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# The Civil Rights Movement

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# THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

by

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This study investigates the Civil Rights Movement from the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education decision through the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. It attempts to determine whether the effect of social inequities on black Americans was a causal factor of the Civil Rights Movement. The author chose a normative, historic approach. Research is based on a review of existing literature, interviews with movement participants, documents collected by the author, and the author's own experiences as a participant in the movement.

The study investigates the movement, the various indigenous national and local organizations that played a significant role within the Civil Rights Movement. Three distinct facets of the movement are analyzed:

a. its characteristics as a social form;

b. its impact as a social movement; and

c. the development of its activists and participants.

Questions about the causes of the Civil Rights Movement, its goals and ideology, how it functioned, and what caused it to terminate can be answered from current and available research. Little information exists on why people joined the movement, and which individual and group dynamics shaped and gave impetus to this great "transitioning machine." New research was needed to shed light on these questions.

The study sought to eliminate three widely accepted myths:

(1) that the Civil Rights Movement was a monolithic, one-dimensional movement led by Martin Luther King;

(2) that the civil rights was characterized by illegitimate tactics, internal disorganization, and inappropriate attitudes; and

(3) that the movement's participants were cast-outs and misfits.

These myths, perpetrated by conservatives and segregationists, have served to discredit the movement and to deny to generations of liberal-minded, progressive people the understanding of how the movement strengthened America's democratic principles.

The historic development and functions of some of the main organizations which the movement fostered--the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, and the SDS--are set forth. The main finding from the study was that the Civil Rights Movement was a legitimate social movement. It was a sophisticated operation with internal organizations, resources, leaders, strategies, and tactics that produced positive results. The movement consisted of many more people than the current literature implies. Participants were committed people--students, farmers, workers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, blacks, whites, native Americans and Hispanics--whose main objective was nothing less than to reform and liberalize the social, political and economic system of America, and at the same time destroy the established systems of racial segregation and discrimination.

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# DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to some of the participants of the Civil Rights Movement who helped to shape my development and guide me as I developed by genuine love and concern for humanity and overcome my fear of racial violence and intimidation:

Ella Baker, affectionately known as the mother of SNCC, who shared her skills as a community organizer and beliefs in the wisdom and strength of organized people;

Ruby Doris Robinson, a real superwoman, who taught me commitment and dignity even in the face of death;

Fannie Lou Hamer, who taught me the real meaning of the freedom song "Old Freedom" ("Before I'll be a slave, I'll be burried in my grave, and go home to the Lord and be free")'

Gloria Dandridge, whose smooth manner disguised her tough disciplined leadership skills, and who exhibited the true character of a leader in Cambridge, Maryland;

Dr. Martin Luther King, whose calmness, sincerity, and unrelenting discipline taught me how to maintain a moral commitment and understand the importance of moral consciousness. We walked the dusty roads of Mississippi together and learned to share our frustrations, our pains, and our joy over knowing that the moral arm of the universe is long but it bends toward justice;

Henry George, one of my closest and dearest friends, whose short life taught me how to rise above our shortcomings and set our sights on

the world and universe not merely the sky or clouds;

Stokely Carmickel, my brother, whose quiet suffering, humility, and dedication were never really understood or appreciated; and finally, Cleveland L. Sellers, Sr., my father, who has done so much to help me develop, whose sacrifices have sometimes gone unnoticed, but whose love for me never diminished for one moment even though he worried through many sleepless nights about my welfare in Mississippi and in the Civil Rights Movement.

I wish to share with my children my experiences and my commitment to America's struggle for social justice and full implementation of its democratic principles. I hope they will learn of the substantial contributions and the importance of the Civil Rights Movement.

This study is also dedicated to the hundreds of movement activists whose services, on behalf of civil rights, were never recognized nor mentioned in the literature--people such as Joyce Brown, Waune Yancey, George Bess, Annie Pearl Avery, Bob Smith, Ralph Featherstone, Jack Minnis, William "Che" Payne, and Ben Chaney.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The social movement is a form of collective behavior governed by norms that are not envisaged in the larger society and that may even modify or oppose these broader norms (Turner & Killian, 1972, p. 5). A social movement fosters a kind of behavior wherein a large number of participants consciously attempt to change existing institutions and establish a new order of life (Blumberg, 1984, p. 91). It includes not only persons who engage in group action for a cause but also those who agree with them on the need to change (McCarthy & Zald, 1979, 1217-18).

During the mid-1950s there was a revival of interest in the study of social conflict resulting from a series of dramatic events which included World War II, the Korean conflict, the world movement for national independence of former colonial states, and the beginning of social conflict in America, over the issue of racial and social justice. We now label this latter conflict the Civil Rights Movement.

This study investigates the Civil Rights Movement in the United States from 1954 with the Brown vs. Board of Education decision through 1968 with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Civil Rights Movement was a loose-knit working coalition of several separate organizations. Each contributing organization with the exception of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League was primarily composed of active working

members as opposed to organizations whose main function was to bond passively for the purpose of a shared belief.

Within 14 years, from 1954 to 1968, the Civil Rights Movement changed the social hierarchy of America, forcing the nation to put the words of freedom and equality into action and thereby forever altering the lives of all American citizens. In spite of the overwhelming impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the nation, little information existed until recently which analyzed why people joined the movement. There has been little or no analysis of the individual and group dynamics which shaped and gave impetus to this great transition.

Within this 14-year period the Civil Rights Movement experienced four distinct phases: a) the Legalism Phase, the background, spearheaded primarily by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (1930-1954); b) the Nonviolent, Direct-Action Phase (Civil Disobedience), fostered by the Montgomery bus boycott, Dr. King, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) (1954-1961) (Himes, 1973); c) the Voter Registration/Voter Education Phase ushered in by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the SCLC, the NAACP, and the Voter Education Project (1961-1965); and d) the Black Power/ Nationalist Phase guided along by SNCC, CORE and the nation of Islam (1966-1979).

The Civil Rights Movement participants, for purposes of this study, may be divided into four categories:

Regulars: faithful members of an organization who paid dues and attended meetings regularly

Constituents: those served by the movement

Volunteers: those who contributed time, resources or money, but were not regular members of an organization

Activists: salaried technicians who brought tactical, administrative and organizational skills to the movement and actively worked in a movement center

This study focuses on the activists. While the other groups of participants were no less committed or dedicated nor their contributions less important, they were more difficult to identify and verify.

## Who Were the Activists

Several recent studies have found the activists who participated in campus boycotts, protests, and the Civil Rights Movement tended to come from families with higher incomes, to be better educated than nonprotesters, and to be generally more educationally advanced than nonprotesters (Thomas, 1984). The Civil Rights Movement Activists were primarily black. However, there were white activists dispersed among the many organizations that made up the movement. Some organizations that were predominantly white contributed to the movement in much the same capacity as the traditional civil rights organizations. Organizations emerged for those southern whites who were interested in working in white communities on behalf of civil rights.

Some authors suggest that even though whites have contributed greatly to the Civil Rights Movement, white and black participants differ in type: in social background, in motivation, and in level of ultimate commitment (Wender, 1971, p. 156). This study will examine

the black and white activists to determine the validity of these assumptions.

The Civil Rights Movement spawned a predominantly white movement known as the "New Left," composed primarily of well-educated, white middle-class youths. Sociological data frequently emphasizes the impressive intellectual caliber of these young radicals (Berger, 1970). Many of these activists played significant roles in the Civil Rights Movement.

Transcending the restrictions of the traditional academic disciplines, the researcher used a multidimensional view of the Civil Rights Movement as opposed to the one-dimensional view previously provided. As time passes, more and more information will come forward from the new research being generated by a resurgence of interest in the Civil Rights Movement.

Much has been written about the social inequities suffered by blacks in America (Clark, 1964; Epps, 1971; Katz, 1964; Myrdal, 1944). Blacks have been socially demeaned by Jim Crow laws, segregation, discrimination, disenfranchisement and random violence. All these were targets of the Civil Rights Movement which had the ultimate aim of precipitating decisive action from the United States Government (Piven & Cloward, 1979; Zinn, 1980). The litany of southern violence against black people trying to exercise their rights seems endless. The failure of the U.S. Government to protect black citizenry in the pursuit of their fundamental rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution has often led to extreme violence and even death.

However, one's life was considered a small price to pay for the elimination of the existing nondemocratic and unjust social and political systems (Sellers, 1973, p. 29). Emmett Till, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, James Reed, Herbert Lee, Viola Liuzzo, Ruby Doris Robinson, George Bess, Sammy Young, Wayne Yancey, George Lee, Medgar Evers, Jimmie Lee Jackson, William Moore and countless others lost their lives as activist/participants in the Civil Rights Movement. Loss of life was inevitable in the drama of the movement but it was seen as an unnecessary consequence of struggle, never the objective. Activists and participants in the Civil Rights Movement viewed it as a celebration of hope, pride and life.

Much has been written to document the Civil Rights Movement through the activities of such luminaries as Dr. Martin Luther King, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young. However, research yields a scarcity of materials which chronicle the participating activities and struggles of the hundreds of field secretaries, community organizers, voter registration workers and freedom riders who made a sizeable contribution to the Civil Rights Movements.

This study focuses on the activists who were not simply member/participants of the movement but were movement resources because of the technical skills they brought to the movement. The activists were mostly found in the organizations involved in protest activities and direct action as opposed to the bureaucratic and traditional organizations (e.g., NAACP and Urban League) that were engaged primarily in legalistic or legislative reforms.

Lang and Lang (1961) stated, "unless we are able to distinguish between the core group and the larger mass of supporters who formally joined, we are not dealing with a social movement" (p. 524). All participants in a social movement do not need to have identical goal definitions, strategies and tactics; it is only necessary that they share the same general objectives. This analysis makes it clear why any definition of the Civil Rights Movement must include groups as diverse as SNCC, CORE, SCLC, NAACP, and the Urban League.

As in all social movement there was a division of labor within the movement. The NAACP and Urban League provided the legal strategy and the national focus, while SNCC, SCLC, and CORE were the three principal organizations that engaged in protest demonstrations and nonviolent direct action. The NAACP, Urban League, and CORE had an urban focus, while the SCLC and SNCC had a southern rural focus. In the deep south it was the field secretaries, community organizers, and voter registration workers of SNCC and CORE who directed most of the grass-roots community organizing.

## What is a Social Movement

A social movement can be studied from a variety of perspectives. Turner, Killian, Langs, Smelser, Abel, Aberle, Coser, Weber, Oberschall and Himes, all noted sociologists, have established and expounded on methods by which sociologists can examine social movement. Their theories, the collective behavior theory, the resource mobilization theory, the theory of charismatic movements, and conflict theories are used in the study of social movements. Topologies which "begin the

translation of qualitative, systematic concepts into quantitative, operational ones" are used where necessary (Wilson, 1973, p. 271).

In Theordore Abel's article (1974) in the American Sociological Review, entitled "Theory of Social Movement," he stated that "a social movement belongs to the general class of social phenomena which includes: mob action, booms, crazes, panic, revolution, and so forth. As a subclass, a social movement is circumscribed by pluralistic behavior functioning as an organized mass effort directed towards a change of established folkways or institutions" (p. 19).

Dr. Himes' "conflict theory" suggests that "intense and pervasive conflicts constitute a striking feature of contemporary American society" (1973, p. 1). Social conflict is seen as one of the possible social consequences of special structural conditions, as well as a socializing process (Parks & Burgess, 1925, pp. 47-62). Social conflict also requires the definition and linkage of contrasting and opposing interest. In this regard, when one's interest is serviced, the other's potential interest is limited (Coser, 1968, pp. 232-236). When race becomes a significant factor, social conflict in American society often takes on a new dimension involving questions of race, political power, and the distribution of economic and political resources.

Smelser's (1963) racial conflict theory suggests that the traditional racial structure was the initial and underlying factor that caused the social conflict creating the Civil Rights Movement. This value added logic theory concluded that early stages and factors must

combine according to a definite pattern before the next stage can emerge and contribute to the process. Prior to the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement, preconditions or causal factors existed within the structure of the political, economic and racial systems. They also provided the necessary motive for the emergence of the movement.

Smelser (1963) listed four factors that are necessary for a social movement:

1. Adequate motivation: heightened frustration strains generated by society when expected performances and rewards are inconsistent with those of the status quo
2. Rise in expectations: belief that change is possible
3. Availability of organization equipment and power resources
4. Tactical devices: manipulation of status quo

These factors establish a theoretical base for determining why participants join social movements. Smelser's theory of rising expectation and his relative deprivation hypothesis are the basis of the existing studies of activists in protest movements. Smelser's theory considers that many of the students involved suggest greater opportunities in America's social, political, and economic systems as the motivating factor.

Anthony Oberschall's resource mobilization theory emphasized that formal and informal organizations, leaders, money, people and communications networks, are necessary for the initiation and development of movements. It is the groups' ability to organize, mobilize, and manage valuable resources that determines whether they will be able to engage in social protest (Morris, 1984, p. 179).

Resource Mobilization theory is a structural theory that emphasizes "measurable" components such as organizations, participants, and money rather than culture, charisma, and philosophy of a movement. The theory holds that outside groups played an important role in social movements. The preexisting social organizations and communications networks are essential for the movement to develop. Finally, the theory states that available resources must exist prior to the development of movement.

The theory of charismatic movements was first addressed by Max Weber. Weber believed that at certain times in history charismatic leaders have emerged with a following and have been a significant force to bring about social change. In Weber's view such leaders emerged because of their extraordinary personalities and their ability to preach, and create and demand new obligations from their followers (Morris, 1984, p. 278). Social movements are generally linked to social order and values. Wilson (1973) stated: "A social movement is a conscious, collective, organized attempt to bring about or resist large scale change in the social order by noninstitutionalized means" (pp. 14-15). The Civil Rights Movement allowed activists to function through a well-developed indigenous base, which included institutions, organizations, and functions. The Civil Rights Movement also encompassed the cultural aspect of a social movement, including music (freedom songs), art, dance, theater (Free Southern Theater) and oratory.

Plan of the Study

This study seeks to determine the impact and consequences of the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968) as a social movement, its characteristics as a social form and the involvement of its activist participants before, during and after these dates.

This study has attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What was the role of the activist participants in the Civil Rights Movement?
2. What were the benefits and consequences of the activists' involvement?
3. What was the organizational and demographic background of the participants?
4. What was the indigenous value structure and ideology of the participants?

Formal interviews provided most of the data collected. Former activists of the Civil Rights Movement were interviewed and participants were asked about current social economic status, age, race, organizational affiliation, amount of time of involvement, and other questions relating to their experience as a movement participant. Other data and materials were collected by the author during his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. Some of this material has never been published previously.

Two principal perspectives were used interchangeably to facilitate an investigation of the Civil Rights Movement, the movement activists, and the various indigenous national and local organizations that played a significant role within the Civil Rights Movement.

The following groups or organizations are examined in this study: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Urban League, Highland Folk Center (HFC), Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Council of Federated Organizations (COFO, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). In addition to these groups the many local organizations that received minor attention in today's historical literature will be used. These smaller and less known organizations helped buttress the Civil Rights Movement particularly in the areas in which they were located.

While the Civil Rights Movement consisted of many organizations, the movement carried on in the deep south was spearheaded, organized and directed by youth (Coles, 1972). For this reason this study places particular focus on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (of which the author was a member) with additional attention given to the Students for Democratic Society (SDS). These two organizations were made up primarily of college-age youths, who were anti-authoritarian, anti-bureaucratic, and secular in their orientation. The SNCC was multiracial; the SDS was predominantly white. A contrast of these two organizations provides a better understanding of the movement participants.

SNCC was selected because it was on the cutting edge of the Civil Rights Movement and had the ability to organize indigenous movements

among college students, high school students,and sharecroppers and farmers. It could also refocus the Civil Rights Movement by raising internal contradictions in the social, legal, and political systems and in the public arena. Moreover, it was related to the Students for Democratic Society (SDS) and the peace movement. The SDS was selected because it was an organization of predominantly white activists and because its civil rights orientation was gained primarily by its close association with SNCC. Tom Hayden, one of the founders and key architects of SDS, frequently visited SNCC activists in southern project areas. A number of SNCC workers including Casey Hayden (Tom's wife and a SNCC's field secretary), Betty Garmon, Jim Monsonis, Bob Zellmer, and Marie Varela played significant roles in the SDS. (Several SNCC members attended the 1962 SDS Convention where the Port Huron Declaration was drafted.) SDS also launched an Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) using many of SNCC's techniques that had been developed in the deep south.

This study seeks to eliminate at least three myths which have permeated the analyses of the Civil Rights Movement. The first myth is derived from an incorrect view of the movement as a monolith. Such a concept often leads a student of history away from the participating organizations, which created tensions and orientations of the participants. It encouraged historians to view the movement as one-dimensional, consisting exclusively of the activities of Dr. Martin Luther King and the SCLC. A study of the movement from this perspective causes many invalid conclusions about its nature and the significance of its many

heroes. Himes (1980) stated that in its basic sense a social movement is conceptualized as an inclusive organization of an indefinite number of individuals and groups engaged in advancing or preventing social change. The Civil Rights Movement's basic constituents include numbers of groups and associations of various kinds and sizes.

The second myth, generated by both local and national agencies and people who represented the status quo, concerns the background and attitudes of those who participated in the Civil Rights Movement and its character. The data and information collected during this study should support the notion that forms of social activity, rebellion characterized by resistance which challenge the status quo, are a positive tool for social change.

The third myth to be challenged is that the movement participants were outcasts, criminals, cadge and the like. The study should assist students of history and social researchers to be more analytical and conscious of the contributions and expertise of those heroes, young men and women of a generation past, who actively participated in the Civil Rights Movement.

Morris (1984), author of The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, stated that social scientists for too long have portrayed the masses (movement participants) as a flock of sheep reacting blindly to uncontrollable forces. He suggested that such a stereotype discounts the complex decision-making and action undertaken by ordinary participants in the course of a social movement and robs the masses of the creativity and courage they often show.

Significance of the Study

The study should unmask the traditional rules and roles and provide insight for students and researchers interested in an analysis of social change and social movements. The study also focuses on the way in which participants sustained themselves within the Civil Rights Movement. Any movement is ultimately made up of living breathing people, and "they traditionally must experience gratification from participating in the movement if they are to continue their support and involvement" (Turner & Killian, 1972, p. 361).

The Civil Rights Movement consisted of diverse participants. College students and young people dominated the Civil Rights Movement during the direct action and protest stages. These experiences propelled many activists on to other intellectual and humanistic pursuits in their communities and their professions or careers. Others in the clergy, farmers, sharecroppers, lawyers and social workers contributed to the success of the movement, but the common element of the movement participants was that they were young black college-age men and women who had a mission to transform America into a society that could live up to its principals of justice, equality and peace. One reason for the involvement of large numbers of students was that college students were mature enough to leave home and develop their own attitudes; yet, young enough to be spared the heavy social and economic responsibilities of parenthood while granted the flexibility and mobility to go into "hot beds of injustice, racial disharmony and violence."

