AN ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUES DEVELOPED BY SELECT
BLACK AMERICANS ON THE WAR IN VIETNAM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Robert William Mullen, B.S., M.S.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1971

Approved by

[Signature]
Advisor
Department of Speech
PLEASE NOTE:

Some Pages have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to make several acknowledgments. First, I wish to thank my advisor, Professor James Golden, for his encouragement, understanding and for perfecting the manuscript.

My next acknowledgments go to two scholars on my reading committee, Professors Goodwin Berquist and Franklin Knower. Their valuable suggestions added strength and clarity to the work.

I take this opportunity to also express my appreciation and sincere thanks to my wife, Linda, for her patience and the numerous sacrifices she made on behalf of this study. Without her special thoughtfulness, this dissertation might not have been possible.

My thanks, finally, to John and Suzie, to those graduate students and friends in Buckeye Village who have left their marks upon me.
VITA

November 1, 1937 . . . . Born - Melrose, Massachusetts
June, 1960 . . . . . . B.S., Emerson College, Boston, Massachusetts
June, 1962 . . . . . . M.S., Emerson College, Boston, Massachusetts
1968 - 1971 . . . . Teaching Associate, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Speech

Studies in Rhetoric: Professors James Golden, Richard Ricko, Harold Lawson

Studies in Communication: Professors Franklin Knower, Jack Douglas

Studies in Persuasion: Professor Wallace Fotheringham

Studies in Speech Education: Professors George Lewis, Jack Douglas
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART I. RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale and Justification for the Study of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Rhetoric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Rationale for this Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Dissertation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE BLACK ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ISSUE OF WAR AND PEACE</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Revolutionary War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The War of 1812</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish-American War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World War One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World War Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Korean War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vietnam War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF BLACK AMERICANS</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies and Movements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separatism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE RHETORICAL SITUATION</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Revolutionary Approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Separatist Approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Assimilationist Approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART II. AN ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE ISSUE OF &quot;COLOR&quot; WARS AGAINST THE POOR AND OPPRESSED OF VIETNAM AND AMERICA</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE ISSUE OF RACE GENOCIDE</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. THE INCONSISTENCY PERCEIVED IN FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM ABROAD IN THE ABSENCE OF FREEDOM IN AMERICA</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. THE ISSUE OF PRIORITIES</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictions for the Future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Future Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale and Justification for the Study of Black Rhetoric

There is a considerable body of primary source materials to suggest that black Americans, in seeking to establish a meaningful role and identity in American society, often wrote and spoke with persuasive force on the issue of war and peace in every era beginning with the colonial period and extending to the present. Yet despite this evidence rhetoricians until recently have largely ignored these expressive contributions of black Americans. Black rhetoric has surely been with us for a long time. It is only now after either choice or pressure that we have come to realize its rich history.

One can state that there is a phenomenon known as a black rhetoric, messages generated by blacks and for blacks in the attempt to gain status and what may be called the "good life." By "good life" is meant that blacks, too, desire the good things in life, which so many other Americans have already gained; things now taken for
"granted" by the white middle class. It can also mean aspiring to a place in an open society—"one in which integration is a free option rather than a faint hope." For Martin Luther King the term "good life" meant "a share in the American economy, the housing market, the educational system and the social opportunities." For King, it meant to "'get in' rather than to overthrow." For Bobby Seale, the "good life" means the same goals the white man fights for. These are simply a decent education, good jobs, and good housing. In terms of economics alone, Stokely Carmichael explains the term this way:

We want our people to be able to enjoy life and to get all the things they need for a decent life without having to struggle as hard as they now do. . . .

---

Expressed in social terms, Carmichael says:

I guess we want what most people want out of life: people who are happy and free and who can live better than they now live and who make and participate in decisions that affect their lives, and never feel ashamed of the color of their skin or ashamed of their culture. 6

Politically, the term means for Carmichael a black people "free of oppression." 7

In this attempt to obtain the "good life," blacks throughout history have also made meaningful and fitting responses to the exigencies that confronted them. As Golden and Rieke point out in their text The Rhetoric of Black Americans, the total concept of black rhetoric may be viewed largely as a persuasive campaign with periods of revolt and terror. 8

It seems clear that a focus on black rhetoric is justified for at least three major reasons. First, it would appear that it has made an impact on both black and white America. Secondly, there is evidence to suggest that it will not be a momentary thing. And, third, its strengths and weaknesses as a movement are of value to the rhetorical scholar. Still further, its justification, as Golden and Rieke suggest, rests on the following:

1) it has fashioned leaders and heroes.

6Ibid., p. 525.
7Ibid., p. 524.
8Ibid., pp. 10-17.
2) it has created a body of literature.

3) it has changed or altered black and white perceptions of society and one's role in that society.

4) it has given the young black American a new sense of self-identity and his role in a white society.

5) it has altered attitudes and images.

6) it has questioned the traditional theories of rhetoric, and accepted norms of speech and speech values, and the traditional doctrines of usage.

In short, black rhetoric is an identifiable and useful study in itself. Since black history in America has been, what Arthur L. Smith calls, "a history of protest" and "a history of communicative challenges," an assessment of the rhetorical management of those challenges seems important. Among some gains to be realized for the black student is a greater sense of the worth and dignity of his past. For the white reader, a deeper understanding of the black individual and a basis to communicate with him should result. For society in general, there should be an increased appreciation of why America today is in turmoil.

Additionally, blacks are today demanding a more meaningful role in the decision-making processes of

---

9 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

government, international affairs, and society in general. In our attempt to increase the information and understand the contributions and inputs by black Americans to the development and direction of our society, it seems evident that the current furor over both civil rights and Vietnam constitutes one of the most challenging dual issues facing contemporary America. Therefore, a study of the persuasive activities by blacks on both struggles seems useful, timely, and certainly relevant. Hopefully, as a study of the past tells us something about the present, contemporary events will enable the critic to make some kinds of prediction about the future.

A Rationale For This Study

There is evidence to suggest that the war in Vietnam is probably the most unpopular conflict in which Americans have been involved. From a communications view, the war has additionally provoked a comprehensive news coverage, television analysis of front-line action, congressional debate on the war, the draft, military spending and war research, plus campus reaction, all generally surpassing that concerned with any other conflict. Further, extraordinary reaction to the war by people at all levels and ages, particularly the young, has developed. College students, churchmen, senators, and the black American have all protested against this war. These individuals and
groups have explored the issues and have disagreed with the Washington analysis of the cause and nature of this war. Many do not accept the thesis that communist aggression has brought the American Army to Vietnam and that we must fight there for the ultimate security of the United States. Many others are convinced that neither America nor they as individuals have anything to gain from participation in the war. Yet, the volume and frequency of communication generated by the war, however, has not produced proportional research, writings, and criticism. While the historical recency of the topic and the problems of writing contemporary history and criticism are clear, the national furor raised by the Vietnam war suggests the rhetorical critic cannot for too long ignore the relationships that are affected by this crisis. In the case of the Vietnam war and this study, this would include the problems and situations created by the rhetoric of the black American.

It seems important, therefore, that at this point some attention must be given to a survey of the most current literature in the field of black rhetoric in terms of Vietnam. Such a review will hopefully suggest that black reaction to the war has also been insufficiently dealt with in terms of research, writings, or criticism.

Scott and Brockriede in their book *The Rhetoric of Black Power* are primarily concerned with the phrase "black power" as both a concept and a revolutionary force in
American life. While the book is essentially an attempt to define the phrase through a collection of articles and speeches by James P. Comer, Hubert H. Humphrey, Stokely Carmichael, Martin Luther King, Charles V. Hamilton, and essays by both authors first published in the Central States Speech Journal, the book contains only isolated references to Vietnam. The book remains essentially an explanation of the phrase, its definition, impact, and effect on American life.

Black Protest: History, Documents, and Analysis, 1619 to the Present by Joanne Grant is a comprehensive history of three and one-half centuries of black American protest and agitation. In addition to documents, position papers, letters, and the writings and speeches of DuBois, Garvey, Douglass, Walker, John Brown, Mrs. Rosa Parks, Charles Silberman, Ossie Davis, and others, Grant's reprint of a newsletter by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party of McComb, Mississippi, on July 28, 1965, is important in that its publication marked the first black protest of the war. Grant also includes the SNCC anti-Vietnam war statement of January 6, 1966, the first such statement by a major civil rights organization on the war.


While the two volume book *The Making of Black America* by August Meier and Elliott Rudwick deals importantly with the origins of blacks and the black community in modern America, concentrating finally on the new militancy, the concept of identification, and the rhetoric of "soul," the book remains a collection of essays and articles by such men as John Hope Franklin, Benjamin Quarles, Robert C. Weaver, E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph J. Bunche, and Thurgood Marshall. While valuable, to be sure, it does not contribute to an understanding of the black man's relationship to the war in Asia.

John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom* remains one of the definitive source books on the history of the black American. Spanning a thousand years of black experience on three continents, Franklin begins with the pre-slave trade of Africa through slavery in the western hemisphere, admitting in his preface to the revised third edition of 1967, that this edition only begins to deal with the revolutionary developments of the last decade. The book is also noted for its comprehensive bibliography.

The *Rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement* edited by Haig A. Bosmajian and Hamida Bosmajian is one part of

---


the Random House series on issues and spokesmen developed as a response to a need expressed in the areas of rhetoric and public address, persuasion, and in rhetorical, political, and social criticism. The book is organized around the issue of civil rights and contains the editors' introductory essay on the social, political, and intellectual environment on the issue itself, the background of the issue, a description of careers and roles of the spokesmen included, an account of the rhetorical techniques and principles for analysis, and the speeches presented chronologically, generally, in their entirety. While the book does contain the recent speeches by Carmichael at Morgan State College on January 16, 1967, and Floyd B. McKissick at the National Conference on Black Power on July 21, 1967, only brief references are made to Vietnam.

Rhetoric of Black Revolution\(^{16}\) by Arthur L. Smith, while important for its chapter discussions of the nature of revolutionary rhetoric, the strategies of the revolutionists, and the topics or themes of revolutionary rhetoric, does not concretely deal with the issue of Vietnam. Although samples of this rhetoric include speeches by Cleaver and Seale, special references to Vietnam are at a minimum.

\(^{16}\)Arthur L. Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969).
The Black Power Revolt, edited by Floyd B. Barbour, is admitted by Barbour himself to be a collection of thirty-six essays by black writers that span almost two centuries of black protest. Among the contributors Barbour includes Nat Turner, Malcolm X, Leroi Jones, Robert F. Williams and Ron Karenga.

Black Power: The Radical Response to White America, edited by Thomas Wagstaff, is one book in the series of contemporary issues from Glencoe Press. The documents and speeches included attempt to provide insight into the background of "black power." The early selections illustrate the black man's historical attempts to identify themselves with the mainstream of American life. The remaining chapters reflect the radical tradition of black protest thought as it developed in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Wagstaff's final chapter presents the writings of modern adherents of black power and concludes with an analysis of its meaning and direction.

The Negro Speaks, edited by Jamye C. Williams and McDonald Williams, includes six categories of speeches

covering a wide range of subjects and further representing twenty-three speakers from a variety of vocations and professions. The span of time covered is a twenty-two year period from 1945 to 1967. The editors have conveniently grouped the speeches under the categories of speeches to articulate problems, to arouse national conscience, to affirm rights and responsibilities, to assess the past and chart the future, and speeches to enunciate black awareness. While the editors admit the anthology is by no means all-inclusive, noticeably absent is any black concern with the issue of Vietnam.

Black Protest in the Sixties, edited with an introduction by August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, is primarily a collection of articles reprinted from The New York Times Magazine, spanning the years 1960-1969. Once again, while the book relies essentially on articles by such authors as Eric F. Goldman, C. Vann Woodward, Kenneth Clark, Charles V. Hamilton, and others, to explain how far the black protest movement has traveled in the sixties and why its future course seems uncertain, none of the articles deal directly with the war in Asia and its impact on the black American.

James L. Golden and Richard D. Rieke in *The Rhetoric of Black Americans* develop the theme that the black American's experience has been essentially marked by the attempt to achieve a good life through the use of rhetoric. This rhetoric, the authors add, has concentrated on three major strategies: assimilation, separation, and revolution. Included with the speeches, essays, editorials, and letters are original essays by the authors analyzing each of the strategies.

Other books in the field would include *The Rhetoric of Revolt* by Paul D. Brandes; *Forerunners of Black Power: The Rhetoric of Abolition* by Ernest G. Bormann; *The Agitator in American Society* by Charles W. Lomas; and *The Rhetoric of Racial Revolt* by Roy Hill. While C. Eric Lincoln's *The Black Muslims in America* remains a thorough

---


study of the history, ideology, methods, and goals of the Black Muslims, so, too, this book, published as it was in 1961, fails to substantially record any Muslim reaction to the developing issue of Vietnam.

Soul on Ice by Eldridge Cleaver, written while Cleaver was in California's Folsom State Prison, is essentially autobiographical in nature, yet, contributes to an understanding of the black position on Vietnam with the inclusion of two chapters on the subject. These chapters are: (1) "Rallying Round the Flag," and (2) "The Black Man's Stake in Vietnam."

One further contribution to the dialogue on Vietnam is available in Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal by Howard Zinn. Admittedly opposed to further American involvement in the war, the book is important not only for the debate and case for withdrawal and other alternatives to the war, but Zinn includes a chapter discussion of the black view on the war. He titles the chapter "A View from Within: The Negro."

In addition to the books cited previously, a survey of theses and dissertations in the area of black rhetoric

---


also reveals that little concentration in terms of Vietnam has been completed. However, among some representative research on King alone are these titles.  


29 Marvil E. Geynar dealt with a thematic analysis of twelve sermons by King on race relations between 1954 and 1963.  

30 Lucy A. Melhuish, dealing with the rhetoric of racial revolt, completed a Burkeian analysis of speeches by King.  

Concerned with the nature and function of rhetorical imagery, Samuel T. Niccolls provided a descriptive study of three speeches by King.  

32 Donald H. Smith at the University of Wisconsin titled his dissertation: "Martin

\[ ... \]


Luther King, Jr.: Rhetorician of Revolt." Janeda W. Stennet centered her study of King on his rhetorical techniques.

Representative research dealing with other black orators would include one study of Stokely Carmichael by Patricia A. Jefferson who titled her thesis "The Rhetoric of the 'Magnificent Barbarian'" and another by George R. Skorkowski who dealt with a Burkeian analysis of the rhetoric of Malcolm X.

In terms of other representative titles, John Allison studied American racial protest drama from 1955 to 1965. Concerned with patterns of black protest, Augustus F. Caine dealt with a structural-functional analysis of black protest. Alexander Hawruluk studied


various militant civil rights organizations. In a study of recent black protest thought, William R. Marty centered on the theories of nonviolence and black power. The case study method was used by Jackson A. McCormack to study some aspects of communicative behaviors toward white persons by a group of young leaders in one black ghetto.

Importantly, then, in terms of one rationale for this study, a review of the literature in the field reveals that while all the books, theses, and dissertations cited previously touch on some phases of black rhetoric, none of these works have singled out or concentrated on the issue of Vietnam for special focus.

Second, it may be stated with some confidence that in recent years the rhetoric of black Americans has taken a dramatic turn from a singular concern with the issue of civil rights in America to a more global, universal concern with the issue of war and peace in Vietnam. Today, the black communicator now appears to view the civil rights


struggle and the war issue in Vietnam as directly tied together, the implications and outcomes of both dependent on the other. Since the war in Vietnam is an overriding issue which affects all the major facets of American society, we may then study with profit its impact on the black American, and more importantly, its rhetorical implications.

An examination of the literature and oratory by black Americans on both issues reveals that reoccurring issues, arguments, or themes constitute the major thrust of the black message when they speak of either the "war" at home or United States involvement in Asia. What these issues are and how they have been developed by representative black communicators will be discussed in Chapters V through VIII.

The dissertation then is, first, the attempt to isolate the key issues or inconsistencies as seen by black Americans and, secondly, to illustrate their interpretations or perceptions of both wars as essentially the same struggle through available writings and speeches. Rhetorical standards will then be applied to gain insight into the meaning and goal of the black message.

The speeches of Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and some lesser known blacks will be included. The dissertation shall draw heavily from the writings and speeches of
Eldridge Cleaver, and particularly, Martin Luther King. Most valuable to the thrust of the study will be the three major addresses by King in 1967 and 1968 on the interrelatedness of Vietnam and the black situation in America.

**Method**

The important word in the dissertation title is "select." Clearly, one should then raise the question on what basis the speakers and materials will be selected and others rejected. First, what is included here has been limited to a large extent by the availability of resources. As the review of literature pointed out, while many books, theses, and dissertations cited earlier all touch on some phase of black rhetoric, none have singled out Vietnam for exclusive attention and focus. A second limitation on the study is set by limiting the speeches and speakers to the issue of Vietnam only. Third, speeches and speakers have been selected only as they address themselves to the four main issues. While some other materials could have been chosen, what is included here seems to reveal the scope and variety of the black message. Next, speakers were selected as they reflect, illustrate, or seem representative of the three persuasive strategies used by blacks throughout history. These strategies are: (1) the assimilationist strategy, (2) the separatist strategy, and (3) the revolutionary approach. In brief, assimilation or the "melting
pot" ideal, refers to the merging of a minority into the general community with its members accepted and fully mobile in every area of political, social, economic, and cultural intercourse. It stresses nonviolent action as a technique for effecting social change. Separatism abandons the ideal of an integrated society and calls for a drawing away from white America into either all black enclaves within the United States or complete withdrawal outside America. The revolutionary strategy calls for complete overthrow of the present system of government and its replacement with another form of government. Phrased in these three ways or not, the approach and goal in each remains to exert influence and leverage on national decisions and national policies. Thus, for example, as representative of the assimilationist point of view will be the addresses of Martin Luther King. Most valuable to the study will be three speeches by King on the interrelatedness of Vietnam to the black situation in America. These are available in complete text and comprise a significant portion of the study. From the separatist strategy, one can draw from the speeches, interviews, and writings of Malcolm X. From "The Ballot or the Bullet" address, his "Message to the Grass Roots," and "The Black Revolution," Malcolm frequently alludes to the Vietnam problem. For the

---

A more detailed explanation of each strategy is dealt with at length in Chapter III.
revolutionary strategy, much material is also available in the books, speeches, and interviews of Carmichael, Cleaver, and Huey Newton. While some speakers have moved from one strategy to another, all have made repeated references to Vietnam in terms of a particular strategy and specific issues. Finally, the selection of black speakers was based on three recent polls of the black community by the N.A.A.C.P. in January, 1970, the Gallup Organization for Newsweek Magazine in June, 1969, and the Louis Harris poll in April, 1970, for Time Magazine. Five speakers representative of the three persuasive strategies and placing within at least the top twenty leaders named in those polls were selected. A summary of those three polls is, therefore, important as they reveal both the place of those speakers in the black culture and their impact on it through the medium of the spoken word. The results of each poll are included below.

The N.A.A.C.P. poll, the first of its kind ever conducted, asked its state conference and key branch presidents to name the nation's ten most outstanding blacks, deceased and living, and to say why they rated their first choice as number one. Of the 362 persons polled, forty-three percent (156) responded, responses coming from forty-two of the forty-eight states in which the N.A.A.C.P. has state conferences and key branches, plus the District of Columbia. Although, admittedly, the
poll only represents the more moderate view of the N.A.A.C.P.

memberships, the complete results are printed below to reveal

how the assimilationist ranks its black leaders throughout

history. 43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Among the Living</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurgood Marshall</td>
<td>925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil rights, jurist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Wilkins</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph J. Bunche</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statesman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney M. Young, Jr., civil rights</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Philip Randolph</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labor leader, civil rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian Bond</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politician, civil rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. R. (Jackie) Robinson, athlete, businessman, civil rights</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward William Brooke</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., clergyman, politician</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Among the Deceased</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr., clergyman, civil rights</td>
<td>1,222 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. E. B. DuBois</td>
<td>855 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>author, editor, civil rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Douglass</td>
<td>751 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abolitionist, editor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington Carver, scientist</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booker T. Washington</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educator, founder, Tuskegee Institute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary McLeod Bethune</td>
<td>427 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educator, founder, National Council of Negro Women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm X</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet Ross Tubman</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abolitionist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medgar W. Evers</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Among the Living</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Among the Deceased</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Carl B. Stokes</td>
<td>164 politician</td>
<td>12. Sojourner Truth</td>
<td>230 abolitionist, feminist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sidney Poitier</td>
<td>157 actor</td>
<td>15. Carter Goodwin</td>
<td>158 Woodson, historian, social scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Ralph David Abernathy</td>
<td>130 clergyman, civil rights</td>
<td>17. Paul Laurence Dunbar</td>
<td>139 poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Robert C. Weaver</td>
<td>124 government official, educator, civil rights</td>
<td>18. Nat (King) Cole</td>
<td>128½ singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Sammy Davis, Jr.</td>
<td>102 entertainer</td>
<td>20. Dred Scott</td>
<td>116 slave, plaintiff in historic Dred Scott case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Rosa Parks</td>
<td>98 civil rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Dick Gregory</td>
<td>95 comedian, civil rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. Kenneth Bancroft Clark, psychologist, educator 88
25. Coretta King civil rights 82

22. Marcus Garvey separatist, black nationalist
23. Langston Hughes author
24. Prince Hall fraternal organizer 94\frac{1}{3}
25. Phillis Wheatley poet 72

The third *Newsweek* poll of black America conducted by the Gallup Organization revealed among a cross section of 977 blacks surveyed nationally that Martin Luther King remains the ranking black figure of the freedom struggle. The late black nationalist Malcolm X was their second choice. King was rated favorable by ninety-five percent of the sample, excellent by eighty-three per cent. *Newsweek* reports that the radical elements, the advocates of separation and armed revolution, have reached perhaps a militant tenth or so of black America, but not the general masses. Malcolm and Carmichael have important personal followings among the restive young as do the Black Panthers, but all these, the poll shows, rank far down on the list gauging the leaders' popularity. While the "old-style race diplomats" have slipped since the second poll three years earlier, the N.A.A.C.P. still stands second only to King. The exemplars of the new black politics appear to be
Cleveland's Mayor Carl B. Stokes and Georgia state legislator Julian Bond. However, the poll also reveals that neither can yet seriously be rated leaders of America's black masses. Regarding the important matter of who today really speaks for black America, Newsweek reports that clearly the older apostles of nonviolence and gradualist integration have all but lost their hold on what used to be called the civil-rights movement. Instead, a new style of militance is increasingly dominating the strategy and rhetoric of the black revolution. The cross sample shows that the movement today is being carried on in so many directions, by so many unfamiliar figures, that the overall impression among some whites is of confusion rather than cohesion. However, notes Newsweek, while the monolith of black leadership may be at an end, a young, articulate, and pragmatic generation appears setting the tone. The poll shows that Bond, Stokes, Charles Evers, Reverend Jesse Jackson, Harry Edwards, are some of today's younger leaders likely to attain growing national prominence based on an already high recognition quotient among the blacks surveyed.

The Louis Harris poll in April, 1970 for Time Magazine, was based on interviews among a nationwide cross section of 1,255 blacks. On a national basis, nine per cent

of all blacks, or more than two million, count themselves as revolutionaries and believe only the use of violence will bring racial equality. The number of those who believe blacks will probably have to resort to violence to win rights has risen from twenty-one per cent in 1966 to almost thirty-one per cent at the time of the survey. Among black teenagers, Harris reports the percentage is forty per cent. Harris also reports that one measure of the blacks' sense of alienation from white-run institutions is the expressed sympathy for the Black Panthers. One in four categorically states that the Panthers represent his own personal views and the figure rises to forty-three per cent among those under twenty-one. Sixty-four per cent of all blacks polled agree the Panthers "give me a sense of pride." In view of the long list of grievances, Harris feels it noteworthy that the poll reveals the majority of blacks still rely on orthodox methods of working within the system. When asked to assess the effectiveness of four different types of black leadership, a majority made the distinction that although the militants may build up black pride, they are not necessarily the most effective. At the top of the list are "elected" black officials, cited by seventy-one per cent as "very effective." They are followed by civil rights leaders, such as the N.A.A.C.P., viewed as "very effective" by sixty-seven per cent, although by only fifty-six per cent of the under twenty-one group. Behind
this group are the black ministers and religious leaders, given a "very effective" rating by fifty-six per cent. At the bottom of the list, despite "pride" expressed in the Panthers in another context, are the "leaders" of the various black militant groups. These leaders are given a "very effective" rank by only twenty-nine per cent, though an additional twenty-nine per cent say that these leaders are "somewhat effective." The complete rankings of the Harris poll are printed below under the heading "Whom Do Blacks Respect?"45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Great Deal %</th>
<th>Some, Not A Lot %</th>
<th>Hardly At All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.A.A.C.P.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.C.L.C.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Mayor Carl Stokes</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.C.L.C. President The Rev. Ralph Abernathy</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayette, Miss., Mayor Charles Evers</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.A.C.P. Executive Director Roy Wilkins</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Urban League</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Thurgood Marshall</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Jesse Jackson</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the widely-held view by many blacks that polls are limited in their value, these findings are significant for the following reasons: (1) each poll gives the best available insight into both the place of black communicators in the black culture and their impact on it through the medium of the spoken word; and (2) how black society ranks its leaders throughout history.

It seems clear, then, that with this current topic of Vietnam, the critic in selecting his rhetorical method should not be restricted to either old or new instruments,
but rather reflect the most rigorous approaches to the questions asked and the issues in the study. Consequently, the approach here will be the eclectic method, a bringing or drawing together of those theories of rhetorical criticism that seem most relevant or applicable to the speeches for discussion.

The eclectic system suggests that this author will select what is considered most appropriate and again applicable from different systems and sources of rhetorical criticism, favoring no particular method or practice but rather selecting from various theories the ones that provide insight into the nature and meaning of the black message on Vietnam.

Being an issue study, the issues and arguments will, in some cases, dictate the method. Some issues will by themselves suggest the rhetorical material as this writer finds it. This is termed inductive criticism. Yet again, some rhetorical standards or methods can be set at the start. Such will be the case when the rhetorical situation is discussed. One knows Lloyd Bitzer's monograph is important here. The test, then, will be the scholar's ability to adjust his material to fit his theory.

The eclectic method and inductive criticism means the writer has made some previous observations and then searches the data or theories to find those that help him understand or describe the product of his observation. If the theory proves of little value, here the writer can suggest other tentative hypotheses for further testing. In that this method can work to reveal weaknesses in selected theories of rhetorical criticism, it also suggests avenues for future research. 47

Two rhetoricians who have urged the use of the eclectic method in rhetorical criticism are Mark S. Klyn in his essay "Toward a Pluralistic Rhetorical Criticism" 48 and Otis M. Walter in his essay "On the Varieties of Rhetorical Criticism." 49 A review of both essays will help clarify further the nature of the eclectic approach.

The essay by Klyn expresses dissatisfaction with the conventional and limited attitude which he feels still dominates much of rhetorical criticism. Because this attitude sacrifices ingenuity for dependability, Klyn deplores the demand for a prescriptive criticism built on a standard methodology.

47 Golden and Rieke, Black Americans, p. 37.
A "monistic compulsion" in the theory of rhetorical critics, he points out, has led to a misapprehension about the nature of criticism and what one should ask of it. Those who demand some unifying set of principles, Klyn believes, are not talking about criticism, but rather mere pedagogy. Klyn is opposed to the ideal and totalistic pattern of rhetorical criticism which traditionally sees rhetorical criticism as a unitary pattern of analysis and evaluation. Traditionally, he believes the tendency has been by the critic to suggest practical generalizations of rhetoric, supporting an attitude of functionalism which Klyn feels is quite false to the nature of criticism. This "pedagogic compulsion" has generated a limiting set of priorities that makes the job of the critic essentially one of just being useful to the practitioner, creating technical absolutes for criticism. Arguing the "traditional pedagogical fixation" confines one to the immediate, audience-oriented situation of the speech, or to the practical argumentative ends of rhetoric, he writes:

The problem with the traditional view of rhetorical criticism is not inherent in the Aristotelian conception of rhetoric, but obtrudes only when this standpoint is extended to dominate rhetorical criticism as well.50

Klyn's emphasis is that rhetorical criticism can be valuable regardless of its consideration of the practicalities of

rhetorical theory. Otherwise, Klyn observes, one only authorizes "a tyranny of technique." 51

Holding that a restrictive view of criticism in terms of effect as the ultimate test of judgment has delimited the meaning and consequences of rhetoric and created "institutionalization" and "implicit absolutism," Klyn asserts that a speech's effect on its immediate audience and how this result is achieved is only one of the ultimate concerns of criticism. Consequently, Klyn would have the critic comprehend the discourse in a larger context, free of any "coercive" doctrine, "pedagogical imperative," prescriptive definition of rhetorical criticism, or inhibiting methodology. He further wants the critic to function uninhibited by methodology or technique and be free to use his mind as unconventionally as he can. In writing about persuaders or works of rhetoric, Klyn suggests the need for the critic to reason inductively from the material and explore his insights as an independent, disinterested thinker. 52 Thus, Klyn argues in essence that rhetorical criticism and literary criticism are parallel, and that rhetorical criticism "delimits only a genre, an area of concentration; that it does not define a methodology, as rhetorical critics seem conventionally to have supposed."

51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., pp. 154-156.
For Klyn, rhetorical criticism only means "intelligent writing about works of rhetoric," the works "illuminatingly treated" in whatever way the critic can manage it. It does not imply "a prescriptive mode of writing, any categorical structure of judgment, or even any judgmental necessity." 53

Otis Walter argues that one major reason rhetorical critics are ignored or rhetorical criticism fails to capture interest is that most critics rely too heavily on a system derived from Aristotle's Rhetoric. While one of Aristotle's stated aims was to ask "What are the means of persuasion?," Walter believes critics for too long have made this the one aim for criticism, thus, letting the exclusiveness of the Aristotelian question blind many to the fact that in some cases the question itself is not even worth asking. 54

Walter contends that an analysis of the means of persuasion is not always the best standpoint from which to look at a speech and often misses other important matters. Sometimes, writes Walter, questions having to do with the available means of persuasion are not the important questions at the moment. Regrettably, Walter notes, critics have made from Aristotle a canon, a creed for criticism, avowing

53 Ibid., p. 147.
this way as the only proper way of looking at a speech. Instead of guaranteeing good criticism, Walter feels the use of the Rhetoric "formalizes" a way of looking at a speech that is not always the best way, and, at times, may be an absurd or impossible way. Emphasizing that Aristotelian criticism does not meet even the requirement of exclusiveness since studies of the means of persuasion are also found in the fields of psychology and sociology, Walter urges that uniqueness should hardly be a guarantee of excellence. For him, the critic in rhetoric should be more concerned with "our intellect than our uniqueness."

The thrust of the Walter essay is that the present use of the Rhetoric "by no means exploits the whole of the work." Other aspects of it might furnish more productive questions than the traditional one. Indeed, writes Walter, as the rhetorical critic should have a broad background in the fields of politics, ethics, and psychology, the points of view from which rhetoric might be written seem unlimited. For Walter, there are more worthwhile "undiscovered" rhetorics than the consciously formulated theories of rhetoric suggest. Aside from the explicit rhetorics, Walter notes that every culture and every subculture has an "implicit" theory of rhetoric, a theory of how communication ought to proceed, and of what

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{ pp. 163-165.}\]
is appropriate, dangerous, or unusual. Walter's argument is that critics have not discovered these "implicit" assumptions about communication in, for example, a slum or ghetto culture, because critics for too long have been dominated by the study of the available means of persuasion.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 168-170.}

Walter also makes clear that procedures and formulas in the humanities only result in "mindless mechanics." As criticism cannot be easily prescribed, criticism that is "brilliant" is somewhat unexpected, fits the unique speech for which it is designed, and is the most appropriate thing to say "at this time about that speech." In Walter's words: "to say that criticism cannot be formulated in advance is only another way of saying that rhetoric belongs to the humanities and not to the natural sciences."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 170.}

Criticism in the humanities, continues Walter, is unpredictable and free from formulas out of the past. He would have critics rely on the notion that there is no true way of criticism, but several ways, some more appropriate than others. Rather than treating only persuasion, he makes clear that there are other divergent standpoints from which critics may view speeches.

Believing rhetoric, broadly speaking, is "any theory about communication," Walter argues that rhetorical criticism has become "formalized" by adopting a portion of
Aristotle's Rhetoric. As there are often more important questions to raise than the use or neglect of persuasive devices, Walter, in rejecting a single approach to criticism, calls for a great variety of approaches suggested by both the explicit rhetorics and the yet undescribed implicit rhetorics that exist everywhere. From this variation, Walter then sees the need for a kind of "natural selection" among rhetorical theories. In his view, with a number of standpoints from which to criticize speeches, the critic will then be able to select those that most meet his particular needs. Thus, against the background of the arguments being advanced by Klyn and Walter, let us trace some of the approaches that demonstrate the eclectic approach.

First, it seems important that some discussion must be given to the reason black Americans have perceived the two conflicts as essentially tied together, almost one in the same thing. Certainly the civil rights movement started out as a quest for civil rights alone and, therefore, one should ask what suddenly made certain leaders perceive the two conflicts as related? In other words, at what point and for what reasons did Martin Luther King feel he could no longer remain silent on the war and suffering in Vietnam? Additionally, at what point and on what basis

58 Ibid., pp. 171-172.
did the revolutionaries seem to equate the struggle in America and Vietnam as part of a general "third world" struggle, a universal, worldly movement by all people of color? Here Lloyd Bitzer's discussion of the "Rhetorical Situation" seems to apply. For some reasons and at some point, blacks obviously felt they had to make a meaningful and fitting response to an escalating situation. Early study suggests that the Vietnam situation produced much of the black response. In Bitzer's terms, the situation, some felt, could be modified. Major black leaders felt obviously their public utterances could alter the situation or the course of events. The rhetoric had the power to change America's course of action. Others, perhaps, as the study may show, perceived an anti-war rhetoric as an opportunity to get broader support from white circles than the civil rights issue alone might achieve. These opportunists may have seen a rhetorical advantage to uniting the two causes. In other words, the war gave some blacks a broader base to attract additional white students and academicians to the basic civil rights cause. On the other hand, did some black leaders connect the two issues on the philosophical position of racism, pacifism, conscience, patriotism, or opposition to war in general? These raise interesting questions and will be dealt with in the conclusion.

Thus, in terms of the eclectic approach, Bitzer's concept of the rhetorical situation deserves consideration and application to the topic. Significant black Americans have made fitting responses to the Vietnam problem. They have perceived "defects," "something waiting to be done."

Second, it seems when one talks of both wars as "color" wars against the poor and oppressed of the world and a speaker calls for minorities and people of color to unite and overthrow their oppressor, that these calls for unity suggest an application of Kenneth Burke's concepts of identification and consubstantiality. Burke talks of a style of ingratiating. Identification for Burke means cooperation and sociality between speaker and listener, both acting together, sharing common ideas, attitudes, and concepts that make them substantially one. Rhetoric, for Burke, "builds bridges," plays on common experiences. As Burke writes, to proclaim a man "brother," is to identify your ways with his and one does this by emphasizing common language, heritage, experiences, ideas, and beliefs.

How particular black communicators attempt to establish the bond and commonality of black Americans and Asians, develop the idea of a universal struggle and unity

---

among all colored people for complete freedom, and seek to establish a feeling of "oneness" of "brotherness" among both peoples and both conflicts, is dealt with at length in Chapter V.

Third, when this writer suggests that one issue involves the adoption of wrong priorities and King speaks of the domestic consequences and morality of the war itself, this suggests a discussion of Richard Weaver's argument from definition. King, on three occasions, seemed to argue from the essential nature of things, from principles, the rightness of the issue. King, it can be hopefully shown, spoke to his audience not as they were, but rather what they were capable of becoming. In Richard Whately's terms, King's rhetoric was attempting to bring Mahomet to the mountain on occasion and not necessarily the mountain down to Mahomet. It attempted to show men "better versions of themselves." King's speeches suggested not "what was," but rather "what was best." From the Weaver perspective, one could say King spoke to men not as they were, but rather what they could be. In short, the major question for King was: "Is it morally right to curtail pressing domestic needs within America in order to prosecute the war in Vietnam?"

A fourth organizational pattern from which to view black response to the war can be drawn from Eric Hoffer's discussion of the four stages in mass movements. Mass
movements for Hoffer proceed from or begin with the men of words or letters, academic leaders, and opinion leaders (King). The movement then passes to the fanatics, opportunists who only join to belong to something or use the movement for personal gain. The third stage is described as an uncontrolled phase with violent reaction setting in. Here the men of letters become disenchanted and fall out. The militants come in and take control. The fourth stage is where the movement either runs itself out, is crushed, or passes into the hands of the practical "men of action." These "men of action," legislators, attempt to put things back together again through rational channels. Thus, one could say that the black rhetoric on Vietnam seems to conform to Hoffer's stages. Hoffer's generalizations, again, seem a part of the eclectic method and most applicable to the study.

The criticisms of Edwin Black and Douglas Ehninger on logos and argument seem the most useful and valuable framework from which to study this topic. Rejecting Aristotle's belief that rhetoric is rooted in the rationality of man, Edwin Black contends that there are too many neo-Aristotelian scholars with us today. Black writes that Aristotle was in error to assume that all hearers or

audiences act and perceive in a rational, logical manner. He states that man is an emotional being first. One, therefore, persuades by stressing emotional experiences through emotional appeals. For Black, it is up to the speaker to create a universe of discourse from the clusters of opinions that people already hold. The goal, thus, is to change attitudes.

As support for the Edwin Black position, Ehninger argues that all past measurements of argument are invalid. The speaker now has a moral validity to change attitude. Further, the audience must know they are being persuaded and want to be. Consistency is not measured by examining the internal arguments. Today, says Ehninger, consistency does not necessarily prove the validity of arguments. Consistency again is not shown by the number of facts for support, the prestige of the speaker, the motives of the opponent, the ability of the case to persuade, or by comparing this case or speech to others earlier judged valid. All these Ehninger feels are unacceptable criteria for revealing or measuring the validity of arguments.62 The valid tests are, first, it causes one to "abandon," change, reorder or alter his position or thinking, and secondly, the opponent or audience must know it is being persuaded out

of necessity, not choice. Holding that evidence is no longer in a jar but in the mind of the hearer, Ehninger recommends the need to look at the audience. Since the validity of evidence is determined by the listeners, Ehninger feels an enthymeme can only be constructed out of a major premise that is accepted by members of that audience. To measure the worth of an argument, then, is to ascertain its effectiveness on the hearers.\textsuperscript{63}

How various black communicators stress common emotional experiences through the use of emotional appeals, create the discourse through opinions known to be probably held by their audiences, and emphasize the evidence they know is again already in the mind of the black audience is developed at length in Chapter VII with a discussion of the perceived inconsistency of black soldiers fighting for a freedom in Asia when there is no real freedom for blacks in America.

The argument being offered here is that the traditional, formal, analytical process of assessing arguments may no longer be valuable in evaluating black rhetoric. Perelman, in rejecting formal, analytic logic as a model

\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., 220-222.
for practical argument makes these distinctions. First, Perelman rejects the idea that form in logical argument should make an assessment—form meaning the structure itself. Second, analytical has meant that no new evidence is presented in the conclusion that has not been found in the premises. In other words, the idea that one could look at the premises and then draw conclusions has been the tradition of the past.

Like Toulmin, Perelman is looking for a non-formal logic to explain and justify how law is changed and modified. Perelman feels that the non-analytical and adherence by choice concepts have been long neglected since the time of Descartes. Arguments that seek the adherence to theses by somebody and by choice have been largely ignored. Arguments, Perelman would like us to accept, are never right or wrong, but only strong or weak, relevant or irrelevant. One can determine the strength or weakness of an argument by looking at the law of justice. This law proposes that beings or situations of the same category be treated alike. As Perelman writes, if we can formulate a law of justice applicable to all men and agreeable to all, we will have a better understanding of man himself.

---

and law in general. Still further, arguments seek the adherence of others and are audience-centered, not form-centered. Perelman stresses arguments that speak to a universal audience, a target audience, almost posterity. For Perelman, presumption and burden of proof are not inherent in the statements. He would have us look at the beliefs of the audience to determine presumption and burden of proof. Thus, in weighing arguments, Perelman rejects absolutism, dualism, and subjectivity.

Perelman favors a reason that not only justifies, deliberates, and criticizes, but also argues. His text stresses the practical, rational, reasonable argument. Non-formal logic should be rhetorical and argumentative, not deductive and mathematical. In short, Perelman is favoring a logic of value judgments.

The point again for emphasis is that the Black, Ehninger, and Perelman thrust on logic and argument may be the only perspectives from which to assess the black message. If, as Rokeach suggests, people associate or choose people who primarily think and act as they do—regardless of race, religion, or belief congruence, then, in evaluating and criticizing black rhetoric, it may no longer be strictly a rhetorical problem. Rokeach feels the rhetoric may now be aimed more at black psychological problems.  

---

Organization of the Dissertation

Before discussing the organization and chapter descriptions of the study itself, three final comments must be made about what has come before. First, the strategies alluded to earlier are meant to illustrate persuasive approaches taken by various speakers at one time or another. It is quite possible that the same person employed more than one strategy in his lifetime. Second, not to satisfy the white liberal consciousness, but rather to give the study a more balanced structure and historical perspective, a discussion of the historical role and participation of the black American soldier in support of national war efforts has been included in Chapter II. Certainly to suggest that black Americans have failed to establish a military tradition of patriotism, service, and bravery both to their country and the military would be in serious error. In retrospect, individual black soldiers and entire black units have performed credibly and received honors as far back as the Civil War and including Vietnam. Yet, more importantly, such a survey and discussion is also necessary as it reveals insights into the later black view and attitude on the war in Vietnam. For this last reason primarily, such a chapter review seems necessary and is included. Part one, which includes chapters one through four, is a rationale and justification for the study. These
chapters set forth the purpose of the study and its critical method, survey the history of the black soldier in wartime, discuss the rhetorical strategies of assimilation, separatism, and revolution, and deal with the rhetorical situation in that order. Part two, including chapters five through eight, is essentially an analysis of the four issues. Chapter IX will review the dissertation and evaluate the nature of black rhetoric in terms of specific areas. Third, and last, much is said today that whites as critics cannot possibly understand or write about the black experience or the black situation. To some extent this is true and cannot be denied. However, it should be made clear here that this writer approaches the topic, not as a man of color, but rather in terms of the need for such material, in terms of research, scholarship, and as a rhetorical critic. While the white critic has not experienced the black dilemma, this should not prevent him and others from seeking or searching for some "basis of judgment" that is meaningful to both blacks and whites. In other words, one must never be deterred from seeking "some mutually acceptable basis for judgment." 66 On the other hand, blacks, too, should remain open enough to see at least how the white critic could "legitimately" reach such a conclusion or make his "honest judgment." 67

66 Golden and Rieke, Black Americans, p. 40.
67 Ibid.
CHAPTER II

AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE BLACK ATTITUDE TOWARD
THE ISSUE OF WAR AND PEACE

Recovering events and speeches of the past, reconstructing the circumstances under which speeches were given, discovering the motives that prompted orators to speak and audiences to respond, may be counted among interesting and worthy studies. Since the process of observing analytically the practice of earlier speakers and events can be helpful in developing a sound theory of speech-making, these studies are further important for the light they may throw on contemporary events, in defining a people's ideals, in determining their culture, and suggesting some lessons that can be applied to the future.

Because the study of rhetoric is essentially concerned with the persuasive process, the critic cannot properly evaluate it until he has learned a great deal about the occasion which called it forth, the speaker's relation to the occasion, the resources available to him, and the climate of opinion and current of events amidst which he operated.

Additionally, the need to know the nature of the audience for whom the speech was intended helps the critic understand why some things were said and others omitted. Further, to know something of the speaker's character, education, and background assists the critic to understand the important "conditioners" of what he says.²

Yet, as a rhetorical critic concerned with history, he must distinguish what is relevant to his purpose and not get lost in matters that are "extraneous to rhetoric."³ This is to suggest that excursions into the fields of history, sociology, or biography are useful only as they assist the critic in the rhetorical analysis of the speech itself or help explain the communicative act or problem. They are only backgrounds against which the speech itself may be studied. This means, then, historical reconstruction, . . . requires that the critic understand the nature and intent of the discourse he is examining as manifested within the historical context which gave birth to the discourse. What series of events led to the composition and delivery or writing of the discourse? What events historical, contemporary, or future are mirrored in the discourse? What forces, physical and mental, combined to produce the various reactions to the discourse? What factors external to the rhetorical transaction, or an integral part of it, acted to limit the response a discourse received, or conversely, to heighten its impact?⁴

²Ibid., pp. 5-6.
³Ibid., p. 7.
Convinced rhetoric does not arise by itself, but may be the product of some social movement, social condition, or social upheaval, the rhetorical critic sees rhetoric as both an outgrowth of and an agent-reaction on the society.

Unlike the historian concerned with the speech act as effect and a force in shaping culture, or the literary critic concerned mainly with its enduring worth as literature or its poetic beauty, the rhetorical critic centers on a speech as "a medium distinct from other media, and with methods peculiarly its own." Hochmuth emphasizes that the rhetorical critic sees public address throughout history as a communication, with a purpose, and a content presumably designed to aid in the accomplishment of that purpose, further supported by skillful composition in words, and ultimately unified by the character and manner of the person who presented it.

Concerned with speeches of the past, the rhetorical critic tries to discover the ideas which have been generated, the conditions of their acceptance or rejection, and the scope, dimension, and intensity of concentrated action. As Marie Hochmuth Nichols later notes:

Rhetoric being essentially a process whereby means are adapted to ends, it is imperative that the

---

5 Parrish and Hochmuth, American Speeches, pp. 56-57.
6 Ibid., p. 57.
critic not only know what the ends were but what resources were available at the time to secure these ends. To the extent that the critic is able to determine this, he may function effectively.6

Thus, difficult as it may be for either the historian or rhetorical critic to recreate the black past in particular, it is a function of the critic to use his imagination and knowledge of sources in all spheres, political, economic, social, cultural, to understand the past in that this may provide clues to the current black view on Vietnam.9 With this rationale in mind, it would appear that insight and understanding into the present black view of the war seems best understood by first surveying earlier black concern with the issue of war and peace and the participation of the black American in the war record of America.

Black Americans have taken part in all of this country’s wars.10 From the beginning of a military tradition in this country, black manpower has been used for military purposes. While most who have reviewed the black role in wartime conclude that white America has generally restricted black participation in military affairs until an emergency

6Ibid., p. 23.
or crisis situation forced the utilization of black manpower as a military necessity, the black American has viewed his military record as proof of his loyalty and as a claim to full citizenship. 11

United States policy requires citizens to participate in the armed forces. If a group was denied the opportunity to fulfill this obligation, this restriction could provide a rationale for denying that particular group its full rights of citizenship. Aware of this reasoning, the black American has, therefore, sought to participate in America's wars in the hope that his sacrifices would bring the reward of increased rights.

