THE RHETORICAL STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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August, 1972
Michaelis, Daniel J., The Rhetorical Structure of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Master of Science (Speech), August, 1972, 125 pp., bibliography, 47 titles.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the overall rhetorical structure of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during 1960-1968. The criteria used in this study were adapted from: Joseph R. Gusfield, Protest, Reform, and Revolt: A Reader in Social Movements; Dan F. Hahn and Ruth Gonchar, "Studying in Social Movements: A Rhetorical Methodology;" Kurt Lang and Gladys Lang, Collective Dynamics; Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements;" Herbert W. Simons, "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements." Gusfield's definition of a movement as "socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward the demand for change in some aspect of the social order" is utilized.

To examine the rhetorical structure, it is necessary to divest it from the complex structural aspects of a movement. Simon's theory of the "grand flow" of a movement's persuasion guided this study. The rhetorical requirements of a movement are introduced in Chapter I. The requirements tend to fall into the following sub-categories: the ideology, the strategy, the goals, the membership, and the leadership. Chapter II is devoted to the setting during which the
movement was founded. It includes a brief history of social unrest in civil rights struggles in the United States between the years 1950-1960. Chapter III examines the structure of SNCC based upon the philosophy of love and nonviolence, approximately 1960-1964. Chapter IV examines the structure of SNCC based upon a philosophy of hatred and rejection, approximately 1964-1968. The chapter also includes a postscript discussing SNCC's progressive movement away from the philosophy of nonviolence after 1968.

This examination of the rhetorical structure of SNCC reveals a unique aspect which may be added to the study of social movements. When the movement attempts to work within the system for a redress of grievances by utilizing the proper political channels and the movement's membership is deeply and morally committed to the cause, a compromise or rejection by the power structure may cause the movement to assume many of the characteristics of the society which it has attempted to alter. SNCC attempted inclusion into the system at the Democratic National Convention in 1964. At the Atlantic City convention, SNCC was rejected and was offered a "compromise solution" which was totally unacceptable to the morally-committed SNCC membership. The subsequent strategy of parallel politics by SNCC was a failure. After a rejection and a failure, SNCC adopted some of the characteristics of the Southern all-white power structure.
SNCC excluded whites from the organization and became an all-black organization, with the exception of "token" whites in clerical capacities. The movement elected Stokely Carmichael, a firebrand orator, to offset the ravings of Southern power figures. The symbol of the movement became the black panther, like the police dogs of the white police, vicious animals. The slogan of the movement became the cry of "black power" to counteract white power politics in the South.

Although the movement was not successful in its bid for inclusion into the American political stream, the movement did awaken the country to the racism which was evident to the black man in the South. The attempt to compromise with a moral movement seems to have caused the violent outbreak of SNCC rhetoric and strategy. This study reveals that unless a movement is able to compromise on issues, it must be ready to employ other strategies which will effectively force the power structure to concede to its demands. When the movement fails (as did SNCC with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization) with this strategy, it must look elsewhere for assistance to force change in the society (as did SNCC with the alliance with the Black Panther Party). This study suggests that had the Democratic National Convention accepted the challenge delegation of the MFDP at Atlantic City, the entire spectrum of SNCC protest from 1964 would have been less violent.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was organized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in April, 1960. SNCC, as it has come to be known, was organized for the express purpose of coordinating the sit-ins in the South in the early 1960's (8, p. 44). SNCC got its name because its core membership was composed primarily of college students who coordinated the activities involving the direct action of the sit-ins. Because the sit-ins were a direct violation of custom and law in order to advocate significant social change, and because of the resistance from the establishment, SNCC may be defined primarily as an agitative movement (1, p. 28). It must be made clear that the focus of this thesis is not necessarily on agitative movements. Because it seems incongruous to define SNCC as an agitative movement and then to state that this study is not confined by the agitative tendencies of SNCC, a brief explanation is provided.

Although a movement may be founded with all the qualities of an agitative movement, a movement has no restrictions which state that it must remain so. As many movements progress to the agitative stage, it is feasible that some
would reverse this trend. If this study restricted itself to examining SNCC as an agitative movement simply because the movement was founded upon agitative rhetoric, valuable information could be lost. Therefore, the methodology of this study of the rhetorical structure of SNCC focuses upon SNCC as a social movement. Although SNCC was formed by the NAACP, it soon broke the bonds and gained stature on its own as a movement in the mid 1960's. The election of Stokely Carmichael as chairman, combined with the advent of "black Power," thrust SNCC to the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement.

As of the present date, no movement study has been attempted on SNCC. Numerous studies and articles have appeared on the leadership of SNCC (John Lewis, Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, etc.). Many scholarly works have been completed concerning other movements associated with black Americans and their quest for equality and power. This study of SNCC may contribute to the overall understanding of the structures of the black movements. Also, in light of the lack of a specific movement study of SNCC, a broad spectrum is desired in this examination. An analysis of the rhetorical structure allows a total picture to emerge. This study is not limited by studying only the leaders, arguments, strategies, controls, ideologies, etc.; but rather, it analyzes the overall rhetorical structure of the movement. It is recognized that all these facets play roles in the study, but they do not dominate it.
This study proposes to analyze the rhetorical structure of SNCC from 1960 to 1968. SNCC was organized in 1960, and in 1968 SNCC (then the Student National Coordinating Committee) formed an alliance with the Black Panther Party. At that time the movement became shrouded in secrecy and has since disappeared from the public scene, leaving only speculation and doubt as to its present position.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the rhetorical structure of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee for the years 1960 to 1968.

Methods and Procedures

The following methods and procedures have been adapted from various rhetorical and sociological studies which are relevant to social movements. A study of the rhetorical structure of a movement is really an analysis of the role of persuasion in the development and organization of a movement. A movement may be defined as "socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward the demand for change in some aspect of the social order" (3, p. 2). The first requirement in analyzing the rhetoric of a movement is to determine the ideology that the movement is based or founded upon and also the social climate which precipitated it (4, pp. 44-52). Sociologists Kurt and Gladys Lang warn that "Attention to the structural aspects of a movement should never lead one
to ignore its ideology" (6, p. 573). Because a movement is directed toward the change in the order of society, it must "possess both structure--some organization of people--and sentiments--beliefs about what ought to be and what will come to pass" (3, p. 8). The ideology represents these "socially shared beliefs" which bring the members together, presumably to share activities. Michael Lewis, writing in his article about protest in America, stated that "all the different ideological responses of the black movements have all emerged out of the same set of circumstances--the Negro's victimization" (9, p. 149). After a historical study of the events surrounding the circumstances which caused the emergence of "socially shared beliefs and activities," the emerging rhetorical structure of a movement can be discovered. The shared beliefs and activities were then interpreted. The slogans, signs, leaders, symbols, speeches, actions, non-actions, etc., are all combined to create a specific persuasive effect for that movement. These are all designed to accomplish a basic function (structural requirement) of the movement.

This, however, is not to say that the rhetoric of a movement is constant. It must be remembered that the rhetorical structure of a movement includes not only the functions or duties of the movement, but it also includes the manner in which problems are solved. Problems arise naturally from the implementation of the functions. Because
of the variety of forms the problems may take, there will naturally be a multiplicity of strategical choices open to the movement to resolve the problems. These choices may even include a change in the basic structure of the movement. Zald and Ash, in their article concerning movement change, list three types of change: "goal transformation, shift to organizational maintenance, and oligarchization" (11, p. 517). Goal transformation "may take several forms," but it is "always in the direction of greater conservatism [the accommodation of organization goals to the dominant societal consensus]" (11, p. 517). A change to organizational maintenance is a type of goal transformation whereby the "primary activity of the organization becomes the maintenance of membership, funds, and other requirements of organizational existence" (11, p. 517). Oligarchization is the "concentration of power" in the "hands of a minority of the organization's members" (11, p. 517).

Nevertheless, whatever goal changes occur, if any, a movement must have a rhetoric based on unity if it is to succeed. Again, this is not to say that a movement's rhetoric must be constant. To succeed means that a movement resolves a problem, accomplishes a function, or simply remains in existence. The difficulty in assessing the rhetorical structure of a movement lies in the fact that a movement is dynamic (6, p. 507). If the functions, problems, goals, solutions, membership, strategies, and tactics are constantly
changing, so then must the rhetoric of the movement constantly change (2, p. 185). When all the demands of a movement are met, it often attaches itself to new goals; thus both the structure and the rhetoric consequently change (11, p. 526). Because of the dynamics of a movement, contradictions may at first appear. This is why a historical study alone is not always adequate in analyzing a movement. The study must include the historical aspects and yet have the freedom to observe the dynamic forces affecting its structure. The contradictions which appear to the historian may be valuable tools of evaluation of strategy for the rhetorician.

An excellent example of an obvious contradiction appeared in SNCC's stated philosophy to elect a leader who did not possess charisma. SNCC felt that a strong, influential, and controversial leader would hinder the toned-down, grass-roots approach of the movement (9, p. 124). Yet, in 1966, SNCC elected its most charismatic member, Stokely Carmichael, to lead the hierarchy of the organization (5, p. 390). This may become a contradiction to the historian, but to the careful observer of the rhetorical choices open to SNCC at that time, it became a brilliant strategy of SNCC—not at all contradictory to the rhetorical requirements facing SNCC at the time.

At the same time, what appears to the historian to be an excellent choice of strategy for the movement may be a crippling error for the movement. It seemed at the time (1964)
to be good strategy to expel a member of SNCC for carrying arms; yet, to the rhetorician observing the changing structure of SNCC's rhetoric, it was a disastrous rhetorical error. The message it conveyed to the membership was much more important than was the message the public received.

This particular study of the rhetorical structure of SNCC takes on added significance in view of SNCC's radical departure from nonviolence during its decade of existence. As seen historically, SNCC became a contradiction of itself.

In his discussion of the difficulty of assessing the requirements, problems, and strategies of a movement, Simons stated that the "standard tools of rhetorical criticism are ill-suited for unravelling the complexity of discourse in social movements or for capturing its grand flow" (10, p. 1).

Because it is the purpose of this study to analyze the "grand flow" of SNCC, it was necessary to arrive at a set of criteria useful to the study. Simons continued with the statement: "No theory of persuasion in social movements can as yet be applied predictively to particular cases or tested rigorously through an analysis of such cases" (10, p. 2). Rhetoricians and sociologists have been aware of certain specific structural and rhetorical requirements a successful movement usually possesses. This study combines the works of the sociologists and the rhetoricians to arrive at a workable set of socio-rhetorical requirements for a movement. However, as Simons also stated, "A social movement
is not a formal social structure, but it nevertheless is obligated to fulfill parallel functions" (10, p. 3). These functions are a combination of functions established by both rhetoricians and sociologists. This is not an indication that each movement will meet each specific requirement. The requirements listed below are adapted as a general guide to provide for the fullest possible examination of the structure of a movement. They are not, however, intended to be full guidelines for the determination of the success or failure of a movement, for certain aspects of a specific movement may not be known until they are studied with a movement.

The socio-rhetorical requirements of a movement may include any or all of the following:

(1) The movement may provide an ideology for the internal core structure of the movement. An ideology consists of any or all of the following:

(a) a statement of purpose defining the general objective of the movement and giving the premise on which it is based;

(b) a doctrine of defense--that is, the body of beliefs that serves as a justification for the movement and its activities;

(c) an indictment, a criticism, and a condemnation of existing social arrangements;
(d) a general design for action as to how the objective is to be achieved;
(e) certain myths that embody emotional appeals, promises of success, heroes, and the many folk arguments that are taken seriously (6, p. 537).

(2) The movement may set the criteria for full membership in the core group, including the duties and obligations of such memberships. Lang and Lang distinguish between core members and periphery members. The periphery members are analogous to a "cheering section," while the core membership are those members who are dedicated to the ideology and perform the routine duties of the movement (6, p. 526).

(3) The movement should insure that it will be allowed to function by the power structure (the establishment), for if the movement is a severe threat to the existence of the power structure, maximum external pressure and resistance may destroy the movement. Althought external resistance is expected, even necessary, it may become so represive that it may cause the destruction of the movement.

(4) If the movement elects a hierarchy, it should be acceptable to the goals of the movement. The
leadership of a movement faces a quandary of rhetorical dilemmas:

(a) the leaders of social movements may face discrepancies between role expectations and role definitions;
(b) the leader must adapt to several audiences simultaneously;
(c) movements require a diversity of leadership types with whom any one leader should both compete and cooperate;
(d) pressures for organizational efficiency are often incompatible with membership needs;
(e) a leader may also need to distort, conceal, exaggerate, etc., in addressing his own supporters (10, p. 5).

(5) The movement needs to recruit, maintain, and organize a base membership into a functional organization. The membership should, in effect, be "sold" on the ideology of the movement, so as to forgo time, money, work, etc., for the realization of the goals of the movement (11, p. 521).

(6) There ought to be some regulation of the relationship between leaders and followers. The followers should feel that the leaders are as devoted as themselves. They should feel that the leader is from among the ranks of the followers—even if
he is not. The members should feel that the leader says what they would say. There cannot be too much distance between leader and follower in a social movement (11, p. 532-34).

(7) A movement should create the feeling of solidarity among its membership through a variety of rhetorical tools. The movement should not allow the tools to be misrepresented by the establishment. It is through the use of these tools that the membership gains a strong identification with the goals of the movement.

Songs, symbols, slogans, speeches, etc., are all rhetorical tools for the solidification of membership.

(8) The movement should coordinate the relations among various groups within the movement. Within each movement there will be factions. Zald and Ash define a faction as "an identifiable subgroup opposed to other subgroups; a split occurs when a faction leaves an MO movement organization" (11, p. 531). The factions within a
movement normally can be identified by their espousal of different strategies.

(9) The activities of a movement should be coordinated with other groups and outsiders in general.

(10) A movement should develop a power base to bargain for change. A variety of strategies is open to a movement in order to solve this requirement. For example, massive voter appeal (promulgation) may be utilized. Perhaps, militant or revolutionary techniques may be desired. In any case, the movement should, in some way, be able to bargain, threaten, or force the power-holding structure into change.

(11) The movement should be prepared for opposition from the establishment. Zald and Ash specify that

Social movements are directed toward objectives that are the deep and vital concerns of society as a whole or of a sizable and powerful segment of that society. They lie in areas closely related to the mores and to basic social values. Because they affect basic interest, strong effects either in support or in opposition of a movement are likely to be generated (11, p. 526).

The following is an examination of the problems which can be expected to arise from the natural implementation of the above requirements. The problems tend to fall into three categories: (a) resistance generating from the outside power structure, (b) problems arising from within the
movement, and (c) problems stemming from conflict with other movements. Complications may arise if the movement is placed in a dilemma, that is, if it cannot resolve one problem without a proportionate increase in another problem area. For example, to create a feeling of solidarity, a movement might choose a controversial motto or slogan which gives the core membership a feeling of pride. However, the symbol may cause increased pressure and resistance from the power structure. The choice of the black panther and the "black power" slogan caused SNCC such problems. By solving a structural problem (the solidification of the membership), the movement increased resistance to the overall purpose of seeking change within the power structure.

A common example of a rhetorical dilemma may be discovered in solving the structural requirement of choosing a leader. If the movement wishes to petition the establishment for a redress of grievances, it should have a leader who commands a high regard from the establishment. However, if the chosen leader is unacceptable to the majority of the membership, the movement has failed to create a feeling of solidarity. The establishment may indeed rectify a few grievances because of the ethos of the leader; however, the leader may soon discover that he has no one to lead.

The problems stemming from other movements can become especially acute for the different black movement. Because the overall black movement is comprised of many smaller
movements (CORE, NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, Black Panther Party, Black Muslim, et al.), there will probably be an overlapping of ideologies, strategies, and membership. How the smaller movements act and react to each other may cause serious structural problems for the smaller movements and to the total structure of the black movement (11, pp. 528-29).

Finally, it is necessary to examine the means available to the movement. Hahn and Gonchar state that the availability of these means depends upon, "(1) the strength of the members' belief in the movement, (2) the nature of the beliefs [the ideology of the movement], and (3) the nature of the society in which they (members) live" (4, p. 45). One further variable may be (4) the degree and nature of resistance generated by the power structure. If the type of strategy depends upon these preconditions, it is necessary to discover the strategies available to the movement.

