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It is ironic that within SNICK, we find as much difficulty (if not more so because SNICK is so much more personal) in freeing ourselves from control as we do in the mainstream of American culture. Most of us are expected to be responsible to SNICK's administration, which sets the boundaries of our work. We have never as a group set the boundaries of our work. We have been too busy deciding how to decide.

The sad thing about organizations is the fact that inherent in them is the fact that they have to be run. If they didn't have to be run, they wouldn't be organizations, they'd be something else.

On the field, we're part of a movement. What's meant by the civil rights movement is the effort to acquire basic civil rights for Negroes, and the dealing with the denial of these rights. The freedom movement means that too, but also implies something vaguer, the implications of which are rarely explored. Anyway, under this general umbrella, a lot of people have room to do things that the institutions that make up the framework of the "American way of life" usually do not allow.

When we get together as staff, we get together as some of the movement people who make up the organization SNICK. Everybody at staff meetings by virtue of the fact that he or she is there, recognizes the fact that SNICK the organization exists. Nobody on staff that I know claims that we are the entire and only movement.

Our problem at staff meetings is that we try and get the staff to talk about the organization SNICK, which only a few people can talk about -- namely those who run the organization. What the staff can talk about is the things they are doing within the movement they are working with. Talk about the organization should be focused on how the organization can best aid this work without imposing on what the work is, or could be. This talk should be in terms of individual people as well as of projects and things.

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Because SNICK is an organization, it is run. As long as it is an organization, it will continue to be run in some kind of way. There are people who apparently feel threatened and concerned about this, and perhaps a couple of questions that need to be raised are: Who feels threatened? What are the roots of these feelings?

To believe (or to accept the fact that SNICK is an organization, some people have suggested is like a sellout, giving in to the doctrines imposed by society on us. A society whose impositions we are fighting. The concern is legitimate I feel, for another fact about organizations is that they impose on the freedoms of those who operate within them.

We should understand then, that the organization SNICK means incompleteness in terms of freedom (read in personal freedom). Because, another characteristic of organizations, is that they function within

defined boundaries called "organizational needs" that tend to be defined by those who run the organization. More questions for SNICK: Who defines the boundaries? How? Maybe the central question we have to deal with is whether or not the specific kinds of work that we do can define the boundaries of our organization.

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Our work as we project it takes place in the rural communities of the black belt south. We've learned to love these communities because the people we work with make personal judgements about what we are rather than what we are labelled. As well as relating to what we do. Generally, we are honest in what we say and do in our work. Generally again, the people we work with are not bogged down with a lot of extraneous and irrelevant factors, LIKE IN THE CITIES WHICH WE HAVEN'T LEARNED TO WORK EFFECTIVELY. There is time, and the kind of climate to make our work more than a mechanically done job. Our work is a kind of living that isn't allowed within the structure of mainstream society.

I am certain that there is a great deal of work that people could and would do if given a chance. I am not sure about exactly what it is that prevents people from doing work that they feel is necessary. But doing work that you want to, implies living the way you want to, which really means not being under control.

The questions about the "floaters" are usually raised

within the context of "work" and "production." What is meant by this, is a misuse of resources (like paychecks) of the organization. People "float", and "don't do things", which means the programs don't get done.

A question we have to deal with, is whether there is enough room in SNICK for people to do all the kinds of work they conceive of as necessary. We might find, that like the mainstream society (it is important to understand that we are not completely outside of society and its impositions -- more like on the periphery), we have to move in and out of SNICK. Like Worth Long, who goes off to be a poet when he feels he has to, yet still can be counted on to grab hold of some SNICK things and "work" within whatever boundaries these things have.

Right now, our work is supplemented by the material resources that we depend on getting outside of the southern rural communities. Some of the SNICK staff deals with what they conceive of as necessary to get these resources. What has to be done to get the resources we have taught ourselves to need, is outside of the daily work in the black belt communities. A lot of the running of the organization is involved in getting the resources "out to the field". If our work is determined by the resources we get, then running the organization also implies defining the work.

