INTRODUCTION: SEMI-INTROSPECTIVE   (Name withheld by request)

Before I decided to write this paper and a week before the last SNCC meeting, I was considerably depressed. I was distrubed at SNCC's operation, the way things were going in general, the lack of knowledge on anyone's part of where SNCC was going, talks of expansion when present committments are almost totally unfulfilled, waste, the way in which personality "hang-ups" were beginning to seriously hamper SNCC's operation and a number of personal problems. I wasn't too aware of the fact that many others were similarly depressed until I heard of the abortive attempt that was made to get something out of the last staff meeting.

I went to Atlanta after the last staff meeting was over, sat for a couple of hours with a committee that was attempting to arrange for another meeting. I read questions that had been drawn up for persons on staff to write position papers around. I heard talk about planning a more meaningful, serious, staff meeting, in a better environment and under conditions that would be conducive to causing ALL the staff to participate in the meeting.

I left Atlanta after a few hours because I had business elsewhere. I had decided I would not write any position paper on any of the questions because I didn't think the questions got at the heart of the problem and very few people would write papers anyway and those that did would be the same ones who talk in the meetings.

After some of the position papers came in the mail and because in my thinking: organizationally speaking, things are getting worse and will continue to do unless some basic changes are made I wrote these few pages in hope that a few people might read them and get a wind of what I feel is wrong and why this particular staff meeting is taking place.

Before I begin to write this paper, let me say that at first, I was reluctant to write this paper--I started to take the easy way out and simply quit working and let someone else do it. I was really not willing to state out loud for SNCC staff consumption my misgivings about SNCC's operations.

The horrible part about having to write this paper and being aware of changes in my thinking and feeling about the South and civil rights is that in the back of my mind are all the taunts of the older generation and all the generations before me. Part of the reason I didn't quit is an unwillingness to join the waves of disillusioned humanists of the past.

Nevertheless, with each day the problems get more and more complex, my consciousness of the tentative solutions I propose as inadequate more and more acute, my state of mind, my emotions, more harried, my nerves more frayed. I have begun to split up. I keep on doing the same things I began to, only the emotion that backs them is no longer enthusiasm, but endurance, and endurance is a type of schizoid thing, it consists of watching yourself, wondering how long you can keep on functioning. I have developed an inner life in conflict with my outer one, and am therefore isolated from simple channels of communications with others.

Even when I know others around me are going through some of the same changes, I do not talk about it in an honest way. There is still too much outward loyalty for me to talk about doubts, except at times when things are the most difficult, and then only to perhaps one other person, and in the strictest of confidence.

If I leave, I leave with no grand tirade against what I have been working for, no lashing out at what I no longer believe is impossible to effect, but with a feeling of personal inadequacy to keep on fighting.

Why should it be that way? I must have put a lot of my personal feelings and beliefs at stake to feel so personally defeated. Probably part of the reason that I keep on going is because the alternatives are so grim.

No matter how little is being accomplished in respect to how much is necessary, it soon becomes clear the holocaust that will ensue if everyone gives up. The re-education that is necessary for even the Negro community to evolve the type of society I'm interested in I now believe is impossible, and yet changes will continue at an alarming rate, no matter if I'm around or not. And aside from the fate of the movement or of the Negro in the South or any of that, there's my own fate to think about. When I turn my back on an unpleasant situation with unpleasant perspectives, does this mean I have given up a life populated with anything else but myself?

No, the alternative is not necessarily Scarsdale, but then, what is it? Does leaving the South or SNCC mean leaving behind idealism, which has been taught to me as synonymous with leaving my youth? What will I have conceded when I leave, and can I afford that concession?

How does a life centered around oneself look, or a life centered around the cultivation of the arts, or of pleasure, or of the mind? I am still too much caught up in my old feelings about the world for any of these to look fulfilling. They at times look attractive but not fulfilling. And I keep on!

The distance between me and the others increases. The new people are naive. I need them, as long as I continue to do my job, but I cannot really be honest with them as people. I wait for them to learn what I know, and then I still don't talk to them. The ones who were here before me and don't see or those who will never see or those who are here for other reasons than me annoy me, irritate me, but I say nothing to them either. I keep on doing my job, and then this becomes destructive in itself. I stop thinking in terms of the whole movement and concentrate on Mississippi and at times only on the Jackson office. I become petty and chauvinistic about my particular work, unable to get along with epople in other fields, and slightly inhuman in my own field. The abstract Ideal does not generate the warmth and love necessary for the organizationally minded to love the people with whom he works. I have stopped thinking of the abstract—I am just going on . . .

I

WHAT IT AIN'T

People can talk about who makes decisions, affiliations, the black-white problem, who should be on staff, who should not be on staff, what is the hiring policy, who places people in positions, all they want. We can even make decisions in regard to these items and if this is all we do, the meeting will again be unsuccessful, full of arguing and clamoring but accomplishing actually nothing.

