PRELIMINARY DRAFT

THE "FREEDOM HIGH" AND "HARDLINER" FACTIONS OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SNCC): A REEXAMINATION

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ELAINE DELOTT BAKER
7623 E. BATES DRIVE
DENVER, CO, 80231
303-337-1314

A RECONSIDERATION OF THE `FREEDOM HIGH' AND `HARDLINER' FACTIONS OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SNCC)

Elaine DeLott Baker
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It has never been my custom to look back. In my youth I considered reminiscences to be the self indulgence of ego, and even more to the point, of the older ego. In 1964 I scoffed at SNCC executive secretary James Forman when he reminded fellow civil right workers that he was keeping a record of our actions for history, and that when this was all over he would be the author of this history. To consider one's place in history was reactionary thinking. How could anyone act in the moment and think of history at the same time?

Lately I have been looking back, thinking about the interaction of ideology and experience. As I read the historical accounts of events in which I participated I begin to see how personal bias creeps into what we call history. When events are separated from the individual lives that shaped them and the world that produced them, our vision begins to blur. In that context the first people to reflect on the past have an enormous power, the power to publicly focus attention on their view of events.

The first histories written about SNCC were James Forman's Making of a Black Revolutionary and Cleveland Sellers' River of No Return, personal biographies that defined events through the perspectives of their authors. Within their stories were angry, bitter attacks on what they saw as the opposing faction in a struggle to chart the direction of the organization after the summer of 1964. Theirs was the faction that believed in centralized power, in structure, in discipline and accountability to a central organization as a prerequisite for revolutionary change. Forman saw the conflict in clear terms: "The fundamental question,... was: Could SNCC grow from a cadre of organizers into a revolutionary organization seeking power?" (1)

I was a part of "the losing faction", the faction that believed in the importance of "process", the belief that the actions which we took to arrive at our goals were as critical as the goals themselves. We believed in the individual's responsibility to act with integrity in the moment. Only then could "real change" take place. We are most often characterized as "anti-authority", a description I find misleading. We were concerned with the issue of where authority derived its legitimacy, but our focus was on principles of democratic leadership development, not on power and authority. We believed that legitimate authority was vested in leadership that flowed from the ground up, not from the top down. We believed that the many excesses of power that we saw at all levels of society were the results of a misplaced reliance on stagnant models of traditional authority.

We were as committed to changing the way power and authority were exercised as we were to its outcome, because we were convinced that there could be no real change unless we learned to operate in new ways. We were obsessed by a pattern of behavior that we called "selling out", incidents of betrayal where leaders gained power, only to turn their backs on the people who had invested their hope in them. The potential for selling out was everywhere, from middle class blacks, whom we called "Toms", to politicians of the liberal establishment, even to thsoe within our own ranks. We looked beyond the vote, beyond political power, toward what we called "real change". Our goal went beyond a piece of the pie. The dreams we dreamed were not dreams of power, they were dreams of

a just society.

Ella Baker, often called the "mother of SNCC", expressed this vision of a just society in a 1967 interview:

> The NAACP, Urban League, etc., do not change society, they want to get in. (SNCC) It's a combination of concern with the black goal for itself and, beyond that, with the whole society because this is the acid test of whether the outs can get in and share in equality and worth...SNCC defines itself in terms of the blacks, but is concerned with all excluded people.(2)

This past June I attended a Jackson, Mississippi reunion of civil rights activists who had participated in Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964. Together with people I had not seen for thirty years, in a place I had not visited in thirty years, I began a process which I continue today, the process of remembering and reflecting. After the conference I turned for the first time to books on the civil rights movement, from before my time, through my time, and after: works of James Forman, Cleveland Sellers, Clayborne Carson, Don Mac Adam, Mary King, Howell Raines, Todd Gitlin, Emily Stoper, and others. It was provocative, sometimes exhilarating, often deeply disturbing. There was old and new information, unfolding a progression of events that seemed almost inevitable when presented in retrospect. I learned many things I had not known. I also encountered what I saw as distortion after distortion, some factual, but others more subtle and difficult to refute.

