

PARTIAL

TRANSCRIPT OF TALK BY STOKELY CARMICHAEL AT BSU MEETING NOV. 4, 1968

...I want to tell you the importance of a man like Dr. Hare, because he did teach me when I was at Howard. But he didn't teach me sociology. Because anybody can teach you sociology. The importance of Dr. Hare was he taught me an attitude. And it's the attitude he has that is more important than the specific, technical materials he can give you in the classroom. And I think that you have to understand that if we're seriously going to talk about challenging education around this country today. I think that too many times people get caught up in the specific content rather than the attitude. Because what you have to do is work on the attitude. Let me give you some examples.

We all had the reader comprehension. You know, they used to let us read and then answer questions, and we would read it and try to be smart. But now we have to understand what the attitude was. We read something, we read for example "Abraham Lincoln was a poor boy born in a log cabin who worked very hard, he was very honest, he read a lot and he studied well and therefore he became president of the United States." And the question asked you, "How did he become president of the United States?" You study hard, work well, blab, blab, blab...that's how you become president of the United States.

Well we thought we were exercising our brain, but what we were doing was being whitewashed. Whitewashed. Whitewashed, over and over again. See the attitude is more important than the specific content. And that's what students, especially in the Black Student Union, especially at San Francisco State, must realize. It is the attitude we must aim at, and not the specific content.

If you teach black history to a student and it's taught by a Negro-- I won't mention any names--and if Dr. Hare teaches black history, there's a difference, even though the course material is the same. It is again because of the attitude.

Now the attitude of white America is that you must be responsible, you must love, worship, be patriotic, etc., etc., to them. The attitude of us must be that we must oppose white America on every level, on every ground, we must oppose them. Now then how do black students begin to move to do that? And that's some of the things we can talk about very briefly. No entertainment today, because I hate rallies. We have so many of them, and there's not a chance to really deal with things. That's why we're cutting down as much as we can on public rallies. They're a necessity. But for people who've ~~passed them~~ passed them they no longer become a necessity because they're, like, feel good sessions, you know, like you go to church on Sunday and you feel good for the bad things you did last week which you know you're gonna do on the following week anyhow...

Now the first thing--we must begin to learn to sustain our struggle. Very important. We must learn to sustain our struggle. That is to say our struggle cannot go like this and like this. If it goes at a level like this and there're ups and downs it's OK, as long as this level continues... But if you attempt to wage a serious struggle then you must be ready to sustain the struggle. Now how do you sustain the struggle?

You sustain the struggle by first deciding what your aims and goals are. And you decide that nothing can stop you from achieving those aims and those goals. Once you have decided that, you're ready to struggle. ~~1. XXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ ...So that we cannot any longer just throw out phrases--we want freedom, we want self determination, we want this--everybody want's that! If we say the same thing Lyndon Johnson is saying, there's something wrong with us. And if you say the same things that Lyndon Johnson can endorse, or Alloto can endorse, there's something wrong with the struggle...But if we're going to sustain our struggle we have to give to our people something specific they can work on, but always tuned to what we're talking about in terms of the attitude....

For example, if the black student union were to say we want X person~~X~~ kicked out, and we want Y person kicked out, and we want them replaced with a black person, that's not enough...because they can replace them with any black person, and that black person would not be to your liking, to your choosing, or to your same political ideology. Now the way to insure that you get somebody who is to your liking, who is someone who will do what you want them to do...is to make sure you can choose, that you have control over that person...

There is visible power and there is real power in the sense of control... So that we no longer say we want to displace ~~XXX~~ so and so...we say we want the power to pick, to hire and to fire. That's the attitude. And we say we will not stop our struggle short of that goal. And if you're willing to do that, then you're willing to struggle. If you're not, then continue playing games. There's nothing wrong with that, but just don't be serious and play games, because a lot of people get hurt...

What happens today is that many of always fight on specific issues rather than the general issues, you understand? for example, we fight for Mr. so and so to be a black principal. That's specific. If we said that all people who live in the black community who teach black children should be controlled by the community, we have the power to pick any principal that we want and we won't even have to fight over a black principal...

We want the right to hire and to fire teachers. We want the right to control the Black Students Union course at San Francisco State. And once we got that, then George Murray becomes irrelevant. Because George Murray's under our control and Alloto has nothing to say about it. But if we fight over George Murray, even if we win, next week ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ they will pick somebody else and we'll have to go back and fight again for that somebody else, and they will wear us out...

