POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

THREE CASE STUDIES
OF PROTEST

By

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ERRATA


P. 26, fn. 36, line 4, should read: NYT, Mar. 12, 1956, p. 19.

P. 80, fn. 70, line 3, should read: See also cases reported in VII CLD 25-28 (1961); VII CLD 58-60, 94-96, 121-22 (1962); VIII CLD 55-57 (1962).


P. 114, fn. 53, should read: The March on Washington, August 28th 1963: We Shall Overcome, op. cit.

P. 221, fn. 42, should read: G. Bell and Sons

P. 240, fn. 35, should read: February, 1961,

P. 243, fn. 49, line 1, should read: published by The Times, The Nuclear Dilemma

P. 310, fn. 122, should read: Free Speech? The Arrowsmith Case

P. 324, fn. 155, should read: Michael Foot
Using the model of a norm-oriented movement set up by Neil Smelser in his *Theory of Collective Behavior*, I have traced the sequence of events of three political movements: (1) the civil rights movement in the United States, 1945-64; (2) the nuclear disarmament movement in Great Britain, 1957-64; (3) selected aspects of the trade union movement in Australia, 1916-64, with particular emphasis on the period 1937-50. In addition to being movements which attempt to modify or create norms in the name of a generalized belief (using Smelser's terminology), these movements contain groups and individuals who use unconventional, and occasionally illegal, tactics to make known their demands to the authorities. Through the use of various forms of non-violent direct action, the movements seek to persuade governmental authorities to pass new or enforce existing legislation, institute new policies in the domestic or foreign sphere, or protect the interests of certain groups within the society.

In order to evaluate the successes and failures of the three movements, I have applied Smelser's six determinants of collective behaviour to each of the movements in turn: (1) structural conduciveness; (2) structural strain; (3) the growth of a generalized belief; (4) the role of precipitating factors; (5) mobilization of the participants for action; and (6) social control. In so doing, I have sought answers to the questions of why the movements arise where they do, when they do, and in the way that they do. Finally, I have sought to assess the reasons contributing to the successes and failures of the respective movements.
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Experience and observation reveal that people are conditioned by usage, custom, convention and law - the social regulators of a person's behaviour. People do what is familiar, what is usual, and what is routine. They have certain ideas as to what is proper: they may act according to convention out of fear of disapproval or social ostracism; or according to law out of fear of punishment or legal coercion.

Tradition and the traditional way of doing things are such strong components of conduct that deviation from the usual, normal or typical way of acting is very rare. Conformity and regularity need not be demanded of people by threatening legal punishment. The judgement of contemporaries or of posterity may be a stronger deterrent to deviation than the judgement of a court. As Weber points out, when action regularly recurs, it becomes imbued with a sense of "oughtness" and people become oriented to its recurrence. Even with respect to laws: "The broad mass of the participants act in a way corresponding to legal norms, not out of obedience regarded as a legal obligation, but either because the environment approves of the conduct and disapproves of its opposite, or merely as a result of unreflective habituation to the regularity of life that has engraved itself as a custom."  

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Why people abide by usage, custom, convention and law is a part of the subject matter of psychology; that people usually abide by these regulators of conduct is a starting point of the social sciences. Innovation and deviation, by definition, are exceptions to the rules of behaviour. As exceptions, they stand out as demanding explanation. Political deviation, no less than other kinds, must be explained by reference to the standards that are regarded as "normal" at the relevant time.

Even where people cast in the role of political activists try to bring about political changes in the society, they usually follow methods of action which are themselves regulated by appropriate or, at any rate, typical rules of conduct. This thesis is concerned with three political movements which exhibit certain distinct patterns of behaviour not usually found in other political movements; that is, they indicate deviations from the conventions and the laws of the societies in which they operate. The three are: (1) the civil rights movement in the United States, 1954-64; (2) the nuclear disarmament movement in Great Britain, 1957-64; (3) a section of the trade union movement in Australia, 1917-64, with particular emphasis on the period 1937-50. While these three movements have characteristics in common with other political movements, they are distinguished by their inclusion of groups and individuals who utilize unconventional or illegal tactics, such as the practice of civil disobedience, as a regular part of their activities.

I propose to examine these three political movements as forms of collective behaviour, by explaining what kind of collective behaviour
they are, why they occur where they do, when they do, and in the way that they do. For purposes of analysis, I shall use a modification of the scheme advanced by Smelser in his *Theory of Collective Behaviour*.²

Smelser's work is a systematic attempt to account for various kinds of collective behaviour. He defines collective behaviour as "mobilization on the basis of a belief which redefines social action."³ He regards this as a technical definition which leaves out of account types of behaviour such as ceremonial behaviour, the audience, public opinion, propaganda, crime and individual deviance (hoboism, addiction, alcoholism). Cutting through his Parsonian jargon, one can list the characteristics of such behaviour: (1) it is purposive behaviour; (2) it is behaviour involving an attempt to change a part of the environment; (3) it is behaviour attempting to effect change on the basis of some belief (generalized belief) which the activists or participants in the behaviour hold to be true. Smelser makes two other points in defining collective behaviour. First, that collective behaviour is uninstitutionalized; that is, it is neither established nor compulsory behaviour but rather behaviour that is outside of, although related to, the institutional orders of the society. Second that the beliefs on which collective behaviour is based are assessments of certain conditions which either do exist or which are thought to exist now or in the future.⁴

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⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-9, 71-78.
Smelser introduces both a classification system and an explanatory model into his analysis of collective behaviour. He adopts a Parsonian typology of social action in order to show that specific kinds of collective behaviour relate to specific components of social action. He argues that collective behaviour is formed or brought into being as a result of certain situations of strain. He suggests that there are four relevant parts of the social environment which collective behaviour may be attempting to change. These he cites as:

1. values, or the legitimate ends of the society;
2. norms, or the rules or regulatory principles by which the values are realized;
3. mobilization of motivations, or the agents or structures which realize the norms;
4. facilities, or information, skills, tools or other means used by agents or structures.

He then classifies collective behaviour as it relates to or is oriented towards these four components of social action:

1. the value-oriented movement, or collective behaviour mobilized on the basis of a generalized belief (in this case a value-oriented belief) which attempts to alter the values of the society;
2. the norm-oriented movement, or collective behaviour mobilized on the basis of a generalized belief (in this case a norm-oriented belief) which attempts to alter the norms of the society.

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(3) the hostile outburst, or collective behaviour mobilized on the basis of a generalized belief (in this case a hostile belief) which attempts to act against agents in the society.\(^8\)

(4) the craze or panic, or collective behaviour mobilized on the basis of generalized beliefs (in this case either wish fulfilment or hysteria) which attempt to redefine certain facilities (information, knowledge, skills) in the society.\(^9\)

Smelser then moves from this classification system to an explanatory model which will use this system. He argues that any given kind of collective behaviour is determined, in the sense of being influenced or conditioned, by six factors: (1) structural conduciveness; (2) structural strain; (3) growth and spread of a generalized belief; (4) precipitating factors; (5) mobilization of participants for action; (6) operation of social control.\(^10\) These factors or determinants are applicable to each major type of collective behaviour. By analogy with the concept "value-added" in economics, Smelser explains that each determinant is a necessary condition for the next factor to operate as a determinant. In his theory, the determinants must combine in a definite analytical, although not temporal, pattern to produce a specific and

\(^8\) Ibid., pp. 222-69.

\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 131-221.

\(^10\) Ibid., pp. 15-18.
distinct kind of collective behaviour. He argues that "value-added" posits "a definite sequence for the activation of determinants but does not posit a definite sequence for the empirical establishment of events and situations."  

In general, the six determinants indicate the conditions by which any form of collective behaviour will be shaped. Structural conduciveness indicates the structures in the society which permit, encourage, or discourage a given kind of collective behaviour. Structural strain indicates the conflicts, ambiguities, real or anticipated deprivations, and discrepancies in the society which elicit a given kind of collective behaviour. The growth and spread of a generalized belief indicates the making of the situation of strain or the conflict meaningful to the potential activists of a given kind of collective behaviour by identifying and explaining the strain and outlining appropriate responses. Precipitating factors indicate the specific events which initiate a given kind of collective behaviour. Mobilization of the participants for action indicates the ways in which the affected activists act in a given kind of collective behaviour. The operation of social control indicates the counter-determinants.

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11 *Ibid.*, pp. 12-20. Smelser argues that the "value-added" process differs from the "natural history" approach used by various writers to discuss episodes of collective behaviour. He says that "natural history" fails to take into account dormant but existing determinants, while "value-added" can allow for the occurrence or existence of an event, on the one hand, and its activation as a determinant on the other. This distinction between the two approaches appears to me to be based on Smelser's misreading of certain authors. The methodology used by Crane Brinton, to cite an example of Smelser's of a writer using "natural history", does not differ in any major sense from Smelser's adaptation of "value-added". See Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), pp. 3-27.

12 Smelser, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
which prevent, interrupt, deflect, inhibit or otherwise affect the previous five determinants of a given kind of collective behaviour.

Smelser's work provides a conceptual model which describes simpler and more accurately analyzable forms of collective behaviour than occur in the real world. It is less a full-scale theory than a comparison of different forms of collective behaviour. In fact, the work should have been more accurately titled *Ideal Types of Collective Behaviour*. For like Weber's "ideal types", Smelser's forms of collective behaviour "are used as conceptual instruments for comparison with and the measurement of reality." Ideal types describe, but they are not empirical descriptions. One need not fear doing violence to reality if one regards Smelser's work as providing a set of ideal types with which one can compare empirical cases.

According to Smelser's system of classification, the three political movements cited in this thesis approximate most closely to norm-oriented movements; for, in the main, they are attempts to alter rules or policies of the society in the name of certain generalized beliefs.

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14 Smelser's ideal types of collective behaviour can be used even by those who find Smelser's system of classifying components of social action cumbersome and turgid. They stand up as instruments for comparing and measuring reality even when they are considered independently of their Parsonian forebears. After doubting the worth of a work which used such formidable jargon, I was relieved and pleased to find that Smelser's models of behaviour were used by George Rudé, an historian whose work I respect. See George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964).

15 Smelser, *op cit.*, p.270.
The relation between the components of social action and the movements discussed would approximate the following table:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Components of Social Action</th>
<th>Civil Rights Movement</th>
<th>Nuclear Disarmament Movement</th>
<th>Trade Union Movement</th>
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<td>Value</td>
<td>Democratic Capitalism</td>
<td>Democratic Capitalism</td>
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<td>Mobilization of motivation</td>
<td>Congress of Racial Equality</td>
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<td>Waterside Workers Federation</td>
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<td>Knowledge of Negro Discontent</td>
<td>Knowledge of Radio-activity</td>
<td>Knowledge of Japanese Aggression</td>
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The six determinants of a norm-oriented movement indicate the ideal conditions under which activists will develop and act on a norm-oriented belief:

(1) Structural conduciveness for a norm-oriented movement involves the possibility of altering the norms without fundamentally altering the values of the society. Certain channels for expressing dissatisfaction must remain open so that the activists are able to continue with norm-oriented activity and are not forced into activity which attempts to alter the values of the society or which results in expressions of hostility.  

(2) Strains or conflicts must exist which create demands to change the social environment.  

(3) Beliefs as to what is wrong with a regulation or policy and how the wrong is to be corrected may be built up through a variety of ways:

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literature; manifestos; the mind of an individual; importation from one
cultural setting into another. 18

(4) Precipitating factors or specific events suddenly symbolize one
of the conditions of strain. They focus the belief, create a sense of
urgency, and hasten the mobilization for action. 19

(5) Mobilization of the movement for action is heavily dependent
upon the role which the leadership plays and its choice of strategy and
tactics. In general, the movement goes through a slow beginning phase,
which is followed by a period of enthusiastic mobilization, after which
the movement settles into an institutionalized and organized pattern of
behaviour. 20

(6) General encouragement from the agencies of social control will
act as a boost to the norm-oriented movement; general discouragement will
either send the movement into decline or into other than norm-oriented
forms of activity. Encouragement might include permitting the legitimate
expression of grievances or the hearing of complaints. Discouragement
might include refusing to recognize the movement (refusal to negotiate,
refusal to meet leadership), vacillation in the face of pressure, closing
off all avenues of agitation, taking sides, or openly encouraging some
other kind of collective outburst. 21

To return to the objective of this thesis, structural conduciveness
and structural strain are particularly important in explaining why the

18 Ibid., pp. 292-94.
19 Ibid., pp. 294-96.
20 Ibid., pp. 296-306.
21 Ibid., pp. 306-10.
cited political movements occur where they do; the growth of a generalized belief and the role of precipitating factors are particularly important in explaining why they occur when they do; mobilization of the participants for action and the operation of social control are particularly important in explaining why they occur in the way that they do.

**Definition of Concepts**

It is now necessary to define in a preliminary way some of the leading concepts used in this thesis, viz., the idea of a "movement", and some of the methods especially characteristic of the political movements studied in the thesis - direct action and its sub-forms, "civil disobedience" and "political strike".

**Movement.** The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a movement as: "A course or series of actions and endeavours on the part of a body of persons, moving or tending more or less continuously toward some special end." This definition is compatible with the description of movements given by Gerth and Mills and Heberle. These writers emphasize that movements must be intent upon changing institutions; that there must be a turnover of membership without the movement losing its identity; that a movement may contain organized groups as well as individuals; that the membership must be aware of its common interests or principles. Heberle stresses the last point:

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22 *Oxford English Dictionary*, VI (1933), 729.


...mere similarity of sentiments occurring independently among a large number of people does not constitute a movement, nor does mere imitative mass action. A sense of group identity and solidarity is required, for only when the acting individuals have become aware of the fact that they have sentiments and goals in common - when they think of themselves as being united with each other in action through these sentiments and for these goals - do we acknowledge the existence of a social movement. 25

I define political movements as movements which attempt to influence the power of the state.

Direct Action. Historically, the term "direct action" has referred primarily to methods of the labor movement which do not rely upon either governmental protection or parliamentary procedure, such as arbitration or political action through a labor party. As a concept central to the theory of syndicalism, "direct action" was regarded as the workers' chief weapon in the class struggle against both employers and the government. Against the former, workers could use the strike, the boycott, and sabotage; against the latter, agitation, demonstrations, refusal to join the military forces, and other forms of mass pressure. Direct action need not entail violence, although sometimes it will assume violent forms; often, however, syndicalist intellectuals have made a "cult of violence". 26 A French syndicalist writer says, "Direct Action is opposed to the indirect and legalized action of democracy, of Parliament and of parties. It means that instead of delegating to others the function of action (following the habit of democracy) the working class is

25 Ibid., p. 7.


determined to work for itself".\(^{27}\)

While the concept of direct action has been more influential in industrial labor movements than elsewhere, some of its related ideas, such as the general strike and the conscious minority,\(^{28}\) have influenced communist and anarchist thinking. In addition, it has "contributed to present day criticism of sovereignty and of the democratic state".\(^{29}\)

Direct action has come to mean: (1) a technique of action directly involving the participants in protest; or (2) situations where such a technique is used. One writer speaks of it as "action engaged in directly by the populace rather than through political representatives, military formations or other 'indirect' means".\(^{30}\) Another writer has a more extensive definition: "a theory and practice of politics that envisages the active participation of the overwhelming majority in the making and implementing of political decisions".\(^{31}\) Another contrasts it with other indirect processes, such as educational or electoral means or conventional institutional procedures.\(^{32}\) The tactics of direct action, as so defined may include violent ones, but current usage equates direct action tactics with non-violent direct action tactics.

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29 Lewis L. Lorwin, "Direct Action", *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, V (1931), 158. See also the same author's work under the name of Louis Levine, *The Labor Movement in France: A Study in Revolutionary Syndicalism* (New York: Columbia University, 1912).


April Carter includes three categories of action under the term "direct action": (1) economic action, such as strikes, boycotts, or picketing; (2) civil disobedience and physical intervention, such as acts of trespass or sit-ins; (3) non-cooperation with the state, such as revenue refusal, conscientious objection, disobedience of governmental decrees, or a general strike. I would add to these three categories of direct action, two others which Carter refers to as components of non-violent, but not direct, action - constitutional action and propaganda, such as deputations and public meetings, and symbolic action, such as marches and fasts.

Where direct action is non-violent, that is, non-violent direct action, the term is interchangeable with non-violent action. I prefer to include "direct" in the term to emphasize the "directness" of the operation, for this appears to be essential to a full understanding of the term. Following Sharp, non-violent action, or non-violent direct action, is a generic term used to include such phenomena as non-violent resistance (Satyagraha) and passive resistance. Protests without recourse to violence may be made by either acts of commission (e.g., Negroes entering white section of a bus terminal) or acts of omission (e.g., refusals to load ships bound for the Netherlands East Indies). In addition to possible differences in specific techniques of non-violent direct action, there are also variations in the motives for its use, the

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33 April Carter, Direct Action (London: Peace News, n.d.), p. 34. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Conscientious objection is not necessarily illegal and should not ordinarily be classed as "action against the state".

34 Ibid. See Appendix A.

35 Sharp, "Definitions of a Few Key Terms", op. cit., p. 65.
attitude held toward the opponent, the objectives to be gained, and the relation of non-violent action to other techniques of action.  

Historically, the different kinds of non-violent direct action have had distinct meanings. In Gandhian thought, a distinction is made between non-violent resistance and passive resistance, the former being what was practised by the Indians in South Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century and the latter what was practised by the suffragettes in Great Britain at roughly the same time.

"Non-violent resistance" or "satyagraha" is defined by Gandhi as "soul force pure and simple", or "the force which is born of Truth and Love or non-violence." Its essential element is its refusal to sanction cooperation with what is regarded as evil. This refusal, as well as touching the heart of the opponent, may act on him coercively, but if so, the non-violent resister, according to Gandhi, should do what he can to reduce the element of coercion. He may even renounce concessions which have been made to him if he believes that they represent the fruits of coercion. Non-violent resistance is not a tactic, but a way of life: "Non-violence is a universal law acting under all circumstances. Disregard of it is the surest way to destruction". It is the continual pursuit of truth by non-violent means. It is undertaken for the good of society. It has regard for both ends and means. It must come from the heart as well.

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36 Ibid., p. 66.
38 Ibid., p. 109.
as from the brain: "Non-violence to be a creed has to be all-pervasive. I cannot be non-violent about one activity of mine and violent about others. That would be a policy, not a life-force". 40

"Passive resistance", on the other hand, is not a way of life but a tactical weapon. Passive resistance might appear to bring about results similar to those of non-violent resistance, but it does so, argues Gandhi, without the use of "soul force", without the weapon of love, and without the total and future rejection of violence. 41

In current usage, the terms "non-violent resistance" and "passive resistance" appear to be used interchangeably, with non-violent resistance being the more commonly used of the two. Martin Luther King refers to non-violence as being adoptable as both a technique and a way of life and most contemporary writers would agree with this duality. King says that while "nonviolence in the truest sense is not a strategy that one uses simply because it is expedient at the moment.... the willingness to use nonviolence as a technique is a step forward". 42 Unlike Gandhi, who often spoke with contempt of those who used passive resistance, 43 King recognizes that its tactical practitioners may, in the future, become converted to


43 On at least several occasions, however, Gandhi said, "It did not matter if non-violence was accepted as a policy provided such acceptance was sincere and honest". M.K. Gandhi, Prayer Speech, Feb. 5, 1947, quoted in Pyarelal, Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase, Vol.I (Ahmedabad:Navajivan Publishing House, 1956), p.534.

I am grateful to Kenneth Rivett for bringing this to my attention. See also M.K. Gandhi, Young India, April 10, 1930, quoted in Gene Sharp,
non-violence as a way of life. He seems not to object to coercion as such.

**Civil disobedience.** The term "civil disobedience" was first used by Thoreau to explain his refusal to pay his poll tax to a government which he considered to be engaged in an unjust war. When unjust laws or an unjust system exist, the citizen has three choices open to him: he can obey the laws; he can try to change the laws, while obeying them until he has succeeded; he can break the laws immediately. At the point at which the government no longer acted justly, the moral man, Thoreau argued, had to refuse to cooperate with it. One way to do this was to break the tax laws and be prepared to go to jail for a cause that is morally right.

For Gandhi, the "breach of unmoral statutory enactments", was another step in a satyagraha campaign. He often used the term "civil resistance" for "civil disobedience", but in both cases he emphasized that "civil" meant non-violent or civilized, as well as public. As the most drastic form of non-cooperation, it had to be used with extreme care; whereas other forms of non-cooperation could be practised safely by the masses, civil

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43(Ctd)


disobedience, presupposing as it did a usual obedience to the laws, could be practised "only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance at any rate." It could be directed against particular unjust laws or against general laws of the unjust state; it could be undertaken by groups or by individuals; it could be offensive or defensive.

With respect to the latter distinction, Gandhi said:

Aggressive, assertive or offensive civil disobedience is non-violent, wilful disobedience of laws of the state whose breach does not involve moral turpitude and is undertaken as a symbol of revolt against the State [e.g., refusing to pay taxes] ....Defensive civil disobedience, on the other hand, is involuntary or reluctant non-violent disobedience of such laws as are in themselves bad and obedience to which would be inconsistent with one's self respect or human dignity [e.g., picketing in violation of orders prohibiting same]....

Civil disobedience can be defined as non-violent direct action taken in open defiance of a positive law for the express purpose of opposing governmental policy. It is a protest against laws, policies or decisions of the government in order to frustrate or change the laws or policies. The individual or group may violate a law by a positive act of commission, such as trespassing on private property, or by a negative act of omission, such as refusing to pay income taxes to support a war economy.

Civil disobedience may include forms of non-cooperation, such as refusal to comply with a policeman's orders to leave certain premises, but not all forms of non-cooperation violate a law, such as certain instances of black bans on particular ships. Civil disobedience is a type of non-violent direct action, since the latter may include categories of action which do not involve law-breaking. Sometimes forms of non-violent

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direct action which were not launched as acts of civil disobedience may become such. Should a positive law be invoked by the authorities which the activists had thought would not be, the act becomes one of civil disobedience if the activists decide to continue with their protest at the price of breaking the law; for example, if the police invoked an anti-parade ordinance after a peaceful march had been undertaken, an act of civil disobedience would occur once it was decided to continue the march. The situation may be complicated within a federal system of government, where an act could be one of civil disobedience to local laws but not to the federal laws.

The law which is broken may be the actual object of dissent or symbolic of the object of dissent; in the latter instance, although the law which is broken is not itself regarded as oppressive, it is symbolic of the political situation which is so regarded. Civil disobedience is usually used when other remedies of protest do not exist or have been exhausted. It is used when the activists believe that legal devices for a redress of grievances have failed; orderly changes of laws or governmental personnel have proved ineffective; the urgency of the situation makes it impractical to resort to more conventional methods. It may be used when the activists, as well as perhaps rejecting other methods on moral grounds, do not command any stores of armed weapons. It is used to create a conflict situation, so as to force the opposition into a confrontation.

When the conscious decision is made publicly to break a law as an act of protest, whatever moral, legal or rational reasons the person has for obeying laws yield to stronger reasons for not obeying a particular law. The reasons for disobeying may be similarly varied - religious
loyalty, social conscience, belief that a measure is constitutional, belief that it infringes natural rights, political expediency. In each instance, however, there is an obedience to an obligation regarded as higher than the obligation to keep the law from being transgressed. For the practitioners of civil disobedience, the legal order may not be the ultimate order, nor civic virtues the highest virtues.

Present theories of civil disobedience usually state that it is the "people" who decide when law breaking is justified and when it is not. This is quite different from what Neumann calls ancient or functional theories of civil disobedience, in which resistance was justified if the ruler no longer fulfilled his proper role, and medieval or natural law theories, in which resistance was justified if the ruler did not obey certain natural law precepts. Now, Neumann points out, the individual or a judiciary of the people must decide upon the validity of an act of civil disobedience.

**Political Strike.** This is a form of non-violent direct action which may also be a form of civil disobedience. It is a concerted work stoppage which is not concerned with making ordinary demands on employers for the changing or sustaining of conditions of employment, but is essentially concerned with making demands on governmental authorities for altering and redirecting policy in the political or industrial sphere. It may be characterized by its lack of any obvious industrial demands, while seeking to change or affect political events; or it may have industrial demands which can only be achieved by the government's alteration of an aspect of the political system. One writer argues that if the ends of the strike are industrial in nature, then the strike cannot be considered to be political; but he admits that classification in some cases may become a matter of controversy. 51

In any case, tactics and aims, not duration and intensity, distinguish political from other strikes. Workers may attempt to do various things: to obstruct the operation of a legislative act; to press for the removal of a law which they find objectionable; to demand the repeal of legislation which they consider to be repressive; to call for the reconsideration of some aspect of the government's policy. In calling strikes for such reasons

the trade unions are not applying economic pressure on an employer but political pressure on the government. They are demonstrating for a cause; it is not merely that they are giving publicity to a cause but rather that they are serving notice that they want their demands, in respect to that cause, complied with.

The political withdrawal of labour may take the form of either strike action (the direct downing of tools) or boycott (the refusal to handle or to produce certain goods or to operate certain services). It may be accompanied by other forms of direct action, such as mass meetings, marches or picketing; it may also be supplemented by applying direct pressure on political parties and by making direct appeals to public opinion. The tactics used to frustrate or change a law, a policy, or a decision of the government are geared to inconveniencing the government either directly or indirectly by inconveniencing a section of the community which may in turn complain to the government.
CHAPTER II

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (I) INTRODUCTION

The civil rights movement operated in a country which has a value system of democratic capitalism\(^1\) based on certain ideals, customs and institutions toward which the majority of citizens have an affective regard. Political representation, majority rule, elections, governmental responsibility to the electorate, and an economy where the means of production, distribution and exchange are in large measure privately owned and operated - these are the fundamental and sacred components of that value system. These values are for most people sacrosanct, much like the myths which MacIver calls the "value-impregnated beliefs and notions that men hold, that they live by or live for".\(^2\)

The civil rights movement operated in a country which also has formal and informal rules which determine how the system is to be run; there are rules pertaining to elections, to citizenship rights, and to the decision-

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\(^1\) Aron cites the traits which characterize democracy: "the choice of governors and the exercise of authority in conformity with a constitution; free competition among parties and individuals in election to office; and respect for personal, intellectual and public freedoms on the part of the temporary winners in such competition". Raymond Aron, "The Situation of Democracy: Western Political Institutions in the Twentieth Century", Daedalus, XC (Spring, 1961), . 353. Cole defines capitalism as "an economic system in which the greater proportion of economic life, particularly ownership of and investment in production goods, is carried on under private (i.e. non-governmental) auspices through the process of economic competition (q.v.) and the avowed incentive of profit". G.D.H. Cole, "Capitalism", in Julius Gould and William L. Kolb, eds., A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964), p.70. Cole allows for economies in which there is a degree of state intervention, e.g., welfare capitalism, protected capitalism.

making processes, as well as laws, such as those pertaining to freedom of association, and customs which make it possible for political movements to function. There are institutionalized structures through which demands for altering, modifying, or changing formal or informal rules are made, as well as channels for influencing the application of rules and regulations. Grievances are articulated and demands are enunciated and disseminated both formally and informally by political groups (such as political parties and pressure groups) and individuals to authorities who are capable of adjudicating among the conflicting demands made upon them by the various groups within the society.

3 "The articulate organization of society's active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of governmental power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holding divergent views." Sigmund Neumann, "Toward a Comparative Study of Political Parties", in Sigmund Neumann, ed., Modern Political Parties: Approaches to Comparative Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p.396. Italics in the original.

4 Organized groups, drawn or recruited from larger groups or classes, which collectively pursue common political objectives without themselves trying to become the government. They operate in a cultural setting with a particular value system and specific rules of operation; they have a formally structured leadership and membership, a common set of interests, methods of pressure, and political objectives; they try to influence the policies and decisions of public bodies, be they executive, legislative, judicial or administrative bodies, in the manner they consider to be most effective; that is, either by direct pressure on the authorities or on political parties or by an appeal to public opinion. Some useful works on pressure groups include: Stuart Chase, Democracy Under Pressure: Special Interests vs. the Public Welfare (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1945); Louis Coleridge Kesselman, The Social Politics of FEPC: A Study in Reform Pressure Movements (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948); Lester W. Milbrath, The Washington Lobbyists (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1963); Harmon Zeigler, Interest Groups in American Society (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964).

5 This follows Almond's formulation where he distinguishes between the interest articulation function, such as that of interest groups, and the aggregative function, such as that of political parties in power. Gabriel A. Almond, "Introduction: A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics", in Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds. The Politics of Developing Areas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) p.16.
But the civil rights movement also operated in a country of interracial tension, beset by what Myrdal calls the "American Dilemma". This dilemma is the conflict between:

the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the "American Creed", where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and... the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal and local interests; economic, social, and sexual jealousies; considerations of community prestige and conformity; group prejudice against particular persons or types of people; and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook.

This dilemma and its accompanying tensions were exacerbated in 1954 when the Supreme Court formally declared for the integration of public educational systems.

It is not possible to date the inception of civil rights protest with accuracy; any precise date is arbitrary. To say that activists in the civil rights movement began to make certain demands on the state and federal governments after the Court announced that state laws requiring segregation in the public schools were unconstitutional, is not to imply that until then Negroes and their supporters were satisfied with the Negroes' status in the society. Nor should it be taken to mean that until then such people had refrained from using law suits, the ballot, or the pressures of politics and economics in their own behalf. Throughout Negro history, new instances of protest had repeatedly been seen as the

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7 Ibid., p.lxxi.
sign of the "New Negro", be they slave revolts, plantation rebellions, aid to runaway slaves, protest conventions, the formation of Negro organizations to fight for civil rights, black nationalist movements, or mass protest marches. The turn of the century even witnessed a


short-lived boycott of street cars in the South. Throughout American history, a fight had been waged by Negroes and their supporters against white supremacy, but after the Second World War, certain external and internal factors coalesced which made the Negroes less content with small gains in the struggle for equal rights and which made future fights more likely to succeed.

The Second World War was the second international struggle in which Negroes had participated to "make the world safe for democracy". It was fought against a theory of the master race and racial superiority which the mass of Americans had found abhorrent. The Japanese, paradoxically, had dealt a blow to the myth of white supremacy and the emerging coloured nations began to put the bones of the myth to rest. A Negro writer recalled how, after the War, she no longer felt herself a member of an American minority but of a world majority: "As a fairly self-conscious Negro, I began to feel this kinship, the feeling from the past summed up in 'aren't we all miserable?' passing to a new and happier feeling: 'Aren't we all moving ahead!'". The hope that the wartime propaganda would become peacetime reality was realized only partially. Armed forces units were

_15_ August Meier, "Boycotts of Segregated Street Cars, 1894-1906", _Phylon_, XVIII (Third Quarter, 1957), 296-97; Alan F. Westin, "Ride-In", _American Heritage_, XIII (August, 1962), 57-64. The term "New Negro" was first used by the Negro historian Alain Locke in speaking of the Negro Renaissance in the arts in the 1920's; see Margaret Just Butcher, _The Negro in American Culture: Based on Material left by Alain Locke_ (New York: New American Library, 1957), pp.132-88. The term came into prominence again at the time of the Montgomery bus boycott, although used in earlier instances; see e.g., H.C. Brearley, "The Negro's New Belligerency", _Phylon_, V (Fourth Quarter, 1944), pp.339-45. One Negro grinned when asked to comment on the term: "New Negro? It's just us old Negroes, the same old folks. It's not the 'new Negro' - it's the 'new times'. Only we know it, that's all, and the white folks haven't caught on to it yet." Quoted in George Barrett, "Jim Crow, He's Real Tired", _NYT_, Mar. 3, 1957. VI, 67.
integrated during the Korean War, improving the situation of the Negro, but just slightly. Although by 1954, coloured people in Asia and Africa were coming into their own, Negroes in America still had to face voting violations, mob action, ghettoization and job discrimination based on colour prejudice.

In the 1950's newly emergent African states convinced many doubters among the Negroes that black skin could be a race's pride and not a race's shackle. For the first time on any major scale in the experience of American Negroes, black men were respected, listened to, and courted. Negroes could say: "Those Africans standing up there in the UN, they make me proud"; "If black people anywhere in the world make a significant impact and thereby win respect and status, I share in some of it"; "The average Negro sees that the whole world is forced to recognize and readjust its attitudes toward the colored world; the rising black man is the theme of his thinking....".

Race prejudice after 1945 was no longer a private, domestic matter, as repeated interchanges in the halls of the United Nations bore witness. Many people were prepared to interpret the Negroes' struggle as part of the coloured people's struggle against colonialism and as a part of the Cold War


17 Almost twenty years earlier, Haile Selassie, at the time of the Ethiopian War, appeared "as the symbolic defender not only of his country but of Negro self-respect everywhere". Isaacs, op.cit., p.150. See also remarks of a Negro informant, in John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), pp. 214-15.

and American competition for the undivided loyalties of the coloured people of the world. Myrdal had warned even before the Second World War was over that America was "free to choose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity". With two-thirds of the world coloured, the American government had to be sensitive to its own colour problem when it tried to sell the American Creed abroad.

Diplomats sent to the United States by the new African states often had to face the indignities suffered by American Negroes: failure to be served in restaurants; difficulties in securing housing; crude and obscene shouts from the sidelines. Diplomatic embarrassments called for apologies for racial incidents from state officials, heads of federal departments and presidents themselves, many of whom would have hesitated to apologize to American Negroes had the latter been the victims. Such incidents served to magnify national problems of colour to the outside world.

By 1954, the domestic status of the American Negro had changed. Migration to the North, urbanization, unionization, and increased educational and job opportunities had bettered the life of the average Negro, bringing him closer to the ethos embodied in the American Dream and the rags-to-riches myth. Migration to the North and West, caused by changes in southern agriculture and by northern demands for unskilled labour in industry, brought with it a greater degree of political influence for Negroes in northern and national circles, particularly in trade unions; but such influence was still very low. The move to the cities, both in the

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19 Myrdal, op. cit., p. 1022. Italics in the original.
North and in the South, had significant implications: it increased the
number of Negroes able and willing to use the ballot; it diversified
Negro occupational patterns; it increased the earning power of many Negroes;
it made better systems of education available to more Negroes.

With the increase in occupational differentiation in the Negro
population, a sizeable middle-class began to emerge which conformed more
to the white middle-class in attitudes, values, standards of living, and
aspirations than did the respective white and black lower-classes.

Unaccepted by white middle-class society and detached from Negro lower-
class society, the "Black Bourgeoisie" sought to break out of its social
limbo and become part of the white American society. It is probably this
class which Martin Luther King had in mind when he suggested that as the
Negro's standard of living increased, he took a new look at himself,
found new self-respect and a new sense of dignity: "And so the tension
which we are witnessing in race relations today can be explained, in
part, by the revolutionary change in the Negro's evaluation of himself,

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20 By 1960, Negroes, who formed 10.6% of the population, were 73%
urban and 27% rural. 60% were living in the South, 34% in the
North, 6% in the West. By 1960, possibly 5% were illiterate
as compared with 11% in 1947. Since World War I, Negroes had
increasingly entered institutions of higher education; propor-
tionately fewer Negroes than whites were going to college, but
from 1947-61, the number of non-whites in college rose at a
faster rate than the number of whites. The proportion of Negro
males in unskilled or service jobs, including farm labour, was
reduced to 40% by 1960; of Negro women, to less than 60%. The
number of Negro skilled and semi-skilled workers doubled between
1947-61; but proportionately fewer non-whites entered professional,
managerial, or other white collar, or skilled groups. See Marion
*Monthly Labor Review*, LXXXV (December, 1962), 1359-65. See also

21 For a discussion of the Negro middle class, see E. Franklin Frazier,
and his determination to struggle and sacrifice until the walls of segregation have finally been crushed by the battering rams of surging justice.”

Against this picture of the improvement in the Negroes' economic position, stood other factors: during the 1950's, Negro families earned three-fifths less than white families; Negroes were disproportionately concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs; Negroes were disproportionately unemployed; Negroes were discriminated against in jobs both in the North and in the South. Even though improvements came, a Negro in American society was still at a disadvantage.

The disadvantages of being a Negro did not appear suddenly; they had been below the surface for years, but most whites had been blind to them and most Negroes had not been able or willing to attack them with vigour. Agitation by Negroes, by radicals and liberals of both races, and by civil rights organizations had marked the scene for many years. But agitation was given a boost by the Supreme Court in the 1954 school desegregation decision; before, civil rights activists believed themselves morally right, and in 1954 the Supreme Court said that they were legally right as well. The decision received widespread publicity, discussion and praise. Its message was forever impressed upon the minds and the outlook of the Negroes. It nullified some of the legal norms of an area which contained more than fifty million people. The Court, so

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22 Part of an address delivered at the First Annual Institute on Non-Violence and Social Change, Montgomery, Alabama, December, 1956, reported in Martin Luther King, Jr., "Facing the Challenge of a New Age", Phylon, XVIII, (First Quarter, 1957), 27.


far as the civil rights movement was concerned, had hit a final fatal blow to legal segregation. 25

However, the Supreme Court's decision helped to create a new climate of opinion in the civil rights movement, not so much because of what it said, but because of the failure of the state governments to implement it both in letter and in spirit. The decision created disharmony between legality and actuality; for while the Court had committed the country to a new position on the race question, resistance, compromise and moderation in the South, where the decision was applicable, left the Negro with little to show for it. Grudging acceptance, studied indifference, and legal circumvention were the responses to the decision. When legal efforts to preserve segregation failed, states attempted to guarantee de facto segregation by building more Negro schools, by establishing private school systems, by proposing delaying tactics which, in effect, concealed segregation, and by shifting the burden of transferring schools to the individual school child. To these official responses were added the unofficial responses of economic and physical reprisals and social ostracism directed against whites and Negroes who were prepared to abide by the Court decision. Resistance insured that by the 1960 school year, only 27.3 per cent, of the biracial school districts in the South had begun to integrate, and even here, less than 10 per cent of the Negro children in the area were in integrated situations. The integrated situations were, moreover, in the urban

25 For a discussion of subsequent court decisions in fields other than education which were favourable to Negroes, see Jack Greenberg, Race Relations and American Law (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).
centres of border states; "hard-core" states, by delaying contrivances and official and unofficial intimidation and harassment, rejected compliance with the Court's decision. 26

The civil rights movement was launched in its active phase when the arrest of a middle-aged Negro seamstress in December 1955 for refusing to vacate her seat for a white bus passenger sparked off economic reprisals by the Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama. Almost all of the city's fifty thousand Negroes agreed to the action suggested by Negro civic and ministerial leaders - that they walk, join car pools, or stay at home rather than ride the buses. In protesting against the humiliating second-class treatment meted out to one of their race, they intended to "make it clear to the white folks that we will not accept this type of treatment any longer". 27 After the failure of negotiations with city authorities to resolve their differences, they settled into the first successful, large-scale application of non-violent direct action to an American situation.

Given the strain within the society and the growth of the generalized belief of equal rights for Negroes, Montgomery's boycott may have been unexpected but it was not altogether unlikely. The spark of initiation, be it lighted spontaneously or by premeditation, had fed on past grievances and past demands. Early in 1955, a high school student in Montgomery had registered a protest similar to that of the Negro seamstress,


27 Quoting E.D. Nixon, who spearheaded the boycott idea, in King, Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story, op. cit., p.35.
when she also refused to move to the back of a city bus. The arrest had similarly aroused Montgomery's Negro community, but proposals made at the time for a boycott did not develop. Biracial talks with the City Commission failed, as Negro demands for a statement of seating policy and more courteous treatment from bus drivers were turned down.

