

THE INS AND OUTS OF SNCC

"The freedom of the Negro was as little as dream
that never come true.
Through the years the Negro began to get free of white
men ugly names. The Negroes are a hardworking race
and should be free some day."

Sam S.
West Helena, Ark.

"If I myself stress the wholly fragmentary, incomplete
character of this book, I do not do so in order to protect
myself, in a sheer manner against objections to this
character....Nothing more can be attempted than to estab-
lish the beginning and the direction of an infinitely
long road--the pretension of any systematic and definitive
completeness would be, at least, a self-illusion."

Georg Simmel
Soziologie

Nancy Stoller
January, 1966

THE INS AND OUTS OF SNCC

I. INTRODUCTION

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is an unusual organization. Since its birth in February, 1960 it has grown in size from no full-time staff to a height in the fall of 1964 of 215 paid workers, receiving salaries ranging from \$1 to \$100 per week. Its members have voluntarily engaged in activities which have caused them to be beaten, jailed, and killed. And it has attempted to radically transform the lives of thousands of Southern Negroes, using, in most cases no funds, no experts, no equipment, and no support from economically and politically powerful sources in the South. As an organization, it has been wary of political coalitions and extremely hostile to the commonly understood art of compromise. It is described, even in the Northern press as a group of idealistic, radical, but immature and often misguided, youngsters. But without its work throughout the South, the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Act would never have been conceived or passed. Historians may disagree about the particular effect of SNCC on the production of the bills--whether it "stirred the conscience of the nation" or it frightened it with the possibility of Negro violence, or it roused the ire of foreign nations and blighted the national image. But there can be no doubt that the sit-ins, the Freedom Days, the Selma March, the Mississippi Summer Project, and even the murders in Alabama, have shaken this country. SNCC and SNCC workers were intricately involved in all these events.

A bit overrated

I began by saying that SNCC is an unusual organization. It is unusual, as a civil rights organization, not only in terms of its growth and impact, but also in terms of its internal structure, its goals, and its operating techniques. It is not only more critical of its environment than the NAACP, CORE, or SCLC; it is also more critical of itself.

Few would suggest that SNCC is an internally peaceful organization and most would agree that it is continually engaged in internal and external battles. Indeed, its raison d'être is conflict--conflict with all who oppose its goal of a free society peopled by free men and women. The purpose of this paper is to understand how SNCC is affected by conflict, how it resolves or does not resolve its internal problems, and how it approaches its social environment. In order to simplify the presentation in some ways (and complicate it in others), I have borrowed Lewis Coser's analysis of conflict¹, which is based primarily on the work of Georg Simmel.² The paper proceeds simply, proposition by proposition. I have attempted not only to utilize Coser's analysis as a model for SNCC's handling of conflict; I have also hoped to criticize and qualify his theory, indicating succinctly where it might not apply in the analysis of certain relationships. Finally, my goals are to communicate (indirectly) to the reader what it is like to belong to SNCC and how difficult it is to make generalizations about either its history, its present, or its future.

¹The Functions of Social Conflict, New York, Free Press, 1956.

²Georg Simmel, Conflict and The Web of Group-Affiliations, trans. by Kurt Wolff and Reinhard Bendix, New York, Free Press, 1955.

II. Methodology

I have been associated with SNCC in one way or another since 1960. My most intense involvement was from February to August, 1965 when I was a paid volunteer (an intermediate role between "volunteer and "staff member") in Arkansas. During that time I worked in an office, helped organize a state conference, started a Freedom Center program, and coordinated Northern contacts for the state project. In addition to my work in the state, I attended a national staff meeting, two executive committee meetings, and several workshops. Prior to that time I had been involved in SNCC picketing, sit-ins, etc.

While I was in Arkansas I wrote extensive letters during the first four months. Therefore, one might say that I have "field notes" covering that period. In addition, during that time, I collected SNCC literature and press coverage for both Arkansas and other states. In this paper I have not dealt with any events in SNCC, either during that time or any other, which rely solely on my memory. Those that seem doubtful can be substantiated by conferring with SNCC workers or by reading the press--depending on the events referred to. Wherever possible I have cited references. However the selection and analysis are mine. If at times they seem biased, I wish to apologize. I have attempted to be objective. I have avoided distortion as best I could. But I have not withdrawn my emotions from the study. Fannholl remarks that the variety of social perspectives prevents all men from seeing things the same way. But it also introduces the possibility of new perspectives on old events. A man who sees a "murder" will ask different questions than one who sees an "unavoidable death." And

A noble but perhaps unnecessary restriction

a man who describes a murder, and believes he has seen one, and then is afraid to label it, is either having difficulty with his language or his society. Murder is murder, whether it is witnessed by a sociologist or a housewife. I ask my readers to correct my analysis but not my emotions. And if it can be demonstrated that my emotions interfere with objective analysis, I will gladly rephrase the letter. *but hopefully not distort*

I quoted you the other day
SANS
footnote

For those who are interested, I would be glad to share my field notes and my collection of SNCC literature.

III. CONFLICT WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Proposition #1: The Group-binding Functions of Conflict.

A certain amount of discord, inner divergence, and outer controversy is organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together; it cannot be separated from the unity of the social structure.... Hostilities... prevent boundaries within the group from gradually disappearing, so that these hostilities are often consciously cultivated to guarantee existing conditions.¹

In order for a group to maintain a cohesive identity and a delineated position within a social structure it must set itself apart from other groups with that structure. Conflict operates to maintain the distinction in two ways. Internally the group limits and structures the activity of its members in certain ways so that they and it can be distinguished from non-members and other groups. The group boundary is maintained partially by enmity and antagonism toward other groups. Secondly, this enmity, operating among groups and governing the external relations among groups, acts to maintain the entire social structure by

¹ Coser, op. cit., pp. 17 - 18.

forcing a balance among its parts. This is particularly clear in highly stratified societies where mutual antagonism is high and the opportunity for mobility is low. In a more mobile society, hostility and conflict will increase because of the attraction of the lower strata to the higher. ^(Coser, op. cit. p. 38.) This does not imply that the boundaries between the strata will become blurred. If inter-group conflict results boundaries may indeed become sharper still.

Let us consider the position of SNCC in light of this proposition that conflict binds both the group and the social structure.

SNCC is an organization of men and women attempting to transform the lives of Southern Negroes. Its avowed goal is to work toward a harmonious integrated society. Its ideology, which will be discussed in greater detail later, centers around a vision in which race hatred, economic, political and "educational" oppression will disappear. The proper means for obtaining this society are subject to dispute, within limits. The limits of one dispute will indicate how SNCC sets itself apart from, and is set apart by, other political organizations in this country.

Ever since the development of the Freedom Schools and the Freedom Democratic Party in Mississippi, SNCC workers have discussed the use of "parallel institutions." The debate about parallel institutions (a debate which rarely involves the use of the phrase itself) centers on the proper means for attaining political power for Negroes. There are three basic stands on the question.

First, it is argued that given the small population of Negroes in America, and the immense power of the majority, it is necessary to concentrate on integration into the "mainstream" of American life. Politically, this means that Negroes must gain

If they were a larger group as I wish the Catholic would be altered in any different.

↳ actually, % of Negroes larger than % of Jews.

entrance into traditional political parties and institutions on the local, state, and national level. Economically, and educationally, the object is also integration on every level.

The second position begins with the same given, that Negroes constitute a minority population, but it concludes that this minority status implies that the political interests of Negroes will be overridden within any organization they integrate. In addition, the dominant institutions are depicted as the very source of exploitation, bigotry, and oppression which are to be overcome. As James Baldwin says, no one wants to be integrated into a burning house. Consequently, the argument continues, we must establish independent institutions. These institutions will have two purposes. They will be used for independent political leverage and change in the social structure; and they will provide meaningful participation in politics, economics, and education. The Mississippi FDP and the new county political parties in Alabama are examples of SNCC-originated parallel institutions. The Freedom Schools, which operate on a year long basis in several Southern states, exhibit this principle educationally, and, finally, the establishment of a "Poor Peoples Corporation" for funding local co-ops in Mississippi and Alabama demonstrates the economic application.

The third position regarding parallel institutions is that independent organizations must be utilized locally and on a temporary basis while pressure is applied nationally and locally through existing institutions to force integration. This position maintains that ^{while} parallel institutions may be temporarily expedient, that integration and disappearance of boundaries between Negroes and whites is the primary (and not utopian) goal.

The divergencies among SNCC workers and the possibility of internal conflict over this serious issue have thus been indicated. But we must now understand how the debate is used in delineating SNCC boundaries and how the boundary affects SNCC's relation to other groups in the American structure. To illustrate both of these functions of conflict I will briefly analyze the MFDP convention challenge.

The Mississippi FDP (perhaps SNCC's most creative and powerful parallel institution) was organized on a state-wide basis in 1964. Its origin was the campaigns of several Negroes in November, 1963 in a Mississippi "freedom ballot," which was designed to show the number of Negroes who would vote if they were allowed to register. The candidates ran on the Freedom Democratic Party ticket, in a neck election. The following spring, delegates to the national Democratic convention were being selected in Mississippi. No Negro is allowed to join the Mississippi Democratic Party. SNCC decided that if Negroes could not attend the county and state Democratic Party meetings then the only way for them to participate in the selection of a presidential candidate would be to establish their own organization, complying with the national party rules, ^{and} send delegates to the convention. They would argue that they were the legal Mississippi representatives. SNCC workers debated the plan and agreed to it. Once they committed themselves to it, debate ended and work began. This plan was followed and representatives were sent to the convention. So far we can see the operation of the parallel institution theory, noting of course that the institution was developed not because the existing system was worthless but because entrance to it was denied.

When the delegates arrived at the convention, a debate arose among politicians, liberal supporters of SNCC and FDP, and among the American public who watched the proceedings on television. SNCC and FDP maintained that they had a legal right to be seated--legal in the sense that the convention set its own rules, and the FDP had complied with those rules while the "regular" delegates had not. Many influential, presumably sympathetic Democrats, maintained that although the FDP had a moral right to the seats, they were not really the Democratic Party representatives from Mississippi and must therefore be excluded from the convention. The Mississippi regulars, of course, maintained that the Negroes had no right to anything at all at the convention. In fact the FDP had been outlawed earlier in the year in Mississippi. The Credentials Committee voted a compromise allowing all the regulars to be seated and giving two at-large seats to Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer and Dr. Aaron Henry of the FDP. The FDP advising lawyer, Joseph Raugh, of Washington, D.C. (now a member of the Democratic National Committee) accepted the compromise without consulting with the FDP representatives. When the representatives heard the offer they rejected it unanimously, arguing that it was not a compromise because it ignored their basic claim of rightful ownership and awarded them two "visiting" positions as a privilege. They added that the final insult of the committee was to predetermine the persons who would sit at the convention. After FDP rejection of the compromise, national publicity, which had been sympathetic and extensive, became harsh and more limited. Politicians who had argued for the compromise--and explained that they did it because they were liberal--had bitter words for the FDP.

