

SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference
Shaw University, Raleigh NC, April 2010
Transcript Video Recording #11
(Raw, unedited, no annotation)

Speaker 1 (00:00:18):

Before we move forward in meeting our panelists today, I would like for us to take a moment to breathe in and breathe out and call all up the names of our ancestors to ourselves who were a part of a long train towards black power and a long train towards justice that fertilized the soil that made SNCC and other organizations able to be a part of a community struggle. So could we just take a moment of silence and gather ourselves? Thank you.

Speaker 1 (00:01:31):

It is really quite an honor and blessing to gather in a circle that has existed for more than 50 years. It is an opportunity not only to reflect on what you were doing when you became a part of the SNCC, but in is also an opportunity to tell us how we've been living in the wilderness years. Well for 50 theologically and spiritually is a number of maturity and that we should come to the table at 50, after 50 years with the holistic vision includes hindsight, insight and foresight. So hopefully all of these sites will be operating today. As we reflect on the question of black power allowance county, before we move to the panelists, I would just like to offer <affirmative> Several reflections points of reflection To remind us. First of all, black power did not explode in, in 1968 or 65. I want to remind us that in 1865 Black men who were newly freed from enslavement, Met in Selma Alabama To talk about as a community, the direction of the African American community in the south. And there is all down to a man to use their utmost endeavors, to educate their youth, to advance the community

Speaker 1 (00:03:29):

And to preserve our rights in Liberty. When you really think about that resolution, it was a call to black power and a white supremacist culture. It was a call that went beyond the walls of this convention and resonated throughout the black community in the south. It was a call that created a call of culture. And it is from that perspective that I want us to think about black power. And I want, when they issued the call to black power, Theirs were not a call to domination through terrorism, make social and political injustices, as well as spiritual tyranny to them. Black power meant the power of full citizenship. It meant the right to define themselves in a society that slander their names and desecrated their bodies. It was Black power meant the right to move freely in a society without being terrorized Traumatized, Or in some cases killed. And for this vision, it is. And for this black power early, a late 19th century vision of black people having power. It was a vision that generations of African Americans put their body selves on the line and brought to the table, their resources to be used on behalf of this vision.

Speaker 1 (00:05:25):

So we see that black power was a dynamic struggle that generated a counterculture of education that contested the intentions of segregation is to turn black Southern schools into plantations where black adults indoctrinated their children into an ideological culture of white supremacy and economic injustice. Blacks in Alabama were no exception. They move swiftly and cohesively towards empowering their community. We all know about the Southern youth, the Southern Negro youth Congress. We know about black teachers in Alabama and throughout the south organizing for pay equity. In the 1930s student, 1940s, we know about black men joining labor unions in Birmingham, Alabama, as they left, uh, the plantation at the, as they left in agriculture society, moved to the cities we know about Charles. GAILs incredible struggle with his community members against gerrymandering. We know that Tuskegee was part of a chapter of the student Negro youth Congress. It is important that we have a context for understanding

black power, because most of the presentations of black power does not see it as a dynamic process. They see it as an explosion that happened in 1968. Now I'm not saying that, uh, any dynamic process evolves as it goes forward, but that doesn't mean that that's the beginning of the process. So when SCC members came into the Alabama community to work alongside members of their community, they joined along train towards black power that had been running on track for more than a hundred years.

Speaker 1 (00:07:45):

This was not the, the impulse for power and the impulse for freedom ran deeply in the hearts of African Americans in the south. And Alabama was no exception this afternoon. Our panelists will tell you, where did they get on the train? What did they do once they got on the train? What struck them mostly about the work that they were doing? And what reflections do they have to give us in a minute or two in a minute? <laugh> We are looking forward to hearing their voices. I will not introduce them. I will give them a, the power of their own voices to tell you about getting on the train, how old they were, where they worked, et cetera. Yes.

Speaker 2 (00:08:52):

Thank you, Ruby and good afternoon, everyone, brothers and sisters. So glad to see you so happy to be here to represent.

Speaker 1 (00:09:02):

Okay. I'm sorry. I think you need to go to the podium.

Speaker 2 (00:09:04):

Oh dear. It's so comfortable. We

Speaker 1 (00:09:06):

Thought we'll be able to sit, but we can't.

Speaker 2 (00:09:08):

Okay.

Speaker 3 (00:09:08):

We can get you.

Speaker 2 (00:09:10):

Oh, can we, can we have the mic a little

Speaker 1 (00:09:13):

Can't they can't see you Y'all hurt what I said. Right. See you. Okay.

Speaker 3 (00:09:22):

We see.

Speaker 2 (00:09:23):

Yeah. Is that better? Okay. If for some reason, uh, my voice fades off, please raise your hand in the back because it tends to do that. And, um, my friend Michelle said that someone told her once that she enjoyed coming to my poetry readings, because she liked looking at my smile. She couldn't hear the words I was saying <laugh> so please don't let it be like that this afternoon. Okay. Please tell me if I've just kind of trailed off and you can't tell what I'm saying. Um, because Ruby decided to open with a moment of reflection and silence and remembering, I thought, why not open, uh, with some poems that came out of this period? Uh, my name is Gloria House. Um, I'm also known as an Cozi. That's the, the name that I use in my poetry. And it's the name that people in the Detroit activist community know me by. I'd like to read a few of

the poems that I wrote during this period, the two year period that I spent in, uh, Alabama and lows county. And then I'll move into the two minute reflections that were asked to do. Okay.

Speaker 1 (00:10:32):

Did you tell them where you got on the train?

Speaker 2 (00:10:34):

I got on the train in 1965. Um, I was, um, I came down to Selma, Alabama to teach in a freedom school that some of us students from UC Berkeley and San Francisco state decided we were going to set up. Um, I came and got involved. We found a house just on the edge of the Selma housing project and, and very close to brown chapel. We recruited our students and we got the school going. Um, within the first few days of being there, I met Stokley Carmichael who was doing, uh, who was speaking at the, uh, mass meetings in brown chapel. He invited me to come into Lowes county and attend the mass meetings there. And before I knew it, I was working in louds county. Um, and before I knew it, I had become involved in a boycott of a store there been put in jail with Ruby and others witnessed the murder of a very dear friend and the, the near murder of another.

Speaker 2 (00:11:34):

And though I did go back to Berkeley thinking I was gonna on with my studies within a week. I was back in Lounds. Um, Silas Norman hired me as a field secretary in the count in Lowes county and there I stayed for two years. Okay. So that's how I got on the train. All right. Um, I'd like to start out by, um, reading a poem that I wrote to honor the, um, the insights, the strategic understanding that I found among sharecroppers, uh, with whom we worked, it's called Alabama farmers dialectic. And, um, <affirmative> I was inspired to write it because you know how some, uh, left intellectuals think of themselves as being intellectually superior and having to bring the word. Right. Um, and I just wanted to express, uh, the recognition of what our elders, the Shareco we worked with, what genius they brought to us and to the struggle.