At this stage, the rhetorical and structural requirements of a movement have been examined, the expected problems facing the movement have been qualified, and the rhetorical choices have been categorized. It is now appropriate that the rhetorical strategies available to a movement be examined. The rhetorical strategies a movement may adopt have been categorized by Bowers and Ochs (1, pp. 16-37). Although they speak in terms of an agitative movement, the strategies they list may be adapted to a social movement.
The strategy of petition is the legitimate and acceptable manner of presentation of the movement's case to the power-holding structure. Indeed, some movements never advance beyond the strategy of petition, if their demands are met. However, the power structure may adopt a strategy to defeat the demands of the movement. Control strategies, which may be adopted by the power structure, will be discussed later (1, pp. 39-56). It is not necessary that a movement attempt petition; however, most do so. A movement may also adopt the strategy of promulgation. Promulgation is an attempt by the movement to secure adoption of its ideology by society. An integral part of promulgation is the dissemination of information to the public. Tactics may include informational picketing, erection of posters, distribution of handbills and leaflets, and mass protest meetings. The strategy of solidification may be adopted by a movement to draw its members together into a cohesive unit. This strategy allows the membership an identification with the movement. A movement might adopt tactics of symbols, songs, emblems, speeches, and in-group publications. The strategy of polarization assumes that there are people who have not committed themselves. This strategy may be employed to recruit neutral individuals who have not made the decision to join the movement. The movement may solidify the membership by adopting the tactics of exploiting flag issues and individuals. These issues and individuals are
particularly susceptible to the attacks of the movement; therefore, the movement may gain adherents and solidify the membership by attacking them. The strategy of nonviolent resistance is the deliberate violation of laws and customs considered to be unjust or unfair. Tactics may include sit-ins, marches, meetings, boycotts, strikes, etc. The tactic of persistence must be employed with the strategy of nonviolent resistance. Because nonviolent resistance often does not pose a direct threat to the power structure, the establishment may decide to ignore these petty violations of custom and law. Persistence will prompt the power structure to react. The final strategy is escalation/confrontation. The objective of this strategy is to out-guess the power structure. Using specific tactics, the movement leads the power structure to become overly apprehensive in the face of a confrontation. Overpreparation and anxiety may cause the power structure to overreact to the confrontation. The movement hopes to discredit the power structure by the overreaction.

The previous strategies may be combined by any movement. The movement should constantly be aware of the dangers of increased factionalism which may weaken or destroy the movement. A movement may divide into two groups: (1) a group of nonviolent resisters, and (2) a group working to polarize neutral individuals. One faction may use peaceful civil disobedience; another faction, within the same
movement, may be calling for revolution. The "calling for revolution" may be used as a polarization tactic. If the movement becomes confused with its strategies, the rhetorical structure may become distorted. Persuasion will not be effective unless solidification takes place again.

Lastly, a movement may opt for total revolution (the physical and total destruction of the power structure). With this option, the movement has passed the rhetorical stage and assumes the structure of a military unit engaged in war (1, p. 37).

Because this study is concerned with the rhetorical structure of a movement, the strategies available to the power structure should be mentioned. Bowers and Ochs label these strategies "control strategies" (1, pp. 39-56).

Four rhetorical strategies can be adopted by the control structure. **Avoidance** is a strategy whereby the control structure merely ignores, postpones, evades, or in some other manner refuses to admit to the movement. **Suppression** is a strategy whereby the control structure harasses the movement's leaders, denies demands, banishes, or in some other way directly suppresses the movement. **Adjustment** is a strategy in which the control group adopts token measures or people advanced by the movement. This may be a real adjustment or merely a token adjustment. **Capitulation** is a strategy used as a last resort. It is the salvaging of that part of the structure that can be salvaged by the control
group. Total capitulation is a victory by the movement, as it has completely replaced the power structure.

This chapter attempts to provide a broad framework within which the structure of a movement may be analyzed. It is derived from sociological and rhetorical structural requirements of movement studies. It attempts to formulate a set of requirements to be used to analyze the structure of SNCC. The application of these methods follows in Chapters III, IV, and V.

Summary of Design

The rhetorical requirements of a movement are introduced in Chapter I. The "grand flow" of the movement's persuasion is discovered by utilizing these requirements. Chapter II is devoted to the social reconstruction of the 1950's and the 1960's. It includes a brief history of social unrest in the United States between the years 1950 and 1960. Chapter III is an examination of the structure of SNCC and the philosophy of love and nonviolence (1960-1964). Chapter IV is an examination of the structure of SNCC and the philosophy of hatred and rejection (1964-1968). Chapter IV also includes a postscript discussing SNCC's progressive movement away from the philosophy of nonviolence after 1968. Chapter V contains the conclusions drawn from this study of a movement. Although the study of the rhetoric of social movements is relatively new in the field of
speech criticism, this study reveals a unique aspect which may be applied to future movement studies.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

THE STATUS OF BLACKS IN AMERICA PRIOR TO 1960

Introduction

The pace of the black American's quest for equality in the United States was accelerated during the 1950's. The events which occurred during the decade of the 1950's had a direct bearing upon the foundation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. To understand the civil rights struggle in the United States, it is necessary to observe the racism evident during this period in this country.

Stokely Carmichael, chairman of SNCC from 1966 to 1968, defined racism as "the prediction of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group" (3, p. 3). Carmichael also distinguished between individual and institutional racism. Individual racism was described as an overt act by a white man or group committed against a black man or group resulting in "death, injury, or the violent destruction of property" (3, p. 5). Institutional racism, however, was an act by a total white community against the black community. Yet, individual attitudes are what comprised the whole of institutional racism (3, p. 5).

Carmichael further discussed racism in three related areas: political, economic, and social. One additional
area which racism has permeated might be added and labeled "cultural" racism. Jerome Skolnick, in his report The Politics of Protest submitted to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, agreed with these areas of racism when he described

the dominant thrust of black protest was toward political, social, economic, and cultural inclusion into American institutions on the basis of full equality. Always a powerful theme in American black militancy these aims found their maximum expression in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and early 1960's (1, p. 129).

A short examination of each of the four areas in which racism exists should assist in the overall description of the status of the black man in the 1950's.

Political Racism

The white power structure has always been defensive concerning the possession of political power. Speaking of political racism, Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, "no one gives up his privileges without strong resistance; the underlying purpose of segregation was to oppress and exploit the segregated, not simply to keep people apart" (2, p. 68). Carmichael felt that "the holders of an advantaged position see themselves as a group and reinforce one another in their attitudes; any qualms about the justice of the status quo seem to be diminished by the group character of the arrangements" (3, p. 8). This is not to say that racial ruling power must be direct. Many times the white power structure
indirectly controls the black community. Most black leaders have been well aware of indirect rule and puppet power figures. The strategy is that "the white power structure rules the black community through local blacks who are responsive to the white leaders, the downtown white machine, not to the black populace" (3, p. 10).

The problem can quickly become acute. If the white power structure does not rule directly, as was the case of the Southern all-white power structure, then it rules indirectly through the black leaders who are unresponsive to the black community. Consequently, the community does not truly choose its own leaders. Carmichael explained that these black leaders and potential black leaders are co-opted by the power structure. Skolnick noted this less of faith in the black community leadership as being one of the causes for Negro political unrest (2, pp. 124-175). The Negro community has consistently found itself in need of a leader who, in its eyes, would not sell out to the "man." Skolnick discussed this lack of faith in Negro leadership in connection with the race riots of the 1960's: "There was a widespread sense that civil rights leaders either could not or would not speak to the kinds of issues raised by the riots, and that a wide gulf separated these leaders--mostly of middle-class background--from the black urban masses" (2, p. 136). This concept will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter III; however, it is necessary to be aware of this lack of a black
leadership in the 1950's to understand properly Carmichael's concept of political racism.

Political assimilation of black leaders is not the only evidence of political racism. Maneuvering and adjusting political arenas also represent the white structure's racism. Blacks have realized since the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment that if they could utilize their voter strength in a black unit, goals could be instituted and accomplished. King spoke of political racism and the hope that the black man could vote as a unit, when he said, "Those who deny us their support should not feel that no one will get our vote, but instead they must understand that, when they spurn us, it is likely not only that they will lose but that their opponent will gain" (2, p. 26). However, through gerrymandering and redistricting black neighborhoods, the white political power structure had efficiently and effectively reduced any voter unit threat from the black community.

Economic Racism

Evidence of racism in the field of economics is not difficult to discover. The black ghetto is an obvious example of economic racism and can be found in any large city. Kenneth B. Clark, in his book Dark Ghetto, vividly described economic racism:

The ghetto feeds upon itself; it does not produce goods or contribute to the prosperity of the city. It has few large businesses . . . . Even though the white community has tried to keep the Negro confined
in ghetto pockets, the white businessman has not stayed out of the ghetto. A ghetto, too, offers opportunities for profits, and in a competitive society, profit is to be made where it can (3, p. 18).

In the mid and latter 1960's, as the center of emphasis of black protest shifted from the South to the Northern cities, the ghettos began to play an important role in the decision-making of civil rights strategists. It was during the 1950's, while Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was receiving a mass of publicity for his work in the South that,

another kind of organization with another kind of leadership was coming into its own in the Northern ghettos. Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Black Muslims, and the Nation of Islam, gained wide support among those segments of the black community that no one else, at the moment, was representing; the Northern, urban, lower classes (3, p. 18).

Further indication of economic racism can be found in unemployment figures. The unemployment of black people has consistently ranged "twice that of the white workers for the past twenty years" (1967) (12, p. 131). Carmichael cited the eye-opening statistics that in "the ten year period from 1955-1965, total employment for youth between the ages of fourteen and nineteen increased from 2,642,000 to 3,612,000. Non-white youth got only 36,000 of these 970,000 new jobs" (3, p. 19). A mere revealing and startling statistic is "that the median income of non-white college graduates in 1960 was $5,020--actually $110 less than the earnings of white males with only one to three years of high school education" (3, p. 19). In the early 1960's "a white man with
four years of high school education can expect to earn about $253,000 in his lifetime. A black man with five years or more of college can expect to earn $246,000 in his lifetime" (3, p. 20).

These statistics are not, of course, rare by any means. They can be found in any number of books and periodicals dealing with the economics of the black race. They are cited here merely as an attempt to indicate the vastness of economic racism. There are, however, much more subtle methods of economic racism practiced by the white power structure. The white merchant situated in the ghetto has become a legend. His image is one of dealing in cheap merchandise with a low overhead and victimizing the powerless black man in the ghetto. It is, however, not merely legend; it is fact. Approximately 75% of the black population live in urban communities (6, p. 45). In Chicago, most of the "838,000 Negroes live in a ghetto and pay about $20 more per month for housing than their white counterparts in the city" (3, p. 22). A staggering indication of economic racism in the ghetto is revealed when it is discovered that the Small Business Administration "in the ten year period prior to 1964, made only seven loans to black people" (3, p. 22). The citations of the white power structure's attempt at economic racism could continue indefinitely. It was, as has been shown, quite successfully employed.
Social Racism

Social racism should have ended like slavery with the Emancipation Proclamation. It, in effect, did not. The black race is the only race ever to be owned by another race in America. To be owned by another person is to be subservient or lower than that person. Is it possible for a piece of legislation to erase the attitudes of the owner or of the owned? President Eisenhower was often heard to say, "I don't believe you can change the hearts of men with laws or decisions" (10, p. 13). This is not a new revelation, as the Supreme Court of 1896 reasoned their decision to uphold separate facilities for Negroes on this strain of logic: "Legislation is powerless to eradicate radical instincts or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences" (10, p. 13). A more logically reasoned argument was used by the 1950 Supreme Court: "The removal of the state restrictions will not necessarily abate the individual and group predilections, prejudices and choices. But at the very least the state will not be depriving appellant of the opportunity to secure acceptance by his fellow students on his own merit" (10, p. 13). Yet, the owner had purposefully, maliciously, and with reckless abandon relegated the black man to the status of slave. To be thought of, treated as, and identified simply as an animal was the black man's burden. Carmichael stated, "The fact of slavery had to have profound impact on the subsequent attitudes of the larger society toward the
black man. The fact of slavery helped to fix the sense of superior group position" (3, p. 25).

In *Soul On Ice*, Eldridge Cleaver described the social ostracism of the black man:

> Of course I had always known that I was black, but I'd never really stopped to take stock of what I was involved in. I met life as an individual and took my chances. Prior to 1954, we lived in an atmosphere of novocain. Negroes found it necessary, in order to maintain whatever sanity they could, to remain somewhat aloof and detached from "the problem." We accepted indignities and the mechanics of the apparatus of oppression without reacting by sitting-in or holding mass demonstrations. Nur- tured by the fires of the controversy over segre- gation, I was soon aflame with indignation over my newly discovered social status, and inwardly I turned away from America with horror, disgust, and outrage (4, p. 17).

Kenneth B. Clark, a psychology professor at one time associated with Harlem's anti-poverty program, has stated, "The preoccupation of many Negroes with hair straighteners, skin bleachers, and the like illustrates this tragic aspect of American racial prejudice--Negroes have come to believe in their own inferiority" (3, p. 29). The more the black man could think, look, act, speak, and smell like a white man, the more he would be accepted by the white power structure. It is ironic that this same white-washed Negro became the leader in his own black community. This vicious circle is almost complete. Social racism is inextricably tied to political racism and economic racism.
Cultural Racism

The final area of racism—cultural racism—is identified in Skolnick's *The Politics of Protest*. Skolnick's thesis is that the colonizing of people's "concern for the native was predicated on the idea of the social and sometimes innate inferiority of the recipient vis-a-vis the donor" (12, p. 139). The natives of Africa became the "cultureless savages", and all links to African heritage were discouraged down to and including tribal customs. Although Africa is by far the most obvious example of an attempt at colonization, it is not unique. Skolnick continued by saying that "these arrangements, and the white cultural hegemony which they reflected, have obvious parallels in the American situation, and their effects cut deeply into the self-image of blacks" (12, p. 140).

With probably more insight into the area of cultural racism than any other black writer, Eldridge Cleaver revealed his thesis of *Soul On Ice* in a discussion with other prison inmates:

We went on to notice how thoroughly, as a matter of course, a black growing up in America is indoctrinated with the whiterace's standard of beauty. Not that the whites made a conscious calculated effort to do this, we thought, but since they constituted the majority the whites brainwashed the blacks by the very processes the whites employed to indoctrinate themselves with their own group standards. It intensified my frustrations to know that I was indoctrinated to see white woman as more beautiful and desirable than my own black woman (4, p. 23).

This "rejection of color, hair and facial features could be found wherever these policies against black people
developed, in Brazil and in West Africa, as well as Chicago" (12, p. 140). It should follow logically then that "The first attempt of the colonized is to change his condition by changing his skin" (12, p. 140). It is almost sad to realize the full truth of Carmichael's statement, "They live in a society in which to be unconditionally 'American' is to be white, and to be black is a misfortune" (3, p. 32).

As has been shown, there was widespread racism evident in the United States during the 1950's. The racism existed in four broad areas: political, economic, social, and cultural. For the most part, the black man in the United States did not stand idly by while being denied equal rights. The 1950's witnessed the adoption of nonviolent resistance on a nationwide scale by the American black in his quest for equality.

The Civil Rights Struggle During the 1950's

Because the theory of nonviolence was very important to the Negro strategy in the late 1950's, it is vital to have a grasp of the theory of nonviolent resistance. Probably, no other person could better describe the reasoning and effect of nonviolent resistance than Martin Luther King, Jr. King, in his book Stride Toward Freedom, listed six basics for understanding nonviolent resistance:

First, it must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist.
A second basic fact that characterizes nonviolence is that it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding.

A third characteristic of this method is that the attack is directed against the forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil.

A fourth point that characterizes nonviolent resistance is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation.

A fifth point concerning nonviolent resistance is that it avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit.

A sixth basic fact about nonviolent resistance is that it is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice (8, pp. 90-107).

