Rise, Radicalization, Fall and Legacy of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

1 Rise

- **February 1960**: Black students hold first lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro, NC; sit-ins spread throughout the country; a new organization is needed to give the protest more coordination
- **April 15-17, 1960**: SNCC is founded at Raleigh Conference at Shaw University (sponsored by the SCLC and mentored by Ella Baker), first chairman is Marion Barry
- **SNCC** is designed as a nonviolent, direct action organization, mostly sustained by students and with a group-centered leadership
- **May 1961**: SNCC, together with CORE, carries out the first Freedom Rides from Washington, D.C. to Jackson, MS under great personal risk
- In the following years **SNCC** is engaged in voter registration campaigns in the Deep South
- **August 28, 1963**: March on Washington; by then SNCC has become one of the major civil rights organizations
- In the summer of 1964, **SNCC** is part of the Mississippi Freedom Summer. Thousands of black and white students help to mobilize voters, form Freedom Schools and organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP, an alternative to the all-white Democratic Party)

2 Radicalization

- **August 1964**: MFDP fails to present a serious political challenge to the Democratic Party (though the integrated delegation manages to get extensive national attention), a lot of SNCC members are disillusioned and disappointed in the jurisdiction and political decision-making
- **March 1965**: SNCC alienates itself from the SCLC and other mainstream civil rights organizations during the Selma To Montgomery Marches, because SNCC increasingly supports a more militant and uncompromising tactic
- **May 1966**: Stokely Carmichael becomes new chairman and steers SNCC towards the ideology of Black Power. From this turning-point onwards, SNCC radicalizes more and more and gradually abandons nonviolence as a tactic.
- **1966**: SNCC excludes all white members
- **1967**: SNCC is covered by the FBI’s Counterintelligence Program
- **1968**: SNCC changes its name to Student National Coordinating Committee

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1 http://libinfo.uark.edu/eresources/news/collectionsnews0207.asp
3 Fall
- The decline of SNCC already started with its alienation from the mainstream Civil Rights Movement and its radicalization; the actual downfall, however, starts in 1968
- Among the various reasons are: discrepancy of ideology and results, political frustration, influx of members → fragmentation, growing separation from other civil rights organizations, dwindling financial support, expansion of actions from South to North, radicalization and fragmentation because of frustration within SNCC (also parallel to the development of the Civil Rights Movement as a whole)
- **1972:** SNCC simply ceases to exist

4 Legacy
- **SNCC** played a crucial role in the success of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. With its courageous campaigns in the Deep South SNCC helped to improve the lives of many Blacks.
- **SNCC** was a role model for the Student Protest all over the world by focusing on nonviolent, direct action.
- **SNCC**’s development in the second half of the 1960s, however, is highly disputable; nevertheless, its achievements outshine its deficits. In honor of its 50th birthday an Anniversary Conference was held at Shaw University and a **SNCC Legacy Project** was created to continue the work of this significant civil rights organization.

5 Selection of important members
- **Marion Barry:** first chairman of SNCC, later mayor of Washington D.C.
- **Stokely Carmichael:** SNCC chairman 1966-1967, turned SNCC towards Black Power, expelled from SNCC in 1967, became Honorary Prime Minister of the **Black Panther Party**
- **John Lewis:** early activist, Freedom Rider, SNCC chairman 1963-1966; since 1986 member of the US House of Representatives
- **Bob Moses:** SNCC field secretary 1960-1966; nowadays he is engaged in educational projects
- **Diane Nash:** early activist, Freedom Rider and successful organizer in the Civil Rights Movement

6 Bibliography
- [http://www.ibiblio.org/sncc/](http://www.ibiblio.org/sncc/)
- [http://america.docuwat.ch/videos/?alternative=2&channel_id=0&skip=0&subpage=video&video_id=122](http://america.docuwat.ch/videos/?alternative=2&channel_id=0&skip=0&subpage=video&video_id=122)
- [http://www.sncc50thanniversary.org/](http://www.sncc50thanniversary.org/)