

SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference  
Shaw University, Raleigh NC, April 2010  
Transcript Video Recording #15  
(Raw, unedited, no annotation)

Speaker 1 (00:00:17):

This town is supposed to be about what was, how did it evolve over time that whole we're planning the program we debated among ourselves, uh, discussed among ourselves as it were. Um, what was Nick in the beginning? What was it later on and what was it at the end? And my contention is that each of us experienced Nick differently that it meant something slightly different all of us, but yet there, there were corporate or, or group identifications as well. Um, in the very beginning we heard, for example, Julian bond spoke yesterday at the center session about what's Nick accomplished. And he began at the beginning here at Sean 50 years ago. Uh, and how Smith went from, uh, a coordinating committee to a real organization. However, we never became a bureau task structure, nor did we. There was assemblies of bureaucracy, but always focus was on being a movement and never gave a lot of thought to bureau rocket for the long term and becoming a permanent organization to the, the nature of the task. And when that's the case, then the work and work, it is what it is. As young people say today, I'm going to start with you Jenkins, who was, and stick at the beginning. The other powers don't come up. I'm going ask, um, Leah wise, who was there at the end and asked bill Hanson, who was there, the beginning, middle, early middle before we went abroad to live abroad. The next 40 years he lives in that Nigeria now came to Nigeria. Um, and if other people come in, I would ask them to come.

Speaker 2 (00:02:24):

I thought when I saw that the three of the panelists were people who had served as presidents of HBCUs that they released on time, but I was wrong. SNCC really was an idea, and it came together in a, a moment of impulse, but it had its foundations that went back. As far as Denmark levy, John Brown, it really was an embodiment of the, the, the baker principle that a movement starts with. What is closest to the hearts of the people who are in

Speaker 3 (00:03:31):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Speaker 2 (00:03:34):

And yesterday, when I was in the panel, they were talking about what, what is the grand design that we now should be promulgating for the future? And my comment was that we need to consult the people and decide in consultation with them. What are their priorities and build a movement around that. Let's not lose sight of the fact that this whole student movement started at lunch S soda fountains, places that sell hot dogs and hamburgers. That was the immediate interest of the students. They felt they had a right to go into a store like their peers, and be treated equally. One must not Leto romanticize, or confuse those facts today. If we were looking for a movement, what would it be? It would be where people are one significant element that sometimes gets lost is that some of the early impetus for creating this thing called snake was really a religious emphasis, like the great awakening of the 18th and 17th century. This was an impulse by some people. And, and you heard Jim Lawson yesterday. He was one of the seminal promulgators of this. If you read the mission statement of SNCC at its origin, it leads like it comes out of the new Testament somewhere.

Speaker 2 (00:05:35):

That was the, the thinking of the Nashville group that, that created a lot of the original language and articulation of what SNCC should be, the redemptive community, the beloved community, creating a new way of thinking in moral terms.

Speaker 2 (00:05:57):

Well, then some of the rest of us came in <laugh> and while we had some exposure to religious teachings, principles, doctrines beliefs, we also had an exposure to the politics, the sociology, the economics, the internationalism of social movements, and, uh, the history books have confused this thing. If you, if you read it, it makes it sound like some of us were the, the, uh, horns of the Kennedy administration who had been sub born to the idea that we ought to come in and take this student movement and move it into a political direction. So it would support their agenda for elected politic, nothing further than the truth.

Speaker 2 (00:06:54):

Let's let's, let's also be clear that the Kennedy administration was the creation of SNCC. Thank you. That gets lost. It's only a footnote somewhere were not for the fact that, uh, in the first year of S snake's existence, one of its affiliates in Atlanta, the committee for the appeal for human rights, decided to have a demonstration in the face of the black and white establishment. And let's understand Atlanta was, was too, uh, busy to hate. And it was, uh, it was also too concerned with commerce to have racism and all that thing. And they had the notion that it, the white fathers of the city and the black fathers of the city wanted anything they'd sit down and meet and get it decided we didn't need demonstrations in Atlanta was the mythology. The students challenged that because they still had segregated lunch count. And they still had the dressing rooms in, in apartment stores where white people could try on things.

Speaker 2 (00:07:59):

And, and again, go to the next thing or a black person, try it on, have to keep it or have to buy it without being able to try it on. The restaurants were in the department stores were saying, David and this in a town where black millionaires existed. And it set on in the chamber of commerce with white people, and they thought they were equal, but the students challenged that mythology because they saw that the reality on the ground wasn't working and they decided to have a demonstration. They said, let the record be clear. Aren't your father was pose to demonstrations in Atlanta mm-hmm <affirmative>. And the students said that we're gonna have a demonstration, whether or not the adults are supportive of it. And they decided that they were going to go to Martin's house and challenge him to join the demonstration that his father, opposed to Martins immortal credit.

Speaker 3 (00:09:02):

He get

Speaker 2 (00:09:06):

When he was arrested and the Kennedys expressed sympathy for him again, and the a U a w and the packing house workers and the other unions publicized the fact that Kennedy had made this expression of support to king and sent the, uh, telegrams and called to TTA to make sure that Martin wasn't harmed when he was arrested. And they publicized that in Detroit and Los Angeles and Philadelphia and New York, and that created the margin of a hundred thousand votes that shifted immediately from Nixon to Kennedy and made Kennedy president, the United States. That's lost in history.

Speaker 3 (00:09:55):

Thank you.

Speaker 2 (00:09:57):

But it's one of the things that needs to be lifted up that Obama is not the first president that SNCC made SNCC of course, made Obama president because it had not been for the registration of blacks in the rural places of, of Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. There would've been no primary victory that would've made him the nominee in democratic party. Yes, that was snake the legacy of snake. When we came into the

SNCC environment that was suffused with all of this religious fervor and this redemption of people and what I used to call, and I guess it's kill fire, fix it up. The, the, uh, redemptive community, the pain and suffering school of SNCC.

Speaker 3 (00:10:54):

<laugh>

Speaker 2 (00:10:55):

The people who felt that if they got their heads bashed enough and, and that somehow people would get the message that, uh, there was a, a moral issue. Some of us had no confidence in that. And our view was that you, you don't get bashed forever expecting to redeem the soul of the bash yet. Thank

Speaker 3 (00:11:18):

You.

Speaker 2 (00:11:19):

But you had to have a different kind of agenda. Our view was that unless than, until you had the ability to change the sheriff change, the, the county executive change, the mayor change the captain police force by political means you would continue to get your head bashed

Speaker 3 (00:11:41):

<affirmative>.

Speaker 2 (00:11:43):

So our view was that we needed to have a political thrust in snap

Speaker 2 (00:11:53):

Kennedy didn't approach us about that. We had sense enough to know that it was in our interest to take over the political base so we could create the school systems and do the, the, the welfare systems. Do the public works, control the budget and control the police. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. We saw that the Campes were an instrument for our use because they clearly needed to have a change of the political environment in the south. And so we had a natural Alliance, but they can be lied to us. We sat in the office of the attorney general mm-hmm <affirmative>. And he said that if necessary, we would fill all the JS to allow black people to go. And as uh, was indicated, uh, when John Z was called out, he was Mississippi. He was the scarestest thank people. He was the assistant attorney general in the United States.

Speaker 2 (00:13:01):

The fact of the matter is that it appeared to be early on that what we really needed was a greater sophistication of our movement. And one of the first things I did after I had graduated from Howard, I was elected as the vice president of the, uh, student national student association. And I went out and I got funds from various foundations, new world and Tecan and a few others to create a seminar for student leadership. And the whole objective of that was to sophisticated the leadership, because clearly when we had this first meeting in, in Raleigh, you could see that the students were very uneven. Many of them had had no, no political sociological or economic underpinnings for a movement. And so what we did was we identified some of the key leaders around the country and brought them to Nashville for a seminar that would run for a period of six to eight weeks.