The life of the black man in America has been a "strange paradox" from the very beginning. A human being sold into slavery by fellow human beings in Africa, he was brought to America as a slave, subject to all human miseries that afflict any man, yet possessing no rights as a man. 12

As Ebony Magazine points out:

The only recognition the black slave received as a human being after the colonies became the United States was when slave holding states won the right to count each slave as three-fifths a person for

---


purposes of political representation although the slave was not given his three-fifths of a right to vote.  

Aside from the slavery issue itself, if the black man in America found himself living a paradox, first as slave and later as citizen without full rights, the same may be said for the black soldier who has fought for some three-hundred years "on the front lines of ambiguity." Never really sure of the "real" enemy or the location of his "real" battlefield nor completely accepted by his white comrades in arms or his white neighbors at home, the black soldier has still "willingly and repeatedly offered himself as a witness in war to the truths America refuses to recognize in war and peace." Thus, from the first days of the Republic, the black soldier, as one critic observes,

"... fought away from home for the freedoms denied him at home. At the back of his mind always has been the vain hope that America would recognize his bravery away from home by recognizing him as a man at home."

In every American war, on almost every American battlefield, black men of war have paid in the flesh for the dream denied.

---


14 "These Truly are the Brave," Ebony Magazine, August, 1968, p. 164.

15 Ibid.
A chronology of the black soldier in wartime is, therefore, important as it provides insight into the developing anti-war rhetoric of today's black American.

The Revolutionary War

Tradition holds that the first American alleged to shed blood in the revolution which freed America from British rule was a black seaman named Crispus Attucks.\footnote{Martin Luther King, Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?, Bantam Books (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 48.} Attucks, a slave and sailor was the first reputed to give his life in the struggle for America's independence, known to us today as the Boston Massacre of March 5, 1770.\footnote{Janette H. Harris, "Crispus Attucks," Negro History Bulletin, 33 (March, 1970), 69.}

It is of interest also to note that this was "an integrated massacre," with Attucks and four white men as martyrs.\footnote{"The Boston Massacre and Crispus Attucks," Negro History Bulletin, 33 (March, 1970), 57.}

One interpretation of the event by Martin Robinson Delany suggests:

... Colored men, not only took part in ... the first act for independence, but ... a colored man was really the hero ... and actually the first victim in the revolutionary tragedy.

Attucks ... was the first who headed, the first who commanded, ... charged, who struck the first blow, and the first whose blood ... baptized the
colony . . . on the altar of American liberty.

In the midst of a torrent of invectives . . . the military were challenged to fire.

The mulatto lifted his arm against Captain Preston . . . Firing succeeds. Attucks is slain.

He had been foremost in resisting, and was first slain; as proof of front and close engagement, received two balls, one in each breast.19

John Hope Franklin writes that it was "almost natural" for the colonists to link the problem of Negro slavery to their fight against England. The struggle by blacks to secure their freedom was growing. When James Otis was writing his "Rights of the British Colonies" in which he affirmed the black man's inalienable right to freedom, blacks, too, were petitioning the General Court of Massachusetts for their freedom on the grounds that it was their natural right. The Attucks incident in March, 1770, writes Franklin, perhaps greatly impressed many colonists of the incongruity of their position. The presence of British soldiers in Boston excited "indignation" and many wondered what actually could be done. As Franklin saw it, Attucks as a seaman probably felt the restrictions which England's new navigation acts imposed and made the protest in a form England would understand. His martyrdom is significant, therefore, not only as the first life to be offered in the

struggle against England but more importantly the significance lies in the connection

. . . which it pointed out between the struggle against England and the status of Negroes in America. Here was a fugitive slave who . . . was willing to resist England to the point of giving his life. It was a remarkable thing, the colonists reasoned, to have their fight for freedom waged by one who was not as free as they.20

Prior to the mid 1700's, the fear of slave insurrections had caused the colonists to exclude blacks from militia service. Yet, despite this exclusion, blacks did participate in the wars against the French and Indians, thus early developing a tradition of military service that was alive at the time of the War of Independence. As early as the battles of Lexington and Concord in April, 1775, blacks took up arms against the mother country.21 Among the black minutemen who participated in the famous battle of April 19, 1775, were Peter Salem, Cato Stedman, Cuff Whittemore, Cato Wood, Prince Estabrook, Caesar Ferritt, Samuel Craft, Lemuel Haynes, and Pomp Blackman.22 One of the outstanding heroes in the Battle of Bunker Hill was Peter Salem. Although not thoroughly substantiated, Salem reportedly fired the shot that killed Major John Pitcairn of

22 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 164.
the Royal Marines. Pitcairn earlier was second in command of the British expedition to Lexington, where, it is believed, the shot was fired from his pistol which started the American Revolution. In addition to Salem, another black, Salem Poor, also distinguished himself at Bunker Hill. For his bravery, several American officers commended Poor to the Continental Congress.\textsuperscript{23} Equally gallant at Bunker Hill were such other black men as Pomp Fisk, Grant Cooper, Charleston Eads, Seymour Burr, Titus Coburn, Cuff Hayes, and Caesar Dickenson. At least one black soldier, Caesar Brown of Westford, Connecticut, was killed in action on Bunker Hill.\textsuperscript{24}

It is important to point out here that by no means had the black soldier entirely won the right to fight for the independence of America. Returning to two earlier points, blacks were used, first, mainly in manpower shortage situations, and secondly, to prove their loyalty and claim to citizenship. From these two factors they did not retreat. However, in the formulation of an over-all policy for military service shortly after General Washington took


\textsuperscript{24} "These Truly are the Brave," p. 168. This war record is also supported by Herbert Aptheker, Essays in the History of the American Negro (New York: International Publishers, 1945), pp. 101-108.
command, whites decided that the Negro's services were not needed. 25 As Martin Luther King perceived Washington:

No one doubts the valor and commitment that characterizes George Washington's life. But to the end of his days he maintained a posture of exclusionism toward the slave. He was a fourth-generation slave-holder. He only allowed Negroes to enter the Continental Army because His Majesty's Crown was attempting to recruit Negroes to the British cause.

. . .  . . .  . . .  . . .  . . .  . . .  . . .
. . . Washington never made a public statement condemning slavery. He could not pull away from the system. When he died he owned, or had on lease, more than 160 slaves. Here . . . we can see . . . the emotional tie to the system so deep . . . it imposes an inflexible unwillingness to root it out. 26

Even during the Revolutionary War, military commanders found the problem of black manpower a difficult one to handle. Washington and his staff discussed the question of using blacks in the army as early as October 8, 1775. The decision against their use and an order to that effect was issued on November 12, 1775. 27 The order instructed recruiters "not to enlist Negroes, boys unable to bear arms, or old men unable to endure the fatigues of campaign." 28

It was, however, the proclamation by Lord Dunmore, the governor of Virginia, on November 7, 1775, that caused not

25 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 132.
26 King, Where Do We Go, pp. 89-90.
28 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 133.
only immediate concern among the patriots but a subsequent reversal of policy. Dunmore's proclamation read in part:

*I do hereby . . . declare all . . . Negroes . . . free, that are able and willing to bear arms, they joining his Majesty's troops, as soon as may be, for the more speedily reducing this colony to a proper dignity.*

Franklin observes that there was no indication there would have been a change in policy had not the British made such a political offer to the blacks. But with the British calling upon blacks to rise up and join the king's colors, the Americans could ill afford to alienate either slaves or freedman. The upshot, Franklin notes, was that blacks were not expelled from the army or refused enlistment, but, rather, received with greater enthusiasm as the war went on. Alarmed at what the consequences of Negro enlistment in the British ranks could mean in Virginia, on December 31, 1775, Washington partially reversed his previous policy and permitted the enlistment of free Negroes. On January 16, 1776, Congress approved Washington's action. This British bid for the Negro, reports Franklin, had the effect of liberalizing the policy of the colonists toward Negroes.

---

*29* Ibid.

In addition to the Washington reversal, most states now began to enlist both slaves and free Negroes. Before the end of the war most states, as well as the Continental Congress, were enlisting slaves with the understanding that they were to receive their freedom at the end of their service.\(^{31}\)

At this point, the important thing to many blacks was that they had been given the right to fight as free men. That they were segregated was of little, if any consequence to them then.\(^{32}\) In other words, the "right to fight" was "an invigorating force in itself." Serving in segregated units was not the chief priority and concern.\(^{33}\)

Of the 300,000 soldiers who served in the War of Independence, approximately five-thousand were black.\(^{34}\)

Some volunteered, some were drafted. There were several all-black companies and an all-black Rhode Island regiment which distinguished itself in the Battle of Rhode Island on August 29, 1778.\(^{35}\)

Hardly a major military action between 1775 and 1781 was without some black participants. Blacks again were at Lexington, Concord, Ticonderoga, White Plains, Bennington,

\(^{31}\)Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, pp. 133-135.

\(^{32}\)Mandelbaum, Soldier Groups, pp. 90-91.

\(^{33}\)Ibid.

\(^{34}\)Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 136.

Brandywine, Saratoga, Savannah, and Yorktown. Some by their outstanding service won recognition and a place in the history of the War for Independence. Two blacks crossed the Delaware with Washington on Christmas day, 1776. They were Prince Whipple and Oliver Cromwell. More importantly, however, black patriots saw clearly the implications for their own future in their fight against England. Blacks wanted human freedom as well as political independence. They were beginning now to speak out on the inconsistency of fighting for independence while the country clearly adhered to the tenets of slavery. As early as 1766, Franklin notes, blacks were seeking their freedom in the courts and legislatures. Later, in 1774, a group of blacks expressed astonishment that the colonists could seek independence from Britain and yet, at the same time, "give no consideration to the slaves' pleas for freedom."  

In short, despite black assistance in winning independence from Britain, the declaration that "all men are created equal" and endowed with "certain inalienable rights,"

---


was withheld from the black American. Thus, with the war over, many blacks had lost their lives and few blacks had their freedom. Any thought of "the pursuit of happiness" remained just a dream.  

The War of 1812

When war came again in 1812, blacks once again had another opportunity to serve their country. Martin Delany described the temper and commitment of those blacks "as ready and as willing to volunteer in your service as any other." For Delany, blacks "were not compelled to go; they were not draughted. They were volunteers." Blacks fought against the British on land and sea and were part conspicuous in the various battles on the Great Lakes under the command of Oliver H. Perry. It was estimated that at least one-tenth of the crews of the fleet within the lake region were blacks.

Also during these battles the legislature of New York authorized the raising of two regiments of black soldiers for its area and two battalions of black men were mobilized for the New Orleans area. This mobilization in New Orleans was significant because it was here on September 21, 1814,
three months before the Battle of New Orleans, that General Andrew Jackson issued his proclamation "To the Free Colored Inhabitants of Louisiana." In that proclamation, Jackson, in need of augmenting his forces in the autumn of 1814, called upon the free blacks of Louisiana to answer the appeal of their country. His appeal was based on his confession "that the policy of the United States in barring Negroes from the service had been a mistaken one."^41 An excerpt from the Jackson proclamation of September 21, 1814, is included below:

As sons of Freedom you are now called upon to defend your most estimable blessings. As Americans, your country looks with confidence to her adopted children, for a valorous support, as a faithful return for the advantages enjoyed under her mild and equitable government. As fathers, husbands, and brothers, you are summoned to rally round the standard of the Eagle, to defend all which is dear in existence.

To every noble hearted free man of color, volunteering to serve during the present contest with Great Britain, and no longer, there will be paid the same bounty in money and lands now received by white soldiers. . . . The non-commissioned officers and privates will also be entitled to the same monthly pay and daily rations and clothes furnished to any American soldiers.42

On the eve of the Battle of New Orleans, December 18, 1814, through his Aid-de-camp, Colonel Butler, Jackson again issued another address to the black soldiers who had, in

^41 Ibid., p. 170.

Martin Delany's words, "proven themselves . . . worthy of their country's trust, and in every way worthy of the proudest position of enfranchised freeman." Jackson addressed the black troops saying:

Soldiers! When on the banks of the Mobile, I called you to take up arms, inviting you to partake the perils and glory of your white fellow-citizens, I expected much from you; for I was not ignorant that you possessed qualities most formidable to an invading enemy. I knew with what fortitude you could endure hunger . . . the fatigues of a campaign. I knew well how you love your native country, and that you . . . had to defend what man holds most dear - his parents, wife, children, and property. You have done more than I expected. In addition to the previous qualities . . . I found among you noble enthusiasm . . . . Soldiers! The President . . . shall hear how praiseworthy was your conduct in the hour of danger; and the representatives of the American people will give you the praise your exploits entitle you to.  

Although under the command of General Andrew Jackson blacks performed their most effective services during the War of 1812, the war itself "found black soldiers again fighting for 'their country' and its end found them again slaves, or, at best, free men with no real rights as citizens."  

Civil War

With the outbreak of the Civil War, the black soldier found himself in the "strangest paradox" of

---

43 Delany, Condition, Elevation, Emigration, p. 78.
44 Andrew Jackson, "Address to the Troops in New Orleans; to the Men of Color," full text in Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, pp. 118-119.
In the early part of the war, black men were not even allowed to fight in the Union Army although this war was supposedly designed to bring about a final end to slavery. As in past wars, the idea of using blacks as soldiers did not receive sympathetic hearings in the North at the beginning of the Civil War. Most Northern whites did not at first view the war as involving the Negro. Richard Dalfiume writes that Lincoln, "intent on maintaining the loyalty of the border states" early refused to sanction the use of black troops "that would support the view that this was an abolitionist war." For almost two years, the Lincoln administration refused to accept black soldiers contending that "the war was a gentlemanly misunderstanding between white men."

Early opposition to the use of the black man as a soldier in the Civil War was rooted in a prejudice, writes Robert Goldston, based on the notions that

1) blacks could not stand and fight against white men and Southern whites in particular.

2) arming the black man would be admitting that the white soldier alone was not sufficient to win victory.

46 Ibid.
47 Dalfiume, Desegregation, p. 6.
48 Ibid.
49 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 169.
3) arming the black man would change the status of blacks in unforeseeable ways.

4) to change the status of blacks was to complicate an already hugely complicated struggle.50

In Goldston's view, the fact that blacks had served with distinction in previous wars was "overlooked."51 Expanding on the above, Franklin presents the view that early opposition to the use of black troops was rooted in the prejudice that it was one thing to have blacks performing all types of work, even with the army, and quite another to put weapons of war in their hands. There was, observes Franklin, the fear blacks might turn on their masters. To accept blacks for military service, moreover, would be an acknowledgement of their equality with whites.52 Frederick Douglass, emphasizing this inconsistency, told a Cooper Institute audience in New York City in February, 1863, that whites claimed in one breath that Negroes would not fight, and in the next that if armed they would become dangerous.53 However, as it became clear that the war might be a long and drawout battle, Benjamin Quarles states the administration gradually shifted its position on the question of black


51 Ibid.

52 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 288.

soldiers. Heavy losses plus increasing desertions, were placing a premium on manpower. Moreover, the point that "every black man who joins the army enables a white man to stay home," began to carry weight. Additionally, dwindling white enlistments and the effective resistance of the rebel forces also forced Lincoln to face an uncomfortable decision. It was only as the war became one for abolishment of slavery and as more military manpower was needed, that Lincoln felt constrained to accept the policy of utilizing blacks as soldiers.

For many black Americans, the goals of the Civil War were clear from the start. Blacks saw in the conflict the seeds of their own emancipation. Since the war "had been precipitated by the desperate class of Southern slaveholders, the abolition of slavery would sooner or later be used as a weapon against this class." On April 15, 1861, when President Lincoln issued his call for seventy-five thousand volunteers, Northern blacks responded in great numbers. Black companies and regiments were formed and ready to serve. However, neither the governors of the Northern states nor the war department had any intention yet to make

55 Dalfiume, Desegregation, p. 6.
use of black troops. As Franklin writes:

When a company of sixty free Negroes presented
themselves for service . . . in 1861, they were
thanked and sent home. A company of free Negroes
. . . was allowed to parade, but not to go into
battle. 57

In 1862, Congress authorized the use of black troops
in the Civil War. 58 Lincoln signed the bill on July 17,
1862, but there was no follow-up until the Emancipation
Proclamation of January 1, 1863 which stipulated that freed
slaves should be received into the armed forces of the
United States. 59 Finally permitted to enlist in the Union
army, blacks like Frederick Douglass acted as recruiting
agents in the North, holding rallies to enlist the black man
in the army. Douglass, through the columns of his monthly,
issued his call, "Men of Color, to Arms!," in Rochester,
New York, on March 21, 1863. Here he urged his fellow
black compatriots to "fly to arms, and smite with death
the power that would bury the government and your liberty in
the same hopeless grave." It was better, Douglass continued,
to die free than to live as slaves. "Liberty won only by

57 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 288.

58 Joanne Grant, ed., Black Protest, Fawcett Premier

59 Abraham Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation of
January 1, 1863, full text in The Collected Works of Abraham
Lincoln, ed. by Roy P. Basler, VI (New Brunswick, New Jersey:
white men will lose half its lustre." Additionally, Douglass predicted

... that the war ... would not be fought out entirely by white men.

I have implored the imperiled nation to unchain against her foes her powerful black hand. Slowly...

... that appeal is beginning to be heeded.

They tell you this is the "white man's war"; that you "will be no better off after than before the war"; that the getting of you into the Army is to "sacrifice you on the first opportunity." Believe them not; cowards themselves, they do not wish to have their cowardice shamed by your brave example.

This is our golden opportunity. Let us accept it.
... Let us win for ourselves the gratitude of our country, and the best blessings of our posterity through all time.61

Douglass further presented in April, 1863, a long list of reasons in support of black enlistment for the Civil War. He argued blacks should join the Army because

1) manhood required one to take sides.

2) blacks were citizens with citizen's obligations.

3) to offset the arming of blacks "as a calamity," blacks should join the Army and prove the argument false.

4) blacks should learn the use of arms in order to secure and defend their liberty.

5) battle encounters would give blacks a chance to demonstrate their courage.

6) enlistment would enable the black man to recover his self-respect.

60Frederick Douglass, "Men of Color to Arms!", full text in Vol III of The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, pp. 317-319.

61Ibid.
7) the war was being waged for the emancipation of blacks.

8) black enlistment was one means "of preventing the country from drifting back into the whirlpool of pro-slavery compromise."

Quarles writes that Douglass "shrewdly divined in the Negro as soldier a foundation for the Negro as citizen and the Negro as voter." In the words of Douglass himself:

> Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S.; let him get an eagle on his button ... bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on the earth ... which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States.

Concerned, too, with the treatment of blacks behind the gun and their salary and rank, he also interwove the ideas of nationalism and Negro suffrage. For Douglass, it was clear the black man was fighting for something incomparably better than the old Union. We are fighting for unity; unity of idea ... sentiment ... institutions, in which there shall be no North, no South ... no black, no white but a solidarity of the nation, making every slave free, and every free man a voter.

---


63 Quarles, Frederick Douglass, p. 209.

64 Address by Frederick Douglass at National Hall, Philadelphia, July 6, 1863, for the promotion of colored enlistments, full speech in Vol III of The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, p. 365.

65 "Our Work is Not Done," speech delivered by Douglass at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society held in Philadelphia, December 3-4, 1863, full speech in Vol III of The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, p. 386.
Thus, Douglass had petitioned Lincoln to accept black soldiers into the Union Army. He had perceived the war between the states "as a war to end slavery." But, like Washington in the revolutionary war, Lincoln, too, was again reluctant to use the black soldier. Lincoln was not willing, in Douglass' words, "to loose that black hand" even in the interest of liberty. Only after the steady prodding of such men as Douglass and the increasing Confederate victories, did Lincoln finally accept the black soldier and all this was at less pay and under segregated conditions. However, in contrast to the appeals of Douglass, the sentiments of some others paralleled that of one man who wrote:

I have observed with much . . . shame, their willingness to take up arms in defence of this unholy, ill-begotten, . . . government, that summons its skill, energy and might, of money, men and false philosophy that a corrupt nation can bring to bear, to support, . . . that vilest of all vile systems, American slavery.

Nevertheless, many weekly black newspapers continued to urge black men to prepare themselves for any contingency. The Anglo-African in New York City printed this account of why blacks could fight in the Civil War:

There are men among our people who look upon this as the "white man's war," and . . . say, let them


fight it out among themselves. It is their flag... constitution... this is a huge fallacy.
... What rights have we in the free states?
We have the "right to life, liberty, and... happiness." We have the right to labor... to
a large extent the right to educate our children. Are these rights worth the having? If they are
then they are worth defending... at any cost.
It is illogical, unpatriotic,... unmanly in us
to shrink from the defence of these great rights
and privileges.58

In short, the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 had
an immediate effect upon the course of the war primarily
because it authorized the army to recruit blacks for the
fighting line. From the beginning the response of blacks
to such recruiting agents as Douglass was generally good.
Eventually more than 180,000 blacks served in Union blue.69

From the seceded states came about 93,000, and from the
border slave states, came 40,000. The remainder, about
52,000, were from free states.70 Although blacks saw
action against Confederate forces as early as 1862, hardly
one battle to the end of the war did not include some black
soldiers. They saw action at Milliken's Bend in Louisiana,
Vicksburg in Mississippi, and at the siege of Savannah
among others.71 Perhaps the outstanding achievement of
black troops was the charge of the Third Brigade of the

68Anglo-African, August 24, September 14, 1861, in
70Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 288.
71Ibid., pp. 292-293.
18th Division on the Confederate fortifications on New Market Heights near Richmond, Virginia. For their gallantry in this specific action, black soldiers received thirteen Congressional Medals of Honor in one day. 72

More than 38,000 black soldiers lost their lives in this war. Franklin estimates that the black rate of mortality was nearly forty per cent greater than among white troops due to unfavorable conditions, poor equipment, bad medical care, and the "haste" with which blacks were sent into battle. 73 Yet, despite these disadvantages, blacks earned the praise of important Union commanders, among them Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Lincoln himself, who initially opposed their use, said later that the North could not have won without the help of the 180,000 black soldiers and the more than 200,000 black laborers. 74 The Congressional Medal of Honor, established during this war, was awarded to nearly twenty black soldiers in recognition of "gallantry and intrepidity" in combat. 75 Also in early 1865, after Lincoln was re-elected by a comfortable electoral

72 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 170.

73 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, pp. 293-294. This point of view is also supported in Herbert Aptheker, To Be Free (2nd ed.; New York: International Publishers, 1963), pp. 75-112.

74 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 170.

margin, Congress adopted the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery throughout all the territory and possessions of the United States.

When the Army was reorganized in 1866 and put on a peacetime basis, six black regiments were established by law as a part of the Regular Army and as recognition and reward for valor.76 By an act of Congress passed in 1866, four regiments—the 24th and 25th Infantry and the 9th and 10th Calvalry—were organized as permanent army units. Most officers of the Regular Army regiments were white. The best-known graduate of these regiments was John Pershing, who earned the nickname "Black Jack" because of his later service with black soldiers. It was also the 9th and 10th Cavalry that were later centrally involved "in the winning of the West between 1870 and 1900." Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., who later became the first black general during World War Two, also served with the famous "Buffalo Soldiers."77

Martin Delany, appointed a major in the Union Army late in the Civil War, explained why blacks could justify their participation in the early wars of America on such grounds as

Our common country is the United States. Here were we born ... educated; here are the scenes of childhood; ... and from here will we not be driven by any policy that may be schemed against us.78

---

76 Mandelbaum, Soldier Groups, p. 92.
77 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 170.
78 Delany, Condition, Elevation, Emigration, p. 48.
On the basis of being American and having a birthright citizenship, he said:

... natural claims upon the country ... natural rights, which may, by virtue of unjust laws, be obstructed, never can be annulled.

It is this simple but great principle of primitive rights, that forms the fundamental basis of citizenship in all free countries, and it is upon this principle, that the rights of the colored man in this country to citizenship are fixed. 79

For Delany, it was in the war record of blacks that their claims to citizenship were justified. In serving one's country and fighting its battles there was no responsibility, notes Delany, "for which the country owes a greater debt of gratitude." 80 In Delany's words:

... love of country, is the first requisition and highest attribute of every citizen; and he who voluntarily ventures his own safety for that of his country, is a patriot of the purest character.

Blacks at the start of the twentieth century also attempted to justify their citizenship by once again reporting the war record of blacks and in particular their role in the Civil War. Among those writers were Timothy Thomas Fortune and Reverend Hightower Kealing. Fortune was the editor of The New York Age, the influential weekly black newspaper in the 1880's and 1890's. Kealing was a leading

79 Ibid., pp. 48-51.
80 Ibid., p. 51.
81 Ibid., p. 67.
cleric in the African Methodist Episcopal Church of the
times. Kealing, in describing the general characteristics
of black people, also listed the following descriptions of
the black soldier in the Civil War.

1) blacks were "affectionate and without vindicive-
ness."

... none will gainsay the patience ... loyalty
... of the Negro slave during the Civil War, and
of his good old wife who nursed white children
... when ... the ... head and master was at
the front, fighting to perpetuate slavery.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
Many other thousands fought in the ranks for
freedom, but none ... betrayed a trust ... or
rebelled against a duty.

2) blacks had great dispositional and physical
endurance.

... his patience has been the marvel of the
world; and, indeed, many, regarding this ... in
such an unusual degree, doubted the Negro's
courage, till ... the 60's ...

3) blacks were courageous.

His ... war record ... is without blot or
blemish. His commanders ... pronouncing him
admirable for courage in the field, ... obedience
in camp. That he should exhibit such excellent
fighting qualities ... and yet exercise the
forbearance that characterizes him as a citizen,
is remarkable.

82 Booker T. Washington, et al., The Negro Problem (New
York: Arno Press, 1969), VI-VII.

83 H. T. Kealing, "The Characteristics of the Negro
People," full essay in Washington, et al., The Negro Problem,
pp. 167-170.

84 Ibid., p. 170.

85 Ibid., pp. 170-171. Support for this point of view
is dealt with at length in Herbert Aptheker, The Negro in the
Civil War (New York: International Publishers, 1938), pp. 37-
40.
T. Thomas Fortune described the black war record in the Civil War in these harsher terms:

However he may be lacking in pride of ancestry and race, no one can accuse the Negro of lack of pride of Nation. . . . Indeed, his pride in the Republic are among the most pathetic phases of his pathetic history. . . . He has given everything to the Republic. . . . What has the Republic given him, but blows and rebuffs and criminal ingratitude! . . . What does the Republic stand ready . . . to give him? Let the answer come out of the mouth of the future?86

In short, with the Civil War at an end, black soldiers found that they had achieved a status of free men and the fourteenth and fifteenth Amendments had made them legally citizens. Once again, wartime manpower needs had forced some kind of "official tolerance."87 But with no jobs, no money, and no training, blacks had exchanged legal slavery for economic slavery. As in almost every other war, they had once again fought for the mere "right to die."88 Displaced and deserted by the very union forces blacks had aided, Addison Gayle summarizes that their fight for liberty was, in the final analysis, no more than a fight for reenslavement, this time by the "Black Code Laws."89


88 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 169.

89 Gayle, The Black Situation, p. 93.
Spanish - American War

As mentioned previously, following the Civil War, four black regiments were established and were later active in the Indian wars on the western frontier. These regiments later fought with distinction in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. Here six black awardees received the Congressional Medal of Honor for gallantry in this pioneer police action.

From the beginning, black Americans were involved in the war against Spain. There were at least thirty blacks on the Maine when it was blown up and twenty-two were killed. With this loss of black lives, blacks, too, shared with the country at large a general sense of indignation and anger. They, too, were also anxious to vindicate the honor of the United States and help bring independence and freedom to Cubans, whom they regarded as Negroes and mulattoes. Therefore, when the President called for 200,000 volunteers to supplement the inadequate regular army, blacks were as enthusiastic about enlisting as any group in America.

Besides the four black outfits in the regular army, numerous other black groups served in the war against Spain.

90 Friederich, "54 Black Heroes," p. 245.
91 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 418.
Several states permitted blacks to organize outfits and enter the service. Among these were the Third Alabama Infantry of Volunteers; the Third North Carolina Infantry; the Ninth Ohio Infantry; two companies of the Indiana Infantry; and Company "L" of the Sixth Massachusetts Infantry, the only black company which was an integral part of a white regiment. But in the swift and decisive action that brought victory, only the blacks in the four regular black outfits saw any considerable service. 92

When the campaign for the reduction of the Spanish forces in Cuba began on June 22, 1898, the American forces were divided into three units: one moved directly on San Juan Hill, the stronghold of the Spanish forces; another force moved on El Caney; and the third took Las Guasimas on the way to San Juan and the ultimate battle at San Juan Hill. 93

Black citizens were generally proud of the role of the black soldier in this war as black contingents saw action principally at El Caney, Las Guasimas, and San Juan Hill. In the three days of fighting most of the black regulars in Cuba saw action and won the praises of most all of their officers. It has been claimed by many that the black Ninth and Tenth Cavalries came to the aid of Theodore

---

92 Ibid., pp. 419-420.
93 Ibid., pp. 420-421.
Roosevelt's "Rough Riders" and saved them from complete annihilation at Las Guasimas and San Juan Hill. Franklin reports that the reaction of Roosevelt to the performance of these black troops varied, depending upon the occasion. When Roosevelt made his farewell address, he had words of unqualified praise for the black soldiers. Yet, a year later, he wrote unfavorably that blacks were dependent on their white officers, frequently weakening and drifting to the rear of the battle. 94

At the close of the war, black soldiers served as occupation troops, performing garrison duty in Cuba. However, some American citizens did not completely favor the arming of blacks to serve as troops of occupation and as black troops passed through the South to the ports of embarkation, they were frequently treated with contempt by Southerners preoccupied with reducing the status of the black American. 95

In short, while approximately one-hundred black officers were commissioned during this war, blacks had once again "fought valiantly" only to return home to find that "separate but equal" was the law of the land. 96

94 Ibid., pp. 421-423.
95 Ibid., p. 424.
World War One

For the young black entering any branch of the armed forces today, it is hard to conceive that the military was one of America's "most segregated institutions" at the start of the twentieth century.\footnote{Moskos, "Racial Integration in the Armed Forces," p.437.} Today, color barriers at the formal level are absent throughout most of the military establishment. Equal treatment regardless of race is "official policy" in such non-duty facilities as chapels, post exchanges, movie theaters, dependents' housing, and military assignments, promotions, and living conditions. However, in the early twentieth century, owing to a general rise in American racial tensions and outbreaks of violence between black and white troops, opinion began to turn against the use of black soldiers.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 427-437.} Blacks were barred altogether from the Marines and permitted to serve in the Navy only in the most menial capacities. Only in the Army were they permitted to serve in every branch except the elite pilot section of the aviation corps.\footnote{Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 458.}

Evaluation of the black soldier was further lowered by events in the war itself. The combat performance of the all-black 92nd Infantry, one of its regiments reportedly having fled a German offensive at Mense-Argonne, came under
heavy criticism. Yet, black units operating under French command, performed well.100 These regiments were awarded the Croix de Guerre. There were, however, incidents of riots and bloodshed. Some black soldiers, responding to the already developed policies of discrimination, reacted to official humiliation with extreme rage.101 Black suspicions about treatment of black soldiers were aroused early by the Brownsville episode of 1906. Here black soldiers of the Twenty-Fifth Infantry rioted in protest against their treatment by the white citizens of Brownsville, Texas. When the guilty men could not be found, President Roosevelt ordered the dishonorable discharge of three companies. Southerners in Congress took this opportunity to then attack the record of black troops in general. The feeling developed among blacks that Roosevelt and the South had now set out on discrediting the black right to citizenship by denigrating the fighting ability of Negro soldiers.102 Later, members of the black 24th Infantry Regiment "shot up" Houston, Texas, killing some twenty whites. Thus, despite the gallantry shown at San Juan Hill, the status of the black American and the black soldier plummeted to a new low in the early decades of the twentieth century. With the

101 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 173.
102 Dall’iume, Desegregation, p. 6.
tightening of racial lines, "black doughboys" had to once again fight "for the right to die on an equal basis." Thus, for black officers and for black enlisted men, World War One was a deeply disturbing experience. Discrimination at home and abroad reached staggering heights, and the government went out of its way to emphasize the subordinate status of black soldiers, most of whom were confined to labor and service brigades.

One official order, issued by Pershing's headquarters on August 7, 1918, dramatizes the official hostility suggested in previous paragraphs. The order was captioned: "To the French Military Mission - Secret Information Concerning the Black American Troops." It stated in part:

1) prevent the rise of any "pronounced" degree of intimacy between French officers and black officers.

2) do not eat with blacks, shake hands, or seek to meet with them outside of military service.

3) do not commend "too highly" black troops in the presence of white Americans.

To suggest at this point that blacks did not become actively involved in World War One would be in serious error. In review of black involvement in the war, it may be written that the black American was also "affected by the rhetoric of the war just as white Americans were; all

---

103 "These Truly are the Brave," pp. 170-176.
104 Ibid., p. 173.
105 Ibid.
were anxious 'to save the world for democracy.'" Black leaders stated again that the "race is on trial." A faculty and student group at Howard University commented: "If we fail, our enemies will dub us COWARDS for all time; and we can never win our rightful place. But if we succeed - then eternal success." Shortly after the United States entered the war, black leaders from different organizations adopted resolutions to express the attitudes and aspirations they thought fitting for black Americans in wartime. Among these were the arguments that

1) despite the poor records of America, England, and other allies in dealing with colored people, "we earnestly believe that the greatest hope for ultimate democracy ... lies on the side of the allies."

2) blacks should join "in the fight for world liberty" despite "persistent insult and discrimination" even when they do "their patriotic duty."

Kelly Miller, black educator and essayist frequently noted how the war and its slogans of democracy aroused in the black man "hopes and ambitions that he would enter as a full participant in the fruition of that democracy which he was called upon to sustain and perpetuate." Prominent whites also lent support to this optimistic view of the war's impact on race relations. Roosevelt told black

---

106 Dalgiume, Desegregation, p. 9.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid., p. 10.
audiences that "America's war aim of securing greater international justice in the world would lead to a 'juster and fairer treatment in this country of colored people.""  

Although many of the rank and file blacks did not totally agree, most black leaders "counseled complete devotion to the war and the muffling of grievances." Among these were W. E. B. DuBois. In the Crisis Magazine of July, 1918, DuBois stated in his editorial "Close Ranks:

Let us not hesitate. Let us, while the war lasts, forget our special grievances and close ranks shoulder to shoulder with our white fellow citizens . . . fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills.

Forgetting his grievances for the duration of the war, DuBois made it clear that the black American's first duty was to not bargain with their loyalty nor profiteer with his country's blood, but rather to close ranks and fight with his white brothers in the common cause "to make the world safe for democracy."

Many other blacks did not appreciate the advice of DuBois. The Washington, D.C., branch of the N.A.A.C.P. felt the editorial by DuBois was inconsistent with the work and

---

109 Ibid.
110 Ibid., p. 11.
the spirit of the association. This group saw no reason to "stultify consciences" or act indifferent to the acts of indignity and injustice continually heaped on blacks. Other segments of the black press attacked DuBois for "selling out." Through it all, however, DuBois maintained that the two events were not connected. He upheld his original position that for blacks it was "first your country, then your rights."\(^{113}\)

Other black leaders attacked President Woodrow Wilson himself. They argued Wilson had never attempted "to make America safe for democracy." They charged that from the inception of the Wilson Administration, Wilson had transformed the nation's capital into "the most segregated city outside of the deep South." Civil services, they observed, were "resegregated." "Colored" rest rooms were established in office buildings and the lynching rate climbed as high as two blacks per month. They further charged that Wilson himself had repeatedly declared that "this is a white man's war." Yet, despite all this, Wilson put up little resistance to accepting black troops. In fact, Wilson was reminded by the editor of one newspaper that the use of black men was "a good thing." As the editor put it: "It seems a pity to waste good white men in battle with such a foe. The cost of sacrifice would be nearly equalized were the job assigned

\(^{113}\)Dalfiume, Desegregation, pp. 11-12.
to Negro troops." As Addison Gayle, Jr., summarizes the period:

Still black men heeded the call to participate in the "war to end all wars," serving in segregated units, most of them under the control of Southern officers, one of whom welcomed his troops with the following words: "You need not expect democratic treatment. Don't go where your presence is not desired."

In short, the only place that the presence of black soldiers seemed desirable was the battlefield.

Of the 750,000 men in the Regular Army and the National Guard at the beginning of the war, about 20,000 were black. The passage of the Selective Service Act on May 18, 1917, however, provided for the enlistment of "all able-bodied Americans between the ages of 21 and 31." On July 5, 1917, registration day, more than 700,000 blacks registered. Before the end of the Selective Service enlistments 2,290,525 blacks had registered, 370,000 of whom were called into the service. Franklin reports that about thirty-one per cent of the blacks who registered were accepted, while only twenty-six per cent of the whites who registered were later accepted. This was due, in Franklin's words, not to

\[\ldots\text{superior physical and mental qualifications of Negroses, but to the inclination of some draft}\]

\[^{114}\text{Gayle, The Black Situation, p. 94.}\n^{115}\text{Ibid.}\n^{116}\text{Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 455.}\]
boards to discriminate against Negroes in the matter of exemptions. One board in Georgia was discharged because of its discrimination in exemptions. There were no outstanding examples of draft-dodging among Negroes, and even those Negroes who were opposed to the war on grounds that it was an imperialistic conflict answered the calls of their draft board.\textsuperscript{117}

The first black stevedore battalion arrived in France in June, 1917. From that date to the end of the war blacks came in large numbers. Before the war's end, there were more than 50,000 blacks in 115 different units, more than one-third of the entire American force. When it became clear to the Germans that the Ninety-Second Division consisted almost entirely of black soldiers, the Germans launched a propaganda campaign to accomplish with words what they had not been able to accomplish with arms. \textsuperscript{118} In this one incident, the Germans sought to demoralize the black troops by circulating a leaflet over the lines to persuade blacks to lay down their arms. It said in part that blacks

\ldots should not be deluded into thinking that they were fighting for humanity and democracy. \ldots Do you enjoy the same rights as white people \ldots or are you rather not \ldots second-class citizens? Can you go into a restaurant where white people dine? \ldots Is lynching \ldots a lawful proceeding in a democratic country?

\textsuperscript{117}Ibid., p. 456.

\textsuperscript{118}Ibid., pp. 461-464.
"Why, then fight the Germans only for the benefit of the Wall Street robbers and to protect the millions they have loaned to the British, French, and Italians?" 119

Apparently, writes Franklin, blacks were "unimpressed" because none deserted and "all seemed to have fought more energetically against the enemy." 120

Examples of the black soldiers' success can be drawn from the performances of the four black infantry regiments in the war; the 369th, 370th, 371st, and 372nd— all attached to French command. Three of these regiments were awarded the Croix de Guerre by France. There were also individual acts of bravery. But, because of "the racist assumptions prevalent in the Army, the favorable side of the picture was overlooked by those who formulated Army policy." 121

The black American had hoped that in making the world safe for democracy America would grant more democracy to its largest minority. It was this optimism that had been one of the factors behind the complete loyalty pledged by Negro leaders during the war. But the turn of race relations during and after the war meant black hopes were still largely unfilled. Ninety-six blacks were lynched in 1917

119 Ibid., pp. 464-465.
120 Ibid., p. 465.
121 Dalfiume, Desegregation, pp. 19-20.
and 1918. The Ku Klux Klan, revived in 1915, began its growth into a national organization in the early twenties.

Now developing among the black troops in Europe was the idea that, based on the cruel events at home, they would not easily return home passive bystanders to injustice, but instead "move forward to a new basis for democratic living in the United States." One editorial in the May, 1919, Crisis Magazine thus undertook to speak for the returning black soldier with the words:

We return from the slavery of uniform which the world's madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civilian garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: This country of ours . . . is yet a shameful land. It lynches . . . steals . . . insults us . . . We return from fighting. We return fighting. Make way for Democracy. We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the U.S.A., or know the reason why.124

One of the outstanding poets of the post-war period, Claude McKay, expressed the feelings of a great many returning blacks when he wrote:

If we must die, let it not be like hogs . . . if we must die, O let us nobly die, So that our precious blood may not be shed in vain; . . . O Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe! . . . Like men we'll

122 Ibid., p. 20.
123 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 478.
face the murderous, cowardly pack, Pressed to the wall, dying but fighting back! 125

More than seventy black Americans were lynched during the first year of the post-war period, "many of them soldiers still in uniform." 126 From June, 1919, to the end of the year approximately twenty-five race riots occurred in urban areas. The new element now was the black man no longer was "a helpless victim," but rather fought back, killing some white attackers. DuBois' theme of "closing ranks" was broken. He was to later write in 1919:

By the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that the war is over, we do not marshall every ounce . . . to fight a . . . more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our land. 127

Thus, despite the French honor that recognized blacks as having "saved the most sacred cause, the liberty of the world," America was still not ready to "repay its debt."

As Gayle saw the post war period:

Hardly had the victory parade down . . . Fifth Avenue ended before the Ku Klux Klan arose, stronger than ever, to take advantage of a world now made safe for democracy. . . . That following year -- one of those now forgotten hot summers . . . Blacks were the recipients of America's indebtedness in Texas . . . and Chicago, Illinois where in a twelve - day massacre, black men . . . were maimed and murdered by mobs of whites, operating with tacit assistance from the legal authorities. 128


126 Dalfoome, Desegregation, p. 20.


128 Gayle, The Black Situation, p. 95.
In short, the black American had battled Germany in World War One and came back to face a decade of lynchings and discrimination.

World War Two

Racial stereotypes and a continuing belief in the inferiority of the black American was widespread among many Americans and the high-ranking officers and officials of the military in the twenties and thirties. In the interval between the two world wars, the Army not only remained segregated but also adopted a policy of a black quota that was to keep the number of blacks in the Army proportionate to the total population. Yet, writes Charles C. Moskos, "never in the pre-World War Two period, however, did the number of Negroes approach this quota." On the eve of Pearl Harbor, blacks constituted almost six per cent of the Army. There were only five Negro officers, three of whom were chaplains. During World War Two, blacks again entered the service in large numbers but at no time did they exceed 10 per cent of total personnel. They again remained in segregated units, and approximately three-quarters served in the quartermaster and transportation corps. And, in terms of "the right to fight" relates Moskos, "Racial Integration in the Armed Forces," p. 428.
Moskos, "Negro combat units were frequently used for heavy-duty labor."  

In the late thirties and early forties, blacks, too, watched events around the world with growing concern. It was, however, in John Franklin's view, when Italy invaded Ethiopia, that blacks first, "protested with all the means at their command." Franklin recalls:

Almost overnight even the most provincial among the American Negroes became international-minded. Ethiopia was a Negro nation, and its destruction would symbolize the final victory of the white man over the Negro. In many communities funds were raised for the defense of the African kingdom, while in larger cities elaborate organizations were set up.

Second, blacks, too, were concerned with the rising fascism in Europe and the Aryan doctrines of Nazism. Some blacks had also read Hitler's Mein Kampf and resented its unfavorable comments concerning Negroes. Still further, in 1936, Hitler had refused to treat Negro Olympic participants with "civility" at Berlin. In brief, Hitler's tactics in overthrowing countries caused "loud condemnation" in many black circles. "These facts notwithstanding," comments Addison Gayle, "in World War Two, black men went forth once again, though with mixed emotions, to defend the freedom of their country." And, continues Gayle, this despite the fact

---

130 Ibid.
131 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 574.
132 Ibid.
that lynchings had now become "an accepted part of the American character," so much so that an anti-lynching bill could not be passed in Congress even though the rate of lynchings had gone up during the Roosevelt years to one per week.133

Franklin states that under the Selective Service Act of 1940 more than three million Negro men registered for service in the armed forces of their country. In 1942, about 370,000 blacks joined the armed forces. In 1944, when the Army was at its peak, there were about 700,000 blacks in Army service alone. In round figures, 165,000 served in the Navy, 5,000 in the Coast Guard, and 17,000 in the Marine Corps.134 The first black marine recruit entered the Corps in 1942. There were no black marines up to this time nor black marine officers in World War Two.135 Franklin, in estimating the total number of blacks in the armed services during the Second World War, places the figure near one million men and women, "which approximates the ratio that Negroes bear to the general population."136 Additionally, close to 4,000 blacks saw service overseas and twenty-two black combat units participated in the ground

133Gayle, The Black Situation, p. 95.
operations in the European theater. As before, with a manpower shortage in 1945, black troops would again be integrated with white troops in a unit to fight on German soil. 137

Despite continuing official hostility and indifference, many black units received the Presidential Citation for gallantry. There was no dearth of individual bravery either. Private Robert H. Brooks was the first member of the United States armored forces and probably the army to give his life in the war against Japan and Dorie Miller, a Navy mess attendant, was the first hero of the war. During the Pearl Harbor attack, Miller manned a machine gun, and shot down four enemy planes. He was later awarded the Navy Cross. 138

On the home front, blacks also gave support to the war effort. They purchased bonds and served in the Red Cross. However, in contrast to their state of mind at the outbreak of the first world war, Franklin reveals:

Negroes had no illusions about the benefits they would derive from World War Two. Had there been any doubts in their minds, they would have been dispelled . . . when Negroes had such great difficulties in securing . . . work in defense industries. . . . Negro civilians made it clear that they were suspicious of the white man's good

137 Ibid., pp. 585-586.
138 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 177.
intentions, and one went so far as to say, "This is . . . to be the last war that the white man will be able to lead humanity to wage for plausible platitudes."^{139}

Now, upon mistreatment of black soldiers, civilians began to remark that "they would prefer to die for some rights in the United States than to die overseas to secure those rights for peoples in foreign lands."^{140}

The major issues for the black American in this war were graphically illustrated on the cover of the July, 1940, Crisis Magazine. The cover simply depicted Air Force planes flying over an aircraft factory turning out new planes. The caption printed across the picture read: "For Whites Only." At the bottom of the cover was printed: "Negro Americans may not help build them, repair them or fly them, but they must help pay for them."^{141}

Although the most immediate concern of blacks was defense jobs, their position or status in the armed forces was also an important symbol. Many blacks again adhered to the argument of previous wars that if one did not participate fully in the defense of his country, he could not lay claim to the rights of a full-fledged citizen. Others adhered to the argument that this war was "no fight merely to wear a uniform," but a struggle for status, "a struggle to take

^{139} Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, pp. 596-597.
^{140} Ibid., p. 597.
^{141} Crisis Magazine, July, 1940.
democracy off of parchment and give it life." Still others fell back on the earlier argument that participation by blacks would show "our white fellow citizens" that they "must treat Negroes as equals." 142

Another issue of concern was the fact the armed services were still segregated. Blacks in the Navy were still restricted to the messman's branch. There were no black aviation units. The White House policy statement of October 9, 1940, also refused to abandon this principle of segregation. For the black American:

The emotional impact of this issue would grow during World War Two. The hypocrisy involved in fighting with a segregated military force against aggression by an enemy preaching a master race ideology would become readily apparent to black Americans. 143

As segregation was part of the civilian life of Americans at that time, the Army believed it must also conform to this fact. 144 One outcome of this racial perspective was that blacks, on the average, "tended to show less enthusiasm for the war than did whites, and manifested somewhat greater reluctance to go overseas or to enter combat." 145 Segregation in the Army was one factor which "tended to make Negro troops less sure than they otherwise would have been about

142 Dalfiume, Desegregation, pp. 26-27.
143 Ibid., p. 43.
144 Ibid., p. 45.
145 Mandelbaum, Soldier Groups, p. 95.
their personal commitment to the war." Increasing numbers of blacks, dissatisfied with the system of race relations and their inferior status, were likewise increasingly less committed to accept official formulations of war aims. In Chicago in 1941, some young blacks, therefore, formed a group called the "Conscientious Objectors Against Jim Crow" to resist the draft because of segregation. During the first years of the war, the major goal of the military "was always subordinated to the goal of segregation" and those who made policy in the early forties largely identified their thinking with that of American society.