The strategy of nonviolent resistance was brought to attention on December 4, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, by Mrs. Rosa Parks who refused to give up her seat on a public bus to a white man. This led to the Montgomery bus boycott which lasted almost a year. The demands of the Montgomery Improvement Association (the predominately black organization headed by Martin Luther King, Jr. who coordinated the boycott) encompassed (1) equal rights, and (2) equal employment. The boycott ended with the Supreme Court ruling on December 21, 1956, that public bus segregation was illegal. Perhaps, the most important effect of the Montgomery bus boycott was that it thrust King to the forefront of the emerging civil rights movement. He was twenty-seven at the time of the success of the boycott. In Bennett's biography of King, *What Manner of Man*, he stated that King filled the leadership
gap, and for "some 50 years, Negroes had been expecting a leader" (2, p. 83).

Although there are numerous conflicting opinions concerning the effect of the Supreme Court ruling in the Brown vs. Board of Education case in 1954, no chapter on the status of blacks in America would be complete without its mention. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren wrote the opinion of the court:

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools, solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does (7, p. 266).

The Brown decision, which, in effect, stated that separate schools were unequal, "gave a positive thrust to the movement which took up this legal challenge to segregation" (7, p. 253).

It was during the 1950's that the NAACP's principle goal was to get black children enrolled in white schools. Many tactics were adopted by the states opposed to such integration. Court proceedings revolved around the interposition theory and became a simple delaying tactic. A leading figure of the NAACP saw tokenism as the greatest danger to the school desegregation policies: "Moderates could accept token Negroes to meet desegregation suits brought by NAACP, and yet the vast majority of the blacks were frightened to move into all-white neighborhoods" (7, p. 272). Harassment of black
students who managed to attend white schools was not unusual. Perhaps, the most obvious tactic adopted by the states was to physically bar the black students from entering the all-white schools. Grant documented the case of one fifteen-year-old black girl who was turned away by National Guardsmen (1957) to a screaming white mob:

She tried several times to pass through the guards. The last time she tried, they put their bayonets in front of her. When they did this, she became panicky. For a moment she just stood there trembling. Then she seemed to calm down and started walking toward the bus stop with the mob baying at her heels like a pack of wolves. The women were shouting, "Get her! Lynch her!" The men were yelling, "Go home, you bastard of a black bitch" (7, p. 272).

As was noted by the news media coverage in 1957, this was not an isolated event in school desegregation.

It is more than ironic then to read of Anthony Lewis' (a leading civil rights activist and writer during the 1950's and 1960's) "lessons" of the Supreme Court decision of 1954. A few of the "lessons," which seemed to be aimed at both the white power structure and the civil rights leaders, read,

1. It may, more than anything else, have given the Negro hope.
2. It gave the Negro a courage and a will.
3. Violent Southern resistance to the school decision awakened Northern white opinion to the meaning of racism.
4. The federal government was at last moved to action in race matters (38, pp. 11-12).

Lewis echoed the ultimate black hope when he stated, "Now at last this country's deep underlying reverence for
law seems to be prevailing in most of the South. The South has begun to learn that the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution, when it has the support of the rest of the country, cannot be resisted indefinitely" (10, p. 13).

This certainly was a time of black buoyancy and expectation. It is important to note the prevailing atmosphere of hope and expectation that permeated the black community. Surely, this time, freedom and equality were at hand. Bennett described this period of the Negro struggle as "the age of great hope" (1, p. 183).

The civil rights struggle of the 1950's also focused on the Negro's disenfranchisement. To get the vote was to gain equality. The struggle during the latter 1950's and the early 1960's centered on Negro civil rights. Skolnick wrote that for the civil rights movement "the years before 1955 were filled largely with efforts at legal reform, with the NAACP, especially, carrying case after case to successful litigation in the federal courts" (12, p. 130).

A unique aspect or angle of political racism that few people were aware of was brought out by King: "It is not generally realized that the burden of court decisions, such as the Supreme Court decisions on school desegregation, places the responsibility on the individual Negro who is compelled to bring a suit in order to obtain his rights" (9, p. 139). The burden of proof, in reality, rested with the Negro; and the thousands and millions of dollars of
court costs were borne by the innocent. Also, there was a widespread lack of enforcement. King, in his book *Why We Can't Wait*, countered the growing black optimism:

What will it profit him to be able to send his children to an integrated school if the family income is insufficient to buy them school clothes? What will he gain by being permitted to move into an integrated neighborhood if he cannot afford to do so because he is unemployed or has a low-paying job with no future? . . . Of what advantage is it to the Negro to establish that he can be served in integrated restaurants, or accommodated in integrated hotels, if he is bound to the kind of financial servitude which will not allow him to take a vacation or even to take his wife out to dine (9, p. 139)?

Bennett felt that as the 1950's progressed the American black "could see the beginning of the end" (1, p. 169). He described the 1950's as the time of "optative evasion." This was really a time for reflection, exaggeration of gains, and the long pause before the next assault. In reality, not all gains were exaggerated, and there was a certain legitimacy to the expectations. New fields were opening for the black (new positions of authority in politics), and blacks were being educated on a greater and wider scale than ever before. A new Negro class was emerging--the black middle class. With the new black middle class emerging, very often the younger generation of middle class blacks found the "fruit rotten on the vines" (1, p. 172). The gains of the black people were not as pervasive as at first might appear; they were limited to the Negro middle and upper class (1, p. 173). As more blacks became more aware, they began to understand their
false hope. Bennett observed that "the South was still spending five, six, and seven dollars for white education for every one dollar spent on the education of Negro Children" (1, p. 181).

The early satisfaction, hope, and complacency of the middle class black can be seen in the membership figures of the NAACP. It was during the period of "great hope" that the membership in the NAACP "plummeted to about two hundred thousand, as compared with the wartime high of some five hundred thousand" (1, p. 181). It was from 1955 to 1959, during the age of great hope, while laws and customs fell before the courts that there "was a reign of racial terror in the South. Lynchings, murders, assaults, and bombings were not infrequent" (1, p. 201). There were three lynchings in Mississippi in 1955. Two NAACP leaders and a Chicago youth named Till were murdered in a three month period in 1955. Bennett noted, "This reign of terror, particularly the Till lynching of 1955 and the Mack Charles Parker lynching of 1959, had a sharp impact on the Negro mind, causing some leaders to call for federal occupation of Mississippi and other defiant areas of the South" (1, p. 201).

Bennett described the emerging feeling of the intellectual Negroes, assessing the spectrum of the black positions in white America, by listing four parts of the "Myth of the Black Man's Burden."
(1) That Negroes were a community of maligned victims waging, with the aid of a band of rebels, a righteous war for freedom.

(2) That they were being deprived of their freedom by oppressors whose bad deeds and bad consciences had poisoned their minds and their dreams.

(3) That it was necessary to wage the struggle to save not only the oppressed but the oppressors.

(4) That the oppressed stood in a challenge relation to the oppressors who were indebted to the oppressed not only for services rendered and not paid for but for values invented and not acknowledged (1, p. 204).

At a Negro Summit Conference in 1958, four hundred national and local black leaders spelled out the Negro's problems, and the spell of hope and expectation was crumbling:

Two million Negro children are still attending segregated schools . . . political leaders in the South have joined in open, massive, concerted resistance to the Supreme Court decision . . . We are denied equal employment . . . We are segregated and discriminated against . . . We are hampered unfairly in registering to vote . . . We are denied equal justice . . . (1, p. 209).

Jack Newfield, in his book A Prophetic Minority, offered statistics to prove that the leaders were correct in their assessment of the black situation in 1958:

The pace of public school desegregation was still proceeding at 1% per year, which meant that full compliance with Brown vs. Board of Education would be achieved, "with all deliberate speed," by 2054. There were still more than forty counties in the South where not a single Negro was registered to vote and more than twenty counties where white registration exceeded 100%. Negroes were still denied the right to use the same lunch counter,
motels, theaters, and public toilets as whites. Negro cotton choppers were still paid three dollars a day in the Mississippi Delta. Negro youth unemployment in the cities like Birmingham and Atlanta was as high as 30% (11, p. 35).

The voting and registration statistics were deplorable. The percent of Negro voting age citizens registered to vote in Mississippi in 1955 was at an all time historical low of 4.3%, while the percent of white voting age citizens registered was 59.6% (5, p. 327). The Mississippi Voter Registration Application Form was ambiguous; it was left entirely to the discretion of the local registrar (5, p. 341). The report of the United States Civil Rights Commission best illustrated the widespread discrimination in Mississippi in a section of the report titled, "Voting in Mississippi—Findings":

(1) The State of Mississippi, for the purpose of preventing registration by Negroes, has enacted over the past 75 years a series of laws establishing a constitutional interpretation test, and other tests for registration, and has vested broad discretion in county registrars to administer these requirements. The stringency of these tests was increased at a time when most whites were already registered and few Negroes were registered.

(2) Registration records indicate that county registrars in a large number of Mississippi counties have discriminated against Negroes in the administration of these tests primarily by (a) giving Negroes more difficult constitutional sections to interpret than whites; (b) disqualifying Negroes for insufficiencies in the completion of the application form or in the interpretation of the selected constitutional section when comparable or greater insufficiencies failed to disqualify white applicants; (c) affording assistance to white applicants but not to Negroes.
The Mississippi poll tax was established and made a qualification for voting for the purpose of preventing the exercise of the franchise by Negroes. In some counties local officials have refused to accept payment of the poll tax from Negroes, or have encouraged white electors to pay such tax and have failed to encourage, or have discouraged, Negroes from doing so. The poll tax was adopted on the belief that Negroes as a class would find it more difficult to pay than whites as a class. In 1890, when the poll tax was adopted, this belief was justified and it remains so today. In light of actual economic conditions, the payment of a poll tax is a significantly heavier burden for most Negroes than it is for most whites (5, p. 344).

The economic frustration evolved into anger as Ginzberg explained:

The median annual income for the Negro family (1963) is $3,233 as compared with $5,835 for whites, a gap of 43%. That the trend is in the wrong direction is evidenced by the fact that the gap in 1952 was 43%. Hence, that one element in the gap has widened rather than narrowed in barely more than a decade (6, p. 46).

Zinn noted that the median income of Negro families in Mississippi was $1,100. White family income was three times as high. Negroes were laborers, sharecroppers, farm laborers, maids, servants of various kinds. More than half of them lived in houses with no flush toilet, no bathtub or shower. They lived in tarpaper shacks and rickety wooden boxes sometimes resembling chicken coops (13, p. 36).

Moving from the "age of great hope," the blacks were moving quickly into the "age of great frustration." The laws and customs were stricken down; the racism was not. Things were beginning to boil in 1958. Blacks were realizing that they did not have to wait any longer. In 1958,
there were sporadic outbursts of sit-ins in Kansas and Oklahoma. In 1958, there were mass marches in Washington, D. C. The activity was at a fever pitch. King resigned as pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church on the fourth Sunday in January, 1960. It was as if the whole world knew the events of the coming week. Skolnick summarized the feeling of the Negro on the eve of the Greensboro, N. C. sit-ins: "The move to direct action in the South brought civil rights protest out of the courts and into the streets, bus terminals, restaurants, and voting booths, substituting 'creative disorder' for legislation" (12, p. 131). On February 1, 1960, four Negro students changed the lives of millions of people with a simple act of nonviolent resistance.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

THE RHETORICAL STRUCTURE OF THE EARLY STAGE OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Introduction

It was stated in Chapter I that the first requirement in analyzing the rhetoric of a movement is to determine the ideology that the movement is based or founded upon. The philosophy of a movement is usually revealed through the rhetoric of a movement. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the many different aspects of rhetorical structure which were listed in Chapter I in order to understand the "grand flow" of persuasion (see Chapter I, pp. 8-13). As was stated in Chapter I, a movement's rhetoric is not necessarily constant. The first stage of the rhetoric of SNCC is examined in this chapter. This chapter is concerned primarily with the rhetorical structure of SNCC from 1960 to 1964. The dates were chosen because of SNCC's radical departure from nonviolence following the Democratic National Convention in 1964. The categories include the list of socio-rhetorical requirements found in Chapter I: the ideology the movement was founded upon, the early rhetorical strategy.
of the movement, the goals of the movement, the membership, and the leadership of the movement.

The Ideology of SNCC--Stage I

In February, 1960, four students began the student sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina and shocked the citizens of the United States. Within a few days of the sit-ins, the "new" tactic had spread throughout the United States. The sit-in was not a new strategy in protest movements; however, a massive sit-in was new (See Chapter II, p. 40). Jack Newfield, in his book A Prophetic Minority, labeled the sit-ins as an "unplanned activist contagion. They gave people something to do immediately to show their feeling about segregation. They required no ideology, no politics, no scholarship--just one's body and a certain set of ethical values" (6, p. 43). It is no wonder that these early students posed a dilemma for both white and black leaders. They were clearly against segregation (as can be seen in their rhetorical actions); yet, they verbally attacked the civil rights leaders who had gained so much for the Negro since 1954. Their rhetoric seemed based upon ambivalence. The enemy was not only the white racist power structure but the black moderate power structure.

The early rhetorical structure of SNCC began in April, 1960 when there was a need for coordination because there were sixty centers of sit-in activity. Ella Baker, an
executive secretary for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference during the activities of 1960, felt that the sit-in students should be brought together to coordinate and formulate activities. Mrs. Baker said, "It was my idea . . . to call together the leaders of the sit-ins in a small meeting, maybe of about 100, to exchange information and try to find some way of coordinating a spontaneous and unplanned movement" (6, p. 44). The Temporary Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee was formed in April, 1960, in Nashville. A philosophy of independence was immediately revealed. The young movement refused alliance with major civil rights organizations and justified their feelings by expressing the sentiment that it was their movement. Julian Bond, subsequent Leader of SNCC, remembered their early meetings: "We really weren't doing much then. . . . The meetings were talk sessions and they really didn't accomplish anything. The coordinating committee really didn't do anything until October, when we held our second conference to tighten organizational structure" (6, p. 47).

The philosophy of love and nonviolence was dominant in SNCC. No other statement in SNCC rhetorical history was as significant as the founding statement issued in October, 1960. The statement emphasized the moral commitment of SNCC:
We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our belief, and the manner of our action.

Nonviolence, as it grows from the Judeo-Christian tradition, seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society.


By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities.

Although each local group in this movement must diligently work out the clear meaning of this statement of purpose, each act or phase of our corporate effort must reflect a genuine spirit of love and good will (6, p. 47).

This statement of purpose indicated both the naivety and the youthfulness of SNCC's early idealism. One of the most cogent statements concerning the rhetorical implications of SNCC's ideology was offered by James Lawson in a speech in 1960 when he pointedly stated what SNCC was not.

1. He is not a symbol of the movement.
2. Police partiality is not the issue.
3. The legal questions and court battles to follow the sit-ins are not the issue.
4. The issue is not integration (4, p. 274).

SNCC raised a moral issue by attempting to illustrate the sinfulness of racial prejudice. Early indications of
SNCC's emerging philosophy were offered by Lawson as examples of sinfulness: "The South and the entire nation are implicated in the same manner... the lynching of souls... goes on every day" (4, p. 279). SNCC also attempted, indicated Lawson, to prod the "pace of social change. The sit-in is a sign of promise: God's promise that as radically Christian methods are adopted the rate of change can be vastly increased" (4, p. 280). Lawson continued: "Such nonviolence strips the segregationist power structure of its major weapon: the manipulation of law or law-enforcement to keep the Negro in his place" (4, p. 280). SNCC members realized the philosophical importance of nonviolence at the lunch counters. Lawson related that "such an act attracts, strengthens, and sensitizes the support of many white persons in the South and across the nation" (4, p. 280). Perhaps, most important, Lawson echoed the SNCC moral consciousness and the hope that the early nonviolent activities of SNCC would succeed: "The 'word' from the lunch stool demands a sharp re-assessment of our organized evil and radical Christian obedience to transform that evil. Christian nonviolence provides both that re-assessment and the faith of obedience" (4, p. 281)."

SNCC's philosophy was based upon the assumption that there was a moral consciousness to waken, and that once awakened, all the evils of racism would disappear. By actions rather than words, the early students demonstrated a rhetoric
based upon the philosophy of nonviolence and a strategy of nonviolent resistance.