Speaker 2 (00:14:13):

And we got some of the luminaries of sociology, economics, and politics to lecture those students. We had papers that had to be produced at the end of it. We read books, and we really cramed a, the, the, the, the combination of courses that would be necessary for an international cadre of leadership. And it changed snake started to start speaking less about Jesus

and more about economics. And it talked about the sociology of the class, as opposed to just the business of race. And they got to have some understanding of the historical roots in politics that had created the circumstances that they were faced with at lunchtime mm-hmm

Speaker 1 (00:15:07):

<affirmative>.

Speaker 2 (00:15:08):

And what emerged in SNCC was a, a, a, a growth and evolution, if you will, from what was a sound moral beginning with an evangelical call to a strategic mood. And would that change the language and change some of the people?

Speaker 1 (00:15:34):

Yeah.

Speaker 2 (00:15:36):

If you are looking at SNCC, you have to see that it, uh, at a given point with the political intervention of the leadership, it began to shift into a different dynamic than the voter registration. And all of those things were done with a design to assemble power. And we also designed that we could, as black students be beaten and crushed to death, because the newspapers were going to only periodically cover it. And it wouldn't map the real politics of the United States. We knew we needed white students. We knew that as soon as some white students were being bashed, that the press would be there to cover it. And it worked, it worked. And we mobilized students who came from some 350 different colleges, uh, that were the membership of the, the national student association and brought them, brought them into the movement with their bodies, with their finances and with their political sophistication. That in my view is one of the crucial things to understand in the evolution OFN is distorted by a lot of the historians to make it feel that we were somehow bamboozled by Robert, uh, Kennedy and, uh, Harris Walford at the white house to come in and, and start doing this voter registration, a ass of the democratic party.

Speaker 2 (00:17:24):

I was there. And I can tell you,

Speaker 1 (00:17:28):

It's

Speaker 2 (00:17:28):

Not. So

Speaker 1 (00:17:30):

Thank our third college president. You sell us as how you run your institution now emergence to, and his board trustees called him in, or he to the precedent getting here on time. Um, Tim, Tim has laid up what I think is very good analysis of, of the beginning of, and the base basic basic shift from, from, um, what do you call I think overly? So the moral crusade, uh, to political strategic, I think that my job is to moderate it, not to, to comment, but I will say one thing that, that, and I'll talk about this. Um, tomorrow when I speak that it was very moral for a lot of people, and it remained a moral issue even as the political came forth, because segregation was wrong, you know, oppression was wrong. We had right and wrong, especially if you came from the south, I'll talk about that tomorrow. But now CLE is going, sellers is going to talk about, um, the, the next phase of SNCC. Uh, and when Zara comes, she'll talk about SNCC toward the end.

Speaker 4 (00:18:58):

Okay, good morning. I'll take by Nick and keep on ticking. Um, it's, it's certainly a pleasure to be here this morning. And what I would like to do is just kind of go back through, uh, and lay out

what I think of the phases that snake, uh, actually goes through. And then what we can do is we can actually, uh, in discussion kind of go into even more detail about those phases. But I think that were five distinctive phases that the organization goes through. And one of the reasons why we are having some difficulty with having an appreciation and understanding of the evolution of state and the development of SNCC is because of, uh, some of what has happened with the civil rights literature over the years, uh, the first, uh, office and scholars and writers that, that, um, that wrote about the civil rights history and the civil rights movement in generally did a more traditional narrative.

Speaker 4 (00:20:01):

And they talked about the, the big man theory and those kind of things. They talked about the top down kind of organizational instruction, and they don't factor in what happens when students decide that they are going to step onto the stage of history and make the difference and make change. When students come in in 1960, uh, they are demanding change and they're demanding change within the, what I call the Negro leadership group. And that is the traditional leadership group, and many instances that where those people are the preachers and the, and sometimes professionals who were probably more inclined to be involved in a kind of gradual, um, evolution of the civil rights movement. The other is, is that they were concerned about the gradualism and kind of legalism that in order for you to protest some, uh, uh, oppression or some discriminatory practice, you would go into the point and you talk about a long process in which that would evolve.

Speaker 4 (00:21:03):

If you think about, um, brown versus board of education, school desegregation, you might want know that Charles Hamilton Jones was in South Carolina in 1935. Mm-hmm <affirmative> examined him separate but equal. He was the person who kind of put together the whole strategy for, uh, undermining, uh, desegregation, undermining segregation in the school systems. And he even talked about developing a strategy to talk about how you address the presidents or how you establish presidents, legal presidents in order for courts to evaluate and overturn. I'm saying that because I want us to have some kind of context about what it is that young people will be challenging during that particular period of time. The other is, is the organization. They were kind of concerned about the organizations, even though there were new organizations like the Southern Christian leadership conference that come on board in 1957 and the Congress of racial equality, which had been around since, since the 1940s, they were concerned that there needed to be an organization that could address the issues with the contemporary issues and direct and, and address those issues more directly.

Speaker 4 (00:22:16):

So they were concerned about that kind of change. So understand the students had an agenda on their minds in terms of what they were looking for and what they wanted to see in terms of change in the movement structure. Um, then when we, when we go into phase one, I say that phase one is the, uh, 19 60, 19 62, and that's mass action, civil disobedience. Uh, we're talking about, um, um, the, the sit-ins the freedom rides, uh, we are talking about non-violent direct action. That is the phase in which young people could actually enlist themselves, put themselves and engage in the movement. And you could go out and protest and you could go out and do different kinds of things that had consequences to it. Because many of those, uh, young students that were involved in the sit ins were in many instances, first generation college, this was an opportunity for them to uplift themselves.

Speaker 4 (00:23:14):

And because they didn't know what the consequences were going to be, they put themselves at extreme risk, but it was risk to themselves. And so as you see the movement involved, you begin to see, uh, responsibility for young people increased over the years. And so we, we talk about that period and we see students engaged. We see the evolution of the coordinating committee,

temporary student non-violent coordinating committee form coming together. Uh, and then we began to see it turned into a, a formal organization. But again, the focus is around, uh, uh, sit-ins and, and, and, and direct action kind of campaigns, but primarily public accommodation and public facilities. How did you get those things desegregated? The second phase, I think comes around 19 63, 19 65, when the shift is from public accommodation testing and voter registration voter education. But you have to understand that was a struggle inside the SNCC over those two different factions, which would you prefer to be voter registration, a public accom, public accommodation testing, and Charles Jones, and some of the others lay at those forces.

Speaker 4 (00:24:31):

And that was a, that was an internal struggle that took place. And I think that internal struggle that took place is resolved when Bob Moses actually goes into Mississippi. And we found out that it didn't matter, we side tactics, that you were employing that, uh, when we talk about change, that change was going to draw certain kinds of, of resistance and opposition, and that you were in Han's way irre, regardless of whether or not you did voter registration, voter education of public accommodation testing. And so we began to learn more about tactics and tactical use of, uh, of, uh, projects and programs. Uh, we then see that the evolution of the freedom vote of, uh, 1963 around the same time that, uh, the demonstrations are going on in Birmingham. Uh, we see the Mississippi summer project come out of that particular era out that particular period.

Speaker 4 (00:25:28):

We see the launch on Washington coming out of that particular period in, in evolution. And you may know that when the module on Washington comes into play, that it is John Lewis's speech, that is a speech that people are concerned about, uh, censoring. And we made some accommodations, uh, to make sure that we were in compliance with a Philip Randolph. And that's how that, uh, accommodations actually were made, but it was a major lesson for SNCC. And that is, is that we had to own up to, to our own organization. If we took a position, we had to be willing to carry that through irre, regardless of who comes in and, and, and make that kind of recommendation that there changes and, uh, those kinds of things. Uh, we also see the beginning of that coalition between the, the church labor, um, the moderate wing, I'm sorry, the liberal wing of the democratic party and the civil rights movement.