Speaker 2 (00:12:37):

Now I see it like this, you see that tree out there. It's a good shade tree in the summertime. And you know, don't nobody like to see their shade tree cut down. Ain't that right? Well, we've been that shade tree for them folk for a lot of summers. <affirmative> working in the sun, making it cool and easy for them. Well, I can't be no shade tree all my life. That tree got to come down one of these days. Okay. So that's Alabama farmers dialectic. Thank you. Um, I'd also like to read, um, a poem, which was one of my first impressions of arriving in Selma Selma, 1965, amid the ghost of the civil rights marchers in Selma in the summer. So hot, the children sang in the paths of the afternoon showers before I'd be a slave, I'd be buried in my grave from the freedom school window.

Speaker 2 (00:13:39):

We watched them come across the lawns of the housing project down the rain, Rudi, dirt roads through the puddles, waiting for their bare feet. They were tattered angels of hope. One plat caught at an odd angle and standing indigently a ripped him hanging like a train behind them, gray knees, poking through denim frames, dancing the whole trip. They performed their historic drama against the set of their wet brick project homes. Um, some of those children who were in our freedom school subsequently wrote a book called Selma Lord Selma. You may be familiar with that. Um, uh, Cheyenne and Rachel, who were little, little children when they were in the freedom school, of course grew up with the consciousness of struggle and continue. And the, a last poem I'd like to share with you from this period is one that I dedicated to Ruby Doris. And I think it speaks to the honor that we had for her as a very important leader in SNCC, and also speaks to the power and the, um, the influence of women in snake.

Speaker 2 (00:14:58):

Thank you to Ruby Doris from your long overwhelming fatigue came the energy of a dozen organizers calling you for a hundred reasons to make a hundred complain, followed by a hundred requests to say, we need, need, need, can we have, have, have, and your voice horse disciplined, trying to say yes to give everything your eyes, knowing, understanding the hunger, the loneliness, the failure, the try, and the desperation of the field. As you sat at your desk in Atlanta, we hold you Ruby. We hold you just as you were. We hold you tenderly in our hearts and in our history. So with those poems, I thank you.

Speaker 2 (00:15:53):

Well, um, when I found out we only had 10 minutes to speak, I started to panic because I had originally planned to simply read to you the article that will appear along with all of our other SNCC women's articles in hands on the plow, plow the book. That's going to come 'em out in September, but, uh, we don't have time for that. So I'm gonna just read a few patches here and there. Um, our work as organizers in Lowes county, um, was to get up early in the morning and, um, try to find as many of the lows county sharecroppers and others before they went out to the field to work and to talk about what we were trying to do to encourage them to register, to vote, but also to excite them and inspire them with the idea of an independent black party that could finally represent them and allow them to challenge the white supremacy of the south to finally win the things that they needed for their own survival.

Speaker 2 (00:17:03):

So we rose early, uh, we moved from plantation to plantation from house to house. Um, speaking with people, encouraging them, also organized mass meetings during the week, uh, held freedom schools, um, schools in which we taught people, the law regarding independent black parties. Um, we taught people to read and write. We encouraged people to become involved in the electoral politics around getting, um, agricultural supplements and supports for their, their lives as farmers. Our work was very diverse, uh, and very, uh, demanding. I would like to somehow S summarize the kind of culture that emerged in that work. And I hope this will be when I was thinking about what is going to be most valuable to people who are interested in the low county experience. I thought maybe they'll want to know that a culture did emerge in this process. Um, it had to do with having to live carry on these very important, uh, relationships within the context of constant danger.

Speaker 2 (00:18:15):

In fact, within the context of terror, because it was not uncommon for our house, our freedom house, which by the way, had been given to us by a local family, the Matthew Jackson family, one of the few families, the county that owned their own land and could actually make this kind of gift. They protected us. They nurtured us. They knew that if we didn't have a place to stay in the county, we'd be even that more vulnerable going back and forth between Selma. But that house was a target. Um, once, uh, people were evicted from their share cropping play because they registered to vote. Then the tent city that we set up, uh, was a target as well. So we learned to hit the ground and wait until the firing stopped or in some cases to shoot back in order to let people know that we weren't afraid to shoot back.

Speaker 2 (00:19:07):

Okay. So living together under that terrors, one of the things that historians often fail to mention in the way they write about the history of the so-called civil rights movement, which was a human rights movement, is they fail to mention that all of the victories, if you can call them victories, took place were carried out under this constant threat of violence. The church bombings, the constant, uh, you know, night riding and firing the being chased on dark country roads. All of these things were part of that struggle. So understanding and accepting and living and being ready to defend oneself within that context. Another important aspect of the culture was the, we held across all kinds of lines that operate in the outside society, right? Respect across

levels of education, uh, respect across north, south boundaries, respect, uh, uh, gender, okay. Respect, uh, for leadership, no matter where it came from.

Speaker 2 (00:20:10):

We did not think of ourselves as a talent at 10th or whatever, and respect for the leadership and the wisdom and the insight of the people that we are, the local leaders with whom we were working. Um, one of the things I've said in some writings is one day, someone will comment on the incredible beauty, uh, and rarity of this relationship between people who were barely in their twenties and people who were their parents' age and the kind of respectful collaboration and the way we, um, were able to thrive, um, with the wisdom of our elders, our energy, our tenacity, and our determination to make a change, how those two parts of the struggle came together. So beautifully. Another aspect of that culture was the legitimization of the kind of work we were doing, that it was good to be working as an organizer full time.

Speaker 2 (00:21:06):

This was important work to do. Um, Stoker used to have the, the expression. My day is my work, right, starting at six in the morning, till whenever he finally collapsed that this was a good thing to be in the service of the community and advancing our in this way. Um, that was something that came out of this struggle that we carried on together. Okay. Um, another aspect, another important part of the culture was that as we were organizing the independent black party in Lown county, which we saw as a necessity after the failure of the Mississippi freedom democratic party, after the failure of that effort, to get the support of, uh, the liberal establishment, we realized we had to turn to our own ingenuity, our own genius. We had to turn to ourselves, right. To create a next step for the movement running out of time.

Speaker 2 (00:22:11):

No time left one minute. Okay. We, we had to turn to ourselves and, um, this, this realization that we had to turn to ourselves and come ourselves and devise this independent, uh, way of organizing politically happened at this same time that we were growing in terms of our international consciousness, right. We were seeing ourselves linked to and identified with all of the independence, freedom movements that were going on in the third world. We supported those movements. We, um, we were in solidarity with them. We, it, in order to support them, we raised medical supplies. And, um, we brought this internationalization, this consciousness of ourselves as Africans and tied to the motherland, but also tied to the rest of the world that was struggling for independence. And self-determination all of this was happening inside SNCC among us as organizational people. Right? So those two things really worked in, uh, conjunction and made.

Speaker 2 (00:23:15):

I think what we did in that moment in LNS county, LNS county, even more powerful because our intellectual and theoretical and ideological development and commitment and passion, all of that was growing at the same time we were doing this independent work in the field and we could bring those in unity. Um, one of the ways in which the international internationalization of consciousness manifested itself was in the Vietnam statement and the statement against the Vietnam war, which I wrote. And if anybody's interested in how that came about, we can discuss it when yeah. Okay. All right. Thank you. Thank you. <laugh>.

Speaker 4 (00:23:56):

Thank you, Gloria.