SNCC's philosophy of nonviolence and love would be faced with strenuous tests. In 1961, a black Mississippi farmer was murdered while attempting to register during a SNCC voter registration drive. SNCC's voter registration drive in the Amite County Project had been far from successful. However, to the already fearful Negroes in Amite, the murder meant that even fewer were willing to be seen talking with SNCC workers. Newfield noted, "Nobody tried to register in Liberty after the murder of Herbert Lee. No SNCC project was attempted in the county. No summer volunteer was sent into the hills and woods of Amite" (6, p. 61). It was January, 1965, before another SNCC worker returned to Amite County. Amite posed a serious problem for SNCC. The SNCC philosophy could not allow violence to overcome nonviolence. SNCC had attempted to build a community-oriented group which could accept responsibility and work for the betterment of the black man at the grass-roots level. SNCC workers returned in 1965 with a determination to face violence in the Black Belt. It became clear that SNCC was determined to remain faithful to the philosophy of nonviolence found in the statement of purpose.

Why did SNCC, a relatively new movement, choose to work in Amite County, Mississippi, a place most likely to
produce failure? The answer must be that the choice indicated SNCC's deep-rooted faith that love would transcend hatred. It was the hope that nonviolence would overcome violence to the point of actually succeeding in a grassroots voter registration drive in the Black Belt. SNCC was a moral movement. Bennett stated that the SNCC involvement in the South was a pretext to cause a confrontation between federal and state power structures. This was probably correct at another time in the South, but it was not true of the Amite County Project or any other backwoods area where SNCC was working at the grass-roots level. These workers seem to have been the forerunners of the "new morality" which was later to surface at the Democratic National Convention in 1964.

A pattern of SNCC activity began to emerge in Amite and later in Albany, Georgia, in the early 1960's. The SNCC workers usually attempted to get the local Negroes interested enough to work for the cause of equality. This had been the case of the earlier sit-ins and Freedom Rides. In Albany, SNCC workers began immediately to organize the students of Albany State College for Negroes. The SNCC workers trained the students in nonviolent tactics and then chose a target. Lewis said of the workers in Albany, and it was true throughout the South at this stage of SNCC, that "they were educating in the ultimate
meaning of that word, bringing out from deep inside the Negro people of that area the muffled cries, the dreams so long kept to themselves" (16, p. 144).

Albany was chosen by SNCC for the "same reasons Mississippi was chosen; educated Negro youngsters from the border states of the South wanted to return, it seemed, to the sources of their people's agony, to that area which was the heart of the slave plantation system" (10, p. 124). Most SNCC centers of activity were an attempt to break through the frozen crust of the social order . . . and show to increasing numbers of Negroes there a glimpse of the future" (10, p. 139).

During this stage of SNCC, most members felt it was almost a ritual or purging of the soul to be arrested and to remain in jail without posting bond. It was almost as if it were a cleansing of the soul or a comraderie which needed sharing with other black, battle-scared veterans. The jail also served another unique purpose for the SNCC workers; it allowed the later SNCC philosophy to be formulated while students were in the jail. For most SNCC workers, the jail was their baptism of fire in the South.

Indicative of the SNCC philosophy of employing body rhetoric was a statement by one SNCC worker in Albany: "When we came to Southwest Georgia in October, 1961, we offered before the people our minds and bodies. That was all we had. Three months later, nearly a thousand bodies and
minds were being offered before us" (10, p. 146). The SNCC workers went into a community as outsiders to get the insiders to see the outside. Together, they went outside to change the inside. To teach and instruct the grass-roots level Negro to realize his position was one of the early goals of Stage I SNCC.

Skolnick wrote,

Nonviolence was for King a philosophical issue rather than the tactical or strategic question it posed for many younger activists in SNCC and CORE. The aim was "to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent." Such a philosophy presumed that the opponent had moral shame to awaken, and that moral shame, if awakened, would suffice. . . . What was not expected was the absence of strong protective action by the federal government (8, p. 132.)

The strategical question of nonviolence did pose a serious problem for the SNCC organization. In the next section, the strategy of nonviolence and the problems related to that strategy are examined.

The Strategy of SNCC--Stage I

Although the philosophy of nonviolence was not a new phenomenon in American protest movements, a massive sit-in was new. Because the movement was spreading wildly and because many participants had no connection with any directive agency, the students at Nashville College drew-up a code of conduct which characterized the early strategy of the sit-ins:

Don't strike back or curse if abused.
Don't laugh out.
Don't hold conversations with floor workers.
Don't block entrances to the store and aisles.
Show yourself courteous and friendly at all times. Sit straight and always face the counter. May God bless each of you (1, p. 216).

The strategy was simple enough; a student would take a seat or request service at a "white" facility. If he were refused service, he remained seated. If he were struck or manhandled by law enforcement officers, he remained seated and refused to retaliate.

The purpose of the sit-ins was analyzed by one of the early activists within the movement: "As I see it, it is to prove to the white people we aren't children and deserve our full and equal rights. The sit-in technique shows these whites we can do without immediate gratification, unlike children, and that we can wait like adults for our rights" (6, p. 43). There was more involved in the strategy than this member realized. In effect, the sit-ins were a public, nonviolent demonstration by students advocating social change in laws and customs in the South. They were an obvious rejection of the slow petition strategy which had been used during the past decade by civil rights organizations, most notably the NAACP. They were complex reactions which gave the people something to do to demonstrate their frustration with the slow courtroom strategy.

As the sporadic movement grew, the technique varied, but the strategy remained the same. There were wade-ins at swimming pools, kneel-ins and pray-ins at churches, and read-ins at libraries. Bennett described these early days by
stating that there "was a frenetic sense of movement about all this. The swirling ferment of bodies in motion, the uproarious scenes in stores and lunch counters, and unprovoked attacks" (1, p. 216). Nevertheless, the strategy of the sit-in became more structured as the participants gained experience. Zinn, who first chronicled the early stages of SNCC in SNCC: The New Abolitionists, noted that the student sit-ins were sometimes very carefully planned. Stores were not randomly picked, but those selected were connected with "city, county, or federal government, and were therefore, subject to the 14th Amendment" (10, p. 25).

The sit-in strategy was also effective in gaining for SNCC a base membership during its formulative stage. Practically speaking, however, the sit-ins did not accomplish much. Although some lunch counters were desegregated and some restrooms were desegregated, for the majority of black Americans, the practical aspects of the sit-ins were minimal. For the most part, the sit-ins had taken the Southern power structure by surprise, and the reaction was slow and non-violent. The Freedom Rides were an extension by SNCC and other civil rights organizations, notably CORE, of the direct action strategy of the sit-ins. The Rides were an attempt to expose the racism in the South and, at the same time, to challenge segregation in interstate commerce in the Deep South. At the beginning of the Freedom Rides, SNCC structure was, at best, loose. Zinn noted that SNCC "had an office in
Atlanta with two full-time workers who maintained sporadic communication with affiliated movements all over the South" (10, p. 40).

Most of the early Riders were veterans of the early sit-ins and members of SNCC and CORE. This new strategy represented a deeper commitment for the members of SNCC merely because of the physical danger it involved. It became a rhetorical request by the Riders to be permitted their rights as ordered by the Supreme Court. Their strategical action alone was a challenge to the federal government to uphold the constitutional laws. The early Rides were like nightmares; beatings, lead pipes, hospitals, and bus burnings were common events. The Southern power structure reacted so violently to the Riders that the Rides were temporarily halted by the NAACP and CORE. The halt of the Rides by the major civil rights organizations was enough to spur SNCC to defend its philosophy of nonviolence. SNCC officials decided that the Freedom Rides must continue. They stated that if "it didn't, it would prove that violence could overcome nonviolence" (10, p. 45).

The early Rides were not too successful in penetrating Southern racism. However, if the SNCC Rides were viewed as an attempt to force the confrontation between federal and state authorities, they were very successful. The wide publicity given the Rides in the press and the national news media coverage prompted the federal government to intervene
in Alabama in May, 1961. The federal government had hoped to avoid a confrontation, but the Rides continued. Attorney General Robert Kennedy promised the assistance of the F.B.I. and an investigation into the incidents of violence. Also, Kennedy promised a contingent of United States Marshals who would accompany the Freedom Rides in the future (10, p. 49).

SNCC's body rhetoric had prompted a confrontation between federal and local authorities. The SNCC field workers were heroes of the moment. This signalled the beginning of "Freedom High" for SNCC. In the future, all SNCC activities were centered around the term "freedom." There was "Freedom Summer," "Freedom House," "Freedom School," "Freedom Song," "Freedom Day," "Freedom Walk," "Freedom Singer," "Freedom Ballot," and the "Freedom Party."

During the Freedom Rides, the SNCC staff decided upon a new tactic. It was developed with the philosophy of nonviolent resistance. The SNCC steering committee adopted the "jail-nō-bail" tactic. SNCC's first use of the tactic was in the Atlantic sit-ins in February, 1961. Eighty student went to jail and refused to come out. They flooded the jails with bodies. There were numerous reasons for adopting such a tactic. In massive demonstrations, SNCC would simply overflow the local jails and would force the release of prisoners because of the limitations of the jails.
A second tactic was that "jail-no-bail" provided a solidifying factor for both the members in jail who shared a common physical experience of suffering, and the workers who strived for their release outside. A third theory of SNCC was that this was an unjust deprivation of rights by local authorities, and they refused to admit guilt by posting bail. Finally, the tactic was employed to secure new members who might also be in jail.

Because of the vast amount of publicity accompanying the direct action strategy, SNCC gained a tarnished reputation as a rabble-rousing organization whose members were trouble-making students wanting too much, too soon. Even though President Kennedy had called for a "cooling off" period, SNCC workers continued to agitate in the South. By August, 1961, over 300 persons had been arrested in connection with the Freedom Rides (10, p. 57). Three future chairmen of SNCC were among these three hundred: John Lewis, John Lawson, and Stokely Carmichael. Frustration was the key word in describing the sentiments of local authorities. While new Riders arrived and were arrested, the earlier Riders remained in jail. James Farmer, a Freedom Rider, observed that jails "are not a new experience for the Riders, but the Freedom Riders were definitely a new experience for Mississippi" (10, p. 57).

The first observable deviation from the early SNCC rhetorical strategy was a proposal at one of the early SNCC
summer organizational meetings in 1961. It was proposed that SNCC drop its sensation-seeking, direct action campaigns (sit-ins, kneel-ins, picket lines, boycotts, Freedom Rides) in order for SNCC "to make the registration of Negro voters in the South its main activity" (10, p. 58).

There were two reasons for the proposal of change in SNCC strategy:

(1) The federal government had asked for a "cooling off" period. SNCC needed the assistance of the federal government if for no other reason than to threaten the South with federal intervention. This demonstrated SNCC's practicality, for the movement soon realized that it was necessary to develop a power base from which to bargain for social change.

(2) There was mention of substantial financial support offered by Northern liberals if SNCC would aim in this direction.

The members aligned themselves into factions; each espoused a different course of action for the budding movement. The outcome of the meeting was to have profound effects on the SNCC organization for years to come. The organization was divided into two groups or wings: (1) a direct action wing, and (2) a voter registration project wing in Mississippi.

The structure of SNCC never returned to a sole reliance upon the original direct action confrontation tactic. Throughout its existence, SNCC retained its ties to the
grass-roots level Mississippi organization which it formed in August, 1961. It never relinquished its hold in Missis-
sippi even in the face of an international struggle which developed at a later stage in SNCC. SNCC realized that "the Department's [Justice] conservative interpretation of civil rights law led it to argue that only in connection with voter registration activities could it go into the federal court for injunctive relief against local and state govern-
ment in the South which tried to suppress the civil rights movement" (10, p. 59).

Therefore, at this stage of the SNCC organization, it was an agitative movement hoping by direct action to cause or to force federal intervention and to publicize the racism in the South. The rhetorical strategy of nonviolent direct action had been widely successful both in the North and in the South by bringing racism into the open, at the cost of physical in-
juries. SNCC strategy had not prompted the federal govern-
ment to take action to cease the local violation of constitu-
tional laws.

SNCC's rhetorical strategy had expanded by adding voter registration to direct action. The overall purpose had not changed, the movement was still bound by its philosophy of nonviolence, the activity was still on the local level, and there was still a looseness about the entire SNCC organiza-
tional structure. With the SNCC philosophy as it was in the early 1960's, it is not difficult to understand SNCC's
decision to work in small Southern communities like Amite County, Mississippi. During 1962, SNCC moved into the Black Belt and "the drive for Negro rights began to expand beyond desegregation to public accommodations, into questions of direct political power like the right to vote and run for office" (9, p. 232).

Amite County was the first voter registration project, and SNCC decided there would be no direct action wing in Amite. SNCC workers would simply walk the back roads educating and talking very calmly to the local Negroes. Fear pervaded the illiterate backwood Mississippi Negro. Newfield felt that simply "for a Negro to talk to another Negro in the movement requires courage; to come to a meeting is authentic heroism" (6, p. 61).

In 1961, Bob Moses, a SNCC volunteer, came to Amite County, Mississippi alone. No civil rights workers had been in Mississippi since 1952. Moses came "without a grand scheme, lacking any concrete experience in voter registration" (1, p. 53). Very little publicity was given to the Amite Project. There were a total of 16 college students who dropped out of school in the fall of 1961 and went to the South. This project seems almost miniscule in comparison to the mass marches and mass protests of other civil rights organizations. In Pike County, Mississippi, SNCC set-up a voter registration school which would be the forerunner of the later SNCC Freedom Schools. Confrontation followed
immediately as SNCC workers were harassed, beaten, arrested, and jailed. Moses was physically attacked numerous times as he accompanied black citizens to register.

Just as the earlier direct action strategy of SNCC was dominated by body rhetoric, the voter registration drives were also noted for the body rhetoric of the workers. There were no leaders urging the workers onward, no mass meetings, and little, if any, communication between the membership itself. The grass-roots rhetoric of SNCC consisted of a uniform (overalls, sneakers, and a T shirt), an example for the Southern black as he saw the courage of the SNCC workers in the face of danger, and an intense moral determination to overcome the iceberg of the South. The SNCC rhetoric consisted primarily of actions—accompanying voters to register; calm, rational questioning of registrars; and attempting to obtain legal justice from the federal government. In Amite County, Bob Moses filed suit against a white man who attacked him, and he had the case heard in a Mississippi court. SNCC believed in the "system" and felt that with love, time, and perhaps some bloodshed all evil would disappear.

SNCC's belief in the system, and the legal reasoning of SNCC was as follows:

The United States Constitution says that Americans have the right to speak freely, to distribute literature, to assemble peacefully, to petition the government for a redress of grievances (First Amendment), and that no state or local official may deprive anyone of these rights (Fourteenth Amendment), or subject any person to discrimination or abuse because of
his color. These constitutional provisions are the "supreme law of the land" (Article VI).

The President of the United States, according to Article II of the Constitution, has the responsibility to see "that the laws be faithfully executed." But on countless occasions these past few years, state and local officials have violated the constitutional rights of Negroes and whites in the deep South, and the Executive Branch of the government has not taken any effective action to stop this. The President of the United States, then, and specifically the Department of Justice, which is the law enforcement arm of the Administration, have not been fulfilling their responsibilities under the Constitution (10, p. 192).

Later, in January, 1964, after Freedom Day in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Bob Moses was the center of a similar SNCC tactic which demonstrated SNCC's belief in "the system."

During the trial of Moses for participating in Freedom Day, the SNCC workers (white and black) sat in the courtroom on the reversed sides assigned to white and black. The judge ordered the courtroom segregated three times, and she was answered by Howard Zinn, "Your Honor, the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that segregated seating in a courtroom is unconstitutional. Will you please abide by that ruling"(10, p. 18)? She did. The fact that SNCC brought its rhetoric directly into "the system" and attempted to participate in that system indicated early SNCC rhetorical strategy.

Although SNCC had attempted to force the federal government into action in the South through the strategy of working within the system, it was often met with statements like the following telegram from the Department of Justice:
in regard to your query as to why the Department does not supply federal protection when requested, it is appropriate to observe that the responsibility for preservation of law and order, and the protection of citizens against unlawful conduct on the part of others is the responsibility of local authorities (10, p. 197).

Even more revealing of the inaction of the federal government was a statement by Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenback that "civil rights groups through despair or ignorance of the federal system seek to involve the power of the federal government to enforce personal rights" (10, p. 198).