In this paper I focus on one of these issues, the conflict between the two factions of SNCC that emerged in the fall of 1964, a conflict that had powerful implications for individuals, for the civil rights movement, and for the ideologies and strategies of the then emerging New Left. The two factions were first defined by James Forman, the leader of one faction, in his autobiography, The Making of a Black Revolutionary. Forman called the group whose views he represented the "structure" faction and labeled the opposition with the unflattering terms, "freedom high", referring to its emphasis on individual freedom and "floater", describing the individual choice of assignments as "floating" from project to project. Civil rights historian Clayborne Carson later softened this rhetorical inequity by referring to the two factions as "hardliners", vs. those concerned with "individual freedom":

> During 1965 SNCC was torn by a dispute between staff members who resisted tendencies toward centralization and bureaucratization, believing that this would inhibit the development of local leadership, and those that believed that radical social change required restraints on individual freedom in order to achieve collective goals...
>
> Both (Forman and Moses) accepted the need for a new orientation in SNCC, but Forman was prepared to abandon a large measure of SNCC's freewheeling style in order to achieve political power, whereas Moses believed that SNCC should encourage individuals to break free of all centralized structures of power rather than build new ones. (3)

Although more descriptive and less pejorative than Forman's and Sellers' accounts, Carson still defined the conflict in essentially the same terms, one faction in favor of increased bureaucratization and centralization, and one faction opposed to such goals. The efforts of this paper are aimed at

expanding the understanding of the opposing faction, which I call the "process" faction.

BACKGROUND

The conflict was set at the organizational crossroads facing the civil rights movement in Mississippi at the end of Freedom Summer, 1964. Over the summer there had been a thousand arrests, 67 bombings or burnings of black churches, homes and buildings, 85 beatings and four deaths. The National Democratic Party had rejected the seating of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at its Atlantic City convention, a major thrust of the summer program, in a complex drama of backroom intrigue and betrayal. Project offices that had only recently been hives of activity and energy were now almost desolate. Freedom schools and community centers were shutting down.

The issues the organization faced that fall were dual, charting a course of action and determining a decision making structure, issues of both program and structure. The core administrative staff, housed in Atlanta, felt out of control. The violence and emotional stresses of four years had eroded the focus and spirits of many veteran field staffers who appeared to central office staff as increasingly unpredictable and unreliable. Communication between core staff and field staff was poor and getting worse. To field staff, the Atlanta office was out of touch and becoming more and more irrelevant.(4) Meanwhile, there were no central strategies. Resources were dwindling and tensions over the allocation of resources were mounting. The great plans had failed while the expectations of local communities had been raised. There was an urgent sense that the momentum of the summer had to be maintained, but no agreement on how this could be accomplished.

Until that fall nearly all decisions were been arrived at through consensus. The original SNCC structure was a loose affiliation of student protest groups growing out of the sit-in movement. Decisions were made by a coordinating committee comprised of one representative from each participating college campus. By 1963 SNCC had broadened its activities to include voter registration efforts. Meanwhile the staff had expanded from part-time student leaders to a small band of full-time activists. Despite these changes SNCC's revised constitution of 1963 continued to draw from its early commitment to nonviolence and a vision of the "redemptive community", or "beloved community", built on that philosophy:

> We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from the Judeo-Christian tradition seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step toward such a society.
>
> Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overcomes injustices. The redemptive community supersedes systems of gross social immorality.
>
> Love is the central motif of nonviolence. Love is the force by which God binds man to himself and man to man. Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of evil to inflict suffering with an even

more enduring capacity to absorb evil all the while persisting in love.

