"WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED": SNCC AND THE POWER OF NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION

A Syllabus by the SNCC Legacy Project

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> "The plan…was simplicity itself. In any sane, even half-civilized society it would have been completely innocuous, hardly worth a second thought or meriting any comment at all. CORE would be sending an integrated team—black and white together—from the nation's capital to New Orleans on public transportation. That's all. Except, of course, that they would sit randomly on the buses in integrated pairs and in the stations they would use waiting room facilities casually, ignoring the white/colored signs. What could be more harmless . . . in any even marginally healthy society?"
> – Stokely Carmichael

Course Description

A year after its founding, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee reached a philosophical and operational crossroads. The bold direct action campaigns unfolding across the South affirmed the promise and efficacy of "protest politics," or initiatives that prioritized mass action and immediate resolution outside of institutional processes. In the words of Rev. James Lawson, an architect of SNCC's theory of nonviolence, sit-ins were "a judgment upon middle class conventional, half-way efforts to deal with radical social evil…" The growing appeal of direct action, however, invited scrutiny and debate. From the Kennedy Administration to internally voiced concerns around strategy and power, direct action became a defining question for the young organization.

This course will trace SNCC's philosophical and operational approaches to direct action in four parts. We will begin by studying the early and critical debates that pitted direct action against voter registration as well as the organization's strategic commitment to nonviolence. This will include deep attention to conference and

meeting minutes, interviews, and autobiographies. This portion will also include the philosophical ancestry of nonviolent direct action. We will then turn to freedom rides, sit-ins, and picket lines by moving through Nashville, Tennessee, McComb, Mississippi, and Monroe, North Carolina among other key places. In addition to the major direct action campaigns organized out of these locations, we will pay particular attention to the impact of Black Power politics and anti-war organizing on SNCC's understanding of nonviolent direct action. We will conclude the course through two opportunities for reflection: 1) the entanglement of nonviolent direct action with Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy via his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"; and 2) the people power generated by SNCC's commitment to nonviolent direct action. There are also several activity-based units to encourage different methods and styles of study.

Primary Sources

- www.snccclegacyproject.org - The SNCC Legacy Project's Digital Movement Platform, created in 2022.
- www.crmvet.org - the website of the Civil Rights Movement Archive, Inc.
- www.snccdigital.org - The SNCC Digital Gateway, produced in partnership with Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies and Duke University Libraries.

Books

- James Farmer, *Revolutionary Nonviolence: Organizing for Freedom* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2022).
- Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Format

We have tailored this course to be delivered in multiple ways. Firstly, the modality can be either virtual or in-person. Secondly, and perhaps most significantly, it can be delivered in both the traditional lecture format and the seminar discussion format, as well as in non-traditional, flipped classroom formats. The teaching notes provide suggestions and recommendations tailored to the course material covered that week. In addition, we have added suggested media and other resources that can be folded into the course delivery. We believe that each course leader should use the methods that are most appropriate to the students engaged in these courses. This method

should enable students to reach a clear understanding and appreciation of the "SNCC Way"—not only its approach to organizing, but its approach to pedagogy. This too is movement-building.

Notes on Our Approach

This course employs the SNCC archive as the primary pedagogical tool for understanding the history of the movement. Individual facilitators however are free to enlarge upon that foundation by bringing in more historical figures, archives, and/or secondary sources that may not be available within the SNCC collection. In addition, the facilitator should feel free to connect the historical content to stories within and beyond the movement that might be relevant to the unique regional, institutional, and political contexts for the class. If there are stories that can be fruitfully added to the discussion, the facilitator might improvise upon what we have offered here. We encourage and expect facilitators to incorporate those elements into their delivery of the course.

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Schedule

Week 1 - GROUNDINGS: What is Direct Action and the Highlander Debate of August 1961

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

What is the Highlander School? Why did SNCC organizers gather at the Highlander during the summer of 1961? What two tactical orientations were organizers debating during this meeting? What concerns did direct action advocates such as Marion Barry, Diane Nash, and Charles Payne share concerning an emphasis on voter registration? How did voter registration advocates such as Tim Jenkins, Charles Sherrod, Chuck McDew, and Charles Jones reply to these concerns? What strategies did rural communities wish to prioritize and how did local needs shape this critical debate? What role did Ella Baker play in "resolving" this "tactical standoff" at the Highlander? How was Baker's proposed resolution formalized?