It was radical and intransigent; it "did not understand national politics."

What effect did these events have on SNCC? During the days at the convention, workers were buoyant. I spoke to many who were elated that they had delayed the progress of the convention for about two days. Later, when stories were told of convention intrigues, the most often repeated was how Johnson had told Humphrey that he must settle the dispute and make the party look good if he wanted to be vice-president. (Although there is little documentation for this story, it is conceded by most commentators that Johnson, by one or another means, controlled this convention even better than the Goldwater Republicans controlled theirs.) SNCC workers who had worked for months in the strange isolation of Mississippi, and those who had feared that they and their parallel institution would be ignored at the convention, had now discovered that their work and the FDP demanded the personal attention of Hubert Humphrey, as well as hourly T.V. and press coverage for several days. They were closely bound emotionally and intellectually. They accepted volunteer demonstrators from the east coast as if they were temporary members of SNCC--because these volunteers had accepted the legitimacy of the SNCC position. The factors which are ordinarily important for "regular membership" and acceptance in SNCC were temporarily ignored as supporters joined to protest a specific injustice. Thus new boundaries for membership were defined, for the duration of the specific conflict.

At the same time, persons and organizations previously defined as friendly were immediately and permanently excluded from SNCC--if they took an unacceptable position. Joseph Raugh has never been taken into confidence since. The primary charge

against him was not that he had spoken without permission, but that he had betrayed the aims of the FDP and SNCC by admitting the legitimacy of the opponents position. Today, if he joins, directs, or participates in any organization, SNCC workers refuse to depend on it. Leaders of the Democratic Party who did not take a strong enough stand, and the party as a whole, were condemned both in speeches at the convention and later by SNCC workers in their home states. (SNCC did, however, campaign for the national ticket as part of an attempt to further discredit the state party and to seat their own elected representatives in Congress.)

The events at the convention demonstrate how the conflict around the legitimacy of a parallel institution--the FDP--helped bind SNCC into a unit and to set the boundaries of friendship and membership. If we now shift briefly to the role of conflict in the maintenance of social relationships and distinctions among various strata of society, we can observe the

Conflict in a new light,

Insofar as the FDP represented the ~~relatively disfranchised~~ in which the politically disadvantaged in this country, the conflict can be seen as the meeting of two political strata, one relatively powerless, and the other quite powerful. From this point of view the ostensive goal of the FDP was the acquisition of legitimate power and the reorganization of power relationships in Mississippi by denial of certain rewards and privileges which the Mississippians sought from the national Democratic Party. On the basis of this premise, the compromise was a conscious attempt to maintain the existing power situation in Mississippi but to prevent an increasing hostility toward the national organization which might lead to new relationships between the Democratic Party and the disfranchised Negroes. Coser notes that in societies where individuals are

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socially and economically mobile, conflict between strata will increase; this seems to hold true here also, where a group is attempting to become "politically mobile."

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In one sense the conflict was between SNCC - FDP and the Mississippi Democratic Party. (The two groups were vying for a specific number of votes at the convention.) The conflict increased the distance between the two groups, strengthened the hostilities and antagonism between them, and thus contributed-- at least temporarily--to the maintenance of their peculiar relationship. In another sense the conflict was between SNCC-FDP and the national Democratic Party. In this regard too, boundaries

and allegiances became more sharply defined, not only in terms of membership in the opposing groups, but also in terms of new forms of interaction which would develop in the future.¹ There are, of course, many aspects to this conflict which have not been analyzed here. Their analysis will await the further development of the conflict theory, so that they can be dealt with more specifically and with greater clarity.

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Proposition # 2: The Group-Preserving Functions of Conflict and the Significance of Safety-Valves.

This proposition has, properly, two parts:

- 1)...."Often conflict is necessary to maintain such such a relationship. Without ways to vent hostility toward each other, and to express dissent, group members might feel completely crushed and might react by withdrawal."²

This section of the proposition applies both to intra- and inter-group conflict, but primarily to the former. The second half of the proposition concerns social systems which have analogous

¹I refer here to the increasing disaffection of SNCC with the Federal government and its agencies, as well as to its growing political radicalism.

²Coser, op. cit., p. 49.

problems of hostility.

2) "Social systems provide for specific institutions which serve to drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments. These safety-valve institutions help to maintain the system by preventing otherwise probable conflict or by reducing its disruptive effects."¹

In order to analyze the integrating functions of conflict within a group, and to illustrate a group safety-valve analogous to those which exist on a social structural level, the SNCC staff meeting will be discussed. The discussion will involve an additional factor, left undiscussed by Coser and Simmel. This is the importance of the /latent or unrecognized function of certain institutions as channelers of conflict and hostility.

When SNCC was formed in 1960 it had virtually no full-time staff. Between 1960 and early 1964, it grew steadily to approximately 100 paid workers. These workers were distributed in field projects in Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Maryland, and Mississippi, in support offices in Chicago, Detroit, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C, and at an administrative office in Atlanta, Georgia. In addition, there were several "campus travelers" who visited states across the south. Staff meetings usually took the form of conferences to which former staff members, and "local people" were often invited. Some of these conferences involved workshops with inside and outside "experts" on labor, civil rights law, economics, and federal programs.

The organization was loosely structured. Workers were scattered, had few supplies and little money. Most did not have access to automobiles and they were accustomed to going without

¹Coser, op. cit., p. 48.

without any pay for as long as three or four months. The primary issues discussed at the meetings revolved around general policy for SNCC vis à vis outside groups, which programs could or should be implemented, and what types of expansion and tactics should be used. SNCC workers with whom I have spoken agree that although there was conflict at the meetings, there was little hostility. A major function of the gatherings, which usually lasted several days, was to renew social contacts with fellow and former workers and to find release from accumulated tension in various social activities. While this function continued to be important, during the fall and winter of 1964-65, the staff meeting developed a new intense atmosphere. To understand this change we must know something of SNCC history in 1964.

hostility can be interpreted of certain affects. For purposes of organization it may not be that it did not occur but that it was not or could not be interpreted as such

The Mississippi Summer Project was conceived in the spring of 1964. Its purpose was to bring a thousand students to Mississippi for three months. The story of what happened to Mississippians and to the students that summer is well documented. But what happened to SNCC is not as well known. The majority of summer workers, approximately 700 students, were classed as COFO volunteers, working for the Council of Federated Organizations, a coalition of Mississippi SNCC, CORE, and the NAACP. Of the 100 COFO staff members, in the state, approximately 20 were SNCC staff on loan to COFO. Because voting in COFO was done on the "one staff member-one vote" principle, SNCC dominated COFO policy. After the summer, the NAACP, which had only one staff member in the state, became disillusioned with SNCC and withdrew from the organization. As far as SNCC and CORE were concerned, the major function of COFO had been to provide a covering responsible organization with diverse funding for the summer. ~~Consequently in the fall when the summer was over...~~

Why

summer. Consequently, in the fall, when the project ended, it lost its significance for both these organizations. Operating in different sections of the state, they began to make their plans independently. However, many of the volunteers who did not leave Mississippi when the fall came retained their status as COFO volunteers, and did not join the staffs of SNCC or CORE. The exclusionary policy of SNCC was that no one but its staff, paid from the Atlanta office, could participate in its decisions. COFO volunteers in the sections of Mississippi where SNCC worked began to operate in organizational limbo. The independent funding of projects, opposed by the SNCC administrative staff, began to grow. Communication within congressional districts deteriorated. Not having any forum for complaints, many of the left-over volunteers withdrew from SNCC contact. Here it is appropriate to quote Simmel.

If we did not even have the power and right to rebel against tyranny, arbitrariness, moodiness, tactlessness, we could not bear to have any relation to the people from whose characters we thus suffer.¹

Not all volunteers withdrew, but many did. Some left the state, others stayed where they were and developed independent projects.

Now we must look at another group of volunteers, who at the end of the summer did not go into limbo, but joined the SNCC staff. On a day in October, approximately 100 people became members of SNCC and began receiving checks. The majority were Negro. In fact, from what I can ascertain, any Negro who worked at all over the summer, and was "sponsored" by a relatively prestigious staff member, was added to the staff. The primary reason for doubling the staff was to provide paid long-term workers

¹Simmel, op. cit., p. 19.

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Which way did they go. Did SNCC solicit these & other who were the "limboers"

to cope with the expansion the summer had brought. SNCC didn't want its own projects to be controlled by COFO volunteers over whom it would not have direct control with the intermediary of COFO (which, as we have noted, was already going into decline).

One more point must be made before we can understand the intense conflicts which developed in SNCC over the winter. The summer project exhausted many of the staff. Most of the workers were unaccustomed to their new administrative and nurse-maiding roles, brought on by the ten-fold increase of civil rights workers. When October arrived and most of the volunteers had left, SNCC had a doubled, but exhausted staff, a decreased total working force, few plans, a loose personalistic structure, a large budget, over a hundred cars--mostly non-operative, a massive collection of communication gadgets (radios, cameras, presses, films, projectors, etc.), and an expanded, but disorganized, Mississippi project.

The staff meetings that were held in October, December, and February, were characterized by tension, anger, and frustration. Primary issues at the meetings were the financial support of individuals and projects, relations between field offices and the Atlanta office, responsibility for decision making and policy, independence of individual workers, and one issue into which the others fed--what should be the structure of SNCC. At the fall meetings, the staff presented an interesting mixture of conflict and peace. In group meetings little was accomplished. If the issue of structure was raised, opponents argued that structure must depend on program. If program was mentioned, either someone would interject/that workshop discussions were needed or that regardless of program, SNCC must have some structure now.

At the time, SNCC was operating under a provisional "government" whose administrative workers in Atlanta, who presumably had ultimate control on financing and equipment, were occasionally responsive and occasionally unresponsive to requests from the field. At the staff meetings workshops on program and SNCC policy were held, but their results were not discussed. The workers avoided large meetings after the first day or two. Some attended no meetings at all, but used the meeting time for trips to New Orleans, and renewing friendships.

In some important ways the conflict culminated at the February staff meeting that I attended. Briefly, this is what happened. A "planning committee" which met prior to the meeting announced a tentative schedule--tentative because the staff as a whole would be unwilling to accept a required schedule and also tentative because they had no idea if it would work. The schedule --which was printed and distributed to all 200 odd persons at the meeting--called for field reports on Friday afternoon. It suggested that a group of about 30 people, to be selected by the staff, meet Friday night and Saturday morning to talk about structure. At a Saturday morning session planned for 10 A.M., the staff would discuss and then debate the committee's proposed structure. The rest of Saturday was left open for discussion of structure and filling positions in the structure finally selected. The Sunday entry on the schedule reads: "Hopefully, the discussion on structure would be over." and five workshops on Black Belt plans would begin to meet. No plans were made for Monday.