> By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities. (5)

By the fall of 1964 violence had all but buried the belief in the redemptive community. Both the loose decision making apparatus that had characterized the organization and the fundamental belief in its ability to create a just society were in crisis. To compound matters, the organization added 85 new members to its 70 member staff after the summer project. Most of these were northerners, many of them white, shifting the racial composition of the organization from predominantly black to an essentially balanced racial membership. Class differences, most evident as educational differences, intensified along with increased racial tensions. Exhausted workers talked about "battle fatigue". Psychologist Robert Coles described the state of mind he found:

> Fixed anger and suspicion plague them...They lose not only perspective and humor, but they begin to distrust the aspirations of others, so that fewer and fewer people can be trusted. (6)

The intimacy of the early years was over. The old strategies were empty. Expectations in the field had been raised. The old SNCC structure, originally designed to coordinate the actions of student protests and sit-ins, was unable to accommodate both an expanded role and an expanded membership. Within this context two main factions emerged, representing different views of how to move forward. The leader of the mostly black structure faction was James Forman, fifteen years older than most SNCC staff, a man who believed that centralized authority was a prerequisite for revolution. Forman was a self conscious actor in a drama he was certain would become history. The second faction, divided fairly equally between black and white, identified with the leadership ideas of Bob Moses, a high school teacher with an M.A. in philosophy who had first come south to work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and later emerged as a key figure in SNCC's voter registration efforts and its intellectual leadership. Moses' commitment, courage and compassion translated into a powerful charisma, no less powerful because of the humility of its bearer. He was an anti-leader, uncomfortable with the influence he had on others, a reluctant hero in a time when many were heroes, but few knew what to do next.

Forman, executive secretary of SNCC, called for structure, discipline, accountability, hierarchy. Moses, the architect of the summer project and the spiritual leader of the organization, asked people to listen to each other, to be servants of the communities where they worked and to support these communities in developing their own leadership. Forman wanted passionately to be recognized as a leader; Moses longed to be invisible, to be overshadowed by the leadership he nurtured in others.

Although the debate encompassed issues of both content and structure, the more concrete issue of structure began to dominate discussion, splitting the staff into two factions with fundamentally differing views of both power and the manifestation of power through structure. Forman saw power as a tool for creating a better society, chiding Moses and his supporters for their emphasis on process, which he identified as a weakness:

> some people were afraid of power...they failed to distinguish between SNCC as an

> organization fighting for the creation of a better society, and SNCC as that better society itself.(7)

With the fall of 1964 the issue of structure dominated all other issues. Who made decisions? What was SNCC? Discussion grew bitter. The hardliners, led by Forman, pushed for an Atlanta based centralized structure that would determine policy, strategy, and deployment of personnel and resources. Moses' view of leadership led to a looser and more decentralized structure. Carson describes the conflict in these terms:

> Rather than viewing SNCC as a permanent political organization, as did Forman, Moses wanted it to remain an informal community of organizers whose task was first to identify local leadership, foster its development, and then step aside, allowing that leadership to determine is own direction. (8)

This approach to power and structure was more difficult to define than the traditional hierarchical structure proposed by Forman. An anonymous position paper submitted at the Waveland staff retreat held near Biloxi, Mississippi in November, 1964, and attributed to Bob Moses, called for a flexible, decentralized decision making model as an alternative to a fixed structure:

> We are on a boat in the middle of the ocean. It has to be rebuilt in order to stay afloat. It also has to stay afloat in order to be rebuilt. Our problem is like that. Since we are out in the ocean we have to do it ourselves ...
>
> To say we want staff to participate in decisions is to work to set up within SNCC the tradition, the climate, the forum for the exploration of ideas about our work and all the problems we face.
>
> Important problems at the center of our work need longer exposure and a wider forum. Every day problems on the edge can be decided immediately by the person responsible in forum with himself or whoever.
>
> Between the "crucial" and the every-days fall the working problems related, say, to carrying out a "crucial". (For example, in relation to the crucial, political organization, there are the working problems of: precinct organizing, freedom registration, political education, etc.)
>
> Roughly what should happen, it seems to me, is this:
>
> Working problems get cited and circulated. A group of staff who are interested band together to work on the problems. They chunk out their work and carry it through. When it's over they disband.
>
> So, ideas circulate; staff gets together on the crucials; standing problems get every-day attention, if needs be, by stationary people; the rest of the staff bands and disbands to hit the working problems related to the crucials as they arise.
>
> "..The fixed man for the fixed duty is a public danger" (9)

