

A chronology of events gives only a superficial description of a crisis. More deeply meaningful is an understanding of the existent tension caused by conflicting interests, ideologies, or philosophies which not only shape the events but also provide their significance.

For three years SASS has attempted to find inside the procedural framework acceptable remedies to a basic dilemma: the achievement of self-defined goals within the structure of an unfortunately insensitive institution. During this same period, Swarthmore's administration has responded with an ever-ready formula of sophistication, co-optation (with a smile), false consensus, but above all self-serving resistance.

SASS, in its present crisis involving Black Admissions, has been forced to re-examine this history, with the surprisingly simple but portentous discovery: the past actions of SASS and the Administration are actually manifestations of conflicting interests. Therefore, today's crisis must be viewed as the latest but most conspicuous collision of basic underlying philosophies.

It has been indeed mortifying to realize that in past contact with the Administration, SASS was the only party not fully cognizant of its own interests and the methods leading to their advancement. As a result, SASS repeatedly found itself in a defensive position...always defending its legitimacy as a bargaining group...always defending its proposals as rational and democratic...always defending the urgency of its goals.

Beginning with a legitimate, narrow objective, Black Admissions and Personnel, SASS has been forced into an escalation of its responsibilities. The justifiable attempt at modification of Admissions Policy has revealed an oppressive power configuration that affects the very nature of the institution.....and that is the issue.

Brought into sharp relief is the very basic question involving the possibility of a relevant, humanistic education at Swarthmore. SASS's experience has demonstrated that the institution's manipulation of image and appearance obscures an unjust polarization of decision-making power: complete power for the Administrators none for the collective student body.

SASS has no alternative but to pursue a course leading to rejection after rejection of the Administration's arbitrary assumption of a monopoly on language, definitions, policy and initiative. Terms such as "rational, democratic behavior", "separatists", "risk students", "consensus" must be creatively discarded as currently defined. The control and integrity of one's definitions and language is essential to meaningful challenge to a static, unimaginative institution.

Instructive in SASS's experience is the surfacing obstructionist character of the administration, the full implications of which must be apparent to the entire community: College officials

- 2 -

have accurately recognized our challenge as fundamental, basic, and involving an impending participation in power. The entire college community must recognize that SASS's efforts are providing leverage for further examination, exploration, and creative achievement in needed modification of institutional policies.

Each member of the college community is asked to consider this deeper significance before yielding to administration attempts to isolate SASS as a purely selfish, separatist, "Black militant", interest group. Rather than SASS versus administration, the proper polarity is the possession of power initiative -- have and have nots. Therefore, SASS'S success is clearly in the immediate interests of all faculty, operational employees and students.

Swarthmore Afro-American
Students' society