When asked why the boycott arose in Montgomery in December, 1955, Martin Luther King offered some possible explanations: the hope engendered by the 1954 Supreme Court decision; the long history of injustice on Montgomery's buses; the people's weariness of oppression; the appearance of a new Negro leadership to revitalize the divided community. Other leaders of the boycott simply said: "the straw which broke the camel's back". Having seen the futility of negotiations in earlier instances, the leaders this time suggested the use of direct action to supplement their talks.

From its inception the boycott had a middle-class religious tone.

The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), the ad hoc organization

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28 NYT, Mar. 19, 1955, p.36.
30 Ibid., p.53.
whom directed the boycott, consisted of ministers, teachers, businessmen and lawyers. The cars used to replace the buses were driven by the middle-class; the leadership operated primarily through church pulpits, the tactics and objectives of the boycott were disseminated through mass meetings, highly religious in character, which were held in Negro churches.

The chance appointment of Martin Luther King, a newly-arrived, young Baptist minister who had not had an opportunity to make enemies within the divided Negro community, brought forth a leader who had made an "intellectual pilgrimage to nonviolence". As the child victim of southern prejudice, he had come to regard racial injustice and economic injustice as two sides of the same coin. As a theological student, he had been exposed to Thoreau's "Essay on Civil Disobedience" and the author's code of refusing to cooperate with an evil system; to Haußchenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis* with its emphasis on the social as well as on the religious gospel; to the pacifism of A.J. Muste; to the glorification of power expounded by Nietzsche; to the dialectic of Hegel; and to the social ethics of Reinhold Niebuhr. He had come into contact with the works of Marx and Lenin; and while he had rejected what he considered to be the Communists' materialistic conception of history, their ethical relativism, and their political totalitarianism, he had been challenged by their concern with problems of social justice.

But the decisive influence came from Gandhi, who appeared to blend the power of love with a concern for social reform in his emphasis on


33 Ibid., p. 71.
nonviolence. King became convinced that non-violent resistance was the soundest and most powerful weapon that an oppressed people could use in their fight for justice. When he was called upon to lead the Montgomery bus boycott only two years after he had finished his formal training, he was in a position to put his intellectual tenets to the practical test.

King led the boycott in the spirit of a withdrawal of cooperation from an evil system. He laid down the code which he asked the membership to adopt:

We will take direct action against injustice without waiting for other agencies to act. We will not obey unjust laws or submit to unjust practices. We will do this peacefully, openly, cheerfully because our aim is to persuade. We adopt the means of nonviolence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts. We will always be willing to talk and seek fair compromise, but we are ready to suffer when necessary and even risk our lives to witness to the truth as we see it. 34

If minister and professional people composed the bulk of the organizing staff and provided the core of drivers of alternative transportation, all classes within the Negro community provided the walkers. The boycott, King said, cut across class lines: "Men and women who had been separated from each other by false standards of class were now singing and praying together in a common struggle for freedom and human dignity." 35

34 Ibid., p.176

35 Ibid., p.68.
On the side of direct action, the MIA had the problems of running a boycott and of countering the manoeuvres of the city authorities. It had to set up and provide alternative means of transportation, finance car pool operations, and keep up the morale of its supporters. When the Association's limited demands were turned down, it broadened its objectives into an attack, through the federal courts, on bus segregation itself. It considered that it had been forced into this general attack by the intransigence of the white community and of the city officials, who refused negotiation while supporting intimidation. During the year of the boycott, when no federal court had spoken, the Negroes of Montgomery had to face the authorities' response: nuisance arrests of protest leaders for minor traffic violations; the questioning and intimidation of car pool drivers and other boycott activists; the arrest and conviction of 115 participants under a 1921 state statute, originally intended to deal with labour disputes.

On the legal side, it was not until June 1956 that a federal court ruled that bus segregation was in violation of the due process and equal protection clauses of the Constitution, and not until December that the ruling was made applicable to Montgomery. Demands that had been made

Initially the demands were for: a "first-come, first-served" rule under which Negroes would continue to board at the rear and whites at the front, but once the seating was established it would remain fixed; greater courtesy on the part of the bus drivers; the hiring of Negro drivers for routes serving predominantly Negro areas. *Ibid.*, p.52.


*Browder v. Gayle*, 142 F. Supp. 707 (1956); upheld by the Supreme Court in *Gayle v. Browder*, 352 U.S. 525 (1956). For other Supreme Court cases on bus segregation, see *Flemming v. South Carolina Electricity and Gas Co.*, 351 U.S. 901 (1956); for efforts of the city of Montgomery to circumvent the Supreme Court decisions, see *Montgomery v. Montgomery City Lines*, reported in I *Race Relations Law Reporter* [hereafter *RRLR*] 534-46(1956); II *RRLR* 121-23 (1957).
on the city were, in effect, agreed to by the federal government, and the experience of Montgomery made it clear that the strong arm of the federal law could be used by civil rights activists to break the yoke of unconstitutional state laws.

Both the courts and the streets gave the Negroes cause to keep the boycott going – the legal victories contributing to a new sense of hope and the method of non-violent direct action acting as a cohesive element in the divided community. The method turned out to be a form of protest in which all classes could participate. It required neither college degrees nor trade training and was available to both the highest and the lowest income earners. Its acceptance need not have been based on any philosophical precepts or any knowledge of Gandhi. During the boycott, hymn-singing Negroes packed church halls in Montgomery twice a week, vowed to continue their protest against oppression, and renewed their dedication to non-violent resistance. King recognized that most of the participants "did not believe in non-violence as a philosophy of life, but because of their confidence in their leaders and because non-violence was presented to them as a simple expression of Christianity in action, they were willing to use it as a technique". 39

To religious people like the Montgomery Negroes, it was important to be told by their ministers that they were playing the role of God's children; the success of their method would prove they were applying it correctly.

The boycott foreshadowed trends which other non-violent direct action protests spelled out in full. It showed that legal battles take

39 King, 
time and money and that protests need measures of direct action to
make an immediate impression on the people concerned - both the active
participants and the audience watching them. By moving the fight for
their rights into the streets, the Negroes were able to air their
grievances to the world outside Montgomery. With the colour question
one of international concern, the city became an international incident
which the domestic and foreign press, and radio and television were
prepared to cover. The sight of thousands of Negroes - old women weighed
down with their parcels, young children bundled up against the cold,
teenagers in animated conversation - quietly and with dignity trudging
the streets or waiting at a central depot to be picked up by one of the
emergency cars pricked the conscience of many who saw or read about them.
The occasional outburst of violence directed against some of the parti­
cipants and the bombing of King's home was good copy for the mass media
and ensured for the Negroes the publicity which they needed.

The boycott also pointed up the new role which the white Christian
church was coming to play. Financial, moral and symbolic support came
not only from national civil rights and civil liberties groups which had
been combatting racial discrimination for decades but also from the
national bodies of some of the Christian churches. From past silence,
these now showed a willingness to take a more forthright stand on the
civil rights question.

The boycott also revealed the dollar and cents pressure for settlement

40 The southern press, however, when it did mention the boycott,
chided the Negroes for taking matters into their own hands; but
most often it pursued a policy of silence on events in Montgomery,
perhaps in the hope that the new tactics might then disappear.
On newspaper views of the coverage of integration incidents, see
report of convention of American Society of Newspaper Editors,
NYT, Apr. 20, 1956, p. 11; Apr. 21, 1956, p. 8.
of the dispute from businesses which were losing money from suspended Negro trade, from the bus lines which lost $750,000 for the year, and from industries which could not attract new monies to areas where there was racial tension. 41

On the negative side, the boycott resulted in an effort of southern congressmen to smear the protest as a Communist plot, the work of "outside agitators" who had come to the city to stir up the contented Negroes. 42 But even in a decade of fear, characterized as an age of "McCarthyism", few persons in the federal government appeared to take these allegations seriously. The federal government was ambiguous in its attitude to the boycott. President Eisenhower assumed a stand of cryptic neutrality and refused to evaluate the boycott publicly. He reiterated one of his favourite themes – that only time and education could bring about the spiritual change needed to end the problem of racial discrimination: "It is difficult through law and force to change a man's heart". 43 However, some of the administrators around the president were aware of the significance of events in Montgomery and used them to prod Congress into action on the president's proposals to create a civil rights commission. 44

The boycott foreshadowed a solidarity and resolve among southern Negroes that few whites had thought possible. It showed that ties of

42 See, e.g., Forrester, Congressional Record [Hereafter CR], 102: 3208 (Feb. 23, 1956); see also debate, CR, 102: 3215-59 (Feb. 23, 1956).
43 NYT, Sept. 6, 1956, p. 10.
colour could cut across class lines. But above all, the boycott showed the deep resentment which Negroes felt at being regarded as second class citizens. The will to protest was there ready to be called upon; and evidenced by fifty thousand persons refusing to ride buses for one year - for mass protests cannot emerge out of contentedness.

The boycott also foreshadowed the problem of peaceful integration once the federal courts had decided questions of civil rights. Five weeks of sporadic incidents of violence against Negroes followed the ending of the boycott; it was not until one year later that a consistent pattern of bus integration had been established. But if the boycott left traces of bitterness and some hardening of the lines of resistance among the whites, it showed the possibilities for social change without major outbreaks of violence.

The Montgomery bus boycott gave more than moral sustenance to the civil rights movement; it also established a pattern of protest. The choice of methods of presenting demands, as well as the choice of channels through which they will be presented, are not lucky guesses which the leadership makes. Tradition, the availability of some channels and the inaccessibility of others, the possibility of curtailing leadership, of repressing some methods, and so on, enter into the choice.

Montgomery was illustrative of an operation occurring simultaneously on two levels, one of direct action and another of legalism. Montgomery served notice that litigation alone was not a meaningful process in the struggle for equal rights. The Negroes of the city made it clear that they would use their bodies to demand rights which they believed to be theirs to enjoy. The ritual of protest helped not only to keep the
movement together but also helped to demonstrate the massed strength of the movement. 45

Following upon Montgomery, a Negro leadership began to emerge in the South less dependent than before upon the traditional civil rights organizations. Some were young ministers, many in their twenties, secular in outlook, and preachers of both the social and the religious gospel. While the church had always been among the most important Negro institutions, 46 controlled by the Negroes themselves, it now assumed more influence on secular matters. "The Negro minister could no longer be interested solely in 'gettin' the Negro in Heaven'; he had to be interested in 'advancing the Race'." 47 In 1957, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (originally called the Southern Negro Leaders Conference on Nonviolent Integration, then changed to SCLC) was organized, with King as its first president, to consider ways of using non-violent direct action to desegregate the southern social structure. Composed largely of southern ministers, SCLC contained many trained disciples of non-violence,

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Hobsbawm makes the point that modern social movements are lacking in contrived rituals and that content rather than form acts as the cohesive element. However, he continues, form plays a far more important role in primitive social movements. It would seem that Negro communities in the South, the least modern section in the United States, go in for ritual more than do northern communities. Similarly, rural communities go in for more ritual than do urban communities. See E.J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp.150-74.

46 The Negro church had been the most significant inter-racial meeting place as a result of other buildings in the South being segregated by law. Since in the South the Negro could not participate in integrated forms of community life, the church became a far more important institution than in different circumstances of the North. The role of the Negro church, as a refuge in a hostile white land, is brilliantly set out in E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Church in America (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964).

including some who had worked in India. Complementing the new leadership in the South, the nature of the dissent and the quality of the dissenters changed. After the failure of the Supreme Court's decision to be implemented, there was less reliance upon legal battles and more upon action in the streets. The oldest and largest of the civil rights organizations, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), had relied primarily upon three methods: legal approach through the courts; lobbying of legislatures; and education of the general public on the inequities of Negro life. Dramatic episodes, starting with the Montgomery bus boycott, indicated that Negro unrest was manifesting itself through channels other than those used by the NAACP. In 1956, Negro students at a South Carolina college boycotted classes in protest against a state resolution calling for an investigation of NAACP activity on campus. Bus boycotts were


49 Founded in 1909 and initially supported by the Negro "talented tenth" and middle-class white liberals, the NAACP had never been a mass organization. In its main form of activities, it reflected the composition of its predominantly middle-class Negro membership of 400,000. Its goal was "to end racial segregation in all public aspects of American life". See National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, This is the NAACP (New York: NAACP, 1962). See also Langston Hughes, Fight for Freedom: The Story of the NAACP (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1962).

50 NYT, Apr. 10, 1956, p.20.
conducted in some cities in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. Inter-racial conferences were held, in violation of laws forbidding whites and Negroes to mingle in public places. Race relations institutes sponsored seminars on the use of non-violent direct action. In 1957, thousands of civil rights activists from thirty states met in Washington, D.C., for a Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom in observance of the third anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision outlawing segregation in the public schools. In 1958 and 1959, ten thousand and thirty thousand people, respectively, massed in Washington, D.C., from all over the country on Youth Marches for Integrated Schools to demand more vigorous action from the federal government. In Tuskegee, Alabama, Negro residents boycotted city merchants in protest over the efforts of the state legislature, which feared the potential Negro voting strength, to gerrymander Negro voters out of the city limits; this was another instance of supplementing legal action by direct action.

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52 See, e.g., the annual conference of the Alabama Council on Human Relations, ibid., Feb. 12, 1956, p.86.


54 Ibid., May 18, 1957, p.1. Police estimates put the numbers at fifteen thousand, while the pilgrimage leaders set them at twenty-seven thousand.

55 Ibid., Oct. 26, 1958, p.76; Apr. 19, 1959, p.64.

The civil rights movement preferred non-violent direct action to the conventional pressure group methods of such organizations as the NAACP as well as to methods of defensive violence which were being suggested by some people at the time. The movement was optimistic about the possibility of its demands bringing about certain political changes. For in addition to high regard for the federal judiciary, the civil rights movement recognized the significance, however small, of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which was the first piece of civil rights legislation passed since the Reconstruction period. After extensive watering down of the Eisenhower Administration's original proposals, and after lengthy debate in the Senate, an act emerged restricted to: (1) protection of Negro voting rights by injunction in the federal courts at the request of an individual or the Department of Justice; (2) provision for a Civil Rights Commission to investigate problems in this field; and (3) provision for a new Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice. While the Act disappointed many persons in the civil rights movement, it did serve notice that civil rights were subjects for legislative action. Though it offered little in the way of meaningful change for the majority of American Negroes, the act did indicate that where there was support

57 The best statement of views on defensive violence are found in Robert F. Williams, Negroes with Guns, Marc Schleifer, ed., (New York: Marzani & Munsell, 1962). Williams, as president of the Monroe, North Carolina, NAACP, had spoken of the use of violence in 1959, only to be dismissed from his post by the national headquarters of the Association.

for civil rights legislation, it was bi-partisan.

However, because both major political parties contained sections which opposed the demands of the civil rights movement, the movement saw neither of the parties as its particular champion. Eisenhower, a Republican president, never appeared to be enthusiastic about the question of civil rights, as his role in the legislative battles on the 1957 Civil Rights Act indicated. In addition, his handling of the Little Rock crisis contributed to Negro discontent with the Republican Party. When seven children courageously attempted to attend a formerly all-white high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, they were threatened by mob violence. When it became clear that the state and local authorities were unwilling to safeguard the students' federal rights, as defined by the courts, Eisenhower ordered federal troops to the city. But his half-hearted and dilatory handling of the situation disheartened many Negroes, who then began to argue that the civil rights movement should not depend on support from political parties. While there was support among Negroes for northern Democrats, there was none for those in the South who had been actively denying the right to vote to the Negro ever since southern Democrats returned to positions of power after the Civil War. On the Republican side, southern Republicans did not offer Negroes a meaningful alternative to the Democratic incumbents; while northern Republicans

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were usually pitted against Democrats able to make a higher bid for the Negro vote. 60

In resorting to the new tactics of non-violent direct action, the civil rights movement remained faithful to the American Dream; where it fell out was with earlier efforts to realize the Dream. The conventional and legal methods of agitating for change had not worked, so the movement decided to try something else. Lacking money and with little access to the corridors of power, the civil rights movement called upon its richest resource - its numerical strength.

CHAPTER III

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (2): FROM GREENSBORO TO ALBANY

Introduction

Personal discontent, in order to grow into social unrest, must be widespread; accidents and chance occurrences affect movements by accelerating general tendencies which are present already. Although four years were to elapse between the boycott in Montgomery and the start of the sit-ins, Montgomery had announced widespread discontent with the injustices of Negro life in the United States. The sit-ins, for their part, made clear the urgency of the situation.

This phase of the civil rights movement had specific, limited objectives. The activists were demanding rights of equal access to places of public accommodation, such as hotels, eating establishments, gasoline stations, theatres and sports arenas, which they alleged southern law or southern custom had denied them solely because of their race.

The protests in Montgomery had concerned the right of integrated seating arrangements on city buses. The sit-ins similarly were concerned with seating arrangements, first at lunch counters, then in other public places. As a specific campaign, the sit-ins lasted from February 1960 to May 1961; as a tactic, sit-ins were used in their original and in modified form through the period when this study closes.

Following upon the sit-ins came the Freedom Rides, with the objective of integrating seating arrangements on interstate transportation and in
interstate terminal facilities. Demonstrations in Albany, Georgia, highlighted, in one geographical setting, the various methods used to demand equal access to public accommodation.

Another essential characteristic of this phase was the transition from spontaneity to organization. The sit-ins turned spontaneous rebellion into a planned, deliberate movement of massive proportions. Spontaneity is most effective when it ignites similar situations and becomes organized into an effective bargaining unit. The first group of demonstrators had no idea that their act would spark off a mass movement; but the conditions which incensed them, incensed others as well. After the sit-ins, further direct action demonstrations were planned and directed by organizations which either had existed before 1960 or were established to meet the needs of the new kind of demonstrations.

The demonstrations during this phase showed the dual approach which activists had toward the use of non-violent direct action. For a majority of the leadership, but for a minority of the membership, non-violence was a philosophical discipline; for the majority of members it was a technique adopted as an expedient. As one weapon among many, non-violence could be abandoned when it failed to bring favourable results. Its failure in Albany posed this very problem.

In this chapter, I shall trace the main events of the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, and the demonstrations in Albany. When analysing the movement, I shall follow Smelser and bear in mind four aspects of the mobilization of the participants for action: (1) the temporal phases of the movement; (2) the aims and motives of leadership and membership; (3) the
success or failure of specific tactics; (4) the overall success or failure of the movement. At the same time, I shall examine the reaction to the movement, with particular emphasis on the specific behaviour and general encouragement or discouragement by the authorities.

Temporal Phases

Sit-ins—It is helpful to think of the period 1960-64 as a subsection of the civil rights movement to which Smelser's six determinants of collective behaviour can be applied. Three of the factors—structural conduciveness, strain, and the growth of a generalized belief—remain substantively what they were for the analysis of the Montgomery bus boycott. In the case of the sit-ins, a fourth factor, the precipitating factor, occurred in February 1960, when four Negro college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, were refused restaurant service at a variety store which did not serve Negroes. Instead of taking their trade elsewhere, to a store outside the downtown shopping area where Negroes could be served, they decided to remain seated until they were waited on. Relay groups of similarly well-dressed and well-behaved students from the same college waited their turn to sit quietly at the all-white lunch counter until the store would agree to change its policy to serving everyone regardless of colour.

The demonstrations spread to another of the city's variety stores; within a week of the initial protests, which had received a fair amount of publicity on radio, television, and in the press, similar demonstrations

\[NYT\], Feb. 3, 1960, p.22.
were being held in two other cities in North Carolina. Every day, new
cities in the state became the scene of lunch counter sit-ins; within two
weeks, demonstrations had spread to two other southern states. Sympathy
demonstrations were introduced in the North at variety stores which had
southern chain outlets. As the movement spread, no state could expect
to remain immune. By March, sit-ins were occurring in at least thirty-
eight cities in at least seven southern states, as well as in at least
six northern states. By September 1961, every southern and border state
had been hit by over seventy thousand active participants.2

The activists, primarily southern Negro students, would occupy seats
at lunch counters, sit quietly, and refuse to leave until they were served,
the counter was closed, they were arrested, or a fixed period of time had
elapsed for them to have made their point. As the movement progressed,
the sit-ins were accompanied by boycotts, picketings, parades, and marches;
some activists also added the refinement of going to jail rather than pay
court assessed fines.

The sit-ins met with mixed responses, including some outbreaks of
hostility. The official reply of city and state authorities varied to
include doing nothing, examining the demonstrators' grievances, or arresting
the sit-in participants. When arrests were made, as they were in the cases
of five per cent of the participants, state courts usually found the
defendants guilty. But from the first of a series of decisions handed
down in 1961, the United States Supreme Court spoke out in favour of the
demonstrators.

2 Based on figures in a special report of the Southern Regional Council,
The Student Protest Movement: A Recapitulation (Atlanta: Southern
Regional Council, 1961).
According to progress reports issued by variety stores, by October 1960, 112 southern and border communities had integrated lunch counters, which number had risen to 125 by January, 1961. By September, 1961, the Southern Regional Council listed 103 key cities which had integrated lunch counter facilities.

What began as a protest against segregated lunch counters spread, at various times, to include attacks on segregated parks, swimming pools, theatres, movies, restaurants, churches, libraries, museums, art galleries, beaches and courthouses. Wade-ins, stand-ins, skate-ins, kneel-ins, vote-ins, and the like were variations on the theme of sitting down at the lunch counter of a store, asking for service, and waiting even after it had been refused.

**Freedom Rides.**—As the rarity value of the lunch counter sit-ins began to wear off, or as the demonstrators succeeded in their particular efforts, new forms of protest and new objects of attack emerged. In May, 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) announced plans to sponsor a series of integrated bus trips through sections of the South in order to demonstrate the illegal operation of racially segregated interstate carriers and terminal facilities. After formally notifying President Kennedy of their intentions, thirteen white and Negro CORE members headed south by bus on what James Farmer, CORE's national director and a participant in the project, called a non-violent sit-in on wheels.

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5 *NYT*, May 5, 1961, p.17.
The first of the CORE Freedom Rides, which set off from Washington, D.C., for New Orleans, Louisiana, was treated with no discrimination or show of force until it arrived in Alabama, where the bus was stoned, set afire and attacked. Without assurances of local police protection, CORE was forced to cancel the remainder of the trip and the thirteen riders returned home.\(^{5A}\) After this initial display of violence, volunteers from all over the country contacted CORE offices and asked to be sent on future rides. A second group of college students affiliated with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) set off from Nashville, Tennessee. Although given protective custody when the bus reached Birmingham, they were met by mob action in Montgomery.\(^6\) Federal marshals were dispatched to Alabama to guarantee safe passage through the state of further rides. When the buses reached Jackson, Mississippi, there was no public violence, but state authorities instituted a pattern of immediate arrests of the riders on charges of breach of the peace or disorderly conduct. The riders were found guilty by the local courts and lodged appeals with the federal courts.

The two rides were followed by others, most of which were staffed by students and ministers. During the course of their travels south, the riders tested terminal facilities by entering segregated waiting rooms and seeking service at segregated lunch counters; this action prompted arrests only in Mississippi.

\(^5\text{A}^\text{ibid.}, \text{May 16, 1961, p.1; May 18, 1961, p.27.}\)

\(^6\text{ibid.}, \text{May 21, 1961, p.1.}\)
In September, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) issued new regulations to guarantee the right of integrated travel. The rides tapered off as it became more difficult to find student volunteers and as efforts were concentrated elsewhere.

**Albany, Georgia.** In January, 1961, a group of Negro leaders presented the City Commissioner with a petition asking for the desegregation of certain of the city's facilities, but their requests were ignored. In October, SNCC set up a voter registration office in Albany, as part of its general program for the South, but the Committee had little success in encouraging Negroes in the surrounding rural counties to register. The signal for demonstrations to begin was the arrest of five Negro youths who had sought service at the white lunch counter in Albany's bus terminal. These arrests were followed by those of eleven Freedom Riders who had attempted to test segregation practices at the railway station.7

A march in support of the riders, led by the newly-formed Albany Movement, was stopped on the way to the courthouse. This set off a series of non-violent mass demonstrations and mass arrests on the technical charges of disorderly conduct, obstructing traffic, and failure to obey an officer.8 Among the arrested were the Revs. Martin Luther King and Ralph Abernathy of SCLC, who had been invited to the city by the local Negro leadership; they were released on bail pending trial.

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8 *Ibid.*, Dec. 13, 1961, p. 51; Dec. 14, 1961, p. 47. Some of the student participants subsequently were suspended from college for their part in the demonstrations.
The Movement called off further demonstrations and a bus boycott and selective buying campaign, which had been started against white merchants, when the city agreed to comply with the recent ICC ruling on bus terminals and to release demonstrators who either owned property or could show proof of employment. When the city reneged on one of its concessions, selective buying and the bus boycott were re-introduced; the former tactic was less effective than the boycott, which had succeeded in curtailing operations in February. On the whole, emphasis was shifted from mass demonstrations to economic pressure, although sporadic demonstrations still continued.

Demonstrations were reintroduced in July, 1962. The new wave of demonstrations coincided with the convictions of King and Abernathy, and their choice of jail over payment of fines, assured the city of nationwide publicity. Demonstrations — marches, sit-ins and rallies — continued throughout the summer, but the city authorities refused to negotiate. Further demonstrations were marred by an outbreak of Negro violence, when Negro youngsters threw rocks and bottles at the police. Although this outbreak was unconnected with the organized protest march which had preceded it, King called for a day of penance on the part of the Movement: "We abhor violence so much that when it occurs in the ranks of the Negro community, we assume part of the responsibility for it." In August, small-scale demonstrations were introduced, but the city

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9 Ibid., Dec.15, 1961, p.29.

authorities either closed the facilities being tested or sold them to private interests. As the costs of conducting the demonstrations mounted, efforts were reshifted to legal action and voter registration, while direct action demonstrations were allowed to peter out.

The Albany demonstrations raised three major problems for the civil rights movement: (1) the enforcement of federal law by local authorities hostile to that law; (2) the peculiar operation of local justice with its special brand of jailhouse brutality which never came before the public purview; (3) the appropriate role of the federal government in local civil rights movements.

**Aims and Motives**

**Aims.** This phase of the movement was bound by a common objective - the securing of equal facilities and equal treatment for all regardless of colour in places of public accommodation. Activists wanted to show that it was not right for a business which dealt with the public to keep individuals out because they were Negroes. They wanted to show the injustice of segregation in a country which idealized equal rights for all. They said: 

"Every normal human being wants to walk the earth with dignity and abhors any and all proscriptions upon him because of race or color. In essence, this is the meaning of the sit-down protests that are sweeping this nation today."

On a more sophisticated level, the sit-ins aimed to show that

10 SCLC had spent $30,000, the Albany Movement $20,000.  

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laws or customs requiring segregated seating arrangements at commercial places made available to the public were in violation of either the letter or the spirit of Supreme Court rulings on desegregation.

The Freedom Rides sought to demonstrate the operation of racially segregated interstate carriers and terminal facilities in violation of orders of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and recent decisions of the United States Supreme Court. CORE had come to realize that litigation was not always the most efficient method of securing equal rights for Negroes. After the Supreme Court's decision in 1946 declaring state laws requiring segregation on interstate carriers unconstitutional, an integrated "Journey of Reconciliation" sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) and CORE travelled through the Upper South to challenge remaining patterns of segregated seating. When the trip met with little opposition and only one outbreak of violence, both organizations hoped that other travellers, primarily Negroes in the South, would be encouraged to practice the desegregation granted by the courts. Few travellers did. In 1955, the ICC invalidated regulations requiring segregation in facilities in waiting rooms serving interstate carriers. 

In December, 1960, the Supreme Court ruled that if an interstate carrier


12 A group which aims to settle all kinds of disputes peacefully and to reconcile warring parties. Begun after the First World War, in addition to an anti-war position it is against racial segregation and the use of violence to enforce the status quo. See Fellowship of Reconciliation, What It Is, What It Does (New York: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1963).


14 I RRLR 263, 272 (1956); II RRLR 901 (1957).
contracted to offer terminal and restaurant facilities to its passengers, racial discrimination was disallowed under provisions of the Interstate Commerce Act. In reversing the conviction for trespass of a Negro who had refused to leave the section of a terminal restaurant reserved for whites, the Court avoided the broader constitutional question of private discrimination in public accommodation; but it still left CORE with a testing ground on equal facilities used by interstate passengers as part of their travels.

Albany was characteristic of the fight born of specific grievances which was turned into a battle for more general demands for integration. Protests over the city's violation of the ICC regulation on segregated transportation terminals developed into protests over less narrow aims, but these were still within the framework of equal access to public accommodation.

All of the demonstrations aimed to arouse the nation both to the meaning of segregation and to the rebellious mood of the Negro. Non-violent direct action was regarded as a way to publicize objectives to as wide an audience and as many levels of authority as possible.

MOTIVES.—Demonstrators were motivated by a variety of reasons. The initial demonstrators in the sit-ins had been inspired by the careers of Gandhi and King, which they had read about or seen portrayed on the television; they had seen King personally when he visited Greensboro on a fund-raising tour at the time of the Montgomery bus boycott. They

16 Helen Fuller, "We are All So Very Happy", New Republic, CXLII (Apr. 25, 1960), 13.
thought Gandhi to be "a pretty amazing guy... so faithful to his people.... I began to wonder sometimes why couldn't I be a Gandhi myself, doing something for the race." 17

King gave you the feeling you'd been sitting down all the time.... He was speaking the truth. He kind of made you feel as normal people would just have to do something to better conditions. He was saying, don't hurt anyone, no revenge even while you are fighting the bad conditions.... I began to wonder why my father had never done something to change conditions. 18

King became the symbol of the assertive Negro, who, with dignity, had confronted the white community. Fishman and Solomon, in discussing the motivation and style of the students' involvement in the sit-ins, suggest that the students felt:

....the older generation has come to accept segregation and social inferiority as the natural order of things.... However, feeling that desegregation was now their right, these students experienced increasing frustration with its painfully slow implementation and with the seeming hypocrisy of adults who paid lip service to principles but took no risks for implementation. 19


19 Jacob R. Fishman and Fredric Solomon, "Youth and Social Action: I. Perspectives on the Student Sit-in Movement," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XXXIII (October, 1963), 874-75. The authors go on to conclude: For the Negroes, inferiority, submission and deprivation are their childhood experience; passive-aggressive resolutions their heritage; Christianity their moral background; the Supreme Court decision and the coming of age of new African nations part of the tempo of change. Through these influences are filtered the typical internal pressures and new ego capacities of early and late adolescence." Ibid., p.881.
The success of King's use of non-violent direct action in Montgomery convinced young Negroes that there was something that they could do for themselves along similar lines.

Other participants joined the movement for other reasons. After the Greensboro sit-in had been reported by the local and national press, students at other campuses said they felt morally obliged to show where they stood on the race question. After the first Freedom Ride had been called off, some of the students affiliated with SNCC undertook a second ride in order to prove that non-violence was a more powerful weapon than violence. Other demonstrators chose to act after rational deliberation upon the correctness or legality of equal treatment and the appropriateness of direct action tactics; others were motivated by feelings of resentment towards those who practised segregation and enthusiasm for action which could give vent to their feelings; others were motivated by the example set by their peers; others by the feeling of personal advantage to be gained by being part of an influential movement.

Tactics

Role of CORE.— As has been shown already, the initial sit-ins were inspired by the examples of King and Gandhi. However, as an organized protest technique, sit-ins were not novel to the American experience.


22 Compare with Heberle's typology of motivation, op.cit., pp.94-100.
CORE, a national organization devoted to fighting racial discrimination through the application of Gandhian techniques of non-violence, had pioneered the method in 1942 and had used it periodically since then. CORE had developed a particular interest in holding sit-ins at variety store lunch counters and for reasons similar to those advanced by the activists in 1960. Variety stores were the recipients of a good deal of Negro trade and many of them were prepared to serve Negroes at restricted stand-up sections where the food could be carried away. CORE objected to the ban on communal drinking and eating while there was no ban on communal cash registers.

CORE's following, limited in any case, was restricted primarily to northern urban centres, with only minor support coming from border or southern states. It had established few contacts with the general Negro population in the South. While it had been successful in many of the individual protests which it had sponsored, it had never been in a position to launch a national campaign even approximating the one which burst upon the South in 1960.


CORE's previous activities were unknown to both the students who launched the sit-ins and their followers. However, one of the adult leaders of the Greensboro Negro community, who, as local head of the NAACP had heard of the CORE technique, contacted CORE's national office. CORE's subsequent appearance in Greensboro and later in other cities contributed a degree of unity and cohesion which the sit-ins might have lacked otherwise. By giving instructions in the art and technique of non-violent direct action and by helping to structure a direct action campaign, CORE placed the professional stamp of its brand of direct action on the civil rights movement.

Local youth chapters of the NAACP organized and led sit-ins as well. Initially the national office of the Association had had reservations about this new form of protest, but the speed with which the tactic was adopted, as well as its initial successes, persuaded the Association to throw its resources and talents, the most extensive within the civil rights movement, behind the skeleton student organization. In many of the cities where demonstrations took place, students were affiliated with neither of the national organizations; but they could, if they wished, look to them as a model to follow or be encouraged by.

Shared Characteristics.- In pace, tactics and specific goals, the demonstrations during this phase of the civil rights movement may have varied in different locales and at different times, but they had many shared characteristics. The typical demonstrators during a sit-in would sit quietly at the lunch counter, either staring silently or reading from school texts or from the Bible, trying not to respond to taunts of any
kind. Often at their protest rallies and occasionally at the sit-ins themselves, the demonstrators would begin to sing hymns, gospels or patriotic songs, frequently using verses penned for the occasion. Out of a rich musical heritage, the Negroes used folk music to whip up enthusiasm for their cause, bolster their morale, disarm their opponents, and communicate their message to their audience.  

Their code of non-violence required peaceful conduct on their part at all times, either when left unmolested at the lunch counter, when attacked or when arrested for alleged violation of municipal or state laws. The prescribed code of conduct often included instructions for forbearance:

- Don't strike back or curse back if abused.
- Don't laugh out. Don't hold conversation with floor walkers. Don't leave your seats until your leader has given you instruction to do so.
- Don't block entrances to the stores and aisles. Show yourself friendly and courteous at all times. Sit straight and always face the counter. Report all serious incidents to your leader. Refer all information to your leader.
- Remember the teachings of Jesus Christ, Mohandas K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King.
- Remember love and nonviolence.

The appearance of the activists was often in stark contrast to that of the hecklers who came to the demonstrations. One southern newspaper

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26 These songs can be heard on: *Sit-In Songs: Songs of the Freedom Riders* (New York: Dauntless Recordings, 1962), No. DM4301; *We Shall Overcome* (New York: Folkways Records, 1961), No. FH5591.

27 Instructions drawn up by Nashville, Tennessee, students acting under the direction of the Rev. James M. Lawson, Jr., who had just spent three years in India as a Christian missionary. *NYT*, Mar. 2, 1960, p. 28.
lamented:

Here were the colored students, in coats, white shirts, ties, and one of them was reading Goethe and one was taking notes from a biology text. And here, on the sidewalk, outside, was a gang of white boys come to heckle, a ragtail rabble, slack-jawed, blue jacketed, grinning fit to kill, and some of them, God save the mark, were waving the proud and honoured flag of the Southern states in the last war fought by gentlemen. Eheu! It gave one pause.28

It was less easy for the opponents of the sit-ins to brand the participants as "beatniks", dressed as the students were in such respectable attire.

After the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides tested the durability of the non-violent code of the demonstrators. Reports of the outbreaks of violence indicated that the participants accepted the attacks without striking back. When Negro violence did break out, as it did in Albany, the non-violent leadership assumed responsibility for it. But during this phase of the movement it could be seen that for a minority of the participants non-violence was a way of life consistent with their Christian heritage and training; for the majority it was a tactical weapon that had shown itself capable of bringing favourable results.

This phase of the demonstrations also had in common the middle-class background of the participants. During the sit-ins, the activists were primarily Negro students from the South, joined on occasion by southern white students, adult members of the Negro community, white religious leaders and some white professionals and performing artists, frequently

from northern states. The Negro students were usually from middle-class background, many the children of professionals. The leadership of the students was often in the hand of divinity students or undergraduates training for one of the professions.

While the Freedom Rides differed from the sit-ins in that participation was limited to a few demonstrators, here too, most of the activists were students and ministers; for not many other supporters had the free time for a week's travel through the southern states.

The demonstrations in Albany also characterized the middle-class aspect of this phase of the movement. Albany was a city of fifty-six thousand whites and twenty-three thousand Negroes. Like other areas no longer content to remain small southern trading centres, Albany had grown on industry from the federal government and northern businesses. As a result of its changed economy, a Negro middle-class had emerged with professionals and businessmen less dependent upon the whites than the Negro working class and farmers had been.29 The Albany Movement, a coalition of Negro ministers, SNCC, the local NAACP, and a few other Negro organizations, reflected this middle-class. The president was the local osteopath, the vice president was a real estate agent, while the secretary was a retired railroad trade unionist, which in the Negro community was a high status, if a working class, position.

Students were of particular value for they did not have jobs from which they could be fired by employers who objected to their asserting themselves on the civil rights question. They were freer from constraints

than were most groups in the society. Of course, students were never free altogether from reprisals; they could be expelled from schools, and in a few instances were,[^30] by school boards which did not take kindly to their political activities. But usually students were free of economic reprisals and, in this sense, formed almost a natural alliance with Negro ministers (and in some cases Negro attorneys) whose incomes were dependent upon the Negro community.

**Variations.** Where there were variations in the demonstrations, they were the result of particular local grievances, the strength of the demonstrators, the strength of the opposition, and the quality of the Negro leadership. In Nashville, Tennessee, the sit-ins climaxed nearly two years' practice in non-violent direct action techniques by the Rev. James Lawson, who had worked as a Christian missionary in India for three years, and several other religious leaders who had been influenced by Ghandhian ideas.[^31]

The sit-ins here reflected the discipline of organizational training, and were but one tactic in a structured direct action campaign. In Orangeburg, South Carolina, where the Negro community was exceptionally well united, the sit-ins were an anti-climax to a march of more than one thousand students through the streets of the downtown shopping area.[^32]

In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the sit-ins were linked with threatened school expulsions by the state board of education and were as much a protest


against the position of neutrality taken by Southern University's Negro president as they were against the white merchants. It was in Atlanta, Georgia, where King threw his personal weight and the resources of SCLC behind the student demonstrations; this had the double effect of taking the spotlight away from the organizers and bringing national and federal attention to the campaign. In Monroe, North Carolina, the Negro leader, Robert Williams, advocated retaliation in kind against white intimidation and posed an alternative strategy to the sit-ins in other cities. In addition to variations as the result of local conditions, demonstrations often used a variety of weapons to accompany their principal one. Sit-ins might be accompanied by picketings to persuade prospective customers not to patronize stores which practised discrimination. They might be preceded by rallies to whip up group enthusiasm, or followed by marches to lay demands before the governmental authorities.