Readings and Resources:

- Interview with Ella Baker by Eugene Walker, September 4, 1974, Southern Oral History Program, UNC.
- Charles Jones, Tape 8, SNCC 40th Anniversary Tapes, 2000, Duke University.
- SNCC Staff Meeting Minutes detailing the direct action and voter registration programs and their relationship, October 8 – 10, 1961, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 110-11.

Other Resources:

- SNCC to Expand Direct Action," *Swarthmore Phoenix*, November 30, 1962.
- Joyce Denise Duncan, "Historical Study of the Highlander Method: Honing Leadership for Social Justice," (PhD diss., East Tennessee State University, 2005).

Teaching Notes:

- This week is designed to introduce participants to SNCC's structure and founding debates concerning direct action. Participants would benefit from a

quick historical review of SNCC's founding before delving into the specifics of direct action. For a lecture, the instructor may consider going into an in-depth history of the Highlander School and Ella Baker's experiences there.

- For a seminar, the instructor can consider having participants reenact this key debate, adopting the positions and lines of argument of people who were in attendance.

- As a remote learning activity, participants can research early coverage of SNCC's direct action framework to begin developing a sense of national coverage of the organization.

Week 2 - GROUNDINGS: "What Are We Trying to Create?": James Lawson and the Philosophical Origins of Nonviolent Direct Action

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

How did Rev. James Lawson arrive at non-violent praxis as a method of social action, an ideology and "moral methodology" capable of not only overturning legal segregation but inspiring a "world revolution against war?" What early influences and experiences in Lawson's life (familial, religious, social) did pacifism successfully integrate? What role did Lawson's incarceration for conscientious objection to the Korean War play in his approach to social change? How did deep study in India formalize Lawson's commitment to non-violence and expand his vision of what such a commitment can politically accomplish? Why did Lawson consider non-violence to be the most *pragmatic* orientation to struggle in the American context? How, where, and when did Martin Luther King Jr. and James Lawson meet? What came out of this meeting? What was the purpose of the Nashville workshops and how did this specific training impact the debates at SNCC's founding conference? How did Lawson's keynote speech at SNCC's founding conference inspire organizational priorities?

Readings and Resources:

- SNCC 50th, James Lawson Luncheon Keynote, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Kent Wong, "A Brief Biography of James M. Lawson," Jr, in *Revolutionary Non-Violence: Organizing for Freedom*, 107-24.
- James M. Lawson and Bryan Stevenson, "You Have to Do the Truth Part First," in *Revolutionary Non-Violence*, 90-106.

Other Resources:

- From James M. Lawson, The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University.
- Peter Dreier, "A Totally Moral Man:" The Life of Nonviolent Organizer Rev. James Lawson," *Truthout*, August 15, 2012.

Teaching Notes:

- This week offers participants the opportunity to develop a deeper sense of nonviolence as a philosophical and religious tradition. For lecture-based format, instructors should consider providing a more extensive intellectual biography of Lawson emphasizing the exchanges he and Martin Luther King, Jr shared. _

- In a seminar format, participants can more deeply engage and discuss the "moral methodology" of nonviolence and *why* Lawson understood it to be the only option within the conditions of modern politics.

- In a flipped setting, have participants journal about their understandings of contemporary political violence; participants should reflect on the conditions of contemporary social movements and whether those conditions affirm or challenge Lawson's position on nonviolent direct action.

Week 3 – FREEDOM RIDES, SIT-INS, AND PICKET LINES: CORE and the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

What is the Congress of Racial Equality? What kinds of organizing did CORE prioritize? What is *Morgan vs. Virginia* and how did CORE use this decision to shape their organizing strategy in the 1940s? Who are George Houser, James Peck, and Bayard Rustin? How did their personal and organizational histories converge in the Journey for Reconciliation? What were the stated objectives of the ride? How did CORE prepare—logistically and mentally? What decision left Ella Baker and Pauli Murray frustrated and dismayed? What did Thurgood Marshall and other key civil rights organizations say about the JOR? What were the outcomes of the ride and how was it received locally/nationally?

Readings and Resources:

- *CORE-Lator* May 1961, Civil Rights Movement Archive.

- Interview with Pauli Murray by Genna Rae McNeil, February 13, 1976, Documenting the American South, UNC.
- Arsenault, *Freedom Riders*, 1-25.