Segregation was the military rule in World War Two. Many blacks believed maintaining racial separation seemed the more important goal for the Army and the country at large rather than the preservation of freedom. Many believed also that segregation was inconsistent with the national goals in the war and should, therefore, be challenged. A cross section of this opinion by black soldiers is reflected below:

We had just as soon fight and die here for our rights as do it on some foreign battlefield. How can we be trained to protect America ... when

146 Ibid.
147 Ibid., p. 96.
148 Dalfiume, Desegregation, p. 52.
149 Ibid., p. 63.
all around us rears the ugly head of segregation?\textsuperscript{150}

Dalfiume points out that the "paradox of building a segregated Army to fight an enemy dedicated to conquering the world in the name of a racist ideology was too obvious for the black American to ignore." The violence directed against the black soldier and the segregation to which he was subjected led many blacks, civilian and military, to begin talking about their "soldier-fighting" on two fronts and to realize that "his real enemy" was here in America.\textsuperscript{151}

Dalfiume writes that as Americans, black soldiers tended to respond to the appeals of patriotism and loyalty. As before, some blacks saw the war as an opportunity to prove their loyalty, in the hope that their efforts would be rewarded. However, also present was a growing ambivalent attitude toward the war. This is reflected in the following points provided by Moskos and Dalfiume:

1) struggling with patriotic motivation, blacks were increasingly bitter over their treatment in and out of the armed services.\textsuperscript{152}

2) overseas duty in Germany and the Far East gave him an opportunity to witness societies where racial discrimination was less practiced than in his home country.\textsuperscript{153}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[150] Ibid., pp. 72-74.
\item[151] Ibid., pp. 74-77.
\item[152] Ibid., p. 80.
\item[153] Moskos, "Racial Integration in the Armed Forces," p. 442.
\end{footnotes}
3) comparison of his treatment with the idealistic war aims often bred increased cynicism.

4) denied full and equal participation in the war by segregation, some believed that blacks were then doing more than their share to win the war or more than whites had a right to expect.

5) black contributions to the war effort led others to espouse a moral claim for improved postwar conditions.154

The growing general shortage of manpower in 1943 again led to a change in the Army's policy toward black units. Pressure to commit some black combat units to battle began to build within the War Department in 1943. Additionally, Dalfiume reports, a drastic shortage of infantry replacements as a result of the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944-45 later persuaded General Eisenhower that black troops should be given the opportunity to volunteer as infantry replacements to white companies. Assigned to various white units pushing across Germany in 1945, black volunteers, it would appear, fought well.155

World War Two saw greater opportunities for blacks in the armed services than had existed in the first world war. From viewing the black as a "problem," Dalfiume writes, some whites had come to recognize that black manpower was an asset that had not been fully realized. However, the black mind and morale had been deeply shaken by the events and

154 Dalfiume, Desegregation, pp. 80-81.
155 Ibid., p. 99.
treatment accorded them in this period. For some a certain hope died, a certain respect for white America faded. Some predicted the war would act as a stimulant to black protest and a redefinition of black status in America. Black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier stated that the war marked the point where blacks would no longer be willing to accept discrimination without protest. Charles Silberman, notes Dalfiume, wrote that the war marked a "turning point in American race relations" from which "the seeds of the protest movements of the 1950's and 1960's were sown." 156

To understand how the black American reacted to this war, some idea of the discrimination he faced is necessary:

1) employment discrimination was rampant in the forties.

2) the military discriminated against and segregated the black soldier.

3) those eager to contribute to the Red Cross blood program were often turned away.

4) at a time when America was claiming to be "the last bulwark of democracy," separate air-raid shelters for blacks and whites were planned for Washington, D.C. 157

Increasingly, the "close ranks strategy" was shattered by race riots, lynchings, and continued discrimination. Because of their position in American society, blacks, thus, reacted to the war both as Americans and as black Americans. Some

---

155 Cited in Dalfiume, Desegregation, pp. 103-106.
156 Ibid., pp. 106-107.
viewed it as a white man's war only. Some viewed "peace at home" as the primary concern for blacks. Others saw "our war" not against Hitler in Europe, but against "the Hitlers in America." Dalfiume points out:

The dominant opinion . . . toward World War One was expressed in . . . DuBois' "Close Ranks" editorial - the Negro should forego his racial grievances for the duration of the war. Now . . . most Negroes looked upon the earlier stand as a great mistake. The dominant attitude was that during World War Two the Negro must fight for democracy on two fronts - at home as well as abroad. 158

Some blacks took advantage of the war to tie their racial demands to the ideology for which the war was being fought. The black press frequently compared the similarity of America's treatment of blacks and the Nazi's treatment of minorities and the white-supremacy doctrine in America to the Nazi plan for blacks. Stimulated by the "democratic ideology of the war," blacks increasingly were moved to reexamine their position in society. Blacks found it simply too difficult to reconcile their treatment with the announced war aims. The war was serving to focus black attention on their unequal status in American society. And, for many, the war would not be fought to maintain the status quo in America any longer. 159 In other words:

158 Ibid., pp. 108-111.
159 Ibid., pp. 112-129.
The hypocrisy and paradox involved in fighting a world war for the four freedoms and against aggression by an enemy preaching a master race ideology, while at the same time upholding racial segregation could not be overlooked. The war crisis provided American Negroes a unique opportunity to point out, for all to see, the difference between the American creed and practice. In part, this confidence was also the result of the mass militancy and race consciousness that developed in these years. When the expected white acquiescence in a new racial order did not occur, the ground was prepared for the Civil Rights Revolution of the 1950's and 1960's.160

As the war ended, racial tensions in civilian life reached a new peak with the return of the black veteran. Dalfiume points out that the black veteran was "affected by the war's slogans . . . and . . . democratic treatment afforded them by foreign civilians." Scores of veterans pledged themselves, "to follow a program of action that would bring the 'full share of democracy' for which they had fought."161 One retiring veteran wrote:

A new Negro will return . . . a bitter Negro if he is disappointed again. He will have been taught to kill, . . . to die for something he believes in, and he will live by these rules to gain his personal rights.162

In review, the black American entered World War Two "only to find that 165 years after the Declaration of Independence," the black soldier could only serve in segregated

160 Ibid., p. 131.
161 Ibid., pp. 132-133.
units while "white men flew the planes, drove the tanks, and sailed our ships."\textsuperscript{163} In 1941, he found himself completely segregated by race, fighting to destroy Nazism and Hitler, and the doctrine of Aryan supremacy. The paradox was that this battle was fought in segregated units till near the war's end. When the black veteran returned to civilian life after again helping to "make the world safe for democracy," he soon found that he faced additional problems. First, while the G.I. bill offered a college education which the government would pay for, most black veterans could usually not take advantage of this because most had not even finished high school. Second, while there were G.I. mortgages guaranteed by the government, there was also the factor of housing segregation. Third, while there were government-backed on-the-job training programs, many white firms refused later to employ the black veteran.\textsuperscript{164} Once again, after acquitting themselves well on the field of battle, their heroism and sacrifice was forgotten. After helping to defeat the "racist" regime of Adolf Hitler, America, Gayle notes, returned to a position "as severe as that of the Nazi racists." Black people were the first to be dismissed from defense jobs, still segregated,

\textsuperscript{163}"Paradox of the Black Soldier," p. 142.
\textsuperscript{164}Ibid.
and still victims of the rope, the firebomb, and the rifle at the hands of white Americans North and South.  

The Korean War

Military leaders realized after World War Two that the methods of utilizing black manpower had not been satisfactory and that in the post-war army changes were in order. The pressure of black protest to end segregation in the armed forces helped force this realization. In 1948, A. Philip Randolph publicly advised all blacks "to refuse to serve in the military until it was desegregated." His call was for civil disobedience. A confrontation with Senator Wayne Morse and Randolph occurred in the Senate on April 12, 1948, in which Randolph made clear his position.  

Randolph stated that if America does not develop the democratic process at home and make the process work by giving the very people whom they propose to draft in the Army to fight for them democracy, democracy then is not the type of democracy that ought to be fought for.  

Civil disobedience, for Randolph, was the only way by which we are going to make America wake up and realize that we do not

165 Gayle, The Black Situation, pp. 95-96.

166 U.S., Congress, Senate, Senator Morse requesting that testimony by A. Philip Randolph before the Armed Services Committee be printed in the Record, 80th Cong., 2d sess., April 12, 1948, Congressional Record, XCIV, 4312-4318.

167 Ibid., 4312.
have democracy here as long as one black man is denied all of the rights enjoyed by all the white men in this country.168

On civil disobedience as a course of action, Randolph argued he would be willing to face that doctrine on the grounds that blacks were serving a higher law than the law which applied the act of treason to them when they were attempting to win democracy in this country and to make "the soul of America democratic."169

Also in 1948, President Truman took it upon himself, as commander in chief of the armed forces, to order full integration of the services. By the time the Korean War broke out in 1950, military integration was a "limited integration" but still an important step.170 Under this new policy, the color bar was removed from all army jobs and schools, all racial quotas were abolished including the former ten per cent limit, and blacks could now be assigned to any unit as his qualifications merit. Segregated units were still maintained but would presumably decline since blacks no longer had to serve in segregated units only.

168 Ibid., 4313.
169 Ibid., 4313.
The Korean War was the training ground and transition point for the new policy. In the midst of the war and with complete secrecy, the army deactivated black units and assigned blacks to white units. Before its deactivation, the 24th captured Yech'on in the first United States victory of the war. Private William H. Thompson, a unit member, added another "postscript" to history by becoming the first black man to win a Congressional Medal of Honor since the Spanish-American War. 172

Integration, then, came to the Army as the result of the Korean War. The war, remarks Dalfiume, "pushed the Army to complete integration much sooner than would have been the case without a war." 173 This occurred only because of the foundation laid down by the Fahy Committee and the attitude of President Truman whose commitment to the black American has been described by some as "probably stronger than any President before or since has demonstrated." 174 Truman held in 1946 that the constitutional guarantees of individual liberties and equal protection clearly placed on the federal government the duty to act, when state or local authorities abridged or failed to protect constitutional rights. 175 It was, however, the Fahy Committee that later

172"These Truly are the Brave," p. 177.
173Dalfiume, Desegregation, p. 201.
persuaded the Army to abolish the racial quota in April, 1950.

Integration was also quickened by the revival of old charges that all black units were unreliable and fled in the face of danger. In other words, a concentration of poorly educated persons, low morale, and the tendency for commanders to blame their units' failures on race, also forced agencies to speed integration in the services. On July 26, 1951, the Army publicly announced that integration would be completed in about six months. After this time a group of social scientists in Project Clear found that black soldiers "performed better in integrated units." This was later to be the conclusion of the majority of officers with experience in integrated units in Korea. But Project Clear concluded early that continued racial segregation limited the effectiveness of the Army and integration enhanced that effectiveness.176

By the end of 1954, segregation and discrimination were "virtually eliminated" from the internal structure of the active military forces with equal treatment now official military policy. Military life developed a unique interracial character unlike that found in the other major institutions of American society. However, off-post civilian communities were still a "constant reminder that

176Dalifimine, Desegregation, pp. 204-215.
the society they are prepared to defend is a society that deprecates their right to full participation as citizens."

The social situation for the black American, however, did not change after Korea. Once again, as in previous wars, the black veteran found that blacks were in the same predicament as before; still the recipients of inferior education, the worst jobs, and acts of terrorism and murder. In exchanging the khaki brown for civilian clothes, blacks discovered that the freedom which they had fought to preserve was, in the words of Gayle, "the freedom of America to oppress them and their people." 

The Vietnam War

The conclusion that the United States armed forces may be the most integrated institution in American society today seems inescapable. Yet, this observation, together with the Vietnam War and the sense of black nationalism current among today's young black radicals, however, poses a number of ironies.

The Vietnam War raises new questions about the meaning and mission of the black soldier. These questions have prompted, in turn, new queries about the meaning of America. And America, having proved finally that all men are indeed

177Ibid., pp. 218-221.
equal in the military, is faced with the necessity of matching that on her streets. Today's black soldier, however important to United States military posture, is faced with increasing pressure from black civilians to assume new roles and make new demands on the homefront. For an increasing number of young blacks, there are simply too many questions raised and ironies pointed up by the Negro in Vietnam.

*Ebony Magazine* in 1968 reported that of the approximately 303,000 blacks on active duty with the armed forces, some 56,000 were currently serving in South Vietnam. Generally, black motives for being in Vietnam paralleled those of their white counterparts but, at the same time, reflect particular ironies common to blacks. These motives are status, career, and resignation. Black servicemen almost "consistently reenlist" at a rate "at least twice that of whites" in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, and "about three times the rate of whites in the Army." Most frequently, career reasons and income keep most black men in Vietnam. Others remain for the reasons of "adventure" and "to stop the spread of communism," the often stated "official line." Increasingly, however, some blacks, concludes Johnson, feel that it is an indictment of America

179 "These Truly are the Brave," p. 177.

that many young blacks must go into the military for fulfillmen
t or status and that many prefer service overseas
to their homeland. 181

There is no one black view on Vietnam, any more than
there is one white view, but, "there are such clear signs
of hostility to United States policy in Vietnam among
important sections" of the black population that it is
useful here to note these and to present some of those
arguments. 182

First, one must realize that "the race mood determines,
from moment to moment," the black attitude toward Vietnam.
As Howard Zinn explains this:

In World War Two there was such a strong element of
anti-racism in the fight against . . . arch-racist,
Adolf Hitler, that Negroes could . . . be persuaded
to support the war. But in the Vietnam War, the
situation is different: The foe is not an Anglo-
Saxon racist but a mass of poor dark-skinned peasants
who resemble in many aspects of their lives the
Negro of the American rural South. 183

In World War One, blacks could adhere to the moral aim of
the war "to win the war against autocracy and to make the
world safe for democracy and democracy for the world." 184

181 Ibid., pp. 31-36.
182 Howard Zinn, Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal
183 Ibid., p. 22.
184 Jess Yoder, "The Protest of the American Clergy in
Opposition to the War in Vietnam," Today's Speech, 17
(September, 1969), 53-54.
In World War Two again, the "just war" argument provided the rationale for some blacks to justify the actions of allied forces in Europe and Asia. Many held that "the morally responsible person, as a citizen of the state, should fight to establish the cause of justice and to destroy an injustice that threatens the social good."\(^\text{185}\) In other words, in World War Two, blacks explained their part on the rationale that:

Though all killing and destruction of the property of others are evil acts, there are different degrees of evil. A lesser evil is committed when the just destroy the unjust rather than the other way around. The righteous must, of course, be on the side of the lesser evil. In other words, killing is a dirty business that unfortunately good people must do when conditions make it necessary.\(^\text{186}\)

However, in the black view, the following conditions for violence in Vietnam seem absent:

1) the cause is not entirely just.

2) the motives of economic gain and world prestige are not entirely proper.

3) the innocent are bearing the greatest losses and suffering.

4) war has not been declared by proper civil authority.

5) a reasonable hope that the original injustice will be corrected without greater harm to the common good is questionable.\(^\text{187}\)

\(^{185}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{186}\text{Ibid., 54.}\)

\(^{187}\text{Ibid.}\)
Thus, the black American has challenged American involvement in Vietnam on the grounds outlined above.

Second, after World War Two, blacks more and more "viewed their fate as inextricably connected with the fate of darker peoples throughout the world." Franklin points out that this "interdependence of the world" was brought about by the revolutionary developments in transportation and communication. Diplomacy, disarmament, colonial problems, and international relations were brought within the sphere of the "international aspects of the struggle for freedom." Peace and freedom occupied the attention of a growing number of black scholars such as DuBois, Ralph Bunche, and Rayford Logan. These men and others praised "America's goal of a world community of peaceful nations." And as blacks increasingly wrote and spoke in support of freedom in Africa and Asia and human welfare globally, "they never," Franklin emphasizes, "lost sight of their immediate difficulties." As Franklin puts it: "The struggle to attain freedom all over the world was essentially a struggle to attain a measure of it at home." It was, following World War Two, the "widening horizons" of blacks, world interest in the American race problem, and the leadership role of America in world affairs, that were factors commending

188 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 645.
189 Ibid., pp. 645-647.
greater participation by blacks in world affairs. Thus, for some historians, the war in Vietnam merely underscores the belief in the black American's increased involvement. Blacks, too, began raising questions about the presence of American troops in Southeast Asia. Some joined other Americans who insisted America should not "police" the world. Others began to insist that the escalation and bombing of North Vietnam went beyond the commitment of America and rendered impossible meaningful peace talks. Some articulated that the war used up resources that could be better utilized for economic programs at home. 190

Third, this war is labeled by some "the most integrated war in American history" and by others simply "whitey's war." Some are, therefore, moved to charge that the war and the military are too integrated, that black soldiers are doing more than their share of dying. 191 Importantly, this claim that the military is "too integrated" does have a basis in fact. Comprising eleven per cent of the population, blacks are only 9.5 per cent of all the armed forces. In Vietnam, however, black soldiers are 14.5 per cent of the combat units and 22.4 per cent of all troops killed in action. 192 So, too, the black spokesmen of today

190 Ibid., pp. 648-651.
191 Dalfiume, Desegregation, pp. 218-221.
192 Ibid., pp. 223-224.
also find cause for complaint when they examine the draft statistics. Here blacks make up nearly 13.4 per cent of all the draftees inducted. This is especially galling to the radicals because, as of May, 1967, only 1.3 per cent of all local draft board numbers were blacks, and there was not a single black member on the draft boards in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.\footnote{Ibid., p. 224.} However, Ebony Magazine in August, 1968, reported that black draft board members have now increased from 278 to 750, or from 1.6 per cent to 4.4 per cent. In southern states, Arkansas, which had no black draft board members in 1966, now has thirty-five or twenty-five per cent, and Louisiana, which had none as of 1966 also, now reports thirty-three members.\footnote{L. Deckle McLean, "The Black Man and the Draft," Ebony Magazine, August, 1968, pp. 63-64.} Despite these advancements, some blacks further charge that the draft is also concerned "with keeping folks in line on the home front." According to some, the draft's unstated purpose is to

... employ the threat of military service to "channel" civilians away from opposition to the military establishment. As long as ... boards have the power to excuse vast numbers from service, it remains crucial to blacks whether the principle of "channeling" is followed. An abused minority ... out-of-work and angry, with a growing militant core, is neither "safe" not compatible with the military's aims ... and if "channeling" remains in the minds of draft boards,
young blacks will continue to be hauled in large numbers from street-corners to training camps. And from dashikis to muddy fatigues. 195

There are, of course, some reasons why blacks do make up a larger percentage of the draft, the combat forces, and the battle deaths in Vietnam. The primary cause for the higher number of draftees is blacks do not occupy the position in American life that makes them eligible for deferment. Few get college deferments because few have the opportunity to attend college. Next, the high percentage of blacks in combat forces in Vietnam and the resulting high number of battle deaths can be explained by the fact that blacks generally prefer the military as a career. They are aware that the military "is the most integrated institution in American life." 196 However, while life in the service is often less abusive than life outside, black reenlistment in the Vietnam war years is now on the decline. This is both a source of pride for some and an alarming phenomenon to others. Whereas in the past "some 49 per cent of blacks eligible for discharge from the Army" elected to again re-enlist, this reenlistment rate in the Army "dropped from 66 per cent in 1966 to 32 per cent in 1967." 197

195 Ibid., p. 66.
196 Dalfiume, Desegregation, pp. 221-225.
1967, it is important to note here, was also the year when the Vietnam War "became more controversial in the black community than during any previous year." This, according to some observers, was the direct result of prestige given the anti-war movement by the voice of the late Martin Luther King. Newsweek Magazine's third poll of black opinion in 1969 confirms that because blacks "are persuaded 2 to 1 that their young are fighting a disproportionate share of the war - and by 7 to 1 that Vietnam is directly pinching the homefront war on poverty," the anti-war feeling has helped in the space of three years, to reverse the old black majority view that the military gives black youth a better break than civilian life. And, Newsweek reports, it has also infected the black man's "already jaundiced view" of the Nixon administration. Blacks frequently enlisted before because of the following reasons:

1) the military represented the most completely integrated segment of society.

2) combat units provided better pay and increased chances for promotion.

3) combat duty was a chance to achieve and prove one's manhood.

4) it was a means of escaping poverty.

---

198 Ibid., p. 92.

5) the Army legitimized the impulse for aggression, anger, and violent impulses. Reenlistment, in the past, was made, "in virtually every case," on the conscious level of dollars and sense, for economic reasons, and "less the measure of their patriotism than an indictment of the country." Today, blacks increasingly feel it is "a sad commentary" on the state of the country that a man will subject himself to possible death in order to be "quasi-integrated."  

Newsweek again reported that a small but increasing proportion of the black community now feels bitterness, alienation, and despair over the war in Vietnam. Now, the magazine noted, "one in seven doesn't consider America worth fighting for in a world war." Further, blacks have come to regard Vietnam "as their own particular incubus - a war that depletes their young manhood and saps the resources available to healing their ills at home." Newsweek summarizes:  

... black backlash against the war is one of the most striking turnabouts since the 1966 poll: the notion that blacks ought to oppose the war because they have less freedom in the United States - a 35 per cent minority slogan then - has become a 56-31 majority sentiment today.  

201 Ibid., pp. 88-92.  
In short, despite opinion that blacks may get a better chance in the services than in civilian life, or volunteering for hazardous duty in Vietnam means extra money, faster promotions, a chance to prove one's worth, the "sad truth" is that the best opportunity American society provides for many blacks to get ahead in life can only be taken by risking one's life. 203

A fourth black view on Vietnam, not entirely different from that of the past, is the belief that "America is the black man's battleground." 204 Many blacks in Vietnam, like those who served before them in previous wars, are not likely to be content with anything less than first-class citizenship when they return home. Dalfiume makes clear that those who have interviewed black service-men in Asia report that the primary question on the black soldier's mind is what treatment they can expect when they return home. However, and more importantly in the Vietnam situation, this returning veteran poses a much more serious threat to the establishment and society in general. An image of today's returning black veteran from Vietnam is suggested below:

You will have ... veterans ... who have reached a very high point of bitterness and who, having

203 Dalfiume, Desegregation, p. 225.
204 Ibid.
suffered for what they felt were dubious reasons, will refuse to accept injustice. They are coming back with skills in warfare and with no feelings of inferiority.205

A report by Time Magazine's Wallace Terry in September, 1969, reveals what Terry calls "the new black militancy in Vietnam." Terry, a black correspondent who spent more than six months in Vietnam talking with black soldiers, reports:

Many of today's young black soldiers are yesterday's rioters, expecting increased racial conflict in Vietnam and at home when they return. Elaborate training in guerrilla warfare has not been lost upon them, and many officers ... believe that Vietnam may prove a training ground for the black urban commando of the future.206

Though admitting his more than four-hundred personal interviews with black enlisted men were "by no means a scientific sample," the interviews provided a measure to obtain the attitudes of black men in Vietnam. Portions of the results are excerpted below:

1) 45 per cent said they would use arms to gain their rights when they return to America.

2) 60 per cent agreed black people should not fight in Vietnam because they have problems back home.

3) 41 per cent said they would join a riot upon return to America.207


207Ibid., pp. 586-587.
For the future Terry summarizes:

... a significant number seems likely to continue to believe that the United States owes the black soldier a debt both for his service in Vietnam and his suffering at home. These men are a new generation. ... Unlike the veterans of a year or two ago, they are immersed in black awareness and racial pride. It is only this fall and winter that they will be returning to ... the cities. If they find that nothing has changed there, then they could constitute a formidable force in the streets of America, schooled and tempered in all the violent acts as no generation of blacks has ever been. 208

The point being made here is that the Vietnamese War may play a part in the radicalization of the black American. As opposed to earlier wars, the black veteran from Vietnam brings home this time much experience in the sophisticated war weaponry and, thus, creates a vastly superior figure or potential in the civil rights struggle. In other words, today's black radical is likely to find his demands for increased militancy in the struggle for civil rights reinforced by the very war he denounces. No less ironical is the position of white society. As Dalfiume points out, by structuring a situation whereby the black American finds his best chance for equal opportunity in the military services, white America has produced a powerful force that is working to destroy the racial barriers it is so reluctant to pull down on its own volition. 209 Thus, the violence in

208 Ibid., p. 587.
America over civil liberties, has produced in the black soldier a new awareness of self and his major obligation to issues and priorities in his life. This is increasingly reflected in letters from the black serviceman in Vietnam. A reflection of this new militancy is seen in the following excerpts drawn from two letters to the editors of Ebony Magazine in August, 1968. One soldier from New York City wrote:

I for one refuse to return to the same society of racism. We are due to return soon. All we ask is to be accepted as humans, not some inferior race. We are men, and men are accepted on their individual characters and integrity. Blacks are good enough to die for America in Vietnam, therefore, I am willing to die at home for a cause that is easier to understand.

So, I say now, America, get your own house in order, because if you don't there won't be any house to get in order.210

The second letter includes references to the King assassination:

In view of the circumstances which permit such acts to be perpetrated, we ask. "What the hell are we doing here?" If it's to gain freedom for the Vietnamese, then who will gain our freedom in the States while our blood is being spilled at a higher rate than that of any other group over here? If it's to preserve the freedom of all Americans, then it's questionable if we are fighting in the right place at the right time.211


211 Ibid., p. 17.
In 1968, military spokesmen estimated that 41,000 black veterans would be returning to civilian life, with more than five-thousand of this total from Vietnam. They return aware of events, what course they will take when necessary, knowing better than anyone else the high cost black people are paying in the Vietnam War. Bringing home bitterness, hope, and a feeling of service in Vietnam, they wonder if all this will be forgotten because of their color? The late National Urban League, Executive Director, Whitney Young, articulated this same concern when he warned that black veterans are truly "a force the nation can ill afford to have embittered."

In the future perhaps the most seriously listened to black men in America in days to come might well be the thousands returning from combat action in Vietnam. One of the reasons for this may be their feeling that they have "'paid their dues' and are now ready to collect from the American society for which they have caught hell." Believing they have earned the right to comment on Vietnam and their situation in America, they feel more strongly than ever that America owes them something.

---

213 Ibid., p. 145.
In review, there are two black views on Vietnam. First, for some black soldiers, Vietnam represents America at war again and as loyal Americans it is their duty to defend their country. Concerned also about things at home, they are sure America will work out its problems in the long run. This group further argues that the country is "engaged in a vicious war against communism, and every American should support that war." These blacks, thus, appear more concerned with their own welfare and are not influenced greatly by those who cause riots, and tell them not to support the war in Vietnam. A second view includes those soldiers who would prefer to die fighting tyranny, oppression, hunger and disease in the black ghettos of America than to die in the jungles of Vietnam for an abstract freedom for the Vietnamese. Deciding they will not go to Vietnam, their decisions are not the result of "emotionalism nor youthful iconoclasm." As Addison Gayle explains this feeling:

Not only are their decisions derived from first-hand experience of the treatment received by them and their kinsmen at the hands of present-day white America; they are even more aware of the history of the participation of black men in past American wars and the treatment accorded these men and their fellow Negroes once those wars had ended.

\[215\] Ibid., pp. 90-92.
This group further argues that only on the battlefield is the presence of black soldiers ever desired. They contend only manpower shortages provide the rationale for turning to the black community for assistance in military ventures. On this manpower argument, these blacks emphasize that it was never because of some kind of moral enlightenment or internal good will on the part of white Americans that blacks made progress both in America and the armed services. In short, this group asserts that it has arrived at the "terrible truth" concerning one's country, and nothing, they believe

. . . either in the past or in the present, has made it necessary for black people to disavow this truth; and if indeed the future is merely a product of past and present, then the black soldiers . . . in Vietnam . . . can look forward to a future differing very little from that of their predecessors. Their people will still be oppressed . . . still forced to attend inferior schools . . . still forced to live in crime-infested ghettos . . . the victims of acts of violence . . . now initiated by . . . those of the suburbs . . . who will reationalize their actions with the assertion that they are fighting to preserve their freedom.216

Arguing that once the war is over, America will again return to "repressing black people," they remind the listener that this time black people will no longer passively accept such oppression. For these black men "there comes a time in the life of a people, as in the life of an individual," when one must say, "No more, you have gone too far enough." That moment,

216 Ibid., p. 96.
in Gayle's judgment, appears here for many young black Americans. He concludes:

Young, articulate black men, who are refusing to serve in Vietnam, are the inheritors of an experience which Crispus Attucks did not possess. They know that America is a racist society and that the fight for liberty and freedom must begin here where liberty and freedom are so blatantly denied, and that it affords a man nothing to make another country safe for democracy only to live under totalitarianism in his own. 217

It is of little wonder to many that blacks today are now demanding a final showdown for their centuries of un-rewarded services to this country. Having done their jobs from the Revolution to Vietnam and been cheated of their rewards, the demand today is to "Make the promise of America available to all right now." Asking no more or no less than has been given others, the implication is to "act now or face the consequences." 218

Summary

Looking at this survey of the black soldier as a whole, the following general conclusions can be drawn. First, black Americans have taken part in all of this country's wars. Second, while most who have reviewed the black role conclude that white America has generally restricted black participation in military affairs until an

217Ibid., p. 97.
emergency manpower situation forced the use of the black man, the black American has viewed his military record as proof of his loyalty and as a claim to full citizenship. Third, aware that citizens have the obligation to serve in the armed forces, the black American has, in most cases, sought to participate in America's wars in the hope that his sacrifices would later bring the reward of increased rights. However, a chronology of the black soldier in wartime indicates that this has not been the case.

While blacks participated in the battles of Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill, Bennington, and Yorktown, developing among some blacks as early as 1766, was the feeling that it was inconsistent for blacks to fight for national independence while America clearly adhered to the tenets of slavery. Although under the command of General Andrew Jackson blacks performed their most effective services during the War of 1812, the war itself found black soldiers again fighting for their country and its end found them still slaves or, at best, free men with no real rights as citizens. So, too, with the Civil War at an end, black soldiers achieved a status of free men and the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments made them legally citizens, yet, again, wartime manpower needs only forced some kind of official tolerance. With no jobs, no money, and no training, blacks soon found they had exchanged legal slavery for economic slavery. Again, having fought valiantly during the Spanish-
American War, blacks returned home to find that "separate but equal" was now the law of the land.

Although at the start of the twentieth century the military remained largely a segregated institution, to suggest that blacks did not again become actively involved in World War One would be in serious error. Blacks, too, were affected by the war and were anxious "to save the world for democracy." Arguing the race was on trial, some black leaders urged full participation in the war on the grounds that such efforts, they hoped, would bring eventual recognition as citizens and fairer treatment in America.* W. E. B. DuBois early counseled complete devotion to the war, telling blacks to "close ranks" and forget grievances for the duration of the war. Other segments of the black community accused DuBois of "selling out," placing country above rights. As before, blacks had hoped that in making "the world safe for democracy," America would grant more democracy to its largest minority. However, the revival of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915 and the turn in race relations during and after the war meant black hopes were still largely unfulfilled. Yet, importantly, now developing among some black troops in Europe was the idea that based on the cruel events at home, they would not easily return passive-by-standers to injustice, lynchings, and murder.

While racial stereotypes and a continuing belief in the inferiority of blacks remained widespread among many
Americans and the military from the twenties to the forties, two factors drew the attention of blacks to the world scene and their later involvement in World War Two. First, the invasion of Ethiopia and its destruction symbolized a victory of the white man over the black man. Second, some blacks concerned with the rising facism in Europe, the Aryan doctrines of Nazism, and Hitler's unfavorable comments concerning blacks, saw a direct threat to the black race developing in those circles. For these two reasons and a continuing belief that participation meant one could lay claim to the rights of a full citizen and expect equal treatment as such, blacks enlisted in the war effort. Importantly, however, after acquitting themselves well in the war, their heroism was soon forgotten. As before, black soldiers returned to America still second-class citizens and still the victims of the firebomb at the hands of white Americans North and South.

After World War Two, the pressure of protest by A. Philip Randolph and the commitment of President Truman and the Fahy Committee to end segregation in the armed forces became a reality. By the time the Korean War had ended in 1954, segregation and discrimination were virtually eliminated from the internal structure of the active military forces. However, the social situation for blacks did not change after Korea. Blacks were still the recipients of inferior education, the worst jobs, and more acts of
terrorism and murder. Again, blacks discovered that the freedom which they had fought to preserve was the freedom of other Americans to oppress them and their race.

While blacks could adhere to the moral aim of World War One which sought "to make the world safe for democracy" and the idea of fighting an injustice threatening the social good justified their involvement in World War Two, the Vietnam War raises a number of ironies and questions concerning the meaning and mission of today's black soldier. While there is no one black view on Vietnam, the following arguments appear repeatedly among important sections of the black community. First, some young blacks feel it is an indictment of America that blacks must enter the military for career and status fulfillment. Second, many blacks see the foe in Vietnam as a mass of poor dark-skinned peasants who resemble in many aspects of their lives the black man in America. Third, many hold that the innocent are bearing the greatest suffering in a cause that is not entirely just. Fourth, with war undeclared by proper civil authority, some have labeled it simply "Whitey's War," with black soldiers doing more than their share of the dying. Further, blacks argue the war drains resources available to healing black needs at home. A final view, not entirely different from that of the past, is the belief that America should be the black man's battleground.
What seems important about the previous arguments on Vietnam is that these views are derived from the first-hand experiences of the treatment received by blacks at the hands of white America, plus, a keen awareness of the historical record of blacks in past wars and the treatment accorded the returning veteran. Aside from this, it appears important to note that this time the black veteran from Vietnam creates a vastly superior figure and potential in the black freedom struggle. Skilled in sophisticated war weaponry and possessing a new awareness of self and his major obligations to issues and priorities in his life, his return as the best trained killer in the world may well be a reminder that this time the black soldier will no longer passively accept such oppression.
American historians, with few exceptions until recently, have never dealt properly with the black American. Writers have "written patronizingly about him," observes Franklin, "or deplored his sufferings, or all but ignored his presence, treating him as an appendage to American history rather than an integral part of it."\(^1\) As Chapter II illustrated, at the birth of America, blacks, too, shared the white man's concept of liberty and expressed it in words and deeds. The Declaration of Freedom presented by blacks to the Massachusetts Legislature in 1777 and the memorial to the first man alleged to fall in the revolution at Boston in 1770, Crispus Attucks, are examples of this. But when independence was finally won, black Americans had to start again their own separate struggle for freedom and equality. That continuing struggle not only is the central theme upon which black history is built, but is a crucial aspect of American history as well. Yet, Americans of all hues know too little about this. And today, when that

struggle has become what Franklin and Butterfield term, "the critical social issue of our time," there is now the urgent attempt to understand its beginnings. Additionally, since the war in Vietnam has for five years been an overriding issue which affects all of the major facets of American society, we may study with profit its rhetorical implications from the black perspective. Indeed, as there has been a tradition of protest and dissension in American history by white Americans to change American society, so, too, the black American has also been a part of this tradition. With a principal dimension of black history encompassed by spoken symbolic interaction, Arthur L. Smith indicates that

Proclamations of dignity, selfhood, equality, freedom, and justice have always been the black man's most personal confrontation with the speaking platform. The numbers and varieties of the spokesmen suggest the energy expended in the effort of black liberation. First, slavery was denounced; and after the emancipation, the black spokesmen turned their attention to the oppressive conditions brought on by segregation and discrimination. The black revolutionists voice concern over the presence in today's society of the same racist tendencies that have existed in the nation since 1619.

---

2 Ibid.


Using a number of methods to protest and achieve goals, black resentment at discrimination and deprivation was channeled in these ways. First, in Revolutionary days it was fairly common for slaves to save enough money to purchase their freedom or to initiate court suits, some winning compensation for work done as slaves. Others in the abolitionist movement sent petitions to Congress against the Fugitive Slave Act and to legislatures against segregated transportation and education. Second, retaliatory violence was not unknown; it occurred both during the antebellum years and throughout the century since emancipation. Third, verbal protests, the use of the Negro vote, picketing and boycotts have all been direct expressions of the race's frustrating experience in America. Fourth, alienated from the mainstream of American life, some aggressions were sublimated into nationalist attempts to create all black communities within America or to a "wanting-out" or emigration to Africa and Haiti. Emigration led many blacks to conclude that it was better for both races to be separated. Fifth, some black resentment was suppressed into an accommodating acceptance of the status quo, "looking to Heaven

---


for solace," or "internalizing" the white man's view of the black American. Thus, the psychological mechanisms involved in the black response to discrimination have also colored their expression of resentment and depended largely on cultural factors with each historical period producing certain types of adaptation. 8

However little black writers, speakers, and thinkers may have exerted an influence on the main currents of white American thought over the years, Martin Luther King writes, in his last book, that it was, nevertheless, the black American who alone "illuminated imperfections in the democratic structure that were formerly only dimly perceived," forcing a reexamination of the meaning of American democracy, both economic and political. 9 "By taking to the streets," King points out, "and there giving practical lessons in democracy and its defaults," the black American has "decisively influenced white thought." 10

Strategies and Movements

Inasmuch as black history in America has been a history of protest, there are a number of ways or rhetorical

8 Ibid., pp. 94-95.


10 Ibid.
perspectives from which to view this protest and the later rhetoric on Vietnam. Smith, Scott and Brockriede, Randolph, and Golden and Rieke suggest four approaches or frameworks. A review of each now follows.

Scott and Brockriede write that "traditionally rhetoric has been the study of verbal persuasion."\(^{11}\) However, now realizing that nonverbal actions or nonverbal cues such as gestures and tone of the speaker's voice affect how receivers respond to the verbal discourse, both are now "dominated" by the view of black rhetoric "as patterns of argument and human interaction that tend to grow out of the situations in which Black Power is urged and denounced."\(^{12}\) They see black rhetoric as "situational," "particular arguments on a subject," and "special interaction of people in a situation."\(^{13}\) Since, they argue, "a rhetorical perspective is a way of looking at how men use symbolic behavior to influence other men and events," this implies four primary dimensions from which the critic may view black rhetoric. First, if the critic approaches black rhetoric as a "transaction among people," he may then study the audience, the process of identification or


\(^{12}\)Ibid., pp. 2-3.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 3.
the elements of ethos and credibility. Second, approaching rhetoric as a "transaction of ideas," the critic may well study the speaker's rhetorical decisions, philosophical position and stance, the ideology represented, policies advocated, data used, or style developed to be consistent with the rhetorical decisions. Third, if the critic approaches black rhetoric as "rhetorical transactions" occurring in "unique situations," he may well make judgments on the speaker's perception of the situation, the choice of channels, or what this situation invited or prescribed. In all, the rhetorical perspective is "a complex set of interacting dimensions" or a "transaction" among people or ideas. A fourth approach is to view this rhetoric in terms of the rhetorical stance of the speaker, grouped here as militant, moderate, or conservative. Here the critic is concerned with ideas emphasized, approach, and style.\(^1\)

In contrast, additional ways to analyze the nature of black revolutionary rhetoric are suggested by Arthur Smith. Smith discusses as elements of black revolutionary rhetoric the tactics of keeping whites off-balance, of particularizing grievances, and the "or-else" threat of violence.\(^2\) The four rhetorical strategies Smith offers as ways to analyze

\(^{1}\)Ibid., pp. 202-204.

revolutionary rhetoric are: (1) vilification, (2) objectification, (3) legitimation, (4) mythication. Vilification is "the agitator's use of language to degrade an opponent's person, actions, or ideas." Objectification is "the agitator's use of language to direct the grievances of a particular group toward another collective body such as an institution, nation, political party, or race." Mythication employs "language that suggests the sanction of supra-rational forces," thus creating "a spiritual dynamism" for the movement and demonstrating "the righteousness of his cause." Legitimation "is the use of language to answer the opposition" and a refutative strategy. Not only an argumentative rebuttal to an opponent, it is also a "psychological weapon" that seeks "to explain, vindicate, and justify the activists involved in his movement."17

Among the fundamental issues probed by Smith in a theme approach are the claims that all black people face a common enemy, that there is a conspiracy to violate black manhood, that America is a hypocritical country, and that unity among blacks must be achieved for liberation.18

Holding a different position, Harland Randolph analyzes black rhetoric on the basis of how persons with

17Ibid., pp. 26-40.
18Ibid., p. 50.
attitudes favoring segregation, compromise, integration, or revolution, use distinctly different arguments to support their positions. He contends a person may be labeled a separatist if he essentially argues people cannot be forced against their will and groups must maintain their cultural integrity. On the other hand, Randolph believes the integrationist can be identified by the tendency to argue people must be judged as individuals and democracy must be made to work in America to prove its value to the world.

Similar to the Randolph position, the editors of Ebony Magazine contend that black rhetoric may be divided into the integration approach, the separatist approach, and the course of liberation. Integration is defined as a "reciprocal process" in which

. . . blacks and whites gravitate toward each other, sharing decision-making control over institutions and communities and melding their ethical and esthetic values. "Integration" . . . implies desegregation or the removal of all legal barriers to the massive coming together of people. Such a process also implies social and cultural exchanges between mutually-respecting equals . . . .

While segregation is "a forced grouping of people," the separatist presses for physical and cultural separation from whites because of the relative "powerlessness" of blacks.

---


20 Ibid., p. 31.

The separatist argues that before any minority group can be integrated into the mainstream, its members must first develop economic and political power among themselves so that eventually they can bargain from a position of strength rather than beg because of weakness. Some other separatists such as Ron Karenga, LeRoi Jones, and the Black Muslims urge blacks to reject white culture altogether and build upon the broad cultural base of their history.\textsuperscript{22}

While the white man is central to both integration and separation, either in movement toward or away from blacks, the white man's presence is not crucial to the liberation strategy. Since liberationists perceive the white man as non-existent, integration becomes

\textquote{irrelevant to a people who are powerless. For them the equitable distribution of decision-making power is far more important than physical proximity to white people. Indeed, they want black people to take the dominant role in determining the black-white relationship in America. This means complete emancipation of blacks from white oppression by whatever means \ldots necessary \ldots.}\textsuperscript{23}

Some liberationists challenge individualism with the contention that blacks are oppressed as a group rather than as individuals and must therefore respond collectively. They see "communalism as crucial to the needs of emerging people like the blacks of America and their suffering brothers elsewhere in the world." Some envision a synthesis

\textsuperscript{22}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{23}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
of individualism and communalism contending the individual is strengthened when the group is strengthened. Yet, all can agree that blacks must continue their thrusts toward liberation, for within this effort they believe, "lies the definition of these times." 24

Golden and Rieke suggest that the rhetoric of black Americans throughout history seems representative of three persuasive strategies. These strategies they define as assimilation, separatism, and revolution. Under this framework, this writer feels the rhetoric by blacks on Vietnam can best be viewed, categorized, or conceptualized for rhetorical criticism. From these headings, the reader may further gain a more meaningful introduction to the broad scope and variety of this rhetoric. More importantly, however, a description of each strategy and its particular characteristics is important as every major rhetorical event falls under these headings and affects the rhetorical practice of the men who subscribe to them. Additionally, it is crucial to discuss each strategy as each influences the arguments used by particular communicators in the later chapters on issues. To suggest these strategies alone are all inclusive would certainly be in error. Other plans or frameworks could have been chosen. However, conveniently grouping black rhetoric under these three headings will

24 Ibid.
also, hopefully, achieve the following:

1) provide a clearer insight "into the history of the communicative challenges faced by the black American."

2) provide a framework from which an assessment of "his rhetorical management of those challenges" can be made.25

At the same time, for the reader, the advantages or gains to be realized are:

1) for black students, "a greater sense of the worth and dignity of their past."

2) for white students, "a deeper understanding of 25 million fellow Americans" and "a basis to commu­nicate with them."

3) for historians and researchers, insights into a methodology.

4) for society at large, an increased "appreciation of why America today is in turmoil."26

Finally, it is hoped that under these three persuasive strategies something will be disclosed about the nature of black rhetoric, "the use of words as instruments of power," and the black attitude on Vietnam.27

Assimilation

The important decade of civil rights progress, from 1955 to 1965, found its victories "in an appeal to the

26Ibid., p. 20.
conscience, the laws and the pragmatism of white America." 28

Four men can claim as much credit as any for those victories. Thurgood Marshall, Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, and Martin Luther King all spoke for the black citizen to the white man demanding new efforts in the black American's quest for equality.

Thurgood Marshall, named in 1967 to be the first black American to sit on the Supreme Court, appeared before that same Court thirty-two times during his twenty-three year terms as counsel of the N.A.A.C.P. From 1938, Marshall built a series of victories that culminated in Brown v. Board of Education, decided by the Supreme Court in 1954. To win that battle, Marshall persuaded the Court that separate schools were "inherently unequal." 29

While the N.A.A.C.P., under the leadership of Roy Wilkins, pursued legal goals, the National Urban League, headed till 1971 by the late Whitney Young, concerned itself with America's employers and more jobs for blacks in positions of the white collar category. In this context, it may be

---


seen that while the N.A.A.C.P. attacked on the legal front and the Urban League on the economic, Dr. King, as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, considered the moral stance of the nation.

More than Marshall, Young, or Wilkins, King spoke to his own people with words that, at the same time, were also meant to be overheard by white America. A discussion of King alone, his background, speeches, and writings are, therefore, important as it reveals both the man's philosophy, and, more importantly, reflects the essential thrust of the assimilation strategy.

The late Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929. After graduating in 1948 from Morehouse College and in 1951 from Crozer Theological Seminary, he received his doctorate from Boston University in 1955 and his Doctor of Divinity in 1959. He was Pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and vice-president of the National Baptist Convention, Incorporated. Awarded the Nobel Prize in 1964, he was also the author of such books as *Why We Can't Wait*, *Strength to Love*, *Strive Toward Freedom*, and *Where Do We Go From Here*:

---

Chaos or Community? He was assassinated in 1968. Robert Storey, a black attorney with a prominent Cleveland, Ohio, law firm, describes below how King was thrust into the national spotlight in 1955.

When a black seamstress named Rosa Parks refused to yield her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus to a white man on December 1, 1955, it occurred to few people . . . that her simple act of defiance of local custom would touch off one of the greatest and broadest reform movements . . . ever known. What southern segregationists saw as an act of an arrogant black woman . . . was probably best and most perceptively described by . . . King when he called it "her intrepid affirmation that she had had enough. It was an individual expression of a timeless longing for human dignity and freedom."