Speaker 4 (00:26:26):

And we see that, uh, kind of come together with the March on Washington. And I point that out, because what we will find is, is that in a very short period of time, and that is during the period of the challenge of the, of the, uh, Mississippi delegation at the, at the 1964 convention, that coalition imploded mm-hmm <affirmative> because we were of the impression that we had a moral issue, that we were going to win over with the democratic party. We did not win. Many of us had a lot hope and aspiration. It was a, it was almost a bag into the heart for many of us that we had followed the, the rules followed the, uh, requirements, but we recognized that there was something called power politics <laugh> that we didn't know about until we got there. And so that spun us out into looking for new ways in which to organize and that kind of thing.

Speaker 4 (00:27:23):

Uh, we also must know that during that particular period of time, that's the period of time in which the Dixiecrats under the leadership was strong term and began to out out of the democratic party and, and whether or not, you know, it or not that Dick craft group has shown up again all to audio. So don't make that mistake of not understanding that history and that whole period of development. Then, then I go to phase three and that is 1965 to 1967. We talked about independent political organizing. We had gotten stung by the democratic party. We wanted to begin to organize and empower because that's the lesson that we learned from Mississippi local communities in order for them to organize themselves and set the strategies and empower

themselves to make change in their communities, helping them empower themselves to take control of their own lives and their own destiny.

Speaker 4 (00:28:18):

Uh, also knowing this period 19 65 67 is a period in which we actually see the, uh, Northern areas, ninth side of 1964 in, in Harlem, the rebellions, which we saw, we saw as Rebell, they were called riot, uh, 1965 in, in Watts. And there was an effort on the part of many of us who were concerned about African Americans and empowering the African American community to fight against this, uh, rage and segregation and discrimination and, and, and those kinds of things that, uh, if we were having success in the north, what I mean in the south, is there a possibility we can actually move the model that we had in the south to the north. We see that happen with SCLC, uh, in Meem 1966, when he goes to, um, he goes to, uh, Carro, Illinois. We see that with Ivan McDonalds and going to Columbus and, um, bill hall going to, to, um, to, uh, New York.

Speaker 4 (00:29:22):

And we see some effort on that part in, in, in and around Philadelphia. So that whole process begins to evolve, but we also see the evolution of black power. And we began to see the rules men beginning taken on additional interest. That is the question of identity, culture, uh, nationalism, uh, liberation. We began to see folks began to talk about changing tactics. And if you go back and we talk about, uh, non-violence non-violence for a lot of people was in fact, a way of life, certainly for S SCLC and Dr. King, but for a lot of younger people, it was a tactical consideration. How do you employ a non-bid direct action to, to, uh, save you if you engaged in a demonstration in, in McComb, Mississippi, and which, you know, there's gonna be a hostile element. That's not gonna be in a police to protect you.

Speaker 4 (00:30:17):

What you had to do is you had to use that tactic because in many instances that saved your life because that kept the crowd from actually being antagonized and organizational behavior would kick in, and somebody would eventually say he's had enough back off and let that whole process go. So we began to see that whole thing, 19 65, 19 67, and again, the billing of alliances, uh, and we are talking about alliances within and within the protest community in America. Certainly our Alliance with Cecil Chavez and the great pictures. We began to see alliances with, uh, aim and American Indian movement. We began to see those efforts actually going on, but the last thing I want to talk about in terms of this, this, uh, this third phase is, uh, COINTEL pro thank you. Because coin trail probe was very, very active, and we were smart enough to recognize that COINTELPRO was in fact in operation.

Speaker 4 (00:31:16):

But what it said to us was that our time was limited and that we had a lot of things we needed to do before the powers of, of the, uh, forces would take over. And there were some things internal to the authorization. There were some things external, but we were looking at. So we had to put that in perspective, uh, during that period. And then later between 19 67 69, I'll be through with this part of it. Uh, we see 16 of our young, uh, young men in, in SNCC be drafted into the arm service, which Hughes draft. Uh, we also see Leotis Johnson organized in Houston, Texas. He was found to have a, a, a Ru marijuana, a Ru in his possession. He ended up with 40 years and penitentiary, and we saw what was happening with rap and some of the rest of us in terms of the surveillance in terms of the arrest, in terms of the pulling jail pro, and the effort on the federal government is this, this, uh, this, um, disassemble, the observation and Microsoft track, the wire tap and all that kind of thing. So we have to factor those things in, as we look at these different phases, I will stop by saying that the next phase was the phase I follow 19 67, 19 69. Um, we have to, uh, factor the, um, the, um, anti PIDE movement in which we beginning to make some alliances with that human rights, African liberation, uh, mass arrests repression was in that last phase. I'll stop there. And we'll talk more about internal and external factors that contributed to the demises of snake.

Speaker 1 (00:33:10):

Uh, now we, the last was hard to bring up career the last day focus, but okay. Um, good morning, um, started late, um, uh, in my comments, um, that I put together, I sort of went along with what was SNCC and then the evolution of SNCC, and then the demise. Are we doing it in that order or, okay. All right. So, um, back in February of this year, Joyce posted an article on the SNCC list, served written by Maryn Wright Edelman titled SNCC 50 years later, in which she reminisces about the impact that the sit in of the four black freshmen from North Carolina, a a T state university, uh, at a White's only lunch counter at the wool war store in Greensboro had on her. And as she notes, it was the spark that she, and so many black youth needed to encourage us to stand up against the segregation that daily assaulted out, blow our dignity and our lives.

Speaker 1 (00:34:31):

Uh, and of course, this act as many of us in this room know, galvanized us and others to strike our personal blows of freedom, giving birth to the sit in movement, the formation of SNCC and a new era of student activism that energized the largest civil rights movement. And the ending of the Jim Crow system are American apartheid. Of course, many of us in this room know about this spark being ignited because it was ignited in each of us, uh, but what made us ready to be ignited? And why did we arise when we did and why? In some instances, were we successful to a lot of people at that time, they thought this spontaneous movement that became slick came out. Nobody certainly the white mothers and fathers of the south were certainly taken by surprise as many of our black leaders and our own parents who certainly oppose our involvement yet.

Speaker 1 (00:35:40):

In retrospect, it shouldn't be viewed as an anomaly. In reality, we were that generation of black people coming of age with perhaps the highest expectations of our people. Since the end of slavery, it was post the 1954 brown versus board of education ruling. It was after the successful Montgomery bus boycott and we thought change was right around the corner. Black demographics were a factor. Also many blacks living in the south now lived in urban areas. And some of our parents were industrial workers, union members, professionals, teachers, post office workers, and the life. We were certainly middle class in aspiration. If not in reality, many of us were in college. We were in high school and we had high expectations for change in race relations and attitudes, as well as in increased opportunities to get our slice of the proverbial American pot yet change had not happened.

Speaker 1 (00:36:53):

Jim Crow was everywhere and not showing any signs of demise amongst those of us who would join the movement. There was an impatience with the slow progress of change that our parents had put up with the sit in tactic caught on so quickly, because it gave us a way to fight back against the racism, the justice, the unfairness of the call. It gave us a way to assert our humanity in the face of centuries of degradation and humiliation. And there were thousands of us waiting to strike our personal flow for freedom, for dignity, for respect. We also had a rational belief that we really could change things. <laugh> we felt that if we put our bodies on the line against segregation, against racism, we believe deep in our hearts that we could change it. We could bring the walls of segregation down, SN through the wisdom and foresight of Ms.

