

Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the

FBI File on the
Student Nonviolent
Coordinating Committee
(SNCC)

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Introduction

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was organized in 1960 as a nonviolent civil rights movement devoted to direct-action, voter-registration campaigns for blacks in the Deep South. Comprised mostly of Southern black college students upon its inception, SNCC later attracted both black and white students into its membership, and was one of the major groups, along with the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) and the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), to press for voter rights in the early and mid-1960s. In 1965, SNCC shifted its emphasis from civil and voting rights to the empowerment, both economic and political, that those rights bring. In March 1966, SNCC became one of the first national student groups to come out strongly against the Vietnam War, labeling the black soldiers of the U.S. armed forces fighting there nothing more than "black mercenaries" and encouraging other students to avoid the draft.

The election of Stokely Carmichael as the SNCC national chairman in May 1966 was a major turning point in the group's history. Frustrated by foreign and domestic events, some SNCC members began to believe that the rights for which the committee fought had been merely legislated and not acted upon. Under Carmichael's leadership, as well as subsequent national chairman H. Rap Brown, SNCC pushed aggressively for black political and economic enfranchisement, as well as advocating black supremacy. Carmichael also abandoned the group's early insistence on nonviolence at all times and popularized the slogan, "Black Power," which heightened tension among other black civil rights groups that had built interracial support through nonviolence. Carmichael split openly with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., over the methods to achieve a more just society, stating his challenge plainly to the white establishment: "It's time we stand up and take over. Take over. Move on over or we'll move on over you."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began its surveillance of SNCC shortly after it was organized, claiming that Communists were infiltrating its leadership. As SNCC evolved, according to a 1967 FBI memorandum from "a peaceful civil rights movement.. .to a hate group preaching violence and black supremacy," the investigation centered on racial matters and domestic security rather than communism. * The investigation of SNCC was tied closely to the black nationalist division of the FBI's counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO) against real or potential threats to domestic security. The FBI believed that incendiary statements by Brown and Carmichael were igniting the many urban riots of the time, but could gather no hard evidence. Hence many of the Bureau's activities were not directed toward prosecution of the group, but instead focused on compiling information on the organization that could be used to discredit the movement

This file is comprised of field reports from nineteen different cities, and generally the larger the city, the better the coverage. (The national offices of SNCC were in Atlanta, so that section is the largest.) These reports are organized first by reporting field office, and then by rough chronological order therein. The cities are, in order: Atlanta, Jackson, Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, New York, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Springfield, and Washington. The reports cover the years from 1964 to 1973, with the heaviest concentration of reporting during the years 1967-1969.

Each report is organized roughly as follows: 1) basis for investigation, 2) address of SNCC chapter, 3) characterization and membership, 4) principal officers, 5) activities, 6) results of activities, and 7) appendix. The appendix is noteworthy because it contains brief descriptions of the related organizations (national and local) the FBI thought important or noteworthy, including the Nation of Islam, the Black Panthers, Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., the Young Socialists, the Students for a Democratic Society, the

Revolutionary Action Movement, Committee on Racial Equality, and the W. E. B. DuBois Clubs of America, among many others. Note that no two field offices' reports are exactly alike, so some included newspaper clippings, others (most notably the Chicago reports) included SNCC publications and other "black power"-type pamphlets and transcripts of speeches. The documents reproduced here were drawn from the Washington files of the FBI and have been released under the Freedom of Information Act; certain documents have been deleted by the FBI pursuant to provisions of that legislation. The material has been filmed in the exact order in which it was released. Microfilm targets indicating pages in poor condition have been inserted in the file.

The roll notes that follow this introduction give the originating city of each report and a list, as they appear on the film, of the dates these reports were made. The two exceptions to this are in sections one and two, where an FBI monograph about SNCC and a single report from one field office appear.

