THE RHETORICAL STRATEGIES AND TACTICS OF
THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY AS A SOCIAL-
CHANGE MOVEMENT: 1966-1973

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

Patricia Bowman Edwards, B.S.
Denton, Texas
August, 1974

This thesis is concerned with the identification, description, analysis and evaluation of the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party as a specific social-change movement from 1966 to 1973. Evidence is presented to indicate that the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party played a vital role in the movement's rise and decline and that their choice of a power orientation and a rhetoric of coercion brought about the decline of the movement. This study also indicates that rhetoric in a social movement is of crucial importance to the development of the movement's ideology, leadership, membership, and methods for effecting change.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Works in the Area and Potential Significance of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology and Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories on the Nature of Social Movements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of a Social-Change Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools for Analyzing, Describing, and Evaluating the Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of a Social Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. FROM BLACK PROTEST TO BLACK POWER: THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The South: The Impact and Effects of the Activist Approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The North: The Shifting Focus of the Civil Rights Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward a More Militant and Separatist Oriented Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds Are Sown for a New Social-Change Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE EARLY RHETORICAL CHOICES OF THE MOVEMENT: LEADERSHIP, IDEOLOGY, MEMBERSHIP, AND METHODS</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Environment of Oakland, California</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Life Experiences of Early Party Founders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Initial Ideology of the Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Membership and Methods of an Emerging Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary: The Early Rhetorical Form of the Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE ROLE OF RHETORICAL STRATEGIES AND TACTICS</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY: 1967-1973</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Methods, Membership, and Public's Response to the Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology and Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary: The Rhetorical Form of the Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Panther Party as a Specific Social-Change Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of the Black Panther Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing, Describing, and Evaluating the Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of the Black Panther Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Robert H. Lauer, in his book *Perspectives on Social Change*, stated,

The world may yet, as T. S. Eliot suggested, end with a whimper rather than a bang. But in the meantime, it plunges breathlessly into a hazy future, convulsed by conflict, writhing in the agony of injustice, and searching with a kind of urgent desperation for a meaningful human existence. Such a world demands an understanding of social change (12, p. 3).

In attempting to provide some insights into the nature of social change, scholars in the field of rhetoric have studied the messages generated by social-change movements and how these messages, when received by society at large, affected the development of the movement and the resulting acceptance or rejection of social change (4, p. 1). This study is concerned with the rhetoric of social-change movements. Specifically, it focuses upon the rhetorical strategies and tactics of a contemporary social-change movement, the Black Panther Party.

Flanked by the increasingly militant rhetoric of the civil rights movement, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, initially a local party, was founded in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California. The Panthers, by early 1967, "had made something of a local
reputation by their open display of weapons as evidence of a desire to defend the black community against the depredations of the Oakland police" (2, p. 48). They had also issued a platform and program demanding reforms in the social order which would allow blacks to determine the destiny of their own communities (6, p. 2). As the Party increased its community activities, claiming the right to protect and defend the ghetto community of Oakland against the city's "white racist power structure," it met with opposition (6, p. 19).

A bill calling for the prohibition of carrying weapons by ordinary citizens was introduced in the California State Legislature in May of 1967 (6, p. 20). This bill, if passed, would have made the Panther's major activity of armed patrols of the community illegal. The Panthers achieved national prominence by appearing in the state capital's legislative chamber carrying loaded weapons and protesting consideration of the bill which at that time was being debated (15, p. 7). The bill was passed and the Panthers dropped "Self-Defense" from the original title of the organization.

William L. Patterson, a lawyer who has been continually active in black Americans' fight for civil rights, explained, "The dropping of 'Self-Defense' resulted from the understanding on the part of the Panther leaders that a broader political offensive was necessary to realize the self-defense they sought" (6, p. 19). In 1967, the Black Panther Party made a number of choices which carried the group
beyond "the position occupied by any of the other organizations associated with the black liberation movement" (6, p. 19).

From 1967 to 1971, the Black Panther Party moved into "a commanding position in American radical politics, at one stage serving as the interlocutor between the SDS and the newly nationalistic civil rights groups" (2, p. 48). The New York Times stated in 1968, "The Panthers constitute the sole organized armed tradition of black America" (14, p. 14). As chapters of the Party emerged in black communities across the nation, the organization appeared to take on characteristics of a national revolutionary movement. Newspapers and television programs reported shoot-outs that occurred between the police and the Panthers. "Adventurous TV cameramen would show pictures on the evening news of a Panther squad practicing close-order march" (1, p. 97). Leaders and members of the Party became the center of attention for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover described the Panthers as "a black extremist organization consisting mostly of hoodlum-type revolutionaries who stockpile weapons, espouse Marxist-Leninist doctrines and terrorize black communities" (6, p. 10). Former Attorney General of the United States, John Mitchell, ruled that the "Panthers are a threat to national security" (6, p. 10). Daniel J. Boorstein, an American historian and director of the Smithsonian Institute's
National Museum of History and Technology, referred to the "aggressive ethnicity and racism of groups like the Black Panthers," and he accused them of "destructive and illegal acts" (6, p. 10).

It is obvious that many members of the power structure in America defined the Black Panther Party as "immediately threatening to society, its core members viewed as vicious and its peripheral members as disloyal to the goals of society" (26, p. 97). What is not clear is how black America viewed the Panthers.

A poll of black Americans living in New York, San Francisco, Detroit, Baltimore, and Birmingham, Alabama, taken by Market Dynamics, Incorporated, for ABC-TV (broadcast on ABC-TV's "The Panther," April 13, 1970), disclosed that of the best known organizations, the NAACP is regarded as having done the most for black people; the late Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference came next, with the Black Panthers showing up in third place. But when it comes to the future, the Panthers are rated the only black group which will increase its effectiveness if only in a small way, while both the NAACP and SCLC contributions to the black cause are expected to diminish. Sixty-two percent of the people polled admire what the Black Panthers are doing (6, p. 14).

While many changes have taken place in the status of the civil rights movement and of the Black Panther Party since the poll was taken in 1970, it is important to note that black Americans in 1970 were either exposed to a different character of the Party or perceived the acts of the Panthers from a different frame of reference than did the majority of white America. The Panthers, in a public
statement, denied that "they were reverse racists or revolutionaries attempting to violently overthrow the American system" (15, p. 31). Yet, Panther leader Huey P. Newton stated, "When the people learn that it is no longer advantageous for them to resist by going into the streets in large numbers, and when they see the advantage in the activities of guerrilla warfare as practiced by the Party, they will quickly follow this example" (15, p. 16). Other spokesmen for the Party insisted that the only violence that had been purposely initiated was by the police and not by the Party. Thus, the Panthers became surrounded by an aura of ambiguity.

Nevertheless, reinforced by the accolades of supportive black and white radicals, the Panthers "came to regard themselves as a revolutionary force in being" (2, p. 50). But despite the super-revolutionary potency attributed to them by both the establishment and the black community, "by the end of 1970 the Panthers were in desperate straits" (2, p. 49). Over three hundred Party members had been arrested or put in prison, thirty had been killed, and its two most well-known spokesmen, Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, were attempting to deal with the Party's problems in two different ways (2, p. 49). Cleaver, who had taken over leadership of the Party in 1967 when Newton was imprisoned, had left the country in 1969 to avoid being sent back to prison. Newton began asserting that the Party had lost the
support of the black community because Cleaver had placed "a greater premium on revolutionary commitment than on community service" (2, p. 49). Cleaver, who was then in Algiers, became increasingly disturbed with Newton's accusation and proxy prison leadership, which Cleaver felt was leading members away from those "principles of armed revolution which are the basis of the Party" (2, p. 50).

By 1971, there were two rival factions of the Party. Not only were the Panthers battling police but they were battling each other. When Huey P. Newton came out of prison "he assessed the shambles into which the movement had fallen, and he engineered a dramatic reversal of policy" (2, p. 51). The Newton followers "performed social welfare functions, ran for office, and entered the mainstay of the black community, the church. They divested themselves of the old rhetorical symbols. The new Panthers sought to engender support through service and not through fear" (2, p. 51). A number of Cleaverites, in late 1971, were reported to have reconstituted themselves as "the Black Liberation Army, vowing to continue the activities of armed revolution which they regarded to be the essence of orthodox Pantherism" (2, p. 51). A minute amount of information has been made available on this organization.

From a historical perspective, the impact of the Black Panther Party on black America's struggle for equality is
difficult to assess. Perhaps even more difficult is a prediction of what can be expected from the Party in the future. What does emerge as historically accurate is that the Panthers made a dramatic imprint upon the course of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Their imprint, however, varied according to who was assessing the intent and value of the Black Panther Party, at what point in time the assessment was taking place, and to what aspect of the Party or to what activity the assessor was referring.

C. Wright Mills stated, "If you determine to make history, you must recognize that the task is complex and demanding; you will act in a context that is rapidly changing already, and you must carefully and skillfully choose your strategies" (12, p. 104). The Panthers undoubtedly made history, but whether their strategies were carefully and skillfully chosen is a question which this thesis may be able to answer by a study of the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party from 1966 to 1973.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party as a social-change movement: 1966 to 1973.
Other Works in the Area and Potential Significance of the Study

As of the present date, no complete study of the Panthers as a social-change movement has been published. Numerous articles and several books have appeared about the Party. However, most of these sources have either attempted to justify the activities of the movement or condemn the Party as an extremist element of the "black power" phase of the civil rights movement. Furthermore, newspaper, television, and radio reports covering the activities of the Party from 1966 to 1973 have been restricted to regional occurrences and subjected to the sensationalism of reporting only those activities which were associated with violence. Through this study, using all of the sources available, a more complete picture of the Party, through their rhetorical development and subjective responses of various segments of the American public, has emerged.

Four books have dealt specifically with the Black Panther Party. Don A. Schanche's book, *The Panther Paradox: A Liberal's Dilemma*, was published in 1970. The book was inspired by Schanche's close and continuing association with the Panther movement and with Eldridge Cleaver. As a white liberal, interested in the problems of ghetto blacks, Schanche's book is basically an attempt to understand the nature of the movement and asked, "Can any of us, in good conscience, support it?" According to *The New York Times,*
Schanche's book "represents as complete a description of the Party as can be provided at this moment by any honest writer, regardless of color." The second book is entitled *The Black Panthers Speak* and was published in 1970. The book was edited by Philip S. Foner, Professor of History at Lincoln University and a member of the Board of Editors of the *Journal of Black History*, who subtitled the book "The Manifesto of the Party: The First Documentary Record of the Panthers' Program." The work includes authentic statements from such Party leaders as Huey P. Newton, David Hilliard, Eldridge Cleaver, Fred Hampton, and others. *Black Panthers Speak* also includes several reproductions of the Party's own publication, *The Black Panther*. Numerous texts of speeches given by Party leaders have been presented in Foner's book. The third book, *An American Verdict*, written by Michael J. Arlen, is concerned with the killing of two members of the Black Panther Party by Chicago police in 1969. Arlen's book, published in 1973, discussed some of the tactics of the "system" which were used to control the Party. The Cook County State's Attorney and twelve policemen were put on trial for "obstructing justice" in connection with the police raid on Panther headquarters in Chicago. Arlen traced the events which led to the trial of the policemen and provided an interesting insight into the vast amount of rhetorical phenomena which encompassed the entire event. The final book, which deals specifically with the Black Panther Party,
was written by Huey P. Newton. Published in 1972, the book is entitled *To Die For The People*. It includes the writings and speeches of Huey P. Newton. He discussed the rivalries, contradictions, and internal struggles of the Party from its founding through its contemporary status.

All of these books, as well as those articles which reflect the public's response to the movement, are used in analyzing the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Party. Several other books have dealt indirectly with the Party as they presented a history of the civil rights movement. These books have also been used. A complete list of the articles used can be found in the final bibliography.

The potential significance of the study may be realized in two areas. The analysis may provide further information concerning the role of rhetoric in the development and career of social-change movements. Secondly, the study should contribute to a better understanding of the Black Panther Party, their relationship to other black protest movements within the United States, and what effect the rhetoric of the Party may have had upon this country's attempt to deal with racial problems.

Methodology and Procedures

Leland Griffin, in his article on the rhetoric of social movements, suggested that the rhetorical historian should identify, analyze, describe, and evaluate those
efforts of the movement which attempt to effectuate change through the force of persuasion (7, p.135). In establishing sociorhetorical criteria for identifying, analyzing, describing, and evaluating the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party, the methodology of this study incorporates an interdisciplinary approach. Theories presented by scholars in the fields of history, rhetoric, and sociology are adapted to the stated purpose of the study.

In order to identify what rhetorical phenomenon is under investigation in this study, it is necessary to first operationally define rhetorical strategies and tactics in relationship to the context through which they are examined. This requires a discussion of how rhetorical strategies and tactics operate within the context of a social-change movement. This discussion aids in establishing a broad theoretical framework from which to draw tools for analyzing, describing, and evaluating the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party as a social-change movement.

To understand how rhetorical strategies and tactics operate within the context of a social-change movement, some general theories on the nature of social-change movements should be set forth. Furthermore, because the Black Panther Party was labeled by the establishment¹ "a revolutionary
social movement," this discussion includes some theories on the nature of revolutionary-social movements.

Theories on the Nature of Social Movements

Robert R. Evans, editor of a book entitled *Readings in Collective Behavior*, stated, "Social movements are collectivities organized with a set goal: to bring about change" (5, p. 3). Herbert Blumer, Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, in his article "Collective Behavior," further refined the definition of social-change movements by distinguishing between general social movements and specific social movements. Blumer has characterized as "general" social movements "the unorganized and uncoordinated mass behavior related to some cluster of socially significant but fairly vague issues" (18, p. 174). He used the "labor movement," the "peace movement," and the "woman's movement" as examples of general social-change movements. There is a significant relationship between general social-change movements and specific social-change movements. Bruce F. Ryan, in his book *Social and Cultural Change*, stated,

Backgrounds for such general social movements are provided by gradual and pervasive shifts in the values of people. The development of new values is reflected in new images which people come to have of themselves.

---

1The establishment is defined as that group of decision-makers within the United States that have the power of deciding policy and enforcing policy. They have also been labeled "power-elites" (4, p. 14).
in relation to the social order, awakening them to the
dissatisfactions and hopes which in turn can be crys-
tallized into specific social change movements (18,
p. 174).

Thus, out of drifts in the climate of mass sentiment
arise specific movements in which, for example, the objec-
tives of labor, or women, or humanitarians are more clearly
defined and "like-minded or susceptible people are drawn into
a more or less organized concern" (18, p. 175). The result
may be a highly differentiated set of specific social-change
movements. The civil rights movement in the United States
produced such a result. The general movement toward the
Negro's right to equal opportunity to participate in society
led to such divergent groups as the Black Muslims on one
hand and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference on
the other (17, p. 184). This particular occurrence in the
history of social movements is widespread. The general
"peace movement" produced such specific social-change move-
ments as "Mothers for Peace" and the "Weathermen Faction of
Students for a Democratic Society." Because different seg-
ments of the population, while concerned with basically the
same problem, have differing backgrounds and experiences,
they may view the problem from varying perspectives. Their
view of the causes of the problem, the changes necessary to
solve the problem, and subsequently the methods which are
selected to effect that change produce specific social-change
movements which stand apart structurally, ideologically, and functionally (18, p. 176).

Furthermore, general social movements are often concerned with problem areas which are so varying and so widespread that they may continue through many time periods, the problem areas being reflected in numerous specific social-change movements. Each identifiable specific social-change movement may be focusing on a particular aspect of the problem which is appropriate to the time period and the unique environmental circumstances of those concerned. The general movement toward women's rights in Western nations transcended all boundaries of time and space. Specific social-change movements, which stemmed from the general movement, dealt with varying aspects of the problem and greatly influenced each other. For example, the perceived failure of the nineteenth century suffrage societies to obtain the parliamentary franchise for women in Great Britain facilitated the founding of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903. The W.S.P.U. developed a distinctive organizational structure, leadership, and methods based upon the perceived effectiveness of other previously active suffrage societies.²

²From a paper written on the rhetoric of the woman suffrage movement in Great Britain by Patricia Edwards, author of thesis, for William DeMougeot's graduate class, A Rhetorical Study of Movements, (North Texas State University), Spring of 1974.
In general, it can be assumed, specific social-change movements develop in response to the accomplishments, as well as the failures, of other specific social movements concerned with the same problem area.\(^3\) Secondly, specific social-change movements are distinguished from general movements and from other similar movements by the development of a distinctive ideology, leadership, membership, and methods for effecting change. It should be remembered that social movements are never static. They exist in a rapidly changing context of time and space and are always in the "process of becoming" (18, p.173).

Having established a general definition of specific social-change movements and the important relationship and distinction between general and specific movements, attention should be focused on theories concerning the character and career of specific movements. The character or career of a specific movement, and the resulting success or failure of the movement to effect change in the social order, is influenced by a wide variety of circumstances.

\(^3\)The statement that a specific social-change movement develops from the accomplishments of other specific movements means that the success of other specific movements may, according to Blumer, awaken new hopes and dissatisfaction which crystallize into new specific social-change movements. The predominantly "legislative reform" era of the Civil Rights Movements accomplished many legal reforms for black America, awakening new hopes. When those hopes were not realized, new specific social-change movements, such as CORE and SNCC, developed to build on the accomplishments, as well as failures, of groups like the NAACP.
In dealing specifically with the career of social-change movements, some theorists have contended that a movement goes through various "ideal-typical" stages of growth. Bryce F. Ryan suggested that this theory of idealized stages was "given early expression by Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess," in their book *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (18, p. 180). He also pointed out that this idea received development and empirical support especially in the works of Herbert Blumer and Warren E. Gettys as well as Rudolph Heberle's studies of political movements, which broadly support the theory, as does Brinton's more specific analysis of revolutions (18, p. 180). Dawson and Getty synthesized many of the previously mentioned theorists' ideas on the stages of social movements, suggesting that there are four recognizable stages through which a "successful social movement" passes: (1) The preliminary stage of unrest, characterized by collective excitement and uneasiness but lacking any formal organization or focus on issues; (2) The popular stage of excitement, where collective unrest emerges from amorphous roots into a more identifiable social movement as leaders come forth and minimal organizational structure develops in an aura of excitement over the cause; (3) The stage of formal organization, where excitement plus disciplined cohesion develops as motives and aims become clearly defined and the organizational structure proliferates; and (4) The stage of institutionalization, where the specific social movement terminates in the form
of a lasting organization, a labor union, a nation, a denomination, or a similar organization (18, pp. 179-183).

Obviously, all social movements do not go through these idealized stages. Many never progress beyond the stage of popular excitement, and some movements may begin with formal organization and regress to creating a preliminary stage of unrest. The theory of "stages" in a social movement does offer, however, some insights into the forces which facilitate and encourage the development of specific social movements. The "character" of a social movement is another determining factor.

In examining the character of specific social-change movements, some theorists have proposed a very broad classification based upon the extent of the changes a movement is seeking and the methods employed to effect the changes. When a specific social movement is perceived as seeking limited changes, the changes may be termed "reform"; when total, involving the entire structure of society, they are called "revolutions" (5, p. 4). Reform movements are said to use predominantly "legitimate" means of achieving their goals. Revolutionary movements are usually noted for utilizing predominantly "illegitimate" methods to realize their goals (5, p. 5). This classification is subject to a great many variables. For example, participants of a movement may be seeking what they consider "reforms" in the social order, while certain segments of the population may perceive
these "reforms" as revolutionary changes. It may also happen that a reform movement may employ what is perceived by society at large as revolutionary methods to effect their "reforms," and thus be labeled as a revolutionary social movement. The reverse may also be true. A movement may be seeking massive changes in the social order but may select "legitimate" means of effecting change. The movement may then be classified as deviant but still be respectable because of the methods it selected.\(^4\)

Therefore, it is often the methods a movement selects, rather than its basic ideology, which establishes the character and affects the career of the movement. A social-change movement becomes the "focus of attention for a public which observes, interprets, and labels the movement" (27, p. 131). Ralph H. Turner, in his article "New Theoretical Frameworks," explained the impact of the public's label of a movement.

The public definition of a movement affects the character of recruitment to the movement, the means which the movement is able to use, and thus the strategies which the movement evolves and the kind of opposition it encounters. These features in turn largely determine the way in which members think of themselves and of the

\(^4\) For example, the Socialist Labor Party in the United States sought massive changes in the political system but employed primarily legitimate methods, such as going through the electoral process. A classification of deviant but respectable refers to the fact that the ideology of a movement may deviate from the general norms and values of society but the methods of the movement to promulgate the ideology are within the acceptable range of conventionality. Thus, the establishment cannot justifiably repress the movement in the eyes of the public which does not feel threatened by the methods of the movement.
movement, the type of ideology they develop for the movement, and the aspects of the ideology and values which become most salient (27, p.131).

In concluding this section, several theories have been presented concerning the nature, character, and career of social-change movements. It has been established that specific social-change movements develop a distinctive ideology, leadership, membership, and methods. A specific social-change movement may develop and be influenced by other general or specific movements dealing with the same problem area. General movements may facilitate a shift in the values and beliefs of certain segments of the population, awakening new hopes and dissatisfactions which in turn can be crystallized into specific social-change movements. In examining the character and career of social-change movements, it was pointed out that some social movements go through idealized stages. In each of these stages, certain requirements, such as leadership, cohesion, and the development of motives and aims, should be met. A general classification of the "types" of movements included the "reform movement" which seeks limited changes in the social order, and the "revolutionary movement" which seeks massive change in the societal order. Finally, it was stressed that the classification, as well as the career of a social-change movement, can be a product of the public's response to the methods of the movement.
Therefore, in examining the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party as a specific social-change movement, this thesis considers the general civil rights movement and the influences of other black protest movements on the development and growth of the Panthers. This study, however, is not directly concerned with the sociological aspects of the Black Panther Party. The theories concerning the character and career of social-change movements receive extension and clarification when placed within rhetorical perspective and were merely presented as a basis for establishing a sociorhetorical criteria for this investigation.

Identifying the Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of a Social-Change Movement

As a movement goes through the previously mentioned stages, develops leadership, ideology, membership, and methods, and is interpreted and labeled by a public, a movement "must make choices among the available means of persuasion" (4, p. 16). John Waite Bowers and Donovan J. Ochs, in their book *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, stated, "The more general choices we call strategies; the more specific choices we call tactics" (4, p. 16). In identifying the rhetorical nature of strategies and tactics, several perspectives are presented in order to define what phenomena are considered within the purview of rhetoric.
Bowers and Ochs substantiated the view of rhetoric as the instrumental and symbolic behavior of participants in a movement. Behavior is instrumental if it intends to or results in generating a response. Behavior may be considered symbolic if it has a referential function—if it stands for something else (4, p. 2). Rhetorical strategies and tactics may be verbal or nonverbal and are inherently linked to the growth and development of a social-change movement. "All groups must develop symbolic expressions to emphasize their distinctiveness and to celebrate their cause" (3, p. 305). Recalling Turner's article concerning the importance of the methods a movement selects and the response of the public to those methods, Turner was actually referring to the rhetorical strategies of a movement, the instrumental and symbolic behavior of participants. All of these perspectives illustrate the rhetorical nature of social movements. It is necessary, however, to illustrate what specific rhetorical phenomena have been selected for analysis in this study.

This study is concerned with the rhetorical phenomena, both verbal and nonverbal, which were generated by the Black Panther Party as a social-change movement. The Black Panther, a newspaper published by the Panthers, as well as excerpts from speeches made by Huey P. Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Seale, and Fred Hampton, have been selected as primary sources for analyzing the verbal strategies and tactics of the Party. The speeches selected center upon significant
events which affected the rise and decline of the Black Panther Party as a social-change movement. The nonverbal rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Party, which receive attention, are also considered significant events in the history of the Party. These rhetorical events were selected from issues of The Black Panther and from events which received wide press coverage in The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and other newspapers. Many rhetorical activities of the Panthers, which are given consideration in this study, come directly from accounts of the Party's founder, Huey P. Newton, in his book To Die For The People.

This section has defined rhetorical strategies and tactics and illustrated what phenomena in the development of a social movement can be considered rhetorical. Secondly, in identifying the rhetorical strategies and tactics of a social movement, the specific rhetorical activities of the Black Panther Party which received attention in this study were isolated. They include the verbal strategies of the Party, consisting of speeches and statements made by Party leaders, and the nonverbal strategies of the Party which were given widespread coverage by the press and various national magazines. In the following section, tools for analyzing, describing, and evaluating the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party as a social-change movement are set forth.
Tools for Analyzing, Describing, and Evaluating the Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of a Social Movement

As suggested early in the chapter, the rhetoric of a social movement may take many forms, have varying intentions, and produce both measurable and immeasurable effects on the development and career of a social-change movement. In analyzing, describing, and evaluating the rhetorical strategies and tactics of a social-change movement, the rhetorician should ask: What was the rhetorical form of the strategy or tactic? What influenced the choice of the particular rhetorical form? What was the intention of the rhetorical choice? What response was there to the rhetoric of the movement? Was the rhetorical choice effective, or did it produce the desired result?

In analyzing the rhetorical form of the strategy, Richard E. Walton's article "Strategies for Social Change" provided a framework from which to examine rhetorical form in social movements. Walton suggested that a movement may elect one of two rhetorical forms: a power strategy or an attitude strategy (29, p. 167). The use of a power strategy by a movement is based upon the leaders', or those desiring to effect change in the social order, view of the society. Walton contended, "those who select a power strategy perceive man as acting on a basis of power, legitimate or coercive" (29, p. 168). Therefore, any effort to direct change requires the mobilization and manipulation of power over others.
There are several distinguishing characteristics of the power strategy. The rhetoric of power would stress differences between the groups in conflict. Bipolarization of sentiment will either be intended or result from the use of a power strategy. The adherents of a power strategy will emphasize their ability to coerce. Herbert W. Simons, in his article on the use of coercive persuasion, illustrated various ways in which coercive persuasion may be established. Verbally and nonverbally, the leaders or spokesmen for the movement may generate messages which establish the relative willingness of the movement to use coercive force, the relative capacity of the movement to use coercive force, the relative legitimacy of the movement's use of coercive force, and the relative desirability of the movement's objectives (21, p. 235). Movements employing the power strategy and specifically the use of coercive persuasion, may find it expedient to verbally supplement any coercive acts with reassurance to members of the desirability of objectives in relation to the risks involved (29, p. 168). The power strategy will seek to control information and will usually create a great deal of ambiguity for the opposing group. A movement employing the power strategy will not seek an openness in communication between the groups in conflict. Finally, a movement selecting the power strategy will be more inclined to use illegitimate means of achieving its goals (29, p. 169).
Those movements which utilize an attitude strategy, according to Walton, view man as rational and believe that he will follow his own self-interest when it is shown to him (29, p. 167). A movement based upon an attitude strategy operates under the philosophy that any effective social changes can only take place through a restructuring or change of the attitudes and values of society. Those who elect to use an attitude strategy will seek to minimize differences between the groups in conflict. They will declare for an openness and honesty in communication. Emphasis will be placed upon persuasion as a means of ethically and logically appealing to the basic goodness of man and depicting the soundness of the change advocated by the movement. Those movements characterized by the use of an attitude strategy will usually operate within the bounds of conventionally accepted methods of effecting social change.