Speaker 1 (00:23:58):

Thank you very much, Gloria.

Speaker 2 (00:24:00):

10 minutes go.

Speaker 1 (00:24:01):

Very, I know two things I want to say before our next panelists come up. I just want to, I think we can't underscore the fact enough to understand that SNCC was not in the Vanguard of a movement, that we were a part of a dynamic community process that had been going on for a long time and where people put, has struggled, sacrificed and put their body selves on the line for this struggle. So we were not above the community. We were part of it. And that's important to remember, cuz rarely do you hear that kind of conversation in academic explorations of the Southern freedom movement. And finally, I want to say that what was so radically different about this movement in terms of black power? It was one of the few times in history where black people held the public microphone and that we and holding the public microphone did not require you, you to have a formal education or a college education.

Speaker 1 (00:25:10):

It required you to be able to talk about the issues in language and symbols that was intrinsic in the community and that everyone understood and had access to. It was not an academic discourse. Finally, the thing about what we got from being there and I'm going to paraphrase what Gloria just said was a whole conversation about faith, an understanding of faith. So I can imagine hearing them say, you see that tree over there. If you water it enough, it'll bear fruit. That is what I think was an important message that we took from that experience from that black experience. Our next speaker, APER,

Speaker 5 (00:26:19):

I'm gonna say good evening, everyone. My name is miss Anna Pearl Avery. And what I would like to do is I'd like to say I'm not a speaker or an author, but I would like to tell you a short story of my, uh, first, uh, insight on injustice was when M and Till was murdered. No, I can't. Uh, I was just nine or 10 years old and it kind of passed, you know, you know how children are you, new years get to doing something else and you kind of forget. And I guess he was a child and I, I was a child too. The reason I was kind of concerned, not understanding what lynching and all of this stuff meant. But anyway, I went back to, um, at the time I was living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania venue, but I went back to Birmingham where, um, I, uh, had been here in about Reverend shuttle worth and, and the integration of the, uh, Phillips high school and stuff like this. And when I heard about the freedom rides, I was waiting for them to come after the bus blew up in Anton, Alabama, I had bought me a ticket it and was ready to get on the bus. And I met a fellow by the name of Wilson brown and Wilson brown told me that I couldn't go because I didn't quite understand the concept of nonviolence as a tactic. So,

Speaker 5 (00:28:08):

Uh, Wilson invited me to a SNCC meeting about two weeks, uh, later. And that was when I went to Atlanta and I've encountered SNCC and, uh, Jim foreman and Ms. Baker also met some of the first decent white people I'd ever met in my life. Uh, uh, Dotty Zelner Anne and Carl Braden. Yes. Uh, bill Hansen. And I met, uh, James Foreman who <laugh> and other people and Ella baker, I had met these people before, and that was the beginning for me. But anyway, I went on to participate in some other things in Danville, Virginia, Gaston, Alabama, Mississippi, um, bloody Sunday, Selma Alabama, Birmingham with the dogs, uh, and the hoses and the tank that bull Connor had. And also up in Danville, Virginia with a fellow here by the name of Matthew Jones. Well, he's might not be here in this room, but anyway, Matthew Jones and I also met, uh, in, uh, SEL, Alabama, uh, a brother here, we call HIMS <laugh> Arkansas. Wells walked all the way from Arkansas to come to Selma, to walk 60 miles. That's the way I put it. And I, you know what I said, I said, only a white boy would do this

Speaker 6 (00:29:54):

<laugh>

Speaker 5 (00:29:57):

From, but anyway, it was a, you know, um, at this time I'm gonna let you ask some questions later when we get to the question and answers. And I'm just gonna say for all of the people that I knew, Dr. Vincent Hardy, all the people that I knew and all the people I met and worked with, it was a pleasure. And it changed my life. My whole changed my whole life, my whole direction at this time, this, uh, this have become a way of life and I've since retired. And I'm hoping that my legacy is gonna be still working a justice for everybody. I am presently now retired from my job and working at the national voting rights museum in Selma, Alabama with Ms. Rose, rose, Sanders, and Hank Sanders as a volunteer. And that's what I would like to be part of my legacy. And thank you.

Speaker 7 (00:31:10):

Good afternoon,

Speaker 8 (00:31:12):

Afternoon.

Speaker 7 (00:31:13):

Uh, my name is Hassan Kwame Jeffries, and I am an associate professor of history, uh, at the Ohio state university. And if brother Frank Smith is still in the house, and if he's not somebody let him know that there's still more houses, still letting in a one or two smart brothers. They didn't close the door after he left. There's still a couple smart, dedicated brothers coming through the house is it is a distinct honor and pleasure, uh, for me, uh, to share, um, this, this podium, uh, this day is this opportunity to share this day. Um, most recently I published, I finished a book on low county, Alabama. Uh, and so there's a, a natural, uh, a but

Speaker 7 (00:32:06):

I, I, I, I stand here, uh, representing, as I see it, a gen, a younger generation of historians. I was talking to, uh, sister ne just before, uh, the panel began. And she, she mentioned, uh, she said she had a kind word about the book. And she mentioned, uh, that when she, if I can share this, uh, that when she opened the book, she opened the book as many SNCC activists, opened books of history with a little bit of trepidation, a little bit of concern as to what she might find on the inside. And I'm just here to say that I share and understand that sympathy because, or that concern, because as a historian, uh, I have opened many a book with that same kind of trepidation, but there are some younger folk and I, I I'm, I'm not quite, uh, as young as I used to be when I had a little hair, but there are still some younger folk, uh, younger historians, uh, that have come up in the tradition of SNCC.

Speaker 7 (00:33:08):

Now we were, we were, I can't reflect on my black power experiences because I wasn't born during the black power era, but I came of age as many other young folk, uh, who have gone into the profession under black power parents. Oh, right. Uh, and they sent me down. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, but they said, you need to get a Southern education, a, a Morehouse college education, a black college education, uh, where many of those SNCC activists, young people, uh, who not only, uh, launched the sit-in movement, but also cut their teeth there and were launched into the, uh, student non by and accord coming out of that black college tradition. But then I moved on from there. As many of my fellow younger historians did, particularly African American historians and moved on to those, uh, uh, uh, institutions of higher education that SNCC activists opened the doors for going right down the road, uh, in North Carolina know, uh, it's tobacco road, but right over there to duke university. But there's something about, uh, and I'm glad brother Smith raised this issue. There's something about, uh, Morehouse and duke duke trained me well. Uh, but Morehouse taught me. Yeah.

Speaker 7 (00:34:20):

When I, I started to do the research, uh, for my book, it started as a dissertation. And I remember the first day I, I went down into lows county, Alabama, and I ha had the opportunity to run into, uh, John Huett, uh, many, uh, uh, uh, uh, who are familiar with the movement, what we'll call that name, uh, one of the principal leaders of the local movement down there, and he was kind and gracious enough at that moment to grant me several interviews. Uh, and he became a key, uh, partner, uh, in gaining, allowing me to gain access to the oral history of the local people. Because what SNCC activists did in these local projects was formed this symbiotic relationship. It was a partnership. It wasn't about movement messiahs coming down. And too often, we think of you pick a name it's Stokley Carmack, or perhaps it's Bob Moses.