Finally, this study will offer a basis for future studies about the positive contribution made by the Civil Rights Movement and

specifically the unsung heroes of the movement--both male and female. This study attempts to provide another perspective from which the importance of education, specifically humanistic education, could be viewed. This study also validates the importance of the culturally identifiable college and the college student and the potential for the integration of education and activism. Activism in the context of the movement should be associated with "social excellence." Many of the activists were excellent students; their activity contributed to the development of positive self-esteem, pride in themselves, and a willingness to make their community and the world a better place in which to live.

As one of those idealistic youths who made the moral commitment to changing the systems of racial discrimination so that America could live up to its claim of "Equality and Justice for All," this author now looks back 25 years to analyze this dynamic Civil Rights Movement with its sit-ins, freedom rides, and other events.

# CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several schools of thought exist on when the movement began. A common view is that they were a spontaneous collegiate phenomenon; (Lomax, 1963), however, evidence to the contrary is abundant. Sociologists (Geschwerder, 1971; Smelser, 1963) argue that preconditions, causal factors, and participants existed prior to the emergence of the movement and that these provided the spark that ignited it (Morris, 1984). One possible explanation of this selective participation and protest action (sit-ins) can be attributed to what sociologists called the "theory of rising expectation" (Brinton, 1938; Edwards, 1927; Geschwerder, 1968; Thomas, 1974). Thomas defined this theory as the promise by the status quo, of desegregation but in reality the continuation of tokenism. The theory of rising expectation argues that if people of long-term poverty or disenfranchisement are subject to heightened aspirations, due to fulfillment of some of their goals, they then become dissatisfied with gradual change and will seek much quicker resolution to the problem of inequity. It is believed that President Kennedy's 1960 election and the 1954 Supreme Court decisions are but two events which contributed to rising expectations in the black community (Blair, 1960; Wilkins, 1982).

A second theory as to what precipitated the student activism is referred to by some sociologists as "societal inadequacies." This

theory focuses on the failures of institutions to function on behalf of a specific (often racially or ethnically defined) individual or group of people. It is precipitated by social unrest caused by the imperfect integration of social systems. The passage of the 1957 Civil Rights Bills, the Interstate Commerce Commission ruling on the integration of interstate facilities and the lack of specific plans to integrate the school systems, as well as the high rate of unemployment are examples that lend support to this theory.

The third theory profferred by sociologists as a basis for student protest activities is that of relative deprivation (Geschwender & Geschwender, 1973; Lang & Lang, 1961). This theory proposes that black people's perception of white life has led to dissatisfaction with their own rate of development. Its application presents the concept that the more blacks gain, the wider the gap between blacks and whites appears.

A more direct and specific example of the theory of relative deprivation could be shown with the study of educational attainment and median income of blacks and whites. Blacks sought middle-class status through a college education. From 1940 to 1960, the educational attainment level of blacks increased by 2.5% from 5.7% in 1940 to 8.2% in 1960. During the same period the educational attainment level of whites increases from 8.8% in 1940 to 10.9% in 1960. Because income is closely linked to education it is assumed that an increase in educational attainment would indicate an increase in income. The income figures from this period indicate that the higher the educational

attainment of the black head of the household, the greater the difference in white and black median income (see Table 1).

Table 1

Black and White Median Income in Relation to Years of School Completed

| | | Black | White |
|---|---|---|---|
| Median Income | 1940 | $3,337 | $5,845 |
| | 1960 | $4,931 | $9,547 |
| Years of School | 1970 | 10.8 | 12.2 |
| | 1980 | 12.9 | 12.4 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

The fact that increasing education does not have the same income return for blacks as for whites is one reason why a feeling of relative deprivation among blacks exist.

Smelser (1963) developed four causal factors that are germane for social movements: 1) adequate motivation--such as frustration generated by intense repression; 2) rising expectation--the belief in the possibility of change if power resources are available; 3) organization equipment in place--such as resources, administration, ability to publish and communicate with masses; 4) tactical devices developed--to confront the system that protects the correct status.

Smelser's (1963) value-added logic states that earlier stages and factors must combine according to a definite pattern before the next stages can emerge and contribute to the process and social movement. Adequate motivation must be sufficient before the organizational

equipment is put in place. Tactical devices like nonviolent direct action, public accommodation testing, and boycotts must be developed before the movement can have an impact or bring about the desired effect.

Some historians and writers have suggested a moral basis for the protest movement. Most of the student activists of the 1960s had a moral perspective regarding the condition of blacks in the South. They considered racial discrimination morally wrong and the system that supported it unjust and evil. These students felt a moral obligation to develop the initiative to eliminate racial discrimination in the line with Christian ideal of eliminating "sin" (Cohen & Hale, 1966). Chuck McDew, a former SNCC Chairman, in answer to the question: "What is the nature of our opposition? stated, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the ruler of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. The nonviolent struggle challenges us to live out the "Golden Rule" (Cohen & Hale, 1966). Many of the student activists embraced this basic philosophical belief. They joined in the protest as if they were on a divine mission.

Finally, economic impoverishment provides yet another possible explanation. However, this does not provide the impetus that the Neo-Marxist would lead one to believe. Economics, characterized by the black "peasants" in Mississippi and other rural areas of the South, raises a severe contradiction in light of the fact that these people live in the "richest" country in the world. Poor housing, high unemployment, lack of vocational skills, job discrimination, lack of educational opportunities all contributed to the economic disaster that existed within the black community in the South.

Sociologists (Coleman, 1957; Lenski, 1954) have used a combination of these factors to put in place a comprehensive perspective on preconditions and circumstances that can cause social movements to ignite. Sociologist Robin Williams (1971) listed six preconditions that are necessary for the social movement to emerge:

1. A high level of intragroup communication resulting in a widely shared and intense sense of collective rate among the potential movement participants.
2. A recent history of rapidly rising aspirations.
3. A strong sense of legitimacy of these aspirations.
4. A strong sense of the arbitrary or immoral character or the blockage to aspirations.
5. The awareness of power or potential power of the minority in the political arena.
6. Failure of the dominant grouping to enact realistic action to remove the basic source of grievance from the minority population. (p. 21)

Preconditions alone are not sufficient to explain the emergence of social movements. Geschwender and Geschwender (1968) concluded

that the relative deprivation hypothesis was confirmed as the prime motivational force. However, other factors led to the polarization of actors and to social conflict.

Smelser's (1963) racial conflict theory suggests that the traditional racial structure was the initial and underlying factor that created and accelerated the climate for protest. The genesis of the modern racial conflict coincides with the emergence of new forces and patterns that exist outside the status quo. The structural barriers between these factors act as the conflict motivation. In this connection Himes (1973) listed six developments that appear decisive:

1. Forging a unified common interest. Black masses agreed on nonviolent direct action, desegregation of public facilities, schools and the right to vote. These issues united conservative and radical groups in the black community.

2. Spread of the belief that change through self-help is possible. The Montgomery bus boycott and Greensboro sit-ins are examples.

3. The rising level of aspiration among black people, demonstrated by the sit-ins and the masses of local people in voter registration campaigns.

4. The availability of resources that could be expanded in conflict.

5. The growing willingness to accept risk of conflict. The "Jail no Bail" tactic and involvement in the nonviolent direct action campaign are examples.

6. Stabilization of a conflict ideology. (p. 12)

Himes (1973) concluded that racial conflict tends to enhance the general social system as opposed to leading to its destruction. He suggested that two respectable sociological traditions regarding racial conflict are in fact relevant. The first tradition says that

social conflict is seen as a universal, natural, and socializing process. The second suggests that social conflict is conceptualized in social functional terms. Within these two conceptual traditions, conflict is defined as a direct conscious and personal process of intermittent struggle for social status and its correlates good; it is also seen as one of the possible social consequences of specific structural conditions.

Searles and Williams (1962), in answer to the question, "Why do students protest?", stated that:

> Students [are] socialized to value respectability and achievement, educated to affirm their rights of equal opportunity, legitimized in their expectation by Civil Rights Legislation and an important body of opinion, living in a college environment where freedom from constraints and ease of communication facilitates the development and spread of protest as an acceptable means of demonstrating their anger at barriers to first-clad citizenship. Far from being alienated, the student appears to be committed to the society and its middle-class leaders. (p. 219)

The causal factors and preconditions of the Civil Rights Movement follow the course outlined by the social scientists but go further to encompass the philosophical belief in the Judeo-Christian ethic which makes each man equal, based on the divine affirmation. During the sit-ins, McDew (quoted in Cohen & Hale, 1966) wrote: "The present system (racial discrimination and segregation) is an affront to the Judeo-Christian doctrine of man. The affirmation that God created man in his own image (Genesis 1:27) and that "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7) declares the foundation of belief in the dignity of all men.

The Civil Rights Movement was essentially a bid for power and privilege within the context of the American social system (Burger, 1970). Initial courage and the ability to stand up to intimidation and coercion and a historical destiny were the compelling forces of the movement. Studies by Thomas (1974), Marx (1967), and Pinard, Kirk, and Von Eschen (1971) provide some insights about the economic background, the social status, and the religious orientation of Civil Rights Movement participants. Pinard, Kirk, and Von Eschen's (1971) study focused on the five to six hundred members of CORE and other civil rights organizations who staged demonstrations at eating places along U.S. Route 40 between Baltimore, Maryland and Wilmington, Delaware. This study found that the participants of CORE and the other civil rights organizations came from families with high incomes and were mostly college students or former college students. The study also found that those participants who came from relatively low socio-economic backgrounds joined the sit-ins late in the campaign, even though they appeared to be more active than persons from higher-income families. A few of the participants came from the working class or the most deprived segment of the population.

In order to be a contributing participant in a social movement, a person must have a clear set of beliefs or believe firmly in the ideology of the social movement. The more complex the form of participation, the stronger the belief must be. Many black college students of the early 1960s, who tended to be one of the more upwardly mobile segments of the black community, thought that the expansion of employment opportunities for blacks was an important goal of the Civil Rights

Movement and joined the movement when confronted with limits on their own mobility. Pinard, Kirk, and Von Eschen (1971) concluded that what prevented those affected most by socioeconomic deprivation from being earlier participants of the Civil Rights Movement was their ability to transfer their grievances into political terms. It was found that most participants that were from relatively low socioeconomic status tended to fall into one of five categories: (a) they were unable to develop an ideology; (b) they had taken a position of resignation; (c) they had decided to withdraw from the issues; (d) they felt a sense of hopelessness; (e) they had reached a point of retreat or total alienation. Such attitudes grow out of a long-lasting deprivation which prevented the persons in the group from joining the movement until the movement had proven that it would or could impact upon their condition. Lenski (1966) suggested that status inconsistency can lead people to support liberal and radical movements. This theory holds true as far as black participants were concerned.

In the case of white participants, their relationships suggest that the displacement hypothesis, the feeling of unjust treatment, leads many of the white participants to help others in similar conditions or change the system. Many of the white participants developed a feeling of unjust treatment on the part of society relative to the conditions of blacks in the rural South. Subsequently, these individuals made an effort to assist the movement in changing either those conditions or changing the system itself.

Matthews and Prothro (1969) found that black students from lower socioeconomic classes were less likely to participate in the sit-in movement than others. These conclusions strongly challenge the claims that the isolated and alienated are the prime recruits of social movements. "Long-continued frustration characteristically leads to hopelessness and preoccupation with the immediate and momentary survival which mitigates against participating in reform [or] Social Movement" (p. 247). Searles and Williams (1962) suggested that when college students are socialized to value respectability and achievement, educated to affirm their rights of equal opportunity, legitimized in their expectations by civil rights legislations and an important body of opinion, and living in a college environment where freedom from constraints and ease of communications facilitates the development and spread of protest activities, these students will select nonviolent protests as an acceptable means of demonstrating their anger. Little is known about the mechanism that initially inhibits the recruitment of those permanently deprived. Lipset's (1960) idea was that lower status people will always choose the least complex form of politics (Social Force, 1962, pp. 219).

The National Opinion Research Center study by the University of Chicago, analyzed by Orum and Orum (1972), found that (a) economic impoverishment, (b) rising expectations, and (c) relative deprivation were at the core of the reasons why students protested. The study also found that freshmen and black male students with high career aspirations were more apt to participate in the protest event. According to

Orum and Orum, persons from this socioeconomic group viewed protesting as an opportunity to get better jobs in less restrictive areas. Rising expectations were viewed as another reason for black student participation in protest. The study postulated that if people of long-standing impoverishment are subject to heightened aspirations due to partial fulfillment of certain goals, then they will become dissatisfied with gradual improvement and will seek to channel their energies into a social movement. The study concluded that discontent may occur among people who evaluate their achievements by reference to the standards and accomplishments of some similarly situated person. There are those, however, who would argue that ideology, religion, theology, moral commitment, faith, or some other philosophy were at the core of the factors that motivated the students to protest.

Studies (Geschwander, 1971; Mathews & Prothro, 1969; Searles, & Williams, 1962) have found that participants in the Civil Rights Movement generally came from families with high incomes and were better educated than nonparticipants. These findings apply to nonviolent protests, campus boycotts, or direct-action protest. Two theories, "rising expectations" and "relative deprivation" support the findings that participants come from high-income families and are better educated. The relative deprivation hypothesis asserts that when people have gained enough to realistically hope for more, barriers to future movement will be felt as severely frustrating (Geschwender, 1971). Militancy represents aspirations for rising socioeconomic mobility and acceptance of the standards of achievements and rewards of the white middle-class population.

Increased similarities of blacks and whites in education, income and occupation, facilitate comparisons in growth of convictions that equality of public life is preserved. Major legal changes for more than two decades have increasingly reinforced the legitimacy of black aspirations. During the 1950s and 1960s racial income discrimination in the United States, and especially in the South, was blatant and institutional. When a black family or person obtained a high income level (substantially lower than that of the white family providing the same or similar expected services), expectations for a better quality of life were not met. The family would most likely live in a segregated neighborhood, the children would attend segregated schools, and most of the black citizens of the community would remain disinfranchised and outside of mainstream America.

Marx (1967) initiated a study into the relationship between religion and the Civil Rights Movement. The study sought to examine how religious denominations affected militancy and the relationship of religiousity to the civil rights concerns. Marx's nationwide study of blacks living in metropolitan areas found that those belonging to sects are the least likely to be militant; those in predominantly black denominations are marginally militant and those individuals belonging to white denominations (Episcopalian, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ or Roman Catholic) are those most likely to be militant. These findings were evident in spite of the greater civil rights activism of the black denominations and when social classes were held constant. The study found that 46% of the Episcopalians were considered militant.

This denomination was the one that indicated the highest level of militancy within its ranks. Marx (1967) also found that religiousity and militancy were related to age, sex, and education as well as religious denomination. He concluded that an older, less educated southern woman within a black denomination was more likely to be religious and to have a lower tendency toward militancy, and that a person with a temporal orientation would be expected to have a high tendency toward militancy.

Thomas (1974) did a study on militant attitudes and their relationship to educational performance, intelligence, and family status. Thomas started from the premise that the higher the educational attainment of the head of the black family, the greater the difference in white and black median income. Secondly, she surmised that increasing education does not have the same income return for blacks as it does for whites. Thomas' study of students focused on black women attending senior high school in Richmond, California. Thomas found that the feelings toward black militancy are related to their educational performance on standard mathematics and English tests. The higher the educational attainment, the greater tne militancy. Intelligence was measured by the Herman Nelson Intelligence Test. Attitudes toward black militancy were measured by the response to a survey questionnaire which included these questions: (1) how do you feel about keeping all whites out of black organizations? (2) how do you feel about getting all blacks to take the same stand? (3) how do you feel about improving attitudes and conditions in the black community?. At the conclusion of the study, Thomas observed that the vast majority of women were

not militant in their response. Better students were more militant. This conclusion supports the relative deprivation hypothesis. A person whose abilities are relatively high knows that those abilities ought to be rewarded by society, but does not anticipate that society will deal justly unless direct militant action is taken. The study also observed that the higher intelligence the student has, the greater the militancy. The study found that performance status was not related to militancy as expected. Thomas thought that education and performance were an interfering variable which worked against a positive relationship between family status and militancy in her sample. The study showed, however, that educational performance by itself, independent of intelligence, acts to affect student militancy. The better the educational performance, the more militant the student. The main thrust of the study was that the black militant woman was a person of relatively high educational performance, relatively high intelligence, and was from a relatively high status family.

Searles and Williams' (1962) study of black college students found that expressions of militancy were greatest among those of higher backgrounds and those who participated more fully in extracurricular activities. In a study by Matthews and Prothro (1969) civil rights activism was found to be greater among relatively more privileged students from the better black colleges and among those raised in urban areas, and those best informed and most in touch with the mass media. These studies together give an excellent profile of the characteristic personality and economic and social status of the black activist who was involved in the modern Civil Rights Movement.

Most of the past sociological research dealing with black militancy is generally consistent with the results reported here. A study by James Forman (1972) on the two most important militant civil rights organizations, CORE and SNCC, indicates that in spite of their anti-bourgeois emphasis the members were disproportionally middle class, young, and female.

Charles Frankel in his speech to the Foreign Policy Association (1978) said that the idea that human beings have rights to which they are entitled against every government on earth has an ancient pedigree. Judeo-Christian tradition holds that every individual is created in God's image. The philosophy of the Roman Stoics holds that every soul has a spark of the Divine Fire and that whatever distinction society might make between individuals in nature, they are in fact equal. This statement and idea seem to lend credence to the proposition that there was a linkage and comraderie among the black and white college students who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. That linkage was based on the belief that people regardless of race, sex, or origin are essentially the same. The struggle for human dignity and freedom has, at it base, a common universal concern which eminates from the will and spirit of people.