A question we might consider is whether the staff of SNICK is the only true resource we have. The rest (cars and things) are really just supplementary to

the work. All of that to say, can we organize the way we want to without the northern white money? With a different kind of fund raising base? It's never much talked about.

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The SNICK type (read in ideal SNICK man) we project, is the "rugged, ragged" battle-scarred black intellectual. Like Stokley and Ivanhoe. Internally as well as externally we project this image. Which is at least partly why the Howard kids were battled for at Oxford orientation last summer. This SNICK prototype is the standard by which production is gauged. Like everybody can't run the country, everybody can't be like Ivanhoe and Stokley. Everybody just aspires to be like them. We should talk about that, cause it raises a question about what we are doing.

Who goes off to do work? Who goes off to do personal freedom? Who goes off to do irresponsibility? These are questions that need to be talked about within the context of the fact that we as a group have never defined our working boundaries and priorities.

The "strong people" who tend to fit the "rugged ragged" black SNICK worker image are the ones who go off to do work. Like Ivanhoe, Stokley, Cleve, Forman -- essentially those who were at the SNICK/SCIC meetings in Atlanta.

The "freedom highs" are essentially white intellectuals, hung up in various ways. Maybe these whites are trying to break free of the

need to be like the strong people (which they can't ever be like cause they're not black) and their role as supplements to the work of the "strong people". It sort of ties into the white-black question (which has simply taken another shape) and the need to have a black run and controlled organization. Some of the "freedom highs" have done "good work" in the past (like Casey and Mary King) supplementing the work of the "strong people".

The people who go off to do "irresponsibility" tend to be the local southern black staff. Maybe frustrated in their attempts to be "strong people". They aren't qualified to be "strong people" you see (except in some instances, like Guyot). They are mostly like Lafayette.

In mainstream society, when locked out of moving up, the tendency is to grab at (read in take/steal) the things that symbolize moving up. Or move close to (read in become puppets) the governing administration. Sometimes the things that symbolize what governs them are smashed (like in ghetto riots).

What happens to the people in SNICK who aspire to our "rugged ragged" image, and can't make it? They become "happy and satisfied" or go out and do "irresponsibility" if they don't want to be pawns.

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I want to expand now on an earlier statement that organizations inherently have to impose on, and limit personal freedom. In my own mind, there are essentially two kinds of freedom: (1) with people, (2) without people. The easiest to achieve is without people. All you have to do is remove yourself from people (like go off to a mountain top). There you

don't have to worry about what you do causing hurt or pain to other people. You have no responsibilities to other people cause there are no other people. Complete personal freedom is yours. None of us in SNICK do that. We stay in SNICK. There's other people in SNICK. We want freedom with other people. Specifically we want it now, with SNICK people.

Society or something has us all trapped. That means to me, complete personal freedom with other people cannot exist. That means we have responsibilities to other people. That is partly why the organization exists -- we are not free, none of us.

I don't think anybody can trace all of the ways society has us boxed in. Suffice to say that it makes the actions of other people (actions that we cannot control) a threat to us. This puts us into conflict with other people. The specifics of our individual freedoms are shaped by the impositions of the society and our individual willingness to fight them. Responsibility lies in the area between your willingness to fight, and the other guy's willingness to fight. What is in that space between also is the different ways to fighting (from kicking in a door, to kicking in society).

To live without constant conflict implies some sacrifice of personal freedom, and some conscious feeling of responsibility to other people as well as to yourself. You are not free if other people are not free. Organizations exist because people are not free. Like SNICK.

We assume then, when we become a part of SNICK, a responsibility to the many people operating within the organizational framework. We are conscious

of the needs of other people, even when they conflict with what we believe.

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People generally feel that they have personal property. As long as people feel that way, there is such a thing as stealing.

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I want to sketch out about "the revolution" -- any revolution really. What it is, is the energy of people released and put to work in interests that they define and consider important. What is implied then, in making "the revolution" is the dealing with the factors that stifle and block the energy of people from being put into use. A question then: What prevents people from defining and doing? How?

