

was partial and incomplete and that it too must be integrated into a higher synthesis to be defined not by white people alone but by white people and black people together. His saying, in short, that "integration is not a one-way street but a two-way drive."

Carmichael believed the adoption of the concept of black power was one of the most legitimate and healthy developments in American politics and race relations in our time. The concept of black power is a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society. The concept rests on a fundamental premise: "Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close its ranks." Carmichael's whole black power theory was based on the possibilities of the black masses and centered mainly on protest.

Carmichael's notable civil rights record began as a youthful member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In 1964, Carmichael was arrested in Jackson, Mississippi as one of the first Freedom Riders. The jails of Mississippi were the scene of a rapid process of political education for student activists who encountered persons from different backgrounds and with a variety of political beliefs. Carmichael says he learned a lot about the struggle and its leaders in jail.

In retrospect, the Selma campaign was a victory for King's protest strategy. If his presence interfered with SNCC's long-range efforts to develop self-sufficient local black leadership, it also provided the spark for a crucial confrontation between Alabama blacks and stubborn state officials which in turn contributed to a favorable climate of public opinion outside the South and to subsequent passage of Johnson's voting rights proposals. Despite this decisive victory, the Alabama campaign contributed to the further disillusionment of SNCC workers. The bitterness, verging on spite, felt by many staff members was expressed in Carmichael's complaint that the march to Montgomery, which began as a protest of the death of a black man, Jimmy Lee Jackson, attracted major national attention only after the death of a white Rev. Reeb.

The Alabama demonstrations which stimulated black militancy nationwide, also led to the launching of the Black Panther Party in the rural black belt county of Lowndes, situated between Selma and Montgomery. Carmichael's talents as a headman/organizer were demonstrated in this local movement. Here he was given the opportunity to initiate a black political movement. The upsurge in black registration brought on by the SNCC workers brought intensified white resistance. One

young civil rights worker was killed after a part-time sheriff fired into a group of picketers. Because voter registration in Lowndes County was so threatening to white leaders, SNCC workers began to question whether they should continue to encourage blacks to register as Democrats, a party led by segregationist George Wallace, or to form an independent party. Spearheaded by Carmichael a new political organization, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, was initiated. The LCFO was established as an independent political party rather than a racial separatist group, yet the emblems chosen for the new organization a snarling black panther- was unmistakably significant.

Meanwhile the intensity of internal conflicts in SNCC was growing. The question of separatism was steadily dividing the workers. Carmichael joined those opposing the separatists. Although criticized in the press as a separatist because of his work in Lowndes County, he disagreed with the extreme beliefs of separatism calling for white expulsion. Sensing the increasing support for a shift in SNCC's direction toward the kind of organizing approach he had developed in Lowndes County, Carmichael announced that he would break with tradition and actively campaign for SNCC's chair, then held by John Lewis, the SNCC officer most tied to its past. While criticisms of Lewis' associations and tactics increased, the success of the LCFO boosted Carmichael's candidacy. Lewis won the first emotional vote, but his election was challenged and an intense, open discussion began. As it continued into the early morning hours, the fragility of Lewis' support became apparent. Many of his exhausted supporter left after the first vote. His position was also weakened by James Forman's suggestion that both he and Lewis resign "to give some of the young staff members a chance to acquire the experience we had acquired." After being overwhelmingly asked to resign Lewis did just that allowing the exhausted remnants of the staff to elect Carmichael. As was customary, reporters were barred from the elections, but immediately after Carmichael's election journalist proclaimed it a victory for black nationalism.

After much internal conflict, new chairman Carmichael decided SNCC would participate in the Mississippi marches with other civil rights leaders, including King. Regardless of their respect for King, SNCC workers sought opportunities to dispute his positions thereby expressing the black anger, discontent and disillusionment that could not be conveyed through King's more moderate rhetoric. Willie Ricks, one of the most militant SNCC workers, provided Carmichael with a new weapon in his ideological struggle with King when he demonstrated the enormous appeal of the slogan

"Black Power"- a shortened version of "black power for black people," a phrase used by Alabama SNCC workers. Carmichael's opportunity to use the black power slogan came as the march entered Leflore County, the site of previous SNCC voter registration efforts. Carmichael's use of black power slogan immediately became the central controversy of the march. Journalists quickly focused public attention on the phrase.

Carmichael and other SNCC workers roused the racial feelings of blacks through verbal attacks on the existing leadership and prevailing strategies of the civil rights movement, but their own organization was weakened in the process. Staff members expected the external attacks and undoubtedly some believed that such attacks confirmed the correctness of their actions. Yet to many SNCC workers, the organization's vulnerability was somewhat unnecessary, because it resulted from an emphasis on militant rhetoric rather than on the development of workable programs to consolidate southern civil rights gains. As Carmichael became a nationally-known figure, SNCC shifted the focus of its activities from the deep South to urban centers, prompting some staff members to question whether tangible political gains could be realized as a result of the personal following Carmichael attracted.

Carmichael recognized the increasing special risks associated with his highly visible role and SNCC's vulnerability during a period of extensive racial conflict. By the time of SNCC's annual staff meeting in the spring of 1967, he was eager to relinquish the chairmanship. Staff members were then faced with finding someone capable of expressing the angry mood of urban blacks and of avoiding the role of scapegoat for the spreading of black rebellion. They chose a member of the Alabama field staff, H. Rap Brown as the new chairman. This was unequivocally the end of an era for SNCC and Carmichael.

Stokely Carmichael's popularization of the black power slogan began a new stage in the transformation of African-American political consciousness. Shattering the fragile alliance of civil rights forces, the black power upsurge challenged the assumptions underlying previous interracial efforts to achieve national civil rights reforms. The black struggles of the 1960's had awakened dormant traditions of black radicalism and racial separatism by fostering among black people a greater sense of pride, confidence and racial identity. Through their increasingly positive response to the concept of determination to use hard-won human rights to improve their lives in ways befitting their own cultural values.

Carmichael was not an exceptional prophetic figure. He became a symbol of black militancy because he sensed a widespread

preparedness among blacks to reject previous habits of accommodation. His attitudes, shaped by experiences in the southern struggle, coincided with the unarticulated feelings of many other blacks, especially in northern urban centers, whose hopes were raised but not fulfilled by the civil rights movement. Carmichael was an innovator who could not control or fully understand the social forces he had set in motion, and he could only begin the difficult task of formulating a comprehensive political strategy for the post civil rights era. Nonetheless he set forth the broad outlines of subsequent black political development. Carmichael joined a line of audacious black leaders- Marcus Garvey, Malcom X - whose historical role was to arouse large segments of the black population by reflecting their repressed anger and candidly describing previously obscured aspects of their racial oppression.

Only after Carmichael attracted national attention as an advocate of black power did he begin to construct an intellectual rationale for what initially was an partially thought-out statement of conclusions drawn from SNCC's work. It was a colossal public relations blunder to throw out this slogan whose meaning was so obscure, whose intent was so subject to misinterpretations, whose impact was so abrasive that it divided blacks, alienated whites and confused everybody. He attempted to demonstrate that black power was logical outgrowth of the southern struggle and reasonable response to the conditions facing blacks. While he did clarify misconceptions of his views, he could not eliminate confusion caused by biased press reports and SNCC workers' own uncertainty about future programs. Moreover, his writings and public statements were not only vague formulations of strategy but were also emotional responses to the frustrations of SNCC staff members and rebellious urban blacks.

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