

Miller and Liddell

This summer's San Francisco Summer Program completed its fourth Saturday session last Saturday, August first. Mike Miller, a veteran of the Civil Rights Movement, Cesar Chavez's fight and a leader against gentrification in the Mission district during the Seventies and Eighties, was the morning's guest speaker. He led an activity and discussion around the debate within SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) over whether to pursue direct action or voter registration in the black belt counties of the Deep South from 1961-62.

Hoover Liddell was the speaker after lunch. Liddell is a longtime SFUSD employee, having worked for the last three superintendents, often in the capacity as liaison to the Consent Decree monitor, Stuart Biegel. His current title is consultant to the Superintendent. He shared his report, *Race and the SF Schools* (presented to the SF School Board on May 5, 2009), with us in the afternoon and responded to questions and comments.

The topic of the day was "The Struggle over Strategy and Tactics." Mike argued that "a strategy answers the question, 'What is our overall plan for getting from where we are (the world as it is) to the world as we'd like it to be (our goal/s and purpose/s [and tactics are the] specific objectives we adopt to move us toward our goal/s and purpose/s)?"

In 1961-62, SNCC debated whether to pursue direct action (e.g., sit-ins, freedom rides) or voter registration as the strategy to end segregation in Mississippi and Alabama, and thereby, take a step to ending racism and the climate of fear preventing African Americans from pursuing a free and dignified life.

Direct action involved defining a target (e.g., lunch counter, pool, library), developing a tactic (e.g., picket line, sit-in, fill-the-jails, wade-in, coin-in, or blockade that would dramatize the injustice and get the rest of the community to participate in the escalation of action such as a silent march or boycott), recruiting and training a small and dedicated band of people to implement the action.

Voter registration involved using the skills of community organizing—one on one, door-to-door listening campaign in which the organizers discover what issues would motivate people to risk their lives, their jobs, their homes and their families in order to register to vote. For example, parents wanted a school bus so their children didn't have to walk to school; a new school in which there would be heat in the winter and no holes in the roof when it rained. The organizer would then connect the issue to voting as a solution, i.e., elect a school board representative who would vote for a new bus and revamped school.

SNCC students were divided over which strategy to pursue. Mike explained that in determining one's strategy, it is crucial to consider what the capacity and resources of the organization are in relation to understanding the world you are trying to change, "to develop an effective strategy, one has to combine one's understanding of the world out there with what you are able to bring to bear upon it."

"The World Out There:"

- Direct action provoked violent responses from southern racists.
- Direct action created international news, especially on television.
- The U.S. government was very concerned about how the US looked in the Cold War world when it said it was for democracy yet there was systematic discrimination and violence against African Americans being broadcast by international news media.

- The Freedom Rides of 1961 generated enough public pressure on the Kennedy administration to force it to enforce the court rulings and regulations against segregation in inter-state travel.
- Direct action appealed to young African-American students, both in college and high school.
- The US Supreme Court was regularly ruling against discrimination, but its rulings were not being obeyed in the South, and the Federal Government was doing little to enforce them.
- Voter registration was supported by local Black leaders with whom SNCC organizers were discussing SNCC's program in the South.
- "Local people" (Black adults living in southern communities) did not participate in direct action because of the fear of violence against them, firing, eviction and other sanctions.
- The Justice Department promised to support SNCC if it engaged in a voter registration campaign.
- Southern racist Democrats in Congress (both the House of Representatives and Senate) were a powerful bloc opposing desegregation, voting rights and most progressive legislation.

#### SNCC's capacity 1960-61

SNCC is composed of college students who were representatives of black college campus-based organizations. These young people found direct action particularly attractive because of the moral clarity it brought with the experience (didn't have to argue with an older person who was afraid of participating; students not worried about what came next, about losing a house, or a family or a job).

