AN ANALYSIS OF AGITATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE SPEECHES OF STOKELY CARMICHAEL

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In this study, six speeches delivered by Stokely Carmichael,
during and immediately following his role as chairman of the
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, have been analyzed
to determine if, and in what ways, Carmichael used the elements
of agitational rhetoric. Criteria for examining the speeches
were adapted from Charles W. Lomas, The Agitator in American
Society; Arthur Lee Smith Jr., "Samuel Adams' Agitational
Rhetoric of Revolution," Diss. UCLA 1968; Leo Lowenthal and
Norbert Guterman, Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques
of the American Agitator; Mary G. McEdwards, "Agitative
Rhetoric: Its Nature and Effect;" Richard Hofstadter, "The
Paranoid Style in American Politics;" and Kenneth E. Boulding's
essay, "Toward a Theory of Protest." For this study, Lomas'
definition of agitation has been used. He defined agitation
as "a persistent and uncompromising statement and restatement
of grievances through all available communication channels,
with the aim of creating public opinion favorable to a change
in some condition."

For an agitation to occur, certain political and social pre-
conditions usually exist: (1) the prevailing mood is one of
discontentment and turbulence; (2) a group of people are victims

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of justification to rationalize the concept of Black Power and to defend ghetto "rebellions" as self-defensive tactics. Using the paranoid style, Carmichael depicted American society and Western civilization as deliberately conspiring to rob non-whites of their cultural integrity.

This analysis has revealed that Carmichael utilized extensively the tools of agitative rhetoric. Furthermore, the analysis of an agitator's speeches has revealed much about how and why he felt he had to infuriate and irritate the general public. It was in this way that he could capture their attention and present his case. The analysis of Stokely Carmichael's speeches in relation to agitational characteristics suggest that other leaders of contemporary protest movements might merit a similar study.

AN ANALYSIS OF AGITATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

IN THE SPEECHES OF STOKELY CARMICHAEL

THESIS

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On February 1, 1960, four black college students
entered a Greensboro, North Carolina, Woolworth store,
and, after making several purchases, sat down at the lunch
counter. They remained seated until arrested. This marked
the beginning of a new era in the chronicles of black
protest. Although the "sit-in technique" had been used
before, it was in 1960 that the sit-in, as a form of
protest, flourished.[1] Sit-in demonstrations spread swiftly
throughout the South and even into much of the North, causing
one Southern journalist to describe them as the "South's
new time bomb."[2] When criticized for the new form of
protest, black youths placed full-page advertisements in
newspapers such as the Atlanta Constitution proclaiming:
"We do not intend to wait placidly for those rights which
are already legally and morally ours to be meted out to
us one at a time."[3]

As young blacks became increasingly disenchanted with
the slow process of American justice, they devised new
methods of expressing their disillusionment with society.
By the mid-1960's, many black leaders believed that the
tactics of the Civil Rights Movement were no longer viable.
The federal government and white liberals had failed to

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meet black expectations, and, consequently, frustrated blacks in the ghettos began to riot. Broken dreams and promises led blacks not only to newer forms of physical protest but also to more militant forms of vocal expression. A study of the rhetoric which evolved during this tumultous period should provide not only a more profound under- standing of the new protest movement, but also, perhaps more important, expose the underlying feelings and frus- trations of a people as voiced by their leaders. Stokely Carmichael was one of the emerging black leaders to give expression to the new black mood. A brief background of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC or Snick) must first be considered in order to understand Carmichael's role in the Black Protest Movement of the 1960's.

Because sit-in demonstrations had gained in popularity, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), advanced $800 to a group of students to promote and or- ganize further sit-ins. With this money, Snick was born.[4] Primarily, Snick was a Southern organization which decided, "as a matter of strategy, to violate all the rules of logic and war. . . . [by sending its members] to fight a powerful, heavily entrenched enemy in his strongest positions: the Black Belt counties of the South."[5] In addition to pro- moting sit-ins and Freedom Rides,[6] Snick decided to con- centrate its efforts on voter registration in the deep

South. Their primary goal was to force the federal government to send voter representatives and poll watchers to states such as Mississippi and Alabama.[7]

By mid-1964, Snick employed approximately 150 full-time workers, nearly eighty per cent of whom were black.[8] Although student workers came from all parts of the country, the major portion of the new Snick workers came from the rural South.

Being a dedicated Snick worker not only meant "knocking on doors for food, scrounging around for a pair of shoes, riding a mule along a country road because the car donated by some sympathizer has broken down,"[9] but it also meant living with the poor and sharing their food and their troubles. The Snick field worker left his station in life behind and lived with the people to "lift them where they were."[10] This meant Southern black men and women were encouraged to face white men proudly and to share fully in the political and economic life from which they had been excluded.

With this objective, Snick began to organize a political party in the South which would truly represent the poor black masses. Often, however, attempts to organize Southern Negroes into a political voice were met with white terrorist tactics. In Alabama, two Snick staffers were shot to death and others were beaten by mobs of whites.[11] Negroes not voting the regular Democratic ticket were threatened with

loss of their jobs,[12] and merely registering to vote often
resulted in Negroes being evicted from their homes.[13]
In spite of setbacks, Snick youths forged ahead with their
programs. Historian Howard Zinn wrote:

> It would be easy to romanticize them, but they
> are too young, too vulnerable, too humanly frail to
> fit the stereotype of heroes. They don't match the
> storybook martyrs who face death with silent stoicism;
> the young fellows sometimes cry out when they are
> beaten; the girls may weep when abused in prison.
> Most often, however, they sing. . . . there has never
> been a singing movement like this one.[14]

In June 1966, in the midst of all this activity,
James Meredith, who had begun his Freedom March in
Mississippi, was shot and wounded by a white man. As news
of the attempted assassination of Meredith flashed across
the country, black leaders from the Congress of Racial
Equality (CORE), Snick, and SCLC gathered at Meredith's
bedside to make plans for the continuance of the pilgrimage.
The next day the march resumed from the desolate spot on
Highway 51 where Meredith had been shot. It climaxed ten
days later on June 16, in Greenwood, Mississippi, when
Stokely Carmichael, the newly elected chairman of the
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, mounted a
speaker's platform and aroused the audience with his cries
for "Black Power!"

> ". . . We been sayin' 'freedom' for years and we
> ain't got nothin'. What we gonna start sayin' now
> is 'black power'."
> "Black Power!" the crowd echoed.
> ". . . And from now on, when they ask you what
> you want, you know what to tell them."
> "Black Power!" the crowd roared. "Black power!
> Black power! Black power!"[15]

Almost overnight Carmichael's image was embedded on the national conscience, and his cry for Black Power became the symbol of a "new militancy" in the civil rights struggle.[16] Thus, a new, more aggressive, dimension was added to the Black Protest Movement.

The Man

In order to understand Stokely Carmichael as a leader and as a man, it is necessary to look briefly at his background, especially his introductions to American society.

Stokely Carmichael was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on June 21, 1941. Approximately ninety-six per cent of Trinidad was Negro, and, although the real power rested in the hands of a few whites, all immediate authority-- police, teachers, merchants--which a growing youth might emulate, were black. Thus, "the question of exploitation of the black by the white had not occurred to the boy [Carmichael]."[17] In 1952, when Carmichael was eleven, his family moved to the United States and settled in Harlem. Although Harlem was a Negro community, whites living outside the area held the power and "flaunted it on every corner."[18]

Carmichael's father, Adolphus, had made the decision to move his family to the United States because he believed that any man, through honesty and labor, could succeed in America. Adolphus and Mabel Carmichael strove to become middle-class Americans, seeking to escape ghetto life by

moving to a better neighborhood--which meant, to them,
a white one.[19] The family succeeded in the goal and moved
to an old Italian neighborhood in the East Bronx where
they were the only Negroes. Stokely, who was then in his
early teens, quickly made friends with the youths in his
new neighborhood, and, consequently, learned how to steal
cars, break into stores, and smoke marijuana.[20]

Although Carmichael's family believed that white people
were incapable of accepting blacks as equals, they sought
to emulate their white neighbors. Carmichael's father,
being exceedingly ambitious, held, in addition to his regular
job as carpenter, various side jobs as taxi driver, seaman,
or whatever was available. Being extremely honest,
Adolphus refused to bribe union officials for admittance
into the predominantly white labor union even though it was
a widespread practice. Thus, when his father died at forty-
two, a bitter Stokely Carmichael said he had worked himself
to death, "trying to prove that a honest, hard-working
black man could make it in white America."[21]

In 1956 Carmichael was admitted to the elite Bronx
High School of Science, whose pupils were selected from the
state of New York on the basis of merit. Here Carmichael
realized his intellectual deficiencies and sought to remedy
them. He observed:

> "My parents never finished school, we had no intel-
> lectual background. All these students' fathers had
> been Harvard, Yale, doctors, dentists, Ph.D.'s. They had
> what I didn't have, but I tried to develop my own--
> just beginning to read as quickly as I could, anything
> that anybody mentioned."[22]

Of the 2000 students at the Bronx High School of
Science, there were approximately fifty blacks. Here
Carmichael became keenly aware of a white stereotype of
the Negro. Although he had many friends and was always
included in the social activities, his white associates
constantly bent over backward to accept him. "It was
a continual thing," said Carmichael, "Oh, you dance so well
--when I can't dance. Everyone telling me how well I
could sing when I can't carry a tune."[23] Carmichael
remembered particularly the Park Avenue party he attended
where his host's mother bragged to her friends after
meeting Carmichael, "Oh yes, we let Jimmy hang around with
Negroes."[24]

While a senior at Bronx Science, Carmichael saw
the sit-in era take hold. Although at first he was repulsed,
he later became actively involved in sit-in activities.
It was partly because of his experience in the South, where
he had participated in the sit-in movement, that he turned
down several scholarships to white universities in order
to go to Howard University in Washington, D. C. He felt that
he would have a better chance of keeping in touch with
the Black Movement at Howard. He also became active in
the Nonviolent Action Group, a local civil rights
organization.

After graduation in 1964, Carmichael joined Snick
as a full-time field worker. He was instrumental in

establishing the Lowndes County Freedom Organization

(LCFO), in Lowndes County, Alabama. He also played a

major role in the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project which

aimed at increasing voter registration in that state.

The LCFO, with the black panther[25] as its symbol, ran

various candidates for local office. The party was es-

tablished as a means of by-passing the Republican and

Democratic parties which Carmichael felt did not truly

"represent the needs of the black community."[26] By 1964,

Carmichael, because of his participation in various forms

of protest, had been arrested twenty-seven times and

spent forty-nine days in the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

In May 1966, Carmichael assumed John Lewis' post as

chairman of Snick. A month later, he thrust himself on

the national scene in a way that few other black leaders

had with his cry of "Black Power." Although the idea

of Black Power had appeared earlier in the writings of

W. E. B. DuBois, Frederick Douglass, and others, it was

Stokely Carmichael who gave it vivid expression. As

Carmichael himself said of the slogan, "The feeling was

always there in the black community . . . but people were

afraid to speak to it."[27]

As the slogan, "Black Power," became a popular form

of expression for the new black mood in the sixties, and

because Carmichael assumed a dominant role in the Black

Protest Movement, it is worthwhile to examine his rhetorical

strategies in relation to the goals he sought for the

movement. Because of the political climate in America during the sixties, and because most of the media had characterized Carmichael as "'radical,' 'racist,' 'hard-core,' 'black nationalist,'" and a "wild sort of Mau Mau man,"[28] it is felt that the best approach to the problem would be to examine Carmichael as an agitator—to see if Carmichael did, indeed, utilize the rhetorical methods most often employed by agitators and how he used them.

A Survey of the Literature

A number of writers have dealt with the nature of agitation, agitative rhetoric, and the agitator and his role in society. Perhaps the most significant text examined was Charles W. Lomas' The Agitator in American Society, which defined agitation and the role of the agitator in society. More important, perhaps, he discussed the type of social and political environment necessary for the breeding of agitators as well as the characteristics of agitation itself. Arthur Lee Smith,Jr.,[30] combined the findings of Lomas, Mary G. McEdwards, and Henry Jephson[31] in analyzing the agitative rhetoric of Samuel Adams.

Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman's, Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator,[32] characterized the agitator and the tools of persuasion he utilized in order to gain popular support.

Mary G. McEdwards in "Agitative Rhetoric: Its Nature and Effect,"[33] analyzed the speech style of agitators.

Finally, Richard Hofstadter in "The Paranoid Style in American Politics,"[34] indicated that many leaders of protest movements see a conspiratorial world directed against an entire culture, the one they, as leaders, have chosen to represent. His analysis of this type of political paranoia is particularly rhetorical and suggests guidelines for an analysis of style.

More specifically, Patricia Jefferson of Indiana University has completed a Master's thesis on Stokely Carmichael.[35] This thesis took a different approach from the present study and concerned itself mainly with Carmichael's life, his ethos, emotional appeals, and speech style. Jefferson made no attempt to analyze Carmichael in light of agitative characteristics. Since no study has been attempted in this specific area, it is felt a thesis on Carmichael as an agitator would be a valuable contribution to the field of speech.

Statement of Purpose

This study will analyze the speeches of Stokely Carmichael in order to determine if, and in what ways, he used the elements of agitational rhetoric. The specific questions to be answered by this thesis are as follows:

1. How did Carmichael, as the leader of Snick, expound the black man's grievances?

2. What were Carmichael's basic rhetorical premises?

3. What goals were sought by Carmichael to meet the black man's grievances?

4. What rhetorical strategies were used by Carmichael
in relation to the goals he sought?

5. Were his strategies agitative in nature?.

Before discussing the methods to be utilized in the
preparation of this thesis, the nature of agitation must
first be defined.

Lomas defined agitation as "a persistent and uncom-
promising statement and restatement of grievances through
all available communication channels, with the aim of
creating public opinion favorable to a change in some
condition."[36] Further, Lomas stated that agitations may be
rhetorical, relying on the spoken or written forms, or
activist, relying on deeds to communicate a message.
Important also are the preconditions to agitation. The
climate which gives birth to an agitator is a disturbed one,
with society divided and discontented over major issues
confronting it.[37] The ruling class shows a reluctance to
change and thus the injustices, or perceived injustices,
multiply in the minds of those who consider themselves to
be the oppressed. Lomas classified agitations in terms
of their desired goals.[38] Short-range agitations seek
immediate objectives which are attainable without any major
changes in society. Long-range agitations are aimed at
established conditions which are undesirable to the agitator
and his auditors and are incapable of quick change. Revo-
lutionary agitations are directed at the existing social

order and seek, ultimately, to shift the balance of power from one group to another.

McEdwards placed strong emphasis on the style of the agitator, saying that he uses language to "evoke an immediate emotional response in the listener" and chooses a vocabulary which "upsets the listener's expectation of the speaker and of the occasion."[39] McEdwards analyzed the agitator's use of extreme language by relating the types of stylistic devices most often employed. She found that concrete diction, "heavy with unpleasant connotations," tropes and schemes that carry high descriptive appeal, abrasive words, derogatory metaphors, and simple sentences, marked the language of an agitator.[40]

Method and Procedure

After searching the literature extensively, six speeches of Carmichael's have been located. They cover a variety of speaking situations and range from July 1966, to August 1967, the period during and immediately following Carmichael's role as Snick's chairman. The speeches to be studied are as follows:

1. "Black Power Explained to a Black Audience," Cobo Auditorium, Detroit, Michigan, July 30, 1966.

2. "Black Power," speech given at the Berkeley Black Power Conference in Berkeley, California, in October, 1966.

3. "Speech at Morgan State College," speech given at Morgan State College, Baltimore, Maryland, January 16, 1967.

4. "Toward Black Liberation," speech delivered at "Impact '67" at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, on April 8, 1967. (A variation of this speech was delivered at Wisconsin State University, Whitewater, on February 6, 1967).

5. "The Dialectics of Liberation," address given before The Dialectics of Liberation Congress, London, England, July 18, 1967.

6. "Black Power and the Third World," given at the First Conference of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity, Havana, Cuba, July 31, 1967.

Since Carmichael used his immediate audiences to reach a broader public, both black and white, predominately via the news media, his speeches are best examined in relation to the larger audience of the American public.

The following criteria for analyzing the speeches of Carmichael were adapted from the works of Lomas, McEdwards, Smith, Lowenthal and Guterman, Hofstadter, and Kenneth E. Boulding's essay, "Toward a Theory of Protest," in The Age of Protest, by Walt Anderson:[41]

    I. Four preconditions are necessary for agitative rhetoric to take place.
        A. Society is divided and discontented over present conditions.
        B. There is evidence of injustice or apparent injustice.

C. The established ruling group shows massive
resistance to change.

D. The agitator has available channels of commu-
nication with the afflicted.

II. The agitator is a man of the people.

A. He understands those to whom he speaks, that
is, he associates himself directly with the
common man.

B. He identifies their grievances and sufferings
with his.

C. He shows his concern for the problems of his
auditors.

D. He is charismatic in the eyes of his supporters.

III. The agitator attempts to motivate his audience away
from the status quo by exposing injustices in the
current social structure.

A. He seeks to expose the grievances of his
listeners.

1. He may develop the grievance in detail or
merely assert it.

2. He may state new ideas or recall to his
listener's minds beliefs already held.

3. He may cite specifics or general instances
as evidence of the injustice he is asserting.

B. The types of grievances which may be exploited
by the agitator are:

1. Economic: grievances in which the afflicted
are depicted as suffering from economic
exploitation.

2. Political: grievances which reveal the
afflicted without power and at the mercy
of the powerful enemy.

3. Cultural: grievances which depict the
oppressed as suffering because of their
race or national orgins.

4. Media Distortion: grievances which reveal
the public is misinformed via the media
which attempts to further castigate the
afflicted.

C. Grievances may represent long standing beliefs
of the afflicted or they may expose newly
created problems.

IV. The agitator proposes solutions for remedying
injustices.

A. According to the speaker, the problem may
be capable of solution in the existing social
order.

1. Short range agitations are those where the
agitator seeks immediate and attainable
goals.

2. Long range agitations are directed against entrenched conditions and are incapable of quick solution.
    B. The solutions may demand revolutionary changes in the existing power structure.

V. A special style marks the agitator.
    A. Language is extreme because of the unexpected word usage.
       1. Language is concrete and filled with unpleasant connotations.
       2. The abrasive word is used instead of the bland -- the derogatory metaphor is used in place of the complimentary.
       3. Language is used as a weapon: it jolts and combats.
       4. The jagged, insulting, snarling word is used.
    B. Language is emotional, carrying high sensory appeals.
    C. Sentences are short, simple, and jabbing.
    D. Language of Objectification, that is, it directs the grievances and frustrations of one group toward an ill-defined out-group.
    E. Language of Justification, that is, the agitator rationalizes the means by which to achieve his goals.
    F. Ultimate terms are likely to be used.
    G. The language used may exemplify the Paranoid Style in the following ways:
       1. A vast, yet subtle, conspiracy is seen directed against the agitator and his supporters.
       2. History appears to be a conspiracy against the agitator and the afflicted.
       3. The time for action is now -- time is running out.
       4. The enemy is vilified.
          a. he is seen as having no redeeming qualities.
          b. he is seen as sinister because he chooses to be so.
       5. The agitator may use contrasts to sharpen the idea being advanced, that is, the struggle is between absolute good and absolute evil.
       6. Terms to define absolute victory, without compromise, are used.
       7. The agitator sees himself and those he represents as the Elect, perfect in every way. Even though they are unmercifully persecuted they will ultimately triumph.

Summary of Design

Chapter Two of this thesis will examine the social and political conditions in the 1960's to determine if the prevailing atmosphere was conducive to the development and growth of an agitational movement. Chapter Three analyzes black grievances as espoused by Stokely Carmichael and the solutions he proposed for them, and examines how Carmichael sought to identify his personal grievances with those of the black masses. Chapter Four analyzes Carmichael's speaking style in relation to the characteristics of an agitator and determines by what means Carmichael utilized language to identify himself with the oppressed blacks he sought to represent. Chapter Five contains a summary of the entire thesis and relates the conclusions concerning the nature of agitation, Stokely Carmichael's use of agitational devices, and the black rhetoric of the sixties.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The sit-in, as a form of protest, was used successfully by the Congress of Racial Equality against segregated lunch counters and restaurants as early as 1943 in Chicago, in 1949 in St. Louis, and in 1953 in Baltimore. The NAACP Youth Council utilized the technique in Oklahoma City in 1958. Joanne Grant, ed., Black Protest (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968), p. 255.

[2] John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 3rd ed. (1947, 1956; rpt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), p. 623.

[3] Franklin, p. 623.

[4] Bradford Chambers, ed., Chronicles of Negro Protest (New York: Parents' Magazine Press Inc., 1968), p. 263.

[5] Lerone Bennett, Jr., Confrontation: Black and White (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, Inc., 1966), p. 228.

[6] Freedom Rides began as a test of the Interstate Commerce Commission's order against segregation in interstate buses and terminals. They were first begun by the Congress of Racial Equality but later spread to other black organizations.

[7] Bennett, p. 228.

[8] Those joining Snick usually worked for ten dollars a week, a few married couples making fifty or sixty dollars a week. Often, however, weeks would pass with no pay. Howard Zinn, SNCC: The New Abolitionists (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 10.