While those using a power strategy would be opposed to negotiation, accommodation, or compromise, those using an attitude strategy would seek better relationships between the opposing groups through compromise and the art of give and take (29, p. 167).

It should be stressed that both of these strategies may be in operation within the context of a social movement. However, most movements are directed primarily by one of these strategies more than the other. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s nonviolent direct-action campaign
employed the power strategy on several occasions. Yet, the basis of the movement and the verbalization of the intent of the activities in which the movement engaged depicted the dominant selection of an attitude strategy (12, p. 241). A movement may also drift from one strategy to the other as it meets with opposition or experiences internal changes. SNCC began with an attitude strategy but by the mid-sixties was one of the first civil rights organizations to reflect the black-power phase of a previously patient movement (8, p. 150).

Thus, there are two rhetorical forms which may characterize the choice of persuasive strategies that a movement selects, a power strategy or an attitude strategy. Applying Walton's criteria to an analysis of the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party, this thesis examines which of these forms the Panthers selected. The next question to be answered in this study is what factors influence the rhetorical forms which are selected by a movement?

In the initial discussion of theories concerning the nature and development of social-change movements, several ideas were set forth on factors which facilitate the emergence of specific social-change movements. These same factors are influential to the rhetorical choices of a movement.

The first factor given attention was the relationship between general and specific social movements. A study of
the rhetorical choices of a movement should include an examination of previously established movements which dealt with the same problem area and should isolate what aspects of the general movement can be seen as influential in the rhetorical choices of a new social movement. Another factor in the development of a movement and the selection of rhetorical strategies is the background and experiences of those who are seeking change in the social order. Don F. Hahn and Ruth M. Gonchar, in their article "Studying Social Movements: A Rhetorical Methodology," stated, "Social movements are built upon shared beliefs. So, the student will want to discover how the movement's participants came to share the beliefs" (9, p. 45). As previously stated, the leaders' view of the social order is of primary importance to the selection of the strategy. Thus, attention should be given to the social, political, and economic environment in which the leaders of the movement emerged and through which their perceptions of the situation were formed. Finally, the rhetorical choices of a movement are influenced by what Blumer contended are the distinguishing characteristics of a specific social-change movement: ideology, leadership, followers, and methods. Each of these areas is discussed in relationship to its influence on the selection of rhetorical strategies and the ways in which rhetorical strategies and tactics are manifested through each of these areas.
One of the first distinguishing characteristics of a specific social-change movement, discussed by Blumer, is the development of a distinctive ideology. The ideology of a movement consists of "the integrated assertions, theories, and aims constituting a politico-social program" (30, p. 411). Rudolph Herberle, in his Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology book, stated, "A genuine social movement is always integrated by a set of constitutive ideas, or an ideology" (10, p. 11). Bowers and Ochs distinguish between ideological statements and rhetorical statements by defining ideological statements as "being expressive of a set of values and beliefs rather than being instrumental. A strictly ideological statement is not made to persuade or to alter behavior. It is made to define the position of an individual or group" (4, p. 2). In reality, most ideological statements of a movement may also serve rhetorical functions. Robert Lauer, in his book Perspectives on Social Change, illustrated the importance of ideology to the selection and employment of rhetorical strategies. He stated, "Ideology gives direction to change by impelling change in a particular direction that derives from the specifics or logic of the ideology" (12, p. 114). Barry McLaughlin's studies in social movements extended the rhetorical functions of the development of an ideology, suggesting that ideology gives the movement justification, direction, weapons to attack, weapons to defend, and inspiration and hope (13, p. 209).
It is also important to remember as Ralph Turner stated, "The initial ideology and values of any movement are seldom specific enough to prevent alteration of the character of the movement according to the public response" (27, p. 132). Neil J. Smelser, in his article "Theoretical Issues of Scope and Problems," dealt specifically with value-oriented ideology, or that ideology which attacks the values of society and may most easily lead to a revolutionary movement. Smelser substantiated Turner's theory on the importance of public response to the ideology. He stated, "The subsequent career of these value-oriented ideologies depends above all on the behavior of agencies of social control. It is not so much the nature of the ideology of the movement as the behavior of authorities that determines the change of direction" (24, p. 122).

While many of these theories concerning the ideology of a social movement may seem contradictory, the crucial point is the ideology of a movement sets it apart from other movements and is a key to understanding the nature of the movement's rhetorical choices. Also, the ideology of a movement may be influenced by the public's response to the rhetoric which depicts the ideology of a movement. Thus, ideology is instrumental to and shaped by the interplay of the rhetoric of the movement and the public's response.

The second distinguishing characteristic of a specific social-change movement is the development of distinctive
leadership. Leadership plays a vital role in the rhetorical development of a social movement. As previously discussed, the leaders and their view of the social order are responsible for determining the initial direction, power strategy or attitude strategy, a movement may take. Leaders also shape the ideology of a movement and serve as representatives of that ideology to the public at large. In identifying who the leaders are of a movement, several factors should be considered. The leaders of a movement can be identified as those individuals who receive public recognition as representatives of the movement, who plan and direct activities of the movement, or who serve as spokesmen for the movement. A leader draws a following and is able to mold and shape the intensity of the beliefs of his following (22, pp. 11-12). Leaders may serve as prophets, catalysts, organizers, or problem solvers.

Eric Hoffer suggested that there are three distinct categories of leadership: "Men of words to prepare the ground, fanatics to hatch the actual movement, and men of actions to carry it through" (11, p. 119). The function of men of words "is not only to discredit the prevailing myths, but also to furnish new doctrines and new slogans and to give a new faith to the potential membership of the movement" (11, p. 75). A second type of leader, the fanatic, may function to promote the ideology of the movement. The fanatic leader "personifies the certitude of the creed
and the defiance and grandeur of power. He articulates and
justifies the resentment dammed up in the souls of the
frustrated. He evokes the enthusiasm of communion and the
sense of liberation from a form of petty existence" (11, p. 121). The third type of leadership in a movement, men
of action, consists of the administrators, organizers, and
those charged with the responsibility of maintaining the
internal structure of the movement. All of these leaders,
according to Hoffer, are necessary to the development of a
movement. Also, leaders are charged with the rhetorical
development of the movement.

Barry McLaughlin illustrated the rhetorical functions
of leadership through his classification of "four rhetorical
stages of a movement" (13, p. 212). According to McLaughlan,
leaders function in the "agitative stage of the movement"
where leaders must arouse people and make recruiting pos-
sible, as well as give direction to impulses and feelings
through ideas, suggestions, and promises. The second stage,
characterized by the development of esprit de corps, requires
that the leader organize feelings, identify common goals,
give sense to collective spirit, and develop group solidar-
ity by identifying in-group and out-group relationships.
The out-group is identified as the "bad guys." In the
development of esprit de corps, the leader may encourage
informal fellowship and ceremonial behavior of participants
(13, p. 213). The next stage, the development of morale,
challenges the leader to give persistence and determination to the will of the group. The leader should establish a righteousness in the purpose of the movement, faith in the movement's ultimate objective, and should encompass the movement in an aura of sacredness (13, p. 214). The final stage, the development of group ideology, has already been discussed. The leader must present the desirability of the ideology to the membership as well as respond to resistance from the society at large. The ways in which leadership elects to deal with these stages and the type of leader that emerges in the course of the movement indicates and influences the rhetorical choices of the movement.

The third characteristic of a specific social-change movement is the development of membership or a following. This area is also intertwined with the leadership and the ideology of the movement. Individuals are attracted to social movements for various reasons. Max Weber's typology of motivation for joining social movements points to three reasons why people are attracted to movements: First, because they feel the goals of the movement are desirable, right, and good. Second, because their personality structure needs some type of involvement in a cause. Or, their emotional make-up, filled with many prejudices and "gut feelings," draws them to any movement which allows a release of emotional tensions. Third, individuals may join a movement for traditional reasons: their parents or their peer group
already belong (10, p. 21). Other motivations may include an enthusiasm for the leadership, some expectation of personal advantage, or a great resentment toward the forces which the movement opposes. In most movements, there are two types of followers: The **core membership** of a movement or those completely dedicated to the cause, and the **peripheral members**, or those that are not directly involved with the movement but sympathize with the cause (5, p. 125). Needless to say, without membership there would be no movement. However, membership is important to the rhetorical choices of a movement. Rhetorical strategies and tactics are selected to meet two target audiences: the membership and the public at large. In each of these areas, rhetoric may function in different ways. In the area of membership, McLaughlin views the role of rhetorical strategies as responsible for gaining adherents, holding adherents, and molding adherents to workers who will aid in reaching the objectives of the movement (13, p. 215). In the outside area, the public at large, rhetorical strategies may be aimed at calling attention to the problem, providing answers to those segments of the public which question the intentions or actions of the movement, or intensifying antagonisms between the groups in conflict.

The fourth distinguishing characteristic of a specific social-change movement is the selection of methods to achieve its objectives. It is in this area that the rhetorical strategies and tactics of a movement are manifested. The
methods a movement selects are of course dependent upon its ideology, the nature of the leadership and membership, and the objectives the movement is seeking. According to Herberle, strategies are aimed toward "long-range" goal achievement and tactics are aimed toward "short-range" goal achievement. The long-range goal of a movement may be the change of the institutional or political composition of society, while a short-range goal may be to win the support of a specific segment of the population. The methods of movement are described in dealing with the intentions of the movement's rhetoric.

In analyzing the rhetorical form of the persuasive choices of the Panthers, several steps have been followed. The study includes an examination of what rhetorical form, power or attitude, the movement selected. It is recognized that the rhetorical choices of movement are influenced by the general and specific movements which deal with the same problem area, as well as the environmental circumstances from which the new specific movement emerged. This thesis examines the general civil rights movement in the United States and the specific black protest movements which were influential to the rhetorical choices of the Black Panther Party. The values and beliefs of the leadership of the Party can also be understood through an examination of the environment of Oakland, California, and the life experiences of the early rhetorical decision makers. Finally,
the other factors of ideology, membership, leadership, and methods have been analyzed according to the ways in which each area may function in the rhetorical development of the movement.

In describing the intention of the rhetorical strategies and tactics of a social-change movement, Bower and Ochs provided an extensive list of various intentions rhetorical strategies may assume in the development and career of a social movement. The methods or strategies included are, Promulgation, Solidification, Nonviolent Resistance, Polarization, Escalation-Confrontation, and Gandhi and Guerilla (4, pp. 16-37).

The first strategy or method, Promulgation, is employed to win support for the movement's cause and disposition. Tactics which may be used include "erection of posters, distribution of handbills, the holding of mass meetings, and exploitation of the mass media" (4, p. 19). Solidification is a strategy used primarily within the group or membership. It is designed to "reinforce the cohesiveness of members, thereby increasing their responsiveness to group wishes" (4, p. 20). The tactics in this strategy may include "plays, songs, slogans, expressive and esoteric symbols, and in-group publications" (4, p. 20). Another strategy which is used primarily by those supporting an attitude base is Nonviolent Resistance. The strategy of nonviolent resistance advocates breaking of laws which are deemed unjust and destructive of
human dignity. By accepting societal punishment for breaking these laws, the movement may gain sympathy for the cause and stimulate negotiation or adjustment on the part of the establishment (4, p. 32).

The final three strategies are used by those advocating a power base. **Escalation-Confrontation** is a strategy designed to create an atmosphere of apprehension on the part of the opposing group or the establishment. It is anticipated that the establishment will overprepare and be made to look foolish. The strategy consists of a number of tactics, each of "which is designed to escalate the tension in the establishment until finally the establishment representatives resort to violent suppression in a confrontation with the agitators" (4, p. 35). Tactics under this strategy would include threatened disruption, a nonverbal offensive, non-negotiable demands, nonverbal obscenity, or verbal obscene deprecation. **Polarization** is a strategy a movement may employ to force individuals to make a choice between the establishment or the goals of the movement. The strategy of polarization "assumes that any individual who has not committed himself in one way or another to the agitation is supportive of the establishment" (4, p. 26). There are two main tactics under polarization. The exploitation of "flag issues" incorporates presenting the uncommitted audience with issues with which it is especially concerned and depicting the establishment as the prime cause for the evils
which prevail. The exploitation of "flag individuals" presents the audience with public figures who are "especially susceptible to the charges made against them by the agitator's ideology" (4, p. 27). *Gandhi and Guerilla* may be only partly rhetorical. "The strategy of Gandhi and guerilla confronts the establishment with a large group of agitators committed to the strategy of nonviolent resistance and another group committed to physical destruction of the establishment" (4, p. 37). The first group is rhetorical because their behavior is instrumental and symbolic. The second group is rhetorical, only to the extent that physical underground attacks on the establishment, if successful, "will polarize other disaffected members of society and encourage them to join the attacks" (4, p. 37).

All of these strategies and tactics are applied appropriately to the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party as it developed as a social-change movement. The rhetorical choices of the Party and the documented intention of the strategy or method are described and analyzed according to Bowers' and Ochs' criteria. Equally important and influential to the rhetorical choices of a movement are the strategies of control. The public or establishment response to the rhetoric include several strategies and tactics.

To maintain control when confronted with proposals or movements directed toward change in the establishment's
structure, policy, ideology, or power, any or all of the following rhetorical strategies can be adopted. These strategies of control include "avoidance, suppression, adjustment, or capitulation" (4, pp. 39-56). The use of these strategies is dependent upon the degree to which the established order perceives a "threat" to its structure.

The strategy of avoidance may be employed through a tactic of "counterpersuasion." This tactic would require meeting with the leaders of the group and attempting to persuade the agitators they are wrong and that their proposal would be harmful to society. If this tactic fails or does not seem an appropriate response, the establishment may elect to use a tactic of "evasion." The tactic of evasion includes shoving members of the movement off numerous "power centers" that supposedly could more effectively deal with their problem. Another tactic of avoidance is "secrecy with a rationale." The establishment would hear the demands of the agitators but decline to respond because of some need for secrecy. However, if the establishment issued a rationale which was questionable to its own members, as well as to those of the demanding group, the agitating group could elicit an even stronger following. A final tactic of avoidance is "denial of means." A social movement must have the physical means necessary to promote its cause, a meeting place, and a means of presenting its views. It is also
necessary for the establishment to provide appropriate reasons for denying these means to an agitative group.

A second strategy the establishment may select to use is that of suppression. A strategy of suppression differs from that of avoidance because suppression is an attempt to weaken the movement by removing its spokesman, while a strategy of avoidance focuses on changing or retarding the issues underlying the agitation (4, p. 42). The initial use of suppression is through the tactic of "harassment" of the leaders of the movement. This tactic may be designed to take away the leadership of the movement or to discourage membership in the movement by illustrating what ills may befall the leaders of a specific movement. Three other tactics may be used in a suppression strategy. These tactics include overt denial of the agitators' demands, banishment, and purgation. In a revolutionary movement, all of these tactics are anticipated. Few governments would agree that they should be overthrown.

The third rhetorical strategy is adjustment. An institution may elect to alter its ideology, policy, or actions in response to an external challenge. The strategy of adjustment includes the tactics of "changing the name of some regulatory agency or sacrificing personnel" in order to appease or deter the movement's growth (4, p. 53). A more effective tactic of adjustment may be that of "accepting some means of agitation." For example, if a threatening
movement is allowed to hold meetings, rallies, and issue publications, without the establishment intervening, then the movement may lose its credibility and be forced to take a more violent stance. Once a movement has been lured into showing more violence, then the establishment may justifiably take a harsher stance. Two other tactics of adjustment may be used "incorporating some of the personnel of an agitative movement or incorporating parts of the dissident ideology" (4, p. 54). The first of these is more easily carried out after a confrontive agitation. The hiring of more black faculty members on college campuses, or appointing students to administrative positions is both a tactic of adjustment and a "lesson learned" from past experiences of student uprisings during the sixties.

The last strategy that the establishment may employ is capitulation. Bowers and Ochs contend that "to be totally successful, an agitative movement--its ideas, goals, policies, beliefs, and personnel--must replace those of the target institution" (4, p. 55). The strategy of capitulation would allow such an occurrence. It is inferred that capitulation would be the "last resort" of the establishment and is not rhetorical but is defeat.

The strategies and tactics of control are applied equally in describing the rhetoric of the Black Panther Party. Because the response of the public or the establishment is influential to the rhetorical choices of the
movement and the movement's development and career, emphasis is placed on the dynamic interplay of the rhetoric of agitation and control in the Black Panther Party's development.

This chapter has discussed how this thesis proceeds to identify, analyze, and describe the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party as a social-change movement. The final step is explaining how the evaluative task of the rhetorical-historian is approached. This thesis does not attempt to make a moral evaluation of the rhetorical motives or actions of the movement. The focus of any rhetorical evaluation should be on the "effectiveness" of the rhetoric in relation to the intention and measurable results of the message or messages generated (7, p. 188). This requires an understanding of what was intended by the particular mode of rhetorical discourse and a means of measuring the results. Earlier discussions in this chapter have outlined the tools for discovering the intentions of the rhetorical form. Thus, an attempt is made to isolate the intent of the rhetoric through these tools and primary sources, such as the speakers and/or statements made in reference to the rhetorical events under consideration. The results of the strategy or tactic are measured according to the recorded public response to the message generated by the Party and the movement participants' own analysis of the effectiveness of their rhetoric. An easy and accurate evaluation of the
effectiveness of the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Party was not always possible. There are varying intentions, results, and a complex of other factors which influence the observable results of rhetorical aims. In such cases, the variables affecting the rhetorical situation have been identified and considered in the evaluation.

An analysis of the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party from 1966 to 1973 presents a challenging, fascinating, and somewhat frightening inquiry into rhetorical discourse in the contemporary world. This thesis merely begins to touch upon many interesting aspects of the rhetorical development of the movement. Perhaps, through this study, others may profit and seek to further examine the rhetorical dimensions of a truly unique movement in the history of black protest.

Summary of Design

Chapter II deals with the changing nature of the civil rights movement in the United States from the late fifties to early sixties. The chapter includes a discussion of specific black protest movements during this time period, their leadership, goals, methods, and successes and failures. In concluding the chapter, statements are made concerning the influence of the general movement on the emergence and character of the Black Panther Party. Chapter III analyzes the early rhetorical choices of the Party and the factors of
environment, leadership, ideology, membership, and methods which affected the character and early development of the movement. Chapter IV analyzes the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Party and the strategies and tactics of control employed by the establishment. This chapter discusses the rhetorical development of the Party in relationship to its leaders, members, ideological base, as well as the strategies and tactics of the organization. Chapter V, Conclusions, presents a summary of the overall rhetorical choices of the Party from 1966 to 1973. It includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Party's rhetorical choices and the influence of rhetoric on the character and career of the movement.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

FROM BLACK PROTEST TO BLACK POWER: THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Introduction

As stated in Chapter I, the rise of a specific social-change movement and its accompanying rhetorical choices, ideology, strategems, and tactics, is often influenced by the nature of a general movement. Thus, to understand the rhetorical choices of a movement, it is necessary to examine how the values and beliefs of the movement came to be shared in relation to the general movement. This chapter focuses on the general mood of societal protest in the late fifties and the early sixties. Specifically, the chapter examines the history of black protest in America and how it served to facilitate a basic shift in the values and images that some blacks came to have of themselves in relation to the social order. This new set of values may have contributed to the development of a unique movement in the history of black protest, the Black Panther Party, as well as contributing to a shift in the nature of the black protest movement. From a historical perspective, an attempt has been made to recreate, as accurately as possible, the historical setting and the
significant events which influenced the values and beliefs of the Black Panther Party.

Black men in America have always engaged in militant action. However, their activities have not followed a clearly defined methodology nor ideology (10, pp. 9-18). The black man's militancy has taken many different forms of expression. What made the Black Panther Party unique, in the history of black protest, was that they represented the first and only organized black socialist revolution movement (8, p. 19). This uniqueness was born out of the reality of the civil rights movement of the late 1950's and 1960's.

Before 1955, except for the Garvey movement, spokesmen for the civil rights movement were largely concerned with legal reforms as a means of obtaining integration. The NAACP had led the fight and carried case after case of successful litigation through the Federal Courts.

Under NAACP leadership, the objective of the Negro Protest movement during the interwar years, 1915 to 1941, had been to seek reform through legal and judicial processes. This approach prevailed until the emergence of direct, nonviolent action in the 1960's. From 1941 to 1958, Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower issued a dozen executive orders affecting civil rights. These touched upon fair employment practices, federal contracts with private industry, employment and advancement opportunities in federal service, integration in the armed forces, and the implementation of a federal court order for school desegregation. The United States Supreme Court heard and ruled on a wide range of cases related to civil rights, and its decisions on voting, interstate travel, housing covenants, higher education, and public school desegregation were resoundingly favorable to the Negro's plea for reform (2, p. 356).
The landmark Supreme Court decision of 1954, Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, sounded the death-knell to Jim Crow laws. However, despite that decision and the above mentioned legislation, the rhetoric of the Court was not the reality of the Deep South in the 1950's. A large gulf separated the judicial decree and the eventualities of the everyday life of Southern blacks.

Thus, when Mrs. Rosa Parks boarded a Montgomery bus in 1955, she did not feel the comfort supplied by the highest Court of the land. Refusing to give up her seat on the bus to a white man, Mrs. Parks' determination generated the Montgomery bus boycott of Martin Luther King and signaled a shift in the tactics of the black protest movement (13, p. 281). As King organized the poor blacks of Montgomery to the tune of national publicity, another type of black organization was forming to the scarred chants of Elijah Muhammad in the Northern ghettos. Both leaders found a large portion of the poor lower-class-black community to be without representation due to the middle- and upper-class-black elites who controlled the more established black civil rights organizations. Yet, neither King nor Elijah Muhammad could claim a unique approach to the struggle for civil rights. King could find his theoretical and doctrinal forerunners in the literature and tactics of the abolitionists and more conventionally in modern organizations such as CORE and, to an extent, the NAACP. Likewise, black nationalism was a traditional theme.
developed in the 1920's by Marcus Garvey and even earlier by both black and white separatists (4, pp. 11-15).

What is fundamental to both of these men and their respective movements is that they began to chip away at the established legal tactics of the NAACP. The policy of direct action, as preached and practiced by King in the South, and the spirit of separatism and nationalism, as preached by the Black Muslims in the North, took the place of the litigation of the NAACP.

The South: The Impact and Effects of the Activist Approach

The struggle for civil rights in the South was a peculiarly regional movement. The aims and goals of the Southern civil rights movement can only be applied to the distinct culture and history of Southern blacks. With the advent of Martin Luther King's nonviolent direct-action crusade, the Southern blacks were part of a movement that was supported and based on the strong cultural and religious ties that bound the black men and women of the region. Christopher Lasch stated,

After the Civil War, Southern Negroes gradually developed institutions of their own, derived from American sources but adapted to their own needs, and therefore capable of giving the Negro community the beginnings of cohesiveness and collective self-discipline. The Negro church managed to impose strict standards of sexual morality, thereby, making possible the emergence of stable families over which the father, not the mother, as under slavery, presided.
Stable families, in turn, furnished the continuity between generations without which Negroes could not even have begun their slow and painful self-advancement. .. . The accumulation of talent, skills, and leadership, by the 1950's, had progressed to the point where Southern Negroes, together with their liberal allies, could launch an attack against segregation. The prominence of the Negro church in their struggle showed the degree to which the civil rights movement was rooted in the peculiar conditions of Negro life in the South .. . conditions which had made the church the central institution of the Negro subculture. Even radicals like Charles M. Sherrod of SNCC who condemned the passivity of the Negro church realized that "no one working in the South can expect to beat the box if he assumes that one does not need the Negro church as it exists" (14, p. 416).

Despite the early victories of the black civil rights activists in the South, especially in the area of civil rights legislation, little change was effected in the everyday lives of blacks in the South. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which served as the major legislative achievement of the Southern civil rights coalition, was systematically subverted in the South (9, pp. 129-154). The Southern whites adjusted to the decrees of equality issued by the courts and Congress with the tactics of delay and overt violent oppression.

Opponents of civil rights openly expressed their resentment against executive policy and initiated a relentless campaign to discredit the Supreme Court. Some even went so far as to allege that the winds of change originated with Communist agitators and subversives seeking to disrupt America's established order. Diehard southerners supported segregationist organizations, including the Ku Klux Klan with its tendencies to mob action, and the White Citizens' Council with its appeals to states' rights, southern regionalism, and obstructive legislative tactics (2, p. 356).
The early activists who joined the forces of the civil rights movement in the South founded their tactics upon the nonviolent creed and actions of men like Martin Luther King. The young activists of CORE and SNCC, both black and white, based their early tactics on awakening a sense of moral shame against the injustices done to the blacks in the South (7, pp. 281-82). The philosophy and tactics were not based on awakening the moral indignity of the Southern whites, but upon arousing the pity and rage of the nation, and of the Federal Government.

What became increasingly evident and apparent, with the outbreak of Northern urban rioting in 1965, was that the Federal Government was either slow or simply unwilling to assume protective action. The activities of the SCLC, CORE, and SNCC resulted in their freedom riders being beaten, children bombed in churches, Southern sheriffs conspiring to murder civil rights workers, and demonstrators being clubbed, gassed, and bitten by police dogs (1, pp. 393-402). As such injustices were brought before the Southern judiciary, the courts seemed to sanction the official violence and deny justice to the activists' cause. FBI agents were accused of favoritism and of being the products of the racist institutions. Even the United States Justice Department declared that "maintaining law and order is a state responsibility" (1, p. 399). As John Lewis of CORE stated in his
speech during the 1963 March on Washington, "These civil rights bills will not protect young children and old women from police dogs and fire hoses while engaging in peaceful demonstrations" (15, p. 376). Howard Zinn reinforced the idea when he wrote in 1964,

The simple and harsh fact made clear in Albany, and by the events in Americus, Georgia, in Selma and Gasden, Alabama, in Danville, Virginia, and in every town in Mississippi, is the simple and harsh fact that the Federal Government abdicated its responsibility in the Black Belt. The Negro citizen of that area was left to the local police. The U.S. Constitution was left in the hands of Neanderthal creatures who cannot read, and whose only response to it has been to grunt and swing (21, p. 144).