#### SNCC's capacity shifts in 1961-62

Approximately 20 or so students drop out of school to become full time organizers, called field secretaries (e.g., Bob Moses, Charles Sherrod, Charles McClaurin, Hollis Watkins). These organizers start talking to local leaders such as Amzie Moore, Aaron Henry and Herbert Lee, leaders who have been organizing in their towns since returning from fighting in World War II. These leaders tell the SNCC organizers that they want to have a voter registration drive and that black Mississippians will not participate or respond to direct action.

The debate within SNCC over strategy is between these two groups – college based students versus the new full time organizers. Ella Baker ends dispute by suggesting that SNCC do both. Two wings of SNCC are created. The Direct Action Faction and those who begin to create voter leagues through community organizing.

In 1963, SNCC begins to transform from a volunteer organization to developing structures (fund raising support, research, and media structures) to support full time community organizing in the deep south.

This led, eventually, to the creation of the Mississippi Summer Project in 1964, whose successful strategy (creating an alternative state political party) broke the back of segregation in Mississippi. [the details of this story and its aftermath will be the topic of this coming Saturday's morning session].

### **AFTERNOON WITH HOOVER LIDELL**

In the afternoon session, Hoover Liddell gave his report, the highlight of which can be found on page one:

Of the African American students who entered the ninth grade in 2003 in a San Francisco high school, only 31.8 percent received a SF high school diploma four years later in 2007. The percent of Latino students was 43.2 percent and the district performance was 62.8 percent.

Black and Latino students represent 75 percent of the students suspended, 80 percent of the students in the juvenile justice system, 54 percent of students in Special Education, 68 percent of truant students, and 75 percent of the students enrolled in the lowest performing elementary schools.

In contrast they represent 8 percent of the students enrolled in the highest performing elementary schools, 9 percent of students taking Advance Placement examinations, 10 percent of students attending Lowell High School, and 13 percent of students in the Gifted program.

Hoover Liddell argued that these statistics are evidence of ongoing racism within our schools, and in our society of which schools are an inextricable part. His point was that “all students deserve a first class education” or a “high quality education” or a “21<sup>st</sup> century education.” The problem, he argued is that there are teachers who do not expect all of their students to learn at high levels. There are schools in the district that do not offer all students “rigorous coursework” such as honors or Advanced Placement curricula. Students, themselves, are not ready to learn. To illustrate what he meant by this, Liddell compared his experiences as a teacher in Nigeria with those in SFUSD. When he walked into the classroom in Nigeria, all the students stood up and were so quiet and attentive you could hear a pin drop. Liddell argued that teachers could demand that of students in SFUSD since he knew of a physical education teacher who was able to demand silence before instruction began.

### **FOR WEDNESDAY NIGHT, August 5, 2009**

Last Saturday, we didn't have time to get to discussion of strategy and tactics. IF we had, and we used the lessons from the morning, we might have set up the problem in the following manner:

#### **THE WORLD “OUT THERE:”**

- Schools are structured to sort and socialize, not educate
- The number of people in need of work exceeds the total number of job openings (in 1996 by a factor of 5 to one – it has only been getting worse)
- only 20 percent of jobs in the U.S. require a college degree and are well paying.
- U.S. has changed from an industrial economy to a service economy in the last 20 years, which has been accompanied by a shrinking of the middle class (resulting in an unprecedented polarization of wealth).
- prisons have been a major source of labor for multi national corporations (e.g., Toyota, Dell) who pay the workers anywhere from 29 cents to \$3.00 an hour.
- The top CEO's decided in 1989 to replace the old tracking system (middle class kids to college and working class to vocational ed) with “high standards for all” – everyone goes to college. The result has been a new tracking system – college prep and prison prep—as the number of pushouts has dramatically increased with the implementation of a state high school exit exam and a scripted curriculum for “low-performing” schools. California adopted high stakes testing in 1999.
- Standardized tests reflect 19<sup>th</sup> century assumptions about what learning and intelligence are.
- Education reform efforts are led by nonprofits (government and corporate funded) and corporate foundations.