# CHAPTER III

## HISTORIC EVENTS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Several events led to the development of the modern Civil Rights Movement. First, there was the 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Board of Education which held "that separate but equal" was no longer the law of the land. The 1957 Little Rock efforts to implement school desegregation featured high school students as participant protesters. Second, during the Korean conflict black men fought on the battlefields of Korea for democracy and independence, naturally creating in them a similar desire for equal opportunities and desegregation when they returned to the United States of America. Third, random, violent, and overt oppression of blacks in the South continued, especially in Mississippi, and specifically, the murder of Emmett Till by the KKK. This murder was important because of the national exposure it received in the popular black magazine, JET, and because Emmett Till was someone with whom many blacks, especially youths, could readily identify. Fourth, Ghana (the former British colony called the Gold Coast) won independence in 1957. Led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, this helped blacks immensely to crystalize the one-man, one-vote concept. Dr. Nkrumah had been a student in the United States at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania before returning to Ghana to organize and lead its freedom and independence. Fifth, the Montgomery bus boycott strengthened the new concept that blacks, if organized and united, could bring about

social change through the tactics of nonviolent direct action and selective boycott. Direct action protest spawned by the bus boycott ended the years of "legalism" as the primary tactic for fighting segregation and discrimination. The next event was the emergence of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from the successful Montgomery bus boycott with Dr. Martin Luther King (27 years old at the time) as its president and charismatic leader. Finally, the development of new technology, specifically television, allowed communication to be transmitted to all parts of the world in a flash. These isolated events, while taken separately and isolated, have limited proracial value, but put together, they take on a universal quality. These are the events that set in motion or created the climate for the emergence of the modern Civil Rights Movement.

Sit-Ins

The students who generated the sit-ins of the early 1960s displayed a new sense of courage as well as the ability to stand up to intimidation and coercion. They were continuing a tradition of protest represented by the slave revolts, the Garvey movement of the 1930s and the marches on Washington in 1941 and 1963. This tradition had been transmitted across the generations by older relatives, black educational institutions, churches and protest organizations (Morris, 1984). Blacks interested in social change inevitably gravitated to this protest community where they hoped to find solutions to a complex set of problems. Fitting solidly into this rich tradition of protest, the modern Civil Rights Movement emerged in the South where protest was and

remains firmly entrenched. Most slave revolts had occurred in the South and the majority of Garvey's organization branches were there (Martin, 1976).

Therefore, it came as no surprise when on February 1, 1960 four North Carolina A&T State University students "sat in" at the whites-only lunch counter at Greensboro Woolworth's to show their discontent with the Southern social order and racial bias. Rising expectations, adequate motivation, relative deprivation, the moral implication of racial discrimination, the willingness of students to accept the risk of conflict, economic impoverishment and political disfranchisement--all these were the causal factors that motivated the students to act. These factors existed in many communities throughout the South. In such areas where this presence resulted in protest action, the sit-ins sparked a series of demonstrations nationwide. The courage, vision, and determination of the sit-inners sparked an entire generation of struggle for equality, justice, freedom, and social change in America. This singular event, while not isolated from the bus boycott and the 1957 Little Rock school desegregation, marked the beginning of modern civil rights activism, societal confrontation, and social change that would continue for an entire decade.

Closer analysis of some of the specific preconditions which led to the Greensboro sit-in will provide a more specific correlation between the sociological theories and the actual historical development of the Civil Rights Movement.

1954 Brown Decision

The 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Board of Education is usually considered the major event that set in motion the belief that social change was universally possible. On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court decided the first of Brown vs. Board of Education (Brown 1). The decision held that segregation of white and black children in state public schools, solely on the basis of race, denied black children the equal protection rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. The court said "we conclude that in the field of public education that doctrine of separate but equal has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (p. 495). The court also found that the separation of black children from other children of similar age and qualification solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in an irreversible manner (p. 483). On May 31, 1955, Brown 2 was handed down, wherein the Supreme Court, in calling for implementation of Brown 1 ordered the federal district courts to handle all future desegregation cases in a manner consistent with the Brown 1. The Supreme Court in Brown 2 set out the following guidelines for deciding desegregation cases:

1. Local school authorities have primary responsibility for implementation.
2. The federal courts have the right to decide whether the local school board's response constituted good faith implementation.

3. The istrict ourt is guided by equitable principles "characterized by practical flexibility" (p. 294) in shaping remedies. In this respect the court cautioned that the principles of equal educational opportunities in Brown 1 were not to be yielded simply because of disagreement of that principle.
4. Although the district court was to take into account practical problems of implementation, they were to make sure that local school authorities were making a "prompt and reasonable start" (p. 295). The court further said that

> the judgment below, except in the Delaware case is accordingly reversed and the cases are remanded back to the district court to take such proceedings and enter such orders and decrees consistent with this opinion as are necessary and proper to admit to the public schools on a racially nondiscrimination basis with all deliberate speed to parties to these cases. (p. 301).

The Brown decisions and the cases that followed dealing with desegregation in colleges and graduate studies served as a watershed in developing and raising the expectations of many blacks across the South, the nation, and the world.

## Ghana's Independence

Ghana's independence also played a significant role in the development of the Civil Rights Movement. On March 6, 1957, Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) won its independence from British Colonial rule. Kwame Nkrumah who led Ghana to freedom and became its first Prime Minister, had been a student in the United States (Lincoln,

University Pennsylvania) where he had witnessed Jim Crow laws and segregation as well as the black protest movements of the 1940s and 1950s. Many civil rights figures (including Dr. Martin L. King, Ralph Buncne representing the NAACP, A. Phillip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell from Harlem, New York) were invited and attended Ghana's independence celebration.

As Prime Minister, Nkrumah provided Ghana with a sense of the neighborhood by submerging tribal identities, a sense of pride on the international scene, and a cohesion of purpose within Africa--namely, African unity. Nkrumah's major thesis centered around his belief that freedom-seeking people must "seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto it." The use of the terms, "one man, one vote" was one of the primary concepts used during the Positive Action Campaign prior to Ghana's independence. Nkrumah was not satisfied with Ghana's independence; he desired to spark the independence movement beyond Ghana. On the eve of Ghana's independence, he declared that the independence of Ghana was not meaningful unless it was linked to the total liberation of the Africa continent (Nkrumah, 1957).

Ghana became the champion of the idea of a United Africa. Ghana provided material aid to movements in other countries fighting for national independence. Between 1957 and 1960, 17 former European Colonies became new independent African States (Dei-Awang, 1968). These events were seen by blacks in America in the context of unity and pride, and they heightened the pressing demand for political

enfranchisement. If blacks could manage entire countries, why then were they not allowed their fundamental rights which were guaranteed by the United States Constitution and included the right to vote. Talcot Parsons observed that the emergence into independence of the sub-Saharan African nations changed the significance of the American race problem and provided a stimulus to the movement for racial equality in the United States (Dei-Awang, 1968).

## The Korean War

The Korean War was nestled within social protest of earlier years. In 1958, A. Phillip Randolph, Jr. formed the League for Non-violent Civil Disobedience Against Military Segregation. This group threatened to urge blacks to resist induction by civil disobedience unless segregation and discrimination in the armed forces were banned. A. Phillip Randolph, Jr. had been one of the black leaders who threatened to have a March on Washington to protest military segregation. In July 1948, President Harry Truman issued two executive orders. One dealt with discrimination in employment within the federal government and the other created a Presidential Commission to study the problem of "equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed services." The committee's report "Freedom to Serve," submitted to President Truman in 1950, was a major force in effecting the abolition of segregation and the reduction of discrimination in the armed service branches.

The Executive Orders came at the beginning of the Korean War in 1950 and, coupled with an immediate need for troops, were largely

responsible for desegregation in the Army. The Korean War was also characterized as a "fight for Democracy over Communist aggression." Many of the fighting units were integrated for the first time and a large number of blacks interpreted this interracial war for democracy as a sign that America's policies toward blacks were changing. Military experience contributed to the black soldier's rising expectations. At the conclusion of the Korean War conflict, there were many new benefits for the returning veterans. A new GI Bill provided veterans with home loans, educational benefits, and health services. Despite these changes, when black soldiers returned home from their tour of duty abroad, they found the social, economical and political conditions at home either the same or worse than they were before the war.

## The Murder of Emmett Till

The Southern cities even though holding tight to their identity as parts of the Confederacy and the cultural trappings that accompany Confederate history, were moving to develop greater heterogeneousness and mobility. The Southern cities' efforts to move toward a more cosmopolitan and sophisticated atmosphere and greater integration into national life mitigated against traditional southern patterns (Marx, 1980, p. 52). The one-party system, the relative absence of labor unions, ethnic and religious homogeneity and the one-community structural variables were seen to attract "favorable" interest from the military industrial complexes. The backdrop to this was their struggle to hold onto their legacy of segregation and slavery. The murder of Emmett Till in 1955 brought on a tidal wave of abhorrence, indignation,

and protests throughout the nation. This author living in South Carolina, at the time, was aroused by Emmett Till's murder which exemplified the inherent brutality, cruelty, and injustice that ran rampant and operated blatantly within the American society. The Emmett Till case was a prototype of radicalizing experiences that would mark the odyssey of black youth.

Emmett Till was a 13-year-old black youth from Chicago who usually spent his summers visiting his grandfather in Money, Mississippi. During his visit in July of 1955, Till allegedly whistled at a white woman. Two days after the incident the husband of the woman and his brother went to Till's grandfather's house and kidnapped Till. The men bludgeoned Till to death and threw the remains in the Tallahassee River. Emmett Till's badly beaten, mutilated and decomposed body was found later with a blacksmith's anvil tied around his ankle. The murder of Emmett Till was carried on the wire service and in the media around the world. A picture of Emmett Till's bloated body was shown in JET, a popular black weekly magazine. The murders, two white men, J. W. Milan and Roy Bryant, admitted assaulting Emmett Till but were never found guilty for the murder in a court of law. The brutal murder of Emmett Till provided adequate motivation for the development of social consciousness and anger necessary to resist random racial violence.

Emmett Till's murder was not an isolated incident. Even though by 1950 black people's level of tolerance of violence at the hand of whites had lowered considerably, the killings continued. On May 7, 1955,

the Reverend George W. Lee was shot and killed for refusing, under pressure, to take his name off the voter registration list in Mississippi. On August 13, 1955, a 63-year-old election campaign worker, Lamont Smith, was gunned down in broad daylight in front of the Humphrey County Courthouse after having worked to get the black voters out for an impending primary election. Other incidents of murder and lynching continued. Black youths were convinced that they would no longer allow these atrocities to occur without speaking out and denouncing this cancerous racism which was eating away at the foundation of the American social system. A groundswell of black protest activity followed after this chain of violence. The assaults provided adequate motivation for actions to end the series of meaningless killings.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

On December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks was arrested for violating the bus discrimination ordinance in Montgomery, Alabama. On December 5, 1955 the Montgomery Bus Boycott began and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., 26, a new Baptist minister in town, was elected President of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). A local group spearheaded the boycott. The MIA leadership was made up primarily of local ministers in Montgomery, Alabama. During that period MIA was responsible for generating resources, publicity and momentum to continue the boycott over the period of a year. The MIA was successful in keeping approximately 95% of the blacks in Montgomery from patronizing the bus service. Car pools were set up and other resources were developed to

assist blacks to get to and from work. On December 21, 1956, Montgomery buses were integrated by order of a local court and the MIA called off the 381-day boycott. The Montgomery Bus Boycott occurred during the advent of television and television news. The boycott was the first black protest movement activity that was shown on national television.

The first major consequence of the Montgomery Bus Boycott was the fact that the Montgomery Improvement Association was able to organize itself and get people to stay off buses for 381 days. Television inadvertently began to project the message across the county that a united black community could bring about social change. The Montgomery Bus Boycott effort also pointed out the ability of a movement to sustain itself over a long period of time and that blacks could in fact protest and win using a new method called "nonviolent direct action." The boycott provided organization and tactical strategies that were new to the black movement. The Montgomery black community began to understand itself as an independent economic force. The MIA possessed the ability to forge a unified common interest within the Montgomery black movement.

## The Nonviolent Direct Action Strategy

The final and major consequences of the Montgomery Bus Boycott was the emergence of Dr. Martin Luther King as a dynamic leader, not only of the black protest movement in Montgomery, Alabama, but of similar black protest movements across the South. Dr. King's involvement in the Montgomery movement led to the creation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The Montgomery Bus Boycott had

generated the belief that organized and united blacks could bring about social change through the tactic of nonviolent direct action and selective boycott.

Nonviolent direct action tactics did not originate in a post-1954 Civil Rights Movement. The tactics of civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action had first been initiated by the Congress of Racial Equality. During the 1950s the Fellowship of the Reconciliation (FOR), a pacifist organization in Chicago, authorized James Farmer, a Howard University theological student who had been hired as a race relations secretary, to organize the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Utilizing the techniques and methods of civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action of the great Indian pacifist leader, Ghandi, CORE sponsored with the FOR the Freedon Rides, called the "Journey of Reconciliation." Some years prior, the FOR had launched the first successful sit-ins at Jack Spratt's Coffee Shop in Chicago, Illinois. Both events utilized the tactics of nonviolent direct action.

Without regard to its origin, the concept of nonviolence became a tactical study that was found in future civil rights protests. On August 19, 1958, Barbara Ann Posey, a member of the Oklahoma City NAACP's Youth Council, initiated a sit-in at a local segregated facility that resulted in the desegregation of all but one of five stores selected for action. During this period, the consciousness of most "peasant" blacks of the South and students were not at the political level to respond. The white citizen councils and the KKK chapters appeared to evoke a climate of fear and violent opposition in the

South. But far more effective were the legal strategems, evasions, and delays in compliance to court rulings in desegregation efforts. The sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, came at the hour when the black college students were prepared to join in and create the kind of focus on racial segregation that lead to the mobilization of the black community in Greensboro and nationwide. A similar mobilization had not occurred since the 1920s with Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association Movement.

## The Spark at Greensboro

Within hours of the Greensboro sit-ins students from the predominantly black colleges and universities across the upper South began to organize similar activities in their communities. Early in February 1960, students from South Carolina State College in Orangeburg began training in the techniques of nonviolence. The teaching director was the Reverend Matthew McCollum, a friend of Dr. King's and one of the founding members of SCLC. McCollum insisted upon strict obedience to nonviolence:

> You may choose to make physical assault without protecting yourself, hands at the side, unclenched, or you may choose to protect yourself making plain you do not intend to hit back. If you choose to protect yourself, you practice the positions such as these.
>
> To protect the skull, fold hand over the head. To prevent disfigurement to the face, bring the elbows together in front of the eyes. For girls to prevent internal injuries from kicking, lie on the side and bring the knees up to the chin; the boys kneel down and arch with skull and face to protect it. (Zinn, 1963, pp. 23-24)

Five days after the sit-ins had begun in Greensboro, three Morehouse College students--Lonnie King, Julian Bond and Jill Pierce--met and decided to form the Atlanta Student Movement, hoping to get Morehouse and Atlanta University students involved in the protest movement in Atlanta. Some 500 students from Fisk University, Tennessee State University, Meharry Medical College, and the American Baptist Seminary also met February 7, 1960 on the Fisk University campus in Nashville, Tennessee. John Lewis, James Lawson, and Marion Barry assumed the leadership positions of the Nashville students that met. On February 10, 1960, 45 black students dressed in their Sunday best with books under their arms divided into three groups of 15. One group went to Woolworth's store, another to McCellan's department store and a third to Kress store.

Students from Fisk University, Vanderbilt University, and American Baptist Theological Seminary had tried sit-ins earlier in the fall of 1959, but even then the social and political milieu was not developed sufficiently to generate the response of the Greensboro sit-in. The wave of sit-ins spread across the east coast and the South, where predominantly black colleges and universities were located. The sit-ins spread to 15 southern cities in five states by February 16, 1960. It became clear that this technique was going to be adopted by civil rights activists (Sobel, 1967, p. 6).

Informal organizations to support students in their protest against segregation appeared in 21 northern colleges and universities including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Smith, and Bennington Colleges

(Sobel, 1967, pp. 7-8). This began the action on the part of the white students who organized sit-ins at the Woolworth, Kress, and other northern chain stores where segregated lunch counters appeared in support of the effort of the black students in the South (Marx, 1980, p. xi).

Students from Alabama State College staged the first Deep South sit-ins on February 28, 1960 in the Montgomery, Alabama, County Courthouse. This and the earlier efforts attracted national attention. At the National Urban League Conference in New York, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller called the sit-ins "an inspiring example to the nation." He further stated that the civil rights problems could be solved by "mild voices and appeal to human conscience personified by the young men and women who sit-in at the segregated lunch counters" (New York Times, April 13, 1960).

## A View From Within

Students from all over the South became involved in the sit-ins. In rural Denmark, South Carolina, the students at Voorhees High School and Junior College (a black private Episcopal high school and junior college) became involved in the sit-ins. This author was 15-years-old and remembers vividly the college students lining up in their Sunday suits, white shirts, and ties, and the young women in their high-heeled shoes and stockings marching the three dusty miles from the campus to the drugstore downtown. It was an impressive sight as the roadway was full of black spectators watching these youngsters "march for freedom." This act of courage and defiance acted as a catalyst for the author.

This author had grown up in Denmark, South Carolina, population 3,000, with a rigid segregation policy. There was little association between the races except to purchase items downtown, and even then, blacks could not try on clothing prior to purchasing them in the local department stores. Denmark was a dairy and farming community and had a unique education arrangement. Rather than build a public high school for blacks, the county paid tuition for all black high school students to attend Voorhees High School. Voorhees High and Junior College had a traditional curriculum built around the philosophy of Booker T. Washington. Voorhees College had a farm that many students worked on as part of their work aid; it provided a liberal education with the self-help and uplift concept found in many of the private black educa- colleges. These institutions saw their role as providing an academic and intellectual vehicle or framework for black students so they would become proficient and productive members of society. A college tion was for black students a passport to middle-class structure. Black students were taught the importance of setting goals as well as the importance of being conscious about how they relate to their fellow man (humanity).

Prior to the sit-ins, two important experiences made this author conscious of the deadly effects of facism and racial oppression. The first appeared in a South Carolina history textbook. Though the book was 18-years-old at the time, it was used in the classroom; it was the standard history book used in black schools. This book explained the

Reconstruction period after the Civil War with the following words:

> The greatest problem facing the state was the sudden freeing of the Negroes. The sudden freeing of the Negroes would have brought serious problems even without the evil influence of the Carpetbaggers. There were more Negroes than whites in the state. The Negroes were uneducated. They had no knowledge of government. They did not know how to make a living without the supervision of the white man. They were so accustomed to being taken care of that they had no idea how to behave under freedom. They stole cattle and chickens and hogs, burned barns and stables. They were not willing to work. They were like children playing hookey, the moment the teacher's back was turned.