[9] Zinn, p. 10.

[10] Bennett, p. 229.

[11] Chambers, p. 267.

[12] Chambers, p. 267.

[13] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), p. 105.

[14] Zinn, p. 4.

[15] "Black Power!" Newsweek, 27 June 1966, p. 36.

[16] Robert L. Scott and Wayne Brockriede, The Rhetoric of Black Power (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 133.

[17] Robert Penn Warren, Who Speaks for the Negro? (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1966), p. 390.

[18] Lerone Bennett Jr., "Stokely Carmichael: Architect of Black Power," Ebony, September 1966, pp. 25-32.

[19] Bennett, "Stokely Carmichael," p. 30.

[20] Warren, p. 392.

[21] Bennett, "Stokely Carmichael," p. 30.

[22] Warren, p. 392.

[23] Warren, p. 393.

[24] Warren, p. 393.

[25] This was not the same Black Panther Party that was to later emerge, although the symbol was borrowed from the LCFO.

[26] Bennett, "Stokely Carmichael," p. 31.

[27] Bennett, "Stokely Carmichael," p. 31.

[28] Robert Lewis Shayon, "The Real Stokely Carmichael," Saturday Review, 9 July 1966, p. 42.

[29] (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968).

[30] "Samuel Adams' Agitational Rhetoric of Revolution," Diss. UCLA 1968.

[31] Henry Jephson, in 1892, mentioned some of the features of an agitational movement in discussing the Anti-Corn Law League. Among the characteristics of agitation listed by Jephson were organization, money, good leaders, and singularity of aim. Smith, p. 1.

[32] (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949).

[33] Western Speech, No. 32 (Spring 1968), pp. 36-43.

[34] The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1965), pp. 3-40.

[35] "The Rhetoric of the Magnificent Barbarian, Stokely Carmichael," Thesis Indiana University 1967.

[36] Lomas, p. 2.

[37] McEdwards, pp. 39-40.

[38] Lomas, p. 3.

[39] McEdwards, pp. 37-38.

[40] McEdwards, p. 37.

[41] (Pacific Palisades, California: Goodyear Publishing Comapny, Inc., 1969).

CHAPTER II

PRECONDITIONS FOR AN AGITATIONAL MOVEMENT

Introduction

For an agitation to occur, certain political and
social preconditions usually exist. A certain mixture
of circumstances can not only lead to the development of
an activist campaign, but can also accelerate its maturation.
Four preconditioning elements are conducive to the devel-
opment of an agitational movement in a society. First,
the prevailing mood is one of discontentment and turbulence,
and the people are divided over the major issues which
affect them. Those who are discontented are also undecided
as to which direction should guide their course. Second,
and more specifically, a group of people are victims of
injustice or perceive themselves to be. Third, the power
structure shows a massive resistance to change--a reluc-
tance to do anything meaningful to help those who feel
they are the victims of injustice. Fourth, and perhaps
most important, accessible communication channels must
exist between an agitator and the victims of the injustice.

Before examining Stokely Carmichael's rhetoric, it
is first necessary to determine if American society in
the early sixties contained elements favorable to the birth
of an activist spokesman for the black agitation. The

social and political climate of America during this era
have been examined to determine to what extent such
conditions did prevail, and specifically, the conditions
relating to the American Negro have been analyzed.

Injustice and Inequality as a Precondition
for Agitation

For three centuries the black man has suffered the
indignities and injustice of white rule in America. Freed
from the shackles of slavery over a century ago, blacks
have sinced faced bondage of another kind in education,
job, and housing discrimination. Under leaders like Martin
Luther King, Jr., the black man sought to express through
nonviolence the desolation of his existence. When deaf
ears were turned to his pleas for justice and equality, the
blacks increasingly moved toward more militant forms of
expression. The frequent result was violence and rioting.

On July 29, 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed
the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to study
the causes of urban riots. The basic conclusion of the
Commission's report released in 1968 was: "Our nation is
moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate
and unequal."[1] Moreover, the Kerner Report validated many
complaints long made by blacks concerning racial discrimi-
nation and injustice.

One of the major grievances expressed by blacks per-
tained to police practices in ghetto communities. In 1964,

an attitude study revealed that forty-three percent of
Harlem Negroes believed police brutality existed; a national
Gallup Poll taken in 1965 reported that thirty-five percent
of black males felt police brutality was present in their
neighborhoods, as contrasted to seven percent of whites who
felt that way.[2] Actual physical abuse was only one type
of police exacerbation reported by blacks. Most of the
complaints concerned harassment of interracial couples,
indiscriminate personal searches, and dispersal of street
gatherings of a purely social nature.[3] These abuses, added
to contemptuous verbal assaults, had great impact on poor
ghetto residents and aided in the generation of hostilities
toward policemen.

Charles E. Silberman, in Crisis in Black and White,[4]
related an example of police maltreatment of blacks. In
New York City in 1962, a prominent Negro engineer, returning
home from a neighborhood baseball game, was stopped by four
white policemen, beaten, searched, and then told to get off
the street. The victim, Marshal Whitehead, wrote the
police car number on a slip of paper and went to the station-
house to complain. The detective interviewing Whitehead
destroyed the slip containing the license information. As
Whitehead was about to leave the station, he spotted the
four policemen who had abused him earlier and identified
them. The officers reportedly said: "If you want something
to complain about, then we'll give you something to complain

about" and forced him to the station's basement, where
Whitehead was brutally assaulted and arrested for disorderly
conduct and resisting arrest. Had this been an isolated
incident, it would have been bad enough, but other related
research indicates that the occurence of such phenomena
in Negro communities was far from rare.

Instances of police brutality were reported repeatedly,
especially in cities torn by riots. The Kerner Report
related an account of a Detroit resident beaten so severely
by police that two weeks later bruises were still visible.[5]
Another seventeen-year-old Detroit youth who received a
cracked skull at police hands was removed to a hospital
only after inmates reported that he was bleeding to death.
The Kerner Report also validated many accounts of physical
abuse by police in Detroit when black prisoners were brought
in uninjured and later had to receive hospital treatment.

The most publicized instances of police brutality
involved the killing of blacks by white policemen. According
to Gunnar Myrdal, the majority of these killings must be
considered wanton when measured in terms of a decent standard
of policemanship.[6] Moreover, many of the victims were
innocent. What appears to have accounted for many killings
of blacks by white policemen was the latter's fear of the
"bad nigger," which inclined him to keep a heavy finger
on the trigger of his gun.[7] Indiscriminate shooting on the
part of police accounted for many victims. During the

Detroit riots, the uncritical machine-gunning of an apartment

building resulted in the death of four-year-old Tonya

Blanding.[8]

Concerning police racial predilection in the South,

Myrdal wrote:

> Probably no group of whites in America have a
> lower opinion of the Negro people and are more fixed
> in their views than Southern policemen. To most of
> them no Negro woman knows what virtue is . . . and
> practically every Negro man is a potential criminal.
> They usually hold, in extreme form, all other dero-
> gatory beliefs about Negroes; and they are convinced
> that the traits are 'racial.' This holds true of the
> higher ranks in the police departments as well as
> of the lower ranks.[9]

But police hatred of blacks is not confined to the South.

The Skolnick Report to the National Commission on the

Causes and Prevention of Violence related an account by

San Francisco journalist Charles McCabe, who told of re-

turning to his childhood neighborhood and meeting a friend

who had become a policeman.

> We went to a corner saloon, together with a couple of
> buddies and we talked — mostly about cops. . . . On
> the subject of hippies and black militants they were
> not really human.
> Their language was violent. "If I had my way,"
> said one, "I'd like to take a few days off and go off
> somewhere in the country where these bastards might
> be hanging out, and I'd like to hunt a couple of them
> down with a rifle." The other cops nodded concurrence.[10]

Regarding the use of force by policemen, Robert M.

Fogelson in _Political Science Quarterly_ of June 1968, wrote:

> In practice, then, the police regard excessive
> force as a special, but not uncommon, weapon in the
> battle against crime. They employ it to punish suspects
> who are seemingly guilty yet unlikely to be convicted,
> and to secure respect in the communities where patrolmen
> are resented, if not openly detested. And they justify

it on the grounds that any civilian, especially any Negro, who arouses their suspicion or withholds due respect loses his claim to the privileges of law abiding citizens.[11]

In 1962, Dante Andreotti, a twenty-one-year veteran of the San Francisco police force, was appointed head of the newly created Community Relations Unit. The purpose of the Unit was to go into minority communities and discuss problems facing the constituents living there. It was hoped this process would encourage respect for the local law agencies. Andreotti's main difficulty came from the police department as indicated by some of the taunts he received from fellow officers: "How do you like working in the commie-relations department? . . . Have you got your N. A. A. C. P. card? You're the biggest nigger-lover in the police department." Andreotti recalled seeing John Birch literature on some of the precincts' bulletin boards. One bulletin board had a large picture of the Ku Klux Klan's Imperial Wizard with a headline reading "Our Hero."[12] The Kerner Report reinforces Andreotti's view of the racist policeman:

> To many Negroes police have come to symbolize white power, white racism, and white repression. And the fact is that many police do reflect and express these white attitudes. The atmosphere of hostility and cynicism is reinforced by widespread perception among Negroes of the existence of police brutality and corruption, and of a "double standard" of justice and protection -- one for Negroes and one for whites.[13]

As these attitudes appeared to be prevalent among police officers, it was little wonder that ghetto residents habored such resentment and antipathy toward law enforcement

agencies. To the black ghetto resident, the white police-
man was representative of the white power structure and
symbolic of all that had gone wrong in black lives. A
white policeman served as a reminder that blacks were
dependent on, and, of necessity, submissive to the white
man's laws and sense of justice. The fact that police
departments employed few blacks also contributed to the
problem.[14] The Kerner Commission's investigation of
twenty-eight police departments revealed that the percentage
of sworn black personnel ranged from less than one percent
to twenty-one percent.[15] In no instance was the percentage
of black policemen on a force equal to black representation
in the population. One black ghetto resident expressed
her feeling this way: "This is more or less a colored
neighborhood--why do we have so many white cops? As if
we got to have somebody white standing over us. . . . I'm
not going to see a lot of colored cops in no white neigh-
borhood, . . . I get sick and tired of seeing so many white
cops."[16]

Of course, not all white policemen were guilty of
harassing blacks. However, the instances of unethical
police practices in black neighborhoods were sufficient to
lend credibility to the black man's claim of racial prejudice
on the part of white police officers. Not only do blacks
believe that they are likely to be arrested by white police-
men, but upon appearing in court they believe they usually

receive more stringent punishments than whites. The

Kerner Report stated:

> The belief is pervasive among ghetto residents that
> lower courts in our urban communities dispense
> 'assembly-line' justice; that from arrest to sentencing,
> the poor and uneducated are denied equal justice with
> the affluent, that procedures such as bail and fines
> have been perverted to perpetuate class inequities.
> We have found that the apparatus of justice in some
> areas has itself become a focus for distrust and
> hostility. Too often the courts have operated to
> aggravate rather than relieve the tensions that
> ignite and fire disorders.[17]

In the South, particularly, racial bias was a determinant

in the punishment meted out to Negroes. For example, a

black man brought in for insobriety was likely to receive

a ten- or fifteen-dollar fine as compared to a three-dollar

fine for a white man convicted of the same crime.[18] In

1959, in a Monroe, North Carolina courtroom, two white

men were acquitted of brutal assaults on two Negro women

while a mentally retarded black was imprisoned for arguing

with a white woman.[19] Negroes were also more often arrested

for minor offenses than were whites. The Kerner Commission

related that bail for blacks was often excessively high

and cited as evidence that bond for curfew violations

during the Detroit riots was rarely less than $10,000 and

frequently as high as $15,000 to $25,000.[20]

Another source of frustration for blacks concerned

unemployment and underemployment. Black males were more

than three times as likely to hold low-paying, unskilled

jobs than whites. One study, conducted by the Kerner

Commission, found that unemployment or underemployment

for low-income black neighborhoods was approximately
33 percent or 8.8 times greater than the overall un-
employment rate for the United States as a whole.[21]
Perhaps more revealing is the difference in incomes between
blacks and whites possessing similar educational back-
grounds. In 1960, black men between the ages of eighteen
and sixty-four who had acquired eight years or less of
education could hope to make only about sixty-one percent
as much as white males of similar age and education.[22]
Negro males needed one to three years of college to obtain
an income equal to whites with less than an eighth grade
education. With a master's degree, the black man counted
on making the same salary as a white possessing only a
high school diploma.[23] Thus, even higher education provided
no guarantee of equality. And education to many blacks
was an insurmountable obstacle. Ghetto schools were over-
crowded and equipment was scarce. Textbooks were written
for white middle-class students and contained little
relevance to black children who had not seen much of the
world beyond the ghetto where they lived. Jonathan Kozol,
a former teacher for the Boston Public School system
described the text he used in a predominantly Negro ghetto
school this way:

> Out of a total of 140 biographies of famous
> men and women, there was one having to do with a
> Negro. That one was George Washington Carver. The
> geography book . . . was about eighteen years old
> in substance, . . . In this book . . . a traditional
> American cross-country journey was traced. During this
> journey there wasn't one mention, hint, whisper or

glimmer of a dark-skinned face. Reading it without
any outside source of information, you would have no
reason to suspect either the past history or present
existence of a Negro race.[24]

Further, Kozol related that the text described black Africans

as "savage and uncivilized."[25] In many schools blacks

experienced this sort of ego deflation and hence were doomed

to frustration, bitterness, and self-hatred. Further-

more, they were likely to project this image given them by

white America on to the society they considered responsible

for their plight.

Also, money allocated to black schools fell far short

of that allocated to white schools. The Kerner Commission

concluded that less money was spent on educating ghetto

children than their surburban counterparts, and, the Civil

Rights Commission study of twelve metropolitan areas found

that in 1964, seven of the twelve average suburbs spent

more per pupil than the central cities.[26] This was a cause

of discontentment to the white urban dwellers as well as

to the blacks.

The Superintendent of the predominantly Negro Cleveland

schools, testifying before the Kerner Commission, related

the plight of many young Negro students:

> If this child of despair is a young adult, there
> is better than a 50 percent chance that he is a high
> school dropout. He is not only unemployed, but
> unemployable, without a salable skill. . . . Preschool
> or nursery school was out of the question when he was
> four, and when he was five he was placed on a kinder-
> garten waiting list.
>   . . . At six he entered school; but could only
> attend for half a day because of the big enrollment.

. . . During his six years in elementary school, he
attended four different schools . . . When he got to
high school he wanted vocational training, but none
was available.

Of his few friends who were graduated from high
school none had found jobs and they couldn't afford
to go to college.

Here he is now, discouraged and without hope--
economically incompetent at a time in life when,
traditionally, young Americans have entered the economic
mainstream as job holders.[27]

Further frustrations which probably contributed to

discontentment related to blacks in white environments.

Black students escaping ghetto schools often met with

frustration and failure in integrated white schools.

Scholastic examinations and I. Q. tests were designed

for middle-class white students making no allowances for

blacks coming from different socio-economic and cultural

backgrounds. Regarding standardized testing and black

students, sociologist Andrew Billingsley has written:

They standardize these tests on other white
people like themselves; then they administer them
to Negroes without regard to cultural diversity and
basic life conditions. Through interpretation of
these tests, they make major decisions affecting the
lives of Negro people. . . . Negro people, whatever
their social class status, do not generally do as well
as whites. If Negroes were free to make the decisions
about which values and life styles to reward, white
people certainly would not demonstrate the consistent
superiority on these test performances they currently
do.[28]

One of the arguments frequently given to placate black

discontent regarding education and employment is that

Negroes are consistently making gains in these areas. A

University of Texas sociologist, analyzing the rate of

Negro progress in relation to whites, determined that at

the 1950-60 rate of progress it would take blacks 60 years

in education, 93 years in occupation, 219 years in personal

income, and 805 years in family income to reach full

equality with whites.[29] The Moynihan Report,[30] published

in 1965, likewise established that black America had fallen

behind in the race for equality and concluded that by

1964, black unemployment was twice as high as that for whites;

from 1952 to 1963, the median income for black families

dropped from fifty-seven to fifty-three percent in com-

parison with whites; since 1947, poverty for nonwhite

families has decreased three percent, as compared to a

twenty-seven percent decrease for whites.[31]

Another common grievance expressed by blacks which

probably contributed to feelings of frustration concerned

substandard housing.[32] The Kerner Commission's investigation

of such complaints revealed that two-thirds of the fifty-six

percent of the nation's nonwhites who lived in the central

cities resided in substandard housing; by 1960, twenty-

five percent of nonwhites in central cities occupied sub-

standard facilities as compared to eight percent of whites,

and twenty-five percent of all housing in metropolitian

areas occupied by nonwhites were overcrowded (by the standard

of 1.01 persons per room), as compared to only eight percent

of all white residences. Furthermore, Negroes in large

cities often were forced to pay the same or higher rents as

whites while receiving poorer accommodations.[33]

32

Overcrowdedness, as the Kerner Report revealed, was
one of the major problems of slum life. Michael Harrington,
in The Other America, related that if the densities of some
of Harlem's blocks were representative of the country, the
entire population of the United States could be contained
in three of New York's boroughs.[34] Perhaps the largest
problem of poor blacks was being trapped in ghetto slums,
and, subsequently, subjected to discriminating price
controls and other forms of exploitation. Concerning
Chicago slums, in particular, Martin Luther King Jr., wrote:

> Consumer items range from five to twelve cents higher
> in the ghetto stores than in the suburban stores, both
> run by the same supermarket chains; and numerous stores
> in the ghetto have been the subject of community
> protests against the sale of spoiled meats and vege-
> tables. This exploitation is possible because so
> many of the residents of the ghetto have no personal
> means of transportation. It is a vicious circle. You
> can't get a job because you are poorly educated, and
> you must depend on welfare to feed your children;
> but if you receive public aid in Chicago, you cannot
> own property, not even an automobile, so you are
> condemned to the jobs and shops which are closest
> to your home. Once confined to this isolated community,
> one no longer participates in a free economy, but is
> subject to price-fixing and wholesale robbery by many
> of the merchants of the area.[35]

Moreover, ghetto residents believed they were exploited by
local merchants. This claim was substantiated by the
Kerner Commission which revealed that merchandise in ghetto
stores was higher priced than the same goods sold in other
areas.[36] Additionally, efforts on the part of black families
to move to more advantaged areas were frequently thwarted.
Blacks were often refused the purchase of rental or housing
in nonslum areas, particularly the suburbs.[37]

Studies conducted on racial discrimination and injustice
factually document the plight of the Negro masses. However,
they cannot portray the depth of emotional feelings held
by black individuals living in white American society. The
words of these individuals reveal some of the pain and
frustration of their experiences.

Remembering her first encounter with racial bias as
a child trying to make a purchase in a meat market, a
black woman told this story:

> When I entered the market, there were several
> white adults waiting to be served. When the butcher
> had finished with them, I gave him my order. More white
> adults entered. The butcher turned from me and took
> their orders. . . . While he was waiting on the
> adults, a little white girl came in and we talked
> while we waited.
> The butcher finished with the adults, looked down
> at us and asked, "What do you want, little girl?" I
> smiled and said, "I told you before, a pound of
> centercut pork chops." He snarled, "I'm not talking
> to you," and again asked the white girl what she wanted.
> . . .
> "Please may I have my meat?" I said as the little
> girl left. The butcher took my dollar from the counter,
> reached into the showcase, got a handful of fat chops
> and wrapped them up. Thrusting the package at me, he
> said, "Niggers have to wait 'til I wait on the white
> people. Now take your meat and get out of here!" I
> ran all the way home crying.[38]

Angelo Herndon, black journalist, who was arrested in
Atlanta in 1932 at age nineteen for leading a demonstration
of unemployed Negro and white workers demanding relief,
revealed his first encounter with the term "Nigger":

> One day I saw some white children at a game of marbles.
> Innocent of any evil thought or expectations, I joined
> their game. As my misfortune would have it, I shot
> all their marbles out of the ring. A white boy, livid
> with rage, called me a "nigger." "Nigger?" I repeated,
> not understanding. "What does 'nigger' mean?" The

boys burst out laughing and I laughed with them good-
naturedly. . . . "Do you want to know what 'nigger'
means?" asked the white boy spitefully. "Let me show
you."
        Together with the other boys he began to pelt me
with stones and I fled for dear life. After a while,
tiring of their sport, they let me alone. With feelings
smarting more than did the bruises on my body, I ran
to my mother, weeping.[39]

Elizabeth Eckford, one of the first black students to

integrate Little Rock's Central High School in 1957, revealed

that on her first day at school she was spat on, called

a "nigger bitch," and a mob of whites chanted, "Lynch her!

Lynch her!"[40]   And, Bill Russell, a professional basketball

athlete, related having hotel reservations cancelled when

the management learned that he was a Negro.[41]

Although the personal revelations cited may be termed

"isolated cases," they were examples of what countless black

individuals faced daily in their struggle to live in American

society. Indeed, as books have been filled with accounts

concerning discrimination against black individuals, one

can only discern that such "isolated cases" were in

actuality, far from rare.