People have been taught that they don't know -- aren't "qualified" to know. Because to know, means to know how to run things. This thrusts up the fact that to know how to run things, means to have a chance to build things. Which again, most people are taught that they aren't qualified to do.

Now we say, that one of the central problems in this country is the fact that people have no say in what governs their lives. They can't run their own lives. If people did that, the country would run differently. Here again the problem of qualification comes to the fore. People have been taught that they are not "qualified" to determine whether or not the country should run differently. People living the way that they want to, threatens those few ("qualified") people who run people the way they want to. And everybody knows threats must be controlled.

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Now about SNICK's revolution:

I think that we are revolutionary in this sense. SNICK is ours. In that we built and are building it. We shape and are defining it. We USE it to do a work that we have decided is important. We use it in reality, to live a life that is ours, while doing a work that is ours. In effect, running counter to the "qualifications" and "responsibilities" laid out for us by the mainstream society.

We have experienced at many levels the focus that our work, and our way of living has turned on us. There are probably two major reasons:

- 1) Running counter to, and through society means that we must rub against much of the rigidity of society. Which at the least is irritating in terms of the friction created (agitation); and at best, wears a hole at some point in the structure reform).
- 2) People see in our motions, a freedom from control for which they are afraid to risk the security of their (rather stagnant and bogged down) living patterns. These people are trapped and tied down with "responsibilities" but support us at different levels til threatened by our "irresponsibility."

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In the eyes of the country, much of what we do, and the way we live, is not practical in terms of being sustained and extended. We have been able to work our work because the country tends to define us within its own terms. Therefore, we are young, and without responsibilities, and can

do what we do.

The country (or at least those who run the country) are staring to feel threatened by our beginning experimentations, with forms of work and living that we can control and have say about. SNICK was not suppose to last -- "just kids". We have sustained and extended our "irresponsible" way of living. We shrugged off definitions and labels, and got on with our work. Which is a revolution. For people have to live for their work, which they define, which is their life. Which they generally never get a chance to do,

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I've started reading Camus, and feel compelled to mention a little about individual rebellion.

We say very generally, that we are rebelling against what the society is (what society imposes on us). Often within this context the question is raised, What kind of society do we want? If we are trapped (enslaved) in various ways, can we conceive of a whole new society in terms of its specific form and/or structure? My tendency is to say no. We must fight then against the slavery that we see most clearly and immediately.

We see most clearly and immediately, our own enslavement. Our personal fight is for what we see in ourselves that is worth retaining, but being infringed on or enslaved to the point of intolerance (or rebellion). Which is how the sit-ins got started. What we want to retain in ourselves, is maybe common to all men (in the sit-ins, a lot of us found a common tie with each other).

The very act of rebellion tends to expose a common ground for all men to other people. Which could lead to revolution by other people -- like SNICK.

(12)

It seems clear to me that we hook up to (at least in our thinking) the growing challenges around the country directed against the decision-making process that governs most peoples' lives. We need to deal with the implications of these hook-ups. Implications like:

- 1) What it means to our fund raising base in terms of a lot of people we get money from being challenged by a force that has been stimulated into action by our activities and talk.
- 2) Can we organize the way we want to without the big money?
- 3) The young people with the most immediate energy to give, moving away from our northern offices because of the limitations in terms of what they can do.
- 4) A potential alienation from our northern student base if we cannot move with them in their actions around the questions they are raising about their life and living in this country.
- 5) A general crackdown on racial student activity. What will it take to survive it?

The new context within which we are beginning to move organizationally, is that students around the country are increasingly relating questions and issues that we raise in our work, to their own situations, questions and issues. What inevitably has to happen is that they are going to want to act in their own communities. At this point

they feel tied-in to us. Assuming that we want to maintain this connection, how do we relate to it? And if our emphasis is in the South, not control their actions.

(13)

I have a motto now:

Not that there ain't
nothin' to do
But
nothin' to do
that gets done
in a hurry

by
charlie cobb