

THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
8½ Raymond Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia
688-0331

HISTORY: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was organized in April, 1960 at a general conference of student sit-in leaders in Raleigh, North Carolina. Its purpose then was to circulate information about the Southwide protests and to promote joint activities by the protest groups that make up the Coordinating Committee. SNCC employed an Executive Secretary, set up an Atlanta office, issued a newsletter, the Student Voice, and served as a clearing house for information about sit-ins. The Coordinating Committee, composed of one representative from each of the Southern states and the District of Columbia, met regularly to exchange information, methods, nonviolent techniques, and to plan joint protests.

But the summer of 1961 and the advent of the Freedom Rides which saw New Yorkers and Californians taking an active, personal interest in segregation in Alabama and Mississippi, brought a change in SNCC's thinking. In many areas, after lunch counters had been integrated, the movement lagged. In others, it had never begun. SNCC members saw that if the movement was to have meaning for the millions of degraded, disenfranchised, and exploited Negroes of the Black Belt South, someone would have to take the theories, methods, practices, and actualities of the protest movement to them. Consequently, SNCC did just that.

STRUCTURE: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee now consists of representatives from autonomous protest groups which are considered the prime expression of the Movement. It has an Executive Committee membership, a staff, and volunteer workers. A more detailed explanation of the SNCC structure may be found in the SNCC Constitution, revised at the April, 1962 Conference.

PROGRAM: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's aim is to serve as a channel of coordinating and communication for the student movement. SNCC initiates anti-segregation programs where none exist. It works closely with local groups in the intensification and extension of the movement.

SNCC's two main thrusts against segregation are direct action and voter registration. Direct action protests are aimed at integration of public facilities such as lunch counters, hospitals, libraries, theatres, and at segregation in employment and housing. Beside giving disenfranchised Negroes the right of the ballot, SNCC's voter registration program aims at awakening an awareness of citizenship.

PROJECTS: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee has initiated or participated in direct action and voter registration projects in Albany, Sasser, Dawson, Leesburg, and Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia; Greenwood, Holly Springs, Liberty, Tylertown and Laurel, Mississippi; Talladega, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Selma, Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama; Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, and Lebanon, Tennessee; Louisville and Frankfort, Kentucky; Pine Bluff and Little Rock, Arkansas; Washington, D. C.; Petersburg, Newport News, Hampton and Alexandria, Virginia; Rock Hill and Orangeburg, South Carolina; Cambridge, Crisfield, Baltimore, Princess Anne and the Eastern Shore of Maryland; Cairo, Carbondale and Mount Vernon, Illinois; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Charleston, Missouri. SNCC was also a member of the Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee which kept a stream of rides flowing into Mississippi in 1961.

FINANCES: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee receives most of its operating capital from voluntary contributions. The Northern Student Movement, the National Student Association, Students for a Democratic Society and other national students groups also help in securing financial assistance for SNCC.

FUTURE: In the future, SNCC hopes to enlarge its existing activities, to engage more students, Northern and Southern, actively in the movement, to initiate direct action and voter registration programs in border states and deep South areas where none have been held.

SNCC workers have organized and guided local protest movements that are never identified as SNCC projects. This is part of the program developing and building and strengthening indigenous leadership.

This program has captured the imagination of students all over the country, and today more than 150 SNCC field secretaries are symbols of courage and dedication as they undertake the often tedious and tiring, and always dangerous work in the most difficult areas of the South: Mississippi, Central Alabama, Southwest Georgia, Eastern Arkansas, Southern Virginia.

These students work for subsistence salaries, when funds are available. But at times they have chopped cotton and picked squash to secure food. They live in the community, often in the homes of local residents, for the weeks and months that are required to break through generations of fear and intimidation. The students' courage helps emerging leaders achieve a new self-image and the strength to act. Slow, steady personal contact, discussion, persuasion give the people confidence in the SNCC worker and the program he advocates. Then the people begin to gain enough confidence in themselves to seek and assert their rights.

In the community SNCC workers organize for voter registration and direct action. SNCC voter registration efforts give disfranchised Negroes the right to vote in areas where they have been denied this right since Reconstruction. And, fully as important, the program deepens an awareness of the meaning of first class citizenship, develops a community of action, and creates mutual trust and support among people who too often have been suspicious and divided by fear.

of summer, 1963, SNCC had initiated and participated in direct action campaigns in 54 cities in the 13 Southern states.

STRUCTURE

SNCC is not a membership organization, but rather an agency attempting to stimulate and foster the growth of local protest movements. The Coordinating Committee itself consists of representatives of protest groups who meet regularly to formulate strategy, to review the general program, and to give direction to the staff.

FUTURE

The future means redoubled efforts to continue introducing educated and determined young workers into the hard core areas while maintaining a college contact program which leads to militant action in cities and provides new recruits for full time work later.

SNCC hopes in the future to expand pilot projects from one town to surrounding counties, find funds to support students who wish to join the staff, provide more and better workshops and conferences on the meaning and techniques of nonviolent community action and political involvement.

SNCC hopes in the future to make the South into a just and free land. We intend that the future will not be distant.