Even the growing disillusionment with the power and intent of the Federal Government did not shake many of the nonviolent activists from their belief in the fundamental good of the American democratic and political system. Despite the oppressiveness and brutality of Southern injustice, the traditional organizations still believed that the national political leaders could not and would not continue to deny a speedy redress to the plight of the Southern black (12, p. 191).

With the explosion of the Northern ghettos in 1964 and 1965, the institutional aspects of racism became obvious to even the most devout believers in the existing political and social systems. The fires of Northern cities burned not only the ghettos, but also the ties between the white Northern liberals and the black activists. It became evident, in
the wake of Harlem, Watts, and a dozen other infamous ghettos, that the institution of racism was not confined only to the South, but, in the minds of many black activists, it permeated the entire nation. The urban riots and unrest helped to destroy the credibility of the institutions of both the Northern white liberals and the Federal Government (18, p. 11).

The North: The Shifting Focus of the Civil Rights Movement

With the outbreak of massive violence in urban ghettos, the power of the Federal Government was seen to be against the black man. The same troops that had helped to escort black children to school in Little Rock, Arkansas, were now seen turning machine guns on urban blacks in Detroit and Watts. The unique cultural heritage that bound the civil rights movement in the South to patience and long-suffering was not to be found in the North. In many of the black activists' minds, the process of nonviolent resistance and legal redress that had achieved at least legislative victories in the South would not apply to the urban-ghetto black. The problems confronted by the civil rights activists in the North were not the same as those found by Martin Luther King and other members of the civil rights coalition in the South. As Lasch observes,

The breakdown of the Southern Negro subculture in the North has recreated one of the conditions
that existed under slavery, that of dangling between two cultures. Unlike other rural people, who migrated over the last hundred and forty years to the cities of the North, Southern Negroes have not been able to transplant their rural way of life, even with modifications. The church decays; the family reverts to the matricentric pattern. The schools, which are segregated but at the same time controlled by white people, hold up middle class norms to which black children are expected to conform, and if they fail, they are written off as "unteachable." Meanwhile the mass media flood the ghetto with images of affluence, which Negroes absorb without absorbing the ethic of disciplined self-denial and postponement of gratification that has traditionally been a part of the materialist ethic. The Civil Rights movement that had been focused in the South became considerably weaker in the North, due to this breakdown in cultural patterns (14, p. 413).

As surely as the tactics of legislative equality had failed as a practical solution in the South, so too had they failed in the minds of black activists in the central city's urban ghettos of the North and West (17, pp. 260-63). The white liberals of these regions had congratulated themselves on their treatment of the black, in comparison to his subjugation in the South (19, p. 135). Yet, the realities of poverty, segregation, inadequate education, and cultural isolation was as real to the black activists in the North as it was to the civil rights workers in the South. Despite the decrees of the Congress and the Federal Courts, despite the tremendous sums of Federal funds that were spent in urban areas, and despite the good intentions of the white liberals, the conditions of black deprivation were only too obvious to the black activists. As the Southern conservative whites
had used delay as a tactic, so too had their Northern counterparts. Perhaps the best example of the prevailing conditions in the urban ghettos can be seen in the policies that resulted in denying equality of opportunity in education. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, after studying the conditions and causes of urban violence, stated in 1968,

Within cities, as within metropolitan areas, there is a high degree of residential segregation—reflected in the schools—for which responsibility is shared by both the private housing industry and the government.

(a) The discriminatory practices of city landlords, lending institutions, and real estate brokers have contributed to the residential confinement of Negroes.

(b) State and local governments have contributed to the pattern of increasing residential segregation through such past discriminatory practices as racial zoning ordinances and racially restrictive covenants capable of judicial enforcement. Current practices in such matters as the location of low-rent public housing projects, and the displacement of large numbers of non-white low income families through local improvement programs also are intensifying residential segregation.

(c) Federal housing programs and policies serve to intensify racial concentrations in cities. Federal policies governing low- and moderate-income housing programs such as low-rent public housing and FHA 221 do not promote the location of housing outside areas of intense racial concentration. Federal urban renewal policies are insufficiently concerned with the impact of relocation on racial concentrations within cities.

Individual choice contributes to the maintenance of residential segregation, although the impact of such choice is difficult to assess since the housing market has been restricted.

In all central cities, as compared to their suburbs, non-public schools absorb a disproportionately large segment of the white school population; non-whites, however, whether in city or suburbs, attend public schools almost exclusively (18, p. 9).
The urban black was stripped of his cultural heritage that had belonged to the South when he migrated to the North. In the North, he found no promised land but only a continuation of segregation, although it was in a more subtle form. Denied his hope of improvement in the North, the young urban black man found no relief in the tactics of nonviolence and judicial redress.

Elijah Muhammad and his Nation of Islam offered the urban black a renewed black identity and black culture. The Muslims operated on a different ideological base from other civil rights organizations. They sought separation from white society instead of integration. They firmly believed that the white man was evil and not committed to the betterment of black America. The Black Muslims also offered a strict, if not puritanical, ethic to the urban black male. The culture and values of the Black Muslims are based on the deprivation of the ghettos and their black inhabitants. "In a ghetto environment of matriarchy, it stressed male dominance. In a world of drug addiction, poverty, illiteracy, and lack of hope, the Black Muslims preached morality, clean living, education, and self-help" (14, p. 68).

Lawrence L. Tyler noticed, "The Muslim life style is both mystical and practical and has definitely provided an escape from degradation for lower-class Negroes" (20, p. 92).
The growth and expansion of the Black Muslims and the increasingly publicized rhetoric of Malcolm X, after the urban riots of the middle 1960's, gave rise to even more white "back-lash" in the North and West. Despite the infusion of billions of federal dollars and the increased awareness by some public figures of the particularly explosive plight of urban blacks, little changed following the violent urban unrest. As the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concluded,

A study of the aftermath of disorder leads to disturbing conclusions. We find that, despite the institution of some post-riot programs:

1. Little basic change in the conditions underlying the outbreak of disorder has taken place. Actions to ameliorate Negro grievances have been limited and sporadic; with but a few exceptions, they have not significantly reduced tensions.

2. In several cities, the principal official response has been to train and equip the police with more sophisticated weapons.

3. In several cities, increasing polarization is evident, with continuing breakdown of interracial communication, and the growth of white segregationist or black separatist groups (18, p. 12).

Toward a More Militant and Separatist Oriented Movement

With a growing sense of the inadequacies of the Federal Government and of white liberals, many blacks became increasingly aware of what they labeled "institutionalized racism." With this awareness, the civil rights movement began to change its frame of reference, tactics, and goals. As early
as 1964, Malcolm X expressed the revolutionary nature of the growing frustration among urban blacks.

This is a real revolution. Revolution is always based on land. Revolution is never based on begging somebody for an integrated cup of coffee. Revolutions are never based upon love-your-enemy and pray-for-those-who-spitefully-love-you. And revolutions are not waged singing "We Shall Overcome." Revolutions are based upon bloodshed. Revolutions are never compromising. Revolutions are never based upon any kind of tokenism and whatsoever. Revolutions overturn systems. And there is no system on this earth which has proven itself more corrupt, more criminal, than this system that in 1964 still colonizes 22 million African-Americans, still enslaves 22 million African-Americans (16, p. 241).

Malcolm X's comment demonstrates not only the growing revolutionary rhetoric of the civil rights movements but also a philosophical link to the revolutionary rhetoric of the Third World. As the failures of the power structure became more prominent in the minds of black civil rights activists, so too did their identification with the revolutionary spirit of the oppressed people of the underdeveloped nations who had struggled against their "colonial oppressors."

As the black activists began to call into question the intentions of the Federal Government and their "supposed" white allies in a domestic and racial context, they also began to examine the growing conflict over American involvement in Vietnam's War. The dilemma of American foreign policy fitted easily into the concept of institutionalized
racism. The parallels between the struggle of the "colored" people of Southeast Asia had obvious implications for the American black man. In 1966, SNCC issued the following statement concerning the War in Vietnam:

We believe the United States Government has been deceptive in claims of concern for the freedom of the Vietnamese people, just as the government has been 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.

We of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee have been involved in the black people's struggle for liberation and self-determination in this country for the past five years. Our work, particularly in the South, taught us that the United States Government has never guaranteed the freedom of oppressed citizens and is not yet truly determined to end the rule of terror and oppression within its own borders (19, p. 137).

The relationship of the struggle of the Negro in the United States and the anticolonialism revolutions of the Third World was not a new concept to black militants. Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. DuBois had sought a common culture and heritage from the African continent for their movements of the 1920's and the 1930's. However, it was the successful revolutions in the underdeveloped nations of the 1950's and 1960's that provided the young black activists with an unparalleled sense of identity with cultures that had managed to overthrow white oppression.

In the wake of independence and the anticolonial revolts of the Third World, the black militants of America
could find nations that were ruled by nonwhites, nonwhites who had gained control by defeating the military and technological advantages of the developed nations (19, p. 139). The new revolutionary nationalism of the black activists was not the same type of nationalism that had been evident in Garveyism, or DuBois Pan-Africanism, or even the Nation of Islam. These older forms of black nationalism were based on black separation from white society either by exile to Africa or annexation of a part of the United States as a black nation.

The new revolutionary spirit that was emerging among many black activists was international in scope and dedicated to the overthrow of American "colonialism." Stokely Carmichael of SNCC stated in 1966,

> 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 far 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 is the same—a powerful few have been maintained and enriched at the expense of the power of the voiceless colored masses. This pattern must be broken. As its grip loosens here and around the world, the hopes of Black America become more realistic. For racism to die a totally different America must be born (11, p. 144).

The lessons of Third World revolutions were not only doctrinal and ideological, but also tactical. The Third World movement for independence against colonialism was victorious, not by legislation, nor by good intentions, but
due to the power of the oppressed people. The success of anticolonialist tactics was not wasted on the growing black militants. Violence was inherent in the revolutionary process of the oppressed, according to the theoretical master of the Algerian revolution, Frantz Fanon. According to Fanon, only through revolutionary violence against the oppressor could the oppressed be "rehabilitated in their own eyes and in the eyes of history" (6, p. 104). In the 1960's, many black militants found support for their thoughts in the growing student radicalism of the "New Left." These student radicals found their doctrinal heirs in the writings and actions of Castro, Guevara, Debray and Ho Chi Minh (14, p. 419). The New Left and black militancy shared a common heritage in their attempts to overthrow colonialism.

Many of the leaders of the New Left and student protest movements of the 1960's had been associated with the civil rights movement in the South and with the programs of the "War on Poverty" in the North. Many of these leaders had experienced the same type of disillusionment with the Federal Government and with the intentions of the "so-called" liberals as had the black activists. The New Left found its ideological and tactical focus in the same international and anticolonialist themes that many of the blacks had assumed (14, p. 417). Equally important, the New Left was composed of an intellectual elite of both blacks and whites who saw in the Vietnam War, the draft, college admissions policies,
and a host of other grievances, the reality of the powerlessness of youth. The New Left theorized that the capitalistic system exploited not only students, but also, and more inhumanely, blacks in America. It was the injustices done to black Americans by the established order that was the New Left's primary evidence for the call for either an immediate change or overthrow of the government (5, p. 319).

It was in the turmoil of college campuses in the mid-1960's that many young blacks became associated with radicalism. It was on these campuses that the young blacks and whites also found their first confrontations with the police. The police stood as a symbol of the establishment to the white student radical and to the black urban ghetto resident. In the violence of student protest and police counterviolence, the young radicals of both races found a common enemy to unite their ideology and strengthen their resolve (19, p. 105).

The goals of the New Left and black militancy soon became separate, first on the campuses and later nationwide. As an end to the War in Vietnam and students' rights became the focus of the New Left, "black power" became the central theme of the civil rights movement of the 1960's. Black activists soon began to demand their own organizations. Stokley Carmichael defined the concept "Black Power" in 1966:

It is the 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 racist institutions and values of society (3, p. 44).

The growing "separatist philosophy," of what has been labeled the Black Power Movement, led black activists to begin to doubt the commitment of white students to justice and equality (19, p. 111). The rhetoric of Black Power gave emphasis to the separatist demands of militant blacks. The rhetoric of Black Power, as it emerged from the previously discussed areas, was the specific framework from which the Black Panther Party found its values and beliefs.

Seeds Sown for a New Social Change Movement

The publication of Carmichael's book Black Power generated more interest in black separatism and the institutional racism of "White America." Carmichael became an increasingly articulate spokesman for the concept of Black Power that addressed itself to the special cultural and economic problems of the ghetto. The term "Black Power" is a product of Carmichael. It came to symbolize a broader movement and ideology than either Carmichael or SNCC, the organization which he led, was ever to represent. The phrase captured the growing fear of the whites and the increasing pride of the blacks. Carmichael and SNCC had originally used the term to describe the growing black political participation in Mississippi. With the outbreak of urban rioting in 1965, the term "Black Power" had shifted the ideological basis of the civil rights movement (11, p. 129). Blacks began to see themselves
in a different relationship to the social order. The values of black separatism and self-defense, as preached by Malcolm X, replaced the old values of integration, nonviolent resistance, and legal redress.

The black Americans' problems were attributed to more than laws or to some misguided whites perception of the black man, the problems were attributed to the entire "white-power structure." More importantly, the rhetoric of this new black separatist movement implied the complete overthrow or transformation of the social system. Stokley Carmichael stated in Havana,

> Our enemy is the Western imperialist society; our struggles are to overthrow the system which feeds itself and expands itself through economic and cultural exploitation of non-whites (14, p. 417).

Thus, the slogan "Black Power" symbolized the final break between the traditional middle-class liberal, who had supported the civil rights movement in its nonviolent era, and the revolutionary prospects of a new era. The advocates of Black Power no longer trusted the intentions of the whites, and equally as important, what they perceived to be a large number of former white supporters no longer trusted revolutionary and violent tendencies of Black Power (11, p. 132).

The rhetoric of violence, on the part of the advocates of Black Power, was based upon a climate which approved and encouraged violence by disillusioned blacks throughout the
nation. It was a violence of "self-defense," for black America and was perceived as an offensive violence by much of white America. The advocates of Black Power had seen the violence committed by whites in the South and by the Federal troops in the ghettos. The increasing violent militancy of young urban blacks was born of "black powerlessness" according to The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. The committee summarized this new violent mood among urban blacks:

Frustrated hopes are the residue of the unfulfilled expectations aroused by the great judicial and legislative victories of the civil rights movement and the dramatic struggle for equal rights in the South. A climate that tends toward approval and encouragement of violence as a form of protest has been created by white terrorism directed against nonviolent protest; by the open defiance of law and Federal authority by state and local officials resisting desegregation; and by some protest groups engaging in civil disobedience who turn their backs on nonviolence, go beyond the Constitutionally protected rights of petition and free assembly, and resort to violence to attempt to compel alteration of laws and policies with which they disagree. The frustrations of powerlessness have led some Negroes to the conviction that there is no effective alternative to violence as a means of achieving redress of grievances, and of "moving the system." These frustrations are reflected in alienation and hostility toward the institutions of law and government and the white society which controls them, and in the reach toward racial consciousness and solidarity reflected in the slogan "Black Power." A new mood has sprung up among Negroes, particularly among the young, in which self-esteem and enhanced racial pride are replacing apathy and submission to the "system." The police are not merely a "spark" factor. To some Negroes police have come to symbolize white power, white racism and white repression. And the fact is that many police do reflect and express these white attitudes. The atmosphere of hostility and cynicism is reinforced by a widespread belief among Negroes in the existence of police
brutality and in a "double standard" of justice and protection—one for Negroes and one for whites (18, p. 13).

This escalation to "violence" as a tactic was not a sudden occurrence. It had its roots in the nonviolent tactics of the Black Muslims and the preachings of Malcolm X. These early violent tactics, therefore, can be and were described as "self-defense" against the aggression of whites. Blacks had not only banded themselves together in slave insurrections before the Civil War, but had also formed collective defense groups during the race riots after and during the First World War. During the civil rights movement in the South during the 1950's and the 1960's, several black groups formed rifle clubs and self-defense groups to counter assaults by the Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens Councils. The failure of local law enforcement agencies to protect civil rights workers in the South gave justification for these black self-defense groups (19, pp. 150-51).

The same justification for self-defense was used to form armed self-defense groups in the North after the urban riots. In the North, it was not so much a matter of local law enforcement agencies failing to enforce the laws, but their use of the law to harass blacks that led to the formation of these protective organizations (19, p. 152). The conditions of the ghetto had historically led to a strained relationship between the police and the blacks. The growing
militance and protest of blacks in the Northern ghettos tended to place even more strain on the relations between the police and the blacks.

As the rhetoric and activities of the black militants continued and the growing disillusionment with the progress of nonviolent protest intensified, the seeds for a new specific social-change movement were sown. Amidst this "black power phase" of the civil rights movement, the Black Panthers were formed. Originally chartered as a self-defense group, the Black Panthers were established in 1966 in Oakland, California. Chapter III examines the leadership, ideology, and early activities of this organization. These factors, when placed within the rapidly changing context of the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's, testify to the potential of the organization to evolve into a new specific social-change movement in the United States.

Summary

As discussed in Chapter I, a general movement and the successes and failures of other specific social movements influence the emergence and rhetorical development of new specific social-change movements. For this reason, Chapter II has presented a brief history of the civil rights movement in the United States. It appears the general movement went through four phases: the transition from accommodation to protest; legal protest; nonviolent direct action; and the
black-power phase. It was during this last phase that there was a recognizable shift in the images that many blacks came to have to themselves in relation to the social order. Renewed emphasis was placed upon issues dealing with the problems of the urban-ghetto black, such as police brutality, unequal job opportunities, unfair housing practices, and de facto segregation. As these new values and issues emerged, the seeds were sown for a new social-change movement.

In the last phase of the general movement, blacks viewed the social order as a "network of groups and individuals bound together in superior-subordinate relationships." Any effort to direct change, therefore, required the mobilization and manipulation of power over others. This view came to be shared as many of those who had worked in the previous phases of the movement evaluated their efforts and the suffering that occurred during the nonviolent phase of the movement in relation to the relative successes they had seen. SNCC was one of the first organizations to recognize the need for a powerful stance. With the failures of the federal government to enforce civil rights legislation and the white backlash that poured increased violence and discrimination on black Americans, confidence was lost in the conventional means of effecting change. The rhetoric of the movement began to shift to a "power strategy" as Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and others, talked of the "racist power
structure" and encouraged blacks to "pick up the gun." At the same time, another group was gaining increased publicity under the leadership of Malcolm X. The Black Muslims struck at the heart of the urban-ghetto black, preaching a religion of separation from white America and defense against white violence. Thus, during the sixties, the movement moved toward militancy and toward "power" as a means of effecting the desired social changes. All of these occurrences greatly influenced the emergence and development of the Black Panther Party.

While the nonviolent direct-action phase of the movement was mainly stationed in the South, the new movement, "while nationwide in scope, was primarily centered in the black communities of the North and West, and was generally antagonistic to both local and federal governments" (19, p. 129). The membership of previous phases of the movement was mainly interracial, but the new movement attempted to reject white participation and seek primarily black organizations. The concepts of nonviolence were replaced by the rhetoric of self-defense and freedom by any means necessary. All of these characteristics of the new mood of black protest are crystallized, extended, ideologically developed, and rhetorically emphasized in the emergence and rhetorical choices of the Black Panther Party For Self-Defense.
In general, the changing nature of the civil rights movement, from black protest to black power, facilitated a new set of values for the urban black. Michael Lewis, in his article on the nature of urban protest, synthesized the basic and unique shift in the values of urban blacks which took place and contributed to the rhetorical choices of the Black Panther Party. He stated,

The swelling ranks of the urban Negroes have been caught up in a revolution of rising expectations. In the cities for the first time the Negro has come to view himself as a legitimate competitor for rewards which whites have traditionally monopolized. Seeing himself denied those opportunities and rewards which he recognizes as legitimately his, the urban Negro has reacted with increasing intensity (16, pp. 154-155).
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was founded in Oakland, California, in 1966. The name "Black Panther" was chosen because "the panther is reputed never to make an unprovoked attack but to defend itself ferociously whenever it is attacked" (3, p. 15). The name was directly copied from the "Black Power" phase of the movement, discussed in Chapter II. The "Black Panther" was originally "the emblem of the Lowndes County Freedom Party in Alabama, organized in 1965 by Stokely Carmichael" (3, p. 15). The panther had become a symbol of black militancy and was copied across the nation.

The "Black Power" phase of the movement influenced the emergence of the Panthers in many ways. The movement brought to the attention of the public new issues. There was a focusing of discontent on the numerous and complex problems of the urban-ghetto black. The rhetoric of Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and other militant spokesmen, moved the rhetorical strategies of the general movement toward a "power orientation." With this new mood of black protest, a new specific social-change movement, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, took form. This chapter focuses upon the early
rhetorical choices of the Party, its leadership, ideology, membership, and methods, as well as those forces which influenced rhetorical decision-making.

Chapter I outlined several sociorhetorical forces which are influential to the type of rhetorical form a movement elects. Chapter II dealt with one of those forces, the nature of the general movement. The other force which affects the rhetorical form of a movement is the environment out of which the movement emerges. Secondly, Chapter I illustrated two basic rhetorical forms a movement may elect, a power strategy or an attitude strategy. It was stressed that the choice of either of these strategies is moved forward and expressed in the movement's rhetorical development of ideology, leadership, membership, and rhetorical methods. This chapter discusses each of these factors in relationship to the emergence and early development of the Party. Five areas are examined: (1) The environment of Oakland, California; (2) The life experiences of early Party founders; (3) The initial ideology of the Party; (4) The membership and methods of an emerging movement; and (5) The early rhetorical form of the Party. Many of these areas have overlapped in the discussion which follows. This is because, in reality, a social movement does not develop each area separately. Therefore, while categorically discussing each of these areas, the rhetorical development of the Party was
dynamic and all of these factors interracted to produce a specific social-change movement.

The Environment of Oakland, California

Michael Lewis stated, "In order to fathom the source of urban protest, one has to have an appreciation of the profound disenchantment which has emerged among Negroes as a product of their sensitivity to the disparity between promise and reality in the city" (4, p. 149). This statement emphasizes the necessity of understanding the environment out of which the Black Panther Party emerged. It was from this environment that early Party founders, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, formed their perception of the social order and decided upon what steps should be taken to improve their relationship to that order. It was also important to the development of the Panthers that Oakland, California, was representative of the social, political, and economic environment of other cities across the nation, cities where blacks had become increasingly disenchanted with their political powerlessness, their economic disparity, and the conditions of ghetto life. Many black-urban residents, especially the young, were psychologically prepared for a more militant stance by these conditions and by the early rhetoric of black power.

The Black Panther Party was conceived in what has been described as a "depressing industrial slum on the eastern
shore of San Francisco," Oakland, California (12, p. 94).

Don A. Schanche, in his book *The Panther's Paradox: A Liberal's Dilemma*, presented a capsule characterization of Oakland as the city that (1) had a definite racist power structure, (2) had never had a major race riot, and (3) had been the birthplace of the Black Panther Party (12, p. 98). The interrelationship of the above factors may appear rather inconsistent to the development of a new specific social-change movement. However, the increasing significance of the physical environment to the development of the Party is shown by an in-depth study of the geographic and demographic nature of Oakland, California.

Floyd Hunter of the Social Science Research and Development Corporation studied Oakland, California, in 1967-68, under a contract with the United States Department of Commerce. His study revealed that one-third of the population, 360,000, were black, red, or brown. This population, he asserts, was systematically excluded, geographically and politically, from the benefits of the city's economic development. Mr. Hunter's study concluded,

1. There is an unrestricted open arms policy toward business and industrial development in the minority housing area. Due to this, commercial and industrial establishments have been able to encroach with impunity on living areas, so that the resulting smoke and grime and industrial stink became characteristic of the community.

2. A systematic study of the power structure found almost all corporation executives in the position of community leadership. The priority of the funds were used in redeveloping historical building sites.
3. The status-quo in Oakland, California, is vigorously maintained. The city's capital, composed of a few powerful men, maintains and directs the police force, specific economic development, and community planning (12, pp. 96-97).

The geographic isolation or defacto-segregation in Oakland has been more vividly depicted through a subjective description of the city's minority housing:

Four major automobile freeways cast a shadow of affluent indifference on mile after mile of slum blocks crowding three sides of Oakland's downtown business area. Industrial sites grow helter-skelter like mushrooms amid dark neighborhoods of deteriorating turn of the century bungalows (12, p. 100).

Michael J. Arlen, in his book *An American Verdict*, reminds those removed from the Oakland of the sixties that "Oakland which now has those flashy athletic teams on TV was not so long ago known as one of the toughest cities in the country, full of slums and out-of-work blacks, and with a tough police force" (1, p. 95). The police force in Oakland, as well as the environmental factors previously discussed, have been clearly reflected in the ideology and early activities of the Party, discussed later in the chapter.

The main importance of Hunter's study and Arlen's overall view of Oakland in the sixties, lies in their insight into how the blacks of an urban ghetto perceived the institutions of America, and, in turn, evaluated the effectiveness of the general civil rights movement. Schanche provides an oblique glimpse into the relationship of the environment to the forming of the Panthers' perception of the social order:
Looking out at the institutions from the misery of Oakland's ghettos one sees a different vision and it is not surprising that the conditions of this wretched city led the Black Panthers to formulate such devastating concepts as these:

The Negro in America: A subjugated, colonial people diffused throughout a land which 360 years ago enslaved them; lacking as colonials always lack, the power to order their own lives, their economy, their schools, their business institutions, their foreign relations or even their own criminals; at war, as colonials always remain at war, with their conquerors.

The Police: An Army of Occupation, recruited from the lowest segments of the imperial white society, deployed throughout the fragmented black colony, not to provide public safety within the ghetto but to keep the lid on it, to protect the affluent white colonialists outside of the ghetto from the poor blacks within it.

Firearms: The instrument of power, the phallus with which emasculated black man will regain his manhood and throw off the colonialist masters.

Established Political Parties: Manipulative instruments of the white colonialist establishment, elaborately constructed to give the appearance of equal representation, but in fact allowing neither representation nor power to anyone outside the white power structure (12, pp. 98-99).

