

THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION

(as revised in Conference, April 29, 1962)

I. Purpose

- A. We accept the following statement of purpose, adopted at the Raleigh Conference in 1960, as the basis for our action:

what has happened?

"We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from the Judaeo-Christian tradition seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society.

Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overcomes injustice. The redemptive community supercedes systems of gross social immorality.

Love is the central motif of nonviolence. Love is the force by which God binds man to himself and man to man. Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of evil to inflict suffering with an even more enduring capacity to absorb evil, all the while persisting in love.

By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities."

- B. SNCC shall serve as a channel of coordination and communication for the student movement. By direction of its Executive Committee through its staff it shall have authority to initiate programs in areas where none presently exists, and to work closely with local protest groups in the intensification and extension of the movement.
- C. SNCC shall be responsible for the distribution and communication of news regarding any of its staff or local groups. It will publish a newsletter called the Student Voice as often as possible, which shall cover news of the student movement as a whole. In addition SNCC shall be responsible for the distribution and interpretation of information to local groups which is of specific interest to the student movement.
- D. SNCC shall be responsible for calling a Conference of the whole student movement each year, on the Easter weekend, and any other conferences the Coordinating Committee deems necessary. These Conferences shall be open to all, primarily educational in nature, and shall be a time when information is exchanged between areas, new knowledge communicated, progress examined, and general plans are made for the coming year. In addition SNCC shall be available to assist states or regions in holding their own Conferences regularly, providing both personnel and financial assistance.

II. The Student Base of the Coordinating Committee

- A. Any local protest group in the South shall be eligible for affiliation with SNCC which shall consist of not less than ten members and which subscribes to the principles of nonviolent direct action.

The Executive Committee of SNCC shall have the power to grant affiliation to local protest groups upon application.

B. Responsibilities of SNCC to affiliates

1. SNCC recognizes that local protest groups and affiliates are autonomous and it shall consider them the primary expression of the protest movement in a given area.
2. SNCC Field Secretaries shall be available to lend assistance to local protest groups and to take any other action deemed necessary by the Executive Committee. Visits to campuses or specific areas may be brief or at times Field Secretaries may be assigned upon request of the local area to work with a particular program on an extended basis.
3. Affiliates shall be eligible for financial assistance from SNCC. Ongoing commitments must be cleared through the Executive Committee, but emergency situations will be handled by the Executive Secretary of the staff and the Chairman of SNCC.

C. Responsibilities of local affiliates to SNCC

1. Each affiliate shall elect one of their members to serve as a voting member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. This person shall serve for a term of one year, shall be eligible for re-election, and shall be a representative to SNCC in the manner of a Congressman to Congress.
2. Affiliates shall give every consideration to cooperating with South-wide or area-wide projects decided upon by SNCC or its Executive Committee.
3. Affiliates shall appoint a SNCC News Coordinator whose responsibility shall be to supply the central SNCC office with up-to-date information regarding protest activities in that area. The central office shall in turn supply the News Coordinators with news of events and activity in other areas.

III. The Organization of SNCC

A. The Coordinating Committee

1. The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of one representative from each of the local protest groups.
2. The Coordinating Committee shall meet three times a year: immediately before and immediately after the annual conference, and in early Fall.
3. Membership on the Coordinating Committee shall be from annual conference to annual conference.

4. National civil rights and civil liberties groups at work in the South are invited to serve in an advisory and/or observing capacity, with voice but not vote on the Coordinating Committee. Such permission is to be reviewed by the Executive Committee and finally approved by the Coordinating Committee

B. The Executive Committee

1. The Coordinating Committee shall elect from among its voting membership at the time of the annual conference eight persons to the Executive Committee. It shall also elect two adult members to the committee. The Chairman of the Coordinating Committee and the Executive Secretary shall also serve as members of the Executive Committee. In addition, the annual conference shall elect three members at large to the Executive Committee who must be students currently or formerly engaged in the protest movement. These fifteen persons shall compose the Executive Committee.
2. The Chairman of SNCC shall be elected by the Coordinating Committee, and shall serve as Chairman of both the Coordinating Committee and the Executive Committee. He shall devote full time to the work of SNCC and its staff.
3. The Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Coordinating Committee between meetings of that body. It shall be directly responsible for the program, for direction and supervision of staff, for the financial operation of the organization, and for any matters of policy which need action. It shall be responsible to SNCC and implement its programs.
4. The Executive Committee shall meet five times a year: in May, in mid-summer, in Fall with the Coordinating Committee, during the Christmas holiday, and at the annual conference. It may also meet at unscheduled times when necessary.
5. The Executive Committee shall have the power to appoint whatever committees it may consider helpful to the work of SNCC.

C. The Advisory Board

1. The Coordinating Committee shall elect its own advisory board, the number on which is flexible and to be determined by the Coordinating Committee. Advisors shall serve for a term of one year, and shall be eligible for re-election.
2. Two members of the Advisory Board shall be voting members of the Executive Committee.

D. The Staff

1. The staff shall be responsible for the implementation of the program of SNCC, at the direction of the Executive Committee.
2. The head of the staff shall be an Executive Secretary, who shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of SNCC. He shall supervise and be responsible for the activity of the other staff.
3. The Executive Committee shall employ whatever staff it understands to be necessary for the operation of the program. All staff appointments shall be for one year and subject to annual review by SNCC.

IV. Finances

1. The work of SNCC shall be financed on the basis of voluntary contributions and through other sources of funds which it shall be able to secure.
2. Since SNCC is the Coordinating Committee of the student movement, efforts shall be made to find ways in which students may contribute significantly and substantially to the support of the program.
3. The fiscal year of SNCC shall be from September 1 to September 1. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the preparation of the budget, to be approved by the Coordinating Committee at the Fall meeting. The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for its administration, and shall prepare reports for each Executive Committee meeting.

V. Amendments

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

Each year the Coordinating Committee shall report to the Conference those constitutional changes which it may have made during the year.

The following is proposed to Northern students and groups:

Over the past two years informal relationships have established ties between various student groups in the North and SNCC. The more fruitful of these ties have provided occasions for increased contacts between students active in the movement and Northern students; opportunity for explanations of the problems of the south and exploration of the problems of the North; inspiration for renewed attack upon civil rights problems by Northern students; and, last but not least, money for the student movement.

SNCC would like to invite such groups to become "associates with" in which relationship we would work out means of closer cooperation in student exchanges, education about the South and the North in the area of civil rights, action in the North, and fund raising.

Associates would be autonomous, of course, and the structure for association would be minimal. Representatives from associated groups may be invited to attend meetings of the Coordinating Committee, although without vote.