In spite of the federal government's inaction to insure constitutional rights in the South, the voter registration tactic of SNCC was highly successful. By 1961-1962, over 500 Negroes had registered in Albany. By the end of directed activity in Albany, there were over 3,000 blacks voting. However, as usual, the direct action wing received the widest publicity. Again, as usual, SNCC appealed to the young blacks, and in 1961, 400 high school students were arrested for forming a mass protest march in Albany. Because of the youngsters' involvement and their subsequent arrest, 300 citizens marched in a protest and all were arrested. A strategical pattern of the direct action wing had emerged. SNCC acted as a catalyst for the young students in the community and prompted them to action. Once the youngsters were deeply involved, the older Negroes, seeing the treatment of their young people, were persuaded to action. Total community action was a SNCC goal at the grass-roots level.
This explains why SNCC did not develop a charismatic leader during Stage I; SNCC strategy was to assist the local community to help themselves to form their own leadership, not to follow the direction of others.

However, SNCC encountered a serious problem in the voter registration strategy adopted in the South. The local Southern Negro identified the SNCC field workers as outside agitators attempting to stir-up the local citizens. It was a problem of identification in the minds of the local Negroes. The white power structure occasionally blundered into assisting SNCC to rid itself of the devil connotation. For example, in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1962, SNCC encountered a new strategy of the power structure--economic harassment. In a letter from a SNCC field worker in Mississippi, "economic harassment" was defined:

We are dealing with very subtle problems, here, not one of shootings and hangings, but of lowering of cotton acreage allotments and the raising of taxes. The Chancery Court sells the land for taxes and the farmer is forced to move. In the meantime the banks refuse to give him a loan. . . . Here we have the problem of the sheriff riding by a place where meetings are held and writing down the tag numbers. The next week, any person who does public work is fired (10, p. 82).

This subtle economic harassment continued in Greenwood. "In October, 1962, the Board of Supervisors of Leflore County stopped distributing surplus food, cutting off 22,000 people, mostly Negro, who depended on it" (10, p. 86).
SNCC headquarters forwarded the message to Northern colleges, and a food drive was begun. Zinn felt that the food drive

... turned out to be a catalyst for the voter registration campaign in Mississippi. It brought the SNCC workers in direct contact with thousands of Negroes, many of whom came forward to help with the distribution of food, and stayed on to work on voter registration. Thus SNCC became identified in the minds of the Negroes in Mississippi not simply with agitation, but with direct aid. The more food was distributed, the more people began to go down to the courthouse to register (10, p. 88).

Perhaps the most effective and most novel rhetorical strategy adopted by SNCC was the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964. The reasoning behind the strategy lay in the fact that if enough white and black students flooded Mississippi during the summer of 1964, they could register every Negro in Mississippi. The first prerequisite was educating and registering the Negroes of Mississippi on a statewide scale. Bob Moses told SNCC volunteers, "If we can go and come back alive, then that is something. If you can go into Negro homes and just sit and talk, that will be a huge job. ... We think the key is in the vote. Any change, any possibility for dissidence and opposition, depends first on a political breakthrough" (2, p. 394).

SNCC formed Freedom Schools for those too young to vote and community centers for the older folk. Each day began with a meeting and a speaker which were designed to boost morale and to urge the workers on. Early in the summer of 1964, Governor Johnson appeared on statewide television and stated:
The hard core of this group is your beatnik-type people. Nonconformists, hair down to their shoulder blades, some that you'd call weirdos... They don't realize that they're following a group of professional agitators, many of them with criminal records, people who've been in trouble all their lives—you can see it in their faces. We're not going to tolerate any group from outside of Mississippi to take the law in their own hands. We're going to see that the law is maintained, and maintained Mississippi style (2, p. 398).

The law was maintained "Mississippi style" almost before the Mississippi Summer began. The murders of three young men working for SNCC were discovered in Mississippi early in the summer. The day SNCC discovered the murders of the three workers, Moses spoke to the other workers:

The way some people characterize this project is that it is an attempt to get some people killed so the federal government will move into Mississippi. And the way some of us feel about it is that in our country we have some real evil, and the attempt to do something about it involves enormous effort... and therefore tremendous risks (2, p. 401).

The strategy had been that after registration of large numbers of Negroes, the organization would bypass the official Mississippi parties and move outside the political machinery in Mississippi. COFO (Council of Federated Organizations), which coordinated the summer project, would hold their separate but equal primaries and elections. The goal was to set-up an organization to contest Mississippi politics at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City in August, 1964. Grant noted that up to this time SNCC had merely adopted tactics which "simply consisted of doing outside the
existing local law what could have been done legally if racial equality had already been achieved" (2, p. 265).

By August, over 60,000 Negroes had registered, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was formed. At Atlantic City, the MFDP presented their credentials and were offered two compromise seats "at large" (not the regular Mississippi seats). SNCC and the MFDP were in a dilemma; leading civil rights figures urged the MFDP to accept the token seats. SNCC and the MFDP refused the seats because as Zinn stated,

The token two seats were rejected by the MFDP by a vote of 60 to 4.

Arthur Waskow, in his book From Race Riot to Sit-In, felt that the SNCC attitude was disconcerting to the national leaders.

To many of the national leaders, this belief meant that when "protest" movements entered party politics they must and should give up their "protest" style and their purity of conviction, and must be prepared to compromise. These national leaders who felt this way urged the Freedom Party to accept the Administration's offer (9, p. 272).

However, to many of the SNCC field staff "the same belief that politics and protest were incompatible meant that protest movements ought to stay out of party politics, ought to preserve their purity and the protest style, and ought
not to get mixed up in compromise at all" (9, p. 272). By refusing compromise, SNCC rejected the American way of politics and retained a grass-roots hold in Mississippi. The question to SNCC seemed not one of how many seats they could get, but rather it seemed to be, "Will the political power structure in America recognize the constitutional rights of Mississippi Negroes?" Waskow felt that for all these reasons

... an overwhelming majority of the Freedom delegation felt that accepting the offer would mean attempting to please the national leadership of the Democratic Party and of the civil rights movement at the expense of betraying and alienating their constituents in Mississippi. On political as well as moral grounds, the delegation therefore voted on two separate occasions to reject the offer (9, p. 273).

SNCC had waged a moral battle with America and not a political battle. Skolnick summarized Mississippi Summer:

The Atlantic City compromise seemed of a piece with the reluctance of the federal government to enforce existing laws protecting civil rights workers in the South. The events of that summer in the South led SNCC to a profound reevaluation of its commitment to building a nonviolent grass-roots protest movement, since that commitment depended on the belief that the national authorities would be responsive to and supportive of the movement (8, p. 92).

The MFDP and their subsequent rejection of American political tokenism signalled the emergence of a new SNCC rhetorical structure.

The Goals of SNCC--Stage I

In Chapter I, a movement was defined as "socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward the demand for change in some aspect of the social order" (3, p. 2). "Directed
Here were the colored students, reading Goethe and one was taking notes from a Biology text. And here, on the sidewalk outside, was a gang of white boys come to heckle, a ragtail rabble, slack-jawed, some of them, God save the mark, were waving the proud and honored flag of the Southern States in the last war fought by gentlemen (10, p. 40).

In 1961, during the heat of the activity from the Freedom Rides, editor Eugene Patterson, although criticizing the "theatrical approach" of the Freedom Riders, wrote in *The Atlanta Constitution*:

\[
\text{But that is not the point of what happened in Alabama. Any man in this free country has the right to demonstrate and assemble and make a fool of himself if he pleases without getting hurt. If the police, representing the people, refuse to intervene when a man--any man--is being beaten to the pavement of an American city, then this is not a noble land at all. It is a jungle. But this is a noble land. And it is time for the decent people in it to muzzle the jackals (10, p. 53).}
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These examples are what are considered goal realization by SNCC. They must have believed that their founding statement was correct because it appealed to conscience and moral principles; and thus, nonviolence did nurture the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice became actual possibilities.

Certainly, one of the most important goals of SNCC during Stage I was to organize the local Negroes in the heart of the South to petition for redress of grievances. The movement was not captured on television in Selma, Hattiesburg, or Jackson because the core members were in Amite, Greenwood, McComb, and countless other small counties and
towns getting their minds and bodies smashed quietly and persistently. Their philosophy was undaunted:

The workers had moved into the rural communities of the South. They became a hardened nonviolent guerrilla army challenging not merely segregation, but "the system" with voter registration, protest marches, and community organization. They still believed that America, if shamed with enough redemptive suffering, would honor its century-old pledge of equality for the black man (6, p. 71).

Although rural organization was one of the earliest goals of SNCC, there were those in SNCC who could not resist expanding SNCC territory. After two years in the bush, Bob Moses sent a communique which read (1962): "The movement from the rural to the urban is irresistible and the line from Amite to McComb to Jackson is straight as the worm furrows. Accordingly, I have left the dusty roads to run the dusty streets. In short, I'm now installed in Jackson--subject to reproval or removal--and am duly reporting" (10, p. 79). It was almost as if the SNCC field worker was free to go where he felt needed and do what he felt needed done.

Bob Moses' communique in 1962 indicated far more information about the structure and goals than at first might be realized. Early in 1964, Zinn wrote: "There is a part of the South impermeable by the ordinary activities of non-violent direct action, a monolithic South completely controlled by politicians, police, dogs, and prod sticks. And for this South, special tactics are required" (2, p. 313).
The movement away from the smaller Southern cities to the larger cities suggests a frustration with the small token amount of progress made in the backwoods areas—or perhaps, the urge on the part of the SNCC workers to accomplish things on a grander and more massive scale. There was a sense of urgency or immediacy that the movement had to reach more people, and it had to reach them faster. The general working area was still the South; the communique might suggest that SNCC expand its activities to include the larger metropolitan areas in the South where more Negroes could be reached. This new aspect of the SNCC goals was continued in 1963 when SNCC workers spread over the state of Mississippi to work with "Negroes prevented by intimidations and reprisal from registering and voting, it was decided to give them a chance to vote for a Negro governor, Aaron Henry, in an unofficial Freedom Ballot" (10, p. 100). The move was made from the local area to a statewide campaign with "ballot boxes placed in churches and meeting places" (10, p. 99).

Even though the election was unofficial, when the Freedom campaign was concluded, 80,000 Negroes had voted. The effect of the Freedom Ballot, said Bob Moses, was

... that Mississippi Negroes would vote, in huge numbers, if given the chance. It showed that Negro and white youngsters were still not afraid, despite everything that had happened in the last two years, to move into towns and villages and farmlands of Mississippi and talk to people about what the future might be like (10, p. 101).
But the Freedom Ballot showed more than anything Moses could foresee in 1963. The move toward mass political action by the Negroes of Mississippi on a statewide scale was begun with the Freedom Ballot and evolved into the Freedom Summer of the MFDP in 1964. Once the SNCC goal had been to attempt to force the federal government into confrontation with state authorities, and then to publicize the racism in the South. It now attempted to change the state or area racism by incorporating itself into that system.

The goal of the Mississippi Summer Project had been to carry the petition of the Mississippi black man to the federal government (indirectly through the Democratic National Convention). The rebuff and the subsequent rejection of the MFDP must have left a bitter taste of defeat in the mouths of the SNCC workers who had worked and risked their lives for years in Mississippi for the realization of just such a goal. Much emphasis must be placed on the rejection at Atlantic City, for it affected the structure of SNCC. New goals had to be adopted because, obviously, the earlier goals of inclusion into and participation in the "system" had no possibility of success after 1964.

The Membership of SNCC--Stage I

Two socio-rhetorical requirements for membership were discussed in Chapter I, pp. 8-12. The movement may set the criteria for full membership in the core group, and the
movement needs to recruit, maintain, and organize a base membership into a functional organization. The strategy of the sit-in attracted numerous college students to the cause of racial equality. SNCC had a massive group from which to choose. SNCC crossed color lines and employed both white and black students within the movement. The members were, for the most part, college students who participated on a limited scale in the sit-ins.

The "Code of Conduct" of the Nashville movement gave an indication of the students' activities. They had to be neatly dressed (coat and tie) and usually carried books to the sit-in. There was little doubt that the sit-in symbolized a "badge" which provided a common ground for the members of SNCC. According to Newfield, "Behind the sit-in technique was the pacifist ethic of placing one's body in moral nonviolent confrontation with an existing evil (6, p. 41)." During the early formulative period of SNCC (1960-1962), there were few core workers in SNCC. The Freedom Riders were often members who had earlier participated in the sit-ins. Very few of these members were full-time paid members of SNCC. The early sit-ins and Rides did provide a common bond of suffering with the SNCC workers.

It is important to note that SNCC was never an organization which sought membership, but rather it was a catalyst which provided for the organization of local blacks in the South. Therefore, there were no membership drives or mass
recruiting campaigns. The early SNCC workers who went into the South to organize the local blacks were paid ten dollars per week (if they were paid at all) and were expected to live and talk to the local Negro. Obviously, the movement attracted the young people committed to the cause of equality. These members evolved into the core group of SNCC. Their primary duty was to organize the local blacks by becoming a part of the community in which they were organizing. Not only did this require courage, but also this indicated the deep moral commitment of the core membership.

As the harassment and physical beatings continued in the South, the SNCC workers seemed to develop a language of defiance directed at the power structure. Seldom, if ever, did a SNCC worker deliberately antagonize an authority; but these incidents were becoming less rare. Zinn documented two accounts of verbal backtalk by SNCC workers:

Sheriff: I'll give you till tomorrow to get out of here (Greenwood).

Black (SNCC): If you don't want to see me here, you better pack up and leave, because I'll be here (10, p. 86).

Again, in 1962, a SNCC worker "was questioned by a state trooper who became enraged when Guyet refused to say, 'Yes, Sir' and 'No, Sir'" (10, p. 95).

The purpose of this defiant language seems obvious. It was designed for the local Negro who was fearful of the white power structure and could not fathom the idea of verbal
backtalk to "whitey." When SNCC workers antagonized the authorities and were not punished, the local Negro felt a sense of pride which instilled the feeling of courage to follow the example set by the SNCC workers. Very little could be accomplished while the Southern Negro was engulfed with fear. Another aspect of the defiant language could have been the arrival of the Freedom Riders in Mississippi. Many Riders had been released from prisons across the South and were moving into Mississippi. Perhaps this new language was a result of the numerous beatings suffered by the Riders and later the SNCC workers in Mississippi. It is probable that the developing rhetoric of SNCC was a combination of the many different variables.

However, the beatings suffered by SNCC members were one thing, but murder was something new for SNCC. Herbert Lee was murdered in cold blood in September, 1961 as he attempted to register. He had been a poor black farmer who had attended voter registration drives in Mississippi. The murder was adjudged self-defense, but more important was the impact upon the SNCC workers and the already fearful Mississippi blacks. The death of Lee offered SNCC its first martyr symbol; and because SNCC was a singing movement, Lee was immortalized in two songs composed by SNCC workers:

The Ballad of Herbert Lee

Did you see Herbert Lee help his people try to vote? Did you see Herbert Lee damned for what he said and wrote?
Mrs. Lee, did you see a better life ahead?
Did you see it seem to die when Herbert did?
Did you see him fall for the cause of liberty?
Will you see someone else carry on for Herbert Lee?
Words by Ernie Marrs and Guy Carawan
(5, p. 40)

We'll Never Turn Back

We have hung our heads and cried for these like Lee who died,
Died for you and died for me, died for the cause of equality.

We've been 'buked and we've been scorned,
We've been talked about sure's you're born.
But we'll never turn back, no, we'll never turn back,
Until we've all been freed and we have equality.
Words by Bertha Gober for SNCC (5, p. 40)

The question asked in the last verse of the "Ballad of Herbert Lee" was answered quickly: "Will you see someone carry on for Herbert Lee?" After the murder of Lee, the Amite Project was disbanded, and it was three years before SNCC returned to work in Amite County. It would be impossible to overestimate the effect of Lee's death upon the membership within SNCC. The death revealed the deep commitments of the SNCC workers who continued to work in the Black Belt. Yet, it was difficult for the SNCC members to steadfastly hold to the rhetoric of love and nonviolence in view of murder. The murder did provide a myth for the later SNCC workers; but this was SNCC heroism: the people, the place, the beatings, the jails, and the murders. Newfield was brilliant in his observation of the SNCC heroism:

What I am trying to suggest is the ultimate irony of the New Left's assault on the Closed Society. It is that the liberators have so far benefitted more from
the struggle than those in bondage, that for all the enormity of their heroism, Parris, Ganz, and Rogoff [SNCC field workers] have gotten more than they have given (6, p. 66).

