

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Since my coming to Atlanta, the personnel committee has attempted to cope with some of the situations facing certain field staff members and a few of the northern offices. Because this period in SNCC has been one of the most serious, and given the general nature of this organization, many persons have been very suspicious not only about the committee, but things it tried to do.

In many cases, the committee has had to make policy where there was a void left by the general staff meetings. For example, in an attempt to serve those who needed vacations, the committee made up a policy -- and some of its members worked on an ad hoc vacation committee. The policy, which was expressed in the minutes of one of the Executive Committee meetings, was that persons desiring to leave had to consult their project director and their state director. Persons in the Atlanta office had to consult their department head and the office manager. People then knew generally the movements of various individuals and the information necessary to forward mail, etc.

And, the personnel committee tried, perhaps in the wrong or least desired manner, to contact staff and get a feed back of information to be dispersed to the other members of the staff. What was, in my mind a very naive gesture, of requesting information so that a regular publication could be sent out of the staff's work, was grossly misconstrued. That the checks were held in Atlanta was over-emphasized, and that in some areas there was a great mishandling of finances many folks took the letters to be a witch-hunting device.

More so than any other committee, everything that was done or attempted moved far out of the proportions intended. Members of the committee never looked for a panacea for the troubles which plagued SNCC, but seriously attempted to answer somethings.

The questions of what staff really meant, and what it meant to raise the morale of our members, our program-less field areas, and minimizing the personality hassles, attempting to encourage bold new projects, etc. where some of the possibilities of this group. That its members were anxious to help, and had little precedence that was positive, were walled up, and made immobile by the gulf of suspicion.

At no time, during its cycle of motion, did action initiate from the committee. Persons complained in writing or vocally about certain situations and wanted to get motion out of the committee in Atlanta. But, like was often goes on in SNCC, people cannot face an accuser, because those who feel those problems are silent and motionless. So, many more situations than not, looked as if folks in Atlanta had nothing better to do than hunt up folks and spend valuable hours and energy to communicate with them (in terms of solving problems, etc.)

The chasm between the staff must be bridged. The sooner that all of us realize that ~~are~~ the mistakes made in SNCC ~~are~~ because on some levels there is no positive force, which is active, the sooner we can move closer to forming a body which ~~is~~ more like what is needed. The sooner we understand that chaos left standing does not suddenly ordered, and that each of us

become

has limitations and talents which most of us choose to ignore, the closer SNCC comes to attacking with strength those walls which close the sensitive, the poor, the voiceless...

Muriel Tillinghast,
for the personnel committee