"It was the genius of King," submits Storey, "that permitted him to grasp the universality of Rosa Park's defiance and to help transform that act into the broadly based civil rights movement of the late fifties and early sixties."

Under King's leadership, continues Storey, "blacks and whites, young and old worked together across religious, economic, and state lines 'to overcome'." College students particularly were caught up in the notions of commitment and participation through sit-ins and voter registration drives. Through working with King, the young had come to

---


32 Mr. Storey is a graduate of Harvard College, a trustee of Exeter Academy, and a trustee of the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges.

believe that they could indeed play an immediate role in making America a better place for all.\textsuperscript{34} Using four sub-strategies to improve the status of blacks in America, a review of each is important as it contributes to an understanding of the assimilation strategy.

\textbf{The Message of Nonviolent Resistance}

What is important here for this discussion of assimilation is that the Civil Rights Movement of the early sixties by King was an affirmation of hope that injustices accumulated over the years could be eradicated by appealing to the rational and moral sense of the nation. As Storey describes it, the King movement acted out the stated American belief that citizens may effectively petition government for the redress of grievances.\textsuperscript{35}

Guided by the concept of nonviolent resistance, there were, according to King, four elements of nonviolent protest. The first was "to use the process of the mind and emotion to persuade your opponent that he is wrong."\textsuperscript{36}

Arthur Smith details this first element this way:

\begin{quote}
King's movement had been based on a fundamental belief in the goodness of man. He insisted that America had the moral courage to correct the
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 17-18.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 18.
\end{flushright}
injustices perpetuated on the black man. Beyond that, he believed that America would redress the grievances if those injustices were amply shown.  

Second, the nonviolent protester did not seek to defeat or humiliate his adversary but rather to win his friendship and understanding. Third, this strategy of protest was centered not against persons but rather against "forces of evil." As King said to the people of Montgomery: "The tension is, at bottom, between justice and injustice. . . . We are out to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust."  

The fourth point of nonviolence, as advocated by King, was a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation. As King himself explained this:

He must not only refuse to shoot his opponent but must also refuse to hate him. To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate. . . ., along the way of life, someone must have sense enough . . . to cut off the chain of hate. This can be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives.

Adding to this fourth point, Smith states that King's message did not contain the threat of violence or the implication of "or else." The only times, concedes Smith, that his rhetoric even hinted of violence was when he pleaded

---

37Smith, Black Revolution, p. 17.


39Ibid.
with America to accept his nonviolent approach because rejection could only lead to violence. But, concludes Smith, "he never intimated that he would be a party to or a preacher of violence."^40 As King himself said of violence:

Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus. I said on one occasion, "If every Negro in the United States turns to violence, I will choose to be that one lone voice preaching that this is the wrong way."^41

King was concerned that blacks should achieve full status both as citizens and as human beings. But he was also disturbed "about our moral uprightness and the health of our souls." Therefore, as he said, he "must oppose any attempt to gain our freedom by the methods of malice, hate, and violence that have characterized our oppressors." He, thus, saw hate as "just as injurious to the hater as it is to the hated" with humanity "waiting for something other than blind imitation of the past." For King, a "dark, desperate, confused and sin-sick world" waited for this new kind of man and this new kind of power.^42

Self-Identity and Self-Image

A second positive response by the assimilationist to the black dilemma was to develop a sense of "somebodyness"

^40Smith, Black Revolution, pp. 19-20.
^41King, Where Do We Go, p. 73.
^42Ibid., pp. 74-77.
in the black American. Here the attempt was made to instruct the black man on the "disastrous sense of his own worthlessness" instilled since the days of slavery. To overcome this feeling of being less than human, the assimilationist preached that a "sense of somebodyness" meant the refusal to be ashamed of being black. Self-acceptance and self-appreciation was one way to cause white America "to see that integration is not an obstacle, but an opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity."\(^4^3\) As King said:

As long as the mind is enslaved the body can never be free. Psychological freedom . . . self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against the long night of physical slavery. No . . . Kennedyan or Johnsonian civil rights bill can totally bring this kind of freedom. The Negro will only be truly free when he reaches down to the inner depths of his own being and signs with . . . assertive self-hood his own emancipation proclamation.\(^4^4\)

To gain self-esteem, King urged blacks to say to themselves and the world:

I am somebody. I am a person . . . a man with dignity and honor. I have a rich and noble history, however painful and exploited that history has been. I am black and comely.\(^4^5\)

Thus, one strategy of the assimilationist was to respond to the recognizable exigence present in both the white and

\(^4^3\)Ibid., pp. 144-145.
\(^4^4\)Ibid., p. 50.
\(^4^5\)Ibid.
black view that blacks were basically inferior. The
inferiority-superiority controversy or being less than
human constituted one rhetorical situation. Some blacks
accepted the challenge here and created arguments or fitting
responses.

The Message of Brotherhood

Another part of the assimilationist strategy was to
presume the brotherhood of all men. This strategy, in
terms of audience, saw the black man speaking directly to
the white man, persuading society at large of the equality
of man. It, thus, viewed the American racial revolution
as "a revolution to 'get in' rather than to overthrow."
The following lines from King are in point:

We want a share in the American economy, the housing
market, the educational system and the social
opportunities. This goal itself indicates that a
social change in America must be nonviolent. If one
is in search of a better job, it does not help to
burn down the factory. If one needs more adequate
education, shooting the principal will not help . . . .
To destroy anything, person or property, cannot bring
us closer to the goal we seek.\(^{46}\)

Another feature of this sub-strategy as exemplified
by King was to take quite literally "the Christian doctrine
that it is sinful to hate."\(^{47}\) Present sufferings were
always contrasted against the background of future glory and

\(^{46}\)Ibid., p. 153.

future triumph; the general theme being "the greater the suffering here, the greater would be the reward in the world to come." The difference between the assimilationist and radical, then, as Eric Hoffer sees it, springs mainly from their attitude toward the future. As Hoffer details this in The True Believer:

A mass movement has to center the hearts and minds of its followers on the future. . . . The self-sacrifice involved in mutual sharing and co-operative action is impossible without hope. . . . On the other hand, when everything is ahead and yet to come, we find it easy to share all we have and to forego advantages within our grasp.

Today, however, the compensations for denial based upon the promises of future blessings in this world or the next appear fading away. The black American's increased participation in the current urban, industrial, and decision-making processes, make the securing of secular goals in this world primary over future goals.

The Strategy of Compromise

A fourth feature of assimilation is a leadership that gives the appearance of conforming to the pattern of compromise with the white community and its leaders. While some blacks contend that leaders, such as King, held their

---

48 Ibid., pp. 100-101.
50 Ibid., p. 68.
position primarily because they were acceptable to white leaders, the assimilationist regards compromise as one of the most practical and effective modes of adjustment in the existing power situation. Conducting their affairs as much as possible on the basis of moral principles, the assimilationists' power, to a large extent, depends on their influence with the white community. Jack L. Walker, writing on how disunity among black leaders actually helps to secure fulfillment of demands made by militants, states that the assimilationists are the spokesmen for the black community primarily because they have gained white recognition and favor, although, he points out, their own achievements placed them in a position to be chosen for this role. Yet, Walker continues, pressure from the new militant wing of black leadership has also enabled the conservative element to use its influence with the white decision-makers to obtain many of the changes desired by the black community.

---


53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p. 342.
August Meier concludes that "not since Booker T. Washington" has a black leader emerged with as much appeal both black and white as King. In Meier's view, King functioned in the early sixties as the mediator of the diverse wings of the black protest movement, "the leader of the nonviolent direct action movement."  

Meier also views King as "amenable to compromises" and often willing to postpone or avoid a direct confrontation in the streets. He was "ideologically committed to disobeying unjust laws and court orders, in the Gandhian tradition," but generally followed a policy of not disobeying Federal Court orders. In all, says Meier, he profoundly awakened the moral conscience of America through a combination of militancy with caution and righteousness with respectability. 

At the heart of King's influence, notes Meier, were two additional facts. First, better than others, he articulated the aspirations of blacks and "the vision of his dream for them and for America." Second, he communicated black aspirations to white America more effectively than anyone else. His religious terminology and the Christian symbols of love and non-resistance were partly responsible

56 Ibid., pp. 354-355.
for his appeal among whites as both were "reassuring to the mentality of white America." King's success with whites was also built upon the exploitation "to maximum effectiveness" of white America's "growing feeling of guilt." His rhetoric, then, played upon white guilt feelings. 57

Unique in that King maintained a balance between moral appeals and a militant display of power, his most important function, Meier believes, was that of "effectively communicating Negro aspirations to white people, of making non-violent direct action respectable in the eyes of the white majority." 58

In review, then, King's rhetoric focused on the economic conditions of the ghettos, tried to identify the interests of blacks and whites and to cooperate with white leadership, and was unalterably opposed to violence. 59

Simons, in summarizing King's pattern of persuasion in the civil rights struggle, develops the view that the strategy of assimilation is the "embodiment of reason in verbal interaction," exemplified by the rhetoric of the courtroom and the conference table, and the method rhetoricians "understand and characteristically prescribe." 60

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., pp. 355-361.
59 Scott and Brockriede, Black Power, p. 198.
Golden and Rieke summarize that the assimilationist message

1) begins with the premise that blacks are ethnologically equal to whites and, therefore, have to be fully integrated into the American culture.
2) argues black accomplishments and contributions to America are proof of ethnological equality.
3) argues the brotherhood of man and the inherent equality of the races.  
4) seeks freedom and the "good life" by absorption into society and a faith in the "melting pot" ideal.
5) contends moral persuasion can effect change.
6) relies on legislative and judicial action to guarantee freedom under the law and the Christian message and religious argument for sustenance.
7) makes an appeal to both audiences, black and white.

The message for white audiences alone, they add, is:

1) both informative and persuasive.
2) appeals to the white anglo-saxon respect for law, justice, and fair play.
3) appeals to both cognitive and affective behavior.

In short, this strategy means blacks participating in major ways in the American mainstream. It stresses the average black man does not want to destroy anything. Here it assumes the black man is not "basically opposed to the system; he just doesn't like being at its bottom." 

63 Ibid., pp. 270-271.
64 Charles E. Fager, "Dilemma for Dr. King," Christian Century, LXXXIII (March 16, 1966), 331.
65 Ibid.
another way, Lawrence P. Neal, former arts and cultural editor of Liberator Magazine, summarizes that the integrationists do not believe the basic socio-economic structure must be destroyed, but rather, that blacks must simply be given a "greater slice of the capitalistic action." Believing in reform not revolution, continues Neal, these communicators have weighed the issues and decided the best course lies in seeking some kind of "rapprochement" with the "system."  

In contrast to the efforts of the assimilationists, other black communicators decided that the prejudice directed at blacks was derived from a color difference. Termed separatism, this philosophy reasons that it is futile to engage in any rhetoric aimed at convincing whites of the inherent equality of the races since men will hate each other so long as men are black and white. Believing it more desirable for blacks to live only with other non-whites than live in an "integrated society," this strategy, to be discussed more fully in the next section, is important as it affects the rhetorical practice of the men who subscribe to it and later colors their arguments when dealing with Vietnam.  

---

Separatism

Since we cannot get along with our former slave masters in peace and equality after giving them 400 years of our sweat . . . and receiving in return some of the worst treatment human beings have ever experienced, we believe our contributions to this land and the sufferings forced upon us by white America justifies our demand for complete separation in a state or territory of our own.67

Elijah Muhhammad
Messenger of Allah

The above quote serves to suggest that in some ways the legal successes of 1955-1965 "spawned" much of the turmoil of the late sixties, the angry militancy, and the many urban outbreaks. "Implicit in the legal victories was a guarantee of equality that many white Americans were not prepared to grant."68 In other words, the prejudice woven into the fabric of society could not be argued out of existence before the Supreme Court. The "real restraints" upon freedom and equality "stood revealed" and many blacks, therefore, "despaired of ever getting clear of them."69

With persistent exigencies, rhetorical situations evolved that required different strategies. The separatist, arguing that observable, recognizable, persisting exigencies

68Butterfield, "Separate Path," p. 82.
69Ibid.
could not be removed, urged withdrawal or removal from the American mainstream. For them, the continuing and urgent needs of blacks in particular situations demanded that kind of fitting response.

The rhetoric of separation, in terms of audience, is primarily black men speaking to other blacks. With the exception of Marcus Garvey's "An Appeal to the Soul of White America" in 1923 and Malcolm X's frequent press and radio and television interviews, it relies little on an appeal to the white conscience nor white acceptance of its message. Termed by some nationalism, this strategy makes the following linguistic distinctions. First, the term separation is derived from the white point of view. Here separation means withdrawal or retreat away from the white man, either outside America, or into enclaves set up within certain southern states. Second, nationalism can also mean that regardless of where the white man lives, blacks must draw together in developing the new black nation. The emphasis is also on nationhood here, establishing a black territory to promote and develop those unique black qualities such as language, literature, folkways, and values. Anything defined on the basis of white values is termed "dead." The nationalist also wants to own and control the economics and politics of the new black state or community. Arguing it is a separatist society already, he sees a drawing away from white society into a separate territory as the best
hope for black survival. Through regrouping or falling back, later confrontation with the white establishment is possible. Additional insight into the nature of this strategy, however, is revealed in the following discussion of the Black Muslims.

The Black Muslims

G. Eric Lincoln's *The Black Muslims in America* is an important study of the history, ideology, organizational structure, and methods of the Black Muslims. Evaluating the movement within the frame of reference of religion, Lincoln sees the movement as essentially "a religion of protest," a movement of social protest that moves upon "a religious vehicle," its main emphases upon social action. 70

Claiming a membership of close to 100,000 persons, the organization is under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad. While their ultimate demand is that blacks be allowed to set up a separate state within the United States, occupying as much as one-fifth of the nation's territory, the Black Muslims are neither pacifists or aggressors. They pay strict attention to the letter of law regarding peace and order. They further engage in no "sit-ins," test no segregation statutes, nor participate in any marches. They do, however, believe in keeping the scores even and they

have warned all America that "an eye for an eye" is the only effective way to settle racial differences. Against the backgrounds of lynchings, uncertainty of justice in the courts, the tradition of disprivilege and opposition to first-class citizenship, all are contributory to the making of a Muslim and what Lincoln terms the "Muslim mood."

With its beginnings in the early 1930's, Lincoln defines a Black Muslim as:

... an American Negro who is a follower of Elijah Muhammad, "Spiritual Leader of the Lost-Found Nation in the West." Black Muslims are distinguished from orthodox Moslems not in their spelling of the word ... but in their belief that their leader, ... Muhammad, is the Messenger of Allah himself, who came in person (under the name of Fard) to wake the sleeping Black Nation and rid them of the white man's age-old domination.72

In determining the constituency of the Muslims through observation and informal interviews, Lincoln concludes that, first, the membership is young with eighty percent of a typical congregation between the ages of seventeen and thirty-five. As an "activist" movement, the appeal is directed to youth. Second, the membership is predominantly male and essentially lower-class. Attracting few intellectuals, a majority of the membership is composed of factory workers, laborers, ex-convicts, dope addicts, and gamblers.

71 Ibid., p. 4.

72 Ibid., p. 21. See also Elijah Muhammad, "Are We The Black Muslims?" Muhammad Speaks, April 25, 1969, p. 19.
Third, the membership is almost wholly American Negro, predominantly ex-Christian, its members drawn primarily from a Protestant tradition. Lincoln notes that the fundamental attraction of the movement is its emphasis on group solidarity, its pressure that men acknowledge themselves as black, and that all blacks work together to accomplish group aims. These aims, summed up for Lincoln by one Muslim minister are:

To get the white man's foot off my neck, his hands out of my pocket and his carcass off my back. To . . . look straight into his cold blue eyes and call him a liar every time he parts his lips.\footnote{ibid., pp. 22-27.}

Lincoln believes the ultimate appeal of the movement is the black man's chance to become identified with a power strong enough to overcome the domination of the white man and perhaps even to subordinate him in turn. In this context, religious values are of secondary importance only in that they foster and strengthen the sense of group solidarity. Muslims make no secret of the fact that they count themselves a part of the growing alliance of non-white peoples, expected eventually to inundate the white race, thus, removing the supremacy whites have enjoyed for so long.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 27-30.} The appeal goes deeper with the idea that every Muslim holds

\footnote{Ibid., pp. 22-27.}
\footnote{Ibid., pp. 27-30.}
himself ready to die for his brother, and more especially for his sister.\textsuperscript{75} The central theme of the Muslim's is "the glorification of black civilization and the deprecation of the white man's culture," which, whenever adopted by blacks, "has reduced him to impotence and ignominy." The Muslims have made "black" the ideal, the ultimate value, proclaiming blacks to be "the primogenitor of all civilization, the Chosen of Allah, 'the rightful ruler of the Planet Earth.'"\textsuperscript{76} Rejecting white culture and revising history to establish that today's black men are descended from "glorious ancestors," the Muslims believe the future will be better and "the inherent superiority of his race will triumph and he will again rule the world."\textsuperscript{77}

The Doctrines of the Movement

In developing race consciousness and a hatred of the white race, the Muslims teach blacks that they have a "manifest destiny" while the white man is the "personification of the evil that separates the Black Man from his freedom, his moral development and his God." Their doctrines urge "peace among brothers" and an in-group social morality. They

\textsuperscript{75}Elijah Muhammad, "The Muslim Program," \textit{Muhammad Speaks}, April 25, 1969, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{76}Lincoln, \textit{Black Muslims}, pp. 33-34.
\textsuperscript{77}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 44-46.
further resent and reject the word "Negro" as a label by whites to make discrimination more convenient. 78 Believing that as long as blacks live among whites they will be subject to economic and political abuse, separation, they hold, provides the only realistic opportunity for mutual respect between the races. 79 Two basic doctrines are, first, their insistence that blacks must separate from the "abhorrent" and "doomed" white race, and secondly, their belief that it is a manifest destiny of blacks to inherit the earth. 80

Goals

Lincoln notes that while the ends toward which the Muslims are directed appear the most nebulous and clouded points of their entire body of doctrine, to ignore the movement on such grounds would indeed be absurd. What can be summarized is that, first, Muhammad wants every black in America reunited with his own forming "a United Front of Black Men." Second, the Muslims demand absolute separation of the black and white races in all relationships. Third, they call for an entirely separate black economy as a fundamental aspect of total separation. Last, in terms of


80 Lincoln, Black Muslims, pp. 67-72, 220.
political goals, allusions are made to a separate nation here in America, sometimes in terms of three to five states.

The Muslim View of Integration

While black audiences are frequently urged to give the Christian religion back to the white man and see it as "a religion of slavery," audiences, in turn, are also urged to see their surnames as "badges of slavery." Thus, as one response to the idea of integration, the symbol "X" takes on this double meaning:

... implying "ex," it signifies that the Muslim is no longer what he was; and as "X" it signifies an unknown quality or quantity. It at once repudiates the white man's name and announces the rebirth of Black Man. . . .

More importantly, integration is seen as "a stratagem of the white man to insure his survival in a world he has managed badly." The following remark from Muhammad is in point:

The white man's time is up, and he knows it. He has no friends anywhere. He now hopes that by integrating with the rising Black Man, he can avoid paying for the long list of crimes he has

81 Muhammad, "The Muslim Program," p. 40. See also Lincoln, Black Muslims, pp. 84-97.
82 Ibid., p. 121-122.
83 Ibid., p. 110. The selectivity of Muslim names is developed at length in the regularly published article Elijah Muhammad, "Why Black Man Should Be Called By the Names of God," Muhammad Speaks, April 25, 1969, p. 21.
perpetrated against humanity. So he has undertaken to "sweetheart" with the only people who are stupid enough to listen, the dupes he has trained to love him.84

The Muslims, thus perceive such other organizations as the National Urban League and the N.A.A.C.P. as essentially controlled by white men, both dependent upon white philanthropy. Opposed to any kind of passive resistance or sit-in technique, the Muslims rejected King's philosophy because he emphasized the Christian principle of loving the oppressor rather than retaliating against him. King, representing to the Muslims "a capitulation to the cunning Christian strategy of the white man," is, thus, scored for having turned many potential "freedom-fighting" blacks into "contented, docile slaves." Muhammad tells his followers never to initiate violence but to retaliate if they are attacked. He further ridicules whites for demanding that blacks turn the other cheek, when they themselves will kill even without provocation. Thus, Muhammad believes the white man's greatest fear is that blacks will know the truth about him and unite against him.85

Lincoln sees the Muslim leadership as "uncompromising" in its attitude toward the white community as it wages an economic and ideological war that will not end, the Muslims insist, until the white race has "disappeared." As Muhammad urges a willingness to fight back if attacked, the entire

84Ibid., pp. 124-125.
movement is seen by Lincoln as a kind of "reserve fighting corps . . . ready to wage open war . . . in case of white provocation." In short, the Muslim call for separation is based on the consideration that it is futile to reform American society. Planning simply to retire from it and cultivate the Black Nation, the Muslims believe whites, lacking black victims, will then presumably turn on each other and destroy themselves, leaving blacks to "inherit the earth." 86

Malcolm X

The man who spoke most clearly to those who, despite recent court rulings, still despaired was Malcolm X. Malcolm was "the central figure in the attack on nonviolence of action and the spirit." 87 As Robert Storey saw him, his ideas converted the intellectual and biracial civil rights movement into a "struggle for identity" for the black masses. 88

Malcolm was Muhammad's chief lieutenant in the open affairs of the Muslim movement and his chief emissary to the


88 Ibid.
Islamic nations of Africa and Asia. As the most articulate spokesman and organizer for the movement, he directed and coordinated its program, founded new temples, conducted rallies, and served as Muhammad's chief spokesman. Importantly, whereas Muhammad spoke almost exclusively to the black masses, Malcolm frequently interpreted the movement for white society through press meetings, numerous radio and television interviews, and appearances at various colleges and universities. 89

Malcolm's concern was with what he termed "the collective white man." He wrote: "You cannot find one black man . . . who has not been personally damaged in some way by the devilish acts of the collective white man." 90 Jarring the sensibilities of whites by telling blacks to stop begging favors from whites and rather get up off their knees and fight their own battles, 91 Malcolm demanded that blacks "draw back into themselves," especially emotionally, to relearn their African roots, to merge their efforts for maximum effect, to assert their manhood as something that they already have, not as a civil right they must bargain for. 92 Malcolm could speak to the ghetto black for he knew


91 Ibid., p. 374.

92 Butterfield, "Separate Path," p. 82.
the ghetto better than most black leaders. Malcolm Little had gone the route from a Harlem hoodlum, thief, dope pusher, convict, "an avaricious student who devoured hundreds of books in the prison library," to a "religious and racial zealot of the Black Muslims." Adopting the Black Muslim faith in 1952, he fought for black rights, perceiving the white man as a "devil." His intellect, "belying a ninth-grade education, soon made him the most effective of the Muslim spokesmen." Questioning much of the simplistic rhetoric of the sect and particularly the notion that all whites were by definition the devil, he later withdrew from the Muslims in 1964. After two trips to Africa and the Middle East during 1964, he returned still preaching black power and black pride, but now more "a man of compassion" seeking "to ignite the spark of brotherhood in human beings." He was assassinated in New York City on February 21, 1965, before he could fully develop his new stance.

---


95 Knebel, "Widow of Malcolm X," p. 77. For a more detailed account of those influences that altered his later view of white society, see his autobiography, pp. 288-377, 413.
Although the preceding analysis suggests that Malcolm moved from one strategy to another with each given exigency, the issue and the goal for Malcolm remained the "good life." Lifting the black struggle above the realm of civil rights alone, Malcolm forcefully argued for

Human rights! Respect at human beings! That's what America's black masses want. That's the true problem. They want not to be walled up in slums, like animals. They want to live in an open, free society where they can walk with their heads up, like men and women.96

On April 8, 1964, Malcolm gave a speech on "The Black Revolution: in New York in which he further detailed what was meant by the black quest for the "good life." More importantly, however, he also indicated in what ways the assimilationist and separatist strategies were alike. He said then:

All of our people have the same goals. That objective is freedom, justice, equality. . . . recognition and respect as human beings. We don't want to be integrationists . . . separatists. We want to be human beings. Integration . . . Separation is only a method that is used by other groups to obtain . . . equality or human dignity.97

For Malcolm, the important thing to keep in mind was not integration or separation, but the fight for recognition as human beings. In fact, he remarked, the actual fight was not over civil rights but human rights.98 Thus, for

98Ibid.
Malcolm, the objective of complete freedom, justice, the "good life," the immediate recognition as human beings never changed. As he stated on December 20, 1964, at the Audubon ballroom in New York City: "That's what all of us want." Casting aside group affiliation, he concluded: "I don't care what you belong to - you still want the recognition and respect as a human being." 99

In the same speech, he also made clear that the strategies were set apart by the separatist advocacy of "by any means necessary." Mrs. Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X, explains the phrase this way:

When Malcolm talked about black freedom, he meant freedom by whatever means. It is considered a point of honor for all peoples to defend their rights. . . . Malcolm believed in what Patrick Henry said: "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" 100

Whereas King, the assimilationist, saw America as a "multiracial nation where all groups are dependent on each other" and in this interdependence no racial group could "retreat to an island entire of itself," 101 Malcolm believed the King approach was bound to fail because it appealed to instincts and qualities which were present in too few white Americans. The problem, as Malcolm saw it,

99 ibid., p. 116.
100 Knebel, "Widow of Malcolm X," p. 74.
101 King, Where Do We Go, p. 71.
was that in America blacks met few so-called "good" or "brotherly" white people. It was, therefore, the general "collective" body of whites that blacks had most to deal with.

Arguing the assimilationist approach was an "underdog . . . begging, hat-in-hand, compromising approach," Malcolm placed the struggle on a human rights level, observing that those blacks involved on the human rights level, "don't look upon themselves as Americans." In Malcolm's words:

They look upon themselves as a part of dark mankind. They see the whole struggle not within the confines of the American stage, but . . . the whole stage. And, in the world context, they see that the dark man outnumbers the white man . . . the white man is just a microscopic minority.102

Therefore, argues Malcolm, the assimilationist "looks upon himself as a minority . . . because his scope is limited to the American scene," while, on the other hand, the nationalist or separatist sees himself "as part of the majority," whites then being "a microscopic minority." And, says Malcolm, using a different approach to struggle for his rights,

He doesn't beg . . . thank you for what you give him, because you are only giving him what he should have had a hundred years ago. He doesn't think you are doing him any favors. . . . Once . . . expanded . . . to the level of human rights, it opens the

---

102 Brietman, Malcolm X Speaks, p. 52.
door for all of our brothers and sisters in Africa and Asia, who have their independence, to come to our rescue.103

In review, the separatist rhetoric is aimed primarily at other black men. It argues that the superior life for blacks is with other non-whites, not in an integrated society. Separation also indentifies itself with other nationalistic movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America in its call for race unity, self-help, and self-determination.104

The separatist strategy is much like the term nationalism in that it promotes the feeling that racial groups ought to possess a country of their own. Thus, groups sharing common heritage, language, culture, as distinct from other groups, should rule themselves and be in control of their social, economic, and political institutions. The rhetoric here implies that blacks are a subjugated people and under the control of a colonial government. It is a rhetoric, therefore, that depends on the anti-colonialism message.105

The separatist also argues that full integration or assimilation of blacks into the white mainstream is "utopian" and never to be realized. Therefore, the

103 Ibid., pp. 52-53.
104 Golden and Rieke, Black Americans, pp. 43-44, 279-280.
105 Ibid., pp. 280-281.
separatist argues: can separation be any less desirable than continued existence as second-class citizens?\textsuperscript{106}

Stressing the need for racial, cultural, and psychological separation as a way of developing a sense of racial integrity and black identity, they preach, as Harland Randolph suggests, that "each group must maintain its cultural identity."\textsuperscript{107}

Malcolm X, perhaps the most articulate and well-known black separatist in the 1960's, was primarily responsible for bringing the separatist message to great numbers of blacks. He was also, until 1964, the chief spokesman of the Black Muslims for the white community. He stated that America, for the Black American, meant simply "prison." And for the black auditor, he spoke the real truth for many about the black status in America.

For Malcolm, the goals of freedom, justice, and the "good life" were the same as the assimilationist goals, but he could not believe integration was the best route to those goals. In his view, integration had failed repeatedly. Although separation was the solution he felt, his plan for this was never made clear.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{106}Ibid., pp. 282-283.
\textsuperscript{107}Randolph, "Inter-Group Communication," p. 30.
\textsuperscript{108}Golden and Rieke, \textit{Black Americans}, pp. 411, 421-422.
Revolution

With the emergence of King as a moral force in the struggle for equality, many Americans looked forward to the day when prejudice and racism would be replaced by the actuality of brotherhood. But King was killed in 1968. Yet even before his assassination, Arthur Smith suggests the civil rights movement appeared to be exhausting itself. This decline in the nonviolence approach was accompanied by "the rising voices of Black Power advocates and black nationalists who insisted on human rights for all Americans at any cost whatsoever." The assassination of Malcolm X also produced a number of potential successors to the throne of radical protest. These new revolutionists refined the tools of protest and utilized the techniques of agitational rhetoric to a greater degree than had King, Wilkins, or Young, in their effort "to liberate the black masses" from white oppression. Among the major figures were Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and later Eldridge Cleaver. Through the medium of television, the front pages of newspapers, and books, Carmichael argued that blacks were oppressed as a group because they were black. And he

---

109 Smith, Black Revolution, VI, 17.
110 Ibid., VI.
111 Ibid., p. 19.
continued:

... oppressed because we are black, ... to get out ... one must feel the group power that one has. Not the individual power which ... is called in this country ... integration.112

According to Carmichael, integration failed because it was "a concept of, by, and for a few." Addressing himself "to the problem of the many," he told a Berkeley audience in 1966:

We cannot afford to be concerned about six percent of the children in this country ... who you allow to come into white schools. We have 94 percent who still live in shacks. We are concerned about 94 percent.

The question is, how can white society begin to move to see black people as human beings? I am black, therefore I am. Not that I am black and I must go to college to prove myself. I am black, therefore I am.113

With the procedures of protest, negotiation, and compromise largely discarded by today's young radicals of every color, a contemporary hero, Eldridge Cleaver, interprets today's situation in this more inclusive view:

... problems ... can no longer be compromised or swept cleverly under that national rug of self-delusion. ... Those who are victimized by these "social problems" - Negroes, the aged ... poor ... dissatisfied students, the haters of war and lovers of man - have flung back the rug in outraged rebellion, refusing to be silenced until their grievances are uncompromisingly redressed. America has come alive ... and ... forces of revolutionary

113 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
momentum are squaring off in this land for decisive showdowns from which no one can purchase sanctuary. Willing to ally himself with all black, red, white, and yellow people who think and act in the revolutionary spirit as he does, Cleaver believes the fundamental political problem facing the world today is whether America moves decisively to the right or to the left. For Cleaver, the true patriots may well be those individuals on the "new left."  

As suggested previously, the term "revolutionary rhetoric" is clearly one which encourages a variety of interpretations as does the rhetoric itself surrounding the term revolution. An examination of recent books and professional journals in the speech field alone should now demonstrate some of these interpretations of the term.

First, Robert L. Scott has called this rhetoric "substantially justificatory." Arguing the rhetoric of revolution and "Black Power" is "open to an interpretation which is absolutely unobjectionable and totally consistent with democratic ideals," Scott asserts it is "substantially justificatory" in that it is "a response to prior white violence;" it is "self-defense" as it is a "reaction to

115 Ibid., p. 114.
116 Scott and Brockriede, Black Power, p. 134.
racism around the world" and "most readily identified with guerilla action to overthrow imperialistic colonialism." Further, it is "congruent with the corrupt status quo in America."117 Scott concludes:

I believe that we must assume that their rhetoric makes clear the world as it is for many, perhaps most, Black Americans. The ghetto is a colony; the White is the enemy; a racist society is violent.118

A second interpretation of the term by Gregg, McCormack, and Pedersen, contends that revolutionary rhetoric "reflects the contemporary situation as the black man perceives it, and the black man's actions, like the behaviors of us all, are decisively influenced by his perceptions." The rhetoric, then, is both an outgrowth of and an agent-reaction on the society and culture. These authors interpret the rhetoric of the current black movement as a "kind of parareligious catechism, to be believed because it is so." The attacking and condemnation of white society is viewed as "redundant" and appeals to blackness are "often delivered as a litany."119 Viewed as "para-religious catechism," they contend it also offers the black man "a cathartic device for the discovery of self."120

117 Ibid.
118 Ibid., p. 143.
On the other hand, Arthur L. Smith believes it is the "classic chasm" of "inconsistency between ideal and reality, between theory and practice" that gives this "aggressive rhetoric its energy."\(^{121}\) Addison Gayle, Jr., author of *The Black Situation*, explains the resolution of this perceived inconsistency or conflict in the mind of the revolutionary this way:

The moment arrives when this inner dichotomy is resolved, when the forces of "desperate rebellion" takes possession of his soul. When this occurs he breaks his pact with history, steps outside of it, becomes a proponent of the impossible, an outlay; which is to say, he becomes a revolutionary.\(^{122}\)

So, too, Thomas F. Pettigrew wrote in 1963: "Intense relative deprivation in an age of rising expectations is the stuff out of which revolutions are made."\(^{123}\)

Discussing the rhetoric of revolution and its persuasive qualities from both a behavioral point of view and in terms of the behavioral concept of trust and trust establishment, Charles U. Larson believes the rhetoric is clearly directed towards various audiences at different times.


Larson explains that sometimes the message seems specifically designed for blacks; at other times directed to the white power structure, and, in yet other cases, aimed at blacks but meant to be overheard by whites.\(^{124}\)

Put another way, Herbert W. Simons sees this strategy or pattern of persuasion as a rhetoric of direct pressure including the threat or employment of force.\(^{125}\) In the argument over reform versus revolution, the revolutionary realizes "that there's nothing like the threat of revolution to bring about some reforms."\(^{126}\) Simons views this strategy as "militant exercises" and "massive retaliation" against white injustices manifested through economic boycotts, strikes, riots and now bombings.\(^{127}\)

As every revolution has a rhetoric that "attempts to justify the claims and legitimize the aspirations of the revolutionists," so, too, emphasizes Arthur Smith, "the black revolution is no exception." Black revolutionary rhetoric, explains Smith, has these features in common with

---

\(^{124}\)Larson, "Trust Establishing Function," 52.


any other rhetoric. First, this rhetoric is concerned with:

... the communication of ideas, values, opinions, and beliefs in an effort to elicit the approval or acceptance of others. Within his particular situation, the rhetor attempts to discover means with which to show the aptness of his message. Insofar as the revolutionist seeks to find the means of persuasion within a given rhetorical situation, he functions as a rhetor.\footnote{Smith, Black Revolution, pp. 1-2.}

Second, like all revolutionary rhetoric it

... must possess an offensive stance if it is to mold the beliefs of the masses into a tight compact against the status quo opinion. Thus, all revolutionary rhetoric is essentially aggressive rather than defensive. The aggression inherent in revolutionary rhetoric becomes a unifying force that gives revolutionists a mien of tremendous energy.\footnote{Tbid., p. 1.}

Third, "without grievance, distress, and political or social discomfort," a revolution, even a black revolution, "lacks the necessary fuel on which to base its power."\footnote{Tbid.}

It may be unique, however, in that first of all, it "speaks to and for the black masses," and, secondly, depends on the "linguistic components of the black language" as much as the grievances of the revolutionist. Third, containing both the language of aggression and unification, the revolutionary issues "a specialized call for community" among black Americans with such phrases as "black is beautiful" and "let's get ourselves together" as important rallying expressions for unity. Fourth, concerned with identity
and "redefining their situational culture in a way that liberates them," this rhetoric becomes "a rhetoric of redefinition" as they struggle with such terms as Afro-American, black, and brother. Essentially, argues Smith, the black revolutionists' aim is to preach pride, self-respect and self-assertion, not only among themselves but with their "brothers" around the world. Fifth, believing that enslavement of the mind and spirit leaves the black masses helpless, the black communicator uses a militant rhetoric to change the black man's self-concept and humiliating image he has of himself. Sixth, where King's rhetoric was a "request," the revolutionists' is an "or else" demand, the only alternative being violence. Next, this rhetoric "possesses a militaristic outlook," or the style indicates, at least, a "reliance on military terminology."\textsuperscript{131} Smith explains:

\begin{quote}
The rhetors have appropriated the language of revolution . . . to attain their rhetorical purpose. . . . Sloganizing is nothing less than a form of rhetorical aggression. To state a complex or intricate concept in a few simple emotional words is effectively to agitate: WE WANT BLACK POWER; MOVE ON OVER . . . ; HELL NO, WE WON'T GO.\textsuperscript{132}
\end{quote}

Last, this rhetoric has more emphasis on secular themes than earlier religious themes with the acquisition of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{131}Ibid., pp. 1-21. \\
\textsuperscript{132}Ibid., p. 21.
\end{flushright}
power now superceding brotherhood with the white community.

On assimilation, the revolutionists argue that there is no freedom in this strategy. They seem antagonistic to persuasion as a method of instituting social change and view integration as a "deceitful plan" and totally unacceptable. Arguing from the premise that blacks form "an oppressed colony in the midst of white America," Cleaver sees himself as different from King and other assimilationists in that those leaders have been . . . willing to work within the . . . rules laid down by the white establishment. They have tried to bring change within the system . . . without violence. . . . Furthermore, all are careful to remind everybody that they're Americans as well as "Negroes," that the prestige of this country is as important to them as whites.

Unlike King, he sees himself and the new black leadership identifying first and foremost with the best interests of the masses of black people, caring little about preserving the dignity of a country that has no regard for black dignity. Steps in destroying the commitment to white

---

133 Ibid., pp. 48-49, 87.

134 Golden and Rieke, Black Americans, pp. 44, 453, 515.


137 Ibid.
society and white cultural values involve:

1) no hair straightening or skin bleaching.
2) the adoption of Afro hair styles and clothes.
3) the attack on white grammatical verbal values.\textsuperscript{138}

On separatism, the revolutionist asserts the "good life" cannot be attained by withdrawing entirely into all black communities. In other words, reaching the goals of the good life by either leaving or joining society is impossible. Revolution, for these rhetors, is the only way to improve the black man's status. The removal of power from those who have created the racist society through violence, civil disobedience, and coercion then become both legitimate and necessary.\textsuperscript{139}

Although not unique to black rhetoric, the message of destroying or tearing down the present society and replacing it with another is a basic ingredient in the black revolutionary message. As Eric Hoffer explains this tendency:

\begin{quote}
The radical and the reactionary loathe the present. They see it as an aberration and a deformity. Both are ready to proceed ruthlessly and recklessly with the present, and both are hospitable to ... self-sacrifice.

The radical has a passionate faith in the infinite perfectibility of human nature. He believes that
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{138}Golden and Riske, \textit{Black Americans}, p. 497.
\textsuperscript{139}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 44-45, 517.
by changing man's environment . . . a society can be wrought that is wholly new and unprecedented.¹⁴⁰

In short, the emphasis is on reconstruction and the building of his new world.

Another feature of this rhetoric is the rhetorical decision to never make entirely clear one's plans for the future or telling the white enemy what one group is planning. As Hoffer again sees this strategy, its effectiveness as a doctrine does not come from its "meaning but from its certitude;" that is, to be effective a doctrine must not be understood, but rather believed in. If neither unintelligible nor vague, it has to be unverifiable. When, says Hoffer, a movement begins to rationalize its doctrine and make it intelligible, it is a sign that its dynamic span is over and that it is now primarily interested in stability.¹⁴¹

The Inherent Evils of Whites

Golden and Rieke state that the following reoccurring themes are among those present in the black rhetoric of revolution:

1) the inherent evil of whites.
2) the inherent evils of capitalism.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Hoffer, The True Believer, p. 71.
¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 76-77.
¹⁴² Golden and Rieke, Black Americans, pp. 503-505.
Citing hatred as the "most accessible and comprehensive of all unifying agents," Eric Hoffer provides this background material on the first theme. Mass movements he writes, can never "rise and spread" without the "belief in a devil" as the strength of a movement is proportionate to the "vividness and tangibility of its devil." If, he continues, the enemy is vague, it is often necessary "to invent him." The ideal devil is also one who belongs to a single category enabling all hatred to be concentrated on a single foe. This ideal devil should also be "omnipotent and omnipresent" so that every difficulty and failure within the movement can be attributed to "the work of the devil."\(^3\)

In the revolutionists' selection of white colonial America as the chosen enemy allies are also chosen. As Hoffer puts it:

> We do not usually look for allies when we love.  
> ... But we always look for allies when we hate.  
> It is understandable that we should look for others to side with us when we have a just grievance and crave to retaliate against those who wronged us. ... It is chiefly the reasonable hatreds that drive us to merge with those who hate as we do, and it is this kind of hatred that serves as one of the most effective cementing agents.\(^4\)

Thus, in Hoffer's words, "hatred is a convenient instrument for mobilizing a community for defense" and a means of unification.\(^5\)

\(^3\)Hoffer, *The True Believer*, pp. 85-87.  
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 88.  
\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 91-93.
Noting that all true believers speak repeatedly on the decadence of Western democracies, Hoffer concludes:

There is a deep reassurance for the frustrated in witnessing the down-fall of the fortunate and the disgrace of the righteous. They see in a general down-fall an approach to the brotherhood of all...

...Their burning conviction that there must be a new life and a new order is fueled by the realization that the old will have to be razed to the ground before the new can be built. Their clamor for a millennium is shot through with hatred for all that exists, and a craving for the end of the world. 146

Cleaver reflects the implications of Hoffer's above remark with the words: "We shall have our manhood. We shall have it or the earth will be leveled by our attempts to gain it." 147

The Inherent Evils of Capitalism

An examination of the second theme, the inherent evils of capitalism, reveals that the black rhetoric of revolution is much like the anti-colonialism message preached by many communist leaders. It seems akin to communist ideology in that both stress the interdependence and interresponsibility of man, both profess that real participation should be at the grassroots or worker level, both are international and revolutionary movements, and for both, the ultimate goal is worldly. Although one cannot say these ingredients or similar messages make the black radical a communist, these

146 Ibid., pp. 91-92, 147.
147 Cleaver, Soul on Ice, p. 61.
further parallels can be drawn:

1) both blame capitalism for world problems and the conditions of man.
2) both say capitalism is exploitative.
3) both preach an anti-colonialism message.
4) both advocate violent revolution to overthrow the existing system.

The following lines from Cleaver's latest interview with Lee Lockwood are suggestive of this attitude:

I'm saying an American application of the principles of socialism that hopes to move to the classless society . . . that we have to do away with the institution of private property . . . have an equal distribution of the products of our industry and our technology. . . . I'm saying that what we need to do is to rearrange the system . . . need . . . a war on the rich . . . on the system of the rich . . . on the system that allows poverty to exist in the midst of all those riches. 146

It is within the context of this second theme one can write that today's black rhetoric of revolution is not altogether an original or unique rhetoric. Appearing a socialistic movement tied to the general world-wide class struggles taking place, it is not unique in that the arguments advanced are essentially drawn from a collection of ideas by such revolutionaries as Mao, Fanon, Lenin, Che Guevara, with Malcolm X supplying the black arguments. These ideas seek to establish the colonialist character of

black Americans, oppressed in ways similar to the laboring and peasant classes everywhere under the control of corporations, land monopolies, and capitalistic materialism. Attacking the capitalist system which allows landlords and owners to grow rich through the labor of the black poor, spokesmen for the Black Panther Party who envision the establishment of a socialist state, argue the revolution is indeed a class war and must include all oppressed peoples. Others, such as Carmichael, argue blacks are engaged in a color war. Importantly, however, these ideas, while not original altogether with the black American, are then seen by some black advocates as analagous and applicable to the black problem in America. Some have even tried to apply all or portions of these theories to the black situation in America. Yet, as Roy Wilkins sees this group of advocates: "... they're a little behind the times. Some of their socialism sounds like the 1930's and sounds like they've just discovered it..."149

What at this point, however, must be particularly noted is the black revolutionist's high regard for the writings of Frantz Fanon, the African born, French-educated psychiatrist who became a revolutionary theorist during the Algerian rebellion. Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth,*

regarded by Cleaver, Carmichael, and others as "a classic study of the psychology of oppressed peoples," has now become known among the militants of the black liberation movement in America as the primary handbook for the black revolution and, as Cleaver admits, "The Black Bible." In reviewing the book, one sees that perhaps the main thrust by Fanon is his emphasis on the idea that colonialism and its resulting subjugation, physical exploitation, and psychological devaluation, cannot be overcome by peaceful means because the oppressed must undergo a sense of transformation in terms of self-image. Fanon urges that violence can be, by itself, "a cleansing force" in this transformation. He sees the use of violence as freeing "the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless, and restores his self-respect." In another way, violence lets man recreate himself. Comparable to a "royal pardon," the colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence.

Explaining to his black reader that brothers in Africa, Asia and Latin America must achieve revolutionary socialism all together everywhere or else one by one face defeat by

---

150Schoer, Post-Prison Writings, p. 18.


152Ibid., pp. 21, 86.
the "master," Fanon warns blacks that special emphasis upon the African culture alone will blur the only true culture, that being, the culture of the revolution, constantly in the making. 153

Cleaver in his writings frequently alludes to Fanon's point that the black culture bears the marks of oppression and that blacks can wrest their manhood from white society only through revolutionary political struggle, not through posturing, dress, or reviving African cultural roots. 154 Cleaver, the revolutionary, sees Fanon's book as important because of its description of the consciousness and the situation of colonized peoples. He further sees Fanon providing a great service to revolutionaries by explaining and analyzing how colonized peoples move from an awareness of being oppressed to the ultimate height of consciousness where they are willing to fight for their freedom. Also important to Cleaver is how Fanon legitimizes and destroys feelings of guilt one might have over wanting to kill his master. Thus, in destroying the idea that there is something wrong with the revolutionary impulse, Cleaver sees the book as valuable in its endorsement of violence to remove "the oppressor's boot off your neck." 155

153Ibid., pp. 11-12.
154Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, XI.
155Lockwood, Conversation, pp. 90-91.
As Cleaver sees Fanon's stages of liberation, he writes that at some point in any quest for national liberation, an impulse to violence develops in the collective unconscious. Oppressed people feel an uncontrollable desire to kill their masters. But in shrinking from this impulse, Cleaver notes, the violence is often turned upon itself and the oppressed people fight among themselves. At this stage, the internalized violence of oppressed people produces the major distortions in the personality. 156

Cleaver notes that what Fanon importantly teaches is to focus all the hatred and violence on the true target—the oppressor. As murder, Cleaver writes, can strangely make the oppressed sane again, he feels the Fanon book importantly legitimizes the revolutionary impulse to violence and further

. . . teaches colonial subjects that it is perfectly normal for them to want to rise up and cut off the heads of the slave masters, that it is a way to achieve their manhood, and that they must oppose the oppressor in order to experience themselves as men. 157

Despite the earlier criticism by Wilkins that current black revolutionary rhetoric is not really new, the point being made here is that the black men who espouse these revolutionary doctrines are now the men who are speaking most clearly to the young black American and gaining an

156 Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, pp. 18-19.
157 Ibid., p. 20.
audience. One has only to refer to the most recent Gallup poll of black opinion reported in *Newsweek Magazine* of June, 1969, and the subsequent Louis Harris poll for *Time Magazine* in April, 1970, to observe that an articulate and young black generation seems to be setting the tone for the black community today. In other words, while the black movement has had a history of fragmentation, disunity, and "a history of wearing out its prophets early," revolutionary rhetoric appear the words that right now are coming through most forcefully. This chapter, therefore, concludes with a discussion of the Black Panther Party and the rhetoric of Eldridge Cleaver.