Another weapon was to accept a jail sentence rather than pay a court imposed fine. Being arrested meant a variety of things to the demonstrators. To some, it meant seeing the travesty of southern justice operate for only so long as it took to get cases before the federal courts, where, what many regarded as their constitutional right - the right to equal access to public accommodation - had a better chance of being upheld. To others, it meant an opportunity to dramatize their position on equal rights by being prepared to go to jail. These demonstrators emphasized the morality rather than the


35 Williams, *op. cit.*
legality of their action: "I could not cooperate with any facet of a society - in this case the judicial system - that perpetuates in a sense segregation and discrimination on the basis of color. If I did not accept the responsibility for my action, then in fact I would be cooperating with evil." 36

Many of the Freedom Riders also chose jail sentences as a way of insuring more publicity for their cause. During the Albany demonstrations, King and Abernathy were convicted for having violated a local street demonstration ordinance. Both men chose jail rather than pay fines and, in their view, cooperate with an unjust legal system. 37

King's arrest, let alone his jailing, assured demonstrations of nationwide publicity, for by 1962, he had come to be regarded by many people, including the federal government, as the titular leader of the Negroes. When his fines were paid anonymously two days after he had been jailed, he was robbed momentarily of being the symbol of the oppressed to whom an injustice had been done.

As had been the case with the Montgomery bus boycott, the direct action demonstrations were accompanied by litigation as a tactic. During the sit-ins, even where the participants were concerned primarily with the morality of their action, lawyers for the civil rights movement

36 Quoted in NYT, May 15, 1961, p. 23.

were concerned with the legality of their action. Jack Greenberg, head counsel for the NAACP, argued that what the activists called an unjust law the Association called an unconstitutional one. In the sit-in cases, the right which the Negroes were demanding (the right of equal access to public accommodation) had not been fully established when the demonstrations began. But as far as civil rights lawyers were concerned, state support of or acquiescence in private discrimination (in instances where public accommodation was privately owned or operated) was prohibited by the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. While legal precedent held that neither the Congress, the states, nor the courts had power under the Fourteenth Amendment to prohibit purely private acts of racial discrimination, arguments arose over what constituted "private" and what constituted "state action". The advocates for the civil rights movement did not question the sanctity of private property, but rather the allowable restrictions on its use: whether drugstores were dedicated to any other than private use; whether restaurant owners had the right to choose their guests or customers; whether a restaurant in a public parking building could refuse to serve Negroes; whether the state could enforce its own laws requiring restaurant discrimination; whether


the state could enforce conventions, but not laws, requiring discrimina-
tion. In addition, the lawyers argued that direct action demonstrations
were expressions of the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech,
historically interpreted to include free expression.

The protest campaigns in Albany also illustrated operations
occurring on the legal and the direct action level. Demonstrations took
the form of marches to City Hall, upon which the participants were arrested
for parading without a permit, congregating on the sidewalks, blocking
traffic, disregarding traffic signals, and refusing to obey a police
officer. There were attempts to use the public library, for which there
were arrests for breaches of the peace. There were sit-ins at lunch
counters for which charges of loitering, disorderly conduct and creating
disturbances were laid. There were prayer rallies on the steps of City
Hall, followed by arrests on similar technical charges.

In addition to fighting these charges on legal grounds, the leader-
ship in Albany instituted legal action of its own. Qualified voters
brought action in the federal district court against public officials
seeking a declaratory judgment and injunction against the maintenance
of segregated voting places and lists. In addition, in July, 1962,
the Albany Movement filed an omnibus desegregation suit against the city's
officials, again in the federal district court, and backed up its legal
moves with daily, non-violent direct action. When demonstrations failed
to get the city to negotiate, the leadership intensified earlier efforts

to register three thousand Negroes in time for the autumn election so as to try to unseat two segregationists on the City Commission. Three court suits were in progress as well: one sought to prohibit the continued arrests of peaceful demonstrators; one asked for a court order desegregating all public facilities with the exception of schools; one asked for school desegregation. The Movement, still keeping up its economic boycott of white stores and its selective buying campaign, pushed demonstrations into the background for the time being.

Reactions

Public Reaction.—The sit-ins received the financial and moral backing of religious groups, labor organizations, student bodies, civil rights and civil liberties organizations, and the general Negro community. The picketing of the northern outlets of chain stores and the raising of funds for legal expenses or arrested students were activities extensively carried out by college students across the country. Campuses, dormant during the days of "McCarthyism", sprang to life again in the name of equal rights.

The Freedom Rides and the Albany demonstrations also received active and moral support from students, religious leaders, and some professionals


48 Ibid., Feb. 12, 1960, p.15.
of both races. Sympathy picketings of interstate bus lines in areas outside the South paralleled earlier picketings of chain stores which had southern outlets.

However, the demonstrations raised questions in the minds of some persons who considered themselves supporters of the movement's demands for equal rights for Negroes. During the sit-ins, the leadership was criticized for having raised the equality issue in an area of personal choice; that is, for having demanded equal rights in privately owned, if publicly open, accommodation. The leadership was criticized also for using tactics, such as sit-ins, which placed Negroes in the position of being lawbreakers.

The Freedom Rides added a new dimension to the civil rights movement. Some supporters of the movement's objectives began to question the moral and legal validity of non-violence which provoked violence. They suggested that the riders might have baited the local townspeople by their daring, rather than protesting, attitude. There was fear that excessive Negro militancy might bring about a situation in which moderate southerners would be unable to act as a restraining influence on southern conservatism. In reply, the riders argued that it was not they who had inflicted violence, but they who had been the victims. One of the purposes of the rides had been to reveal the power of non-violence and how, as a method, it accepted violence without returning it in kind. Riders queried what other methods could have been used to obtain equal rights without delay.

Very few of the store owners or operators welcomed the challenge to established custom made by the demonstrations and most decried attempts to alter traditional ways. However, some owners, usually those who recognized the advantage of increased Negro trade, did agree to integrate their establishments; the number of such merchants increased as the movement progressed. Those who were opposed to change regardless of its economic advantages either closed their counters or called in local authorities to arrest the demonstrators.

Verbal and active opposition from local residents marked many of the demonstrations. As soon as the sit-ins were assessed as being neither fleeting, schoolboy stunts nor solely the work of outside agitators, local forces responded with verbal sallies, retaliatory boycotts and counter-demonstrations. Those not content with these weapons used violence.

Four points should be noted here. First, most of the demonstrations, particularly those in the upper southern and border states, were marked by non-violence on both sides. Secondly, where there was violence it was usually a form of minor outbreak, such as a fist-fight or a brawl,

50 Many of the stores were outlets of large companies which had their headquarters in the North. The problem arose as to whether policy could be set in the North or whether it should bow to local custom.

51 See Merrill Proudfoot, *Diary of a Sit-In* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p.191. Students have treated the criticism of outside agitation as an insult: "As students, we should be credited with some degree of intelligence and personal dignity - at least enough to organize and direct a movement without the expert guidance of an outside source. We do not deny that CORE has helped the movement, but we maintain that the movement would have had the same desirable effect on the nation without the involvement of CORE, or of any other organization for that matter." Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p.91.
precipitated by white opponents. Thirdly, severe beatings, riots, pistol whippings, and the like were reported by the press more often than were the more numerous instances of begrudged acceptance. Fourthly, intensity appeared to make a greater impression on public opinion, or at the least was more newsworthy, than extensity; this may have been so because the violence seemed so completely unwarranted. Major news stories were not of negotiated agreements between the activists and the store owners, but were news reports of beatings in Montgomery, Alabama, race riots and deaths in Jacksonville, Florida, burnings in Tallahassee, Florida, acid burns in Atlanta, Georgia, ammonia burns in Rock Hill, South Carolina, cigarette burns in Nashville, Tennessee, dog bites in Jackson, Mississippi, hosings in Orangeburg, South Carolina, bombings in Nashville, Tennessee, bodily carvings and floggings by the Ku Klux Klan in Houston, Texas.52

Local authorities.— The official reply of municipal and state authorities to the sit-in demonstrations varied according to local conditions, but fell into certain patterns. Where biracial committees were appointed to examine local grievances, only those which negotiated with Negroes active in the protests, and not with Negroes out of touch with current events, were able to reach agreement.53


53 The Sit-In Story: The Story of the Lunch Room Sit-Ins (New York: Folkways Records, 1961), No. FH 5502.
Where policy was to arrest the demonstrators, it was carried out either at the request of the store owner or on the authorities' own initiative. Although only about five per cent of the participants were arrested during the campaign, the quality of the arrests often made up for what they lacked in quantity. The method of arrest or the name and position of the arrested compensated for the numbers, in a way similar to the few incidents of violence compensating for more instances of non-violence. It was noteworthy that 350 students were herded into a stockade alongside the county courthouse in sub-freezing weather; similarly, it was newsworthy when Martin Luther King was arrested or when Negro and white ministers were apprehended in clerical dress.

During the Freedom Rides, two arrests were reported in detail: one of the arrested was chaplain of Yale University; the other, an assistant to the director of the American Church Union, was the son-in-law of the governor of New York state. Similarly, when Jim Peck, who was white, was beaten up by mobs in Montgomery, it was prominently reported; but the beating of a Negro, Charles Person, at the same time, was barely mentioned. As has been pointed out previously, Albany became an item of concern to the federal government when King was sent to jail, seven months after the demonstrations had begun.

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54 Incident in Columbia, South Carolina, NYT, Mar. 16, 1960, p.1.
56 Incident in Atlanta, Georgia, ibid., Feb. 16, 1961, p.22.
Arrests were made either under existing state and city laws or under new legislation specifically passed to meet the sit-ins. Of the 3,600 arrests in southern and border states which have been tabulated for the sit-ins, most fell into the following categories: (1) disorderly conduct, public disturbance, or breach of the peace; (2) civil or criminal trespass; (3) unlawful assembly. But the full range included: failure to obey an officer; loitering; vagrancy; conspiracy to interfere with trade or commerce; improper language; inciting to riot; picketing without a licence; disrobing in public; blocking entrances to buildings; delinquency; contributing to the delinquency of a minor; criminal mischief; criminal anarchy; creating a public annoyance; affray; assault and battery. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the state courts convicted the demonstrators on the specified charges.

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57 The legislation dealt with a wide range of offenses: disturbing the peace; trespass; resisting an officer; unlawful assembly; parading without a permit; obstructing public passages; aggravated battery; barratry. Laws were also passed to curtail demonstrations on or near state property and to prohibit conspiracies to injure trade. VII RRLR 525-6, 529-35, 873-80, 897-98, 1240 (1960); VI RRLR 317-19, 1181 (1961); VII RRLR 258, 925, 1252-53 (1962); VIII RRLR 697, 699-700 (1963).


The first of the CORE Freedom Rides was treated with no discrimination or show of force until it arrived in Alabama, where the bus was stoned, set afire and set upon. At neither Anniston nor Birmingham where the violence erupted were state police on hand to control the mobs, although the Department of Justice had warned local authorities of the possibility of violence. The state governor had contributed to the violence by refusing federal requests to guarantee safe passage for the riders through the state.\(^{60}\) Although the second group of riders was given protective custody by the city when the bus reached Birmingham, they were greeted by mobs in Montgomery.\(^{61}\) The local authorities announced that they had "no intention of standing guard for a bunch of trouble-makers coming into our city and making trouble"\(^{62}\) and the state governor said he refused to enrage Alabamans by escorting "bus loads or car loads of rabble rousers about our state from city to city for the avowed purpose of disobeying our laws, flaunting our customs and tradition and creating racial incidents."\(^{63}\)

State officials in Mississippi were alerted by the Justice Department to the continuation of the rides. As a means of preventing further outbreaks when the buses reached Jackson, the Mississippi authorities instituted a pattern of immediate arrests; upon disembarking, the riders were arrested on charges of breach of the peace or disorderly conduct.

\(^{60}\) NYT, May 16, 1961, p.1; May 18, 1961, p.27.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., May 21, 1961, p.1.

\(^{62}\) Quoting the Montgomery Police Commissioner, ibid.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., p.78.
Arrests and convictions by local courts increased as the civil rights drive was extended to airline and train terminals. But by then the rides were routinized enough to avoid violence and their main drama was fought out in court and on the administrative level.

The riders were found guilty by the local courts and had to lodge appeals with the federal courts. In the local courts, judges refused to allow questions of race to be introduced even if segregation laws were at issue. They insisted that the only relevant questions were those of the rides' effect on the community's peace and tranquility, since the riders had not been divested of any of their civil rights. One Mississippi judge argued that the activists' methods of choosing to defy the state segregation laws were calculated to incite mob violence; if the laws were to be challenged properly, recourse lay through legal court procedure: "What these defendants seem to say by their conduct is that they are not going to let any judiciary, Federal or State, resolve the questions present in Mississippi's present segregation laws and customs, but that they are going to inflame the people to fight it out among themselves."

Until appeals were heard in the federal courts, the riders and the organizations supporting them had to cope with the procedural burdens of

64 State v. Farmer, reported in VI RRLR 544-45 (1961) See also Brown v. State, reported in VI RRLR: 780-81 (1961); Thomas v. State, 160 So2d 657 (1964). But in Knights v. State, 161 So2d 521 (1964), the court took judicial notice of several matters concerning the history of race relations in the United States and concluded that when Negroes entered the whites' waiting room, it was reasonable for the police to act to avert violence by ordering the Freedom Riders to move on and to arrest them if they disobeyed.

65 State v. Farmer, op. cit., at 544.
the trials (cash bail, lawyers' fees, court fees, travel expenses back to the South, availability of time to attend court, proliferation of the courts hearing the cases). This expense had to be borne even when conviction seemed likely.

During the Albany demonstrations there were similar arrests on technical grounds: small groups praying on the front steps of City Hall were arrested as threats to public safety; a SNCC worker was arrested on suspicion of vagrancy, even though he had $59 on his person when apprehended; a deputation of Negroes outside the federal government's employment agency office was arrested because the police chief had ordered the streets cleared at the time; twelve people picketing a variety store were arrested for obstructing traffic. These arrests were upheld in the local courts.

The Albany Movement had hoped that the city authorities would comply with a court order on desegregation, especially since the local authorities had declared that their role in handling the demonstrations was to guarantee law and order. But this assessment failed to allow for differences in living up to the letter and to the spirit of the law. In the eyes of the white residents, it had been the Negroes who had broken the laws, defied the court injunction and used violence. The police were able to maintain order without publicly resorting to violence by arresting demonstrators before the peace had been broken. But the

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price for keeping order had to be paid by the Movement at the cost of its constitutional rights to assemble peacefully and to petition government for a redress of grievances.

If the police commissioner won the respect of the whites for having enforced law and order, he did so by operating what his critics called a form of police state, by making arrests when there were no real threats to the public safety, when there were no imminent disturbances, and when there was no outbreak of violence. The violence that did occur broke out in sheriff's offices and in county jails, but was rarely evident to the white public. If the police commissioner could not be charged personally with brutality, he neither tried to prevent its happening nor made an effort to punish the perpetrators. 67

Federal authorities.- Tocqueville could write even in his time: "Scarcely any political question arises in the United States that is not resolved, sooner or later into a judicial question. Hence all parties are obliged to borrow in their daily controversies, the ideas, and even the language peculiar to judicial proceedings."68 On the whole, Americans have a penchant for constitutionalism and the fundamental organic law which affects all discussions of policies and issues. The agitation for civil rights was not able to escape being fought out in terms of constitutional


strengths and legal weaknesses. For the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, a division of the NAACP which handled most of the sit-in cases, the legal questions were as important as the political and social issues. The activists who had refused to move from the lunch counter asserted with their bodies their moral right to be there; the NAACP undertook to assert with lawyers' arguments the legal right to be there. The Association proceeded to blend arguments on minor, legal technicalities with arguments on desirable social policy.

In the majority of cases, the state courts convicted the demonstrators on the specified charges. But from the first of a series of cautious decisions handed down in 1961, the United States Supreme Court spoke out in favour of the demonstrators and acted as a spur to the movement. In weighing conflicting rights, such as the right of private property vs. the right of Negroes to be free of discriminatory state action, the Court tried not to pronounce on Negro demands per se. The Court sought to decide on the right to demonstrate, but not on the question of what was being demonstrated; on the right to assemble, but not on the purpose of the assemblage; on the right to march, but not on the objectives of the march. While it was true that the legal cases which have developed out of the civil rights movement have played a major role in altering the status of the Negro, it was also true that substantive issues were left to other governmental bodies to decide.

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In the case of the Freedom Rides, federal court decisions were also favourable to the demonstrators. But by the time that the cases went through their legal somersaults on the federal level, the practical problems of the rides were past. 70

Congress' attitude towards the sit-ins varied. The majority of members were silent, but southerners warned of mobocracy replacing democracy, of moderate opinion being alienated, of pending civil rights legislation being delayed, of law-breaking Negroes hypocritically demanding adherence to the law by white southerners. 71 However, liberals of both political parties accorded the sit-ins their enthusiastic support and saw them as 'symptomatic of the refusal to accept a suppressed status.' 72

Against the background of the sit-ins, Congress passed a whittled-down version of the Administration's seven-point civil rights program. The Civil Rights Act of 1960, in addition to provisions which made it a federal crime for a person to use violence (or threats) to interfere with rights decreed by federal court order and a federal crime to bomb schools or churches, included new statutory provisions for additional protection


for voting rights. The legislation eased the enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, but it offered little in the way of meaningful change for the majority of American Negroes.

Similar Congressional sentiments to those expressed at the time of the sit-ins were expressed during the Freedom Rides and the Albany demonstrations. Support or opposition cut across political party lines: southern Democrats and northern liberal Republicans supported them; most of the Congress said nothing.

The sit-ins occurred in an election year and became fair game for comment by candidates of both political parties. Unqualified support came from Democratic presidential candidates, while on the Republican side a more moderate estimation of the demonstrations was advanced.

From the beginning, the Eisenhower Administration followed a cautious policy which fitted with the President's opposition to federal intervention in matters of civil rights. Eisenhower preferred to leave such matters in the hands of local officials until such time as the latter proved either unable or unwilling to keep order and control. When asked whether he saw the Gandhi-like demonstrations as manifestations of moral courage, he said it was "...difficult to give a sweeping judgment; some are unquestionably a proper expression of the group which is making them; others can be otherwise classified."

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The Attorney General, however, recognizing the importance to integration of the attitude of northern businessmen who operated in the South, took positive action by holding informal discussions with such businessmen, impressing upon them the relevance of integrated facilities to the American image. He succeeded in getting them to apply pressure on southern chain outlets to work out timetables for and details of appropriate measures of desegregation.77

Senator Kennedy, who had been a strong supporter of the sit-ins during the presidential campaign,77A and who appears to have attracted a majority of Negro voters by adopting a more militant position than his opponent,78 was less vociferous in his support after his victory in the election. While he did not try to restrain the movement, he failed to present any legislative proposals designed to secure equal access to public accommodation. In the early stages of his Administration, Kennedy believed that he could best help the civil rights movement with general economic measures and special tax proposals - by stimulating the economy in general, by improving welfare programs, and by attacking discrimination in hiring. In addition, he feared that any general civil


77A Having made a celebrated phone call during the presidential campaign to Mrs Martin Luther King expressing concern over her husband's jailing for his part in a sit-in demonstration, ibid., Oct. 27, 1960, p. 22; Oct. 28, 1960, p. 1; see also Oct. 20, 1960, p. 20; Oct. 24, 1960, p. 20.

rights measure would jeopardize other sections of his legislative program.

During the Freedom Rides, Kennedy sought to counter the role of the state governments at that point when violence had erupted. Four hundred marshals were sent to Alabama, an action acclaimed by liberal members of Congress but deplored by southern representatives, and the government applied for and was granted an injunction enjoining three Ku Klux Klan groups from interfering with further rides in interstate commerce. As more violence erupted, more marshals were sent into the city. The federal government also held top-level talks with state officials, but these came to nothing.

To counter the violence, the Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, called for a "cooling off" period by the organizations sponsoring the rides, but the latter queried why they should be the ones to cool off.

During the Albany demonstrations, the executive branch first expressed concern when King was arrested. Kennedy requested a full report on King's arrest and instructed federal investigators to examine the situation for possible legal action. When a stalemate had developed in the city, Kennedy

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79 United States v. U.S. Klans, Inc. 194 F. Supp./(1961). This move was also intended to counter the state's injunction against any further rides calculated to provoke breaches of the peace; see State ex rel. Gallion v. Doe, reported in VI RRLR 542-43 (1961).

80 NYT, May 26, 1961, p. 21. Robert Kennedy became one of the anti-heroes of the movement.

One of the favourite prison songs of the Freedom Riders, sung to the tune of "Frere Jacques" was:

Are you sleeping?
Are you sleeping?
Brother Bob;
Brother Bob,
Freedom Riders waiting,
Enforce the law!
Enforce the law!
expressed amazement that the city was being as stubborn as it was; but the Administration's intervention in the form of efforts to arrange meetings between the opposing sides, was futile. Some Congressmen urged the Justice Department to intervene wherever possible on behalf of those arrested; but the Department claimed that it had no grounds on which to act.

Evaluation

Sit-ins.- Given all of the legal and political support which they received, the sit-ins achieved few, if significant, results. According to progress reports issued by variety stores, by October, 1960, 112 southern and border communities had integrated lunch counters, and in seventy-five per cent of these, change had come before any direct action protests had been conducted locally; by the end of January, 1961, the number had risen to 125. By September, 1961, the Southern Regional Council listed 103 key cities which had integrated lunch counter facilities. As was to be expected, results were best in border and upper southern states and worst in the Deep South.

84 Called, on its letterhead, "A Council to attain the ideals and practices of equal opportunity for all peoples in the South". See also Lewis Killian and Charles Grigg, Racial Crisis in America: Leadership in Conflict (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 11-14.
Had there been no protests, southern stores which changed their service policies probably would not have done so; but those which changed under the impetus of direct action demonstrations did so without either violent consequences or loss of business and with a new recognition of the economic value of Negro trade. For the demonstrators, the financial cost of this progress in racial equality was in terms of large outlays for lawyers, bail bonds, and fines.

The protests forced changes in the timetable of integration by speeding up what might have come of its own. In less precise terms than those of integrated facilities, but of greater importance, the sit-ins confronted white southerners with the Negro facts of life. Southern forces which supported the movement said:

Just by their presence, the demonstrators were saying: (1) that not all Negro Southerners were content with their lot; (2) that agitation was not from outside, but burst from within the local Negro community; (3) that there were polite, educated, well-dressed Negro Southerners; and (4) that moreover there were ones brave enough and dedicated enough to conduct the demonstrations. 86

There always had been cracks in the southern monolith - areas where segregation had been less rigid and southern whites who had spoken out against the status quo. The sit-ins helped to widen the crack by making the position of the white moderates more difficult, forcing them to take a more direct stand on civil rights. The sit-ins also aroused the Negro community by giving a boost to slumbering consciences through small

victories. There was every chance that tactics which had proved successful once might be used again by an aroused community. For Negroes now had further proof that they could do something about civil rights.

The sit-ins left more than a feeling of success. They left members trained in battle and the tactics of warfare. The members were primarily Negro youth; their tactics were those of non-violence. In 1960, when it was found necessary to coordinate the protests in the South, SNCC was formed by student leaders assisted by SCLC. Having seen the "rapidity with which mass action can bring about social change", SNCC set about with little money, a minimum of paid staff, no membership requirements and a good deal of patience to fight issues other than public accommodation.

**Freedom Rides.**—In concrete terms, the rides prompted the ICC to issue specific regulations covering terminal facilities which were designed to ease the enforcement of existing legislation. Most of the activists considered these new rules gratuitous and an expensive gift when considered in terms of finance and human suffering. If the rides accomplished anything, they showed the futility of mere dependence upon court and administrative agencies; for what the latter could lay the groundwork for, direct action had to bring into effect.

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87 See Ruby Hurly, Southern Director of the NAACP, in *NYT*, Jan. 29, 1961, p. 64.


89 *VI RRLR* 902-03 (1961).
Violence had a positive effect by causing some people in the community to rethink their position on segregation. Educationists and businessmen realized that violence made it difficult to attract personnel to areas of racial tension and faculty to schools and universities. Even the very threat of violence, its presence right below the surface, made the demands of the civil rights movement more palatable. It seems certain that the fear of the total breakdown of law and order acted as a force in behalf of the civil rights movement. Opponents were won over not by any belief in the rightness of the activists' cause, but out of fear of instability and disorder affecting the community. Senator Douglas expressed the fears of many supporters of the movement over the staying power of the non-violent phase of the movement and its ability to withstand rival black nationalist movements which were becoming more vocal. Out of these fears, he asked for "sympathy, help, and understanding from the white race." 

Albany. - After the failure of the Albany Movement, King still argued that certain important results had been achieved despite the city's rigid stand. By organizing the local Negroes into action, the Movement assured


a "new sense of dignity and self-respect"\textsuperscript{92} for thousands of people. SNCC felt that by lending direction and giving form to discontent it had cut through the fear of the Negro community: "When we first came to Albany, the people were afraid, really afraid.... There was fear in the air, and if we were to progress we knew that we must cut through that fear."\textsuperscript{93}

If, by the middle of 1962, there were no visible results in Albany, the leadership could point to the effects which the demonstrations had had on surrounding cities which did not want the same confusion to come to them: "They don't want to lose commerce; they don't want to see any of the northern industries that might consider coming into their area saying we cannot go into a community where there is confusion, where things are upset."\textsuperscript{94}

By preserving the status quo, the local authorities had to preserve segregation; by preventing violence, they had to forfeit protecting the rights of the Negroes. The Movement primarily failed because without violence the federal government would not step in to protect the activists.

\textsuperscript{92} NYT, Aug. 18, 1962, p. 44. On similar assessment on the successes in Albany, see Wyatt Tee Walker, "The American Dilemma in Miniature: Albany, Georgia", in Papers on Police Administration and Civil Disobedience (New York: New York University Graduate School of Public Administration, 1963), pp. 17-19.

\textsuperscript{93} Charles Sherrod, on Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Freedom in the Air: A Documentary on Albany, Georgia, 1961-1962, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{94} Slater King, Vice-president of the Albany Movement, in Peace News [hereafter PN], Aug. 3, 1962, p. 1.
During the Freedom Rides, the federal government acted only when there was uncontrolled violence. During the Albany demonstrations, when there was no public violence, it did nothing to protect federal rights when the state failed to act. Critics of the government argued that it was the job of the federal government not only to maintain order but also to guarantee and preserve the processes of justice. Observation and investigation, or *amicus curiae* briefs in support of the Movement's action on the legal level, were insufficient methods of protection. The government could have sought federal prosecutions of officials who deprived activists of First Amendment rights or who violated ICC regulations.  

Albany was an example where the government had the power to intervene in a local situation but chose to interpret that power narrowly.

The chances of influencing a state's policy on segregation, let alone of altering it in any major way, became remote once the federal government decided to offer no assistance to the activists. At bottom, there was very little wrong with the methods used by the Movement. It was simply that its demands were not attainable if the government in Washington refused to be of active assistance. A small and alienated minority of the population could have done two things. It could have increased its strength both in absolute numbers and influential supporters; this the Movement did. It could have convinced the federal government that it was in the latter's interests to be receptive to its demands; this it

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95 Under Title 18 of the United States Code, section 242: "Whoever, under color of any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, or custom, willfully subjects any inhabitant of any State, Territory, or District to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or to different punishments, pains or penalties, on account of such inhabitant being an alien, or by reason of his color, or race, than are prescribed for the punishment of citizens, shall be fined not more than $1000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both."
failed to do. Until there was an actual or highly probable danger of civil disturbance, the government chose to remain undisturbed.

During this phase of the movement, non-violent direct action laid bare the discontents of the civil rights movement and the lengths to which it would go in demanding implementation of civil rights. By this unusual form of coercion, the activists were able to remain, in the eyes of many in the audience, psychologically and morally commendable even if technically disobedient at times.

It is customary in the South for violence to be committed against Negroes. But violence increased the "American Dilemma" posed by Myrdal; it widened the gap between the American Creed of equality and justice and the real world of group living.
CHAPTER IV

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (3): THE REPERCUSSIONS OF BIRMINGHAM

Introduction

The demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, during the spring of 1963, highlighted a new phase in the civil rights movement. First, they were characterized by their inclusion of demands that went beyond the specific, limited objective of equal access to public accommodation. The suggested package deal included demands for the desegregation of lunch counter and public facilities, fair hiring practices, and complete school integration. Secondly, the class composition of the activists included more members of the working class than in earlier phases of the movement. Thirdly, Birmingham created more social disruption and dislocation than the movement had seen to date. It included acts of violence from Negro and white sides; non-violent direct action precipitated police violence which, instead of going unanswered, was met by violence from unorganized Negro elements.

In this chapter, I shall discuss and analyze: (1) the demonstrations in the South which preceded the demonstrations at Birmingham; (2) the demonstrations at Birmingham in the spring of 1963; (3) the introduction of federal civil rights legislation in response to the new demonstrations; and (4) the demands of the March on Washington for major measures of reform. In particular, I shall look at the respective roles played by non-violence, latent violence, and violence.
Temporal Phases

Events Before Birmingham. The sit-ins and the Freedom Rides inspired daily, direct action protests throughout all of the southern states. A brief catalogue of events would include wade-ins at public beaches in Biloxi, Mississippi, and Savannah, Georgia; courtroom sit-ins in Anniston, Alabama; theatre and cinema stand-ins in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville, Tennessee, and Tallahassee, Florida; swim-ins at pools in Jacksonville and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Lynchbury, Virginia, and Cairo, Illinois; bench-ins in parks in Jackson, Mississippi; skate-ins at rinks in Louisville, Kentucky.¹

In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, students at Southern University boycotted classes in protest over the suspension of forty-eight students who had participated in anti-segregation demonstrations.² In Jackson, Mississippi, and Macon, Georgia, buses were boycotted in protest over segregated seating regulations.³ In Nashville, Tennessee, Negroes conducted an all night sit-in at police headquarters in protest over police brutality evidenced during racial clashes in the city.⁴ By the beginning of 1961, there had been over two hundred kneel-ins at white churches in the South.⁵

¹ The events are tabulated from the pages of the NYT, reports of CORE and SNCC, and reports of the Southern Regional Council.
⁴ Ibid., Aug. 8, 1961, p. 19.
⁵ Ibid., Jan. 9, 1961, p. 28.
Individuals and groups alike struck out at segregation. Dinah Washington, the Negro blues singer, demanded a boycott on the sale of her records in southern states which sanctioned segregation. Floyd Patterson was given a guarantee against segregated seating in his title boxing match in Miami, Florida. The Metropolitan Opera House announced that it would not allow touring companies to appear in segregated halls. Fifty-four producers of live theatrical shows sponsored by large business corporations agreed to bar segregation at all performances as part of their new basic agreement with Actors' Equity.

During 1963, it is estimated that 930 individual protest demonstrations took place in at least 115 cities in the eleven southern states. More than twenty thousand of the Negroes and whites who demonstrated were arrested; ten persons died under circumstances directly related to the protests and thirty-five known bombings occurred. On the positive side, in so far as the civil rights movement was concerned, some progress toward racial integration was achieved in most of the southern cities: integration of the buses; particular grades in public or high schools being integrated; some form of seating plans in public accommodation; other instances of a token nature. There were encouraging signs: the Arkansas Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional four state laws that the

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7 Ibid., Jan. 20, 1961, p.35.
9 Ibid., June 8, 1961, p. 40.
NAACP had argued suppressed its activities; an ordinance outlawing racial discrimination in public places of business was passed in Louisville, Kentucky; two thousand citizens of Knoxville, Tennessee, signed a petition sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce asking for desegregation of public facilities; in Charleston, South Carolina, merchants publicly agreed to extend equal courtesies to all customers and to commence equal hiring practices.

But the pattern of riot, bloodshed, and even death was there as well. Ten persons were shot and many others badly hurt in a fight which broke out when small groups of Negroes appeared on the beach in Biloxi, Mississippi, in an area normally used by whites. Federal troops were sent to Oxford, Mississippi, to enforce the court-ordered admission of James Meredith to the state university, but not until two persons had been killed and many others wounded in a race riot on the university campus. In the end, the defiant state governor had to yield and stand to the side as federal marshals led Meredith into the

university. William Moore, a Baltimore, Maryland, postman hiking to Jackson, Mississippi, in a one-man civil rights crusade, was found murdered near Attalla, Alabama; his bullet-pierced body, still bearing the anti-segregation signs he wore, was discovered along a main highway.\footnote{Ibid., Apr. 24, 1963, p. 19.}

Birmingham. The sit-ins that began in April, 1963, were not the first Negro protests to be held in Birmingham. Late in 1958, there had been demonstrations to test new bus regulations, but these amounted to very little. The city had arrested some of the demonstrators, while the federal district court warned the local authorities not to enforce segregated seating regulations which the private bus lines were entitled to issue.\footnote{Ibid., Nov. 14, 1958, p. 1; Mar 27, 1959, p. 47; Nov. 24, 1959, p. 18; see also Bowman v. Morgan, reported in \textit{V} CLD 42(1960).} Strategy was shifted to a boycott of the buses, but this failed to get the full support of the Negro community.

Early in 1962, sporadic protests and a boycott of downtown succeeded in persuading white business leaders to negotiate Fred Shuttlesworth's Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMR), an affiliate of SCLC.\footnote{\textit{NYT}, Apr. 22, 1962, p. 63.} The merchants, fearing large-scale demonstrations, actively backed by SCLC, promised to integrate some lunch counters in return for a moratorium on demonstrations. But when the SCLC executive, then in Birmingham for its annual convention, left the city, the merchants reneged on the agreement.\footnote{Martin Luther King, Jr., \textit{Why We Can't Wait} (New York: New American Library, 1963), p. 53.}
SCLC and ACHR launched "Project Confrontation" in April, 1963, with certain minimum demands on the merchants and the city and backed up these demands with small scale sit-ins. Within a week, 102 arrests had been made on technical charges of trespassing, parading without a permit, creating a disturbance, and loitering. As had happened in Albany, Birmingham became a national news item when a conscious act of civil disobedience, a protest march in defiance of a county court injunction, resulted in the arrests of King, Abernathy and some sixty others. For the rest of April, the pattern of protest continued, spreading to kneel-ins at churches and sit-ins at libraries. Fighting briefly erupted when Negro bystanders, in protest at some of the arrests, hurled stones at the police; but this was curbed effectively by the authorities. Arrests of peaceful demonstrators continued; but even in the face of a ninety-five per cent effective boycott, merchants were unprepared to negotiate.

The non-violent stalemate which had settled over the city was broken when over one thousand young children, some as young as five, appeared on the lines of march and were arrested. For two days, the excitement in Birmingham was the child demonstrators. Then, on May 4th, while Negro adults stood on the sidelines and cheered on children and teen-age demonstrators, the Commissioner of Public Safety ordered that fire hoses and police dogs be turned on the demonstrators. In addition

21 NYT, Apr. 8, 1963, p. 31.
to the effect which this use of force had on the thinking of the federal government, it was an invitation to Negro bystanders to retaliate. Stones and bottles thrown at police by those who would no longer stand idly by while dogs and hoses were unleashed revealed the latent fury in the Negro community. SCLC's only reply was to call off further demonstrations.\(^\text{24}\)

Against the background of mass arrests - by May 6th the number, most of whom were children, had risen to 2,425\(^\text{25}\) talks were held between Negro and white community leaders; but no accord was reached. When rioting broke out for a second time as nearly three thousand Negroes stormed through white business districts only to be driven back by high pressure hoses and armoured cars, the need for a truce became more apparent. After several abortive attempts, an agreement was reached.

However, the agreement was cut short when bombs destroyed the homes of some of the Negro leaders and set off widespread rioting in Negro areas. After some days, the city quietened. When order returned, the negotiated agreement began to pick up support within the white community. SCLC called off further demonstrations. By July initial steps had been taken to implement the agreement.

*March on Washington.* Birmingham shifted the Kennedy Administration's approach to outright support, in the form of legislation, for the direct action demonstrations. Against the background both of growing resentment


\(^{25}\) See cases in IX *CLD* 6,8 (1963).
within the civil rights movement towards physical opposition to its
demands and of the hope inspired by the Kennedy proposals, civil rights
leaders issued a call for a March on Washington for August 28, 1963.
The order and discipline sought by the leadership was achieved beyond
all expectation. Two hundred and fifty thousand people converged on
Washington on the day to demand of the federal government a broad programme
of social reform.

Aims and Motives

Birmingham. Both before and after the stalemate in Albany, sit-ins, voter registration drives, selective buying campaigns and the like were being conducted throughout the South. SCLC believed that a successful attack on segregation in Birmingham "might well set forces in motion to change the entire course of the drive for freedom and justice."26 Towards that end, it drew up "Project Confrontation", a fully detailed programme of negotiation and direct action directed against both the business community and the city authorities. The project outlined minimum demands: (1) the desegregation of lunch counters and all public facilities in all downtown stores; (2) the immediate establishment of fair hiring practices in those stores, including the employment of qualified Negroes for white collar jobs; (3) the dropping of all charges against those arrested during recent sit-ins; (4) the establishment of fair hiring practices in all city departments; (5) the re-opening of city parks and playgrounds, all of which had been closed to avoid desegregation; (6) the establishment of a bi-racial

26 King, Why We Can't Wait, op. cit., p.54.
group to work out a timetable for the desegregation of all city public schools. 27

The Negro leadership was no longer prepared to wage a fight for one particular objective. The aim during the Birmingham demonstrations was to present a package deal to which it was hoped both private and public interests would respond. In addition, the demands included a new objective of civil rights - fair hiring agreements.

March on Washington. Two streams of protest activity merged for the March on Washington, represented by the dual themes of jobs and freedom. A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the principal Negro trade union leader, had been planning a demonstration against unemployment in October of some twenty thousand persons to be led by the Negro American Labor Council. 28 When it looked as though President Kennedy might not introduce any significant civil rights legislation, King suggested that civil rights groups might press for such legislation by staging a March on Washington, possibly one that would include civil disobedience in the form of sit-ins in the halls of Congress. 29 When the legislation for civil rights was introduced, it seemed advisable to advance Randolph's proposed October march and widen its scope to confront the expected Southern filibuster against the legislative proposals.

27 NYT, Apr. 5, 1963, p. 16.

28 The Negro American Labor Council had been formed in 1960 to act as a force for equal rights within the American Federation of Labor - Council of Industrial Organizations (AFL-C10).

President Kennedy told Negro leaders that he thought it best to postpone the March while debate on civil rights legislation was in progress; but he had the good sense and political acumen not to suggest that the March be called off. The Negro leaders, quite prepared to pledge themselves to a grass-roots campaign in behalf of the Administration's civil rights programme, saw the need for continued peaceful demonstrations. While leaders were aware that should violence erupt civil rights action might be jeopardized, they felt that pressure from the mass of Negro activists made calling off the March extremely difficult. In the past, even threatened marches had brought limited success; while in the present, it was the use of non-violent direct action that had brought the nation to the point where civil rights legislation was even a distinct possibility.

The aim of the March was to apply pressure for meaningful civil rights legislation. It was hoped to emphasize that the proposed legislation did not go far enough in rectifying economic problems of adjustment and inequality. Its aim was to show what the demonstrations in Birmingham illustrated: that the civil rights movement was no longer content merely with equal access to public accommodation, but now wanted a broad programme of social reform.

Birmingham and the March had a further implicit aim. This was to announce that after May 1963 no area could consider itself free from the reverberations of Negro discontent. Whites and Negroes alike could no longer stand aloof; both had to be prepared to take a stand on the question of racial equality. Neither time, place nor the individual was able to
remain neutral any longer. The voices in the movement sang:

They say in Hinds County,
"No neutrals have we met.
You're either for the Freedom Ride
Or you'll Tom for Ross Barnett."