The major complaints of blacks centered around police

practices in ghetto communities, discrimination in jobs

and housing, and poor educational facilities. Yet, perhaps

most frustrating to the individual Negro was the mental and

physical anguish he suffered as a result of having been

born black. The Kerner Commission's findings and the

Skolnick and Moynihan Reports lent credibility to the black

man's claim of racial injustice. Hence, the precondition of a grievance felt by the blacks in general has been established, and the first stage was set for the development of an agitative campaign aimed at exposing the black man's grievances.

Society's Resistance to Change as a Precondition
for Agitation

In the sixties, blacks began to organize and mobilize in an effort to obtain a redress of their grievances. Freedom rides, sit-ins, boycotts, and marches, particularly in the South, constituted the most popular forms of protest. But if the blacks were committed to nonviolent protest, the white resistance they met was not. Churches in the rural South where black protest meetings were held were burned and Negro homes bombed. On May 10, 1963, the A. D. Gaston motel, demonstration headquarters for Birmingham, was dynamited as was the home of protest leader, Rev. A. D. King. On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers, Mississippi field secretary for the N. A. A. C. P., was murdered on the front lawn of his home. The accussed assassin of Evers, Byron de la Beckwith, later acquitted, was visited in jail by Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett.[42] One autumn Sunday in Birmingham, four young Negro girls, attending Sunday School at the 16th Street Baptist Church, were killed when a bomb ripped through the church building. In the summer of 1963, three civil rights workers were murdered in Neshoba County,

Mississippi. In the summer of 1964, Snick Mississippi workers witnessed thirty-five shootings, eight beatings, and six murders.[43] In Tuskeegee, Alabama, on January 4, 1966, Sammy Younge Jr., was murdered while attempting to use a white restroom at a gas station. Additionally, "Freedom Riders were beaten by mobs," and "demonstrators were hosed, clubbed and cattle-prodded in Birmingham and Selma."[44] These were only a few of the many atrocities perpetrated against individuals, black and white alike, who sought to protest racial discrimination and injustice in the rural South. Perhaps violent retaliation was expected, but government inaction was not. Hundreds of affidavits asking the Department of Justice for a redress of grievances were ignored. F. B. I. representatives took no action against police who gave beatings to citizens who broke no law, and watched impassively while state patrolmen administered electrical shocks to freedom walkers who had committed no crime.[45] During the Alabama Freedom Rides of 1965, two Snick workers called the Justice Department and asked for government protection. In both cases, the Justice Department refused their request, saying they could not protect anyone, "but if something happened, they would investigate."[46]

> The Civil Rights Act of 1866 of the U. S. Code reads:
>
> That all persons born in the United States . . . of every race and color . . . shall have the same right, in every State and Territory in the United States . . . to full and equal benefits of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property

as is enjoyed by white citizens . . . That any person
who, under color of any law, statute, ordinance,
regulation, or custom, shall subject, or cause to be
subjected, any inhabitant of any State or Territory
to the deprivation of any rights secured or protected
by this act . . . shall be deemed guilty of a mis-
demeanor, and, on conviction, shall be punished by
fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, or imprisonment
not exceeding one year, or both.[47]

Additionally, Section 3052, Title 18, of the United States

Administrative Code, grants F. B. I. agents the power to

make arrests, without warrants, "for any offense against

the United States committed in their presence."[48] In

effect, these two statutes gave the federal government, and

F. B. I. agents, the authority to arrest and prosecute

anyone violating the Constitutional rights of any citizen.

Yet the first Amendment guarantee of "the right of the

people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government

for a redress of grievances," was flagrantly violated by

Southern policemen who went unpunished. Often the civil

rights of protestors were violated openly by Southern police,

in full view of federal officials who did nothing. Further-

more, many innocent individuals were jailed throughout the

South for trying to "accomplish by themselves what the

national government had failed to do for them: to establish

the rule of the Constitution in the Deep South."[49] The

marches, demonstrations, and other forms of protests utilized

by the blacks during the summer of 1963-64, in the South,

came to be viewed by the black masses as a "series of

rebuffs, disappointments, even failures."[50]

Yet, some progress was made through new legislation.
The Civil Rights Law of 1964 ordered the termination of
racial discrimination in voting, public facilities and
accommodations, and some areas of employment. It was
supplemented by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which es-
sentially was an effort at enforcing the Fourteenth
Amendment to the Constitution. These acts, however, did not
prevent retalitory action against blacks who sought to
enjoy their new freedoms, as, for example, white land owners
eviction of black tenants exercising their right to vote.[51]
John Lewis, chairman of Snick in 1965-66, felt that blacks
could not support the civil rights bill for it was "too
little, and too late." He further explained that there was
nothing in the bill to protect blacks against police brutality,
or to shield citizens who exercized their right to vote
from harrassment; neither would it "protect young children
and old women from police dogs and fire hoses for engaging
in peaceful demonstrations;" nor would it aid the hundreds
of citizens "arrested on trumped-up charges."[52]

Sociologist Robert Allen, in Black Awakening in Capitalist
America, wrote that the catch in the 1964 Civil Rights Bill
was in its enforcement. Blacks reporting violations of
their civil rights had to go through "lengthy and elaborate
procedures to secure redress." Response to their requests
were "slow, sporadic, and largely ineffective."[53] The black
masses came to realize that without effective enforcement,

legislation meant nothing. And, the National Committee of Negro Churchmen declared:

> We submit that to pass a Civil Rights Bill as this nation did in 1875 and then refuse to enforce it; to pass another Civil Rights Bill (weaker this time) in 1964 and then refuse to enforce it; . . . to declare desegregation in our schools unconstitutional as the Supreme Court did in 1954, and then refuse to end it forthwith; to set up guidelines for desegregating hospitals and then refuse to appropriate moneys for the enforcement of these guidelines; to insist on civil rights legislation aimed at the south and then to defeat the first piece of such legislation relevant to areas outside the south; to preach "law and order" into the anguish of Negro slums in full view of the contributions of policemen to that anguish and then to insist that policemen be their own judges; to hear the suburban politicians declaim against open occupancy in one breath and in the very next breath insist that they are not racists: These are the ironies which stare us in the face and make it all but impossible to talk about how much "progress" has been made.[54]

What must have appeared totally sanctimonious to blacks was that had Constitutional guarantees and earlier civil rights laws been enforced, there would have been no need for the civil rights legislation produced in the sixties. This, possibly, was one reason why the black masses appeared so skeptical of the new legislation. Concerning Americans typical responses to reform movements, historian C. Vann Woodward wrote, in The Strange Career of Jim Crow, that Americans, sufficiently pressured, will enact laws that embody "reputable and moral values," as "an appeasement of moralists and reformers." Having accomplished this, they regard it as "rather tedious of the reformers to insist upon literal enforcement." The result is that most new laws of this nature become a source of pious gratification, "more honored in the breach than in the observance."[55]

What the civil rights legislation did do, however, was to renew black hopes that they could at last receive some measure of justice in their native country. The Kerner Commission established that the new legislation led to "frustration, hostility, and cynicism in the face of the persistent gap between promise and fulfillment." Further, the struggle for equality in the South, made Northern blacks aware of the economic inequalities of their lives.[56]

The subsequent result of the culminating frustration in black communities was expressed by violence and rioting. In view of the recent passage of civil rights legislation, white America was horrified and could not comprehend what caused blacks to so express themselves. The blame frequently was placed on militants, communists, and outside agitators. White America could not seem to understand, in light of all the "progress" blacks had made, why they would resort to violence. Commenting on the typical reactions to riots, psychiatrists William H. Grief and Price M. Cobbs wrote, in Black Rage, that the first response was usually to find scapegoats. Biracial committees established to determine the causes of racial violence failed to recognize substandard housing and job discrimination as the problem, and reported instead that "outside agitators and wily Communists" were the major causes of racial disorders. Grief and Cobbs concluded that after centuries of suppression, "the black man is still thought to need a provacateur to inflame him!"[57]

Immediately following the riots, governmental committees were appointed to review the causes and to establish programs to prevent the outbreak of future violence. However, after the furor died, little remained changed for the masses of Negroes still huddled in deprevation and squalor in city ghettos. The Kerner Report noted that actions to eliminate black grievances were "limited and sporadic," and did not significantly reduce tensions. Further, the principle response to riots in many cities was to "train and equip the police with more sophisticated weapons." The result was increasing polarization which further enhanced the breakdown of inter-racial communication.[58] The Kerner Report further concluded that despite governmental and private efforts, little change had taken place in the conditions underlying the disorders, and that rather quickly the former status of black existence had been resumed.[59] Likewise, the Skolnick Report contended that the programs recommended by the Kerner Commission, to aid in the termination of racism, had not materialized and indications that it would in the near future, were few.[60]

John Lewis, reflecting the black mood of the mid-1960's, wrote:

> The black masses are on the march for jobs and freedom, and we must say to the politicians that there won't be a "cooling-off period."
> We won't stop now. All of the forces of Eastland, Barnett and Wallace won't stop this revolution. The next time we march, we won't march on Washington, but we will march through the South, through the Heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We will make the action of the past few months look petty. And I say to you, WAKE UP AMERICA!![61]

Blacks marched and demonstrated throughout the South
in the mid-sixties in an effort to express their frustrations
and to petition their government for a redress of grievances.
The U. S. Congress reacted by passing new civil rights
legislation in 1964-65. The enforcement of the legislation,
however, was slow and sporadic. In many instances black
reporting civil rights violations to the Justice Department
saw their petitions ignored. Furthermore, Southern police-
men openly and flagrantly violated the civil rights of
protestors in full view of federal officials who did nothing.
When riots broke out in Northern communities, biracial
committees were established to determine the causes of the
disorders and to suggest guidelines for the prevention of
future violence. Additionally, the Kerner Commission was
appointed to study the causes and offer solutions to the
urban disturbances. However, few programs suggested for
the reduction of black tensions materialized and, after
the furor died, few blacks saw any improvement in their
condition. This failure on the part of the national
government to enforce its legislation and to act on the
recommendations of its own committees resulted in black
frustration and cynicism and reduced the hopes of the black
masses for ever achieving full equality in their native
land. Thus, the precondition of society's resistance to
change has been established, and the second stage was set
for the development of an agitational movement.

Agitative Spokesmen Must Have Access

to Communication Channels

From the time of his national exposure in the summer
of 1966 and during the time he served as chairman of Snick,
Carmichael received constant attention from the media.
Numerous articles, interviews, and feature stories on
Carmichael and black power appeared in every major magazine
and newspaper in the country. Although some of the reportings
of his activities were less than favorable, they gave him
national exposure. Carmichael also published a book, co-
authored with Charles V. Hamilton[62] and entitled Black
Power: The Politics of Liberation in America, and wrote
several articles which appeared in The New York Times and
the Massachusetts Review.

Carmichael spoke before poor ghetto blacks in the
streets, before college audiences, black organizations,
theological seminaries, and various protest organizations.
Excerpts from his speeches frequently appeared in newspaper
accounts concerning his activities. Sometimes he received
live television coverage when he spoke. Wherever he went,
Carmichael made news and secured attention, and this was
necessary in order to reach the masses of poor blacks for
whom he purported to speak. It was also essential if he
hoped to expose to white America the new mood and tone of
black feelings. Hence, accessible communication channels
existed between Stokely Carmichael and the masses of blacks
he represented, as well as to the broader American public
who became exposed to the new black mood.

Conclusion

The mood of American society in the mid-sixties was one of discontentment and turbulence--a precondition which was conducive to the birth and development of an agitative campaign. This mood was enhanced by several factors at work in society. Americans were disturbed over the racial issue and divided in their opinion about the new form black protest had taken. Most Southerners like many other Americans felt that the new black movement was infiltrated by communists and outside agitators. Moreover, there was discussion about what the government should do to end violent retaliations against Negroes and peaceful protestors in the South. To add to this, several accused killers were acquitted, and most of the violent crimes committed against Southern protestors went unpunished. More important, blacks believed they were victims of an unjust system which perpetrated a double standard in its dealings with people--one standard for whites, one for blacks. These complaints were verified by the Kerner Commission, and, although the government passed legislation to end such discrimination, federal inaction to enforce it lent credibility to black complaints that white society was not interested in "true" reform. At a time when all this was going on, the media lent extensive coverage to black speakers, especially the more militant ones. This exposure put the new rhetoric in constant view of millions of Americans, especially the downtrodden masses of blacks whom the new leaders claimed to represent.

In the mid-sixties, many blacks began to tire of
peaceful protests in the face of overt white violence.
Blacks sought new forms and new expressions to expose
their feelings. Hence, the time was ripe for spokesmen who
could eloquently reflect the black mood. Carmichael was
one such man and he acquired channels of communication to
speak his message. Although his slogan of Black Power came
to mean different things to different blacks and whites, it
nonetheless became a popular form of expression in black
communities. James Forman, Executive Secretary for Snick
from 1961 to 1967, speaking of the protest triggered by the
slaying in 1966 of Sammy Younge, Jr., wrote:

> We had no form, which was beautiful. We had no
> pattern which was beautiful. People were just filling
> the streets, and they weren't singing no freedom songs.
> They were mad. People would try and strike up a freedom
> song, but it wouldn't work. All of a sudden you heard
> this, "Black Power, Black Power." People felt what
> was going on. They were tired of this whole nonviolent
> bit. They were tired of this organized demonstration-
> type thing. They were going to do something.[63]

To many blacks the slogan, "Black Power," came to
symbolize a new black consciousness--a pride in being
black, an awareness and identity with their African ancestry,
and more importantly, it seemed to signify a new approach
to old problems. Power was seen as the key to gaining
equality and justice. To some degree Italian power, Jewish
power, and Irish power had helped those minorities acquire
equality in American life, and the blacks felt that perhaps
Black Power could accomplish the same for the Negro.

Carmichael's use of Black Power in his speeches will be examined in Chapter III which specifically analyzes Carmichael's ideas concerning black grievances, goals, and solutions.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 1. Hereafter this Commission will be referred to as the Kerner Commission and the study as the Kerner Report.

[2]It is not exactly clear what "brutality" entails but it covers conduct ranging from use of insulting language to use of excessive and unjustified physical force. Kerner Report, p. 302.

[3]Kerner Report, p. 303.

[4](New York: Random House, Inc., 1964), pp. 51-52.

[5]pp. 104-105.

[6]An American Dilemma, 2nd ed. (1944; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1966), II, 542.

[7]Myrdal, p. 542.

[8]Kerner Report, p. 102.

[9]p. 541.

[10]Jerome H. Skolnick, The Politics of Protest (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1969), p. 275.

[11]From 'Resentment to Confrontation: The Police, the Negroes and the Outbreak of the Nineteen-Sixties Riots," pp. 217-47, cited in Skolnick, p. 270.

[12]Eleanore Carruth, "Our War with the Police Department," in The Negro and the City (New York: Time-Life Books, Inc., 1968), pp.

[13]p. 206.

[14]Cities with an integrated police department had fewer racial disturbances. Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, ed., The History of Violence in America (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1969), p. 414.

[15]p. 315.

[16]Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 4.

[17]p. 337.

[18]Myrdal, p. 1344.

[19]Graham and Curr, p. 399.

[20]p. 341.

[21]p. 13.

[22]Andrew Billingsley, Black Families in White America (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1968), p. 68.

[23]Billingsley, p. 88.

[24]Death At An Early Age (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p. 61.

[25]p. 69.

[26]pp. 434-35.

[27]p. 437.

[28]p. 157.

[29]Herman J. Blake, "The Agony and the Rage," Negro Digest, March 1967, pp. 9-15, cited in Billingsley, p. 168.

[30]The Moyniham Report was, at first, a confidential report entitled, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action. It was done under the auspices of the Office of Policy Planning and Research of the Department of Labor. The Report was completed in March 1965 by Daniel P. Moynihan, Assistant Secretary of Labor, and two of his fellow staff members, Paul Barton and Ellen Broderick.

[31]Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy (Cambridge, Mass: M. I. T. Press, 1967), pp. 127-8.

[32]The Department of Housing and Urban Development classified substandard housing as (1) sound but lacking full plumbing facilities; (2) deteriorating and lacking full plumbing, or (3) delapidated. Kerner Report, p. 467.

[33]pp. 467-71.

[34]cited in David R. Hunter, The Slums (New York: The Free Press, 1968), p. 37.

[35] *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 115-16.

[36] p. 14.

[37] *Kerner Report*, p. 473.

[38] Daisey Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*, in *Growing Up Black*, ed. Jay David (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 22-38.

[39] *Let Me Live*, in David, pp. 57-59.

[40] Bates, in David, pp. 203-6.

[41] William Felton Russell and William Francis McSweeny, *Go Up for Glory*, in *Black on Black*, ed. Arnold Adoff (Toronto, Ontario: The Macmillan Company, Ltd., 1968), p. 257.

[42] Joanne Grant, ed., *Black Protest* (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968), p. 257.

[43] Gene Roberts, "The Story of Snick: From 'Freedom High' to 'Black Power,'" *The New York Times Magazine*, 25 September 1966, pp. 27-29; 119-128.

[44] Skolnick, p. 132.

[45] Zinn, p. 193.

[46] Zinn, p. 44.

[47] George P. Sanger, ed., *United States Statutes at Large: The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America from December, 1865 to March 1867*, 14 (1868; rpt. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), p. 27.

[48] *United States Code Annotated, Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, 3001 to 3530* (St. Paul, Minn: West Publishing Company, 1969), p. 63.

[49] Zinn, p. 192.

[50] Grant, p. 260.

[51] In Lowndes County, Alabama, black tenants who voted in the November, 1966 elections were evicted from their homes. Snick established "Tent City," which existed until March 1967, for the purpose of housing evicted Negroes. Jefferson Thesis, p. 6.

[52]John Lewis, "March on Washington," (speech delivered at the March on Washington, August 28, 1963), in Grant, pp. 375-77.

[53](Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), p. 25.

[54]Nathan Wright Jr., Black Power and Urban Unrest (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1967), p. 161.

[55]Cited in Lewis Killian and Charles Grigg, Racial Crisis in America (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 113.

[56]p. 204.

[57](New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 20.

[58]p. 8.

[59]p. 151.

[60]p. 175.

[61]Lewis, in Grant, pp. 375-77.

[62]Professor Charles V. Hamilton is chairman of the Political Science Department at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

[63]Sammy Younge Jr. Cited in Skolnick, p. 132.

CHAPTER III

DESPAIR AND ATONEMENT: CARMICHAEL'S EXPOSITION
OF BLACK GRIEVANCES AND SOLUTIONS

Introduction

The rhetoric of agitation has been used throughout
history by various groups and their spokesmen for the
purpose of motivating their listeners away from the status
quo. Certain methods have been employed by agitators in-
volved in various movements to express their concern about
the plight of a particular group of people. One tactic
frequently used by agitators is to expose injustices in
the social fabric by reactivating the existing beliefs
of an audience and by stating new grievances.[1] By reviving
previously held grievances, an agitative speaker seeks to
intensify the existing feelings of his listeners on a
particular issue and to heighten the emotional atmosphere.
Increasing the emotionality of a particular situation
helps a spokesman to reduce the logical discrimination of
his listeners, and, hence, prepares them psychologically
for a ready acceptance of his prepositions. Furthermore,
by revealing new complaints, an agitator exposes certain
injustices of which he feels his auditors are unaware.
Living in the midst of certain conditions and accepting

such circumstances as a part of their daily lives, the
audience of an agitative spokesman might not have realized
that such conditions were unjust and therefore merited
complaint.

An agitator may also develop arguments in support
of the injustice he is proclaiming, or he may merely
assert the grievance and offer no proof of its validity.
An agitative speaker who makes a bold assertion without
offering his audience any proofs to support his allegations
probably feels that his auditors accept such statements
because of the credibility of the speaker or because such
contentions are consistent with the values and beliefs
of the audience. Sometimes, however, an agitator seeks
to prove his statements by citing evidence concerning
the grievance which he is exposing. Regardless of his
strategy, the aim of the agitative spokesman is to make
those whom he represents, or seeks to represent, more
aware of their oppressed condition by speaking out against
social evils and the source of the evils as well.

Four types of grievances are frequently used by
agitators to express their discontentment with society
and the power structure. These grievances are related to
the cultural, economic, and political plight of the oppressed
as well as to the mass media's denouncement of the down-
trodden. Cultural Grievances depict a group of people
suffering discrimination and oppression because of their
race or national origins. Economic Grievances describe

the suppressed as victims of economic manipulation and exploitation. <u>Political Grievances</u> represent the down-trodden at the mercy of a ruthless and powerful enemy who victimizes them for political gain. Finally, <u>Media Distortion Grievances</u> reveal the oppressed as misrepresented by the media which disseminates negatively biased newscopy against the agitator and his followers in an attempt to further castigate them and discredit their cause. The agitator may also combine grievances. He may, for example, relate the economic exploitation of his followers and claim that such contrivances are a result of political maneuvers which occur because of the cultural discrimination against his people. Additionally, an agitator may express any of these grievances as personal ones thus seeking to gain audience sympathy and empathy by identifying their grievances with those of his own. The ends of these specific strategies utilized by a particular agitative spokesman are to unite the audience in a concerted effort to improve their condition and to put them in a more powerful position to challenge the vestiges of society responsible for their misery.