Eldridge Cleaver gained stature in 1968 with the publication of *Soul on Ice*, a collection of original essays and autobiographical sketches written in prison. Upon release from prison, he became an editor of *Ramparts Magazine* and later joined the Black Panther Party, becoming its information director. Accused of breaking parole again, and faced with more years in jail, he fled America, living first in Cuba, now Algiers, "the home of Fanon, who 'legitimized the revolutionary impulse to violence'" as a cleansing force for the black man against the white oppressor.

---

160 Lockwood, *Conversation*, pp. 5-32.
Cleaver's major thesis is that American society is one of the gun and that it evolves around muscle and brute force. Yet it is incumbent upon Cleaver, observes Gayle, to also believe that the opposite reality is equally true. This reality is to believe that men are more victims of systems than the originators of them and that no man is inherently evil.

Smith writes that Cleaver demonstrates that many blacks have moved beyond the slogan "black power" to an acquisition of everything black as a rallying point; that is, "the reason of oppression" becomes "the center for impassioned pride." Smith views Cleaver as a "visionary who sees the significance of international black power as expressed in black awareness among African leaders and Afro-Americans." However, this awareness does not mean black exclusivity for Cleaver speaks of the need for radical whites to develop something to which blacks can relate to so that a meaningful coalition can be formed. On the coalition question itself, Mike Wallace, CBS news correspondent, reported on the program "60 Minutes" broadcast, January 6, 1970, that

Whatever else the Panthers may teach, they do not teach racism. They do not teach black supremacy,

161 Gayle, Jr., The Black Situation, p. 215.
162 Ibid.
black separatism. They talk about the problems of the poor, all the poor, not just blacks.  

Wallace concludes: "They are a revolutionary cadre, bent on changing radically the social and economic structure of this country, by violence if need be."  

Importantly, Cleaver views the development of the BPP as stemming directly from what Malcolm X taught.  

Malcolm X advocated that black people arm themselves in a political fashion in order to protect themselves when they move for their rights. Malcolm made the shift of emphasis from civil rights to human rights, and he put the great emphasis on the need for black people to arm themselves so that they could defend themselves against the attacks that were being made at that time.  

On this point, Cleaver, Huey Newton, and Bobby Seale, see themselves as "trying to salvage the effort that was being made by Malcolm and to perpetuate it."  

Cleaver's basic demand is for proportionate participation in the real power that runs America. This means for Cleaver black people must have part of the decision-making power concerning all legislation, all appropriations of money, and foreign policy. Admitting he and the Panthers  

164 "60 Minutes," CBS telecast, January 6, 1970, p. 5.  
165 Ibid., p. 11.  
166 Lockwood, Conversation, p. 86.  
167 Ibid.  
168 Ibid.  
are revolutionary, this also means, he states:

... we're disciplined, that we're working out programs, that we intend to create a radical political machinery in coalition with whites that will uproot this decadent society, transform its politics and economics and build a structure fit to exist on a civilized planet inhabited by humanized beings.\textsuperscript{170}

Cleaver's speeches generally center on the need for black independence and his assumption that black people in America form an oppressed colony. To white society, he makes clear that "it is the conduct of whites, not their skin color, that he condemns."\textsuperscript{171} In this context, then, "the oppressor has no rights which the oppressed are bound to respect." The essential question for white Americans then becomes: "Which side do you choose? Do you side with the oppressor or with the oppressed? The time for decision is upon you?" Thus, as Cleaver perceives the situation, a choice is present in his rhetoric. Whites are either with the black American's drive for freedom or against him. He, thus, does not discard freedom of choice which is an important element in the study of any rhetoric. In this framework, he can then warn: "But there is a choice and it will be made, by decision or indecision, by action or inaction, by commission or omission."\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., p. 104.
\textsuperscript{171} Scheer, \textit{Post-Prison Writings}, XII-XIII.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., pp. 38-39.
While King believed the nonviolent approach would most effectively bring blacks into the mainstream of American life as quickly as possible, Cleaver, on the other hand, advocates the total, unequivocal destruction of capitalism and in its place a socialist system that would be compatible with the "spirit" of the American people and calculated to apply specifically to conditions that exist in America.\(^{173}\) Drawn from Cleaver's most recent interview with Lee Lockwood, author of *Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel*, and the first American photographer inside North Vietnam after the war began, he explains further that he wants an American application of the principles of socialism that hopes to move to the classless society; that is, a "Yankee-Doodle-Dandy version" that will fit America's particular situation. Believing everyone deserves the benefit of all human history, he opts for a system that guarantees to everybody the right to access on an equal basis and that has to be socialism.\(^{174}\) What is important about Cleaver here is that he realizes the examples of other revolutions cannot be entirely applied to the situation in America. Believing "our situation is unique," classical revolutionary principles and models, he feels, can be followed only when analogous to the black problem. He, thus, elaborates a

\(^{173}\) Lockwood, *Conversation*, p. 65.

\(^{174}\) Ibid., pp. 63-64.
theory of revolution that will cope with the highly urbanized, highly mechanized, industrialized society that blacks live in and says:

I am very critical of what I call "revolutionary romanticism" . . . walking around the cities in combat boots and fatigue jackets . . . unfortunately this is not functional in an urban situation. 175

Cleaver believes it more functional for revolutionaries in the urban setting to study the model of the Mafia to see how they move in the cities and "function in terms of arms in an organized fashion." Consequently, the black urban guerrilla has a responsibility to look at the terrain, to develop a concept of urban geography, because the only models of revolutionary behavior blacks have are those taken from rural terrain. 176

The goal, he remarks, "is to bring heaven down to earth." He, too, seeks "the good life" by creating "the best possible living conditions and standards of living that human knowledge and technology are capable of providing." He maintains this is both the aspiration and the dream of the revolutionary. Assuring his audiences that socialism would not turn America into a satellite of the Soviet Union or Americans into Chinese or Cuban people, he noted it would instead only put the American people on a

175 Ibid., pp. 51-52.
176 Ibid., p. 52.
basis where they can be friends with the people of Russia, China, Cuba, in fact, with the people of the whole world.\textsuperscript{177}

Cleaver, "a committed Marxist-Leninist" presently in exile, argues what is wrong with America is not its traditional values but the way in which those values have been distorted. He still "admires the American Constitution and believes in the American Dream." Yet, he is a socialist convinced that socialism can succeed in America where it has failed abroad because Americans possess "such a strong tradition of democracy" they would never permit "a system that infringed on their civil liberties."\textsuperscript{178}

In establishing his "Yankee-Doodle-Dandy" form of socialism for the future, Cleaver foresees the revolution spearheaded by bloody urban guerrilla warfare. Insisting this war has already begun and "intensifying steadily," he holds that as the "forces of reaction escalate their repression," by 1972, "there will be a right-wing coup d' etat in this country." This act, he contends, will trigger the final, all-out conflict which will bring the revolution to power.\textsuperscript{179}

One final quality that Cleaver exhibits in common with other revolutionaries is the willingness to die for

\textsuperscript{177}Ibid., pp. 63-65.
\textsuperscript{178}Ibid., pp. 27-28.
\textsuperscript{179}Ibid., pp. 28-29.
Brother Malcolm used to tell us that there were several types of death. I think a dehumanized people who do not fight back are a dead people. That is what the West has been able to do to most of us. They dehumanized us to the point where we would not even fight back. Once you have begun to fight back, you are alive, . . . and bullets do not kill you. If you do not fight back, you are dead. . . . So we are alive today, . . . all over the world. All of our black people are coming alive because they are fighting back. They are fighting for their humanity. . . . When you become alive, you want to live so much that you fight to live. See, when you are dead . . . do not rebel, you are not fighting to live, you are already dead. Well, we are alive and we love life so much that we are willing to die for it. So, we are alive. Death cannot stop us.180

Believing that "a revolutionary is a doomed man," Cleaver, too, affirms that if one is not "willing to put your life on the line" and come to terms with the prospects of death, then, as a revolutionary, "you have no business at all in defying or confronting or even arguing with the power structure." Thus, the revolutionary comes to terms with the idea he may be killed at any time. Cleaver himself admits that he has "learned to live with it somehow." And as he considers his future plans in exile, "the more I consider the possibility that my life will not be very long."181

180Cited in Golden and Rieke, Black Americans, pp. 534-535.
181Lockwood, Conversation, pp. 37-38.
In review, the revolutionist argues that there is no ultimate freedom for blacks in assimilation or absorption into white society. Second, he argues that the goals of the "good life" cannot be reached by either leaving society, withdrawing into all black communities, or joining the white society. Third, he seeks the removal of power by violent means from those who have created the racist conditions and the racist American society.\textsuperscript{182}

The messages here are directed to both black and white audiences. The message for blacks seeks to establish unity among blacks and may be termed "a rhetoric of organization" for revolution within the black community. This strategy further argues that violence, coercion, and civil disobedience by blacks are "legitimate and necessary." For the white audience, the black speaker emphasizes the choice between violence or peaceful settlement is up to white America: Employing what Golden and Rieke term "a rhetoric of preparation," the black orator makes clear that choice is in the hands of white Americans.\textsuperscript{183}

The rhetorical goals of the revolutionist are the destruction of white cultural values, the development of a black nationalistic culture, and black unity. The strategy further seeks to develop a sense of brotherhood

\textsuperscript{182}Golden and Rieke, \textit{Black Americans}, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{183}Ibid., pp. 455, 45.
among blacks, to emphasize that people of "color" constitute a world majority, and to make the prospect of ultimate victory and success seem real.

The reoccurring themes are:

1) the inherent evils of whites.
2) the inherent evils of capitalism.
3) black Americans are a colonized people.
4) integration is unacceptable as a means of achieving the good life.
5) revolution and destruction of the present system is necessary.
6) the moral justification of violence. 184

Although coalition and alliances with some white Americans is an important and repeated theme, it has been withheld for the final chapter.

Summary

The history of the black man in America has been a series of protests, both through verbal discourse and sometimes violent physical encounter. Relying upon a variety of means to protest his condition and achieve his goals, blacks have used methods ranging from petitions to Congress and appeals to Presidents to ghetto uprisings. With persistent

---

184 Ibid., pp. 497-522.
exigencies, rhetorical situations evolved that demanded different strategies.

In this third chapter the purpose was to discuss the unique characteristics of black rhetoric in terms of the three persuasive strategies outlined by Golden and Rieke in their book *The Rhetoric of Black Americans*. These strategies they define as assimilation, separatism, and revolution. While reviews of other rhetorical approaches were also included, the framework advanced by Golden and Rieke seems to best conceptualize the broad development of rhetorical efforts by black Americans for rhetorical criticism. All three strategies have been conducted concurrently with varying degrees of emphasis from one period to another and each has exhibited various sub-strategies noted earlier.

A description of each strategy has also aimed at a rationale and method for the later criticism of the speaking and writing of black Americans in terms of the Vietnam issue. Constituting the general organization of the remaining chapters, a description of each strategy and its particular characteristics was important as every major rhetorical event falls under these headings and affects the rhetorical practice of the communicators who subscribe to them. More importantly, it was crucial to discuss each strategy as each shapes or influences the arguments used by particular communicators in the later chapters on issues.
How, then, these strategies do influence and shape a rhetorical stance on Vietnam and additionally color the black perceptions of the war in terms of specific issues, is illustrated in the next chapter and the rhetorical situation.
CHAPTER XV

THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

This chapter deals with a discussion of the principal reasons why black Americans perceive the racial conflict in America and the war in Vietnam as essentially linked together forming a single entity. Certainly the civil rights movement started out as a quest for civil liberties alone, and, therefore, it seems important that one ask what suddenly made certain black leaders view the two areas as directly related? In other words, at what point and for what reasons did Martin Luther King feel he could no longer remain silent on the war in Vietnam? Additionally, was he the first black American leader to speak out on the war? Further, on what grounds did the black revolutionaries seem to recognize a duality of interests or equate the war in America and Vietnam as part of a general "third world" struggle, a universal, worldly movement by all people of color? Although the attempt to exact a specific time or month for this awareness would be impossible, for some reasons and at some point, blacks obviously felt they had to make a meaningful input or fitting response to an escalating situation. In Bitzer's terms, the situation,
some felt could obviously be modified. Major black leaders felt their public utterances could in some way alter both the situation and America's course of action.

It seems, therefore, in light of the questions raised above, that Bitzer's concept of the rhetorical situation deserves consideration and application at this point. Significant black Americans have made fitting responses to the Vietnam problem, perceiving "defects," "something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be."¹ Those factors that led up to this need to speak out or respond are, therefore, the concern of this chapter only. Whether the uniting of the two conflicts may be termed either a strategy of opportunism or grounded in the philosophical bases of pacifism, conscience, and opposition to war in general, remains the concern of the last chapter.

John Hope Franklin suggests in his book From Slavery to Freedom that black Americans have "more and more viewed their fate as inextricably connected with the fate of darker peoples throughout the world."² As to whether the implications of this interdependence was achieved through some "breadth of understanding of international problems" white America did not possess or whether "it was a masterful


merging of their own problems with similar ones in other parts of the world," Franklin cannot determine. However, what is clear to Franklin is that blacks generally did have a broad interest in human welfare everywhere while never losing sight of their immediate difficulties. For Franklin, "the struggle to attain freedom all over the world was essentially a struggle to attain a measure of it at home;" that is, what happened to human rights in Manila, Brazil, or Martinique affected in no small measure developments in Detroit. Robert L. Scott reinforces Franklin's observations by arguing that it should be

... scarcely surprising that Blacks in America have argued theirs as a common cause with colonial revolt around the world. Reminded constantly that they are a minority in the United States, . . . . they have made identification with colored peoples around the world a neat reversal of positions and the threat inherent therein.

Certainly, the perception of a direct black relationship to the war in Vietnam did not occur overnight. Blacks had heard little about Vietnam before the 1964 national election and they, like most all white Americans, went to the polls believing we would not have to send any more troops

---

3 Ibid., pp. 645-647.
4 Ibid.
there. At least the Johnson campaign had led most Americans to believe this. As Bernard S. Lee, writing in Freedomways Magazine in 1966, recalls the period:

We didn't know the meaning of "escalation" until the troop buildup to 100,000 men. We look around in September and see that one of our best friends had been killed in action. We knew there hadn't been any street fights in the area. Our friend . . . didn't die on the expressway. Yet I found myself going to a military funeral.7

Lee recalls about the only thing blacks knew about Vietnam then was that it approximated Alabama in total size. However, as increased black involvement became more apparent, significant numbers of blacks felt they had more than earned the right to comment about the war.6 As months passed, black America observed the escalation for black soldiers increase and the black death toll move higher. In the view of Gwendolyn Patton, blacks saw that they had to be concerned about the war.9 Patton recalls:

Black people saw that the Vietnam war was the reason why the war on poverty had diminished. Black people in Washington, D.C., saw a site . . . for low-rent housing made into an airbase . . . saw Black militants and activists forced into the army because of inequities in the draft . . . saw Black students forced into the army to become Black mercenaries because

---

6 Bernard S. Lee, "We Must Continue to March," Freedomways, 6, No. 3 (Third Quarter, 1966), 257-258.

7 Ibid., 258.


this country does not allow them enough economic stability to continue their college education.\(^{10}\)

Now, continues Patton, America was forcing blacks to fight "an inhuman war in Vietnam against people who, like us, have been fighting for survival all their lives."\(^{11}\)

Early criticism of the war by black Americans included these military, economic, and political considerations:

1) the insistence that America could not and should not undertake the task of policing the world.

2) the escalation in troops and the bombing of North Vietnam went beyond the commitment of America to South Vietnam, and, thus, minimized meaningful peace talks.

3) the war used up resources that could better be utilized for economic and civil rights programs at home.

4) it was a war against other darker peoples.\(^{12}\)

By 1966, black Americans, too, were growing weary of the unanswered questions and confusion surrounding the conflict in Asia. Blacks, like others, wanted some answers. In the questioning tone similar to Senator J. William Fulbright, the editors of *Freedomways Magazine* summed up the confusion in some black minds through this editorial:

Is our nation at war in Vietnam or not? If we are not . . . what accounts for the presence of more than a quarter million American troops over there and the growing casualty list of dead and wounded?

---

\(^{10}\) Ibid.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.

The question has been asked ... and never answered: by what authority does the President ... put this nation into a war, when ... only Congress has the power to declare war? And against whom would a declaration of war be made? Against ... a nation with one-tenth the population of America and located 5,000 miles away?  

In the growing black view, the build-up of American forces in Vietnam could not be "passed off" as just another police action. It was becoming clear that Vietnam represented a full scale war using conventional weapons, costing the American public about one-and-a-half billion dollars per year, plus thousands of lives, both Vietnamese and American. More importantly, however, about 1966, also developing was the tendency of black Americans to speak of Vietnam in relation to the black condition at home. Blacks were starting in larger numbers to equate American atrocities in Vietnam with the numerous unpunished murders of blacks and other white civil rights workers in the American South. The picture of an American soldier painting the words "from Raleigh, North Carolina" on a bomb intended to be dropped on Vietnam villages, spoke eloquently enough of the "real nature of American involvement in Vietnam." Additionally,  

---

13 Editorial, "The Two Presidents Johnson," Freedomways, 6 (Summer, 1966), 196.  
many blacks did not perceive a coincidence in the fact that among the earliest and loudest supporters of the war were such ardent segregationists as Senator Long of Louisiana and many Goldwater Republicans. What was coming through forcefully to many blacks was the fact that

... the most fervent supporters of the war ... are men and organizations whose names read like a Who's Who of racism in America: Congressmen Eastland, Thurmond, Rivers, and Stennis; Governors Wallace, Faubus, and Maddox; the Conservative Party, the American Nazi Party, the John Birch Society, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. ... 18

Eldridge Cleaver also noted this "strange" link between particular men and certain policies when he wrote in Soul on Ice:

Those who most bitterly oppose Negro progress are also the most ardent advocates of a belligerent foreign policy, the most violent castigators of critics of American escalation of war against the Vietnamese people, the hardest to die of the die hard enthusiasts of armed intervention in the internal affairs of the Dominican Republic and Latin America generally. 19

It was, for Cleaver, "no coincidence" that such "political cavemen" as Stennis or Thurmond of South Carolina were among the first to denounce the Vietnam Day demonstrations and protest marches held throughout America in October, 1965. 20

17 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
As the editors of *Freedomways Magazine* saw the situation then: "This is not the first racist war in which the American people have been dragged by their political leaders." America, the editors continued, was "peculiarly shaped," in part, by its history of wars against the Indian, Mexican, Philippines, Cuban, and Korean peoples. Increasingly, the use of napalm bombs, gas, and chemical warfare against the people of Vietnam appeared just "one more chapter in a sordid record of . . . 'crimes that would disgrace a nation of savages.'" Blacks were beginning to see that the reason the American government could "so arrogantly violate" the rights of the Vietnamese people to settle their civil war in their own way, was because the American government had a "tradition"

... of never having upheld and defended the right of the black people ... to choose the kind of government they wish to live under, by guaranteeing to them the ballot and free elections.

This was the complicity, the link that connected Selma and Saigon. It took only the later news report of thousands of American troops landing in Vietnam while black citizens in Selma, Alabama, were "beaten, tear-gassed, and smoke-bombed" by Alabama State Police for trying to march in

22 Ibid., 229-230.
23 Ibid., 230.
peaceful protest over the right to vote to reveal America "boldly asserting its priorities."²⁴

It was increasingly clear to many that there were more appropriate responses for blacks than service in the military of America. A relationship between the Vietnam war and the black condition in America could be drawn. Further, an analogy between the two conflicts could also be developed. Donald W. Jackson, writing in Liberator Magazine, develops one such relationship in his article, "Black People and Vietnam." Portions of this 1965 article are excerpted below to reveal how blacks, at this time, were beginning to perceive the situation in Asia and its relationship to them.

In Vietnam, all evidence indicates that a sizable group of indigenous people, with limited assistance from other sources, is attempting to overthrow a reactionary minority whose only power is a foreign government - America.²⁵

In America, using Mississippi as his analogy, Jackson argues that here, too, a sizable group of blacks with assistance from sympathetic whites, are attempting to revolutionize their state by overthrowing "a racist ruling group whose lifeblood is the national government."²⁶ So, too, the

²⁴Ibid.
²⁶Ibid.
participants in the Mississippi revolution, observes Jackson, are convinced that self-determination is the only solution to economic underdevelopment, perverted public education, "dysfunctional social relationships," and other ills that beset areas like Mississippi. For Jackson, the similarity between Vietnam, Mississippi, and "the American intervention" in the "Los Angeles uprising," are not coincidental. "They are," in his words, "but different peoples with similar problems, similar goals, moving against a common antagonist." And, he emphasizes, blacks would indeed be

\[\ldots\] foolish not to extrapolate from this sameness some notion of a cooperative world-wide movement \[\ldots\] an historical interconnectedness having to do with social, political, and economic patterns. We have to admit, in fact, that the American government \[\ldots\] is engaged, domestically and internationally, in efforts to suppress revolutionary movements whose goals are human welfare through self-determination.\[26\]

Jackson, therefore, would have black Americans see that the role of America in Vietnam and other similar situations "compels" the black American to view the National Liberation Front with "sympathy" and to make "strategic use" of the Vietnam war without being "restricted by an inappropriate sense of American patriotism."\[29\] Secondly, American military

\[\begin{array}{l}
27 \text{Ibid.} \\
28 \text{Ibid., p. 10.} \\
29 \text{Ibid.}
\end{array}\]
intervention in Vietnam "undercuts" any attempt by America to moralize against the use of violence by black people to accomplish just goals within this country. Conversely, Jackson states, in situations where violence is not desirable as a vehicle for the black freedom struggle, blacks can analogically refuse to participate in organized violence elsewhere (Vietnam). Such refusal, he emphasizes, can be a positive device for the advancement of black goals in America and may further have positive effects on American foreign policy. 30

Although the Jackson analogy may be criticized as developing a strategy of opportunism, a primary concern of the last chapter, it does afford the reader at this point an indication of how some blacks increasingly perceived a duality of interests or complicity in both conflicts. To be sure, by the mid-sixties, the Vietnam war was gradually replacing the civil rights issue as the number one concern of all Americans. As the demand for civil rights was made primarily "on moral grounds," it was, in Robert S. Browne's words, "an inevitable coincidence" that the protest against American policy in Vietnam would unite the two movements on various levels.31 However, not all black spokesmen in the various civil rights groups were willing in late 1965

30 Ibid.
and 1966 to join or view the two struggles as directly tied together, the implications and outcomes of both dependent on the other. The principal arguments offered against the civil rights movement involving itself with the Vietnam protest included these economic, social, and political considerations:

1) the high risk of losing financial support from civil rights contributors who supported American policy in Vietnam.

2) the risk of creating dissension among members in the civil rights movement itself who may have held differing views on Vietnam.

3) the risk of the movement being labeled "communist-oriented."

4) the risk of dissipating energy and resources in a peripheral activity.32

The older black organizations tended to be less critical of United States policy and to view their role as that of continuing to fight for their stated objectives. Roy Wilkins, the leader of the N.A.A.C.P., adopted the position that foreign policy was not "a proper sphere for public analysis and criticism." James Farmer of the Congress of Racial Equality offered his critical judgment of the Johnson administration's foreign policy, but did it as an "individual," opposing his organization's taking a public stand on Vietnam.33 Reasons for those early misgivings in joining

32 Ibid., 473.
33 Cited in Browne, 472-473.
the two conflicts grew out of the unique background and sense of political involvement blacks had with the American political scene. As Robert S. Browne recalls those early misgivings:

Traditionally, the American Negro has been single-minded . . . insofar as his social consciousness was concerned. He has bestirred himself solely about problems directly involving his welfare as a Negro. Issues involving him only as a citizen, but not as an ethnic group, were of little interest to him; and certainly foreign policy, one of the most sophisticated of public affairs, was generally beyond his sphere of interests. No wonder then that the effort to involve the civil rights movement in the Vietnam crisis met strong resistance. 

On the other hand, Browne points out that the new pressures for dual involvement at home with the Vietnam war introduced "a new and potentially revolutionary dimension into the civil rights movement, and perhaps into Negro thinking generally." The arguments favoring such an alliance generally fell under these four major headings:

1) the recognition that the civil rights movement represented "the moral conscience of America" and, therefore, belonged "in the vanguard of the Vietnam protest, felt now to be the number one moral issue confronting American society."

2) that billions of dollars being diverted to Vietnam represented funds which otherwise might be available to programs for raising the level of life for blacks in American society.

3) the belief that the civil rights objectives were "unachievable under the present organization of American society" and, therefore, must be fought

---

\[34\text{Ibid., 472.}\]
for as part of the "larger effort to remake American society, including foreign policy."

4) that the war is "intimately involved in American racist attitudes generally" and, therefore, does fall "naturally" within the range of the black American's "sphere of interest."35

Inevitably, the "duality of interests" arguments led to a growing pressure on major groups to extend their scope sufficiently to encompass a position on the vital Vietnam question. Especially prone to the "double involvement" arguments were the student movements, the pacifist organizations, and the more militant religious organizations and institutions. Additionally, those groups most vocal in support of civil rights were also the groups most outspoken against the worst aspects of United States involvement in Vietnam.36 The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, thus, viewed the war as closely related to the civil rights question. One member of that organization remarked in 1965 that the guerilla war in Mississippi was "not much different from that in Vietnam."37 It was, however, the SNCC position paper on Vietnam, dated January 6, 1966, that marked the first public statement by any major civil rights group on the black relationship to Vietnam. In the excerpt that follows, the name of Sammy Younge refers to a SNCC worker shot after attempting to enter a white restroom in

35 Ibid., 474-475.
36 Ibid., 472.
We ourselves have often been victims of violence and confinement executed by U.S. government officials.

The murder of Samuel Younge is no different from the murder of people in Vietnam, for both Younge and the Vietnamese sought and are seeking to secure the rights guaranteed by law.

Samuel Younge was murdered because U.S. law is not being enforced. Vietnamese are being murdered because the United States is pursuing an aggressive policy in violation of international law. The U.S. is no respector of persons or law when such persons or laws run counter to its needs and desires.

Still further, some leaders in SNCC declared that they would not fight in Vietnam even if drafted. It was clear, writes John Hope Franklin, that as black Americans moved into the last few years of the sixties

... more than in any other war in the nation's history Negro Americans were signing peace petitions, participating in peace rallies, and criticizing the administration of the armed services and their country's role in the war.

It was also clear to the individual black leader that the situation brought on by the war, in Bitzer's terms, demanded or invited utterance; that is, called "the discourse into existence." Blacks could speak on Vietnam because as Bitzer put it:

---

38 Ibid., p. 417.
39 Franklin, Slavery to Freedom, p. 651.
40 Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation," 2.
1) Rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to a situation much like an answer comes into existence in response to a question.

2) "A situation is rhetorical insofar as it needs and invites discourse capable of participating with the situation and thereby altering its reality."

3) "Discourse is rhetorical insofar as it functions (or seeks to function) as a fitting response to a situation which needs and invites it." 41

The black orator perceived in the dialogue on Vietnam, exigencies, imperfections, defects, "something waiting to be done." Black leaders felt the "exigence" of Vietnam could be modified. As Bitzer puts it:

... an exigence is rhetorical when it is capable of positive modification and when positive modification requires discourse or can be assisted by discourse. 42

Some major black leaders obviously felt their public utterances could alter the situation or the course of events brought on by Vietnam. They could be "mediators of change." Yet, further, the situation of Vietnam invited "a fitting response, a response that fits the situation." In Bitzer's terms: "If it makes sense to say that the situation invites a 'fitting' response, then the situation must somehow prescribe the response which fits." 43

Thus, in short, individual blacks responded to Vietnam

41 Ibid., 5-6.
42 Ibid., 6-7.
43 Ibid., 8-10.
through the rhetorical strategies of revolution, separation, and assimilation. Faced with this situation, those strategies were enunciated. A representative sample of those three approaches to an escalating situation that did not "decay" but rather "persists" is the concern of the following pages.\[^{44}\]

The Revolutionary Approach

Huey Newton, an avowed revolutionary, correlated the black struggle in America with the Vietnamese struggle for independence on the grounds that just as the "capitalistic system" occupies Vietnam now by sending American soldiers there, so, too, the black people of America are being "oppressed in the colony by white policemen sent by the 'system'." Newton argues further that just as the Vietnamese are attempting to drive "the American imperialist troops out of Vietnam," so is the black American attempting the same by attacking the white system of control in the ghettos. And, continues Newton, as the Vietnamese "should be able to determine its own destiny . . . we in the black colony in America want . . . power over our destiny. . . ."\[^{45}\]

\[^{44}\]Ibid., 12.

Newton could speak of the two situations as essentially tied together because "these are the rights of man, and not of any particular group." As Newton writes:

We join the struggle of any and all oppressed peoples all over the world, as well as in this country, regardless of color, who are attempting to gain freedom and dignity.

Another revolutionist, Bobby Seale, in a speech called "Free Huey" delivered in 1968, maintains that blacks can draw an analogous relationship between both conflicts if they view the situations in these terms:

The Vietnamese have had political decisions made upon them and their country and they have disagreed. . . . So, they said . . . we're going to defend ourselves right here on our land, and we want you to withdraw from our land. Now, we . . . parallel the situation, when we see all these racist cops off in our community. . . .

In fact, we're in a position then to demand that they withdraw from our communities because they occupy our community just like a foreign troop occupying territory.

Stokely Carmichael united the two conflicts because, as he saw it, "we share with you a common struggle . . . common enemy . . . white western imperialist society."

Carmichael described both as struggles to overthrow "the economic and cultural exploitation of non-white, non-western

---


47 Ibid.

peoples" with both cultures being forced to submit to "foreign rulers who impose their own corrupt cultures on those civilizations they would dominate."49 Again, with both destinies "intertwined," Carmichael was equipped to say:

The struggle . . . is international. We well know what happens in Vietnam affects our struggle here and what we do affects . . . the Vietnamese people.
Our destiny cannot be separated. . . . Our victory will not be achieved unless they celebrate their liberation side by side with us. For it is not their struggle, but our struggle.50

It was with increasing concern that Carmichael viewed America utilizing any means necessary to prevent liberation struggles sweeping across the Third World.51 Convinced that the "colonies of the United States," the black ghettos, like Vietnam, were all exploited, he, thus, said in the fall of 1966:

... the form of exploitation varies from area to area but the essential result has been the same--a powerful few have been maintained and enriched at the expense of the poor and voiceless colored masses. This pattern must be broken.52

---

50 Ibid., p. 3.
51 Ibid., p. 7.
It was apparent to Carmichael that in this situation there was only one place for black Americans in these struggles, and that was "on the side of the Third World."\(^53\)

It was from this framework and background that Carmichael remarked on July 30, 1966,

... that we have to speak out about ... Vietnam, ... talk to black people about the war.... This country has reduced us ... to such a state that the only way our black youths can have a decent life is to become a hired killer in the army.

... Do you mean ... to have a decent life I've got to become a hired killer and fight it out in Vietnam? Baby, it's time we stayed here and fight it out here.\(^54\)

In November, 1966, Vietnam represented, for Carmichael, "an illegal and immoral war."\(^55\) What blacks could then do to stop the war was outlined briefly before a University of California audience at Berkeley on November 19, 1966:

We must begin to think politically and ... question the values of this society. And I maintain that black people are the best people to do that because we have been excluded from that society. ... \(^56\)

Standing squarely with Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver believes, too, there is a definite structural relationship between the two areas of conflict. He unites the two struggles on the basis that, first, it is indeed a "reality," when blacks say there is a "black colony" and a "white

---

\(^54\)Cited in Scott and Brockriede, Black Power, p. 89.
\(^55\)Cited in Grant, Black Protest, p. 462.
\(^56\)Ibid., pp. 463-464.
mother country," warning that any discussion of Vietnam can only take place if this distinction is clearly understood. Second, since blacks are a "stolen people held in colonial status on stolen land," any analysis of Vietnam which does not acknowledge "the colonial status of black people cannot hope to deal with the real problem." As Cleaver describes it: "We're colonial subjects . . . dispersed . . . in enclaves called . . . ghettos." Third, Cleaver sees the police and armed forces of America as "the two arms of the power structure," both using force "to make you do what the deciders have decided you must do." He perceives the police on the domestic level doing what the armed forces do on the international level; that is, protecting "the way of life of those in power." As the police patrol cities, blockade neighborhoods, and invade homes, so, too, the armed forces "patrol the world, invade countries . . . blockade islands and whole peoples." "To complicate matters," maintains Cleaver, "there are also rich people and poor people in America." All have equal rights "but unequal possessions." Thus, the scene for Cleaver is one whereby

The whites are on top in America and they want to stay there . . . also on top in the world . . . and they want to stay up there, too. Everywhere

58 Ibid., pp. 57-61, 140.
59 Cleaver, Soul on Ice, pp. 128-130.
there are those who want to smash this ... system, ... change it. ... Everywhere the whites are fighting to prolong their status. ... In America, when everything else fails, they call out the police. On the international level ... they call out the armed forces.  

Importantly, Cleaver noted in the developing situation that while "those who turned the other cheek in Watts got their head blown off," blacks also saw that "heads were being blown off in Vietnam." And he continues:

... those corpses spoke eloquently of potential allies and alliances. A community of interest began to emerge. ... The blacks in Watts and all over America could now see the Viet Cong's point: both were on the receiving end of what the armed forces were dishing out.

Thus, linking "America's undercover support of colonialism abroad" and the bondage of blacks at home together, Cleaver wrote that any improvement of the black condition depended to a large measure on the "liquidation of America's neo-colonial network" and the fight became "one and the same." Based on this analysis, Cleaver, the internationalist, perceived that the black struggle in America "is not an isolated struggle" because the "oppressor has an international system." Thus, racism, imperialism, capitalism, and colonialism all function hand in hand and one can fight no matter where one is.

---

60 Ibid., p. 131.
61 Ibid., p. 132.
62 Ibid., p. 115.
Stronger indications of the situational and structural relationship created by the black condition in America and the war in Vietnam are established in these two excerpts drawn from Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*:

1) "The fact that the brains in the Pentagon see fit to send 16 per cent black troops to Vietnam" is one indication of the "genocide" in Vietnam. "Once the white man solves his problem in the East he will then turn his fury again" on blacks, "his longtime punching bag."

2) The black man's interest in seeing a strong, free, and independent Vietnam, "not the puppet of international white supremacy," rests on the belief that if the nations of Asia, Latin America, and Africa are strong and free, black Americans, too, will be safe and secure to live in dignity and self-respect.

In short, Cleaver holds the black struggle is "inextricably bound up with the struggle of all oppressed peoples..." He sees forces moving for liberation in colonies around the world profoundly affected by the same spirit that "motivates the Vietnamese people to pick up a gun and run the Yankees" out of Vietnam who came there only to exploit them. And that same spirit also motivates black people to fight for their liberation.

It was in this perspective of internationalism and a "sense of imbalance and injustice in America, an injustice

---

64 Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, pp. 121-125.
experienced at first hand and every day," that ultimately impelled Cleaver to speak out publicly on Vietnam. He wanted black participation and influence on "the real power that runs this country" and black people to play a part in the decision-making power concerning legislation, appropriations of money, and foreign policy. He had come to realize in his world view "that the price of hating other human beings is loving oneself less." It was, however, his appearance as one of the main speakers at San Francisco's Kezar Stadium on April 15, 1967, before 65,000 Vietnam war protestors, that provided some of his first comments on the war. The speech was part of the program of the Spring Mobilization Against the War in Vietnam. In the speech, Cleaver criticized this country's role in Vietnam and advocated the basic program of the Black Panther Party, including the call for black self-defense and identification of the black struggle with the one being waged by the NLF in Vietnam. The situation created by Vietnam and the Johnson foreign policy had, thus, caused Cleaver to summarize that lies "shattered by reality" meant the black community was tired of the lies, "the liars," and the non-solutions.

67Lockwood, Conversation, p. 4.
68Hentoff, "Playboy Interview," p. 90.
69Ibid., p. 108.
70Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, XIV-XV.
71Ibid., p. 116.
The Separatist Approach

The separatist rhetoric of Malcolm X over the issue of Vietnam had little chance to really emerge and develop in the sixties. Malcolm was assassinated by three gunmen in New York City's Audubon Ballroom on February 21, 1965, after he broke with the Black Muslim movement and began forging his own instrument of black rebellion. Yet, in the few comments that can be found by Malcolm on the then escalating war, the tendency was always to speak of United States foreign policy and the white man's role in it as, in Hoffer's words, the work of the "devil." As Hoffer believes "hatred is the most accessible and comprehensive of all unifying agents," he also feels hatred pulls the individual away from his own self, freeing him of "jealousies and self-seeking." Thus, no movement rises or spreads "without belief in a devil," its strength "proportionate to the vividness and tangibility of its devil." 72

The point being made here is that Malcolm did not perceive an "abstract" devil figure when he spoke of the black dilemma in America. For him, the white man was the enemy and he, therefore, proceeded to concentrate all his hatred on the "single foe," the common enemy, white America.

With this perspective, Malcolm could then bring Vietnam within his circle of concerns.

Another perspective that equipped Malcolm to speak on Vietnam was the feeling that racism was international. For him, "everybody who has caught the same kind of hell that I have caught is my blood brother." Malcolm had reason to join with the peasant of Vietnam because "the same man" colonizing people in the Congo was the "same man, the same enemy, oppressing the black American in Detroit." Thus, what happens to blacks in America, also happened to the black man in Asia. And "what happens to one of us today happens to all of us." The international system of racism, therefore, made all oppressed men brothers.

Further, he could relate to Vietnam because racism and Vietnam was not a black problem, "nor an American problem," but rather "a world problem." It was, in his words, "a problem for humanity," not "a problem of civil rights but a problem of human rights." As he described it in his

---

When you . . . look at your and my problem in the context of the entire world . . . a world problem, and that there are other people . . . who look just like you do who also have the same problem, then you and I become allies . . . in a way to get the best results.78

In this context, Malcolm was then ready to bring his charge of racism and genocide of black people before the United Nations.

Mississippi, the Congo, and Vietnam were tied together and could be spoken of as one struggle because, as Malcolm saw it, the same interests were at stake, the same sides were drawn up, the same schemes were at work in all places.79 The "rice farmers" of Vietnam "fighting off the agents of imperialism" was linked with the black struggle in America to throw off "the yoke of colonialism." The black American paralleled the Vietnamese rice farmers who were

... peasants, with a rifle--up against all the highly-mechanized weapons of warfare--jets, napalm . . . and they can't put those rice farmers back where they want them.80

In his "Prospects For Freedom in 1965" address delivered on January 7, 1965, approximately six weeks before his assassination, he concluded that what America was doing in Vietnam was historically the role America had played in

79 Ibid., p. 125.
80 Ibid., p. 148.
the world scene for years. Describing America's role in Vietnam as "criminal," he said then:

She's causing American soldiers to be murdered . . . killed . . . for no reason at all. That's wrong. Now, you're not supposed to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it. . . .

In short, on the arguments of a common enemy or "devil" figure, the international scope of racism, and the universal nature of human rights, Malcolm proceeded to speak of Vietnam. Not anti-American, he was, however, "against what America is doing wrong in other parts of the world as well as here."82

The Assimilationist Approach

It is in the rhetoric of Martin Luther King on Vietnam alone that the rhetorical situation is revealed most clearly. Those factors or pressures that finally moved King to speak of Vietnam in detail on April 4, 1967, have, therefore, been reserved till now. Further, those reasons for King constitute an essential basis or framework from which to view the remaining chapters.

King, in the tradition of the "protesting man of words," saw himself, first, as "the champion of the downtrodden and

82Ibid.
injured." As Hoffer describes the man of words:

It is only a few rare ... men who have that kind of love toward mankind at large that makes them unable to endure patiently the general mass of evil and suffering, regardless of any relation it may have to their own lives.  

King, though highly educated, spoke the language of the small town southern black and the language of the small town preacher. He represented for many blacks "the race at its best." His movement, notes Smith, had been based on "a fundamental belief in the goodness of man," believing America did indeed possess "the moral courage to correct the injustices perpetrated on the black man." Beyond all this, he believed America "would redress the grievances if those injustices were amply shown." Withholding the "or else" threat of the revolutionary, Smith described the king message as that of a preacher pleading with his congregation to repent of their sins lest evil times befall them. Calling America to higher purposes and seeking moral goals, King tried to persuade a whole nation of the beauty of justice, compassion, and love.

Additionally, Addison Gayle saw King as:

... dedicated to the things of the spirit, standing atop the mountain, saddened by the reluctance of his country to grant minimum reforms and thus make revolution unnecessary.

---

83 Hoffer, The True Believer, p. 122.
85 Ibid., p. 20.
86 Gayle, The Black Situation, p. 211.
More important than perhaps being described solely as a man of words, King was, secondly, in the rhetorical tradition of Richard Weaver who saw rhetoric in the light of values and courses of action. Moreover, Weaver viewed societal and personal salvation in ideals, essences, and principles, with the ultimate "goods" in society of major concern to him. 87

Weaver included within the nature and scope of rhetoric an additional "advisory" function. 88 In his article "Language is Sermonic," he explained that rhetoric..." has the office of advising men with reference to an independent order of goods. ... The honest rhetorician therefore has two things in mind: a vision of how matters should go ideally and ethically and a consideration of the special circumstances of his auditors. Toward both of these he has a responsibility. 89

Weaver in his book The Ethics of Rhetoric also believed that "rhetoric at its truest seeks to perfect men by showing them better versions of themselves." He wrote that "a man's method of argument is a truer index in his beliefs than his explicit profession of principles." Further, "a surer index to a man's political philosophy" was his "characteristic way of thinking, inevitably..."

88Ibid., 137.
expressed in the type of argument he prefers." For Weaver, the study of an argument revealed "the philosophy of its maker," how he is thinking about the world, "the key to his primary view of existence."  

Weaver, additionally, selected, ranked, and outlined a hierarchy of topics a persuader might use and which a critic could employ to assess the rhetoric of others. Of highest order, was the appeal based on the argument from genus or definition. This involved arguing from the essential nature of things, from principles based on the essential rightness of the issue with no room for middle ground. Rooted in the concept of human nature and the nature and definition of man himself, it involved "a philosophy of being." To yield to circumstances, to pick arguments that fit a particular circumstance was, in Weaver's words, grounding an argument "in the nature of a situation rather than in the nature of things." The argument from circumstance was, therefore, expedient and on a lower level.  

Standing in the tradition of Weaver and the argument from definition, King found it easy to speak out on Vietnam.

---


91 Ibid., p. 55.

92 Ibid., pp. 83, 85-87, 106.

93 Ibid., p. 57.
Despite his deep involvement in seeing the black American finally free in the United States, he could not for long "ignore the larger world house" in which blacks were also "dwellers." As he made clear in his book *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*:

Equality with whites will not solve the problems of either whites or Negroes if it means equality in a world society stricken by poverty and in a universe doomed to extinction by war.\(^{94}\)

King perceived "all inhabitants of the globe" as "neighbors," all men as "interdependent," and all life as "interrelated."\(^{95}\) In light of his nonviolent philosophy and the situation in Vietnam, it was, therefore, not outside his realm or vision to comment that

The agony of the poor impoverishes the rich; the betterment of the poor enriches the rich. We are inevitably our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.\(^{96}\)

King was gradually moved to speak of Vietnam because during his entire career his whole stance had been not merely economic but more basically "a moral one." He had opposed segregation not simply because it was "economically debilitating but because it was evil—and unchristian."\(^{97}\)

---


\(^{95}\)Ibid., pp. 196-211.

\(^{96}\)Ibid.

\(^{97}\)Charles E. Fager, "Dilemma for Dr. King," *Christian Century*, LXXXIII (March 16, 1966), 331.
He had always focused on ethical matters as part of the rhetorical strategy to stir the conscience of the white community and to further draw their support. But, more importantly, many of the moral issues King raised in the restricted context of civil rights had national and international contexts and implications as well. As Charles E. Pager wrote in The Christian Century in 1966:

> "Without seriously compromising his acknowledged role as a man of principle," contends Pager, King could not remain quiet for long in the face of continued escalation of the fighting. As the nation grew clearly more uneasy about the war and as the arguments of "national honor" continued to be punctured by the press, contradictions and "moral evasions" of our policy were brought before the American public in increased numbers. King, too, incensed by "lapses of credibility" gradually, then, felt the need for an "authentic moral challenge to the war." 99

King, as a "man of conscience," saw acquiescence as preventing any significant national reassessment of the war.

---

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid., 332.
and the policies it exemplified. Thrust as he was "onto the stage of world attention," Fager observes, he could never again find refuge in "the sectional or minority cause from which he sprang." 100

It was, however, with his acceptance of the Nobel Prize in 1964, that King was particularly urged to take a public stand on Vietnam. Before 1964, King had remained silent on the Asian war. However, as a Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1964, as a "world symbol of nonviolent resolution of conflicts," as the "personification of America's conscience," he now found it increasingly difficult to remain silent. 101 No longer just a spokesman for the black American minority, King's acceptance of this award broadened his rhetoric "to include all of the oppressed peoples of the world." In fact, recalls Smith, King now became "the conscience for many people," indicting all he considered "unjust and detrimental to the human spirit." 102 When he accepted the Nobel Prize for peace, he became "a citizen of the world as well as an American Negro, and he felt himself responsible to work for peace everywhere." 103

100 Ibid.
102 Smith, Black Revolution, p. 36.
With the Johnson administration talking of escalating the war beyond 450,000 men, of possibly bombing Hanoi and Haiphong harbor, and even confronting China itself on the Asian mainland, King was forced to make public his feelings on the war. His decision, however, was speeded along following publication of an open letter to him from Vietnamese Buddhists who urged him not to remain silent on the suffering caused by "this unnecessary war." With this letter public, he addressed his prestige to the "burgeoning nationwide moral condemnation" of American activities in Vietnam.  

Like other churchmen who supported earlier American involvements in world wars one and two because the causes appeared just, King could not come to the same conclusion about Vietnam. The issues surrounding this war and its purpose seemed unclear. It was his burden, as he saw it, to "awaken the American conscience," to raise questions which were basic, "to raise the level of debate."  