Oliphant (1940) stated:

> There were so many more Negroes than whites [in South Carolina] that they would have been in control if they had been allowed to vote. They had nearly ruined the state during the years they voted. The whites were determined that this should not happen again. Regulations were made which prevented the Negroes from voting, and to this day, South Carolina has had a white man's government. The welfare of two races living in one small state is a problem you will have to face when you become citizens. (p. 265)

The author further described the Reconstruction Period as "the State's Darkest Day." A concluding section called "Fighting Fire with Fire" reads:

> With the arming of the Negroes, crime increased greatly. Houses were burned, women were insulted on the streets, white men were arrested on slender excuses, murders and burglaries were frequent. Faced with these terrible conditions, South Carolinians banded together and formed the Ku Klux Klan. Whenever the Negroes gave trouble, the Ku Klux Klan dressed in long white robes and caps and mounted on fast horses, galloped through the darkness, frightening the superstitous blacks into submission. (Oliphant, 1940, pp. 257-258)

These are examples of the educational material available under "the separate but equal" dual public education systems. The overtly racist nature of the material created the social context for whites to

to justify the social inequality of the blacks. As blacks, we never believed for one moment that these texts and negative depictions of blacks were valid or truthful in any respect; our teachers, even though a part of the school system, never for one moment allowed us to view ourselves in the manner depicted in the book. If anything, these types of materials created in many of us a social consciousness and the will to succeed.

The next devastating experience for this author was the murder of Emmett Till. There was something about the cold-blooded callousness of Emmett Till's lynching that touched everyone in my community. We had all heard atrocity accounts before, but there was something special about this one. For weeks after it happened, people continued to discuss it. It was impossible to go into a barber shop or corner grocery without hearing someone deploring Emmett Till's lynching.

We even discussed it in school. Our teachers were just as upset as we were. They did not try to distort the truth by telling us that Emmett Till's murder was an isolated event that could only have taken place in Mississippi or Alabama. Although they did not come right out and say it, we understood that our teachers held the South's racist legal system in the same low regard as we did. That was one of the good things about the all-black schools; they were liberal and open and were free to discuss many events that would have been taboo in an integrated school.

When the sit-ins began, this author was more than ready to join in and fight for political rights, freedom of choice, and social

justice. McDew captured the essence of our involvement in the sit-ins when he stated:

> They think of us as ignorant--and we display a level of intelligence that few of them practice. They think of us as slovenly, unkempt, and boorish, and we marched among them well-groomed and in quiet dignity. They think of us as irresponsible--and we shout that we are willing to go to jail if we violate any laws in our campaign of civil disobedience. (Cohen & Hale, 1966).

## The Movement Expands: Students Consolidate Gains

With the wave of sit-ins spreading across the South and East, the student activism reached a crescendo. Ella Jo Baker, Executive Director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a heroine of the movement, who became known as the "mother" of the new student movement, persuaded Dr. King to finance a conference for student activists. Ms. Baker "initiated the plan to bring student activists together because she recognized that many black students had little preparation for the leadership role suddenly thrust upon them (Carson, 1981, p. 19). But Ms. Baker fundamentally disagreed with SCLC's perspective on leadership. She believed in strong decentralized local leadership (Forman, 1974). In April 1960, Easter weekend, the conference was convened at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. More than 300 student activists attended, representing 55 colleges in the South, 50 southern communities, and 12 southern states. Nineteen schools from the North were represented and 13 observing organizations were also represented, including SCLD, NAACP, CORE, YWCA, and the National Student Association (NSA).

The mood of the students was reflected in a newsletter by the students of Barber Scotia College in Concord, North Carolina. The newsletter stated:

> We want the world to know that we no longer accept the inferior position of second-class citizenship. We are willing to go to jail, be ridiculed, spat upon, and suffer physical violence to obtain first-class citizenship. (Forman, 1972).

Students were prepared to endure the possible suffering and potential iolence in order to bring about a change in their sociopolitical status.

Ms. Baker, writing in the Southern Patriot in May 1960, described the movement's objectives and the conference's significance:

> The student leadership conference made it crystal clear that current sit-ins and other demonstrations are concerned with something much bigger than a hamburger or even a giant-sized coke. By and large this feeling that students had a destiny date with freedom was not limited to a drive for personal freedom or even freedom for the Negro in the South. Repeatedly it emphasized that the movement was concerned with universal value.

Although a clear target for the movement was racial discrimination, the paramount concern was the moral implications of that discrimination. The representatives at the Raleigh conference decided to form a non-aligned temporary Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC would act primarily as a coordinating agency for the southern protest groups and would meet each month. The students resisted efforts on the part of CORE, Dr. Martin L. King and the black ministers associated with him to have their group aligned with the more established organization for the traditional "Negro" leadership. Although the students respected Dr. King, they disliked his tendency to merge his

religious and political roles. The students vigorously resisted all efforts to "subvert their autonomy" (Carson, 1980, p. 19). Julian Bond explained the reasons:

> We resisted the affiliation requests of the older organizations partly because of Ms. Baker's feeling that we didn't need to become part of an existing organization, and partly because it was very heady stuff for young people 17 and 18 years old to be running their own political organization. We were running our own little group. We had our own office, bank account, and made our own decisions. (Personal communication with Julian Bond)

In May 1960, a meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was held at Mount Moriah Baptist Church near the campus of the Atlanta University complex. Marion Berry, a native Mississippian and student leader in Nashville, was elected the first chairman of SNCC. Jane Stembridge, the daughter of a white Baptist minister from Virginia and a divinity student at Union Theological Seminary, was appointed administrative secretary. A limited program of intergroup communication between protest groups (Nashville, Atlanta, Washington, etc) was decided upon. It was also decided that the group would provide testimony on the issue of desegregation to both the Democratic and Republican platform committees. Before adjourning the Mount Moriah conference, the students adopted a one-page idealistic statement of purpose:

> 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 Judeo-Christian tradition seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step toward 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 supersedes systems of gross social immorality.
>
> By appealing to the conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities. (Sellers, 1973, p. 39)

This statement drafted by James Lawson, a divinity student at Vanderbilt University, in Nashville pointed out the similariaties and common philosophical orientation among civil rights organizations, especially the nonviolent direct-action organizations: SNCC, CORE, and SCLC. But throughout the history of the movement, confrontational and violent experiences often led movement participants to doubt and question their commitment to the idealism of nonviolent direct action.

Lawson, the architect of the statement of purpose, had been expelled from the Vanderbilt School of Theology for his involvement in the sit-ins. During the early 1950s Lawson was a draft resister and served three years in India as a missionary, after being paroled to the Methodist Board of Missions for refusing induction into the United States Armed Services. While in India, Lawson was able to study Mahatma Ghandi's use of nonviolence as a method to bring about social change. Lawson had also been the first Southern Field Secretary for FOR. His experiences as a community organizer and student leader, coupled with his knowledge of the philosophical and practical application of nonviolent direct action, elevated Lawson to the position of being one of the most influential people at the conference where SNCC

was formed. As the first speaker at the conference, Lawson opened with a blast against the leadership of the NAACP. Lawson denounced Crisis as a magazine for a "black bourgeoisie club" and the NAACP organization for its failure to mobilize the black rank and file in the fight for freedom and justice (New York Times, April 17, 1960). In July 1960, Marion Barry and three other SNCC representatives traveled to Los Angeles to speak before the Democratic National Convention's platform committee. The goal was that they wanted the nation to know that if any decisions were made about the sit-in movement, the students had to be taken into consideration (Sellers, 1973).

> We want them to know that we were the ones who were sittin in and causing all the trouble, that we were the ones getting arrested and running the boycotts. (p. 40)

Julian Bond said:

> Barry's comments before the platform committee reflected the combination of indignation and "poetic freshness" that characterized that stage of the student movement. (Sellars, 1973, p. 52)

The speech read:

> . . . the ache of every man to touch his potential is the throb that beats out the truth of the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. America was founded because men were seeking first room . . . . We want to walk into the sun through the front door. For three hundred and fifty years, the American Negro has been sent to the back door. (Barry, unpublished, 1960)

During the fall of 1960, the student leaders sought to consolidate the student protest movement by establishing a permanent organizational structure. SNCC made the coordinating committee the central committee. The membership was small. Most of its members believed in the principle of nonviolence as a practical consideration. They

believed that nonviolence involved action (Carson, 1980, p. 274) and passive resistance was seen as being aggressive (Forman, 1972). They were against establishing a traditional bureaucratic civil rights organization. They wanted the "people" involved in making decisions about what the organization should look like as well as giving it direction, and setting goals and objectives. There was a strong sense of moral legitimacy in what SNCC was doing. The sentiment within the group, while being antiauthority and antibureaucratic, was also humanistic, democratic, and altruistic.

During the next months SNCC continued to be involved with campus protest organizations. At Southern University when students persisted in demonstrating against segregation at public facilities in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the University administrators closed the school. The administrators ordered buses to transport the students home, and ended the school year early to avoid having their students participate. This kind of administrative reaction caused SNCC to encourage college students to raise the question of the role of the black colleges in issues that affected the immediate black community surrounding the colleges. There was a concerted effort and consciousness among SNCC members to maintain the level of political consciousness currently resulting from the sit-ins and subsequent demonstrations.

During this same period, CORE, under the direction of James Farmer, moved forward with its Freedom Rides program which had first been utilized by FOR in 1947. The Freedom Rides were to begin in a northern city and move throughout the South, stopping and testing

interstate laws on public accommodations. SNCC members joined the Freedom Rides. A mob burned a Freedom Rider bus outside Anniston, Alabama, and riders aboard a second bus were brutally beaten in Birmingham. Another group of Freedom Riders was beaten at the Montgomery terminal. The bus left Montgomery under National Guard protection and the riders were imprisoned upon arrival in Jackson, Mississippi. The wanton and vicious attack on the Freedom Riders caused CORE to reassess whether to continue the Freedom Rides. The toll in terms of injuries and legal fees was high. CORE, after a careful assessment and the intervention of the federal government, decided not to continue the rides. The Freedom Rides, though short-lived, proved to be a watershed in terms of the movement's tactical development. Thomas Kahn, a Howard University student activist, wrote on the significance of the Freedom Rides:

> The problem is: we are achieving the declared goals of liberalism but we are not doing it in the liberal way. Even more than the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides were disruptive of the conventional liberal mentality. On the emotional level, the violence in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama much more than the cumulative violence absorbed by sit-inners, deeply disquieted the world of liberal unviolence. (Hilltop News)

The Freedom Riders generated such an overtly violent reaction that both movement activists and federal officials had misgiving and doubts about their effectiveness and results. The Nashville SNCC group, having decided that to abandon the Freedom Rides would appear to be a civil rights defeat, joined with CORE to continue the rides.

On November 1, 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) ruling on desegregation was to take effect. This ruling stated that no bus facility, bus or driver could discriminate against blacks.

As more of the lunch counter and public facilities were being desegregated, SNCC members began to focus more attention on voter registration activities. The feeling emerged that there was the need not only to desegregate bus stations and lunch counters, but a need to become more involved in political action.

The new focus caused SNCC to split into two factions--the direct action wing and the voter registration wing (Forman, 1978, p. 221). The voter registration faction, led by Charles Jones, believed that through voter registration, the student movement could penetrate areas of the Deep South that had not been involved with public accommodations testing. However, the direct action wing, led by Diane Nash, felt that the voter registration effort would align SNCC too closely with the federal government, as information about voting discrimination would have to be gathered in conjunction with the Justice Department. This split in SNCC was short-lived. Both factions remerged after SNCC encountered massive repression in the rural South.

Albany, Georgia: First Voter Registration Project

In late 1962, SNCC began to see its role as a "band of organizers organizing the downtrodden and poor, masses of people" (Forman, 1972, pp. 287-289). Its focus began to shift away from the campus organizations to organizing in the small communities across the South. SNCC sent representatives (Field Secretaries) to McComb, Mississippi; Danville, Virginia; Selma, Alabama; and Americus, Georgia. In each they met massive and violent resistence from the established institutions.

During the fall of 1961, SNCC decided to make voter registration a major project. Charles Sherrod, Cordell Reagan, and Charles Jones were assigned by SNCC to work in Albany, Georgia. Sherrod, Reagan, and Jones had been Freedom Riders and sit-inners and were influenced by the religious ideas that pervaded the early student protest movement. Their plan was to challenge the segregated public accommodations, bill a local movement, train the students in the use of the nonviolent, direct-action tactics and begin to develop a voter registration campaign. Opposing the drive was Police Chief Laurie S. Pritchett who was more restrained and less violent than many of the other southern police authorities. The Georgia black belt was to be a major proving ground for the newly organized struggle for the vote.

They began testing the public accommodations in the local Trailways bus station in Albany. They were attempting to test the Interstate Commerce Commission order that had gone into effect on November 1, 1961, prohibiting segregated facilities. The first group of protesters was small and included students from Albany State College (a predominantly black institution) and the local black high school. The students were arrested. After the initial protest and arrest, the number of protesters continued to increase. The arrested protesters, deciding to dramatize their action, refused bail and thus generated community support. The intention was to fill the jails and thus force local officials to stop arresting protestors.

The large outpouring of community support for the protestors created the emergence of "The Albany Movement." SNCC sought out new

leaders for the Albany Movement. SNCC believed that movements and their organizations should be built around group-centered leadership which would allow the movement to be democratic and minimize struggle aimed at acquiring personal leadership. Dr. William G. Anderson, new to the city of Albany, was selected as head of the Albany Movement. Initially, the movement received support from the local students, but support also came from the clergy as well as other middle-class blacks. SNCC continued to nurture the movement as more and more people protested and became involved.

After a few months, Dr. Anderson realized that SNCC did not have the resources or capability to mobilize support and resources outside of Albany. He heard this even though SNCC had provided the stimulus for the Albany Movement and had exhibited exemplary behavior. Dr. Anderson had become friends with Dr. King during the 1940s when they organized Atlanta's first NAACP Youth Council together. Dr. Anderson also was a schoolmate of Rev. Ralph David Abernathy at Alabama State College in Montgomery. It was Rev. Abernathy, Vice-President of SCLC, who called Dr. Anderson and suggested that he send a telegram to Dr. King and invite him to come join the demonstrations. Rev. Abernathy felt that with Dr. King the Albany Movement would get national headlines.

Dr. King and SCLC went to Albany and led some demonstrations. The national press descended on Albany. Dr. King and Rev. Abernathy were arrested along with some other protesters and they refused bail, as had the earlier protestors. Dr. King, from his jail cell, announced

"if convicted, I will refuse to pay the fine. I expect to spend Christmas in jail. I hope that thousands will join me." The die was cast, and it seemed that the city would have to capitulate to the Albany Movement demands (Brisbane, 1974, p. 61).

The decisive edge in the Albany struggle had now gone to the Albany Movement. But on the very next day, it was announced that a truce had been worked out, and Dr. King was released from jail. In the truce, all demonstrations were to cease. The manuever, even though at the time unexplained, undermined the Albany Movement and all but shut off any major concessions that may have come from its efforts.

SNCC was furious at the turn of events. SNCC leaders were concerned because SCLC had decided to come to Albany after SNCC had labored long to build the foundation for the Albany Movement. They were concerned that SCLC had not assessed the situation properly and did not keep the movement a people-oriented, indigenous movement. In his biography of Martin Luther King entitled What Manner of Man, Lerone Bennett stated, "Albany was difficult for Dr. King because King allowed himself to be pushed into action without adequate preparation, on a battlefield he did not choose with a faction-ridden army he never completely commanded" (Bennett, 1964).

It was in Albany that the different organizing strategies and objectives of SNCC and SCLC became clear. SNCC was interested in organizing indigenous movements, while SCLC was interested in mobilizing large numbers of people around specific and well-defined issues in order to gain immediate concessions.

There were other lessons to be learned. SNCC learned that it could work with urban black communities, and that it could foster beliefs and build institutions as a foundation for mass struggle. Its members began to understand that if the movement were properly organized, it could generate support from the black underclass, and the working class as well as the middle class. SNCC also began to understand that the direct-action and public accommodation testings were short-term tactics and filling up jails was not always successful in applying pressure on local authorities. Bill Hansen, a white SNCC activist, had these remarks about the effort to fill the Albany's jails: "We were naive enough to think we could fill up the jails . . . we ran out of people before Police Chief Pritchett ran out of jails" (Carson, 1980, p. 61). Chief Pritchett called on the resources of other communities and municipalities to transport and house protesters from Albany's jails to prevent overcrowding and eliminated the key factor in the tactic of filling the local jail (jail-no bail). The Albany experiences and later the Mississippi experiences resolved SNCC's internal conflicts between the voter registration and public accommodations testing forces.

Finally, the Albany Movement's greatest contribution was its introduction of movement music and song. Prior to Albany, the singing of "We Shall Overcome" had given courage and the assurance of group support to activists in many situations of fear and disappointment. In Albany, this changed; more songs were added. Albany's black community had a rich southern gospel tradition. During the protest

days, mass meetings were frequent and singing was common. The lyrics of old gospel songs were changed to be relevant to the protest activities. One of the songs that began in Albany was "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round."

Ain't gonna let Chief Pritchett turn me 'round
I'm on my way to Freedom land
If you don't go, don't hinder me
Come and go with me to that land where I'm bound
There ain't nothing but peace in that land
Nothing but peace.

After Albany there would be many other movement songs along with the standard bearer "We Shall Overcome."

Some of the students in Albany formed a group of SNCC activists called the "Freedom Singers." This group would tour the nation and participate in SNCC fund-raising events. The group also visited program project areas in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Alabama to perform for the local communities. Their songs began to permeate the entire movement. The singers and songs added inspiration and courage to the protest lines, to protesters in jail, and to the mass meetings where project activities were being planned. They were also a source of courage to "go into battle."

In 1963, SNCC field secretaries in Mississippi developed a program known as the Freedom Ballot. This was a mock registration campaign with the objective of collecting 100,000 signatures of disenfranchised and unregistered but eligible black voters to vote for

for Aaron Henry (State NAACP President) for Governor. SNCC collected a number of signatures, substantial enough to make a political case. Their argument was that, if the opportunity to register were available, most blacks would register. In spite of the intimidation and harrassment, over 80,000 signatures were collected.

Students continued to come South from all areas of the United States to work for SNCC in the more recalcitrant and hostile areas. The majority of these students believed that the problems of black people were racial and social in character, not religious or spiritual. Many of the new SNCC workers were not involved in the original Raleigh meeting and were not as committed to the principles of nonviolence the original SNCC members were. These students began to wrestle with the issue of directions.

William McCord (1965) reflected on the character of SNCC workers:

> The full-time workers, old-timer drawn from the sit-ins, Freedom rides and large number of arrests, moved in and out on their way to other towns. Clad in dungarees (the dress most common among the rural black farmers and artisans across the South), these young people lived on subsistence pay (food, lodging and nine dollars a week). Many worked a 16-hour day and often had to submit to arrest. Although young, averaging 23 years in age, these professional workers had a stoical aim and seldom smiled. They made a fetish of using the most monotonous tones to describe the real dangers which faced them. They exhibited a slight disdain for newcomers and projected a premature air of cynicism.

The youthful character of SNCC was evident by the average age of its workers. It was a fact that young high school protesters in Mississippi were recruited to work for SNCC. These students were as

young as 15 years of age. Nevertheless, once they became involved as SNCC workers (field secretaries), they were expected to share the same responsibilities as other workers.