After indicating which grievances the audience may suffer, the agitator might propose solutions for ending such abuses. When the agitator sees the injustices as capable of solution within the existing social order, he may seek immediate and attainable ends or he may speak against entrenched conditions in a society which are

incapable of quick redress and therefore require long-range
goals.[2] On the other hand, an agitator may propose solutions
which demand revolutionary changes in the power structure
-- a shift in the balance of power from one group to another
or, perhaps, the creation of a new society founded on a
socio-economic-political philosophy which is in complete
contradistinction to the established norms of the present
society. Whatever his goals, the agitative spokesman
offers his interpretation of solutions as the most viable
answer to the problems of his followers.

Using the criteria for an analysis of grievances and
solutions within agitative rhetoric,[3] the speeches of
Stokely Carmichael, during and immediately following his
role as chairman of Snick, have been examined in order to
determine how he voiced the grievances of the black masses
and what solutions he proposed to remedy the injustices.
The six speeches examined were: "Black Power Explained
to a Black Audience," Cobo Auditorium, Detroit, Michigan,
July 30, 1966; "Black Power," Berkeley Black Power Conference
in Berkeley, California, in October, 1966; "Speech at
Morgan State College," given at Morgan State College,
Baltimore, Maryland, January 16, 1967; "Toward Black
Liberation," "Impact '67" at Vanderbilt University, Nashville,
Tennessee, April 8, 1967; "The Dialectics of Liberation,"
Dialectics of Liberation Congress, London, England, July
18, 1967; and, "Black Power and the Third World," First

Conference of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity,
Havana, Cuba, July 31, 1967.

Black Grievances Voiced by Carmichael

In 1966, twenty-five-year-old Stokely Carmichael
began to expound his interpretations of the black man's
grievances against white society. The black masses were
becoming increasingly frustrated over what they perceived
as the persistent gap between white liberal promises of
equality and the actual fulfillment of such promises.
As a speaker and activist for the new black mood, Stokely
Carmichael undoubtedly mirrored some of the sentiments
and feelings of the poor masses of blacks whom he represented.
In the six speeches analyzed for this study, Carmichael
introduced and reiterated several grievances.

Carmichael's Cultural Grievances

In developing his exposition of black Cultural Grievances,
Carmichael used five principle themes:

1. American racism
2. Integration
3. Western oppression of non-white cultures
4. Group oppression
5. White liberals in black communities

American racism. --Whether speaking before a black or
white audience, Carmichael repeatedly reminded his auditors
of the racism that existed in American society. To a black
audience in Detroit he heralded the beginning of a new
era for the black man when he affirmed that blacks would

now stand up to the challenges of racism: "It's 1966 . . . our eyes are open wide. And we [sic] seeing you clear through, and you're nothing but a racist country . . . and we're standing up today."[4] Carmichael usually developed the thesis of American racism in greater detail by offering his listeners specific examples to verify his allegations. At Berkeley, Carmichael reiterated the theme of American racism and proclaimed that American institutions were "built upon racism,"[5] and, although at this particular point he cited no evidence to back his contentions, throughout the text of his speeches his ideas on racism were clarified by numerous examples in which the audience was expected to see the proof of racism in America.

The theme of American racism was repeated throughout many of Carmichael's speeches. In London and Cuba, the concept of racism in the United States was extended and related to the capitalistic system, "capitalism and racism go hand in hand."[6] Carmichael offered examples of American racism in the Cuba and London speeches, but he gave no examples to specifically connect capitalism with racism. Thus, it appeared that Carmichael's auditors were expected to agree that capitalism and racism were synomyous; therefore, America as the epitome of capitalism was necessarily racist. Believing that America was racist, a listener was apparently expected to have proof enough of his own that capitalism and racism were intertwined. No doubt the Cubans could relate these two negative ideologies.

Integration. --One of the themes persistently em-
phasized by Carmichael in his speeches dealt with his
belief that integration and white superiority were syn-
onymous, that is, integration perpetuated the idea that
whites were racially superior because it was always voiced
in terms of blacks assimilating into the white community.
Integration weakened the black community because only the
exemplary blacks, according to Carmichael, were selected
for presentation into the white community. Hence, the
black neighborhood was impaired by the loss of its better
citizens to the integrated one. In his Vanderbilt speech,
Carmichael stressed that "integration has to be based on
the assumption that there was nothing of value in the Negro
community and that little of value could be created . . .
so the thing to do was to siphon off the 'acceptable'
Negroes into the surrounding middle-class white community."[7]
In Detroit, Carmichael contended that if whites really
wanted to integrate they should move into black communities
and send their "lily-white children from the suburbs into
our crowded schools."[8] And, in London, Carmichael further
stated, "integration is absolutely absurd unless you can
talk about it on a two-way street, where black people sit
down and decide about integration."[9] Carmichael intimated
that blacks were assimilated into white communities because
it was felt this process would make Negroes more like whites
and hence make them more acceptable human beings. Carmichael

viewed integration, perhaps, as a white concept perpetrated
for the appeasement of the white liberal conscience--a
way for liberals to convince themselves that they were
concerned about the problems of the poor blacks because
they allowed blacks to assimilate into their communities.
At any rate, the white man had nearly always determined
what was best for the black man, and Carmichael felt that
it was now time for blacks to make the decisions which
affected their lives.

In Cuba, at the OLAS Conference, Carmichael expounded
on the idea that many blacks had believed integration would
alleviate their condition. This attitude, Carmichael
contended, was "characteristic of the 'Civil Rights movement'
. . . [and the] bourgeois character of that 'movement.'"[10]
Here, Carmichael implied that the Civil Rights Movement was
led by middle-class blacks, the "bourgeois," who were seeking
to better their own condition and who, perhaps either out
of credulity or indifference, did not realize that the
program of integration was irrelevant to the poor black
masses. Carmichael reasoned that only the elite were in
a position to be concerned about public accommodations.
At Berkeley, he stated, "we cannot afford to be concerned
about 6 per cent. . . . We are going to be concerned about
. . . [the other] 94 per cent."[11] Since it was obvious that
the poor masses of black Americans did not have jobs,
decent housing, or the money to enjoy such luxuries as hotels

and restaurants, credibility was lent to Carmichael's contention that integration did not speak to the needs of the poor black masses.

Carmichael's verbal vilification of integration appeared contradictory to his actions in the South where he participated in protest demonstrations, some of which were aimed at the integration of restaurants and bus stations. But Carmichael's position was not hypocritical. Although Carmichael felt that integration would not remedy the problems of the black masses, he believed that any man should have the freedom, for example, to eat anywhere he wished. Carmichael participated in Southern protest demonstrations, not to be able to sit next to a white man, but to be able to sit, eat, sleep, ride wherever he chose. At Berkeley, Carmichael explained, "we were never fighting for the right to integrate; we were fighting against white supremacy."[12]

In the six speeches examined, Carmichael spoke at length on the topic of integration and appeared to develop this theme in greater detail than any other single idea. He did this, perhaps, because he felt that integration was endorsed by both blacks and whites as an acceptable goal for the black masses; hence, the true implications that the program had for the average black man were not realized.

Western oppression of non-white cultures. --Carmichael repeatedly voiced, especially in his Cuban and London speeches,

the grievance that Western colonization subjugated the
non-white peoples of the world and subsequently destroyed
their native culture. Developing this theme quite extensively
when he spoke before the OLAS in Havana, Cuba, Carmichael
identified the black man's oppression in the United States
with that of Latin-Americans and other non-white people and
linked this oppression to a common enemy--"Western
civilization." Attempting to show that Latin-Americans
shared a common grievance with black people and other non-
whites, Carmichael gave specific examples of degrading names
which were attached to all non-white races in an attempt
to dehumanize them: "We are called 'niggers,' Spanish-
speaking people are called 'spics,' the Chinese 'chinks,'
the Vietnamese 'gooks.'"[13] One of the major problems facing
all non-white peoples of the world was that Western society,
operating from a position of white superiority, attempted
to make native cultures believe in their own inferiority
by classifying non-whites in almost subhuman terms. Thus,
Carmichael not only voiced the black man's grievances, but,
at the same time, linked the problems of his people with the
problems of his Cuban auditors and all non-whites throughout
the world. Here, Carmichael obviously attempted to agitate
his non-white Cuban auditors by showing how they suffered
from white exploitation.

Carmichael related the ideas of the Algerian psychiatrist-
philosopher Frantz Fanon, who wrote in his book, The Wretched
of the Earth,[14] that the progress of Western civilization

entailed the forced destruction of the culture of a conquered people and the institution of Western values in their place. Carmichael supported the thesis of the West forcing its culture on a people when, in his speech in London, he castigated the English for the role they played in African colonization: "If a few settlers left England to go to Zimbabwe, there was no reason for them to rename that country Rhodesia . . . if they'd had respect for the cultures of other people, they would have spoken the language of those people."[15] Carmichael repeatedly condemned the white West for its exploitation of non-white peoples, but never once mentioned the rape of the South American continent by the Spanish-speaking people who were just as ruthless in their treatment of the natives as the American and English. It was almost as if Carmichael could not recognize the crimes committed by the Spanish, whom he considered as his non-white allies, as they plundered, raped, and murdered in the name of the King of Spain and the Holy Catholic Church. Perhaps the reason he ommited any reference to the Spanish conquest of Latin America was that, as he was trying to unite all non-whites into a collective body to fight white oppression, he did not want to alienate his Latin auditors.

Carmichael contended that the West had propagandized its culture and defined beauty to the extent that people around the world were clamoring to imitate Western styles. As specific examples to support this contention, Carmichael

related the case of Japanese women who had eye operations
to round their eyes and black women who hot-combed their
hair to straighten it. Carmichael proclaimed in London:
"To hell with the West and its culture. Let it keep it.
We want ours."[16] Carmichael appeared to believe that
because the West possessed the power to conquer everything
in its path, the non-whites around the world were psycho-
logically conditioned to believe that Western values were
superior and hence to be emmulated. Perhaps if the black
man could defiantly assert his right to his own culture,
he might rid himself of the myth of white Western superiority.

Group oppression. --Developing Cultural Grievances
further, Carmichael explained that it was "nonsensical and
a downright lie" to speak of individual suppression among
blacks because blacks were oppressed as a group. Carmichael
developed this theme in greater detail and exemplified the
types of stereotyped characteristics which were often
attributed to blacks: for example, in his speech at Berkeley,
Carmichael related, "we are oppressed as a group because
we are black, not because we are lazy, not because we are
apathetic, not because we're stupid, . . . smell, . . . eat
watermelon and have good rhythm. We are oppressed because
we are black."[17] Carmichael attempted to convince blacks
that their oppression was due only to their skin color and
not because of individual blight. Thus, the stereotypes
imposed on the black man were perhaps calculated by white

society to appease the white guilt for suppressing black
people by convincing both blacks and whites that the Negro
was indeed inferior. Carmichael laid the blame for the
collective black oppression squarely on the shoulder of
white power.

White liberals in black communities. --Another facet
of the Cultural Grievances voiced by Carmichael concerned
the migration of white liberals into the ghetto community
for the purpose of advising blacks on how to improve their
condition. Using an analogy, Carmichael in his Berkeley
speech compared the liberals with African missionaries.
The African missionary came to civilize the heathens and
to instill in them Western values and culture. The
"modern-day missionary," the white liberal, came into the
black ghetto to "Head Start, Upward Lift, Bootstrap, and
Upward Bound . . . [blacks] into white society."[18] Further-
more, Carmichael felt that the positions of authority occupied
by whites who had come to work in the black community
contributed to the black man's feelings of inferiority.
It was the white liberal who assumed a position of power
in ghetto programs, and it was the white liberal who advised
Negroes on how to solve the black problem. Carmichael
believed that black men should occupy the "positions of
power, doing and articulating for themselves."[19] White
liberals needed to go into their own communities and help
eliminate the deeply embeded racist attitudes there.
Expounding this theme in more detail, Carmichael stated

that there could be no coalition between blacks and whites.
Whites were economically secure, and, since blacks were not,
there could be no viable coalition because white and black
goals were not the same. In Detroit, Carmichael clarified
his ideas on this theme by a specific reference to the
college students involved in the Student Protest Movement:
"that college kid is fighting for the right to wear a beard
and smoke pot, and we're fighting for our lives."[20]

Carmichael additionally criticized white liberals for
attempting to "whiten" the black man. Carmichael appeared
to believe that the white liberal had to make a black man
white in order to be able to accept that black man as an
equal. Perhaps Carmichael felt that the liberal was in-
capable of recognizing that a black man was different from
the white, both in cultural and in environmental orientation.
In his desire to purge his conscience of any guilt feelings
concerning the black problem, the white liberal decided
that all men, regardless of race, were alike. Thus, the
liberal had made the black man into his own image and was
now capable of accepting him as an equal. If this exemplified
Carmichael's perception of the true nature of the white
liberal, it was another reason for Carmichael's belief
that there could be no viable coalition between whites and
blacks because the black man could no longer tolerate the
emasculation of his self-identity by crusading liberals.

Carmichael's Economic Grievances

Carmichael cited three major reasons for the economic dispensation of the black masses:

1. Low income
2. Institutionalized racism
3. Exploitation of black communities

Low income. --When Carmichael spoke of the Economic Grievances of the black man, he emphasized that the black plight was due to meager salaries and not to laziness. He stressed the point that the menial jobs, hard labor, and low wages always fell to blacks. Carmichael, in his Berkeley speech, ridiculed the American myth regarding the positive correlation between hard work and economic success and stated that in the United States it was assumed that if someone were poor, they were poor because of individual faultiness as "they had too many children . . . [and] didn't care about school."[21] Carmichael felt these ideas were a lot of nonsense and that poverty in America was calculated, He said further in his speech at Berkeley: "The reason why the poverty program won't work is because the calculators of poverty are administering it."[22] Perhaps Carmichael suggested that poverty would not be eliminated because it provided monetary rewards for the administrators of poverty programs. If this is what Carmichael implied, then perhaps some credibility was lent to his allegation by sociologist Herbert J. Gans of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who supported the theory that poverty exists because it

performs a useful function to society. Gans believed that
one of the major roles of the poor is to provide jobs for
social workers, government health workers, journalists,
and poverty program administrators. Gans implied that
many individuals who are ostensibly combating poverty
are profiting from it.

Carmichael contended in his Berkeley Speech that one
of the major forces hampering the economic development of
the black man was white society's refusal to adequately
compensate the black man for the services he performed.
If money were contingent with the amount of work accomplished,
then Carmichael felt the black man would be economically
secure.

Institutionalized racism.--Carmichael further
voiced the Economic Grievances of the black man when in
his Vanderbilt and London addresses he gave examples of
institutionalized racism as evidence of the economic
inequality of blacks. He described institutionalized
racism as that which "keeps the black people locked in
dilapidated slums, tenements, . . . subject to the prey
of exploitative slum landlords, merchants, loan sharks,
and the restrictive practices of real-estate agents."[23]
As a specific example of institutionalized racism, Carmichael
revealed the economic plight of the masses of blacks in
Birmingham: "Five hundred Negro babies die each year because
of lack of proper food, shelter, and medical facilities;

and thousands more are destroyed and maimed physically,

emotionally, and intellectually because of conditions of

poverty and deprivation in the ghetto."[24] Throughout many

of his speeches, Carmichael repeated the idea that individu-

alized racism, terrorist attacks on individual blacks, was

unacceptable to the majority of society, yet institution-

alized racism, which was more destructive to the black masses,

was either ignored or society was incapable of remedying it.

Carmichael appeared to feel that since institutionalized

racism was more subtle, it was, therefore, more tragic for

it went virtually unnoticed by white society. If a church

were bombed and five children killed, society was appalled,

yet if hundreds of black children died or were "maimed

physically and emotionally" from malnutrition, disease and

other conditions of poverty, no one seemed to care.

Carmichael's attitude was that institutionalized racism

produced greater malevolent consequences for the black

masses than individualized racism, and, hence, it was much

more destructive.

Exploitation of black communities. --Another facet

of Economic Grievances exposed by Carmichael related to

the dependent status of black communities which Carmichael

defined as "colonies" because their cheap labor and capital

were exploited by those living outside the black neigh-

borhood. In Cuba, Carmichael developed this theme by

collating the economic problems of black Americans to

those of the Latins: "Our people are a colony within the

United States; you are colonies outside the United States."
Carmichael related that black colonies in America were
"victims of white imperialism and colonial exploitation, . . .
(and this was) in practical economic and political terms
true."[26] Thus, Carmichael sought to identify the black
problem with the problem which his Latin auditors believed.
they also possessed when he implied that they were both
exploited economically by the white imperialistic United
States. Seeking further to clarify his contention that
black communities were colonies, and simultaneously, to
lend validity to his claim, Carmichael argued at Vanderbilt
that although American cities were populated by the non-white
people of the Third World, the non-whites in those areas
did not control the resources in their communities--"the
physical ownership of the land, houses, and stores lie
outside that community."[27] Carmichael implied that white
merchants in the ghettos charged exorbitant prices for the
commodities they sold to blacks and, upon return to white
areas, took their bounty with them and deposited it in white
banks. Thus, as whites living outside the area controlled
black neighborhoods economically, black people never profited
from the money they put into their communities; rather,
the tools necessary to improve the black ghetto rested
in the hands of whites who expressed little concern for the
amelioration of the black man's condition.

Carmichael's Political Grievances

Carmichael based his exposition of the black man's

Political Greivances on four major factors:

1. The Vietnam War
2. Black powerlessness
3. White power
4. Irresponsible Negro leaders

The Vietnam War. --One of the topics around which

Carmichael based Political Grievances concerned the war

in Vietnam. Carmichael realized that many Negroes believed

that the army provided the best chance for security to

black youths. Carmichael's response to this idea was

expressed in his Detroit speech: "Do you mean to tell me

for me to have a decent life I've got to become a hired

killer and fight it out in Vietnam? Baby, it's time we

stayed here and fight it out here."[28] Carmichael lashed

out vehemently against the Vietnam War and implied that it

was but another example of Western imperialism seeking to

subjugate a non-white people. Furthermore, it was ridiculous

for a black man to fight for freedom around the world

when he did not enjoy freedom at home. Carmichael believed,

for example, that it was ludicrous for a black man to fight

to give free elections to Vietnam when he could not exercise

that right in the South of his homeland. On the same theme,

Carmichael reminded his Detroit auditors of another reason

why the black youth should not sacrifice his life for his

country: a black youth "killed fighting for his country;

. . . [is brought home] and they won't bury him in his
land."[29] Carmichael's statement obviously referred to the
fact that many Southern cemeteries, including those for
veterans, excluded blacks from interment in them. Thus,
a black man who fought in Vietnam was fighting a political
war waged against a non-white culture--a war based,
supposedly, on all the American platitudes of freedom,
liberty, and equality. Carmichael appeared to believe that
not only was it nonsensical, but hypocritical for the
country to expect a black man to fight for the freedom of
others when he did not enjoy these same freedoms in his
native land.

Black powerlessness. --Carmichael's exposition of
Political Grievances centered mainly on the black man's
lack of power. Carmichael frequently reiterated the theme
that blacks had no effective political voice with which to
combat violent white power which was epitomized by the
making and enforcement of laws with "guns and nightsticks."[30]
In the coming decade, Carmichael contended, the inner city
ghettos would be populated by Puerto Ricans, Mexican-
Americans, and American Indians, as well as blacks.
Carmichael expressed at Vanderbilt that the main problem
these people would face would be a lack of "power to
control their lives . . . and effective political institutions
through which to relate to the total society."[31] Carmichael
felt that should blacks and other non-whites not be given

the power to combat white oppression, then the future

of the inner cities would be one of violence. Thus,

black powerlessness was deemed responsible for the condition

of the black communities and for the depressed situation of

the black masses. Carmichael frequently repeated that black

Americans lived in deprivation only because they were

"black and powerless"--powerless to effectively confront

the machinery of white power.

White power. --Carmichael complained that violent,

destructive white power was responsible for the misery

of the ghettos, and yet white society had the audacity to

condemn black rebellion and rhetorical vehemence as

violent. To support this contention, Carmichael related

in his speech at Berkeley, "Lyndon Baines Johnson is busy

bombing the hell out of Vietnam--don't nobody talk about

nonviolence. White people beat up black people every day--

don't nobody talk about nonviolence. But as soon as black

people start to move, the double standard comes into being."[32]

At Vanderbilt, Carmichael tied black racial violence to

a specific cause--white power--and related that "As

long as people in the ghettos . . . feel that they are the

victims of the misuse of white power without any way to

have their needs represented . . . we will continue to

have riots."[33]   Carmichael preferred the term "rebellion"

to describe the racial disturbances in the ghettos and to

his black Detroit audience stated, "don't you ever call

those things riots, because they are rebellions."[34]
Carmichael apparently delineated ghetto violence as
"rebellion" because it entailed nothing more than an attempt
by the black man to state his grievances against white
American society. The misuse of white political power,
Carmichael implied, was responsible for the impotence
and subjugation of black communities, and if white power
continued to keep the black community in a state of
oppression, then violence would continue to occur. Thus,
Carmichael appeared to believe that ghetto "rebellions"
occurred only as a result of the culminating frustration
of the black masses whose cries for political justice
were ignored.