Speaker 7 (00:35:08):

And we think of them as these messiahs descending down in local communities, telling them what they are to do. It's a relationship, it's a dynamic, but when I'm down there talking to, uh, a brother Huett and he would say, this is important history, I'm so glad you're gonna capture it. Who do you want to talk to? And he would send me out into the community, you know, most of those folk, and I didn't, I couldn't afford a nice suit. I had a t-shirt and, and, and some jeans, and they didn't know, they weren't concerned about credentials. They didn't care. I was a graduate student from duke working on a PhD. They heard Morehouse

Speaker 9 (00:35:48):

<laugh>,

Speaker 7 (00:35:49):

They respected Morehouse, but duke was a world away. And beyond that, beyond that, they wanted to know, they want to make sure that I captured the history accurately,

Speaker 7 (00:36:01):

That I captured the history accurately. And so on the one hand, it's about the work that we have to do a generation coming up out of black power, coming up under the doors that were open by SNCC activists. And so many is not only to recover and cap for all posterity, the history, the what happened, that's the first stage, but then we have to get right the, how it happened at the start of 1965 in Laos county, Alabama county, that's 80% African American representative of the black counties in the Alabama black belt. And throughout the black belt of account is 80% African American had zero registered black voters, not a single one, Not a single one. And SNCC activists go into this county that they don't call bloody Lounds that everybody calls bloody lo because of this long history of racial terrorism. And that's the backdrop for the organizing dynamic organizing project that emerges, uh, in the heart of Alabama in the heart of Dixie at the start of 19 65, 0 registered black voters at the end of 1966, not only had they succeeded in registering a majority of African Americans, but they had succeeded in creating a radically democratic appendant or a black political party.

Speaker 7 (00:37:21):

Those are the facts, but what's more important than that. If you just leave it at the facts, all you have is trivia And trivia is meaningless information.

Speaker 7 (00:37:34):

You have to connect the facts to the process, because if we look that process, the process of going from zero registered black voters to registering a majority and to actually creating a radically democratic, independent political party that said wealth, whiteness, and previous political experience are not prerequisites for running for office, a political party that said you can anybody who's a sharecropper with a great education or tenant farm, or a small landowner can run for office, a party that nominated as their candidate for tax assessor, a woman by the name of Alice Moore, 42 years old, who decides when she throws her hat in to run for office in 1966, that her platform is gonna be taxed. The rich to feed the poor. That's a different kind politics. That's a

process politics. That's the application of Ella Baker's organizing philosophy to electoral politics. Wow. So people ask me, Hey, as I've been doing this, you know, talking about the book and trying to share, uh, the information, uh, uh, this important knowledge, uh, that, uh, happened. They, they say, well, why, how, how, they're all confused. How did a brother from Brooklyn wind up doing some work on Alabama in the heart of Alabama? And I did not know anything about the rules of coming from Brooklyn, but you learn quickly. And I get down there. And the reason, I mean, the answer to that is very simple because of what happened.

Speaker 7 (00:39:06):

Historians have been messing up SNCC for so long and for too long acting as though 1964. And these are, there's some good historians, but there's some bad ones too. And these are the not so good ones acting as though SNCC ends after 1964.

Speaker 7 (00:39:24):

Amen. Freedom Summer is the high point. And then they, they, they, they leave off. They leave off the next two years. So we have Mississippi in 1964, and then we're back in Mississippi in 1960. It is, during the Meredith March with Stokely called Michael and Brother Mu CASAA calling for black power. And then suddenly people are saying, well, it's just rhetoric rhetoric for the sake of rhetoric. Well, you divorce black power from the context. The context is the last two years of organizing that was going on in LaSalle county and in Alabama and in the black belt, black power, wasn't a slogan was tied to a political program, a political program that had power behind it, empowering African Americans that was based on democratic principles. That's a revolution. And if you separate out the black power slogan from the program that SNCC organizers learn in combination and in context and in conversation with local people, then you don't, you don't, you not get into history. If I was a SNCC organizer, I'd be mad as hell too. You don't go. You don't go down there risking your life to have some old fool sitting up on an ivory tower, getting the damn thing wrong.

Speaker 7 (00:40:39):

I think my time might almost be up,

Speaker 8 (00:40:44):

Bring it home.

Speaker 7 (00:40:49):

Stokely said. Michael required me to say Ray said and say, think about the context of what has happened going from zero registered voters to not only creating, not only registering a majority, but creating an all black, independent political party, LaSalle county freedom party. First black Panther party, 1966.

Speaker 8 (00:41:07):

Yes,

Speaker 7 (00:41:08):

1970 first African Americans in that county, since reconstruction era elected to political office. Then by 1980, gaining control of the county courthouse, the arc of black political power is born and embodied in what happens in the heart of Alabama. But, but Brother Carmichael said,

Speaker 8 (00:41:26):

Uh,

Speaker 7 (00:41:27):

He said, you know, he had a caution. He said, black visibility is not black power. Black visibility is not black power. So, you know, I don't end this book in 1970. The story doesn't end in 1970,

the movement doesn't end in 1970, the story of black political empowerment doesn't end when African Americans are sitting county courthouse, the, the state house or the white house,

Speaker 8 (00:41:56):

Come on down.

Speaker 7 (00:41:57):

People talking about, we just had a revolutionary movement with the election of rock Obama. But if we look back at history of black political empowerment and black elected officials going into office, that's not necessarily a movement. It can be a moment if they don't do anything for black folk, once they office Black visibility is not black power, this last word, and I'll, I'll be through Brother. Tori also said, He said, you know, it's not radical. This is speaking in 1966, when questioned about what are the goals and objectives of the L county freedom of organization. He said, it's not radical. If SNCC organizers are elected to public office, he said, it's not radical. If Martin Luther king is elected to public office, if decisions are still made from the top down Here, the echoes of Ella baker, he's that it's only radical. If decisions are made from the bottom up, thank you very much.

Speaker 10 (00:43:27):

I have a picture there that More, you can't myself. Stok come. I can. And Martin king And this March was on the black power March from Memphis, Tennessee To Jackson, Mississippi. And this is a March. We had to fight all the way And we were even bombed on rooms, But we carried the March on. Now, first I want to talk about myself.

Speaker 8 (00:44:05):

<laugh>

Speaker 10 (00:44:07):

The question is how did I get on the train? I got on the train when they put me on the slave ship from Africa?

Speaker 8 (00:44:16):

Well,

Speaker 10 (00:44:19):

Come from Africa, the richest continent in the world, A land of diamonds and gold and all, and silver and copper and Pearl and Cobos and thousands of other resources, The richest cultural Traditions, richest tradition. As any people in the world, We had our own civilization in Africa. We had our own kingdoms and universities. We had our own languages, our own gods. We God, and directed our own people For thousands of millions of

Speaker 9 (00:45:02):

Years.

Speaker 10 (00:45:03):

And then in Africa was invaded.