From a contemporary perspective the structure attributed to Moses is not radically different from that of many organizations with broad goals and multiple objectives. Unlike Forman's hierarchical structure, which grouped both decision making and the execution of decisions under the control of a standing group, Moses' decentralized structure differentiated between different categories of decisions, and provided different formats for the considerations of these categories.

For Moses, organizational structure was a question of utility, not of power:

> Suppose every time someone asks what SNCC (COFO) is, we agree to say, SNCC (COFO) is what we use to...
>
> Structures are interesting: You can make interpretations as to what they are; you can use them without knowing what they are and feel fine; if you know what they are and cannot use them. it's not clear what you know. (10)

If the issue of structure was an issue of utility, of greater concern was the relationship between morality and action. Carson describes Moses' position as a conflict between moral and political imperatives. From this perspective action was an ethical issue first and a strategic issue second:

> Moses was less willing than Forman to accept the idea that political expediency should ever take precedence over moral consistency,...Yet Moses never resolved to his own satisfaction Camus' dilemma of maintaining a balance between moral purity and political effectiveness. (11)

Moses' affinity for Camus is mentioned often. A frequent allusion is the moral dilemma faced by "the stranger". Moses warned that in the battle for civil rights we must seek to be neither victim nor executioner. Many of those in the "process" faction interpreted this to mean that simply substituting blacks in positions once held by whites would not produce real change. In their minds it was the system that had to change, not the people who wielded power. On a pragmatic level it meant moving beyond providing access to the political system to transforming the political system.

The conflict that began with issues of morality, both personal and societal, grew into a conflict over power and structure, splitting the movement into two factions and draining its energy. Today, in reading about the conflict it is easier to understand what the structure faction promoted than what the process faction believed. The process faction is seldom defined by what it stood for (democratic leadership\flexible structure). In most accounts it is defined by what it opposed (concentrated authority\hierarchical structure).

The closest depiction of a positive definition of the process faction is Carson's discussion of the belief in individualism shared by its proponents. Carson traces this belief to Moses' existential background and to a general distrust of authority that grew from the experiences of civil rights workers in the south. Carson describes the relationship between this attitude of distrust, noting that the challenges mounted against segregation were challenges to traditional bases of authority.(11) As field staff worked with local people, urging them to question authority, staff reinforced their own habits of questioning all authority. This pattern of distrust intensified with the passive actions of the federal government in the summer of 1964, culminating in the betrayal of the liberal left at the

National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City.

Carson's work presents an interesting contrast. When describing conflicting views within the organization Carson portrays their complexity with great insight. Yet, when describing the activists who shared Moses' views, Carson depicts their actions in a more superficial way, often quoting Forman and Sellers. While Moses is seen as operating from principle, people with similar beliefs are seen as driven by personal considerations:

> Some SNCC workers, particularly northern activists, responded to their displacement (by local leaders) by leaving SNCC or by floating from project to project searching for more meaningful roles and in the process acquiring the appellation of being "high on freedom". (12)

In practice, the label "floater" did not correlate with any particular pattern of behavior, being more a question of attitude than behavior. In general, the term was levelled against anyone who was opposed to a tighter structure, and in particular, to individuals who did not appear to be subject to the direct authority of a local project director. This included photographers and communications personnel and numerous individuals who were working in a particular focus area, such as literacy, rural co-ops, etc. Forman's attitude toward those who operated outside of a defined organizational authority comes through clearly in his scornful portrayal of the "freedom high" mentality:

> Some of us had seen that individualism take an acute form in the state of Mississippi where a phenomena called "freedom high" was developing. The phrase was a humorous euphemism for workers and volunteers, who in late 64 and early 65, apparently felt that individual freedom was more important than organizational discipline. They felt no need to let any central office of SNCC or the MFDP (Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party) know where they were, or what they were doing. They went about, "doing their own thing", often floating from project to project, responsible to no one but themselves. If workers were needed to help on a voter registration drive but they felt like writing poetry, they would write poetry. The freedom high people, most of them middle class, were often subject to an ailment known as "local people-itis" the romanticization of poor Mississippians. This carried the idea with it that local people could do no wrong; that no one, especially someone from outside the community, should initiate any action or assume any form of leadership. (13)

Sellers went one step further, calling members of the opposing faction "philosophers, existentialists, anarchists, floaters and freedom high niggers".(14)

This was a pattern with a familiar historical ring: Faction A, believing that a consolidation of power is necessary to achieve its objectives, labels faction B's actions as an immutable product of the middle class, associates faction B's behaviors (writing poetry, doing their own thing) with this class membership, and thereby impugns faction B's motives and actions. What is distressing from an intellectual perspective is that subsequent historical accounts rely on these same pejorative terms as an accepted beginning point of discussion, with scant attention to the underlying beliefs, values and assumptions of the two factions. The terms "freedom high" and "floater" appear in Carson, Gitlin, Evans, MacAdam, Stoper, King, and virtually every major work on the history of SNCC, with little consideration of the meaning of the terms, or for the affect these terms had on subsequent discussion.

It is easy to understand how scholars could over rely on the structure perspective. The process faction was by definition more internal and less vocal. To intensify the problem, the person most identified with this view, Bob Moses, withdrew from the discussion and later from the country for a period of ten years, first to canada, then Africa. Moses' withdrawal and silence, and the high concentration of whites in the process faction subdued the voices of the group. The process factions was divided almost equally between black and white, while the structure faction was supported by a far greater proportion of blacks. Racial tensions between blacks and whites made whites less likely to promote strong positions, particularly those with "suspect origins", such as intellectual thought. Efforts to discredit the process faction included attacks against northern intellectuals, pointing to a ideological distinction between northerners and southern blacks (although an analysis of the backgrounds of the major participants done by Emily Stoper reveals much less purity along those lines than what was shouted on the floor of meetings). (15) It is from this perspective that I introduce a piece from my personal papers, written in reaction to the "freedom vote" of fall, 1964.

First, some background on the Freedom Vote:

In November of 1964 the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) called for a second freedom vote to challenge the seating of the Mississippi congressional delegation in congress. The action was modelled after the first freedom vote of 1963, a mock election in which blacks (in addition to a handful of whites), selected their own candidates for office, calling attention to the discriminatory practices that kept them from registering to vote. In the summer of 1964 staff and volunteers continued this parallel political process by forming a new party, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

By the end of the summer, staff and volunteers had registered 60,000 members in the MFDP, a sharp contrast to the few thousand that had succeeded in passing the discriminatory voter registration procedures employed by white registrars. MFDP delegates headed to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City to challenge the seating of the regular Mississippi delegation, a group who had openly declared their support of Goldwater. But the MFDP failed in its attempt to gain official recognition at Atlantic City. A political maneuver mandated by Lyndon Johnson and executed by Hubert Humphrey in conjunction with liberals, turned back the tide of emotion that was carrying the MFDP to victory. Johnson feared the seating of a black delegation would cost him the votes of angry southern democrats in the upcoming election. The challenge failed. The event marked the end of the liberal\civil rights alliance and the end of the belief that the democratic process would respond to moral authority and deliver justice. Before Atlantic City civil rights workers still operated under the assumption that if the American people could see injustice, then moral outrage and public opinion would create the necessary pressure on the system and the system would respond. Atlantic City was the end of that dream and the strategies built on the dream.