Other Resources:

- Derek Catsam, *Freedom's Main Line: The Journey of Reconciliation and the Freedom Rides* (University Press of Kentucky, 2009)
- Charles E. Cobb, *Jr., On the Road to Freedom: A Guided Tour of the Civil Rights Trail* (Algonquin Books, 2008)

Teaching Notes:

- The 1961 Freedom Rides were a political eruption, a "dangerous experiment" that set the spirit of black self-determination aflame in communities *besieged* by white supremacist violence. Freedom riders set off across the South to legally challenge the segregation of interstate transportation facilities. In a lecture format, consider spending extra time on freedom rides. They were vectors of self-determination and social dissent but are overshadowed by other achievements and moments within SNCC's history.

- As SNCC veterans recall, Freedom Rides were not only tactically disruptive but fed a *psychic hunger* for dignity, equality, and empowerment as well. They provoked (legal, social, and economic) crises in authority, introducing America to the radical methods of political change to come. Have participants map all the freedom routes within a state of their choosing (Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama) and write a brief accompanying analysis of what was achieved and experienced on those rides.

- The river of the freedom struggle is long. As historian Michael Arsenault notes, Freedom Rides had important antecedents in the midcentury convulsions of depression and war. Though frequently associated with a decade of student revolts that began with Greensboro and ended with a full-scale generational assault on authority, the Rides were rooted in earlier rebellions, both youthful and otherwise." Consider having participants create a chart that compares the political climate of 1947 to 1961 to think about the historical space and time between the two freedom rides addressed in this week.

Week 4 – FREEDOM RIDES, SIT-INS, AND PICKET LINES: "Only the Nashville Student Movement!": SNCC and the First Freedom Ride of 1961

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

Why and how did SNCC come to this decision to support the Freedom Rides? What was the Nashville Student Movement? Who were the key SNCC organizers that came out of Nashville such as Diane Nash, John Lewis, and Charles Sherrod? Who were the Rock Hill Nine? How did their case bring SNCC and CORE closer together? How did CORE manage to re-activate interest in Freedom Rides? What were the major challenges faced as riders headed deeper South, specifically Birmingham? How did this ride—from national context to logistics—differ from the Journey for Reconciliation? What legal decision were the riders testing this time around? What was the role of police/ state protection during the first Freedom Ride? What happened once riders reached New Orleans? How did Diane Nash and John Lewis emerge as critical leaders in Nashville? What was their specific analysis of the repression experienced during these forms of direct action? How did their training with Rev. Lawson prepare them to meet the challenges and possibilities of the moment? How did the Nashville political establishment respond? And perhaps most importantly, what action did the Kennedy administration take in light of this commitment to the Freedom Rides?

Readings and Resources:

- Interview with Diane Nash by Blackside, Inc. November 12, 1985, Eyes on the Prize, Henry Hampton Collection, Washington University, SNCC Digital Movement Platform
- *The Voice of the Movement*, July 16, 1961.
- "Sit-Ins: The Student Reports," ed. Lillian Smith, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Freedom Rides of 1961, *Civil Rights Movement Archive*.
- Arsenault, *Freedom Riders*, 43-93.

Other Resources:

- Larry W. Isaac, et al, "Preparation Pathways and Movement Participation: Insurgent Schooling and Nonviolent Direct Action in the Nashville Civil Rights Movement" *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 21 (2016): 155-76.
- Amanda D. Clark and Patrick G. Coy, "Civil Rights, Social Movements, and Domestic Policy: The 1960 Nashville Student Sit-In Movement Nashville Student Movement," in *Understanding Non-Violence: Contours and Contexts,* eds., Maia Carter Hallward and Julie Norman (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).

Teaching Notes:

- This week will explore the first Freedom Ride of May 1961 from D.C to New Orleans and its aftermath. Particular emphasis is placed on SNCC's participation and determination to finish the ride. This was a critical moment in which youth-led organizing stood up to organized violence. In a lecture format, instructors should emphasize why Nashville emerged as a pulse of SNCC's early organizing.

- For remote or flipped learning settings, consider having participants create a TikTok about Diane Nash and her centrality to the Freedom Rides of 1961.

- In a seminar format, have participants stage an evening newscast that would have aired when the Freedom Riders arrived in Birmingham.