Another complaint voiced by Carmichael at Vanderbilt
concerned the gerrymandering of political districts by the
white power structure to impair the collective voting strength
of the black masses. Carmichael established that blacks were
strategically located, constituting a heavy majority in
the cities, and, hence, blacks should manifest some degree
of political power by bloc voting. Yet, white political
machinery had gerrymandered black neighborhoods to the
extent that the true voting strength of the Negro community
was never realized. Thus, even though blacks constituted
a majority in many areas, their pleas for social justice
were dismissed because they did not possess the political
strength necessary to make their requests heard. Carmichael
appeared to believe that the white power structure's

suppression of the black man's political voice placed blacks
in a position of submissiveness to white-controlled political
machinery which expressed little concern for the blighted
condition of the black masses.

Irresponsible Negro leaders. --Another theme Carmichael
developed in his exposition of political grievances was
that Negro leaders were not responsible to the black masses,
but rather demonstrated allegiance to the white political
machinery that had helped elect them. Carmichael appeared
to believe that Negro leaders were so occupied with trying
to win the approval of the white community and power
structure that they spent most of their time talking with
whites instead of working in the black communities where
they were most needed. Carmichael's complaint had some
validity. When the slogan "Black Power" exploded on the
American scene, most black leaders, instead of going to
the black community and seeking to find some workable and
creative uses for Black Power, clamored instead to either
disclaim or defend the concept to white America. In a
further attempt to show how black leaders were bought by
white society, Carmichael, in his speech at Vanderbilt,
referred to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and lashed out
at President Johnson and the Democratic Party for attempting
to "register Democrats, not Negroes." Carmichael related
that when black leaders went to Washington to discuss
the problems of Negroes in the South, they were told "Go

home and organize your people into the local Democratic
Party--then we'll see about poverty money and appointments."[35]
If Carmichael's assertions were valid, then he had another
reason to suspect that Negro leaders, bribed to serve as
political chattels in the interests of the Democratic
Party, could never be responsible to the black masses.

Carmichael's Media Distortion Grievances

A recurring theme of Carmichael's was the role the
press played in helping to maintain the status quo in a
racist society. In developing Media Distortion Grievances,
Carmichael cited four crimes of which he claimed the
communication media were guilty:

1. Unconscious racism
2. Media misrepresentation
3. Guilt projection
4. White superiority propaganda

Unconscious racism. --One of the themes Carmichael
developed when reciting Media Distortion Grievances was that
the press was so subconsciously indoctrinated with the
racist norms of Western society that they were incapable
of objectively reporting the news. At Vanderbilt, Carmichael
observed: "Our experience with the national press has
been that, where they have managed to escape a meretricious
special interest in 'Git Whitey' sensationalism and race-
warmongering, individual reporters and commentators have
been conditioned by the enveloping racism of the society
to the point where they are incapable even of objective

observation and reporting of racial incidents, much less
the analysis of ideas."[36]   The idea Carmichael appeared to
advance was that the press could not objectively report
events because they were victims of unconscious racism.
He felt that the media selectively perceived certain
happenings and recorded them inadequately not, perhaps, due
to any conscious effort to distort the news but rather
because the norms of a racist society were unconsciously
ingrained in their minds.   Carmichael also related in his
Vanderbilt speech, "I can see very clearly the discrep-
ancies between what happened and the versions that are finding
their way into general acceptance as a kind of popular
mythology. Thus the victimization of the Negro takes place
in two phases--first it occurs in fact and deed; then
. . . in the official recording of those facts."[37] Thus,
according to Carmichael, Negroes were tyrannized, first,
by the suppressive restrictions placed on their freedoms
by white society, and secondly, by the reportings of the
news media which reproved any attempt on the part of the
black masses to remedy their plight.

Media misrepresentation. --Carmichael cited specific
examples of media misrepresentation to lend validity to
his claims that the media sought to discredit the black
cause. He revealed that in 1964 the National Democratic
Party had damned the actions of the black population of
Mississippi to obtain some facsimile of political representation

and stipulated that "whenever the events of that convention

are recalled by the press, one sees only that version

fabricated by the press agents of the Democratic Party."[38]

Carmichael referred here to the actions taken by the

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) to be rec-

ognized at the 1964 Democratic Convention as the official

party for the state of Mississippi. The MFDP stressed that

they excluded no one on the basis of race or color, and

that they supported the Democratic platform. Despite the

fact that the Mississippi Democratic Party had rejected

the Democratic platform and passed a resolution condemning

the Civil Rights Act of 1964, its delegation to the

national convention was seated, while the MFDP delegation

was excluded. The second example Carmichael gave referred

to the MFDP's contestation of the election of five white

congressmen from Mississippi. The MFDP gathered data to

substantiate their claim that the election was illegal and

fradulent, and that the congressmen had "been elected

through a process which methodically and systematically

excluded over 450,000 voting-age Negroes, almost one-half

of the total electorate of the State."[39] Carmichael

further claimed at Vanderbilt that when this event was

related by the press, it was mentioned "in terms which leave

one with the rather curious impression that somehow the

oppressed Negro people of Mississippi are at fault for

confronting the Congress with a situation in which they had

no alternative but to endorse Mississippi's racist political practices."[40] Carmichael's recitation of these two specific examples of media misrepresentation indicated his belief that, first, the press did not delve deeply enough into certain issues and were content to accept the ideas of others, in this case the press agents of the Democratic Party, as factual. The press was also depicted as catering to special interests because it reported only the white power structure's version of the news. In the second example related, Carmichael intimated that when a situation involving blacks occurred which reflected negatively on the white establishment, the news was slanted to convey the erroneous impression that Negroes were at fault.

Guilt projection. --Expounding Media Distortion Grievances further, Carmichael, at Morgan State, admonished his listeners to ignore the presence of the press because "they will not be able to understand what we are talking about." Carrying the theme further, Carmichael referred to the criticism the Black Movement had received from the press and stated: "I was reading George Bernard Shaw the other night . . . He said that all criticism is in fact autobiography. So the press ought to dig them some Mr. Shaw."[41] Carmichael inferred that the deficiencies spotted by the press in the Black Movement were the same characteristics possessed by the press members. Perhaps one reason the press noticed these blemishes was because they possessed

these weaknesses themselves, and, hence were more prone to perceive them in others. Carmichael not only condemned the American press, but when he appeared in London, he defamed the British media as well. Carmichael told his British auditors that he planned to expound on the plans of black Americans and proclaimed, "This is your only chance to hear it clear, because you'll be hearing it from the BBC next time."[42] Thus, he felt that white reporters, whether they were English or American, projected their own inadequacies onto the Black Movement when they disseminated a negative picture of Black Power.

White superiority propaganda. --Carmichael discussed his complaints against the media further by contending that the press had brainwashed American society, white and black, to the point where anything white was considered superior. In Cuba, Carmichael explained: "Black children in North America grow up aspiring only to enter white society-- not only because white society eats better, is housed and clothed better . . . but also because they have been bombarded by the white-controlled communications media and educated by black teachers with white minds . . . that white is better."[43] Hence, Carmichael saw the press as a guilty factor in the "whitening" of the black community and the destruction of black culture. The media created an inferiority complex in the black youth, according to Carmichael, by making them want to trade their culture for that of the

~white man. In Detroit, Carmichael recited a specific grievance that he personally had experienced with the press: "Now these guys---those guys over there. They're called the press. I got up one morning and read a story. They were talking about a cat named Stokely Carmichael. I say he must be a ba-a-a-a-d nigger. For he's raising a whole lot of sand. I had to get up and look in the mirror and make sure it was me."[44] Carmichael felt that the press had distorted his own image to the point that he was unrecognizable even to himself. Carmichael perhaps implied that the reason the press distorted his image was that his style was not in keeping with the idea that the white press had of Negro leaders.

Was Carmichael's complaint legitimate? --Did the press, in fact, distort the concept of Black Power? Did the press distort the image of Stokely Carmichael? There is evidence to support Carmichael's contentions. George Knowter of radio station WCWC in Selma, Alabama, who, although he disagreed with the philosophy of Snick, admitted, "If I hadn't seen some of the events myself, I wouldn't even recognize the copy as it comes through here. You know, there are ways to report the facts and still distort the news."[45] Paul Good stipulated that the Philadelphia Bulletin of August 13, 1966 carried a lead story with the headline: "80 ARMED POLICE RAID FOUR SNCC OFFICES HERE, SEIZE DYNAMITE, ARREST 4." The story quoted Philadelphia

Police Commissioner Frank R̶i̶z̶z̶o̶ ̶a̶s̶ saying that Snick offices
were "becoming store-houses of arms, ammunition and dynamite
. . . powerful enough to remove Independence Hall." Good
continued:

> Virtually everything in the headlines, the story
> and Rizzo's quotations were untrue or misleading.
> One of the four places raided was a SNCC office.
> One of the persons arrested belonged to SNCC. Two
> and a half sticks of dynamite were allegedly found
> in a private apartment not connected with SNCC.
> No other arms were found.[46]

A newsman of Nashville, Tennessee said, "I've heard his
[Carmichael's] speeches in their entirety. They're
different from what you hear on the news."[47] Wayne Brockriede
and Robert Scott wrote, in The Rhetoric of Black Power, that
when "Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey and Roy Wilkins
repudiated Black Power, they got front-page coverage, . . .
[while] reports of support for the concept were buried in
the back pages."[48] Paul Good reported that "While the
controversy over Black Power raged on front pages, the
social, economic and political proofs of white power were
scattered over the inside pages."[49] Robert Lewis Shayon
wrote in the Saturday Review that Carmichael was given
the "monster treatment" on major network newscasts and that
readings in the press reinforced such an image by describing
Carmichael as "'radical,' 'hard-core,' 'racist,' 'black
nationalist.' . . . a wild sort of Mau Mau man."[50] And,
Time magazine dubbed Carmichael a "fiery Negro demagogue."[51]

When Carmichael spoke at Vanderbilt, he received a
special treatment from the media. Prior to Carmichael's

arrival in Nashville, the front-page editorial of the
Nashville Banner proclaimed: "Hate Speeling Carmichael
Unwelcome in This City."[52] After Carmichael's speech,
most of the audience was impressed and found him to be
decidedly different from what they had expected. University
of Alabama President, Frank A. Rose, who followed Carmichael
on the platform, omitted the part of his prepared speech
which attacked Carmichael for his "passionate intensity,"
because the speech was not as he expected it to be.[53]
Hours after Carmichael's speech, a riot broke out in the
black section of Nashville. National television featured
live coverage and emphasized that Carmichael had spoken
in the city that day, and "flashed the story from coast to
coast."[54] The probable result was that the American public
concluded that Carmichael had been responsible for inciting
a riot. Thus, evidence exists to suggest that Carmichael's
contentions were valid--that the press did, in fact,
distort the reportings of events surrounding the black
community, the Black Movement, and Stokely Carmichael.

Carmichael's Solutions to the Black Problem

In the six speeches examined, the one basic solution
that Carmichael offered to remedy all black grievances was
"Black Power," for power would enable the black man to set
his own goals, to work out his own problems, and to define
himself and his relationship to society. If the black man
had power, Carmichael believed that he could overcome his

inferiority complex and develop self-confidence enough to
be able to make valuable contributions to society as a whole.
At Morgan State, Carmichael related that "the first need
of a free people is to be able to define their own terms
and have those terms recognized by their oppressors. . . .
We must define what we are and move from our definitions
and tell them to recognize what we say we are."[55] Thus,
Carmichael felt that blacks were going to have to stop
accepting the white man's definition of what was best for
black lives. It was up to the black man to determine what
was to his best advantage and to act accordingly to make
his goals a reality. Carmichael, who was influenced greatly
by Albert Camus' The Rebel, related Camus' idea that "when
a slave stops accepting definitions imposed upon him by
his master . . . he begins to move and create a life."[56]
Thus, for a black man to be truly free, Carmichael felt he
must define his own terms and defend them even if his
master, white American society, disagreed with those terms.
And freedom would come when blacks were able to be themselves
in a society tolerant enough to allow blacks the liberty
to develop their culture in their own way. Thus, blacks
would be accepted as equals in society, not because they
imitated white values, but because their culture, although
it was different, would be considered worthwhile by the
total society.

Carmichael felt that true liberation would come for

the black masses when they had organized enough political
and economic power to be able to control their own
communities. In many of his speeches, Carmichael stressed
that blacks must organize black power in their communities
to end abuses and economic exploitation and develop a
structure capable of expressing the needs of the black
community. Carmichael revealed in his speech at Vanderbilt:
"It is because we are powerless that we are oppressed, and
it is only with power that we can make the decisions governing
our lives and our communities. . . . Without power we have
to beg for what is rightfully ours."[57] Carmichael referred
to Black Power as the collective power of the black masses
--not to individual power. Only through a collective strength
could the black man force a change in the conditions which
threatened to engulf him.

Carmichael proposed a revolutionary solution when he
stated his belief in London that blacks needed to gain
control over the basic institutions in American society, to
destroy them, and rebuild new ones. Carmichael felt that
a capitalistic society could not possibly "create structures
free from exploitation."[58] Carmichael, however, never
stipulated exactly how the new institutions would be built,
what they would consist of, nor how they would function.
He merely voiced, in very general terms, that new institutions
would be built. Additionally, Carmichael revealed that the
struggle was "to overthrow this system which feeds itself
and expands itself through the economic and cultural

exploitation of non-white, non-Western peoples--the Third World."[59] This solution was obviously revolutionary for it stated a goal often voiced by other revolutionaries. Carmichael believed that a change in the power base of the world would end the exploitation of peoples of the Third World by foreign plunderers who sought to impose their culture and values on a conquered civilization. Again, however, Carmichael never stated how these goals were to be accomplished; he simply asserted that his proposals would end the misery of Third World peoples. Since Carmichael's solutions required a revolutionary change in the socio-economic philosophy of the United States, his proposals were not workable within the American society of the mid-sixties.

Another solution to the black man's problem, as Carmichael viewed it, lay in leaders who would be responsible to the needs of the black community. At Vanderbilt, Carmichael expressed that blacks needed a "leadership which is truly 'responsible'--not to the white press and power structure, but to the community." Carmichael felt that concerned leaders would recognize that blacks must have power, and that this power was to be gained by the "unified and collective strength of . . . a community." With such community strength, the white leadership would be forced to engage in meaningful dialogue with the representatives of a black community "in terms of real power."[60] In Cuba,

Carmichael related that blacks did not want leaders who
merely took over the positions now held by the white elite,
because blacks "do not seek to create communities where,
in place of white rulers, black rulers control the lives of
the black masses and where black money goes into a few
black pockets." Carmichael felt that money from the black
community must go into the "communal pocket" and that the
society black people sought to build was not an "oppressive
capitalistic society."[61] Thus, Carmichael believed that
blacks needed to organize themselves into a collective power
and to elect representatives that would be truly responsible
to the needs of the black community. Black leaders would
not merely take over the functions of white leaders who
had stripped black communities of their resources. But
Carmichael felt that, because capitalism was necessarily
exploitative, new institutions must be built in which
black leaders could function. Thus, the economic resources
of black neighborhoods would be controlled by the black
community as a collective unit, and black leaders could
then effect a meaningful dialogue, from a position of power,
with the white establishment.

The key to solving the black problem, according to
Carmichael, rested in power---the collective Black Power
of the Negro community which would enable the black man to
define himself in his own terms, elect truly representative
leaders, and create institutions capable of meeting the
needs of the people.

Conclusions

Stokely Carmichael appeared before the American public
and the black masses in the mid-1960's to express his
perception of black grievances and to offer his inter-
pretation of viable solutions to the black problem through
Black Power. Carmichael developed themes surrounding the
four types of grievances common to agitators: Cultural,
Economic, Political, and Media Distortion Grievances.

Carmichael's solutions focused on the elimination of
cultural and economic grievances and the political dis-
franchisement of the black masses through the development
of black power. Carmichael envisioned Black Power as the
collective strength of the black masses which would enable
them to form a political force and elect leaders to represent
the legitimate needs of the black community. Carmichael
saw in Black Power an economic and physical bloc that would
force black leaders to speak to the problems of the black
community, instead of appeasing the white establishment
with an ineffective dialogue which did not express black
sentiments. He believed that integration should not be
a goal for the black masses because integration spoke only
to the needs of a few blacks who would assimilate into the
white community. Additionally, integration was an attempt
to destroy the cultural integrity of the black community
by forcing blacks to imitate white values in order to be
accepted by the white community. With effective power,

the black masses would be able to maintain their cultural
identity and enhance their self-esteem by solving their
own problems. Carmichael saw the black man oppressed
primarily because of his skin color. Because he was
black, the Negro was powerless, and because of this political
impotence, the black man did not possess the tools necessary
to force a change in his economic condition. Since blacks
were oppressed as a group because they were black and
powerless, Carmichael felt that by developing a sense of
racial pride and a collective unit of power in the black
community, blacks could answer their needs for a cultural
identity and economic dependence through political power.

Carmichael believed that the black man must be able
to define himself and his relationship to society. If
blacks allowed white society to define the black man and
his goals, then blacks could never move to create a new life
suited to the temperament of the black masses. The black
culture, Carmichael contended, must be accepted as worthwhile
by the total society, even though its values might differ
from that expounded by the white community. Carmichael
stressed that if blacks controlled the economic and political
power in their communities, they would possess the capability
of determining their own destiny and of making valuable
contributions to the total society. If blacks were not
allowed to control the resources and political machinery
of their own communities, Carmichael suggested that the
inner cities would erupt in violence.

Carmichael was a skilled master at audience adaptation
in terms of national characteristics. When speaking to
an American audience, Carmichael proposed solutions which
appeared to be capable of terminating black grievances
within the framework of American society. These solutions
appealed mainly for a power base in the black community and
for the election of black leaders who would truly represent
the needs of the black masses. Although these solutions
were not necessarily immediately capable of being assimilated
within the American society of the mid-sixties, they pro-
posed no revolutionary changes in the power structure. The
change Carmichael mainly desired was for the American public
to develop a new perspective in relationship to the black
culture and its role in society. When speaking in London
and Cuba, however, Carmichael proposed revolutionary changes
in society and called for the destruction of capitalistic
institutions because capitalism was, by nature, exploitative,
and, hence, black grievances could never be redressed within
such a system. Carmichael's solutions in London and Cuba
called for the redistribution of power, wealth, and land
in the United States --solutions that were in complete
contradistinction to the established values of the American
system. These goals were typical of revolutionary agitations
because they advocated changes which could only be brought
about by a revolution, and perhaps a violent one, in the
United States.

In developing his exposition of black grievances and solutions, Carmichael utilized quite extensively the characteristics of agitational rhetoric in voicing grievances and in proposing solutions, some of which required long-term agitation, others revolutionary changes in the socio-economic fabric of American society. He tended to propose goals typical of spokesmen involved in agitative movements. Thus, Carmichael's proposals of grievances and solutions definitely fit the criteria for agitational rhetoric.

In Chapter IV, Carmichael's speeches have been examined to determine if Carmichael employed the stylistic devices common to agitators.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Lomas discusses some of the rhetorical choices available to agitative spokesman in chapter two of The Agitator in American Society, pp. 21-24.

[2] Lomas, p. 3.

[3] For a look at some typical British and American agitations which may help to clarify the agitator's use of grievances and solutions, see Lomas, p. 14-18.

[4] Stokely Carmichael, "Stokely Carmichael Explains Black Power to a Black Audience in Detroit," in The Rhetoric of Black Power, Robert L. Scott and Wayne Brockriede (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 84-95. Hereafter to be referred to as the Detroit Speech.

[5] Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power," in The Agitator in American Society, Lomas, pp. 135-51. Carmichael delivered this speech at the University of California, Berkeley; hereafter it shall be referred to as the Berkeley Speech.

[6] Stokely Carmichael, "The Dialectics of Liberation," in Stokely Speaks (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 77-99. Throughout the rest of the text, this speech shall be referred to as the London Speech.

[7] Stokely Carmichael, "Toward Black Liberation," in The Negro Speaks, ed. Jayme Coleman Williams and McDonald Williams (New York: Noble and Noble, Publishers, Inc., 1970), pp. 261-75. Carmichael read the text of this speech at "impact '67" at Vanderbilt University, from an article he had earlier published by the same name in the Massachusetts Review, September 1966. Hereafter this speech shall be referred to as the Vanderbilt Speech.

[8] Detroit Speech.

[9] London Speech.

[10] Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power and the Third World," in The New Revolutionaries, ed. Tariq Ali (New York: William Morror and Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 91-103. Hereafter referred to as the Cuba Speech.

[11] Berkeley Speech.

[12] Berkeley Speech.

[13] Cuba Speech.

[14] (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961).

[15] London Speech.

[16] London Speech.

[17] Berkeley Speech.

[18] Berkeley Speech.

[19] Berkeley Speech.

[20] Detroit Speech.

[21] Berkeley Speech.

[22] Berkeley Speech.

[23] London Speech.

[24] Vanderbilt Speech.

[25] Cuba Speech.

[26] Cuba Speech.

[27] Vanderbilt Speech.

[28] Detroit Speech.

[29] Detroit Speech.

[30] London Speech.

[31] Vanderbilt Speech.

[32] Berkeley Speech.

[33] Vanderbilt Speech.

[34] Detroit Speech.

[35] Vanderbilt Speech.

[36] Vanderbilt Speech.

[37] Vanderbilt Speech.

[38] Vanderbilt Speech.