Therefore, when the environment of Oakland, California, is viewed within the context of the changing nature of the civil rights movement, a setting ripe for the development of a new specific social-change movement can be seen. Furthermore, the beliefs and values which were shared by the Panthers can better be understood in relationship to the environment through which their perceptions of the social order were formed. Finally, the characteristics of Oakland's environment, shared by other urban areas across the country, provided the movement with potential for growth and
development. As stated in Chapter I, "social movements are built upon shared beliefs." The environment of Oakland, California, establishes a basis for the beliefs which came to be shared by the Black Panther Party and the rhetorical decisions which were made.

The Life Experiences of Early Party Founders

Chapter I established that the development of a social movement and the selection of rhetorical strategies is greatly influenced by the background and experiences of those who are seeking change in the social order. The leadership's view of the social order is of primary importance to the early election of rhetorical form. Two young blacks, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, are credited with the founding and early leadership of the Party. They can be identified as leaders because they planned and directed the activities of the Party, served as spokesmen for the movement, and drew a following which they attempted to mold and shape around the beliefs of the Party. However, it should be stressed that Huey P. Newton received acclaim as being the "true leader and spokesman of the Party, largely responsible for its ideological make-up and activities" (13, p. 4). A brief biographical sketch of the founders provides several insights into the influences on their view of the social order and the factors which determined the rhetorical form the Party assumed.
Huey P. Newton was the last of seven children. He was born in Oak Grove, Louisiana, and his father, who was a sharecropper and Baptist minister, was supposedly almost lynched several times for talking back to white bosses (5, p. 73). Reverend Walter Newton, Huey's father, was seeking a better life for his family through the Populist promises of the former infamous governor of Louisiana, Huey P. Long. However, in 1935, with the death of Long, the Newtons lost that hope and in 1944 were drawn to Oakland, California, by the Government's advertisement of wartime jobs for unskilled laborers.

Huey was two-years old when the family moved to Oakland. The Newton's move did not prove to be as fulfilling as had been anticipated. Reverend Newton was able to find work as an Oakland streetcleaner and continued as a part-time minister (12, p. 140). The family remained close and much stress was placed on education as a means of breaking the mold of poverty. Yet, it seemed the young Newton encountered difficulties with the educational system from the first grade onward. In grade school, he recalls throwing a shoe at one of his teachers after she hit him over the head for dumping sand from his shoe into the wastebasket (5, p. 74). Newton, reflecting on his years in the Oakland slum schools, stated,

I spent most of my time standing outside the classroom door because of fights with my instructors. I found class humiliating and because my father had taught me to stand up for myself, I would always speak up or cause a disturbance (5, p. 74).
Newton was suspended from school approximately thirty-eight times (5, p. 74). He was aware at a very early age of the image that blacks were given in society and by the schools. He recalled the anger he felt when his teachers would read the story of Little Black Sambo, "Whites had the story of Sleeping Beauty and the glorious knight rescuing her. Little Black Sambo wasn't glorious or courageous at all" (5, p. 75). Newton continued his war with the educational system through grade school. At age eleven, he started breaking open parking meters and "at age fourteen was arrested for gun possession and kept in juvenile hall for a month" (5, p. 75).

During high school, he became increasingly frustrated with the educational institution. He was shunted off into shop courses and automobile mechanics (when he didn't even have a car), while continually announcing he wanted to go to college. Newton recalled, in one of his courtroom testimonies, how humiliated he had been when he scored 50, idiot level, on a Stanford Benet intelligence test and "dull level" on some other standardized test. When he was still in high school, he continually sought new experiences. He would get on his bicycle and travel all around Oakland. He became increasingly hostile as he observed the two sides of Oakland. The beautiful homes on the hillside in contrast to the slums of Oakland's minority housing area seemed
inconsistent with the type of America he had heard about during school (12, p. 139).

After graduation from Oakland Technical High School, he admitted his inability to read or write. He blamed the system, which he said was "responsible for approximately eighty-five percent of his fellow classmates not being able to read or write efficiently when they too graduated" (5, p. 75). However, Newton was determined to show the system he was "college material" (5, p. 75). He taught himself to read and write. The first book he read was *Plato's Republic*. Newton said, "I read the book about five times before I could read it and understand it" (5, p. 74). After this encounter with literacy, Newton found reading easy, and in 1959, he entered Oakland City (now Merritt) College (5, p. 75).

While at college, Newton became associated with Donald Warden, head of an Afro-American Association. He also befriended members of a socialist labor party (3, p. 15). In 1961, he became acquainted with the Black Muslims. The influence of this movement greatly affected Newton's concept of the black man's struggle for justice and equality. He stated, "Malcolm X was the first political person in this country I really identified with. If he had lived and had not been purged, I probably would have joined the Muslims" (3, p. 16). Since it was the philosophy that blacks ought to defend themselves with arms when attacked by the police,
which became one of the original points in the program of the Black Panther Party, the influence of Malcolm X should not be underestimated.

Newton seemed to be continually engaged in some type of "criminal activity." "When he wasn't going to class, he was spending his spare time burglarizing homes in Berkeley, passing forged checks, engaging in credit card hustling, and other activities, for which he was caught but was never tried for a lack of evidence" (5, p. 76). In 1965, Newton served his first prison term for assault with a deadly weapon—a steak knife. Newton claimed it was an act of self-defense and that the event supposedly stemmed from an argument over the term "Afro-American." Nevertheless, he served an eight-month prison sentence and was released in 1965 on three-years probation (5, p. 77).

After his prison term, Newton returned to college at Merritt. His early connection with black organizations and with Bobby Seale occurred when the Soul Students Advisory Council, "which fought for the rights of Black students at Merritt" was formed. It was at this point that Bobby G. Seale became an important part of Newton's life as well as in the formation of the Black Panther Party.

Bobby G. Seale, who was born in Dallas, Texas, in 1936, was a "musician, carpenter, journeyman sheet metal mechanic and a mechanical draftsman" (3, p. 15). He moved with his
family to California and was graduated from Oakland High School after a stint in the Air Force. (3, p. 15). Seale and Newton became partners in many activities. They both worked together at the North Oakland Poverty Center, as well as with the Afro-American Association. However, they became disillusioned after one year with the groups' emphasis on "cultural nationalism" and the middle-class composition of the group. Foner further explained this disillusionment with the organizations:

Cultural nationalists see the white man as the oppressor, and make no distinction between racist whites and nonracist whites. They also emphasize that a black man cannot be the enemy of the black people. Apart from questioning the validity of this thesis, Newton and Seale were irritated by the fact that the cultural nationalists mainly met and talked and did nothing concrete to end the oppression in the black ghetto (3, p. 15).

The foundation for the Party stemmed, to a great extent, from Newton's life experiences and his hostility and bitterness toward the "white power" ruling elite, whether the elite was in the form of a grade-school teacher, a policeman, or an entire system of government. Everything Newton read, learned, and encountered after his elementary and secondary school experiences served to reinforce his attitudes. Newton and Seale associated with Socialist Labour Party members and "read and reread Malcolm X and Frantz Fanon" (3, p. 15). From these black revolutionaries, Seale and Newton began shaping doctrinal concepts which served as the philosophical
basis of the Party. "Later, they were to read and study the writings of Marx, Engles, Lenin, Mao Tse-Tung, Ho Chi Minh, and Che Guevara" (3, p. 15). Foner best summarizes the impact that revolutionary thinkers had upon shaping the frame of reference through which Newton and Seale came to view society and their role as agents of change:

Modeling themselves on Malcolm's philosophy—Newton viewed himself as Malcolm's heir and the Black Panther Party as the successor to his Organization of Afro-American Unity—the founders of the BPP expressed belief in black-nationalism and black culture, but they did not believe either would lead to black liberation.

It was the martyred Malcolm X's emphasis on self-defense and his effort to lead the struggle for freedom by "any means necessary" that most deeply impressed Newton and Seale, and they frequently quoted his famous statement: "We should be peaceful, law-abiding, but the time has come to fight back in self-defense whenever and wherever the black man is being unjustly and unlawfully attacked. If the government thinks I am wrong for saying this, then let the government start doing its job." Newton and Seale read and reviewed Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth, and they were impressed by the black psychiatrist's thesis that revolutionary violence was necessary in order for the oppressed to get the oppressors' boot off their neck and that it was essential in order to achieve the transformation or rebirth of the black personality. By fighting back, the black man would assert his dignity as a man (3, p. 16).

Thus, the combined life experiences of Newton and Seale had fostered a perception of man as acting on the basis of power, legitimate or coercive. When the race riots of 1966 occurred in several major cities across the United States, the city of Oakland began to escalate its "militant" hand in controlling the black ghetto areas of Oakland. Newton and
Seale responded in a manner consistent with their view of the social order. Reports of unnecessary police brutality, extra-legal arrests, and the recruitment of rural white policemen from Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, created the explosive situation from which early Party leadership emerged (12, p. 72).

Newton and Seale, in observing the excessive militancy of Oakland police, felt the situation deserved or required a militant response. "We wanted to show that we didn't have to tolerate police abuse, that the black community would provide its own security, following the local laws and ordinances and the ordinances of the California Penal Code" (5, p. 74). Therefore, Newton, as a prelaw student, had carefully researched the code and found that it was perfectly legal for a citizen to carry a loaded, unconcealed gun. In order to purchase these guns, Newton and Seale sold copies of Chairman Mao's Little Red Book for a dollar apiece, when they had bought them for twenty-three cents apiece. The guns were purchased, and the Panthers, initially composed of two members--Bobby Seale and Huey Newton--cruised the streets of Oakland's ghetto, lawbook and rifle in hand. They advised young blacks being stopped or arrested by police of their "constitutional rights."

Newton and Seale, influenced by their readings and their work experience within Oakland, took action against what they considered "exploitation of black citizens by the Oakland
police" (12, p. 80). The wall between the black-ghetto community and the white community of Oakland had already been built by de facto segregation. There was also an obvious lack of concern on the part of the "power structure" to improve the conditions of Oakland's slum districts. The intensity of militant-black rhetoric and the relative success of "black power" in focusing attention on the problems of the urban black had shifted the values of many urban residents, such as Newton and Seale, who felt they should and could effect change in the social order.

Chapter I suggested that there are three distinct categories of leadership: "men of words," "fanatics," and "men of action." Malcolm X, Stokley Carmichael, and other black revolutionaries had prepared the ground for Newton and Seale by their words. It appears that Newton and Seale, in the embryonic stage of the movement, were the fanatics and the men of action. Creating a "sense of liberation from a form of petty existence," which Newton and Seale felt they had known, the "gun" became a symbol of status and power. Two black men from the ghetto of Oakland challenging the authority of the white Oakland police force could certainly be viewed as the actions of "fanatics." They were also "men of action." Newton and Seale had carefully planned and administered their "nightly justice patrols." According to McLaughlin, one of the early rhetorical stages of a movement is the "agitative stage" where leaders must arouse people
and make recruiting possible, as well as give direction to impulses and feelings through ideas, suggestions, and promises. At this point in the discussion of the early rhetorical choices of the movement, the "agitative stage" was merely beginning. However, Newton and Seale had taken the first step. They attempted to give direction to impulses and feelings through action. The necessity of an ideology to give their actions justification, direction, weapons to attack, weapons to defend, and inspiration and hope became a crucial concern of the emerging movement.

The Initial Ideology of the Party

Chapter I presented the importance of an ideology to the rhetorical development of a specific social-change movement. The ideology of a movement consists of the integrated assertions, theories, and aims constituting a politico-social program. It provides the movement with direction and expresses the values and beliefs of those desiring to effect change in the system. As the group of young lawyers grew and their intervention in police work increased to the use of their own squad cars for the nightly justice patrols, the group became more solidified and determined to preach the gospel of "self-defense." The ideology of the movement was a logical extension of their early activity, their perception of the social order, and the values and beliefs which had
come to be shared by many young ghetto blacks. Bobby Seale explained:

The Black Panther Party began when Huey and I outlined the basic political desires and needs and put them into the form of a platform and program with ten points of "What We Want" and ten of "What We Believe." Huey and I sat there in the Poverty Office where we worked, one night in October 1966, and began a revolutionary political party, knowing that the program was not just something we had thought up. The program was an outline of the basic political desires and needs that went back into the history of Black people suffering under the exploitative oppression by the greedy, vicious, capitalistic, ruling class of America. The Platform and Program is nothing more than the 400-year old crying demands of us Black Americans. They are basic demands of "What We Want" and "What We Believe" (13, p. 4).

"Between October 1 and October 15, 1966, in North Oakland, California, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale prepared the following ten-point platform and program of the Black Panther Party" (3, p. 1). While Seale made some suggestions, the platform and program were actually written by Newton.

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.
We believe that black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.

2. We want full employment for our people.
We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if white American businessmen will not give full employment, then the means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. We want an end to the robbery by the white man of our Black Community.
We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules was
promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The Germans are now aiding the Jews in Israel for the genocide of the Jewish people. The Germans murdered six million Jews. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million black people; therefore, we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.

4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.
We believe that if the white landlords will not give decent housing to our black community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that our community, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for its people.

5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.
We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else.

6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.
We believe that black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.

7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of black people.
We believe we can end police brutality in our black community by organizing black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.
We believe that all black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.
9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States. We believe that the courts should follow the United States Constitution so that black people will receive fair trials. The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives a man a right to be tried by his peer group. A peer is a person from a similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical, and racial background. To do this the court will be forced to select a jury from the black community from which the black defendant came. We have been, and are being tried by all-white juries that have no understanding of the "average reasoning man" of the black community.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

THAT, TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS, GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED; THAT, WHENEVER ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT BECOMES DESTRUCTIVE OF THESE ENDS, IT IS THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO ALTER OR TO ABOLISH IT, AND TO INSTITUTE A NEW GOVERNMENT, LAYING ITS FOUNDATION ON SUCH PRINCIPLES, AND ORGANIZING ITS POWERS IN SUCH FORM, AS TO THEM SHALL SEEM MOST LIKELY TO EFFECT THEIR SAFETY AND HAPPINESS. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. BUT WHEN A LONG TRAIN OF
ABUSES AND USURPATIONS, PURSUING INvariably THE SAME OBJECT, EVINces A DESIGN TO REDUCE THEM UNDER ABSOLute DESPOTISM, IT IS THEIR RIGHT, IT IS THEIR DUTY, TO THROW OFF SUCH GOVERNMENT, AND TO PROVIDE NEW GUARDS FOR THEIR FUTURE SECURITY (5, pp. 2-4).

According to Seale, the ten-point platform and program was the beginning of a revolutionary political party. However, while the methods they selected to express their ideological stance may have been labeled revolutionary by the Panthers themselves and by the public, the platform and program are not considered "revolutionary." Ross Baker, chairman of the Department of Political Science, Rutgers University, in his article "Panthers Outgrow Their Rhetoric," contended,

The guiding principles of the Panthers, their ten-point program of October 1966, is a model of liberal, incremental and reformist desiderata . . . a program which demands community power, full employment, an end to racial exploitation, decent housing and education; which condemns inequalities in the draft and police brutality; calls for a jury of one's peers and for a United Nations referendum on the preferences of the black community, and culminates with an invocation of the Declaration of Independence is certainly in the best traditions of mainstream dissent in America (2, p. 50).

Within the context of revolutionary ideology, which insists upon abolition of property, calls for a dictatorship of the proletariat, and demands the overthrow of the government, the Panther platform and program did not appear "revolutionary." Yet, as discussed in Chapter I, the methods a movement selects to promulgate its ideology and the public's interpretation of those methods, largely determine the character of
the movement and therefore the ideological basis from which it develops. The platform and program of the Panthers provided the Party with a wide latitude for rhetorical decisions. The ideological base of the Party was ambiguous enough to allow those who developed it to shift from one doctrinal position to another.\(^1\) Schanche expressed the unusual nature of the Panther's ideology. He stated,

The Black Panther Party doctrine, ineptly constructed, borrows selectively from Mao (power of the gun), Che (death with honor, many Vietnams), Karl Marx (death to capitalism), Ho Chi Minh (feed on the brutality of the occupying army), Al Fatah (terrorize, disrupt, destroy), and Bakuin (all revolutionaries are doomed) (12, p. 9).

However, the ideology of the Panthers did set it apart from other civil rights organizations and provided the movement with a unique base from which to further develop the ideology through its rhetorical methods. Also, the platform and program of the Panthers provided the movement with direction, a means of justifying its activities, as well as hope and inspiration for an improved existence for urban-ghetto blacks across the nation.

The Membership and Methods of an Emerging Movement

Because the methods of a movement directly influence the type of membership a movement develops, this section

---

\(^1\) It has been illustrated in later chapters how the platform and program of the Panthers remained unchanged throughout the course of the movement. It was used to justify a black nationalist philosophy, a socialist philosophy, and a communist philosophy.
examines the methods of the Panthers in relationship to those who became participants in the movement.

The platform and program of the Panthers were a product of the conditions of Oakland, the life experiences of Newton and Seale, as well as the general mood of black protest across the nation. Herbert W. Simons, in his article "Patterns of Persuasion in the Civil Rights Struggle" written in 1967, stressed the readiness of Negro audiences to accept militant leadership. He stated,

Negroes are at present unwilling to rely on the good will and compassion of whites. . . . In the face of Negro impatience and hostility, a segment of the black leadership is convinced that psychological proximity to whites is political suicide. They argue that the more moderate and peaceful the leader's appeals, the more likely he is to find himself a leader without a following. . . . Cabinet member Robert C. Weaver had lamented that "today, a publicized spokesman may be the individual who can devise the most militant cry and the leader one who can articulate the most far-out position" (14, p. 26).

The platform and program of the Panthers, as well as their militant position, drew immediate respect and support from the black community of Oakland. The activity of "armed patrols" caught the eye of other ghetto blacks. Bobby Hutton, then fifteen, "handled the money so well, he was appointed Party Treasurer" (12, p. 65). He was joined by David Hilliard, Charles Bursey, and a few others, mostly fourteen and fifteen-year olds, who made up the early membership of the Party. The motivation for joining the Party was in part a fulfilling of emotional needs. Don A. Schanche compared
the young membership of the Panthers to the Boy Scouts of America. He stated,

The analogy may seem ludicrous, but it is apt, because while the goals of the good Scouts and the Black Panthers are appallingly disparate, the raw material in which they are implanted is not: little kids, for the most part, indoctrinated in the flush of fraternity and solidarity to suspend critical judgment in the areas that are vital to the greater organization and the ideals of its leaders (12, p. 7).

Certainly the Black Panther Party provided its young members with a feeling of respect and belonging. They had enthusiasm for the leadership and stood in awe when Newton and Seale challenged the authority of the "power structure."

The early rhetorical methods of the Party stemmed directly from point No. 7 of the program: "We want an end to police brutality and the murder of black people." The Party established a system of patrol cars, completely legal, carrying both guns and law books. The Panthers trailed police cars through the slums of Oakland and whenever an individual or group of blacks were stopped by the police, the Panthers would stand the legal distance and shout to the Blacks their constitutional rights (12, p. 66). This activity was a nonverbal rhetorical strategy of confrontation, directly challenging the authority of the police.

Huey P. Newton explained the basis and perceived effectiveness of this strategy. He stated,

Our strategy was based on a consistent ideology, which helped us to understand the conditions around us. We knew that the law was not prepared for what
we were doing and policemen were so shocked that they didn't know what to do. We saw that the people felt a new pride and strength because of the example we set for them; and they began to look toward the vehicle we were building for answers (10, p. 45).

The "gun" became a rhetorical tool; it was a symbol and served two referential functions: (1) For the black community--"The impact on black crowds was electric; they weren't used to seeing a black man refuse to submit to a white policeman, let alone jack a round of ammunition into the firing chamber of an M-1, as Newton did once in the face of a squad of officers who then backed off and docilely went away"(5, p. 18). (2) To the police and the white community--The "gun" became a different symbol. Viewed within the context of the widely publicized statements of black radicals and the recent ghetto uprisings, a group of ghetto blacks with guns meant the equivalent of a group of hoodlums aimed at inciting another riot.

Martin Oppenheimer, in his book The Urban Guerrilla, suggested that "armed defense against the police usually provokes a more vigorous and repressive policy on the part of the establishment" (11, p. 83). However, in the early development of the Party, the rhetoric of control was almost nil. Perhaps this was because the Panthers were not using an "illegitimate" rhetorical method. Newton had gone to great lengths to establish the "relative legitimacy" of his coercive and confrontive strategy. "We are operating within
the law as defined by the gun regulations of the state and the constitutional right to bear arms" (12, p. 68). The police may have also anticipated that any attack on the Panthers could ignite another costly riot in the ghetto.

The rhetorical methods of the Panthers were promulgating a doctrinal position of "self-defense." The strategy of promulgation is employed to win support for the movement's cause and disposition. The relative success of this strategy was documented by later studies which stated, "The brutality and harassment directed against black men and women tapered off in Oakland during the later part of 1966" (3, p. 18). Many blacks began to see the Panthers as a potent force in protecting their community. Because the semi-effectiveness of the new organization had spread rapidly during 1966, the Panthers were provided with an opportunity to employ more rhetorical methods and increase their membership. The "agitative stage" of a movement, where leaders must arouse people and make recruiting possible, as well as give direction to impulses and feelings through ideas, suggestions, and promises, was moved forward during early 1967.

Denzil Dowell, a black youth living in North Richmond, California, had been shot and killed by the police. "The official report of the police contradicted the story of dozens of black eyewitnesses, who claimed the event was a deliberate slaying" (3, p. 18). The Dowell family called in
the Panthers to investigate, and the Party decided to hold a street-corner rally in the neighborhood to expose the facts of the slaying and promote their doctrine of self-defense (3, p. 18). The Panthers made two important rhetorical choices. The rhetorical strategy of *escalation*, discussed in Chapter I, was employed by widely publicizing the meeting. Assured that the police would appear to either stop the meeting, fearing it would escalate into mob violence, or, at least, attempt to stand guard, the Panthers decided to counter the possible police tactics by stationing their own guards around the meeting site.

Hundreds of black people turned out for the rally, many carrying their own weapons. The police did come and with the intent of stopping the rally. However, as the police approached the crowd, a nonverbal strategy of *confrontation* was employed. The Panther guards lifted their guns into firing position, and "the police quickly turned away, except for one, caught in the middle of the crowd, who sat quietly and listened to the speeches" (3, p. 18). Nonverbally, the Panthers had concretely illustrated the effectiveness of "armed self-defense" for the black community. More importantly, the Panthers had demonstrated the organization's relative superiority over that of the "establishment," which Simons contended was a prerequisite for the use of coercive persuasion (see Chapter I). Furthermore, the fact that the
police did appear served to substantiate the Panthers' position that the police were racist agents of an inherently "oppressive" power structure, attempting to deter justice.

In the Dowell episode, the Panthers' actions had placed the police in a rhetorical dilemma. If the police turned away and did not break up the rally, then the effectiveness of "picking up the gun" was substantiated. On the other hand, if the police forced a showdown with the armed Panther members, they were acting on innocent agencies of a self-defense nature, who were carrying guns within the law. The police would be resorting to violent suppression and showing their "true colors." In either case, the actions of the police could only reinforce the Panthers' rhetoric.

Verbally, the Panthers continued to reinforce their beliefs and promulgate the doctrine of self-defense. Several Panthers addressed the crowd at the Dowell rally, explaining the Party's program and how it would attempt to meet the needs of the black community. Then Huey P. Newton spoke:

The masses of people want peace. The masses of people do not want war. The Black Panther Party advocates the abolition of war. But at the same time, we realize that the only way you can get rid of war, many times, is through war. Therefore, the only way you can get rid of guns is to get rid of the guns of the oppressor. The people must be able to pick up guns, to defend themselves² (3, p. 18).

²This statement comes directly from Chairman Mao's Little Red Book where he explains the paradox of revolutionary action.
At that point, a police helicopter began to buzz over the crowd. Newton pointed up and shouted, "and always remember that the spirit of the people is greater than man's technology" (3, p. 18). The crowds cheered and hundreds signed up to work for the Party that day (3, p. 18).

The early membership and rhetorical methods of the Black Panther Party during 1966 and the early part of 1967 were characteristic of an emerging social movement. Having formed an ideology and developed some organization structure, through the leadership of Newton and Seale, the Party was seeking to draw a following and substantiate the desirability of the movement. The rhetorical methods of promulgation, solidification, and escalation-confrontation were intertwined in the movement's attempt to give direction to the impulses and feelings of the black-ghetto community. Polarization was not a manifest intention of the early rhetorical choices of the movement. The black community of Oakland was already aware of the "white racist power structure." The rhetoric of the Panthers, while exploiting flag issues, merely reinforced and intensified antagonisms which were already present. For the white community, the rhetoric of the Panthers also reinforced their view of ghetto blacks. The statement of an Oakland policeman most accurately illustrated the "establishment's" feelings toward the Panthers: "They ain't nothin' but mean and vicious niggers" (6, p. 123).
Summary: The Early Rhetorical Form of the Party

In Chapter I, Richard Walton suggested that a movement may elect one of two rhetorical forms: a power strategy or an attitude strategy. It was pointed out that the use of either or both strategies is dependent upon the leadership's view of the social order and the social order itself. The rhetorical form a movement elects is expressed and carried forward through the leadership, ideology, membership, and methods of the movement.

In analyzing the rhetorical form of the B.P.P., it seems apparent that the movement elected a "power strategy." Newton and Seale's perception of the social order did not accept man as rational and acting on the basis of the "good" of all concerned. Phrases such as "All Power to the People" were coined as a means of expressing their orientation. Newton reinforced the Party's underlying perception of the social order which guided its rhetorical choices. He stated, "When we coined the expression 'All Power to the People,' we had in mind emphasizing the word 'Power,' for we recognize that the will to power is the basic drive of man" (7, p. 4). Demonstrating the ability of the Party to provide for the welfare of the black community was a prime motivation for their early rhetorical choices. The "power strategy" was used to concretely illustrate their ability. The "armed-defense" strategy was a power confrontation which was designed to win the support of the community. Newton stated,
The original vision of the Party was to develop a lifeline to the people by serving their needs and defending them against their oppressors, who come to the community in many forms, from armed police to capitalist exploiters. We knew that this strategy would raise the consciousness of the people and also give us their support (10, p. 45).