Week 5 – FREEDOM RIDES, SIT-INS, AND PICKET LINES: Mayhem in Monroe: Freedom Rides, Violence, and the Question of Self-Defense

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

Why did Paul Brooks and Jim Forman have an interest in a Monroe Freedom Ride? Who is Robert Williams? What is the Monroe Non-Violent Action Committee? How did strategic differences between the two organizations contribute to the manner in which events played out in Monroe? What were the consequences for SNCC and other organizations that sent representatives to participate in this Freedom Ride? How did both the national media and SNCC opponents represent the organization's involvement in Monroe? How did this specific Freedom Ride impact SNCC's strategy and practice/process of collaboration moving forward? Does the Monroe Freedom Ride anticipate some of the dissent that will emerge around Black power and direct action tactics?

Readings and Resources:

- Frame-up, Escape, & Exile of Robert Williams (1961-1969), Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Truman Nelson, *People With Strength: The Story of Monroe, NC,* Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Arsenault, *Freedom Riders*, 400-18.

Other Resources:

- Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999).
- Robert Williams, *Negroes With Guns* (Marzani and Munsell, 1962).

Teaching Notes:

- Coordinated by SNCC members Paul Brooks and Jim Forman, the Monroe Freedom Ride of August 1961 is considered one of the most controversial. Brooks and Forman joined the Monroe Nonviolent Action Committee led by the militant Robert Williams in North Carolina in order to coordinate a picket line outside of the local county courthouse. The days of picketing devolved into violence that left Robert Williams wanted by the FBI and on the run. In a lecture, the facilitator may provide more details on Robert Williams and the organizational tensions at the heart of what unfolded in Monroe.

- In a seminar format, consider having participants reenact day-two of picketing and the need for a strategic realignment. What did SNCC organizers recommend and what did Williams and some Monroe locals advocate? In a seminar format, consider arranging a "silent conversation" via which participants can weigh in on tense and critical moments during the Monroe Ride/Campaign.

- In a flipped session, the facilitator might consider having participants assume different organizational roles (SNCC, SCLC, NAACP) and draft a "movement memo" based on their assigned affiliation.

Week 6 – FREEDOM RIDES, SIT-INS, AND PICKET LINES: Building Autonomy in McComb, Mississippi: 1961-1963

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

Why is McComb, Mississippi—a nerve center of white supremacist violence at the time—central to a bottom-up understanding of SNCC's direct action and voter registration projects? How did local people (such as Curtis Hayes, Hollis Watkins, Emma Bell, Bobby Talbert, and Ike Lewis,) take on the responsibility of advancing actions in McComb? What do the successes and challenges in McComb in 1961 suggest about SNCC's approach to organizing? How did the state's response to direct action compare to other places in Mississippi and across the South? Who was Herbert Lee and what was the McComb Student Movement? What was "Nonviolent High of Pike County" and how did it serve as a place and practice of solidarity, survival, and

autonomy? Why did SNCC return to McComb in 1963 and what were some of the new projects taken on in conjunction with the Council of Federated Organizations? What were the major initiatives undertaken during Freedom Summer? What did a Freedom School curriculum include? How did the state escalate and intensify surveillance and repression since the last time SNCC had organized in McComb? How did Black people's perceptions of nonviolent direct action shift from 1961 to 1963?

Readings and Resources:

- "Students Face Violence for You!" SNCC fundraising flyer from McComb, Mississippi, 1961, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- "Burglund High School Students Walk Out, 1961," *SNCC Digital Gateway.*
- Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 103-31.

Other Resources:

- Brenda Travis, *Mississippi's Exiled Daughter: How My Civil Rights Baptism Under Fire Shaped My Life* (NewSouth Books, 2018).
- McComb Legacies

Teaching Notes:

- By August 1961, SNCC had settled into McComb, Mississippi, a nerve center of white supremacist violence. While Curtis Hayes and Hollis Watkins joined their local SNCC office to assist with voter registration, they were so compelled by the framework of direct action that they helped create the Pike County Non-Violent Direct Action Committee. Hayes and Watkins staged a sit-in of two at Woolworth's and were promptly arrested. Their arrest encouraged 200 people to turn out for a mass meeting that same evening and McComb was activated from there. A lecture might focus on the problems of organizing in McComb and the significance of youth voices in breaking through these challenges.
- A seminar discussion might follow the thread of thinking about how youth organizing broke the stranglehold on McComb. Similarly, it might reframe the question of failure as it relates to the McComb Movement.