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The Friday afternoon events went as scheduled, with different projects making brief reports. Some of the reports discussed hostility and conflict in the workers' areas. One worker complained sarcastically of the "new sociological approach" that volunteers were trying to introduce. Others spoke of black-white, old-new, and volunteer-staff conflict. Once given, the reports were ignored, in an official sense, for the rest of the meeting. This included those which had made specific requests of the staff. Early in the evening, argument about SNCC structure and the possibility of having any structure began. A loosely organized structure committee met late that night--until about 4 A.M., and mimeographed a report for a full meeting Saturday afternoon. The committee's suggestion was that there should be a structure in the form of an executive committee, and that its major functions would be to implement decisions of SNCC between staff meetings. It would be prevented from making any broad policy decisions. Several procedures for selecting the executive committee members were suggested in the report. One suggestion included in the committee report is quoted here because it indicates the range of issues which the staff had to face in the next few days before the problem of structure could be settled.

Jesse Morris proposed that regardless of how the members of the executive committee were elected, they should all have certain qualifications, namely, they should all be black, be from the south, and have no formal education past the 12th grade. Some objections were raised to this proposal.¹

Deeply involved in Morris' suggestion was the problem of control. Specifically, he was upset that SNCC had so much influence on the lives of Mississippians, yet allowed them and their uneducated

¹Structure Committee Report, February 12, 1965.

Are these terms used the way you have used them in this paper?

Beautiful contradiction in terms

which was?

Give this statement I now realize how in the dark I am as to the character of the SNCC staff. You haven't provided any data on this & trust the full significance of that.

counterparts in SNCC no voice in the decision-making. Morris felt that the better educated Northern Negroes and whites would find positions of power in SNCC regardless of their relation to the executive committee. They were more articulate and politically knowledgeable; they would get power. These other people, however, must be guaranteed some power and some influence.

An interesting philosophy I recently saw the argument some at a medical school where they gave the social sciences all the important positions in curriculum & other school committees

This would work best where that committee does in fact lack the wood policy making power

As the discussion of the structure committee's report began, the issue of control arose frequently. Two factions developed. One was opposed to reinstating the executive committee without first discussing program. The other was desperate to have some structure, regardless of its nature. They were afraid that this meeting, like the others, would end with SNCC in the same position. The first group charged that the second was ram-rodging its proposal, while the second charged that the others were sabotaging the meeting and the organization. With 200 people at the meeting, any attack, even an inadvertent one, could produce several hours of discussion. Although by Monday night a structure had been approved and people elected to positions within it, the meeting produced intense strain and conflict among the participants. Let me quote from a letter I wrote on Wednesday of that week.

Who were they or do you consider this involvement to your parents

"Progress" broke down continually into arguments about local control of SNCC policy, of whether SNCC staff were trying to run the local people just like the society ran them and controlled them; and there were countless personal attacks of people "controlling" the meeting or "obstructing" the meeting. People complained that no one trusted anyone anymore. And they didn't. People fought and bled. Several of them cried and walked out in tears. Some said that those who said that they (e.g., Moses, his wife, Donna, Andy Samstein, Casey Hayden) were being destroyed, were actually destroying themselves by their conviction of death and destruction. But regardless of the source, the people felt dead.

? Rob Moses came in Monday night after the structure and the elections were done, drunk. He had been fighting all

weekend, fairly or unfairly, rightly or wrongly, for the voice of the silent people--the Negroes in Miss., the quiet bewildered staff. He had been saying that "if you want to have slaves, you had better give them the vote and call them freedom, because that's the only way the world will let you do it." So now he was drunk. First he shared cheese, bread, and an empty bottle of wine. Then he spoke. It was the saddest and most moving event of the whole weekend for me. First he announced that he had changed his name--he was no longer Robert Parris Moses, but Robert Parris. He didn't want to be, and he wasn't the myth we had created. He wanted to be a person again. No one had shouted him down in the past few days, because he was Robert Moses. Now he would be Robert Parris. He also spoke about his father--his father had taught him how to get drunk, coming in drunk every night, and one night his father had gone crazy and Bob had to pick him up at Bellevue. "Don't say my father's crazy. He's my father. He's not crazy. You're crazy." Bob screamed it--at us. It was awful and frightening to see him, to even try to imagine what had happened and why he was shouting at us. Then he recited a poem, saying we had lost our poets. It was something like this--

Where in all the awful apparatus
That we construct to gain our freedom
Is the silver thin flute
The thin thin flute
The flute thin thin
The thin flute thin
That opens the door?

And he closed by saying we must find poets or become poets again. And he walked out.

I could hardly begin to explain how I felt; I do know that I felt he was not speaking about the arguments of structure and program and goals, but about something inside people. That somehow his dream of love or mutuality that the movement should produce, that people in SNCC should feel had disappeared. That it could not be realized. Or was not being sought. That in our urge for expansion, production, and progress, in statistical quantitative terms, we had lost our souls or the soul of the movement.

Following the outburst, quiet descended on the meeting hall.

SNCC workers saw what their conflict had done to one of their most sensitive members. They seemed shocked at Bob's intensity and at their own intensity. On the one hand they seemed to regret their previous hostility and violence, a violence which had at times during the meeting become expressed in fist fights,

Are these the times you mean - I don't know what you do mean.

broken doors, and wrecked furniture. On the other hand, they seemed reunified. They found that somehow they shared more than they had thought. After Monday evening, conflict subsided, and hostility was less evident. Fruitful discussions on program were held, and members began to ask each other questions. Seating at the dining tables lost its rigid group divisions. There was the sense of a calm following the resolution of a conflict.

This staff meeting and the others following it did not of course solve all of SKCC's internal problems and sources of conflict. But the open conflict at the February meeting provided an opportunity for the expression of hostility toward fellow members and toward the organization itself. The tension within SKCC had reached a point where violent confrontation was required if the members were going to retain any unity at all. The staff meeting provided a structure within which the confrontation could occur. In this way it functioned analogously to a safety-valve institution and acted to preserve the group.

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Are you
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that this
conflict was
institutionalized
in some way*

Proposition #3: Realistic and Non-Realistic Conflict.

"Conflicts which arise from frustration of specific demands within a relationship and from estimate of gains of the participants, and which are directed at the presumed frustrating object, can be called realistic conflicts, insofar as they are means toward a specific result. Non-realistic conflicts, on the other hand, although still involving interaction between two or more persons, are not occasioned by the rival ends of the antagonists, but by the need for tension release of at least one of them."¹

In other words, realistic conflict is directed toward an end for which conflict is one possible means of attainment. Non-realistic conflict is directed toward the expression of hostility.

¹Coser, op. cit., p. 49.

In non-realistic conflict, the party or parties involved will not cease fighting even if there is another method (than conflict) for obtaining their presumed goal. Consequently a simple test of the degree of realistic motive involved in a conflict would be the presentation of non-conflict options which would also allow success. At the same time, however, it is clear that the two types of conflict, although analytically distinct, often occur together in reality. Conflict over an object or value generates ^{can or} _{does?}

hostility which can be sufficient to continue the conflict after the resolution of its original issue. And similarly, a conflict which arises from hostility and hatred without objective goals, can develop specific issues and claims, some of which the antagonists might settle peacefully. The history of Negro-white relations in this country, and the history of the civil rights movement in particular, shows this interweaving of internal unfocussed hostility with specific conflicting aims.

I find this whole discussion rather confusing

There is an important issue in the distinction between realistic and non-realistic conflict that is left unclarified and in our discussion of the proposition we will focus primarily on this issue. The issue is the nature of the criterion for determining whether ^{given} a conflict is realistic or non-realistic. Our goal will be to show that characteristically the decision arises from ideological and emotional orientations of observers and opponents. Organizations and individuals which share an ideological orientation with the organization in conflict will interpret its action as realistic conflict; those with conflicting orientations, if they are interested in peace, defeat, or ridicule of the opponent, will accuse it of non-realistic conflict. Thus the definition of the type of conflict _{involved}

All the light!

the definition of the type of conflict involved, can be used as a weapon within the conflict. Two accusations that SNCC is engaged in non-realistic conflict, and conflict merely for its own sake, will be considered. The first, by the columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, is obviously ideological and involves the assumption of Communist influence in SNCC. The second, by Rabbi Richard Rubenstein, arises more from a simply conservative attitude toward law, and from serious misunderstanding about the circumstances of the conflict he observed.

Early in 1965 Evans and Novak began a series of scattered articles on SNCC and the Southern civil rights movement. The articles were uniformly hostile toward SNCC, occasionally hostile toward the FDP, and complimentary toward the SCLC and the NAACP. The primary charges against SNCC are that it is extremely left-wing, communist-tainted, and, by its associations, threatening the entire civil rights movement. By arguing the significance of former supposedly communist ties of some SNCC supporters and lawyers, and by joining this with an assumption that these "communists" favor/disruption of the American social system (conflict for its own sake), Evans and Novak imply that SNCC shares their aims and desires only to perpetuate conflict. For example,

Moderates in the civil rights movement have scored a major behind-the-scenes triumph over leftist radicals who proposed a voting rights bill Congress would never pass.

This victory was made possible when Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. sided with the moderates. After buckling to Communist-tainted extremists in SNCC on key decisions in Selma, Dr. King's forces this time stood up to them. Thus the extremists are out in the cold for the time being.

and...

...William Higgs, a leftist radical lawyer from Mississippi who is an expert at the art of disruption...[etc.]¹

From an article published April 9, 1965, come the following quotations. First, the columnists carefully protect themselves from the charge of bias by referring to SNCC as "an inspiration for so many idealistic young collegians." This establishes the authors as sympathetic observers. In an interesting paragraph they present caveats before their documentation of Communist infiltration in SNCC.

First, extreme radicalism in SNCC is by no means solely or even principally due to Communist influences (for example, black racism is rising inside SNCC). Second, only an infinitesimal fraction of SNCC workers have Communist ties.

But an infinitesimal fraction can be quite influential.

These writers certainly know how to damn with faint praise. Throughout this article, as in the others, are accusations of "extreme radicalism" and the implication of non-realistic (in terms of the announced object of value of civil rights) conflict.

The second attack on SNCC comes from a Pittsburgh rabbi, who attended the successful March on Montgomery which followed the abortive attempt to leave Selma the previous Sunday. Rabbi Rubenstein is quoted as saying of SNCC, "they wanted dead bodies, our bodies."² According to the Washington Post,

He accused SNCC leaders of being "activists and revolutionaries" who wanted to cause trouble rather than further civil rights. He called for a "genuine, responsible" civil rights movement at Pitt.

His major charge was that the students marched through Montgomery without specific police permission and that they tried to con-

¹Washington Post, March 28, 1965.

²Ibid., March 20, 1965.

vince school children to leave classes and join the march. The primary source of emotion was his feeling that SNCC workers had "lied" to Pittsburgh college students who come, by saying that the march was legal. The emotional sources of Rubenstein's charges is evident. - not to me

You claim that he was mistaken but you don't demonstrate it.