Speaker 9 (00:45:07):

And

Speaker 10 (00:45:07):

All of this was interrupted The invaded Africa And spread it Islam And enslaved And conquered our people and dominated our land took over our land. Some of our land is still our control, And many of our people was for us, are educated into joining them. And many of us began to work in the interest of Arabs over the interest of the African tradition. Then the York Christian invaded

Africa, And when the York Christian came to Africa with Jesus in the Bible, we had diamonds and gold in all and silver, copper, and Pearl and Cobo. And Manese they had Jesus in the Bible. And when you left Africa, we had the Jesus in the Bible. They had the diamond, the gold, the silver and copper and Pearl, the, and they had us on slave that had us on slave Jesus. And today, many of us are still on slave Jesus. We had our own gods in our own dears in Africa, And we didn't need nobody to invade Africa to bring our no cultural, no tradition, no religion. I, no gods. We as African people

Speaker 9 (00:46:43):

Paid

Speaker 10 (00:46:44):

Our own way. Now we would put on this slave shift and scout it all over the world.

Speaker 9 (00:46:51):

And

Speaker 10 (00:46:52):

I wanted pay to the brothers. When we were all enslaved all over the world, we fought them in some places in Africa, the Europeans murdered millions and millions of Africans like in Zimbabwe SeaOne Who is nothing but an international murderer Killed the people them by and name the country. Rodia Y'all with

Speaker 9 (00:47:19):

Me

Speaker 10 (00:47:20):

Name the country. Rodia after the Europeans In the condo, Liverpool

Speaker 10 (00:47:28):

Murdered millions of our people stole our land. Colonized. Our people took their names, took their history from them. If they didn't work hard enough, cut their hands, cut their ears, cut their feet off. But we were murdered by you invading Africa. Every of Africa was invaded by foreign enemies from Europe, representing the philosophy that was alien and Dr. Mill to African people. They put us on slave ships and scattered us all over the world and divided us out in every way our people could be divided. They committed genocide on us, and they put us in this school, which is another form of genocide. Well, they forced their religion on us, which is another form of they forced their ideals and gave us their European white raises history to study in school, which is another form of genocides. And when they got us all over the world and we were enslaved, it was the Africans in Haiti.

Speaker 10 (00:48:46):

We found 'em all over the world. We found 'em in the Congo. We fire in South Africa. We follow in God again and everywhere in the world. And when in the, how you say Haiti was the first nation, the gang independence, and we in their freedom, y'all know about the Haitian revolution. And we thank the Haitian people for winning and, and taking this freedom and Europe and America continue to punish the Haitian people for what they did in 18 0 4, 18 0 5. Marcus God became in, in 1917 to talk about candles back to Africa. You right? Good. What I'm saying about I can't read.

Speaker 11 (00:49:34):

Okay, one minute, one minute,

Speaker 10 (00:49:36):

One minute. No, no, I'm just joking. I'm still, I'll be doing one minute.

Speaker 10 (00:49:43):

Marcus. God came to take us back to Africa. I believe in the God movement. And I believe that the solution to African people's problem, whether you living in Haiti, the Caribbean south America, Europe, or in Africa, south allows county or the United States. Our solution is Africa. Africa's our land and the down the gold are the richness of Africa is supposed to be used to feed close and make us powerful. Just like China, make China powerful, just like LL make the Europeans power Africa supposed to make us powerful. So dub Dubai and climate you raise and all of us black power. What we are talking about is uniting with our brother, sisters in Africa, and we have to make revolution. We are fighting against an economic system that was billed off a murderer off a robbery off a kidnapping off of slavery, and it's capitalistic and purely system.

Speaker 10 (00:50:44):

And it must be totally destroyed. Okay? If the people in the world going to have freedom and dignity, we must join in with everybody in the world that's fighting against and fighting to control their land and their territory. If we are going to have a new world, that new world will have to be socialist and communist Martin Luther king himself, the that we need a redistribution, other wealth. If there's a redistribution other well that's socialism, that's socialism and fi Castro who the United States have embargo own and committing crimes against and have caused many people to die. The United States have crimes against Cuba. We support Fidel Castro, long live Fidel. And last, last, I wanna say that in Africa, Robert Moga of Zimbabwe, he's our great leader. He's a powerful brother. The United States have embargo Zimbabwe, starving our people to do. We must support Mogas, Zimbabwe, and we condemn bla.

Speaker 10 (00:51:52):

We can condemn America for embargo and Cuba long lived Cuba, long lives, Zimbabwe. And finally, I wanna say that if we are going to have black power, we need land and it must be guided by our African tradition. Luther king was living today. He said he was against the war in Vietnam. He would be against the war in Iraq. He would be against the Roy. And if Afghanistan, he would be saying, ain't gonna study the war no more. And stoke the Carac would be saying choir too. Ready? Be saying, hell no, we won't go. Hell no, we won't go, hell we won't go.

Speaker 1 (00:52:41):

We're going to open the conversation up. I don't wanna say questions and answers because people here have some of the answers for a, but I just wanna say a call for revolution requires the respect of everybody in the circle for each other. And if you and no voice in a revolution is greater or more relevant than any other voice. Having said that let's open the conversa.

Speaker 12 (00:53:12):

Some of you know about Jimmy Lee Jackson. We had a, a little March in Marion, Alabama in February 18th, 1965. And all the Alabama state troopers were there. As soon as we came out the door of the church, Zion Methodist church. First, they attacked the photographers. They smashed all the cameras. They shot out the street lights. And then they went for the people and smashed heads and tear gas in the church. They threw one 15 year old boy threw the stained glass windows. They went around the max cafe about the back and we're going after one of the leaders there, his name was KR Lee, 83 year old man. And they came to hit him and his grandson jam Lee Jackson, who was a wood cutter, stood up, said, don't hit my grandpa. And they shot him twice in the stomach. And he beat on him. And he ran out in his street and people got him in the car and got him back back to Selma. But he died a week later and it was Jimmy's death that caused us to organize the March home Montgomery. And I went into lown county and scouted for campsite before the March started. So I know some of the lown county, you, although I wasn't really an organizer there as such. Um, let me give you a poem.

Speaker 12 (00:54:34):

I did not know you Jimmy Lee, but I came to watch you lowered to the earth in highest homage as though a king or chief or priest of sacred truth. I to one of 4,000 sad and scared and seething souls who tracked the miles from Marion in pouring rain that holy Alabama Sunday, so long ago, washing away our tears, replacing even our fears and anger with a determination, no ti of reaction or, or terror could stem. Perhaps it was not my own blood upon the jacket I wore thereafter, but yours Cheyennes Martins that of Annie Lee and BR brother Reeb and young St. Jonathan of Daniel. We mixed blood by day and laughter her by night and tears. But for the Dawn, the shack rocked and rang with the footsteps of our dancing shotgun shoot up. Holy baby shotgun. Shoot it right now. Winner man loves a woman deep down in his.

Speaker 12 (00:55:47):

So he'll tell the world about the good thing he's found. There have been times when I thought that I couldn't last for long, but now I think I'm evil, able to carry on. It's been a long, long time coming brother, but I know gene it's going come. Whoa, yes, city. I said the shack rocked and rang with the footsteps of our dancing. The silence streets echoed with the pounding of our hearts. Love came easily as did conflict and rode away with the next car to Atlanta, perhaps never to return that terrible and wondrous winter before the Dawn. I know not how many years I grew that month before the spring, but fleeting decades since scarce have left. So true remark upon my soul from afar. They do not remember your name. Those who came to carry on the torch. You passed into their hands, as they do remember Rosa and Medgar and Andy and Mickey and Jim.