No time for Mr. Charlie
Don't listen to his lies.
Us dark folk haven't got a chance
Unless we organize.

Oh, which side are you on, boy
Which side are you on.
Which side are you on, boy
Which side are you on.

**Tactics**

*Birmingham.* Building on the failures in Albany, SCLC decided to concentrate rather than scatter its efforts. It was decided that demonstrations at Easter, a major shopping period, would bring maximum pressure to bear on the merchants. Plans were postponed originally to await the outcome of the mayoralty election and the desired defeat of Eugene ("Bull") Connor, an ardent segregationist who was then Commissioner of Public Safety. Although Connor was defeated, he contested the election of Albert Boutwell on legal technicalities. Rather than miss the Easter shopping period, SCLC decided against further postponement of the project pending final resolution of the mayoralty contest.

In April, demands were presented to the City Commission and backed up by daily, small scale lunch counter sit-ins and protest marches by small groups of Negro adults most of whom were middle-class activists of SCLC. This pattern of protest continued throughout the month, spreading
to kneel-ins at churches and sit-ins at libraries. Although there had been police warnings against unauthorized marches, demonstrations continued and arrests were made. Each evening, meetings were held in churches to discuss the tactics of non-violence and the goals of integration and a task force was enlisted to serve as demonstrators or assist in the organizational work of the campaign. Each day, lines of activists, often led by northern Negro celebrities in the performing arts, went into the streets to face arrest.

In May, the earlier pattern changed. Protests rallied the entire Negro community, cutting across class lines. Birmingham was distinguished by two tactical innovations: the first was the planned introduction of child demonstrators; the second was the spontaneous involvement of the unorganized Negro bystander who initially played no active part in the project.

If in April, Birmingham appeared to be repeating the non-violent stalemate which had occurred in Albany, the situation was altered radically on "D-Day", when over one thousand young children appeared on the lines of march and were arrested.

The dramatic introduction of a new dimension of child demonstrators succeeded, as the leaders hoped it would, in bringing new energy to the campaign. With their enthusiasm and their capacity for excitement, the children lit up the spirits of the Negro community: with their sheer numbers, they put into effect the Gandhian principle of filling the jails. They had been instructed by SCLC leaders in the philosophy of non-violence and in the tactics of non-violent direct action. Whether all of the
children understood what they had been taught was uncertain. However, they offered no resistance to the arresting officers as they marched out of the church grounds where they had assembled. Many dropped to their knees and prayed; others broke out in freedom songs:

I a'nt a-scared of your jail
'Cause I want my freedom,
Want my freedom, want my freedom,
I a'nt a-scared of your jail
'Cause I want my freedom,
Want my freedom, NOW!

The songs gave them courage, unity, and a method of communication.

Persons who considered themselves sympathetic to the civil rights demands of the movement criticized the use of children. In reply, the Negro leaders argued: that the campaign needed the refreshment and enthusiasm of youth; that the segregated society itself had been using, misusing, and abusing children prior to the Birmingham demonstrations; that any child born a Negro had a battle on his hands from the beginning. One commentator said:

These children have been insulted, degraded and excluded all of their young lives. Against this background they now see the possibility of freedom. Once the demonstrations developed the momentum they did, it was inevitable that some, at least, of the children would clamour to take part in them.

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30 This situation is recorded beautifully on Pete Seeger, We Shall Overcome (New York: Columbia Broadcasting System, 1963), No.BB233109.


No one had made the children do anything against their will: "How do you force a little girl to walk up to a snarling police dog, if she lacks a tremendous amount of inner motivation of her own."  

For two days, the excitement in Birmingham was the child demonstrators. Then on May 4th, the focus of attention shifted. Children and teen-age demonstrators were forcibly apprehended by policemen using fire hoses and dogs. This use of force was an invitation to Negro bystanders to retaliate. The changing size and scope of the demonstrations were themselves warning signs of the powderkeg within the Negro community; now the latent fury was revealed by stones and bottles thrown at the police by those who would no longer stand idly by while dogs and hoses were unleashed. SLC, with no control over the unorganized, could do no more than call off further demonstrations by its own members.  

The rioting showed the need for a truce. When, some days later, bombs destroyed the homes of some of the Negro leaders, widespread rioting in Negro areas occurred again. Negro ministers, assisted by volunteer civil defence workers, were able to disperse Negro mobs which were still reacting to the outrages of the bombings. King, for his part, visited pool rooms and other centres in the Negro community in a bid to restrain his unofficial, unorganized following from resuming violence.

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33 Ibtd., p. 20. See also King, Why We Can't Wait, op. cit., p. 96.

SCLC had more influence over its membership than over its peripheral supporters. King, placing faith in the timetable which the white and Negro negotiators had worked out, deterred some of his followers from holding further demonstrations. When the state board of education ordered the expulsion of some eleven hundred students who had been arrested in the demonstrations, some Negro leaders wanted all of Birmingham's Negro students to withdraw from school in sympathy; but King's views prevailed, the school boycott was cancelled, and a court suit seeking reinstatement of the students was filed instead. So as not to upset the negotiated agreement, King asked Negroes to refrain from seeking service at white lunch counters despite a recent United States Supreme Court decision holding that state enforcement of segregation in such facilities was unconstitutional.

The unorganized Negro bystander, who initially played no active part in the project, affected the outcome of the demonstrations. For either by his acts of violence or by the sympathy which he gave to the activists, he was a reminder of Negro forces which did not appear on picket lines or at prayer meetings. One observer wrote of the unemployed youths and delinquents who joined in the demonstrations in May:

The steam has been building in these people for weeks. It was they, not the demonstrating [sic] children, who were the targets of hoses and dogs....

35 For federal court decision on school cases in which it was held that the students were engaged in legally permissible activities and were illegally arrested, see Woods v. Wright, reported in VIII RRLR 444-45 (1963).
So the hate built in these bitter souls and courage built up too. They had always cowered before the cops and held back their hatred—
to protect their skulls. But suddenly, without forewarning, for they had been in no church rallies and ridden in no freedom rides, they saw Negroes defying the hated cop. So the non-
privileged decided to make it a fight of their own....

These undisciplined forces posed a problem for the SCLC leadership, committed to non-violence, as well as for the police. They turned latent and overt violence into a positive tactical weapon that might be capable of bringing results to civil rights demands.

The Negro leadership was criticized, again by persons allegedly sympathetic to their objectives, for some of its tactics. Criticism arose over the timing of the demonstrations; that is, delaying them until Boutwell had had time to disclose his intentions. A group of white ministers in Birmingham issued a statement calling the street demonstrations "unwise and untimely", adding: "When rights are consistently denied a cause should be pressed in the courts and in negotiations among local leaders, not in the streets." King replied to his critics: that pressures had to be brought on the merchants at a peak shopping period such as Easter; that a campaign involving so many people in this kind of

36 Quoted in Irving Howe, "An End to 'Moderation': The Negro Revolution", Dissent, X (Summer, 1963), 207.


38 Ibid., Apr. 14, 1963, p. 46. See also Little Rock Arkansas Gazette editorial, reported in ibid., May 15, 1963, IV, 11; also "Go Slow, Dr. King", Liberation, VIII (June, 1963), 9.
protest could not be put off again and again; that regardless of the result of the mayoralty election, a segregationist administration, that would have needed prodding, would have been returned to office; that "it was ridiculous to speak of timing when the clock of history showed that the Negro had already suffered one hundred years of delay."\(^{39}\)

The leadership was also criticized for its defiance of a court injunction in April. King argued that his conscious act of civil disobedience was much considered and the result of his assessment was that "the courts of Alabama had misused the judicial process in order to perpetuate injustice and segregation."\(^{40}\) Conscience, he argued, directed that the Negroes disobey the state court's ruling out of allegiance to something higher than the law; their action was similar to disobeying an unjust law "openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty."\(^{41}\)

Too often critics blamed the leadership for not confining the demonstrations within controlled channels of agitation. King's reply was poetic but close to the truth:

> It was the people who moved their leaders, not the leaders who moved the people. Of course, there were generals, as there must be in every army. But the command post was in the bursting hearts of millions of Negroes. When such people begin to move, they create their own theories, shape their own destinies, and choose the leaders who share their own philosophy. A leader who understands this kind of mandate knows that he must be sensitive to the anger, the impatience, the frustration, the resolution that have been loosed in his people. Any leader who tries to bottle up these emotions is sure to be blown asunder in the ensuing explosion.\(^{42}\)

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39 King, *Why We Can't Wait*, op. cit., p. 66.
40 Ibid., p. 71.
41 Ibid., p. 83.
42 Ibid., p. 132.
**March on Washington.** At various times in American history, organized groups have marched on Washington to present their demands or record their grievances. Some have marched for peace, others to seek clemency for convicted criminals, others to demand equal voting rights for women, others against unemployment, others, still, for civil rights for Negroes. Their receptions have been as varied as their causes.

Those which were marches for civil rights included one other under the leadership of Randolph. In 1941 a March on Washington Movement (MOWM) under his direction was established to demand an end to racial discrimination in defence employment and in the military services. Randolph proposed that ten thousand Negroes march on Washington for this purpose. Protest meetings in twenty-three states, organized by the NAACP and the MOWM, made it clear to the government, and to President Roosevelt in particular, that the only way to have the march call rescinded would be by meeting the Negroes' demands. One month later, Roosevelt issued an executive order prohibiting discrimination in defence work and followed this up with the establishment of a wartime Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC).

The march, a departure from previous Negro protest activities, was reactivated as a tactic in 1948. After a series of futile discussions with President Truman on the civil rights question, Randolph and other

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Negro leaders planned to initiate a civil disobedience campaign, including a march on Washington, in protest against discrimination in military service and jobs, but after further consultations with Randolph, Truman issued two executive orders — one creating a Fair Employment Board to eliminate racial discrimination in federal employment and one to establish a Presidential Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the armed services.45

In the 1950's, there were the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom and the Youth Marches for Integrated Schools, both previously mentioned. Both of these were organized by Bayard Rustin, who was to become the chief organizer of the 1963 March. Successful as they were, these earlier marches paled in comparison with the latter march. The sheer amount of organizational work required on both the local and national levels, constituted an enormous task that did not have to be faced by the earlier efforts. If by 1963 the march as a tactic was not a sharp departure from previous protests, this particular march, involving as it did so many people from so many diverse backgrounds, was unconventional, to say the least. The existing civil rights organizations might have been able to call upon experience from previous situations, but there was much that was novel in the new enterprise.

The pressures behind the 1963 March were such that the question was no longer whether there would be a march, but what kind of march there would be. As Randolph pointed out: "The choice, Mr. President, is between

a controlled and non-violent demonstration and an uncontrolled and violent one". Another leader warned: "We have a powderkeg situation in America. Negroes are angry, upset, restless. They need constructive, lawful outlets for their feelings". Pressure from the activitists made calling off the March difficult; in any case, it was important that continued pressure be put on the federal legislature.

Organizational steps were taken toward making the March a "living petition" and a joint effort of the NAACP, the NAACP legal Defense and Educational Fund, SCLC, SNCC, CORE, the National Urban League, and the National Council of Negro Women. The seven Negro organizations were joined by the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, the National Council of Churches, the American Jewish Congress, the Negro American Labor Council, and the United Auto Workers. These became the official sponsors of the March, with the interests of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the National Council of Negro Women being covered by the NAACP. The executive council of the AFL-CIO said

46 Quoted in Murray Kempton, "A. Philip Randolph: 'The Choice, Mr. President..."", New Republic, CXL IX (July 6, 1963), 17.

47 Quoting Rev. G. Lawrence, NYT, June 12, 1963, p. 25.

48 Originally concerned with advising and counselling southern farm workers; now it advised Negro workers on urban problems and tried to ensure equality of job and educational opportunities; see Urban League, Urban League Means Equal Opportunity (New York: The Urban League, 1964).

that while it shared the purposes of the organizers of the March, it was unable to give official endorsement. The date of the March was set for August 28th and more than one hundred civic, labor and religious organizers set about to recruit money and marchers.

It was decided to exclude acts of civil disobedience from the March, in order to allow a wide range of direct action supporters to participate, even if a filibuster on the civil rights legislation was in progress. Similarly, plans were abandoned to have state delegations contact their representatives and plans were postponed for a religious vigil on the Capitol steps. The manual issued for the March indicated the efforts being taken to ensure disciplined unity: only approved signs were to be carried; only approved places were to be scenes of demonstrations; no slogans were to be chanted; only one song, "We Shall Overcome!", was to be sung.

The order and discipline that had been aimed at were achieved beyond all expectations, even though not carried out to the letter of the manual. Two hundred and fifty thousand people, more than twice the number expected, of whom eighty per cent were Negro, converged on the city of Washington. They came from all classes, all sections, and all age groups. Prophetic warnings of riots seemed absurd when measured against the calmness of the day's events. Representatives of all media of communication, foreign as well as national, were present to report the meaning of the day and to try to capture some of the feelings of the thousands who thronged before the Lincoln Memorial.

Gospel and folk singers gave the message in song; Joan Baez sang of the movement's faith that justice would triumph in the end; Marion Anderson reached back into the slave past and sang of God's promised land; Bob Dylan borrowed from the current art of topical songs of protest to pay tribute to murdered civil rights leaders. White and Negro entertainers and celebrities, witness to the interracial quality of the march, gave the message in speech. Not one ugly incident marrred the demonstration; a staged play could not have been performed more smoothly. In the heat of the summer, the greatest assemblage Washington had ever seen had the air of a hootenanny or of a church picnic. But the sounds reverberated with the ideology of American history and the traditional chants of the nation's folklore.

As a form of non-violent direct action, the March had been called for the same reason that sit-ins, freedom rides, prayer rallies and boycotts had been resorted to - the civil rights movement had taken to the streets because the authorities had proved to be indifferent to its demands. The March reflected the various trends in the civil rights movement and the alignment of the Negroes' racial and religious allies. All major church denominations were represented and Rabbi Joachim Prinz, president of the American Jewish Congress, managed to capture some of their reasons for being there:

When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime, I learned many things. The most important thing that I learned in my life and under these tragic circumstances is that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problems. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.

51 As recorded on Council for United Civil Rights Leadership, The March
By contrast, there was no official representative from the AFL-CIO, although national and local unions were individually represented. This absence, which underlined the traditional discrimination against Negroes by the trade union movement,\(^{52}\) was more notable when some of the civil rights leaders called for an alliance of working class whites and Negroes. It was a particularly painful absence because, notwithstanding their position on colour, the trade unions had been until then the largest single organized group pushing for social welfare legislation.

At the March, the Negro leadership offered realistic appraisals of the current state of the movement. Of those who spoke, only King, in a speech which abounded with imagery, saw a hopeful dream; the others concentrated on the struggle ahead and spoke in tough, harsh language. They emphasized that the proposed civil rights legislation did not go far enough in rectifying economic problems of adjustment and inequality; but all except John Lewis of SNCC, who was censored on this point by the other March organizers, voted their support for the legislation anyway.

51 (Continued)

52 Although the situation has been changing since 1935 with the growth of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), trade unions have practised discrimination in spite of their ideology of brotherhood. Craft unions have discriminated through membership restrictions or other internal practices, while industrial unions, when they discriminate, do so through external practices in the collective-bargaining process. Recognizing that "[w]ithin the labor movement itself civil rights goals are celebrated at the higher levels, but fundamental internal barriers tend to preserve discrimination at the workingman's level" [United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1961 Report: Employment, op. cit., p. 151], the civil rights movement has been unable to depend to any large extent on having its demands presented to the authorities by the trade unions.
The demands of the March were read out by Bayard Rustin and revealed the penetrating influence that he had had on the movement. In little-known left-wing journals, Rustin had been arguing that social peace through social justice required some profound changes in the country's economic and social structure. The Negroes' problems, he had argued, were not exclusively those of civil rights but also of economic wrongs. To the general public, Rustin was well known for his organizational genius; but more than anyone else in the movement to date he had insisted that civil rights alone would only be the right to join the underprivileged whites.

The March's demands for comprehensive civil rights legislation included guarantees to access to all public accommodation, adequate and integrated education, protection of the right to vote, and authority for the Attorney-General to seek injunctive relief when constitutional rights were violated. Other political demands were for a reduction of congressional seats in states which disfranchised Negroes, that is, an enforcement of section two of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the withholding of federal funds from all programmes in which discrimination was practised. In addition, there were economic demands: for a massive federal programme to train and place all unemployed workers; for better housing; for an increase in the national minimum wage to $2.00 an hour; for the extension of the Fair Labor Standards Act to include exempted fields of employment; for a Federal Employment Practices Act. 53

53 Council for United Civil Rights Leadership (authorized recording), op. cit.
Randolph, a socialist who had accommodated himself to New Deal types of social welfare legislation, elaborated a theme that had become clearer as demonstrations spread to large urban centres of the North and South — that the demands of the civil rights movement were less confined to the Negroes than might appear at first to be the case:

Yes, we want all public accommodation open to all citizens, but those accommodations will mean little to those who cannot afford to use them. Yes, we want a Fair Employment Practices Act, but what good will it do if profits geared to automation destroy the jobs of millions of workers, black and white?

He argued that to meet the real demands of the civil rights movement, the "sanctity of private property" had to take second place to the "sanctity of human personality".

Lewis' speech reflected the pessimism of one who had to face the day-to-day struggle against southern brutality and repression knowing that the government in Washington cared less than it ought. The proposed remedy, the civil rights bill, was too little and too late, he said. It would not bring jobs to the unemployed or benefits to those on starvation wages; it would not protect the movement from police brutality; it would not help those who wanted to but were denied the right to vote. He asked where the social justice of the bill was to be found: "What is in the

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54 To be discussed in Chapter V.


56 Ibid.
bill that will protect the homeless and starving people of this nation? What is there in this bill to insure the equality of a maid who earns $5 [sic] a week in the home of a family whose income is $100,000 a year?" He castigated the federal government for not having assisted the movement in its fight against southern oppression: "...what did the Federal Government do when Albany's Deputy Sheriff beat Attorney C.B. King and left him half-dead? What did the Federal Government do when local police officials kicked and assaulted the pregnant wife of Slater King, and she lost her baby?" He castigated the federal government for its appointment of racist judges to southern courts. And he castigated both political parties for having betrayed the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

He applauded those who had acted against the evil of segregation: "We all recognize the fact that if any radical social, political and economic changes are to take place in our society, the people, the masses, must bring them about." Nothing and nobody could stop the revolution, he warned: "The black masses are on the march."  

From his jail cell in Louisiana, where he had been arrested for his part in the Plaquemine integration demonstrations, James Farmer dramatically sent a message of warning:

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57 The uncensored version appears as John Lewis, "... A Serious Revolution," Liberation, VIII (September, 1963), 8.
58 Ibid.
59 Loc. cit.
60 Loc. cit.
We will not come off the streets until we can work at any job befitting our skills any place in the land. We will not stop our marching feet until our kids have enough to eat and their minds can study and range wide without being cramped in Jim Crow schools. Until we can live wherever we choose, and eat and play with no closed doors blocking our way. We will not stop till the dogs stop biting us in the South and the rats stop biting us in the North.

Lewis and Farmer spoke the language of those who had more faith in the Negroes' readiness to face danger than in the government's readiness to pass meaningful social welfare legislation.

Reaction

Public Reaction. When Connor ordered his men to use fire hoses and dogs, he turned himself into the symbol of southern resistance, the Negroes into the oppressed and the martyred, and the city of Birmingham into an international liability for the United States. The picture of Negro children, many as young as five, being set upon by husky southern policemen was flashed across the nation and around the world.

The violence which erupted frightened people both inside and outside the city. White business interests in the city pressed for a negotiated agreement, which in the absence of Negro retaliation they had not been prepared to do. The interests which had opposed racial tension and social disruption during the phase of the sit-ins and freedom rides spoke out at the time of Birmingham as well. This time their numbers also included persons who feared that non-violence would fail as a tactical weapon unless the Negroes could begin to show some results of its use.

61 Reported in PN, Sept. 6, 1963, p. 12.
The protests had received the moral and financial support of labour, religious and progressive groups; demonstrations and rallies had been held in major cities to highlight the situation in Birmingham and at one point pickets even carried their message to the United Nations to ask for intervention in the South. 61A

For the reasons that Birmingham was feared, the March on Washington was applauded. Here was an orderly demonstration clothed in the ideology of the American Dream. Few people examined the implications of the demands Rustin read at the March; most were content to see a peaceful day's outing of 250,000 people.

Local authorities. Initially, the Birmingham authorities contented themselves with arresting demonstrators on technical charges of trespass, parading without a permit, creating a disturbance, or loitering. Local courts upheld the arrests. But when the arrests failed to deter the movement, the police resorted to brute force.

Federal authorities. As had happened in Albany, Birmingham became a national item when King, Abernathy and some sixty others, all appropriately dressed in blue jeans and denim shirts to emphasize the Negro boycott of clothes buying, were arrested. As with Albany, President Kennedy expressed concern over the jailings and asked the Justice Department to keep him informed of

further developments. As before, the Department felt assured that at present there were no legal grounds for federal intervention.

On the federal legal side, the courts dashed hopes for an immediate hearing for the arrested demonstrators when it returned to the state courts cases which it had earlier agreed to hear.

The turning point in the civil rights movement came when Connor used force against the demonstrators. More than anything else in the protest movement to date, it marshalled the fight against discrimination and injected into the Kennedy Administration a previously missing determination to fight for civil rights.

The direct action demonstrations planned by the civil rights leadership were based on various assumptions about the nature of the adversary. The civil rights movement was prepared to expect the worst from southern authorities. But the leadership assumed that the federal authorities had a degree of humanity and compassion which placed limits not only on their own potential for using force but also on their tolerating ruthlessness in others. In this assumption, the leadership was to be proved correct.

Similarly, what Hancock says of Smuts and Gandhi, one can say of Kennedy and King: "More than anything else, it was the force of public opinion, that brought Smuts to terms with Gandhi. There was, moreover, something

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62 Ibid., Apr. 14, 1963, p. 1. Kennedy, as on an earlier occasion, phoned Mrs King, expressed concern for her husband and said he hoped that a change of government in Birmingham would speed his release from jail. Ibid., Apr. 16, 1963, p. 17.

within Smuts himself which made him receptive of this public opinion and sympathetic towards the man who was inciting it. "64 Behind the force of public opinion lay Smuts' and Kennedy's disapproval and fear of social disruption.

Another assumption of the civil rights leadership was that the federal authorities would prefer not to be faced by prolonged and widespread dissension overflowing into violence. This assumption was proved correct also. Birmingham, with its reservoir of untapped violence, showed the need for legal outlets for pent-up Negro frustration. Birmingham, with its dogs and its hoses, added weight to questions both of the power to act and of the wisdom of specific proposals.

When Negroes replied with violence to Connor's use of force, the federal government ordered troops to bases near the city and, overriding the governor, put the Alabama National Guard on the alert. 65 In addition, high level truce mediators were sent in to try to resolve the conflicts in Birmingham. Kennedy initially indicated that he saw no legal steps which the federal government could take in the direction of intervention: "In the absence of such violation [of a federal statute] or any other Federal jurisdiction, our efforts have been focussed on getting both sides together to settle in a peaceful fashion the very real abuses too long inflicted on the Negro citizens of that community."66 He pointed to the Justice

64 W.K. Hancock, *Four Studies of War and Peace in This Century* (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), p. 82.


66 *NYT*, May 19, 1963, p. 16.
Department's previous investigations of voting discrimination in the city and its support, in the Supreme Court, of an attack by Negro plaintiffs on the city's segregation ordinance, adding that "through mediation and persuasion, and, when that effort has failed, through lawsuits and court actions, we have attempted to meet our responsibilities in this most difficult field where Federal Court orders have been circumvented, ignored, or violated." 67

But recognizing how damaging Birmingham had become to the country's reputation abroad, how significant to the Negro voting bloc at home, and how important to previously uncommitted, as well as committed, sections of the public and Congress, Kennedy argued the case for legal outlets for pent-up Negro frustrations and emotions.

In May, Congress already had before it an Administration proposal for civil rights legislation designed to speed up legal attacks upon voting discrimination and to provide federal funds for school districts which had desegregated. 69

After the crisis in Birmingham, Senators

67 Ibid.


69 See message from Kennedy, CR, 109: 3080-81 (Feb. 28, 1963). In this message, Kennedy attacked racial discrimination because it: (1) hampered economic growth; (2) hampered America's world leadership; (3) marred "the atmosphere of a united and classless society in which this Nation rose to greatness [Ibid., p. 3081]"; (4) increased the cost of public welfare; (5) increased crime, delinquency and disorder; (6) was wrong.
Cooper and Dodd opened a bipartisan drive for legislation designed to wipe out segregation in virtually every facet of daily business. Birmingham became a rallying point for effective civil rights legislation which the Administration chose not to ignore.

In asking for broad legislation, Kennedy appealed to the conscience of the nation to help stem the tide of discontent which was a threat to public safety and appealed to the legislative branch to listen carefully to the cries for equality being made in Birmingham and elsewhere in the nation:

The growing and understandable dissatisfaction of Negro citizens with the present pace of desegregation, and their increased determination to secure for themselves the equality of opportunity and treatment to which they are rightfully entitled, have underscored what should already have been clear: the necessity of the Congress enacting ... legislation providing legal remedies for the denial of certain individual rights.

Organized direct action, "with all its potentially explosive consequences", would continue if there was federal inaction, "causing the leadership on both sides to pass from the hands of the reasonable and responsible men to the purveyors of hate and violence," to the detriment of the country.

His proposals included: a guarantee of equal access to all public facilities; authority for the Attorney-General to sue against school segregation when those affected made written complaint and could not

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72 Ibid.
73 Loc. cit.
afford the expenses of suing or feared reprisals; a broad attack on
job discrimination, including $400,000,000 in new money for vocational
and literacy training and intensified efforts to eliminate discrimination
by federal contractors. These, if passed, would make demonstrations
unnecessary. Kennedy said, "by providing peaceful remedies for the
grievances which set them off." While the demonstrations had brought
the race problem to the nation's attention, they might soon so inflame
passions as to endanger life and property. With the race problem now
before the Congress, "unruly tactics or pressures will not help and may
hinder the effective consideration of these measures". Therefore he
suggested that Negro leaders "do their utmost to lessen tensions and...
exercise self-restraint [so that] ... Congress should have an opportunity
to freely work its will."?

When plans of the March were announced, Kennedy told Negro leaders,
in tones reminiscent of Roosevelt and Truman, that he thought it best to
postpone the March while debate on civil rights legislation was in progress.
Once it was certain that the March would not be postponed, Kennedy gave it
his most enthusiastic support and pronounced it an event consistent with
the American tradition. On the day of the March, he held talks with civil
rights leaders at the White House and expressed support for the March's
primary objectives, whatever he might have considered those to be.77

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74 Ibid., p. 11176.
75 Ibid., p. 11179.
76 Ibid.
77 NYT, Aug. 29, 1963, p. 16.
It is difficult to assess with precision the effect of the March on pending civil rights legislation. Although only seventy-five members of Congress accepted invitations to attend the ceremonies, none of the others, who tried to go about their routine business as if nothing unusual was happening, could escape the message of the marchers. Before the March, Congressmen were divided into those who wholeheartedly welcomed the marchers, those who cautioned against excess and the possibility of violence, and those who condemned the March outright as a form of mob violence. After the March, although its peaceful demeanour could not be ignored, there were still some Congressmen who contended that they were being made to operate under pressure and threats.

Evaluation

Both Birmingham and the March on Washington had broadened the objectives of the civil rights movement. The March suggested what the demonstrations in the North, to be discussed in the next chapter, made clear - that the movement was beginning to consider issues of economic equality based on class as well as issues of political segregation based on race. In approaching its objectives, the movement in Birmingham was assisted by the outbreaks of violence by unorganized Negro bystanders, while the March was assisted by the authorities' fear of the outbreak of violence.

SCLC's formal demonstrations in Birmingham and the movement's one-day demonstration in Washington were marked by their high degree of organization and their commitment to non-violence. But their effectiveness was attributable in part to the force of violence which they had behind them.

Birmingham. On the level of specific results, the Birmingham demonstrations did achieve a negotiated agreement. This included pledges to desegregate facilities in large downtown department and variety stores within ninety days, a promise to promote qualified Negro employees, and a promise to set up a bi-racial committee to examine other aspects of desegregation. The white negotiators also promised to recommend to the City Commission that charges be dropped against the more than twenty-four hundred Negroes who had been arrested. Although this agreement meant a scaling down of SCLC's original demands, neither the old nor the new city officials were prepared to give even tacit public approval of it. But one month later, initial steps had been taken to implement the agreement and in July the city appointed a bi-racial committee to examine possible implementation of the agreement's conditions. One year later, King could report the desegregation of lunch counters, libraries and schools on a token basis, for him a "small break in the enormous fortress of injustice, but considering the strength of the fortress, it was a towering achievement."81

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81 King, Why We Can't Wait, op. cit., p. 114.
Birmingham highlighted old as well as new trends in the civil rights struggle. On the local level, the authorities were faced with novel problems – the use of children, the filling up of the jails, white violence setting off Negro violence. The success of organized non-violence, when used by the unarmed Negro against the armed power of the state, was supplemented by the violence of unorganized supporters of civil rights. Had the hoses and dogs not been used, moderates and the silenced majority, both inside and outside of Birmingham, that had avoided taking a stand so far on the question of civil rights might still have remained silent. Human compassion and conscience, and the economic effects of racial tension, now brought them to the side of the underdog.

There were the dollars and cents considerations of mass jail-ins and school absences: the city lost $30,000 a day in state and federal funds for education; extra police had to be added to the force; retail stores added up losses of thirty per cent over previous selling figures; new industry was deterred from locating in the city and surrounding areas while they remained spots of tension. Such debits on the balance sheet indicated why at least some business interests were prepared to rethink their position on segregation.


83 When US Steel was attacked for not having exerted pressure for settlement in Birmingham, Roger M. Blough, the president, said: "[F]or a corporation to attempt to exert any kind of economic compulsion to achieve a particular end in the social area seems to be quite beyond what a corporation should do, and I will also say, beyond what a corporation can do." Quoted in Warren, op. cit., p. 311. Blough's attitude assumes that a corporation is silent on racial tension in an area, or that it does not support segregation, in effect, by doing business with banks, etc., which practise segregation.
After Birmingham, demonstrations continued, reaching a peak during the summer months of 1963. The pattern set by the sit-ins and the Freedom Rides of non-violent direct action was repeated in its essentials: there were still arrests on technical grounds; there was still the bid on the part of the activists for national publicity; there was still the outside assistance of national civil rights groups to local Negroes in the form of personnel, advice, encouragement, legal counsel, bail funds, and active participation in the demonstrations. The names of hitherto obscure places where mass arrests were made became front-page headlines. New stalemates such as had occurred in Albany cropped up. More and more, the glimpses of Negro life that emerged showed not only social inequities but also economic inequalities. Parallel to this latter point, until 1963 the movement had been primarily middle-class. Birmingham brought to it the urban unemployed and SNCC's voting campaigns, such as the one previewed in Albany, the agrarian lower class.

March on Washington. Whether it was a tactic of intimidation or an appeal to reason and morality, the March forced most of the Congress and the rest of the nation to face the presence of direct action. But more than this, it seems that a unified, responsible march of a quarter of a million people, even if it lacked the coercive effect which some of its more militant activists thought it ought to have had, could not fail to dramatize the urgency of civil rights legislation. By taking their struggle into the streets, the civil rights activists made it more difficult for the authorities to remain indifferent to their demands.
CHAPTER V

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (4): THE GHETTOS OF THE NORTH

Introduction

What has been examined so far are the conditions under which non-violent direct action evolved in the South. When demonstrations spread to the North, there were changes in the nature of the demands, in the tactics of non-violent direct action, and in the composition of the activists.

Merton's theory of reference groups hypothesizes that "men frequently orient themselves to groups other than their own in shaping their behavior and evaluations...."\(^1\) By reference groups, Merton understands not only membership and non-membership groups but also collectivities and social categories.\(^2\) Applying his general comments to the civil rights movement, I would suggest that in the South, the activists, by and large, took the values and standards of the white race as their comparative frame of reference. They demanded rights and privileges which members of that race had, irrespective of their class, by virtue of their being American citizens, but what they as Negro Americans were denied. Thus, they demanded to be served at lunch counters where whites were served, to vote in elections where

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whites could vote, to be hired for positions that whites with comparable skills could get.

In the North, the activists had two comparative frames of reference. First, in most instances, they took the values and standards of the white race. As was the case in the South, when activists in the North demanded that Negroes be hired for work on construction sites, they were demanding privileges which the white worker had. When they demanded that Negroes be allowed to buy houses where they chose, they were demanding purchasing privileges which white purchasers had. However, in addition the activists occasionally adopted a second frame of reference. When they demanded decent housing conditions or retraining schemes, they were not demanding something which the white race qua race had; they were demanding something which other classes of both races either had or were able to have. The source of their attitudes in both frames of reference may have been the American Creed; that is, they based their attitudes on what the situation should be in a society where no race and no class were denied equality of opportunity. But, in one case they were making race demands, while in the other, they were making class demands. In one case, they wanted to break away from their inferior ethnic status; in the other, they wanted to alter their "life chances"—educational opportunities, external living conditions, prospective earning capacity.

Looked at another way, southern activists can be seen as demanding alterations in their legal and de facto race position; northern activists can be seen as demanding alterations in their de facto race and class positions. In the case of the southern sit-ins, the activists were
demanding rights which they believed to be theirs in the spirit of
the American Creed of racial equality, if not in the letter of more
than a decade of federal court decisions on the question of segregation.
In the Freedom Rides and in instances of voting and school deprivations,
the activists were demanding rights which clearly were theirs, either as
a result of legislation, administrative regulation, or judicial pronounce-
ment. Birmingham went beyond issues of equal access to public accommodation
to issues of job opportunities for Negroes. But SCLC's demands were
still race demands; they were still demands for the elimination of
explicit racial barriers to opportunities available to white Americans.

In the North, where legal rights such as were being demanded in the
South already existed, activists were demanding rights and privileges
which had not been denied them by law, even if they had been denied them
by practice. They were asking for an end to ghettoization, which for them
meant alterations in both their race and class positions. The activists
said: (1) no one should be denied a job because he is a Negro; (2) no one
should be denied a job and decent housing and adequate social services
because he is unskilled and poor. The activists in the North were
concerned with conditions of poverty which affected the one-fourth to
one-fifth of Americans who lived below the minimum subsistence level.
If we consider the conservative estimate of forty-four million poor in
the United States,2A then the conditions which affect eleven million
Negro poor (about two-thirds of the Negro population) affected thirty-
three million whites as well. In contrast to this, southern activists

2A On poverty, see Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in
were concerned with conditions that affected only the sixty per cent of the Negro population which lived in the South, or about eleven million people (but not the same as the eleven million Negro poor).

The March on Washington, discussed in the last chapter, previewed both the race and class demands which characterized the movement from mid-1963 on. For in addition to demands for civil rights legislation, it included demands for a massive federal programme to train the unemployed and demands to raise the national minimum wage.

Because of the change in demands once the movement spread north, direct action tactics which had proved useful in integrating lunch counters were sometimes less easy to apply when pressing for more jobs or better housing. Since Negroes in the North already had the right to eat in restaurants of their choice, the movement conducted sit-ins on construction sites which would not hire Negroes. Since they already had the right to swim at public beaches, they conducted sit-ins at beach areas where their colour held them back from being employed as workmen. Since they already had legal rights to equal housing, they withheld their rent in order to press for decent housing conditions. When activists protested against lunch counter discrimination, they were engaging in a direct protest by making known their demands to persons who were able to alter the situation. However, precision was more difficult to apply in the North. When activists protested against slum conditions, it was harder to find the specific agent responsible for the conditions. For these reasons, demonstrations in the North often were more desperate and had less immediately achievable objectives
than did those in the South.

Northern tactics differed from those in the South in three other ways. First, the activists were less dependent upon the established Negro leadership and were more prepared to try out new kinds of direct action tactics. Secondly, the activists were more prepared to disregard the legalism of the NAACP type pressure and, partly as a result of the nature of their specific objectives, used litigation as an accompanying tactic less often than had been the case in the South. Thirdly, because their protests did not appeal to legal deprivations, the activists accentuated the civil disobedience aspect of non-violent direct action in a way that southern activists did not.

In addition to differences in aims and tactics between northern and southern activists, there were some differences in the composition of the respective groups. In the South, even when the civil rights campaigns were given the backing of all classes within the Negro community, the objectives and tactics were formulated by a middle-class leadership, often by ministers or persons in the professions. Although the base of the movement was widened in time, to include rural workers, urban workers, and small farmers (usually tenant or sharecropper), the leadership and initially the membership came from students and the middle-class. Progressively, a leadership emerged which had a more working class background but which itself was middle-class. At the end of 1963, Zinn checked the background of forty-one (one-third) of SNCC's field workers in Mississippi. His results were as follows:

Thirty-five of them were Negro, and twenty-five of them came from the Deep South. Of the six white staff members two were from the Deep South. The white youngsters and most of the Northern Negroes
came from middle-class homes; their fathers were ministers or teachers or civil service workers. All of the Southern Negroes, and some of the Northern Negroes (twenty-one out of thirty-five) came from homes where the mothers were maids or domestics, the fathers factory workers, truck drivers, farmers, bricklayers, carpenters. Twenty-nine (about three-fourths) of the total SNCC Mississippi staff were between fifteen and twenty years old. There were twelve between twenty-two and twenty-nine, and one person each in his thirties, forties, and fifties. Twenty-six, or about two-thirds, of the Mississippi SNCC staff were either college graduates or had some college education. Ten had finished high school, or had some high school education and two had no more than part of an elementary school education. If one were to generalize roughly about the SNCC staff in the Deep South, one would say that they are young, they are Negro, they come from the South, their families are poor and of the working class, but they have been to college. Northern middle-class whites and Negroes are in a minority.

This leadership pattern was modified during the voter registration campaigns in rural areas, to be discussed in the next chapter, where the local farming and working class not only comprised the main component of the demonstrations but also threw up some of the leadership.

As for the activists in the North, the middle-class and the students were included within the leadership and membership groups as in the South; but the working class and the unemployed, to a greater degree than in the South, also carried the placards, gave the chants, and blocked the roadways. Among the middle-class leaders, there were fewer ministers and more labour leaders than in the South; but the northern movement

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threw up more working class leaders even at the initial stages.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the main events which occurred in the North from 1963-64. In particular, I shall examine the situation in New York City, which provided an exaggerated version of conditions in other metropolitan areas where there was a very large Negro population. I shall examine the aims and motives of the demonstrations, the tactics of direct action which were used to publicize those aims, the reaction of both the public and the authorities to the spectrum of tactics used, and the results which the demonstrations had achieved by the end of 1964.