It was late fall and there were still no new strategies to replace the old dreams. The freedom vote had been a great organizing tool. The MFDP, trying to salvage the momentum of the summer, turned to the freedom vote once more. It was action, it was a plan, and many people felt the need for a plan. The second freedom vote would gather signatures to protest the seating of the Mississippi congressional delegation on the grounds that they were not legitimately elected. For many veterans of the summer it made no sense. What was the point in collecting signatures for a Washington establishment that had rejected the first petition in full view of the entire country? Moreover, as

many civil rights workers became more internal, shunning power politics, the freedom vote represented to them the same kind of political manipulation that they abhorred. I wrote the following piece in fall, 1964, in response to the announcement of a second freedom vote. It evidences the dual concerns of process and leadership development that occupied our thoughts:

> You should be here now to witness the near armed rebellion that is going on in reaction to the new plans for the freedom vote - ten days, mobile units, no requirement of freedom registration for a freedom vote. The FDP has been flying under the banner of principled politics, honesty and a true mandate of the people. The double purpose was supposedly to prove that the people of Mississippi did want to vote and to educate them on how it's done in an accurate way as possible. So here we are railroading them to sign something we have no time to explain, bringing the ballots to their door, telling them how to vote, declaring that the people have spoken, and then running to Washington to fight, representing thousands of people who don't know what's hitting them. This type of thing is the worst possible insult you can give to the Negroes in Mississippi, virtually tricking them into giving you the right to speak for them.
>
> Who's going to spoonfeed them their ballots when they get the right to vote? And considering they are not building the FDP themselves, but are letting a lot of northern whites and blacks build it for them, what do you think it will be like in two years? When will the orders start coming from down to up, instead of being issued by Lawrence Guyot or Aaron Henry? I challenge anyone to pick at random five freedom registration forms and ask these five people what the freedom vote is. What would a really big freedom vote mean to the people anyway? You might as well just forge all the signatures in the office, because if a white man goes up to one of these people and asks them if they signed this, 9 out of 10 are going to deny it. It's not a matter of principle to them yet, and won't be till they start working for it themselves.
> And me - you're selling me out too. you're making me manipulate people, use their names as tools, put Washington above Mississippi and work for something that is beginning to look like any other political group. Okay, so all minorities have gone through this type of stage, from idealistic to manipulative, to selling out their own people. Maybe I shouldn't ask the Negroes to be different. On the other hand, who's got the right to ask me or expect me to bring this about in a spirit of commitment? And all this from the party that acted on principle at Atlantic City, that rejected compromise.
>
> Will the movement ever decide to work through the people instead of for the people? Won't anyone ever recognize they have dignity and treat them accordingly?. (16)

Thirty years later it is difficult for me to confront the self-righteous adolescent who authored this piece, to face the arrogance and impatience that characterized me as a youth. It is also quite easy to see the anti-authority stance that drove people like James Forman crazy. From the perspective of hardliners, this was classic floater talk (even though the position that individuals took on the freedom vote did not necessarily divide along factional lines). What placed me clearly in the process faction was not my position, but rather the way in which I expressed this position. There was more than mutiny in these words.

When I look at myself in 1964 I see someone who felt she was acting in the only responsible way she understood. My refusal to collect signatures for the freedom vote was primarily a reaction to what I saw as my responsibility as an individual, and only secondarily to a belief in my right as an individual to act according to conscience. To dismiss me and those who thought like me as anti-authority and pro-individual freedom is to miss what we were struggling to accomplish. The anti-authority label and pejorative names like floater and freedom high nigger were attempts to discredit us. What we were questioning was not authority, but the nature of legitimate authority.

For us, legitimate authority came from bottom up, not top down. We were trained to listen to the people, to ask questions and help communities come up with answers. But there was another reason we believed in local control that went far beyond the notion of participatory democracy. People's lives were at stake. If they were not to be pawns, they had to be part of the decision making process. What we regarded as respecting the impact that decisions had on people's lives was derided by Forman as "local people-itis, the belief that local people could do no wrong".....In our view, however, we were not romanticizing local people, we were respecting their political will. When Moses went into McComb county to organize voter registration he did it in response to a request by local resident, Amzie Moore. Later, when people were murdered there because of those efforts it was a heavy price, but in as much as it was bearable at all, it was because the community had chosen this strategy with a full understanding of the risks. We were convinced we had no right to ask people to take these kinds of risks unless they had a role in determining these strategies. Strategy was not a game of revolution plotted by people sitting in an office. Strategy was life and death, real people, real risks.