Speaker 1 (00:37:59):

Ella baker began became the channel for this exuberant will for change. SNCC became the vehicle to organize this will to make it happen. SNCC was the embodiment of this urgent will to change the status quo, to rip Jim Crow off his Thrones and to live lives of dignity and work. Howard then wrote about the mood of the SNCC activists. He cited impatience as our primary mood. As Ms. Hamper said, we were sick and tired of being sick and tired. We were impatient with the courts with the national and local governments. Uh, and we were impatient with the negotiations, the conciliations with the traditional Negro organizations as the old Negro



leadership and with the unbearably slow pace of desegregation in the American century where everything else was changing and changing rapidly mm-hmm <affirmative> yet in reality, SNCC was not radical as, as often has been said, SNCC did not seek in the beginning to tear down America.

Speaker 1 (00:39:15):

It wanted to show that we should be included in America. Also SNCC embraced Dr. King's blend of Christianity and nonviolent civil disobedience in, in our inception. Uh, and the organization's found this statement shows the degree to which the principal actors in SNCC formation embraced King's ideas. I'll just read a couple of, uh, lines from that. We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as a foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith and the manner of our action nonviolence, as it grows from the Christian's tradition seeks a social order of justice permeated by love integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first steps toward such a society. And then it goes on to talk about how love is the central motif, et cetera. Um, so you can see that that's not exactly what we would call radical from our perspective now. Uh, but it's important to note that not all of us, the participants in the founding of SNCC, uh, and certainly those who came into SNCC embrace nonviolence as the organizing principle for our work.

Speaker 1 (00:40:40):

Some viewed it as a tactic, the only realistic one, given the entrenched nature of racism and the reality of white terror. Mm-hmm <affirmative> how did it evolve? Many of us were quite naive and we really didn't know. I certainly can speak for myself. I didn't know the history of black struggle in this country. Um, and of course, in spite of our early successes with getting accommodations open to black on a non basis, some of us still became these disillusioned over the racist violence and the suffering of our people and the foot dragging of the federal government as it evolved over time. The issue of nonviolence as a tactic, uh, versus as a way of life was an issue often simmering in the background, there was also the emerging reality that there was much that there were many more serious evils to be confronted than getting a cup of coffee or hamburger at the five and dime.

Speaker 1 (00:41:50):

There was economic exploitation. There was an evil political structure that permeated the country from the county to the state, to the federal level. And there were the evils of unbridled capitalism. This led to dissension within the rights over whether the organization would focus all of this efforts on direct action versus versus working on voter registration and political empowerment, the organization at one point almost split over this issue. Again, Ms. Baker to the west, Peter in her wisdom, she advised the group that we could do voter, which was what we agreed to do at that time, but voter registration and the organizing of political entities became paramount, especially after the 1964 Mississippi summit project with this focus on voter registration and the organizing of the Mississippi freedom democratic party, SNCC was becoming more radical. And it was radicalized by its style of organizing, living, eating, and sleeping with the people in their homes, interacting on a daily basis, seeing their struggles in many instances, just to survive and in others to hold onto their land.

Speaker 1 (00:43:13):

And the reality of the total shut out of political activism for our people in the deep south often, it was the militancy of those who organized that pushed us to our more radical understandings of what we up. We were up against. For example, most of us knew that we could not ask the people who lived with and worked with on a daily basis to give up their guns, especially when they were using them to protect us as well as their own lives and property. Some SNCC folk began to connect our struggle with the African liberation struggles going on in Africa, in Asia, Latin America, and the middle east. We began to identify with Padel Castro and the Cuban revolution,

and some, even with the AFA and the P we also began to turn our attention to issues of poverty and the great wealth disparities in this country and to the war in Vietnam, in our naivete.

Speaker 1 (00:44:18):

Many of us had no idea what we were getting ourselves into when we started demanding fundamental economic change. And of course, we touched the third rail when we called for foreign policy changes. And in an end to imperialist wars, we did not know what the government apparatus at the national level we do to bring us down for Medling into rich and white and powerful white folks visit. We did not know the repercussions nor we had. I doubt if we would've stopped doing what we were doing yet. <laugh>, uh, we were politically immature, but we were brave. Uh, there were other factors impacting onn activists, the Malcolm X phenomena, and his impact on the minds of a number of us in the organization. Malcolm X was the author of, and a symbol of the, of our time of this rising black consciousness that was spreading slowly but surely in black America, first in the north.

Speaker 1 (00:45:28):

But this message was seeping down from the south. Um, and an example of how, uh, Malcolm X affected us. Some of us in SN, um, I didn't know anything about Malcolm X, but I was sitting in Laurel, Mississippi in a burned out office that we were still forced to use. When, uh, some boxes came in from north. One of them had a, uh, 78 RPM recording of a Malcolm X speech. It was his message to the grass roots, perhaps his most famous speech. Uh, my initial reaction to the speech was one of shock and all I was ative electrified Jo awakened. It was like electric shock. It was frightened and empowering at the same time. It was an antidote to what I was feeling at that time for myself. And for many of the people that I worked with in war, I felt angry. I felt alone vulnerable, and that all of us were in a tiny boat in a tumultuous shark infested seat.

Speaker 1 (00:46:40):

I never forgot that speech and the emotion that elicited and I would listen to it over and over again. Before I left that state thinking and ruminating his message. I was already questioning nonviolence as a strategy as the face of the unrelenting violence and threats of violence. We lived on the daily, his question, how could black people afford to be nonviolent when our churches were being bombed? And our little girls murdered wanted me, whoever heard of a revolution. He said in that speech where they locked in, that, uh, yeah, had lock arms singing. You shall overcome. You don't do that in a revolution. You don't do any singing cause you're too busy swinging, uh, in the quote. Now let me be clear. I definitely still wrote the scene on incredible role. It played in our ability to galvanize ourselves and our people to action. Um, one author who many you may know of you now, Joseph wait writing in his waiting till the midnight hour describes Malcolm as playing the ideological foundation, but nothing less than a political revolution by blacks who sought to control their own.

Speaker 1 (00:47:58):

DESS certainly the idea of self determination was implanted then and there in my mind, and a way that it had never been before. There were numerous members of Smith who began to identify with the self-determination ethos, pervading, the third world. And those who felt this way, thought that the organization must be representative of the people. It served in its leadership, as well as its membership else. The people we thought could no longer relate to the institution in the way that it must in a liberation struggle. And that's what we were engaged in a liberation struggle, uh, unless they could see this movement as representative of them, this new sense of nationalism caught on with a number of people in SNCC, certainly myself, as well, as many members of the Atlanta project, all the members of, uh, this was occurring at the same time that SNCC had increased the number of white organizers and staff.

Speaker 1 (00:49:04):

And of course this was an ideological conflict that was bound to come to a head. And of course it did. Lastly, why did the organization cease to exist? The factors above certainly led to our demise as an organization. There would be internal and well as external factors. And as please mentioned, the external ones certainly included the government's co Intel pro operations, whether we knew it or not. That's right. Uh, the media played a decisively negative role yes, as SNCC changed, uh, and radicalized their portrayals of us changed Dramat mm-hmm <affirmative>, especially after the call for black power SNCC began to lose its financial base. And this was critical. Many white supporters were terrified at the idea of black, powerful. They were, uh, financially supported of supportive of the goal of integration, but not of self-determination the media portrayed SN and not only radicalized, but violent and perhaps seeking to overgrow the government.