A distinguishing characteristic of the power strategy is the stressing of differences between the two groups in conflict. The Panthers built clear boundaries through their rhetoric between the groups in conflict. The two groups were the "people," representing the oppressed masses of blacks in the ghetto, and the "racist white power structure," including the police, the federal government, and any member of society who supported their power to decision-making. Bipolarization of sentiment was obviously intended by the rhetorical choices of the Panthers. In early 1967, Newton dramatically sought to demonstrate the necessity of separation from the "white power structure." He stated,

Black people have begged, prayed, petitioned, demonstrated and everything else to get the racist power structure of America to right the wrongs which have historically been perpetrated against Black people. All of these efforts have been answered by more repression, deceit, and hypocrisy. As the aggression of the racist American government escalates in Vietnam, the police agencies of America escalate the repression of Black people throughout the ghettos of America. Vicious police dogs, cattle prods and

---

3In 1966, the Party thought primarily of themselves as "black nationalist." While there was not any direct statement outlawing all whites from joining or supporting the movement, the statements made were mainly directed toward blacks. Newton stated, "In 1966 we called our Party a Black Nationalist Party because we thought nationhood was the answer"(11, p. 26).
increased patrols have become familiar sights in Black communities. City Hall turns a deaf ear to the pleas of Black people for relief from this increasing terror (9, p. 2).

Walton also contended that the adherents of a power strategy will emphasize their ability to coerce. Verbally and nonverbally the leadership of the movement generated early rhetorical messages which established their willingness to use coercive force, their capacity to use coercive force, the legitimacy of their coercive force, and the desirability of the movement's choice. The Party's willingness to use coercive force was demonstrated nonverbally through their confrontation with Oakland police. Verbally, the speeches of Party members sought to demonstrate the willingness of blacks to "pick up the gun."

A people who have suffered so much for so long at the hands of a racist society, must draw the line somewhere. We believe that the Black communities of America must rise up as one man to halt the progression of a trend that leads inevitably to their total destruction (3, p. 41).4

The movement's capacity to use coercive force was only partially shown. Their confrontation with police and the supposed "backing away" of the policemen suggested a relative capacity of the organization to use coercive force. The legitimacy of their coercive persuasion was justified by the actions of the "white racist power structure" and the history of the black man's struggle in America.

The ideology of the movement served as a major rhetorical vehicle for legitimizing the coercive persuasion of the organization as well as suggesting the Party would use coercive persuasion. The "10 point" platform and program touched upon numerous grievances of black America, such as poor housing, unfair judicial practices, prison conditions, and police brutality. The Constitution of the United States provided a justification, as well as a rationale, for the demands the Panthers made on the government of the United States. While some have labeled the program and platform as reform in nature, the "unreasonableness" of some of the demands and the phrase that these demands should be met "by any means necessary" were interpreted by some as a call for revolution. The exact nature of the methods to be used to effect the desired changes was not made clear. However, it is certain that negotiation, litigation, and conventional political methods for effecting change in the social order were not considered as "available means of persuasion." Demands for an overt aggressive attack on the power structure, as a means of effecting the desired change, was supplanted by the "defense" philosophy of the organization. However, in Newton's article "The Correct Handling of a Revolution" written in 1967, another perspective which is seemingly "revolutionary in nature" was expressed.

The primary job of the party is to provide leadership for the people. It must teach by words and action the
correct strategic methods of prolonged resistance. When the people learn that it is no longer advantageous for them to resist by going into the streets in large numbers, and when they see the advantage in the activities of the guerilla warfare method, they will quickly follow this example (8, pp. 2-3).

Thus, while the ideology of the movement may have appeared to be reform, the methods, which at least in some instances were advocated, could be interpreted to be revolutionary. In 1966 and the early part of 1967, there was not any sign of actual "guerilla warfare" except in the rhetoric of organization, which sought to legitimize their use of coercive persuasion. The desirability of the Party's choice of coercive persuasion as a means of effecting change was not directly presented by portraits of a glorious future or political promises. The desirability of the Party's objectives was depicted in their platform and program. The reality of the conditions of the ghetto allowed the black audiences to draw their own conclusions about which program would be more desirable, the status-quo or the Panther's program.

In conclusion, this chapter has dealt with the early rhetorical choices of the movement. Emphasis was placed on the factors which influenced the Party's rhetorical choices, the environment of Oakland, and the life experiences of early Party founders. Secondly, this chapter examined the four characteristics of a specific social-change movement which distinguish it from other movements: the ideology,
leadership, membership, and methods. The ideology of the movement was presented and examined in light of its rhetorical function of justifying and legitimatizing the rhetoric of the movement, as well as providing aims, hope, and inspiration to the movement. The early leaders of the Party were identified and their early leadership activities were discussed. The membership and methods of the Party in its early phase were presented and analyzed according to the character of the membership, the possible motivations for belonging. The methods of the movement were discussed in relation to the rhetorical strategies which were employed, the intention of the strategies, and the observable results. Finally, the chapter examined the early rhetorical form of the Party in 1966 and 1967. The rhetorical form was identified as a "power strategy." This strategy was verbally and nonverbally expressed and reinforced through the ideology, leadership, membership, and methods of the emerging social-change movement.

In 1966 and early 1967, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was still a local, community-oriented Party. Chapter IV examines the role of rhetorical strategies and tactics in the rise and decline of the movement as a national organization. This chapter has provided a basis from which to analyze the changes in the Party's rhetorical strategies and the ways in which these changes were
influenced by or reflected in the ideology, leadership, membership, and methods of the movement from 1967 to 1973.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF RHETORICAL STRATEGIES AND TACTICS
IN THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE BLACK
PANTHER PARTY: 1967-1973

Introduction

Chapter III discussed the early rhetorical choices of the Black Panther Party from 1966 to early 1967. The rhetorical choices of the Party stemmed from and were reflected through the leadership, ideology, membership, and methods of the new organization. The Party adopted a "power strategy" as its rhetorical form. The orientation of the power strategy appeared to be aimed toward winning the respect and support of the black community in Oakland through display of "power." Their "justice patrols" were concerned with preventing the Oakland police from intimidating ghetto residents. While the Party enjoyed a relative degree of success in its early phase, it was mainly a local organization with an elaborated ten-point program which articulated the plight of black Americans.

In the later part of 1967, several events occurred which pushed the Party into a national arena. From 1967 onward, the movement met with a hurricane of crisis, confusion, confrontations, and contradictions. This chapter
examines the role of rhetorical strategies and tactics in the Party's attempt to become and to maintain an organized and solidified specific social-change movement. Furthermore, in analyzing the rhetorical choices of the Party, attention has been given to the changes which took place in the movement's rhetorical development since 1966.

Chapter I established a framework through which to view the role of rhetorical strategies and tactics in the development of a social-change movement. Rhetorical strategies and tactics may function in setting the tone of the movement, in providing it with persuasive tools for effecting the movement's desired change in the social order, as well as aid in determining the character and career of the movement. Rhetorical strategies and tactics both stem from and are manifested in the movement's development of leadership, ideology, membership, and methods. The rhetorical form of the movement, whether it be a power or an attitude orientation, is dependent upon the interaction of all of the above areas. Thus, this chapter focuses upon the ways in which rhetoric functioned in the development of the Party's leadership, ideology, membership, methods, as well as its rhetorical form. Because all of these areas are interrelated, the organization of this chapter illustrates the interaction of the following: (1) The movement's methods, membership, and the public's response; (2) The movement's development of leadership and ideology; and (3) The movement's rhetorical
form. This chapter covers the rhetorical development of each of these areas from 1967 to 1973. The criteria used for examination are presented in the introduction of each section.

The Methods, Membership, and Public's Response to the Movement

From late 1967 to 1969, the Panthers went through their period of most intense growth (2, p. 49). The rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Party, during this period, were an integral part of its growth. As stated in Chapter I, the rhetorical strategies and tactics of a social-change movement consist of the instrumental and symbolic behavior of participants in the movement. This behavior may be verbal or nonverbal and plays a vital part in the movement's attempt to become and maintain itself as an organized and solidified agency of social change. Barry McLaughlin, in his book Studies in Social Movements, illustrated the important relationship between methods and membership. According to McLaughlin, the methods of a movement are used to gain adherents, hold adherents, and mold adherents into dedicated workers who aid in reaching the objectives of the movement (12, p. 231). The methods used by a social movement are also vital to shaping the public's interpretation of the movement. Ralph H. Turner contended that a movement "becomes the focus of attention for a public which observes, interprets, and
labels the movement" (22, p. 9). It is the methods a movement selects which become the focus of attention for the public. The public or establishment's response to the movement is also an important element in the strategies and tactics a movement elects. Thus, the strategies of a movement and the public's response affect the character and career of a social-change movement.

Bowers and Ochs provided a means for labeling and analyzing the intent of rhetorical strategies and tactics in a social movement. In this section, the strategies of promulgation, solidification, escalation-confrontation, polarization, and Ghandi-guerilla, have been examined in relation to their use by the Black Panther Party. The control strategies of avoidance, suppression, and adjustment have also received attention in correlation with the establishment's response to the rhetoric of the Party.

**Promulgation and Solidification**

The strategies of promulgation and solidification are crucial to a movement's growth and effectiveness. One of the first rhetorical methods employed by the Panthers was a combination of both of these strategies. The Black Panther, an in-group newspaper, was first issued in 1967 and served as an official organ of the Party from 1967 onward (6, p. 8). It was full of propaganda against the establishment, editorials, information on Party activities, and poetry by
black poets. Huey P. Newton declared that "the newspaper is the voice of the Party and the voice of the Panthers must be heard throughout the land. Because the newspaper is one of the main tools for educating the masses of Black People" (6, p. 7). The first issue of *The Black Panther* consisted of two sheets of legal sized mimeographed paper. This first issue was given out after the Denzil Dowell rally, which was described in Chapter III. The paper served as a tactic, similar to that of distributing handbills, which sought to win support for the Party's disposition. It also sought to solidify the movement by molding the beliefs of members toward various issues and reinforcing the cohesiveness of the group.

In 1966, the carrying of loaded weapons was the most vital activity of the Party, a symbol of its strength, and a means of achieving its goal of self-defense. More significantly, being able to legally carry a loaded gun had allowed the Panthers to operate as an "above ground" self-defense movement. Using "illegitimate" means to fulfill the goals of a social movement allows the establishment the opportunity to justify its repressive tactics. Thus, in 1966, the Party had been able to promulgate its doctrine of "self-defense" legally, without the employment of the rhetoric of control. However, the first sign of the "rhetoric of control" by the established power structure came in the form of revised gun
control legislation that was introduced in the California State Legislature by assemblyman Don Muford. Passage of the legislation would make the "carrying of loaded firearms on one's person or in vehicles, and, an ordinary citizen having a loaded firearm in or near any government building, a criminal offense" (6, p. 7). The bill could be interpreted as a rhetorical tactic of "denial of means".\(^1\) The Panthers' decision to protest consideration of the bill provided the Party with another means of promulgating its policies through the tactic of "exploitation of the media." Their rhetorical choice on this occasion was responsible for launching the Party as a national movement.

Huey Newton developed a plan to protest the state assembly's attempt to hinder the movement. Although Newton did not participate in the protest, thirty members of the Party, including six women, went to Sacramento carrying loaded firearms.\(^2\) Newton had written out a statement which Seale was to read. The statement called upon the "American people in general, and Black people in particular, to take

---

\(^1\) The tactic of "denial of means" falls under the control strategy of avoidance. See Chapter I.

\(^2\) Newton later explained that the membership of the Party before the Sacramento incident actually consisted of only four or five. The day before the Party planned to invade the California Capitol building the Party recruited members from off the streets of Oakland (10, p. 74).
note of the racist California Legislature aimed at keeping
Black People disarmed and powerless while racist police
agencies throughout the country intensify the terror, bru-
tality, murder, and repression of Black People" (6, p. 40).
However, the verbal statement was overshadowed, if not for-
gotten, by the nonverbal communication of what made headlines
as "Armed Blacks Invade California Assembly." Schanche pre-
sented a rather colorful description of the event:

The ragtaggle but fierce-looking group entered the
building with Seale in the lead, anxiously calling
out "Where in the Hell's the Assembly? Anybody in
here know where you go in and observe the Assembly
making these laws?" By this time a crowd of photog-
raphers, reporters, and T.V. cameramen had gathered
and were backing down the hall in front of the Pan-
thers, clicking shutters and grinding film through
their cameras. Unaware of where they were going,
the photographers backed directly into the Assembly
chamber, which was not permitted under the rules of
the House, and the Panthers followed in total con-
fusion. In the melee, Seale forgot all about
reading the statement that Huey Newton had drafted.
He remembered it later and read it for the benefit
of the press after the Assembly chamber was cleared.
There was no violence, but assemblymen's ears rang
with shouts of "Hey, that motherfucker got my gun
... bastard gimme back my gun, I got rights ..."
(18, p. 66).

This was the event that launched the Party into a
national movement and imprinted an image that was never over-
come. The Panthers, in the minds of millions of Americans,
were "black revolutionary thugs and hoodlums" (6, p. 21).
The News media reported the "awesome" event across the nation,
and it appeared the Panthers had anticipated this response.
Bobby Seale stated, "Now the papers are going to call us thugs and hoodlums. But the brothers on the block, who the man's been calling thugs and hoodlums for 400 years, they're going to say, 'Them's some out of sight thugs and hoodlums up there . . . I'm going to check out what these brothers is doing" (6, p. 21).

To some extent the strategy had been successful; the Panthers became nationally known, and within a few months branches had been established in Los Angeles, Tennessee, Georgia, New York, and Detroit. Hundreds of black-ghetto youth were attracted to the Party and its program.

However, in another sense, the event presented the Panthers with several rhetorical problems, including increased "control" strategies from the establishment. Bobby Seale and several others served a six-month prison sentence for unauthorized entry into the legislative assembly, and the gun-restriction legislation was passed. The Panthers could no longer operate "legally" as a self-defense group, and, as was to be anticipated, the police made sure that they did not operate "illegally."

Thus, this event served several rhetorical ends. The Party was able to promulgate its doctrine through "exploitation of the media." Secondly, the rhetoric of control, witnessed in the consideration and passage of the gun legislation, as well as the prison sentence which the participants
were given, served to further solidify the group. The actions
of the establishment had reinforced the Party's stance con-
cerning the suppressive nature of the "white power structure."

The Panthers, in 1967, gained many adherents due to
their "militancy" and the opportunity concretely to promul-
gate their doctrine of "self-defense." One of the most
important new recruits in 1967 was Eldridge Cleaver. Cleaver,
who had spent nine years in prison and was out on parole, was
writing for *Ramparts*, a radical, anti-war magazine published
in San Francisco. Cleaver received his contact with the
Party when he saw a group of armed Panthers escort Malcolm
X's widow to the offices of *Ramparts*. While Cleaver watched,

Newton and his colleagues made a point of osten-
tatiously loading their weapons in front of a group
of San Francisco policemen. One of the officers
told Newton to stop brandishing his gun. Newton
replied that he had a legal right to carry it. The
officer repeated his order and reached for his own
gun. Newton shifted his shotgun, ready to raise it
and the policeman took his hand from his holster and
sighed with frustration, while Newton laughed and
walked jauntily away (18, p. 65).

Out of admiration for Newton's courage and awe at see-
ing blacks with weapons, Cleaver immediately joined the
Panthers and became their Minister of Information.\(^3\)

Cleaver's influence on the rhetorical development of
the Party was tremendous. The ways in which he contributed

\(^3\)Bobby Seale was named Chairman of the Party; Huey P.
Newton, Minister of Defense; Eldridge Cleaver, Minister of
Information; and David Hilliard, Chief of Staff.
rhetorically to the rise and decline of the Party has been dealt with in a later section. Cleaver's decision to join the Party, however, illustrated the way in which the Panther's nonverbal activities persuaded other blacks to become a part of the new organization.

As the Party grew, the necessity of methods for organizing and solidifying the movement became a primary concern. With the development of other chapters across the country, Oakland was designated National Headquarters and the home of the Central Committee of the Black Panther Party. The Central Committee represented the leadership of the organization. It was composed of ministerial positions, including such titles as Minister of Defense, Minister of Culture, and Minister of Information. The following rules were issued in print as the basic structural requirements of the organization:

RULES OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Every member of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY throughout this country of racist America must abide by these rules as functional members of this party. CENTRAL COMMITTEE members, CENTRAL STAFFS, and LOCAL STAFFS, including all captains subordinate to either national, state, and local leadership of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY will enforce these rules. Length of suspension or other disciplinary action necessary for violation of these rules will depend on national decisions by national, state, or local area, and local committees and staffs where said rules of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY WERE VIOLATED.

Every member of the party must know these verbatim by heart. And apply them daily. Each member must report any violation of these rules to their leadership or they are counter-revolutionary and are also
subjected to suspension by the BLACK PANTHER PARTY.

The rules are:
1. No party member can have narcotics or weed in his possession while doing party work.
2. Any party member found shooting narcotics will be expelled from this party.
3. No party member can be DRUNK while doing daily party work.
4. No party member will violate rules relating to office work, general meetings of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY and meetings of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY ANYWHERE.
5. No party member will USE, POINT, OR FIRE A weapon of any kind unnecessarily or accidentally at anyone.
6. No party member can join any other army force other than the BLACK LIBERATION ARMY.
7. No party member can have a weapon in his possession while DRUNK or loaded off narcotics or weed.
8. No party member will commit any crimes against other party members or BLACK people at all, and cannot steal or take from the people, not even a needle or a piece of thread.
9. When arrested BLACK PANTHER MEMBERS will give only name, address, and will sign nothing. Legal first aid must be understood by all Panther Party members.
10. The Ten-Point Program and Platform of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY must be known and understood by each Party member.
11. Party Communications must be National and Local.
12. The 10-10-10 program should be known by all members and also understood by all members.
13. All Finance officers will operate under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance.
14. Each person will submit a report of daily work.
15. Each Sub-Section Leaders, Section Leaders, and Lieutenants, Captains must submit Daily reports of work.
16. All Panthers must learn to operate and service weapons correctly.
17. All Leadership personnel who expel a member must submit this information to the Editor of the Newspaper, so that it will be published in the paper and known by all chapters and branches.
18. Political Education Classes are mandatory for general membership.
19. Only office personnel assigned to respective offices each day should be there. All others are to sell papers and do Political work out in the community, including Captains, Section Leaders, etc.
20. COMMUNICATIONS—all chapters must submit weekly reports in writing to the National Headquarters.
21. All Branches must implement First Aid and/or Medical Cadres.

22. All Chapters, Branches, and components of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY must submit a monthly Financial Report to the Ministry of Finance, and also the Central Committee.

23. Everyone in a leadership position must read no less than two hours per day to keep abreast of the changing political situation.

24. No chapter or branch shall accept grants, poverty funds, money or any other aid from any government agency without contacting the National Headquarters.

25. All chapters must adhere to the policy and the ideology laid down by the CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY.

26. All Branches must submit weekly reports in writing to their respective Chapters (6, pp. 3-4).

The issuing of such elaborate rules and the "disciplined" nature of the rules testified to the Party's attempt to provide the movement with organization and cohesion. The rules also reflected the character of the membership. Eldridge Cleaver, in an interview with Henry E. Weinstein, spoke of the importance of the rules to the development of an effective organization. He stated,

The Black Panther can't be effective in dealing with the power structure if its members are high or drunk. I realize that some people will react to these rules by calling us the "New Puritans" but it simply will have to be done. People will have to begin to relate to a sort of revolutionary morality (21, p. 143).

Such rules as "political education classes are mandatory for general membership" and "all branches must implement ... medical cadres," reflected a militaristic and political orientation. The Party began to take on other rhetorical symbols which distinguished it from other groups and
"celebrated" the cause. Members of the Party were required to wear uniforms, uniforms which accentuated pure blackness. Party members wore black leather jackets, black trousers, power-blue shirts, black berets, and shining black boots (1, p. 87). New recruits, still composed mostly of fourteen through eighteen-year-old ghetto blacks, practiced military drill and were assigned various ranks within the Party. Through these rules and regulations, the movement was attempting to provide the participants with a sense of belonging, of importance, and perhaps more significantly, of power. Solidification was a desired result of the internal organization of the Party. Other solidifying tactics—songs, slogans, and expressive and esoteric symbols—became a part of the new movement. The "clinched-fist" was popularized by the Black Panthers as their salute and a symbol of power. "Power to the People!" and "Panther Power" were heard shouted at Panther meetings and rallies. A national anthem was written for the organization, and in The Black Panther, October 26,

---

4 Chalmers Johnson, in his book Revolution and the Social System, contended the discipline and training of revolutionary groups is far more harsh than of reform groups which are not directly challenging the status-quo. Revolutionary groups must develop strict discipline and symbolize the nature of their cause (4, pp. 24-25).

5 Christopher Lash, in his article on revolutionary rhetoric, explained the psychological need of the black-ghetto male to feel power and manliness. All of the socio-psychological writings of the late fifties and sixties had stressed the "matriarchial" nature of the inner-city family. The Panthers provided the black male with a sense of "power" and importance.
1968, the "Black Child's Pledge" appeared:

I pledge allegiance to my Black People.
I pledge to develop my mind and body to the greatest extent possible.
I will keep myself physically fit, building a strong body free from drugs and other substances which weaken me and make me less capable of protecting myself, my family and my Black brothers and sisters.
I will unselfishly share my knowledge and understanding with them in order to bring about change more quickly.
I will discipline myself to direct my energies thoughtfully and constructively rather than wasting them in idle hatred.
I will train myself never to hurt or allow others to harm my Black brothers and sisters for I recognize that we need every Black man, woman, and child to be physically, mentally, and psychologically strong.
These principles I pledge to practice daily and to teach them to others in order to unite my People (6, p. 2).

According to McLaughlin, one rhetorical stage of a movement is the development of esprit de corps, where the leaders encourage informal fellowship and ceremonial behavior of participants. The Panthers, through their solidifying tactics, were approaching the development of this stage. Women, mostly the wives of Panther members, and their children, were indoctrinated with "Pantherism." The rhetoric of the organization was employed to develop core members. However, other tactics of promulgation and solidification were directed toward the development of peripheral membership. Newton described the relationship between core (the vanguard Party) members and peripheral (the masses) members:

The relationship between the core members and the masses is secondary relationship. The relationship between the members of the vanguard party is a primary relationship. . . . The primary job of the Party is to provide education, service, and leadership to the masses (16, p. 16).
In attempting to demonstrate the Party's concern for the well being of the black masses, the Panthers became engaged in a wide variety of activities in 1967. The Party "protested rent eviction, informed welfare recipients of their legal rights, taught classes in Black History, and demanded and won school traffic lights" (6, p. 9). The installation of a street light at 55th and Market Streets in Oakland was an important event in the Party's early history:

Several black children had been killed coming home from school, and the community was enraged at the indifference of the authorities. Newton and Seale told the Oakland power structure that if the light was not installed, the Party would come down with its guns and block traffic so the children could cross in safety. The traffic light was installed (6, p. 9).

Community service was an important part of the early vision of the Black Panther Party. It was to provide a means of promulgating the effectiveness of the Party and of solidifying the black masses in support of the Panthers as the "government" of the black community. In early 1969, the Panthers escalated their community-service program to include "The Free Breakfast for School Children program and Liberation Schools" (6, p. 167). Eldridge Cleaver explained the importance of these programs to the future of the Party.

Breakfast for Children pulls people out of the system and organizes them into an alternative. Black children who go to school hungry each morning have been organized into their poverty, and the Panther program
liberates them, frees them from that aspect of their poverty. This is liberation in practice (6, p. 167) 6

The programs and community activities of the Panthers were rhetorical because they were instrumental and symbolic behavior. Symbolically the Panthers' service programs stood for the desirability of the organization as a "government" of the people, rather than the status-quo. The programs were instrumental in relating a message to the black communities that the Panthers were concerned with their welfare. Thus, the rhetorical methods of the Panthers depicted a "service" image to those of the black community, a different message was being received by the power structure. For those of the white community, especially the police, the rhetoric of the Panthers was threatening, violent, and needed to be controlled. The Panther headquarters, which had continually been searched by police for weapons, reflected a definite overtone of political violence. "Lists of recommended weapons, pictures of rifles and machine guns, stark drawings of armed children and cartoons depicting dead pigs in police uniforms surrounded huge posters of the armed Huey and an angry Eldridge on the walls" (18, p. 101).

To the secondary audience, the establishment, the rhetorical choices of the Panthers (specifically their choice

6The Free Breakfast for School Children program reached its peak in early 1970 when it about covered the country. It was initiated in every chapter and branch of the Party, which by 1970 numbered approximately 300.
to continue their "justice patrols," despite the indirect warning of the California legislature) justified the strategy of "suppression." A tactic under the general strategy of suppression is "harassment," which is designed to discourage membership in the organization by illustrating the ills which may befall those who participate in the movement. The Oakland police began harassment tactics in 1967.

Police bulletin boards featured descriptions of Party members and their cars. On foot or driving around, Panthers would be stopped and arrested on charges ranging from petty traffic violations to spitting on the sidewalk. Newton was stopped almost daily by the police who were intent on arresting him (6, p. 22).

Thus, the movement employed many strategies and tactics of promulgation and solidification. The rhetorical methods of the Party were successful to the extent that new chapters were formed and the black community gained increased respect for the organization. The Party was attempting to gain adherents, hold adherents, and mold adherents into dedicated Party workers. However, from the perspective of the white-power structure, the Panthers were a menace to law and order and a threat to the effective functioning of the Oakland police. The rhetoric of the Panthers and the rhetoric of the establishment escalated to a new level of "confrontation" in 1967.
Escalation-Confrontation and Polarization

The increased intensity between the Panthers and the Oakland police reached a peak on October 28, 1967, almost a year after the Party's founding. "The battle-lines between the Oakland authorities and the Black Panther Party were drawn in blood when Huey P. Newton was arrested and charged with the killing of John Frey, a twenty-three year old Oakland policeman" (6, p. 22). In a sense, the promulgation and solidification strategies of the Panthers had also served to escalate the controversy with the power structure. However, this event marked the beginning of a campaign of escalation-confrontation. The rhetoric of control responded with increased employment of tactics of suppression. Secondly, the strategy of polarization was employed as issues emerged which forced the black community as well as the white community to take sides.

While the Black Panther Party platform and program did not call for political violence unless it was in the nature of self-defense, the rhetoric of the Party, interpreted by the establishment, did not fit the definition of self-defense. Therefore, the death of Frey was viewed by the

7Martin Oppenheimer, in his book The Urban Guerilla, dealt with the establishment's interpretation of the Panther's activity of self-defense. He stated, "As in the case of the Black Panther Party, a self-defense group can find itself in an insurrectionary situation it did not intend when the government thinks the defense group is insurrectionary and proceeds to attack and repress it as such" (17, p. 84).
establishment from a different perspective than from the black community.

