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SNCC: The New Abolitionists (Radical 60s)

Howard Zinn

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Howard Zinn : SNCC: The New Abolitionists (Radical 60s) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised SNCC: The New Abolitionists (Radical 60s):

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Anatomy of a RevolutionBy Alan MillsFollowing the out break of

sit-ins across the upper south, originated by and participated in largely by Black college students, the students founded the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, in an attempt to bring some order to these spontaneous direct actions. In 1960, a group of these students decided to bring democracy to Mississippi and other deep south states. Zinn was with them, and (being a historian, after all) wrote down what he saw. As Zinn admits, this is not a history. It is closer akin to contemporaneous journalism. What Zinn does is dramatize just how far from democracy and the rule of law Mississippi was in the early 60's (at least for Black people--but it is hard to believe that this form of autocratic government didn't spill over into the "White" government as well. The Federal Constitution did not apply. State law did not apply. A student standing on the steps of the federal building (of all places) is arrested, beaten to unconsciousness, and sent to hard labor at the notorious Parchman Farm. All for simply watching a line of black citizens attempt to register to vote. All this while the FBI stands by, and does nothing but take notes. Looking back from the perspective of 40 years on, we tend to glamorize the civil rights movement--the Supreme Court decided *Brown*, Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of the bus, King gave a speech about his dream, and then Congress solved the problem by passing the Civil Rights Law. What Zinn makes clear is that while all of this was happening on the national level, the real battle was taking place person by person in the deep south. The heroes were not limited to Dr. King and Rosa Parks, but included hundreds of young people (the members of SNCC) who turned their backs on middle class educations, and literally put their bodies on the line (and all too often in the hospital) to force the power structure in the South to recognize the rule of law. The courage and creativity of these young men and women comes through dramatically in Zinn's account--it is inspiring, and terrifying at the same time. Terrifying just how close to tyranny this country was in the early 60's. Inspiring to know that young people had the courage, intelligence, determination, and focus needed to battle that tyranny under the most oppressive conditions this country has known since the civil war. Remember, the horror of Emmitt Till was only a few years in the past when these men and women decided to openly challenge the existing power structure. And best of all, they won. Read the book.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. It is simple: this is a great and insightful book! By Cole Howard did us proud. Anyone who wants to better understand the young people who fought in the southern struggle, should read this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you can't get the original this is a great substitute. By John W Hardy This is the updated version of Zinn's original book. And though some what more concise it still is impacting. If you can't get the original this is a great substitute.

Howard Zinn tells the story of one of the most important political groups in American history. SNCC: The New Abolitionists influenced a generation of activists struggling for civil rights and seeking to learn from the successes and failures of those who built the fantastically influential Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. It is considered an indispensable study of the organization, of the 1960s, and of the process of social change. Includes a new introduction by the author.

"Seminal"—Washington Post “A good way to maintain your sense of the urgency of civil rights problems is to keep a copy of Howard Zinn’s book handy.”—Harvard Crimson