Speaker 12 (00:57:11):

But we who stood by your side and built our defiant anger with your ever failing breath. We who heard your final verdict pronounced died of massive internal infection. We, we who stood the calls. We know. And when we met the horses on the bridge, the gas, the clubs, the whips, the angry shouts and, and flaming eyes of hatred. Yes, we knew from that moment, we were certain that our costs should not have died in vain, that we wouldn't March on to Montgomery affront the eyes of all the world and seal one body victory forever along the never ending trial trail for freedom, the struggle, the task, the prayer, the song of human dignity. And you dear Jimmy Lee Jackson, age 26 of Marion, Alabama, footnote of history. As you stood to protect your grandfather from the Bishop's gloves of hatred that February 9th and thereby gave you not your life, you to lead a song. And we, we who stood by your side. We remember,

Speaker 13 (00:58:37):

But if I can just give an overview, because I don't think this part of, uh, the history of Alabama has been told, especially to our white friends, that SNCC did not put white people out of SNCC. Yes we did. That's number one. Yes, we did. Number two when Alabama folk, namely Wendy Paris, who was here somewhere, cause I heard his mouth. And as you can tell, Alabama, people are very, very Evolv. I mean, we have a lot of energy. I don't know where that comes from, but it's there. We have it. You heard me speak earlier. That's typical, Alabama. Um, but, um, as I was saying, the low county people made it clear that they wanted political power. They were not interested in running for state legislatures or for the governor. They were not interested in going to the, uh, democratic national convention. They were interested in the SHA a corner, people who were close to them on the ground and was just terrorizing them.

Speaker 13 (00:59:47):

So when they, when they told us their vision, then SNCC didn't become a Vanguard. SNCC became a resource person. Cause the vision was created by the people <affirmative>. And out of that in black power is not a new concept. Adam Clayton power said it in the forties. So let's be clear on that. And um, and for instance, Joyce, uh, uh, I mean glory and there was Martha Prescott Newan. I mean, they went and wrote the proposals because the people said, we need to do something about this land and we need to do something. And, and, and George Paris and his daddy, Mr. Perry and CIA, and all of that, you know about the stabilization board, he had to get

all into the details and, and Hasan does a wonderful job talking about that. But the bottom line that I want, my white friends to know Snick did not put you out of SNCC when Wendy and Sammy came back from Mississippi and there was an effort to replicate Mississippi and Alabama, our folk on the ground said, we don't wanna do that.

Speaker 13 (01:00:54):

Not that we rejected that, but our culture, our character are different. And I want you to understand the political economy of Alabama and the confluences that we have that on the ports, Mississippi kept its ports. Lilly white is still on. And Alabama mobile is an industrial enterprise and black men. And, and well, mainly men on the docks interacted with the international longshoremen. We organized unions, black men. If you read about Jose Hudson in Birmingham, in the thirties with guns, understand in louds county, you had some, some fearless people and you had some people full of fear. But generally speaking, when the overseer came on the property, when they were 10, you know, tenant farming all on the horse with the long gun, when he went by the next day, a black miles county folks had they long gun up against the tree, little short in the beard. Sister might have one of her in her pocket or her purse or wrapped up in the baby. Something like you have, have to understand the culture, the history and the political economy of a place that will shape how a movement will be formed or will manifest. And that's why white folks didn't come to Alabama. One because of me or SIG or Stokely or rap, we didn't have a purpose. What were you going to do you understand what were you going to do? And we didn't have time for training sessions.

Speaker 1 (01:02:39):

Thank you, Gwen.

Speaker 8 (01:02:41):

Thank you, Gwen.

Speaker 14 (01:02:45):

Uh, one quick comment, cuz I was down in, uh, Selma in summer of 66 and frankly I agree with you because the dynamics of such was very understandable. So, uh, uh, question, I got question I've got, uh, for the panel, um, this past December I was down in Selma, helping a friend rode west run for the school board down there, uh, for a variety of reasons he lost. But one of the things I noticed being down there working with him was in one precinct, we lost five votes, five people that couldn't vote, but cuz they cannot meet the new Alabama requirements for forms of identification. And this is the same thing that goes on in Georgia. Indiana's got it. Five votes may not seem like a lot, but we've seen in recent years how five votes per precinct can make a difference. And just like to get a reaction from the pal in terms of what we need to be doing in the future to protect what's been gained in the past.

Speaker 7 (01:03:49):

Essentially you're talking about disenfranchisement, uh, and there's nothing new about disenfranchisement as with regard to race. So whether it's a literacy test or grandfather clause disen occurring at the point of a gun or disenfranchisement because of a felony conviction, it's still disenfranchisement and it's inherently undemocratic, but it's also inherently American. I mean that's part of the American political tradition and that's limiting the size of the electorate, particularly the educated electorate. I mean, so we all have to be very is in, uh, in this contemporary moment about the ways in which, uh, political interest will move to, uh, push forward their agenda by limiting and decreasing the size of the electorate. And one of the ways in which they do it, uh, throughout the United States, uh, is through this, uh, through, uh, voter identification. Uh, there is no, uh, documented significant evidence of actual voter fraud based on, uh, identification, false identification. I mean, so it's really simply a mechanism, uh, to shrink the size and to intimidate, uh, particularly, uh, undocumented workers, immigrants, uh, and the likes. So we do have to be aware of it. We have to be cognizant and we have to push back and

we also have to push back against felony disenfranchisement. Uh, I mean, that's, that's a that's even, uh, that has an even greater impact on communities of color, uh, than the I identifications.

Speaker 5 (01:05:16):

Thank you. My name is Katherine Coleman flowers and I'm a native of low county. Yes. Hi Alabama. And I am, um, my I'm descended from people that were also activism were not afraid and yeah, and I, I, your father. Yeah, my father. And, um, it's just a blessing for me to be here and see the people that have had such an impact on me. I'm 51 years of age and was too young to be a member of SNCC. But I was surrounded by people like Willie Ricks and Stokley Carmichael and Donna Smith who couldn't be here. And just so many people that had an impact on me and what I'm doing today. Uh, one of the things I like to do is kind of tie the past with the present, with the work that I'm currently in allowance counties relates to economic development. And I think that that this is something that we have to deal with as it relates to poverty in these communities.

Speaker 5 (01:06:06):

A lot of these communities are just as poor as they ever were. Despite the fact that we controlled the courthouse in low county in 2002, I discovered that they were arresting people for not having septic tanks. The reason why they don't have septic tanks is cuz the land doesn't per and really the reality is that the laws are created after people build houses there. And it never really matter when people had outhouse where now throughout the black belt region, I'm finding that actually from, um, from just being exposed to other people, people dealing with this issue from, from Virginia to New Mexico, there are people living with raw sewage running on top of the ground. In 2002, when I started this effort, we had a congressional appropriation that was sponsored by a Republican because you know, one of the things I've learned from SNCC is that, you know, sometimes we have to work of people that folk don't normally work with.