Temporal Phases

In support of the sit-ins and the Freedom Rides which had been conducted in the South, sympathy demonstrations had been held in the North since 1960 to highlight the plight of the southern Negro. Usually conducted by local CORE and NAACP chapters, often these were held in order to put pressure on northern businesses which had outlets in the South. The active participants were usually students, professionals, and trade unionists of both races. 5

In the summer of 1963, northern demonstrations were conducted to

deplore conditions closer at hand. They occurred in such cities as Chicago, Illinois, Chester, Pennsylvania, Los Angeles, California, Gary, Indiana, Cincinnati, Ohio, Boston, Massachusetts, East St. Louis, Missouri, Elizabeth, New Jersey and New York, New York. The tactics of non-violent direct action included sit-ins, hunger strikes, picketings, lie-downs in front of trucks, school boycotts, chain-ins to pillars, stall-ins on major highways. The demands were for changes in discriminatory patterns of school assignment, discriminatory state hiring policies, and oppressive slum conditions; they also were for the enactment of fair employment and fair housing legislation. In most instances, local governments promised to investigate the situations being attacked; in some cases, the authorities took concrete steps towards meeting the demands.

This pattern of demonstrations and responses continued into 1964, although the peak period of frequency was during the summer months of 1963. In the summer of 1964, the pattern was broken by the outbreaks of riots in urban areas in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Illinois. As a result of the riots, which came at a time when the Negro leadership feared the election of Senator Goldwater to the Presidency, some of the national civil rights leaders called for a moratorium on demonstrations until after the elections in November. This study closes at the end of the moratorium period with the election of President Johnson.

Aims and Motives

In general, demonstrations in the North sought to point out that segregation existed there as well as in the South, that living conditions

for the northern Negro in his ghetto left much to be desired, and that the northern Negro was no longer satisfied with his economic and social position in the society. In the North, instead of legal barriers there were institutional barriers. As far as the activists were concerned, instead of the legally segregated schools of Birmingham there were the *de facto* segregated schools of Chicago which were overcrowded and physically dilapidated. Instead of the jailhouse brutality of Albany there was the milder police brutality of New York, both kinds being beyond review by civilian sections of the population. Just as the Negro in the South felt that he had no other course but direct action to make his grievances known, so, too, did the Negro in the North feel this way.

Some of the demonstrations had specific aims: Philadelphia CORE demanded that a definite number of Negroes be employed on the Municipal Services Building construction project; Northern California CORE demanded that the state legislature pass a *fair housing law*; Syracuse CORE demanded that the Hotel Syracuse sign a *fair employment policy*; Los Angeles CORE demanded the resignation of the city's police chief, who, it alleged, sanctioned police brutality against Negroes and Mexicans.

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Other demonstrations had less specific aims. South Philadelphia CORE demanded that slum conditions be eliminated\(^\text{10}\), while East River CORE demanded improved living and school conditions for people living in Harlem\(^\text{11}\).

At the time of the protests against discrimination in the New York City building trades industries, CORE demanded five specific steps to end such discrimination: (1) that all qualified journeymen be accepted as members of the various construction industry unions; (2) that objective criteria to determine the qualifications of applicants for membership be established; (3) that the unions discard present waiting lists for new apprentices and accept new applicants without delay; (4) that an appeals board made up of representatives of the construction unions, the building industry and civil rights groups be set up to review cases in which union membership had been denied; (5) that Mayor Wagner revoke contracts on projects where job discrimination existed. \(^\text{11A}\)

At the time of the New York City rent strikes, Community Council on Housing (CCH) adopted a legislative programme with far-reaching implications. In addition to demands on the federal government for more government-supported low rent housing, CCH asked the city authorities to increase the power of the civil courts in granting stays of eviction when landlords failed to make repairs or maintain their property. It also asked that: court-deposited rents be returned to the tenant if the landlord \(^\text{10}\) *Ibid.*,, September, 1963, n.p.


failed to act within sixty days; courts be granted power over the
deposited rent monies to expend them for such essential services as
fuel, where a reluctant landlord failed to do so; rents be reduced if
landlords failed to provide the minimum of housing requirements; the
city immediately take over buildings where conditions had so deteriorated
that government control was needed to raise the buildings to a minimum
standard of decency; an emergency housing squad be established to aid
in perilous housing situations; and a long-range programme be instituted
to enable the city to correct violations before conditions deteriorated
to the point that the city receivership was the only remaining remedy. 11B

The City-wide Committee for Integrated Schools demanded plans for
massive rezoning of school districts, the "pairing" of Negro and white
grades in elementary schools by combining white and Negro school districts
and dividing the school horizontally rather than vertically, the reorganiza-
tion of junior high feeding patterns, the building of "educational
parks" (centrally located school clusters to which thousands of children
of all school ages were to be transported), and timetables for the
completion of specific desegregation plans. 11C

As the price of calling off plans for a stall-in, CORE demanded:
(1) the closing of all city construction sites and a grand jury investi-
gation of all unions that were alleged to have practised discrimination;
(2) city authorization of rent strikes and a grand jury investigation of slum landlords; (3) the immediate desegregation of all high schools, a moratorium on school construction in ghetto areas, and a timetable for total school desegregation; and (4) the establishment of a civilian review board to investigate all policemen charged with brutality. 11D

Tactics

Northern cities in general. Demonstrations in various northern cities followed a similar pattern. In Chicago, Illinois, sit-ins and hunger strikes were conducted by CORE in the offices of the Board of Education and the mayor to demand a review of discriminatory pattern of school assignment; school sites were picketed and arrests were made when demonstrators hurled themselves in front of trucks and lay down in the mud to call attention to their cause. 12 Sit-ins were also conducted by the Committee for Freedom Now in schools in Chester, Pennsylvania, 13 and by a CORE group at the Board of Education in Los Angeles, California. 14 Classroom boycotts, primarily by Negro pupils, were staged in Chicago, Illinois, and drew absences of 225,000 and 172,350 pupils. 15 Similar boycotts drew 16,000 absences in Gary, Indiana, 16 26,400 absences in


16 NYT, Apr. 18, 1964, p. 16.
Cincinnati, Ohio, and 20,571 absences in Boston, Massachusetts.

On the question of job discrimination, various organizations held sit-ins at state government offices in Peoria, Illinois, San Francisco, California, and East St. Louis, Missouri, in protest against discrimination in state hiring policies. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, work on city buildings was halted pending an enquiry on job discrimination on the part of both job contractors and trade unions; a temporary truce was broken when a promised change in policy failed to eventuate. In Elizabeth, New Jersey, protests against construction site hiring policies led to picketing, sit-ins on roadways, and chain-ins on trucks leading to the site. In San Francisco, California, shop-ins for fair employment agreements were started by CORE; demonstrators loaded shopping carts with merchandise, had the purchases rung up on the cash register, and then asserted that because they could not get jobs in the store they had no money with which to pay for their purchases.

In Columbus, Ohio, demonstrators conducted chain-ins and sit-ins in the gallery of the state legislature demanding fair housing legislation. In San Francisco, Berkeley, and Los Angeles, California, CORE conducted

17 Ibid., Feb. 12, 1964, p. 25.
18 Ibid., Feb. 27, 1964, p. 23.
sit-ins in realty agencies which would not sell to Negroes. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, CORE members dumped junk collected in slums on the doorstep of a slum landlord, demanding that he correct conditions in the properties he controlled.

Civil rights leaders found that new weapons were needed to keep the issues before the public and the authorities. Faced by the lethargy and indifference of city authorities to Negro housing problems, Philadelphia CORE saw no alternative but to attack and inconvenience the slum landlords themselves. To highlight the squalor and exorbitant rents of slum housing even in city-owned projects, Chicago CORE deposited rats and cockroaches on the mayor's doorstep; to highlight the seventeen per cent Negro unemployment rate in the city, CORE asked that the unemployed be given jobs as rat exterminators and building inspectors. Because the Bank of America would not enter into a hiring agreement with CORE and the California Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC), CORE conducted stall-ins at bank branches; activists conducted legitimate bank business in the slowest manner possible, such that one demonstrator took thirty minutes to purchase $9.50 worth of change.

New York City. New York City presented the problem of the northern Negro on an exaggerated scale. About 1,500,000 Negroes lived in the metropolitan

26 PN, Aug. 28, 1964, p. 10.
27 Ibid., July 10, 1964, p. 3.
area, most of whom were jammed into concentrated slum districts. A Department of Labor Survey, in discussing the twenty-three per cent coloured (fifteen per cent Negro and eight per cent Puerto Rican) section of the city's eight million people, reported that these groups had lower median family incomes and higher unemployment rates than any other groups within the community.²⁸

The general problems in almost all Negro neighbourhoods in New York City were predictable—poverty, unemployment, crime, illiteracy, bad schools, bad housing. These conditions were aggravated in the last decade by new strains on institutional structures: as white attendance at parochial and private schools increased, it also began to appear that by 1970 Negro and Puerto Rican children would exceed the rest of the school population; Negro unemployment rose as automation eliminated more unskilled and semi-skilled workers, of which Negroes were a dis-proportionate number; housing for Negroes was kept permanently scarce and rents permanently high as cheap housing was demolished at a far faster rate than that at which it was constructed.²⁹

If the problems of Negroes in New York were predictable, the methods of attack by frustrated people caught in the vicious circle of northern ghetto life were less predictable. In 1963, civil rights activists in New York City sat down at construction sites, chained themselves to iron grilles, dumped garbage on the mayor's doorstep, and refused to pay


rent to slum landlords. In 1964, the protests included these and others as well—school boycotts, stall-ins of cars on major highways, and uncontrolled disorder and riots. While tactics continually changed, the protests shared certain characteristics. First, they were directed at both private interests and political authorities; secondly, they illustrated the northern movement's assessment of the futility of mere reliance upon legal battles and recourse to courts of law; thirdly, they pointed up differences between the dilemma of the northern Negro and that of the Negro in the South.

I shall discuss four different areas with which the civil rights activists in New York City were concerned and the tactics used to demand alterations in the status quo: job discrimination; slum housing conditions; school segregations and general ghetto conditions.

The problem of finding jobs for skilled Negro and Puerto Rican construction workers had numerous complications. To get jobs, such workers had to be trade union members. To become trade union members, they had to complete apprenticeship training programmes or show that they were qualified journeymen; they had to be nominated for union membership by a sponsor, who also had to be a trade union member. Somewhere along the line, coloured workers had failed to become union members. Racial discrimination was one factor, for the vocational high schools were producing more Negro graduates trained for the jobs than the unions were prepared to take on. But even if there were no union discrimination, there would be a shortage of skilled Negro workers in this field. In June, 1963, a newly-organized coalition group, the Joint Committee for Equal Employment Opportunity composed of representatives of the New York Chapters of the NAACP, CORE,
the Urban League, the Negro American Labour Council, the Workers' Defense League, and the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, charged labour bias against Negroes and Puerto Ricans in the hiring policies of unions and firms on job construction sites. The group, presided over by Negro ministers, demanded: that city and state authorities halt work on all city and state construction jobs until construction unions adopted a "meaningful program of integration"; that the authorities enforce the laws against discrimination in the construction industry; that the authorities cancel contracts where discrimination existed, and that unions and firms make sure that Negroes and Puerto Ricans were hired to make up twenty-five per cent of the construction crews at city projects.

To counter the bias, the Joint Committee announced a series of picketings at building sites in specified areas of New York. Work on some sites was halted temporarily by the city while its select panel conducted an inquiry into the hiring practices; but the work and the picketing were resumed simultaneously as the inquiry dragged on.

As the summer progressed, demonstrations led by the Joint Committee, chapters of CORE or the NAACP, or local ad hoc groups, increased, becoming more desperate and more dramatic with time. There were peaceful sit-ins at City Hall and at the state governor's New York City office.


31 Ibid., June 12, 1963, p. 28.

There were peaceful picketings of housing and other building construction sites. Demonstrators blocked building sites by darting in front of incoming construction vehicles, sitting or lying down on the sites' roadways, hanging on to cranes, and chaining themselves to mechanical equipment. A group would lock hands and stand in the path of a truck; no sooner would they be dispersed, than another line would form ten feet behind. The disposal of this and succeeding lines would force the trucks to halt several times. Children were used in the line of demonstration to dramatic effect, as were adults attached to each other by chains or flypaper.

Other tactics accompanied these. The Joint Committee picketed the United Nations to demand that Latin American, Asian and African nations insist upon the hiring of more Negroes and Puerto Ricans on construction projects at the World's Fair. Five hundred, far fewer than had been expected, marched on City Hall to protest alleged bias in the construction unions. The NAACP petitioned the New York State Supreme Court for an injunction to halt the expenditure of $10,000,000 on state and city projects while bias against Negroes and Puerto Ricans in building trades existed; but their injunction was denied. The Bronx chapter of CORE served summonses on the Mayor and some other city officials accusing them of misuse of public funds by allowing racial bias to continue at

city-sponsored construction sites; but the summonses were dismissed. Some CORE members even attempted a citizens' arrest of the mayor for allowing racial bias; but they were arrested for trying to interfere with the operation of the mayor's office.

In the summer of 1963, the first of a series of mass arrests began, reaching over seven hundred by the end of July, on charges of disorderly conduct, trespass or resisting arrest. The activists usually justified their action in moral, not in legal terms, arguing that the injustice of denied opportunity exceeded any offence which they may have committed. In a situation of powerless frustration, the activists argued that they needed an element of the unusual to "dramatize to the Mayor that this should be first on his agenda." For most of the participants, their action was one of considered civil disobedience: "...we blocked trucks and conducted sit-downs [and] when we did so we were cognizant of the act of civil disobedience - wilful violation of the existing laws to protest an unjust situation. We were willing to accept whatever consequences were meted out."

Other participants were prepared to test the courts' willingness to uphold their novel forms of direct action. They sought protection under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution; they argued that their act of civil disobedience was to remedy an alleged

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38 Ibid., July 16, 1964, p. 12.
violation of a guaranteed right, and as such should be upheld.\textsuperscript{41}

Undeterred by arrests, protests continued, tapering off after the summer months. At only one site, a Harlem bank remodelling project, an accord ended demonstrations when the contractors agreed to employ twenty-five percent Negroes and Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{42} When building unions made some vague promises to promote more construction jobs for minority groups and even placed some Negroes as apprentices for the first time, there were pressures within the civil rights movement to call off demonstrations; but the majority felt that these efforts fell far short of the activists' concrete demands. When the state governor promised stricter enforcement of the state's anti-discrimination law, Negro ministers who had negotiated with him agreed to call off construction site pickets; but those leading the demonstrations at the sites spurned the pact out of disgust with "public relations devices being put forth as a substitute for meaningful action,"\textsuperscript{43} and warned that any further pacts would have to be made with the activists on the picket line. Nor were demonstrations called off when the state and city authorities agreed to set up offices to recruit Negroes and Puerto Ricans for jobs; promises and tokenism were rejected as being insufficient responses by the authorities.

\textsuperscript{41} The Appellate Term of the New York State Supreme Court held 2-1 against the demonstrators' plea of not guilty; but one justice was prepared to note the difference between "dry legal considerations and dynamic social realities." \textit{Ibid.}, Oct. 16, 1964, p. 30. The case was an appeal when this study closed.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibid.}, July 17, 1963, p. 1.

Demonstrations tapered off, but were never officially called off. Leaders expressed their disappointment that direct action had failed to achieve integration in the building trades. The hiring practices had been attacked, but the pattern of discrimination had not been changed. By the middle of October, 1964, some 2,600 Negroes and Puerto Ricans had applied for positions in the building trades industries; but it was not known how many had obtained jobs. To this same period, 307 had been judged as qualified for apprenticeship or journeymen positions. 44

Slum housing was another area where direct action tactics were used. Junk was dumped on the steps of City Hall and demonstrators chained themselves to pillars outside the mayor's office in protest against slum conditions. 45 These unusual tactics of non-violent direct action were matched by rent strikes which began in Harlem, the largest Negro section of the city, in September, 1963. These strikes began in protest over housing conditions in slums, exploitation by private landlords, and the authorities' failure to force corrections in the conditions. More conventional methods - letter writing, personal pleas, threats of non-payment - having failed, tenants in Harlem slum buildings withheld their rent until their grievances were met. Initially guided by a group of college students affiliated with the Northern Students Movement (NSM) 46 who saw themselves

46 A loose confederation of student-staffed projects in eight northern cities which began in the fall of 1961 to do civil rights work; its originators, white students, saw themselves as the northern wing of SNCC. The Movement has "committed itself to enabling people in depressed ghettos to confront and change the complex institutions which now so limit their lives." Peter Countryman, "With Our Minds Stayed on Freedom", Fellowship, XXIX (Nov. 1, 1963), 18.
as the catalysts rather than the leaders of the strike, families in
the buildings formed tenants' councils to serve notice of their grievances
on high rents and minimal services to both the landlords and the city
authorities. 47 In October, the city's Rent and Rehabilitation Administra-
tion reduced rents in the contested building to $1.00 a month because of
uncorrected violations - rat holes, rat infestation, broken plaster,
broken furniture in premises rented as furnished. 48 As the strikes spread
to other buildings, rents were lodged with either one of the tenants, NSM,
or local chapters of CORE which were backing the strike, to be used at the
discretion of the courts.

With NSM still assisting, strike organization was centred in CCH,
which operated out of Harlem. Jesse Gray, a militant Harlem personality,
employed as a shipping clerk, who had been active in left-wing organizations
since the Depression, headed CCH and announced plans to have thousands of
buildings on strike by December. He outlined the following activities
for the strikers: to urge the chief of the Civil Court to refuse to grant
slum landlords the right to evict tenants where there were building
violations; to appear in court cases with rubber rats tied around their
necks; to picket the Department of Buildings demanding complete inspection
of slum housing; to press for a three member arbitration board to settle
difficulties with landlords rather than let the cases be heard—tangled

47 NYT, Sept. 28, 1963, p. 1. On James Baldwin's suggestion on September
22, 1963, for rent strikes, see the report of his speech to a National
Day of Mourning rally (in honour of the four children killed in a church
bombing in Birmingham) in New York City. James Baldwin, "We can sha
the Country", Liberation, VIII (October, 1963), 8.

up in the legal backlog - in the present court system.49

To the surprise of many landlords and tenants, the courts upheld the strikers and awarded to themselves power to hold rents in question pending repairs to the tenement; the landlord could apply to the court for the money, but only for use in correcting building violations.50 Subsequently, the courts ruled that tenants could live rent-free until housing evils which menaced health and safety were corrected.51

With legal sanction on their side, the rent strikes spread. By January, 1964, they involved fifty-eight buildings and the number had risen to 250 by February. The city began a drive on rats in the slums, charging the owners of the buildings with the cost of extermination work. In addition, acting under city receivership laws, it prepared to take over slum buildings in cases where the landlords were financially unable to make repairs. By August, 1964, Gray reported that corrective city action had improved conditions in most of the tenements on strike and that only sixty of the original 325 buildings which had been involved were still on strike.52

49 Ibid., Dec. 2, 1963, p. 30. Gray said that he had organized a similar rent strike in 1959: "But there was no community solidarity. Now because of the struggles in the South, the community is becoming aware of its rights." Ibid., Dec. 18, 1963, p. 33.


52 Ibid., Aug. 11, 1964, p. 25.
De facto school segregation, racial imbalance resulting from de facto segregated housing, was another object of protests in New York City. Such segregation was most pronounced in neighbourhood elementary schools, for often high schools cut across such housing patterns. During the summer of 1963, CORE began sit-ins in the offices of the State Commission for Human Rights and at the headquarters of the Board of Education seeking to force a change in the neighbourhood school assignment programme which it argued perpetuated de facto segregation.

Prior to the opening of the fall term, Negro leaders in the city called for a boycott of classrooms on opening day, but cancelled the call when the city agreed to set an integration timetable by the end of the year. Displeasure with the proposed timetable led to further sit-ins at the Board's offices and proposals for a new boycott in the spring term.

Earlier school boycotts had produced some tangible results, even though these boycotts were on a more limited scale. In September 1958, nine Harlem pupils stayed out of school until reassignments to white

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Total Enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>168,162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior High</td>
<td>56,072</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic High</td>
<td>29,870</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational High</td>
<td>10,512</td>
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Source: Ibid., Jan. 6, 1964, p. 28.


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schools were made six months later. In September, 1959, two hundred Harlem children boycotted classrooms for a week; twenty-three of them stayed out until they were reassigned six months later. One Negro student stayed out for six months, from September, 1961, to February 1962, and when reassignment was made in February, the Board promised to re-examine the entire high school assignment pattern. 57

When a city-wide boycott was threatened in September, 1960, by the Rev. Milton Galamison, then president of the Parent's Workshop for Equality, the Board of Education agreed to an open enrolment plan under which students from designated, predominantly non-white schools could apply for transfer to designated, predominantly white schools; but by the end of 1963, only fifteen thousand students, out of a Negro enrolment of 265,000, had chosen to do so.

At the time of the 1964 boycott, the Board had introduced the free-transfer plan, under which pupils in predominantly non-white schools could apply to any schools outside their area and be assigned, on a first-come, first-served basis provided that space was available. While this had the effect of integrating the transferred children, it left the schools from which they had come as segregated as before. The goal of the 1964 boycott was to keep students out of the city's 165 so-called "ghetto schools", those whose enrolment was ninety per cent or more non-white, and to keep students out of the city's one hundred other public schools that were more than fifty per cent non-white. According to Galamison, chairman of the organizing City-Wide Committee for Integrated

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For these and other instances, see ibid., Feb. 4, 1964, p. 20. These efforts were engineered largely by Paul Zuber, a militant, Negro attorney, who represented the parents of the children concerned.
Schools, which included CORE, the NAACP, Parents' Workshop for Equality, Harlem Parents Committee, the Urban League, and the National Association for Puerto Rican Civil Rights, the boycott would be repeated as often as necessary until the Board produced an acceptable programme for city-wide racial integration, including a timetable of dates by which steps in the programme would be completed. He conceded that the boycott might be a violation of the state's compulsory school attendance law, but argued that there was a "higher, moral law" to be obeyed. The Board's president described the boycott as a "lawless course of action" and refused to be moved by its pressure.

When held, the boycott was responsible for school absences of 360,000 above normal. If it failed to gain immediate integration of the school system, doubtful in any case, it did help to dramatize the aspirations of the city's racial minorities.

After the boycott, threatened reprisals by city authorities against teachers who absented themselves from school for the day were called off, but the civil rights groups, disagreeing among themselves as to the next course of action, did not formulate any further united action for the immediate future. Under the sponsorship of several Puerto Rican groups, eighteen hundred persons marched on the Board's headquarters to demand

59 Ibid.
60 Loc. cit.
better educational facilities and more effective integration. A second boycott called by Galamison, undertaken without the backing of the NAACP, CORE or the Urban League, produced only half the previous turnout and affected mostly all-Negro schools.

In addition to protests over job discrimination, slum housing, and de facto school segregation, there were protests over the general problems of ghetto living. Seven members of East River CORE sat down on the Triborough Bridge during the evening rush hour; before they were arrested by the police, they were pelted by motorists with invective and with the garbage which they had dumped on the bridge. In leaflets which they handed out to the inconvenienced commuters, they argued the case of the Negro in the ghetto:

East River CORE is engaging in civil disobedience today to protest the unsafe and overcrowded schools in East Harlem. We regret to inconvenience people passing through our neighborhood on their way to better sections of the city, but we are both very sorry and angry about the way Negro and Puerto Rican children are treated in the richest city and the wealthiest country in the world.... We are asking that New York commuters stop for a moment to look at Harlem and the people they leave behind, and that they do something about this problem that is not only Harlem's but all America's. CORE has participated in many great marches - all useful in their time and in their way for pushing the movement for freedom and equality forward. But now it is necessary to go to the root of this problem, to organize in local communities, to help make the poor visible and vocal in defense of their rights so they can no longer be ignored by America's commuters.

The frustration and hostilities of some civil rights activists came to a head at the demonstrations planned for the opening of the World's Fair to be held in New York City. The national office of CORE announced plans to demonstrate at the Fair, a monument to American affluence, that the Negro citizen was not getting his fair share of the glitter and gold. To dramatize its case before the international audience that would be in attendance on opening day, CORE planned to picket before the pavilions of states which practised discrimination, as well as the pavilions of companies that had discriminatory hiring policies.  

CORE's announcement was pushed aside by one of its Brooklyn chapters which stated its intention to tie up traffic on the opening day of the Fair: "Drive a while for freedom. Take only enough gas to get your car on exhibit on one of these highways [five major arteries leading to the Fair grounds]." In addition, the chapter announced consideration of a programme of intentional water-wasting as an ultimatum to the city: it would ask all CORE supporters to open their faucets and let the water run, should the proposed stall-in fail to produce immediate working plans on housing, schools, employment and police brutality. A new tactic, it was planned to inconvenience the entire city and not just specific sections within it.

The proposed stall-in provoked sharp disapproval from sections both within and outside of the civil rights movement. Farmer, in announcing the national office's suspension of the local chapter because the proposed tactic would "merely create confusion and thus damage the fight for freedom"

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67 NYT, Apr. 9, 1964, p. 1.

added that the stall-in was "not a relevant confrontation with the power structure." In a joint declaration, CORE, the NAACP, the Urban League and SNCC accused the stall-in proposal of being neither orderly nor non-violent and out of step with the general civil rights movement: "It is an essentially revolutionary proposal that might serve the peculiar needs and motives of some of its proponents but not the broad interests and needs of the Negro people in their normally broad program of effective social protest." In reply, Brooklyn CORE said: "We are not promoting violence. We are preventing violence in that if people do not have some healthy outlet to express their frustrations there will be violence."

The city authorities began to prepare for the demonstrations: preliminary sit-ins were thwarted; legal measures were enacted to make it a crime to run out of gas on highways leading to the Fair; an injunction against the proposed stall-in was granted to the city; provisions were made for towing away stalled cars; the heaviest concentration of traffic

71D Ibid., Apr. 15, 1964, p. 1. However, the head of the sanitation union warned that the ten thousand men in his local would not scab on civil rights workers by towing away their cars.
policemen in the city's history was put on duty; talks were held with the local CORE chapter to try to settle the dispute; the public was advised to stay off the roads and take trains to the Fair wherever possible; detention centres were set aside at the Fair grounds. 71E

The stall-in, which had been extended to include tie-ups in subways, snarl-ins at ticket gates, and lie-ins on bridges, failed as a tactic. Only twelve cars turned out, of an alleged pledged number of twenty-five hundred. There was only one serious attempt to stop a train. And pickets were successfully kept from entering on to the Triborough Bridge. 72 However, at the Fair grounds, shouting, chanting and singing demonstrators managed to drown out President Johnson's opening address. In other activities, three hundred persons were arrested when they attempted to block doorways and climb exhibits in "a classic and successful confrontation which has dramatized the urgency and immediacy with which the nation must deal with its most urgent problems, racial discrimination and hatred." 73

The tactics which have been discussed were used to attack related areas to the ones outlined. There were lie-downs in front of moving cars at the approachway to Jones Beach in a bid to draw attention to CORE's campaign for the hiring of more Negroes and Puerto Ricans by the state park commission. 74 Seven CORE members were arrested for

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71E Jurisdiction over persons charged with illegal acts had been given to the Fair authorities by the city in its contract with the Fair.


73 Quoting Farmer, in Ibid., Apr. 23, 1964, p. 28.

disorderly conduct when they protested over alleged police brutality by handcuffing themselves to a large iron grille outside the office of the Police Commissioner.\textsuperscript{75} Two weeks later, eight demonstrators were arrested for blocking the loading area of a brewery concern; they had resorted to direct action when negotiations failed to resolve differences over the company's hiring policies.\textsuperscript{76} A week later, eight CORE pickets were ejected from City Hall after staging a sit-in in protest over the mayor's failure to take action on the questions of police brutality and school integration.\textsuperscript{77}

Demonstrations continued to the time at which this study closes, but none reached the pitch of the protests discussed in detail. There was dissension within the civil rights movement over tactics. The gamut of non-violent direct action ran from the legal protest meetings and the rallies of the NAACP to the more militant, in some cases civilly disobedient, tactics of CORE. At one end of the spectrum stood Wilkins of the NAACP who, even as late as June, 1963, argued that intelligent work in capital lobbies would be more effective than mass marches on Washington and sit-ins in the halls of Congress.\textsuperscript{78} But the NAACP, with its regular paid staff and its large network of chapters, its half a million members and income of nearly $1,500,000 could rely upon legalism and litigation that less well-endowed organizations were forced to reject. At the other end

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., Mar. 7, 1964, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., Mar. 21, 1964, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., Mar. 28, 1964, p. 20.
of the spectrum stood Farmer of CORE, for whom there was an organizational need to extol demonstrations that could produce a reaction which CORE's limited resources could not achieve in any other way.

Independent action groups, local branches of national organizations, and the national headquarters of the latter occasionally quarrelled over tactics of racial integration. One local leader argued that "anybody who is under the aegis of a national organization and who is responsible to an anonymous board of directors and a faceless host of contributors cannot function adequately in the current situation as a creative leader".78A There was the further difficulty of local affiliates who viewed problems differently from the national bodies; or local leaders who were able to assess the temper of the immediate activists more accurately. But as was often the case, it was the national body, or the better-known leaders, who had the prestige, the organizational ability, and the financial resources to undertake a long-range programme.

Although the civil rights movement in the North was not bound slavishly to any one theory of non-violent direct action, there appeared to be certain well-accepted standards of behaviour. First, even in the North, direct action was used usually as a last resort, after conciliation and negotiation had failed to produce results. Farmer said: "We find that demonstrations are frequently the catalyst - spur the dialogue. Sometimes demonstrations start the dialogue."79


Secondly, most of the leaders recognized that militant tactics alone would not produce a solution. They supported the use of a plurality of approaches - legal, moral, economic, political as well as the simultaneous use of a variety of tactics. But they objected to being told to use only conventional channels to make their position known. While the appeal of militancy was great for those who had come to distrust promises and mediation, shock tactics were used only when it appeared that other methods had failed.

Thirdly, all of the leaders stressed that they tried to avoid either provoking violence or interfering with the rights of others; but some of them argued that they were forced into inconveniencing the public by the failure of other methods. Galamison said:

The question [of why certain tactics are used] assumes that we are not utilizing these direct action tactics as a last resort, that we haven't sat around trying to negotiate in a civilized way, that we haven't been consistently frustrated at every turn.... We have no alternative. This is why we turn to tactics that lose us friends.

The bridge sit-downs and the Fair stall-ins were examples of civil disobedience, and for many critics, non-violent direct action which bordered on violence. The objectives were just and fair or, at any rate, consistent with the goals of the civil rights movement; but the tactics of urgency only infuriated the motorists whose cars were (or might have been) halted by the action. In the North, however, specific objectives were easier to

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formulate than specific oppressors were to identify. Galamison said: "We're living in a society where it's increasingly hard to find who's responsible. It's difficult to determine at whom you direct your protests."\textsuperscript{82}

Some within the civil rights movement who had opposed the bridge sit-downs and the stall-ins on tactical grounds were prepared still to come to the defense of the militants. Whitney Young, executive director of the Urban League, attacked the critics who bemoaned the tactics used by the Negro but who themselves gave no concrete assistance to the movement: "The white man is concentrating on the inconveniences and disturbances and not on the basic cause of the problem: poverty."\textsuperscript{82A}

Attacks on the use of particular methods of direct action assumed that the leadership could dictate explicit guidelines for acceptable demonstrations, which could apply at different times and in different locations. Senator Javits had asked the leadership to issue a statement on the "proper limits of protest"\textsuperscript{83} so as to ease racial tension and assure the public that protests were not heading in the direction of unlawfulness and violence. Robert Gore, assistant community relations director of CORE, had pointed out earlier: "The time is past when any person or group of persons can assume the prerogative of determining the time, place or type of demonstration which should be held to break down segregation - Northern or Southern style - often, if not always - the only way to accomplish this is through Socratic gadfly techniques...."\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{82A} Quoted in Warren, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 162. Italics in the original.

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{NYT}, June 11, 1964, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{84} \textit{Ibid.}, July 13, 1963, p. 16.
Farmer argued against Javits' position that allowances had to be made for situational changes which made certain tactics correct in one case and inappropriate in another. Even with respect to the stall-in, which he had opposed at the time, an occasion might arise when such a tactic would be acceptable:

I was not opposed in principle, I was opposed in tactics and timing. I consider a stall-in to be an essentially revolutionary tactic which requires a revolutionary situation — to be in the same category as a general strike, a general work stoppage — and it has certain prerequisites. First, unity in the Negro community. Second, an almost absolute polarization between the races. It would be a desperate measure. For instance, in Plaquemine, Louisiana, I have recommended to the Negro community that they explore the idea of a general strike. There you have the total polarization, and the absolute unity, so that such a measure would be justified; while in New York it would be neither justifiable or workable. Also there is the extent to which you have been able to get dialogue, and in New York at least we have had dialogue. 85

The protests of the northern civil rights movement, in spite of their militancy, were disciplined, organized, and executed with a minimum amount of "provocative nonviolence". In contrast to these were the riots which erupted in New York and other northern cities in the summer of 1964. The riots followed a similar pattern, but were not connected organizationally. Routine police behaviour provoked crowds to gather; there were voiced objections to the police's behaviour, followed by interference with the latter's duty. Mob action began; law and order broke down; ill-assorted weapons were thrown at the police; store windows were broken, looting followed. White persons visiting the neighbourhoods were attacked; fire alarms were

85 Quoted in Warren, op. cit., pp. 197-98.
pulled; cars were overturned. The civil rights leadership within the community was unable to restore order; only the authorities' superior force was able to do that.

A Harlem rally, called by CORE to protest the killing of a Negro boy suspected of robbery by an off-duty policeman, set off a week of rioting, looting and stealing in the area. Appeals by local and national Negro leaders, asking that Negroes get off and stay off the streets, were offset by the call of some local Negro leaders for "100 skilled black revolutionaries who are ready to die", to correct conditions in Harlem. Similar riots were touched off by other instances of alleged police mauling in the Negro section of Brooklyn and throughout the summer months spread to Rochester, New York, Chicago, Illinois, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Jersey City, Paterson, and Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Smelser characterizes a riot as a form of hostile outburst within which participants are mobilized on the basis of a hostile belief. He suggests that "the degree of overt expression of these lower-level components in norm-oriented movements depends largely on the conditions

87 Quoting Jesse Gray, ibid., July 20, 1964, p. 16.
88 See comparative reports of riots in ibid., Sept. 27, 1964, p. 61.
89 Smelser, op. cit., p. 226.
In the Harlem race riot, one factor which set the outburst in motion was the killing of the Negro boy and the failure of the police commissioner to reprimand the policeman. This was justification for many of the participants to feel that they could not expect a fair deal from the authorities. The northern riots, all of which had begun obscurely, were characterized by their undefined goals and their lack of a closely knit, identifiable leadership. Attacks on police brutality were attacks rather than demands. Formal demands for a civilian review board, for example, were made either before the riot began or after the riot had subsided.

The rioters themselves were by no means a cross-section of the Negro community. They were composed largely of teenagers and young men, many of whom were either on school vacation or in the ranks of the unemployed; they bore a resemblance to those who had retaliated against Connor's men during the Birmingham demonstrations. Their aggression was not necessarily class aggression, although it has been suggested that it might have been since the looting of luxury items predominated. The rioters appeared

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90 Ibid., p. 272.

to be aggressive towards the symbols of their version of the white power structure, such as the police and white storeowners. The looting was indicative also of a substantial lawless element within the riots.

This latter point, in addition to the riots having been spread exclusively by grapevine and not by local or national civil rights organizations, separated them from the main body of the civil rights movement. The national Negro leadership was powerless, on the whole, to deal with the violence. What leadership was asserted on the side of pacification was mainly by local figures. If there was a positive effect of the riots for the civil rights movement, it was that the established Negro leaders could point to them as a possibility for the future when putting their case for positive and immediate beneficial action from the authorities.

Rustin, himself a disciple of non-violence, argued that the civil rights leadership had to understand the reluctance of suppressed Negroes to rely upon non-violence. The latter regarded it as a tactical weapon that often was inadequate to deal with their objective needs. "[I]t is wrong," Rustin argued "to turn one's back on people who have been so demoralized and trampled on that they literally have no choice except to fight back, and then turn to them and say that was naughty." 91A

Non-violence was more acceptable as a pragmatic political weapon by those who saw it as consistent with their religious training in Christianity or their tradition of minimizing offences to whites. In this sense, it was more applicable to southern Negroes for whom it was

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"a natural outgrowth of the traditional passive and submissive role in the face of white domination and potential retaliation".\footnote{Fishman and Solomon, "Youth and Social Action: I. Perspectives of the Student Sit-in Movement", \textit{op. cit.}, p. 880.} In addition, the philosophy of non-violence could be understood by the educated and sophisticated: "But it is unlikely that it can be accepted with full understanding by the masses of Negroes. Their very attempt to cope with this type of philosophical abstraction in the face of the concrete injustices which dominate their daily lives could only lead to deep and disturbing inner conflicts and guilt".\footnote{Kenneth B. Clark, "The New Negro in the North", in Ahmann, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37.}

A moratorium on demonstrations was called by the national leadership after the Harlem riot to counter any swing towards Goldwater for president. Wilkins, King, Young and Randolph urged their respective followings to observe a moratorium until after the elections in November and to use the pre-election period to enlist voters (presumably for Johnson), press for enforcement of the newly passed federal Civil Rights Act, and win allies to their cause: "Our own estimate of the present attitude is that it presents such a serious threat to the implementation of the Civil Rights Act and to subsequent expansion of civil rights gains that we recommend a voluntary, temporary alteration in strategy and procedure...."\footnote{\textit{NYT}, July 30, 1964, p. 12.} Farmer and Lewis (of SNCC) refused to agree to the moratorium, although Farmer associated himself with that part of the statement which denounced the rioting and looting by Negroes in some urban areas.
Behind the dissent of Farmer and Lewis lay their assessment of the difficulty of channelling the released energies and emotions of the activists into conventional political pressure tactics; that is, of having them return to earlier methods such as lobbying and legal action. This assessment had been reflected in Farmer's earlier reply to Kennedy's request for a truce when the civil rights bill had been introduced. He then had said that the leadership could not call demonstrations off even if it wished to; but, in any case, he felt that demonstrations would not damage the bill's chance but would "help persuade the legislature of the urgency of the situation."  

Reaction

Public reaction.- As the civil rights movement grew, more white people of liberal persuasion had become involved. By the time that the demonstrations spread to the North, influential organizations had become attracted to the movement. But such groups as Freedom House, the American Jewish Congress, and the Americans for Democratic Action had been attracted to the movement when it was at a stage of development where legal segregation was being attacked. As the movement spread to the North, many of these white organizations became hostile to some of the new demands being raised and some of the new tactics being advanced. For many Negroes in the civil rights movement, the term "white liberal" became one of derision, just as in 1954 the term "moderate" had been similarly transformed. Young, never noted for his rejection of white support, said:

But one thing, if nothing else, 1963 did for us — it taught us that no longer can we generalize about our friends and our enemies.... As long as some of those fair weather friends could express liberalism in terms of indignation about a lynching in Mississippi, this is one thing; when it comes to having somebody move next door to them, this is something entirely different.

The term "white backlash" was introduced into the public jargon to explain the allegedly growing white rejection of civil rights objectives and civil rights supporters. But because of the diverse number of issues on which the 1964 presidential contest between Johnson and Goldwater was run, it was difficult to assess the precise role which the "white backlash" against the civil rights movement played.