Your movement should get a boost from Dr. Hare. You should not depend on Dr. Hare for your movement. You should develop a structure which makes a Dr. Hare irrelevant. Which means that anybody who is in his position must act the way you want him to act...see you mix up trust and power. You trust Dr. Hare, you have faith in him that he will do the right thing. But if you talk about real power, there is no place for trust and for faith. You know he is gonna do what he is supposed to do...I do believe that is the attitude you must aim for...

If you can set the attitude of San Francisco State, it will be duplicated across this country overnight. Overnight it will be duplicated. It will save us a lot of trouble just running around telling each black student union--there are thousands of them in this country--what to do. Because you will have already done it. You will have elevated the struggle from the specific to the general.

But now sustaining the struggle is what's important...you should not start off doing activities which you cannot maintain or sustain over a prolonged period of time...You delude yourselves and you delude the entire black community because you assume the fight you are fighting is an easy fight and it will be over tomorrow, and that is not true. Our fight is a fight of this generation, the entire generation. The entire generation has to give its blood, its talents, its skills, its sweat, its blood and its life to this struggle. It's not a fight that's gonna be over tomorrow, next year, two years from now...We gotta fight our whole lives...you're black...and that's a lifetime fight for us, this generation...

You must understand the importance of your fight...the white power structure does...you should not underestimate what you're fighting for, it is vitally important. Because you're now beginning to challenge real attitudes. Who has the right to hire and to fire. Not even the white student movement in the height of its movement at Columbia was able to do this. Because they held the buildings for a few days, then they gave up, but they had no clear victories....

You read about Mark Rudd. Yeah, he's sho nuff bad, he ain't got nothin' to show for his badness. And I don't think that we can afford that. Because we're not in the same position as the white students. They have the luxury of being militant or radical or revolutionary. For us, it is a necessity. We have no other out.

Now there are two things. When you fight you depend only upon yourselves nobody else...You look to make allies among those people who suffer like you do. That's black people, and then that's people of color outside this circle. But you look upon yourself. If you're gonna start the war, then you be ready. Say, you be like the Vietnamese. If they come, the only way they're gonna get Vietnam is drenched in our blood. They will not have Vietnam with one Vietnamese alive. If you start your fight, you say the same thing. If they win, they will win, but none of us will be in this school...if you're not ready for that, don't start the fight, because they're ready to do it. We're not talking about a tomorrow battle, we're talking about prolonged warfare. Warfare! psychological, political and otherwise. Otherwise can mean anything. We hope it means the right thing. It means military. That's what we're talking about, and that's what you prepare yourselves for, psychologically...

...The war is going to be waged on different levels, but for college students it is going to be waged mainly on a psychological level. Your biggest fight will be television...because Alliotto can call a press conference any time he wants to and go on any program he wants to and bring up any Negro he wants to defy you on television. Now obviously we do not control television so our fight cannot be in that arena just yet.

STOKELY--4

So we must pick the ground for our fight. That's what you must do. Carefully, and after you've made a clear analysis of where you're going. Because if you fall into the mistake of other students by seizing a building for the sake of seizing a building, you have plunged the movement down one more time. The seizures of those buildings were a necessity. Today they are insufficient. You must understand that. We do not regress, we always progress. There've been buildings seized before. You've done it here last year. Big deal. To come back and seize it again this year doesn't even excite anybody. Victory is what we want, not notoriety...

So we must begin to understand that we're talking about prolonged struggle. You may start something that you may not even finish in San Francisco State. Maybe the freshmen who come after you will have to pick up. But if the struggle is correct they will be die to fit in immediately and will not have to go over the problems you had when you first came here--should I join the black student union? Should I wear an afro? should I, should I, all of those personal problems will become irrelevant if you set the correct attitude, not the specifics, the correct attitude...

methodology)

(black power ~~methodology~~ different ideology means an ideology rooted in black nationalism, not just adding black people...because finally and it is your job, as we have to heighten the contradictions as we prepare for the confrontation...while we heighten the contradictions we politically awaken our people, we make them more aware...It is easy to die for one's people, it is much more difficult to live, to work and to kill for them.

...Seek to heighten the contradictions so that we can politically awake the masses of our people, then we can begin to prepare for the confrontation...

###