Speaker 5 (01:07:02):

And we did that. We got the appropriation, we never received it through Bush's two administrations. And now with president Barack Obama, we're having the same problem. And what I'm here to say is to not only just to reflect, but I need your help today in low county because we, they have just started an effort a few months ago to start back arresting people for not having septic tanks. The family that I went to visit most recently, they have an income of \$12,000 a year. The septic system costs over 6,000. They have, the law is in place where they can find this woman up to \$500 a day until she can get it resolved. She's not gonna get it resolved and what we have to do with, and I, I would've thought that it would've been a whole lot easier. I had to get a Republican Senator to send a letter to the EPA administrator. That's just been appointed by president Barack Obama to ask why are they still holding up this money after all these years? They have since decided to hold it up even more because I have the audacity to complain.

Speaker 1 (01:08:05):

Catherine, thank you very much for your remarks.

Speaker 5 (01:08:08):

Thank move to the next. Thank you very much to the

Speaker 1 (01:08:11):

Amount of time. Thank you.

Speaker 15 (01:08:18):

I, I would like to ask a question, uh, what happened to the low county freedom organization and why is there no independent black political party there now? And one, one other short question. What's the name of your book brother? Oh,

Speaker 7 (01:08:35):

Uh, the title of the book is bloody Lounds civil rights and black power, uh, in Alabama's black belt, the shameless promotion, bloody lounge. <laugh>

Speaker 6 (01:08:45):

Shameless,

Speaker 1 (01:08:46):

Shameless. Go for it. I'm just kidding.

Speaker 7 (01:08:50):

Um, in bloody shameless bloody scene in 19, um, in 1966, uh, the allows county freedom organization run seven candidates for local office for the county courthouse. Um, and they're unsuccessful. Um, in 1968 they run, uh, a handful of candidates also for local office, uh, for some minor positions and they have a handful of victories. Uh, but of ironically, um, there was still some pushback. It was pushback from the African American, uh, some, some African American registered voters. And it was decision in 19, uh, 68, uh, to 1969 to actually drop the black Panther, uh, symbol and logo, uh, because of the negative media attention, uh, that had been, uh, surrounded that had surrounded the, uh, black Panther party for self defense. Uh, and so they merged with the national democratic party of Alabama, uh, in 1969, uh, and in 1970, the first African American independent candidates or running on the third party ticket, the national democratic party of Alabama, a white progressive party, uh, both black and white, uh, coming outta Birmingham with Dr.

Speaker 7 (01:10:01):

Cash. And, uh, they elect three African Americans, two local office, uh, a sheriff. Um, John Hewlett becomes the, uh, first black sheriff, uh, of the county between 1970 and 1980. Uh, we see gradual increasing numbers of African Americans elected to public office. Uh, and by 19 80, 19 82 African Americans are in control of the county courthouse county government. Uh, but the, the, the tragedy is cuz you really can't just leave it there. Right? A part of the tragedy is the movement politics. What I call freedom politics that emerged, that really gave birth and rise to the low county, the freedom organization, this, this mix of, uh, mixing both fighting for civil rights and human rights, but doing it, uh, in a democratic way, uh, using SNCC principles, applying SNS, organizing philosophy for philosophy to electoral politics that gradually begins to fade away. Uh, so over the course of, uh, that decade, 19 70, 19 80 part cause of political compromises by individuals, partly because of a slow down in, in momentum, we see freedom politics losing out to traditional American politics.

Speaker 7 (01:11:07):

Uh, and that's where, uh, that's part of the, the tragedy of the story. Uh, but it's an important element of the story. Uh, so when people say, well, what happened to the, uh, independent party, the independent party was no longer there, but the independent party was just the vehicle, uh, for a new kind of politics. Uh, so what's lost is, is that, that revolutionary politics that was born in that moment. Uh, but Katherine Coleman who just spoke a moment ago, uh, uh, is, is, is the future of the county, is those folk who are moving back south, who came up under the tutelage of SNCC organizers and who understand the kind of revolutionary important demo, small, the democratic politics that emerged at that moment. And so as long as that memory and that commitment is still alive and there's always a possibility for a resurgence of that kind of politic, thank

Speaker 10 (01:11:54):

You. We've got one more and question that we can, I, I wanna speak to, excuse me. Uh, voting is not a solution to our problem. Freedom is one through revolution and that its sad that even though we have elected thousands of people into the democratic party, we have absolutely no

power in the democratic party and we gotta stop selling out to the democratic party and go on and organize our people and make revolution like we got to do. Cause you cannot go to your slave master and thank your slave master. Gonna treat you better. We got the politics are begging this country, begging the democratic party and begging our white slave master to treat us better. That's not freedom. Freedom is when you have land, when you have your own government, your own army, and you are able to treat yourself the way you need and want to be treated. Look at the Chinese. The ain't got to ask nobody to treat them better. Matter of fact, people asking them not to treat them bad and we need to be in that position. We need Africa.

Speaker 1 (01:13:03):

Hi. Um, my name is Ashley. Uh, I'm from New York, Harlem New York. I'm a student at a Bates college, um, located in Maine. Um, and I had a question for the panel. What, what are your words of advice for students who go to predominantly white colleges while, um, I, I don't attend, you know, Spellman in historically black college. I specifically did that on purpose because I felt that while growing up in Harlem, I went to predominantly black schools. I knew what want it to be. I wanna be a lawyer. I wanna go into congressional politics and I knew I needed, okay, great to be uncomfortable in order to change, I felt like, you know, to go to a school where predominantly the students of color are not present. And then finally through my class, we were able to bring more students of color I fit. I wanted to know from you guys, what do you have to say?

Speaker 1 (01:14:01):

Like, what are your advice for students who wanna bring diversity, who are trying to bring about, um, civil rights with, within their campuses? Because I feel like while it's great that we have this conference that talks about the history of SNCC. I feel like that there's a lack of workshops for training students in order for them to actually go on and do what you guys did, because while it's nice to hear about all these great leaders, I don't know what you guys did. What did you guys do? Like, you know, the training workshops that you guys facilit during your, um, your progress. I wanted to know if you could, you know, give that sta

Speaker 2 (01:14:39):

I, I think both Ruby and I will speak to that and I'll try to be very brief. Um, part of our training was being in the field, engaged, committed, and understanding that the way to grow is to be there doing the work and trusting that as we, um, tried to understand what we were facing and tried to come up with ways of responding to that, that we would get stronger doing that. Okay. So my, what would I say to you as a young woman who wants to be involved? Um, first it's important to know your history. Okay. It's important to know the history of your people that is Africans in this country. It's important to know American history. It's also important to know the history of the particular locale or region that you want to organize in. And then I think it's very easy to look around you and see what issues really call, you know, your attention, what issues really inspire you to be involved and step out, go ahead and do it as you, as you commit to daily work.