The examples cited here should give some indication of the possible ideological and emotional sources behind accusations and depictions of non-realistic conflict. Parenthetically, we should add that many individual confrontations between SNCC and southern communities appear as if SNCC were signing at conflict for its own sake. However, the policy of stirring up conflict is a consciously utilized technique based on the SNCC theory that the goals of integration (or freedom) cannot be attained without conflict, and that the mobilization of individuals to join the movement may require open rather than the usual covert conflict.

Your case for the 2 columns is better. In fact I think the whole analysis is great but doesn't go far enough.

This over-simplifies

Proposition #4: Conflict and Hostile Impulses.

Aggressive or hostile "impulses" do not suffice to account for social conflict. Hatred, just like love, needs some object. Conflict can occur only in the interaction between subject and object. It always presupposes a relationship.... Realistic conflict need not be accompanied by hostility and aggressiveness.... Yet it might be "useful" to hate the opponent.¹

Two important variables are involved here: hostility and conflict. Hostility is an attitude whereas conflict is an action. They may exist separately or in conjunction. The purpose of the proposition is to account for the ways in which they come together. Speaking first of hostility, the point is made that a hostile attitude alone can not produce conflict. It must be associated with some object existing in a social situation. There are

Pardon my redundancy but by now I yearn for some definition of the term - of arbiters - of hostility & conflict

¹Coser, op. cit., p. 59.

two processes involved here. First, there is the development of the hostility or aggressive drive. Simmel maintained that it was innate.¹ Therefore it occurred in all social situations interaction, even in the deepest love. Even if we reject the postulation of its innate character, and side with modern psycho-analytic theory that bases hostility on frustration of other basic drives, we can still agree with Simmel that by the time a human being reaches the state in which we can refer to him as hostile or non-hostile, he has already developed some internal aggression, which in most cases can be directed in a multiplicity of ways. The second process is the attachment of hostility to a social object in order for the hostility to produce conflict. The object may not be the source of frustration (as in scape-goating), and it may be only a supplementary excuse for the expression of hostility, but it must be selected, however vague it is. Thus, when hostility becomes associated with an object or goal, conflict can arise.

Now let us consider the second variable, conflict. Coser argues that conflict may occur without hostility. He cites research on the motivation of soldiers during World War II which indicated that combat motivation relied primarily on "buddy loyalty." In addition, in American labor relations (particularly at the upper echelons of labor and business) negotiation and even strikes can be held without seeming personal enmity.² It is unfortunate that we do not have adequate means for conceptualizing group hostility as opposed to individual hostility. Despite

¹Simmel, op. cit., pp. 31 - 33.

²Coser, op. cit., p. 58.

Like what?
a possibility minor element of individual hostility in such conflicts, the literature, propaganda, and even direct conversation between most groups engaged in conflict do exhibit what must be called hostile characteristics. This may be done merely to reinforce or develop hostility among the members of opposing groups or societies. On the other hand, it may also be done to communicate to the opponent the intensity of the party's interest in the conflict. In any event I am not aware of any society or organization engaged in conflict which does not make hostile statements about its adversary. This implies that although individual members of a group engaged in conflict may not be hostile, the group itself, though in a different way can and perhaps always is hostile.

Simmel's statement that "it is always expedient to hate the adversary with whom one fights"¹ partially accounts for the psychological and sociological pressure on individuals in groups to develop hostile attitudes. Certainly many individuals first engage in conflict, and later orient hostile attitudes around the conflict. But in regard to groups, the intermeshing of hostility and conflict is so complex that their causal relationship may be difficult to uncover.

To illustrate the interweaving of personal involvement and hostility in conflict, I will cite my own experiences in joining the civil rights movement. I returned to my home in Bethesda, Md. from a summer in New York City in August, 1960. Two blocks from my home a daily picket line of approximately 30 people were walking in front of a segregated amusement park.

¹Simmel, op. cit., p. 34.

Several people my age and living on my block were on the line. I went down "to see them" and to join the line for a while. During the next three weeks I was a daily visitor and participant. In addition I went on sit-ins and to meetings of the newly formed D.C. Area Non-violent Action Group (an original "group" member of the early SNCC). The picketing group was obviously involved in a conflict, not only with the management of the park, but also with occasional hecklers and sometimes with the local police. The attitude of the line was, however, quite jovial. Robert Coles pointed out at a Brandeis Sociology Colloquium that an uncomfortable stifling racial situation for a white may be a releasing experience for a Negro. Similarly, as Fishman and Solomon argued in their 1961 study of N.A.G., the picketing and sit-ins had special appeal for the adolescent attempting to free himself from social and parental control in order to establish his own identity.¹

is my
disagree
ment
conflict!

With little prior involvement in civil rights conflicts, and with a background of friendships with segregationists in my home town of Hampton, Va., I was not a very hostile picketer. Furthermore, I knew almost nothing about the attitude of police or of enraged segregationists when norms and order were challenged. I believed in integration, I favored the sit-ins, and I belonged to a civil rights group (NAG). However, it was not until I was involved in a sit-in in which half the group was arrested and which was followed by police harassment of meetings and individuals,

¹Jacob Fishman and Frederic Solomon, "Youth and Social Action," Journal of Social Issues, XX, August, 1964, pp. 1 - 27.

that I developed a really hostile attitude toward police and toward segregation. I consider the change in attitude toward police most interesting because it became a generalized fear and hostility which affects me even when I am not in the South, and even when I can not be objectively identified as an "enemy."

Most of the white students who walked the picket line but who did not participate in a sit-in, ceased to be active members in the movement after the fall, although they continued to interact socially with group members. I had previously thought that the reason for this was that the sit-in represented a more personal confrontation with segregation and produced a deeper commitment, which once made--by accident or design--simplified other future commitments. I now think that the development of deep personal hostility which occurs in such situations is an additional factor. Moral commitment will suffice for temporary involvement. So will enjoyment. And as long as one is

"typically" adolescent, so will the need for a way of defining oneself. Long-term commitment and recurring interest may require more focussed hostility. In this regard, I should note that persons recruited into SNCC via demonstrations, or who served early in their career in particularly dangerous areas, seem to have longer SNCC careers, than persons who are recruited through programs such as freedom school and community center work.

When summer volunteers arrived in Mississippi in 1965 they were immediately sent to jail, by way of participation in the Jackson SPD demonstrations. A SNCC worker told me that this was "as good an orientation to Mississippi as anything else."

There were ^{less apparent} two reasons for sending the volunteers to jail. One was to keep them out of the way of a disorganized staff for a few days. The other was to develop hostility and anger by exposure

How great was this change? Was your friendly toward them before. From what point on the continuum did you move

For any kind of movement I identify the early Christian work along this "emotion". It's not just for "volunteers" groups it applies but a certain subtype

to brutality and injustice. One could of course debate whether the hostility would increase their effectiveness as workers as much as would a more conventional orientation, but it is clear that SNCC workers, like propagandists, understood the value of hostility in conflict situations.

It would, of course, speed up the integrative process

Proposition #5: Hostility in Close Social Relationships.

Close social relationships in which the total personality of a member is involved, inevitably show an intermixture of love and hate, attraction and hostility. The primary source of the intermixture is the "intense interaction which is characteristic of primary groups."¹ (Coser, *op.cit.*, p.62.)

This proposition is exhibited in a general way in relations among SNCC workers. This is true despite the fact that in many ways the workers maintain considerable distance from each other. On the whole they are geographically separated, coming together only for occasional staff meetings. However, within a city or county they operate on a daily face-to-face (and sometimes cot-to-cot) basis. In this sense many of the relationships among SNCC workers can be described as primary rather than secondary. One of the facts of existence which impressed me most while I was in SNCC was the totality of its influence on the worker. An ordinary member has almost no privacy. Indeed the desire for privacy is itself suspect, unless one merely wishes a few moments of peace or to write a letter.

As with many "movements"

They would not contend that primary groups have to be used this.

On the other hand, unlike the situations to which Simmel and Coser refer, membership in the primary group in SNCC is not always based on mutual affection or love. A group of office workers, the occupants of a freedom house, and a group of county ~~employees~~

organizers may be thrown together by factors beyond the control of all. Due to the nature of SNCC work, which involves sharing danger and mutual endeavors, and due to a common goal, and an ideology of joint suffering, many friendships develop. But hostility, aggression, and conflict are also common.

The relationship between this hostility and the various social groups in SNCC will be further explored in analyzing the next proposition.

Proposition #6: The Closer the Relationship, the More Intense the Conflict.

An adequate characterization of SNCC must record the fact that it regulates, and the relationships within involve, the entire personalities of its members. Some people are more resistant to total involvement than others. To the degree that a person retains his autonomy from the group he is admired and envied and sometimes distrusted. However, the requirements of SNCC life are such that it is usually only married couples who have private lives. Other members who attempt to isolate themselves in spare times or to remain "affectively neutral" are gradually rejected. They may be accused of laziness, improper extra-SNCC ties, or of "using" SNCC for some personal advantage. This situation of total personality involvement in the organization, coupled with a high level of tension and frustration (caused both by dissatisfaction with certain aspects of SNCC and by ^{the} difficulties in organizing Negroes), can be expected to produce conflict. Previously we have discussed conflict in which the entire staff of SNCC was involved, such as the structure-program conflict handled

at the staff meeting. We are here concerned with the conflicts occurring within SNCC's primary groups and with the means of resolving them.

In order to retain an uneasy peace within a freedom house or an office, antagonists may hold their complaints and wait for a meeting of the next largest or most powerful group to openly articulate them. Thus we have the case of two workers in the Little Rock SNCC office who for several months assiduously avoided each other, engaged in a series of minor skirmishes, and then began independent politicking and gossiping against each other. One party attempted to raise the issue at a SNCC executive committee meeting by asking that the other person be transferred out of the state. She thought that several influential Arkansas staff members would support her at the meeting. After talking briefly with some executive committee members, these potential supporters decided not to put the issue before the executive committee, but to return home and settle the conflict in Arkansas. All this was done with such secrecy that the person whose fate was almost discussed at the meeting did not even know that it might happen. Eventually the conflict was settled at a state staff meeting of the total staff of nine workers, by transferring one worker to a different city. The story is interesting for two reasons. First, the opponents refrained from open conflict, particularly in front of the other staff in the state because they were afraid to express their feelings and because it is not considered "proper" to allow personal feelings and animosities interfere with group progress. Secondly, the opponents' admiration and respect for each other actually intensified the conflict. The model of their thoughts was, "How can anyone so intelligent be

so stupid?"

Although the conflict had an intensity which is perhaps not fully communicated, it did not reach the state of physical violence which occurred in the Jackson office in late 1964 and in the Macomb project in the spring of 1965. In the first case an office was torn up and in the second one staff member threatened to kill another with a gun. In these cases the level of conflict and hostility had risen to such a pitch that the staffs involved could not "pull themselves together" again and ceased to work as unified groups.