[39]Vanderbilt Speech.

[40]Vanderbilt Speech.

[41]Stokely Carmichael, "Speech at Morgan State College," in The Rhetoric of the Civil-Rights Movement, Haig A. Bosmajian and Hamida Bosmajian (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 109-25.

[42]London Speech.

[43]Cuba Speech.

[44]Detroit Speech.

[45]Pat Jefferson, "'Stokely's Cool:' Style," Today's Speech, 16, No. 3 (September 1968), 19-24.

[46]Paul Good, "Out to Get SNCC: A Tale of Two Cities," The Nation, 21 November 1966, pp. 534-38. Good is a free-lance writer who specializes in reporting the progress of the Black Movement.

[47]Jefferson, "'Stokely's Cool:' Style," p. 19.

[48]p. 123.

[49]Paul Good, "A White Look at Black Power," The Nation, 8 August 1966, pp. 112-17.

[50]"The Real Stokely Carmichael," p. 42.

[51]"Stokely's Spark," Time, 16 September 1966, p. 37.

[52]Jefferson Thesis, p. 46.

[53]Jefferson Thesis, p. 48.

[54]Jefferson Thesis, p. 48.

[55]Morgan State Speech.

[56]London Speech.

[57]Vanderbilt Speech.

[58]London Speech.

[59]Cuba Speech.

[60]Vanderbilt Speech.

[61]Cuba Speech.

CHAPTER IV

STOKELY'S AGITATIVE STYLE

Introduction

Speakers involved in the rhetoric of agitation have frequently utilized a distinctive style. Because they are seeking to motivate their auditors away from the status quo and to heighten the awareness of their audiences concerning the oppressed plight of a particular group of people, agitative spokesmen have found that they usually succeed when using language that is extreme--extreme because of the unexpected word usage. Language becomes extreme when it is used as a weapon to jolt an audience out of an apathetic state and when concrete diction filled with unpleasant connotations, abrasive words, and derogatory metaphors are used in place of more euphemistic descriptions.[1] The agitator may also seek to increase the tension of his listeners by using emotive language which carries vivid and sensory accounts of an injustice and by employing short, simple, jabbing sentences to emphasize a point. Ultimate terms are likely to be utilized by an agitative spokesman: devil terms are used to vilify the enemy perceived as responsible for the plight of the downtrodden, and god terms are used to project the saintliness of the agitator, his supporters, and their cause. Additionally,

an agitator may use the language of Objectification to
direct the grievances and frustrations of his auditors
toward an ill-defined out-group, such as a political
party, a nation, or a system of government which is depicted
as responsible for the plight of the oppressed.[2] Language
of Justification is used by an agitative spokesman to
rationalize the means by which he proposes to reach his
established goals.

An agitative spokesman may further exemplify the Paranoid
Style[3] through which he presents his opposition as con-
structing a vast, yet subtle, conspiracy against himself
and his followers in an attempt to defame and reprove their
cause. History itself may be viewed as an insidious plot.
The agitator vilifies his enemy, represents him as sinister,
and points out his lack of any meritorious qualities.
On the other extreme, the agitator may envisage himself
and those he professes to represent as virtuous in all
respects, and, although they are unmercifully persecuted
by an enemy, they will ultimately triumph because of the
probity of their cause. Hence, the agitator may visualize the
struggle as between absolute good and absolute evil. In
seeking to awaken his auditors to the need for overt action
to ameliorate unjust conditions, an agitator warns that
time is running short and that immediate action is required.
The agitator uses terms to conceptualize that only absolute
victory, without compromise, should be the goal of an
oppressed people seeking to improve their condition.

Finally, an agitator, if he is to be truly effective, must be charismatic in the eyes of his followers. The speaker may enhance his charisma by choosing language which associates him directly with the common man. Or, he may at times use an eloquent style in an attempt to impress his followers with his ability to speak to different segments of a society.

Carmichael's Use of Extreme Language

Stokely Carmichael traveled across the United States, to London, and to Cuba, to articulate the black man's grievances. Wherever he went he was castigated for using a caustic and inflammatory rhetoric, and, in some cases, was accused of provoking violence and inciting to riot. An analysis of the stylistic devices used by Carmichael in his speeches may help to clarify why he was catagorized as a vehement and militant rhetorician.

Carmichael frequently used concrete diction filled with unpleasant connotations to expound his ideas. In London, Carmichael revealed the West's definition of civilization as "exploitation for luxury." He referred to the British government's enjoyment of "Parliament House nonsense about constitutionality, [while] she was suppressing all of Africa." Carmichael used concrete diction and an unpleasant metaphor to reveal that as a young student in Trinidad, he was forced to learn "all

"While she [England] was raping us left and right."
Using concrete diction, Carmichael additionally related
that he was required to read about the "beauty of London,
and how peacefully everybody lived, and how nice life
was--at my expense." Carmichael further maintained,
"And I used to say, 'I sure would like to get to London
and burn it to the ground.' But that's violence."[4]
In this instance, Carmichael used verbal irony to contrast
the ideas of violence as he perceived the white West viewed
it, to his definition of violence as epitomized by that
which the British perpetrated on his native Trinidad.

Carmichael used explicit language in his London speech
to make some unpleasant innuendos concerning British author
and poet Rudyard Kipling, who implied, in "The White Man's
Burden," that Western society had a responsibility to the
black man because the black was inferior and incapable of
independence. Carmichael maintained that "It was very white
of him [Kipling] " to express such concern for the black
man.[5] Carmichael developed the theme further in his
speech at Morgan State and employed humor and verbal irony
to imply that when the West moved into Africa, the white
missionary attempted to project white sexual hang-ups
onto black people: "[white society] got all these nice,
white people of good will who wanted to do well. They got
in their little black robes and they went to Africa and
they saw these little black savages, man, running around

with no shirts on, 'Why, you dirty man, cover up yourself.
You are getting me excited.'"[6] In his London speech,
Carmichael again coupled verbal irony with humor in the
recitation of his version of the West's discovery of new
lands, "'Who discovered America?' 'Christopher Columbus.'
'Who discovered China?' 'Marco Polo.' I used to be told
in the West Indies that I was not discovered until Sir
Walter Raleigh needed supplies for his ship, and then he
came along and found me and said 'Whup! I have discovered
you!' and my history began."[7] In this exposition, Carmichael
used dialogue to hypothesize his ideas, as he frequently
did when seeking to clarify his thoughts on a particular
issue. At Morgan State, Carmichael used dialogue and
hip language to relate the probable conversation that occurred
between black and white leaders on integration: "these
black leaders say, 'We want to integrate.' The white man
would say, 'You want to marry my daughter.' They would
say, 'No, I don't want to marry your daughter.' . . .
'We want to live next door . . . we don't want to live
in your bedroom.' By the time this cat finished reacting
to a definition by a white man, he was out the window."[8]

Utilizing concrete language heavy with negative
connotations, Carmichael contended in his speech at Morgan
State that the United States would "kill for freedom,
democracy, and peace." He employed verbal irony and wry
humor to lash out caustically at the Vietnamese war,

"Those little Chinese, Vietnamese yellow people ain't got sense enough to know they want their democracy; we are going to fight for them, give it to them because Santa Claus is still alive."[9] At Berkeley, Carmichael maliciously attacked President Lyndon Johnson's statements concerning the war as "lies" and proclaimed that even if America were sincere about "fighting to give democracy to the people in Vietnam, as a black man living in this country, I wouldn't fight to give this to anybody."[10] And, in an unexpected choice of words, Carmichael questioned why reporters, who referred to the Lowndes County Freedom Organization as the Black Panther Party, did not call the Alabama Democratic Party, whose emblem was a white rooster, "the White Cock Party?" Then, apparently seeking to deflate the white-ego, Carmichael explained that this phenomena could be attributed to "America's problem with sex and color."[11]

Further attempting to jolt his auditors through the use of unexpected language, Carmichael, at Morgan State, utilized humor to build black racial pride and destroy the myth of white superiority. Relating the types of advice that blacks received, Carmichael mimiced, "if your lips are thick, bite them in. Hold your nose; don't drink coffee because you are black."[12] He castigated black co-eds for attempting to imitate such vestiges of white society as the debutante ball, "Your fathers slaved for one year to save $500 so that you can walk up in some white dress for one night talking about virginity. . . . Black co-eds

should not be concerned with the imitation of the white
woman because] she is not the Virgin Mary, she can be made
like any other woman."[13]

Carmichael frequently used derogatory metaphors and
devil terms to describe national leaders. President
Lyndon Johnson was a "buffoon,"[14] "the racist President,"[15]
and an "immoral man;"[16] Secretary of Defense McNamara was
a "racist;" Secretary of State Rusk, a "fool;" Vice-
President Hubert Humphrey, a "political chameleon;"[17] former
President Dwight Eisenhower was a "white Joe Louis," and
"not too smart;"[18] and America's founders were "the white
fathers of American racism."[19] Additionally, McNamara's
plans to draft blacks was "urban removal."[20]

Carmichael used humor to describe the white liberal
as a member of the "Pepsi generation who comes alive in
the black community."[21] Abrasive language and devil terms
characterized white people as "sick,"[22] reporters as
"advertisers" for white supremacy,[23] policemen as "savage"
"racist"[24] and "gestapo troops," and a black man fighting
in Vietnam or on the American police force as a "black
mercenary."[25] Carmichael referred to America as a "nation
of thieves," that bordered on becoming a "nation of murderers;"[26]
a "filthy country that's racist,"[27] which was "founded on
racism and lies."[28] Using abrasive language high in sen-
sory appeal, Carmichael described the Berkeley campus as
the "white intellectual ghetto of the West," and stated

that blacks would not be trapped into the "intellectual
masturbation of the question of black power." Carmichael
caustically attacked integration as "a thalidomide drug,"
and "an insidious subterfuge for the maintenance of white
supremacy."[29]

Carmichael frequently used combative and jolting
language to describe the United States, Western society,
and the ways in which blacks would secure their freedom. To
his black audience in Detroit, Carmichael delineated
Western civilization as believing they were "masters of
the world; they think [sic] they God. . . . [Henceforth,
black people would tell white society] Baby, you ain't
God, we've just let you play for a couple of hundred years.
And now it's time out for play. We've got to bring them
[white society] to their knees."[30] Carmichael explained
to his British auditors that the system responsible for
the perpetuation of capitalism and "international white
supremacy" would be destroyed---the black masses would
"smash that system. People who see themselves as part
of that system are going to be smashed with it."[31] Using
derogatory metaphors, Carmichael, in his Berkeley speech,
said that black communities needed viable political
institutions through which to function, not "policemen with
submachine guns," not "Gestapo troops, because this is not
1942, and if you play like Nazis, we're playing back with
you this time around. Give ears to that."[33] And, in Cuba,
he said that black youths, who were the "real revolutionary

proletariat," were "ready to fight by any means necessary for the liberation of our people." Che Guevara was quoted, "hatred is an element of the struggle . . . relentless hatred of the enemy . . . that transforms us into an effective, violent, selected and cold killing machine."[34]

Carmichael, likewise, used combative and jolting language to agitate his London audience when he characterized the West as a plunderer who went to "Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States, and raped" those countries, and while they did this, "they used beautiful terms: . . . 'We're civilizing you, and we're taming the West. And if you won't be civilized, we'll kill you.'" The white West committed "genocide . . . stole the land, and put the Indians on reservations, and they said that they had civilized the country."[35] Furthermore, at Berkeley, he said the United States used this same justification for the war in Vietnam, "If the Vietnamese don't want democracy, well then, we'll just wipe them to hell out, because they don't deserve to live if they won't have our way of life;" and if the draft board calls say, "Hell, no, we ain't going."[36] Carmichael's auditors quickly picked up on this slogan, which became a popular chant in the Anti-War Movement, and modified it to "Hell, no, we won't go."

Carmichael jolted his British listeners with the unexpected when he related that the people of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the American Indians did not cede to the West because "they liked Jesus Christ or because they

liked white folks." "Power" made Third World peoples submissive to the West.[37] It was now time for black men to "stop begging and take what belongs to them," and if white America would not get out of the black man's way then blacks would "move them out of the way."[38] Carmichael combatively told white society, "Move over, or we're going to move over you."[39]

Carmichael appealed to the emotions of his auditors by giving vivid and highly descriptive accounts of the injustice he was exposing. One example was at Morgan State where Carmichael coupled verbal irony with humor to develop an antagonism in his listeners against Western civilization:

> Now you watch cowboy movies all the time. We all do. And you know there would be a fight and there would be Indians and they would be coming from the hills and Chief Crazy Horse would have a million Indians and they would be yelling, "wha, wha, wha," and they would be killing the good white women. And at last here comes the cavalry. They would come riding in and they would get out their guns and shoot up everybody--men, forward march, forward shoot. "Look out, that one on the right." "Boom, we have got him," he's dead. They would come back and they would say, "We had a victory today. We killed the Indians." Now the next time, the Indians would beat the hell out of the white man and they would say, "Those dirty Indians--they massacred us." . . . In a victory, you shoot people and you kill them that way, but in a massacre you kill them with a knife and everybody knows that's foul.[40]

Carmichael's point here was that the West had always been able to define terms--to decide what was fair play and what was foul. Hence, the West exonerated itself of evil actions, while, at the same time, projecting guilt onto other cultures for acts which produced no greater malevolent effects.

Using emotive language as well as the antithesis
form, Carmichael, in Cuba, described the status of black
education in American schools:

>Black children are not taught of the glory of African
>civilization in the history of mankind; they are
>instead taught about Africa, the dark continent
>inhabited by man-eating savages. They are not taught
>of the thousands of black martyrs who died resisting
>the white slave masters. They are not taught of the
>numerous uprisings and revolts where hundreds of
>brave Africans refused to submit to slavery. Instead,
>their history books read of "happy slaves singing
>in their fields . . . content with their new lives."[41]

One of Carmichael's favorite devices was the rhetorical
question. He coupled this with emotive language at Morgan
State when he stressed the obligations that black college
students had to the ghettos: "What is your responsibility
to your fellow black brothers? Why are you here? So that
you can become a social worker so that you can kick down
a door in the middle of the night to look for a pair of
shoes? So that you can keep the kid in the ghetto school,
so that you can ride up in a big Bonneville with AKA sign
stuck on the back?" Carmichael blamed black students for
the rebellions in the black community and emphasized that
it was their duty to "be back in the ghetto helping out
black people who are looking, who are acting, begging, and
thinking a way to solve their problems."[42] Furthermore,
making use of the emotional appeal of the rhetorical
question, Carmichael intoned, "Do you not know that your
black mothers scrubbed floors so you can get here--and
the minute you get out, you turn you backs on them? What
is your responsibility, black students? What is it?"[43]

Carmichael used language high in sensory appeal in
his Berkeley speech to describe how "thousands of African-
Americans were jailed, intimidated, beaten, and some mur-
dered, for agitating for those rights guaranteed by the
Constitution, but only available to whites." Carmichael
related further that civil rights bills were passed for
whites, not for blacks, because the black man knew he could
vote, it was just that when he tried he was "shot, killed
or jailed, beaten or economically deprived. So somebody
had to write a bill to tell white people, 'When a black
man comes to vote, don't bother him.'"[44]

Carmichael used emotive language and parallelism to
describe the reasons why his generation was not "involved
in mankind." Carmichael explained at Morgan State, "When
we began to crawl, they sent six million people to an oven
and we blinked our eyes. And when we walked, they sent
our uncles to Korea. And we grew up in a cold war to continue
their head-wrecking period so that we are immune to humanity."[45]

Carmichael frequently used devil terms in describing
America, the white West, and their activities. To his Cuban
auditors, Carmichael characterized America as "uncivilized,"
and guilty of "white imperialism and colonial exploitation."[46]
In his Berkeley speech, he proclaimed that the "American
pie" consisted of the "raping of South Africa, beating
Vietnam, beating South America, raping the Philippines,
raping every country" where the United States had been.[47]

At Vanderbilt, Carmichael described the Southern Democratic Party as "overtly racist," and the Northern faction as controlled by "the equally corrupt big city machines;" the American South was controlled by "racist state parties," and the War on Poverty was run by "local Democratic ward heelers" and "outspoken racists."[48] Carmichael's London auditors were told that "capitalism," "racism," and "exploitation,"[49] were synonymous; and, in Cuba he revealed that the worst crimes in the history of the world were committed by the white West and "consisted of the pathological tearing apart of [man's] functions and the crumbling away of his unity."[50] At Berkeley, the white West was termed "un-civ-i-lized" because wherever it went, it was guilty of "stealing, plundering, and raping everybody in its path."[51] And, in Cuba, western civilization was described as a "system which feeds itself and expands itself through the economic and cultural exploitation of non-white, non-Western peoples--the THIRD WORLD."[52]

God terms were used by Carmichael to describe the black people and the Black Power Movement. "Black" became a god term to Carmichael's supporters because it signified a new appraoch to beauty. Broad noses, thick lips, nappy hair were no longer ugly: "your nose is boss; your lips are thick, you are black, and you are beautiful."[53] That this idea was readily acceptable to the black masses was evidenced by the popularity of such slogans as "Say it Loud,

Black and Proud," and "Black is Beautiful." "Black Power," likewise, became a god term to the black masses because it promised the fulfillment of a dream by attacking racism and exploitation and by providing a vision of full equality for the black masses who would share in the shaping of their own destinies.

Carmichael's Use of Simple Sentence Structures

When he spoke before a black audience, Carmichael frequently used short and simple sentences, full of repetition, to emphasize his ideas. Concerning the new black rhetoric, Carmichael stated in Detroit, "This is 1966. It's time out for beautiful words. It's time out for singing 'We Shall Overcome.' It's time to get some Black Power. It's time to get some Black Power." On integration, "Now they take our kids out of our community, and they pick the best. You got to be the best to get next to them; they pick the best." Carmichael felt that black lawyers should move back into the ghettos to help with the problems of the black community, and he again used repeition and simple sentences to emphasize this point:

> Yes, sir, we've got to get our black lawyers. We've got to bring them in here. We got to tell them that we understand they moving [sic] to give us some protection after we got beat up by some white power . . . And we've got to say to those lawyers, we want you to be aggressive. We want you to get back the districts that they gerrymandered and took away from us. Get them back now. We want you to be aggressive.[54]

When speaking to a white audience, however, Carmichael often used complex sentences and contrasted them with short,

jabbing ones. At Berkeley, for example, Carmichael varied

the length of his sentences and used the rhetorical question

to emphasize the economic insecurity of the black masses:

> We are the hardest workers and the lowest paid. It
> is nonsensical for people to talk about human relation-
> ships until they are willing to build new institutions.
> Black people are economically insecure. White liberals
> are economically secure. Can you begin to build an
> economic coalition? Are the liberals willing to
> share their salaries with the economically insecure
> black people they so much love? Then if you're not,
> are you willing to provide economic security for
> black people? That's the question we want to deal with! [55]

In the other speeches examined, Carmichael, likewise,

used short, jabbing sentences coupled with complex ones

to relate his ideas. However, when emphasizing a black

grievance, when asking rhetorical questions, and when

apparently attempting to excite his listeners emotionally,

Carmichael, more often used simple sentences. Long, complex

sentences were used by Carmichael, however, to justify

or explain a solution. In Carmichael's later speeches, his

sentence structure became, in many cases, shorter and

simplier perhaps because he felt this produced a more

desirable effect on his listeners. However, in the speeches

which were delivered to a white audience, Carmichael fre-

quently used long, complex, and complicated sentence

structures.

Language of Objectification

Using the language of Objectification, Carmichael

sought to direct the frustrations of his auditors against

white society in the United States and against the West

for the roles they had played in the oppression of non-white people. Seeking to direct the animosities of his audience against white American society, Carmichael in his Detroit speech related that the United States was a "racist country" which lived on the "sweat and blood of . . . black skins."[56] In Cuba, America was deemed racist because from its inception it was "built upon the subjugation of coloured people."[57] In his London address, Carmichael declared that it was the duty of the Black Movement in America to expose "the extent of racism and exploitation that permeates all institutions in the country."[58] Lest anyone be fooled, America knew what black power was because, as Carmichael pointed out at Berkeley, she had "deprived black people of it for over four hundred years."[59]

Carmichael at Morgan State emephasized that the black problem centered on property rights versus human rights -- "a problem the country is not capable of facing up to." Carmichael further related to his Morgan auditors, "If we get robbed, you can call the policemen till you turn white. He ain't coming. . . . But just hit a grocery store . . . and see how quick they come in."[60] Carmichael sought to direct his audience's aggressions against the government, which was controlled and maintained by propertied people at the expense of the poor class. Carmichael related that the United States Constitution was based on property rights, "People who didn't own property could not vote when this

responsible only to propertied people, the African-American, who was without property, should not, Carmichael intimated, support a system which was operating against black interests.