In 1963-64 the membership of SNCC was undergoing a rapid transformation. With whites in the movement

... the point was made vividly to Negroes that compassion as much as cruelty crossed race lines. ... And the point was made to Southern whites that, try as they might to obliterate the image, someone like them, someone with white skin and from the South, had a different view of the way people should live together on earth (10, p. 255).

Late in 1963, SNCC had a staff meeting in Mississippi, and the role of the whites in the movement was the primary discussion. There were sentiments of restricting the white kid's role in the movement. Most members of SNCC did not want to be a part of a segregated movement because they felt they were above the race question. Zinn noted the reasoning behind the argument for exclusion of whites:

For whites to talk to Mississippi Negroes about voter registration, they said, only reinforced the Southern Negroes' tendency to believe that whites were superior. Whites tended to take over leadership roles in the movement, thus preventing Southern Negroes from being trained to lead. Why didn't whites just work in the white Southern community? Another told of meeting a Black Muslim in Atlanta who warned him that whites were taking over the movement. I had this feeling inside. I felt what he said was true (10, p. 187).

At this particular meeting, nothing was resolved concerning SNCC membership, but the inner factionalism over the issue of membership surfaced.
The membership in 1964 was composed primarily of full-time ex-students who had been in the movement from the beginning or close to the beginning of the sit-ins. Most of the membership had participated in the sit-ins and other direct action techniques. Many had participated in the voter registration drives in the Black Belt. The membership was essentially bi-racial with undertones of anti-white sentiment. Peak membership during Stage I was approximately 300 youngsters. The SNCC member had to hold a firm belief in the philosophy of nonviolence and love especially in view of the widespread violence which SNCC encountered. However, the language of SNCC had evolved almost to the point of open defiance on a few occasions. Yet, these events were isolated and gave no indication of the basic changes in the membership of SNCC after 1964.

The Leadership of SNCC--Stage I

Chapter I listed the requirements of a leader of a movement if the movement develops a leadership. During the very early stage of SNCC, the movement had consisted of many outposts of activity with no central location. There were very few national meetings of the movement, and the organization was loosely organized as the founding statement suggests (leaving each unit of SNCC to determine the philosophy). It wasn't until the 1963 March on Washington that a leader emerged from SNCC. John Lewis had been elected earlier in
1963 as the chairman of SNCC to replace the earlier sit-in coordinator, John Lawson. Lewis was a dedicated pacifist, but his prepared speech in Washington so upset the civil rights leaders, who had organized the March, that much of his speech had to be cut. The most "violent" section of the cut speech read: "We will march through Dixie, the way Sherman did. We shall pursue our own scorched earth policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground--nonviolently" (7, p. 5). Although cut-up, the speech echoed the SNCC sentiments of frustration and immediacy. The question Lewis wanted to ask was a legitimate one: "Which side is the federal government on" (7, p. 5)?

There may be many reasons why SNCC did not develop a strong leadership figure before Lewis was elected chairman. One reason may have been that there was no one person in SNCC ready to assume leadership. Lewis' speech in Washington was the turning point of the future leadership of SNCC. There was a succession of strong leaders during the following period of SNCC existence.

A New York Times article in 1967 stated that though "Lewis was still doggedly following his star of brotherhood through nonviolence, many in SNCC weren't following him" (7, p. 5). Lewis wondered himself after the Atlantic City farce:

I felt after Selma that it was my last demonstration. We're only flesh. I could understand people not wanting to be beaten anymore. The body gets tired.
You put out so much energy and you saw such little gain. Black capacity to believe white would really open his heart, open his life to nonviolent appeal was running out (7, p. 5).

Probably, to most members of SNCC, Lewis was more of a symbol of the philosophy of the movement than a leader. SNCC philosophy was not to lead the local blacks, but it was to guide them. As the Times article suggested, Lewis was obviously unable to adapt to several audiences simultaneously (a necessary requirement of leadership). Also, the body rhetoric of SNCC did not demand a strong leader. With the movement spread over the South, the leadership of the movement tended to be localized, and therefore it was not a powerful force in the movement. The actual decision-making was left to sixteen field staff members who combined decision-making with field work. Although no one person in Stage I was an effective leadership figure in the movement, John Lewis remained chairman of SNCC until 1966. In Stage II, the leadership of SNCC assumed a more important aspect as structural demands forced SNCC to develop a powerful, charismatic, and moving leader.

Summary

To capture the "grand flow" of SNCC rhetorical structure from approximately 1960 to 1964, the following categories were examined: the ideology the movement was founded upon, the early rhetorical strategy of the movement, the goals of
the movement, the membership, and the leadership of the movement.

The ideology of the movement was based upon the philosophy of nonviolence and love as stated in the founding statement. The founding statement became the nonviolent creed for SNCC. Through actions like the sit-ins and the Freedom Rides, SNCC raised a moral issue by attempting to illustrate the sinfulness of racial prejudice. SNCC's philosophy was based upon the assumption that there was a moral consciousness to awaken, and once awakened, all the evils of racism would disappear.

Although SNCC was constantly faced with serious problems which challenged its philosophy of nonviolence, the movement held firmly to its belief even in light of physical harassment and murder in the South. Because of the members' firm belief in SNCC's doctrine of nonviolence, the movement chose an extremely difficult area in which to initiate its projects and strategies—the Black Belt of the deep South. The rhetorical choice indicated SNCC's faith in nonviolence. All other structural aspects of the organization (strategy, goals, membership, leadership) during Stage I were based upon this philosophy.

A strategy actually preceded the organization of SNCC. The sporadic sit-ins were in full swing when the movement was organized to coordinate the sit-in activity. The sit-ins were a public, nonviolent demonstration by students advocating
social change in laws and customs in the South. The strategy of the sit-ins prompted a moral confrontation between the students and Jim Crow. The sit-ins forced the Southern white power structure to take stands on the issues.

Perhaps, above all else, the early strategy was adopted to publicize the racism in the South. The sit-ins, wade-ins, kneel-ins, pray-ins, and boycotts were all designed primarily for publicity. This strategy also had a secondary purpose of gaining a core membership for the organization because many students identified with the cause of equality. The Freedom Rides were an extension of the strategy of the sit-ins and attempted to force a confrontation between the federal government and local and state authorities who were denying the Riders their constitutional right of interstate travel. Federal intervention was promised; however, it was never effective.

The nonviolent strategical "jail-no-bail" tactic was adopted by SNCC for three reasons: (1) SNCC could force the release of prisoners because of the physical limitations of the jailhouses, (2) it was a method of solidifying the membership, and (3) it carried a rhetorical implication of students being denied equal justice under the Constitution.

The direct action body rhetoric of SNCC caused SNCC to acquire a tarnished reputation as "rabble-rousers," and SNCC adopted the strategy of voter registration in the South. Rhetorically, this carried the message that SNCC was working
constructively within the system, albeit against the system. Although the rhetorical strategy of nonviolent direct action had been widely successful both in the North and the South by bringing racism into the open (at the cost of physical injuries), the strategy had not prompted the federal government to effective action to cease the local violation of constitutional laws. It was hoped that the voter registration strategy would accomplish what direct action had not.

The voter registration strategy met with the same opposition of the direct action wing: economic harassment, brutal beatings, arrests, murders, and federal inaction. The voter registration strategy culminated in the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 through which SNCC attempted to register every Negro in Mississippi to form a challenge delegation at the Democratic National Convention at Atlantic City in 1964. Although SNCC was harassed, the registrations and elections were a success as over 60,000 Negroes were registered by the newly-formed Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. SNCC and the MFDP met with rejection at Atlantic City as they were offered two compromise seats "at large." The Democratic compromise was rejected because SNCC felt it would be "selling out" to its constituents. Rhetorically, the rejection meant that the highly motivated moral movement, SNCC, could not accept a compromise solution.

The goal most associated with SNCC was one of gaining massive publicity of the racism in the South. The publicity
objective was highly successful; for it was extremely difficult not to see students sitting-in, singing songs, being beaten to the pavement, or boycotting a store. After the initial goal had been achieved, SNCC moved toward a goal of organizing local Negroes in the South to petition for a redress of grievances. If the effective organization of local blacks could be achieved, they would then be able to bargain for change from a widely supported power base. This was accomplished only once by SNCC (the MFDP), and it was crushed at Atlantic City.

Finally, SNCC attempted to meet and educate the Southern Negro. The more the Southern Negro knew about himself and the world about him the greater was the possibility of his realizing his position and working to change it.

The membership of SNCC from 1960-1964 was composed primarily of both white and black college students. Most members had participated in the early sit-ins and held firmly to the philosophy of nonviolence. The most notable characteristic of the membership was courage. It required a tremendous amount of courage, for example, to participate in a Freedom Ride. The courage of a few SNCC workers, it was hoped, would spread to the Southern Negro.

There were indications that there had been racial tension within the movement. In 1963, there was a move to exclude whites from field work, but it was defeated at the time.
The leadership of SNCC was all but nonexistent during Stage I. The seminary student, John Lewis, was chairman of SNCC from 1963-1966. He was, however, more a symbol of the movement than he was a leader of the movement. Because of its broad working base, SNCC developed no strong leadership in Stage I.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER IV

THE RHETORICAL STRUCTURE OF THE LATER STAGE
OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT
COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Introduction

Leland M. Griffin, in his article "The Rhetoric of Historical Movement," stated that one of the problems in analyzing a movement is that the rhetoric of the movement is constantly changing (4, p. 185). Furthermore, Lang and Lang said that the structure of a movement is dynamic and that the functions, problems, goals, solutions, membership, strategies, and tactics are constantly changing (6, p. 507).

As in Chapter III, the intent is to capture the "grand flow" of the changing rhetoric of SNCC post 1964. The criteria to be examined will include the list of socio-rhetorical requirements examined in Chapter III: the ideology of the movement, the strategy of the movement, the goals of the movement, the membership, and the leadership of the movement.

Stokely Carmichael, in his book Black Power, set the mood of SNCC after the bone-tossing fiasco at the Democratic National Convention in 1964:

The lesson, in fact, was clear at Atlantic City. . . . To seat the MFDP over the "regulars" would have meant a displacement of power, and it became crystal clear that in order to combat power, one needed power. Black
people would have to organize and obtain their own power base before they could begin to think of coalition with others. To rely on the absolute assistance of external, liberal, labor forces was not a wise procedure (2, p. 96).

SNCC may have been politically naive when it entertained the concept behind the strategy of Atlantic City and Freedom Summer. It is doubtful that SNCC realized early enough the wide degree of resistance which it would be faced with at the national level of government. The evolving ideology reflected the angry reaction of SNCC to a complete and total rebuff by the American political system.

The Ideology of SNCC--Stage II

Perhaps, the first indication of a change in the ideology of SNCC originated from the grass-roots movement in McComb, Mississippi. A statement was issued by the MFDP in Mississippi following the Democratic National Convention without the recognition of the national headquarters of SNCC. The statement was an anti-war statement, the first such political statement issued by a SNCC affiliate:

**The War in Vietnam: A McComb, Mississippi Protest**

Here are five reasons why Negroes should not be in any war fighting for America:

1. No Mississippi Negroes should be fighting in Vietnam for the white man's freedom, until all the Negro People are free.

2. Negro boys should not honor the draft here in Mississippi. Mothers should encourage their sons not to go.

3. We will gain respect and dignity as a race only by forcing the United States Government
and the Mississippi Government to come with guns, dogs, and trucks to take our sons away to fight and be killed protecting Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana.

4. No one has a right to ask us to risk our lives and kill other colored people in Santo Domingo and Vietnam, so that the white American can get richer. We will be looked upon as traitors by all the Colored People of the world if the Negro People continue to fight and die without a cause.

5. Last week a white soldier from New Jersey was discharged from the Army because he refused to fight in Vietnam; he went on a hunger strike. Negro boys can do the same thing. We can write and ask our sons if they know what they are fighting for. If he answers "Freedom," tell him that's what we are fighting for here in Mississippi. And if he says "Democracy," tell him the truth—we don't know anything about Communism, Socialism, and all that, but we do know that Negroes have caught hell right here under the American Democracy (3, p. 415).

The significance of the anti-war statement by the MFDP could not be minimized. The philosophy behind the statement must have been of the type that until this government alleviates the racial prejudice found in the federal government, the MFDP will refuse to abide by the rules of that government. It was, in fact, a rejection of the "system." The reasoning behind the statement was logical. The federal government had not protected the rights of its own black citizens in the United States. Yet, the United States was fighting a war attempting to guarantee the rights of colored citizens of Vietnam; therefore, the black citizens of the United States were not morally responsible to fight and to die
for the rights of others until they were given those same rights.

In January, 1966, SNCC issued a statement concerning Vietnam which was the first such issued by any major civil rights organization. It was endorsed by Julian Bond who was then a member of the Georgia House of Representatives. He was subsequently refused his seat, and only by a Supreme Court ruling was he allowed to sit. The basis of the SNCC statement was the same as the earlier MFDP anti-war statement. However, SNCC's statement was more formal, reasoned, and loaded with strong language. The strong language, perhaps, indicated the direction of the arguments toward those in power, whereas the MFDP statement was obviously directed toward the local citizenry (word choice of "mother" and "sons"). The SNCC statement labeled the United States as being behind a "hypocritical mask," and SNCC threw its full support behind those who would not honor the draft. "Work in the civil rights movement and other human relations organizations is a valid alternative to the draft" (3, p. 418).

The importance of the two statements lies in the "direction" of the SNCC attacks. Previously, SNCC had been content to attack the racism found in the Southern white power structure. The expanded attack of the anti-war statements was not directed toward the South, but it was directed at the United States Government. The SNCC statement also attacked the United States for being "deceptive in claiming
concern for the freedom of the colored people in such other countries as the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa, Rhodesia and in the United States itself" (3, p. 416). SNCC attacked the hypocrisy and the irony of the United States' position to allow "free elections" in Vietnam, while it had not implemented with full federal power the 1964 Civil Rights Act or the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The rhetoric emitted from the anti-war statements went far beyond an attack of the United States' foreign policy. It was a rejection of the ideology which the movement had been founded upon. The statements were an indication that SNCC refused to cooperate with the "system" and, in fact, it rejected that "system." Whereas earlier SNCC rhetoric consisted of petitioning the federal government to provide protection and enforcement of federal law in the South, SNCC now openly advocated defiance and violation of federal laws. At the same time period, Stokely Carmichael had made it abundantly clear that SNCC did not need or want federal protection or interference of any kind in the Lowndes County Project in Alabama in 1966.

This reversal of rhetoric and the about-face ideology of SNCC led Zinn to write in 1965:

Today, SNCC's view of nonviolence is more complicated than that simple statement of faith in the power of love. Although there are some in the organization who would hold to that original credo without qualification, most SNCC people, in different degree and with a greater individuality of response, would
probably deny that love, conscience, and morality alone could end segregation (11, p. 221).

This somewhat aggressive nonviolent rhetoric took on practical applications when some "individual SNCC members have sometimes expressed with near-unanimity in an informal discussion among SNCC leaders early in 1964: that they would not stop a Negro farmer in Mississippi from arming himself to defend his home against attack" (11, p. 222).

With the publication of Stokely Carmichael's book *Black Power* came the issuance of the new "founding" statement. Within the book, the changing ideology of SNCC could be found based upon the concept "black power." In his book, Carmichael defined "black power" in many different aspects.

Essentially,

It is a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society (2, p. 44).

But the term "black power" was actually more important than its creator's definition; it was a call to "black people," not "Southern black people", but "black people." The underlying implication of "black power" was that it was a national slogan not limited by area or region. Obviously, SNCC had not abandoned the Southern Negroes because Carmichael was still working in Alabama when *Black Power* was printed. With "black power," SNCC had expanded its ideology to the
United States and Northern Negroes. In evaluating "black power," Bayard Rustin stated,

Southern Negroes, despite exhortations from SNCC to organize themselves into a Black Panther Party, are going to stay in the Democratic party—to them it is the party of progress, the New Deal, the New Frontier, and the Great Society—and they are right to stay. For SNCC's Black Panther perspective is simultaneously utopian and reactionary—the former for the by now obvious reason that one-tenth of the population cannot accomplish much by itself, the latter because such a party would remove Negroes from the main area of political struggle in this country and would give priority to the issue of race precisely at a time when the fundamental questions facing the Negro and American society alike are economic and social (3, p. 467).