Conflict in a project or in a community usually revolves around different issues than at full staff meetings. This is not only because different problems are relevant to SNCC staff members as office workers and companions than are relevant to SNCC members as SNCC member. It is also because the existence of SNCC does not depend on any one project or community. It does, however, depend on the development of a total group consensus and shared orientation about a general goal. Consequently, despite the larger attendance and the more secondary character of relationships at a staff meeting, conflict about structure or policy will be more intense and hostile than within a project. If a staff member retreats from his role and his local relationships because he disagrees with local policy, neither the project nor the member is lost to SNCC. The unity of SNCC is rarely threatened by any local event.

One reason for SNCC elasticity (on all/levels) in accepting divergent opinion and activity is its fear of group control over individuals and its belief that structure reduces creativity. These principles allow SNCC to maintain its peculiar unity des-

SNCC begins to sound like a kind of "total" institution - where trouble develops because institutional constraints are all their needs all the time - a similar phenomenon is seen in groups - similar to long periods of activity, like sit-ins, etc. groups

organizational

pite disorganization and continual conflict. Conflicts within "primary groups" and close relationships may temporarily dissolve these units in SNCC; but in the context of the total organization where relationships tend to be less intense, the intensity of conflict is most often focussed on issues rather than people, and consequently does not present the same threat to group structure.

It is unclear how most of the discussion here relates to proposition #6

Proposition #7: Impact and Function of Conflict on Group Structure.

Insofar as conflict is the resolution of tension between antagonists it has stabilizing functions and becomes an integrating component of the relationship. However, not all conflicts are positively functional for the relationship, but only those which concern goals, values, or interests that do not contradict the basic assumptions on which the relation is founded.¹

If we refer back to the SNCC staff meeting discussed under proposition #2, the meaning of this proposition becomes clear. At the February meeting, the staff resolved itself into three main groups; the supporters of a simple hierarchical structure, the opponents of any structure, and those with mixed opinions. Although the group appeared to be split on almost every issue raised, the basic consensus and assumption that SNCC that SNCC must go on, that it must utilize a relatively loose organization, and that it would survive, was never seriously challenged. In addition, the basic goals of SNCC were not challenged. On the other hand, because the structure of SNCC is closely related

¹ Coser, op. cit., p. 80.

to the problem of control and the freedom of its members, and because this issue is in a general way intricately tied to SNCC ideology, the conflict did relate to certain aspects of SNCC consensus.

Although the final decision on a structure and the authorization of a chairman, executive secretary, and a program chairman, did (as Simmel says it would) aid in the reintegration of the staff as a functioning organization, a clue to future conflicts can be seen in the vote establishing the structure. After agreeing to have an executive committee, the staff voted on a proposed form for the committee. Although the yeas won over the nays (by hand count), more persons abstained than supported the notion. The abstentions are significant for several reasons. First, they indicate that many of the staff disapproved of the procedure for resolving the conflict and refused to participate in it. There were many objections to the limiting and eventual cut-off of debate. Secondly, the abstentions are an example of a common feature of conflict resolution: the withdrawal of parties who disagree on the resolution as formulated by the most powerful of several opponents in the conflict. The problem of multiple parties in a conflict and its resolution will be discussed further under proposition #14, which deals with desire for unity of the enemy.

By reanalyzing the staff meeting in light of the present proposition, we can see that the resolution of the structure conflict which had demoralized and disorganized SNCC for almost six months, signalled the start of a new integration in the organization--particularly for those who did not believe that SNCC philosophy had been threatened and who were willing to work with

the new structure. This integration in the organization proceeded further during the spring with improved Atlanta-- field staff communication, regular executive committee meetings (which were less effective than their supporters expected), and more equitable distribution of funds. However many causes of the conflict were neither resolved at the February meeting nor later in the year. For example, communications between states is still poor, some staff members wander while others refuse to move, experimental programs are difficult to institute without special funding or status, and apparently irrational decisions continue to arise. Finally, many people feel that the previous consensus regarding autonomy of workers has been broken. To the extent that potential sources of conflict persist, we can expect continual dissension in in SNCC. It is doubtful however that continual resolution of specific conflicts will lead to an increasingly more integrated organization. New situations and problems arise continually, old disputes are often renewed, and the staff continues to change (though not as rapidly as in the early days of SNCC). It is difficult to predict what will happen and how long extensive any new integration will be.

Especially what happened to those attending that meeting. The organization would be wiped out if the states of SNCC were voted out.

Proposition 3: Conflict as an Index of Stability of Relationship.

Lack of conflict does not necessarily indicate a stable relationship. On the contrary hostility may be displaced or suppressed, if participants fear dissolution of the relationship. 1

This proposition, like the previous ones, is based on the assumption that the relationship is either voluntary or that at least its

¹Coser, op. cit., p. 81.

continued maintenance in some form is desired. At first glance it might seem that the assumption does not apply in cases of extreme oppression, where one party, but not the other, has an interest and investment in the relationship. Such a case is slavery, where the slave appears to ~~desire no relationship~~ with the master. However, this extreme case does not contradict the proposition, because it is the fear of death and complete termination of any relationship, which may in fact prevent conflict in a slave--master relationship. An additional factor preventing conflicts is the fear that a relationship, believed to be somewhat unstable, will with the instigation of conflict, develop a new less desirable form.

It is possible however, that the slave wishes of the relationship as "legitimate"

Many Negroes refuse to engage in social protest because they fear economic and physical reprisals. This is the "Half a loaf is better than none," position. The SNCC technique for working with this fear and with the admitted instability of Negro-white relationships, is to argue that a temporary undesirable change will be followed by a permanent desirable one. In addition, much effort is directed at convincing people that once conflict is instituted--in any form--certain psychological correlates of the former relationship will be changed. As Nietzsche pointed out, the nay-sayer frees himself from former bonds and becomes capable of creating new relationships of his choosing. This psychological transformation affects the future restructuring of the relationship. On the other hand the person attempting to maintain the present situation (in this case, the white Southerner) will be forced to revise his former strategy and respond with new techniques.

To shift the discussion from a broad social-structural situation to an intra-group situation, we can again consider the

problem of conflict in SMCC. As previously noted there are large allowances for conflict. The majority of these conflicts do not actually threaten the unity of the organization, because its unity and stability does not arise from any specific structure or intensity of internal relationships. SMCC workers are bound by a vague common goal and by a sense of common fate and purpose. The primary thrust of the organization is outward. In this sense it differs from a marriage on the one hand and from a totalitarian state on the other. Internal situations and conflicts become serious problems only if they prevent the total organization from progressing. Consequently, extreme latitude exists for conflicts both on the local and the total-group level. As indicated by the analysis of the volunteer withdrawals in Mississippi and the staff meeting abstentions, when members are not permitted to engage in intra-group conflict to a sufficient extent, they follow one of three courses. They either renounce their relationship to the organization, reinstitute the conflict in new terms, or refuse to acknowledge the new relationship while maintaining other social ties.

This is self-
selected
but why
don't such
conflicts
endanger
the organization?

Unfortunately, in his further analysis of the proposition, Coser maintains that it is always the existence of a consensual bond between potential antagonists which makes such conflict possible. In his analysis of conflict between minority and majority groups he argues that to the extent that the minority feels it has stable links with the majority, it will have the security to engage in conflict.

How
conflict
mean by
definition
the groups
are arguing
over an
issue, refuses
where I refuse
to even
The issue, no
conflict of
The sort
described here
could occur.

To the extent that members of the minority group do not out their conflicts with the majority group, we would expect to find that they are secure enough in

their relations with that group to risk such expression and that they feel the consensual bond between them to be strong enough to withstand antagonistic action.¹

This model is appropriate when the conflict exists totally within the disputed relationship itself, and in which the issue is well-focussed and mutually understood. The model does not fit the civil rights movement in the 1960s where Negro antagonists neither appealed to or relied on a consensus between them and the white managers, owners, and police. They appealed through publicity, stressing their non-violent suffering, to a national (predominantly Northern) consensus. Some battles were fought strictly on a local level. In these cases it was hoped that economic loss through local boycott and the realization of white dependence on Negro satisfaction would resolve the conflict favorably. In other cases national pressure was sought and local consensus was not even hoped for.

Today the need for national consensus operates in the civil rights movement in two different ways. The difference is expressed in the contrasting techniques of Martin Luther King, chairman of SCLC, and SNCC. Although King is willing to challenge local consensus, he will not challenge national consensus. He has attacked the Southern "way of life" and social structure as evil; yet he refuses to attack the entire American social structure. How he is going to account for the situation of the Chicago Negroes he is planning to save is not yet clear. Secondly, King invariably attempts to resolve local conflict through national pressure. Naturally, if he rode too hard on society as a whole he would not be so successful in this procedure. Finally, there is "the leadership principle." King

This is like many situations where the nature of the social system is expanded in an attempt to reach consensus. When an individual gets no satisfaction from his immediate supervisor he may try an appeal to a higher body or the next group in the hierarchy.

¹Coser, op. cit., p. 34.

utilizes his national and international prestige in every way possible. In an article reprinted from a national magazine by SNCC, an SCLC worker is described setting up a mass rally in an Alabama county where King will be the major speaker. The local ministers are scared. They don't know if they can get many people to come. "But you must," says the SCLC representative, "Dr. King is coming." "Well," they reply, "If Dr. King is coming, it wouldn't look right for us not to have anyone there. We'll get the people to come." Another example is taken from a report by a SNCC worker who attended a Selma rally around the time of the Selma march. He said that King was scheduled as one of the last speakers. He was not on stage prior to his speech. An SCLC representative worked the audience up for his arrival. It got to the point where the minister was crying out, "Dr. King is our leader! Our leader is coming. Dr. King is coming! Who is our leader?" "Dr. King!" and "Hallelujah!" came the response. Then, according to my informant, as Dr. King entered the room, everyone (except the SNCC workers) rose and sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." SNCC workers find such scenes innately repulsive, not only because of organizational jealousy and rivalry, but also because such activities contradict a basic principle of SNCC work, which is the development of local autonomous leadership. Briefly, the principle of conflict in SCLC is to create local conflicts through which an appeal is made to a national consensus by demonstration of local suffering which is legitimated by Dr. King's presence and ^{his} bleeding --- to the society at large.