- The SFUSD superintendent has committed to closing the achievement gap through the Balanced Scorecard, getting principals to build community and trusting relationships among the parents and teachers in their schools.
- In San Francisco, SF NAACP attempted to integrate SF schools through a legal challenge resulting in the Consent Decree – 1983-2005 (schools are more segregated now than ever before).
- SFOP and a few teachers attempted to persuade the school district to adopt a small school policy – June Jordan School for Equity was the only concrete result of that effort.
- Coleman Advocates has led a consortium of nonprofits to “end the achievement gap” in SF by getting the School Board to adopt an A-G policy, in which every SFUSD student must pass a college preparatory track curriculum to graduate from high school (to be in place with the class of 2014)
- The CA state budget is in shambles – the governor is planning to cut \$1.3 billion to this year’s school budget and another \$4 billion for the next school year. This will necessarily result in larger class sizes and the laying off of many teachers in every school district.
- We are at the beginning of a Great Recession that is predicted to last at least 10 years.

Coleman’s capacity?

POWER’s capacity?

SFOP not part of A-G consortium

NAACP hamstrung by a series of court decisions denying the constitutional right to consider race or ethnicity in admissions.

**In 2001, 112,469** students in California completed the A-G required courses (21 percent Latino, 5 percent black, 50 percent white and 23 percent Asian.

**In 2008, 127,594** students in California completed the A-G required courses (22 percent Latino, 5 percent black, 34 percent white, 32 percent Asian)

2001 -2002 (rounded numbers) **percentages of total**

	18-20 yrs old	HS grad	A-G grads	UC enrolled freshman
Blacks	7	7	5	3
Latinos	44	33	22	17
Whites	37	45	50	39
Asian	12	15	23	41
total	100	100	100	100

**Freshman Admittance to UC system in 2008**

<b>total</b>	black	Latino	Asian	white
<b>80,029</b>	4,153	17,779	25,272	27,325

Number of CA residents admitted and enrolled in 2008 freshman fall semester

	Fall admits	Fall enrollees	Admit rate	Enrollment rate
2008	69,251	34,481	86.5	49.8

Percentage of those CA residents enrolled who applied for fall of 2008 semester

	black	Latino	Asian	white
2008	49	46	60	43

2008 transfers to UC from CA Community Colleges

	Full-year applicants	Full-year admits	Full-year enrollees	Admit rate	Enrollment rate
Total	21,167	17,635	13,025	83.3	73.9
African American	<b>867</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>440</b>	73.4	69.2
Chicano/Latino	<b>3,853</b>	<b>3,180</b>	<b>2,217</b>	82.5	69.7
Asian-Filip-Pac Is	<b>5,749</b>	<b>4,912</b>	<b>3,772</b>	85.4	76.8
White	<b>8,537</b>	<b>7,102</b>	<b>5,275</b>	83.2	74.3

CSU New Students systemwide (unduplicated)

	Applications	Admitted	Enrolled
Fall 2008	313,678	214,591	121,879
Fall 2001	233,735	167,914	108,372

**2007 First year/ full time degree seeking freshmen in CSU system**

3,673 -- black  
 13,753 -- latino  
 9,293 -- asian  
18,211 -- white  
 44,930 TOTAL

**2007 total full time enrolled 357,746**

**2007 total enrollment 433,017**

**2001 total full time enrolled 302,904**

**2001 total enrollment 388,605**

**SFUSD 2007-8**

**TOTAL GRADUATES 3,905**

	# of grads	Grads w/ UC CSU required courses
asian	2,385	1,470 (67%)
hispanic	634	211 (33.3 %)
black	329	85 (25.8 %)
white	389	226 (58.1 %)

**What will happen if we actually do succeed in graduating everyone from SFUSD with qualifications to apply to a UC/CSU college?**

**What kind of support services need to be in place to ensure that every student succeeds in learning Algebra II, passing four years of “college preparatory English” and can pass an Advanced Placement course?**

**How will those services be paid for?**

**Where will the political will come from to ensure that policy is translated into practice?**