Obviously, the rhetoric of the Panthers could not be interpreted as purely "self-defense" in nature. In the eyes of the establishment, the practicing of military drill and the use of revolutionary slogans, such as "pick up the gun" and "kill the pigs," which was present in Panther publications and their headquarters, documented the Party's inclination toward political violence. However, the "killing" of Frey was surrounded by many questionable accounts of what actually took place. On the one hand, Newton was a murderer; and on the other hand, he became the martyr of the movement, unjustly charged with the killing of a "pig."

Newton's arrest, his imprisonment while he was awaiting trial, and the trial itself increased the rhetorical activity which surrounded the Party and saw many changes in the rhetorical strategies employed. "The event witnessed the first noteworthy Black Panther legal fund-raising activity, which began with the slogan, 'Free Huey or the Sky's the Limit!' Recruitment of new members skyrocketed and new chapters formed in Los Angeles, New York, Denver, and other cities across the United States" (6, p. 23). More significantly, "in the course of the next thirty-three months, with Newton in the California state prison, Cleaver took over de facto leadership of the party, escalating the rhetoric of armed revolution through the news media" (10, p. 74).
Through Cleaver's de facto leadership, the methods of the Party changed as did the character of the membership. The strategy of escalation-confrontation is designed to create an atmosphere of apprehension on the part of the opposing group or the establishment. The tactics consist of threatened disruption, a nonverbal offensive, nonnegotiable demands, and nonverbal or verbal obscene deprecation. All of these tactics are used to escalate tension in the establishment until finally the establishment representatives resort to violent suppression in a confrontation with the group. Cleaver's rhetorical methods were successful in achieving increased confrontation with the establishment.

The first use of the escalation-confrontation strategy appeared in the "Free Huey" rallies. Verbally, Cleaver created a great deal of apprehension. At a "Free Huey" rally in Nebraska, the following excerpt from Cleaver's speech illustrated how his rhetoric began to convey a new "overtly" revolutionary nature in the Black Panther Party.

A revolution is not something that comes as the result of a peaceful meeting. You can't fight with songs. We need guns. Black Power is a well-loaded gun... To the pig power of Babylon: If you brutalize the people, if you murder the people, then the people have a right to kill you. We want to erase your way of life from the planet earth and create a world in which people can live in peace (18, p. 101).

Furthermore, Cleaver was able to use Newton's imprisonment to attract other radical organizations. Ross Baker stated,
At a time when white radicals were intensifying their radicalism, the prospect of affiliation with an ultra-revolutionary black group was overwhelmingly alluring. Cleaver, a far more accomplished ideologue than either Newton or Seale, seized upon the military symbols and fashioned them into a revolutionary appeal. It was Cleaver who transformed Newton from an armed reformer to a revolutionary hero (2, p. 50).

The Peace and Freedom Party, a coalition of mainly white-leftist liberals, was anxious to become affiliated with the Panthers. They were organized as a third party political alternative in opposition to the war in Vietnam and in support of black liberation (6, p. 22). Cleaver, likewise, saw "in the emergence of the B.F.P. and its campaigning machinery, a chance for a wider campaign in Newton's defense, and in the long-run, an important ally in the Panther's struggle for black liberation" (2, p. 48).

Late in 1967, the Peace and Freedom Party approached the Panthers with a proposal for a coalition between the two groups. Cleaver pressed strongly for a coalition and it was consummated (2, p. 48). Newton, still in prison, seemed to go along with Cleaver's decision. In a message to a "Free Huey" rally in Oakland, California, on February 17, 1968, Newton taped the following statement from prison:

Today should mark a new time for the TWO-REVOLUTIONARY forces in the country: the alienated white group and the masses of blacks in the ghettos, who for years sought freedom and liberation from a racist, reaction system. After approximately three years now that the Panthers have been organized, we have gained an even closer relationship with our Latin American brothers, our Chicano brothers in the United States, and the
Cuban people, and every other people who are striving for freedom (16, p. 41).

Newton's statement, Cleaver's speeches, and the perceived growth of the Panthers as a revolutionary force pushed the organization into "a commanding lead in American radical politics" (2, p. 49). By 1968, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was already keeping the Panthers under national surveillance (6, p. 21). However, the rhetorical methods of the organization took still another turn. Newton explained the change in the rhetoric of the organization, which appeared to be a tactic of "obscene deprecation."

When I was in prison the party went through something of a filthy-speech movement. . . . I didn't understand it, and I stood against it. But I didn't have much influence in the party while I was in prison. . . . This was when every third word in the Black Panther newspaper was motherfucker. . . . Not only in the paper but inside the churches. They would go into the churches to give political-education classes for the general community and they would use motherfucker every other word. This was Eldridge's brainstorm, this filthy-speech movement. And it really entertained the white radicals. Blacks had used motherfucker for a long time, in its proper place. But whites? . . . So we drew more and more white radicals and street people. But we alienated the whole black community and we got kicked out of the churches. The black community wouldn't even bring their children to our rallies. So we ended up with 90 percent whites and ten percent blacks at the rallies. And we lost the people we were trying to mobilize, those we could have worked with best at that time (10, p. 75).8

8While Newton condemned the language Cleaver was using, there were others who stood behind Cleaver's choice. Father Earl Neil, the Panther's black Episcopalian chaplain, explained, "I'm one hundred percent with Eldridge when he says 'fuck' or 'motherfucker' because these words have bery special meaning in the black ghetto. They are syllabic words with
Whether the "filthy-speech" tactic was entirely to blame for the difficulties the Party began to suffer during its "escalation-confrontation" phase is not exactly clear. The Party did gain nationwide acclaim and the rhetoric of Eldridge Cleaver was given headline attention. The "Free Huey" rallies always drew sizable audiences, ranging from five hundred to five thousand. There was loud applause, laughter, cries of "Ride On," "Tell it like it is," and "Black Power" (18, p. 64). Cleaver demonstrated what Newton referred to as the "filthy speech movement" during one rally where he was also campaigning for President on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket.

Someone asked me what my first act will be if I'm elected President and move into the White House. . . . I'll burn the motherfucker down. . . . I've said again and again that if you're not willing to become part of the solution you are part of the problem. . . . Now, all of you! Pick up the gun!" (18, p. 65).

Cleaver's speeches, as well as using verbal deprecation, served to polarize the movement. He was attempting to force a choice. Don A. Schanche reinforced the view of Cleaver's rhetoric as serving a polarization as well as an escalation function.

some thrust to them. Motherfucker is a contemptuous word, and we think of it in the same way we think of slavemasters who fucked our mothers. The phrases that infuriate me—the true obscenities of our language—that the white church and the white people generally use are 'justifiable homicide,' 'easy credit,' 'no money down, you're different,' 'these things take time, boy:'" (18, p. 106).
In all-white gatherings, such as the San Francisco lawyers' club where Cleaver spoke even more obscenely than he did in the open-air meetings, the language clearly was a tactical weapon, meant to polarize the audience. Those few who were with him, he reasoned, would overlook or understand the language of the streets; those who rejected it probably belonged on the other side, and by his reasoning it was better to have them clearly against him than standing in the middle wondering which side of the revolution to join (18, p. 105).

Thus, Cleaver's rhetorical strategies served to escalate the controversy with the establishment, as well as to polarize it. Cleaver's rhetoric had changed the character of the membership to include white radicals. This was a change that served to divide the movement from other black organizations. The assertion of black autonomy had been realized in the 1960's when SNCC expelled all whites from the organization. SNCC, which had since then been declining, formed an alliance with the Black Panther Party in 1968. However, the Panthers' new-found white friends tended to discourage cooperation between the two organizations. Schanche depicted another incident which he attested was the final reason for the alliance between SNCC and the Panthers breaking up within five months.

The alliance had lasted only from March until July, when a delegation of Panthers in New York reportedly brought SNCC's international affairs chairman, James Forman, to the point of a nervous collapse by dramatically threatening his life. The Panthers were said to have entered Forman's office and flashed pistols. One of them reportedly put the barrel of his gun in Forman's mouth and pulled the trigger three times. The gun was unloaded, but the hostile intent of the Panthers clearly was not. Shortly after the incident SNCC expelled
Carmichael and broke with the Panthers for good (18, p. 105). 9

While the rhetoric of the Party had become even too militant for many blacks, it proved relatively successful in the Party's attempt to "Free Huey." Gene Marine, in an article published by Ramparts in 1968, explained the great momentum the "Free Huey" campaign was gaining.

Even a white radical from Berkeley has to be pretty radical to give unqualified support to a movement which demands simply that Huey must be set free now. Still, there are "Free Huey" bumper strips all over the Bay Area and there were 2,000 people, black and white, at a recent Oakland rally. And--while a lot of people are adopting the slogans and the cause for their own political reasons--there are a surprising number of people who will genuinely argue that Huey must, indeed, be set free now (11, p. 125).

With Charles R. Garry, a radical San Francisco lawyer, as his attorney, the trial itself became a platform for rhetoric. Foner recalled the nature of the testimony during the trial:

The testimony during the trial--over four thousand pages--includes urban sociology, black history and the Declaration of Independence. At one point early in the proceedings, Superior Court Judge Monroe Friedman said, "I feel like I've taken a course in sociology the last few days." Viewing Newton as a "political prisoner" and the trial as a "political trial," Charles R. Garry, his attorney, made it a practice to enable those in the courtroom and thousands on the outside to learn the racist nature of court procedure in the United States: that black people are virtually excluded from jury panels, often cannot afford bail or

9Stokely Carmichael never became actively involved in the organization. Other black militants, such as H. Rap Brown and Angela Davis, also gave "lip service" to the movement but were not directly associated with the core membership of the organization.
are rejected by bondsmen, tried by juries not of their peers and under laws they did not participate in making, and that they receive consistently heavier sentences. All of this aside from the police harassment described so fully by the Kerner Commission. In his address to the jury, Garry pleaded: "White America, listen. The answer is not to put Huey Newton in the gas chamber. The answer is to listen to him so that black brothers and sisters can walk down the street with dignity (6, p. 24).

Although there is not a publicized account of the jury's deliberations, Schanche interviewed a member of the panel who suggested the verdict of "voluntary manslaughter" was really a compromise or a tactic of "adjustment" from the power structure.

One of the jurors was said to have communicated his own deep fear that a first-degree murder conviction might ignite the entire black community of Oakland, a spontaneous fire under the Panthers' banner of "The Sky's the Limit." Thus the jury reportedly settled for the ambiguity of "voluntary manslaughter." In essence, therefore, it was a political verdict, meant to cool the passions that had been aroused by the Panthers' strident cries. "Free Huey" "The Sky's the Limit!" had been heard halfway across Oakland (18, p. 138).

Newton was sentenced to two to fifteen years. "The only act of violence that came in the wake of the verdict was utterly unexpected, and it was against, not from, the black community" (18, p. 138). Two white Oakland policemen, uniformed and on duty, drove to the front of the Black Panther headquarters and "riddled its plate glass windows with shotgun pellets and bullets from their police guns. Their apparent targets were posters of Eldridge Cleaver and Huey P. Newton" (18, p. 138). Both policemen were suspended from the force.
The rhetoric of control had actually been initiated as early as 1968. The escalation-confrontation tactics of the Panthers, specifically, "threatened disruption" which came in the form of "talk of violence and guns," justified the establishment's use of tactics of "overt denial of the agitator's demands, banishment, harassment, and purgation." Ross Baker asserted that the Panthers overestimated their revolutionary power and that "the Panther rhetoric of revolution outpaced the basic nature of the organization" (2, p. 47). He stated,

That a handful of Panthers scattered across the nation, operating in conjunction with small groups of white radicals, could challenge the armed might of America seems astounding in retrospect. Feted by the white Left and increasingly confident of their support in the ghetto, the Panthers failed to comprehend that whatever his attitudes and orientations, anyone who walks across an open manhole is likely to fall in. The anti-Panther raids of 1969 and 1970 brought that lesson home forcefully (2, p. 48).

In 1968, harassment tactics were employed by the police. The police raided the home of Eldridge Cleaver and his wife Kathleen in search of weapons. The Cleavers had no guns. In February of 1968, the home of Bobby Seale was raided and Seale was arrested, along with his wife and two other Panther members (18, p. 134). In March, the Oakland police issued a statement charging the Black Panther Party with building up an arsenal of weapons (18, p. 123). From 1968 onward, the tactic of "harassment" of the Party intensified (6, p. 24). Newly formed branches were raided across the
country, and on April 3, a public Party meeting in an Oakland church was broken up by armed searches by the Oakland police (18, p. 89). The actions of the police appeared to meet with opposition from the black community. The psychology of the escalation-confrontation strategy seeks to lead the authorities into overpreparedness. In the case of the police raid on the church, the strategy seemed to have been successful. Father Earl Neil, who was a veteran of civil rights demonstrations in the South, responded to the intrusion of the police. He stated,

If a black group that is trying to do something for the community cannot meet in the sanctuary of a church, where in Heaven's name can they meet? It was quite significant that something like this should happen around Easter season when we begin to meditate upon the events that led to the arrest, unjust trial, and execution of Jesus Christ (18, p. 157).

There were no arrests at the church, but reports of the incident served to further polarize the sentiment of the black community. There were previously uncommitted segments of black middle-class Oakland which voiced their disapproval of the police tactics (18, p. 153).

The next evening Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed in Memphis, Tennessee, and Oakland, like many other cities, was on the verge of explosion. The following day, Cleaver, Seale, and other Party members walked the streets of Oakland's ghetto, visited the schools, and Cleaver explained, "The only people who get hurt or killed in rioting are the black people in the middle of it; we didn't want to see
that" (18, p. 108). Yet, on the night following King's death, the Panthers, as a group, became involved in their first violent confrontation with Oakland police. The Panthers called it a "police riot." The police called it a "Panther ambush." "Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Hutton, David Hilliard, and about fifteen other Panthers exchanged gun-fire from 9:07 until 10:30 p.m. with police" (18, p. 70). The police, whose force grew to one-hundred men before the gun-fight ended, were accused by the Panthers of provoking an armed clash. Bobby Hutton, who was only fifteen when he joined the Panthers in 1966, was dead with seven bullets in his head and back.10 Cleaver was treated for his wounds and immediately imprisoned as a parole violator. Several other Panthers "who had taken refuge in the neighborhood were rounded up. One was released and six were charged with assault with intent to commit murder, as was Cleaver" (18, p. 73).

Charles Garry, who had been previously retained to defend Newton, "called the Hutton slaying 'pure madness' and demanded that charges be filed against the police" (18, p. 74).11 His list of Black Panther clients was growing rapidly. Meanwhile, by 1969, "law-enforcement officials from

---

10 Police who examined Hutton's body conceded that he was not armed when he was shot (18, p. 73).

11 The Grand Jury hearing investigating Hutton's death, concluded, "We find that the police conduct in the death of Robert Hutton was lawful" (18, p. 126).
John Mitchell to local police chiefs declared open warfare on the Panthers—a campaign which rendered the party all but leaderless" (2, p. 48). Ross Baker synthesized the series of "purgation" tactics which witnessed the decline of the Party.

Huey Newton had been imprisoned for killing a policeman in October 1967. Bobby Seale was on trial in Chicago for alleged complicity in the Democratic convention demonstrations. In November 1968, Cleaver was ordered back to prison by a revocation of parole and emerged early in 1969 in Havana. On January 17, 1969 two Los Angeles Panthers were killed by a group of local nationalists who were apparently being used by the police as a device to neutralize the party. On April 3, 1969, twenty-one members of the party were arrested in New York for an alleged plot to dynamite public buildings. It was at roughly this time that the Nixon Administration ordered the CIA to investigate possible links between the Panthers and certain revolutionary regimes in the Third World—notably Cuba and Algeria. Both officialdom and the radical world attributed an efficacy to the Panthers which was far beyond their actual strength as a revolutionary force. Proscribed by law-enforcement agencies and lionized by the Left, the Panthers found themselves viewed simultaneously as saintly and demonic (2, p. 50).

The guns which were originally employed as a rhetorical tool to dramatize the creation of the new movement, became used in the reality of political warfare. The most significant events of the movement, during 1968 and 1969, included the "banishment" of Eldridge Cleaver, the death of two Panther leaders, Matt Clark and Fred Hampton, in Chicago, and the increasing courtroom rhetoric which surrounded the close to three hundred Panthers who were on trial throughout the country.
Although Cleaver was not ordered into exile by the establishment, the revoking of his parole, after the Oakland shoot-out with police, left him no other alternative. An address given by Cleaver at a rally in his honor, delivered just a few days before he left the country, reflected the necessity of his leaving the country rather than face the prison system.

I cannot relate to spending the next four years in the penitentiary, not with madmen with supreme power in their hands. Not with Ronald Reagan the head of the Department of Corrections, as he is the head of every other state agency. Not with Dirty Red being the warden. If they made Dr. Shapiro [San Francisco psychiatrist and long-time supporter of the Panthers] the warden of San Quentin, I’d go right now. But while they have sadistic fiends, mean men, cruel men, in control of that apparatus, I say that my interest is elsewhere. My heart is out here with the people who are trying to improve our environment (11, p. 126).

Thus, in 1969, Cleaver fled to Cuba and subsequently to Algeria. He still continued his contact with the Party, permitting interviews with selected reporters. His rhetoric was described as "having a harder and less coherent sound" (18, p. 10). He still employed rhetorical strategies of an escalation-confrontation nature, threatening to "break President Nixon's fuckin neck" and "take off Senator McClellan's head" (18, p. 10).

After the killing of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, Cleaver wrote,

The violent phase of the black liberation struggle is here, and it will spread. From that shot, from that blood, America will be painted red. Dead bodies will
litter the streets and the scenes will be reminiscent of the disgusting, terrifying nightmarish news reports coming out of Algeria during the height of the final breakdown of the French colonial regime" (18, p. 26).

The picture was exaggerated but there was bloodshed and there were dead bodies. However, the deaths were Panther deaths and the establishment seemed to have the upper-hand in controlling the career of the movement. The party leadership was almost completely decimated in the controversial killing of Chicago Panthers, Fred Hampton and Matt Clark, in 1969 (18, p. 74).

In 1968, the Chicago Police Department issued the statement, "We consider the Panther organization probably the most dangerous in the nation" (1, p. 93). Michael J. Arlen, in his book *An American Verdict*, described the events on the morning of December 4, 1969:

At around six in the morning of December 4, 1969, the bodies of Fred Hampton and Matt Clark were brought by police from the apartment at 2337 West Monroe to the Cook County Morgue. Hampton, twenty-one years old, had been head of the Black Panther Party in Illinois. Matt Clark, twenty-two years old, was a Panther Party member from downstate in Peoria. Four Panther members, who had been wounded in the raid, were in Cook County Hospital. Three others who had been in the apartment were in Cook County Jail. All seven were charged with attempted murder, armed violence, and unlawful possession of weapons (1, p. 17).

Later in the same morning, the police issued a statement which was designed to explain and justify the raid and the subsequent deaths of the two Panther members.

This morning, pursuant to a search warrant, the State's Attorney's police attempted to search the first
floor apartment at 2337 West Monroe Street to seize sawed-off shotguns and other illegal weapons stores there. Our office had reliable information that this location was a depot for illegal weapons gathered by members of the Black Panther Party.

As soon as Sergeant Daniel Groth and Officer James Davis, leading our men, announced their office, occupants of the apartment attacked them with shotgun fire. The officers immediately took cover. The occupants continued firing at our policemen from several rooms within the apartment.

Thereafter, three times Sergeant Groth ordered all his men to cease firing and told the occupants to come out with their hands up. Each time, one of the occupants replied, "Shoot it out," and they continued firing at the police officers. Finally, the occupants threw down their guns and were arrested.

The immediate violent criminal reaction of the occupants in shooting at announced police officers emphasizes the extreme viciousness of the Black Panther Party. So does their refusal to cease firing at the police officers when urged to do so several times. Fortunately only one police officer was wounded. We wholeheartedly commend the police officers for their bravery, their remarkable restraint, and their discipline in the face of this Black Panther attack—as should every decent citizen in the community (1, pp. 18-19).

Following the statement, the entire event became surrounded in an aftermath of rhetorical controversy. The four Chicago papers printed over five hundred articles on the event during a two-year period. The first article, which appeared in the Chicago Daily News, in a front page headline, read, "PANTHER CHIEF, AIDE, KILLED IN GUN BATTLE WITH POLICE" (1, p. 20).

The controversy initially stemmed from an interview (obtained by a reporter for the "Noon News" on WMAQ, the NBC affiliate in Chicago) with Bobby Rush, the second in Party leadership in Illinois. Rush stated, "Hampton was murdered
by the police in his sleep" (1, p. 21). Spectators, sympathizers, and investigating teams toured the apartment where the event took place almost every hour for months following the incident. Arlen described what they saw and how a series of questions, which were difficult to answer, began emerging.

People saw that there were only six tiny rooms, no more than forty feet between the front and back doors. Nine men and women had been asleep inside, scattered throughout the rooms. The size of the bedroom in which Hampton and Deborah Johnson slept—the bloodstained mattress in fact was still there, a chair, a reading lamp, the paperboard walls pocked with bullet holes—was scarcely more than ten feet by ten. There had been fourteen policemen coming in from the outside, coming in from the front and back. There had been a lot of shooting. And this was then another thing that people noticed: that the bullet holes in the walls seemed to have been made by bullets coming in from the outside; that most of the front windows were still intact; that there were few visible marks, if any, that might have been made by bullets going from the inside—out (1, p. 22).

The controversy became so intense that Nation magazine published an article on December 29, 1969, describing the extent of the concern which Panther raids—specifically those in Chicago—were causing throughout the United States.

Last week we stated the urgent need for an investigation of recent shoot-outs in which police have again directed murderous gunfire at Black Panthers and their headquarters. A group of black Congressmen will conduct an investigation into the Chicago night attack. At the same time, a number of organizations, including the NAACP, Urban League, Conference of Black Elected Officials, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the American Civil Liberties Union, have set up a twenty-five member independent commission to "direct a searching inquiry" into clashes between police and Panthers. Rep. Edward Koch (D., N.Y.) has suggested that the Civil Rights Commission conduct a general inquiry (13, p. 717).
The causal link between the Panthers' rhetoric of "escalation-confrontation" and the "suppressive" tactics of the establishment was critically analyzed in the same article.

By way of justifying their "overkill" tactics, the police invariably cite the Panthers' revolutionary rhetoric and their known arms caches. But not since the gun battles in Dodge City and Tombstone has violent rhetoric been cited as justification for homicides. All sorts of groups use violent rhetoric in this violence-prone society. As to arms, it is a consideration, perhaps, that the Panthers are not an affiliate of the National Rifle Association. If they were, they would probably enjoy immunity from police harassment. The gun market has been booming. In many communities the police have helped train nervous housewives of poor vision in the use of side arms. The Chicago police turned over to the odious General Turner, as a gift of some kind, more arms than they could find in Panther headquarters (1, p. 717).12

12One of the interesting rhetorical sidelines was the extent to which the Chicago police were willing to go to prove their innocence. Cook County State's Attorney Hanrahan, who had ordered the raid, telephoned the major television stations and offered an "official re-enactment" of the raid by the policemen who had taken part in it. The CBS station accepted. "It required four hours, members of the CBS crew explained later, partly because some of the policemen used profanity and so sections had to be retaped, and because of the usual technical reasons, but also because several of the officers appeared to be mixed-up, or anyway forgetful, as to what they were doing, and thus needed to be rehearsed and re-rehearsed. At the point of entry into the apartment for instance, sometimes one man went first, sometimes another. Other officers needed reminding as to which direction they had actually been facing, or turning, or firing. There was some confusion as to the calling of cease-fires. In any case, at ten that evening, a twenty-eight minute final version of the re-enactment (edited at CBS shortly before air-time, with Jalovec present) was shown over WBBM. In virtually every respect, it repeated the Tribune version of the event, although much more dramatically" (11, pp. 25-26).
Thus, on January 6, 1970, the Cook County Coroner appointed a Special Coroner's Inquest to look into the events of December 4, 1969. On January 23, the Coroner's jury returned a verdict of "justifiable homicide" (11, p. 27). The surviving seven Panthers were indicted for "attempted murder, aggravated battery, and armed violence" (1, p. 183). The Panthers pleaded not guilty and within the course of the next two years the hearings and trials which took place could easily fill a library. The end result is what remains of crucial importance to this study. In 1972, "a judgment of acquittal was entered as to each defendant and each defendant was discharged" (1, p. 184). The police, who were charged with "obstructing justice," were also acquitted. Mayor Daley attempted to pull the torn segments of black and white Chicago together after the trials. He was employing a strategy of "adjustment," aimed at appeasing both segments of the population. He stated, "The verdict speaks for itself. The great lesson here for all of us is not to be too willing to believe charges until there is a thorough airing of the facts. I think the black people of Chicago feel the same way. They want their streets to be safe" (1, p. 184).

It is difficult to say whether Daley's words had any real impact upon the black community. Nation magazine claimed, "For the first time in years the entire Negro public in Chicago is aroused and united. . . . Police guns, not
Panther guns, have won for the black militants the largest measure of support they have yet achieved (13, p. 718). One sign of the importance of Negro unification in Chicago was the fact that State’s Attorney Hanahan, one of Daley’s men, was defeated in his bid for reelection by the cities’ black vote (13, p. 365). The Wall Street Journal, January 13, 1970, reinforced the idea of the popularity Panthers supposedly gained in the late sixties. Four reporters investigated a sampling of opinion among black citizens and found "the clear majority of blacks support both the goals and methods of the Black Panther Party, and, an even larger number believe the police are determined to crush the Party" (6, p. 14).

The courtroom rhetoric of the Panthers, which can be considered in the "escalation-confrontation and polarization" phase of the movement, took place not only in Chicago but throughout the United States. The courtroom tactics of Bobby Seale in the "Chicago conspiracy trial" was described nightly on the national news. On October 29, "Seale was chained hand and foot to a metal chair and a gag of muslin was put in his mouth so that he could not continue to challenge Judge Julius Hoffman and interrupt the trial proceedings" (6, p. 183).13

13During the trial, Seale had frequent clashes with Judge Hoffman. He charged that he had been unfairly denied the counsel of his choice because Judge Hoffman had refused to postpone the trial so that Charles R. Garry, Seale’s San Francisco lawyer, could attend the trial after his recovery from
The pretrial hearings of thirteen Black Panthers in New York accused of conspiracy also provided a rhetorical platform for the organization.

New York Supreme Court Justice John M. Murtagh suspended the proceedings and insisted that the defendants give him assurances about their behavior during the trial. The thirteen sent a twenty-four-page response to Judge Murtagh (which he rejected) which rapidly became famous as a significant summary of Black History as well as for its clear assertion that it is impossible for black people to receive a fair trial in the United States (6, p. 185).