There is no question that the northern demonstrations aroused opposition. To cite one example: In March 1964, taking their case into the streets for the first time, more than ten thousand white parents marched on New York's City Hall in protest over school "pairing" and the "busing" of children out of neighbourhood schools. Engineered by a loosely knit federation representing a wide variety of interests, the demonstrators were bound by their colour and their opposition to any plans which called for the involuntary transfer of children from neighbourhood schools. The largest of these groups, Parents' and Taxpayers (PAT),


95 NYT, Mar. 13, 1964, p. 1. Earlier, a state court ruled that the Board of Education had the right to rezone schools to promote integration but upheld, as well, the right of pupils to attend the schools nearest to their homes. This left open the question as to the constitutionality of a school board's acquiescence in de facto segregation. See ibid., Jan. 11, 1964, p. 1. For other cases, see Balaban v. Rubin, reported in IX CLD 26 (1963); IX CLD 64 (1964).
organized a boycott, in protest over the Board of Education's programme on limited pairing of schools, which successfully cut attendances by 175,000 above normal.  

96 This was followed by sit-ins in the disputed schools and arrests which the courts refused to uphold.  

To cite another example of reaction to the demonstrations in New York: Critics of the school boycott argued that "keeping children out of school is not an effective answer to poor and segregated public education" and called it a weapon which tried "to force a situation that by its very nature is not subject to the use of force." Critics also pointed out that there were genuine practical problems attached to integrating schools which had little to do with racial discrimination. They queried if integration entailed a race-to-race proportion in every school or a general balance proportionate to the population as a whole. They said that after racially motivated gerrymandering had been declared illegal, the problem remained of assigning Negro and white children to each other's schools; even where ghetto schools were integrated, there was the further problem of transporting ("busing") children into distant neighbourhoods. Galamison argued, "Anyone who is opposed to busing is opposed to integration." With this his critics disagreed. It was not


97 *Ibid.*, Dec. 4, 1964, p. 33. The court held that the arrests on charges of loitering on school premises were made on procedural irregularities.


100 Quoted in Midge Decter, "The Negro & the New York Schools", *Commentary*, XXXVIII (September, 1964), 27.
that they were against their children being educated alongside Negroes, but that they were against sending their children into slums (which happened to be Negro) and to inferior schools (which also happened to be Negro). 101

Set against this opposition, it is to be noted that some of the more militant organizations, such as CORE, reported that after the demonstrations began in the North, their financial contributions did not fall off. Public support for giving the ghetto Negro a chance to improve his status continued, even where there was opposition to some of the ways in which the objectives were being approached.

Official reaction.— City and state officials showed a similar ambivalence toward the demonstrations. While they were sympathetic to most of the goals, they were opposed to many of the methods. The first attitude of sympathy if not support for the aims of the movement kept the dialogue which Farmer referred to open; the second attitude of opposition was reflected in the legal methods used to counter the demonstrations.

On the question of job discrimination, both New York City and New York State agreed to set up offices to try to recruit qualified Negroes and Puerto Ricans for jobs in the construction industries. Both the mayor and the governor promised stricter enforcement of the state's anti-discrimination laws. But the mayor refused to cancel construction projects where discriminatory hiring practices existed, most probably because he was unprepared to jeopardize the building of housing projects and schools which were being undertaken on these sites.

On the question of slum housing, New York's Rent and Rehabilitation Administrations reduced rents in the contested slum buildings; city courts upheld the strikes and the city prepared to take over slum buildings in cases where the landlords were financially unable to make repairs. Under pressure from CCH, the city also began a drive on rats in the slums. In a bid to institutionalize the strikes, the mayor asked the state to legalize the strikes, to create special housing courts and more effective methods of vacating run-down buildings and relocating tenants, and to enact measures to increase penalties for violations affecting health and safety. But the legislation was not pressed for by the Democratic supporters of the mayor in the Republican state legislature and was never passed.

On the question of school integration, the New York City Board of Education took steps for greater integration only when pressed into doing so. But it failed to state a timetable when desegregation efforts would be undertaken; without the timetable, the civil rights movement would not recognize that the Board had made any positive efforts to resolve the conflict.

The authorities opposed some of the tactics used. After junk was dumped on the steps of City Hall and demonstrators chained themselves to pillars outside the mayor's office in protest against slum conditions, the mayor ordered that the demonstrators be arrested. Until that time, he had allowed the sit-ins in his office to continue "not because they had the legal right to do so — because they did not — but because of my

102NYT, Jan. 6, 1964, p. 1.
deep sympathy for their objectives." 103

From the middle of 1963 on, the effect of the demonstrations in the North on Kennedy's civil rights proposals became a matter of concern for the civil rights movement. Even the most ardent supporters of civil rights feared the consequences of certain kinds of civil disobedience demonstrations. Senators Humphrey and Kuchel, the bipartisan floor managers of the civil rights bill, warned that illegal and unruly demonstrations would hurt congressional efforts to get the bill passed; those struggling for civil rights, they argued, would greatly help their cause if they conducted their peaceful crusade with the good manners, forbearance and devotion so abundantly displayed the previous August in the civil rights march on Washington. 103A

Local authorities joined the ranks of those who deplored the stall-in tactic, as did the congressional members from New York who warned that it could well injure the cause of civil rights and pending legislation. 104 Senator Javits, otherwise sympathetic towards the objectives of the civil rights movement, at least toward that part of the movement which attacked racial barriers, argued: "The utility of demonstrations will have been lost if there is no focus on the problems which the law can attempt to solve." 105 President Johnson harped on a similar theme, arguing that

103 Ibid., Aug. 23, 1963, p. 11.
violence and threats to safety "do the civil rights cause no good." 106 The Attorney-General, Robert Kennedy, cautioned against "irresponsible activities", 107 but warned that the white community must act to relieve the Negroes of their desperate frustrations.

Acts of civil disobedience alienated those in the society who gave highest priority to the rule of law and who feared that tactics of law-breaking invited and fomented violence and anarchy. Courts, even where sympathetic to the Negroes' depressed condition, warned that disregard of the laws could only lead to serious consequences, even to anarchy:

Peaceful demonstrations are not violative of the law. But what if the brakes on that truck had slipped and someone had been injured? A riot would have broken out and you couldn't have convinced the crowd that it was an accident. You cannot decide what laws to obey and what laws to disobey. If you don't like a law the remedy is to go to the Legislature, to the trade unions, to the city fathers - not to take the law in your own hands. This will result in anarchy.... 108

Evaluation

Had there been no direct action protests in northern cities, fewer people among the public or the authorities would have been confronted with the problems of ghetto living. Bayard Rustin, who had acted as the main organizer of the New York City school boycott, expressed the views of many within the civil rights movement: "The boycott and the rent strike are fair warning that the civil rights revolution has reached out of the South

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107 Ibid.
and is now knocking at our door."\(^{109}\) In addition to the significance which he attached to Negroes and Puerto Ricans having joined forces for the protest, Rustin emphasized the role of conflicts in social change. The battle for integrated education (or one could add, for other social reforms) had to be fought, he said, even if people were inconvenienced and victory was not immediate. The Board of Education had to be pried loose from its position of refusing to examine Negro views on the school problem. Even if the explicit goals were not achieved, people learned about their society by fighting battles in the civil rights struggle. Rustin argued that since school integration had been the subject for so long of volumes of research, speeches, policy statements, emergency meetings, newspaper and magazine articles, scholarly symposia, public debate and demonstration, a boycott was needed to call attention afresh to the school situation: "You can only get this thing over to the people by results. The threat of a boycott got the school board to get out a comprehensive plan for the first time in its existence. Maybe after a series of one-day boycotts, the board will come up with something significant and meaningful."\(^{110}\)

Other leaders as well emphasized the importance of merely getting people into the streets. Calamison argued that even if the goal is not achieved "people learn a lesson in struggling for freedom."\(^{111}\) Farmer echoed remarks that King had made at the time of the Montgomery bus boycott: "One of the most valuable functions of demonstrations is to


\(^{110}\) Ibid., Feb. 3, 1964, p. 18.

\(^{111}\) New York Post, Jan. 28, 1964, p. 23.
weld people together in unity, and to recruit.... We have found, too, that we have to have demonstrations to build a movement."\textsuperscript{112}

Short-range and long-range evaluations can be applied to the civil rights movement in the North. Only the rent strikes, of all of the New York City demonstrations discussed, were successful in short-range objectives, in that they left judicial and administrative marks. But they had long-range success, too. Their success opened up the possibility of directing released energies of dissent into channels for other objects of protest. Gray, operating out of CCH, was able to organize several marches on New York's City Hall in protest over living conditions in the city's slums; he also arranged for the sending of written protests to the White House in support of the claims of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and threatened to storm the convention at Atlantic City.\textsuperscript{113} A leader who is able to deliver success on one issue finds it easier to get support in the next issue which arises.

However, it was one thing to succeed in getting improved building code enforcements and some improved housing conditions. It was another to wipe out housing discrimination, slum deterioration and overcrowded living conditions. These problems remained even after the strikes had succeeded.

\textsuperscript{112} Quoted in Warren, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 198.

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Ibid.}, p.137n.
Introduction

In this concluding chapter on the civil rights movement, I shall discuss a new phase of the movement - the transition from protest to politics (the phrase is Rustin's). Direct action was not discarded, but it was fused with political action - a conscious effort to get political power.

The year 1964 saw the close of a specific period in the movement. In the South, two approaches were occurring simultaneously; first, there were still direct action demonstrations for demands which ranged from the limited package deal previewed at Birmingham to the more far-reaching demands such as were made by the movement in Atlanta; secondly, there was major reliance upon voter registration campaigns, especially in areas where there was a high proportion of Negroes. As the first approach spread to include more comprehensive demands, the demonstrations began to resemble those in the North; as the second approach spread, the lower class was brought into the movement as, in many ways, it had already been brought in in the North.

In the North, there was a questioning of the usefulness of direct action tactics, and while no precise answers were provided, new methods of attack were suggested. It had been agreed by the civil rights leadership that street demonstrations, boycotts, and rent strikes had
made a larger percentage of the public and more of the authorities aware of the race question; but it was agreed also that solutions to the problems of the poor were still to be made concrete. The questioning of direct action, especially of shock tactics, concerned the role of such tactics in bringing about social change.

In the country at large, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which wrote into legislation much of what had been demanded by the movement in the South in the period 1960-63. But the bill was proposed at a time when the ghetto minorities of the urban North had not been drawn actively into the movement. Few, if any, of the bill's provisions were applicable to the *de facto* race and class problems that had been thrown up once the movement spread north. After the Act had destroyed the legal foundations of discrimination, the movement was faced with pressing for legislation to destroy other vestiges of inequality.

By 1964, the aims of the movement were no longer those of the early phase. In many instances the demands went beyond those of civil rights. In all instances, whether the demands were race or class demands, they presented various problems: on the wisdom of the movement's fusing political with direct action; on the need to have allies; on whether the civil rights movement could remain one of reform (that is, norm-oriented) or had to be transformed into one of revolution (that is value-oriented).

In this chapter I shall examine the voter registration campaigns which were undertaken in the South, the tactics suited to those campaigns, and the reactions to the voting drives. These campaigns raised the question for both the northern and southern sections of the movement of the precise
nature of political action, that is, whether it was to be undertaken with respect to the existing political parties. Finally, I shall offer an evaluation of what the movement had succeeded in doing in the period 1954–64.

Temporal Phases

Before discussing the movement's efforts to fuse political with direct action, I shall discuss events in the South after the March on Washington. The period after Birmingham was characterized by old and new trends. Non-violent direct action was still the major tactical weapon, but as demonstrations continued in cities where agreements on public accommodation and school desegregation had already been reached, they added new demands far broader in scope.

Demonstrations after Birmingham.—While demonstrations were occurring in the North, new demonstrations were marking the southern scene. Any chance of complacency setting in after the triumphant March on Washington was ruled out by two elements. One was the sporadic outbursts of violence which greeted new campaigns in the south; the other was lobbying pressures for the passage of Kennedy's civil rights legislation.

Birmingham, quiet after the late spring demonstrations in 1963, was the scene of a bomb blast in a Negro church which took the lives of four Negro girls; ensuing racial clashes in the city led to two more deaths, this time of Negro boys (one at the hand of a white policeman), and injuries to twenty other participants. The bombings and police brutality
were not rare in Birmingham or any other southern city; but the explosive shock value of these events — so soon after the peaceful March, the murder of six children in a single day, the taking of lives in a Sunday school — had an immediate impact on much of the country. National civil rights leaders sent out protests and warnings that Negro patience was being taxed. A National Day of Mourning was held in many cities in the nation, supported by the forces which had backed the March. In retaliation for the murders, a group of Negro writers and artists announced a nation-wide campaign against Christmas shopping; but they received the support of very few civil rights leaders. Most of the latter argued that such a boycott would have difficulty in succeeding, would only penalize Negroes who depended upon spare employment during the Christmas shopping rush, and would hurt merchants with records of support for civil rights.

The violence in Birmingham was not an isolated occurrence. In Tuscaloosa, Alabama, three Ghanaian students, a white student and a white minister from out of state, driving through the city, were taken into custody by the police, released, and later stopped and beaten on the highway. Four integration leaders were severely beaten at a Ku Klux Klan rally in St. Augustine, Florida. Tear gas was used to disperse student demonstrators in Plaquemine and Shreveport, Louisiana. Arrests in civil

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rights demonstrations in Orangeburg, South Carolina, exceeded fifteen hundred, many of which were accompanied by rough handling on the part of the police.\(^7\) In Atlanta, Georgia, demonstrators clashed with the Ku Klux Klan.\(^8\) In Princess Anne County, Maryland, police dogs interrupted a march.\(^9\) In Jacksonville, Florida, a Negro woman was slain in a race riot.\(^10\) Mobs attacked Negro demonstrators in St. Augustine, Florida.\(^11\)

There were, of course, some encouraging signs. Merchants began to hire Negroes for non-traditional jobs in Augusta and Macon, Georgia.\(^12\) Members of the City Commission and the Chamber of Commerce of Johnson City, Tennessee, as individuals, signed and circulated for public approval a resolution calling for the complete integration of public facilities.\(^13\) A league in Danville, Virginia, with over two hundred white citizens, petitioned the mayor to approve a biracial committee.\(^14\)

In many cases, the continuing pattern of protests was similar to that of earlier instances, but often the demands were changing. In some areas, it was true that goals still centered in the limited field of public

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\(^7\) Ibid., p. 14.


\(^12\) Southern Regional Council, Civil Rights: Year-end Summary, op. cit., p. 5.

\(^13\) Ibid., p. 15.

\(^14\) Ibid., p. 16.
accommodation; but the case of Atlanta, Georgia, was typical of new developments in the South, namely the dissatisfaction with, and even contempt for, token desegregation.

When demonstrations were renewed in the city in December, 1963, there already had been token desegregation of schools, public accommodation, hospitals and jobs. To the mayor, there was reason to be proud: "With justifiable pride we have viewed Atlanta's racial progress in racial amity."15 To Martin Luther King, however, these achievements were dismissed with scorn in comparison with the "hard and ugly facts about conditions in Atlanta."16 Dissatisfied with the progress of talks on desegregation and recalling the achievements of earlier demonstrations, Negro leaders of various degrees of militancy put forth a comprehensive list of demands: the total desegregation of all public accommodation; the establishment of private and governmental programmes to guarantee fair employment practices; the desegregation of all housing and the appointment of Negroes to housing boards and agencies; the passage of an open occupancy ordinance; the total desegregation of all schools, including administration, clerical and teaching personnel; the increased Negro participation on trial juries and the appointment of Negro lawyers to the staffs of city and county attorneys, and to judgeships on municipal and traffic courts; the desegregation of all public health facilities and increased Negro representation on


16 Ibid.
health and welfare boards; the desegregation of penal and correctional
institutions and the appointment of more Negro policemen and probation
officers. While these demands were still race demands, they were
applicable to more classes within the Negro community than had been the
case with earlier demands.

These demands were not met, even when backed up by non-violent direct
action demonstrations which were intensified when a section of the United
Nations Subcommittee on the Prevention of Discrimination visited the city
at the invitation of the mayor. Mass arrests, police mistreatment, and
counter-picketing by the Ku Klux Klan, when added to a drain on the limited
financial resources of the participating groups, resulted in the tapering
off of demonstrations. By the time that the Civil Rights Act had been
passed in July, 1964, some sporadic demonstrations were still being con­
ducted; but only a limited accord on public accommodation and school
integration had been reached.

The kind of demonstrations which had been held in Atlanta were held
in other urban areas in the South throughout 1964. Sometimes they reached
the limited accord that had been obtained in Atlanta; sometimes the door of
negotiation remained barred to the movement and the use of non-violent
direct action failed to knock it open.

17 *NYT*, Jan. 19, 1964, p. 43.

18 SNCC's version of the visit appears on Freedom Singers, *The Freedom
MG 20924.
Voter registration. - Another kind of demonstration in the South was bound up with the movement's efforts to fuse political and direct action. Efforts to register more Negro voters in the South were intensified when direct action demonstrations were begun in 1960. By early 1963, SNCC had begun intensive concentration on voter registration. Focal points for SNCC activity were the "black belt" regions of Mississippi and Alabama, so called originally for the colour of their rich soil, but now so named for their heavy concentration of Negro population. In the fall of 1962, SNCC went into Selma, Alabama, in Dallas County, where only 0.9 per cent of the eligible Negro voters were registered. The county, typical of others in the area, was almost exclusively rural. Impoverished, it was among the poorest in the United States: eighty-five percent of the Negroes lived below the minimum standard of subsistence; sixty-seven per cent of the Negroes had less than a sixth grade education; 5.7 per cent of the eligible Negroes in all nineteen counties in the "black belt" were registered to vote. For SNCC: "Those counties with the highest percentage of Negroes are generally the poorest, with Negroes holding the lowest paying jobs. Negroes in Black Belt Alabama are held in poverty by job discrimination and lack of education. Selma adequately demonstrates how Negroes are denied the means to change." SNCC efforts at voter registration moved very slowly. In October, 19

19 Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Special Report: Selma, Alabama, Marion, Alabama, the Black Belt (Atlanta: Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, 1965), n.p.

20 Ibid.

21 Loc. cit.
1963, SNCC launched a south-wide "One Man - One Vote" campaign at a Selma Freedom Day. But still voter registration continued at a snail's pace.

In 1964, the goal of voter registration, as set for these southern rural areas, with emphasis on Mississippi, was broadened to include other forms of political and direct action, as well as small scale attempts at academic vocational and cultural training of deprived southern Negroes by 750 field workers of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). The latter included mostly teachers, lawyers, ministers and students affiliated with SNCC, SCLC, the NAACP, and some Mississippi community groups.

Parallel to COFO, the Freedom Democratic Party was set up in Mississippi to duplicate the steps through which the regular state Democratic party selected delegates to the presidential nominating convention. The Party entered candidates in the regular Democratic primary in June and after their expected defeats, campaigned as independents in the November presidential elections. As a result of the activities of COFO and the Freedom Democratic Party, one hundred thousand Negroes were registered with the Party, a figure almost twenty per cent higher than the number of Mississippi's Negroes of voting age which had been registered to vote previously. A delegation was sent to the national Democratic convention in August 1964, and with the assistance of CORE and SNCC conducted sit-ins outside convention headquarters. The delegation pleaded its case for recognition before the Credentials Committee and a seating compromise was proposed.

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between it and the regular Mississippi Democratic party. Against the
advice of some civil rights leaders, the Freedom Democratic Party
rejected the compromise.

Aims and Motives

Two problems faced civil rights leaders, both in the North and in
the South - how to get Negroes registered and how to get them to vote.
In the North, the problem involved overcoming apathy and offering the
potential Negro voter a candidate and a programme that had something for
him. In the South, the problem was more complex. In some areas, the
problems were the same as in the North; in most areas, the percentage
of Negro voters was miniscule as a result not only of general apathy,
but also of intimidation by local authorities and employers who threatened
physical reprisals and job dismissals, local registrars who loaded the
literacy qualifications against them, and the inability to pay local poll
taxes. 24


24 William Brink and Louis Harris, The Negro Revolution in America
(New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), pp. 84-85. See also Donald
R. Matthews and James W. Prothro, "Political Factors and Negro Voter
Registration in the South", American Political Science Review, LVII
(March, 1963), 24-44; Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro,
Political Factors and Negro Voter Registration in the South", American
Political Science Review, LVII (June, 1963), 355-67. See United States
SNCC instituted a campaign to counter the apathy and the fear. It set about to prepare people for an act which in the South required courage – the appearance at the county registration office. It set about to unify Negroes in rural southern areas and to develop leadership within the local communities. SNCC and COFO did not want to be the personal demonstrators; they wanted to organize communities of the poor and the frightened. The aim of the Freedom Democratic Party was to show, in terms of facts and figures, that Negroes currently denied the right to vote would do so if allowed.

Overcoming fear was the immediate aim of voter registration. The secondary aim was to translate political potential into a political power base. The potential Negro vote in the South, as indicated by the following table, was capable of radically altering the composition of the southern governments and, by extension, Congress itself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Per Cent in Population</th>
<th>Per Cent of Registered Voters</th>
<th>Eligible Unregistered Negroes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>396,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>358,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>356,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>415,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>454,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>120,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>21</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3,583,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cited in Brink, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
Tactics

The tactics of the voter registration campaigns can be examined on two levels: first, the specific tactics of the campaigns in the South in 1964; secondly, the tactical questions concerning the uses to which the political power base of the registered voters was to be put.

Initially, SNCC had been split over whether to concentrate on voter registration drives or on direct action demonstrations to desegregate public facilities. The former approach had the support of white liberals and even some forces within the federal government; but this very support was suspect by those who had already felt let down by these groups and who feared that voter registration might be an attempt to cool down the organization's militancy. SNCC compromised by embarking upon political and direct action campaigns. But even if the organization had decided just to concentrate on voter registration, it would not have had to forgo the militancy or appeals of direct action. For the holding of mass rallies at churches, the door-to-door canvassing of potential voters, and the distribution of educational material in the "black belt" areas of the South were as much a form of unconventional protest as had been the sit-ins or Freedom Rides.

SNCC field workers, usually Negro students, went into rural Negro communities and lived and worked with the local people whom they were trying to organize. The activists bore similarities to the Russian Narodniki in several ways: first, the SNCC (and later COFO) volunteers were often young intellectuals who left their homes and studies to go "to the people"; secondly, many had a moral idealism which saw "the people" as the bearer of the new social order.

Because of their concern with the rural South, replete with well-established caste systems and semi-feudal traditions, SNCC had to use tactics different from those used in southern cities. Because of the normal harassment and terrorization faced by Negroes in the areas, SNCC had to rid the people of their fear before they could attempt to organize them.

COFO, a specific project designed to concentrate on Mississippi, used tactics similar to those of SNCC. In addition, it set out to "invade" the state at one point in time with large numbers (750) and cause the federal authorities to show a greater concern for the plight of the Mississippi Negroes. A field worker for COFO said:

No administration in this country is going to commit political suicide over the right to vote of Negroes. This is part of what we are doing, and getting the country involved through yourselves, that is, to open this up to the country and get the backing of the country and get pressure—public pressure, continual, mounting, steady public pressure—on all of the agencies of the Federal Government and on all of the informal processes of this country. That's the only way we'll get any kind of creative solution to what's going on down there.

COFO operated on the direct action and legal levels. On the first, it helped to register potential Negro voters; it operated freedom schools to educate the local Negro community; it ran community centers to counter the fear. On the second level, it filed several suits against officials, private groups and individuals who arrested COFO workers and it sought to enjoin the holding of county and state Democratic conventions until Negroes had had a fair chance to register to vote.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, whose leaders were sharecroppers, housewives, teachers, ministers and SNCC officials, set out to duplicate the steps through which the regular state Democratic Party selected delegates to the presidential nominating conventions. The Party was designed to serve as the organizing mechanism for Negroes in Mississippi; its campaign served as the focus for the voter registration activities of COFO. Those Negroes not allowed to register on the official books of the state, for discriminatory reasons, were registered on the Party's unofficial registration books. Once it was shown that Negroes presently denied the vote would do so if allowed, the Party could challenge the seating of selected Congressmen on the grounds that a significant percentage of the state's voting population had been denied the right to vote.

As a result of protest activities, one hundred thousand Negroes were registered with the Party. Considering the risk of registering with the Party, this twenty per cent figure was extremely significant. While a further chink was made in Mississippi's "closed society", the price paid by the civil rights movement was high: three people were murdered; four were shot and wounded; fifty-two were beaten or otherwise injured; 250 were arrested; 28 thirteen Negro churches were destroyed by fire; seventeen other churches and buildings were damaged by fire or bombs; ten automobiles were damaged or destroyed. 29

28 IX CLD (July, 1964) 79, 84-85.
29 IX CLD (July, 1964), iii.
A delegation, sent to the national Democratic convention, pleaded its case for recognition before the Credentials Committee and before millions of television viewers. It told how Negroes were systematically denied the right to take part in the process of selecting delegates from precinct meetings to the state convention. Witnesses also told of the brutality and the terror they experienced while trying to register and vote. In an attempt to avoid a floor fight, the leaders of the delegation were offered a compromise which promised the seating of an all-white Mississippi delegation as well as two members from the Party. In addition to the seating provisions, the compromise provided that the call for the presidential nominating convention in 1968 was to include language that would insure non-discriminatory selection of delegates and a place for all Democratic electors on the ballots of each state. However, a split developed within the Freedom Democratic Party and the compromise was rejected.

Legally, the Party did not have a fool-proof case. Its strength was moral and emotional, with the result that it could not be so easily brushed aside by the Credentials Committee. But behind the Party lay the threat of violence erupting on the Negro side:

There are many Negroes that feel they have been patient too long, and that the Justice Department is not doing anything about their grievances, and therefore they feel that they must take things into their own hands, and here you have the possibility of violence erupting from the Negro against the white group.... all these harassments and frustrations [viz., the voting difficulties in 1964] are just at the

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explosion point for a lot of people.  

The split over the compromise revealed a deeper split within the civil rights movement as a whole over whether the political power base should be affiliated with either of the two major political parties. It was not an even split because the majority of the leadership agreed with Rustin that political action had to be "within the Democratic party where only the meaningful primary contests in the South are fought." Rustin argued that the issues awaiting the civil rights movement went beyond simple questions of civil rights; once legal discrimination had been abolished, the movement had to adopt new demands — full employment, the abolition of slums, the reconstruction of the educational system, new definitions of work and leisure. These demands, he continued, could best be achieved by bolstering the liberal forces within the Democratic Party: "We must see to it that the reorganization of the 'consensus party' [that is, the majority of the Democratic Party plus some liberal elements in the Republican Party] proceeds along lines which will make an effective vehicle for social reconstruction."  

Integrating lunch counters and other instances of non-violent coercion were tactics that could depend upon relatively few individuals acting alone. But the new aims of the movement demanded political action tactics which, in turn, depended upon organized numbers. The civil rights movement,

31 Quoting a southern civil rights worker in Warren, op. cit., p. 63.
32 Bayard Rustin, "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement", Commentary, XXXIX (February, 1965), 25.
33 Ibid., p. 30.
Rustin continued, had to identify the forces which could help it achieve a "radical" solution of the existing political and economic issues. It needed allies. It needed to join a coalition with the country's progressive forces - the trade unions, the liberals, the religious groups. Then it needed to transform that coalition into the effective political majority. "The task of molding a political movement out of the March on Washington coalition is not simple, but no alternatives have been advanced. We need to choose our allies on the basis of common political objectives."  

Some members of the civil rights movement, crystallized around SNCC and the Freedom Democratic Party, in opposition to Rustin argued the case for independent political action. They argued against supporting the Democratic party which for them worked on underlying assumptions of foreign policy alien to their view of world politics and a short-sighted domestic programme made possible by a continuing armaments economy. These members had lost faith (if they ever had it) in the liberal wing of the Democratic party: "We find allies outside the Democratic establishment: the restless poor, students and other independent middle class insurgents. We seek to bolster their movement, through the variety of political forms which it may take." Their allies were those who were either culturally alienated (some intellectuals) or economically alienated (some workers).  

They conceived the movement centred around the Freedom Democratic Party to be the beginning of a radical opposition movement to the existing

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34 Ibid., p. 29.

35 Tom Hayden and Staughton Lynd, "Reply: The New Radicalism: Sect or Action Movement?", Studies on the Left, V (Summer, 1965), 133.
structures in American society. If this new, radical group were to be forced into a position of cooperation with the Democratic party, it would be forced to compromise its radicalism.

Given these divergent views, it is still true that any concrete political action group, such as the Freedom Democratic Party, did not find that the political situation in 1964 presented these two clear-cut alternatives. It found it meaningful to work within the Democratic party for a realignment of the progressive forces. It found that even to build its own power base it had to run its own candidates within an existing party. At the same time, it went outside of the national Democratic party for its objectives, and tried to manoeuvre within the party structure for the moment when it could realize these objectives.

The split over the compromise offered to the Freedom Democratic Party was symptomatic of the two views within the movement on what kind of political action was necessary. Rustin approved of the compromise because he considered it important to preserve unity within the Democratic Party and because he thought that the Democratic Party was necessary for the realization of the civil rights movement's objectives. Rustin, in other words, did not want to alienate the allies of the movement, as he saw them. SNCC did not care as much about the political victory of forcing the Convention into recognizing its existence as about the moral and publicity rewards of staging a floor fight. Farmer assessed the rejection of the compromise as being "morally right but politically wrong."36

36 Quoted in Warren, op. cit., p. 117n.
Rustin was the reformer working within the existing social order, who wanted to assimilate into the society, who did not attack capitalism itself but the way in which it was run. SNCC was the revolutionary which wanted to create a new social order.

**Reaction**

*Public reaction.* - There was strong opposition by local white residents to the voter registration efforts. SNCC and COFO faced daily harassment: there were job dismissals of Negroes who attempted to register; there were bomb threats to houses where volunteer workers were boarding and threats were occasionally followed through with action. As has already been mentioned, by the middle of August, four field workers had been shot and wounded, fifty-two had been beaten or otherwise injured, 250 had been arrested, three had been slain, thirteen Negro churches had been destroyed by fire, seventeen other churches and buildings had been damaged by fire or bombs, ten automobiles had been damaged or destroyed.\(^{37}\) Protest meetings had been held outside of the South demanding federal intervention after three civil rights workers (one southern Negro and two northern whites) had been reported missing and were presumably dead. A poll taken by a national concern showed that public opinion in the country at large was opposed to the Mississippi summer project two to one, but that the group polled was heavily in favour of sending in Federal troops to the state should violence break out.\(^{38}\) As had been the case in Birmingham, the infliction

\(^{37}\) *IX CLD* (July, 1964), iii, 84-85.

\(^{38}\) *NYT*, July 8, 1964, p. 20.
of violence on the civil rights activists succeeded in generating support for some of the movement's activities that might otherwise have been missing.

Local reaction. - The voter registration campaigners faced daily harassment from local law enforcement agencies as well as from local private citizens. SNCC and COFO workers were arrested on false identity charges, on charges of illegally circulating literature, and of promoting boycotts. The organizations' headquarters were raided and materials and affidavits from office files confiscated. Negroes had to stand in lines surrounded by city and county police and face slow-downs on the part of county registrars who would process no more than twenty-five people a day and arrests for unlawful assembly. 39

Federal reaction. - From the middle of 1963 until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in July, 1964, the effect of the demonstrations in both the North and the South became a matter of concern for people in the federal government. However, there was more interest during this period in the militant demonstrations in the North than in the voter registration projects in the South.

Initially, the government said it had no power to send agents into Mississippi to protect the volunteer workers. However, when violence broke out in the South, as it did in Philadelphia, Mississippi, the federal government ordered the FBI and the Justice Department to take an active role in Mississippi. Violence spotlighted direct action as it had done

in Birmingham; violence committed the federal government as non-violence had failed to do.

**Evaluation**

Smelser says, "Unlike the panic, the craze, and the hostile outburst, the norm-oriented movement, if successful, leaves an observable mark - a norm or an organization - in its wake." Measured by this rule, the civil rights movement was successful in that it left the Civil Rights Act of 1964, two national pressure groups, and numerous local, grass-roots pressure groups.

However, success is not as simple to measure as Smelser suggests. First of all, success depends upon the evaluator’s vantage point. What may appear to be successful in Greensboro, North Carolina, might not appear to be so in New York City.

Secondly, success depended upon what the aims of the movement were. Where there were diverse aims, success was more difficult to assess. The narrower the aims, the more likely was it that there would be a measure of success. But often narrow objectives did not match the problems confronting key sections of the movement. If one were to regard the Negroes of the North and of the South as a composite group, then the Civil Rights Act was not a great success. For the mass of Negroes, only when the movement hit hard at problems of poverty, public works, social welfare, and automation, to name some of the major ones, was there a chance of improving the group’s economic and political situation. It was often argued within the movement

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40 Smelser, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
that there was no use having equal access to restaurants if one did not have the money to pay the bill; that there was no use asking for equal job opportunities in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations when automation was shrinking job opportunities or in skilled occupations when there were not enough Negroes being trained to fill the vacancies; that there was no use "busing" children into white schools, if the quality of public education left much to be desired for both races. For the mass of Negroes, the Civil Rights Act had not faced the shortcomings of the private economy.

Thirdly, because the goals of the movement changed as the movement progressed, success was difficult to isolate at any one time. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 might have been regarded as a mark of success had it been passed three years earlier. By 1964, the movement had moved beyond the Act's written provisions.

Given these three qualifications, which themselves overlap, one could still credit the civil rights movement with a series of successes. History will be the final arbiter of their comparative worth.

1. The Civil Rights Act of 1964. Kennedy's assassination and Lyndon Johnson's succession to the presidency still left the civil rights movement with White House leadership active in its behalf. Previous to his new-found role, Johnson, himself a southerner, had never enjoyed the confidence or admiration of the movement. Although he had been instrumental as Senate majority leader in getting civil rights legislation through in 1957 and 1960, his role had been more one of the political manager than the

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political supporter of the bills. In his new role, he pledged himself to carry on a fight for racial equality and for the enactment of meaningful civil rights legislation; he played this part as skilfully as his earlier ones.

The bill was passed by the House in February, 1964, by a coalition of northern Democrats and Republicans, and by a similar coalition in the Senate in June. As signed by Johnson in July, the Civil Rights Act of 1964: outlawed racial discrimination in most hotels, restaurants, theatres and similar places of public accommodation; authorized the Attorney General to initiate suits or to intervene in behalf of aggrieved persons in school desegregation or other cases involving racial discrimination; forbade racial discrimination by employers or unions; permitted the halting of funds to federally aided programmes in which racial discrimination was allowed to persist, prohibited registrars from applying different standards to white and Negro voting applicants.

The civil rights movement could consider itself the architect of the bill. By its direct action demonstrations, it made the government more responsive to the urgency of the Negroes' situation; by its persistence in the streets, it changed the government's conception of what was urgently needed in the way of civil rights legislation. But the bill was drawn at a time when the street demonstrations were occurring in the South; the bill

reflected the early phase of the civil rights movement's activities and, therefore, ignored the problems of the ghetto minorities.

The federal government could have chosen to disregard the civil rights demands, ignore the activists, or even repress the direct action demonstrations. If it had chosen to do any of the three, it would not have arrested the growth of civil rights dissension. Repression was likely to cause more trouble that it was worth; it might have forced the hand of the less militant Negro leadership and pushed the movement into other than non-violent channels. It realized that if change by political means was made hopeless and change by the persuasion of direct action was made useless, the activists would be forced into other than norm-oriented channels. This fear of other than political or direct action characterizing the movement may have been the prime mover in getting the federal government to take meaningful action.

Whether repression would have unleashed the alleged powderkeg within the Negro community is less important than that the authorities feared that it would. That the black nationalist sects, the Black Muslims in particular, were less intent on using violence than Kennedy and Johnson imagined was less important to the civil rights movement than the government's preparedness to assume that they were.

In choosing to accommodate itself to the movement, for reasons of either political expediency or morality, the government recognized various factors in the movement's favour. First, that there was a consensus in the country about equality. Secondly, that non-violent direct action was more acceptable as a political weapon than the violence believed to be otherwise possible. This assessment took into account the consequences
of even non-violent direct action being able to chalk up a victory; if
the activists could show success on one score, they might use non-violent
direct action to demand more and other groups in the society might adopt
it for their particular purposes.

Thirdly, the civil rights movement was a popular movement which drew
its inspiration and sustenance from the ideology of the United States
itself. Civil rights leaders took great pains to align themselves with
the Boston Tea Party, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution
and the American Creed.

But the government accommodated itself to the movement at a time when
the demands were race demands, the leadership was respectable middle-class,
and the perpetrators of violence were southern whites. The government
might shift its position as the movement shifted its emphasis.

2. The solidification of the Negro community. The civil rights
movement brought about substantial class unity within the Negro caste
structure. Negroes of all classes identified themselves with the middle-
class students who sat down at the lunch counters, the middle-class
ministers who rode the freedom buses, the unemployed youth who retaliated
against the Birmingham police, the clerical workers who organized rent
strikes, the sharecroppers who tried to register and vote. Colour cut
across class lines and became a cohesive element. Many lower class Negroes
became involved in political protest for the first time; and, for the
first time, they themselves, not some-one acting in their behalf, began to
exert pressures for change.
3. **Other forces set in motion.** The movement threw up new civil rights groups: nationally there was SCLC (1957), SNCC (1960), COFO(1964); locally, there were such groups as the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), the Non-Violent Action Committee (NVAC) in Cambridge, Maryland, the Community Council on Housing (CCH) in New York City, the Chester Committee for Freedom Now (CCFN) in Chester, Pennsylvania, and Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU) in New York City.

In addition, once the movement began to gather momentum, more general kinds of pressure groups assisted it in presenting a part of its case, for example, the American Bar Association, the National Education Association, and Bnai Brith. The movement itself threw up general kinds of pressure groups of dissent as well, such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which included demands for civil rights and for new policies on Cuba, Vietnam and China among its other demands for changing American society.

The movement reinvigorated the art of dissent, temporarily silenced during "McCarthyism". As one writer said, the Negro was winning back the freedom apparently lost by the Communists. 45 The movement became the centre of radical activity of all kinds. Negroes dramatized the issues of poverty, of automation and of youth. They got the churches moving and rid the universities of much of their self-imposed silence.

[The Negro has] unconsciously become a revolutionary, and a catalytic agent.... When he touches a rent

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strike, what happens is not merely that a few Negroes get their rent reduced and a few rats and roaches are cleaned up, and hot water is given, but we are finding that more is now occurring around the rent strike: law, which says that human rights must not any longer be subjected to property rights. Here the Negro is the catalyst.

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CHAPTER VII

THE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT MOVEMENT (1): INTRODUCTION

As in the case of the civil rights movement, the nuclear disarmament movement arose in a country which had a value system of democratic capitalism of which the following were components: universal suffrage; majority rule; elections; governmental responsibility to the electorate; and private ownership of most of the means of production, distribution and exchange. As with the United States, Great Britain had formal and informal rules which determined how the system was to be run and which allowed for the functioning of political movements. Here, too, there were institutionalized structures through which demands for altering, modifying, or changing formal or informal rules were made, as well as channels for influencing the application of rules and regulations. There were institutionalized channels of agitation through which groups could make known their demands, pass along their information, and express their grievances; in addition, there were institutionalized channels of communication, such as the press, through which these demands could be made known.