A dilemma had yet to be solved by SNCC. They had attempted coalition politics in 1964 and had been rebuffed. They had attempted for six years to organize the Southern black into a cohesive voting unit and had been harassed by the power structure beyond belief. They had attempted to form parallel politics in Alabama with the Lowndes County Freedom Organization and had been defeated. Rustin's evaluation of "black power" was faulty in that it did not state that SNCC had nowhere to turn—except to this "utopian" and "reactionary" ideology. In fact, "black power" was a rejection of coalition politics, of Bayard Rustin liberals, of President Johnson's White House Conferences on race, and most important, a rejection of SNCC rhetoric in Stage I. "Black power" was a rejection of the John Lewis leadership and all that it symbolized, a rejection of the old-style membership of SNCC, a rejection of the financing by liberals of SNCC, a rejection
of the "Freedom Now" concept, and a total rejection of the rhetorical structure of Stage I SNCC.

Lewis Killian, in analyzing "black power" in his book The Impossible Revolution?, felt that

First there is the experience of bitter disappointment, disgust, and despair over the pace, scope and quality of social change . . . A second source of the myth of black power was the prolonged and direct encounter of certain civil rights workers--especially those connected with SNCC and CORE--with the grim and aching realities, the dark and brutal actions and deceptions of certain sections of the deep South (5, p. 129).

The founding statement of SNCC seemed like a nightmare of the past to the yet-young SNCC. Zinn captured the drift of the ideology of SNCC in late 1964:

It should be recalled that the Raleigh statement of SNCC was made on the experience in Nashville, Atlanta, and other border and upper-South areas. The plunge into Alabama, Mississippi, and Southwest Georgia, first in the Freedom Rides and then in the prolonged voter registration campaign, disclosed a different kind of situation, where the usual techniques of nonviolent direct action were simply crushed by police power. The devices that had proved effective elsewhere met with a variety of reprisals from brutal beatings to murder. These experiences have led SNCC to ask the national government to intervene in the Deep South, using not love but the power of arrest and imprisonment to stop brutality and violence against civil rights workers by police and private citizens; to clear the way for nonviolent demonstrative activity there (11, p. 222).

Zinn did not realize that SNCC would encounter the same repression at the national level as it did at the local level--albeit, with much more sophistication. Perhaps, Stokely Carmichael, the most verbal and articulate of all SNCC leaders, best emphasized the ideology of SNCC during Stage II:
We can't be expected anymore to march and get our heads broken, to say to you that you are nice guys. You are not nice guys. We have found you out. You are rotten through and through, and that's what we are saying. And Alexander the Great was really Alexander the Barbaric and that's what we're going to start from (5, p. 154).

Thus, the ideology of SNCC in Stage II was a denial of the nonviolent philosophy of SNCC's founding statement. The concern of SNCC had shifted to the black man and his position in an oppressive society at all levels of government.

The Strategy of SNCC--Stage II

Carmichael's philosophy of "black power" was to be the guide for selecting strategy during Stage II. If a year were to be chosen in which the rhetorical strategy of SNCC had most obviously changed, it would be 1965. In 1965, Stokely Carmichael and SNCC organized the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in Alabama. The LCFO was an attempt by SNCC to form independent parallel politics in Alabama. Rather than working within the Democratic Party, which had failed SNCC and the MFDP in 1964, the LCFO began to work on a county and statewide level running black people for office. The deletion of the word "Democratic" from the title of the new SNCC political party indicated the rejection of the "system." And so, a third party system was created in Alabama. In January, 1966, Carmichael described the rhetorical strategy of the LCFO:

The county courthouse has always been the symbol of oppression for the rural Negro. But we are going
to make it the symbol of liberation. . . . We're going to emancipate the Black Belt courthouse by courthouse, starting with Lowndes. We're gonna build political parties run by poor people that will run candidates for everything that runs. We're going to elect sheriffs, school boards, tax assessors, everything in Lowndes County with our party. We're gonna call it the Black Panther.

The rhetorical choice of the symbol of the party held broad rhetorical implications for SNCC. The panther was certainly not a nonviolent animal. When asked to explain the choice of the panther for a symbol, Carmichael replied: "This black panther is a vicious animal, as you know. He never bothers anything, but when you start pushing him he moves backwards, backwards, backwards into his corner, and then he comes out to destroy everything that's before him" (3, p. 407). The suggestion, of course, was that SNCC had been pushed backwards in Mississippi, backwards at Atlantic City, and backwards in the United States. Now, SNCC was coming out to destroy everything that was before them by using the LCFO.

Lowndes County was not the only site of independent parallel politics attempted by SNCC, but it was by far the most publicized attempt. One reason for the wide publicity was because the LCFO had not requested federal assistance in the statewide election held in 1966. Stokely Carmichael indirectly referred to the old MFDP in discussing federal assistance: "We aren't asking any longer for protection--we won't need it--or for anyone to come from the outside to
speak for us" (3, p. 407). Carmichael's reference to outsiders was directed toward the white membership of SNCC and other civil rights organizations.

SNCC made wide use of the slogan "black power" in Lowndes County in 1966. Carmichael had introduced the slogan earlier in Mississippi, but with the symbol of the party (LCFO) already the "black panther," the choice of the slogan "black power" seemed to blend perfectly. The rhetorical choice of the slogan also had numerous implications. Killian felt, "It makes crowds roar, conversations sparkle, and the television cameras click. It wins headlines. After all it made Stokely Carmichael a national figure overnight" (5, p. 129). It was obvious to SNCC that the sporadic race riots in the Northern ghettoes provided a springboard for the strategy of "black power." To underestimate the effect of fear of the whites and the pride of the blacks might be to miss the impact of the symbol "black power." Carmichael realized the effects of the symbol on the white community: "To most whites, Black Power seems to mean that the Mau Mau are coming to the suburbs at night" (5, p. 140).

In 1966, SNCC held a staff meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. Carmichael was elected as the new chairman of SNCC. Most of the discussion centered around "black power" and the strategy of SNCC in general. In writing of the Nashville meeting, Newfield observed,
The war in Vietnam and ghetto poverty began to absorb the energies of student activists. And almost all the strategies for change in the South seemed implausible. The civil rights movement had reached an impasse, with aimless frustrations building up fury behind the barrier of insoluble problems (7, p. 74).

By electing Carmichael to head the organization, SNCC elected "black power" as its new strategy. The strategy of "black power" was more than the deliberate fear tactics which the term certainly carried. In November, 1966, Stokely Carmichael gave a "black power" address at Berkely which has often been used in defining the early concept and rhetorical definition of "black power." "Black power" attacked integration: "When we went to Mississippi, we did not go to sit next to Ross Barnett; we did not go to sit next to Jim Clark; we went to get them out of our way, and people ought to understand that. We were never fighting for the right to integrate, we were fighting against white supremacy" (3, p. 46).

Carmichael outlined the problems facing SNCC's strategical choices:

We maintain that we cannot afford to be concerned about 6% of the children in this country [the current percent of black students attending integrated schools] . . . How can we build institutions where these people can get decent jobs, where they can get decent housing, and where they can begin to participate in the policy and major decisions that affect their lives (3, p. 462)?

Carmichael also stated that the strategy of opposing the war in Vietnam had expanded to include opposition of the draft as being unfair and unjust to the black man in the United States.
In his "black power" address, Carmichael attacked the white student liberals who had recently been excluded from field work in SNCC: "The question is, can the white activist not try to be a Pepsi generation who comes alive in the black community, but that he be a man who's willing to move into the white community and start organizing where the organization is needed" (3, p. 462)? Perhaps, the conclusion of the speech most illuminated the changing rhetoric of SNCC. "If that does not happen, brothers and sisters, we have no choice, but to say very clearly, move on over or we're going to move on over you" (3, p. 462). The address had no real clear-cut strategy for Stage II SNCC. However, in analyzing the address, it seemed that the direction of SNCC rhetorical strategy lay in questioning national issues and forcing confrontations on those issues. It also seemed that SNCC had shifted the burden of proof to the white man—and had backed up the threat with the slogan "black power." Stage II strategy of SNCC was vague and uncertain, but it had expanded from the grass-roots level to the national level. While SNCC retained its ties to the South with the LCFO and other grass-roots organizations, the obvious shift to the North and the ghettoes had given SNCC a wider audience for the strategy of "black power." The move to the national level of existence left SNCC with a philosophy of "black power" but left the strategy of "black power" somewhat vague and uncertain.
The Goals of SNCC--Stage II

If the strategy of SNCC in Stage II had been vague and uncertain, the goals were even more clouded. The movement seemed to be uncertain in which direction to move. The goal of political equality for the black man in the South had been a massive failure. The MFDP had failed in its attempt at inclusion into the "system." The LCFO lost every election in its first year of activity. The attempt to organize in the South had simply been a failure.

Robert L. Allen, in his book *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, commented that the rhetoric of SNCC did not constitute a "program" but that "SNCC succeeded in gathering together the parts for a revolutionary analysis of American society and the roles of American imperialism to transform this analysis into a revolutionary program"(1, p. 256). Allen's comments seemed to indicate that the mere existence of SNCC posing questions of traditional values in America was a goal of SNCC during Stage II. SNCC had challenged the Vietnam war, the draft, the presidency, the Democratic Party, the Justice Department, among others.

Certainly, one of the priority goals of SNCC during Stage I had been to organize the black people throughout the South to fight for their rights. Although the goal did not change, it was expanded to include Negroes throughout the United States. In reality, SNCC did not even restrict itself to the United States in its organizational goal. In 1967,
Carmichael visited Puerto Rico, and SNCC issued a statement of purpose emphasizing that it was "a human rights organization, interested not only in human rights in the United States but throughout the world; that, in the field of international relations, we assert that we encourage and support the liberation struggles of all people against racism, exploitation, and oppression" (1, p. 253).

SNCC attempted to organize blacks on a worldwide scale and began to utilize the United Nations. Linked with the global rhetoric of SNCC was the stand of the organization concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1967. It attacked not only the United States but also "expansionist Zionism." SNCC members were literally all over the world speaking, attending human rights conferences, and attacking the United States foreign policy. The goal seemed to be one of raising questions from afar. The movement managed to maintain relations with the United Nations. SNCC felt that "this world body should be utilized whenever possible as a forum for presenting the viewpoint of the black liberation movement" (1, p. 255).

One of the goals of Stage II SNCC was to expand its strategy within the United States. Because SNCC had concentrated its efforts largely in the South, it did not have a broad support in the North. In 1968, SNCC attempted to broaden its scope by aligning itself with the Black Panther Party. The Panthers had a wide base of support in the
Northern ghettos, and in 1968, the alliance was consecrated with the hope that the two organizations would be able to draw the black people together from both the North and the South. The alliance failed largely because the Panthers had simply a too militant strategy for even SNCC to maintain working relationships.

One further goal which deserves mention was the attempt by SNCC to unify the black race both in the United States and beyond. One of the aspects of "black power" was that it provided black pride or solidarity of the black race. This was not a new goal, for SNCC had stressed unity in the grassroots voter campaigns in the South in the early 1960's. Again, the goal transformation, in this case, was not with the replacement of goals but merely the expansion of earlier goals.

In summation, the goal transformation of SNCC between Stage I and Stage II was not dramatic. It was almost as if SNCC did not have any real direction after 1964. After the Freedom Rides and the serious beatings and physical harassment suffered by the members of SNCC, Skolnick noted, It was not surprising then, that student activists in the South became increasingly disillusioned with nonviolent tactics of resistance. . . . Following the shotgun murder in 1966 of Sammy Younge, Jr., a black civil rights activist at Tuskegee Institute, his fellow students organized a protest march (10, p. 132).

The interesting aspect of that march was echoed by one of the marchers:
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 the, "Black Power," "Black Power." People felt what was going on. They were tired of this whole non-violent bit. They were tired of this organized demonstration-type thing. They were going to do something (10, p. 132).

The statement seemed to reflect the entire spectrum of SNCC structure--they were going to do something--what, they didn't know.

The Membership of SNCC--Stage II

During the first stage of SNCC, there had been expressions of anti-white sentiment in SNCC. Consequently, one of the most radical rhetorical acts of SNCC in 1966 was the publication of "A Position Paper on Race." The paper was submitted by members of the Atlanta Project to the SNCC staff. The thesis of the paper was that whites could no longer function within the organization. The reasoning behind the proposal consisted of,

1. The whites were unable to relate to the cultural aspects of black society.
2. White participation naturally caused paternalism toward the Negro.
3. The whites were unable to penetrate the white community.
4. The white members' presence was a constant symbol of the blacks' inferiority.
The language used in the writing of the paper was important. A sample quotation stated that "The reason that whites must be excluded is not that one is anti-white, but because the efforts that one is trying to achieve cannot succeed because whites have an intimidating effect" (3, p. 453). In the case of Mississippi, "Their role was the very key in that they helped give Blacks the right to organize, but that role is over now, and it should be" (3, p. 454). Four observations can be drawn from the paper:

(1) The paper devoted an inordinate amount of time and space to defend itself against racism or separatism.

(2) It contained a very early reference to "black power: "We must form our own institutions, credit unions, co-ops, political parties, write our own histories" (3, p. 456).

(3) The paper contained a large number of references to the African nations, and it proclaimed that Africa was the link to Afro-America.

(4) The paper contained one of the early SNCC statements against integration: "If one looks at 'integration' as progress then one is really perpetuating the myth of white supremacy" (3, p. 456).

Newfield felt that the "mood of SNCC on the eve of the Nashville staff retreat was sullen and desperate for life" (7, p. 75). Newfield certainly was correct in his
assessment, for the membership of SNCC had dropped from a high in 1964 of 300 to a low of 120 in 1966. Factionalism was rampant on the issue of white membership. At the meeting, there "was open expressions of anti-white feeling. White staffers were sometimes taunted and mocked when they tried to speak" (7, p. 75). A proposal was made at the meeting that "only the Black press and the African press be invited to all future SNCC press conferences" (7, p. 75).

Whites were excluded from all future field work which had the effect of driving all white members from the movement. It created, in effect, an all-black SNCC. In 1966, Newfield stated that it was too early to "tell whether SNCC sees its separatism as a temporary tactic to gain for the Negro psychic and political parity or whether it is the eternal separation envisioned by the Black Muslims" (7, p. 75).

A different kind of separatism had also occurred within the membership of SNCC. No longer was the organization composed of college kids dressed in suits and carrying books to sit-ins. The membership, although still composed of young people, had for all practical purposes lost its connection with students. Most SNCC workers were full-time organizers. These organizers had "given up on the over-thirty generation of fearful, church-loving Southern Negroes. They will now concentrate on organizing the new generation of Negroes, especially those on Southern campuses, and in the riot-pocked
cities of the North" (7, p. 75). Although the membership had undergone rapid transformations, the socio-rhetorical requirement most altered within the SNCC structure was the leadership requirement.

The Leadership of SNCC--Stage II

In Chapter I, the requirements of the leadership of a movement were listed and among them were these requirements: (1) "the leaders of social movements may face discrepancies between role expectations and role definitions," and (2) "the leader must adapt to several audiences simultaneously" (see Chapter I, p. 10). John Lewis had been the chairman of SNCC during Stage I and had carried over his leadership into Stage II. In Chapter III, the philosophy of Lewis was discussed, and it was discovered that he was a thorough pacifist. In an interview in 1964, Lewis' philosophy had mellowed somewhat:

The thing we drew up in 1960 was a type of creed, a philosophic and religious commitment. In SNCC now, there's a growing--and it's growing fast--trend toward "aggressive nonviolent action." You no longer walk quietly to paddy wagons and happily and willingly go to jail. There's another type of willingness, and personally I don't see anything violent about it (8, p. 5).

At the Nashville staff retreat in 1966, John Lewis was reelected chairman of SNCC. However, at that meeting, there was widespread dissension about attending an upcoming White House conference on civil rights. Lewis had stated his intention of attending, but the membership was thoroughly
disillusioned with the progress of the federal government, and many in the movement wanted to boycott the conference. This demonstrated Lewis’ inability to cope with membership expectations and leadership roles. During the discussion about the upcoming conference, the election of Lewis was re-opened. By the time the meeting concluded, Stokely Carmichael had emerged as the new chairman of SNCC.