King could speak of Vietnam because he was a "peace-maker." He found it difficult to "separate peace in Harlem


from peace in the Mekong Delta." Although criticized by some for "confusing the issues" by his protests against America's course in Vietnam, for King, "peace was indivisible."^107 Convinced "the struggle for peace and the struggle for civil rights . . . happen to be tied together," he perceived a relationship between civil rights and Vietnam on the basis of three essential arguments. First, as he stated:

... it would be rather absurd to work to get schools and lunch counters integrated and not be concerned with the survival of a world in which to integrate. And I am convinced that these two issues are tied inextricably together and I feel that the people who are working for civil rights are working for peace; ... the people working for peace are working for civil rights and justice.^109

Secondly, he could bridge the gap between civil rights and Vietnam because as he put it:

Since I am a preacher by trade . . . I have several reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war . . . and the struggle I . . . have been waging in America. A few years ago . . . there was a real promise of


^109Ibid.
hope for the poor--both black and white--through the Poverty program. There were experiments, hopes. Then came the build-up in Vietnam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated.

Third, he equated a relationship or sameness on the argument that the black American's determination to win freedom from every form of oppression sprang from "the same profound longing for freedom that motivates oppressed people all over the world." In King's words:

The . . . deep discontent in . . . Asia is . . . a quest for freedom and human dignity on the part of people who have long been victims of colonialism. The struggle for freedom on the part of oppressed people in general and of the American Negro in particular . . . compels us to admit that the struggle will continue until freedom is a reality for all . . . peoples.

When King saw the leaders of nations talking peace while preparing for war, pursuing peace while expanding defense budgets, and when he saw America, as he said:

. . . intervening in what is basically a civil war, mutilating . . . Vietnamese children with napalm, burning villages and rice fields at random, . . . and sending home half-men, mutilated mentally and physically; when I see the unwillingness of our government to create the atmosphere for a negotiated settlement . . . by halting bombings . . . and agreeing . . . to talk with the Vietcong--and all this in the name of pursuing the goal of peace--I tremble for our world.

It was the American destruction of crops, the American

110 Grant, Black Protest, p. 418.
112 King, Where Do We Go, pp. 212-213.
harassment of the innocent, of "children selling their sisters to our soldiers, soliciting for their mothers," that demanded from King some sort of meaningful response. For King, the above illustrations were "defects" in the Vietnamese situation.

Yet, not all black leaders agreed King should link the struggle in Vietnam with the human rights struggle in America. Wilkins, Young, and Bayard Rustin denounced King's move as tactically dangerous, perceiving no relationship in both struggles. But, it soon became clear in the months following King's move that the black man's relationship to the war was indeed one of the key issues surrounding it. Also, rebellions in the cities now helped to illustrate the explicit relationship between the status of blacks and the war itself. While Whitney Young made statements that the "War on Poverty" and the Vietnam war could both be conducted with the same degree of intensity, there were increased demonstrations in many additional American cities suggesting the feeling among many was otherwise. As Lawrence P. Neal recalls the period:

It became increasingly clear that the massive aid demanded in the cities and the massive resources necessary for waging war in Vietnam were at odds with each other.114

113 Yoder, "American Clergy," 55.
On April 4, 1967, in an address delivered at the Riverside Church in New York City, King spoke of this need to finally take a stand on the war in these terms:

I come . . . because my conscience leaves me no choice.

"A time comes when silence is betrayal." That time has come for us in relation to Vietnam.

. . . the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. And we must rejoice . . . for surely this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history.115

In this speech, later called "Conscience and the Vietnam War" and broadcast during November and December of 1967 over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as one lecture in the seventh annual series of Massey Lectures, King, recreating the social, political, and economic setting, spells out how the war has speeded up the deterioration of the American society, both morally and socially. Specifically, he cites the cuts in the poverty program because of war expenditures; the climate of violence affecting young blacks in the ghettos; and the corruption of American values by our acts of destruction in Vietnam.116 More importantly,

however, he cites four reasons why he can no longer remain silent on this situation. These are summarized below:

1) black men were being sent to Vietnam in "extraordinarily" high proportions relative to the rest of the population.

2) black men were being sent "8,000 miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem."

3) he could no longer maintain that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action after viewing the "massive doses of violence" America was using to bring about the changes it wanted in Vietnam. To do this, would contradict the nonviolent philosophy itself.

4) he viewed the Nobel Prize as a "commission to work harder than . . . before for 'the brotherhood of man.'" This award, in turn, made him "marvel at those who ask me why I am speaking against the war."117

Beyond national allegiances and loyalties, King had come to believe that someone must speak for the peasants of Vietnam and "raise the questions they cannot raise." Someone had "to give a voice to the voiceless on Vietnam and to understand the arguments of those who are called enemy."118

And he continued:

Somehow this madness must cease.

I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste . . . for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world. . . . I speak as an .

118 Ibid., 109-111.
American to the leaders of my own nation. The great initiative to stop it must be ours.

Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.

The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit...

Later, in the same address, he was to conclude:

I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as . . . Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demoniacal destructive tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

I . . . choose . . . to save the soul of America.

King had come to realize that a nation which "continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift" was rapidly approaching what he termed "spiritual death."

On April 15, 1967, Dr. King lent the weight of his prestige to the protest against America's undeclared war in Vietnam by leading a procession of more than 200,000 Americans, both white and black, through the streets of New York to the United Nations to protest America's role in the conflict. Met at the entrance of the United Nations by another black Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Dr. Ralph Bunche, who, at that time supported American policy, Bunche

---

119 Ibid., 111-113.
120 Ibid., 105-106.
121 Ibid., 114.
informed King that although he had marched with King in support of civil rights, he could not march with him for peace in Vietnam. It was clear to many, notes Goldston, that the Bunche attitude reflected a split in the thinking of civil rights leaders throughout the country. However, King maintained as late as February 6, 1968, that "Nothing convinces me more that we suffer this moral and spiritual lag than our own participation as a nation ... in Vietnam."  

It may be inferred from the previous discussion of King and the rhetorical situation that he saw both dissent and criticism of the war much in the same way J. William Fulbright has described it in his book *The Arrogance of Power*. King, too, regarded dissent from the war as a "service," as Fulbright details it, "a belief that the country can do better than it is doing." Much in the same position, King wrote:

Our government must depend more on its moral power than on its military power.

Let us be those creative dissenters who will call our beloved nation to a higher destiny, to a new plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humaneness.

---

123 King, "Vietnam Is Upon Us," p. 22.
Criticism, for King also, was then a "higher form of patriotism." Like Fulbright, he perceived American actions in Vietnam as power confused with virtue, with "omnipotence," "a sign of God's favor" to remake nations "in its own shining image." As King pointed out in the April 4, 1967, address alluded to earlier: "The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just." It was then for King to later observe that America had both placed itself in the position of being "God's military agent on earth" and substituted "the arrogant undertaking of policing the whole world" for the high task of putting its own house in order. Thus, King could speak of Vietnam because in the words of Senator Fulbright:

There are times . . . when one must protest, not solely or even primarily because one's protest will be politic or materially productive, but because one's sense of decency is offended . . . or simply because something goes against the grain.

King, like Fulbright, had realized that America could make errors in judgment on foreign policy and that mistakes could be corrected only if they were "acknowledged and discussed."

---

126 Fulbright, Arrogance, p. 25.
127 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
129 King, Where Do We Go, p. 157.
130 Fulbright, Arrogance, p. 33.
131 Ibid., p. 35.
Thus, King wrote:

... it profits a nation little to gain the whole world of means and lose the end, its own soul. We must have a passion for peace born out of wretchedness and the misery of war. Giving our ultimate allegiance to ... justice, we must be that colony of dissenters seeking to imbue our nation with the ideals of a higher and nobler order. So in dealing with our particular dilemma, we will challenge the nation to deal with its larger dilemma.\(^{132}\)

Acting in the historical tradition of such black leaders as Frederick Douglass and Douglass' son, who, before King, protested the American war against Mexico and the American war in Spain respectively, so, too, for King, the increased dangers to the struggle for black rights by continued American participation in Vietnam seemed most clear. No matter the proclaimed intentions of the American government, King saw in Vietnam American soldiers fighting against another "colored" people, black troops in 1968 providing more than eleven per cent of the American combat forces but suffering close to eighteen per cent of the casualties, and an increased militarism in Asia as an enemy of tolerance and progress in the black struggle for equality at home.\(^{133}\) Based on these and other factors mentioned, King could make a fitting response to the Vietnam problem.

\(^{132}\) King, Where Do We Go, p. 158.

\(^{133}\) Goldston, The Negro Revolution, pp. 228-229.
Summary

The years 1965-1966 saw radical and divisive changes in the civil rights movement. Most significant was the entry of SNCC, CORE, and King's SCLC into the debate against the American war effort in Vietnam and the trend by SNCC and CORE toward black nationalism under the slogan of "Black Power." The N.A.A.C.P. and the National Urban League remained opposed to both of these departures. Meanwhile, Stokely Carmichael appeared on the scene as the new SNCC leader and remained for this period one of the nation's most controversial figures.134

Ghetto riots also continued to hit many major cities through 1966. While they generally remained a separate phenomenon from the organized civil-rights movement, some efforts were made to relate the two events. SNCC and CORE, breaking away from the "mainstream" of the movement, now adopted language and tactics in line with the frenzy of rioters. Also, for the first time in the decade of the sixties, some of the disorders in the North prompted participation by anti-black whites.135

King began to express concern over Vietnam soon after he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Calling for a


135Ibid., pp. 230-231.
"negotiated peace," and an end to the war in July, 1965, he criticized American involvement increasingly during 1966 and particularly 1967 and 1968, now leading demonstrations "more anti-war than pro-civil rights."\(^{136}\)

While CORE's former director James Farmer wanted the movement to concentrate all its efforts solely on civil rights, by 1966, new leaders in CORE were calling for the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam. In January, 1966, SNCC declared America was "pursuing an aggressive policy in violation of international law" and expressed sympathy with all young men who were unwilling to respond to the military draft. Floyd McKissick, now executive director of CORE, also opposed any escalation of the war. Also in 1966, Roy Wilkins was quick to remain disassociated from the SNCC statement along with Whitney Young who carefully avoided involvement over the issue.\(^{137}\)

While blacks opposed to the war emphasized the American effort drained billions of dollars away from the urgent needs of blacks in America and also represented a war against a non-white race, opposition to the war in those years was by no means general among the black public. For example, Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, the first

\(^{136}\)Cited in Muse, pp. 230-231.

black man elected to the United States Senate since Reconstruction, expressed doubts about Vietnam in 1966, but after his visit to the war area in March, 1967, reversed his earlier position and returned supporting President Johnson's policy.

While the debate at home continued into the late sixties, black soldiers continued to serve in Vietnam with efficiency and valor. Yet, now present was a growing concern among some black leaders and a young black public that perhaps too many blacks were carrying too great a load in Vietnam. Draft-age blacks pointed to the fact that while blacks represented only about eleven per cent of the nation's population, close to eighteen percent were serving in Vietnam. Further, with more blacks serving in "high-risk" units, the black percentage of casualties created further cause for alarm. This alarm among other inconsistencies and contradictions arising from the war, produced issues of important magnitude for the black American. A discussion of those issues, then, is the concern of the next four chapters.
CHAPTER V

THE ISSUE OF "COLOR" WARS AGAINST THE POOR AND OPPRESSED
OF VIETNAM AND AMERICA

This first chapter on issues develops the black argument that both wars are essentially "color" wars against the poor and oppressed and represent wars of liberation by "colonized" people who seek, as minorities, to govern their own lives and destinies.

Second, it would appear that the concept of identification as set forth by Kenneth Burke has been used extensively by black orators in establishing both a closer relationship with their audience and to link the two conflicts on the grounds of "color," oppression, colonization, or minority control of their own lives. Consequently, the specific purposes of this chapter are:

(1) to define the concept of identification.

(2) to show how some black orators, either consciously or unconsciously, use identification as a strategy to establish relationships between the black situation in America and the events in Vietnam. 1

1See Chester Gibson, "Eugene Talmadge's Use of Identification During the 1934 Gubernatorial Campaign in Georgia," Southern Speech Journal, XXXV (Summer, 1970), 343.
It seems that when the black orator talks of both wars as "color" wars and further calls for people of color to unite around the one thing that keeps them oppressed, their color, these ideas and calls for unity suggest application of Kenneth Burke's concepts of identification and consubstantiality.

Traditionally, Burke points out, the key term for rhetoric was persuasion. Now, however, Burke feels the term identification may yet be another way for describing the ways in which members of a group promote social cohesion by acting rhetorically upon themselves and one another. In identification, Burke emphasizes, lies the source of cooperation. In simplest form, identification is seen in the politician who, "addressing an audience of farmers, says, 'I was a farm boy myself.'"

Using colleague A and colleague B as a further example, Burke states that A may not be identified with colleague B, but, "insofar as their interests are joined, A is identified with B." And Burke continues:

Or he may identify himself with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so.

In being identified with B, A is "substantially"

---


3 Ibid.
one" with a person other than himself . . . at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 544-545.}

Noting that two persons may also be identified in terms of some principle they additionally share in common, he explains that substance, in older philosophies,

... was an act; and a way of life is acting-together; and in acting-together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them consubstantial.\footnote{Ibid.}

Thus, identification "confronts the implications of division" within men and lets the rhetorician "proclaim their unity." "Since," he continues, "identification implies division," rhetoric involves us "in matters of socialization and faction."\footnote{Ibid., pp. 548, 569.}

Additionally, a speaker may persuade an audience by use of "stylistic identifications" to establish rapport between himself and his audience.\footnote{Ibid., p. 570.} Described as a style of ingratiating or talking the language of a group as both "a mode of formal sharing" and "a signal of consubstantiality,"\footnote{Mario Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), p. 88.} here identification means cooperation and sociality between speaker and listener. Thus, "you persuade a man"
... only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your way with his.

The speaker also gives the "signs" of consubstantiality by deference to an audience's "opinions" or by displaying the "appropriate 'signs'" to earn the audience's good will. As Burke argues, the orator may try to change an audience's opinion somewhat, but he succeeds "only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinion in other respects." He, therefore, sees the speaker and audience acting-together, both sharing common ideas, attitudes, and concepts that make them substantially one. Rhetoric, for Burke, "builds bridges," plays on common experiences. As Burke writes: to proclaim a man "brother," is to identify your ways with his. And one does this by emphasizing common language, heritage, experiences, ideas, and beliefs.

Burke offers as one function of rhetoric the "use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents." A second function is the "use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols." Persuasion "involves communication by the signs of consubstantiality,

---

10Ibid., pp. 579-580.
the appeal of identification." One persuades another, then, only insofar as one talks the auditor's language and identifies his ways with the listener.\textsuperscript{13}

It would appear black orators employ identification as a strategy to relate the war in Vietnam to the black situation in America. This is based upon an analysis of the civil rights movement which suggests that at most levels of the black community today a keen awareness of the extent of their victimization, as well as a knowledge of the forces which maintain it, is generally present.\textsuperscript{14} The black orator knows he belongs to a "select group" and he talks to others of his group in these terms, identifying with them and conferring "the same role on them." Using a "soul" rhetoric to convince others of one's own worth and the audience's worth, "it also serves to persuade the speaker himself."\textsuperscript{15} Thus, the black speaker can be, as Burke expresses it:

\[\ldots\text{ his own audience, insofar as he, }\ldots\text{ cultivates certain ideas }\ldots\text{ for the effect he hopes they may have upon him; he is here}\]

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., pp. 586, 579.


what Mead would call "an 'I' addressing its 'me';"

... he is being rhetorical quite as though he were using pleasant imagery to influence an outside audience rather than one within. 16

Specifically, then, effective interaction between black speaker and black audience, with similar problems, is a way of meeting needs in situations where each mutually supports each other.

More importantly, black rhetoric aims at unique experiences plus shared lower-class black experiences. However, black rhetoric can also be an "umbrella concept for a rather wide variety of definitions of one's situations." 17

In terms of Vietnam, then, this rhetoric "can occasionally get at least fleeting allegiance to 'soul' from others with whom in reality they share relatively little..." 18

Thus, it is not surprising that the black American can relate to Vietnam or bring within his own personal situation and experience the events of Vietnam. He can establish a bond of commonality with Asians, feel a "oneness" or "brotherliness" with the Vietnamese, even on the basis, as one field worker for SNCC put it: "You know, I just saw one of those Vietcong guerrillas on TV. He was dark-skinned ragged, poor, and angry. I swear, he looked just like one of us." 19

18Ibid.
An identification or relationship between the black American and the Vietnamese struggle for freedom is built upon some of these arguments. First, some blacks contend that black America, as a nation, is colonized by another nation (white America) just as Africa, Latin America, and Asia are colonized by white Europeans and Americans. Second, survival includes international brotherhood with revolutionary peoples all over the world. Third, blacks see their struggle against white America as not a minority struggle. It is argued here that, in fact, it is the white race that is a small minority in the face of the majority of dark-skinned peoples who are struggling for liberation and survival. Therefore, some blacks can urge the joining of forces with the "non-white majority in the global revolution of oppressed peoples" on the grounds that the black geographic situation in the urban ghettos would ensure victory in these quarters "if we are correctly prepared."  

The Black Panthers establish a bond between the two peoples and the two locales on the basis that America, "the chieftain of oppression," is presently being attacked by

---


21 Ibid., p. 19. For a detailed discussion of this argument, see also Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, trans. by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 11.
the whole third world to free themselves from United States imperialism and neo-colonialism. Therefore, the Panthers argue, it is a "must" that all "progressive people" unite and wage a tireless struggle against the exploitation and degradation of the capitalist system which is responsible for having millions of people living in a constant state of misery.22 As the Vietnamese people have been the victims of American capitalism, so, too, argue many blacks, "we ourselves have often been victims of violence and confinement executed by U.S. government officials."23

To illustrate the use of identification by black communicators, the following excerpts drawn from the speeches and writings of Seale, Lester, Newton, and Charles Ross, will serve to clarify the main arguments surrounding this issue.

Bobby Seale, in his "Free Huey" address delivered at the Free Huey Rally in Oakland, California, on February 17, 1968, used "the language of the black masses," the "grammar of the central city," to comment on Vietnam.24 In understanding the black community, Seale knew that to communicate

---


with his black audience on Vietnam he would have to keep to the language they best understood. In the excerpt below, Seale handled the reality of black life as his audience knew it and he made of the occasion, like Burke's concept of identification, "a communicating experience of one brother to another." 25 "Ultimately," believes Arthur Smith, "this is what a true rhetoric must be." 26 As Bobby Seale puts it:

The Vietnamese have had political decisions made upon them and their country and they have disagreed with them. So, they said, Naw, we're going to defend ourselves right here on our land, and we want you to withdraw from our land. Now, we... parallel the situation, when we see all these racist cops off in our community the way they are.

In fact, we're in a position then to demand that they withdraw from our communities because they occupy our community just like a foreign troop occupying territory. 27

Julius Lester, poet, folksinger, former SNCC worker, and author of the book Look Out, Whitey, Black Power's Gonna Get Your Mama, develops the idea of a universal struggle and unity among all colored peoples for complete freedom in this brief excerpt below drawn from his article "The Angry Children of Malcolm X":

. . . his blackness links him with the Indians of Peru, the miner in Bolivia, the African and freedom

26 Ibid.
fighters of Vietnam. What they fight for is what the American black man fights for—the right to govern his own life.28

Huey Newton of the Black Panther Party can more than empathize with the Vietnamese struggle on the basis that the Panthers join the struggle of any oppressed people all over the world, regardless of color, who are attempting to gain freedom and dignity.29 Viewed as the rights of man and not any particular group, he continues:

We advocate and we aid any people who are struggling to determine their destiny. . . . The Vietnamese say Vietnam should be able to determine its own destiny. . . . We in the black colony in America want to be able to have power over our destiny. . . .

Charles Ross, newly appointed chairman of the Black Studies Division at the Ohio State University, sees as a major need of black Americans the development of "a greater affinity between struggling black people in this country and struggling black people on other continents." He also sees a "positive correlation" between what is happening in Columbus, Ohio and what occurs, for example, in South Africa. It is apparent to Ross that the same men


who colonized South Africa are the same men oppressing people in this country. Ultimately, he feels, there must be some kind of coalition to eventually deal with that kind of liberated effort. In short, these brief excerpts have served to introduce how the black orator preaches "unity" with other peoples based on color and oppression. From this, states Arthur Smith, the black speaker "hopes to create a massive base from which to deal with the problem of black people in the American society." In other words, the black orator says to his audience, "take what you have and use it to your advantage." Blacks are encouraged to "rally around" the things that keep them and others down—their color and condition. Finding strength in this, they become, in Smith's view,

... like the Jews who have been persecuted for their religion yet find much of their unity in their religious heritage. Once unity is accomplished, the rhetors of revolution contend that nothing will be denied the black people because of the significant power base that their unity commands.

Additionally, the rhetoric on this issue "makes clear the world as it is for many, perhaps most, Black Americans." As Scott and Brockriede describe this view: "The ghetto is a colony; the white is the enemy; a racist society is

32 Smith, Black Revolution, p. 60.
33 Ibid.
violent.\textsuperscript{34} It is, therefore, not surprising to either critic that blacks in America have argued theirs as a common cause with colonial revolt around the world. Reminded constantly that they are a minority in America, blacks, they feel, have made identification with colored peoples around the world "a neat reversal of positions and the threat inherent therein."\textsuperscript{35} Moreover, accepting colonialism as "a symbol of exploitation" and "one whose day is done," Scott and Brockriede believe that "resisting such a force is not only just, but success is also inevitable."\textsuperscript{36} A descriptive account of the black rhetoric on this issue now follows with emphasis on the oratory and writings of King, Carmichael, Malcolm X, and Eldridge Cleaver, in that order.

As stated earlier, a second major purpose of this chapter is to show how the black orator uses the concept of identification and consubstantiality to develop a relationship between his condition and the Vietnam War. Of particular interest, then, is how during King's career, and especially after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, his rhetoric broadened to include all the oppressed peoples of the world, indicting all that he considered unjust and


\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 138.

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}.
detrimental to the human spirit. As Coretta King explains in her introductory statement to his book *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, King could bring Vietnam within his scope because he stressed:

... the common cause of all the disinherited... laying the basis for the struggles now unfolding around economic issues. He spoke out sharply for all the poor in all their hues, for he knew if color made them different, misery and oppression made them the same.37

King wrote that no matter how deeply the black American was involved in the struggle to be free in America, blacks could not ignore "the larger world house," as he called it, "in which we are also dwellers." He argued that although in one sense the civil rights movement here was "a special American phenomenon" which could only be understood in light of American history and the American situation, on a more important level, he said "what is happening in the United States today is a significant part of a world development." This development he termed in 1968 "a worldwide freedom revolution."38 As he explains this "freedom revolution":

All over the world like a fever, freedom is spreading in the widest liberation movement in history. The great masses of people are determined to end the exploitation of their races and lands. They


38Ibid., pp. 195-197.
are awake and moving toward their goal like a tidal wave.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself.

Likewise, says King, the black American, consciously or unconsciously has been caught up by the spirit of the times and is moving with a sense of great urgency toward "the promised land of racial justice." Moreover, as a black man, he can still relate to the situation in Vietnam because "the determination of Negro Americans to win freedom from every form of oppression springs from the same profound longing for freedom that motivates oppressed peoples all over the world." "Realism," concluded King, compelled blacks to admit that "the struggle will continue until freedom is a reality for all the oppressed peoples of the world." Revolting against all systems of exploitation, "the shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before."

39Ibid., p. 198.
40Ibid., p. 199.
42Ibid.
Using "color" as a means of identification to speak of Vietnam, Stokely Carmichael argues that the colonies of the United States, including the black ghettos, must be liberated. He sees America as an "octopus of exploitation its tentacles stretching"

... from Mississippi and Harlem to ... the Middle East, ... and Vietnam; the form ... varies from area to area but the essential result has been the same—a powerful few have been maintained and enriched at the expense of the poor and voiceless colored masses.\(^44\)

Believing this pattern must be broken, he told his audience in Chicago on July 28, 1966, that the only reason blacks and others "have to get together is the color of our skins."

In his words: "They oppress us because we are black and we are going to use that blackness to get out of the trick bag they put us in." Arguing further that the only thing blacks own is the color of their skins, Carmichael urges building a movement in America based on color that will "free us from our oppressors."\(^45\)

In following a strategy of aiming his message primarily at blacks, Carmichael, as Scott and Brockriede noted, "personified the ideology he was advancing and aimed at identification with his chosen primary audience."\(^46\)

---

\(^{44}\) Stokely Carmichael, "Power and Racism." Printed in a pamphlet by the Southern Student Organizing Committee, Nashville, Tennessee, 1966, p. 4.


speaker and audience influence each other within a social context, Carmichael "tried to shape the responses of those about him." As Carmichael "demanded," audiences "demanded" also. The point here is that Carmichael's rhetoric of demands "may well have been shaped more by audiences' responses than by their own attempts to modify tendencies to respond." Notice below in a review and criticism of a Carmichael address to a predominantly black audience at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Florida, on April 16, 1967, how Carmichael stresses common emotional experiences through the use of emotional appeals, creates the discourse through opinions and evidence he knows is again already in the minds of his black listeners, all through a "two-edged approach" which instills pride in black people and expresses contempt for white people.

... he derided the white man's concept of the Negro as lazy. As he described how his own mother had slaved from dawn to dusk, I saw many of the older Negro women nodding their heads. They knew what Stokely was talking about. Then he launched into a series of questions: "Who picked the white man's cotton... reared the white woman's children? ... After each dramatically posed question the audience would call out, "Black people!" "That's right, that's right," replied Carmichael, "Don't ever forget that."
On style as identification, Scott and Brockriede submit that in addition to Carmichael's decision to concentrate his rhetoric on the black audience and to present an ideology appropriate for that audience, he also made the rhetorical decision to project an image and to utilize a style which would reinforce the ideology by a personal identification with his chosen audience.\textsuperscript{50} This "conscious choice" or adjustment in style for identification purposes is noted in the same review of the Tallahassee speech alluded to above. The critic here, in examining the Tallahassee speaking situation and Carmichael's rhetorical abilities, writes:

\begin{quote}
Stylistically he employed a simple, direct approach, which seemingly had tremendous impact upon his audience. Resorting to the language of the commoner and ... his own coinages ('Let the hunkies know ...') or intentionally using incorrect grammar ('Why should we kill some yellow man who ain't never called us Nigger?'), Carmichael effectively established a common ground with his audience.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

With college audiences, Carmichael also identified with the college student "through his 'hip' style and 'in' humor." If indeed "style is the man," Carmichael was best characterized by one student as "cool."\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{50}Scott and Brockriede, \textit{Black Power}, p. 121. \\
\textsuperscript{51}Phifer, "Carmichael in Tallahassee," 91. \\
\end{flushleft}
In another attempt to adjust his style to his audience as a "conscious choice," Carmichael reveals his awareness of identification in this answer to a question following a speech in 1966 at an interracial camp at Glen Falls, Vermont: "As a person oppressed because of my blackness, I have common cause with other blacks who are oppressed because of the blackness."\(^{53}\) In short, Carmichael "formed an ideology for a black audience with whom he identifies stylistically."\(^{54}\)

On the international scene, Carmichael again used the strategy of identification to establish a relationship between the black problem in America and the liberation struggles around the world. His goal was to internationalize black America's struggle for human rights, believing the most important area outside the United States for forging working alliances was Latin America.\(^{55}\) He further held that the struggle for liberation from American domination throughout Latin America would provide black Americans with some very important and strong allies. By turning such an eye toward Latin America, he argued:

> We've got to learn who to coalition with and who not to coalition with. We've got to make specific alliances on specific issues. My enemy's enemy is my friend. I may not love him. . . . But if

\(^{53}\)Cited in Scott and Brockriede, *Black Power*, p. 121.

\(^{54}\)Ibid.

he can help me get the hooks and claws of the eagle out of my throat I want to talk to him.56

This move to "internationalize" the black struggle was clearly enunciated by Carmichael in an address before a meeting of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) held in Havana in 1967. Reprinted under the title "Black Power and the Third World," Carmichael, although addressing members of Latin American countries, clearly emphasized that "the struggle we are engaged in is international."57 Believing the destiny of one country could not be separated from the destiny of others, he told OLAS:

We greet you as comrades because... we share... a common struggle... enemy. Our enemy is white Western imperialist society.

Our struggle is to overthrow this system which... expands itself through the economic and cultural exploitation of non-white, non-Western peoples--the Third World.

The struggle... is international. We well know what happens in Vietnam affects our struggle here and what we do affects the... Vietnamese people.

Our destiny cannot be separated... Our victory will not be achieved unless they celebrate their liberation side by side with us.59

Carmichael promotes an international alliance on the grounds that because blacks are powerless and, therefore, oppressed,

56Ibid.

57Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power and the Third World." Printed in a pamphlet by the Southern Student Organizing Committee, Nashville, Tennessee, 1967, p. 3.

58Ibid., pp. 1-4.
it is only with power they can make decisions governing their lives and communities. Without power, he says, blacks have to beg; with power, blacks can take their birthright. Additionally, he urges that because color has been used to oppress non-white peoples, color must be used as a weapon of liberation as other people use nationality as a weapon in their liberation struggles. In his view, the coming together around "race" was an inevitable part of the struggle. With color and culture being key in oppression, "It is from our people's history," continues Carmichael, "that we know our struggles and your struggles are the same." He can only conclude that the "one place for black Americans in these struggles . . . is on the side of the Third World." Holding a similar position, Malcolm X also sought identity and unification with the colored masses of the world by internationalizing the black man's problem and making it not solely a black or American problem altogether, but, as he often stated it "a world problem, a problem for humanity." By internationalizing the black struggle and

59 Ibid., p. 5.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., pp. 5-9. A similar view is also expressed by Fanon in The Wretched of the Earth, p. 21.
62 Ibid., p. 10.
"calling upon our brothers and sisters in Africa and Asia," Malcolm believed pressure could be brought to bear upon the American government to get the black dilemma solved. In identifying with all colonial revolutions, he held that anybody who caught the same kind of hell he had, was his "blood brother." In other words, oppression made them brothers, exploitation, degradation, discrimination, segregation, even humiliation made them brothers. Standing squarely with Carmichael, Malcolm identified with all oppressed groups on the basis that what they shared foremost in common was the white man as enemy. Dispelling the belief he was anti-white, he argues identity on the basis he was

for anybody who's for freedom. I'm for anybody who's for justice . . . equality. I'm not for anybody who tells me to sit around and wait for mine . . . who tells me to turn the other cheek . . . who tells black people to be nonviolent while nobody is telling white people to be nonviolent.

Arguing the same interests, same sides, same schemes are at work in Mississippi and the Congo, Malcolm emphasizes blacks would be "out of our minds, we would actually be traitors

64Malcolm X, "What's Behind the 'Hate-Gang' Scare?", full speech in Breitman, Malcolm X Speaks, pp. 65-66.
65Ibid., p. 66.
67Speech delivered before the Harlem Ad Hoc Committee supporting the Freedom Democratic Party on December 20, 1964, full speech in Breitman, Malcolm X Speaks, p. 112.
to ourselves, to be reluctant or fearful to identify with people" they have so much in common. And he emphasizes:

... when you have people who look exactly like you, and you are catching hell, to boot, and you still are reluctant or hesitant or slow to identify with them, then you need to catch hell... You deserve all the hell you get.°

Malcolm preached that wherever the "dark man" was being oppressed or exploited, blacks had reason to get together with others on the basis of this "common enemy." The problem, as he saw it, would not be corrected by "getting things straight over here" before correcting it elsewhere. It was rather a case of realizing that the Afro-American problem was not a Negro problem but a "human problem, a problem for humanity."

Expanding the black American's domestic struggle to the higher level of human rights, he could then bring Vietnam and other issues within his commentary. Internationalizing the freedom struggle, no longer confining it to the "domestic jurisdiction of the United States Government," meant real power was international, not local.

---

69 Ibid., p. 130.
70 Ibid., p. 99. See also Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p. 215.
people in language they understood, he warned:

If . . . power . . . isn't . . . tied into that international thing, brother, don't get too far out on a limb. If your power base is only here . . . forget it . . . You have to have a power base among . . . people who have something in common with you . . . some kind of cultural identity . . . relationship between you and your power base.\(^7^3\)

Building his case on identification, Malcolm frequently spoke of the "dark masses" of Africa, Asia and Latin America, seething with bitterness, animosity, and impatience with the racial intolerance experienced at the hands of the white West.\(^7^4\) To this, he added the more than twenty-two million black Americans, the brown, red, and yellow people in America, also, seething with bitterness at the racial intolerance not only of the white West but of white America in particular.\(^7^5\) Seeing the black American as a part of dark mankind, he then saw the whole struggle not within the confines of American stage, but upon the world stage. And, in this world context, the dark man outnumbered the white man; the white man being just "a microscopic minority."\(^7^6\) With this rationale in mind, on April 8, 1964, Malcolm gave a speech on "The Black Revolution" before a white audience in New York in which he warned:

\(^7^3\)Ibid.
\(^7^5\)Ibid.
\(^7^6\)Ibid., p. 52.
What happens to a black man in America today happens . . . to the black man in Asia and to the man down in Latin America. What happens to one of us today happens to all of us. And . . . those who are intelligent will realize that when they touch this one, they are touching all of them, and this in itself will have a tendency to be a checking factor.  

At the end of 1964, Malcolm held that the greatest accomplishment of the black man in America toward some kind of racial progress was the successful linking together of the black problem with other minority and world problems. One month before his assassination on February 21, 1965, he continued to link the problem of racism in Mississippi with the problem of racism in South Vietnam. In a radio interview of January 28, 1965, he saw Vietnam as all part of the "racist system" used by western powers to degrade people in Asia during recent centuries. His expressed hope then was that the black American would see that his problem was the same as those people being oppressed in South Vietnam. From this, he hoped all the oppressed people of the earth, making up a majority, could then demand change and not beg as a minority force might have to. 

---

77 Ibid., p. 48.

78 See Malcolm's speech to a delegation of McComb, Mississippi youths in New York on December 31, 1964, partial text in Breitman, Malcolm X Speaks, p. 143.

79 Taken from a radio interview on Station WBAI-FM, January 28, 1965, partial text in Breitman, Malcolm X Speaks, p. 218.
Cleaver, as a revolutionary and internationalist, argues that the first thing that must be realized when one talks of "color" wars, colonization, or minority control of one's destiny, is that it is a reality for blacks when they say black people are indeed a "stolen people" held in colonial status on stolen land. Any analysis, he writes, which does not acknowledge this colonial status of blacks cannot, therefore, hope to deal with the real problem. For Cleaver, blacks form "an oppressed colony in the midst of white America." In his view:

The whites are on top in America . . . on top in the world . . . and they want to stay up there, too. Everywhere there are those who want to smash this . . . system. . . . Everywhere the whites are fighting to prolong their status. . . . In America, when everything else fails, they call out the police. On the international level, when everything else fails, they call out the armed forces.

From this position, Cleaver sees the black American at war, as colonials always are at war with their conquerors.

To internationalize the black problem and bring it within the framework of Vietnam itself, Cleaver first starts with the basic principle that every man deserves the very highest standard of living that human knowledge and technology

80 Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, pp. 57-61.
81 Ibid., XI.
83 Don A. Schanche, "Burn the Mother Down," Saturday Evening Post, November 16, 1968, p. 32.
is capable of providing. Anything, therefore, that stands in the way of that principle is a contradiction in terms of the survival of people; it is, in his words, evil and should be removed.\footnote{Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, pp. 126-127.} "Unmasked as America the ugly, America the hideous," America has, for Cleaver, become "the number one obstacle to human progress on the face of the earth today."\footnote{Tbid., p. 127.} Secondly, Cleaver contends that the "sanctity surrounding property is being called into question." In his words:

\begin{quote}
The mystique of the deed of ownership is melting away. In other parts of the world, peasants rise up and expropriate the land from the former owners. Blacks in America see that the deed is not eternal, . . . not signed by God, and that new deeds, making blacks the owners, can be drawn up.\footnote{Cleaver, Soul on Ice, p. 135.}
\end{quote}

"Now," as he describes it, "forces are moving for liberation in these other colonies around the world." The same spirit that "motivates the Vietnamese people to pick up a gun and run the Yankees . . . out of there," is the same "universal" human spirit that motivates black people in the ghettos. Calling for "power to the people," he writes that all people should have the power to control their destiny, whether white or black, eskimo or Indian.\footnote{Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, pp. 140-144.} On the black situation alone, he writes that black Americans realize more than ever
that they can help the world by helping themselves in America. "If we give freedom to ourselves right in Babylon, we will give freedom to the world. . . ."98

Third, like Carmichael and Malcolm X, Cleaver can speak of Vietnam because he sees "our struggle as inextricably bound up with the struggle of all oppressed peoples."89 Further, "our struggle in the United States is not an isolated struggle."90 Arguing he has always been an internationalist, he reveals in his latest interview that:

... any true revolutionary has to be an internationalist, because our oppressor has an international system. Racism, imperialism, capitalism, colonialism. . . . are international. All these oppressors are united on the international level in every organization from the United States to NATO. . . . And they function hand in hand. The racists who oppress black people in the United States work hand in hand with the racists . . . in every backward, decadent system in the world. So that one can fight no matter where one is in the world.91

Going beyond symbolism and heroes, he reveals that there are many "freedom fighters" he can identify with and admire. In particular, he identifies with everyone who stands up for the rights of the people, whether head of a government

88Ibid., p. 145.
91Ibid., pp. 57-58.
after a revolution or whether the person is shot down, an unsung hero. He, in short, respects anybody who stands up to the forces of tyranny and says "I'm not going for it." On Vietnam itself, Cleaver builds and establishes the feeling of "oneness" or "brotherness" around the idea that a strong, free, and independent Vietnam, not the puppet of international white supremacy, means the black man in America will be safe, secure, and free to live in dignity and self-respect. He rests the above argument on the "cold fact" that while the nations of Africa and Asia "were shackled in colonial bondage," the black American, too, "was held tightly in the vise of oppression." But when, he continues, "these nations started bidding for their freedom," it was only then that black Americans "were able to seize the chance." Then, too, "the white man yielded what little he did - out of sheer necessity." Thus, it is clear to Cleaver that the "only lasting salvation for the black American is to do all he can to see to it that the . . . Asian, and Latin American nations are free and independent." In short, racial progress in one country means racial progress in the others.

---

92 Ibid., pp. 89-90.
93 Cleaver, Soul on Ice, p. 125.
94 Ibid.
Finally, it is apparent to Cleaver that "this is the last act of the show." As he concludes:

We are living in a time when the people of the world are making their final bid for full and complete freedom.

... the smallest man on the street is in rebellion against the system which has denied him life and which he has come to understand robs him of his dignity and self respect.

He can't afford to put things off. He must stop the whole show -- NOW. . . .

For Cleaver, failure to grasp securely this historic opportunity now may well mean there will be no more tomorrows for the oppressed masses.

Summary

This first chapter on issues develops the black argument that both wars are essentially "color" wars and represent wars of liberation by "colonized" people who seek, as minorities, to govern their own destinies.

More importantly, it appears the concept of identification as described by Kenneth Burke has been used extensively as a strategy by black communicators to link the two conflicts on the grounds of "color." Promoting social cohesion by acting rhetorically upon themselves and

95 Ibid., pp. 124-125. For a similar viewpoint, see also Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p. 11.

96 See a similar appeal developed at length in Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, pp. 311-316.
one another through common sensations, concepts, images, or attitudes that make them "consubstantial," the black communicator also persuades his audiences by use of stylistic identifications; that is, a style of ingratiation or talking the language of a particular group. Talking the listener’s language by speech, gesture, tonality, attitude, identifying his way with the listener’s, this rhetoric builds bridges between speaker and listener by emphasizing shared experiences, common language, heritage, and beliefs.

Identification between the black American and the Vietnamese struggle for freedom is built upon some of these arguments. First, some blacks build their case on the claim that black America, as a nation, is colonized by white America just as Africa, Latin America, and Asia have been colonized by white Europeans and Americans. Second, among the needs of survival is the stress placed upon the worldwide cooperation and brotherhood with all oppressed peoples, a particular emphasis of Frantz Fanon. Third, arguing the non-white masses constitute a majority population, blacks are urged to unite with all other non-white peoples who also struggle for liberation and survival. Fourth, some blacks establish a bond between both peoples and both locales on the basis that as the Vietnamese have been victims of American capitalism, so, too, blacks themselves have been the victims of violence and confinement executed by American government officials.
Using the idiom of the people, the language of the black masses, the grammar of the central city to comment on Vietnam, black speakers generally keep to the language their audiences best understand, handling the reality of black life as their audiences know it. The black communicator often makes of the occasion, like Burke's concept of identification, "a communicating experience of one brother to another." Preaching "unity" with other peoples based on color and oppression, the black speaker hopes to create the massive base from which to deal with his own particular problem. In short, blacks are encouraged to "rally around" the things that keep them and others oppressed—their color and their condition.

Dr. King, whose rhetoric included all the oppressed peoples of the world and all that he considered unjust and detrimental to the general human spirit, argued the black man could relate to the situation in Vietnam because all men and all life were "interdependent" and "interrelated." Believing the determination of the black American to win his freedom from all forms of oppression sprang from the same longing for freedom that motivated oppressed peoples all over the world, he concluded that realism compelled blacks to realize that their struggle for freedom would continue until freedom was a reality for others in the world.
In contrast, Carmichael argued that the only reason blacks and others had to unite was the color of their skins. Arguing blacks were oppressed as a group because of their color, he urged building a movement in America based on color that would free blacks from their oppressors. In all, projecting an image and utilizing a style which reinforced the ideology by a personal identification with his chosen audience, he emphasized that as color and culture made some liberation struggles the same, the only place for black Americans was on the side of the Third World.

Like Carmichael, Malcolm X also sought identity and unification with the colored masses of the world by internationalizing the black man's problem and making it not solely a black or American problem altogether, but, "a world problem, a problem for humanity." By internationalizing the black struggle and seeking the unity of other "brothers and sisters" in Africa and Asia, Malcolm believed pressure could be brought to bear upon the American government to get the particular black dilemma solved. Further, believing the same stakes, same interests, same schemes were at work in either Mississippi or the Congo, he emphasized blacks had reason to get together with others on the basis of sharing a common enemy--the white man. Lifting and expanding the black American's domestic struggle to the higher level of human rights, Malcolm's expressed hope in early 1965 was that the black American would eventually see that
his problem was the same as those people being oppressed in South Vietnam.

Cleaver, as revolutionary and internationalist, sees the black American as a colonial people at war with their conquerors. Believing all people should have the power to control their own destiny, Cleaver sees the black struggle as "inextricably bound up with the struggle of all oppressed peoples." He establishes a feeling of "oneness," "brotherness," and interdependence between both conflicts and peoples on the grounds that a free and independent Vietnam, not the puppet of international white supremacy, means the black man in America will be strong and free to live in dignity and self-respect. In short, racial progress in one country means, for Cleaver, racial progress in all others.
When black Americans speak of a planned or concerted effort on the part of white society to eliminate people of the black race, this rhetoric generally centers around these four ideas. First, blacks hold that white America has been at war with black America since the first African fore­parents were "stolen" from "our ancestral homeland." Second, blacks accept the idea that they are a nation (black America) colonized by another nation (white America) just as Africa, Latin America, and Asia are colonized by white Europeans and Americans. Third, blacks believe that ultimately, Vietnam being the possible first step, white America will try to destroy the black American when he is no longer of any economic or political use. Some even perceive this genocide will be as vicious as Nazi Germany's genocide of the Jews. Fourth, some blacks hold that technology and automation, combined with the awakening militancy of black people all over the world, make black America not only useless to white America, but a "mortal threat" to white America's "world-wide" supremacy, domination, and imperialism.1

Blacks contend the early signs of future genocide stand revealed in the historical records of this country. Cited are the instances of neglect and mistreatment afforded Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, the dark-skinned immigrants of Latin America and Puerto Rican descent, and all other non-white persons in this country. Donald Jackson observes that the white man's use of Chinese slave labor to build the railroads in the 1880's, the white colonization of Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1898, the placing of Japanese-Americans in concentration camps in the forties, and the present war against the Vietnamese people are signs that, in the final analysis, white America will exploit and destroy all black or non-white people whenever, wherever possible.  

Gwendolyn Patton writing in Liberat or Magazine observes that the early signs of race genocide could be seen in World War Two. She raises the question why this country saw fit to drop the "bomb" on Japan, "a yellow nation, and not on Germany, the initiator of World War Two?" Her conclusion suggests that as Japan was the proving grounds for the atomic bomb, Vietnam, another yellow nation, is now the proving grounds for napalm and biological warfare chemicals with black people the "cannon fodder."

---

2 Ibid.
One can add to the previous interpretations the following observation put forth by a twenty-five year old black American who refused to serve in the armed forces of the United States. Rolland Snellings observes that in the fifties, when bands of black youth gangs patrolled and protected black communities, the phenomenon "displeased the overlords of white American colonialism, so they decided to 'break up'" these gangs. In Snellings' view, with "the yellow race rising up in Korea," a decision was made by white authorities in Washington to use these ghetto black youths to check the movement of communism in Korea, to "match these fighting niggers against the chinks." His article concludes:

In this current era of Afro-American colonial uprisings, the Black warriors are showing their ... fighting abilities from Harlem ... to Chicago and Los Angeles ... and hysterical white American colonialism is responding with similar solutions as with the decade of the fifties. Our warrior youth are either sent to concentration camps called "Youth Rehabilitation Centers" ... or again sent to fight for the Great Society--"nigger against chink" in Vietnam.4

Still further, consider the implications of these lines written by the Reverend Daniel J. Mallette of Chicago as he responds to the issue of race genocide:

... it seems especially macabre that a disproportionate number of poor people ... especially black, are pulled into this war. I've seen

dozens of teenagers rejected by the school system ... taken by the military and turned into fighting men.

They are virtually told that they are unnecessary unless a war is to be fought. Then, apparently, all kinds of money can be found to transform them, ... to give them the know-how to killing.5

For the black American, the following political and economic factors inevitably reveal the attempt at planned race genocide:

1) the rise of a growing right-wing political philosophy supported by the so-called "silent majority" of America.

2) the "subtle" use of birth control on blacks in urban ghettos.

3) the unmasking of Northern racism or so-called "white backlash."

4) the "criminal use of black youth" in Vietnam.6

These above factors, in the black view, suggest a major violent conflict fought mainly on the color line, a race war, within a few years.