Further seeking to direct the already hostile feelings of his auditors against the United States, Carmichael related at Berkeley that blacks must "not only condemn the country for what it has done internally, but . . . for what it does externally. We see this country trying to rule the world." Furthermore, black people would have to decide whether or not they wanted to be a part of a country that continued to be "the wealthiest country in the world at the price of raping everybody else."[62] And, in his Cuban address, Carmichael revealed that it was the responsibility of African-Americans "to oppose, and if not to oppose, certainly to neutralize white America's efforts" at world domination.[63]

When speaking in London and Cuba, Carmichael used Objectification to direct his attack against white Western civilization of which the United States was a part. In Cuba, Carmichael specifically named the antagonists responsible for the blight of the Third World: "Our enemy is white Western imperialist society . . . which feeds itself and expands itself through the economic and cultural exploitation of non-white, non-Western peoples."[64] In London, Western society was revealed to have "plundered the cultures and enslaved the minds of the people of

colour until their resistance is paralized by self-hate."[65]
Also, in Cuba, Carmichael stated that Western society had
been almost successful in their bid to keep the Third
World peoples diffused and fragmented, and in detaining those
oppressed "from realizing our common plight." Carmichael
revealed that if people of the Third World would heed the
call of Che Guevara for "a continental struggle against
a common enemy" the result would produce a unification of
non-whites who could then "resist Western imperialism."[66]

In addressing an American audience Carmichael used the
language of Objectification to unite his audience against
the white racist American society, whereas, to his London
and Cuba auditors Carmichael mainly attacked Western
imperialism. The groups Carmichael castigated were im-
perspicious in the sense that they were not a definite body
which his auditors could directly assail. Thus, using the
language of Objectification, Carmichael sought to direct
the frustrations of his auditors on to an ill-defined body
--Western civilization. Therefore, Carmichael did use
the language of Objectification in his speeches, and in
the manner that Arthur L. Smith, who developed the criteria
for Objectification, proscribed that an agitator would.

Language of Justification

Carmichael used the language of Justification to
vindicate black violence in the nation's cities, and to
rationalize both the rhetorical choices and the goals

pursued by the Black Movement. Concerning the use of
militant language by the Black Power Movement, Carmichael
in his London speech established that "Black people in
the United States have no time to play nice polite games
. . . the lives of our children are at stake." Carmichael's
position was that "It was far better to speak forcefully
and truthfully. Only when one's true self is exposed can
society proceed to deal with the problem from a position
of clarity, and not from one of misunderstanding."[67]
Carmichael believed that blacks could no longer accept
the meaningless language of the Civil Rights Movement
because the rhetoric was not "relevant or useful."[68]
Carmichael quoted Frederick Douglass: "Power concedes
nothing without demands--it never did and it never will."[69]
To his Cuba auditors, Carmichael delineated that "Black
Power" was the "cry of the rebellions."[70] And Black Power
was necessary because "it is only with power that we can
make the decisions governing our lives and our communities.
. . . Without power we have to beg for what is rightfully
ours. With power we will take our birthright because it
was with power that our birthright was taken from us."[71]
And, at Morgan State he revealed that the "power to define
is the most important power that we have. It is he who is
master who can define." Carmichael reiterated this position
further, "If we allow white people to define us by calling
us Negroes, which means apathetic, lazy, stupid, . . . then
we accept those definitions."[72] Carmichael implied that

if blacks defined themselves, they might escape the pattern

of the self-fulfilling prophecy inherent in the stereotype

of the term "Negro." In a further use of Justification

concerning the need for blacks to define their own terms,

Carmichael, in several speeches, quoted Lewis Carroll's

Alice in Wonderland:

> "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a
> rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose
> it to mean. Neither more nor less."
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can
> make the words mean so many different things."
> "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "who is
> to be master. That is all."[73]

Carmichael's implications here may have been two-pronged.

In addition to justifying the black need for self-definition,

Carmichael may also have implied that if blacks were accepted

on their own terms, they might become the masters of

American society.

Carmichael used the language of Justification to answer

the criticism that the Black Power Program propagated black

nationalism by disengaging itself from white support.

At Vanderbilt, Carmichael contended that if the Black Power

Program was developed it would have the opposite effect

from isolating the black community: "when the Negro

community is able to control local offices, and negotiate

with other groups from a position of organized strength, the

possibility of meaningful political alliances on specific

issues will be increased. That is a rule of politics and

there is no reason why it should not operate here."[74]

Carmichael, in his Berkeley speech, justified, additionally,

why white people were excluded from participation in the
black community. The reason for white exclusion was on
"psychological grounds . . . [because] all black people
question whether or not they are equal to whites, since
everytime they start to do something, white people are
around showing them how to do it. If we are going to
eliminate that for the generation that comes after us,
then black people must be in positions of power, doing and
articulating for themselves."[75]

Additionally, Carmichael used Justification to exonerate
black violence in the ghettos. In his Vanderbilt speech,
Carmichael stated that violence occurred in black com-
munities because blacks did not have "the power to control
their lives and their communities-- . . . [nor] effective
political institutions through which to relate to the total
society."[76] And, to his London auditors Carmichael related
that in suppressive societies there existed an "executioner/
victim relationship . . . and the executioner uses force
to keep his victim down. But the victim gets tired of that,
and what happens is that when the victim moves either to
a position of equality or to try to conquer the executioner,
he uses the force and the means and the methods that his
oppressor used to keep him down." Carmichael quoted Sartre
for support:

> What then did you expect when you unbound the gag that
> had muted those black mouths? That they would chant
> your praises? Did you think that when those heads that
> our fathers had forcefully bowed down to the ground were
> raised again, you would find adoration in their eyes?[77]

Furthermore, in his London address, Carmichael used
Justification and derogatory metaphors to relate that
most violence on the part of blacks was in self-defense.
Carmichael rephrased the unflattering Nazi-Jew metaphor,
"I'm afraid that blacks in America cannot afford to march
to the gallows the way the Jews did. If white America
decides to play Nazi, we're going to let them know the black
people are not Jews, we're going to fight back to the death."[78]
Carmichael quoted a poem, written by black Jamaican Claude
McKay, which epitomized the black stance on violence for
self-defense:

> If we must die, let it not be like hogs
> Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
> While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
> Making their mock at our accursed lot.
> If we must die, O let us nobly die,
> So that our precious blood may not be shed
> In vain; then even the monsters we defy
> Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
> O kinsmen! We must meet the common foe!
> Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
> And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
> What though before us lies the open grave?
> Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
> Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back![79]

The main theme of Carmichael's language of Justification
concerned a rationalization of black violence, black
rhetoric, and the goals of the Black Protest Movement.
When speaking to black audiences, Carmichael used very
little, if any, Justification perhaps because he felt that
as he was expressing the sentiments of oppressed blacks,
there was no need to justify or exculpate the black man
for his reaction to American society.

The Paranoid Style

Carmichael exemplified the Paranoid Style in his
speeches by attributing the black misery to Western
society and white America who were characterized as delib-
erately conspiring to enslave all non-white cultures. In
London, Carmichael expressed that Western civilization
presumed "a basic assumption of superiority" which allowed
the West to justify its crimes "with lies about civilizing
the heathens, the savages from Africa, whom they portrayed
as being 'better off' in the Americas than . . . in their
homeland."[80] Thus, Carmichael believed that by rationalizing
its aggression, the West provided a base for the continuation
of racism and for the prolongation of the myth of white
Western sublimity.

Vilifying the United States, Carmichael further declared
in London that the country was founded on the premise of
white eminence because the "glorious Constitution's guarantees
of 'Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness,' and all that
other garbage, were guarantees for white men only."[81]
Because the Constitution had delineated the black as three-
fifths of a man, credibility was lent to Carmichael's
contention that the conceptualization of black inferiority
was an ineradicable part of the American system of government.
Carmichael appeared to feel that as the Federal Government
had embraced the philosophy of the racial inadequacy of
the Negro, it was only logical that this attitude should
be transferred to the American populace.

Implying that history was a perfidious scheme against
the black man, Carmichael related in his Cuba speech,
"Our historical analysis . . . views the United States as
being conceived in racism."[82] The theme was further
developed when Carmichael explained that the European settlers
in America rebelled to voice their exacerbation against
English colonialism for "taxation without representation,
[but] the white European settlers could not extend their
lofty theories of democracy to the Indians, whom they sys-
tematically exterminated as they expanded into the interior
of the country."[83] Thus, Carmichael compared the plight of
the American Indian to the black condition, and, additionally,
he pointed out the destruction of non-white cultures by
the conquering Europeans who were themselves fighting for
liberation. Carmichael implied that this hypocritical
stance on the part of Europeans was imbred in the American
culture because the oppressed white American settlers did
not have the capability of realizing that they were guilty
of propagating the very injustice they were fighting against;
or, more simply, American settlers were the victims of
unconscious racism.

Further developing the thesis of a historical conspiracy
against the black race, Carmichael revealed at Vanderbilt
that "The history of every institution in this [American]
society indicated that a major concern in the ordering and
structuring of the society has been the maintaining of the

Negro community in its condition of dependence and oppression."[84]
Carmichael felt this oppression was not so much related to
individual white action against individual blacks, but
rather "as total acts by the white community against the
Negro community."[85] Hence, institutionalized racism, not
individualized racism, was the major force behind the
continuation of racial injustice in American society.
Carmichael additionally related that "racist assumption of
white superiority have been so deeply ingrained in the
structure of society that they infuse its entire functioning,
and they are so much a part of the national subconscious
that they are taken for granted and are frequently not
even recognized."[86] As American society was founded on the
postulate of black racial subordination, and, as the in-
stitutions of the culture functioned daily on the premise
of black inferiority, Carmichael felt the American psyche
was therefore conditioned by society's racist propaganda
to the point of being victims of unconscious racism.

Carmichael frequently vilified America and the West
for propagating racism and for the establishment of
institutions which were against the black race. Carmichael
expressed in London that the Western and American cultures
resisted remedying the black plight because they enjoyed
"luxury from institutionalized racism,"[87] and should America
and the West decide to terminate racism, they would destroy
themselves. Carmichael intimated that as the entire

Western culture was founded on the subjugation and en-

slavement of non-whites, Western social and political

institutions had evolved around the philosophy of black

inadequacy and should racism be ended forthwith the basic

institutions of Western society would be destroyed, and,

hence, Western governments would fall.

Using the Paranoid Style further at Vanderbilt,

Carmichael related his belief that blacks could never

trust the white man to remedy the social ills plaguing the

black community:

> The political and social rights of Negroes have been
> and always will be negotable and expendable the moment
> they conflict with the interests of our 'allies.'
> If we do not learn from history, we are doomed to
> repeat it, and that is precisely the lesson of
> Reconstruction. Black people were allowed to register,
> vote, and participate in politics because it was to
> the advantage of powerful white allies to promote
> this. But this was the result of white decision,
> and it was ended by other white men's decisions before
> any political base powerful enough to challenge that
> decision could be established in the southern Negro
> community.[88]

The white man's interest would always be served first and

if that white interest could best be realized by granting

the black man a few crumbs of social justice, then Carmichael

believed that justice would be granted; however, when

reform was no longer expedient to white society, the Negro

would find himself in his previous condition of servitude.

Furthermore, Carmichael, in his Vanderbilt speech, reasoned

that the reluctance to offer viable solutions to the ghetto

problem stemmed from the fact that "the ghetto is itself

a product of a combination of forces and special interests
in the white community." Carmichael charged that those
who had "access to the resources and power to change that
situation benefit, politically and economically, from the
existence of that ghetto."[89] Thus, white America would not
remedy the plight of the black masses because white society
benefited from such conditions. Viewing the condition
of the Negro community as a conspiracy against blacks,
Carmichael revealed his belief that the problems of the
ghetto were due to subconscious rather than overt actions
on the part of early planners:

> I do not suppose that at any point the men who control
> the power and resources of this country ever sat down
> and designed these black enclaves and formally articu-
> lated the terms of their colonial and dependent
> status, as was done, for example, by the apartheid
> government of South Africa. Yet, one can not dis-
> tinguish between one ghetto and another. As one moves
> from city to city it is as though some maglignant
> racist planning unit had done precisely this--designed
> each one from the same master blueprint. . . . if these
> ghettos were the result of design and conspiracy, one
> could understand their similarity as being artificial
> and consciously imposed, rather than the result of
> identical patterns of white racism which repeat
> themselves in cities as distant as Boston and
> Birmingham.[90]

Hence, Carmichael saw a historical conspiracy which, although
subconscious, was nonetheless responsible for the deprivation
of the inner city ghettos. In his Cuba speech, Carmichael
took a position which appeared in contradiction to his
earlier contentions, and, drawing an analogy between the
system of apartheid and American society, he related that
the American ghetto had been produced by deliberate forces:

"The capitalist system gave birth to these black enclaves and formally articulated the terms of their colonial and dependent status, as was done, for example, by the apartheid government of Azania (South Africa)."[91]

In London, Carmichael used the Paranoid Style to vilify America, and, at the same time, to praise the black man for his efforts at peaceful coexistence with white society:

> For the past four hundred years the African-American has tried to coexist peacefully inside the United States. It has been to no avail. We have never lynched a white man, we have never burned their churches, we have never bombed their houses, we have never beaten them in the streets. I wish we could say the same for white people around the world. Our history demonstrates that the reward for trying to coexist in peace has been the physical and psychological murder of our peoples.[92]

Thus, the black man was portrayed as repeatedly attempting, against insurmountable odds, to live at peace with his white neighbors. The black man's effort to live peacefully with whites, however, was thwarted by the forces in American society which persistently vexed black essays at peace.

Carmichael in his Vanderbilt address also vilified the Negro "leader" and the white system that helped to elect him:

> Just as often the effective political organization in Negro communities is absorbed by tokenism and patronage—the time-honored practice of "giving" certain offices to selected Negroes. The machine thus creates a "little machine" which is subordinate and responsible to it in the Negro community. These Negro political "leaders" are really vote deliverers, more responsible to the white machine and the white power structure than to the community they allegedly represent. Thus the white community is able to substitute patronage control of audacious black power in the Negro community.[93]

Carmichael viewed the white power structure as choosing
Negro leaders who would voice the sentiments of the black
man in terms acceptable to white society. Additionally,
allowing Negroes to be elected to public office was never
an attempt to promote viable representation for the black
masses, but Carmichael beheld it rather as a means of
getting black support for white programs.

Again vilifying the United States, Carmichael in his
Cuba speech accused his country of attempting to produce
discord among the non-white peoples living in the States:
"In the state of California, Mexican-Americans and Spanish-
speaking people comprise almost 50 per cent of the population,
yet the two view each other with suspicion, and sometimes
outright hostility. We recognize this as the old trick
of 'divide and conquer' and we are working to see that it
does not succeed this time."[94] Thus, Carmichael saw
America as deliberately conspiring to promote antagonism
between various minority factions in the United States
to keep them from uniting, perhaps, into a strong political
voice. Additionally, the United States, anticipating the
growing discontentment within the ranks of American workers
and realizing the implications of Karl Marx, avoided the
"inevitable class struggle within the country by expanding
into the Third World and exploiting the resources and slave
labour of people of colour." Hence, instead of diminishing

"expanded internationally and threw the bones of their profits to the American working class."[95] Thus, the white American workers were viewed by Carmichael as enjoying the good-life at the expense of the black man.

In a further display of vilification, Carmichael's Morgan State speech attacked America for trying to "kill the free speech of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee."[96] And, in Cuba, he defamed Western society by describing it as the "bourgeoisie," or the oppressors, and referred to his people, those of the Third World, as the "proletariat"--those who live only by their labor and not at the expense of others.[97] Black Power was lauded for its fight against racism and exploitation and as a champion of justice and equality for the poor black man. Carmichael viewed the black struggle as the battle of an oppressed people seeking to overcome their plight but thwarted by an oppressive, sinister, evil, white society which showed little concern for the problems of the black masses. Additionally, black people were depicted as seeking nothing more than justice.

Although Carmichael never directly stated that immediate action should be taken to remedy the black crisis, the urgency of his message, and the context of his ideas, can only imply that he believed the black man had to begin forthwith to solve the question of racial injustice and inequality. Carmichael did express, however, an awareness

that to remedy the black torment in a meaningful way would take time. Carmichael frequently related the idea, in absolute terms, that power, and only power, could save the black masses; and, in his Cuba speech he explained, "there is only one course open to us. We must change North America so that the economy and politics of the country will be in the hands of the people."[98] In this case, Carmichael allowed for no compromise--his solution was the only alternative for the oppressed people of North America.

Carmichael utilized the Paranoid Style to exemplify that white Western culture, including the United States, had conspired throughout history to rob blacks of their culture and equality. Carmichael vilified his enemy, Western and American society, and lauded his followers and the Black Power Movement for seeking to combat the destructive forces of white Western colonialism.

The Image of Carmichael

Carmichael possessed the rare ability to secure the unfledging loyalty of the poor blacks he claimed to represent--the magic gift of charisma. That Carmichael was charismatic has been inferred by many observers of the contemporary Black Movement.

Six-foot-two, black, slim, Stokely Carmichael, as the twenty-five-year-old Leader of Snick, gave the distinct impression that he could "stride cool and smiling through Hell, philosophizing all the way."[99] "Tall and energetic,

theorist and activist . . . outspoken if not always precise,"[100]

Carmichael developed a rhetorical style that electrified

his listeners and became "legendary among the faithful."[101]

Utilizing a lingo that was "cool and very hip,"[102] Stokely's

words flowed melodiously, building to a crescendo, as he

enraptured his audience with the spell-binding performance

of a "psychedelic showman."[103] Stokely's style was

distinctively his own, it was "No Martin Luther King We

Shall Overcome oratory. No preacher harangue, . . . [on

the contrary, Carmichael spoke] one tone above a whisper,

but a very taunt, suppressed whisper."[104]

Whether speaking to a white or black audience, Carmichael

identified stylistically with the poor black masses. When

addressing a black audience in Detroit, however, Carmichael

repeatedly reminded his auditors, "I'm no Negro leader,"

and "I'm just a poor old black boy."[105] Black people were

his "brothers and sisters," and white people were an

omnious "they." By the use of the pronouns "we" and "our,"

Carmichael further depicted himself as a member of the

poor black masses. Assuring his black followers that he

suffered, as they did, from the abuses of American society,

Carmichael intoned, "We're black and we're poor."[106] Thus,

he not only identified himself with the common black man,

but also emphasized that he understood their plight for

he shared it with them. Additionally, when speaking in

the ghettos, Carmichael typlified the language apparently

common to his black listeners by the frequent use of

double negatives and subject-verb relationships which did not agree in number.

In his Detroit speech, Carmichael repeatedly announced, "I'm going to speak the truth," thereby letting his auditors know he intended to "tell-it-like-it-was," sparing no white feelings. His audience responded by periodically interrupting his speech with excited shouts, laughter, and applause.[107] Usually when speaking before a black audience, Carmichael evoked enthusiastic responses of "Preach, boy, preach;" "Tell, 'em Stokely."[108] And, at the phrasing of a slogan, Carmichael could send an audience, black or white, wildly chanting, "Hell no we won't go."[109]

To the poor blacks of Lowndes County, Alabama, Stokely was a special hero, a man whose daring challenge of white supremacy won the respect and admiration of the poor blacks. "To them, Carmichael represented a new American Negro—not a 'Tom' . . . but a proud man who out-stared the 'Miss Ann's' and 'Mr. Charlie's' . . . with unflinching directness . . . and they delighted when 'their boy, Stokely' gave the white folk 'hell.'"[110] Lowndes County became a second home for Carmichael, for it was there that he first became involved in organizing blacks around the question of political power. When Carmichael returned to Lowndes County, after having been away for a time, black women and children lined the porches of their small shacks, "screaming and shouting,"[111] at the arrival of their beloved native

son. As Carmichael drove into Lowndes County's black

district, "On the left side and on the right side, as

far as the eye could see the porches were filled with the

young and old who were glad to see Stokely Carmichael

home."[112]

Carmichael's ability as an effective spokesman was

greatly enhanced by his charisma. Carmichael possessed the

rare ability to be lionized as a saint, and, simultaneously,

to be one of the people. He had the common touch which

kept him in tune with the poor black masses, and, yet, the

cool, suave manner of a great leader. A positive image

of Carmichael was heightened in the eyes of the poor blacks

because he professed a sincere love for the black masses,

an understanding of their misery, and a determination to

help ease their oppressive situation. Unlike many leaders,

Carmichael spoke to the black man, not to the white, and

in a language they could understand. For once, the black

people had a leader who reflected truthfully the feelings

and frustrations of the black masses. Carmichael spoke

harshly but in the only manner he could if he were to

honestly express black impatience at the slow progress

of racial justice.