The first rhetorical act by SNCC following the election of Carmichael was a statement rejecting the invitation to the White House conference. Because the statement reflected the philosophy of the new chairman and because it illustrated SNCC’s total rejection of the "system" during Stage II, it is reprinted in its entirety:

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee believes the White House conference entitled To Secure These Rights is absolutely unnecessary and rejects its invitation to participate in this use- less endeavor for the following reasons:

(1) The foundation and consequences of racism are not rooted in the behavior of black Americans, yesterday or today. They are rooted in an attempt by European and white Americans to exploit and dehumanize the descendants of Africa for monetary gain. This process of universal exploitation of Africa and her descendants continues today by the power elite of this country. In the process of exploiting black Americans, white America has tried to shift the responsibility for the degrading position in which blacks now find themselves away from the oppressors to the oppressed. The White House conference, especially with its original focus on the Negro family as the main problem which America must deal, accentuates this process of shifting the burden of the problem.
(2) Regardless of the proposals which stem from this conference, we know that the executive department and the President are not serious about insuring Constitutional rights to black Americans. For example, murderers of civil rights workers and black citizens roam free in this country with the desire to kill more freedom fighters; and the national government claims it is impotent in many situations to bring about justice. For example, police chiefs, sheriffs, and state officials who have victimized black people, beaten and jailed them and further suppressed our dignity are fully aware they were in effect given a blank check by the executive department of the government to inflict these lawless acts upon Negroes, since it is common knowledge throughout the South that killing a "nigger" is like killing a coon.

(3) We believe that the President has called this conference within the U.S. at a time when U.S. prestige internationally is at a low ebb due to our involvement in the Vietnam civil war, the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa, and other parts of the Third World.

(4) Our organization is opposed to the war in Vietnam and we cannot in good conscience meet with the chief policy maker of the Vietnam War to discuss human rights in this country when he flagrantly violates the human rights of colored people in Vietnam.

(5) We affirm our belief that people who suffer must make the decisions about how to change and direct their lives. We therefore call upon all black America to begin building independent political, economic, and cultural institutions that they will control and use as instruments of social change in this country (7, p. 76).

The statement indicated SNCC's total rejection of the "system." It contained a direct reference to Carmichael's philosophy of "black power." Finally, the statement gave a few clues about the structure of SNCC following Stage II.

Robert Allen stated that Carmichael managed to "give the remarkable impression of being at once a reformer and
a revolutionary" (1, p. 257). It is easy to understand Allen's analysis of Carmichael. Carmichael had defined "black power":

If we are to proceed toward true liberation we must cut ourselves off from white people. We must form our own institutions, credit unions, co-ops, political parties, write our own histories. . . . The charge may be made that we are "racist," but whites who are sensitive to our problems will realize that we must determine our own destiny (5, p. 139).

That Stokely Carmichael was obviously a reformer. But at the same time, Carmichael said,

I've had so much law and order, I swear before God I want some chaos! I want some chaos so bad I can taste it on the tip of my lips, because all I see is law and order everywhere I go. Law and order: from Canton, Mississippi, to Watts, Los Angeles, to Harlem, to Chicago—nothing but law and order (5, p. 154).

That Stokely Carmichael has the ring of revolution about him.

Much has been written concerning Carmichael's influence upon SNCC, but the fact remains that he was chairman of SNCC for less than two years. In 1968, Carmichael aligned himself with the Black Panther Party and was subsequently dismissed from SNCC. There were some who felt that he had gotten too radical for even SNCC to retain as a leader. But H. Rap Brown, who succeeded Carmichael as chairman of SNCC in 1968, spoke of blacks arming themselves: "We are at war. We are caught behind enemy lines and you better get yourselves some guns" (1, p. 249). There seems to be little difference between Brown's statements and Carmichael's
prediction: "As for initiating the use of violence, we hope that such programs as ours will make that unnecessary, but it is not for us to tell black communities whether they can or cannot use any particular form of action to resolve their problems" (5, p. 140). Translated into Brown's aggressive type rhetoric that became, "If America don't come around, we're going to burn America down" (5, p. 140).

There can be little doubt that SNCC leadership developed strongly during Stage II. The charismatic leadership of Carmichael and the aggressive leadership of Brown were much more visible than the early Lewis leadership. Both Carmichael and Brown became identified as rabble-rousers and agitators. This was not helpful to the already floundering SNCC. The leadership of Carmichael and Brown did add some revolutionary content to the SNCC organization--some fuel to a dying fire. But, carrying the analogy one step further, it seemed that they added too much fuel to the dying embers and smothered the movement. The movement was consumed by its own saving grace--that of Carmichael and Brown rhetoric. The violent rhetoric which accompanied "black power" was a boost to the organization, but the speed with which it was initiated seemed to place SNCC in rhetorical shock from which it became confused and never recovered.
Summary

The rhetorical structure of SNCC shifted noticeably during Stage II (1964-1968). The categories examined in Chapter IV remained the same as those examined in Chapter III: the ideology, the rhetorical strategy, the goals of the movement, the membership, and the leadership of the movement.

The ideology during Stage I had been based upon the philosophy of love, trust, and nonviolence. It was during Stage II that SNCC attacked the United States and called it a hypocritical nation. The movement openly advocated defiance of federal laws including the draft. Based upon the experience in the Deep South and at the federal level of government, SNCC deserted its philosophy of love and nonviolence and chose instead the philosophy of "black power" to guide the movement. "Black power" became a total rejection of Stage I SNCC rhetorical structure. "Black power" was a call for Negroes to unite against an oppressor-government. Simply stated, the rhetorical decision to bargain for change from "power" rather than through "love" and "justice" indicated the ideological shift of the movement.

The rhetorical strategy during Stage I had been to awaken the moral consciousness of America by calling attention to the widespread racism in the United States. It was during Stage II that SNCC realized, again as a result of the experiences in the South and at the Atlantic City Democratic National Convention in 1964, that America had no moral
conscience, or perhaps did have, but chose to ignore it. Therefore, the strategy during Stage II was to cause change by using force. What force that would be was uncertain.

With the slogan "black power" and the symbol of the black panther, the movement was prepared rhetorically to force change in the United States. Also, the rhetorical strategy seemed to be one of uniting all black people into political parties, co-ops, and other institutions. However, this strategy was attempted by SNCC with the LCFO political party with no success. The strategy of SNCC seemed to focus upon the philosophy of "black power," but there was little discussion of how SNCC intended to do what it wanted done.

What SNCC wanted done was for black people to unite in a national force to demand a redress of grievances. This goal had not really changed so much as it had expanded to include a national rather than a local unification attempt. Through an alliance with the Black Panther Party, SNCC hoped to unite the Negroes of the North and South. By using the United Nations as a sounding-board, SNCC hoped to unite the colored citizens of the world in an international struggle against colonialism. Both goals were vague and uncertain, and SNCC had no plan of how to proceed with this unification attempt except by alliances.

One of the most notable shifts in the rhetorical structure occurred within the membership of SNCC. Whites were excluded from the movement in 1966. This seemed perfectly
in line with the "black power" philosophy. The message from the exclusion was that Negroes no longer needed the assistance of white Americans. This action also carried the rhetorical meaning that SNCC was reacting to America the way America had earlier reacted to Negroes—that is, separate.

At this time, SNCC was no longer a student organization, as most members were paid full-time workers. The membership had fallen off strikingly during Stage II, and in 1968, only a handful of dedicated SNCC organizers were active in the movement.

The leadership of SNCC had been all but nonexistent during Stage I. John Lewis, chairman of SNCC from 1963 to 1966, had been replaced by the outspoken Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael carried with him a very strong leadership image, and he breathed life into the dying movement with the black-fisted salute and his cry of "black power." Negroes enjoyed hearing Stokely give whitey "hell," which Carmichael did quite often. Although Carmichael provided for a much needed charismatic leadership during the decline of SNCC, he provided no clear-cut proposals. His rhetoric further divided an already factionalized movement, and he remained as head of SNCC only two years. H. Rap Brown replaced Carmichael as chairman in 1968. Brown's aggressive and violent rhetoric only served to divide SNCC further. It does seem clear that the rhetoric of the leadership of SNCC during Stage II
became as violent as the rhetoric of the American racist that SNCC so violently opposed.

Postscript

Because this study was limited to examination of SNCC from the years 1960 to 1968, a few notes about the movement after 1968 may serve as useful. Perhaps, another chapter could be added for the third stage of SNCC rhetoric, for certainly a third stage was (is) developing. The theme of the Third World liberation struggle became an important part of the SNCC rhetoric as early as 1966. Killian, in analyzing SNCC's involvement with the Third World, related,

Not only do they reject the economic system, the existing political alignments, and the bourgeois values of America; they also reject the nationalism of late twentieth century America. The alliance of the radical wing of the Negro protest movement with the anti-Viet Nam war movement reflects the intrusion of the Third World theme into the ideology of the Negro Revolution (5, p. 143).

Killian identified the Third World as "those people who are distinguished from the major power not by their allegiance to capitalism or communism, but by being the victims of colonialism" (5, p. 143).

Carmichael had led SNCC into the arena of anti-colonialism early in 1966. He revealed his faith in the Third World in the following statement:

The colonies of the United States—and this includes the black ghetto within its borders, North and South—must be liberated. For a century this nation has been like an octopus of exploitation, its tentacles stretching from Mississippi and Harlem to South
America, the Middle East, Southern Africa, and Viet Nam. The form of exploitation varies from area to area but the essential result has been the same—a powerful few have been maintained and enriched at the expense of the poor and voiceless colored masses. This pattern must be broken. As its grip loosens here and there around the world, the hopes of Black Americans become more realistic. For racism to die a totally different America must be born (5, p. 144).

The militancy of SNCC was short-lasted as the Black Panthers soon became the most revolutionary movement on the civil rights scene. SNCC lost membership to the Black Panther Party and had, for all practical purposes, lost their own strategy of "black power" as the original philosophy of "black power" had been distorted beyond recognition.

SNCC was also without a strategy or an effective ideology. Pressed for somewhere to turn, the movement turned to the logical place—back to the campuses where it had begun.

The mushrooming of Afro-American clubs and fraternities on the college campuses can be attributed, in part, to the SNCC workers who had returned to the campuses to work. There was no eulogy written on the death of the movement, simply because no one is certain when the movement disbanded, or for that matter, if it ever did disband. In July, 1969, SNCC officially deleted the word "nonviolent" from its name. It would be known as the "Student National Coordinating Committee." H. Rap Brown explained that the organization would have no connection to the "concept of nonviolence as a solution to the problems of oppressed peoples" (9, p. 25).
When researching the whereabouts of the organization since 1969, the researcher is usually met with the somewhat enticing remark that "Them that says: don't know. Them that knows: don't say."
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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In concluding this study of the rhetorical structure of SNCC, it is important to review certain aspects of the movement. SNCC began as a movement founded upon the strategy of nonviolent resistance. As the movement matured, it attempted other strategies, for example, voter registration which was still part of the nonviolent philosophy of the movement. Voter registration was a grass-roots strategy intended to involve the unrepresented poor in the Black Belt. The titular head of SNCC, John Lewis, also reflected the philosophy of nonviolence. The membership of SNCC was thoroughly committed to nonviolence as evidenced by their actions.

As the strategy of nonviolence met increased resistance in the form of harassment and murder, the membership became increasingly disillusioned with a rhetoric based upon love and forgiveness. Yet, despite the physical violence, the sit-ins and Freedom Rides continued with SNCC members placing their bodies in direct confrontation with the existing evil and hatred in the South. As these nonviolent requests met with increased violence and more sophisticated resistance, the movement's strategy evolved to include the federal government as a force factor in the South.

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Among the goals of SNCC was the hope of a confrontation between the federal government and local authorities. However, the hope for an effective confrontation dissipated at Atlantic City when the MFDP attempted to gain seats at the 1964 Democratic National Convention. SNCC had carried their "high morality" and nonviolent resistance to the federal government, not as a naive movement, but with the honest desire that love and forgiveness could overcome hate and evil. The movement received a severe blow as it was offered a compromise settlement. The offer of a compromise carried with it a suggestion that SNCC was not altogether correct in their assessment of the problem. The offer was repugnant to SNCC, and "morality" rejected "compromise."

The movement then attempted a strategy which seemed sensible after requests to work within the system by utilizing coalition politics had failed. The formation of the LCFO by SNCC initiated a third party politics to challenge the racism found at the highest level of government. The attempt at coalition politics had met with compromise, and it was hoped that parallel politics could effectively work by the side of the system to change the system. Although the movement was still functioning on a grass-roots level, it had shifted its attack from the racism found at the local level to the obvious racism it had discovered at the level of the federal government.
SNCC underwent a rhetorical transition as it shifted its goals. No longer was the "dream" of integration desirable or even feasible to the movement. "Black power" became a call for separatism and block politics. As an all-black organization, SNCC lost support from many white liberals. At the same time, it became necessary for SNCC to spend an inordinate amount of time defending itself from attacks of racism. SNCC expanded its scope to include the national scene as it discovered racism, not only within the boundaries of the United States, but as a world-wide problem. The movement made frantic attempts to form alliances with other Third World organizations. The grass-roots movement SNCC had founded was barely recognizable, although it was still functioning.

During the process of transformation from grass-roots politics to international politics, SNCC lost sight of the rhetoric of nonviolence and love. The transformation was gradual, and it began when SNCC realized that federal intervention in the South was a necessity to crack the iceberg of racism found in Mississippi. It continued to dissipate, and it disappeared completely at Atlantic City when SNCC discovered that the power structure (federal government) was either unable or unwilling to assist a "moral" movement.

Since SNCC was a "moral" movement, it left no room for compromise. SNCC developed a rhetoric of rejection
of the power structure and moved further away from the United States government as it soon realized that it could not participate within or parallel to the power structure. The concept of working "within the system" was all but nonexistent after the Atlantic City rebuff and the subsequent LCFO failure.

During this transformation, the membership was altered from the early "square," coat and tie, college student (both black and white); to the all-black, denim-clad, sneaker-wearing Southern student; to the armed, uniformed Black Panther of 1968. The leadership had drifted from the seminary student John Lewis to the cocky firebrand Stokely Carmichael to the "eye for an eye" H. Rap Brown. The strategy had shifted from the early innocent nonverbal sit-ins to the armed intrusion of a California courtroom. The argument had shifted from a Judeo-Christian plea and a request of love and fair play to the demand for "offing a pig." The symbol had shifted from college textbooks to black panthers.

As SNCC underwent this structural change, every aspect of the movement was affected. The shift had been at once gradual and immediate. The rhetorical shift from "request" to "demand" was most obvious after 1964. The election of Carmichael completed the transformation in 1966. During the latter stages of SNCC, the rhetoric became noticeably more violent. At its inception, SNCC was a moral movement composed of nonviolent, passive students. As the movement met
rejection, harassment, and violence, it lost sight of its original purpose and goals. As the movement passed from the civil rights scene, it was composed of a few violent, guerrilla-type members openly advocating armed rebellion. In this one case study, it appears that SNCC's inability to compromise (because of its moral nature) forced the movement to adopt much of the structure of the society it was attempting to change. After the rejection at Atlantic City with the MFDP and the failure of the LCFO, SNCC adopted some of the characteristics of the Southern all-white power structure.

SNCC excluded whites from the organization and became an all-black organization with the exception of "token" whites in clerical positions. The movement elected Stokely Carmichael, a firebrand orator, to offset, the ravings of Southern power figures. The symbol of the movement became the black panther, like the police dogs of the white police, vicious animals. The slogan of the movement became the cry of "black power" to counteract white power politics in the South.

The attempt to compromise with a moral movement seems to have caused an outbreak of violent SNCC rhetoric and strategy. This study reveals that unless a movement is able to compromise on issues, and the membership is highly involved, it must be ready to employ other strategies which will effectively force the power structure to concede to its demands. When the movement fails with a strategy, it must be
prepared to look elsewhere for assistance to force change in the society. This study reveals that had the Democratic National Convention accepted the challenge delegation of the MFDP at Atlantic City the entire spectrum of SNCC protest from 1964 would probably have been less violent.
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