Week 7 - FREEDOM RIDES, SIT-INS, AND PICKET LINES: Representing Freedom Riders: Between History and Genre

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

How does the narrative constructed by and through *Freedom Summer* compare with the story this course has tried to tell so far? What do participants appreciate about the accuracy and precision of the narrative? Can we identify gaps or inaccuracies? What are the challenges to building a historical narrative around the Freedom Rides? What does the documentary form accomplish that is challenging in other genres or forms? What are other ways to tell the story of the Freedom Riders?

Readings and Resources:

- Film: *Freedom Riders* (dir. Stanley Nelson, 2010).

Other Resources:

- Jon Else, *True South: Henry Hampton and "Eyes on the Prize," the Landmark Television Series that Reframed the Civil Rights Movement* (Penguin, 2017).

Teaching Notes:

- This week offers a break from the political and historical concerns that dominate this course by turning to representations of the Freedom Movement through the documentary form. Consider having remote participants develop their own soundtrack to Nelson's *Freedom Summer* via Spotify. Remote participants can also write a letter to Stanley Nelson or a review of the documentary.
- In a lecture format, the instructor can introduce other examples of Nelson's work and this question of historical narrative and genre.

Week 8 - FREEDOM RIDES, SIT-INS, AND PICKET LINES: Arsnick!

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

What were the unique questions derived from "Arsnick"—SNCC's Arkansas chapter? How might it help us better understand how *local* challenges, needs, and specifics shape organizational priorities? Who was William Hansen? How did Hansen negotiate his position as a white field secretary? How did local Black leadership respond to Arsnick? What was the role of Philander Smith College students and in what ways did they shape the successes of SNCC across the state? What tactics did city and state officials use to suppress direct action organizing? Why were the cases of Frank Lupper and Thomas Robinson some of the last sit-in cases heard by the U.S Supreme Court and what does this reveal about the larger "legal context for direct action and desegregation and how local, regional, and national levels of protest could often

intersect in mutually beneficial ways?" as John Kirk writes. What was unique about the Pine Bluff sit-ins? What happened at the 1965 march on the state capitol and how did this march anticipate emerging divisions (both locally and nationally) within SNCC? For Arsnick, how did local context come to shape strategy?

Readings and Resources:

- Sara Riva, "Desegregating Downtown Little Rock: The Field Reports of SNCC's Bill Hansen, October 23 to December 3, 1962," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 71 (Autumn 2012): 264-82, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Michael Simmons, "Arkansas Roots and Consciousness," in *Arsnick: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee*, eds., Jennifer Jensen Wallach and John A. Kirk (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2011), 107-14, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Arlene Dunn, "My Arkansas Journey," in *Arsnick: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee*, eds., Jennifer Jensen Wallach and John A. Kirk (The University of Arkansas Press, 2011), 160-65.
- Bill Hansen, "Arkansas Daze," *Arsnick: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Arkansas*, eds., Jennifer Jensen Wallach and John A. Kirk (The University of Arkansas Press, 2011), 87-100.

Other Resources:

- Berger, *Stayed On* Freedom, 83-93.

Teaching Notes:

- This week is a departure from the momentum built up over the last few weeks. It can be exchanged for any other local SNCC chapter. The intent is to study a *less* well-known site of struggle. Lectures might deploy this method to explore other locations where SNCC is not well-known or understood.

- However the week is constructed, instructors should consider using local archives and resources to draw out unique features of different chapter histories. As a course project, consider having students reach out to their city of focus to see if there is commemorative programming related to SNCC's impact and legacy there.

Week 9 - FREEDOM RIDES, SIT-INS, AND PICKET LINES: Direct Action Needs Legal Defense: Litigating the Movement

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

How did the Civil Rights Movement collaborate with a complex network of resources working to facilitate progress? What role did lawyers and legal organizations play in representing imprisoned demonstrators and challenging legal discrimination? How did the legal cases during the Freedom Ride inform the direction that movement was to take?

Readings and Resources:

- CORE-Lator, August 1961, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Pro-Bono Lawyers, *SNCC Digital Gateway*.
- National Lawyers Guild, SNCC Digital Gateway.
- Arsenault, *Freedom Riders*, 382-423.