By the spring of 1964, SNCC was still considered on the fringe of the Civil Rights Movement. But with its history of community organization work in Albany (Georgia), Selma (Alabama), and southwest Mississippi, SNCC was building a reputation as being a solid, community-oriented civil rights organization which would go into the hostile areas of the South.

During the spring of 1964, SNCC, CORE, SCLC, and the Mississippi NAACP formed the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) with the purpose of sponsoring a summer program in Mississippi. This program consisted of organizing the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), setting up community centers, organizing voter registration drives, teaching young people black history, basic math, English, social studies, and writing, and raising the political consciousness of the black community to resist fear, isolation and violence. The MFDP was designed to be an alternative to the regular Mississippi "Dixicratic" Party. At the end of the summer the MFDP was to elect delegates to go to the Democratic Party's national convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where they would challenge the regular party seating as the legitimate representative of Mississippi. The Democratic Party, acknowledging the validity of the MFDP, opted to violate its principles and offered two seats at large. This compromise was rejected totally by the MFDP delegation.

The Mississippi program was intended to serve as a focus, both symbolically and in reality, on southern white authoritarianism. Blacks' efforts to secure basic rights could not succeed against the extensive legal weapons and police power of local and state officials without a nationwide mobilization of support (McCord, 1965, p. 15).

The COFO (primarily SNCC and CORE) made a call for students to come to Mississippi to work on the Mississippi Summer Project. Nearly 800 students from all over the county responded and traveled to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, for orientation. The collection of students represented a cross-section of political, socioeconomic and ideological lines. Most of the students were white and attended northern and eastern universities. The orientation covered every possible situation that the students could expect while they were in Mississippi. They were taught the cultural characteristics of the community where they would be working, safety rules and regulations, the history of SNCC and CORE (with an emphasis on prior activities in Mississippi), procedures for mass meetings, how to conduct themselves in the community, and how to use a CB radio. They were also introduced to the civil rights leaders who were functioning in Mississippi. On the final day of orientation, the group was informed of the disappearance of James Chaney (local black Mississippiar), Michael Schwerner (CORE field staffer), and Andrew Goodman (summer volunteer). All three had attended the orientation and had returned early to Mississippi to investigate a church burning and prepare for the incoming volunteers. This tragic news stunned many of the student activists who instinctively

knew the three were dead. The students' mood reflected a sense of urgency. Many students began to contact their local newspapers, congressmen, parents and friends to give the details of what had occurred. This stimulated a nationwide mobilization which brought attention and focus on Mississippi's racism and violence. The first principle of the Freedom Summer safety rules was never to be out of place more than two hours before making contact. The rules were rigidly enforced.

The mood and demeanor of the Mississippi activists was captured in the following statement by Dave Dennis, a CORE Mississippi field director.

> You see, one of the things is that we were in a war, and it wasn't very romantic. We weren't being slapped on the wrist. Every time people got up the next morning, you didn't know whether you would see them again. Everything was a risk. We didn't have many parties; it was work seven days a week.
>
> At that time, we didn't spend that much time thinking about death. I mean it was right there. Very seldom did I think about it until something happened. . . then you'd say, "wow, you know that was close!" (Interview, 1980)

The Mississippi Summer Project was the first training program for potential community organizers and student activists since the one initiated at the Southern Negro Youth Congress. The project brought the student participants into direct contact with racism, violence, segregation and the complete disregard of the law by Mississippi officials. It provided practical experience with organizing skill training. The objective was to train community organizers while making Mississippi show its disregard for freedom, justice and equality. During that summer alone, there were 10 murders and suspicious deaths,

including those of Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner whose bodies were found buried in an earthen dam. They had been killed, as was later established, by the deputy sheriff and other outstanding citizens of Philadelphia, Mississippi. There were over 2,000 arrests, 200 bombings and burnings or other incidents of violence, and 50 churches in the black community were destroyed (Carson, 1980, p. 158). The reality was that, if the white students had not been involved--bringing the FBI and the Justice Department who did little other than take notes--the casualty rate would have been higher. An elaborate citizen band radio communications system, strict adherence to stringent safety rules, and activists with excellent driving skills contributed also. In spite of the National Democratic Party's refusal to seat the MFDP and the violence and hostility by officials in Mississippi, the summer project netted many positive consequences, one of which was the emergence of a political infrastructure in Mississippi and in the Northern Student Movement. The Northern Student Movement (NSM) was headed by William Strickland, Benny Schecter, and Frank Joyce. The NSM concentrated its forces in urban areas of the north and later assisted in the recruitment of black students in the northern and eastern universities, NSM made information and materials available about SNCC activities in the southern states where SNCC was working.

Free Speech at Berkeley

Equally important was the emergence of the Free Speech Movement (FSM) at the University of California at Berkeley. Mario Salvio, a

SNCC Summer Volunteer, in an effort to organize support for SNCC and its southern program, introduced the philosophy of the Civil Rights Movement to students at Berkeley. While using many of the tactics of the Southern Protest Movement, Mario Salvio's focus at Berkeley was on sterile intellectualism, the democratization and the humanization of university education, and the reexamination of the university role in relation to local community and national affairs (Cohen & Hale, 1966). FSM was composed of members who had a disdain for established institutions and who had rejected the values of the white middle class. This movement preceded protest activities by SDS and was the event that gave SDS impetus to organizing protest activities among white students on campuses. Mario Salvio, using the rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement, urged the students to take a stand when he stated that:

> There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, make you sick at heart, that you can't take part, you can't even tacitly take part. And you got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels . . . and make it stop. You've got to indicate to the people that run it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all. (Cohen & Hale, 1966, pp. 248-252).

The FSM was but the first outgrowth of the student movement which resulted from the experiences and involvement of students in the Mississippi Summer Project. At the end of the Mississippi Summer Project most of the students returned to their communities and campuses more aware of the political and social realities of racial inequality from the viewpoint of victims, the oppressors, and those who sat in quiet support. A continuation of the activity generated in Mississippi occurred in their communities. Students began to raise questions about

racial segregation, racism, community control, and the failure of the democratic process. They began to assess the role of the majority (white middle-class) community in its tacit approval and, in most instances, direct support of the status quo. Students began to raise questions about social and political contradictions. The Mississippi Project led SNCC to realize that the Mississippi authorities and politicians were not going to respect the rules or the politicas of order, or more accurately, that there were no rules of order in Mississippi except those of coercion by the state. SNCC concluded that if the enemy did not respect these rules, then neither should they. SNCC's response was to organize independent political organizations outside of the regular Democratic and Republican Parties. SNCC had begun to organize voter registration drives in 1961, but its efforts had been usurped by SCLC in Albany, Georgia, and later in Selma, Alabama. SNCC continued to retain the core of people involved; many of the black activists that joined the movement could not merely withdraw and return to college or a career. SNCC attempted to provide scholarships to movement activities but that effort fell far short of the real need. Most of the black activists remained in the movement longer periods of time because there were much fewer opportunities for them to reenter society.

Selma, Alabama: Independent Organizing

The Mississippi Project continued up through the Selma-to-Montgomery March, which culminated in the 1965 Voter Rights Act. The

march moved through the rural areas of central Alabama which has a large peasant population. In Alabama, the SNCC research department discovered an old state statute that allowed the organizing of independent county parties. Utilizing this statute, SNCC sent organizers to Lowndes County, Alabama, and three other black belt counties. In Lowndes County, SNCC organized the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) which was labeled by the news media as the "Black Panther Party." The Lowndes County Freedom Organization was a grass roots political organization designed to wrestle political control away from the minority white population and the large land owners. This effort was the forerunner to Black Power and the Black Panther Party for self-defense in California.

Vietnam War: The Death of Sammy Young

In January 1966, Sammy Young, a student at Tuskeegee Institute and an SNCC Activist, was murdered while attempting to use a "white only" restroom in a Tuskeegee service station. Sammy Young was the first black college student to die in the Black Student Movement. Young's murder "marked the end of tactical nonviolence and the end of any hope that the federal government would intervene and protect the rights of movement people in the country" (Forman, 1968, p. 168). Three days after Sammy's murder, SNCC issued a statement opposing the war in Vietnam. The statement read:

> The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee has a right and a responsibility to dissent with United States foreign policy on an issue when it sees fit. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee now states its opposition to United States involvement in Vietnam on these grounds.

> We believe the United States government has been deceptive in its claims of concern for freedom of the Vietnamese people, just as the government has been deceptive in claiming concern for the freedom of colored people in such other countries as the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa, Rhodesia and the United States itself.
>
> We, the SNCC have been involved in the black people's struggle for liberation and self-determination in this county for the past five years. Our work, particularly in the South, has taught us that the United States government has never guaranteed the freedom of oppressed citizens, and is not yet truly determined to end the rule of terror and oppression within its own borders.
>
> We ourselves have often been victims of violence and conflict executed by United States government officials. We recall the numerous persons who have been murdered in the South because of their efforts to secure their civil and human rights, and whose murderers have been allowed to escape penalty for their crimes. (Seller, 1973, p. 150)

In April 1967, little more than a year after SNCC's statement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke out against the United States involvement in Vietnam, saying, "It is unreal of civil rights leaders to try to ignore Vietnam" (Lewis, 1970, pp. 359-362). Within a year following this statement, Dr. King gave support to movements and organizations in Africa and the Third World who struggled and fought against racism and colonialism. It was clear that the movement was changing direction. A new Voter Registration law was in place, public facilities were integrated, southern confrontations were not as frequent, but a new wave of actions in the North indicated continued discontent. In 1964 the Harlem rebellions occurred; then in 1965, there was Watts.

Urban Rebellions: Where to From Here?

These urban rebellions created an awareness on the part of SNCC that black people should be organized, not only in the South, but also in the northern urban areas. Political organizing, voter registration, even basic protest activities had not occurred on as large a scale in the northern urban areas as in the South. Several SNCC staffers saw these rebellious activities as a sign that the urban areas were ready to be organized and that the experience of the southern organizing could be useful in organizing the northern areas. This was proven to be incorrect, because the attempted shift from rural to urban, with a real manpower shortage, left the areas and organizations in the South unattended which resulted in SNCC's losing its true constituency: the masses of southern black farmers and the black working class. The mass mobilization techniques used in the South were not transferable to the No-th. SCLC tried Chicago and was unsuccessful. The urban character and political structure were substantially different from those in the rural southern communities. Neither the strategy nor the tactics of the southern movement provided a mechanism to capture the energy of the rebellions.

Students for a Democratic Society: The White Viewpoint

In order to get a better perspective on the participant involvement, it is necessary to look at a predominantly white organization, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The SDS was not a civil

rights organization as such but it provides an opportunity for contrast. While SNCC was evolving within the Civil Rights Movement, the SDS was evolving within the campuses of white universities and among white intellectuals. The Students for a Democratic Society emerged out of a Human Rights Conference at the University of Michigan in 1960. Allen Haber, a student at the university convened the conference. The emergence of SDS was primarily a name change; its predecessor was the Student League for Industrial Democracy. SLID was made up mostly of white liberals and social democrats, whose major emphasis was on sponsoring and conducting prolabor and anticapitalist groups and discussions on the college campuses. Attending this 1960 conference were representatives from the newly formed SNCC, James Farmer of CORE (who had been national secretary of SLID in the early 1950s), Michael Harrington--a Catholic-socialist organizer, Tom Hayden, Rennie Davis, C. Clark Kissenger and Paul Potter--a member of the W.E.B. Dubois clubs of America (the youth arm of the Communist Party). In spite of these representatives, SDS issued a totalitarian disclaimer that satisfied its parent organization, the League for Industrial Democracy. This disclaimer rejected association with any groups that were considered socialist or communist.

During the first couple of years SDS had low visibility and influence on the college campuses, although its few members continued to establish the SDS presence. In an effort to increase its visibility, Tom Hayden was commissioned to draft a manifesto for SDS. It was not until June of 1962, when SDS held a national convention at the

AFL-CIO camp at Port Huron, Michigan where Hayden's manifesto, "The Port Huron Declaration" was adopted, that SDS began to capture the imagination of students. This convention was chaired by Gary Weissman and was attended by representatives from SNCC (Bob Zellner, William Mahoney and Courtland Cos), the Young People's Socialist League, the Student Peace Union, and the Progressive Youth Organizing Committee. Tom Hayden was elected President of the SDS.

SDS was primarily a small northern white student organization. The Port Huron statement provided a perspective for new student recruits on the goals, objectives, and philosophy of SDS. The Port Huron Declaration was a quaint and interesting document:

> It begins with a statement of values and a critique of American society in language now familiar. It then reviews the decline of the democratic process in America, the Cold War and the Colonial Revolution, and the anti-communism as an ideology and makes over the failure of liberalism and the labor movement. It sets forth a program of sweeping reforms and hints that they could be accomplished by a realignment of the Democratic Party. And it closes with a special appeal to young people in American universities to consciously come together in a "New Left" to lead the transformation of America. (Cohen & Hale, 1966, pp. 292-302)

It declared: "A new left must start controversy across the land, if national policies and national apathy are to be reversed. The ideal university is a community of controversy within itself and its effect on communities beyond" (Kissenger & Ross, 1969). The statement ended with a charge for action. "We are committed to stimulating this kind of social movement, this kind of vision and programs in campuses and communities across the country. If we appear to seek the unattainable, it has been said, then let it be known that we do so to avoid the unimaginable" (Kissenger & Ross, 1969).

In an attempt to implement the Port Huron manifesto SDS representatives spread out across the country. Some SDS activists went to the South to observe SNCC field operations, others became involved in antinuclear testing, the Cuban missle crisis, and the anti-Vietnam discussions around the visit of Madame Nhu (wife of the President of South Vietnam) to the United States (Madame Nhu's visit to Howard University was picketed by the Nonviolent Group, a support group of SNCC).

In an attempt to strengthen its organizational base and as a result of its participation with urban demonstrations organized by SNCC, SDS began to organize activities in Chester, Pennsylvania. SDS sent "roving pickets" into the Appalachian areas of eastern Kentucky populated mainly by poor whites. The organizing efforts of SDS gave rise to ideological conflicts within the organization, with Tom Hayden and Dr. Haber representing the two opposing forces. Hayden wanted to organize a "revolutionary trajectory" and spread the insurgency. Haber wanted to focus on college student organizations and the functions of capitalism. Hayden's position won, and the SDS organizational base began to focus on the establishment of the "revolutionary trajectory." With its ideological directive in focus, SDS worked with FSM to set up "Friends of SNCC." Through this effort, SDS set up nine projects in urban black areas. SDS formed the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) on a grant by the United Automobile Workers, ostensibly to organize white workers around job security, better housing, and racial solidarity, and to provide means for expressing community grievances.

Even though the focus was to be on organizing whites, most projects survived as a result of the low level of organizing skills, paternalism and nationalism which existed in many of these urban areas.

SNCC, recognizing that SDS was located primarily in northern and midwestern states, encouraged SDS to co-sponsor the salary of a field secretary for the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), an arm of SCEF, whose functions were to work and organize in the white community and on southern white campuses. SNCC from its beginning recognized that white organizers would be more successful in the white working-class communities. Later, SNCC and SDS would jointly publish The Movement.

In the spring of 1965, the United States Government began to escalate the war in Vietnam by bombing North Vietnam. SDS, confronted with a new issue, organized a massive demonstration in April of 1965 in Washington, DC against the war in Vietnam. Bob Moses was one of the featured speakers for the demonstration, whose organizing principle was that all who opposed the war would be welcome. Twenty-five thousand people participated in the march, thus thrusting SDS on the national scene. In addition to its antidraft and antiwar efforts, SDS continued to support campus issues involving university reform and began to shift its emphasis to the discussion of foreign policy and antiracist strategy. SDS insisted upon the immediate withdrawal of all United States personnel from Vietnam. The following policies were

articulated:

1. On the draft: SDS demanded the abolition of the selective service system. "We see the draft as racist and anti-democratic, procuring manpower for aggressive wars abroad."
2. On the Black Liberation Movement: SDS had long and actively supported the struggle of black Americans for freedom and self-determination. "Racism and exploitation confront black people as a group, together as a people."
3. On labor and the struggle of working people: "To further the unity and radical consciousness of the working class as a whole, we support the rank-and-file insurgencies of working people against their employers, the Government, and corrupt union leadership."
4. On student revolt: SDS viewed the multiversity as a knowledge factory, a kind of service station producing skilled manpower and intelligence for integration with the marketable needs of major corporate, government, and military institutions. (New Left Notes, 1969)

SDSs believed that these policies were key efforts to move its program from college campuses. "The recognition of this process has been the driving force in our work to transport student alienation into a radical force reaching out and uniting into constituencies beyond the campus" (Unger, 1974),

At the Chicago SDS convention, six months after the Michigan State convention, many in SDS still held the position that students

would lead the movement. This view was not held by the leadership factions who would move SDS to a neo-Leninist and then beyond to a new infantile leftist direction.

## The New Left

The New Left, as the white segment of the Civil Rights Movement was called, emerged during the period from 1959 to 1967. It was a well-defined phenomenon. Socially, it was distinguished by its middle-class personnel and the fact that most of its members were university students or young professionals. The youthfulness of the New Left set it apart from the radical movements of the American past. The New Left was also distinguished from immediately preceding radical movements in America by its rejection of the dogmatic scientific socialism of the second and third international. Racial injustice in America along with philistinism, cultural conformity, sexual puritanism, social hypocrisy, economic inequality, and international opportunism supplied the fuel for this movement.

The New Left was composed predominately of well-educated, white middle-class youth. Sociological data frequently emphasized the impressive intellectual caliber of the radical youth (Berger, 1970). Withing the New Left movement the Jewish students were disproportionally strong in terms of the Jewish population (Newhouse, 1970). A 1969 survey by Yankelovich and CBS showed that among noncollege youth, some 60% were moderate philosophically and another 21% conservative. Even among college youth, on 3% considered themselves revolutionaries and only another 10% could be called radical dissenters. Other polls by

Harris and Rossi all point to similar conclusions. Thus the radical perspective was largely confined to the campus and even there it was a minority position. The New Left represented America's student intelligentsia. Generally, the New Left students were to be found in the prosperous liberal arts in universities concentrated in the humanities and social sciences where the reading lists were longer and exposure to human learning and social ideas was more intense. They were located disproportionally in the better and more cosmopolitan universities, the Ivy League schools, and the superior liberal arts colleges. The students were in search of meaning for a better and more purposeful life. They were attempting to reestablish human relationships on the basis of love and spontaneous authentic emotion. The New Left found in the Youth and Civil Rights Movement (especially SNCC) warm approval, a comraderie, and a sense of purpose that they missed in the conventional world.