When I think about the factional split, I do not see it as authoritarians vs. anti-authoritarians, nor as hardliners vs. freedom high proponents. I see it as people who believed that structure and discipline were the means to a new order and people who believed that a new order could only be possible if people learned how to do things in new ways, in ways consistent with their underlying beliefs.

For us, one of the clear dangers we faced was creating a political system that would continue a pattern of oppression, substituting blacks as oppressors in place of whites. This was the meaning to us of Camus' victim and executioner. In addition, the specter of "sellouts" was a near obsession. The only way we understood to lessen the probability of corruption by power was to create new ways of working together, new ways to insure that leaders would be accountable to their communities. We believed that legitimate process was the way to real change. Process meant consensus rather than majority rule; it meant decentralized field staff working with the needs of local communities instead of an Atlanta staff defining strategy and determining staffing patterns; it meant developing leadership rather than imposing leadership.

When I look at this conflict now I see several issues. The first issue is how the factional conflict was resolved within our organization. The second is the historical question of what might have been, which faction was more suited to further the vision of the movement? The third is the question of how this conflict played out in the lives of the individuals who lived it.

In thinking about the type of structure most compatible with the goals of the movement, organizational theory offers some insights. (17) From this perspective, hierarchical structure is viewed as an effective structure for organizations with clearly established goals. Structural

organizations operate from the principle of rationality, which says that goals are achieved by examining alternatives and making rational decisions.

Could SNCC have operated effectively as a hierarchical structure? Was there enough agreement on goals and objectives for the organization to succeed through hierarchical operation? The end of nonviolence as an organizing principle was the end of agreement on SNCC's goals and strategies.

Were the beliefs about leadership development espoused by the process faction romantic, or within reach? This topic that has only grown in significance since 1964. For my reply I submit the following comment written by a young black man after participating in a SNCC leadership institute in the fall of 1964:

> That was a great instiut and I learn alot of things that I didn't no...the meaning organize and I often ask myself what do the people mean by use the word organize and I kept searching until I found the answer to that question. And the answer that I found is that you don't go out in a comminuty and tell the people what they want. You go and work with the people and see what they want and then by working with these people and see what they want then you go back and ask yourself now where I go from here and then you began to think now I no what these people want and then by working with these people and see what they want then you go back and ask yourself now where do I go from here...now I got to draw up a program and see that these people get what they want and that is the meaning of organizing...That is your foundation and their program and ever program they want.(18)

And from the personal perspective, what was real, how did the lessons of those years play out in the years that followed? In the introduction to Mary King's book, Freedom Song, Casey Hayden talks about whether love or power was the answer.(18) From that perspective I believe that in the long term, the people who believed in process gained immeasurable strength, if not victory. When the people who fought for power lost that power, they lost everything. The people who internalized new ways of thinking and acting may have lost the struggle within SNCC, but they won a different struggle, the ability to connect with people, to listen, to feel, to acknowledge, to understand. This was the power of love, the power to connect with people from the heart.

I left the south, but the south and everything that happened there has never left me. I have carried what I saw, what I felt, what I understood - with me, in my heart. What I learned in Mississippi became the foundation of my efforts toward creating a more just society. After Mississippi I never again invested all my hopes in an organization because I believed it could move an agenda forward. My political values and my core values became the same, a respect for the integrity of ordinary people and a belief in the ultimate redemptive nature of correct action. I have few illusions about the immediate outcomes of the larger battles, but I think often of what Bob Moses said at the Atlanta staff meeting in February, 1965:

> We never know what is germinating inside another, and how long it will take for something to emerge from within and take form in the world'. (20)