1 See Chapter II.

The nuclear disarmament movement chose to use propaganda methods which were similar, in part, to those used by pressure groups within the society—speeches, letter writing to the press and to parliamentarians, and mass lobbying. But with the inception of its demonstration pilgrimage from London to Aldermaston, undertaken to show the urgency of its cause, the movement brought an unconventional method to the British political scene, both in quality and in quantity.

Over Easter weekend 1958, four thousand people started the first march from London to the British government’s atomic research establishment at Aldermaston in protest against nuclear instruments of war. The nuclear disarmament campaign in Great Britain, of which this march became an integral part, did not spring into being suddenly. It was a long fermenting expression of the emotions and feelings which were released when the first atomic bomb explosions went off during the Second World War. While these expressions were not articulated into mass action until 1958, more than a decade of thought and abortive action had been preparing the groundwork. Behind that decade lay the cultural context of British politics, the values and activities of earlier peace movements, and a British tradition of dissension and reform. All of these left their imprint on the nuclear disarmament movement; from them, the movement borrowed some of its members, part of its programme, and many of its tensions. The movement took on its own peculiar colorations, but some of the dye was there already.

It should be noted that persons active in peace movements frequently were active in labour and reform movements as well. None of these three
movements in Great Britain, in their long careers, had become moribund, extinct, or obsolete. More quiescent at some times than at others, they were always on hand, even if in the background, with general programmes out of which specific phases of the movements could draw their sustenance.

The chief factor in world politics after the Second World War was the atomic bomb. The United States and the Soviet Union, whose rivalry began during the War, possessed, or, in the case of the Soviet Union, was on the way to possessing the bomb. Great Britain had emerged from the war with a position of economic and military power diminished vis-à-vis the United States and the Soviet Union:

> With empty currency reserves, an empire demanding self-government and the world contested between two powers whose home territory was continental in scale and whose populations were numbered in hundreds, instead of tens of millions, it was obvious that Britain's activities in the world would in future be dwarfed....

The country accepted with resignation the decline of British power. It followed, therefore, that Great Britain was led into deep involvement with the United States, in the form of both credit commitments and of a junior partnership in nuclear weapons. Her economy made insolvent by the War, Great Britain had a debt of £3,000 million on overseas balances. Initially, the country had no bomb of its own; but because both Labour and Conservative governments regarded the bomb as an international status symbol and a weapon of self-defence, the country undertook to manufacture its own nuclear bombs – the atomic bomb in 1952 and the hydrogen bomb in 1957.

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It has been suggested that both Labour and Conservative governments were reluctant to accept the total supremacy of the United States to the point where the latter could decide the ultimate issues of peace or war. This reluctance accounted, in part, for government decisions to undertake separate nuclear arms programmes. However, the armaments race in missiles and delivery systems proved too expensive for the country to enter independently; once the decision to have missile weapons was made, Great Britain was forced to tie herself to the American nuclear apron and to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance.

With the explosion of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, problems of war and peace were debated in new terms. War as an instrument of national policy was conditioned by the possibility of the destruction of all participating parties: "In the nuclear age war was likely to be self-destructive; and there was, therefore, an emergent or secondary dilemma: self-destruction, on the one hand, or piecemeal loss of vital interests on the other." 

By the 1950's, thermonuclear weapons, which turned the earlier atomic weapons into child's pieces, forced a reappraisal of previous positions on the nature of the nuclear struggle. The weapons were new not only with respect to the degree of their explosive power but also with respect to their kind of destruction. The new weapons unleashed energy and gave rise to radioactivity which could be neither temporally nor spatially limited. 

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A bomb exploded at one geographic point could produce radioactive "fall-out" in other geographic points. Such "fall-out" could also induce hereditary changes at later times in plants and animals.

The bombs transformed the nature of war and with it the nature of survival. Concepts of the organization of the civilian population against nuclear attack, as well as plans for evacuation and sheltering of nationals, had to be rethought against the background of weapons of total destruction and vulnerability to strategic air attacks. Military strategists had to face such problems as the effects of blast and "fall-out", decontamination times, storage of agricultural produce, adjustment of crop patterns, stockpiling of industrial materials, and the like. It was becoming apparent that there were few adequate means of protection against nuclear weapons. Writing in 1957, the Conservative Minister of Defence said:

> It must be frankly recognized that there is at present no means of providing adequate protection for the people of this country against the consequences of an attack with nuclear weapons. Though, in the event of war, the fighter aircraft of the Royal Air Force would unquestionably be able to take a heavy toll of enemy bombers, a proportion would inevitably get through. Even if it were only a dozen, they could with megaton bombs inflict widespread devastation. 6

If there were few disagreements in Great Britain and other countries about the potential destructiveness of the new weapons, there were sharp disagreements over the best methods of retaining, restraining, or banning these weapons. Those who articulated their views on these weapons clashed

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over whether the bombs were a moral issue or a problem of power politics, or both. Not only were there disagreements over solutions to the control of the weapons but also over the moral and political terms in which the debate was to be conducted.

For their part, international disarmament negotiations had proved unable to resolve the problem, although they were able to provide forums for the conflicting points of view. By the middle of the 1950's world developments had changed the substance and spirit of the disarmament discussions and negotiations that were being carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. De-Stalinization in the Soviet Union, accompanied by the thaw in relations between western and eastern bloc countries, affected the attitude of both the Soviet Union and the West and made shifts in policy to accommodate the technological changes more acceptable. The ideas of "nuclear stalemate" and a "balance of terror" were gaining ground, as was the evaluation that the country which struck first would itself be annihilated by a second, retaliatory strike. But there was still the fear of war by accident, of technical errors, of the escalation of small scale conflicts, and of increases in the number of nuclear powers (the "n'th power" problem). The possibility of nuclear disarmament seemed more likely in the mid-1950's than it had earlier; for although the United Nations negotiations seemed to have led to an impasse, there were some basic points of agreement between the British, the Americans and the Russian which had not existed previously.

For a history of these negotiations, see Bernhard G. Bechhoefer, *Postwar Negotiations for Arms Control* (Washington: The Brookings Institute, 1961).
By the mid-1950's, after Great Britain had exploded her own atomic bomb and announced plans for manufacturing and testing the hydrogen bomb, there were currents of opinion in the country opposed to the government's policy on the possession of nuclear weapons. It was the fear of the destructive potential of nuclear weapons and the apparent ineffectiveness of civil defence measures that helped to initiate the nuclear disarmament movement. The government's Defence White Paper of 1957, which included a discussion of the concept of massive retaliation with nuclear weapons, set off arguments on the price of victory should these weapons be used. Establishment figures such as Sir Stephen King-Hall, a former Member of Parliament, author of various naval and military works, and founder of the Hansard Society, pointed out the novelty of the new weapons: "The first is that their destructive capacity is so enormous that there is no practical physical means of defence against these weapons.... The second... is that each time one of them is tested there is an addition to the pollution of the earth's surface and atmosphere." At the same time, some of the world's leading scientists were pointing out the devastation that would result from use of the bombs, the genetic effects of radiation, the increase of harmful particles in the earth's atmosphere, and the dangers to children in the increase of strontium-90 in the world's milk supply. Scientific literature on the effects of radiation were


10 See, e.g., A. Haddow, ed., Biological Hazards of Atomic Energy: Being the Papers Read at the Conference Convened by the Institute of Biology.
being rewritten for popular journals and daily, mass circulation newspapers.

Bertrand Russell had pressed for an international conference of scientists to discuss the problems of disarmament and his proposals were realized in the series of Pugwash conferences which were initiated in 1957. Some prominent church leaders were adding to the arguments of the scientists their charges of the immorality of the new weapons. At the same time, publishing houses were bringing out important works which were discussing the consequences and destructive potential of nuclear weapons.

Within Great Britain, proposals for disarmament ran the full gamut: unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons; unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons tests; partial measures of arms control; reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces; reduction or removal of missiles and rockets; abolition of military bases in foreign territory; cessation of the manufacture of fissable materials; cessation of the stockpiling

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10 [Ctd.]


of nuclear weapons; chemical (poison gas, incendiary weapons, biological) disarmament; prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons to countries which did not have them already, or restricting such weapons solely to the United States and the Soviet Union. However, the majority opinion of those favouring some form of nuclear disarmament seemed to be similar to that of Russell's - British unilateral renunciation with respect to both nuclear weapons and tests.  

In the early 1950's, two independent approaches to the objective of nuclear disarmament began to move towards each other. Pacifist groups began to turn their study of the idea of non-violent resistance into concrete direct action, attracting some non-pacifist elements as they did; at the same time, there was growing willingness among some discontented sections of the Labour Party to speak out more forcefully against the government's defence policy. The Aldermaston March in 1958 linked six years of direct action with this labour discontent.

In 1952, eleven members of the Peace Pledge Union (PPU) staged a sit-down outside the War Office in protest against nuclear weapons. The Union had been founded by Canon Dick Sheppard in 1934 to collect pledges of opposition to fighting should war break out. By the middle of 1936, one hundred thousand members had bound themselves to the Pledge: "I renounce War and never again will I support or sanction another, and I will do all in my power to persuade others to do the same." When

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war came, the PPU confined its activities to publishing literature and appealing for conscientious objectors. In the post-war period, it sought to become more active than it had been in the past, while still remaining pacifist.

In 1949, the PPU formed a Non-Violent Commission to explore the possibilities of using non-violent direct action techniques to advance its pacifist position. The demonstration outside the War Office in Whitehall in 1952 was part of the Union's "Operation Gandhi", a pacifist appeal for "non-violent resistance as the right and honourable course for the defence of our country." In addition to the sit-down for which the activists were arrested and fined, "Operation Gandhi", whose name was subsequently changed to the Non-Violent Resistance Group, engaged in peaceful picketing outside the Aldermaston air base, conducted a poster parade and a brief sit-down outside Mildenhall air base, and held a similar demonstration at the germ warfare station at Fenton. The objectives were: the cessation of Great Britain's manufacture of nuclear weapons; the country's withdrawal from NATO; the country's disbandment of its armed forces; and the withdrawal of American forces from British soil.

In 1954, some church, peace and labour organizations, joined by six Labour Members of Parliament, formed the Hydrogen Bomb Campaign, which petitioned for the convening of a disarmament conference and the strengthening of the United Nations; but the Campaign failed to spark off any mass reactions.

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In 1957, the National Committee for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests was formed, again by church, peace and labour groups. It had an impressive list of sponsors and the support of allied groups working for disarmament; but although it conducted several well-organized and well-attended demonstrations, it failed to muster sufficient numbers for a sustained campaign.

In April 1957, once more under the sponsorship of church, labour and peace groups, the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War (DACANW) was set up. It supported and raised money for the Steeles, a Quaker couple who attempted to sail into the Pacific area of Christmas Island, which had been closed for the British tests of the hydrogen bomb. In addition, it planned cooperation with Japanese and American organizations doing similar peace work and provided a base for further direct action when necessary. DACANW was in favour of appeals to politicians, marches, and public meetings; but it did not rule out more dramatic kinds of direct action tactics. It was the parent of the Aldermaston March idea, as well as the practitioner of sit-downs outside air force bases.

By 1958, events within the Labour Party consolidated opinion favourable to protest action on the question of nuclear disarmament. While in office during the period 1945-51, Labour, by and large, had followed the policy which had been set by its predecessors. Its economic dependence on the United States rationalized its strategic commitments. The left wing of the Party had tried to offer an alternative foreign policy favouring a

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"Third Force", which entailed ideological and international independence of the two power blocs; but the Parliamentary Labour Party, insisted that, in the words of Clement Attlee, Labour had to face "the grim facts of the situation."

From the beginning, there was opposition within the Labour Party to the leadership's policies on both domestic and foreign issues. The opposition, most evident in the constituency parties and in the trade unions, centred around the size of the British rearmament programme and the rearming of West Germany. Labour policy on armaments was never made precise and left itself open to different intra-party interpretations. But both Labour and Conservative governments had committed the country to peacetime conscription, to improving conventional forces, and to becoming and remaining a nuclear power. One writer points out:

The divergencies of view within the Labour movement on the problems of defense and rearmament were a matter of degree rather than of kind. While accepting the necessity for defense, there were those who felt that too large an armament program might destroy the economic and social achievements and aims of a socialist government, revive the militarism of the defeated Fascist states, and perpetuate an arms race between East and West, thus rendering inevitable a world-wide conflagration. These fears, expressed at the annual conferences of both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour party, were evidence of the hesitations and the qualifications with which the government's rearmament program was endorsed.


24 Ibid., p. 231.
Once the Labour Party had been defeated at the polls, opposition to official government policy as presented by the Conservatives became more pronounced. In 1955, when the Conservative government announced its intention to manufacture hydrogen bombs, the Labour Party went on record in support of the decision, as well as in support of the need for the testing of nuclear weapons, but remained critical of deficiencies in the conventional armed services. However, sixty-two Labour members, invoking the conscience clause, abstained from voting. 25

In 1957, the Labour Party, without officially and precisely renouncing all nuclear tests, pressed the government to suspend scheduled hydrogen bomb tests at Christmas Island; in addition, it condemned the government for linking the abolition of tests to the concluding of a general disarmament agreement at the United Nations disarmament negotiations. 26 But only fifty Labour members supported a motion tabled in the House which suggested that the dangers arising from nuclear weapons tests had been deliberately minimized by the British, Russian and American governments and which urged the British government "to lay proposals before the Disarmament Commission for an immediate ban on the testing of any further nuclear devices." 27

When the government, for budgetary and manpower reasons, decided to shift its defence strategy to primary reliance on nuclear weapons, the Labour Party offered no criticism except to ask for the postponement of tests for

25 See debate at Parliamentary Debates (Commons) [hereafter PD(C)], 537 : 2066-2199 (Mar. 2, 1955).

26 LT., Apr. 1, 1957, p. 10. The Liberal Party requested the government to stop tests until more information was made available about the harmful effects of nuclear explosions. Ibid., Apr. 3, 1957, p. 10.

a limited period of time while the government pressed for an international agreement on the subject. 28

Proponents of some form of British disarmament had placed their hopes in Aneurin Bevan's appointment as Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary in 1957. Bevan, more concerned with socialist doctrine than was Hugh Gaitskell, who had succeeded Attlee as Party leader, and committed to opposing German rearmament, had gathered around him an impressive group of left-wing members of the Party ("Bevanites"); but the latter were never in a powerful or even a majority position within the Party as a whole. At the Party Conference in 1957, Bevan had to reply for the Party Executive to a composite resolution that asked that "the next Labour Government will take the lead by itself refusing to continue to test, manufacture or use nuclear weapons, and that it will appeal to people of other countries to follow that lead." 29 He disappointed many of his supporters with his attack on unilateralism, which, he said, was an "emotional spasm" which would send a British Foreign Secretary "naked into the Conference Chamber." 30

Bevan argued that while he agreed with the sentiments expressed by the unilateralists, he could not be a party to destroying existing treaties into which the British government had entered. He still held out the promise, however, that other treaties could be written to reduce the tension


30 Ibid.
and polarization that existed in the atomic age. Bevan, as Shadow Foreign Secretary, was forced to compromise; Bevan without that position had been able to argue against the policies which he was now forced to accept. In a mass party, it was easier to question Labour foreign policy the further one was situated from the seat of power. Conference, for its part, that year rejected a policy of unilateralism by a vote of 5,836,000 to 781,000.31

Resolutions on the bomb were being brought up at trade union meetings, Cooperative Party conferences,32 and Labour Party branch meetings and conferences.33 At the 89th Trade Union Congress (TUC), the General Council was urged to organize and lead a strong demonstration of all trade unionists to serve notice on the government that in continuing to manufacture and test nuclear weapons it was acting against the people's wishes. In submitting the motion, it was argued: "We could have the greatest demonstration since the days of Chartism."34 Although the motion was not approved, the TUC called for an immediate halt in the manufacture and testing of nuclear

31 Loc. cit.

32 Founded in 1917, it was allowed to affiliate with constituency Labour parties and, with the Trade Union Congress, is joined in the National Council of Labour. It ran candidates at parliamentary elections with the Labour Party. For further discussion, see R.T. McKenzie, British Political Parties: The Distribution of Power within the Conservative and Labour Parties (London: William Heinemann, 1955), pp. 320, 530, 555.


34 LT, Sept. 7, 1957, p. 3.
weapons, leaving direct action tactics to be initiated by others.

Differences within the Labour Party on the questions of nuclear weapons had several consequences. They allowed opinion in the labour movement to become agitated not only over the subject of disarmament but also over the varying Labour interpretations of the subject. Differences also kept open the question of whether agitation outside the Party could find comfort and support within the Party, and if so, where and from whom. There were many people within the labour movement who believed that more discussion of the bomb might affect Labour Party policy as well as alert the national conscience.

In addition to the agitation of labour and peace bodies, the energies which were eventually released for the nuclear disarmament movement were given a boost by three events which occurred almost simultaneously during 1956 outside Great Britain. These were: (1) the British use of force at Suez; (2) de-Stalinization within the Soviet bloc; and (3) Soviet repression of the Hungarian uprising. The Suez crisis caused an outburst in sections of the labour movement against the whole post-war society of which nuclear weapons and the use of force had come to be regarded as meaningful symbols. The Labour Party itself expressed its opposition to the government's use of force. The National Council organized public protest meetings, but called "upon the British people to bring effective pressure to bear" on the government "through normal constitutional parliamentary methods" and "to refrain from taking industrial action as a means of influencing national policy in the present crisis."

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Suez was also the first time since the Second World War that youth, especially in the universities, was faced with a cause that was capable of stirring it from its complacency and indifference. In addition, as Worsley suggests:

For the young people who had accepted this picture [of a benevolent Britain], Suez was a devastating experience in disillusion. And the peculiar intensity of the reaction in this country arose from the conjunction of Old Left reacting to Old Imperialism, and the new young liberal generation reacting to the betrayal of all they had been taught of a reformed Britain, the dutiful servant of the United Nations and of the Free World.  

A side effect of Suez, therefore, was to temporarily unite the Old Left, the New Left, and the rest of the Labour Party.

Events within the Soviet bloc, both the revelations of the Twentieth Party Congress (and its relationship to de-Stalinization) and the Soviet action in Hungary, brought resignations from some members of the British Communist Party, some of whom were then added to the store of trained political activists on the left of the Labour Party.  

All three international events, but Suez in particular, precipitated a loss of faith for some (more so, perhaps, among intellectuals than among other strata in the society) in the operations of political parties and


a revulsion against the bureaucratization of public life. The majority of British citizens, of course, were unmoved by the events and were prepared to support the fiasco of Suez. But Dr. Donald Soper, a Methodist minister and Labour publicist, expressed the sentiments of a vocal minority when he called on trade unionists to refuse to handle arms and advocated civil disobedience by all British citizens. "That is not an easy thing to say, but as I think of these people of Hungary, of Egypt and Israel, and the people of this country, I am finally satisfied that, until one community is prepared to base its policy on non-violent action, no real progress can be made...."^{39} At the same time, the Cambridge University newspaper reported that fifty per cent of the University's reservists would come out against recall.^{40}

Ideas become forces when there is a receptive audience prepared to do battle in their honour. The words of the agitator are taken up because there is a people for whom these words fill a need. By 1958, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) filled the need by organizing into action those connected with peace, labour and reform movements who wanted to influence and educate the Parliament, the Labour Party, and the electorate on the consequences of nuclear warfare. Agitation for nuclear disarmament came from persons trained in the pacifism of Quakerism,^{41} the organized


^{40} Ibid.

passive resistance of the No-Conscription Fellowship, the conscientious objection of the No More War Movement, and the secular faith of the PPU. By the end of the Second World War, the Quakers and the PPU were still well-established, organized bodies capable of undertaking and advising on protest action. There were, as well, activists in the labour movement and within the Labour Party who were either pacifists or objected to the horrors of war, members who were either part of Labour's anti-war tradition or those recently shocked by the consequences of atomic warfare.

In laying the foundations for a new peace movement, one specifically directed against nuclear weapons, some people in Great Britain could draw upon their own experiences in wartime or their activities in the suffragette movement. To these ranks could be added persons who had been caught up, often in the thick of the struggle, in earlier movements of dissent and reform - against capital punishment, hunger, poverty and colonialism, and for better living conditions.

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43 Ibid., p. 287.

44 Peace Pledge Union, op. cit.


The campaign against the nuclear arms race and the threat of universal genocide was fathered by the National Committee for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests, DACANW, persons gathered around the left-wing weekly, the *New Statesman*, groups of professional cause promoters, and what Collins called the "prima donnas of the campaigning business." But behind these lay the cultural context of British politics which has just been discussed.

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47 Quoted in Driver, *op. cit.* p. 42.
CHAPTER VIII

THE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT MOVEMENT (2): FROM ALDERMASTON, THROUGH SCARBOROUGH, TO BLACKPOOL

**Introduction**

Members of the nuclear disarmament movement in Great Britain, themselves convinced of the threat presented by nuclear weapons, wanted to convince the British public of the decisive consequences of nuclear warfare. Once the public was so convinced, it was thought possible to obtain renunciation by the government of nuclear weapons. Similarly, some members of the movement thought that once the Labour Party was convinced and returned to office, it would be possible to expect a policy of unilateralism: "We are determined to channel the existing feeling in the country and create a climate of opinion which the political parties would have to follow...."\(^1\) The movement attempted to argue that protecting British interests by possessing nuclear bombs was both futile and immoral. Self-preservation, the avoidance of a Third World War, and the protection of democratic institutions, it was argued, were worthy objectives which were endangered by the escalation of the arms race far more than they were assisted by the "balance of terror".

The questions facing the nuclear disarmament movement were threefold. First, it had to be decided what precisely was meant by unilateral and unconditional rejection of nuclear weapons. Secondly, it had to be

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decided what tactics would best be able to advance the position of unilateralism. The movement, which in the initial phase was presided over by CND, relied primarily on tactics of legal persuasion; but, at the same time, different, but not conflicting tactics, were used by other groups and individuals within the movement. These latter tactics, which at a later point would cause a split within the movement, emphasized the civil disobedience aspect of non-violent direct action.

Thirdly, it had to be decided against whom the tactics adopted would be directed most profitably. Here a central problem was the role which the movement, and CND in particular, should follow with respect to the political (namely, Labour) parties. It had to be decided whether CND was a ginger group to try to convert the Labour Party, the possible alternative government, to a position of unilateralism, or a pressure group to make demands for an alteration in official policy on whatever party happened to be in office at the time. In addition, questions arose of whether to by-pass the political parties, whether to raise the issue of nuclear disarmament outside the framework of the traditional parties, and whether to moderate aims and tactics for reasons of political expediency. Many within CND thought in terms of parliamentary manoeuvring; others within the movement thought in terms of mass non-cooperation. The initial phase of the nuclear disarmament movement, which I shall discuss in this chapter, was characterized by its attempts to answer these assorted questions.

One further point needs to be made here. The nuclear disarmament movement was labelled an "umbrella movement" by affectionate supporters, apologists and stern critics alike. It was held responsible for sheltering
thousands of persons who had little otherwise in common than their views on disarmament. However, in addition to the shared objective of wanting to do something to alter the course of events which they thought likely to eventuate with the retention of nuclear weapons, the movement's composition revealed certain similar features.

While there have been no detailed studies of the composition of the movement as a whole, newspaper reports, court cases, personal accounts, and literature produced by groups within the movement allow the analyst to infer certain shared characteristics of the activists: (1) that professionals, students and housewives — persons whose circumstances of employment allowed them the time to demonstrate without posing a threat to their (often independent) incomes — predominated; 2 (2) that, at least on marches and other forms of symbolic action, 3 young people, viz., those under twenty-five years, comprised the largest age group; and (3) that of those who were party political, the overwhelming majority were supporters of the Labour Party. A poll taken in January, 1960, before departure for the Harrington missile base, produced the results which follow; however, it should be noted that the poll was of the fifty more militant members of the group, that is, those who were prepared to be arrested, and may be less than representative.

2 Priestley emphasized that uncommitted or free intellectuals, such as authors, critics, university persons, and so on, had joined while other groups felt that their official status or political commitments precluded their appearing of public platform; see his letter to the New Statesman, LV (May 24, 1958), 668.

3 See Appendix "A".
In this chapter, I shall discuss the chronology of events leading from the formation of the CND in 1958, through the conversion of the Labour Party to a unilateralist position at Scarborough in 1960, to the Party's rejection of that position at Blackpool in 1961. In so doing, I shall analyze the aims of the movement, the tactics of legal persuasion which characterized this phase of the movement, the reaction to those tactics, and the state of the movement by 1961. I shall reserve a discussion of the tactics of the Committee of 100 until Chapter IX, even though in terms of sequence it falls between events at Scarborough and Blackpool.

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4LT, Jan. 4, 1960, p. 6.
Temporal Phases

Formation of CND.— The initiative for organizing against the declared nuclear policies of the two major political parties came from persons connected with more general social movements, in particular, peace, labour and reform movements. These joined forces in the centralized but loosely organized CND.

With respect to the sponsors, of the nineteen persons who were on the executive during the first year, thirteen were listed in *Who’s Who*, while the list of thirty-eight sponsors was equally impressive.\(^5\)

L.J. Collins, canon of St. Paul's Cathedral in London and an experienced fund raiser and cause promoter, was elected as Chairman and Bertrand Russell, member of the House of Lords, philosopher and writer, as President, by the fifty British personalities who had been invited by Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*, to initiate the campaign. Other members of the executive included Ritchie Calder, Michael Foot, M.P., Kingsley Martin, J.B. Priestley and J. Rotblat, while some of the sponsors were Dame Peggy Ashcroft, Lord Boyd Orr, Benjamin Britten, Dame Edith Evans, E.M. Forster, Victor Gollancz, Barbara Hepworth, the Rev. Trevor Huddleston, Sir Julian Huxley, Doris Lessing, Sir Compton Mackenzie, Henry Moore, Sir Herbert Read, Flora Robson, Michael Tippett, Vicky, and Barbara Wootton. A group of eminent British figures including a number of Labour Party sympathizers, most had been associated at various times with movements of social reform.\(^6\)

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\(^5\)*Driver, op. cit.*, pp. 43-45.

CND had a national office in London, run by a handful of paid staff, and local groups all over the country. Although some areas had a regional office with a paid organizer, most of CND’s work was carried out by volunteers. CND had no membership as such and no fees; its work was financed by fund-raising projects and by voluntary contributions. Its rules provided that such bodies as DACANW were to have the same status within the Campaign as had local CND groups and committees; while it would support the activities of such bodies, it would not take any direct responsibility for their tactics and objectives.  

At the inaugural meeting held on February 17, 1958, five thousand people turned up to hear a panel of distinguished speakers - Russell, Collins, King-Hall, J.B. Priestley, Michael Foot, and A.J.P. Taylor - put the case against the nuclear arms race and pledge themselves to a sustained campaign in that direction. After the meeting in Central Hall, about one thousand people from the audience went to Downing Street where they chanted “ban the bomb” slogans; some conducted a sit-down there and five were arrested and fined for obstructing or assaulting the police.  

With a modicum of success from its initial meeting and others held throughout the month, CND was able to extend its sphere of influence. During the rest of 1958 and for the duration of the movement, CND organized various non-violent direct action projects. It organized an annual march between London and the nuclear weapons plant at Aldermaston. It began a grass-roots campaign through street groups, neighbourhood meetings, and the collection of signatures on various petitions of protest; it lobbied

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7 Driver, op. cit., p. 48.
8 LT, Feb. 19, 1958, p. 5.
Members of Parliament; it published literature; and it conducted vigils, marches, demonstrations and picketing.

Activity within the Labour Party. - Supporters of nuclear disarmament who were members of the Labour Party and of trade unions began to concentrate on constituency branches and union locals in an effort to make their impact on official Labour Party policy. The year 1959 was one of a General Election and many activists in the nuclear disarmament movement worked to return the Labour Party; but the Conservatives under Prime Minister Macmillan were reelected.

After Labour's defeat at the polls events moved quickly toward changing the Party's policy on nuclear weapons. Rank-and-file opinion within the constituency branches, aided by the strength of trade union views on the subject, resulted in the delegates at Scarborough endorsing a policy of unilateralism. But efforts were made in the Party to undercut the victory. In March, 1961, the National Executive Committee of the Party defied the Conference position by reaffirming its own, not Conference's, official defence statement. In October, 1961, Conference voted against unilateralism, although it voted also against Polaris bases and the training of West German troops on British soil.

Other Activity. - Sections of the nuclear disarmament movement other than CND were engaging in different forms of non-violent direct action at this time. In December, 1958, civil disobedience, the first since the movement had begun officially, occurred at the North Pickenham rocket base. This was followed by a similar demonstration at a missile base near Harrington.

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Northamptonshire. In September 1960, plans of Russell and the Rev. Michael Scott for a civil disobedience campaign were made public. These will be discussed in Chapter IX.

**Aims and Motives**

A policy for nuclear disarmament had to provide answers to a whole range of problems: (1) whether nuclear weapons should be banned (a) unilaterally and (b) for a limited period of time; (2) whether nuclear tests should be suspended (a) unilaterally, and (b) for a limited period of time; (3) whether (1) and (2) should be steps in a general disarmament agreement, that is, whether they should be tied to an agreement for the reduction of conventional arms and forces; (4) whether (1) and (2) should be tied to an "n'th power" limiting agreement which would include such prohibitions as that against the equipping of West German forces with nuclear weapons; (5) whether (1) and (2) should be tied to an adequate inspections system; and (6) whether foreign bases should be removed from British soil, and, if not, who should control them, Great Britain or the United States.

As expressed through CND, the aim of the movement was:

We shall seek to persuade British people that Britain must: (a) Renounce unconditionally the use or production of nuclear weapons and refuse to allow their use by others in her defense. (b) Use her utmost endeavour to bring about negotiations at all levels for agreement to end the armaments race and to lead to a general disarmament convention. (c) Invite the co-operation of other nations, particularly non-nuclear powers, in her renunciation of nuclear weapons.

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12 Quoted in Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
In particular, the government was asked to act on specific issues, pending the success of the major objectives: 

"(a) Halt the patrol flights of planes equipped with nuclear weapons. (b) Make no further tests of nuclear weapons. (c) Not proceed with the agreement for the establishment of missile bases on her territory. (d) Refuse to provide nuclear weapons for any other country." \(^{13}\)

The initial objective of unilateralism, as expounded first by CND and supported by subsidiary groups within the movement, was clarified as the movement progressed to include withdrawal from NATO as the first step in multilateral disarmament.

All CND spokesmen were united by their opposition to government policy. The basis for the Conservatives' rejection of unilateralism was three-fold: (1) by precipitating the breakup of NATO and drastically upsetting the balance of power, unilateralism would make war all the more likely; (2) unilateralism would leave Great Britain open to Russian aggression; and (3) unilateralism would not succeed in getting the United States and the Soviet Union to disarm. The government's position, that war was most likely to be prevented if the enemy knew that Great Britain could and would retaliate with nuclear weapons, underlay the 1957 and 1958 defence proposals which put a greater emphasis on nuclear weapons. \(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Ibid.

By promising to end National Service in 1960 and by relying less upon conventional weapons, the government could reduce estimates from £1,600 million to £1,483 million. Recognizing the difficulties of defence against nuclear weapons, the government saw its strength in being able to "threaten retaliation with nuclear weapons." To do this, Great Britain would need an independent nuclear deterrent.

In reply, members of the CND argued that it was unlikely that an unarmed Great Britain would be the go-ahead signal for Russian domination of Western Europe. But even if such were to be the case, unilateralism was worth the risk: "We must say that we think it a lesser evil that the world should be dominated by Russia than that the world should be destroyed or mutilated by nuclear warfare." The argument of "better-dead-than-Red" set some of the terms of the debate; Taylor gave the sharpest reply for his side:

...they would prefer suicide to life under Communism. So would I. Our wish can be met simply and cheaply by issuing a phial of poison to every registered anti-Communist. But why should we insist that the rest of the population accompany us on this death ride; that many millions of Russians also be obliterated; and that the atmosphere be polluted so that future generations will be born maimed or monsters?  

If the policy of CND was clear enough, the grounds of that policy varied. The activists had both moral and rational reasons – Christian morality, atheistic humanism, military security, scientific necessity, scientific necessity,

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15 Philip Toynbee, "Answer to Those Who Oppose Nuclear Disarmament", in Boulton, *Voices from the Crowd: Against the H-Bomb*, op. cit., p. 61.

16 *LT*, Mar. 11, 1958, p. 11.
political realism. Some activists argued that it was wrong to bring a ghastly death to millions, others that it was not rational to stake a country's safety on a threat which, if carried out, meant national suicide. Since retaliation was certain and defence was impossible, CND reasoned that Great Britain would have to give a clear lead towards peace under a policy of unilateralism. Evidence was offered to show that the testing of nuclear weapons was poisoning the air with radioactivity, that the manufacture of nuclear weapons was taking monies and energies away from more important projects, viz., social welfare, and that the existence of such weapons made nuclear war more likely.17 Collins argued: "To choose for myself the risk of suffering or death rather than dishonour is for me a proper choice. But for me to choose suffering and death for others (including yet unborn children) is the height of wickedness."18 Russell rejected the benevolence of both the Soviet Union and the western powers, but reasoned that "the hope that we can defend the west by means of the H-bomb is illusory because to use this weapon would be suicide."19 Komm Zilliacus, M.P., asking that Great Britain head a non-nuclear club of nations, said: "Those of us who want Britain to cease being at the tail end of the nuclear suicide club... believe we have reason and realism on our side, as well as conscience and principle."20

17 See, e.g., Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament handbill, "I, the Undersigned, Reject a Policy of Nuclear Insanity Because", (n.d.); Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament handbill, "Let Britain Lead", (1960); Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament handbill, "Why Do We March?", (1962).

18 LT, Mar. 17, 1958, p. 11.

19 Ibid., Mar. 6, 1958, p. 11.

Other speakers began to ask for a new, positive defence and foreign policy based on non-nuclear strategy, support for a policy of non-alignment, and cooperation with uncommitted nations. There were also speakers who argued that Great Britain should be building up her conventional forces, while others argued that she should give up all arms, conventional as well as nuclear, immediately. In the extreme, Alex Comfort, an anarchist writer and biologist, called for widespread refusal of military service, arguing: "We have a moral duty to make sure that we are not going to be the people who press the button."\(^{21}\)

One of the problems that faced the movement with respect to its policy objectives was to substitute something for the movement's negative attitude on nuclear weapons. But once the policy was made more positive, there was the chance of alienating particular sections of the broad movement. The movement needed a definite policy; but it had to balance taking a position of clarity against too extreme a position. This was a problem which had taxed the patience and resources of many protest movements in the past.

**Tactics**

*Legal persuasion.*— Unilateral nuclear disarmament was an objective, not a programme of action. With that objective in mind, various sections of the nuclear disarmament movement, CND being but the largest and best known, sought to make their moral and political views known through different tactics. They sought to publicize their demands to as large an audience as possible, politicians included; they sought to concern the public with their aims and objectives.

Because the movement's single, most plentiful resource was its numerical strength, it tended to concentrate on the political wing of the government.²² It did this by making direct appeals to the government or to the Labour Party; or, alternatively, it sought to create a large favourable public that would be prepared to put pressure on the political authorities either by engaging in direct action, as the already committed activists were doing, or by using their voting power to return a receptive government.

Both the general objectives and the tactics were less precise than they might have been had the leadership been circumscribed by a tightly knit organization rather than a heterogeneous political movement.²³ CND itself officially chose legal methods of persuasion to present its case. It began with a protest meeting in Central Hall in February, 1958, to which five thousand people came to hear a distinguished panel of speakers put the case for unilateralism. With a modicum of success from its initial meeting, which was followed by others throughout the month, CND was able to extend the range of its activities. I shall discuss two components of its activities: first, the unconventional Aldermaston Marches; second, the spectrum of non-violent direct action tactics employed simultaneously by CND.

_Aldermaston Marches, 1958-61._— Adopting an earlier proposal of DACANW, CND organized, over Easter weekend 1958, six thousand people of diverse persuasion on the fifty-two mile, four day march from London to the nuclear

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²² Cf. with pressure groups' channels of action; see Eckstein, _op. cit._, p. 20
²³ Cf. with Smelser on inclusive beliefs, _op. cit._, pp. 299-301.
weapons plant at Aldermaston, where the number swelled to ten thousand. A combination of quality and quantity made the march unlike other marches that had occurred in British history. The spectrum of marchers, may have disagreed on some of the fundamentals of political life, but on what Philip Toynbee called "certain minimum things", namely the opposition to nuclear warfare, the marchers did agree. The march was given additional unity by the newly-adopted symbol of CND, which was carried on signs and banners, designed on buttons and badges, sketched across canvas, or painted on waterproof "lollipops" - the composite form of the semaphore signal for the letters N and D. The designer, Gerald Holtom, referred to the central motif as symbolizing the world, and the background as symbolizing eternity. The slogan "ban the bomb" was simple, direct and vague enough to accommodate the myriad marchers.

The qualities characteristic of later Aldermaston Marches were evidenced during the first one: the celebrities (Labour Members of Parliament, writers, actors, professors, musicians); the songs and the dancing: the youth; and the sheer numbers. The marchers left London after speakers in Trafalgar


26 See his comments in PN, June 2, 1961, p. 6.
Square wished them well; along the route they heard speeches from Collins, Harold Steele, Foot, Toynbee, Comfort, Tippett, Frank Allaun, M.P., Fenner Brockway, M.P., Michael Randle, Soper, John Berger, Ian Mikardo, M.P., Michael Scott, Stephen Swingler, M.P., and Stuart Morris. They marched as individuals or under the banner of a political party, a trade union, or a religious organization. Through song, through shared tiredness, through common smiles to the curious occasionally hostile, onlookers, through searching for beds for the night, through participation in a joint political act, the marchers demonstrated their united cause. If the demonstration was a prank of the misguided, as many observers and newspapers argued, noting only the prevalence of many young marchers in their early twenties, bearded, long-haired and in duffle coats, it was a misguided melange that was joined by some of Great Britain's most respected pacifists, humanitarians, religious leaders, left-wing political activists, scientists, writers, actresses, and Labour Members of Parliament. In the main, one observer said, the marchers were middle-class and professional; the orderly dignity of the March reflected this.

In March, 1959, the second Aldermaston March was held; the format was similar, but this time the march was from the nuclear research centre to London. It got under way with 4,500 people; the number had swelled to twenty thousand when the march drew to a conclusion at Trafalgar Square. As in the first March, there were many young people, Labour supporters, middle-class liberals, religious and moral pacifists, trade unionists, mothe

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28 LT, Mar. 31, 1959, p. 4.
pushing babies in prams, left-wing activists, and celebrities. According to one survey it is suggested that forty-one per cent of the marchers were under twenty-one years, perhaps a higher percentage than in 1958; sixty per cent of the marchers regarded themselves as political activists; seventy per cent were marching in the hope of affecting political events; ninety per cent of the youth on the March supported the CND for moral reasons; only about four per cent of the marchers were working class, while the major occupational groups represented were students, teachers, librarians, clerks, civil servants, journalists and social workers. With respect to tactics, only six per cent supported DACANW's "voters' veto" campaign (to be discussed later) against candidates who had not declared themselves for unilateralism, but thirty-one per cent supported DACANW's civil disobedience activities.  

The objective of the March, according to the text of a "Charter for Nuclear Disarmament" delivered to the Prime Minister, was to urge the government to secure the total abolition of nuclear weapons; to this end, CND called upon the government to "renounce the testing, manufacture and use of nuclear arms and to do so independently as a lead to negotiations and not as a condition thereof." Any finer points of policy than those expressed in the Charter would have to be argued out away from the Aldermaston to London route, the leadership insisted.