Irving Unger (1974) noted that most of the New Left participants should be admired for their dedication and their courage. Many of them sincerely believed that they were risking their professional futures for the cause of oppressed humanity. The New Left, in fact, represented a very small segment of the white community. Organizations like SDS and the Southern Student Organizing Committee were confined primarily to the campuses of the major universities across America.

While one reason the New Left merged with the Civil Rights Movement was around the issue of desegregation, it was not difficult to see that there would be conflict and miscommunications between

elements of the New Left and the Civil Rights Movement once the problem of desegregation had been eliminated. The differences between the New Left and the blacks in the youth movement or the student movement were not only in race but also in social status. Many of the young white activists and militants were from upper-middle-class backgrounds, while many of the blacks were from basically middle-middle or lower-middle-class backgrounds. The options in terms of economic opportunities and additional educational opportunities were also different. Many of the young white militants could at any point change directions, go back home, pick up a scholarship and go off to college, whereas black militants were generally first-generation or second-generation college students and did not have the economic stability or resources to change directions. Those conditions contributed to the conflict between the black student and the white student activists.

Another source of conflict between white and black youth in the movement probably was that where there was protest activity and direct action, whites initially did not get any more favorable treatment than the blacks. During the Freedom Rides and the sit-ins white youths were beaten as badly and to the same extent that black students were abused and brutalized. However, when white students were involved, response on the part of government agencies and other institutions was much quicker and more pronounced than when only blacks were being brutalized. This response was interpreted by many of the black activists as a response based on race. The view generally was that the life of the white activist was more important in terms of the American system than

that of the black fighting for social justice. The conclusion was that the American Constitution which guaranteed the protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness would work for the young upper-middle-class white student but was not readily available for young blacks.

# CHAPTER IV

## ACTIVIST PARTICIPANTS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The 1954 Supreme Court decision broadened the margin of black freedom and aspirations and led to increasing demands for "freedom now" in all areas of American life (Ziegler, 1964). Blocked in their initial efforts to improve their conditions by working within the existing structure of the society, future participants of the emerging Civil Rights Movement began to question the validity of both this structure and the values that justify it. Thus, the movement challenged both the authority of the ruling class and the legitimacy of traditional values. The vehicles to transport these movement participants through this process and insure that they would reach those predetermined goals were the various civil rights organizations.

The Civil Rights Movement was a loose-knit coalition of several organizations and individuals. Each organization tended to adopt a distinctive mission and role, and to appeal to its own constituency (Meier & Rudwick, 1966).

The Civil Rights Movement was not a monolithic preplanned event as many people are led to believe. Thousands of individuals and organizations of varied class and racial backgrounds became involved in civil rights activities. Plans and strategies were continually being formulated. The movement had to respond to unpredicted events, the strategies of the opposition, and the wishes and desires of its constituents.

Geschwerder (1971) noted that a social movement has organized associations at its core that provide general direction and focus; but it also includes large unorganized segments pushing in the same direction but not integrated with the core associations. The Civil Rights Movement, while made up of many different organization, also included many participants without formal organizational affiliation. These individuals would join in protest activities when the core group(s) made a call for participants or when the movement's tactics attracted participation. The number of participants in the Freedom Rides, the sit-ins, the massive Birmingham demonstrations, or Albany, Georgia civil rights activities was much greater than the total membership of the core organizations. The civil rights activists had to be available and in a position to undertake the risks involved. Many of the core organizations had extremely small staffs from 1958 until the summer of 1964 when CORE and SNCC began to add new activist staff members. SCLC followed suit after becoming involved in Selma in 1965. But throughout the period that is under study, the SCLC staff numbered about 18 activists, the SNCC staff numbered approximately 25-30, and the local NAACP had virtually no activist staff organizing protest activities. Even when the SNCC staff reached its peak level after the summer of 1964, there were less than 125 activists.

The movement's organizational participation was what Dr. Himes referred to as "clustering mechanisms." Even though the competing movement and the status quo play only two roles "advancing or preventing" social change, it is possible for many groups to participate in

the action (Himes, 1980, p. 71). Himes stated that joint participation can be cataloged under the following generic types:

1. Council: A unifying and coordinating agency composed of the heads or other representatives of a series of autonomous groups, who act in cooperation in a conflict enterprise.

2. Coalition: A temporary arrangement for joint conflict action made by a number of groups that wish to retain their separate identities.

3. Alliance: A contractual arrangement for joint action by a group of independent collective actors who establish a specialized apparatus for their joint conflict action.

4. Federation: The political union of a series of groups under which the management of external relations, especially relations of conflict, is monopolized by the inclusive organizations. (p. 71)

The Civil Rights Movement used these arrangements in many different combinations. The organizations that were involved in civil rights employed some clustering or joint forms of participation throughout the life of the movement. Some of the core organizations themselves were formed through some joint participation or activity. The core organizations within the Civil Rights Movement were the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC - "Snick"). Other organizations, the Northern Student Movement (NSM), the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), the Southern Conference Education Fund (SCEF), the Council of Federated Organizing (COFO), Lowndes County Freedom Organizations (LCFO), the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the

Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), the Highlander Folk Center Group, and a host of other organizations played important, supportive and supplemental roles during the civil rights period.

NAACP and the Urban League

The NAACP was at the same time a membership organization with branches across the country, and a separate legal arm of the entire Civil Rights Movement through the Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Incorporated (the ink fund) (Holt, 1966, p. 89). The membership participated in local branches of the NAACP through financial contributions and vicarious support. The NAACP was rarely involved in direct action or other forms of protest except on rare occasions when the national leadership participated symbolically. Some social historians considered the NAACP to be the major arm of the black middle-class elite and a source of jobs for lawyers and social welfare professionals. The NAACP was fighting for the kind of integration that expanded opportunities for the middle class. Within the Civil Rights Movement, the NAACP was the largest organization with the most resources and the most developed bureaucracy. The Legal Defense Fund and its attorneys played important support roles in the direct-action and protest segments of the movement. The Defense Fund's attorneys in Atlanta and Albany, Georgia provided legal counsel to the student nonviolent protest activists.

The National Urban League emerged one year after the NAACP in 1911. Initially, it was a coordinating council for the Committee on Urban Conditions among Negroes, the National League for the Protection

of Colored Women, and the Committee for Improving the Industrial Conditions of Negroes in New York. These three organizations eventually emerged to form the National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes. This name was later was later changed to the National Urban League (Franklin, 1967, p. 449).

The League's purposes are expressed in its constitution as follows:

1. The study of social and economic conditions among Negroes in cities with a view to securing cooperation among all agencies seeking to better urban conditions among Negroes.
2. The development of other (social/welfare) agencies if necessary.
3. The training of Negro social workers.

The Urgan League saw itself as a "social work" agency, acting as a conduit to the large segment of liberals, interpreting and providing information about the nature of the civil rights struggle and the social impact of racial injustice. The Urban League provided research and data on the social, political and economic conditions of blacks and race relations in general. Having grown out of the Tuskeegee tradition, the league extended the general philosophy of Booker T. Washington (Himes, 1973, p. 35), a staunch proponent of the self-help upward-mobility principle. Washington encouraged balcks to disregard the social integration and preserve the economic integration. His pragmatic philosophy of accommodation prevailed among a large segment of the black southern masses.

The Urban League and NAACP were the older and more traditional organizations within the Civil Rights Movement. Their relationship to the movement was paternal, primarily because of their bureaucratic structure and secondarily because of their limited group involvement and rigid middle-class orientation. Himes (1973) described groups, in the context of conflict organization, as follows: "Traditional Negro associations had limited utility as conflict organizations" (p. 27).

The NAACP was hampered by limited group involvement and by its use of technical representatives for legal redress. The Urban League had no mass membership involvement or a clear conflict orientation. The elite Negro organizations and the Greek letter fraternities and sororities were dissociated from the masses. However, the NAACP and Urban League were run by very dedicated men whose commitment to racial equality, social justice and peace were unwavering.

CORE and FOR

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) emerged from the Christian/Pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in 1942, which had grown out of a network of students at the University of Chicago. FOR members believed in "applying Ghandism techniques of nonviolent direct action to the resolution of racial and industrial conflict in America" (Meier & Rudwick, 1966, pp. 222-223). The initial direct-action effort of FOR was a sit-in at a segregated Chicago restaurant in 1941. Later in 1942, they would initiate the "journey of reconciliation" which was the first Freedom Ride.

FOR describes itself as:

> . . . a religious organization based on the belief that love, such as that seen preeminently in Jesus, must serve as the true guide of personal conduct under all circumstances. Members of the FOR seek to demonstrate this love as the effective force for overcoming evil and transforming society into a creative fellowship.
>
> They refuse to participate in any war or to sanction military preparations; they work to abolish war and to foster good will among nations, races, and classes; they strive to build a social order which will suffer no individual or group to be exploited for the profit or pleasure of another, and which will assure to all the means for realizing the best possibilities of life; they advocate such ways of dealing with offenders against society as shall transform the wrongdoer rather than inflict retributive punishment; and they endeavor to show reverence for personality--in the home, in the education of children, in the association with persons of other classes, nationalities, and races. (Fellowship Magazine, 1943)

FOR changed its name to CORE in 1942; but the philosophy remained essentially the same. CORE, although founded in 1942, was little known until the 1960 sit-ins. CORE became better known in 1963 when it launched the Freedom Rides that changed the course of social history. CORE, like SNCC, felt that legalism was insufficient for the accomplishment of race goals (Monsen & Cannon, 1965, p. 46). They knew that blacks were outside of the political process so there was little recourse for grievances through the political process. CORE agreed with the position of Broom and Selznick (1963), who concluded that overt demonstrations may be the only means available to groups that do not otherwise have ready access to the means of communication and to the society at large.

The nonviolent direct action seemed both an alternative and a way for the ordinary citizen to become involved in the struggle. It

would be SNCC and later CORE who would direct most of the grass-root organizing in the rural South. The simple removal of legal barriers did little to alleviate the basic social structural barriers that prevented blacks from enjoying the rights of equality guaranteed by the United States Constitution.

SCLC

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was formed in 1958 following the successful Montgomery bus boycott to facilitate and coordinate the nonviolent direct-action movements of local communities in the campaigns of struggle that were spreading throughout the South. The SCLC's basic aim was the achievement of full citizenship rights, equality, and the integration of Negroes in all aspects of American life. SCLC activities focused around two main points: the use of nonviolent philosophy as a means of creative protest and the securing of the ballot for all citizens. The main social base for SCLC was the black church and its main source of leadership was black preachers in the South. SCLC initially was a coalition of about 100 churches and church-oriented organizations. Conceived by Ella Baker who became its first executive director, Bayard Rutin, and Stanley Levison who became its attorney, advisor, and major fundraiser, SCLC intentionally avoided the structuring of a membership program in order to avoid any conflict with the NAACP (Williams, 1969).

Dr. Martin L. King, the son of a Baptist minister, became the leader and president of the SCLC. Dr. King's theological positions were rooted in the Biblical Judaic-Christian traditions. In his book

Stride Toward Freedom, Dr. King expressed the philosophy of the SCLC:

> The Christian ought always to be challenged by any protest against unfair treatment of the poor, for Christianity is itself such a protest, nowhere expressed more eloquently than in Jesus' words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (King, 1958, p. 75)

Shortly after the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Dr. King stated:

> It was the Sermon on the Mount, rather than a doctrine of passive resistance, that initially inspired the Negroes of Montgomery to dignify social action. It was Jesus of Nazareth that stirred the Negroes to protest with the creative weapon of love.
>
> As the days unfolded, however, the inspiration of Mahatma Ghandi began to exert its influence. I had come to see early that the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Ghandian method of nonviolence was one of the most potent weapons available to the Negro in his struggle for freedom. . . . Nonviolent resistance had emerged as the technique of the movement, while love stood as the regulating ideal. In other words, Christ furnished the spirit and motivation, while Ghandi furnished the method. (King, 1958, p. 66)

Within the movement there was an ongoing discussion of various strategies and tactics. The issue of mobilization as opposed to organizations was hotly debated. SNCC was critical of Dr. King's and SCLC's tactics and timing, particularly in Selma, Alabama, and Albany, Georgia. But external criticism by the religious community had a major impact on SCLC and Dr. King. The black church (National Baptist Convention) was critical of the use of civil disobedience, nonviolent resistance, and the use of children in the Birmingham demonstration. There was also criticism of Dr. King's attempt to influence the National Baptist Convention. This criticism led to Dr. King's

development of philosophical justification for the use of various tactics and strategies.

In answer to the critic of civil disobedience, Dr. King wrote:

> The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."
>
> One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law. (King, 1964, pp. 68-69)

Dr. King was convinced that one's character was strengthened when one stood up and resisted evil.

During the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the 1960 student sit-ins, nonviolent resistance was the tactical method of the Civil Rights Movement. However, there was always the need to justify the need for demonstrators to suffer at the hands of injustice. Dr. King's responded to the question with a quote from Ghandi's rhetoric:

> What is the nonviolent resister's justification for this ordeal to which he invites men, for this mass political application of the ancient doctrine of <u>turning the other cheek</u>? The answer is found in the realization that unearned suffering is redemptive. Suffering, the nonviolent resister realizes, has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities. "Things of fundamental importance to people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering," said Ghandi. (King, 1964, p. 82)

Dr. King and SCLC were forced to use children in the Birmingham demonstration when the number of adult protesters dwindled. This was

not unique to SCLC or SNCC. Field workers in Mississippi and southwest Georgia were sometimes as young as 14 years of age. These young people were often active in the direct-action phase of the movement and had developed a commitment and responsibility that were common among movement participants. Dr. King's movement experiences made it exceedingly clear to him, that the Civil Rights Movement was made of dedicated workers (young and old, male and female) who risked their lives daily. When responding to the criticism of using young people, Dr. King stated:

> A significant body of young people learned that in opposing the tyrannical forces that were crushing them they added stature and meaning to their lives. Negro and white youths who in alliance fought bruising engagements with the status quo inspired each other with a sense of moral mission and both gave the nation an example of self-sacrifice and dedication. (King, 1963, p. 76)

SCLC's movement strategy included an appeal to the moral consciousness of white America. However, SCLC's tactics of civil disobedience, nonviolent direct action and the use of children in Birmingham generated opposition from the traditionally white religious community. Peter Berger (1970) also indicated the religious establishment: "The religious institution does not (perhaps one should say, not any longer) generate its own values; instead it ratifies and santifies the values prevalent in the general community" (p. 36). Speaking particularly of the central core of American Protestantism, he said, "Commitment to Christianity thus undergoes a fatal identification with commitment to society, to respectability to the American way of life" (p. 22). This entrenchment of the religious community made it necessary

for Dr. King to point out the contradictions between the churches' professed ignorance of prevailing social issues (segregation, racial violence, and second-class citizenship) and its commitment and belief in an ideal type of humanity where every person is a "child of God." Dr. King challenged the religious community and stated that it could not simply ignore America's social problems. In his writings, Dr. King (1958) offered this justification:

> In any realistic doctrine of man, we must be forever concerned about his physical and material well-being. When Jesus said that man cannot live by bread alone, He did not imply that men can live without bread. As Christians, we must think not only about "mansions in the sky," but also about the slums and ghettos that cripple the human soul, not merely about streets in heaven "flowing with milk and honey," but also about the millions of people in this world who go to bed hungry at night. Any religion that professes concern regarding the souls of men and fails to be concerned by social conditions that corrupt and economic conditions that cripple the soul, is a do-nothing religion, in need of new blood. Such a religion fails to realize that man is an animal having physical and material needs. (p. 205)

Dr. King's critics were not just within the white religious community. As vice-president in charge of the youth division of the National Baptist Association (the largest black organization in America) in 1960, Dr. King came under scrutiny from the association's president, Dr. Joseph Jackson, an ultraconservative man who did not support the nonviolent protest or the civil rights causes. During the association's annual convention Dr. Jackson beat off an attempt by Dr. King to oust him from his position as president of the National Baptist Association. This maneuver so angered Dr. Jackson (who won reelection through the end of the 1970s) that he withheld support from

SCLC, Dr. King, and the Civil Rights Movement in general. Even after Dr. King was assassinated, when the city of Chicago attempted to rename a street that passed in front of Dr. Jackson's church, Martin Luther King Boulevard, Dr. Jackson changed the address of his church to a side street rather than have it be on Martin Luther King Boulevard. However, because of the charisma of Dr. King, SCLC found itself at the center of the movement organization. With CORE and SNCC, SCLC was a part of the direct-action, civil disobedience faction and still maintained a relationship with the liberal labor coalition of NAACP and the Urban League. SCLC was less bureaucratic than the NAACP and Urban League but more structured than SNCC and CORE. The leaders in SCLC deliberately made Dr. King a prominent figure in the news media. The NAACP and Urban League leaders, however egocentric, were organization men, and their organizations depended upon neither charisma nor improvisation for survival. By contrast, SCLC survived because of its leaders' charisma rather than because of organizational structure or resources.

SNCC

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) emerged from 1960 student sit-ins. SNCC was the most dynamic organization in the Civil Rights Movement with its dedication, discipline, and its ability to develop nontraditional tactics and work in the most hostile and violent areas. SNCC was based in the South and focused on protesting the denial of democratic rights to black people, particularly in rural areas. The commitment of its members was a source of moral

strength that pierced deep into the black communities and led to winning the support of large numbers of local blacks (Forman, 1972; Garrow, 1978). In 1963 SNCC was one of the major factions in the March on Washington in which more than 250,000 people demonstrated for justice, jobs, peace and freedom. SNCC workers with long histories of activism were proficient in both organizing and mobilizing people. When there was money available to pay the staff, SNCC workers' salary after texes was $9.37 per week. All of the SNCC workers were called Field Secretaries and each had first-hand experience in confronting entrenched legally established institutions and authorities in the South (Edwards, 1970).

SNCC operated in a loose structure organization where all participants were considered of equal importance. Rules were made by means of workers' consensus rather than conventional parliamentary means. Decisions were made through a form of participatory democracy along the lines of the "Ideal Quaker Meeting." SNCC attempted to avoid the organizational pitfalls of other civil rights organizations. It rejected the notions that "leaders were teachers and preachers" or that an education from a four-year college would make the person eligible to lead a movement for social change, or that man was destined to rule over other men. SNCC questioned traditional leadership positions and leaders in the black community. SNCC believed in strong decentralized local leadership.

SNCC workers on the front line were often forced together by the nature of direct action which invariably bound the participants in

close emotional ties. Most of the relationships remained close and long standing. The group's strong sense of moral legitimacy also validated the correctness of their cause.