Other Resources:

- Mary Hamilton, Louise Ingraham, and Others, *Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves,* Civil Rights Movement Archive

Teaching Notes:

- As the legal support grew, SNCC's needs were organized and delegated in order to ensure efficiency. Casework was divided as follows: President's Committee handled matters that involved "a Movement leader, minister or other 'important person;'" the Ink Fund (LDF) would handle constitutional matters, the Guild would handle radical issues, and the ACLU covers "everything else." ("Pro-Bono Lawyers," SNCC Digital Gateway). In a seminar format, ask participants to evaluate this casework division as they consider the specific cases they chose to study.

- Consider having advanced seminar students complete case briefings on the major trials or cases that impacted SNCC's practice of direct action. Why is this kind of legal research important to social movement history?

- In a flipped format, participants might select any of the trials discussed in *Freedom Rides* for research. Participants will create short presentations on the case and context of their choosing. These presentations should unpack the

importance of legal teams, reasoning, and resources to the resilience of SNCC's direct action campaigns.

Week 10 - BLACK POWER AND THE VIETNAM WAR: "Where Is The Draft for the Freedom Fight in the United States?" : SNCC and the Vietnam War

Discussion Question and Dilemmas:

As SNCC became the first civil rights organization in the United States to publicly oppose the Vietnam War, the organization was propelled into a new and controversial field of struggle where the question of what non-violent, *anti-war* direct action would look like? How would SNCC mobilize Black communities against a war supported by both the political *and* civil rights establishment? Who are John D. Shaw and Sammy Younge? What role did their lives and deaths play in SNCC's movement towards an anti-war agenda? Who is Gloria Larry House? By what process did SNCC arrive at its Statement on Vietnam? How does the statement frame and develop a critique of the war? How did SNCC communicate this critique and the need for an anti- draft program of action? What was the role of images and other creative ephemera (posters, broadsheets, comic books, pamphlets etc) in sharing/popularizing this critique? Who is Julian Bond and how did SNCC's Vietnam statement impact his political campaign for the Georgia house? What did Michael Simmons and Larry Fox's vision for a National Anti-Draft Movement include?

Readings and Resources:

- McComb Project Comes out Against the Vietnam War, 1965 SNCC Digital Gateway.
- Statement by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee on the War in Vietnam, 1966, SNCC Digital Gateway.
- Michael Simmons and Larry Fox, "National Anti-Draft Program," August 9, 1966, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Statement by Julian Bond, 1966, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Diane Nash, "Journey To North Vietnam," *Freedomways* (1967), Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Cleveland Sellers, "The Rise of anti-Vietnam War in Civil Right Movement," Archival Footage, Howard Zinn Project.
- Daniel Lucks, *Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 73-110.

Other Resources:

- Julian Bond, *Vietnam: An Antiwar Comic Book*, The Sixties Project, University of Virginia.
- Roy Wilkins, "SNCC Does Not Speak for the Whole Movement" *Los Angeles Times*, January 17, 1966, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Dan Berger, "SNCC's UnRuly Internationalism, " *Boston Review*, November 16, 2021.
- Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006)

Teaching Notes:

- This week will introduce participants to the historical and organizational context in which SNCC: 1) pioneered a *radically defiant* position on the Vietnam war; and 2) developed new approaches to direct action for an emergent anti-war, anti-imperialist, and internationalist political framework. In a discussion format, the facilitator might ask participants how SNCC's pioneering position on Vietnam impacted its place in the freedom movement at large?
- In a lecture format, instructors can emphasize these emergent threads with additional historical and political context.

Week 11 - BLACK POWER AND THE VIETNAM WAR: "The Viet Cong Never Called me N—": The Atlanta Project and SNCC at the Black Power Crossroads

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

What did SNCC's philosophy of direct action mean within the context of black power politics and the anti-war movement? If the Vietnam War called SNCC to a new field of struggle, how did this field generate alliances and inflame schisms within the broader freedom movement? What is the Atlantic Project? Under what circumstances did the Atlanta project convene and what critique of SNCC did the project advance? Who are Zoharah Simmons, Gwen Patton, Donald Stone, and Bill Ware? What organizing priorities and political analyses did these members of the Atlantic Project advance? Where is Vine City and what actions and campaigns did the Project develop there? How did the Atlanta Project approach direct action? What is the Atlanta Project's Statement on Black Power (April 1966)? What happened at the August 1966 Anti-Draft protests? How was the charge of "insurrection" used to discipline protestors? What was the National Black Anti-War Anti-Draft Union (NBAWADU), and what was on the April 1968 National conference agenda? In what ways did The Atlanta Project's emphasis on urban organizing through rent and labor strikes, anti-police brutality

demonstrations and anti-war actions introduce new organizing priorities and an increasingly *nationalist* approach to political change? How did it generate debate among SNCC leadership and place the organization at another ideological crossroads?