Speaker 1 (00:50:20):

That's how they presented us with the financial support falling away and no concerted effort or ability to garner significant resources from the black community to build a financial black base. Do the organization, even black leaders like were looking of the NAACP, the Samen as much more than white music. He was the first to condemn the turn of black power contending that it meant anti white power claiming it was a reverse hi, a reverse KKK as a father of hate as the mother of violence, several civil rights groups issued a statement entire crisis and commitment that appeared in the New York times in it. They vigorously condemned black power saying they were committed to the attainment of racial justice, but only by democratic process and distanced themselves from SNCC, which they said, uh, espoused such militant and threatened terms as black power, not surprisingly the New York times misinterpreted the term saying it was called for violence. It was anti white etcetera. Uh, so SNCC, I mean for was the only national organization to support us in those early days as did Adam praise Powell, and some others in conclusions, SNCC was badly wounded and would never really completely rebound from its association with all of the above, as well as with the urban rebellions that rock the nation, the black Panther party with its position on the right to bear arms and even brandished them and other militant black formations that came into the, onto the scene in the,

Speaker 1 (00:52:31):

I want to thank all theists for very, very, um, excellent presentations. I was just telling CLE that, that when each person entered the snake, determines which snake we experienced, I came in very early years, native Mississippi. So it was their, we snake arrived. Uh, and some young people arrived. Some people pain. If you're an entrance sneaking 6, 6, 6, 7, it was a very different organization. Different thrust. A lot of the old tappers had left battle fatigue set in, um, the ones get on with their lives. Uh, we just they're tired of, of the day to day, uh, struggles that they had to go through. Um, and one of the interesting things I see now is that it on occasion, which SNCC one was a member, I was played out on the SNCC Lister <laugh>. And what all of us should remember is that that SNCC was a continuous organization from the end and two end. And that there is no single definition of what SM was. It's all in mind parts. There are the facts as historians document, but as a membership organization, as an organization, that in which we participated with our hearts and souls, it was, uh, I came through the integration space mm-hmm and I would never define SNIC as having been the way in. Some people may define it today. I think it went through different errors. Uh, having said that, going to now move on to take question.

Speaker 1 (00:54:25):

Okay. Go back to

Speaker 2 (00:54:29):

We, we made a, a real mistake when we described this panel as why did the organization ceases to exist, even though there's some in demise, SNCC didn't didn't cease to what did, was it infected a whole generation of people to see the world differently and to use different sets of

tactics to confront that reality? In my view, we need to appreciate that likely the caterpillar turns into a butterfly. That seems to be what it is, what SNCC did was SNCC survive and grew, and Buron to become a women's movement and environmental movement, Asian movement international.

Speaker 2 (00:55:35):

And also understand that when, when we talk about the, the, the modification we started at uneven levels, mm-hmm, <affirmative> one of the points I was trying to make is some of us didn't come in at naive babes in the woods. We came with a recognition that this summer was going to be hard and it was going to be bloody and it was going to be tortuous and it was only going to be strong to survive. And so my view of it is that we need to redefine what our expectations of SN were. And they were at the beginning. I, I have a tape recording of a speech I gave in, in Canton, Mississippi in 1963 at the voter registration, in which I talked about all the things that Malcolm talked about. I can say that now 50 years later cause to say, but the fact that <laugh> the fact, the matter is we were calling the, the governor and the, and the attorney general, uh, liars then. So it's not some question that some, all of a sudden, we came to a place where we had the Damascus road experience and changed our point of view. Some of us had that view from the very beginning,

Speaker 5 (00:56:49):

Sorry,

Speaker 1 (00:56:49):

Absolutely.

Speaker 5 (00:56:51):

That black community today there's certain problems, whether it be the drug culture, difficulties with education and there cities and the communities. The first part of the question is, do you feel that those problems are the result of a deliberate system mm-hmm <affirmative> or are they simply the result of neglect and lack of care? In other words, is it imposed by a system that we have these problems in the community that are so prevail? Or is it simply that there's a lack of care in the system that leads to these problems?

Speaker 2 (00:57:27):

I think that that's a good subject, but not for this discussion. I think we really ought to look at snake. We need to, we, we need to get a clear understanding of snake. Those problems in that issue deserve a form, but it's not this one

Speaker 5 (00:57:40):

In relate to the second part of my question that I should mention. Okay. Please only have

Speaker 1 (00:57:44):

One part of your questions

Speaker 5 (00:57:45):

When you come for I'm so sorry. The second part of my question is these problems that I mentioned just now, what can we learn from the experience of SNCC as an organization that was built as an organization that existed and did work as an organization that did either splinter or, you know, fall out into different areas of work, whichever perspective we take, we've got it. What can we take from that? Please? Let me finish. Thank you. I will. What can we take from that in order to solve the problems that we're dealing today? In other words, how can I walk out of this panel after you've educated me so beautifully in your experience in building and operating snake with some knowledge of what I can do to help the problems existing in my community right now? That's

Speaker 1 (00:58:36):

Well, first of all, I just wanted to say, um, to your first question, in my opinion, it is by design. It is a structured design for our community to be in shape. There is no question in my mind about that, right? Uh, in terms of what, uh, people who are trying to deal with the problems we are confronting. I mean, first of all, we have got to be aggressive for, I mean, this is, if anything you can learn. I think from what SNCC did was that we were with the people organizing and they were putting forward their issues that they wanted us to deal with. Of course, we had our own ideas, but it was, it was a collaborative effort. And so I think that once we got on the, uh, political, uh, organizing people who registered vote, which clearly I support, but we all, we, we put all of our eggs in that basket mm-hmm <affirmative> and we gave up the grassroots, organizing the whole concept of freedom schools, uh, educating people about how this country works, etcetera.

Speaker 1 (00:59:55):

So many of our people are just, they have no idea how this system works none. So we have to organize from the grass roots. We have to rejoin if we are no longer in our community, our communities to help them deal with the problem. I wanna say one thing that is a lot of young people here. They had a meeting in the hotel last night, young people's project that led the Moses is here, and I would urge you to meet with them and talk to cause they are organized. I did not intend and how silly, but I'm looking at the clock and the long land behind me all next question, please have only one part of your question. Cause I, this one was

Speaker 4 (01:00:39):

Test. I won't guarantee that first. Thank the panel presentation. And I want say to your sister, did bureaucracy, his name was Jim foreman, Ella, how you felt about it in terms of ideology or whatever that he was master genius organizer. So let's just be clear about that. The echo Glenn's that slick did not, uh, slick went through no demise. It, its time came and passed and the people who were touched by slick continued the work that they did Inn in the rest of their lives. And I think that most of us, uh, you know, are Testament to that. Um, for the, uh, I think for the, in the main, many of us who were, you know, college students, you know, on our way to kinda was so changed by, by that anyway, not die if it did, that was natural, dead. And the problem with the, one of the things, my final comment, we didn't have any rotation system.

Speaker 4 (01:02:12):

Someone, someone mentioned how, you know, we didn't have a rotation system, although we did have the campus travel programs, recruited people in, but we did not structurally, you know, kind organized and bring new recruit this kinda thank you. Okay. Thanks very much. Well, the next question is coming up, let me say a couple things about, so internal conditions that led what I contend is to divide one is success. So people are trying to figure out what they need to know about in order for them to achieve. We started out talking about civil rights, 1964, we had the most widest sweeping civil rights act that the country had ever seen. 1965. We had the go to right side. So those two issues that were issues, primary issues for us were then gone. You also had the widespread desegregation that took place during that period. You had communities that were empowering themselves.

Speaker 4 (01:03:15):

You had a model that communities could actually use organize around. You had the upward bound in the head side and you had all the affirm action. So you had a lot of things that were, um, achieved. And sometimes we even misrepresented, uh, we attended as if all our work was phenomen. The second thing is the lack of internal method of both education and orientation of new people coming into the organization. Jim foreman set up and purchased the house off Auburn avenue for primary purpose of educating new organizers coming in to the history of, of, uh, civil rights, the history of S and also an orientation in terms of what we were trying to

accomplish. The fact, the other thing I wanna put on there is, is fatigue, physical and emotional. Yeah. It was almost like working in wall zone. Huh? Well, I said emotional, I will pencil all that, but, but what you will find is, is that you'll find that snake rotated people in on a regular basis.