SNCC from its inception played a role in every civil rights activity emerging in the South. In 1963, the SNCC chairman John Lewis was one of the March-on-Washington major speakers. Unexpectedly, a conflict arose over the content of his speech which was critical of the civil rights efforts, both of the Kennedy administration and of the Democratic Party. A. Phillip Randolph, one of the march's organizers and its elder statesman pleaded with SNCC leaders to change that section of the speech. SNCC responded to Randolph's passionate plea and reluctantly compromised. Although SNCC members never were comfortable with the compromise, they realized the importance at the time of projecting a united front. This conflict marks the introduction of SNCC to the "real world" of the Civil Rights Movement as a member organization.

In 1964 SNCC sponsored the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. Nearly 1,000 volunteers (teachers, lawyers, doctors, students) from throughout the nation came to Mississippi to work in Freedom Schools, community centers, and provide medical and legal assistance. SNCC helped to organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party which assisted in the denial of basic constitutional rights of black citizens and refused to be loyal to the national Democratic Party. During that summer, six people were killed, 35 churches were burned, and 30 other buildings (including homes and schools) were bombed, and over 2,000

arrests were made. The MFDP traveled to Atlantic City to the National Democratic Party's convention to challenge the seating of the regular party and be offered a compromise. The MFDP presented a sound case with its legally held precinct and state election, legal documentation, and the burned remains of the car driven by three of the murder victims. King, Wilking, and Rustin urged the acceptance of two seats at large. However, both the MFDP and the SNCC refused the offer, saying they would not compromise their principles. SNCC felt that it had made too many sacrifices and lost too many lives to accept two seats at large while the regular party continued to represent Mississippi.

SNCC operated primarily in the South but had associates dispersed throughout the northern urban communities. One such group sparked a united effort to fight de facto segregation in the Chicago schools. In 1963 this effort led to a school boycott of 225,000 students and in 1964 another boycott involving 180,000 students. SNCC was always on the cutting edge of the movement. It challenged the use of tactics within the movement, challenged the National Democratic Party, organized grass-roots political organizations in the rural South, marched in Alabama (Selma to Montgomery) and Mississippi (Mississippi Meredith March), sponsored many of the first black slates of political candidates in the southern states, organized the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (the original Black Panther Party), condemned the war in Vietnam, and ushered in a new positive attitude among blacks about accomplishment and pride in themselves. SNCC never abandoned principles for programs. SNCC genius was in organizing

indigenous movements specifically among college students, farmers, and high school students.

SNCC developed schools, community centers, farm cooperatives, a mobile community theater company, labor unions, manufacturing cooperatives, political parties, local indigenous organizations, and a host of articulate and principled community leaders. SNCC also contributed to the development of cultural artifacts that provided the underpinning necessary to act as the cultural foundation of the movement. The host of songs, art, musical groups, symbols (hand shakes, hair styles), language, and poetry that grew out of the Civil Rights Movement were influenced by SNCC's versatility and dedication.

Interrelationship of Organizations

The primary organization in the Civil Rights Movement during the late 1950s was made up of the black middle-class elite and black ministers. When the students in the movement emerged, they insisted on involvement of the black community, the low-income, black peasants, and ghetto dwellers. The students deliberately shied away from adopting programs only for people of middle-class status. They sought to change society not merely to integrate it. There was disdain for the low level of commitment and support on the part of black clergy for social changes and the movement. The result was that the SNCC fostered tensions between the student and clergy wings of the movement.

The traditional Negro leaders from NAACP and Urban League were unprepared for the emerging mass movement and nonviolent direct action because of the bureaucratic make-up of their organizations. Their

middle-class orientation put them at odds with the upbeat and brash action of the students and CORE.

Dr. King assumed the role of mediator and conciliator between the two forces. Dr. King had learned some important lessons from the W.E.B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington conflict. He relished the role of peacekeeper and conduit between the young student activists and the traditional middle-class black leaders which gave him the power to influence not only both forces but the entire Civil Rights Movement.

During the direct-action phase of the movement and the early stages of the voter registration campaigns in the Deep South, the organizations that took the active roles were the SCLC, CORE and SNCC. The development of strategies, tactics and mass participation across the South was implemented by the field staffs located in the rural communities in the South. The Selma to Montgomery march, the sit-ins, the Montgomery bus boycott, the Freedom Rides, the campaigns in Birmingham and Selma, the MFDP, Mississippi Freedom Summer, the Mississippi Meredith March, and massive voter registration were all projects that developed and were spearheaded by joint action of the field secretaries, community leaders, and the local participants.

As a result of SNCC's anti-authoritarian posture, its organizers refused to admit that they were leaders and as a result inadvertently created many of the most charismatic, organizational and community-oriented leaders in the Civil Rights Movement. In each community that SNCC field staff workers entered they would develop indigenous movement leaders and build independent organizations that existed long after the

SNCC organizers had left the community. Ella Baker would often argue that "For people movements to be effective, participants must organize and build leadership among the masses" (Carson, 1981, p. 20). Instead of "the leader," individuals were bound together by a concept that benefited many others. The program provided an opportunity for them to develop responsibility.

Other organizations were developed or emerged that provided supplemental or supportive activities and assistance to the movement. The movement consisted of many alliances, coalitions, and a few federations. The 1963 March on Washington was sponsored by a coalition of the NAACP, National Urban League, SCLC, CORE, SNCC, the National Council of Negro Business and Professional Women, the American Jewish Congress, the Negro American Labor Council, United Auto Workers, the National Catholic Conference of Interracial Justice, and the United Presbyterian Church. This coalition was strained by the Catholic conference's opposition to segments of John Lewis' SNCC speech. The issue was resolved and the march continued as planned. The official coalition dissolved shortly after the march, but the outgrowth of this coalition was the formation of a civil rights/labor/liberal coalition known now as the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

In Mississippi the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) was formed to sponsor the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer. This federation was composed of CORE, SNCC, SCLC, the local NAACP, the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee (LCDC), local community leaders, and indigenous groups. The two groups that provided most of

the manpower, resources, direction, and work were CORE and SNCC. This federation of organizations remain intact until the introduction of the compromise to the MFDP at the National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Once the challenge ended the federation dissolved.

There were program alliances that movement organizations had with smaller groups on specific programs. SNCC had such an alliance with the Northern Student Movement (NSM), a support wing of SNCC, which raised monies and demonstrated in support of SNCC southern activities. SNCC formed another alliance with the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), which was founded in an effort to create a southern white counterpart to SNCC. Ann Braden stated SSOC objectives as two-fold: "organizing in the white communities and challenging the moderate white student over the issue of segregation" (Braden, 1958).

SNCC and SCLC formed a relationship with the Southern Conference Education Fund (SCEF), and the Highland Folk Center developed a citizenship education program that stressed adult education in conjunction with voter registration efforts. SNCC developed an unofficial working alliance with SDS. With assistance from CORE and the local NAACP, SNCC developed the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), a statewide political party with membership in regional and county structure. SNCC would later organize the Lownde County Freedom Organization (LCFO) (county/state political party).

Leaders

Various leaders represented the many different civil rights organizations. There were leaders who would emerge as by-products of the movement. Too often, the Civil Rights Movement is projected as having only one leader--Dr. Martin Luther King or the traditional Negro leaders. New studies are beginning to show that the leadership in the Civil Rights Movement consisted of all kinds--charismatic leaders, organizational leaders, and the indigenous community leaders.

The charismatic leaders--Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, Hosea Williams, Martin L. King, James Farmer, Fannie Lou Hamer, John Lewis, and Dave Dennis to name just a few--were generally articulate and able to attract the attention of the news media. They would explain the movement's ideology, goals, and methods and generally describe the state of the movement. Dr. King's classic speeches "I Have a Dream" and "Letter From the Birmingham Jail" are examples of his vision of the movement. Fannie Lou Hamer's speech at the 1964 Democratic National Convention gave a scathing review of violence and segregation in Mississippi and the hope and aspiration of the black who sought change.

The organizational leaders were the ones who were primarily responsible for building organizations and developing strategies and tactics. These leaders were generally not spokesmen for the organization and not charismatic or articulate, but some of them provided its essence. Ms. Baker, for example, had a long history of involvement developing NAACP branches across the South, as the first executive director of SCLC, and the founder (affectionately known as "Mother")

of SNCC. James Farmer, the founder of CORE, who introduced Freedom Rides, and was involved with nonviolent direct action in the South prior to the sit-in movement represents another example. Finally, A. Phillip Randolph, the mastermind behind the 1941 and 1957 marches on Washington, the 1960 march on the Democratic and Republican Party's conventions, and the 1963 March on Washington, also organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Finally, there was Baynard Rustin, one of the architects in the formation of SCLC, and the chief organizer for the 1963 March on Washington, who became head of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute.

The indigenous leaders gained attention because of their local activities and involvements. In most instances they were not the target of the news media. Their contributions are as important as those of the other categories of leaders but because of both geographic location and the absence of national media attention their names are not household names: E.D. Nixon of Montgomery, Alabama; Septema Clark of Charleston; Herbert Lee of Mississippi; Sammy Young of Tuskeegee; Fannie Lou Hamer; Victoria Grey; and Dewey Green were some of the notables in this category.

Social movements must direct much attention toward mobilizing mass opinion in the effected community. The Civil Rights Movement followed this process with the organization and leaders who made up the movement. While the movement consisted of a diversity of organization, through a dialectical process, it appeared to the noncritical eye that all of the organizations were going in the same direction with

the same perspectives and methods. This was not the case. The movement was in constant search for direction and did not begin with a 20-year plan or a blueprint to obtain freedom, justice, and equality. But the movement participants had a vision and a very distinct idea about what the goal was.

Good organizations, power resources, leadership communications, and organizing skills are essential for a successful movement, and those things were available to the Civil Rights Movement. But without ideology there is no movement. Ideology is the conscious set of principles or beliefs that give a social movement direction and perspective. The ideology provides the group membership with specific ideas on why the movement is necessary and what it would propose to remedy the problems. Ideology provides justification for a social movement plus a specific analysis of social and political problems. Ideological principles vary with the specific orientation of the movement as well as the type of opposition it will face.

At the base of the Civil Rights Movement's ideology was belief in the Judaic/Christian philosophy and the agape/love principle. The movement's strategy was a basic attempt to appeal to the moral consciousness of Americans in an attempt to rid America of the immoral and dehumanizing systems of segregation, discrimination, and racist oppresion (Sellers, 1973).

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Members of a social movement may react to the pressures and enticements of society individually; however, a social movement must collectively resolve the problem of its identity in order to be a viable enterprise (Toch, 19 , pp. 210-214). There are four conditions that are considered terminal for a social movement: a) overt violent repression by the established authorities or their representatives, b) institutionalization, c) its original demands or usefulness are outlived, and d) inflexibility.

The Civil Rights Movement met violent opposition from among the established authorities and the law enforcement officials in those hostile regions of the South where it operated. In many instances, the climate for this opposition appeared sanctioned by conservative and racist politicians, the white citizen council leaders, and, in some instances, the religious, social, and political institutions themselves. They would seek legal remedies to offset progressive judicial mandates and use other impediments to deny access to blacks. However, the yoke of racial discrimination and segregation began to crack with pressure from the demonstrations, and the pendulum began to swing towards justice and equality for blacks. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) instituted a covert operation to destroy the movement, and its activists. There had been a general feeling that the

FBI would not protect civil rights activists during the sit-in and voter registration phases of the movement. This covert counterintelligence program (Co-in-tel-pro) contributed greatly to the demise of the movement during its work using force, violence, deceptions to the media, and general disregard for constitutional protections (Carson, 1981). In an August 25, 1967 memorandum the FBI's Co-in-tel-pro objectives were laid out:

> The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of blacks, nationalists, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder.
>
> Intensified attention under this program should be afforded to the activities of such groups as SNCC, the SCLC, RAM, the Deacons, CORE, and the Nation of Islam. Particular emphasis should be given to extremists who direct the activities and policies of revolutionary or militant groups such as Stokely Carmichael, H. "Rap" Brown, Elijah Muhammed, and Maxwell Stanford.
>
> The goals are: 1) prevent the coalition of militant black nationalists; 2) prevent the rise of a "Messiah" who could unify and electrify the militant black nationalist movement; 3) prevent violence on the part of black nationalist groups. Through counterintelligence it should be possible to pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence; 4) prevent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability by discrediting them to segments of the community; and 5) a final goal should be to prevent the long-range growth of militant black nationalist organizations, especially among youth.
>
> Besides these five goals, counterintelligence is a valuable part of our regular investigative program as it often produces positive information. (pp. 386-399)

The Co-in-tel-pro agents used every available means possible to disrupt the movement including false arrest, the creation of internal

conflicts within organizations and conflict between organizations, and even personal conflict within private families. The agency resorted to illegal wire taps and the circulation of false, rancorous and heinous rumors about the activists. Agents would contact employers and schools to discourage administrators and managers from hiring activists or allowing the activist to enroll in school. The agency would "red bait" and/or "black list" many of the activists and set a general climate for additional maleficence by local authorities.

The attacks left many activists scarred or otherwise damaged, similar to the victims of the Joseph McCarthy's "Witch Hunt" era. Both during and after this author's involvement with SNCC, he experienced these vicious and illegal attacks and attempts at ostracism. The agents were so overt that he actually could identify by face those that actually doggedly trailed him. His phone, verified through litigation, was tapped for extended periods of time. Denial of bond and false arrest would follow. But in spite of all this, his strong belief in the fact that all that he had done was morally correct allowed him to persevere. He took additional solace in his belief in the goodness of humanity. Looking back, he could see clearly that substantial organizational and political contributions to the welfare, hope, and aspirations of many of the poor across the south, both black and white, had been made. This feeling of accomplishment was a significant deterrent for activists in warding off the attacks by the Co-intel-pro. Most of the activists became keenly aware of the role that government agents played in subverting the movement. Other problems

faced activists in the Civil Rights Movement. As a result of being in the more violent-prone and hostile areas over long periods of time, some of the participant/activists suffered from a malaise known to combat soldiers during World War II as battle fatigue or war neurosis. The uncertainty of when an attack might come, the brutality of the local law enforcement officials, the random violence--all made work in these hostile and recalcitrant areas of the South identical to military zones in Southeast Asia or Korea. This kind of mental violence was coupled with broken bones, concussions, and the actual loss of life. The activists were young and experiencing for the first time this level of violence. The violence was used as a tactic to suppress the movement and discourage its participants. The cattle prods, the water hoses, the church burnings and bombings, the murders, and the assaults all left very lasting impressions on the minds of these young idealistic students.

Toch (1965) stated that for a movement to survive in a changing world, the movement must go through an adaptive transformation that is designed to enhance attractiveness in competition with the outside. Changes, when they occur in a successful social movement, tend to convert it into an institution. When movements become institutions and lose their identity, they merge into society at large.

The Civil Rights Movement was successful in securing its initial goals and could have easily merged into society at large had it not been for the character of the many organizations. Then, with the emergence of "Black Power" and the growth of the nationalist

phase of the movement, a complete merger and institutionization were impossible. CORE and SNCC's support of Black Power meant that the concept had become viable within the more active wing of the movement. These groups sought to redirect the energies of the urban blacks (who from 1964-1967 had engaged in massive urban riots and rebellions) into positive more constructive programs. Their efforts were met with decisive disapproval from the status quo. On one occasion, McGeorge Bundy of Ford Foundation invited the heads of the Urban League, NAACP, SCLC and CORE to a retreat in Arizona. The agenda for this retreat included the development of a strategy to discredit Black Power advocates, to force SNCC out of the civil rights fold, and to provide funds to those organizations that would support the Ford Foundation's efforts. This retreat obviously caused some ill feelings among some of the organizations' representatives who were sympathetic to SNCC. This type of manuevering coupled with general support of Black Power in the black community created intense dialogue within the movement and caused internal conflict and division. This made it difficult for any organization to merge into the society at large.

The Civil Rights Movement began with relatively limited goals: the elimination of segregation and the securing of the right to vote. With the passage of the 1960 Civil Rights Act, the 1964 Comprehensive Civil Rights Act, and the subsequent passage of the 1965 Voter Rights Act, many of the movement's original goals had been achieved. Tensions within the movement began to emerge as various organizations began to struggle with the reality of these successes. Some organizations

continued as if nothing had changed, while others watched their constituency wither away and their resources dry up. Some were forced to close shop altogether. During this period Dr. King wrote Chaos or Community: Where Do We Go From Here and SNCC published internally Rock Bottom. Both expressed concern about the direction and continuation of the Civil Rights Movement. Ironically, in any event, the multiracial organizations terminated first; it became obvious that the movement known as the Civil Rights Movement had reached the point of outliving its original demands. Nationalism and efforts to redirect the movement to a Human Rights Movement were initiated, changed, and the fragile coalition dissolved.

In assessing a movement, it is important to know its strategy and tactics. Strategy is the formulation of the main long-range goal that the movement is fighting for to achieve its objective. Tactics are the day-to-day activities which the movement must respond to in order to meet the changes in the nature of the struggle.

In order for the movement to survive, it has to continue to change its tactics so that it can maintain the confidence of its constituency and not be co-opted by the status quo. Killian and Grigg (1964) noted that movement tactics emerge when previous modes of behavior prove inadequate for bringing about sufficient results. The movement must be unique and creative in developing tactics. If it insists on playing a protest role or confrontational role when this action is inappropriate it will lose its membership. If the movement consolidates its newly acquired power, it will risk becoming institutionalized.

The thrust of the student movement caught many by surprise, even some of the older more traditional organizations and leaders. Ella Baker stated that she felt that the SCLC and the NAACP had not kept pace with the new impatience and aggressiveness that the students were injecting into the movement. Clearly that was a significant change in tactic and direction. If an organization or movement refuses to allow for these changes, their ability to be successful, i.e., to meet their goals or reach their objectives, will be minimized. This results in loss of interest or loss in the willingness of its participants to continue. The collectivity must possess a shared sense of hope and faith. During the Civil Rights Movement, there were a number of successes or symbols of successful actions. Social movements grow and feed upon their own successes; but in order to have these positive results, they must be flexible.

The Civil Rights Movement did fit the collective behavior model of a social movement with its efforts to bring about social change and to establish a new humane social order. Moreover, the movement's initial philosophy dealt effectively with the equality of man and provided the movement with a moral perspective. This very same moral perspective suggests that the Civil Rights Movement does not fit snugly into the collective behavior model because social movements are sometimes considered separately from cultural and political characteristics. Even though Turner and Killen (1972) purported the notion that collective behavior is irrational and emotional, the Civil Rights Movement was very rational and did not fit the range of behaviors--fads,

crusades, mobs, cults, etc.--associated with traditional collective behavior theory. The movement did involve some emotionalism with its protest activities, songs, and mass rallies, but it differed in two ways: it was not spontaneous, nor was it based on psychological strains or pent-up frustrations as the major casual factor. The movement sought to change power relationships within America's social, economic, and political system; it saw its strategy and tactics within a political context.