Summary and Conclusions

Stokely Carmichael emerged on the American scene with

a controversial impact that saw few Americans attempting to

understand his ideas and most reacting to his rhetorical

style. Utilizing the style of the agitator, Carmichael

vowed to speak the truth, and, he revealed his perception

of the truth in a way that was most disturbing to the

American society unused to hearing such rhetorical vehemence

from a black man. Using concrete terms loaded with unpleasant

connotations, abrasive words, and derogatory metaphors,

Carmichael vilified the enemy, white American society, in

a manner that few black leaders at that time had. In so

doing, he set the stage for a new freedom of expression

in the Black Protest Movement, and, at the same time, jolted

white Americans to the extent that they came back many times,

perhaps out of curiosity, perhaps out of anger, to view

the man who had so upset their apathetic lives. Prior to

Carmichael's appearance, the black man's role in American

society had been, for the most part, one of appeasement

and patience--a picture of the black man "hat in hand,

asking the great white father to confer new benefits."[113]

Carmichael's style was different. He did not beg, he did

not ask; he demanded, and, he demanded not gifts, but

solutions. Unlike other Negro leaders on the scene,

Carmichael's rhetorical style was such that few would

accuse him of the "rhetoric of appeasement."[114]

Unsettling white America further, Carmichael used

devil terms to describe national leaders, and to defame

white capitalistic society for the innumerable injustices

deliberately perpetrated on the black man. Carmichael also

viewed the entire Western culture as one vast conspiracy
against the black man which was begun over four hundred
years ago when the West first staked its claim to the con-
tinent of Africa, thus he also used the Paranoid Style.
Seeking to unite his listeners against the oppression
inherent in the American and Western cultures, Carmichael
used the language of Objectification to vilify his opponents,
and to unequivically state that the non-white peoples of
the world would join together to stop the destructive,
imperialistic aggression of the West. Using Justification,
Carmichael exonerated black violence in American ghettos
and rationalized both the rhetorical choices and the goals
pursued by the Black Power Movement. Carmichael believed
the time had long passed for pleasant words and bland
descriptions; if the true feelings of the black masses
were to be accurately represented, they must be in language
which reflected their resentment and frustrations. Because
of his language, Carmichael was often accused of advocating
violence, however, if Carmichael's ideas are examined
carefully, it becomes obvious that he never expounded
voilence for the sake of violence but only as a defensive
tactic.

The effect of the Black Power Movement was greatly
enhanced by the charisma of its leader, Stokely Carmichael.
The black masses loved him, and, although they came to
view him as a sort of black God, they never felt that he

was out of their reach. Thus, Stokely Carmichael became the first black leader, perhaps, to which the black masses, particularly the young and poor, could truly relate because he expressed what they really felt.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Mary G. McEdwards in "Agitative Rhetoric: Its Nature and Effect" discusses numerous stylistic devices employed by agitative spokesmen. Her primary emphasis is on the extreme style common to agitators.

[2] For a more detailed look at the language of Objectificatiion, see Arthur L. Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution (Boson: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969), pp. 29-33.

[3] Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," in The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays, pp. 3-41.

[4] London Speech.

[5] London Speech.

[6] Morgan State Speech.

[7] London Speech.

[8] Morgan State Speech.

[9] Morgan State Speech.

[10] Berkeley Speech.

[11] Berkeley Speech.

[12] Morgan State Speech.

[13] Morgan State Speech.

[14] Berkeley Speech.

[15] Detroit Speech.

[16] Berkeley Speech.

[17] Berkeley Speech.

[18] Morgan State Speech.

[19] Vanderbilt Speech.

[20] Morgan State Speech.

[21] Berkeley Speech.

[22] London Speech.

[23] Berkeley Speech.

[24] Cuba Speech.

[25] Detroit Speech.

[26] Berkeley Speech.

[27] Detroit Speech.

[28] Detroit Speech.

[29] Berkeley Speech.

[30] Detroit Speech.

[31] London Speech.

[32] Berkeley Speech.

[33] Detroit Speech.

[34] Cuba Speech.

[35] London Speech.

[36] Berkeley Speech.

[37] London Speech.

[38] Detroit Speech.

[39] Berkeley Speech.

[40] Morgan State Speech.

[41] Cuba Speech.

[42] Morgan State Speech.

[43] Morgan State Speech.

[44] Berkeley Speech.

[45] Morgan State Speech.

[46] Cuba Speech.

[47] Berkeley Speech.

[48] Vanderbilt Speech.

[49] London Speech.

[50] Cuba Speech.

[51] Berkeley Speech.

[52] Cuba Speech.

[53] Morgan State Speech.

[54] Detroit Speech.

[55] Berkeley Speech.

[56] Detroit Speech.

[57] Cuba Speech.

[58] London Speech.

[59] Berkeley Speech.

[60] Morgan State Speech.

[61] Morgan State Speech.

[62] Berkeley Speech.

[63] Cuba Speech.

[64] Cuba Speech.

[65] London Speech.

[66] Cuba Speech.

[67] London Speech.

[68] London Speech.

[69] London Speech.

[70] Cuba Speech.

[71] Cuba Speech.

[72] Morgan State Speech.

[73] London Speech.

[74] Vanderbilt Speech.

[75] Berkeley Speech.

[76] Vanderbilt Speech.

[77] London Speech.

[78] London Speech.

[79] London Speech. In his speech, Carmichael referred to the fact that Prime Minister Churchill used this same poem in a speech he delivered when Britain was getting ready to attack Germany.

[80] London Speech.

[81] London Speech.

[82] Cuba Speech.

[83] Cuba Speech.

[84] Vanderbilt Speech.

[85] Vanderbilt Speech.

[86] Vanderbilt Speech.

[87] London Speech.

[88] Vanderbilt Speech.

[89] Vanderbilt Speech.

[90] Vanderbilt Speech.

[91] Cuba Speech.

[92] London Speech.

[93] Vanderbilt Speech.

[94] Cuba Speech.

[95] Cuba Speech.

[96] Morgan State Speech.

[97] Cuba Speech.

[98] Cuba Speech.

[99] Zinn, p. 40.

[100] Good, "A White Look at Black Power," p. 113.

[101] Roberts, "The Story of Snick: From 'Freedom High' to 'Black Power,'" p. 128.

[102] Bernard Weinraub, "The Brilliancy of Black," Esquire, January 1967, pp. 130-35.

[103] This phrase was coined by Pat Jefferson who entitled Chapter IV of her Thesis, "The Psychedelic Showman: Preparation and Delivery."

[104] Weinraub, p. 132.

[105] Detroit Speech.

[106] Detroit Speech.

[107] Detroit Speech.

[108] Weinraub, p. 132.

[109] "Which Way for the Negro," Newsweek, 15 May 1967, p. 28.

[110] Jefferson Thesis, p. 45.

[111] Bennett, "Stokely Carmichael: Architect of Black Power," p. 31.

[112] Bennett, p. 31.

[113] Scott and Brockriede, The Rhetoric of Black Power, p. 195.

[114] Scott and Brockriede, p. 115.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In May 1966, Stokely Carmichael became the chairman
of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. A month
later he thrust himself on the national scene in a way that
few black leaders had with his cry of "Black Power"—a
slogan that was itself agitative in nature. As "Black
Power" became a rallying cry for the new black mood, and
because Carmichael assumed a dominant role in the Black
Protest Movement, his rhetorical strategies have been
examined in relation to the goals he sought for the movement.
Because the white press and American society had charac-
terized Carmichael as a militant and vehement rhetorician,
his speeches have been examined to determine if, and in
what ways, Carmichael used the elements of agitational
rhetoric. Six speeches of Carmichael's were selected for
study. These speeches covered a variety of speaking situations
and were delivered between July 1966 and August 1967, the
period during and immediately following Carmichael's role
as Snick's chairman. The speeches analyzed were:

1. "Black Power Explained to a Black Audience," Cobo
   Auditorium, Detroit, July 30, 1966.

2. "Black Power," speech given at the Berkeley Black
   Power Conference, University of California at
   Berkeley, in October, 1966.

3. "Speech at Morgan State College," Baltimore,
   Maryland, on January 16, 1967.

4. "Toward Black Liberation," speech delivered at
   "Impact '67" at Vanderbilt University, Nashville,
   Tennessee, on April 8, 1967.

5. "The Dialectics of Liberation," address given
   before The Dialectics of Liberation Congress,
   London, England, July 18, 1967.

6. "Black Power and the Third World," given at the
   First Conference of the Organization of Latin
   American Solidarity, Havana, Cuba, July 31, 1967.

Criteria for analyzing the speeches of Carmichael were
adapted from Charles W. Lomas' The Agitator in American
Society; Arthur Lee Smith Jr., "Samuel Adams' Agitational
Rhetoric of Revolution;" Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman's
Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the
American Agitator; Mary G. McEdwards' "Agitative Rhetoric:
Its Nature and Effect;" Richard Hofstadter's essay, "The
Paranoid Style in American Politics;" and Kenneth E.
Boulding's essay, "Toward a Theory of Protest," in The Age
of Protest by Walt Anderson.

For this particular study, Lomas' definition of
agitation has been used. He defined agitation as "a per-
sistent and uncompromising statement and restatement of
grievances through all available communication channels,
with the aim of creating public opinion favorable to a
change in some condition.[1] For an agitation to occur,

certain political and social preconditions usually exist.
Four preconditioning elements are conducive to the development
of an agitational movement in a society. First, the per-
vailing mood is one of discontentment and turbulence.
Second, a group of people are victims of injustice, or,
perceive themselves to be. Third, the power structure
shows a massive resistance to change--a reluctance to
help those who feel they are the victims of injustice.
Fourth, accessible communication channels must exist between
an agitator and the victims of the injustice.

Historical research revealed that each of these
preconditions existed.

1. The mood of American society in the mid-sixties
was one of discontentment and turbulence, a mood which was
enhanced by several factors at work in American society.
Many Americans were frightened by the new tone of black
rhetoric and felt that the black movement was infiltrated
by communists and outside agitators. Moreover, many
Americans were concerned about what steps the government
should take to end violent retaliations against black and
white civil rights workers in the South where several
accused killers were acquitted, and most of the violent
crimes committed against Southern protestors went unpunished.

2. More important, blacks believed they were victims
of an unjust system which perpetrated a double standard
in its dealings with people--one standard for whites, one

for blacks. These complaints were verified by the Kerner
Commission and the Skolnick and Moynihan Reports which
concluded that black Americans were deprived of adequate
jobs, housing, educational facilities, and were often
subjected to brutal harrassment by white policemen.

3. Although the government passed legislation to end
such discrimination, federal inaction to enforce it lent
credibility to black complaints that white society was
not interested in true reform. Because of the rising tide
of black discontentment, blacks and whites joined hands to
participate in peaceful forms of protest aimed at exposing
the black condition and to confront American society with
demands for change.

4. As protest demonstrations spread throughout the
South and into much of the North, the media lent extensive
coverage to black speakers, especially the seemingly more
militant ones. This exposure put the new rhetoric in
constant view of millions of Americans, especially the
downtrodden masses of blacks whom the new leaders claimed
to represent. As many blacks began to tire of peaceful
protests in the face of overt white violence, they sought
new forms and new expressions to expose their feelings.
Hence, the time was ripe for agitational spokesmen who
could reflect the black mood of impatience at the slow
progress of racial justice in American society. Carmichael
was one such spokesman. Armed with the philosophy of Black

Power, Carmichael strove to move American society away from the status quo by challenging the system which had subjected blacks to an inferior status.

Four types of grievances are frequently used by agitators to express their discontentment with society. Cultural Grievances depict a group of people suffering injustices because of their race or national origins. Economic Grievances describe the suppressed as victims of economic exploitation. Political Grievances reveal the oppressed to be at the mercy of a ruthless and powerful enemy who victimizes them for political gain. Finally, Media Distortion Grievances depict the oppressed as misrepresented by the media which disseminates negatively biased newscopy against the agitator and his followers.

Carmichael appeared before the American public and the black masses in the mid-sixties to expose his perception of black grievances, and, in so doing, utilized quite extensively the tools of agitational rhetoric. Carmichael exposed black complaints by relating the Cultural, Economic, Political, and Media Distortion Grievances of the black masses.

1. In explaining black Cultural Grievances, Carmichael's basic rhetorical premise centered on the topic of integration---a theme he developed in all of the speeches examined. Carmichael felt that integration did not speak to the needs of the black masses because only the black

elite were in a position to enjoy the luxuries of public
accommodations. As the black masses had no money with which
to dine in restaurants or stay in hotels, integration was
meaningless to them. Moreover, Carmichael felt it was
ludicrous to speak of individual black suppression since
blacks were oppressed as a group only because they were
black.

2. When Carmichael expounded the Economic Grievances
of the black man, he related general and specific instances
of the economic injustices faced by American blacks.
Carmichael affirmed in several of his speeches that the
hardest work was produced by the black man who was given
the least salary in return. Poverty in America was cal-
culated, according to Carmichael, and the administrators
of poverty programs were responsible for the propetuation
of poverty among black Americans. He repeatedly indicted
institutionalized racism as a major force behind the economic
subjugation of the black man and offered specific examples
to lend validity to his allegations.

3. Carmichael's major premise in his exposition of
the black man's Political Grievances focused on the power-
lessness of the black masses to effect any meaningful change
in the oppressed status of black communities. Carmichael
asserted in all his speeches that the white power structure's
suppression of the black man's political voice placed blacks
in a position of submissiveness to the white-controlled
political machinery which expressed little concern for the

blighted condition of the nation's ghettos. Furthermore,
as Negro leaders owed their allegiance to the white political
machinery that had helped elect them, Carmichael contended
that these black leaders could not truly represent the needs
of the black community.

4. Carmichael's exposition of Media Distortion
Grievances focused on the incapability of the white press
to objectively report news concerning the black masses and
the Black Protest Movement. Carmichael felt that since the
press had been ingrained with the norms of a prejudiced
white Western society, they did not possess the competency
to objectively perceive the black situation, much less
report it factually. Carmichael felt, moreover, that the
press did not delve deeply enough into issues and relied
instead on the opinions of officials of the white power
structure for news concerning blacks. The press was viewed
as serving the interests of the establishment, and, hence,
when blacks challenged a part of the system which was
unjust, the media slanted the news to give the misleading
impression that blacks were at fault. Carmichael additionally
related that his image had been distorted by the media to
the point where he was unrecognizable even to himself.[2]
Perhaps, Carmichael realized the importance of the press
in conveying the message of Black Power to the national
audience and expounded a vehement rhetoric which would
assure his exposure to the black masses he professed to

represent. Whatever his strategies, the evidence suggests that Carmichael's contentions were valid--that the press did, in fact, distort the reportings of events surrounding the black community, the Black Movement, and Stokely Carmichael.

Carmichael expressed very vague and general solutions to the black problem. He usually stated only the changes which were needed and offered no concrete method for bringing about such changes. As an example, Carmichael related that new institutions must be created in American society, yet he never stipulated how these institutions would be built, what they would consist of, or how they would function. He merely voiced, in very general terms, that new institutions must be built. The major solution Carmichael proposed to end all black grievances rested in Black Power--the collective power of the Negro community. Carmichael felt that Black Power would answer black needs in two main ways:

1. He said that blacks needed to organize themselves into a collective power and to elect representatives that would be truly responsible to the needs of the black community. Also, he wanted the black leaders to not merely take over the functions of white leaders who had stripped black communities of their economic resources, but rather to build new institutions in which black leaders could function effectively. The economic resources of black

neighborhoods would be controlled collectively by the black community, and black leaders would then be able to effect a meaningful dialogue from a position of power along with the white establishment.

2. With effective power, the black masses would be able to maintain their cultural identity and enhance their self-esteem by solving their own problems. By developing a sense of racial pride and a collective unit of power in the black community, Carmichael felt that blacks could answer their needs for a cultural identity and economic independence through political power.

Carmichael also showed himself to be a master of adapting to national audiences. When speaking to an American audience, Carmichael proposed solutions which appeared to be capable of terminating black grievances within the framework of American society. Although these solutions were incapable of being quickly recognized in the America of the 1960's, they advocated no revolutionary changes in the power structure. When speaking in London or Cuba, however, Carmichael proposed revolutionary changes in society and called for the destruction of capitalistic institutions and the redistribution of power, wealth, and land in the United States. These solutions were in complete contra-distinction to the established values of the American government and could only be brought about by a political revolution, and perhaps a violent one. Thus, the solutions

Carmichael proposed to his foreign auditors were radical in comparison to those he proposed to American audiences.

As Carmichael progressed as a speaker, his rhetoric became more militant. Perhaps, the more radical tone of Carmichael's London and Cuba speeches may be attributed to the fact that they were delivered later than the other speeches examined. Perhaps, too, Carmichael believed, initially, that black grievances could be answered within the existing framework of American society. However, when his efforts, for example, to form the blacks of Lowndes County, Alabama, into an effective political voice were thwarted by the National Democratic Party, and when America reacted so negatively to the concept of Black Power, Carmichael perhaps began to believe that black needs could never be answered within the American system. Hence, he began to propose more revolutionary solutions. Additionally, perhaps the reason Carmichael stated his solutions in very vague and general terms is that a true revolutionary would not disclose his precise plans for the overthrow of a particular system of government. Had Carmichael laid down precise guidelines for the revolutionary solutions he proposed in London and Cuba, this would have been comparable to a general giving the enemy his battle plans before the battle began. When Carmichael spoke to American audiences, he may have merely sought to create more black discontentment with American society, rather than to offer precise solutions

to the black problem, so that when the time was ripe blacks
would be more willing to join him in his efforts to overthrow
the power structure. Still, another reason for Carmichael's
vague solutions may have been that Carmichael had no
specific strategies with which to achieve his goals. What-
ever his strategy, however, Carmichael proposed solutions
either in terms of long-range agitations or revolutionary
agitations---solutions which typified those frequently
used by agitative spokesmen.

Carmichael likewise utilized the agitational style
in the development of his ideas.

1. Carmichael used concrete diction filled with
unpleasant connotations, abrasive words and derogatory
metaphors, and devil terms to lash out vehemently at national
leaders and to defame the racist American society that he
considered responsible for black oppression. Black Power
and the word "black" became god terms to Carmichael's
supporters because they were used to portray the spiritual
uplift of black people which would result if these concepts
were embraced.

2. Using the language of Objectification, Carmichael
sought to discredit white American society and to unite
his black auditors against the system he perceived as
responsible for the black plight.

3. Carmichael used the language of Justification to

rationalize the concept of Black Power and to defend ghetto
"rebellions" as self-defensive tactics.

4. The Paranoid Style was exemplified by Carmichael
when he depicted American society and Western civilization
as deliberately conspiring to rob non-whites of their
cultural integrity and economic independence.

Because of the style of his rhetoric, Carmichael was
vilified by some sections of the black and white community.
The controversy surrounding Carmichael developed because
he did not always clothe his ideas in terms that were
comfortable to the ears of white American society. Perhaps
Carmichael did this to jolt and shock his American auditors
out of their complacency. Whatever his reasons, Carmichael's
selection of the slogan, "Black Power," created a disturbance
in American society which saw few people attempting to
understand the new rhetoric of black protest. Paul Good
wrote in The Nation that in this country a psychological
prohibition existed concerning the use of the word "'power'
in conjunction with the word 'black.'"[3] Likewise, Carmichael
observed that, "If we had said, 'Negro power' nobody would
get scared. . . . If we said power for colored people
everybody'd be for that. . . . it is the word black that
bothers people."[4]

Had American society taken the time to contemplate
the possible meanings of Black Power they might have seen,
in place of a violent reverse racism, some creative pos-
sibilities for the termination of the blighted condition of

the nation's poor black masses. Perhaps, Carmichael might
be accused of an unfortunate choice of words in the selection
of a slogan for the new Black Protest Movement. But had the
rhetoric been tamer would as much have been accomplished?
The 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act,
although regarded by many blacks as too little and too late,
may have resulted from white fear of black militant protest.
If the rhetoric of Carmichael and other black leaders had
been milder, would white society have been sufficiently
pressured to pass the civil rights legislation of the
sixties? Would they have been as aware of black sentiments
and frustrations? Thus, perhaps, agitation constitutes
a creative force in society. McEdwards believes that
to suppress and silence an agitator is to stifle the
chance to approach a more ideal society.[5] Moreover,
McEdwards supported the use of agitative rhetoric by
quoting Wendell Phillips who said that "the rude mass
of men is not to be caught by balanced periods--they are
caught by men whose words are half battles. From Luther
down, the charge against ever reformer has been that his
language is too rough. . . . Rough instruments are used
for rough work."[6] Unfortunately, leaders speaking in
gentle and polite tones often go unheard, their pleas
for reform ignored. Those who make the atmosphere uncom-
fortable gain attention, and this is the necessary first
step to reform. Frederick Douglass noted the importance

of agitation to social progress when he said, "Those who
profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are
men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want
rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean
without the awful roar of its many waters."[7]

A jolting style is the special tool of the agitator
with which he seeks to disturb the status quo and hopefully
to bring about changes in a society. Carmichael utilized
this style when he expounded the rhetoric of Black Power.
Perhaps it was because of black leaders like Carmichael
that the bitter resentment felt by the black masses toward
white society finally surfaced, and the American public
became increasingly aware of the true depth of black
discontentment.

The atmosphere of American society in the sixties
proved fertile for the birth and growth of many, varied
protest movements. The analysis of Stokely Carmichael's
speeches in relation to agitational characteristics suggest
that other leaders of contemporary protest movements might
merit a similar study. Speakers for the various factions
of the Women's Liberation Movement, the Anti-War Protest
Movement, and the Chicano Movement are but a few examples
of types of studies which might contribute valuable information
to the study of contemporary agitation and the modern protest
movements.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Lomas, p. 2.

[2] Pat Jefferson felt that Carmichael reacted to the press' depiction of him by adjusting his image to that portrayed by the press, and, hence, he became more like the press described him. Jefferson, "The Schizoid Image of Stokely Carmichael," in The Rhetoric of Our Times, ed. J. Jeffery Auer (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), pp. 389-99.

[3] "A White Look at Black Power," August 1966, p. 112.

[4] Berkeley Speech.

[5] McEdwards, p. 43.

[6] McEdwards, p. 38.

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