The courtroom rhetoric of the Panthers, the violent confrontations that took place between the police and Panther members, the verbal and nonverbal activities which surrounded the "Free Huey" campaign, and the Panthers' merger with the Peace and Freedom Party, as well as the rhetoric of control which was initiated by the establishment, were all factors which influenced the character and career of the Party as a specific social-change movement. The "escalation-confrontation" strategy of the Panthers from 1967 to 1972 is difficult to assess. The membership of the organization peaked in 1970 with an estimated "1,500 to 2,000 core members" (6, p. 26). However, Ross Baker concluded,

Despite the super-revolutionary potency attributed to them by both the police and the Left, the Panthers were in desperate straits. Their period of most intense growth, between 1966 and 1969, turned out to be a major operation. Seale also charged that the judge, having refused the postponement, then refused to permit Seale to defend himself in Garry's absence and had illegally imposed a counsel upon him (6, p. 183).
illusory. With Seale, Newton and Cleaver removed from leadership responsibilities and relentless publicity given to their activities, the party began to acquire a deceptively large number of local chapters, most of which were chartered in an almost pro forma fashion. Panthers became fixtures at the soirées of salon radicals and can only have been bemused by the attention lavished upon them. Revolutionary fervor was replaced by opportunism. The ranks of many locals filled rapidly with a bewildering army of hustlers bent on using the Panther cachet to legitimize their mulcting of supportive whites. Where once rhetoric outpaced reality, it now supplanted it (2, p. 49).

The Black Panther Party by 1971 was embedded in a "paramilitary idiom and rhetorical superstructure" that outpaced the initial ideology of self-defense, an essentially passive orientation (2, p. 50). Furthermore, on March 27, 1971, Newsweek magazine published a revealing article entitled "The Panthers: Their Decline and Fall." The article contended that the Black Panther Party was near disintegration and explained,

Its ranks have been riddled by warfare with the cops, arrests, purges and desertions. Its lines to white-liberal consciences and checkbooks are drying up. Its outposts in several major cities are shuttered, its breakfast-for-children programs badly shrunk. Its two best-known leaders, Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, are publicly at war, and the first blood was spilled last week when a Cleaverite was slain, apparently by Newtonists, in broad daylight in the streets of Harlem. So reduced are the Panthers that the stakes in the conflict may be little more than the party's name, its newspaper, its mixed reputation and its few enduring local strongholds. "As a national organization," says one Congressional investigator, "the Panthers have had it" (21, p. 29).

The establishment can certainly claim part of the "glory" for having deterred the Party which former director
of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, described as "without a doubt the greatest threat to internal security of the country" (1, p. 93). Yet, Huey P. Newton, in 1968, had declared the seemingly "suicidal" tactics of the organization, were a major strategic plan. He stated, "Our main strategy demands as its most essential element, actions which will provoke our own prosecution. This will change the attitude of white middle-class America. They will become radicalized and bring about the system's downfall (18, p. 7). However, if the rhetoric of the Panthers were to be judged by this statement alone, a verdict of "ineffective" could be rendered. White middle-class America was not radicalized. In fact, the "fairness" of the Panther trials, especially in Chicago, tended to soothe the consciousness of both middle-class blacks and white liberals. Baker contended that the Panthers, through their confrontations with police, reduced their credibility among important segments of the black community (2, p. 48). It was not that the blacks were unsympathetic to the Panthers but rather that their strident and menacing style frightened many blacks who believed that official repression would not limit itself to the Party (2, p. 49).

Thus, when Newton emerged from prison in 1971, he assessed the rhetorical methods the Party had employed. The

---

\(^{14}\)Newton was released from prison after a retrial was won and errors were found in the previous trial's evidence.
establishment was not given all of the credit for the shambles which Newton found the Party to be in. According to Newton, "Eldridge Cleaver's rhetoric allowed the police to murder many of our members without great community protest. If we'd had an organized people, they wouldn't have been able to get away with it" (10, p. 73). In early 1971, it became evident that not only were there differences between the Cleaver and Newton followers which were irreconcilable, but there appeared to be not one Party but two (2, p. 49). Newton sought to change the complete image of the Panthers, returning to the 1966 image of community service and local involvement. He stated, "For a time the Black Panther Party lost its vision and defected from the community. With the defection of Eldridge Cleaver, however, we can move again to a fullscale development of our original vision, and come out of the twilight zone which the Party has been in during the recent past" (16, p. 45). The Panthers went back to the churches, back to the schools, back to the doors of ghetto residents, and out of national limelight, hoping to regain the respect and confidence of the black community.

On Wednesday, May 2, 1973, Bobby Seale, former chairman of the Black Panther Party, was preparing for his run-off election in a nonpartisan mayoral race in Oakland. Ross Baker described a scene which ironically took place on the same day; a scene which dramatically emphasized the "death
of the Panthers" as an insurrectionary revolutionary movement and the perceived death of the Panthers' tactics of threatened disruption, verbal obscene deprecations, and nonverbal acts of political violence.

A battered Pontiac bearing Vermont plates and carrying three black passengers was stopped by two state policemen for speeding on the New Jersey Turnpike near East Brunswick. Gun shots came from the car; the troopers returned the fire and a policeman and one of the car's occupants were killed. The other trooper and a woman passenger in the car were wounded. The third black, Clark E. Squire, fled the scene only to be apprehended the following day.

The newspapers described Squire and his companions as members of the Black Liberation Army. That may have been their current affiliation but their origins can be traced directly to that group of Panthers that didn't go to the polls with Bobby Seale; the Panthers that did not embrace the system; the Panthers that did not put down the gun. They represented the last gasp of a Panther faction that believed literally in insurrection (12, p. 51).

Gandhi and Guerilla

Before dealing directly with the influence that rhetorical methods had upon the ideology, leadership, and rhetorical form of the Party, an overall evaluation of the Panthers' rhetoric should include an investigation of the Gandhi and Guerilla strategy. "The strategy of Gandhi and Guerilla confronts the establishment with a large group of agitators committed to the strategy of nonviolent resistance and another group committed to the physical destruction of the establishment" (3, p. 37). This strategy can be effective in creating a bargaining position for the movement.
The "escalation-confrontation" methods of the B.P.P., from 1967 to 1969, could easily be interpreted as the "guerilla" part of the overall strategy. However, the Panthers did not apply any Gandhi tactics, and it is doubtful whether the other civil rights organizations directly used the Panthers' guerilla tactics to achieve a bargaining position. Yet, it is important to consider, in analyzing the rhetorical methods of the Party, that other specific black protest movements, such as the NAACP and the SCLA, were also active during the Panther movement.

**Summary: Methods, Membership, and Public's Response**

This section has examined the rhetorical methods of the Black Panther Party from 1967 to 1973. Bowers and Ochs provided a framework through which to label and explain the intention of the rhetorical strategies and tactics of a movement. The Panthers, as a specific social-change movement, employed the strategies of agitation, promulgation, solidification, escalation-confrontation, polarization, and Gandhi-guerilla. Verbally and nonverbally the strategies and tactics of the movement set the tone of the movement, provided it with persuasive tools for effecting change in the social order, and aided in determining the character and career of the movement.
Through the use of tactics of promulgation and solidification, the movement became organized and persistent during the years of 1967 and 1968. In early 1968, the strategies of escalation-confrontation and polarization emerged from several events and created a dynamic interplay between the strategies of agitation and control. These methods of the movement allowed the public to interpret the movement as "revolutionary in nature." However, another public, the black community, viewed the Panthers as "revolutionary" but unjustly attacked by the establishment. By the end of 1969, several internal problems, as well as those facilitated by the establishment's suppressive tactics, produced the decline of the movement as a national revolutionary force. When he emerged from prison, Huey P. Newton sought to revamp the Party's rhetorical methods and begin again with the strategies of promulgation and solidification, from a "service" perspective. The next section examines briefly the ways in which the leadership and ideology of the movement were influenced by the choice of rhetorical methods.

Ideology and Leadership

Chapter I established that one of the characteristics of a specific social-change movement is the development of a distinctive ideology. The development of the ideology cannot be separated from the movement's development and
implementation of rhetorical methods. Through the methods of the movement the ideology is expressed and shaped according to the public's response. Because it is the leadership of the organization which directs the rhetorical methods a movement elects, leadership plays a vital role in determining the nature of the ideology.

This section briefly discusses the ways in which the ideology of the Black Panther Party was expressed rhetorically through the methods choice by two of its most renowned spokesmen, Eldridge Cleaver and Huey P. Newton. It is important to recall that the ideology of a movement gives the movement justification, direction, weapons to attack, weapons to defend, inspiration, and hope. Whether the leaders are "men of words," "fanatics," or "men of actions" influences the type of rhetorical response the movement receives and the "arena" through which the ideology is given rhetorical expression.

**Huey P. Newton: From Black Nationalism and Socialism to Internationalism**

Huey P. Newton is credited with being the ideological founder of the Black Panther Party. Newton's direction of activities before he was sent to prison in 1967, his writings and statements from prison, and the way in which he initiated change in the Party after emerging from prison in 1971, were major factors in the ideological development of the Party.
from 1966 to 1973. In a speech delivered at Boston College, on November 18, 1970, Newton explained the ideological phases he felt the Party had been through since 1966. He stated,

In 1966 we called our Party a Black Nationalist Party. We called ourselves Black Nationalist because we thought nationhood was the answer. Shortly after that we decided what was really needed was revolutionary nationalism, that is nationalism plus socialism. After analyzing conditions a little more, we found that it was impractical and even contradictory. Therefore, we went to a higher level of consciousness. We saw that in order to be free we had to break the ruling circle and therefore we had to unite with the peoples of the world. So we called ourselves Internationalists (16, p. 57).

Still later, in 1973, Newton expressed another level of ideological commitment. This level was not so much "internationalist" oriented as locally and community oriented. Newton contended that the supposedly "new" direction of the Party was originally present in 1966 when he laid the ideological foundations of the Party in his ten-point platform and program. However, he suggested,

. . . in the early sixties, we spent too much energy on phrase-mongering and not enough on organizing. As a result the Party found it divorced from the community. . . . Through community service programs--which we call survival programs--we are now moving toward our original goal of providing for the welfare of the black community (10, p. 74).

While the identical Black Panther Party platform and program remained with the organization throughout its history, it was developed differently according to the methods the movement selected to promulgate its ideology and the public's response to those methods. For example, the points of the
ideology which became most salient in 1966 were a direct result of the methods Newton selected. "Point 7" of the platform and program calls for an immediate end to police brutality, and "Point 1" demands that blacks be able to determine the destiny of their own communities. Both of these ideas were emphasized by the organization in 1966. The idea of "black nationalism" was expressed by the Party's emphasis on "the beauty of black culture, the joy of black brotherhood and community" (6, p. 21). "Point 7" was the most emphasized of the Panthers' early rhetorical methods through their activity of "armed patrols." Much of the Panthers' early stress on black nationalism stemmed directly from Newton's respect for Malcolm X.

In the early phase of the movement, in 1966 and the early part of 1967, Newton was both the "fanatic" who hatched the movement and the "man of action." According to Hoffer, the fanatic leader "personifies the certitude of the creed and the defiance and grandeur of power. He articulates and justifies the resentment dammed up in the souls of the frustrated" (8, p. 121). Newton represented this fanatic in the ghetto of Oakland, California. He became a "man of action" as he himself "picked up the gun" to nonverbally articulate the importance of self-defense and the necessity of freedom, by any means necessary. Newton's platform and program were a justification for the Panthers' activity of self-defense.
and provided the movement with weapons to attack, weapons to defend, inspiration, and hope.

Ross Baker referred to the Panthers' early emphasis on self-defense as the "Point 7 error." Baker contended that while the Panthers' ideology was actually calling for "socialism," demanding the federal government provide "full employment, a jury of peers, and military exemption for black citizens," their stress on guns allowed many, including white radicals, to interpret the sociopolitical basis of the Party as "revolutionary" in nature. When the California legislature passed the gun control bill and attempted to deter the Panthers' activity of armed patrols, "self-defense" was dropped from the Party's title. For many, this act symbolized a new overtly revolutionary direction. Newton later explained his interpretation of what constituted a "revolutionary action." "Later we dropped the term 'self-defense' from our name and just became the Black Panther Party. We did not consider our actions revolutionary. The only time an action is revolutionary is when the people relate to it as such." (16, p. 46).

However, there was one particularly influential new recruit who did relate to the Party's actions as revolutionary. Eldridge Cleaver is largely responsible for carrying the ideology of the movement into the phase of "revolutionary socialism." Newton analyzed Cleaver's misinterpretation of
the platform and program. "I had asked Eldridge Cleaver to join the Party a number of times. But he did not join until after the confrontation with the police in front of the office of Ramparts magazine. Without my knowledge, he took this as the revolution in the Party" (16, p. 59).

Nevertheless, in 1967, when Newton was imprisoned for the killing of John Frey and Cleaver became de facto leader of the Party, the ideological commitment of the Party became a revolutionary commitment. When Newton emerged from prison in 1971, he denounced "revolutionary socialism" and transferred an internationalist orientation to the Party's ideological base. His visit to Peking was highly influential in shaping Newton's ideas on community development and communism. He stated,

Because the Black Panther Party is not embarrassed to change or admit error, tonight I would like to accept criticism and say that many critics of our ideology were absolutely right. We are a collection of communities just as the Korean people, the Vietnamese people and the Chinese people are a collection of communities—a dispersed collection of communities because we have no superstructure of our own. The superstructure we have is the superstructure of Wall Street, which all of our labor produced. This is a distorted form of collectivity. Everything's been collected but it's used exclusively in the interest of the ruling circle. This is why the Black Panther Party denounces Black capitalism and says that all we can do is liberate out community, not only in Vietnam but here, not only in Cambodia and the People's Republics of China and Korea but the communities of the world. We must unite as one community and then transform the world into a place where people will be happy, wars will end, the state itself will no longer exist, and we will have communism (16, p. 48).
Thus, according to Newton, "the Black Panther Party bases its ideology and philosophy on a concrete analysis of concrete conditions, using dialectical materialism as our analytical methods" (16, p. 47). The Party's emphasis on "dialectic materialism" transplanted a new Marxist-Leninist ideological base to the Party which has changed its organizational structure, abolishing the ministerial position, and has provided a means of justifying and explaining past mistakes.

Newton exemplified the way in which the new ideological basis of the Party could justify the mistakes of the past:

As dialectical materialists we recognize that contradictions can lead to development. The internal struggle of opposites based upon their unity causes matter to have motion as a part of the process of development. We recognize that nothing in nature stands outside of dialectics, even the Black Panther Party. But we welcome these contradictions because they clarify and advance our struggle. We had a contradiction with our former Minister of Information, Eldridge Cleaver, but we understand this as necessary to our growth. Out of this contradiction has come new growth and a return to the original vision of the Party (16, p. 54).

It was still primarily the methods of the Party that determined the direction the ideology would take. The Panthers today, as they did in 1966, claim the same ten-point platform and program as expressive of the values and beliefs of the Party. Yet, this platform and program have served to justify and guide the development of three different ideological phases. The Panthers today no longer carry guns, dress in black uniforms, or talk violence. As a matter of fact,
Newton wants the Party out of national limelight, even the number of members of chapters he prefers to keep secret (10, p. 88). He contends that the Party today can still serve as an important vehicle to revolution but that revolution is a process and the first step is providing for the welfare of the community. In a statement made in 1973, Newton rekindled his romantic vision of what the Party may some day be able to accomplish and how he sees himself in the twilight of a new revolutionary struggle.

I will fight until I die, however that may come. But whether I'm around or not to see it happen, I know we will eventually succeed, not just in America but all over the world, in our struggle for the liberation of all oppressed peoples. The revolution will win. But Bakunin wrote that the first lesson the revolutionary himself must learn is that he's a doomed man. If that sounds defeatist, you don't understand the nature of revolution: that it's an ongoing process and that we don't get out of life alive, anyway. All we can do as individuals is try to make things better now, for eventually we all die. I think Mao's statement sums it up best: "Death comes to everyone, but it varies in its significance. To die for the reactionary is as light as a feather. But to die for the revolution is heavier than Mount Tai" (10, p. 88).

Eldridge Cleaver: A Revolutionary Commitment

Ross Baker stated,

Left to themselves, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, co-founders of the Party, might not have evolved into anything more menacing than Stokely Carmichael. It was primarily Eldridge Cleaver who transformed the Panthers from a small group of quondam black nationalists with a newly established interest in Frantz Fanon to the most awesome presence to emerge from the black community since Nat Turner (2, p. 47).
Cleaver's influence on the ideological development of the Party was tremendous. After he became the Party's leader in 1967, the "talk of guns and violence" increased and the reality of revolution was echoed over newscasts which reported shoot-outs between police and Panther members. Cleaver's rhetorical choices were greatly influenced by his past and the way in which he viewed the struggle for liberation.

Cleaver received widespread acclaim for his book *Soul On Ice*, which dealt with his imagined sexual-racial mythology and the struggle of black men to obtain manliness. Cleaver, like Newton, spent much of his childhood in some sort of trouble with the power structure. Cleaver recalled the event which he felt was the beginning of his "real anger" toward the racist society.

It was about 1944 when we moved to Phoenix. That's where I first became conscious of our peculiar relationship to white people, of what white people expected of us because we were Negroes. I guess I was too young to feel it in Arkansas. It happened at a public sports contest, run for us by the white people in a public park. They made a big thing of announcing that there would be prizes for running and jumping and other sports. Prizes are exciting to little kids—you dream about them; surprises, glittery things—and we ran our hearts out. I won my race. The prize for the winner was a piece of watermelon! For really the first time, I realized what white people thought of us (18, p. 48).

Cleaver's introduction to the world of crime began before he was six-years old. He found "the only means he could devise to earn extra spending money as a Negro child was shining shoes, so he hustled to avoid paying off the police for the
privilege of working on his knees on the sidewalks" (18, p. 48). Cleaver was picked up so many times on well-founded suspicions of vandalism and drug pushing that by the time he was caught breaking into a store at the age of thirteen "it was foreordained that he would be sent to reform school" (18, p. 51). "There was never again a day in his life that he was not either a fugitive, incarcerated, on probation, or on parole" (18, p. 51).

At the age of eighteen, after being released from reform school just a short while, Cleaver was caught with a shopping bag full of marijuana and began his first adult term in prison. It was during his prison stays that he began to dabble at writing and, as he described it in Soul On Ice, he began to formulate "a devastating black man-white woman mysticism whose consequences could easily have led him to the gas chamber" (5, p. 53). Cleaver became convinced that his only possible course in life lay in rebellion against society and somehow, he stated, "I arrived at the conclusion that, as a matter of principle, it was of paramount importance for me to have an antagonistic, ruthless attitude toward white women" (18, p. 53). Cleaver wrote,

I became a rapist. To refine my technique and modus operandi, I started out by practicing on black girls in the ghetto—in the black ghetto where dark and vicious deeds appear not as aberrations or deviations from the norm, but as part of the sufficiency of the Evil of a day—and when I considered myself smooth enough, I crossed the tracks and sought out
white prey. I did this consciously, deliberately, willfully, methodically—though looking back I see that I was in a frantic, wild and completely abandoned frame of mind (18, p. 53).

After serving a nine-year term for rape, Cleaver was released on parole in 1965. While he was serving his sentence, his attitudes started to change. He realized the viciousness of his "rape" experiences and felt he had dehumanized himself. "I lost my self-respect. My pride as a man dissolved and my whole fragile moral structure seemed to collapse, completely shattered" (18, p. 101). Upon this realization, Cleaver started to write and has since then had many of his short stories, as well as his books, published. However, it was his love for Malcolm X and the new emphasis on black identity that was sweeping the country in the 1960's which "ultimately settled his course in life" (18, p. 59). Cleaver began a legal letter-writing campaign to seek aid in being released from prison. He was successful in obtaining Beverly Axelrod, who not only was important in getting Cleaver out of prison but who aided in getting his book Soul On Ice published (18, p. 61).

Cleaver's dilemma as to what course his life should take after he was out of prison on parole was solved that day in front of the Ramparts office when he decided to convert to Pantherism. His strong need to become involved, the anger he had pent up inside him, and his reputation as an "outraged blackman" were all factors which made Cleaver's membership in
the Party of paramount importance to shaping the character, career, and ideological development of the Party. With Newton imprisoned, Cleaver's leadership was witnessed in his direction of the "Free Huey" campaign, his primary role in forming a merger with the Peace and Freedom Party, his editing of Panther publications, and his direct involvement in the violent incidents with police and Panther members.

Cleaver rose quickly to the position of the movement's spokesman. He gave speeches throughout the United States, lectured on racism at the University of California, and was interviewed on television and radio programs. He became the "fanatic" and the "man of action" as well as the "man of words." Cleaver functioned as the rhetorical leader of the movement to "discredit prevailing myths, furnish new doctrines and new slogans, and give a new faith to the potential membership of the movement." Cleaver's language, violent and obscene, stressed the necessity of "revolution." He turned the emphasis of the ideology to the phrase "by any means necessary." Cleaver stated,

The Black Panther Party recognizes, as do all Marxist revolutionaries, that the only response to the violence of the ruling class is the revolutionary violence of the people. The Black Panther Party recognizes this truth not as some unspecified mechanistic Marxist-Leninist truism, but as the basic premise for relating to the colonial oppression of Black people in the heartland of Imperialism where the white ruling class, through its occupation police forces, agents and dope peddlers, institutionally terrorizes the Black community. Revolutionary strategy for Black people in America
begins with the defensive movement of picking up the Gun, as the condition for ending the pigs' reign of terror by the Gun (6, p. 108).

However, Cleaver did attempt to clarify the nature of his revolutionary stance. He directed this statement to, what he contended, was the "Pig Power of Babylon."

Let us make one thing crystal clear: We do not claim the right to indiscriminate violence. We seek no bloodbath. We are not out to kill up white people. On the contrary, it is the cops who claim the right to indiscriminate violence and practice it everyday. It is the cops who have been bathing black people in blood and who seem bent on killing off black people. But black people, this day, this time, say HALT IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY! YOU SHALL MAKE NO MORE WAR ON UNARMED PEOPLE. YOU WILL NOT KILL ANOTHER BLACK PERSON AND WALK THE STREETS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY TO GLOAT ABOUT IT AND SNEER AT THE DEFENSELESS RELATIVES OF YOUR VICTIMS. FROM NOW ON, WHEN YOU MURDER A BLACK PERSON IN THIS BABYLON OF BABYLONs, YOU MAY AS WELL GIVE IT UP BECAUSE WE WILL GET YOUR ASS AND GOD CAN'T HIDE YOU (6, p. 108).

Thus, the ideological development of the Party, under the influence of Eldridge Cleaver, transformed the ten-point platform and program into a justification for revolution. Newton contended that Cleaver's commitment to revolution turned the organization into "revolutionary cultists" who had no concern for the welfare of the people (16, p. 87).

Newton stated,

Under the influence of Eldridge Cleaver the Party gave the community no alternative for dealing with us except by picking up the gun. This move was reactionary simply because the community was not prepared to do that at that point. Instead of being a cultural cult group we became, by that act, a revolutionary cult group. But this is a basic contradiction because
revolution is a process and if the acts you commit do not fall within the scope of the process then they are non-revolutionary (16, p. 83).

Newton also provided his own interpretation of how Cleaver's choice to join the Panthers and his ideological development of the movement stemmed from his background and his need to prove his manliness.

I use Eldridge's discussion of rape in Soul on Ice as an example to prove my point. He went to prison as a rapist. When I was in prison, I quickly learned that guys who would come in with many counts of rape ended up as homosexuals a large percentage of the time. I think it was no accident that Eldridge had the rape conviction or that when he came out of prison he became so attached to the Panthers and the idea of the gun. I think the gun was a substitute for his penis; he called it his "rod." That's what the party meant to him: a masculine kind of demonstration that he needed in order to reinforce his very shaky sexual identity (10, p. 78).

In 1971, from exile, Cleaver was still urging that the Party go underground and fulfill its revolutionary commitment. Newton refused and Cleaver was no longer associated with the Party. The battle between the Cleaverites and Newtonites seemed to have ended with the forming of the "Black Liberation Army," which has had little publicity. Cleaver did leave a dramatic imprint on the history of the Black Panther Party and can be credited with its rise as well as its decline as a national revolutionary movement.

Chapter Summary: The Rhetorical
Form of the Movement

This chapter has examined the role of rhetorical strategies and tactics in the rise and decline of the Black Panther

The implementation of a power strategy by a social-change movement is founded upon an interpretation of society as a complexus of groups operating in superior-subordinate relationships. In order to effect change, a movement using a power strategy would attempt to change the relationships by the mobilization and manipulation of power over the superior group. From 1967 to 1969, the Black Panther Party went through its period of most intense growth, reaching a membership of approximately two thousand. This growth period was partially influenced by the movement's election of a power strategy.

Throughout the United States, a growing number of radicals, both black and white, shared the same interpretation of society. Therefore, when the Panthers began to represent the "height of radicalism," many were attracted to the organization which articulated the thoughts of many disillusioned Americans. Beginning in 1968, the Party attempted to mobilize its power through forming alliances with other groups. The Party established an alliance with the Peace and Freedom Party in California in the campaign to free Huey Newton and in the election year. The Party also
established alliances with a number of other groups which were influenced by the Panthers and modeled their programs and community activities on the Panthers' example.15

The election of a power strategy as the rhetorical form of the Party was realized in several other areas. One of the distinguishing characteristics of a power strategy is the stressing of differences between the groups in conflict. The rhetorical methods of the Party from 1967 to 1969, employing the rhetorical strategies of promulgation, solidification, escalation-confrontation, and polarization, reflected verbal and nonverbal methods which stressed differences between the opposing groups, namely, the "oppressed" and the "oppressor." Bobby Seale, Chairman of the B.P.P., exemplified the tactic of stressing differences by illustrating what the opposing group, "white power," had accomplished.

White power runs this country, white power is dispensed in its courts, white power shot Huey Newton and put him in jail, and white power is trying to gas him. Huey P. Newton is a brilliant spokesman of black power, a living embodiment of black power. Whether his attorney is white or black, black power is on trial. White resources at the disposal of black people, a white legal firm defending the Minister of Defense of the Black

15 The groups with which the Panthers formed alliances included: "the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican gang which had become a political movement; the Brown Berets, a group of young Chicanos; the Young Patriots, a group of young whites who aimed to organize poor whites; and the Red Guards, a group of Chinese-Americans who organized under the slogan of 'Yellow Power'" (6, p. 219."
Panther Party is a defense example of black power. Black skin is not—as our black lawyers, politicians, doctors, teachers, and other professionals highly attest in their mad scurry for white power, white values, white acceptance, and white hostility to black power (6, p. 42).