Speaker 4 (01:04:27):

Those who were there at the founding meeting in 1960 were probably not there in 1964. Okay. There was another group that came in in 1963. There was another group that came in in 1965. And so it was continuous rotation. And what we have sometimes is we have people who are, who are talking about their particular experiences in a timeframe in which they were in SNI. So they did not see that evolution of some of the more recent developments, even the issue of, of, uh, the war Vietnam. How did you all get there? You know, we got there because we were in Macomb, Mississippi, and the women began to raise questions about their sons and daughters going off the wall to fight for democracy, knowing that when they came back to Mississippi, it was not gonna be available to them if they got back. Okay. And then the last name is I talked about COINTEL process, no used to go back through that one, a need for philosoph and ideological clarity.

Speaker 4 (01:05:29):

That needed to be a point because as the organization changed and as the strategies began to try to be reformed and all there was a time that you needed in, in the African American community in particular, to sit down and develop new strategies, look at new philosophies, new tactics, new ideology, uh, ideology, period. And those were the internal things that, and taught them fail, uh, SNCC. And, but we all recognized that. And we did as much as we could until we just fell off of the wheel and gave it to everybody else to take over

Speaker 1 (01:06:10):

All

Speaker 1 (01:06:10):

Organizations and efforts, institutions that emerged and are still organizing a specific tradition. Next question. Thank you. Thank you. And good morning. My name is Asan. And what you'll hear me say all weekend. I can never thank you enough for all work. All of you did make most possible for me to be here today, if you're an organizer. So thank you for the rest of my life. Um, Dr. Simmons touched on part of my question. If any of you could comment on the different alliances SNCC developed throughout each duration, Dr. Simmons mentioned, uh, support of the Palestinians and the PLO and how the anti Zionist forces came out against SNS after that support. But can you talk a little bit about lines with other radical whites, Latinos, Asians, native Americans, cetera, thank you very much. You think, uh,

Speaker 4 (01:07:09):

I can, I can speak to one part of that. And that's VE out in, uh, California that we actually went out and met many of the leaders of the, uh, great pickers union there and began to talk about how we train organizers, both in, uh, in California, in the, in the valley, in the venues, as well as train organizers in the south and, and urban areas, because there was an, a concern, which we never made the transition, but there was concern that we develop organizers go into the urban areas that other Alliance was based on principles, kind of same kind of work, the same kind of, of community that we were trying to build community caring community with justice, social justice, equality and freedom is, is, is how that aligns was based the same with, uh, aim American Indian movement, same kind of thing with that. And in support and the kind of response that they were getting from Cowin and other kinds of organizations. So that's, that's what I would like to say.

Speaker 2 (01:08:17):

I said simultaneously on the, uh, steering committee at SNCC and also the executive committee of the students for democratic society. Thank you. And one of the things that was originally anticipated was that the white students were going to do in the white south, what we did in the black south, and it never happened. They said they were going to go and organize and get in and live with the white people who are in the poor sections of the, the south and do the same kind of going. It never happened. And that's the reason we have this, this one party south today because we never have changed the white side thinking like the black side about their own self interest. And so they're led to, to go this crap about, uh, against healthcare, against, uh, public services against the strong federal government because of the lack of education. But we tried, we tried to reach out to labor unions, but labor movement also had these fractures of, of those who are really militant. There was the packing house workers who did some aggressive thing, and there were a handful of other unions that did things, but the rest of 'em didn't support that. And we also tried to reach out to, uh, have relationships with international bodies. Yes. So many different efforts were made, but not all of them was successful because our hand was outstretched for it. Wasn't reciprocated. So I,

Speaker 4 (01:09:44):

The question of this conference, I think everybody unanimously agrees is, is how do you inspire the next generation? So I'd, I'd like to just make a couple of points and then ask for some responses. When I attended the SNCC conference in October of 1960 in Atlanta, I wasn't Tim, James, I didn't have a strategy and have it all figured out. I was a young kid, naive, probably an idealist. I could pick up Woolworth in Chicago. Uh, you know, I had participated in the peace movement, but I wanted to find out, uh, the same question that all the young people were asking here today, this weekend. And I got my answer and I'm not sure people this weekend are getting theirs. I went down as a, as a, as an idealist, but not really sure whether my ideals were practical. I met a thousand people who were gonna change the world or die in the process.

Speaker 4 (01:10:43):

I learned that I was a, nobody, I had never been to jail, you know, and that was the first time that I realized that I was a nobody, because I hadn't been to jail. The heroes of the moment were the kids coming out of the jails in Nashville and standing up there on the platform in front of us and, and, uh, all and being our heroes, our model. Uh, so those are, those are two things. But the third thing, which was important for me as a white person is that's where I met Anne gray. Yeah. And so, uh, many years later Zara knows this story probably as well as I do, I was working for, for the freedom of Walter Collins. It was one of those draft resistors that we talked about. And when Walter was about to go to jail, uh, he told me your it's your turn to go to the south. And so I went to Mississippi for the next 20 years, 22 years. And, uh, very, very part of those years though, Ohio was my boss actually. Uh, but I don't think that I don't feel those things happening here that, uh, that inspired me. And I don't know how

Speaker 1 (01:11:51):

To, let me just say what the program may have to do with the purpose of the way we deliberately construc the program. Absolutely. We didn't structure a program to start another organization, but rather to examine

Speaker 4 (01:12:01):

Maybe. And, and I'm not saying I'm not criticizing anybody. I'm just trying to say, I think that these are critical things. When, when I talked to Ann Braden, I discovered that there was a role for, for white people. And I think it taught me the lessons long before black power forced me, uh, to confront them. And I think so I think

Speaker 1 (01:12:24):

Were all this, I, I would rather you, what I'd like to know is whether enough, thanks very much Kim, but whether or not the young people who are at this conference are getting what they need

to hear. And that's the question. Okay. Next, um, I'm announcement of my personal comment. I'm a consultant for the national voter of right being town and the next, uh, the next reation of bloody Sunday in sell Alabama, uh, the theme is renewing and celebrating the spirit of day through our youth. And I've been asked for invite you all to the bridge in this term, which is always the first weekend in March. And we will be inducting and breaking into the women's room. And by the way, I worked 30 years. Um, um, you also have owned the, the NIC office at himself too now. Um, you know, I just can just making a comment, uh, respondent who's comment made about Stok whose name is Kwame terrain.

Speaker 1 (01:13:43):

I think we should really respect the fact that he did change his name and not potentially call it Stok we, no, man, finish UMWA was a worker, a childless worker, and he worked from his death. So I'm not. And if in fact, those who led the efforts around by power and black pride have been successful, we would not be facing the crisis. We face in the African American community today because we are truly full of self hatred and internalized oppression. And until we address that key issue amongst us, we can never build any sustained movement for change. Thank you. Go,

Speaker 4 (01:14:38):

Good eyes. Yeah. My name is David I'm from Philadelphia. My wife was here 60 years ago. Debbie Amus. Um, my question has to do with ideology. I was very, and also even though I'm, I'll be 69. I don't, I'm not retiring from the moment. So this is inspirational for me as well, to continue, um, to fight for healthcare jobs, the whole works, but I was very impressed with Dr. Lawson's comments yesterday, especially when he talked about plantation capitalism. So my question is around, I guess, the question of ideology and whether or not there was, um, what was the level of understanding within SNCC, but also among supporters of the root cause of racism? Clearly we won't respond to racism and we know what's its effects are. But one thing that got me through besides being married to Debbie, the black power struggle and things that I could not understand easily as a white person was I think having some ideological approach or understanding of the nature of the system and the root causes of racism and, and who racism benefits.

Speaker 4 (01:15:50):

And I was wondering if that played any role within SNCC and whether or not, um, that may have also played any role, uh, maybe a lack of some ideology and in what some of you refer to as demise, or at least the, the disappearance of the organization as such, please going to take that question. Then we have three people and we must try to, we can get as many questions in, we can, um, we have questions. Okay. Um, to your question, I, I put it on as one of the internal issues within quiet please. But one of the things you might want to know is, is that SNCC began to recognize early on. We used to have what we call the octopus and we showed how the, the tentacles were around all the corporations and around all the countries, as we talked about colonialism and colonization.