SNCC, although it often appeals to national consensus, is less concerned with the maintenance of peaceful SNCC-action

unity, if that unity does not appear to serve its goals. Its recent statements on the draft and the war in Vietnam are indications of its willingness to engage in conflict which might result in a loss of funds and disruption of its relation to the liberal Americans who have supported it in the past. In addition, its research department has published a series of papers entitled "life with Lyndon," in which Jack Kinnis argues the collusion of North and South, business and government, in the oppression of the poor man and the Negro. A major theme of the series is corruption of the American government and the deviousness of politicians. Possible success--in the form of civil rights and voting laws and poverty wars--are described as frauds which serve to maintain the status quo and prevent significant improvement in the lives of Negroes. Because the basic proposition here is the malignant character of American social structure, no appeal is made to the people or the norms supporting it. Of course, not all SNCC workers agree with Kinnis; many still believe that a just America is possible--without radical structural changes. But as northern and supposedly liberal supporters withdraw from SNCC's circle of friends, many workers are becoming increasingly pessimistic.

If everyone is corrupt why is the Negro an exception & what's more is it worth the trouble to what are you making him equal

What? How?

In this regard, the argument about SNCC workers carrying guns takes on a new light. For most, the argument has long since shifted from a moral question to one of the actual utility of guns for self-preservation. For a while members were concerned with their national image. The increasing unconcern of the nation and the growing fear of the worker combine to produce cynicism and the desire for material rather than simply spiritual means of protection. Because they are concerned with developing local

leaders who will fight for their own freedom, SNCC workers are less likely to use the prestige/ or influence of SNCC to sway national opinion than are the NAACP and SCLC. To a SNCC worker in some ways the local victory of the Gould Citizens for Progress over the Gould city council is more important than the passage of the 1964 civil rights bill. The local victory indicates that Negroes in that area no longer depend on outside aid, or gifts of power, to determine their fate. If, however, the Gould Citizens for Progress together with hundreds of other local organization, lobbied for, demanded, and got a national voting act, then the act would take on a new significance. To a SNCC worker the arrival of 500 Mississippi Negroes at the Atlantic City convention signalled more of a change in Negro-white relationships in this country than did the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act--although the Act too arose from similar scattered local protests.

A writer in Life magazine once compared the meaning of the SNCC slogan "Freedom Now," to the words of a populist named Pa Rainey. Pa Rainey said, "If we all can't eat at the same table, I say let's kick the legs off the goddamn table and eat together on the floor." Pa Rainey and SNCC are beginning to agree more and more, and SNCC is becoming less and less concerned about the stability of its relationship with the American public.

Proposition #9: Conflict with Outgroups Increases Internal Cohesion.

The group in a state of peace can permit antagonistic members within it to live with one another in an undecided situation because each of them can go his own way and can avoid collisions. A state of conflict, however, pulls the members so tightly together and subjects them to such uniform impulse that they either must get completely along with, or completely rebel, one another.¹

Your opinion
 of the
 workers who
 "kicked" &
 "rebelled" look
 at this was
 illustration of this

¹Simmel, op. cit., p.87.

This statement seems to be contradicted by SNCC organization which despite its continued conflict with other groups and despite a tendency toward total personality involvement, is not especially centralized and does not require that all members "pull together." There are perhaps three reasons for the apparent contradiction. First, this statement of the proposition, taken directly from Sissel, does not distinguish non-violent conflict from its violent forms, such as warfare. In war, the proposition more nearly holds true; and SNCC is not yet engaged in war. Secondly, the continual conflict in which SNCC involves itself is carried out primarily on a local basis: a conflict in Selma, a conflict in Little Rock, a conflict in Cambridge, Md. In only a few instances has SNCC gun SNCC engaged in conflict. Thirdly, the distinction between group cohesion and group centralization must be clear. Practically all SNCC members share a commitment to a somewhat ragged, loosely defined ideology. On the other hand SNCC is poorly centralized.

*White
agree the
not
centralized
I don't see
that they
necessarily
"pull
together"
I support from
an outsider's
point of view
The SNCC seem
more similar
than different.*

*I
warfare
the issue
or the
"stakes"
involved eg.
lives*

The organization's most intense conflicts have dealt with the issues of centralization and control. The goal of SNCC is "freedom." Its "structuralists" argue that members must forego freedom temporarily to attain it permanently. They maintain that if conflict within SNCC is to be reduced, so that more effort can be directed toward the external enemies, the staff must be coordinated. The First Congressional District of Mississippi must know what the Fifth Congressional District is doing. And if the Mississippi staff decides to send 300 people to Washington, the First District must not ignore that plan and devote all its time to voter registration. Most workers desire increased communication and unity of effort. But they are torn

by an equally strong desire for personal and community autonomy.

It is a principle of SNCC organizing technique that the program in an individual community should follow the needs and the desires of the people in that community. This conflict between the need for coordination on various levels and the desire for community independence from SNCC control and planning has resulted in numerous compromises. One such compromise was the Arkansas Freedom Meeting.

Early in 1965 John Lewis, chairman of SNCC, announced that there would be a series of "People's Conferences," throughout the South at which "people" in the various states would suggest or plan a program that they wished SNCC to carry out in their area. The Arkansas staff organized the only conference that was held that spring. (The Arkansas staff is generally more responsive to requests and suggestions from the Atlanta office than are other state staffs.) Conferencees were recruited from all areas where the staff worked. Because of the small size of the staff and the reluctance of people to attend a "Freedom Meeting" or any meeting outside their home town or county, this meant that only about fifty people attended the conference. The meeting's organizers, including myself, planned a series of workshops on federal programs and voting, freedom schools and community centers, and on education and jobs. Here we had introduced our categorization of problems which the people faced. But the people for whom the conference was planned did not follow our guidelines--except where workshops were rigidly controlled. Their primary concern was the upcoming school desegregation under the Arkansas "freedom of choice" plan. Already in May when the conference was held, forms on which students could

In a sense it's like some of the early idealism of Communism - temporary organization like with a way of that organization

Why

indicate their choice of school were being handed out . And intimidation was also beginning. The participants wanted to know what they could do about the intimidation, to whom could they protest, and how could they make sure their children would really attend the white schools they had chosen. The SNCC workers finally got the idea. During the summer, they helped parents around the state file suits in federal court; they encouraged the filing of the forms. In addition, they organized the SNCC voter registration program around upcoming school board elections and eventually helped run 20 Negro candidates for school board positions. The Freedom Meeting was used to discover the wishes of those being organized. It lessened the SNCC worker's fear of his own over-control, but it also provided for a unified program for the area.

The importance of a unified program, even if it is not well centralized, within an area where workers regularly associate certainly should not be underestimated. Arkansas SNCC made few plans for the winter period which would follow the opening of schools and the school board elections. This lack of planning, together with the loss of summer staff, produced halting and uncoordinated work in the late fall and winter. Staff morale seems to have dropped considerably from its high points during the summer. Consequently, the organization has been less effective. In some ways the work being done now is less productive than it was in the spring when there were fewer staff members in the state. This situation parallels the Mississippi experience in the winter of 1964 following the large summer project there.

Why was
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follow-up
possible
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some basis
as the
summer
conferences

To reformulate the proposition as it applies to SNCC, the decision to increase the scope and intensity of a conflict requires broader communication and planning than when a number of minor battles are taking place. Secondly, once conflict has been initiated on a broader scale, it is difficult to maintain personal and group effectiveness for any conflict, narrow or broad, unless group unity and cohesion are maintained. The loss of intra-group cohesion, following a period of its existence, lowers morale and increases intra-group conflict.

Proposition #10: Conflict with Another Group Defines Group Structure and Consequent Reaction to Internal Conflict.

When groups are drawn into conflict their tolerance toward internal dissent decreases. If the group is small and involvement high, the dissenter is likely to be rapidly expelled; if the group is large and particularistic, it will be more flexible. In addition,

Each way of reacting to an outside threat contains a special danger: too much rigidity may lead to splits and withdrawals; too much flexibility may lead to a blurring of boundaries and dissolution in the surrounding environment.¹

Dissent and divergence which threaten the group's ability to respond to a conflict will be discouraged. In respect to the degree of divergence allowed, SNCC seems to follow the elastic model by which Simmel characterizes the Catholic Church:

treating dissenters as long as possible as belonging to it, but at the moment this was not possible any longer, expelling them with incomparable energy.²

When operationally does this occur + what determines that it has

In this regard I will cite two examples that I observed while working for SNCC. In both cases the expulsions were effected

¹Coser, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

²Simmel, op. cit., p. 96.

by the executive committee.

In the first case, approximately 50 SNCC workers were sent letters, in April, 1965, asking that they report their whereabouts and activities within a week of receiving the letter. If they did not respond within that time with an acceptable statement (acceptability to be determined by several of the Atlanta staff), they would be dropped from the payroll. The persons to whom letters were sent had in common the fact that they were not following out programs in the areas to which they were assigned. Many were, in SNCC terminology, "floaters," people who drifted from project to project looking for meaningful work. Most had previously made important contributions to the organization. But for one reason or another they had begun to drift. They were not held to be "at fault" for their activities. During the executive committee meeting, people argued about the growing estrangement of certain members. Some traced it to the lack of SNCC program, some to a growing loss of mutuality. But eventually people seemed to agree that it would be more difficult to remedy the causes of disaffection than to remove the disaffected. So the letters were sent. Some who received the letters quit, others responded and stayed on staff. Some members who had not received letters quit in protest of their being sent. These people maintained that SNCC was becoming too rigid--and too centralized. An observer who was concerned ^{with} their response might say that SNCC was becoming more rigid. But an observer concerned with the delay before sending the letters--some to whom they were sent had been wandering for as long as six months--would say that SNCC had merely demonstrated the limits of its flexibility. Perhaps it is a moot question.

What
does this
mean

The second example, involving four new summer volunteers and a previous SNCC staff member, will indicate the way in which restrictive control may be extended. The incident described occurred about six months after the February staff meeting where a new structure was approved and three months after the executive committee meeting at which the letters were authorized.

The former SNCC worker, C.W., had worked full-time for a year and a half and had spent some additional time in Mississippi. He was returning in June, 1965, to Alabama, with four recruits, one white and three Negro. When they arrived in Lowndes County they found that the project was disorganized, due to a recent migration of workers to Mississippi to engage in the Jackson FDP demonstration. Frustrated by disorganization and leaderlessness, they returned to Atlanta and requested a new assignment. They were sent to Tuskegee, Alabama. C.W. decided that this project, being run by Tuskegee students, was so well organized that SNCC volunteers should not be wasted on it and he returned his group again to Atlanta. There he contacted the Arkansas project and asked permission to bring his workers to the state. He was asked to wait a day or two while the ^{Arkansas} staff discussed the idea. Despite the fact that the staff had "filled" their summer positions, they phoned C.W. and invited his group, because they liked him and because they wished to increase their number of Negro workers. But in Atlanta, prior to the phone call, Cleve Sellers, SNCC program secretary, offered the group jobs in North Carolina. Desperate to do something after three weeks of pondering, they accepted the offer. Cleve gave instructions to the finance secretary to give them bus fare to North Carolina and left Atlanta before Arkansas's welcoming phone call came. Another member

of the Atlanta staff approved the little group's new plans, to go to Arkansas; they took their bus fare and left. While they were traveling, Cleve discovered their trip and sent instructions to Arkansas not to allow the visitors to join the project. Thus when the weary band arrived they were told once more that they were not wanted and must now travel to North Carolina or work not at all. By coincidence the executive committee would be meeting in Little Rock in several days and the group decided to await their arrival and formally plead their case.

