

October 12, 1964

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The following statement outlines in brief the purposes and goals to which the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is dedicated and those principles of social and political morality by which its activities are guided.

CAUSES

The history of this country is a shameful chronicle of abuse, exploitation and the systematic degradation of racial and cultural minorities. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is called into existence to answer the challenge represented by what we perceive to be the moral bankruptcy, social incoherence and cultural failure of contemporary America.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee exists because America:

- a. Has failed to create a society, the spirit of which is justice, firmly based on laws democratically formulated and impartially administered which guarantees each member the right to live and develop his human potential in an atmosphere of freedom and dignity.
- b. Failed to liberate our society and its members from the corrosive effects of economic exploitation, material privation, political oppression and human greed.
- c. Failed to establish institutions of education and those traditions which would liberate our people from divisive and narrow prejudice and meaningless mythology which enslave men's minds and erode the human spirit.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee exists, in fact, because American has consistently failed to realize in the fabric of this society those values and qualities of decency, respect for humanity, and love which reflect the highest attributes of the human race.

PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES

Despite a dismally huge body of evidence to the contrary, the members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee persist in believing that a just organization of society and a compassionate and creative conduct of human affairs is possible. We believe that in human terms, which are the only terms that are ultimately meaningful, our society is in crisis, and is without the generate and creative internal dynamism that is necessary to productive change. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is, therefore, dedicated to working in every moral way, for profound and basic change in the social, moral, cultural, economic and political structures of this society.

WE ARE DEDICATED TO WORKING FOR:

- a. The complete political restructuring of our society so that all citizens will have an equal and effective voice in those decisions by which their lives are affected and so that the political affairs of this nation may be conducted in an atmosphere of truth and honesty rather than the falsehood and deceit that now prevails.
- b. The reorganization of the economic machinery of the society so that where there is now exploitation there may be justice, where there is now hunger and nakedness, there may be food and clothes, where there is now idleness and despair there will be jobs and hope, and where there is human and natural waste, there will be conservation.
- c. The radical transformation of the institutions charged with administering justice and enforcing the laws in such a manner as to ensure that there is but one set of laws before which all citizens enjoy the same rights and protection, and so that justice

may we expand and preserved and injustice eliminated, and so that where there is now intimidation and fear there will be security and peace.

d. The transformation of the effective philosophy of the society so that human beings and real human needs for freedom and dignity will take precedence, and so that instead of using people and cherishing things, the society will cherish people and use things.

FUNCTIONING

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee believes the kinds of changes outlined must come from and be brought about by the American people themselves. The organization will function as a motivating and coordinating agent giving expression and direction to widespread need and desire among the people for creative social change.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee will provide programs of education and organization to any community which desires these programs, the purposes of which will be to motivate and organize large masses of people to participate in the processes of decisionmaking.

The Committee will establish educational projects in receptive communities to help the people become aware of the factors and forces responsible for their condition, and the ways legally open to them for controlling these factors. We will provide the perspective and the vision so that these communities can on their own initiative organize themselves to redefine the conditions afflicting their lives.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee will advise and practice the standard political and legal methods of social change, as well as tactics of social dislocation, civil disobedience and other unorthodox methods of social pressure within the framework of redemptive nonviolence, recognizing our responsibility to reject the use of violence against human life or property.

We submit that social order and harmony cannot exist in the absence of social justice and for an oppressed people to "keep the peace" is not either possible or desirable, for the peace of the oppressor is for the oppressed a slave peace, and ~~xxxix~~ only from the pressures of creative social unrest can a true and just peace be forged. Where there is no justice there can be no real or lasting peace.

THIS GOES AFTER PART III--ORGANIZATION OF SNCC

IV. Amendments.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting of the Coordinating Comm. Every constitutional amendment shall be proposed and discussed at a meeting of the Executive Committee or Coordinating Committee, but not voted upon until the next meeting of the Coordinating Committee. In the interim it shall be circulated to all members of the Coordinating Committee.

By-laws may be amended by a majority vote of the Coordinating Comm.
THE END

II. The relation of SNCC to the communities in which it works.

Our purpose is to develop local autonomous groups which can make their own political protest. To this end SNCC shall be primarily a staff of organizers, intent on building local movements rather than chapters of SNCC. However, we recognize that there is a definite need and importance for local groups which have developed with or without the help of SNCC, to be able to relate to SNCC if they so desire, in a manner which does not invade their own autonomy nor suggests SNCC chapters.