Readings and Resources:

- Prospectus for an Atlanta Project, 1966, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, *Wisconsin Historical Society.*
- Atlanta Project, Court Proceedings, 1966, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Reprint of SNCC Atlanta Project's Statement on Black Power, April, 1966, Civil Rights Movement Archive.

Other Resources:

- "Uncle Sam Wants You Nigger," *Civil Rights Movement Archive.*
- Daniel Lucks, *Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 11-40.
- Berger, *Stayed On* Freedom, 119-38.

Teaching Notes:

- A lecture might focus on the nature of the Black Power movement as seen through the eyes of those associated with The Atlanta Project. It might consider the intersections their view had with earlier iterations of Black nationalist consciousness and the larger movement toward direct action.

- Black power was "less a unitary movement," notes Brandon Terry, "than an assemblage of resonant and overlapping activity in politics, cultural production, and creative expression under a sign that tracks particular questions, contentions, and concepts." In a seminar format, encourage participants to use Terry's definition as a template to think about the critique the Atlanta Project was making of SNCC.

- In a remote learning setting, participants might research and collect various organizational statements on the Vietnam War to compare with that of SNCC. What stands out about SNCC's analysis? What does it share with other statements and how does it differ in tone, analysis, and timing?

Week 12 - BLACK POWER AND THE VIETNAM WAR: "Doesn't Anyone Give a Damn About the Murders in Orangeburg?": Student Power, State Repression, and the Story of Cleveland Sellers

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

How did the story of the Orangeburg Massacre story intersect with the life of SNCC's Cleveland Sellers? How does his life thread together lessons on radicalism, repression, and state power? In what ways did it demonstrate the ongoing consequences SNCC organizers faced because of their political commitments?

Readings and Resources:

- "Slaughter in South Carolina," *The Movement*, April 1968, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Cleveland Sellers, "The Context of Black Power," in *A Circle of Trust: Remembering SNCC*, ed. Cheryl Lynn Greenberg (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), Civil Rights Movement Archive.

Other Resources:

- Film: *Scarred Justice: The Orangeburg, Massacre 1968* (dir. Bestor Cram, Judy Richardson, 2008)
- Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, *The Orangeburg Massacre* (Mercer University Press, 1996)

Teaching Notes:

- In a lecture, the facilitator might emphasize the burgeoning history of student and campus activism at the time.

- In a seminar format, after screening *Scarred Justice*, consider asking participants to discuss the relationship between social change and universities. What should student power mean and how should it be protected? What is the role of police on campuses? What does Orangeburg teach us about the current police abolition movement coming out of universities?

- In a remote or flipped setting, participants might develop a compelling and informative graphic that brings the events at Kent State and Orangeburg together to think more broadly about campus activism and deadly repression.

Week 13 - REFLECTION: The Philosophy and Tactics of Nonviolent Direct Action

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

In what ways did SNCC practice direct action as a tactic? How did it converge with the idea of direct action as a belief system? Who were the chief adherents of each? What were the guiding and motivating factors of each? How did these tendencies influence the evolution of the movement in the waning years of the 1960s? How might thinking through these ideas influence how we remember and participate in movement activity today?

Readings and Resources:

- Lawson, *Revolutionary Nonviolence*, 18-68.
- Kwame Ture, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael [Kwame Ture]* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 155-77.
- Faye Bellamy Powell, "Playtime is Over," in *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts By Women in SNCC*, eds. Faith S. Holsaert, Martha Prescod Norman Noonan, Judy Richardson, Betty Garman Robinson, Jean Smith Young, and Dorothy M. Zellner (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 473-83.
- Charles Cobb, *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible* (Duke University Press, 2015).
- Bruce Hartford, "The Bogalusa Lesson," Civil Rights Movement Archive.

Other Resources:

- Eyes on the Prize, interview with Stokely Carmichael.

Teaching Notes:

- A lecture might focus on the long history of nonviolent organizing and the idea of satyagraha as an influential philosophy. It might think through how it ended up playing a role in the worldview of Black organizers.

- A seminar might think through the differences between the idea of nonviolence as a philosophy or belief system and its tactical usages.

