

HISTORY

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—SNCC—was born out of the student sit-in drive. A conference at Raleigh, North Carolina on Easter Weekend in 1960 formed the Temporary Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. At an Atlanta conference later that year, officers were elected, programs outlined, and the “temporary” dropped.

From an immediate concern with lunch counters and movie theaters, SNCC moved into activity across the entire Southern Black Belt.

Participation in the Freedom Rides in 1961 and a growing sense of the depth of fear that shackled most Negroes of the South convinced SNCC that some one would have to take the freedom movement to the millions of disenfranchised, dispossessed and degraded Negroes of the rural South . . .

SNCC DID JUST THAT

. . . August, 1961: SNCC launched the Deep South's first student manned voter registration project . . . choosing Walthal, Pike and Amite Counties in Southwest Mississippi. Their drive developed into a student revolt in McComb, began to spread across the entire state and climaxed in the 1964 Summer Project that involved more than 1,000 volunteer workers.

. . . October, 1961 — SNCC workers opened up Albany, Georgia for the massive demonstrations that followed that year and have since organized movements in the surrounding counties.

. . . January, 1963 — SNCC workers came to Selma, Alabama, and with the aid of local groups set the stage for the drive that resulted in the 1964 Voting Rights Act.



PROGRAM

SNCC's grass-roots approach is designed to . . . build indigenous, trained leadership . . . in small communities and urban centers of the South, in high schools and college campuses . . .

SNCC workers organize and aid local and state wide movements, some never identified as SNCC projects. This is part of its program to insure a continuous committed movement across the South.

This program has captured the idealism and imagination of students and adults all across the country, and today, more than 150 SNCC field workers are engaged in the always dangerous, often dreary and tedious work of organizing people in the most difficult areas of the South . . .

Mississippi — Southwest Georgia
Central Alabama — Eastern Arkansas

SNCC field secretaries receive subsistence salaries when funds are available, but at times have chopped cotton and picked squash to secure food and a bed. They live in the community they work in, in the homes of local residents and in freedom houses, for the weeks and months required to break through generations of fear-enforced apathy and despair. A SNCC worker's skills and drive help a community begin. Sustained personal contact, discussion and persuasion and his determination to stay with the job gives a community confidence to seek and assert their rights and to make their own decisions.

SNCC voter registration drives and work on Agricultural Stabilization Committee elections have begun to give forgotten communities a power they can use to build their own organizations and to help themselves . . .

— the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party . . . an independent political party which educates by its work . . . attempts to involve the disenfranchised in the political processes which are so crucial to their lives.

— the Poor People's Corporation . . . “To assist low income groups in their efforts to receive financial assistance to initiate and sustain self-help projects of a cooperative nature that are designed to offset some of the effects of poverty.”

— the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union . . . farm workers in the Mississippi Delta working to improve economic conditions . . .

— Freedom Schools . . . community centers . . . all these things mean a ray of hope for those with no hope of help anywhere.