Into this morass of facts, two more points must be interjected. John Lewis, Jim Forman, SNCC executive secretary, and Cleve had promised several months prior to Miss Ella Baker, a SNCC advisor, that they would send workers to North Carolina for the summer. The first appointed project director to the state had just absconded with a car and \$500. Now they were planning to send C.W.'s group with a new director to North Carolina. C.W. was extremely pessimistic about the plan, about the new director, and about the possible funding of the project by the Democratic Party. The second factor involved in the dispute was the determination of the SNCC executive trike--of Lewis, Forman, and Sellers--that SNCC workers must begin to accept decisions from above or cease to work.

Against this background, and with the appearance of Miss Baker at the meeting, the group's appeal to stay in Arkansas was rejected. Its members would either go to North Carolina or return home. Even though they were all volunteers (i.e., they had their own support), they would not be allowed to stay in Arkansas. The Arkansas project director agreed with the decision, despite his-

Somewhat
omitted
to Mass

givings, because he did not want to cause dissension and because he wanted to retain his right to criticize other SNCC workers who flouted authority. The group's members split in their response to the decision. Two left for Chicago. Three, including C.W., went to North Carolina. All maintained that the decision had been unfair and unwise, that even if SNCC wished to make "examples" of staff members who refused to abide by administrative decisions, they as volunteers, were inappropriate victims. As they had predicted, the North Carolina project foundered and dissolved in a few weeks. Of the three volunteers in North Carolina, two returned home and C.W. went to Mississippi and spent several weeks working on the Head Start program.

Self-fulfilling prophecy?

It does give an air of arbitrariness since it is unclear when the limit is reached

Whereas the previous example of elastic and then rigid control of deviators may have contributed to SNCC's overall effectiveness, it is doubtful that this case aided it in any way. SNCC, like any other organization, attempts to balance its flexibility and rigidity. Lacking the gift of perfect prediction, they are bound at times to be too flexible and at others to be too rigid in their treatment of dissenters--at least to an observer.

Proposition #11: The Search for Enemies.

Struggle groups may actually "attract" enemies in order to maintain and increase group cohesion...¹

because

victory lowers the energy which guarantees the unity of the group; and the² dissolving forces, which are always at work, gain hold....

In one sense, SNCC has not yet reached the point where it need search for enemies. At this stage it has defined its enemy so broadly, that

¹Coser, op. cit., p. 104.
²Simmel, op. cit., p. 98.

it is unlikely to ever gain a complete victory. Its definition of the enemy has broadened slightly since the founding of the organization. When, in 1961, SNCC was still essentially a coordinating committee and not a group of organizers, its goals revolved around ending public accommodations discrimination. It broadened its work first by focussing on voting and community organization and now recently on jobs and general structural change. These expansions resulted not from victories, but from defeats which indicated the need for a broader base of power among Southern Negroes so that the original and the new goals would have greater chance of success. In addition, SNCC has gradually become more antagonistic toward the federal government, despite its "victories" over it in the form of new legislation and executive orders. The SNCC position in regard to such victories is that they are hollow accomplishments which serve not only to cover continuing inequalities, but which also make the total aim more difficult to achieve because they convince Americans that the battle has indeed been won.

Consequently, we can say that SNCC, by its recent development of an encompassing definition of its enemy, will not require the establishment of new opponents for survival. We can compare it in this regard to the National Polio Foundation, which defined its enemy rather narrowly: polio treatment and research. Following its inception under President Roosevelt, the Foundation grew to a multi-million dollar organization. When it achieved victory in the form of the Salk and Sabin vaccines, rather than dissolve itself and relinquish its prestige, its capital, its equipment, and its money-making arm, the March of Dimes, it

A similar
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 groups
 might be
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 A.D.L.
 which
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 of discrimination

found a new enemy, and changed its name appropriately. It is now the National Foundation and its new crusade is against birth defects.

Proposition #12: Ideology and Conflict.

A part of Coser's formulation of the relationship between ideology and conflict is that

conflicts in which the participants feel that they are merely the representatives of collectivities and groups, fighting not for themselves but only for the ideals of the group they represent, are likely to be more radical and merciless than those that are fought for personal reasons.¹

Let us consider this proposition first in regard to relationships between segregationists and Negroes and secondly in regard to the changing effect of SNCC ideology on the organization's workers.

Anyone who is unfamiliar with the "radicalism and mercilessness" of southern defenders of segregation need only read One Hundred Years of Lynching by Ralph Ginsburg. Although there are other factors than ideological commitment involved in mob activity and brutality, the rationalization of these cruel acts is often drawn from the necessity of maintaining a specific social structure. Let us return to the end of Reconstruction for a moment. The withdrawal of federal troops and the return of Northern sympathy for the white South in the 1890s, combined with an intense Negro desire for equality, produced a rash of lynchings and murder. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, these acts gradually declined, primarily because the cause for which the South stood ceased to be challenged. Its social structure was ignored by the rest of the nation (morally), and was patiently suffered by those Negroes who did not flee

northward.

Most observers agree that by the early fifties the South was beginning to become less solid again, due perhaps to a faltering sense of white Southern morality. Small quiet changes were being made in some areas of the upper and middle south. But with the Supreme Court decisions of 1954 and 1955, the South began to re-solidify...for conflict. John Barlow Martin's documentation

of the rise of the White Citizen's Councils makes this abundantly clear.¹ The primary tactic for battling indigenous protest was economic intimidation. Negroes who filed petitions or suits for school desegregation lost jobs or were run out of town. In Little Rock and in Prince Edward County, Va., where schools were closed for five years, whites who simply suggested a calm approach were bankrupted and isolated.² The rhetoric of this era was filled with stirring speeches on white supremacy, miscegenation, communism, and the salvation of Southern womanhood. In Alabama, since 1963 over 10 people who challenged or were suspected of challenging, the Southern ideology have been brazenly killed. Many others have lost jobs or been physically assaulted. Not one murderer has yet served a sentence for these crimes in either state or federal prisons. Viola Liuzzo, Jonathan Daniels, James Reeb, and Sam Young (to name some well-known victims) were all murdered in defense of segregation.³ Mrs. Liuzzo was driving

Here too definitions are getting in your way. Don't take one battle for the whole war. Voting patterns yield a quite different picture of southern whites. Do you still believe that in 1970?

But the extremes of yesterday are the moderates of today e.g. Faubus

Prior to that time, they wouldn't even have been tried.

¹ The Deep South Says "Never," New York, Ballantine, 1957.

² Daisy Bates, The Long Shadow of Little Rock, David McKay Company, New York, 1962; Personal communication, Dean Gordon, Farmville, Va.

³ This may seem like a strong statement for a sociologist. I would be willing to change it only to the extent of using the word "killed" instead of "murdered." One kills an enemy in a war but murders a person who belongs to his society. Our legal system does not recognize individual killing within this country as a justifiable act of war. Southern jurors, however, do not always feel bound by legal concepts. If they were, they would have to convict these men of "murder" and thus deny the ideological justi-

marchers between Montgomery and Selma. Jonathan Daniels was walking with civil rights workers just after being released from jail. James Reeb was walking away from a Negro church in Selma. And Sam Younge had tried to use a segregated restroom. Thus we have some idea of the possible intensity and mercilessness of one party in the Southern conflict.

*or a segment of it
The other people
are just support
troops
(70)*

The other parties in the conflict range from liberal Southern whites who are not so bound to the ideology of segregation to the "extremist" civil rights groups such as SNCC and CORE. We will here consider SNCC as the organization with the largest full-time staff committed to the cause most diametrically opposed to the cause just discussed. SNCC workers are more likely to be merciless toward themselves than toward their opponents. A prime weapon of SNCC in its early years was the ability of its workers to accept physical and verbal abuse in the name of their cause. The suffering performed two major functions. First, it affected outsiders' attitudes. It aroused the consciences of liberals and the fears of others. Secondly, it bound the staff into a unit, through common experience and demonstrations of faithfulness to the cause. SNCC developed an ascetic character. Its workers renounced money to live on "subsistence" salaries.

*Why?
Like the
early
communist
leaders was
it a corrupting
link to a
decadent
system*

Those who had affluent pasts hid them carefully. Similar to a religious sect, it required its workers to share all property and to renounce ties which might decrease the member's working time or drain off emotional energy. A SNCC worker was expected to work seven days a week in the name of the cause of freedom. People who deviated from these patterns were subject to

fication of the killings. (cont'd. from footnote on previous page.)

suspicion and distrust. About three years ago an argument entitled the "Jail or Bail" controversy arose. SNCC decided that even when bail or fine money was available, demonstrators should serve their terms to show to the opponents, to local Negroes, and to themselves, that they were willing to suffer for their beliefs. Since then much has changed. SNCC workers no longer stay in jail indefinitely. Having redefined themselves as organizers of the struggle and not as actors, they feel they are more useful outside of jail than in, and because the economic burden is heavier on the non-members who are now jailed more frequently, efforts are made to bail everyone out. But a policy is maintained of having at least one worker stay as long as the "local people", in order to keep jail morale high and to re-demonstrate commitment. SNCC is becoming more secular in other ways. *Sub-* ^{Added} ^{Jesus what?} *istence* pay has risen, especially in the cities. Married staff receive a base pay of \$65 a week, plus \$10 for every child, up to a maximum of four. Although all SNCC equipment is owned in common, it is assigned for use individually. A photographer who ceased photographing was hounded for several months before he would return his equipment. A car had to be "stolen" from its driver because he refused to have it assigned to someone else.

Some workers maintain that affluence has corrupted SNCC and the morale and devotion of its workers. While this may be true it is important to place the changes within SNCC in their proper context. SNCC has grown and has become more affluent. It has more money per member than it did in the 1960-63 period. However its commitment to its goal and ideology may not have *You don't* *seem sure* lessened. Its problem is to find a way to reconcile its continuing need for intense personal involvement and selflessness

with the increased size and income. The attempts to increase structure and communication are one response to the problem. Another response has been to call more frequent workshops and meetings in which its problems will be discussed and its members reunified and rededicated.

But how do you explain its lack of mercilessness toward its opponents for this flows from the proposition.

Propositions # 13, 14, and 15: Conflict--The Unifier.