Eldridge Cleaver also noted the inevitability of race genocide in this perceived relationship:

The American racial problem can no longer be spoken of ... in isolation. The relationship between the genocide in Vietnam and the smiles of the white man toward black Americans is a direct relationship. Once the white man solves his problems in the East


6 Jackson, "Unite or Perish," p. 17.
he will then turn . . . on the black people of America, his longtime punching bag."

Affirming the belief that the United States has already decided where its next campaign will be after Vietnam is over, Cleaver views the increasing armed clashes and violent encounters with police departments as preparations for the suppression of the black liberation struggle in this country and one in which "our survival is at stake." 8

Believing that the doctrine of white supremacy "let's the black man in for the greatest portion of the suffering and hate," in Cleaver's view, "this historically indisputable fact," coupled with recent efforts of the United States "to woo the Soviet Union into an alliance against China" means trouble ahead for all blacks who have been victims of white supremacy and rule. 9 Still further, "it is no accident," writes Cleaver, "that the United States government is sending all those black troops to Vietnam." Not only is America's point in sending "16 per cent black troops to Vietnam to kill off the cream of black youth," but, it has for Cleaver, another important result. As he sees this move, by turning black troops into "butchers" of the Vietnamese


9Cleaver, Soul on Ice, p. 122.
people, America spreads hate against the black race throughout Asia and even Africa. Additionally, writing at the time of the 1968 presidential campaign, he believed the race and its candidates suggested much more what the outcome could mean for black Americans. He wrote then:

Racist George Wallace is number two in the polls . . . for President. And here we have a situation where the man who sends letters to black boys in the ghetto, sending them to Vietnam, General Hershey, is standing up saying that his choice for President is George Wallace. That's a desperate situation for black people, whether white people know it or not. 11

Cleaver's position is that the power structure "at all costs" must keep blacks from uniting, "from becoming bold and revolutionary," and that "at all costs the blacks must be kept at bay." "Nothing must be allowed to threaten the set-up." Justice is secondary and security the byword. 12

Cleaver further holds that recent talk and attempts to relocate black people through urban renewal are essentially "hostile moves to break up the concentration of blacks," because as he writes, in a concentration of numbers, "we have potential political power." 13 And with blacks moving toward "a psychological and spiritual awareness of

10Ibid., p. 127.
12Cleaver, Soul on Ice, pp. 136-137.
13Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, pp. 168-169.
"oppression," blacks are

... saying that we've had enough, that we will no longer take it; that you're threatening us with death, ... with genocide, so that we see no alternatives but to organize ourselves to get into a position to take white people with us if we have to go. We say if there's going to be massive death for black people, the best that we can do is to get into a position so that there'll be massive death for white people. 14

In the Cleaver view, the world situation today puts blacks in a position where "we don't have to go for it." 15

Stokely Carmichael, in a speech given at the meeting of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity held in Havana in 1967, also addressed himself to the issue of race genocide. Contending that the United States was a "racist country" from its very beginning, he charged that America "built itself upon the subjugation of colored people." His charge rested upon the following history. First, the Europeans who settled this country "systematically stole the land and destroyed the native population, the Indians." Second, at the same time the United States was "waging genocide" against the Indians, it was additionally "raping the African continent of its natives and bringing them to the Americas to work as slaves." Third, to justify enslaving one human being the United States has always proclaimed

14 Ibid., pp. 116-117.
15 Ibid.
"the superiority of whites and the inferiority of non-whites."

We are called "niggers"; Spanish-speaking people are called "spicks"; the Chinese "chinks"; the Vietnamese "gooks." By dehumanizing us and all others of color, it therefore becomes first, in the mind of the white man that we should be enslaved, exploited, and oppressed.16

History, Carmichael charged, demonstrated that "the reward for trying to peacefully coexist has been physical and psychological murder of our peoples."

We have been lynched, our houses have been bombed and our churches burned. We are now being shot down in the streets like dogs by white racist policemen and we can no longer accept this oppression without retribution.17

Developing further this notion of a planned genocide against black America, he said to a white audience on the campus of Wisconsin State University in Whitewater on February 6, 1967, that when five-hundred black babies die each year in Birmingham, Alabama, because of a lack of proper food, shelter, and medical facilities, and thousands more are maimed physically, emotionally, and intellectually because of deprivation in the ghetto, this illustrated "institutionalized racism."18 Thus, Carmichael makes clear


17Ibid., p. 9.

to the white man that "there are 20 million black people in this country and that when they mess with one black man they got to mess with 20 million black people." In other terms, "if they touch one black man in California... one... in Mississippi... that we will move to disrupt this whole damned country."

Speaking to a predominantly black audience at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Florida, again in 1967, Carmichael's message was clear and explicit: "We need to let America know... that if they intend to play the Nazi, we are not going to be the Jew." He declared the black man must "let the hunkies know, if they touch one of us, we're going to break their arms."

As Scott and Brockriede point out, the thrust of Carmichael's message is with "institutionalized racism." His rhetoric deals with the "systematic oppression of a whole race," rather than isolated and "individualized

the black race in his speech before the National Conference on Black Power held in Newark, New Jersey, on July 21, 1967, the full speech in Haig A. Bosmajian and Hamida Bosmajian, eds., The Rhetoric of the Civil-Rights Movement (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 127-141.

19 Cited in Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, p. 49.


racism." Again, his goal is to save and improve "the lot of black people as a group."  

Malcolm X spoke to the issue of race genocide in these ways. In late 1963, a Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference was held in Detroit with Reverend Albert Cleage, Jr., journalist William Worthy, and Malcolm X as chief speakers. The audience for this occasion was almost all black with non-Muslims in the great majority. The following speech by Malcolm is significant in that this is one of the last speeches he gave before leaving Elijah Muhammad's organization. In terms of historical perspective, a few weeks after this conference, President Kennedy was assassinated and Muhammad silenced Malcolm X. The speech, in short, is representative of the Black Muslim position coming as it did in the period just before the split with Muhammad. The excerpt below, taken from the address "Message to the Grass Roots," reveals Malcolm's early concern with the direction of this country's policies toward the black man.

America's problem is us. We're her problem. The only reason she has a problem is she doesn't want us here. . . . You represent a person who poses such a serious problem for America because you're not wanted. Once you face this . . . then you can start plotting a course. . . . 

---

22 Scott and Brockriede, Black Power, p. 118.

On April 8, 1964, Malcolm addressed a meeting sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum at the Palm Gardens in New York. The speech, before an audience approximately three-quarters white, gave Malcolm an opportunity to present his arguments for internationalizing the black struggle by indicting the United States government before the United Nations for racism. More importantly, Malcolm viewed the growing concern with population increase as a white fear that the masses of dark people, "who already outnumber them," will grow and multiply until eventually the dark peoples will "overrun the people of the West." In his view, the outward preparations for the ultimate "human flood" of dark peoples could be seen in the minds and actions of whites everywhere. Additionally, the idea that dark peoples together form a majority rather than a minority group is frequently stressed by many black orators when addressing people of color. Carmichael, for example, estimates that in another five to ten years, "the two-thirds of our thirty million will be in the ghettos--in the heart of the cities." Joining these blacks, Carmichael states, will be the thousands of Puerto Rican, Mexican-American, and American Indian populations. So, too, Malcolm makes clear: "You might outnumber us in

this country, you don't outnumber us all over the earth." 26

As Malcolm said in 1965:

> When you count the number of dark-skinned people in . . . Venezuela . . . Jamaica, and the United States and even Canada . . . total all these people up, you have probably over 100 million. And this 100 million . . . is what is causing concern for the power structure itself. . . . 27

Again, what seems implicit in the rhetoric of Malcolm X here is that steps will be taken by the white power structure and ruling bodies to prevent or control any change in the present system as it stands today.

Asserting a governmental conspiracy was in operation to deprive black people in America of their rights, he held that the only avenue left for blacks was to take America to court and charge genocide, the political, economic, social, and mental murder of millions of blacks in this country. 28

He noted in May of 1964, that upon close study one could "easily see a gigantic design to keep . . . African-Americans from getting together." Further, he remarked that a combination of peoples of African descent in South, Central, and North America, totalled well over eighty million. The

---


Implication was that such a unification of peoples in one cause could markedly "change the course of history." And with white society in knowledge of this, he made clear for his audiences that steps would be taken to prevent such an occurrence at all costs.

The issue of race genocide was also treated by Malcolm in a speech given at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem on December 20, 1964. Here he developed the idea that a form of genocide was inherent in the white strategy of turning people of color against other colored peoples. In this speech, noting the effort being made by white officials "to turn the African against the Asian ... the Arab ... the African ... being sicked on the Asian," he said:

... the main thing he's doing is causing this division ... to in some way keep the African, the Arab and the Asian from beating up on him.
He's got them fighting each other.
The fact that he can turn one against the other keeps the man on top.

Emphasizing the strategy of turning one minority group against another helped keep "the man" on top, he urged that an understanding of this strategy at the international level would help blacks better understand the strategy employed at the national and local level.

\[29\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 62.\]
\[30\text{Malcolm X, } \"\text{At the Audubon,}\" \text{full speech in Breitman, } \text{Malcolm X Speaks, } \text{pp. 130-131.}\]
As noted earlier, "The Black Revolution" address by Malcolm on April 8, 1964, contained arguments for indicting the United States government for racism before the United Nations. Although those arguments have been excluded here, it is important to note that a recent edition of The Black Panther Newspaper has now taken up this earlier challenge and plans to resubmit the original petition of 1951 to the United Nations. The Panther article of June 13, 1970, charges again "genocide, the crime of government against the Negro people."  

The original petition was first presented to the world body of the United Nations in 1951 by a delegation led by American singer Paul Robeson. Through the petition, the effort then was to first "expose the nature and depth of racism in the U.S.A.," and secondly, "to arouse the moral conscience of progressive mankind against it." The petition declared at that time that racism in America constituted a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter, its Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, most specifically, its Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. In short, it served to emphasize that "the racist crimes against the black citizenry were in violation of the most vital canons of International Law."  

---

31"We Charge Genocide, the Crime of Government Against the Negro People," The Black Panther, June, 1970, p. 10. See Appendix C.  
32Ibid.  
33Ibid.
Now, twenty years after the submission of the original petition, the Black Panther Party asserts that the earlier charges of genocide can be "materially enlarged." The "murderous" political policies toward "colored" citizens in and out of the ghettos, as outlined by the Panthers, now include:

1) the use of state troopers to suppress black democratic demonstrations "seeking enjoyment of inalienable and constitutional rights."

2) discriminatory living conditions that shorten the life span of blacks as compared to whites.

3) "psychological" miseducation in ghetto schools.

4) unemployment and underemployment higher among blacks due to hiring policies and low technical development afforded black youth.

5) higher narcotics traffic in the ghettos.

6) measures to prevent birth within the group practiced in several states.  

However, the important point in this new petition is the charge that once again an increasing number of young black soldiers, used "as armed gendarme to force America's murderous brand of democracy upon a foreign people," are again the "export commodity" used to "breed aggressive wars" and threaten world peace. The petition submits:

The wantonly murderous and predatory racist attacks on Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia are the proof. These criminal wars are inseparably related to the equally criminal murders of rebellious black youth in Chicago

Ibid.
New Haven . . . and Jackson, Mississippi. The crime of these black youth was their color, plus their determination not to . . . be intimidated by its force and violence. The crimes of the racists are the crimes of a desperate class and those whom it has dehumanized. 35

To expose the hypocrisy of American policy toward black Americans, the petition calls for:

1) American racism being brought to the councils of the United Nations through world-wide action.

2) the recognition that the treatment of black Americans violates all provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 36

In brief, "History calls for an end to genocidal relations at home and abroad." 37

The second point above is important in that it calls for removing the black American from the sphere of civil rights alone into the broader, more worldly context of human rights. Through this strategy, the world body could respond as mankind itself. Like Malcolm X, the decision was made that greater acceptance of the black position could be achieved if approached on the human rights level as opposed to the confining and restricted level of civil rights alone.

Aside from the petition, the Black Panthers charge in relation to Vietnam that blacks, "the scapegoats of

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
"America," are cited by the "racist oppressor" to be removed from America in large numbers to avert the disaster of revolution. Believing the need for black people is "diminishing," the party cites two forms of birth control being instituted by white society to prevent disaster to the capitalist system by way of revolution. First, birth control pills are now "flowing" through the black community. Second, as history indicates "the best form of birth control and population reduction is war," they believe once again the "oppressor" has "resorted to the military in desperation." The Panthers support their arguments by charging that at least twenty per cent of the soldiers in Vietnam are black, whereas the population of black people in America composes only ten per cent. Further, on the front where the fighting is, some of these units have as much as thirty to fifty per cent black soldiers. Additionally, it seems perfectly clear to the Panther organization that America has already instituted a national and international campaign to control the birth of people within the oppressed class; that is, white America is trying to proportionally stagnate the birth of black children by putting the men on the front lines in Vietnam and duping black women with birth control pills. The Panthers can only conclude:

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
The Black man is now faced with a survival struggle. The Black man in the military is in a key position to upset this total genocide plan. The Black G.I. is needed vitally if this planned genocide is to be successful, because Black people are the ones the system is trying to kill or get killed abroad.\textsuperscript{42}

The figures and percentages on black soldiers participating in the Vietnam war provided by the Black Panthers earlier, can be substantiated in large measure from a number of different sources. It is, however, a reasonable statement that black Americans are "heavily involved" in the war in Vietnam and are now "persuaded 2 to 1 that their young are fighting a disproportionate share of the war."\textsuperscript{43} For some others, this fact raises many questions and points up particular ironies peculiar to the black American.

John Hope Franklin writes that in the 1960's "proportionately more Negroes (30 per cent) than whites (18 per cent) from the group qualified for military service were drafted." At the end of 1965, he reports that there were more than 20,000 blacks in Vietnam, nearly 17,000 in the Army. As late as 1967, blacks constituted eleven per cent of the total American enlisted personnel in Vietnam, but, as Franklin points out, black soldiers comprised near fifteen percent of all Army units, and in Army combat units the

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid.
proportion was "appreciably higher." He points out that during the first eleven months of 1966, black soldiers constituted nearly twenty-three per cent of all army troops killed in action. Additionally, Thomas A. Johnson writing in Ebony Magazine more recently reports that as of late 1968 "some 56,000" were currently serving in South Vietnam, "according to Pentagon figures."

Dr. King, in dealing with the issue of race genocide, also voiced concern about the black military percentages quoted previously. In his book Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?, he remarked that the genocide perpetrated on the black American begins in this country and then follows the young black to Vietnam. Says King:

Of the good things in life he has approximately one-half those of whites; of the bad . . . twice those of whites. Thus, half of all Negroes live in sub-standard housing, and Negroes have half the income of whites.

There are twice as many unemployed. The rate of infant mortality . . . is double that of whites.

And, for King, the equation pursues blacks even into war.

---

46 Martin Luther King, Jr., Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?, Bantam Books (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 7-8.
Says King again:

There were twice as many Negroes as whites in combat in Vietnam at the beginning of 1967, and twice as many Negro soldiers died in action (20.6 per cent) in proportion to their numbers in the population.\(^{48}\)

Johnson again reinforces the depth of black involvement in the war by reporting that the average age of the black soldier in Vietnam is nineteen. Further, he notes that almost a quarter of Army troops killed there in 1965 were blacks. Front line statistics showed then that while blacks made up about ten per cent of the total American troop commitment there, blacks came close to twenty per cent of those on the front line. This is partially correct, notes Johnson, because blacks do seem to volunteer for combat duty "at a greater rate than whites" and partially true again because their "generally less than average educational backgrounds place them in combat units."\(^{49}\)

Regarding the draft and the black American, according to available figures, about 37,000 blacks were drafted during 1967. This figure represents about seventeen per cent of all draftees in that year. Army deaths in Vietnam from 1961 to 1967 were nearly seventeen per cent black, even though the percentage of black soldiers in Southeast Asia during those years was around twelve per cent. As of

\(^{48}\) Ibid.

December, 1965, nearly twenty-seven per cent of black men in the Army were assigned to combat units, compared to nearly eighteen per cent of white soldiers.\textsuperscript{50} Pentagon officials report publicly that black deaths come to nearly fifteen per cent of the total American fatalities in Vietnam currently.\textsuperscript{51}

Reports of mistreatment and genocide are perhaps best reflected in the words and letters of black soldiers presently stationed in Vietnam. Taken at random, here is an excerpt from a letter written by one black PFC:

You should see for yourself how the black man is being treated over here. And the way we are dying. When it comes to rank we are left out. When it comes to special privileges we are left out. When it comes to patrols ... we are first.\textsuperscript{52}

A second letter reads in part:

When a "brother" speaks out against the unequal treatment ... he is most assuredly "railroaded" to the D.M.L., An Khe or some other extremely dangerous area.\textsuperscript{53}

The vulnerability of the black soldier in Vietnam is also described in this report by David Parks who kept a daily chronicle of his experiences as a combat soldier and published these as part of his book, \textit{GI Diary}. One entry taken from his diary dated January 31, 1967, and reprinted in \textit{Ebony Magazine}, August, 1968, says:

\textsuperscript{51}Johnson, "Negroes in 'The Nam,'" p. 33.
\textsuperscript{52}Letters to the Editors, \textit{Ebony Magazine}, August, 1968, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., p. 17.
The odds are against him. Sgt. Paulson handpicks the men for this job. So far, it seems to me he's fingered only Negroes and Puerto Ricans. I think he's trying to tell us something.

... I get the feeling that I should have been born white. ... If only the souls and Puerto Ricans could tell the world what really happens to them in this man's Army.

The examples of racism and genocide provided in the previous pages of this chapter seem best illustrated again through the words of Martin Luther King. Quoting from Ruth Benedict's Race: Science and Politics, King agrees with Benedict that racism is the dogma that "one ethnic group is condemned by nature to hereditary inferiority and another group is destined to hereditary superiority." He sees racism as seeking "adherence to the thesis" that the "hope of civilization depends upon eliminating some races and keeping others pure." For King, it further relies upon the acceptance of the notion "that one race has carried progress throughout human history and can alone ensure future progress." Since King can accept the definition of racism based on the dogma that "the hope of civilization depends upon eliminating some races and keeping others pure," he holds that the ultimate extension of this logic has got to mean genocide. While noting that America has not literally sought

55 King, Where Do We Go, p. 82.
56 Ibid.
to eliminate the black American in the final sense or ultimate conclusion that Hitler carried his "logic of racism," America has, he writes, through a "system of segregation, substituted a subtle reduction of life by means of deprivation."\textsuperscript{57} King argues that if white America asserts that a black man, because of his race, is not good enough to have a job equal to his, or to attend school with him, or to live next door to him, the white man is by implication affirming that "that man does not deserve to exist" because his existence is "corrupt and defective."\textsuperscript{58}

King was, therefore, moved to summarize that racism and ultimately race genocide is:

1) the myth of inferior peoples.

2) a philosophy based on a contempt for life.

3) the arrogant assertion that one race is the center of value and object of devotion, "before which other races must kneel in submission."

4) the "absurd" dogma that one race is responsible for all the progress of history and it alone can assure the progress of the future.\textsuperscript{59}

Inevitably, for King, racism shows its real nature and "descends to inflicting spiritual or physical homicide upon the out-group."\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., pp. 82-83.

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., p. 83.
Summary

It may be concluded that even though most black orators see some kind of conspiracy or genocidal plan at work against America's black population, as Arthur L. Smith points out, few have taken the extreme position that America indeed does plan to commit genocide. On the other hand, what seems clear from the rhetoric included here is that "America is as racist and therefore as susceptible to genocide as Germany was during the Third Reich." Thus, as Smith notes, the black orator articulates these fears in the minds of his black audiences in an effort to plant still more distrust of white America. As Smith notes:

When one considers the daily examples of police overreaction in the black ghetto, the constant poverty of many black families, and the rabid prejudice that betrays many white Americans, it becomes clear how the rhetoric . . . can be made to appeal to the black community by the rhetor's skillful use of the conspiracy theme.

Second, through the use of the genocide theme or issue, the black speaker attempts to demonstrate that America deliberately designs to deny the black man his full share in society and a share of the "good life." Building to the conspiracy theme, the black speaker can cite numerous examples of mistreatment and instances where blacks, for


62 Ibid.
example, have had their homes invaded or were themselves brutalized by white citizens or the local police. Thus, everything done by white society may, therefore, be held suspect by the black rhetorician. Third, having little faith in the government, the black rhetorician is now capable of contending that the government is indeed in a conspiracy against all black people. With every governmental action held suspect, blacks can then argue that the white man is not to be trusted. Whites have, as Smith puts it, "fooled us too long and too much." This mistrust, as shown earlier, extends itself even into a consideration of planned parenthood in the black ghetto. This, too, is held suspect and seen as part of the "American conspiracy to eliminate the black people in this nation." In short, the system is perceived as even more violent because of their blackness. This means, whereas others may only speak of social inequities, the nature of prejudice, the nature of discrimination, the black American tends to see everything in terms of "a design to undermine," in fact, eliminate the black race.

---

63 Ibid., pp. 56-57.
64 Ibid., p. 22.
CHAPTER VII

THE INCONSISTENCY PERCEIVED IN FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM ABROAD IN THE ABSENCE OF FREEDOM IN AMERICA

No black man should fight in Vietnam. No white man should fight in Vietnam; but definitely no black man. . . . Here is a man, who is already in slavery, . . . going somewhere to fight for the freedom of somebody else. If a black man is going to fight anywhere, he ought to be fighting in Africa, Mississippi or Columbus.

Perhaps the above statement on the hypocrisy, inconsistency, and contradiction of blacks fighting for a freedom in Southeast Asia when there is no real freedom for them in America, appears the strongest of all arguments blacks offer when they speak or write of their relationship to the war. This dove-tailing of issues cannot be easily contested or dismissed lightly. Statements of the type above by Charles Ross, newly appointed Chairman of the Black Studies Division at the Ohio State University, also indicates that this issue receives wide attention from many black sources.

Arthur Smith states that the "distance between the American ideal and the black man's reality" is the area of

the black rhetor's most effective grievance. Using the dichotomies of America, what Malcolm X terms the reality of the American dream and the black "American nightmare," the black rhetorician can easily rally his audience to pictures of contradiction.²

What seems clear, observes Smith, is that with both America's failure to deliver on the ideals of democracy and the long years of "dreams and promises deferred," the black orator does possess enormous rhetorical credibility. When blacks speak of American hypocrisy, they are indeed able to support and substantiate these charges and assertions with vivid examples of American society's "failure to deliver the promise."³ Thus, when a Carmichael, Newton, or Angela Davis asks the audience "Now what has America done for you?," it is easy for the black auditors to make immediately a negative mental response to the question.⁴ So, too, recalling past military campaigns the black soldier has fought in, Cleaver or H. Rap Brown can easily want to know, "Why give your life for the yellow man's freedom when you don't have your own?" Thus, notes Smith, the opportunity to "exploit the grievances of the masses" is inherent in the

³Ibid., pp. 54-55.
⁴Ibid., p. 23.
black masses' disillusionment with white society.  

Further hypocrisy, continues Smith, is also revealed when blacks accuse whites of holding American democracy up to the world as the most humanitarian government while black people curse their American predicament. As Malcolm X put it: "You and I haven't benefited from America's Democracy, we've only suffered from America's hypocrisy."

The war attitude of the black American in particular reflects today's dilemma of his race in an intensified and critical form. Blacks, as pointed out in Chapter II, have fought bravely in every war from the Revolution to Vietnam, but still they are not treated like Americans. Blacks have thus come to regard Vietnam "as their own particular incubus—a war that depletes their young manhood and saps the resources available to healing their ills at home." 

Newsweek Magazine, in its third major Gallup poll of black opinion since 1963, now reports that "one in seven doesn't consider America worth fighting for in a world war." This black backlash against the war, reports Newsweek, "is one of the most striking turnabouts since the 1966 poll." In 1966, thirty-five per cent opposed the war because they had less freedom in the United States. Now, in 1969, the "35

---

5Ibid.
6Ibid., p. 52.
per cent minority" has become a "56-31 majority sentiment."\(8\)

Increasingly, young blacks are refusing to enter the armed forces and fight in undeclared wars such as in Southeast Asia. One illustration of this change in attitude is disclosed in this court case from The Race Relations Law Reporter. The defendants, both black, were Norman Earl Richmond and Karl VonKey of California. Both had failed to comply with orders to report for induction into the military and each claimed exemption on the grounds that he,

... as a Negro, is not a citizen of the United States but is a colonial subject thereof, and therefore his induction ... would violate his rights to due process of law and equal protection of the laws; ... that his induction was ordered in furtherance of the war in Vietnam which is unlawful and is being fought to subjugate other non-white people to white rule.\(9\)

Additionally, both contended that his draft boards were illegally constituted because all members of the boards are white persons. The court dismissed the petition in each case.

Easily the most celebrated case of black opposition to serving in the military was the case of Muhammad Ali or Cassius Clay. Writing in support of the Clay opposition, the editors of Freedomways Magazine hold that Clay's case raises important questions for black Americans, aside from considering

\(8\) Ibid.

Clay's "constitutionally guaranteed right to practice his religious beliefs as a matter of conscience."\(^{10}\) The editors said:

While we are not claiming any special privilege for Negro Americans, what we are challenging is the moral right of this nation, based upon its record, to insist that any black man must put on the military uniform, at any time, and go thousands of miles away . . . to risk his life for a society which has historically been his oppressor.\(^{11}\)

For these editors, of all the statements used to express opposition to the Vietnam war, Clay's phrase, "I won't wear the uniform," may prove to be "the most eloquent as a statement of personal commitment."

For a growing number of young black Americans, it is tragically ironic that Afro-Americans, themselves the "victims of the worst colonialism in history," are drafted and forced to fight against other "dark people" in Vietnam. It is for many "a debasement of our manhood and international reputation.\(^{12}\)" Writes Rolland Snellings:

0 Blackmen, where are your hearts? How can you sit with folded hands and let these madmen lead our innocent sons to slaughter in a war of genocide and national oppression against our Dark Brothers?

The People of Black America Must Come of Age!

\(^{10}\) Editorial, "Muhammad Ali--The Measure of a Man," Freedomways, 7 (Spring, 1967), 101.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 101-102.

The Afro-American Must Come of Age!
Must stand tall in the dawn of a new manhood and state boldly, strongly, firmly: Whitey: I Will Not Serve! 13

Although exact figures are unavailable, increasing opposition to the war among black soldiers has also led many to flee to such neutral countries as Sweden. Forming their own organization in Sweden called the Afro-American Deserters Committee or AADC, Don Williams, the twenty-four year old co-chairman of the group, sums up the position of the black deserter this way:

To us, the fight is not over once there is peace in Vietnam. The main reason—and I cannot stress this enough—for my own defection is the injustices committed against my people in the U.S. I will not rest until their awful conditions have been changed.

Answers to the questions blacks are raising over Vietnam are many times implicit in the rhetorical questions posed. For example, many blacks assert that America is least of all in a position to preach democracy to the free world when twenty-two million blacks in this country are being denied their status as free men. 15 Second, while the Johnson and Nixon administrations have repeated time and time again that America must stand by her foreign commitments, these commitments for the black American are a sham "when

13 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
15 Bernard S. Lee, "We Must Continue to March," Freedomways, 6, No. 3 (Third Quarter, 1966), 258.
twenty-two million people are living witnesses to the fact that America has failed to keep its constitutional commitment to its own Negro citizens at home." Third, blacks are told America is against tyranny, right or left, and openly opposed to aggression. Yet the black American sees America support dictators Franco and the late Salazar, back military takeovers in parts of Latin America, and America further support all sorts of world-wide movements when the military or economic interests are threatened. In addition, questions of national policy are perceived in the fact that there are more than 400,000 troops in Vietnam but fewer than two-hundred federal registrars and marshalls in Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina and elsewhere, when it is the sworn duty and obligation of the President to uphold the constitutional rights of citizens in this country. 

Since, then, clear signs of hostility to United States policy in Vietnam are present among important sections of the black population, a review of some of those early signs drawn from particular groups and individuals now follows.


17 Editorial, "The Two Presidents Johnson," Freedomways, 6 (Summer, 1966), 198.

In terms of historical perspective, the first civil rights movements protest was circulated as a leaflet in McComb, Mississippi, and printed in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party newsletter of McComb on July 28, 1965.

The statement said in part:

... it is very easy to understand why Negro citizens of McComb, themselves the victims of bombings, Klan-inspired terrorism, and harassment arrests, should resent the death of a citizen of McComb while fighting in Vietnam for "freedom" not enjoyed by the Negro community of McComb.¹⁹

The leaflet itself had been originally circulated after the death of John D. Shaw, 23, of McComb, who had been a participant in civil rights demonstrations there in 1961. Contained in the newsletter were these abbreviated reasons why blacks should not be in any war fighting for America. First, no Mississippi blacks should be fighting in Vietnam for the white man's freedom until all black people are free in Mississippi. Second, blacks would gain respect as a race by forcing the American government and the Mississippi government to come with guns, dogs, and trucks to take them away to fight and be killed. Finally, no one has a right to ask blacks to risk their lives in Vietnam so that white Americans can get richer.²⁰

Robert S. Browne wrote that the Mississippi protest was based primarily on the appropriateness of blacks going off to kill unknown Vietnamese with

²⁰Ibid., pp. 415-416.
whom they had no quarrel when real, visible enemies were murdering their families in Mississippi.\footnote{Robert S. Browne, "The Freedom Movement and the War in Vietnam," \textit{Freedomways}, 5 (Fall, 1965), 479.} The protest, Browne feels, also had a slightly different philosophical basis in that it urged American blacks to refuse to fight any other colored peoples for perhaps the first time.

The first anti-Vietnam war statement by a major civil rights organization was made by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee on January 6, 1966. It received wide attention, especially after it was endorsed by SNCC's then communications director, Julian Bond, who had just been elected to the Georgia House of Representatives. When Bond refused to repudiate SNCC's criticism of the war, he was termed "disloyal" by some legislators, expelled by the legislature, and refused his seat. He was later seated after the Supreme Court ruled the legislature's action was a denial of his freedom of speech.\footnote{Grant, \textit{Black Protest}, p. 416.} The dissent of SNCC from the war was based on the grounds the United States government was deceptive in claims of concern for the freedom of the Vietnamese people just as the government was deceptive in claiming concern for the freedom of blacks in the United States itself. Field work, particularly in the South, revealed to SNCC workers that the United States government never guaranteed freedom to black citizens and was not yet
truly determined to "end the rule of terror . . . within its own borders." Based on this rationale, the statement concluded:

We . . . support the men . . . who are unwilling to respond to the military draft which would compel them to contribute their lives to U.S. aggression in the name of the "freedom" we find so false in this country.

We take note . . . that 16% of the draftees . . . are Negroes, called on . . . to preserve a "democracy" which does not exist for them at home.23

Several months later, in April, 1966, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, led by Dr. King, also adopted a strong resolution on the war at the time the Buddhist revolt was being crushed by the Ky government. Earlier, the staff of CORE became "uninhibited" in its criticism of the war when Floyd McKissick was appointed its national chairman after 1965.

In October, 1966, the Black Panther Party platform and program first appeared. The ten-point program, which forms the basis for almost everything they teach and do, called for housing, education, black juries for blacks on trial, repayment for slavery and the mass murder of black people, an end to police brutality, and the arming of all blacks for self-defense. The Panther program ended with the beginning of the United States Declaration of Independence.24


Of importance to this chapter is point six of the program which states: "We want all black men to be exempt from military service." The rationale for this statement is printed in its entirety below:

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.\textsuperscript{25}

Eldridge Cleaver is quite serious about this point. He explains:

As a colonized people, we consider it absurd to fight the wars of the mother country against other colonized peoples, as in Vietnam right now. The conviction that no black man should be forced to fight for the system that's suppressing him is growing among more and more black people, outside the Black Panther Party as well as in it. And as we can organize masses of black people, behind that demand for exemption, it will have to be taken seriously.\textsuperscript{26}

Rule six of the twenty-six rules of the Panther Party also reaffirms this resistance by blacks to military service when it states: "No party member can join any other army force other than the Black Liberation Army."\textsuperscript{27}

To understand more fully how these previous arguments unfold in the speeches and writings of major black

communicators, let us turn to an examination of the rhetoric by Carmichael, Malcolm X, Cleaver, and King, in that order. It will be shown that most all the rhetoric on this issue utilizes the gap between promise and performance or "the theory-practice vulnerability pattern" to establish the inconsistencies or "truth" of the issue; that is, in Arthur Smith's words:

Inconsistency between ideal and reality, between theory and practice has always been the classic chasm giving aggressive rhetoric its energy.\(^\text{28}\)

While black opinion on foreign policy is frequently varied, shifting rapidly even within the same person, and based generally on that person's current mood toward the incumbent party in national office, individual black comment on the inconsistency of fighting abroad for a freedom that is visibly absent in America does not vary in large measure from one persuasive strategy to another strategy. The issue is spoken of in essentially similar ways no matter the persuasive strategy attached to the speaker. For example, Stokely Carmichael, deeply provoked by this inconsistency, spoke to this issue on at least four occasions. In a speech delivered in Chicago on July 28, 1966, he remarked that blacks had to "talk about wars and soldiers and just what that means." Affirming that any

black man serving in the military was a "black mercenary," "a hired killer" and "nothing else,"29 Carmichael explains:

A mercenary fights for a country for a price but does not enjoy the rights of the country for which he is fighting. A mercenary will go to Vietnam to fight for free elections . . . but doesn't have free elections in Alabama, . . . and Washington, D.C. A mercenary goes to Vietnam and gets shot . . . and they won't even bury him in his own home town . . . We must . . . when they start grabbing us to fight their war . . . say, "Hell no."30

Carmichael, addressing a black audience in Detroit two days later, once again laid heavy emphasis on the inconsistency and contradiction of blacks fighting to give free elections in Vietnam when there were none at home in America. Again observing that those killed in Vietnam could not be buried in their own land, for future black response to military service, he reminded his audience that "it's time we stayed here and fight it out here."31 Maintaining Vietnam was "an illegal and immoral war"32 before an audience at the University of California at Berkeley on November 19, 1966.  


30 Ibid.


Carmichael, now former chairman of SNCC, further developed what response young blacks must make to the prospect of military service in general and later in Vietnam. Urging blacks of military age to begin now "to talk morality to people," "to think politically" and "keep the moral values that we hold high," blacks, he also said, must question the values of this society because black people have been excluded from that society. If, as Carmichael puts it, "the American pride means raping South Africa, beating Vietnam," no black should want "to be part of that system." Later, in a speech given before a meeting of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity held in Havana, Cuba, in the summer of 1967, he reported the one option left for black Americans was to increase the consciousness of the African-American so it would extend internationally. Having reached the conclusions that, first, the reward for trying to peacefully coexist has resulted in the physical and psychological murder of all colored peoples, and, second, the next Vietnam will be on this continent, he remarked that the only place for black Americans was on the side of the third world movement. So, too, Malcolm X, through speeches, writings, and appearances on radio and

33 Ibid., pp. 463-464.

television interview programs, also spoke "as a victim of this American system," considering himself "not an American," but rather, "one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. . . . democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy." Speaking as a "victim," he, therefore, perceived America "through the eyes of the victim," seeing no "American dream," only an "American nightmare." Believing there was no system on this earth which has proven itself "more corrupt, more criminal" than the American system of democracy which "still enslaves 22 million Afro-Americans," he told a predominantly white audience at a meeting sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum in New York on April 8, 1964:

There is no system . . . that . . . can go all over this earth telling other people how to straighten out their house, when you have citizens of this country who have to use bullets if they want to cast a ballot.

Malcolm preached that because blacks were in America, it did not necessarily make them Americans. Enjoying only the "thorns" and not the fruits of Americanism," he told

36 Ibid.
38 Malcolm X, speech delivered to the Afro-American Broadcasting Company in Detroit, full text in Breitman, p. 172.
black audiences they had worked and fought harder for the
"fruits" than whites, but had enjoyed less. Scolding
blacks for thinking and acting in the way they do, he told
a meeting sponsored by the Afro-American Broadcasting Company
in Detroit on February 4, 1965:

Man, how could you think you're an American when
you haven't ever had any kind of an American treat
over here? ... Ten men can be sitting at a table
eating ... and I can come and sit down where
they're dining. ... I've got a plate in front of
me, but nothing is on it. Because all of us are
sitting at the same table, are all of us diners?
I'm not a diner until you let me dine. Just being
at the table with others ... doesn't make me a
diner, and this is what you've got ... here in
this country. Just because you're in this country
doesn't make you an American.

It was clear to Malcolm that every maneuver America made
supposedly to solve this problem was simply "political
trickery and treachery of the worst order." Like Carmichael,
it was also important to Malcolm that blacks reassess their
role, attitude, and obligation to the armed forces of America.
He frequently chided blacks for "bleeding" when whites
sent him to Germany, the South Pacific, and Korea. But, as
he told his audiences, when it comes to seeing black churches
bombed and small black girls murdered, blacks had little
blood to spare. Being nonviolent in Alabama could not

\[39^{\text{Ibid.}}\]
\[40^{\text{Ibid.}}\]
\[41^{\text{Malcolm X, "The Black Revolution," full speech in Breitman, pp. 52-53.}}\]
did not know. Malcolm was saying "if violence is wrong in America, violence is wrong abroad." An excerpt drawn from his "Message to the Grass Roots" in 1963 expands on this idea:

If it is wrong to be violent defending black women and black children . . . then it is wrong for America to draft us and make us violent abroad in defense of her. And if it is right for America to draft us, and teach us how to be violent in defense of her, then it is right for you and me to do whatever is necessary to defend our own people right here in this country.

In his "The Ballot or the Bullet" address given in Cleveland, Ohio, at the Cory Methodist Church on April 3, 1964, he carried this idea of black self-defense in America still further saying:

Don't let anybody tell you anything about the odds are against you. If they draft you, they . . . make you face 800 million Chinese. If you can be brave over there, you can be brave right here. These odds aren't as great as those odds. And if you fight here, you will at least know what you're fighting for.

Clear to Malcolm was the knowledge that blacks had made the "greater contribution" to America and yet had "collected less." It was, therefore, inconceivable that blacks would allow themselves to be drafted and shipped abroad to fight for freedom in Vietnam in the light of their present position

---

43 Ibid.
44 Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," full speech in Breitman, p. 25.
and status in America. He reminded a group of teenagers from McComb, Mississippi, on December 31, 1964, in New York that a country "that's supposed to be a democracy" would draft and send them to Saigon to fight

... and then you've got to turn around and all night long discuss how you're going to just get a right to register and vote without being murdered. Why, that's the most hypocritical government since the world began! . . .

Convinced blacks in America were faced with a "government conspiracy," he charged in "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech that the "same government" blacks went abroad to fight and die for was the same government that was "in a conspiracy to deprive you of your voting rights . . . economic opportunities . . . decent housing . . . decent education." Charging the government of America with responsibility for the "oppression and exploitation and degradation of black people in this country," American society, he held, was controlled primarily by the racists and segregationists who are in Washington, D.C., in positions of power.

Malcolm also saw the violence against dark-skinned people "in and around Saigon and Hanoi" as acceptable to the

---

47 Malcolm X, full speech delivered to the Afro-American Broadcasting Company in Detroit, in Breitman, p. 163.
leaders in Washington "when their interests are at stake." But, as he later wrote, "for all that violence they display at the international level, when you and I want ... freedom, we're supposed to be nonviolent." In other words, ironically, "when it comes time for you and me to protect ourselves against lynchings, they tell us to be nonviolent." On the other hand, he held that when the government seems unable or unwilling to protect blacks, it was time for blacks to fight back in self-defense. In obvious reference to the King approach, he asserted that when blacks are "being bitten by dogs, they are within their rights to kill those dogs."

In short, it was clear to Malcolm that the American government moved quickly to protect its interests elsewhere in the world but for the black American progress in human rights and protection under the law would be slow in coming. Thus, he saw no valid reason for blacks to fight for a country whose government was not doing its job and "providing you and me with the protection that our taxes are supposed to be for. . . ." For Malcolm, America's hands were "dripping with the blood of the black man in this

---

48 Ibid., pp. 163-164.
50 Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," full speech in Breitman, pp. 43-44.
country." "Posing as the leader of the free world," he urged blacks to "Let the world know the hypocrisy that's practiced over here" and stop "walking around in America, getting ready to be drafted and sent abroad, like a tin soldier."\textsuperscript{51}

Eldridge Cleaver developing his arguments on this issue, addressed himself to the gap between promise and performance in these ways. First, Cleaver considered black Americans "to be the world's biggest fools to go to another country to fight for something they don't have for themselves."\textsuperscript{52} "Why should black boys," he told Gordon Parks in a recent interview, "have to go fight Koreans and Vietnamese boys, instead of the Maddoxes, Reagans and Wallaces at home?"\textsuperscript{53} Second, Vietnam, for Cleaver, raised some very essential tactical questions for black Americans. In his \textit{Soul on Ice}, he wrote:

They are asked to die for the System in Vietnam. In Watts they are killed by it. Now . . . they are asking each other, in dead earnest: Why not die right here in Babylon fighting for a better life, like the Viet Cong? If those little cats can do it, what's wrong with big studs like us?\textsuperscript{54}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{51}Ibid., p. 35.
  \item \textsuperscript{54}Cleaver, \textit{Soul on Ice}, p. 137.
\end{itemize}
Third, Cleaver sees two distinct Americas. As citizens, blacks are part of the "American dream." As members of the revolutionary struggle, blacks are a part of the struggle against the American nightmare which is the present reality. The reality, for Cleaver, should be the black struggle to do away with this nightmare and to replace it with the "American dream." Identifying first and foremost with the best interests of the masses of black people, the new black leadership which Cleaver represents cares little about either preserving the dignity of a country that has no regard for black dignity nor embarrassments they may cause America on the international scene. Concludes Cleaver, it should be clear to blacks that under American capitalism, blacks are unrepresented by a government calling itself "a government of the people and by the people" and not really in a position to determine what is going to happen in the decision-making process.

King, as assimilationist, developed his arguments on this issue in these three ways. First, King did not consider it unpatriotic to raise certain basic questions about the American national character in relationship to Vietnam. In particular, he believed black Americans should

---

56 Scheer, _Post-Prison_, p. 164.
57 Lockwood, _Conversation_, pp. 70-71.
begin to ask themselves why America both placed itself in the position of being "God's military agent on earth" and intervened "recklessly" in Vietnam, and substituted the "arrogant" undertaking of policing the whole world at the high cost of putting its own house in order?\footnote{58}

Second, utilizing the theory-practice pattern and the ideal-reality pattern to establish the irony of blacks fighting in Asia for a freedom that was absent for them at home, King sought to point out to other blacks the crucial moral issue involved in the political and social predicament created by Vietnam.\footnote{59} Perceiving "a tragic gulf between civil rights laws passed and civil rights laws implemented" and witnessing "a double standard in the enforcement of law and a double standard in the respect for particular laws," he was equipped to say:

> All of this tells us that the white backlash is nothing new. White America has been backlashing on the fundamental God-given and human rights of Negro Americans for more than three hundred years. With all of her dazzling achievements . . . America has maintained its strange ambivalence on the question of racial justice.\footnote{60}

For King, despite legislation, laws were still substantially more dishonored than honored. While the inscription on the Statue of Liberty referred to America as the "mother of


\footnote{59}Smith, "Henry Highland Garnet," 96.

\footnote{60}King, Where Do We Go, p. 97.
exiles," the tragedy was "she evinced no motherly concern or love for her exiles from Africa." 61

Third, King also believed it was important for blacks to know that while billions of dollars in trade and military alliances were being maintained under the pretext of "fighting and containing" Communism in Southeast Asia, the conditions for black Americans "in our own back yard" were being neglected. Concluding that the only people who do not share in the abundance of Western technology were colored people, he was moved to the inescapable conclusion that the black condition was "somehow related to their color and the racism of the white Western world." 62 It was then for King to warn that either blacks share in the blessings of the world or they organize to break down and overthrow those structures or governments which stand in the way of their goals. 63

Summary

The charge most often flung at the Johnson administration and now the Nixon administration by blacks concerning Vietnam can be summarized in three words: contradiction, inconsistency, and hypocrisy. Finding it difficult to

---

61 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
62 Ibid., pp. 203-205.
63 Ibid., p. 205.
understand why the American government, dedicated to the expansion of freedom in far-off parts of the world is not equally dedicated to freedom for blacks in the United States, blacks today make these comparisons. First, blacks compare the magnitude of national effort to bring "freedom" to thirteen million South Vietnamese with the magnitude of the effort for twenty-two million blacks in America. Second, blacks compare the two billion dollars spent each month on the war with the money spent on behalf of American blacks. Third, the black American compares the willingness "to commit mass murder in Vietnam, presumably justified by 'freedom'" with the "unwillingness of the federal government" to arrest one sheriff in Mississippi who has shot or lynched a black man. Next, the 450,000 soldiers sent to Vietnam are compared with the frequent refusal of the federal government to send marshalls to Southern cities to protect blacks from violence. Finally, all the lengthy legalistic arguments to explain why the federal government cannot protect civil rights workers are compared with the violation of the most important provision in the United States Constitution that gives Congress alone the power to declare war. For Howard Zinn, author of Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal, the "crowing hypocrisy" is:

---

64 Zinn, Logic, p. 23.
65 Ibid.
the national administration, which welcomed with such enthusiasm the adoption of nonviolence by Negroes under direct attack and responded with such alarm when Negroes began only to speak about defending themselves, has used such frightful force in a situation where this nation has not been attacked. Even with all the recent emphasis by Negro militants on the right of self-defense, no leader has suggested that Negroes invade the white community with guns and bombs as a preventive action to forestall possible attacks on them in the future. Yet this is essentially what the United States is doing in Vietnam.\footnote{Ibid., p. 26-27.}

As one member of the Mississippi civil rights struggle put it: "Our criticism of Vietnam policy does not come from what we know of Vietnam, but from what we know of America."\footnote{Ibid., p. 24.}

To be sure, verbalized objection by blacks to military service is by no means new to the American scene. Although historically the majority of black spokesmen have demanded full and nondiscriminatory participation for blacks in the American military, there has also been open expression of the contrary opinion as well. However, as Robert S. Browne notes, with the emergence of the Vietnam war, the black American for the first time finds himself in a position where his decisions on this matter could be of serious national, and even international significance. The sixties, Browne concludes, found the black American in a position of adequate sophistication and self-involvement, adequate organization and leadership, even at the grass roots level, to now make mass collective action possible.\footnote{Browne, "Freedom Movement," 479.}
CHAPTER VIII

THE ISSUE OF PRIORITIES

A fourth issue that arises from the rhetoric of black Americans on the war in Vietnam is the perception that the war uses up resources that could be better utilized for more important economic and national needs in America itself.

In Vietnam, blacks see America mobilizing her energies and manpower to kill soldiers of the Viet Cong and North Vietnam, bombing the countryside of both North and South Vietnam, burning entire villages, defoliating crops and forests, taking innocent lives, and creating the problem of millions of refugees.\(^1\) All this has resulted in demonstrations against the draft, the war itself, napalm manufacturing, and much of the recent campus turmoil. Consequently, spending tax dollars and creating a war surtax to pay for escalating war conditions rather than improving American ghetto conditions has, for young blacks in particular, "clearly surfaced the administration's value system."\(^2\)

For Harry Edwards, leader of the black boycott of the 1968

\(^1\) Jess Yoder, "The Protest of the American Clergy in Opposition to the War in Vietnam," *Today's Speech*, 17 (September, 1969), 51.

