

There was (general agreement) on the question of whether or not a very serious staff meeting was needed, one in which the conditions were conducive to everyone speaking up and voicing his opinions. Some thought that the physical conditions of the meeting at Gammon had a lot to do with people's participation (the fact that we were in a church, that it was hot most of the time and that people were lined up in rows facing the backs of the people in front of them), Some thought that the number of people was too large, others thought that people were intimidated and therefore did not speak. But everyone seemed to agree that we had a problem in that usually only a small group of people expressed their opinions. But we also had another problem which was that already the number of people meeting had become so small (about 50 or 60 people) that there was no way of being sure that the group was representative of the staff. Those of us left found ourselves trying to speak for those who were no longer at Gammon - we tried to explain to ourselves why people had gotten fed up with the meeting enough to return to their projects without having said what was on their minds. - we tried to explain why it seemed that some people just didn't care about staff meetings. So that one of the most important things that can be accomplished at the coming staff retreat is the creation of an atmosphere in which everyone feels free to speak for himself so that people don't ^{mis}represent what you feel and so that what you feel can be said in your own words.

The confusion that surrounds the working and talking of the committee which met following the staff meeting is very unfortunate. It threatens to tear us apart - to harm the people we are working with - and to waste our time, in that, we will be talking about people's personalities and personal relationships rather than the crucial issues that we all agreed were so important.

Some people feel that though the present constitution is outlined in part it should not be completely changed or discarded. Others feel that we should start from scratch and write a new constitution with the staff as the Sovereign Body. Some people feel that the idea of a "Sovereign Body" is somewhat abstract and not very clear to us - they feel that the staff could make our basic decisions with a few changes in the old constitution.

Some people feel that we should not organize other communities to become a part of SNCC but rather to build their own independent organizations. Some people feel that we should organize other communities and have them

affiliate with us, while others feel that they should only affiliate with us if they want to - if they feel the need.

Part of the group was concerned about us creating a new structure which allowed for more people to do more things and make more decisions. Others agreed with that point of view but felt that we needed one person or a few people who felt responsible for all of the jobs getting done.

Criticism of our present structure does not have to be criticism of the people who now hold key positions in that structure. Because Bob or Jim or Casey, or Guyot have differing opinions on these very important issues it does not mean that they are arguing against each others personalities. We have to stop thinking in terms of these "top people" who hold "key positions" and have "strong personalities." We do ourselves and them a disservice unless we address ourselves to the issues that we have raised and that we think are important. Too many of us give too much attention to too few people. We have a way of looking up to a small group of people to decide things for us and we never think about ourselves and our own needs.

We all felt that the questions raised were so important that they had to be answered before we could go on and that's why we're taking time out for a staff retreat. We are not doing it so that we can all engage in gossiping and talking about power struggles and condemning individuals. Everyone should read the position papers and do a lot of thinking themselves and even write if they want to, but we shouldn't let SNCC get involved in petty infighting. We haven't the time - we have too many important things to do.