For example, let's assume it is decided that the entire staff makes all decisions, we limit whites to 10% of the staff (this is known as a reversal of social order), we hire people only after they have been with the movement one year and have been shot at twice, and FOS groups become just like projects. Or if these decisions don't strike your fancy, assume then that we decide that only a select group will make the decisions and we take all the whites on staff that want on, in addition to hiring people whenever we have money to do so and FOS groups have to remain "inactive." It really doesn't matter what you assume we decide but simply tell yourself we do decide on these matters which SEEM to have generated all the discussion in the past. And let's assume after reaching these decisions we all go back to our projects perfectly happy and ready to carry out our duties. In one day after getting back home we would be full of all the frustrations and hostilities that have plagued us in the past. And why? Simply because we did not deal with what's wrong. We should not be fooled into thinking that by eliminating the symptoms we have eliminated the disease.

We should not fool ourselves into feeling that if we eliminate the symptoms we can forget about the disease.

More specifically, there has been much discussion about who makes decisions. But this has nothing do do with the basic problem in regard to decision-making (and quite often the lack of it). Since about April there have been some pretty haphazard decisions made for SNCC. And the reason haphazard decisions are made goes much further than who makes the decision. It goes to the type of orientation the people have who are making the decisions and where those people think SNCC is going or should go. To provide an example: There are those who feel the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan was a bad decision. But people who feel that way get nowhere when they attack this decision by questioning who made it. Because despite the fact that it was made by one man (Truman) or a small group of men (Truman's advisors) the same decision would have been made, if the country at large was asked to vote on it. Consequently, in order to attack or criticize that decision meaningfully, one has to criticize what was done or proposed and not who did it. And such is the case with SNCC: it is admirable to talk of democracy and giving the staff full participation but at the moment this is not what needs full attention. We—whether "we" is one man or 210 staff members—must refrain from making haphazard and bad decisions as much as possible. We do this by All deciding exactly

where we want to go and how we want to go there. Then the one man or
small group decisions become irrelevant because they don't interfere
with our goal or our means and have to be made in the context or within
the guidelines that we all agree upon. If we as staff people are not
willing to sit down and decide what we as an organization are working
for and describe the way we want to accomplish what we are working for,
we cannot even think of criticizing people who are making decisions for
us. Because (in all fairness to those who have been guilty of making
decisions for all the staff without consulting the staff on decisions
that were by their nature staff decisions) people have not been making
decisions as dictators but because decisions had to be made and there
was no decision-making body--despite what might be said to the contrary,
the staff has never been willing to make decisions (it must be remembered
that to make a decision without providing for or thinking about any means
for implementing it, is in effect not making that decision).

The black-white problem is stated many ways. The most common one
is that "they" could take over much more unless "they" replaced John,
Jim and Bob. If we assign a quota on whites, or even eliminate "them"
entirely, what will we prove? We might kick "them" out of SNCC, but
we cannot kick them out of the movement. Because the movement is more
than SNCC. It happens to be also the work done by CORE, the National
Council, the National Sharecroppers Fund, NAACP, everyone and every
organization who is trying to promote civil rights and liberties for
Negroes or work towards improving the Negro's general condition. Most
young whites who want to do this in the South prefer to do this as
"Snickers" not because they want to take over but because it SEEMS to
be a more idealistic group. But they can and will do it for other
groups if denied the permission to do it for SNCC. Which all comes
down to the point that we can hide behind racial rationalities if we want
to escape dealing with the problem. And the problem is not that whites
want to take over, but simply that whites want to do a job. The ques-
tion then is do the blacks of SNCC want to do the same job. If not,
then tell the whites and let them go on their merry way. But don't
lie to them by telling them that you want this job done and it has to
be done NOW, if you don't want their assistance in getting this job
accomplished NOW!

I could go on about what isn't really at the crux of the matter,
but since I shall have to cover everything over again anyway I think
the discussion on decision-making and the black-white problem while short
is enough to indicate that we have been only dealing with the sur-
face issues and unwilling to attack the problem at its roots . . .

II
THE PROBLEM AND ITS CAUSE

Ironically as this may seem the chief cause of SNCC's present
troubles has been its fantastic and successful growth as an organiza-
tion to which, certainly during the last year, its Mississippi project
has contributed immeasurably.

SNCC today is an organization that has gone through an unbelievable

growth in a short period of time. Because of this growth many basic adjustments were required which didn't come and many structural changes which are are still lacking. In the process of this development or growth, SNCC had for the most part inadequate leadership on the one hand to guide it through its most critical period and on the other hand a dearth of serious, problem-solving conscientious workers.

(Before it becomes misunderstood by some, let me say that my reference to inadequate leadership is not in reference to only John and Jim. I view as leaders not only those who have titles stating explicitly that they are leaders but all those who have been around for a considerable length of time, have a general awareness of what is going on, are considered idea men (or women), and articulate their thoughts. I see several people therefore as being leaders: Ivanhoe, Harris, Reagon, Hansen, Silas, Love, Guyot, Leigh, Moses, Sayer, Ladner, Hayden, Frank S., Bond, Samstein and several others.)

The fact that the organization has not only survived but grown to the extent that is has (SNCC will spend close to a million dollars this year) can be considered one grand miracle attributed to luck and the devoted energies of a few.