Speaker 4 (01:16:54):

And we talked about that even in terms of the urban areas and, and African American, the ghettos being colonies in which they had no control leaving over the language. Uh, we certainly began to, to talk about those kinds of issues, but there was never a time when we could actually sit down and go through that ideological discussion that needed to happen. Uh, to some extent it happened in the African American community after, uh, 19 70, 19 72, 19 73, we might known New York times put an article in about the ideological discussion in, in the African American community between nationalism and socialism and all of that kind of thing. And then we had the China versus Russia, and we had all of that mayhem that actually went on. Um, but an organization that's starting now has to be very careful about the principles in which it is willing to organize around, but not getting locked into one of these, you know, frame of ideological



positions, because what it does, sometimes the vision in the direction that you're not ready to go. And certainly the community that you're talking about, organizing's not prepared that even understand

Speaker 1 (01:18:09):

We have five minutes left. And, and, um, I don't know if y'all get through question. I mean, you know, you said the origins of racism, you know, and I think we were so busy dealing with the impact of racism. And, um, I think that the whole issue of beginning to look at, um, the psychological impact of, uh, white nationalism of, you know, all that we had been brought up under I'm speaking certainly as a black person, um, and the damage that, that had done to us in terms of our self esteem, um, our sense of, of personhood, I mean, this is what we were in the Atlanta project, for instance, trying to address that we had to deal with the internalized racism. So, you know, trying to get to what caused it was another issue we had to end it out of our system because you are hating yourself and clearly, um, you know, even though it became totally contentious the problem of, of establishing your sense, that you were sort of the, the masters of your own mate, that you were self-determining persons, uh, had a lot to do with this notion that whites needed to go into the white community as was mentioned to organize, and it was mentioned, it didn't happen, right.

Speaker 1 (01:19:58):

Uh, and to try and turn, uh, many of these white southerners, uh, toward understanding what they were up against because they of course, were working against their own best interests. And this has been slated. I mean, you know, and there was clearly the ruling class worked at keeping them ignorant where their real interests locked. And here we have the teabag on social security saying

Speaker 1 (01:21:01):

Professor at Dennison university. And I have a question that's a follow up too one that was asked earlier about the alliances of the domestic alliances engagement with the United farm workers in the American Indian movement. And I was, I was just wondering if you could, um, talk, especially since the Philly was based in California and aim was based in, uh, the twin cities area. I was wondering if you could talk about how you saw those alliances as fitting in with the overall goals and programs of, of SNCC and what SNCC was doing, uh, in the detox.

Speaker 4 (01:21:36):

Uh, I'm have to be very brief on that. That's a whole forum discuss that. Let me just say that. One of the other things that alliances is that SNCC, um, uh, made was the Puerto Rico,

Speaker 6 (01:21:49):

Puerto

Speaker 4 (01:21:50):

Rican independence movement. Yes. And, you know, there were continuous Alliance made as we began to find support with, uh, uh, people of color around the world or way other that were certainly with Vietnam and around those issues and Vietnam anti. So there is a whole litany of, um, of alliances that we made. We would have to go in specific details to talk about those kind of things, but, um, aim, we can, it it's, it's there, we haven't maybe produced the documentation for scholars who are trying to find the bigger trail. We make a promise that we make every do that kind thing. It, it is, and it did exist. And we spent a lot of time in that particular area. That's one of the reasons why we found it kind of difficult to talk about being anti white when we were all over the place, trying to align ourselves with progressives, we cause great Panthers. We not mentioned the emerging gay movement

Speaker 6 (01:23:01):

As well.

Speaker 1 (01:23:11):

Hi, my name is Margaret Prescott and no, it's not. MoFA prescott's snake over my <laugh>. Um, and, uh, I'm also here really very two hats. I'm here with Pacifica radio in Southern California, and also I came to journalism by way of activism and I there's two entry, late things I wanted to ask, uh, one noting, uh, talking about the shift that I would, I, the feeling that I'm getting is that it's an evolution that happened in SNCC as opposed to a demise of SNCC that's right. Um, but at the moment where you were making international connections, you were making the local national and international connections and looking at, at also what happened at the time that Malcolm was assassinated. And also at the time that Dr. King was assassinated, you really see that shift into broadening out and making those kinds of international connections and really building an international movement.

Speaker 1 (01:24:15):

And one of the evolutions, whether you know, it or not, that has happened with snake work and people like myself, not in snake, you know, working in, in the north, uh, after immigrating, uh, from the Caribbean. But since that time have spent, you know, decades building an international global network of women yeah. Where we, um, are autonomous as women of color, uh, but also figured out a way to be, have our voice as black women, as indigenous women of color within the broader movement. And it seems to me a lot of the discussion about whether cause black power or not black power, really trying to learn those lessons. So I would think that our network of very serious grassroots, uh, activists in India and the UK, the Caribbean and Latin America. And there's no time to share that with you. That is part of the evolution of this movement that inspired us then, and is inspiring us now, wherever we are in the world, whether it's the D women in India or domestic servants in Piru.

Speaker 1 (01:25:22):

And that is part of your legacy. And I want to thank you for that. And we internalize that, but I wanted to ask you about that, uh, global view and, and international connection and how much you felt that really had to do with the attack on COINTELPRO that happened. Withinn, and also the difference between the autonomous voices, which I get from when you say black power and those who perhaps were worried about and not understanding the difference between autonomy and separatism. Like, no, I can never work with you because you're white, as opposed to, we are women of color where people of color, and we have a right to autonomous voice, you respond to

Speaker 2 (01:26:08):

That. Well, you can't really respond to it cause it's so big, but <laugh>,

Speaker 2 (01:26:12):

I would say this, one of the things that, that made it clear to me was when I was, uh, a burgeoning as a candidate to be an officer in the national student association, the post that I wanted was the international affairs vice president. See, and I was opposed for that because they, my different association that had been to Cuba by that time and other place. And then, and I didn't know where the opposition was coming from. And in fact they were so they were so, uh, uh, careful what they did was manufacture my vote, my acclimation to the national affairs vice president to preempt my becoming the international affairs vice president, and was only years later that I found that the CIA was funding that operation in, thank you. So it is perfectly clear that SNCC couldn't get into those things in a way that would not really make it the damage and the factors were at work all the time, but that's a really a different seminar, right?

Speaker 1 (01:27:18):

And by the way, that global network is the global women's strike of color as the global, I wanted. Thank you. Next question.

Speaker 4 (01:27:27):

Good morning. My name is Mike I'm from Detroit and I got involved city Tennessee. And, uh, at the time I was, uh, uh, described as my friends and I, uh, over the ground trying some of came Nashville came back, they decided they knew they couldn't be out. We, we, we, Malcolm used to come to Detroit, you know, Malcolm, but the interesting thing is with the, we did, by the time I talking about black power, we had organized black workers, so black, I started. And, um, he, um, Jim actually came part and my house previous with his family and we continued to do, he continued to do the kind of things that he glad part of it. Um, we launch the black economic development conference. Uh, we are here an organization called the black workers country for the rural and the unions and a number of cities, including Nashville, Birmingham, uh, C uh, we had a longing kind of power of history.