Speaker 2 (01:15:44):

And it's really daily work that helps you grow as an organizer. You can't do this sort of, you know, one day a week or one night, a week or whatever it means, daily consistent commitment to a project or several projects and working with a group of people with whom you have to negotiate and reason and come back and do criticism and self criticism. And then move ahead again. Okay. Um, we didn't have any training that allowed us to go into lounges county to do what we did. You know, we were students just like yourself. We'd been in liberal arts colleges around the university, around the, the United States, but it was the passion to be there with our people making this change. Right. And the faith, as Ruby said earlier, that if we applied ourselves that if we can continued that we'd know what to do, that we would be able to step up to the calling. And I, I just say that you should have that faith and trust in yourself, step out, do it.

Speaker 10 (01:16:43):

And I would like to speak to that question.

Speaker 1 (01:16:45):

Well, I was gonna, Rick, could I please speak to the subject? Thank you. Um, I think is very important when you find yourself in those kind of educational settings that you have a right to insist that the learning environment attends to your needs and to your history as an African American student. I think it's very, very important cuz what, one of the things that happened to me when I went to graduate school at Princeton, having just come out in many ways from the fields of Allen county, I found myself in an environment where historians expected me to talk about black people. <affirmative> in terms of we, I mean, in terms of they mm-hmm <affirmative> and by the time you say they a hundred times, they really are. They, and you're no longer connected to your people. And it occurred to me that in that process, they expected me to be a stranger at my parents' table.

Speaker 1 (01:17:47):

And so the questions <affirmative> is what it has always been. How, how do you survive that kind of environment? Acquiring the knowledge, not for the sake of acquiring knowledge, not for the sake of moving forward with the agenda, the empire, but knowledge that is functional that allows black people to move from one position in life to the next. Now I know that's, that's really a lot that I'm saying, but I think you began it by study groups. I think you began it by reading seriously, the history that you talked, just talked about. I think you really began to just do something because if you step out the most amazing thing that how happens when you step out for freedom, you are surprised at the incredible people that you'll meet on this journey. People that have important information that will be essential to your call for social justice.

Speaker 1 (01:18:43):

So I think you have to step out, be in process, be in movement in motion, not as an individual, but as a part of a community, not an understanding that it is pervasive today that activism can be done on a computer. I'm talking about activism, that's eye to eye activism. Cuz when you ask people to step out for a cause you are asking them to put their lives on the line. That's right. And I think you have to be able to look at them eye to eye. So that's that, that's what I would begin to be in community. I know Maine doesn't have a lot of black people, but what you do have in Maine is white progressives, a his, and so that doesn't matter who you're talking to. As long as you're talking at some point with people who really do value and work for social justice.

Speaker 10 (01:19:33):

And also I'd like to add to that three ways, uh, this is how SNCC got formed. All the students or many students that was on campus. They decided that they had to come off their campus and serve their people and fight against, uh, the conditions that they fought saw that our people were in. So they left the classroom and came organizers in the community, which became a school to them. And it really educated and made a great contributions. Secondly, inside of SCC, we organized a group called the campus travelers. George well was uh, one of the brothers in the campus traveler at George and um, I was a campus traveler and we went around from campus to, to school, to school. And we started teaching about history, about SNCC, about the movement and organizing black power conferences. Matter of fact, uh, we organized when we did black power, we, the black power conf on fish and Tennessee state campers and that's uh, they endorsed black power, but T Tennessee state and fish were the first schools to rebel in the sixties. The first schools to go up in rebellion, throwing bricks and balls shooting fighting in the streets and demanding black history were, was on Tennessee state's campus. They endorsed the movement. The children left the classroom and started relating to the movement. Secondly, we sent word out's to kids. That's

Speaker 1 (01:20:58):

Thirdly,

Speaker 10 (01:20:58):

Ricks third. I, I, I can't count either. Uh, thirdly, um, we sent kids, we sent the word to school, the children that was in the white schools when we did black power, that they had to get organized and form, uh, black student unions. And we told them to get organized and work with us. We also sent words that you on campus, lemme finish, uh, you were also sent word that you on campus and you don't need to be on campus. A white people that you need to be on campus organizing and forcing schools to be relevant and teach about black history and black studies. And we told the students that kidnapped the board of the administrators, demonstrate on the campus and demand black studies. And that's how you got black studies departments in the schools. Matter of fact, uh, this brother is set up ed Whitfield.

Speaker 1 (01:21:52):

Rick's I'm going use my authority as a moderator

Speaker 10 (01:21:56):

That

Speaker 1 (01:21:57):

No it's time to bring because that young lady has been standing in line for 20 minutes to ask a question and we owe her the respect to hear her question. Now we've heard you and we want to hear the young lady who's been standing with a great deal of passion and patience. Thank you.

Speaker 16 (01:22:16):

Black power,

Speaker 1 (01:22:19):

Black power power. I'm gonna, I'm gonna use just a little bit of my time to kind of pick it back on what brother Macassa just said. I'm gonna use what dead press says in one of their songs he's as pimp the system. I also went to a majority white college institution and we did exactly what brother MCCO said. We fought for black student unions. We held our school down. We organized sit-ins. We found, uh, resources. We held the white institutions accountable. We used our resources to organize the students, to organize the community. And at the end of the day, even though it was a majority white school, the resources were controlled by the black students. So thank you very much for you. Thank you. And Dr. D Derby <laugh> I'm from Georgia state. Okay. My name, unfortunately, some we have got to close Alzheimer's joy.

Speaker 1 (01:23:05):

I'm sorry. I didn't ask. I didn't, I didn't make my statement. I know, but I'm, I've been charged with letting us out of the room and okay, well I'm a young person. Can the young person just speak for two minutes, please, please hurry up. Okay. Thank you. Um, my name is Olie Maal and I'm a revolutionary baby. I come out of the, um, snake black power, civil rights movement. I'm the daughter of Connie Tucker and say we and my mentors are come to Ray. Uh, so car Michael, Dr. Kalet Moham, et cetera. I am the interim executive director of the national voting rights museum. Many of us are here in, including Annie per some members of the board are here. Erica, my mother, we're going to be walking around, trying to organize, um, interviews to doc. You meant the movement to document SNCC, et cetera.

Speaker 1 (01:23:48):

If you see any of us, please talk to us. Let's organize interviews with yourself. What we're trying to do at the national voting rights museum in Selma is we're trying to digitize our history. That is very important. As we move forward in the 21st century is gonna have our history more accessible to young people, elders people in the international level, all over the world. So please look out for us. Many of us have these shirts from the, the national voting rights museum. My

name is Olie and we are here to organize interviews with individuals. Who've played a major role in the movement to help, um, keep our history. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Unfortunately, we've come to the end of our time together. Just one more. I'd like I okay. And
Speaker 5 (01:24:36):

What I wanted to say was, uh, O has said most of what I was gonna say anyway, about the national voting rights museum. Now, uh, the national of the voting rights museum is independent it and we want it to remain independent. Another thing is, if you don't agree with what is going on someplace, whether it SNCC or whatever, cause SNCC might not organize everything. They're gonna be other people organizing and you have to get on board or either org help other projects yourself. Okay. Uh, and that's

Speaker 1 (01:25:12):

It. First of all, let me, before you go, let me give you several announcements. The, you should line up outside for your bus at six o'clock to take you back to the hotels. Number two, all of the people who were a part of the Tuskegee movement, could you remain here afterwards? Thank you very much for coming. It's been a pleasure to be with you.