- A flipped classroom might allow participants to present different aspects of nonviolent vignettes reflecting on how each might map on to the philosophical and/or tactical dimensions of the concept.

Week 14 – REFLECTION*:* "Letter from A Birmingham Jail" and Other Ways of Remembering the History of Nonviolent Direct Action

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas: How did MLK's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," frame what he calls the "four basic steps of any nonviolent campaign: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive, negotiation, self-purification, and direct action"? What campaigns, actions, SNCC chapters, and key figures studied in this course illustrate or represent these steps at work? How, for example, did the Nashville participants practice "self-purification" prior to the Freedom Rides? How did SNCC go about its "collection of facts"? What did "negotiation" look like in McComb? And what did "direct action" mean to and for the thousands of people that stepped into the Freedom movement?

Readings and Resources:

- Martin Luther King Jr, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," April 16 1963, Civil Rights Movement Archive.

Other Resources:

- Tommie Shelby and Brandon Terry, eds., *To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018).

Teaching Notes:

- Dr. Martin Luther King' Jr.'s national memory is synonymous with non-violence and his "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" is a canonical statement on the meaning and content of non-violent direct action. As this course emphasizes, however, non-violent direct action is a process by which ordinary people make power together. A lecture might reflect on this essay and the dimensions of critical and philosophical clarity it offers.

- A seminar discussion might converge with the flipped format to allow participants to identify the campaigns covered in this course that unpack the "four basic steps of any nonviolent campaign."

Week 15 - REFLECTION: Come Build a Nonviolent World With Us!

Discussion Questions and Dilemmas:

Given the dynamic movement work covered in this course, how might we imagine a world that is nonviolent? What are the philosophical and spiritual dimensions required to help produce it? What lessons does SNCC provide for helping realize this world?

Readings and Resources:

- "The Impact and Influence of SNCC on American Society, 1960-1968," SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference, Civil Rights Movement Archive.
- Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 391-405.

Teaching Notes:

- For this week, participants may select a primary source encountered during the course and give a brief presentation on why that source captures and expresses the wonder and power of nonviolent direct action as practiced by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

Appendix: Reading List

Ahmad, Muhammad. *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960-1975.* Chicago: Charles Kerr Publishers, 2007.

Blackwell, Unita. *Barefootin': Life Lessons from the Road to Freedom.* New York: Crown, 2006.

Bonner, Charles. *Tip of the Arrow: The Selma Student Nonviolent Movement: A Study in Leadership.* Conneaut Lake, PA: Page, 2020.

Brown, H. Rap. *Die Nigger Die!* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2002.

Carmichael, Stokely. *Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2007.

Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Cobb, Charles. *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Dittmer, John. *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Urbana, IL: Illinois University Press, 1995.

Fitzgerald, Joseph. *The Struggle is Eternal: Gloria Richardson and Back Liberation.* Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2019.

Forman, James. *Sammy Younge, Jr.: The First Black College Student to Die in the Black Liberation Movement.* New York: Grove Press, 1968.

–. *The Making of Black Revolutionaries.* New York: Macmillan, 1972.

Greenberg, Cheryl ed., *A Circle of Trust: Remembering SNCC*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

Hartford, Bruce., *Troublemaker: Memories of the Freedom Movement* (San Francisco: Westwind Writers, 2019).

Holsaert, Faith S., Martha Precod Norman Noonan, Judy Richardson, Betty Garman Robinson, Jean Smith Young, and Dorothy M. Zellner, eds. *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Hogan, Wesley. *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dreams for a New America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Jones, Brian. *The Tuskegee Student Uprising: A History.* New York: New York University Press, 2022.

Lafayette, Bernard. *In Peace and Freedom: My Journey in Selma.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013.

Lee, Chana Kai. *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Lewis, John. *Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

McAdam, Doug. *Freedom Summer.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Moses, Robert and Charles E. Cobb. *Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project.* New York: Penguin Random House, 2002.

Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Sellers, Cleveland. *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC.* New York: Harper, 2018.

Travis, Brenda. *Mississippi's Exiled Daughter: How My Civil Rights Baptism Under Fire Shaped My Life.* Montgomery, AL: New South Books, 2018.

Umoja, Akinyele. *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement.* New York: New York University Press, 2014.

Watkins, Hollis. *Brother Hollis: The Sankofa of a Movement Man.* Clinton, MS: Sankofa Publishing, 2015.

Zinn, Howard. *SNCC: The New Abolitionists.* Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013.

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