The Civil Rights Movement grew from within a social, political, and historical context that provided the motivation for struggle. The institutions--black church, black segregated secondary schools, black colleges--were in place. The new and indigenous leadership--young and not committed to the beaucratic and traditional black organizations--was available. The emergence of new indigenous organizations--the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), the SCLC and SNCC--took place. A viable communication network developed through the black press--Jet magazine, Afro-America, and the Pittsburg Courier, the black churches, social and fraternal organizations, and the NAACP branches. All of these developments played an important part in the initial stages of the movement.

Weber's (1947) charismatic movement theory, which addresses the early stages of movements, will not provide adequate analysis when applied to the Civil Rights Movement. It falls short because it implies that Dr. King was the sole charismatic leader of the movement. It is important to note that Dr. King and the other movement leaders

were parts of separate organizations that organized and mobilized movement participants and resources using different methods. The organizations within the movement worked together on a common program and on the same issues, but they were diverse and had different political perspectives.

The resource mobilization model provides a better perspective from which to analyze the Civil Rights Movement. It deals with measurable factors: the ability of a group to organize, mobilize, and manage resources. But this model places too much emphasis on the resources outside of the targeted black and poor communities and gives little legitimacy to the role activists played in setting up movement centers in Montgomery, Birmingham, Selma, Nashville, Atlanta, Jackson, etc. The most successful areas were those where movement centers were established. The fact is that the black community, especially the church, provided an important preexisting mobilization and resource base for the movement. Most of the organizations and movements were indigenously organized and financed. When the students in Atlanta and Orangeburg, South Carolina, were arrested for sit-ins, it was the people in those communities that raised the bond money and provided the legal assistance and other resources necessary to sustain those programs (Morris, 1984, p. 281). The Civil Rights Movement does not fit perfectly into any of the social movements theoretical models. However, it does conform to the basic premise that "social movement seeks to bring about change."

The racial composition of the various organizations played a significant role in shaping the movement and its directions. SNCC and CORE were the only two major civil rights organizations with multi-racial staffs. The local NAACP chapters, the SCLC staff, and the Urban League staff were predominantly black. SNCC and CORE positions on issues and direction were more secular than theological. As a result, SNCC had the largest number of female activists; most other organizations' staffs were primarily male. Both factors--the secular orientation and the female staff--were significant. During its entire existence, the total number of SNCC activists never exceeded 150. During the period 1961-64, the staff's total was approximately 30. It was only during the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project that SNCC staff increased dramatically. From 1965 to 1967, the SNCC staff began to have some problems related to its sudden and massive growth and the fact that a large portion of this new staff was white. The staff of SCLC totaled no more than 50 during this same period of time. The local NAACP seldom had any staff at all. CORE staff numbered about 15-20 southern community organizers. Many of the students were from the major black colleges (Howard, Morehouse, Fisk, Tuskeegee, etc.) and from families where at least one parent or family member had attended college. Dr. Benjamin Mays, former president of Morehouse College called the young civil rights activists "some of our brightest."

A critical analysis of the Civil Rights Movement reveals a series of major successes and accomplishments. First, the movement was able to increase the liberalization of the political and social

system for blacks with the following achievements:

1. The 1954 Brown Decision
2. The Civil Rights Act of 1957
3. The 1960 Civil Rights Bill
4. The Interstate Commerce Commission's ruling against segregation on interstate carriers and terminals
5. The Civil Rights Act of 1964
6. Mass voter registration
7. The 1965 Voting Act
8. Widespread desegregation of public facilities

Second, the movement mobilized and politically educated people who had formerly been outside of the political process. Third, the Civil Rights Movement laid the organizational and political basis for additional movements and organizations in other areas. With this series of successes, the movement went on to win elections, build cooperatives and unions and build institutions that expanded their interests. Finally, the Civil Rights Movement focused attention on the war in Southeast Asia causing the United States Government to withdraw from the war in Vietnam and to reform the Selective Service System.

After 20 years, I am able to reflect on the 1960's Civil Rights Movement and its activist participants more objectively. I still have vivid memories of the 1963 March on Washington, the Birmingham campaign, the Selma to Montgomery march, the Southern voter registration campaign, the Mississippi-Meredith march, the Mississippi Summer Project, and the murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael

Schwemmer. As a young man of 19, I was introduced to Mississippi through a special assignment to investigate the disappearance of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwemmer. Eight of us left the summer project training session to travel to Philadelphia, Mississippi to search for the bodies of the missing men. Under cover of darkness, in teams of two, we searched the backwoods, swamps, and hillsides for signs of these friends. After four nights of no success--their bodies were later found buried under an earthen dam on the opposite side of the county--we returned to Philadelphia and were dispatched to our assigned areas throughout the state.

Even though our investigation had been unsuccessful, this experience left a lasting impression in my mind regarding the character and commitment of the participants in the movement. I often think of the idealism that motivated us young people. We felt a compelling urge to risk our lives, transcend fear, and walk proudly in the footsteps of other abolitionists like Fredrick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Sojourner Truth. The movement was made up of young people who turned away from school, job, family, and all the tokens of success in America to take up new lives, hungry and hunted in the name of justice and equality.

Erik Erikson (1958) in his study Young Man Luther analyzed the identity crisis which young people face. He stated that some succumb to this crisis with various forms of neurotic, psychotic or delinquent behavior; others will resolve the crisis through participation in ideological movements. They become passionately concerned with

religion or politics, nature or art. Erikson went on to say:

> The crisis occurs in that period of the life cycle when each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some working unity out of the effective remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his anticipated adulthood; he must detect some meaningful resenblance between what he has come to see in himself and what his sharpened awareness tells him others judge and expect him to be. (p. 14)

The movement participants understood the sharp contrast between the perception of black people in the old South and the perception of blacks being developed with the emerging Civil Rights Movement. Change was seen as possible. Black people and poor people could fight for and win a new position in the American social, political, and economic systems.

The struggle for civil rights was not the laissez-faire get-together that some have come to believe. Within the movement there were always discussions, debates, and active teaching and learning taking place. There were the discussions of the scholars Bertrand Russell, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Franz Fannon; discussions on the theories of change, theories of reform, the theory of nonviolent passive resistance, and on strategies and tactics of the the movement. The internal environment was similar to that of an open university, where learning was genuine, without intimidation or lock-step rigid and bureaucratic environment. There was always the environment of creativity and hope. The movement participant did learn and grow.

This was quite different from the world of the "yuppies" where success was measured by the accumulation of material objects and where

it is believed that money can assure happiness, love, respect, and dignity; and where intellectual pursuits are relegated to a position of nondistinction. It is then no wonder that athletics take a back seat to acadmics or that we live in a world where there is a dearth of intellectual growth and development.

In the 20 years since the Civil Rights Movement dispersed, participants have gone about living their lives like everyone else. Most feel that their experiences enriched their lives. It is interesting that few of the activists live in the rural southern communities where most of the civil rights activities took place; most live in large cities like Atlanta, New York, Washington, DC, Chicago, and the bay area of California. Few of those who were very religious while in the movement maintained their fervor afterwards. Most of those who were very political in the movement chose not to pursue a career in politics. The contrast between what people did in the movement and the particular career path they chose is interesting also. Their enthusiasm and concern have generally remained intact but their careers varied widely.

Some of the activists have become prominent in their chosen field. Many resumed their education that had been interrupted by their involvement in the southern movement, and went on to earn doctoral and professional degrees in law, medicine, and academia.

In the political arena some movement participants did seek political office becoming county commissioners, city councilmen, state legislators and United States congressmen. Julian Bond achieved national prominence when he was nominated for the Vice Presidency at

the 1968 Democratic convention. Jesse Jackson became the first black to organize a legitimate campaign for the Presidency of the United States. In summary, the movement participants have made their place in history. As Carson (1984) stated, "Most are still engaged in promoting social change; as individuals, they still seek the goals for which they once struggled" (p. 305).

In a larger sense, however, those who participated in the Civil Rights Movement left a significant legacy. All Americans are indebted to them. They not only released the idealism locked so long inside a nation that had not tasted the drama of a social upheaval, but they also endowed the black and poor young people of America with a new respect which was perceived nationwide.

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# APPENDIX A

## STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE STATEMENT

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
208 Auburn Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta 3, Georgia

Jackson 5-1763

STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE TO THE PLATFORM COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION THURSDAY MORNING, JULY 7, 1960, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

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MR. CHAIRMAN and Members of the 1960 Democratic Platform Committee:

I am Marion S. Barry, Jr. of Nashville, Tennessee and with me are Mr. Bernard Lee of Montgomery, Alabama, and Mr. John Mack of Darlington, South Carolina. We appear before you as elected representatives of the STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE, which is composed of students from eleven (11) Southern states, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

We also represent the thinking of thousands of Negro and white Americans who have participated in, and supported student efforts that have been characterized, generally, as sit-ins, but which in truth were peaceful petitions to the conscience of our fellow citizens for redress of the old grievances that stem from racial segregation and discrimination. In a larger sense, we represent hundreds of thousands of freedom-loving people, for whom our limited efforts have revitalized the great American dream of "liberty and justice for all."

# WHAT THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IS

On February 1, 1960, four freshmen left the campus of A&T College in Greensboro, North Carolina, went to the heart of that city, and took their seats in forbidden territory--the lunch counter of Woolworth, Inc. In a sense, this was the beginning of the student protest movement. But the threads of the quest for freedom and human dignity reach much farther--back into the days of 1955 when thousands of Negroes walked and the buses of Montgomery, Alabana were under boycott.

The threads of freedom form the basic pattern in man's struggle to know himself and to live in the assurance that other men will recognize this self. The ache of every man to touch his potential is the throb that beats out the truth of the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. America was founded because men were seeking room to become.

We again are seeking that room. We want room to recognize our potential. We want to walk into the sun and through the front door. For three hundred and fifty years, the American Negro has been sent to the back door in education, housing, employment, and the rights of citizenship at the polls. We grew weary. Our impatience with the token efforts of responsible adult leaders was manifest in the spontaneous protest demonstrations which, after February 1, spread rapidly across the entire South and into the North as sympathetic students sought to display their own dissatisfaction with race relations in the United States.

The movement is a protest and it is an affirmation. We protest and take direct action against conditions of discrimination. We affirm equality and brotherhood of all men, the tenets of American democracy as set forth in the Constitution, and the traditions of social justice which permeate our Judaic-Christian heritage.

## WHAT THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IS NOT

The student movement, despite the accusations of some public figures, is neither Communist-controlled or inspired. Such charges are unfounded and merely serve to heighten the tensions which must come in any social change. To label our goals, methods, and presuppositions "communistic" is to credit Communism with an attempt to remove tyranny and to create an atmosphere where genuine communication can occur. Communism seeks power, ignores people, and thrives on social conflict. We seek a community in which man can realize the full meaning of the self which demands open relationship with others. What we, the participants in the movement, have in common are our beliefs in the dignity of the individual, our hope in the democratic form of government, and our devotion to our homeland.

## WHY WE ARE HERE

We appreciate the opportunity to appear before this Committee, but we are conscious that we cannot adequately bespeak the hearts and minds of those whom we represent in the allotted ten (10) minutes.

We must also state frankly that we are interested in something more than a strong civil rights plank in the platform to be adopted by this convention. Many of us are old enough to remember, and others have observed through studying the records, that all too often, such planks seem devised mainly to woo election votes, and the, for all practical purposes, are forgotten.

We are here today to urge the leaders and candidates of the Democratic party to stop playing political football with the civil rights of eighteen million Negro Americans and to take forthright and definitive action to make American citizenship a vital and living reality to all, regardless of race or creed.

We are here to ask leaders of our nation to face up to the reality that racial discrimination is America's number one social issue, and that our national government must assume responsibility to guarantee the fundamental rights of all citizens without discrimination.

We have come to urge that this convention not only speak to these issues but pledge itself to see that the full weight of the federal government is used to eradicate our national shame, Jim Crow, and second-class citizenship.

## WHAT DO NEGRO STUDENTS WANT?

The question has been asked, "What do Negro students want?" Our answer is firm and clear: we want all the rights, opportunities, and responsibilities enjoyed by any other American, no more, no less; and we want these things now! Because of this, thousands of young Negroes

have faced abuse and mob action; more than 1600 have been arrested; some have spent as much as sixty days in jail, and all have faced charges from disorderly conduct to conspiracy to restraint of trade.

As citizens we are interested in the total civil rights issue; but as students, we have special interest in four (4) considerations. They are:

I. Education - that the legislative and executive branches of government act firmly and immediately to implement the 1954 Supreme Court decision against segregated public schools.

II. Employment - that the federal government set the pace for equal job opportunities by using the existing statutes and executive orders to see that Negroes are hired without discrimination on federal jobs, and jobs where federal contracts are held.

III. Voting - the unhampered exercise of the franchise for all citizens.

IV. Legal Protection - against violation of the constitutional rights of freedom of assembly and freedom to petition peaceably for redress of grievances.

I. Education

In 1956, the Democratic platform on civil rights said very little in the way of direct endorsement of the May 17, 1954 Supreme Court ruling against segregation in the public schools. Instead, the platform stated that the court ruling "brought consequences of vast importance" and that such court decisions were "a part of the law of the land."

In six years since the Supreme Court ruling, states have executed programs whereby the law could be circumvented through token and nominal integration. Today, 94% of the Negro children of school age have not been integrated into public schools. The 6% who have fought their way through courts have been subjected to public humiliation, mob violence, and Klan action. America cannot continue to let such illegality go unchecked.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

*We urge that the members of this committee endorse a plan to withhold federal funds from any school system which has not and will not begin integration now.

*By the same principle, we urge that the federal government offer full technical assistance and financial aid to those areas in which honest efforts are being made to end segregation in education.

*Further, we urge you to insist that the federal government require areas where discrimination in education continues to submit concrete plans to end this discrimination.

We cannot continue to accept second-class schools and inferior materials. It is extremely important to us as future leaders and heads of families that we receive the best possible education in the public schools of America.

In all justice, we urge the adoption and implementation of a plan of action which will give meaning to the words "with all deliberate speed." Integration of 6% of the school children in six years is a

denial of these words and a mockery of the Supreme Court. Aside from the fact that it is law, school integration is the beginning of encounter between persons; consequently, the beginning of communication which is essential to the practice of social justice.

II. Employment

Equal chance for individual economic advancement is one of America's proud boasts. Negro youth, like other youth, dream of jobs and "making a living"; but for them the dream is too often fraught with disillusionment and despair. Discrimination in employment is not limited to the South; but there it is accentuated and defended by local custom. Trained and skilled Negroes have almost no hope for professional employment, except the limited number of jobs in segregated facilities. Thus, many college trained Negroes are offered the "mop and broom" when seeking employment in private industry.

State and municipal governments offer not too much more. Even in federal facilities, jobs are limited by local administration. Yet, there are statutes and executive processes through which the federal government could start immediately to guarantee: equal opportunities on federal jobs and nondiscriminatory employment by firms holding government contracts.

Making a good living is basic to making a good life. Negro youth cannot make its fullest possible contribution to the future welfare and security of America if job discrimination continues. At a time when despotism and nuclear power threaten both the existence of a free world and that of any world at all, it is essential that America utilize her full human potential.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

We, therefore, call upon this convention to accept responsibility for decisive action towards a federal fair employment law, with adequate enforcement machinery.

III. Voting

The right to vote is basic to a democratic government. ". . . Governments are instituted among men," the Declaration of Independence stated, "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Yet today, ninety (90) years after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, many Americans are denied the franchise because of race. This is being accomplished largely through the arbitrary interpretation and application of complex voter-qualification laws, literacy and education tests, that frequently have been enacted for the express purpose of thwarting the Negro voter.

But even more shameful than the legal blockade are the extra-legal harassments to which potential Negro voters have been and still are subjected. Economic reprisals, threats, physical violence, even death are part of the pattern. Presently, in Haywood and Fayette Counties, Tennessee, persons are denied the right to buy gasoline, farm supplies, and even medical aid because they are Negroes and are trying to register for voting. To such conditions there is but one answer--the right to vote must be assured and protected by the federal government.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

*Hence, we call upon all political candidates to pledge themselves to work to strengthen and implement the 1957 and 1960 voting legislation and to work toward a Constitutional amendment that will encourage rather than discourage every qualified citizen to register and vote.

*Further, we urge immediate action to provide self-government to the voteless residents of our nation's capital, the District of Columbia.

IV. Legal Protection

It has been amply demonstrated that the white South is not averse to subjecting the Negro to law; it only objects to including him under a common law.

Nothing is more frustrating to a young Negro than to be barred from spending his money in public places. But it adds insult to injury to be invited, even urged, to shop at a store, buy at all counters . . . EXCEPT the lunch counter, because of the color of your skin.

We have been falsely told that the law forbids white and Negro eating together, or that the law forbids giving service to Negroes in "white" eating establishments and department store lunch counters. Often, it is not the law, but it is "local customer" which is being used to prevent the Negro from receiving his rights.

In the peaceful attempt to demonstrate our dissatisfaction with special laws for Negroes, we have been arrested, convicted and jailed. Then new laws have suddenly been enacted, denying the right to assemble,

and petition for redress of grievances, the right to be secure in our homes, and the right to be free of excessive bail and excessive fines.

We have been met with the "protection" of the police . . . fire hoses, clubs and tear gas. In many places, local officials have sanctioned the policies of rabid white supremacists and have actually deputized members of such groups.

Of the so-called Reconstruction Amendments, only the Thirteenth (XIII) has been carried out. Enforcement of state laws of segregation and disfranchisement have negated the others. Time is far overdue for making real the citizenship rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth (XIV) Amendment.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

We, therefore, urge the leaders and candidates of this convention to pledge that the basic provisions of the Part III of the 1957 Civil Rights Act will be enacted into a law that makes clear that Negroes are citizens of the United States and that "no state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States." Surely, the American government is not powerless to make this promise of more than ninety years ago.

## CONCLUSION

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress, adopting the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, created a new potential for life and liberty. On July 16, 1945, the explosion of the

first atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico created the possibility of death and enslavement. We stand today between these great turning points in human history, saying that America cannot fail in its responsibility to the free world. We must be strong. Civil defense and economic power alone will not assure the continuation of democracy. This democracy itself demands the great intangible strength of a people able to unite in a common endeavor because they are granted a common dignity. This challenge cannot be met unless and until all Americans, Negro and white, enjoy the full promise of our democratic heritage--first class citizenship. Dedicated to this end, we, the students of America, must continue our movement.

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The following Statement of Purpose was adopted in Raleigh, North Carolina, on April 17, 1960, at the first general conference of student movement participants:

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 Judaic-Christian traditions seeks to social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society.

Through nonviolence, courage displases fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overthrows 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.