Nonverbally, the B.P.P. stressed differences between the opposing groups by accentuating the meaning of "Black Power." The dress of the new organization consisted of black berets, black leather jackets, black pants, and powder-blue shirts. The uniforms of the organization served to symbolize their power and their authority over the status-quo. The adherents of a power strategy will also emphasize their ability to coerce. As stated in Chapter I, coercive persuasion is established by the movement's demonstration of its willingness to use coercive persuasion, the capacity of the movement to use coercive persuasion, the legitimacy of the movement's use of coercive force, and the desirability of the movement's objectives.

From 1967 to 1969, the B.P.P., as a specific social-change movement, sought to develop the movement's power orientation through each of these areas of coercive persuasion. The Panthers continually articulated their willingness to use coercive persuasion. Huey P. Newton, in a speech delivered to the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention, stated,

We declare that our goal is to destroy all elements of the oppression. We pledge ourselves to end imperialism. . . . There can be no real freedom until the imperialist
--world-enemy-number one--has been stripped of his power and put in his rightful place as one of the people rather than the ruler of the people. Then and only then will unity and harmony truly prevail. So we resolve to liberate our communities in order that we might serve the true interests of the community (18, pp. 40-43).

The means through which the communities were to be liberated was also given rhetorical emphasis and indicated the willingness of the Party to use coercive persuasion. Huey P. Newton, in discussing the correct handling of a revolution, suggested,

When the vanguard group destroys the machinery of the oppressor by dealing with him in small groups of three or four, and then escapes the might of the oppressor, the masses will be overwhelmed and will adhere to the correct strategy. When the masses hear that a gestapo policeman has been executed while sipping coffee at a counter, and the revolutionary executioners fled without being traced, the masses will see the validity of this approach to resistance (15, pp. 1-3).

The willingness of the movement to use coercive persuasion was also evidenced nonverbally. The environment of Panther offices reflected the movement's willingness to employ coercive persuasion, with lists of recommended weapons and pictures of dead pigs dressed in police uniforms. The military drills, which were practiced daily by members of the Panthers, depicted a "revolutionary" type of training. Weapons were also found in the headquarters and homes of Panther members and leaders. Thus, the movement had established its willingness to use coercive persuasion both verbally and nonverbally.
The relative capacity of the movement to use coercive persuasion was only partially realized. The sentencing of Huey P. Newton on the charge of "voluntary manslaughter" instead of "first degree murder" witnessed the partial effectiveness of the movement's use of coercive persuasion. The Panthers' tactics of "escalation-confrontation" also established the movement's capacity to use coercive persuasion. Whether the violent confrontations with the police were purposely instigated by the Panthers or by the police remains unsettled. However, the fact that the Panthers did exchange gun fire with the opposing group testified to their capacity to use coercive force. Whether their use of coercive persuasion was effective or not is another question. By the end of 1969, over three-hundred Panthers had been either killed, arrested, or were serving prison sentences. Violent confrontations with the police had shattered the organizational structure of the Party by removing its leadership, disrupting its community programs, and frightening many blacks away from participation in the organization. On the other hand, the suppressive tactics of the establishment had provided the movement with "martyrs" and had given the movement a sense of purpose.

... because Huey P. Newton put this program together and founded this organization with this Ten Point Platform and Program that outlined the basic political desires and needs of the people; because of that; because we began to implement it; because we went to the streets to begin to teach the people and educate the people to the strategic methods to have these political
desires and needs answered; because of that, Bobby Hutton was murdered by fascist Oakland pigs. Because of that, we had Alprentice "Bunch" Carter and brother John Huggins also murdered at UCLA by jealous, egotistical, piggish dogs who worked for the pigs of the ruling class. Because of that and because of this Ten Point Platform and Program that's there for the basic political desires and needs of Black people here in America and any other people and any other proletarian struggles going on throughout the world--because of that we've had two more brothers murdered by these Black nationalist, cultural nationalist pigs (6, p. 79).

Bobby Seale demonstrated the way in which the public's response to the Panthers aided their militant stance by surrounding the Party in a halo of "sacrifice for the cause." The results of the Party's use of coercive persuasion had attracted many allies and allowed the Party widespread publicity. Yet, in the final analysis, the Party's capacity to use coercive persuasion established that it was not "powerful" enough to challenge the armed might of the status-quo and effect change. The hope of Huey P. Newton that the masses of blacks would follow the example of the Party was not realized. It appears the black communities were not prepared, physically or psychologically, to liberate themselves "by any means necessary."

The legitimacy of the movement's use of coercive persuasion was constantly promulgated from 1967 to 1969. Through the ideology of the movement the Party was able to establish the legitimacy of its persuasive tactics. The ideology of the Party remained consistently based upon the doctrine of self-defense. "Self-defense" was used to justify
the supposedly "offensive" stance of the Party, as well as their 1973 orientation of community service. The ideological base of the Party recognized that "self-defense" went much further than just defending the community against police brutality. The legitimacy of the Party's use of coercive persuasion was established in relation to those policies and programs which are necessary to defend the human interests and fulfill the collective needs of black Americans. Bobby Seale explained this concept when he said, "The exploited, laboring masses and poor, oppressed people throughout the world want and need the demands of the Party for basic human survival" (6, p. 78). Extending the legitimacy of the Party's employment of coercive persuasion, Charles A. and Betty Lou Valentine, in their article "The Man and the Panthers," pointed to the different types of "killings" the establishment facilitates and condones.

Black people and other victimized groups, including poor whites, are constantly being killed by the existing order: shot down by the police or while in military service, doped to death by the drug trade, starved or poisoned by the economic system as a whole, allowed to die by inhuman health institutions, psychologically destroyed by the nation's schools (23, p. 281).

Therefore, the relative legitimacy of the Panthers' use of coercive force was legitimatized from several perspectives, each of which was inherently tied to the Party's ideological base of "self-defense." However, the legitimacy of their coercive tactics was not recognized by the majority
of middle-class America. Specifically, the establishment interpreted the Party as a risk to internal security and a group of vicious criminals bent on violence. It is doubtful that many white middle-class Americans were even familiar with the Panthers' ten-point program. One of the difficulties of the power strategy is the rhetorical dilemma in which the movement is placed. The necessity of using coercive persuasion invites the media's focus on those events which are surrounded by controversy and violence. Also, the power strategy tends to overshadow the initial intention of its employment because the movement becomes surrounded with issues which demand explanations, expenditures for such things as defense funds, and overextension of the movement's energies. It is difficult to battle on so many different fields at the same time. By 1969, the Panthers had reached such a rhetorical dilemma. The use of the power strategy had overextended the capacity of the organization. Battles with police had deterred the internal development of the Party as well as the external necessity of continual promulgation of the Party's dogma.

The movement did attempt to establish the desirability of the movement's objectives in relation to the obvious risks involved in employing the power strategy. One means of establishing this desirability was the philosophy that "we're going to die one way or the other." Huey P. Newton explained this concept:
Any compromise would be suicidal. It would be what I call reactionary suicide. Reactionary suicide means that the conditions, reactionary conditions, would be the cause of our suicide. If we stand and do nothing it would be self-murder. I would rather choose the reverse, if it becomes necessary, and that is revolutionary suicide. That's suicide motivated by the desire to change the system, or else die trying (23, p. 282).

Spokesmen for the movement also established the desirability of the movement's objectives and methods by viewing the struggle as a means of ending the war. Bobby Seale stated,

We have a war going on. The war started over 400 years ago, and the war must be ended. And only by us continually going forth to implement the Ten Point Platform and Program, by us hanging to the fact that we will receive, through all the struggle, some kind of freedom and dignity and justice, will point number ten be realized. We say in number ten, we want some bread, some housing, some education, some clothing, some justice, and some peace (6, p. 80).

While the movement did attempt to establish the desirability of the movement's objectives and methods, Huey P. Newton, in 1971, appeared to be questioning the desirability of a power strategy to the extent it was used from 1967 to 1969. Newton contended that the Party's activities during those years were guided by a faulty interpretation of the "power" strategy. He stated,

When we coined the expression "All Power to the People," we had in mind emphasizing the word "Power," for we recognize that the will to power is the basic drive of man. But it is incorrect to seek power over people. We have been subjected to the dehumanizing power of exploitation and racism for hundreds of years; and the Black community has its own will to power also. What we seek, however, is not power over people, but the power to control our own destiny (14, p. 2).
Newton also contended that the Party had put emphasis on the "gun" as a means of achieving power and he now recognized that "the gun itself is not necessarily revolutionary because the fascists carry guns, in fact they have more guns . . . political power is not the gun . . . the culmination of political power is the ownership and control of the land and institutions thereon so we can get rid of the gun" (16, p. 48). Newton substantiated his rejection of the desirability of the "power strategy," as it was implemented under Cleaver's period of de facto leadership of the Party, explaining that the Black Panther Party had defected from the black community.

When the Black Panther Party defected from the Black community, we became, for a while, revolutionary cultists. One of the primary characteristics of a cultist is that he despises everyone who has not reached his level of consciousness . . . instead of acting to bring the people to his level. In that way the revolutionary cultist becomes divided from the people as a vanguard, he becomes a hero. Heroes engage in very courageous actions sometimes and they often make great sacrifices, including the supreme sacrifice, but they are still isolated from the people (16, p. 45).

Newton, it should be pointed out, was not deserting the power strategy; he was merely suggesting that it was approached from the wrong interpretation. In another sense, he was saying that, while the Party must use certain characteristics of the power strategy with the establishment, such as maintaining that differences do exist, people should either stand for or against the establishment, and there is no compromising on
the needs and demands of the people; the emphasis should not be on communicating these ideas to the establishment but on selling these ideas to the black communities. These ideals and aims of the Party cannot be sold to the black communities through the demonstration of power, but through engendering their support through service and educating blacks to the necessity of a struggle. Thus, the Party did attempt to establish the desirability of the use of coercive persuasion as well as to reevaluate the methods which were used to substantiate the advantages of coercive force.

Another difficulty which the Party experienced in establishing the desirability of its methods and aims was the seemingly ambiguous results of what would take place after the "struggle." While one of the characteristics of the power strategy is to create ambiguity for the opposing group, the Panthers seemed to have created ambiguity even for themselves. One important function of the ideology of a movement is to provide inspiration and hope for a better future. This element was not fully developed by the rhetoric of the Panthers. In 1968, Newton suggested that the Panthers would create a new society based upon ethnic rather than class or geographical representation. There would be a minister of culture who would be responsible for perpetuating individual ethnic groups and religious cultures. People in the new society could convert to whatever they wanted
(white middle-clas America was not mentioned). This idea seemed to fall along the wayside with Cleaver who seemed more concerned over having the revolution first and then deciding what to do. Finally, Newton, in his most recent statements, rejects socialism as the answer and states, "In the United States socialism will never exist. In order for a revolution to occur in the United States, you would have to have a redistribution of wealth not on a national or international level, but on an intercommunal level" (16, p. 29). Perhaps, in the final analysis, what the Panthers' coercive persuasion reflected, through their nonnegotiable demands and a willingness to die for those demands, was, as Bobby Seale suggested, aimed toward receiving "some dignity, some justice, some bread, some housing, some education, and some jobs" (6, p. 80.

In conclusion, this chapter has examined the role of rhetorical strategies and tactics in the rise and decline of the Black Panter Party as a specific social-change movement. The rhetorical form of the Party maintained a power rather than an attitude base. The rhetorical strategies and tactics of the organization functioned to set the tone for the movement in its organization, persistence, and sense of purpose. The rhetoric of the movement created events which could be used to justify the Party's stance and provided a platform for promulgating and solidifying the movement.
Finally, the rhetoric of the movement functioned to aid in its decline as a national movement. It provided the establishment with justifications for its employment of suppressive tactics as well as contributed to dissension and struggle within the Party. The leadership, membership, ideology, and rhetorical form of the movement were also analyzed in relation to the way in which these factors contributed to the overall rhetorical development of the movement.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The stated purpose of this thesis was to analyze the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party as a social-change movement from 1966 to 1973. From a historical, sociological, and rhetorical framework, incorporating numerous theoretical perspectives, the totality of the study provides a better picture of the Black Panther Party through its rhetorical development. Secondly, the study provides some insights into the overall effectiveness of the Party's rhetorical choices. Finally, through this study, some general theories have emerged which indicate the various roles rhetoric plays in establishing the nature, character, and career of a social movement. The conclusions of the study are presented according to the categories of methodology and procedures which were outlined in Chapter I.

The Black Panther Party as a Specific Social-Change Movement

Chapter I discussed several theories concerning the nature, character, and career of specific social-change movements. It has been contended by many theorists that social movements stem from and are influenced by the status of other general and specific movements which deal with the same
problem area. Chapter II documented the validity of this theory in relation to the emergence of the Black Panther Party. The general movement toward the Negro's right to equal opportunity in the United States produced increased awareness and expectations among the black population. These expectations for a better life were met with a structure which moved too slowly in comparison to the increasing awareness of black citizens. As many blacks began to view violence as a more speedy, visible, and understandable road to masculinity and personal pride, "Black Power" became the driving force of an emerging movement. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense symbolized this new mood of black protest in America.

Chapter I indicated that a specific social-change movement stands apart structurally, ideologically, and functionally from other social movements. The Black Panthers achieved such a distinction. Based upon the perceived effectiveness of other black "civil rights" organizations, the structure of the B.P.P. was not middle-class oriented. Previous civil rights organizations were based upon white middle-class values and exhibited a structure which was designed to elicit white support. The B.P.P. was structured around a paramilitary idiom which both intended to and resulted in frightening, confusing, and alienating the majority of white America. The respectable and intellectual
leadership, which had been characteristic of such organizations as the NAACP and the SCLC, was not characteristic of the Panthers. Its two most well-known leaders, Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, had spent most of their childhood and the later periods of their lives as "marked criminals" whose thoughts, values, and conceptualizations of life were diametrically opposed to the established social and political norms of society. The ghetto environment, which produced the leadership and membership of the B.P.P., was isolated from the mainstream of affluent America by the walls of economic and social deprivation, political powerlessness, and a sense of hopelessness which was released in the ghetto riots of the sixties, where blacks destroyed their own homes and their own communities. The Panthers sought to channel the ghetto's destructive nature into a constructive program through a political party, which would meet the needs of the people. Thus, the ideological base of the Panthers gained its distinctiveness by demanding equality rather than asking for an equal opportunity, by demanding the power to determine the destiny of black America rather than allowing the establishment to make and enforce decisions on racial equality, and by declaring the necessity of "self-defense" against the power structure rather than seeking to make minor repairs or work within conventional channels for effecting social change.
The functional uniqueness of the B.P.P. was realized in its goal of providing for the welfare of the black community. The Panthers sought to establish themselves as the "government" of the people. They functioned not only to give social and economic programs to the community but to protect the community from the official organ of the status quo. The police department, which was supposed to have been protecting the black community, was perceived as pursuing policies and tactics which intensified the hostility of ghetto blacks toward the establishment. The seeds of "militancy" which had been germinating in the rhetoric of SNCC, the philosophy of the Black Muslims, and the popularized writings of black revolutionaries, found fertile ground in the milieu of the Oakland ghetto. The "talk of guns" was transformed into the reality of the Panthers' "armed justice patrols." Therefore, the Black Panther Party stemmed from and was influenced by both the mood of the general civil rights movement and the perceived effectiveness or ineffectiveness of other organizations which dealt with the same problem area.

The character and career of specific social-change movements have also received theoretical consideration. The theory that movements pass through "idealized stages" was substantiated by the rhetorical development of the Panthers. The preliminary stage of unrest, characterized by collective
excitement and uneasiness but lacking any formal organization or focus on issues, could be seen in the period of hostility which followed the ghetto riots of the sixties. The **popular stage of excitement**, where collective unrest emerges from amorphous roots into a more identifiable social movement as leaders come forth and minimal organizational structure develops, was represented in the founding of the Black Panthers in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. Their early activity of armed patrols, the writing of a ten-point platform and program, and the following which the organization began to encompass on the local level, testified to an emerging organizational structure. The **stage of formal organization**, where excitement plus disciplined cohesion develop as motives and aims become clearly defined and organizational structure proliferates, was only partially recognizable in the development of the Black Panther Party. From 1967 to 1969, the movement enjoyed a period of intense growth as chapters formed across the nation. However, with their growth, the employment of the rhetoric of control by the establishment and the schism within the Party began to threaten its unity and workability. Excitement was produced, but the development of a solid organization structure with clearly defined goals was thwarted. The final stage of a movement, the **stage of institutionalization**, where the specific social movement terminates in the form of a lasting organization,
such as a labor union, a nation, or a denomination, poses an unanswerable question as far as the Black Panthers are concerned. The B.P.P., as a national revolutionary movement, was terminated in 1971 when, under Newton's leadership, the Panthers "put down the gun" and moved into the realm of conventional politics. Perhaps, the Panthers were and are seeking to become "institutionalized" in the black communities. The Panthers today are running for political offices, directing their efforts toward the development of health clinics, educational institutions, and food programs. Yet, the ideological base of the Party, their ten-point platform and program remains the same, and Newton still contends the Party is organizing the people to make a revolution. Thus, the character of the movement, while seemingly "reform" in nature, is still operating in the shadow of its revolutionary, violent-prone years, although the methods of the organization have taken a dramatic turn.

Identifying the Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of the Black Panther Party

Chapter I suggested that as a movement passes through "idealized stages" it makes choices among the available means of persuasion. The more general choices are labeled strategies; the more specific choices are called tactics. The rhetorical strategies and tactics of the B.P.P. were inherently linked to its progression as a social movement.
In identifying the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party from 1966 to 1973, this thesis has concentrated on the verbal and nonverbal behavior of participants in the movement, which were instrumental and symbolic in their nature and effect. The activities in which the Party engaged, from their armed patrols in 1966 to their violent confrontations with the police in 1968 and 1969, have been considered rhetorical elements of the movement because they symbolized the nature of the movement and resulted in sending messages to both the establishment and the black ghetto communities of the nation. The verbal statements of Panther members and their speeches have also been recognized as important rhetorical aspects of the movement. The verbal activities of the Party sought to justify their activities, explain the nature of their policies and programs, as well as depict their wrath toward the establishment. The symbolic expressions of the Panthers emphasized their distinctiveness as a social movement and celebrated their cause. The rhetorical development of the movement was reflected through its ideology, leadership, membership, and methods.

Analyzing, Describing, and Evaluating the Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of the Black Panther Party

The rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party had a definite form, identifiable intentions, and produced both measurable and immeasurable effects on the
development and career of the movement. The Party adopted a rhetorical form, which was based upon a power orientation. Because the early leaders of the movement, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, viewed society as a complexus of groups organized in superior and subordinate relationships, they sought to change that relationship by the manipulation and mobilization of power. The power orientation of the movement was recognized in the Party's leadership, ideology, membership, and methods. All of these factors reflected the rhetorical forms of the movement and interacted in determining its character and career.

Another important factor in the movement's rhetorical development was the establishment's use of the rhetoric of control. As noted in Chapter I, the behavior of authorities toward the movement has a vital role in determining the rhetorical choices of a movement. The Panthers, in 1967, had to choose whether to continue their system of armed patrols in light of the fact that the California Legislature had passed a bill designed to deter the movement. Because Huey P. Newton elected to continue the armed patrols and increase Party activities, the establishment was again forced to respond to the rhetoric of the movement. The establishment, employing increased tactics of suppression, and the Party, employing tactics of escalation-confrontation, created a dynamic interplay of the rhetoric of agitation and control.
Thus, we see once again that the rhetorical choices not only determine how a movement progresses, but those choices are often determined by the receivers of the rhetoric.

The leadership of the movement greatly influenced its rhetorical form. As previously stated, the experiences of Newton and Seale and their perception of the power structure of Oakland facilitated their rhetorical decision to act on the basis of power. By emphasizing point No. 7 of their platform and program, "We want an end to police brutality . . .," the leadership of the movement employed "armed defense" against the police as a symbol of their willingness to use coercive persuasion. The leadership of Eldridge Cleaver, after Newton was imprisoned in 1967, added another dimension to the Party's power orientation. Cleaver, through his inflammatory rhetoric and his ability to form coalitions with white radicals, took the movement into an "offensive" revolutionary stance. The violent confrontations with police, during 1968 and 1969, established the Party's capacity to use coercive force. However, their capacity was not that of the status quo. By 1970, the deaths, arrests, and imprisonments of Party leaders and members had made it next to impossible to establish the desirability and legitimacy of the power strategy.

In the course of the movement, there were leaders who served as "men of words," "fanatics," and "men of actions."
Yet, there seemed to have been more "men of words" and "fanatics" than there were "men of action." The Party was in great need of leadership, which carefully planned and monitored the progression of the movement. When the top leadership of the Party became involved in endless court cases and disputes with the establishment, there was not the necessary leadership to organize and continue the internal structure of the organization. Their period of most intense growth, from 1967 to 1969, was met with an equally intense period of ideological conflicts between the leadership, and confusion and contradiction within the Party itself. The internal struggle of the Panthers found the Party fighting with each other, as well as the establishment.

The ideology of the movement seemed to create a great deal of ambiguity for Party members, as well as the public at large. According to Newton, the Party went through three ideological phases: black nationalism, revolutionary socialism, and internationalism. However, the underlying principle of the Party remained embedded in the idea of self-defense. Through the Party's community activities, the Panthers were providing defense against social and economic conditions which were physically and psychologically starving the inhabitants of America's ghettos. The ideology of the Party actually went much further than "armed defense" against the police. However, the media's concentration on sensational
events and the Party's own preoccupation with increasing hostility between themselves and the police, precluded an adequate ideological development of the term "self-defense."

In many ways, the Panthers attempted to give young blacks of the ghetto an identity and a meaning for their existence. The attraction to the organization was tremendous. The Panthers sought to change the direction of the activities of young, urban blacks away from drugs and crimes against each other and the community toward discipline, educational training, and concern over the welfare of "their" community. The effectiveness of the Panthers in accomplishing this goal and the end-result it was supposed to produce can be politically and morally questioned. However, within the environmental conditions of this country's slum areas, the goals and ideology of the Panthers could certainly be justified. The ideology of the movement provided it with justification as well as psychological and physical weapons with which to attack the establishment and defend the actions of the organization. Yet, the tragedies which befell the organization during the later part of the sixties forced Newton to provide answers about the Party's problems. He adopted a Marxist-Leninist type of dialectical reasoning which he used to justify a change of direction in the movement and to explain and rationalize the Party's past struggles.
The membership of the organization contributed to the rhetorical form of the movement. The following which the movement attracted can be linked to several motivational factors. The organization did fill the emotional needs for "belonging" which is a basic requirement, especially for an adolescent. Fourteen and fifteen-year old urban residents sensed a feeling of pride and brotherhood as they participated in the ceremonial observances of Pantherism. White radicals were also attracted to the movement. The militancy of the Panthers and their willingness to "pick up the gun" encouraged white college radicals, who enjoyed Cleaver's verbal obscenities against the establishment, to seek a coalition. The Panthers attracted some "liberals" to their cause but only in a peripheral sense, such as verbal and financial support. However, most liberals had found difficulty in accepting the rhetoric of "intellectual-rhetorical militants" such as Stokely Carmichael. The fact that the Panthers not only "talked guns" but picked them up and shot them at policemen disturbed both black and white liberal Americans. It appears that there were few such liberals who joined the movement because of the desirability of its goals. Yet, the Party represented one of the only viable channels for expressing the frustration and hopelessness shared by many black Americans who recognized the existent institutionalized racism.
The rhetoric of the Panthers was aimed at three audiences: the black community, the white community, and the establishment. For the black community, their rhetoric was used to interpret the reality which all blacks shared, to promulgate the Party's doctrine, and to solidify support for their cause. For the white audience, the rhetoric of the Panthers was intended to justify their acts and to polarize sentiment. For the establishment, the rhetorical strategies of the movement were aimed toward threatening disruption, unless demands were met, and verbally degrading the power structure.

The methods of the movement had varying intentions and varying results. The strategy of promulgation was employed to win support of the Party's position. Verbally and nonverbally the tactics of exploitation of the mass media, the holding of rallies, and pamphleteering were employed. The strategy of solidification was developed through the publication of an in-group newspaper, esoteric symbols, songs, and other forms of ceremonial behavior which were encouraged to solidify the movement. The strategies of escalation-confrontation and polarization used tactics which threatened disruption, exploited flag issues, and obscenely deprecated the establishment through derogatory jargon. It is difficult to say whether the Panthers actually initiated guerrilla tactics toward the establishment. Yet, they did verbally
advocate the physical destruction of the establishment and were perceived by the establishment as initiating violence. The rhetorical tactics and strategies of the Panthers were relatively successful in giving the movement a sense of progression. However, the rhetoric of control was also successful with its tactics of denial of means, overt rejection of the movement's goals, banishment, and purgation. It is difficult to say what might have happened if the rhetoric of control had not have been applied so intensely by the establishment. On one hand, the movement may have developed, especially under Cleaver, into a truly revolutionary group. On the other hand, for a movement to gain support, it must create sympathy for the cause and be able to promulgate its doctrine.

Thus, the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the Black Panther Party maintained a power base. Bi-polarization of black and white America intensified during the Panther's reign of radicalism. Coercive persuasion was employed to establish the willingness, the capacity, the legitimacy, and the desirability of the movement's power orientation.

In the final analysis, the Black Panther Party suffered several difficulties which may affect the development of any movement selecting to go outside the realm of societal norms employing only a power strategy. First, the Party was under constant fire from the establishment which viewed
their rhetoric as a reality which threatened the security of the country. Secondly, the sensational methods which the movement employed deterred its ideological and organizational development. Third, the escalation-confrontation and polarization tactics of the Panthers increased the differences between black and white America and lost the support of those blacks who feared official repression. A power strategy has its short-term advantages but in the long run it is only through a change of attitudes, through understanding and peaceful negotiations, through a genuine belief in the "power of persuasion" to mend the differences between opposing groups that effective and lasting social change can take place.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


198


Evans, Robert E., editor, Readings in Collective Behavior, Chicago, Rand McNally, 196.


**Articles**


Zinn, Howard, "The Limits of Nonviolence," Freedomways, IV (First Quarter, 1964), 143-145.

Reports

Dictionaries

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Springfield, Mass.,

Newspapers

Black Panther, April 25, 1967,
June 2, 1967,
July 20, 1967,
March 3, 1969,
October 18, 1969,
November 15, 1969,
June 5, 1971.