\(^2\) Ibid., 53.
Olympics, the issue breaks down to: "The Man will send a regiment to protect a building but would not put the same effort into improving the conditions of human beings."³

Many blacks now compare the two billion dollars spent each month on the war with the small sums of money spent on behalf of the American black man. Newsweek Magazine, in its survey of black feelings and attitudes, reported on June 30, 1969, that blacks are persuaded "by 7 to 1 that Vietnam is directly pinching the home-front war on poverty."⁴ Thus, in assessing the impact of Vietnam on the black mood today, Howard Zinn writes: "All the accomplishments fade into insignificance. All the progress is shadowed just as all of it can be swiftly undone, by the horror, the spectre, the glaring immorality of Vietnam."⁵

Lee Lockwood, author of Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers, provides further insight into this issue by relating the American space program and moon shots to the political exile of Cleaver in Algiers. As Lockwood details the imbalance:

> If the one voyage represents the apotheosis of our society's material achievement, the other symbolizes its spiritual failure. For Commander Alan Bean and Brother Eldridge Cleaver, two men as unalike as the

uniforms they wear, are both logical end products of the American system. Bean, heroic in his silvery-white space suit . . . represents the best that America can accomplish when she harnesses vast portions of her technology and wealth to a single purpose. Cleaver, the anti-hero in his black pants, black leather jacket, black beret . . . embodies the victim's inevitable response to a society willing to invest billions of dollars in space explorations and bloody war while millions of its citizens continue to be afflicted by hunger, poverty, racism, exploitation and repression.  

"It is this sense of imbalance and injustice in America," writes Lockwood, "an injustice experienced at first hand and every day," that ultimately impels men like Eldridge Cleaver to become revolutionaries. 7 It is also from this sense that Cleaver and others can speak to the issues of priorities, domestic consequences of policies, and societal values as well. For despite the label "revolutionary," to create "the best possible living conditions and standards of living that human knowledge and technology are capable of providing," is the aspiration of the revolutionary and the dream of the black American. 8

Martin Luther King

Developing most explicitly a rhetorical stance on this issue, the clearest remarks on priorities and the impact of


7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 63.
the war on domestic problems are reflected in two major speeches by King in 1967 and 1968. The first address, "The Domestic Impact of the War in Vietnam," was delivered at the National Labor Leadership Conference, held at the University of Chicago on November 11, 1967. The second address, "Vietnam Is Upon Us," was presented at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., on February 6, 1968, to members of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. In both speeches, King not only spoke to the issues discussed in previous chapters, but primarily addressed himself to the more important concerns of priorities, values, national purposes, and the morality of the war itself.

King, along with other prominent clergy, contended that the high cost of the war raised this important issue: "Is it morally right to curtail pressing domestic needs within America in order to prosecute the war in Vietnam?"9 Said King:

... I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demoniacal destructive suction tube.10

King, speaking for the "poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam," could only summarize as early as April 4,

10Ibid.
1967: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."\(^ {11}\)

King, on the occasions of November 11, 1967, and February 6, 1968, argued from the essential nature of things, from principles, the rightness of the issue.\(^ {12}\) He spoke to members of his audiences not as they were, but rather what they and others were capable of becoming. In Richard Whately's terms, King's rhetoric was attempting to bring Mahomet to the mountain and not necessarily the mountain down to Mahomet.\(^ {13}\) His rhetoric also attempted to show men "better versions of themselves," suggesting not "what was," but rather "what was best."\(^ {14}\) From the Weaver perspective, King also spoke to his audiences not as they were, but rather what they and others could be. Addressing members of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam on February 6, 1968, King was, therefore, moved to say:

In spite of all our scientific and technological progress we suffer from a kind of poverty of the

\(^{11}\)Address, "Vietnam and the Struggle for Human Rights," given at the Riverside Church in New York City on April 14, 1967. Published in a pamphlet entitled, "Speeches by the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., about the War in Vietnam," The Turnpike Press, Annandale, Virginia, 8-11.


\(^{13}\)Richard Whately, Elements of Rhetoric (Boston and Cambridge: James Munroe and Co., 1855), p. 279.

\(^{14}\)Weaver, Ethics, p. 25.
spirit that stands in glaring contrast to all of our material abundance. This is the dilemma facing our nation and . . . the dilemma . . . to which we . . . must address ourselves.

Nothing convinces me more that we suffer this moral and spiritual lag than our participation as a nation . . . in Vietnam. Our involvement in this cruel, senseless, unjust war is a tragic expression of the spiritual lag of America.  

Rooting his arguments in a value system that enabled his audience to perceive better versions of themselves, King further argued that the most powerful, richest nation in the world was at war with one of the smallest and poorest nations which just "happens to be a colored nation." Bringing rationality and morality to the issue, he spoke of the American government spending about $500,000 to kill every Viet Cong while the same government spent only fifty-three dollars a year per person for everybody that was characterized as poverty stricken. Bothered that a nation could spend almost eighty-billion dollars for defense and then only "a pittance here and there for social uplift," he foresaw that kind of value system moving America toward its spiritual doom.


16 Ibid., 22-23.
King additionally rooted his appeals and arguments in a fundamental belief in the "goodness of man."\textsuperscript{17}
Believing America had the moral courage to correct the injustices perpetrated on the black man, he also held that America "would redress the grievances if those injustices" were shown.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, the tone and implication of the message in both speeches was a plea for the audiences, both present and otherwise, "to repent of their sins lest evil times befall them." As Arthur Smith describes the King message: "Calling America to higher purposes and seeking moral goals, King tried to persuade a whole nation of the beauty of justice, compassion, and love."\textsuperscript{19}

Drawn from the address "The Domestic Impact of the War in Vietnam," delivered on November 11, 1967, the domestic consequences, for King, included these results. First, the war has made the "Great Society" a "myth" and replaced it with a "troubled" society. Second, it has given the extreme right, anti-labor, anti-black, and anti-humanist forces the weapon of patriotism to "galvanize its supporters into reaching for power right up to the White House." Third, the war has produced "a shameful order of priorities" in which the decay of the cities is neglected and the beginnings of progress toward racial justice are "smothered and nearly

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 20.
Further, the war has increased black frustration and despair so that urban outbreaks are now "an ugly feature of the American scene." And in this context, King notes: "The users of naval guns . . . napalm cannot speak to Negroes about violence." Fifth, King believes the priorities are clearly illustrated in the figures of seventy billions for war and only two billion for anti-poverty programs. Importantly, a sixth domestic consequence included its destructive effect on the young generation. So oriented, King remarked:

It is the generation of wars and it shows the scars in widespread drug consumption, alienation, and the feverish pursuit of sensual pleasures.21

Seventh, the war has isolated and alienated the government from the will and feelings of its people who want either withdrawal, deescalation, or negotiations. Additionally, it has isolated America in the world as America is without "a single significant international ally" in the war effort. Ironically, King notes, the war has also isolated America from the very people it professes to support— the South Vietnamese. Last, King notes the war domestically "has stimulated a profound discussion of the nature of our

20 Address, "The Domestic Impact of the War in Vietnam," delivered at the National Labor Leadership Conference, the University of Chicago, on November 11, 1967. Published in a pamphlet entitled, "Speeches by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., about the War in Vietnam," The Turnpike Press, Annandale, Virginia, 15.

21 Ibid., 15-17.
government," the consequence of which is important members of Congress and political scientists now discuss "excessive executive powers" and call for "basic structural change."\(^{22}\)

Three months later, King, in his address "Vietnam Is Upon Us," delivered on February 6, 1968, detailed these further effects of the war on the American scene. First, it has strengthened the military and industrial complex and further strengthened the forces of reaction in the nation. Second, it has "exasperated the tensions between the continents" and the races. Third, the war has pitted a powerful, rich, and predominantly white nation against a small, poor, colored nation. Finally, King emphasizes, the war effort has "played havoc with our domestic destiny" and, more importantly, "the destiny of the whole world."\(^{23}\)

On the issue of priorities itself, King concluded he must raise questions about society in general and address himself "to the question of restructuring the whole of American society." In his words:

> There are 40 million poor people here. And one day we must ask the question, "Why are there 40 million poor people in America?" And when you begin to ask that question, you are raising questions about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth . . . . about the whole society.\(^{24}\)

\(^{22}\)Ibid., 17-18.

\(^{23}\)King, "Vietnam Is Upon Us," 22-23.

Struck by the absurdity in committing billions to reach the moon where no people live, while only a fraction of that is appropriated to service the densely populated slums, King questioned "on what scale of values" was this "a program of progress?" Thus, disappointed that federal administrations saw fit to be more concerned about winning an ill-considered war in Vietnam than about winning the war against poverty and hunger here in America, King asserted "the journey to full equality" engaged a "reordering of national priorities."

Believing further the gulf between scientific progress and moral progress must be bridged, he argued:

One of the great problems of mankind is that we suffer from a poverty of the spirit which stands in glaring contrast to our scientific and technological abundance. The richer we have become materially, the poorer we have become morally and spiritually.

When scientific power outruns moral power, we end up with guided missiles and misguided men. When we foolishly minimize the internal of our lives and maximize the external, we sign the warrant for our own day of doom. Our hope... lies in our ability to reestablish the moral ends of our lives in personal character and social justice.

While arguing that poverty and racism were not new on the world scene, what, however, was new, in the King view, was America now had the resources to eliminate each of them.

25Ibid., p. 158.


27Ibid., p. 41.

28Ibid., pp. 200-201.
Setting forth the basic theme that poverty and famine were "wholly unnecessary in the modern world," King maintained the deficit was in the "human will." Ultimately, wrote King, "a great nation is a compassionate nation." And no individual or nation "can be great if it does not have a concern for 'the least of these.'"\textsuperscript{29}

Holding firmly to the belief that it profited "a nation little to gain the whole world of means and lose the end, its own soul," King maintained:

We must have a passion for peace born out of wretchedness and the misery of war. Giving our ultimate allegiance to the empire of justice, we must be that colony of dissenters seeking to imbue our nation with the ideals of a higher and nobler order. So in dealing with our particular dilemma, we will challenge the nation to deal with its larger dilemma.\textsuperscript{30}

In the tradition of Richard Weaver and the argument from definition, King urged that America "must be born again." Approaching his task with "divine dissatisfaction," he, thus, wrote:

Let us be dissatisfied until America will no longer have a high blood-pressure of creeds and an anemia of deeds. Let us be dissatisfied until the tragic walls that separate the outer city of wealth and comfort and the inner city of poverty and despair shall be crushed by . . . the forces of justice. . . . until those that live on the outskirts of hope are brought into the metropolis of daily security. . . . until slums are cast into the junk heaps of history, and every family is living in a decent sanitary home. . . . until integration is not seen as a problem but

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., pp. 206-207.

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 158.
as an opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity.

Let us be dissatisfied until that day when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid. Let us be dissatisfied. And men will recognize that out of one blood God made all men to dwell upon the face of the earth. Let us be dissatisfied until that day when nobody will shout "White Power!" . . . "Black Power!" -- but everybody will talk about God’s power and human power.\(^3\)

Finally, the argument by King that funds spent in Vietnam could be used for more constructive projects in America cannot be easily contested. However, from the black perspective, the added question for concern here is whether the funds would, in fact, be used for the poverty program or other urban needs if they were not being used in Vietnam. On this point, too, the black argument appears indisputable again and gains increased credibility as many blacks perceive Congress throughout history as "notoriously more generous in voting funds for military purposes than for programs of social welfare."\(^2\)

Summary

A final issue that arises from the rhetoric of black Americans on the war is the perception that the war clearly


uses up resources that could be better utilized for more important national needs in America itself.

Developing most clearly a rhetorical stance on this issue, Dr. King, on at least two occasions, attacked the war on the basis of national priorities and the belief that America was mistakenly making the war the first order of business. Although the cost to the nation of wiping out poverty had not been reduced to a dollar figure, it was clear to King that such campaigns and assistance programs could not be undertaken or even maintained with America engaged in a war in Southeast Asia. Believing that the war and poverty were inseparable issues, he, thus, demanded that America use the millions it spent annually for both the space program and the waging of war in distant lands to rather create jobs, eliminate starvation, and to improve urban ghettos.

In late 1967, some specific consequences for King included the creation of a confused and troubled society, a decline in progress toward racial justice, an increase in ghetto unrest, a destructive effect on the young generation, isolation of the government from the will and feelings of its people, and an alarming rise in excessive executive power. On February 6, 1968, he further noted that the war had strengthened the military and industrial complex, "exasperated" tensions between the races and nations, and played havoc with the destiny of the whole world.
Arguing from the essential nature of things, from principles, and the rightness of the issue itself, King rooted his arguments in a value system that enabled his audiences to perceive better versions of themselves. For King, the greater concern of government spending should center on rebuilding the cities, extending medical services to all the poor, and raising the quality of education for everyone. In effect, King's message urged that the government spend the annual billions of dollars allotted for the war in Asia to rather insure that the poor of all colors break out of the cycle of poverty and discrimination the present system now imposed on them. Finding the legislative solutions, he argued, was the job of the Johnson administration and Congress.
CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Oppression evolves a logic of its own. An ideology, though weird, often means more than it says. 1

The above quote by Gordon W. Allport serves to indicate the main thrust of this final chapter; the purpose of which is to review the dissertation and interpret the nature of black rhetoric in terms of Vietnam.

The aim of this study has been to demonstrate that in recent years the rhetoric of black Americans has taken a turn from a singular concern with the issue of civil rights to a more global, universal concern with the issue of war and peace in Vietnam, the implications and outcomes of both dependent on the other. Since the war is an overriding issue affecting all the major facets of American society, this study has sought to describe its impact on the black American, and, more important, its rhetorical implications.

Another purpose of the study was to isolate the key issues as seen by the black American and to illustrate their interpretations and perceptions of both wars as essentially the same struggle through available writings and speeches.

1 Gordon W. Allport, foreword to The Black Muslims in America, by C. Eric Lincoln (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), IX.
The rhetorical standards of Burke, Weaver, Black, and Ehninger were then applied to gain insight into the meaning and goal of the black message.

The study also sought to establish that blacks have argued over war and peace since colonial times. Faced with persisting exigencies, their anti-war rhetoric of today may be viewed largely as a persuasive campaign with periods of revolt and terror. As Fotheringham noted:

Persuasion is more typically a campaign through time rather than a one-shot effort. Exceptions can be found, as in mail-order or door-to-door persuasion, but generally an effort is seldom limited to a single message. A structured series of messages is more often developed, using varied media, message forms, and codes.

While history indicates white America generally restricted black participation until emergency situations forced the use of black manpower, nevertheless, the study has shown that the black American has viewed his military record as proof of his loyalty and as a claim to full citizenship. Seeking participation in America's wars, he held the hope that his sacrifices would bring the reward of increased rights to America's largest minority. It was this optimism that had been one of the major factors behind his loyalty from the Revolutionary War to Korea. However, this study also reveals that as early as 1766 some blacks

---

counseled it was inconsistent for them to fight for American independence while the country adhered to the tenets of slavery. In later wars, the arguments cautioned placing country above rights, fighting the white man's wars, forgetting the real enemy was America itself. Most noticeable at each war's end was that black soldiers returned either as slaves, separate but equal, or still the recipients of inferior education, the worst jobs, and acts of terrorism North and South.

It is essential to note that while the history of the black man in America has been a series of protests, both through verbal discourse and sometimes violent physical encounter, persistent exigencies evolved that demanded different strategies. To meet continuing problems, the black American developed the strategies of assimilation, separatism, and revolution.

The strategy of assimilation placed emphasis on "moral suasion," seeking to bring the inequity of segregation and discrimination to the country's attention and to arouse the American conscience. Unalterably opposed to violence, King, in particular, couched his language in moderacy and conciliation while clarifying the relationships of man to man and man to God. Moreover, rooted in the idea that there were moral truths that went beyond men and laws themselves, King believed that if conscience conflicted with the law of the land, one was obligated to follow one's conscience.
From a consideration of King's discourse, four sub-strategies also emerged. These were nonviolent resistance, self-identity, brotherhood, and compromise. The strategy of nonviolent resistance was a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation. It centered not against persons but against systems and forces of oppression. The strategy of self-identity was essentially an attempt to develop in blacks a sense of "somebodyness" and self-esteem. Third, presuming the brotherhood of all men and persuading society at large of the equality of man, King believed literally in the Christian doctrine that it was sinful to hate. The strategy of compromise was held to be a practical and effective mode for change and adjustment in the existing-power situation.

With appeals to conscience and moral principles bringing meager results, the separatist argued observable and persisting exigencies remained and could not be removed. Advocating retreat from white society and abandoning the ideal of an integrated society, the Black Muslims and Malcolm X urged blacks to draw together and develop the new black nation. The strategy of separation depends on the definition of the white man as the "devil" and disavows nonviolence of action and spirit to achieve goals. With few references to abstract concepts, higher laws, or principles, the emphasis is on human rights by any means necessary. In language free of conciliation and deference, the obedient
black man, the expedient legislator, politician, judge, and the military, are all denounced with equal fervor. Few men or institutions are spared in the attack on the collective white man by the separatist.

Another strategy that characterizes black protest is the strategy of revolution. Arguing there is no freedom for blacks in either absorption into white society or withdrawal into all black communities, the revolutionist seeks the removal of power by violent means from those who have created the racist American society. Moreover, the revolutionary calls for the complete overthrow of capitalism and its replacement with some form of socialism. As explained earlier, the strategy of revolution is characterized by arguments displayed in the form of maxims or "grand truths." These include the inherent evils of whites and capitalism, black Americans are a colonized people, integration is unacceptable for the "good life," the destruction of the present system is necessary, and black violence is morally justified.

In essence, it was necessary to describe all three strategies as each illustrated the developing nature of the black freedom movement. More important, however, adherence to any one of the strategies shaped the rhetorical practice of the communicators who subscribed to them and additionally colored the arguments used by them when dealing with Vietnam. In other words, any discussion of a speaker or issue would
have been incomplete without considering the strategy he embraced. It would appear, therefore, that if particular strategies were identifiable features of individual speakers dealing with Vietnam, a number of rhetorical and historical comparisons can be drawn. This was illuminated in the rhetorical situation.

The years between 1964 and 1967 saw the black protest movement become increasingly fragmented with growing disunity rooted in the heightened expectations and frustrations of pending civil rights legislation and the problems of achieving genuine equality for the black poor. But, in addition to the divisions created by those circumstances, various segments of the movement also became increasingly divided on how to respond to the escalating Vietnam situation.

Economically, some believed the war diverted funds from the country's leading domestic problems. Socially, others regarded the war much in the same way as domestic racism, charging that both involved an attempt by the American white power structure to keep a colored race in colonial status and bondage. Some denounced the draft saying blacks were over-represented in Vietnam and under-represented on various draft boards. In all, a number of individuals who had previously devoted their full energies to fighting domestic racial discrimination were now diverted to working against the war. Most prominent, at that time, was the reaction to the war by Dr. King. Previously a key figure in the coalition strategy
involving the N.A.A.C.P. and the National Urban League, King openly attacked United States policy in Vietnam, as did SNCC, CORE, and Stokely Carmichael. At the opposite pole were Young and Wilkins who held that the Vietnam issue was irrelevant as far as black protest was concerned, and that to mix the two issues was tactically dangerous, since it might lose some white support for the black cause. Thus, the Urban League, the N.A.A.C.P., Whitney Young, and Roy Wilkins among others, refused to identify themselves with the issue. But as the black American saw poverty and urban programs eliminated and a disproportionate number of black soldiers committed to the Vietnam fighting, blacks such as Carmichael, Cleaver, Newton, and other revolutionaries, were increasingly compelled to speak out against the war in terms of four basic issues.

Considering the first issue of "color" wars, it appears the concept of identification as described by Kenneth Burke was used extensively by black communicators to establish both a closer relationship with their audiences and to provide the rationale for linking the two conflicts on the grounds of "color," oppression, colonization, or minority control of their own lives.

The claim that black communicators, either consciously or unconsciously, employ identification as a strategy to relate Vietnam to the black situation in America suggests that at most levels of the black community today a keen
awareness of their victimization, as well as a knowledge of the forces which maintain it, is generally present. The black communicator knows he belongs to a "select group" and he talks to others of his group in those terms, identifying with them and conferring the same role on them. In understanding the black community, black speakers, therefore, generally keep to the language their audiences best understand, handling the reality of black life as their audiences know it and often making of the occasion, like Burke's concept of identification, "a communicating experience of one brother to another." Preaching "unity" with other peoples based on color and oppression, the black speaker hopes to create the massive base from which to deal with his own particular problem. He, in short, encourages blacks to "rally around" the things that keep them and others oppressed—their color and their condition.

Most important, perhaps, it would appear the racist aspect of this war seems to arouse a great interest among numbers of blacks as it confronts them with their contemporary dilemma of identity. This new awareness of "color," subjugation and exploitation, the notion of colonialism and "wars of liberation," appear most understood by the black American in relating to Vietnam as he faces such struggles himself. The decade of the sixties found blacks pulled toward an identification with other masses of colored people, who, like themselves, simultaneously attempted to
gain freedom and full acceptance. Second, it would appear that as an increasing number of young blacks in particular believe full acceptance into white society can never be really achieved and separatism only acknowledges their non-citizenship, many are looking to a more international political arrangement which will relieve them of their particular dilemma. Further, with this growing international implication of "race," for the black American to commit atrocities in Vietnam is now seen as appalling. Additionally, the disproportionate use of black troops in Vietnam is now seen as one further way of driving a wedge between black Americans and the colored masses of Asia; that is, an attempt to deflect the accusations of whites killing nonwhites.

A second issue surrounding the rhetoric of black Americans on Vietnam is that white America is not above practicing genocide against the black American, either in the United States or in Asian wars. Arguing that white America is capable of such acts, blacks contend the genocidal acts perpetrated on blacks exist in many forms. Cited frequently are facts showing black people starving in Mississippi or urban ghettos while millions of dollars are spent on space exploration and moon shots, urban renewal and resulting black displacement, the commitment of billions of dollars on a war in Vietnam which pits black men against other colored or yellow peoples, and the black combat death figures reported from Vietnam. The charge by blacks, regardless of
the strategy, is that through historical neglect, murder, and a doctrine of white supremacy, whites have consciously conspired to keep the black man in his place, dead in mind and spirit, to protect both white values and white economic values.

A third issue by black Americans is the hypocrisy, inconsistency, and contradiction of blacks fighting for a freedom in Southeast Asia when there is no real freedom for them in America. Stressing the distance between the American ideal and the black man's reality as he knows it, the rhetoric on this issue utilizes the "theory-practice" pattern of argument to establish the "truth" of the issue. Recalling military campaigns the black soldier has fought in and America's failure to deliver on the ideals of democracy, the black communicator wants to know of young black males: "Why give your life for freedom in distant Asia when you don't have your own?" Thus, inherent in the black masses' disillusionment with white society is the communicator's opportunity to exploit the black grievances.

While black opinion on foreign policy is frequently varied, it may be concluded that individual black comment on the inconsistency issue does not vary in large measure from one persuasive strategy to another. The issue is spoken of in essentially similar terms regardless of the persuasive strategy attached to the speaker. Thus, much of the black criticism on Vietnam policy does not come from
what blacks know of Vietnam, but from what blacks know of America.

It is instructive to note that when the third issue is viewed as a whole, it is perhaps the strongest of all arguments blacks offer when they speak or write of their relationship to the war. This dovetailing or mixing of issues cannot be easily contested or dismissed lightly. Yet, whether any black protest over this issue will take the organized form of refusal to perform military service appears undeveloped at this time. Such appeals have appeared in the past, and this is one of the major points in the Black Panther Party platform. While some leaders feel such a boycott could speed up the end of the war and create the potential for peace, others see such a move posing a serious risk to the entire black struggle to win basic acceptance as human beings.  

The final issue on priorities was illustrated through the rhetoric of Martin Luther King. On at least two occasions, he attacked the war on the belief that America was mistakenly making the war the first order of business. Although the cost to the nation of wiping out poverty had not been reduced to a dollar figure, it was clear to King that such assistance programs could not be undertaken or even 

---

maintained with America engaged in a war in Southeast Asia. Believing that the war and poverty were inseparable issues, he, thus, demanded that America use the millions it spent annually for both the space program and the waging of war in distant lands to rather create jobs, eliminate starvation, and improve urban ghettos.

Arguing from the essential nature of things, from principles, and the rightness of the issue itself, King rooted his arguments in a value system that enabled audiences to perceive better versions of themselves. In effect, King's message urged that the government spend the annual billions of dollars allotted for the war to insure that the poor of all colors break out of the cycle of poverty and discrimination the present system now imposed on them. Finding the legislative solutions, he held, was the job of the Johnson administration and Congress.

While not entirely unique to the black communicator, the argument that funds spent in Vietnam could be better used for constructive programs at home, as a whole, seems indisputable. The only matter for question then, and unique to the black position, is whether the funds would, in fact, be transferred to the poverty program or other such programs if not used in Vietnam. As this study reveals, blacks, on this point, fail to pursue this question.
Conclusions

In sum total, the black American established an Afro-American presence in the everyday life of America during the decade of the sixties. While they did not achieve much in the way of establishing decision-making power as such, what is noteworthy is that decisions on both the national and local levels were now being made with the black community in mind. Some conclusions, then, must include the following.

First, what can be reasonably inferred about logic and arguments in black rhetoric is that however much we as critics preach what rhetoric ought to be or what methods or approaches seem the most effective alternatives, it would appear the success of black revolutionary rhetoric as such is evidence that in some instances this is just not the case. Ghetto rioting and campus demonstrations illustrate that desperate people, many trapped without hope, are beyond listening to promises and reasons they have all heard before.

Seeing black rhetoric as a pattern of persuasion which presently defies many rhetorical frameworks means the black communicator, rather than adapting his message to whites by speaking the language of moderacy, conciliation, deference, and restraint, elects or chooses to increase his psychological distance from whites by voicing the angry emotions of his followers. While Golden and Rieke suggest that much of today's black rhetoric can be termed non-rhetorical in
that it discards the element of choice important in rhetoric, appears antagonistic to persuasion as a method of instituting social change, and relies heavily on coercion and revolt, some rhetoricians still feel obliged to study it for the reason it importantly tests traditional speech principles. Herbert W. Simons suggests that although rhetorical critics may not at present have the complete answers to black rhetoric in their storehouse of theories, some light can still be shed on the black message. With that in mind, it seems what Hoffer has to say about mass movements and Black and Ehninger on logos and argument, provide some insights from which to evaluate the arguments within a black rhetoric.

Hoffer believes the effectiveness of a doctrine does not entirely come from its meaning but from its "certitude"; that is, a doctrine does not necessarily have to be understood, but rather merely believed in. And when a movement begins to rationalize its doctrine or make it intelligible to, for example, the white reader or listener, its dynamic span may be over. In terms, then, of understanding the black argument, Hoffer holds that if a doctrine is not unintelligible or vague, it should be unverifiable. In line with Ehninger's notion that evidence is in the mind of the hearer, Hoffer concludes that "truth" cannot force its way into "unwilling minds." Thus, it would appear that black

---

leaders rather than instilling opinion, only articulate and justify opinions already present in the minds of their recipients, emphasizing only what they already know and have imagined. Further, like Ehninger who argues evidence is in the mind of the audience, the questions raised by black communicators are often presented in such a rhetorical manner that for most black audiences the answers are self-evident, explanations are unnecessary, and the assertion in the question becomes indictment enough. Thus, America's failure to deliver democracy to the black masses gives the black speaker enormous credibility supported by clear examples of society's failure to deliver on the American promise. Therefore, insight into the nature of black argument may well have to rest on the belief that black actions cannot be defined by persons who produced and enforced black suffering in the first place. This "right to define" becomes one of the most important aspects in the black liberation struggle for in defining their own ethic, blacks, therefore, need not obey any law they did not have a part in making, especially if that law keeps them where they are. On this basis, Cleaver can argue

---

7 Ibid., p. 55.
"the oppressor has no rights which the oppressed are bound to respect." Put another way, the Panthers assert blacks must judge people by their actions; that is, actions become the only reasonable grounds upon which blacks can base their judgement. For some, then, "A pig is a pig is a pig" unless otherwise proven.

It may be important to also note that if one judges Cleaver and others by the standards of traditional western culture or contemporary white society, his arguments can be missed entirely. Cleaver, in public, often speaks the four-letter language of the prison cell and the ghetto street. Language becomes for Cleaver a way to polarize audiences. Talking not to the educated whites but to young blacks who know and sometimes appreciate the flexibility of four-letter words, those who are with him anyway, Cleaver feels, will overlook or understand the language of the streets. Those others, he believes, probably belong on the other side in the first place. As Cleaver has stated: "You're part of the solution or you're part of the problem. There is no middle ground."  

---


10 Scheer, Post-Prison Writings, p. 130.
The black communicator, speaking the language of the black masses, often makes little attempt to dress his language in a form that will be acceptable to members of the white community. Understanding the black community and the problems of the central city, they know that to communicate effectively with their audiences one must keep to the language their audiences best understand. Thus, handling the reality of black life as his hearers know it, the black communicator often makes of the occasion, as Kenneth Burke and Arthur Smith suggest, "a communicating experience of one brother to another."\(^{11}\)

A second area that needs reaction is the claim by many black communicators that black violence is justifiable. Rooted in the theory-practice dichotomy, blacks argue if it is right for America to draft blacks and teach them to be violent in Vietnam, then it is right for blacks to do whatever is necessary to defend black people here in America. Additional justification rests upon the idea that where the government seems unable or unwilling to protect blacks, defense of black lives and property by blacks becomes justified. Using this argument, Malcolm X can then say: "When our people are being bitten by dogs, they are within their rights to kill

those dogs." Yet another justification rests on the idea that violence is, as H. Rap Brown said, "as American as cherry pie." Cleaver, too, rests his arguments on this historical view of the American tradition of violence. Placing himself in the position of Thomas Jefferson, he maintains that when society's institutions no longer serve the needs of the people, change by constitutional means or by revolution is at the base of the American tradition. In other words, people tyrannized by government have not only a right but a duty to abolish that government and set up another.

Still further, blacks argue that America's military intervention in Vietnam undercuts any attempt by this country to moralize against the use of violence by blacks to accomplish goals within America. Conversely, if violence is not desirable as a vehicle for the freedom struggle, analogically blacks feel they can refuse to participate in organized violence elsewhere such as Vietnam. Moreover, some blacks, such as Carmichael, regard violence as never really a question of violence as such but rather a question of who can legitimize it by being in control of the seats of power. For Carmichael, violence is only determined by those who at the time hold the power. Revolution and warfare are,

therefore, never a question of right or wrong, but only what oppressed people feel is necessary to obtain goals.\(^{13}\)

For those who accept the basic premise that white people are responsible for the victimization of blacks, all other statements can then sound reasonable assuming acceptance of the assertion.\(^{14}\)

In other ways, the logic of black rhetoric makes use of the "either-or" dichotomy, with, in a literal sense, situations painted in black and white terms. Common emotional experiences are emphasized. Discourse, in other instances, comes from the evidence and opinions the black speaker knows is already in the mind of the audience. In sum, what the black speaker is saying in terms of evidence and logic is true for the black auditors. Put another way, the black communicator creates a world of his own in which a universe of discourse and uniformity of behavior and outlook is maintained by the interaction and dialogue of speaker and audience; that is, black communicators and black audiences enter the speaking situation with common grounds for mutual support.

\(^{13}\)For a detailed explanation of the justification of violence, see Carmichael's interview with the editor of the Mexican Magazine Sucesos in Cuba in 1969, cited in Golden and Rieke, _Black Americans_, pp. 528-530.

Third, viewed as strategies for broader white support, it would be easy to explain away the rhetoric of King, Cleaver, or Carmichael on Vietnam by consigning each to the categories of either opportunists or demagogues. Yet, difficult as it may be to sometimes measure intent or motivation in public address, some discussion must be given to the reasons, intentional and otherwise, black Americans perceived the two conflicts as essentially linked together. One may well ask whether black opposition to Vietnam was on a philosophical basis of opposition to war in general or rooted in a rhetorical advantage to be gained by gathering white support. Obviously, in Bitzer's terms, some were moved to speak out on Vietnam because of the overrepresentation and disproportionate numbers of blacks drafted and killed in the war. Others, like King, were moved to verbal reaction seeing various poverty programs wiped away by the war effort. The important question then becomes on what basis or from what rhetorical stance did these black critics proceed? Did some blacks conclude an anti-war rhetoric was advantageous in gathering white support for black programs that the civil rights issue along might not achieve? Yet, on the other hand, did black leaders connect the two fronts from a philosophical position of racism, pacifism, conscience, patriotism, or opposition to war in general? Again, although intent, purpose, and motivation
is always difficult to measure, some answers can be reasonably suggested in the following pages.

It remains difficult to determine that when blacks choose to speak of Vietnam it either showed some understanding of international problems whites failed to possess or, secondly, blacks had masterfully merged their problems with similar ones in other parts of the world. Perhaps being residents in the Western world for 350 years, being important figures in the ageless struggle for freedom and equality, and being constant reminders of this society's imperfection in human relationships, ingrained blacks with experiences and perspectives to point out more clearly than some others the weaknesses that seemed inherent in the white civilization.

Yet, on the other hand, while blacks in increasing numbers protested the war, a growing ambivalence among white college students, professors, churchmen, and other professionals also developed. Exploring the issues, these groups, too, could not agree with the Washington analysis of the cause and nature of the war. Like some blacks, some whites saw blacks overrepresented in the war and underrepresented on local draft boards. These people, too, could not accept the thesis that communist aggression had forced the American armies to Vietnam and that America must fight there for the security of the United States. Moreover, the arguments and tactics developed by black Americans in
opposing the war were increasingly supported through the sixties by a hard core of whites who, also, marched in demonstrations and went to jails with blacks. The last fifteen years of black protest did influence an activist minority of whites impressed by the commitment and sacrifice demonstrated by blacks in those years. In short, the black struggle for himself caused an interreaction which had considerable impact on white America. Thus, the black movement received fresh support from a new generation of Americans who, also, saw contempt or suspicion of any race as despicable. What was now being demanded by a new generation of white students was not only some basic changes in American society and laws, but also, some basic changes in themselves and others.

Increasingly, during the mid to late sixties, the youth of America seemed to come together over an essential common need; that being, to be able to live, develop their talents, and to make plans for a fulfilling future life. For both groups, alliances and coalitions formed around being free from the arbitrary interference of the military, developing alternatives to the draft, and a sense of conscience and simple self-preservation. All seemed preferable to killing some Vietnamese family on behalf of
America. Thus, on the basis of how certain blacks perceive the need for white support, one may possibly answer whether the black reaction to Vietnam is indeed philosophical in nature or purely an opportunistic strategy to further a group's own ends. The next section, then, examines specific spokesmen for possible answers to this question.

One finds it difficult to describe King's rhetoric with the label of opportunism, recalling his whole career and stance was not merely economic but basically moral in approach. Ethical and moral matters he raised in the restricted context of segregation had national and international implications as well. Since he was acknowledged by many as a man of principle, conscience, nonviolence, and reconciliation, acquiescence on the war would have done most to promote reassessment.

In the tradition of "peacemaker," he had all along stressed the common cause of all the disinherited, for if color made men different, misery and oppression brought them together, and, of necessity, he included them all. Additionally, the deep structural changes he sought were in new alliances between labor, the white poor, Puerto Ricans, and other elements.

---

15 Alliance and coalition between young whites and blacks is dealt with at length by the editors of Freedomways Magazine in the editorial "Abolish the Draft! Enact the Freedom Budget!" Freedomways, 6 (Fall, 1966), 293-295.
On coalition with whites, King held both races could work together to solve problems in common. He saw alliance relationships and alliance politics as the keys to political progress. Perceiving all men as interdependent, he often expressed the idea that whatever affected one directly affected all indirectly. Believing that in a multiracial society no group could make it alone, blacks, in entering such alliances, used this for constructive and multiplied gains. Failure to see that the black man needs the white man and the white man needs the black man, with paths intersecting, meant for King, social disaster.

Stokely Carmichael, consistently anti-white, stands flatly opposed to any coalition with whites. Viewing the black struggle as a "color war," blacks, he holds, are discriminated against because they are "black." He holds that white student liberals who march with blacks are only fighting for the right to wear beards and smoke pot while blacks fight for their very lives. Further, he asserts blacks cannot form coalitions with whites who are economically secure. As white college students are generally economically secure, blacks are fighting just to get some security. Blacks, therefore, cannot align themselves with whites who, because of the war in Vietnam, enjoy the life, luxuries, and money they possess.

Eldridge Cleaver and the Black Panthers reject the "color war" interpretation by Carmichael and instead view
the black dilemma as a class struggle to overthrow a
capitalistic system. Insisting the revolution includes
all oppressed peoples, both, therefore, favor coalition
with particular whites.

More important, Cleaver, a militant black extremist,
genuinely believes the two races can get along and work
together for the good of everyone. Impressed in particular
by the youth of America, both black and white, Cleaver
holds "the price of hating other human beings is loving
oneself less." Recognizing that there is a hard core
of young whites alarmed at the course this country is
taking in Vietnam, Cleaver feels these whites now realize
that more than black freedom is at stake, but also, their
freedom as well. And, for Cleaver, this generation of
white youth is indeed worthy of a black man's respect.
Importantly, Cleaver feels white youths joining black
demonstrations, allow blacks to use tactics they could not
employ as blacks alone. Arguing murder only registers as
murder when the victim is white, violence against whites
gives the black struggle more credibility and further
establishes the common enemy. His point is that whites,
experiencing for the first time what for so long has

---

16 See Schanche article in Saturday Evening Post, November 16, 1968, p. 32. See also Hentoff's playboy
occurred to blacks, forces members of the white intellectual community to take actions and positions unthinkable a few years ago. Experiencing first-hand what has occurred to blacks, Cleaver believes this white segment, prepared to draw the line, can enter into coalition with the Panthers as equal partners. Thus, white groups who before only abstractly saw the need for fundamental change, can play a major role in the black liberation struggle.

Cleaver, thus, should not be termed an opportunist. In optimistically believing the white man is capable of change, in envisioning one society with black and white living together in harmony, and in appraising the present situation as a class struggle, he most nearly approaches what may be termed an assimilationist position.

A final conclusion suggests that while the black freedom movement and the war has reinvigorated and restored a strain of morality to an increasingly purposeless and alienated American society, calling values and priorities into question, and each issue mutually reinforcing and adding strength to the other, fractionalization and division in purpose remains characteristic of the black leadership today. A general conclusion about black rhetoric, regardless of the strategy, the spokesmen, or the issue of Vietnam, is the continuing lack of cohesiveness and unity of message displayed at all levels. No one organization or individual today speaks for the entire black community.
And, as Golden and Rieke importantly note, it is just this inability to establish organization and cohesion among all black Americans or even a significant majority that marks the "single greatest failure of black rhetoric at all levels."^17

A sad but true commentary is that despite universal grievances endured by masses of black people, there is no single organization today which can boast any real intimate contact with and support from the mass black population. With no coordination of thought or serious collaboration in action, numerous satellites work independently with no effective use made of the numerical strength of the black population, nor its economic importance in the labor and consumer markets. Further, while group solidarity has always been the goal sought, these attempts have been generally marked by competitive self-hate, suspicion, and intolerance of other black leaderships.

Predictions for the Future

Standing at the beginning of the new decade of the seventies, the black movement will continue to protest in growing intensity and depth. While conference and

legislative procedures have not entirely affected change in the rapid ways the sit-in, boycott, or riots have, some advances have only served to highlight the further racial changes needed.

Second, it seems likely that there will continue to be a tendency for civil rights groups and black campus activists to devote a portion of their energy to the peace movement generally and the war in Indochina. This trend is also likely to proceed independent of organization affiliation. Thus, to the extent that black leaders chose to play a continuing role in the Vietnam protest, there may well be a diluting of principal functions within groups in the future.

Third, the protests of the seventies may well be increasingly aimed at attracting a larger proportion of lower-income blacks and black college students to the movement with a pronounced shift from status goals to economic goals. Further, international affiliation with all dark masses of people who have suffered oppression and exploitation will be an important goal. Thus, even if the Vietnam war were to end, the strategies of the seventies may well indeed be shaped by the class imprint of the poor. With its symbolic beginnings at "Resurrection City" in Washington, D.C., and the attempts today by black peace organizations to align themselves with sections of the labor movement and low-wage industries, concern with the issue of abolishing
poverty and ignorance and the profit system which created it may well be the focus of black protest in the years ahead.

Fourth, the enemy for many young black Americans may well be the so-called "military state" whose nature and temperament was revealed in the events of Watts, Newark, Kent State, Jackson State, the attacks on Panther headquarters, and the massacre at My Lai, South Vietnam. It would appear these events have both internationalized and institutionalized violence for blacks on a grand scale for all the world to see, underscoring the real nature of the present social and political order, its value system, and its inhumanity to its fellow man. The manner in which America in Vietnam has bombed people and destroyed possessions of the Vietnamese peasant, has only served to expose the true nature of America to some blacks. The racial implications of the My Lai massacre, duplicated many times over in the black ghetto, on college campuses, and in attacks on Panther headquarters, appears not lost on the black American. At the same time, America's willingness to put men on the moon, to use its wealth to keep governments in power, to destroy rather than to construct, to employ technology for ruin rather than life, these American traits have also made impacts on young blacks that today far surpass any admiration inspired by America's achievements. And, like the black situation in urban America,
for the United States to attack so small and poor a nation as Vietnam regardless of stated objectives, in terms of credibility, only diminishes for many blacks, the American purpose and ideal.

Finally, as the young black American faces the decade of the seventies, it appears many are understanding for the first time in their lives the implication that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. Believing they have the power to end the war in Vietnam and shatter national repression, in this context, the slogan "Power to the People" may be the first signs of this growing awareness that black people possess the power to make such changes. 18 Thus, in terms of logic, many young black Americans now argue the right to revolution is a constitutional right, justified by American acts in history. Revolution becomes, then, a requirement to fulfill the basic, natural rights of man.

Recommendations for Future Study

It seems a reasonable conclusion that black rhetoric as such offers no specific rhetorical formulas for analysis, no rigid standards or categories, to help in a criticism

of this rhetoric. In its uniqueness, formulas rigidly applied, seem, at best, ill-advised.

This rhetoric suggests that a complex set of interacting dimensions are at work, some rhetorical, some others, more important perhaps, psychological in nature and, therefore, difficult to measure. Arguing rhetorical criticism should be multipurposed, some combinations of criticism seem to produce insights while others fail to suggest consequences. This study has found Weaver, Bitzer, Burke, Ehninger, and Black to be helpful in this regard.

Although a criticism of black rhetoric can take many forms, three compelling future needs stand out. First, criticizing the black movement as it develops further may be of prime importance. Here the quality of decisions by black leaders, the ideas emphasized, and changes in style should be accurately noted. Second, the rhetorical critic must also be engaged with the quality of response or feedback to the rhetoric heard. Whether people dissociate themselves, show a greater understanding, continue to deplore, neglect, or cooperate with the black communicator seems important. Third, it seems the critic should be willing to note any new force, either of the old civil rights position or the militant black revolutionist, that attempts to draw the races together again. Perhaps most important, the critic should note the development of any new strategy, other than the three used in this study,
that attempts to mold and shape black opinion. In this regard, it seems special attention must be given to assessing the communication generated by the returning black veteran from Vietnam. As this study indicates, a small but increasing proportion of the black military now feels to varying degrees, bitterness, alienation, and despair over the war. Importantly, many now feel America itself should be the black man's battleground. And unlikely to be happy with anything less than first-class citizenship when they return home, these veterans may well pose a much more serious threat to the establishment and society in general than the present ghetto and campus uprisings. Returning home with much experience in sophisticated war weaponry, this soldier creates a vastly superior figure and potential for the black freedom struggle. Also, the violence in Vietnam coinciding with the violence in America over civil liberties has produced in the black soldier a new awareness of self and his obligations to issues and priorities in his life. Through participation in the Vietnam conflict, these blacks feel they have earned the right to comment on Vietnam and their situation in America. They believe more strongly than ever that America owes them something. Thus, it may well be for the future that the most seriously

---
listened to black men in America might well be the thousands returning from combat action in Vietnam. Again, as the black veteran comprises a potential force the nation can ill afford to have embittered, it seems some special attention must be given to assessing the nature and impact of the message generated by these men.
APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

October 1966

Black Panther Party Platform
and Program

WHAT WE WANT
WHAT WE BELIEVE

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 the 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 CAPITALIST 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 in 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 entitle 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.
APPENDIX B

RULES OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
1048 PERALTA ST.
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

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 state area, and local committees and staffs where said rule or 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 aid must be understood by all 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 Leader Section Leader, Lieutenant, and Captain 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 will be 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.
APPENDIX C

PETITION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

We, the undersigned citizens of the United States, gravely concerned with the continued racist persecution, conscious and unconscious, and centuries-old denial of Constitutional rights and respect for human dignity to men, women and children of red, brown, yellow and particularly black Americans, assert that:

The savage police activities, based upon official policies of Federal, State and City governments, has resulted in innumerable beatings, frameups, arrests and murders of black Americans, the classical example of which is the Black Panther Party. The murderous attacks on Black youth in Chicago, Illinois, Orangeburg, South Carolina, Augusta, Georgia, Jackson, Mississippi, and the innumerable beatings, legal frameups of Brown, Red, Yellow and Black youths are not only in violation of their legal rights, but as well of this government's commitment under the Charter of the United Nations.

The Genocide Convention adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1948, defines as genocide "killing members of the group and any intent to destroy in whole or in part a national racial or ethnic
or religious group". And further, according to the Convention, "Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group" is Genocide.

We assert that the Genocide Convention has been flagrantly violated by the Government of the United States. We further assert that the United Nations has jurisdiction in this matter, to hold otherwise is to repudiate its position regarding apartheid in South Africa and as well its universal Declaration of Human Rights, and its Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

The racist planned and unplanned terror suffered by more than 40 millions of black, brown, red, and yellow citizens of the United States cannot be regarded solely as a domestic issue. The continuance of these practices threatens the struggle of mankind throughout the world to achieve peace, security and dignity.

On the basis of simple justice, it is time for the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations to call for universal action, including political and economic sanctions against the United States. We further demand that the United States government make reparations to those who have suffered the damages of racist and genocidal practices.

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF: The Committee to Petition The United Nations of the Conference Committee, 33 Union Square W., New York, N.Y., 10003, Room 907
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources


393


Secondary Sources


Articles and Periodicals

"Abolish the Draft! Enact the 'Freedom Budget!" *Freedomways,* 6 (Fall, 1966), 293-295.

Amato, Philip P. "Column One." *Today's Speech,* 17 (September, 1969), 2.


Gibson, Chester. "Eugene Talmadge's Use of Identification During the 1934 Gubernatorial Campaign in Georgia." The Southern Speech Journal, XXXV (Summer, 1970), 342-349.


Lee, Bernard S. "We Must Continue to March." Freedomways, 6, No. 3 (Third Quarter, 1966), 255-261.


Manning, Robert N. "The Use of War and Peace in the Basic College Speech Course." Today's Speech, 17 (September, 1969), 37-42.


"The Two Presidents Johnson." Freedomways, 6 (Summer, 1966), 197-199.


"These Truly are the Brave." Ebony Magazine, August, 1968, pp. 164-177.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Senator Morse requesting that testimony by A. Philip Randolph before the Armed Services Committee be printed in the Record. 80th Cong., 2d sess., April 12, 1948. Congressional Record, XCIV, 4312-4318.


Unpublished Materials


