

1968

There are four principle features of the new SNCC:

1. Objectives: To struggle against racism, capitalism, and imperialism.
2. To assist in the nationwide building of the Black Panther Party.
3. Ten Deputy Chairmen.
4. The elimination of the position of Chairman and the Executive Secretary.

1. Objectives: To struggle against racism, capitalism, and imperialism.

At the staff meeting June, 1968 there was a conscious attempt to define objectives and goals for SNCC relevant to the struggle in 1968. This effort must be understood in the light of the developing process of thought which characterizes the organization. It also must be understood from the viewpoint that SNCC as an organization has worked on programmatic events in the past without consolidating an ideological framework to which all members must adhere.

A three page paper was voted upon as a basic manifesto, as general stated goals, toward which the organization is striving. (See enclosed) This manifesto grows out of a series of meetings dating back to the October, 1967 meeting of the Central Committee. At that meeting we elected a political committee charged with further hammering out objectives for the organization. This committee met many times and engaged in long dialogue throughout the year. In February it met with a broad spectrum of the organization and hammered out the enclosed statement. The Coordinating Committee approved this statement at our June, 1968 meeting.

There are many strong points to this document, and it points a direction which is revolutionary. It can help in the ideological development of our people. In a later memorandum I will discuss those strong points as well as criticize what I think are some weaknesses in the document.

2. To assist in the building of the Black Panther Party as a National political party of which Huey Newton is the Minister of Defense and Bobby Seales is the Chairman.

This decision is extremely important for it represents a critical political direction toward which we have been emerging since 1966. At our December, 1966 staff meeting we voted to create Freedom Organizations around the country with the Black Panther as a symbol. These were to be all inclusive political parties; that is to say, they would not be concerned with traditional electoral politics but were to be instruments independent of the traditional political parties. They were to include

committees that dealt with the total facets of the lives and needs of our people, political, economic, cultural, educational, housing, re-distribution of wealth, and so forth. As an organization we were unable to do this because of the middle class nature of our organization and our shifting focus from the agrarian South to the industrialized cities of the North. This means, in effect, that while we understood and could work well with the wretched of the Southern earth as we did in Mississippi, Alabama, and other parts of the South--as we moved more and more into the industrialized North we lacked the cadre that could effectively organize poor people in the "ghetto" and especially the "lumpen proletariat" of which Fanon speaks in Chapter 3.

The strong necessity of breaking the "bourgeois" nature of our organization was not clearly understood. This means that the rampant individualism, shifting of energy, ability to leave the South and return to our homes in the North, lack of discipline, undefined goals, shifting ideologies from month to month, season to season--all these factors which make it impossible to act as a disciplined cadre organizing a political party--indeed made it impossible for us to organize the Freedom Organization as a national political party with the Panther as a symbol.

However, even during this time we were fostering ideas--intellectuals that we claim to be--and many of these ideas are being implemented. Brother Huey P. Newton states clearly that he was very impressed with the Lowndes County Freedom Organization with the Black Panther as a symbol and it inspired him to action.

Hence, it was only natural that an alliance should develop between SNCC and the Black Panther Party. This alliance was concretized even further with the drafting of certain people from SNCC to work with the Black Panthers: Stokely Carmichael, Ray Brown, and myself. Kathleen Cleaver who once worked with SNCC is not unimportant to the working alliance which will grow even closer between the Panthers and SNCC.

There is only one legitimate road for us to perform in this period of history: to assist in the development of the Black Panther Party. This means that we must use our resources, our contacts, our experiences, our minds, our revolutionary zeal to further expand the Black Panther Party.

### 3. New Deputy Chairmen.

This new feature emerged from a recognition that to allow the Government of the United States to focus on one person is a serious mistake because the Chairman of the organization can easily be bottled up by a series of court involvements, imprisonments, and other hazards to the struggle. Our organization was not created to be deterred by the handicaps, revolutionary or otherwise, of any individual but was designed to make the collective process work. The group, the organization, the political party, the people

the revolutionary work is far greater than any personality and it is the responsibility of the revolutionary forces to so structure themselves that they do not allow themselves or the enemy--the United States Government in our case--to enfeeble or destroy the revolutionary work.

This decision was also based on the fact that we had to demonstrate to ourselves and to those we serve that as an organization we are not going to allow the Government to persecute our leaders without evidencing a will to fight back. We will create ten Rap Browns and ten thousand more Rap Browns before it's ~~all over~~  
ALL OVER.

4. The elimination of the position of the Chairman and the Executive Secretary.

This move was made because we felt a need to streamline the authority and the decision making. It was clear to us based on several years of experience that a built-in conflict existed with a secretariat composed of three people with similar powers. This structure grew out of efforts primarily to diffuse command and not administration. In other words, it is impossible for a revolutionary organization to move effectively if its command structure is decentralized and split into many poles. The secretariat resulted from the Freedom High period of the organization and has caused trouble in the administrative working of the organization ever since. Hence, a need to embody greater power in the program secretary to whom the Deputy Chairmen are responsible and all of whom are responsible to the central committee. Unified command--decentralized administration. It was also felt that the chief officer should be a person who worked internally within the organization and whose major function was not spokesman of the organization.

The above four points constitute a new direction and emphasis for SNCC. The newness is also in a mood and a recognition that we must tighten up. Shit that we used to tolerate must go. If it's good for the goose, it's good for the gander. This is a new day. Collective discussions, stated objectives, rules of procedures, penalties imposed for violations, recruitment of new personnel, organization and implementation of program, administration and hard work--this new mood of SNCC must remain its reality.

It shall be done!

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