A. Local community groups may become affiliates of SNCC upon the recommendation of the SNCC Executive Committee to the Coordinating Committee.

B. SNCC shall make available to any community group assistance in the form of organizers and services, if such assistance is seen by the Executive Committee as useful and possible. Organizers may be assigned to such groups on a full-time basis for an indefinite term.

C. Becoming an affiliate of SNCC allows participation in the process of decision making within SNCC and allocation of its resources, but does not limit the local autonomy of such groups. It does not preclude community groups making decisions that affect local areas which are in keeping with the broad policy outlines of SNCC.

D. Financial assistance to local groups will be available if the Executive Committee or, in between meetings of the Exec Comm, and in an emergency situation, the Executive Secretary considers it possible and advisable.

II. B. On the relation to the campus community.

SNCC grew out of the student community. The name implies more than the fact that are composed largely of young persons, but that a major focus of the organization is toward the young persons of our society, as the builders of a new order and the catalyst which can change the old. For this reason a major focus of SNCC must remain toward the campus community.

A. SNCC shall make available to as large an extent as possible assistance in the formation of local campus movements.

B. Ways must constantly be explored for northern students to participate in meaningful ways in the life of SNCC, including attendance at conferences, work on staff, etc.

C. A regular effort must be made to ensure that staff who have interrupted their education return to school and that new young persons replace them, to develop a large corps of experienced and educated young persons to work on the process of social change in America.

III. Organization of SNCC

The two basic decision and policy making units of the organization are the Coordinating and Executive Committees. These in turn will have officers and advisors, and there shall be a staff to carry out the purposes of the organization.

A. Coordinating committee.

1. Composition. The Coordinating Committee shall consist of the following:

a) All staff persons. Persons who work for SNCC who are not yet designated as regular staff shall have voice, no vote, as specified in the by-laws.

b) Two representatives from each local affiliate. The qualifications for recognition as a local area affiliate are specified in the by-laws.

c) Two representatives from each campus affiliate.

d) Two representatives from each of the "Friends of SNCC" area offices; such area offices are to be determined by the

administrator of the Friends of SNCC in the central office.

e) Any other persons that the Coordinating Committee shall by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting admit to membership.

2. Meetings. The Coordinating Committee shall meet at least three times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring meetings), and for extraordinary meetings on advice of the Executive Committee.

3. Powers. The Coordinating Comm is the primary policy making body of the organization. All major policy decisions shall be brought before it for action if possible. In the event that an emergency situation requires Executive Comm action without Coordinating Comm action, such decisions shall be brought before the next CC meeting for approval .

Policy is here defined as all actions or decisions which affect the organization and direction of SNCC as a whole. Each project shall have power to make decisions within the project as it needs to when necessary, in consultation with the Executive Committee or Executive Secretary if possible.

4. Review Meetings. If at any time a group of 15% or more of the Coordinating Committee desire a meeting of the CC for any purpose, they may petition the Exec Secretary to hold such a meeting, which must be held within a reasonable amount of time.

B. The Executive Committee.

1. Composition. The Executive Comm shall consist of a smaller body of people elected by the Coordinating Comm, and shall represent various categories of participation in the total program of SNCC. The number and proportions are specified in the by-laws.

2.Meetings. The Exec Comm shall meet as frequently as necessary to carry out the business of the organization, with at least one meeting between, and one meeting at, each Coordinating Comm meeting. Meetings shall be called by the Chairman and the Exec Secretary on their own initiative or upon request of 25% of the members of the Exec Comm.

3.Powers. It is the duty of the Exec Comm to implement policy determined by the Coordinating Comm; to act in extraordinary situations on behalf of the Coordinating Comm.; to plan meetings of the CC; to supervise the use of staff and resources, and other functions which are not matters of major policy.

C. Officers. The officers of the organization shall consist of the Chairman; the Executive Secretary; the Program Director; and the Treasurer. They shall be elected by the CC annually. Their duties are described in the by-laws.

The officers shall be empowered to act on behalf of SNCC for any necessary legal business, and shall be ex-officio members of the Exec Comm.

The Chairman shall be considered the Chairman shall be considered the Chairman of both the Exec and the Coordinating Committees.

D. Advisors. The Coordinating Committee shall elect an Advisory Board the number on which is flexible and to be determined by the Coordinating Comm. Advisors serve a term of one year and are eligible for reelection.