Terry Lynch

**FBI File on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
(SNCC)**

Bureau File No. 100-439190 (Domestic Security Investigation)

Section 1 Roll 1,0007-0682

Atlanta Field Reports

20 Mar 1964

28 Sep 1964

28 May 1965

04 Feb 1966

26 Oct 1966

12 Jun 1967

FBI monograph dated 08 Aug 1967 entitled, "Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee." Includes I: Origin, Aims and Purposes; IE: Component of New Left; HI: Membership; IV: Organization; V: Leaders; VI: Activities; VII: Publications; VIII: Finances.

18 Dec 1967

14 May 1968

24 Jun 1968

26 Nov 1968

10 Mar 1969

01 Aug 1969

Section 2 Roll 1,0683-0705

Jackson, Mississippi, Field Report y

07 Oct 1968

Concerns the Black Student Conference, Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, MI, 12-14 Apr 1968

Section 3 Roll 1,0706-0795

Baltimore Field Reports

23 Feb 1968

24 May 1968

28 Aug 1968

29 Nov 1968

28 Apr 1969

Section 4 Roll 1,0796-0867

Boston Field Reports

08 Dec 1967

14 Mar 1968

22 Jul 1968

25 Oct 1968

Section 5 Roll 1,0868-0922

Buffalo Field Reports

26 Jan 1968

27 Jun 1968

27 Sep 1968

10 Feb 1969

Section 6 **Roll 1,0923-1180**

Chicago Field Reports

06 Dec 1967
19 Apr 1968
23 Jul 1968
27 Dec 1968
18 Feb 1972

Section 7 **Roll 1,1181-1398**

Cincinnati Field Reports

08 Jan 1968
17 Jan 1968
18 Jun 1968
03 Oct 1968
08 Apr 1969
27 Jun 1969
09 Oct 1969
14 Jan 1970
04 Jun 1970

Section 8 **Roll 1,1399-END Roll 1**

Cleveland Field Reports

25 Oct 1965
11 May 1966
07 Dec 1966
15 Jun 1967
26 Dec 1967

Section 9 **Roll 2,0007-0144**

Dallas Field Reports

29 Feb 1968
10 May 1968
23 Aug 1968
27 Nov 1968
06 Nov 1969

Section 10 **Roll 2,0145-0272**

Detroit Field Reports

05 Jan 1968
30 Apr 1968
31 Jul 1968
31 Oct 1968
31 Jan 1969

Section 11 **Roll 2,0273-0449**

Houston Field Reports

30 Nov 1967
28 Feb 1968
29 May 1968
27 Aug 1968
22 Nov 1968

Section 12 **Roll 2,0450-0480**

Indianapolis Field Reports

28 Feb 1968

31 Jul 1968

21 Jan 1969

Section 13 **Roll 2,0481-0930**

Los Angeles Field Reports

16 Mar 1965

24 Sep 1965

07 Apr 1966

07 Oct 1966

07 Apr 1967

06 Oct 1967

29 May 1968

18 Sep 1968

19 Sep 1968

18 Dec 1968

15 Apr 1969

25 Feb 1969

14 Jul 1969

26 Nov 1969

Section 14 **Roll 2,0931-1301**

New York Field Reports

04 Jan 1968

16 Oct 1969

21 Jan 1970

25 May 1970

10 May 1971

11 Aug 1971

18 Nov 1971

11 Dec 1973

Section 15 **Roll 2,1302-1356**

Portland, Oregon, Field Reports

29 Nov 1963

07 Feb 1964

10 Sep 1964

23 Mar 1965

20 Sep 1965

18 Mar 1966

Section 16 **Roll 2,1357-1454**

San Francisco Field Reports

31 Oct 1967

18 Dec 1967

11 Apr 1968

Section 17 **Roll 2,1455-1477**

Seattle Field Reports

29 Feb 1968

30 Sep 1968

Section 18 **Roll 2,1478-1496**

Springfield, Illinois, Field Report

05 Mar 1969

Section 19 **Roll 2,1497-END**

Washington Field Reports

31 Dec 1964

25 Mar 1966

24 Mar 1967

09 Oct 1967

18 Nov 1968

11 Oct 1966