Speaker 4 (01:29:07):

Uh, I think, uh, at any rate, uh, we struck some plants. We closed down plants, we did a variety of things, but that, uh, and I've been going, I've been, um, talking to groups, uh, like I was at the depicted anniversary of, uh, SES in Ann hour about months ago. And I, you know, I've done this with a lot of, lot of groups. I'm sorry, please. Um, but, and, and anyway, um, one of the question always comes up, do, how do we transmit to the next generation, what we experience and, um, should we, should, can we tell them everything? And I, I can talk, I spoke to a couple of people involved in the planning of this, and I'm saying we should have, and, you know, and I hate to tell, we should have a seminar of a close meeting on the question of I here

Speaker 1 (01:30:16):

Answer your first question, your question,

Speaker 2 (01:30:20):

My question was, should we

Speaker 4 (01:30:21):

Have that discussion? That's, that's why

Speaker 2 (01:30:23):

We're having this thing. We're having this. We were planning it. We were, we held them on having young people here so they could hear our experience. Cause it is critical for them to know what we went through. So they don't have to go through it

Speaker 1 (01:30:38):

Again. That's,

Speaker 2 (01:30:39):

That's why we called this our Sankofa moment. Cause we're we we're, we are the people of the, of yesterday telling the people that tomorrow, exactly what they need to know and, and we need their help

Speaker 1 (01:30:51):

To get there. And there's no single way to, to transmit it. Um, but by bringing recruiting young people to the conversations, we did, it's for them to listen to speak questions. So, and I, I understand very well, but I don't think I can, we can give you a better answer than that because I think it's transmitted through formal education inform, uh, through hands on teaching organizing skills. One of the outcomes of this conference is that we are going to establish an interactive, digitally interactive legacy legacy project, uh, after all the tapes you missing the yeah, the whole, the whole story, that whole story.

Speaker 4 (01:31:35):

I think everybody answer this question so we can very quickly

Speaker 4 (01:31:40):

Tell the whole truth. We find that Ella Baker was here years ago. She initiated bring young people to talk about these kind of issues. It was the responsibility of men, people to develop an organization. She gave some guidance on how that organization should look, and then they have the energy and the expertise. They have to be the ones who determine the destiny of that particular generation. That's right for the next generation. What we need to do is be there to help when they have a question. But one of the things that we have a problem with is that we don't know when the zip models and turn the, to,

Speaker 6 (01:32:30):

We have five minutes left

Speaker 1 (01:32:34):

Morning Baltimore project, and there, along with, um, for Baltimore city schools, and recently we've been fighting to, um, to end a school to prison pipeline. So my question is, so we've been doing sit in, we did some rally we protest. So my question is to the panel, what do you say to a young person that says this non-direct direct action tactic? Um, isn't working

Speaker 4 (01:33:05):

Well, first thing, tactics of, of settle around time, when they're, you have to decide what it is, what detective is of any kind of activity that you engage in, um, that there was a period in which we could actually confront and create the moral UAS, the moral persuasion on the product people to say, we don't want see Birmingham happen again. But then there was a period maybe after 1966, when going to Birmingham, there was no, there was no moral SUA coming behind that because they assumed that civil rights was open. And that there were these, these, uh, nationalists running around the streets with guns and threatening to go away fights. So you have to do something other than the confrontation of the civil disobedience and that kind of thing. I think in Baltimore, what you have to do is decide what it is, how is it that you are planning to use that, uh, confrontation, civil disobedience that you're using sit-ins or whatever, uh, activities that you in fact involved in.

Speaker 4 (01:34:11):

How do you tie that in to educating the wider community about the issues of young men and prisons? And maybe what you have to do is say, uh, mass meetings at churches all over Baltimore at the same time that people that, uh, downtown demonstrated, maybe you take the people who demonstrated and go to different churches around the community and began to raise that kinda issue. But it has to have some kind of effect. You don't just want to sit in because I was attacked to God result before to be in the context. And you have to be very careful about that.

Speaker 1 (01:34:46):

I just wanna say, uh, and, and let's, you know, let's look at what's going on with, uh, the right wing movement. I mean, so marching, uh, you know, up in your face kinds of tactics are working for them. Yeah. I mean, you know, they bought from a very small thing to a very big thing. And so we cannot think that using some of those tactics, and again, I, we totally with, uh, please, you've got to know what you are doing, have a battle plan carried out, but those tactics still work when they fit your particular goals. Our problem is we are not sustaining our efforts. Uh, we are scab shot and we were able during that period to have sustained effort, and somehow we have to figure out how to do that. Last question.

Speaker 1 (01:35:52):

Hi, Whitney wife. Hi, I'm Whitney white. Um, we drove down here from Philadelphia, um, senior at sophomore college originally from Memphis, Tennessee. Um, when I take a question was asked earlier about you, okay. A question was asked earlier from the panel directed to the

young people in the audience about what do young people take from this? How, what are the lessons that young people are learning based on what had happened with SNCC? And I can't speak for everyone else, but I can speak for myself, of course. And due to the fact that I read a couple of books about this era and even the era before SNCC, as far back as, um, mayor McCone, and even before mayor McCone the whole history of the civil rights movement, I can say, honestly, that creating self-perpetuating institutions and being financially independent will play a big role in determining how we are to structure our lives and how we are to actually get somewhere.

Speaker 1 (01:36:52):

I noticed that even from the time Mary McLE film, you're always asking for money. Hey, could you please give us this? Could you please have us? We're trying to do this. And when money, when people are giving you money, they have the right to dictate which way you go, which things do you think are important. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. And especially with this panel, you talk about the money disappeared. You know, people stop supporting us and get us when problems happen. Not to say that money is the only way. Of course it's education. Of course, you know, those different things. But I think the African Americans in Tulsa during the, um, the Oklahoma ride, Tulsa city rides back in, um, back in the 1800, the late 18 hundreds, they had the right idea. They were trying to build institutions. But because that time, because of that time, it wasn't supported so much, but the time is different. Thanks to what you have done. And I think if we can go back to that era, meaning focusing on establishing our own financial institutions, I think that would be the best way. That's what I,

Speaker 6 (01:37:58):

Yeah,

Speaker 1 (01:38:00):

I'm, uh, winded because I have a lot of health issues and I overslept, this was the panel I most wanted to come to. Yeah. And I understand that, um, that some issues that I was concerned about might come up and I missed them all. Unfortunately, when, back in 19 67, 6, I guess it was 67. I was the one who would have the newsletter on Palestine. Yes. All right. Yes. And my interest in the area goes back to the mid fifties when Gaal abil, he was my first hero because he stood up to the west and to Israel and I had become involved. And in college I took eight graduate hours on the history of the middle east and Islam. So I came in to SNCC with that background and not too many people in SNCC had that background. And the reason I wanted to speak up is cause I was so afraid that I was going to be blamed. Cuz back then, when I came out with the newsletter, the New York office stick office went crazy and I was malign and I was, you know, people said, you know, a minor came out with that. And now all that money that we've been getting is going to dry up and that happened. And I want you to know that I did not intend for that.

Speaker 6 (01:39:47):

We work with

Speaker 1 (01:39:48):

People who did the whole issue of Palestine and Israel on the map. But anyway, I just want you to know, I'm sorry. I missed, I'm sorry that I mean was my life. And, and when we demise had to move to DC, I was very, very disheartened, but I just want you to know I had

Speaker 6 (01:40:16):

No intention. I just thought it needed to be.

Speaker 1 (01:40:23):

I

Speaker 6 (01:40:23):

Have been,

Speaker 1 (01:40:25):

I have been involved in that since the mid fifth, after NA became my hero.

Speaker 6 (01:40:33):

And

Speaker 1 (01:40:33):

So I was interested in, you know, the international continuum of what

Speaker 6 (01:40:41):

Was happening. I never,

Speaker 1 (01:41:05):

You were a 4runner and um, maybe it was time to speak to losing it's because history bore you out.

Speaker 4 (01:41:16):

Yeah. But that's the same thing with Vietnam. We're the first civil rights organization position against Vietnam. But there's another point of information that you just need to know. And that is George funding. And the polar foundation actually assembled in, in, in Arizona, all of the civil rights organizations. So they could plan a strategy to isolate and, and work to destroy its name. Wow. That's the fact. And I think it was 1966. Thank you.

Speaker 1 (01:41:48):

Thank you very much. Uh, for coming in.