The Coord comm shall elect three of these to serve as voting members of the Exec Comm.

E. Staff. All staff are responsible for the implementation of the program of SNCC, as determined by the Coordinating and Exec Comms. They shall be under the specific direction of the Exec Comm and the Exec Secretary.

The Exec Comm shall employ whatever staff it considers necessary for the implementation of the program, at the suggestion of the Exec Secretary. All staff appointments are for a period of one year and subject to annual review.

The Exec Comm shall ~~appoint~~ appoint all Project Directors and major administrative personnel.

Any person can be removed from staff at any time by action of the Exec Sec, but if the person wishes to appeal he may remain on staff until the next Executive Comm meeting, at which time his status will be finally determined. It is recommended but not necessary that he be present at the time of the decision. (GO TO END OF PART I)

BY-LAWS

1. Quorums: A quorum for all meetings of the Coordinating and Executive Committees shall consist of a majority of the members, including either the Chairman or the Executive Secretary at all sessions.
2. Elections: All elections within SNCC shall be by majority vote of those present and voting, with secret ballot being optional at the discretion of the voting body. All terms are for a period of one year unless otherwise specified at the time of the election. All officers and elected personnel can be de-certified by a two-thirds vote of the Coordinating Committee ~~and~~ present and voting at any regular or special meeting. In the event of a vacancy among the officers or members of the Executive Committee, ~~the~~ the Coordinating Committee may elect someone to fill the vacancy until the next regular election. Three unexcused absences by an Executive Committee member from Executive Committee meetings shall be grounds for automatic de-certification. Regular elections shall be held at the Fall meeting of Coordinating Committee, held in September or October.
3. Nominations: At the meeting of the Executive Committee nearest the Fall Coordinating Committee, there shall be elected a nominating committee of three to five persons to bring to the CC meeting a slate of nominees. The nominating committee shall meet as necessary and present a slate of one or more nominees for each position. Other nominations may be made at the time of the meeting, from the floor.
4. Composition of Executive Committee: The Executive Committee shall consist of 25 persons. They are to be selected from the following categories:

Representatives from "Friends of SNCC" groups:	3 persons
Representatives from student protest groups:	5 persons
Advisors:	3 persons
Staff:	14 persons

"Staff" shall include the four officers; all state project directors; and the balance to be elected from staff at large. The Executive Committee shall meet monthly.
5. Staff: All new staff shall pass through a probationary period of three months before being considered regular staff. Until such time as they become regular staff persons, they shall have voice but not vote as staff in the affairs of the organization. Persons who have been on leave or who have previously been considered regular staff shall go through a similar probational period of one month. "Staff" is taken to mean all those people being paid a regular salary by SNCC and such other persons as the Coordinating Committee wishes to designate as special staff.
6. Duties of Officers; The duties of the officers are as follows:
 - a. Chairman: 1) Chairs Executive and CC meetings. 2) represents SNCC as chief officer in meetings of national significance 3) a major determiner of policy for the Committees. 4) Any other duties as generally fulfilled by the chief officer of an organization.
 - b. Executive Secretary: 1) Administrator of staff operations 2) General responsibility for administration of finances and other resources; 3) Responsible for implementation of basic program; 4) Other duties generally fulfilled by the chief administrative officer.
 - c. Program Director; Under the general direction of the Executive Secretary and the Executive Committee, generally responsible for the development of a program which will accomplish the purposes of SNCC; and for the implementation and operation of the program.
 - d. Treasurer: Responsible for maintaining financial responsibility and financial records of the organization; advisor on use of resources to best accomplish program.
7. Finances: The fiscal year of SNCC shall be from September 1 to September 1. At the end of the fiscal year the books shall be audited by a C.P.A. and a public accounting of funds shall be

shall be distributed. A general budget for the organization shall be prepared by the Executive Committee for approval by the Coordinating Committee at the Fall meeting.

8. Standing Committees: There shall be standing committees of the Executive Committee for the following functions. These committees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and shall not necessarily be limited to membership on the Coordinating or Executive Committees.

- a. Personnel Committee. To make Decisions on personnel to be added to staff and staff assignment within the organization.
- b. Finance Committee. To prepare the budget and to plan and govern the financial resources of the organization.
- c. Nominations Committee. (see above.)
- d. Legal Committee. To advise the organization in legal matters.