The following propositions deal with three ways in which conflict unifies antagonists. First, it binds them in a mutual relationship, in which common norms on the limitations of conflict exist. A conflict without limitations becomes a war of extermination, such as occurred between the Germans and the Jews. In regard to these limits we should note that in Mississippi, following the murder of the three civil rights workers in 1964, the Klan restricted its limits somewhat and reduced their violence to church and house burnings and bombings. In Alabama, however, the norms for violence have gradually been extended from night-rider slayings to daylight murder. In addition, it should be remembered that the normative limits imposed on the combatants by both Southern and Northern forces vary immensely. Neither the Justice Department nor the FBI has ever made an "one scene" civil rights arrest in the South, despite countless witnessing of illegal arrests and violence. However, when members of the Albany Movement were suspected of launching an economic boycott against a white federal juror, the Justice Department prosecuted with vigor, and obtained 9 indictments in federal court.¹

You describe it as a "frequent" occurrence & realize even so frequent but when you are analyzing a historical situation, making comparisons with such time is important

¹Slater King, "The Bloody Battleground of Albany," Freedomways, Winter, 1964.

On the other hand no white man has ever been prosecuted for the same sort of offense--denying a Negro's rights through economic reprisal. In the civil rights conflict, opponents attain little unity through common norms.

Secondly, when antagonists have roughly equal strength, parties often desire that their opponents be unified and centralized.¹ Unity of the enemy is useful if one's own structure is unified--guerrilla bands can harry an army for years. Also, resolution of conflict is facilitated when only one agreement must be reached. SNCC, with its scattered workers and multiple project more closely resembles the guerilla model of conflict.

This is perhaps one of its advantages. Its workers move quickly from one town to another. Negro workers in particular fade quickly into the scenery. And, importantly, no general directives are required for a given action. A defeat in one town does not mean surrender in another. On the other hand, SNCC's most violent opponents, epitomized in the Klan, also operate on this model. In addition, they are more secretive, and more influential politically and economically. We can separate the innumerable parties involved in the civil rights conflict analytically. If we do not consider the groups claimed-to-be-represented, and consider only the organizations involved in the conflict, a partial listing of Southern organizations would include SNCC, SCLC, NAACP, the Urban League, Southern Conference Education Fund, the Southern Regional Council, and the Southern Student Organizing Committee. These are only the organizations that are regionwide and "integration-oriented." On the "segregation-

At least some benefit from the "white" perspective of being unable to tell any of them apart

¹Coser, op. cit., p. 129.

oriented⁹ side are the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Knights, the United Klans, the White Citizens Councils, the National States Rights Party, and the John Birch Society. Neither listing includes any local or state organization. The only cases within the Southern civil rights conflict where unity of enemy has been requested have been local--confined to a city or a county. Civil rights groups worked for this in the "total settlements" in Bogalusa and Natchez, for example, where they demanded political, economic, and social changes requiring the cooperation of police, city management, and businessmen. On the other hand it is also common for a southern city government to select several Negro representatives, make an agreement with them, and become incensed if all factions of the Negro community do not abide by it.

Good point

Third, conflict can unify a community or a society by establishing and maintaining a balance of power.² This proposition is derived from the fact through conflict opposing parties (and observers) can assess their relative power. Knowledge of the extent and type of power each has forms the basis of final negotiation and settlement. In addition, the conflict produces a new, better known balance of power, and prevents new conflicts for indefinite periods of time--the length of the peace depending upon a multiplicity of factors, such as a group's changing assessment of the power balance. A few qualifications should be added here. First, a group's power may grow or diminish during a conflict. SMO's ability to influence Southern and Northern politicians, federal and state governments, and national legislation has increased immensely over the past six years. The political in-

fluence of Southern politicians has perhaps decreased slightly-- on the question of civil rights and national policy concerning it. The national settlements taken so far--in the form of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Act--have indeed shifted the balance of power and influence between whites and Negroes in the South. But as the civil rights movement becomes more class-oriented (middle class, educated Negroes can now receive almost every benefit of the Great Society), the power of the poor Negro in the country and in the cities-- North and South-- has yet to be assessed. The threat of the Watts riot and the series of 1964 riots is likely to be forgotten soon and new more violent conflicts, will need to occur before Negro-white relations approach stability.

Proposition #16: Conflict Creates Associations and Coalitions.

Briefly, the proposition states that "If several parties face a common opponent, a unifying bond is created between them."¹ To illustrate this proposition we will return to our first example, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the Democratic Convention. We stated then that there were a variety of positions possible on the FDP demand to be seated as the proper Mississippi delegation. These were to accept the delegates as morally and "legally" right; to accept them as morally but not legally right; to deny both their moral and legal right; or to maintain an attitude of indifference. In addition, an individual could take a variety of actions in support of his position ranging from no public comment to the utilization of every means of in-

¹Coser, op. cit., p.140.

fluence at his disposal. Finally, there were certain persons involved in the conflict who were primarily concerned with arbitration of the dispute for the best possible good of those they represented (e.g., Hubert Humphrey). Properly speaking the two parties engaged in conflict were the FDP and the regular Mississippi delegation. The FDP enlisted numerous allies during the months preceding the convention. SNCC, its permanent ally and founder, the Americans for Democratic Action, scattered northern politicians, and numerous civil rights groups lobbied for it. Several state Democratic conventions passed resolutions prior to the convention, asking that the FDP be seated. The FDP prepared its brief, with the help of the ADA and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights. It searched conscientiously for allies and utilized them in every way it knew. The Mississippi delegation, on the other hand, did not prepare an advance brief. Although it undoubtedly had supporters, they were not publicized. It did not lobby. It had the more powerful position from the start and it did not feel particularly threatened--it was unlikely that the Democratic convention would chance the Southern defection that expulsion might create. Thus it is clear that coalitions arise partially from different interpretations of the power situation and the possible outcomes of conflict.

However, we must now raise the question of how a common opponent produces coalitions. When the FDP refused the Credentials Committee compromise and denounced the action of the convention, the conflict was reoriented. New coalitions were formed. The new antagonists were the FDP and the Democratic Party. Supporters who had thought the challenge "a good idea" now condemned the FDP.

Joseph Raugh, who approved of the compromise, was not only re-
jected by the FDP; he sided with the Democrats against it.

There was one common element in the responses of the Democratic Party
members and others who could not understand the FDP rejection of
the compromise. Although the FDP challenge appealed to their
consciences and sense of justice, it also threatened the unity
of the party in which they had a stake. The party and the
upcoming election were more crucial issues to these people. They
argued that if the party were split, a Goldwater victory might
be possible, and that this would be far worse for civil rights
than any temporary disillusionment and defeat of Negroes. The
compromise would therefore be a way to retain unity in the party
while offering a sop to the Negroes. Southerners and Northerners,
together with proclaimed liberals such as Humphrey, joined together
for this end. When the compromise was rejected, it became nec-
essary to brand the FDP as irrational and as an organization that
was more concerned with a few seats in the convention than with the
future of civil rights. The coalition probably won the minds of
most T.V. viewers, through the use of the legality issue and by
capitalizing on the return of T.V. time to the convention.

could they
not also
"sincerely"
believe that

It is appropriate that the FDP convention challenge has
been used as both our first and last example of this theory
of conflict. It is a group unified by realistic conflict, by
close personal involvement, and by rising and decreasing periods
of hostility. It has suffered internal dissension and disorgani-
zation, but it has also been at times too rigid and too structured
to accomplish its set goals. Above all it is an example of an
organization dedicated to a realignment of power. And its fate at

By this
time I
would
know more
about FDP
& its relation
to SNCC -
how
independent
etc

the convention illustrates the difficulties it faces in attaining its goal. It should be interesting to follow its paths of conflict, to discover where it copies and where it rejects the model of its parent organization--SNCC.

IV. Conclusion: The Way SNCC Does It.

Throughout this report we have analyzed the ways in which SNCC meets conflict and the possibility of conflict within and without. Several patterns emerge. Within its smallest units--the freedom house, the community organizing team-- disagreement and argument are common and minor personal conflicts expressed but serious problems repressed. When possible the resolution of intense personal conflict is attempted through the use of larger social units. When such resolution is not available, as in the Mississippi cases, where state organization was at the time divorced from local problems, conflict may be violently expressed and result in dissolution of the/unit.

I'm not sure I agree, repressed implies never discussed with/about it, yet your paper is rife with examples of quite the opposite

Intra-organizational conflict concerning issues relevant to the entire staff results/partially from the building of hostility on local levels. Intense conflict over group issues is expressed at staff meetings, where it is occasionally resolved. The degree of diversity allowed is both beneficial and detrimental to the group's continuing unity. The diversity fosters autonomy and independence and allows regular open conflict without which members might withdraw from the organization. On the other hand the sanction of continuing disagreement--expressed in actions as well as opinions--threatens group cohesion, especially when some members feel that the disagreement concerns basic consensus.

What determines in which direction the conflict goes

A kind of reverse mechanism ~~is~~ opposed to the man who with great trouble at work, does not take the out the but goes home kicks his dog, yells at his children. He does it at the local level

Inter-group conflict between SNCC and other organiza-

tions is focussed on the issues of freedom and autonomy (issues mirrored in SNCC's internal conflicts), particularly for Negroes. The organization does not depend on consensual agreement with its opponents and is forced to operate in a society in which demands different normative standards of conflict for it and its opponents.

We have said that the *raison d'être* of SNCC is conflict. It is also its technique and its way of life. Although conflict is neither the *raison d'être* nor the technique of most social organizations, it is probably the way of life for many. The goal of this study has been to demonstrate some of the effects of conflict as a way of life.

Let me say at the outset that I found this an enormously absorbing paper, quite well-written and organized (tho I might have done it differently). Per your wishes and command, I will devote myself to correcting your analysis not your emotions. One problem is in your use of the theory of conflict. What you really have done is show how the theory of conflict helps understand much of what has happened in SNCC. Yet the paper is written as if SNCC is being used as an illustration and test of Coase's theory of conflict. Sometimes it works & sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it is quite laborious and sometimes quite incisive & insightful. Moreover you do not really delineate in detail each proposition & then offer "evidence" in support or against it but rather examples which attempt to reflect on the proposition as a whole. As a result there is a considerable amount of "squeezing".

What is fascinating is the centrality of conflict to the very organization of SNCC. Here I yearn for a more comparative approach both theoretically & empirically. Theoretically I'd like to understand the significance of this theory & your empirical example in relation to other theories of group formation e.g. one's emphasizing the functions of cohesion & consensus. Your paper or my knowledge of

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SNCC also leads me to speculate about the functions + rationalization of charisma (The thesis illustration for me!) Empirically I'd like to have seen more comparisons with other organizations + movements so as to understand the uniqueness of SNCC, the why + wherefore of the particular directions it took. The comparisons between SLC + SNCC are instructive particularly when you emphasize their different uses + frames of reference for both consensus + conflict. An interesting example of what I mean is illustrated by Mike Bender's honors thesis where he also used Coser's theory of conflict as his basic frame. But there he compared 3 ^{occupational} groups from their historical roots to their current development - medicine, osteopathy + chiropractic - ~~the latter~~ where 2 initially defined as charlatans + outside med, 1 event adopted into med the second pushed further away.