The lack of adequate leadership and serious workers in the past was not an immediate concern, because the organization was small, but the sudden overnight growth (remember I said SNCC will spend close to a million dollars this year) into a major organization with a national image that is both recognized and appreciated (whether positively or negatively) has made it necessary for us to begin to deal with the problem.

When we did not deal with the problem in the past the price we had to pay was waste, inefficiency, and lack of direction. If we fail to deal with the problem now the price we have to pay may very well be our organization as we know it.

The cause of the problem then, I claim, is: tremendous growth without adequate leadership and staff personnel to provide the necessary basic adjustments and structural changes to prevent something the staff resents but doesn't understand and consequently diverts its energies debating the black-white problem, who makes decisions, affiliations, hiring policy, who is on staff and who is not on staff, position holding and what have you. We have to examine where our leadership has failed and why, what our workers didn't do, what is meant that a sense of direction is necessary, what structural changes and basic adjustments are needed.

III
LACK OF DIRECTION

I have heard it said that the greatest thing about SNCC is that they can use everyone. A person simply comes to SNCC and does his or her thing and the organization simply grows. In this rare instance it

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may turn out that this did help SNCC considerably, but it was due to a set of unusual circumstances and 9 out of 10 organizations would not only grow with people just coming in and doing their thing but would be ruined. Again we were lucky. But people have to come in and do their thing because we don't really have anything to offer. We as an organization have never sat down and decided what needed to be done as a long term drive, why it needed to be done, whether or not we were going to do it and if we were, how were we going to do it. How, this is important! We can't begin to allocate our resources over a long run period except for fixed expenses on anything but a seemingly spontaneous, haphazard basis, if we don't have any idea of what we are going to be spending for from one month to the next.

As an organization we have never decided whether or not we want to be: (1) agitators (2) demonstrators or (3) organizors. And we can't fool ourselves into believing that we can be all three at once because we can't do it effectively. You can organize demonstrators; yes, but you don't have the type of organization you want. Organizine is a long-run endeavor, demonstrating is a relatively short-run one. Agitating doesn't have to involve other people at all. The three are different forms of endeavor and require different methods of operations. Contrast the work that goes into preparing for a Freedom Day and the work that goes into organizing a co-operative. Consider what can come from a Freedom Day and what can come from a co-operative.

We don't have direction because we first of all can't really say whether we are organizers, agitators or demonstrators. We have to examine the merits of all three and decide which one we are going to give emphasis to. And don't fool yourself by saying it's not a question of either-or, because it <u>has</u> to be one or the other.

Then we have to decide whether or not we are going to be programmatic in approach or nonprogrammatic (whatever that means). SNCC has a program director but it does not have any programs other than voter registration (maybe it would be better to call him a voter registration coordinator), Mississippi has programs but Mississippi is not SNCC. Freedom Schools and community centers are worked on by CORE, summer holdovers and fall volunteers—people that were asked not to come to this meeting. How does it strike your fancy that not one SNCC staff person with the exception of Penny Patch is teaching in a Freedom School or working in a community center. Further, how does it strike your fancy that the Freedom School idea for Mississippi came from a SNCC staff person (Charlie Cobb) who wrote the prospectus, that the community center idea which was initially pushed by Forman, Moses and Morris with the prospectus written by Morris and that the Federal Programs program initially developed by Morris are three programs that are today being coordinated by paid CORE staff persons— thank God for COFO. So that we (SNCC) can still get our credit.

We have tried to be programmatic. In fact, we voted for it. But we don't seem to realize the commitment in time and being stationary to develop a program. And more importantly, we lack the

know-how and seem to be unwilling to learn.

Let me close on this by saying that today people are concerned with working with people in their communities. It's similar to our saying we want to work with local people. Others are organizing local people and doing it programmatically. I think that this is inevitable for us as an organization to survive. I also think we had better seriously consider what we can do to get more SNCC people working on programs and organizing people. Because neither are being done now.

Part of the reason has to do with leadership.

IV
INADEQUATE LEADERSHIP

SNCC leaders with the possible exception of Moses, Leigh and Samstein don't lead the workers. They are good at dictating, bossing, moving people around from one geographical area to another at their own individual whim, giving people orders to do things without explaining how they should be done, continually hampering the establishing of any lines of authority by doing what they want to do as individuals without considering the policy--vague though it is on some matters.

The leaders recognize the fact that many staff persons can't really do the job, but rather than work with them or attempt to develop them, they move them on to another project or either completely ignore them until they move on themselves for lack of anything to do.

SNCC leaders have an unwillingness to set priority on certain things that must be dealt with. Instead they let them drift until a solution evolves (which is not always the best one) or until the situation becomes so demanding that it has to be dealt with: personnel, the Jackson Office and the Atlanta Office are good examples of this.

SNCC leaders won't be implemtors. Even when decisions are made, unless someone stays on the leaders' back, many times decisions won't even get implemented.

Too many SNCC leaders suffer from the St. George complex or as I have heard it stated otherwise: The Black-Jesus complex.

In short, too many of our leaders are not seriously concerned about building an organization that is going to be something other than an instrument to enable them to inflate their super-conceited egos.