In April 1960, following a similar format, the third annual Aldermaston March was begun by ten thousand activists, who were organized, by and large,

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29 Based on a survey by Perspectives, reported in Driver, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

into regional units with a distinguishing colour for the banners of each region. The number of marchers reached sixty thousand as the marchers moved into Trafalgar Square and were joined by London supporters. After hearing various speakers make their personal commitment to the unilateralist position, the marchers listened to Foot warn that nuclear weapons could destroy democratic institutions both directly and indirectly by removing the decision to use them further and further away from elected representatives. Foot expressed a cynicism that had crept into the movement since its inception when he praised the March as a democratic protest against the "military dictatorship" into which the country was slipping.

In April, 1961, the fourth Aldermaston March was undertaken, this time with the addition of civil disobedience activities (to be discussed in Chapter IX). The March was divided for the first time into two divisions, since CND chose to march from both Aldermaston, the principal nuclear research establishment, and Wethersfield, a major NATO base for the United States' Strategic Air Command. Ten thousand people began on both wings of the March and the well-organized, gaily clad column of marchers, whose average age appeared to be under twenty-five years, gathered supporters each day. The representation of youth, trade unionists, religious bodies, and left-wing political parties was supplemented by an international section of supporters from twenty-three countries. By the time that the original

31 LT, Apr. 19, 1960, p. 10. CND set the Trafalgar Square number at one hundred thousand.

32 Ibid.

33 PN, Apr. 4, 1961, p. 5.
band reached Trafalgar Square, the number of marchers had risen to between one hundred thousand and 150,000. While assembled, the marchers heard speeches from Frank Cousins of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Jack Horner of the Fire Brigades Union and Russell, among others; they all spoke of the horrors of nuclear war and the need for unilateral disarmament.

The March, CND persistently argued, was not a substitute for reasoned debate but a means of confronting the government with the strength of the nuclear disarmament movement, as well as a means of laying the groundwork for persuasion. In 1961, Sanity, the then unofficial paper of CND, estimated that:

The first Aldermaston March made the campaign a mass movement. The second proved that it was here to stay. The third was the immediate prelude to the trade union debates and decisions which changed Labour Party policy. And all three have largely contributed to that change in the political climate which has put disarmament high on the international agenda and tacitly outlawed nuclear tests.

If the claims were less than Sanity suggested, the Aldermaston Marches still indicated the degree of self-organization on this single issue of protest. The movement had neither the resources nor the rigid and professional machine to mobilize the number which it did, without a feeling of moral indignation and a widespread appreciation of the political consequences of nuclear weapons. If, for some, Aldermaston was the chance to picnic away from home, it was for most an opportunity to influence defence policy. Regardless of intent, by 1961 the Marches were too big to be totally ignored.

34 LT, Apr. 4, 1961, p. 8.
35 Sanity, Feb. 1961, p. 3.
Other non-violent direct action tactics. - After its initial success with meetings and marches, CND began to use other forms of non-violent direct action in order to induce a feeling of protest in others. It began a grassroots campaign through street groups, neighbourhood meetings, and the local collection of signatures on various petitions of protest. It began to publish literature in large quantities, explaining its position. In addition to town meetings, debates, forums and films and travelling exhibitions, it conducted local marches to acquaint villagers with the location of nuclear bases which had war preparation stores. It lobbied Members of Parliament, sometimes in fancy dress. Supporters who were members of the Labour Party began to concentrate on constituency branches and trade union locals. It conducted vigils outside Aldermaston, with attempts to discuss nuclear disarmament with the plant's workers. It conducted a twenty-four hour vigil outside the German Embassy in protest over plans to arm West German forces with nuclear weapons; it also demonstrated outside the American Embassy in protest over the American decision not to maintain its formal suspension of nuclear tests. It held

39 LT, Apr. 8, 1958, p. 6. For details of a nine-week picketing routine at Aldermaston involving 170 persons, see PW, Oct. 3, 1958, p. 3.
40 LT, Apr. 18, 1958, p. 6.
41 Ibid., Jan. 4, 1960, p. 6. For other vigils, see Ibid., July 27, 1960, p. 4; July 29, 1960, p. 4; July 30, 1960, p. 3.
a protest march to the United States Army Air Force base at Brize Norton, Oxfordshire. It held a twenty-four hour demonstration outside Downing Street in protest against the government's decision to allow the production of plutonium for weapons in atomic power stations. It organized a Women's Campaign to make propaganda on the effects of the new weapons on children.

It wrote letters to the Queen, to the disarmament negotiators at Geneva, and to the Russian and American governments when the latter resumed bomb testing. It demonstrated at civil defence exercises in Stafford. It conducted picketings led by theatrical celebrities in a bid to counter the Royal Air Force's "Battle of Britain Week" with "Nuclear Disarmament Week." It held numerous mass rallies of up to twelve thousand participants. It held protest marches within London.

In newspaper editorials and in letters to the editor columns, as well as on the radio and television, the controversy raised by the nuclear disarmament movement flourished. What the activists in the movement had failed to get discussed, both in moral and in political terms, by any of the major political parties or in Parliament itself, they succeeded in getting

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43 Ibid., June 30, 1958, p. 6.
44 Ibid., July 7, 1958, p. 5.
46 PN, Sept. 25, 1959, p. 8.
47 See, e.g., LT, Sept. 21, 1959, p. 6; Feb. 16, 1960, p. 7.
48 See, e.g., march of one thousand in protest over the Summit breakdown; ibid., May 23, 1960, p. 6. See also the three-week march from Edinburgh to London done in relays, ibid., Sept. 26, 1960, p. 7.
discussed in opinion journals of high repute and influence. The Times, the Observer, the Manchester Guardian, the New Statesman and Tribune became private debating chambers for the controversy over nuclear warfare.

Across this spectrum of non-violent direct action tactics, CND, for one, was able to put its case through techniques of legal persuasion, to argue dispassionately that the government was following a policy of destruction, and to lay bare its beliefs as to why the country should renounce nuclear weapons.

By the end of this phase of the nuclear disarmament movement, that is, by the middle of 1961, not only had the major forms of non-violent direct action which were to characterize the movement been tried but also some major tactical problems of the movement had been raised. First there was the problem of sustaining the activity and enthusiasm of the movement, and of guarding against its losing its freshness and imagination and becoming tedious, dull and ritualistic. Even CND, the section of the movement which came closest to being an organized association, was handicapped by having remote objectives, an indefinite membership, and an absence of full professional or experienced organization to operate it. To its advantage, however, were the backgrounds of the persons associated with it, rich in the causes with which they had been affiliated and with experiences which could be useful in formulating tactics and goals; in addition, CND had a unity made possible by the activists' shared objective of nuclear disarmament and the willingness of large numbers to act on their convictions.

See, for example, the booklet published by The Times, The Nuclear Dilemma (London: The Times Publishing Company, 1958), containing a lead article and a selection of the letters to the editor in response to it.
Secondly, CND, as well as other sections of the nuclear disarmament movement, had to clarify its relationship to the labour movement and to the Labour Party in particular. Two different positions were advanced within the movement, characterized by the de facto policies of DACANW and CND, on the appropriate role to be followed vis-à-vis political parties.

DACANW's position was that the movement should assume the role of a political pressure group, acting equally upon the government and the party in opposition and avoiding identification with either. The movement should put pressure on the party in office, trying to get it to alter official policy. DACANW was opposed to having either an official or an unofficial affiliation with the Labour Party. It wanted to educate the public so that it would demand certain things of parliamentarians and parliamentary candidates; it wanted to convert political parties and return to Parliament those who favoured nuclear disarmament. Along these lines, it wanted to vote support (later on, the Independent Nuclear Disarmament Election Committee [INDEC] put forward convinced opponents of nuclear warfare as candidates in parliamentary elections) for any candidate who favoured nuclear disarmament, while at the same time it wanted to withhold votes ("voter's veto") from all candidates who took a position against nuclear disarmament.50 In other words, it sought to use the movement's major resource, its potential voting strength, to "control votes.... so that the H-bomb issue can jeopardize results across party boundaries."51 DACANW was less concerned either

50 For "voter's veto", see Driver, op. cit., pp. 68-70.
51 PN, May 16, 1958, p. 4.
with concentrating on gaining a majority at Labour Party Conferences or
with working for the return of a Labour government than with awakening
the conscience of the electorate.

At no time did CND disallow appealing for support from members of
all parties. But many spokesmen within the organization wanted major
efforts of the appeal to be concentrated on the Labour Party, since they
felt that the movement had very little chance of persuading the Conser­
vative Party to reverse its arms policy and renounce its nuclear alliances.
These spokesmen wanted to mobilize the electorate and the Labour Party
at the same time. Since they valued very highly the Labour Members of
Parliament and Labour supporters among CND's membership, they were prepared
to moderate tactics in order to avoid proscription by the Party.

For these spokesmen, the historical and political circumstances of
party alignment in Great Britain in the 1950's, when added to the traditions
of pacifism and reform found within the British Labour Party, made it
unrealistic not to expect that a large section of the nuclear disarmament
movement would want to concentrate its attention on influencing opinion
within the Labour Party and working for its return to office. For them
it was important that it was Labour which had a left-wing receptive to
unilateralism, not the Conservatives. Taylor's argument fell on ready
ears: "... ultimately we have to convert the Labour Party just as the
Anti-Corn Law League converted Sir Robert Peel."52 Even those within

800. For comparison, see Henry Donaldson Jordan, "The Political
Method of the Anti-Corn Law League", Political Science Quarterly,
XLII (March, 1927), 58-76; Norman McCord, The Anti-Corn Law League, 1838-1
the Party who deplored Labour's equivocal stand on nuclear weapons pointed out the need to change policy through the Labour Party. Donald Soper on this point argued that politics had to be party politics: "I walked part of the way to Aldermaston as the expression of a moral principle. Now that protest has to be translated into practical and industrial action, and channelled through a political party." Judicial Hart said, in much the same vein: "The fulfilment of social morality in the modern world can be achieved only through the exercise of political power.... a political party, with all its irritations and frustrations, is the only means I have of giving effective expression to my ethical beliefs."

Civil disobedience.—The diversity of argument was not the only thing which characterized the inauguration of the nuclear disarmament movement. After the meeting in Central Hall in February, 1958, about one thousand people from the audience went to Downing Street where they chanted "ban the bomb" slogans; some conducted a sit-down and five were arrested and fined for obstructing and assaulting the police. This act of civil disobedience, while not an official part of CND's inaugural meeting, marked the birth of the movement just as much as did the rousing speeches delivered inside the Hall.


54 Judith Hart, "The Challenge of Politics", in Boulton, *Voices from the Crowd: Against the H-Bomb*, op. cit., p. 95.

In December 1958, the use of civil disobedience as a tactic for the first time since the movement had begun officially, occurred at the North Pickenham rocket base. This will be discussed in Chapter IX, when the general split within the movement over tactics will be introduced.

Reaction

Public Reaction.—This phase of the nuclear disarmament movement provoked widespread reaction to the objectives of unilateralism, if letters to the editor, lectures, books, radio and television programmes and the like are any indication. There was little or no objection to the movement's use of tactics of legal persuasion. Many observers would have agreed with what A. Birch said at a trade union conference: "I don't agree with the Aldermaston March, but I regard the march as an expression of the conscience of Britain." The disagreement was with CND's advocacy of unilateral disarmament followed by withdrawal from NATO.

One psychiatrist has divided the range of response to nuclear warfare into maladaptive and adaptive categories. The first division included ignoring, becoming habituated, denying and becoming anxious over the dangers of such warfare. The second division became one of a series of reasoned responses: at a showdown, the side with the superior destructive force would win; in a conflict, one had to give one's life for one's

beliefs; in a conflict, one had to avoid showing fear in the face of the enemy. Most of the verbal responses to CND's objective of unilateralism fell into the second division. It was argued by some that the renunciation of nuclear weapons would weaken the country's bargaining power; that Great Britain needed the protection afforded by the "balance of terror"; that the country must be prepared as she was not in the 1930's, and, therefore, that she must be as suspicious of the unilateralists as she should have been of the pre-Second World War pacifists; that unilateral renunciation was a futile gesture, since it did not really matter what Great Britain did.

As far as public opinion polls went, responses appeared to indicate that there were relatively few converts to the movement's objective after the direct action phases had begun. According to findings of the British Institute of Public Opinion, the following percentages were in favour of a position of unilateralism: in 1955, thirty-one to thirty-two per cent of the people were against Great Britain's decision to make the hydrogen bomb; in 1958, twenty-five per cent were in favour of unilateralism; in 1959, twenty-five to thirty-three per cent were in favour of unilateralism. For the years 1960 and 1961 the results are as follows:

59 Ibid., pp. 23-25.
61 Ibid.
62 Loc. cit.
ATTITUDES OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC TOWARD NUCLEAR WEAPONS 1960-61*
(Percentage Favouring Each Response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>1960</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>January-April</td>
<td>19</td>
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*Question: What policy should Britain follow about nuclear weapons?

Responses: 1. Give up nuclear weapons entirely.
   2. Pool all nuclear weapons with other NATO countries and rely mainly on American production.
   3. Continue to make our own nuclear weapons.
   4. Don't know.

Labour movement. - Within the Labour Party at the time that the nuclear disarmament movement began, there were some of the same soul-searchings as had made the movement itself possible; but there was also a certain amount of unease over CND and its affiliates as a protest movement.

63 Ibid., p. 60. For analysis of press coverage of the movement during this period, see John Marullus, "'The Times' Plays Spot-the-Reds on the Road to Aldermaston", Tribune, Apr. 11, 1958, p. 4; Richard Clements, "4 Days from Aldermaston", ibid., Apr. 22, 1960, p. 4; David Boulton, "Fleet Street and the March", ibid., Apr. 7, 1961, pp. 6-7.
Partially in response to CND, partially as a result of genuine disagreement with government policy, and partially to quell dissension within its own ranks from the "Victory for Socialism" group, the National Executive Committee and the General Council of the TUC, in March, 1958, issued a joint document entitled *Disarmament and Nuclear War*. The document argued:

(1) that Great Britain should suspend nuclear tests, unilaterally and immediately, for a limited period of time; (2) that Great Britain support an international declaration banning the use of nuclear weapons; that any American bases set up in Great Britain be under British control. Toward these objectives, the Labour Party and the TUC launched a national educational campaign on disarmament, leading off with a meeting in Trafalgar Square and followed by a few more public and private meetings.

For many in the nuclear disarmament movement, this educational campaign had all the earmarks of a direct counter to CND. Taylor vehemently accused the Labour Party of trying "to kill us [CND], not the bomb" and credited the Party with having had some success in this direction. However, he went on to say: "The unspoken accusation against the campaign is untrue. We are not seeking to disrupt the Labour Party nor to challenge the present leadership. We are seeking to win it over...."

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64 A left-wing socialist group revived in 1957 as an intra-party ginger group; its membership in Parliament was about forty strong.

65 *LT*, Mar. 7, pp. 6, 10.


Later that year, the Annual Conference of the Labour Party issued a less direct statement of its views on disarmament than that contained in the joint document with the TUC. While renewing its appeal to the government to end nuclear tests, it made no demand for the country's unilateral cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons. A resolution calling upon the next Labour government to cease the manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons unilaterally and to prohibit their use on British territory was defeated 5,611,000 to 890,000.

As has already been suggested, throughout the 1950's, pressures within the Labour Party and within the TUC for a reexamination of Party policy on nuclear disarmament had been applied. But these pressures were not acted upon by the Parliamentary Labor Party until June, 1959, when, under the impetus of internal pressures from the left-wing and in reaction to changes in the platforms of the Conservative and the Liberal Parties, a new policy was formulated. While still not explicit on the question of nuclear tests, the Party did advance the plan of a "non-nuclear club" of all nations except the United States and the Soviet Union; it coupled this with proposals for disarmament by all nations in specified stages.

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68 LT, Sept. 27, 1958, p. 6.
70 What the Times assessed as being "outflanked" by the government on the right (with its moves towards Summit talks and limited test suspension) and the Liberals on the left (with their conditional suspension of testing). Ibid., June 15, 1959, p. 6.
71 Ibid., June 25, 1959, p. 6.
A change in Labour policy was also being demanded in the trade unions. In June, 1959, the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, notably not a left-wing union, voted at its conference for a policy of unilateralism. That its vote was representative of similar sentiment within the trade union movement was evident by the reception given the Labour Party's new policy. For while Gaitskell was able to count on the support of such unions as the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Union of Railwaymen, other trade unions, such as the Constructional Engineering Union, the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers, the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, the Transport and General Workers Union, and the Fire Brigades Union had rejected the official policy in favour of alternatives closer to the unilateralist position. However, the TUC Conference in September, 1959, endorsed the official policy over the objections and influence of Frank Cousins, head of the powerful Transport and General Workers' Union; in addition, the Conference carried a protest against American missile bases being sited in Great Britain.

Events moved quickly after Labour's defeat at the polls in October, 1959, towards changing party policy on nuclear weapons. In April, the Co-operative Party Conference had passed a composite resolution advocating unilateral renunciation of the production and testing of nuclear weapons and calling upon the trade union movement and the Labour Party to urge this policy on the government. The Independent Labour Party (ILP) called on trade unions throughout the world to ban the development.

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72 Ibid., June 5, 1959, p. 8.

73 Ibid., Sept. 10, 1959, p. 12.

74 Ibid., Apr. 18, 1960, p. 6.
manufacture, transportation, and handling of nuclear supplies. 75

Policies in support of unilateral disarmament, often with provisions against foreign missile bases on British soil, were adopted by many trade unions during the year as well. Prior to the TUC Conference in September 1960, the following unions were pledged against the use of nuclear weapons: the Amalgamated Engineering Union; the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers; the United Society of Boilermakers; the Chemical Workers’ Union; the Electrical Trades Union; the Fire Brigades Union; the Amalgamated Union of Foundryworkers; the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants; the National Union of Public Employees; the Sheet Metal Workers’ Union; the Transport and General Workers Union; the National Union of Vehicle Builders; and the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers. Pledged against unilateral nuclear disarmament were: the Clerical and Administrative Workers’ Union; the Union of Post Office Workers; the Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association; the Associated Society of Woodworkers; and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (the last having done a turn-about). 76

By September, 1960, the TUC after its conference found itself in the position of having adopted two incompatible policies. It had approved the nuclear disarmament resolution of the Transport and General Workers’ Union, while at the same time it had approved the official Labour Party defence policy statement. 77

75 Ibid., p. 10.

76 Ibid., June 10, 1960, pp. 8, 17. This tentatively set the vote at 2,553,000 for to 1,047,000 against unilateral nuclear disarmament.

77 Ibid., Sept. 8, 1960, p. 12.
In earlier instances, the Labour Party had met the challenge to Gaitskell's defence policies with measures geared to shift the spotlight away from the policies of the nuclear disarmament movement in general and of CND in particular, by a variety of means. It had set up a disarmament campaign of its own which expired after a pamphlet had been issued and a few meetings had been held; it had put forward proposals for a non-nuclear club; it had pressured the leadership of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers' Union to recall the membership and revoke the vote on unilateralism. At the time of this new challenge to the Party's official line, the leadership had to contend with both the left-wing's voice in the constituency parties and the trade unions' numerical strength in favour of unilateralism. The Party could not avoid fighting the issue at Conference.

As the Annual Conference approached, the number of resolutions on disarmament far exceeded those under any other subject heading: of the 435 resolutions from constituency parties and trade unions, over thirty-seven per cent (162) were on disarmament; of these, between 115 and 122 advocated unilateral nuclear disarmament; of the latter, most specified withdrawal from NATO and/or the removal of American bases from Great Britain. 78 Rank-and-file opinion within the constituency branches, when added to the strength of trade union feeling on the subject, resulted in the delegates at Scarborough endorsing the policy of unilateralism. 79

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But the conflict between previous official policy and the Conference decision seemed certain to result in a determined effort to overturn the vote on unilateralism. Cousins, who led the presentation of the case for the unilateralists, based his arguments on the "n’th power" position, that if Great Britain possessed nuclear weapons, other countries would follow suit and a general drift towards war would be on. He did not view the position he was advancing as one that demanded an immediate withdrawal from NATO; for he said that NATO was an organization in which Great Britain could use its influence to advance its position on nuclear warfare. The implications of Cousins’ argument were disputed sharply by Gaitskell. The latter was prepared to reject the Conference decision and reaffirmed his bond to the parliamentary party and the official policy it advanced in June. Gaitskell asked the Conference to understand the dilemma of Labour Members of Parliament, "the vast majority of [whom]... are utterly opposed to unilateralism and neutralism." He continued: "Do you think we can become overnight the pacifists, unilateralists and fellow travellers that other people are?"\(^{61}\)

Conference then, was committed to the Transport and General Workers’ Union motion which called for "a complete rejection of any defence policy based on the threat of the use of strategic or tactical weapons"\(^{82}\) and the Amalgamated Engineering Union’s motion which demanded the "unilateral

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\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 19.

\(^{81}\) Ibid.

\(^{82}\) Passed 3,282,000 for to 3,239,000 against; ibid., p.14.
renunciation of the testing, manufacture, stockpiling and basing of all nuclear weapons in Great Britain. 83

CND analyzed the vote at Scarborough not as a victory achieved "by lobbying and infiltration, but by a public campaign which affected trade unionists along with the rest of the population." 84 But the organization was less than satisfied with the closeness of the vote. It recognized, as did Gaitskell, that the Parliamentary Labour Party was disturbed by the vote for unilateralism and that the Party leadership would fight with all its resources to have that policy reversed. The vote for unilateralism came at a time when the Party leaders had abandoned the policy of an independent nuclear deterrent for Great Britain; but not before the Blue Streak missiles had proved to be a fiasco, both in terms of expense and technical innovation, and the government itself had appeared likely to abandon the independent role for the country.

Tribune's estimation of Scarborough, that it was "[A] mighty swell of rank-and-file opinion...[which] has changed the direction of the Labour Party on the principal issues of the day", 85 was less than accurate. For the Party's reaction to the decision indicated that it still had to be convinced of the worth of the Movement's objectives. Starting with Gaitskell's speech at the Conference, the Party leaders began to undermine

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83 Passed 3,303,000 for to 2,896,000 against; the official defence policy, which was defeated 3,042,000 for to 3,339,000 against, surrendered an independent British deterrent and sought to fulfill the country's obligation to her allies. Ibid.


the efforts of the nuclear disarmament movement to have unilateralism adopted in both letter and spirit by Party leaders, members, and Conference.

If Scarborough was a measure of the movement's success, Blackpool was a measure of its failure. When the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party met in March, 1961, it reaffirmed its official defence statement which said that Great Britain could not oppose on principle the establishment of allied bases on her territory, but must remain free to decide according to circumstances whether or not any particular project should be accepted. Polaris missiles, the statement continued, as retaliatory second strike weapons would be acceptable, but Thor missiles would not be. It then went on to criticize the government for having entered into the Polaris agreement without: (1) having first obtained an assurance that they would remain retaliatory weapons; (2) having made sure that the Thor bases would be removed; (3) having demanded adequate, if even partial, control over their operation; (4) having asked that a site in a less populous place than Holy Loch be chosen.

Other events foreshadowed a change in labour sentiment on unilateralism. First, some trade unions which had voted for unilateralism in 1960 began to reverse their votes. Secondly, a centre group began to emerge around Richard Crossman, M.P., which feared splitting the Party. Thirdly, organized opposition spearheaded by the "Campaign for Democratic Socialism," was backed by the machinery of the Party and began to put the case for multilateralism and continued membership in NATO. In February, 1961, some thirty Labour Members of Parliament and other speakers against the "folly

of unilateralism" held a "multilateral marathon" which ran for five nights. 87 This work was continued by the right-wing Campaign for Democratic Socialism at meetings, through union locals and constituency branches and via printed bulletins. As Driver points out, "Far from finding that a posse of determined unilateralists awaited them in every trade union branch, the CDS discovered that a little encouragement went a very long way in quarters where pressure groups had not hitherto penetrated." 88

But even where the movement had made an impact, it had not convinced the trade unions as strongly as it should have done; it had not made them confirmed and convinced unilateralists able and willing to withstand the pressure from contrary arguments. Therefore, it was not a complete surprise when the Scarborough victory was overturned, although the Conference at Blackpool did vote against Polaris bases and Panzers (West German troops training in Great Britain). 89 The nature of the vote at Blackpool, however, indicated that Labour was still divided on unilateralism and that it might still be possible to reconvert the Party to its earlier position. The Executive defeat on bases and German troops was encouraging, as was the


89 *LT*, Oct. 5, 1961, pp. 8-9. Conference supported the National Executive Committee's *Policy for Peace*, 4,526,000 votes to 1,756,000.

passage of two emergency resolutions, one deploring the resumption of nuclear testing and the other expressing deep concern about the Berlin crisis. Cousins, in a mood of deep bitterness, counselled unilateralists in the constituencies: "Be not dispirited by any vote that is taken here today. It will mean as much or as little in some circles as apparently the vote that was taken last year meant." The moral of Blackpool was that the nuclear disarmament movement had to campaign much harder within the labour movement in order to win its case.

Government.— The Conservative government, as well as the Conservative Party, chose to be silent on the nuclear disarmament movement. Immediately after the overflow meetings in Central Hall in February 1958, Mr. Sandys, Minister of Defence, warned the Labour Party against the pacifism within its ranks, while Sir Eric Edwards, Chairman of the National Executive Committee of the Conservative Unionists Association, voiced his misgivings about the misguided pacifists encouraging youth to advocate unilateral disarmament: "If we cherish our country we must stop this madness before it is too late. There is no sense or logic in the campaign." During the 1959 General Election campaign, the Conservatives stressed that the Labour Party was disunited on matters of foreign policy, but the movement

92 Speech to the Central Council of the National Union of Conservative Associations, reported in ibid., Mar. 14, 1958, p. 6.
93 Ibid. See also the remarks of Mr. Du-Cane at the Conservative Party conference at Blackpool warning that honourable titles and priestly garb did not mean that these people had the interests of the country at heart. Ibid., Oct. 11, 1958, p. 4.
itself was little discussed during the campaign.  

When the CND presented their demands to Prime Minister Macmillan after the 1959 Aldermaston March, he pointed out his constant preoccupation with the problem of nuclear weapons, but he failed to see what could be gained by personal talks with CND spokesmen.  

Mr. Butler, Home Secretary, speaking for the Prime Minister, said that the government did not consider that the CND either represented the views of a majority of the people or was in the best interests of the country: "We are fortified in this belief by the fact that they are at variance with the policies proclaimed by both the major parties in this House."  

Questions by nuclear disarmament supporters, when raised in Parliament, were usually about matters of civil liberties, rather than substantive matters of the movement: whether the police were investigating nuclear disarmament protest meetings so as to obtain information on organizers, speakers, or the audiences; whether police were taking photographs of Aldermaston marches; and about the police authorization of meetings.  

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95 Ibid., pp. 65, 71-72.  
97 Ibid.  
98 Mr. Silverman, PD(C), 572:130 (July 4, 1957).  
99 Mr. Swingler, PD(C), 603:371-72 (Apr. 9, 1959).  
100 See statement of Mr. Butler, PD(C), 587:114 (May 8, 1958).
Evaluation

A full evaluation of the movement will be found in Chapter IX. Suffice it to say at this point that by 1961 the movement had introduced political debate on the issue of nuclear warfare. While it is difficult to credit the movement with any substantial achievements by 1961 with respect to disarmament, the movement had produced a climate of opinion favourable to such disarmament had any of the political sections of the society (such as the government or the political parties) decided to favour unilateralism. What Christoph says of anti-hanging societies can be said of the nuclear disarmament movement: it kept the issues alive; it kept the cause from being branded a crackpot cause; it mobilized favourable public opinion; it provided external support for Members of Parliament committed to such a position; it showed the Parliament what a section of the public thought; and it showed the sympathetic public what it could do to convert the parliamentary political leadership. Since neither of the two political parties was prepared to adopt unilateralism as a position, the nuclear disarmament movement was able to present ideas and attitudes to the public and the Parliament which otherwise might have gone unpresented.

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CHAPTER IX

THE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT MOVEMENT (3): FROM POLITICS TO PROTEST

Introduction

The unilateralist victory at Scarborough came three weeks after a serious split had developed within the nuclear disarmament movement over the use of civil disobedience as a tactical weapon. From its inception, when such bodies as DACANW had been allowed to affiliate with CND, the movement had tolerated the use of diverse tactics to present its case for unilateralism. Most of the tactics which had been used were legal, if occasionally unconventional, such as the Aldermaston March; but some of the tactics were illegal, if non-violent and public, such as the sit-down in Downing Street, while others blended legal and illegal elements, such as the use of printed matter to announce the North Pickenham demonstration of civil disobedience. Big names, reputable personalities, and mass marches and rallies of an unprecedented size had kept CND's tactics of legal persuasion very much in the forefront of the movement. The situation was altered in 1960, CND being pushed into the background, when the practitioners of civil disobedience were able to offer novel methods, a galaxy of stars and a multitude of disciples.

Writing in 1959, the New Statesman contrasted CND and DACANW as "the conflict between the Propagandists — those who believe that the task of the reformer is to assist the gradual evolution of opinion — and the Witnesses, who feel morally constrained to
give full and immediate expression to their convictions."¹ The journal went on to evaluate this conflict "between expedience and principle"² as a traditional feature of British reformism. Seen historically, the militancy of DACANW and later of the Committee of 100 troubled some within the movement in much the same way as in Chartism the practitioners of "physical force" troubled the practitioners of "moral force";³ or in the way that the antics of the Pankhursts troubled the Pethick-Lawrences during the Suffragette campaigns.⁴

Dissatisfied with CND's conventional tactics and with the country's conventional (that is, Conservative, Liberal, Labour) politics, the Rev. Michael Scott and Bertrand Russell organized the Committee of 100 to "take every action that is possible with a view to awakening our compatriots, and ultimately all mankind, to the need of urgent and drastic changes of policy."⁵ In

²Ibid.
⁵Committee of 100 handbill, "Act or Perish", (n.d.)
Chapter VII, it was emphasized that the nuclear disarmament movement was the product of the cultural context of British politics, the values and activities of earlier peace movements, and a British tradition of dissent and reform. The Committee of 100 also fell into this pattern. It joined the anti-militarist, anti-authoritarian humanism of Russell with the religious pacifism of Scott. It combined the talents of one who had been an objector during the First World War with one who had taken part in satyagraha campaigns in South Africa during the 1940's. It allowed for activists who wanted an organized chance to make effective propaganda as well as for activists who wanted a personal chance to bear witness.

In contrast to CND's tactics of legal persuasion and agitation, the Committee of 100 used more unorthodox methods of non-violent direct action. It institutionalized a civil disobedience campaign in urban centers, at military sites, and as an adjunct to the legal direct action demonstrations of CND. The Committee, as the CND before it, had to resort to a mass direct action campaign, for its supporters had neither the ear of a political party nor the confidence of administrative officials. It sought added numerical strength to compensate for its unpopular political viewpoint. By its exemplary acts of civil disobedience, it sought to shock and shame the people of Great Britain into

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joining with it in agitating for unilateralism; it sought to threaten the authorities with non-cooperation (and the resultant social dislocation) should its demands not be met.

Mervyn Jones, writing in Tribune, posed the problem of the practice of civil disobedience:

Anyone who says that the issue at North Pickenham is the wrongness of trespass and interference with work, rather than the wrongness of rocket war, accepts the proposition that obedience to law is right whatever the law....If direct action is not the way to oppose the rocket bases... then parliamentary opposition must be made effective....Suppose, despite all opposition, the Government relies on a docile though obsolete majority in Parliament and continues with a course opposed by a majority of the people. What is the duty of the citizen?

The nuclear disarmament movement in effect, spent the years 1960-64 answering that last question and adjudicating between reform by persuasion and reform by physical intervention.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the second phase of the nuclear disarmament movement, in which the activitists had to reassess the consequences of objectives which made it difficult to deliver piece-meal victories and tactics which tended to overshadow the objectives of the movement. By 1961, the movement's aim of unilateralism had been expanded into a policy of positive neutralism. At the same time, a section of the Committee of 100 raised the problem of whether unilateralism and positive neutralism were possible within the framework of the existing political and

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economic system. Michael Randle, the Committee Secretary, argued that in order to implement unilateralism there had to be profound political and social changes in the current political framework. He suggested that unilateralism involved a complete break with the military tradition of the country, that it required the disbanding of the vested interests in the arms program, and that it entailed a new concept of defense based on non-violent direct action.

After examining the broadened objectives being advanced in the movement, I shall discuss the old and new tactics used to advance the program and the reaction to both the broadened program and new tactics. I shall then offer an evaluation of the movement for the period 1958-64, suggesting reasons why the numerical strength of the movement, which was its major resource, waned.

Temporal Phases

Developments within the nuclear disarmament movement occurred against a background of Great Britain's changing defense policy. In signing the Bermuda agreement with the United States in 1957,8 Great Britain laid the groundwork for possessing an independent nuclear deterrent. Still in essential cooperation with and technical dependence on the United States, Great Britain began to develop Blue Streak, a liquid-fuelled missile comparable to

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8"Final Communiqué from the Bermuda Conference", Command Paper 126 (March, 1957).
the American Atlas missile. The project was abandoned in April, 1960, by the United States and, therefore, by Great Britain for economic and technological reasons. Blue Streak replaced by the Skybolt missile, but the latter similarly was abandoned for technological failures in the fall of 1962. In December, 1962, Great Britain and the United States signed the Nassau agreement under which the United States agreed to supply Great Britain with Polaris missiles, which, in the future, could be included in a NATO multilateral nuclear force. By a single clause in the agreement — "except where her Majesty's Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake" — Great Britain managed to retain (although this became a debatable point in the country) plans for an independent nuclear deterrent. But Great Britain was still in a position where the United States could terminate the British deterrent or continue its development at a price fixed by the Americans. The Conservative Government was committed to what it regarded as an independent nuclear deterrent, if for no other reason than its reduction of the total dependence upon the United States. This was still the situation in 1964 when this study closes.


10 Ibid., p. 5.

On the disarmament front, in July, 1963, Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union reached agreement on a treaty providing for a limited ban on nuclear testing. The treaty provided for the banning of all nuclear tests by the three powers in the atmosphere, in space, and underwater and for continued negotiations on the question of underground tests. All other nations were invited to sign the treaty, which contained the following escape clause: "Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country."

**Civil disobedience.** At the end of 1958, a sustained campaign in the practice of civil disobedience was begun in protest over the government's policy on nuclear warfare. A "squat-in" at the car park outside the Aldermaston nuclear plant, in protest over a refusal to be granted an interview with the Director of the plant, was followed by DACANW's demonstration at the Royal Air Force base at North Pickenham. None was arrested, but two weeks later, forty-six persons, including the

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14 *LT*, Sept. 23, 1958, p. 4.

Rev. Michael Scott and three other leaders of DACANW, were arrested during a similar demonstration. 16 The following day, three persons were arrested for a demonstration in Whitehall in support of the earlier demonstration. 17

At the end of 1959, another act of civil disobedience was announced by DACANW, this time at a missile base near Harrington, Northamptonshire. 18 Immediately, summonses were served on six members prior to the proposed action. Upon refusing to be bound over to keep the peace for twelve months, as required by the Peace Act of 1361, the six were sent to prison for two months. The announced missile base protests went on as planned, leading to the arrests of eighty-two persons. 19

DACANW continued to use its brand of tactics against the Ministry of Supply at the atomic weapons research establishment on Foulness Island 20 and at the Finningley Royal Air Force base; 21 each time demonstrators faced arrest who refused to enter into recognizance to be of good behaviour for a set period of time.

In September, 1960, plans of Russell and Scott for a civil

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16 LT, Dec. 22, 1958, p. 8; Dec. 30, 1958, p. 3.
21 Ibid., Aug. 1, 1960, p. 10.
disobedience campaign were made public. In seeking support for "non-violent resistance to nuclear war", Russell and Scott wanted responsibility to rest with a "Committee of 100", in turn supported by at least two thousand volunteer activists, which would act outside the confines of CND. The Executive of CND, after consideration of the appeal, reaffirmed its earlier policy—that the case for unilateral disarmament could be argued best by legal and democratic methods of persuasion and demonstration. There were some unpleasant personal clashes between Russell and Collins over the proposals, but these differences were sorted out with time and Russell's resignation from the presidency of CND.

At the inaugural meeting of the Committee of 100 in October, 1960, Russell was elected president and Michael Randle, previously chairman of DACANW, secretary. The Committee, a smaller, more tightly knit organization than CND, had in common with the latter a sponsorship of persons prominent in British life, although more heavily weighted with persons of anarchist thinking. Included among the sponsors were Lindsay Anderson, Robert Bolt, Alex Comfort, Christopher Logue, Hugh McDiarmid, George Melly, John Osborne,
Sir Herbert Read and Arnold Wesker. As had been the case with CND, professionals, students and housewives, those who had the available time to demonstrate, composed the hard core of the activists. In so far as presenting its case was concerned, the Committee as a whole would decide policy, which policy would be set into operation by a working committee.24

The Committee had postponed any formal demonstrations until after the Labour Party conference at Scarborough. In December, 1960, Russell announced its first demonstration of civil disobedience—a four hour sit-down outside the Ministry of Defense in London in February to coincide with the arrival of the American depot ship Proteus carrying Polaris missiles for Holy Loch. A call was made for at least two thousand volunteers to challenge directly the government's nuclear weapons policy. The Committee received pledges daily, and the total number of participants was over five thousand.25 In Scotland, demonstrators tried to impede the Polaris submarines by bodily obstructing the moorings;26 at Holy Loch, fifty sea demonstrators in canoes and boats attempted to board the Proteus, while one hundred land demonstrators sat in front of a pier on the Loch and blocked incoming traffic.27

24 Clark, Second Wind: The Story of the Campaign and the Committee of 100, op. cit., p. 8.


27 PN, May 26, 1961, p. 4. Earlier, fourteen persons were arrested for a sit-down in Edinburgh as part of a march to the Polaris base; see LT, May 13, 1961, p. 6; May 15, 1961, p. 8; May 16, 1961, p. 10.
The Polaris protests were followed by others of a similar nature. In the Committee's sit-down "Public Assembly" in Parliament Square, preceded by a rally of five thousand and a supporting march by CND of six hundred, over eight hundred people were arrested, including many British notables.\(^\text{28}\) In response to the Berlin crisis in the summer of 1961, the Committee sponsored a "No War Over Berlin" rally in Hyde Park; but for its contravention of Park regulations prohibiting the use of microphones, four executive members were fined.\(^\text{29}\) Undeterred by the refusal of the Ministry of Works to grant permission to hold a civil disobedience demonstration on the 17th of September, the Committee went ahead with its plans to conduct sit-downs in London and Holy Loch. Thirty-two members of the Committee, including Lord and Lady Russell, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment of up to one month for refusing to be bound over on a summons accusing them of inciting others to break the law and commit a probable breach of the peace at the proposed demonstration.\(^\text{30}\) At the demonstration itself, twelve thousand persons assembled in Trafalgar Square (the police had banned sit-ins in Parliament Square) and 645 arrests were made;\(^\text{31}\) on the same day, 351 persons were arrested at the Holy Loch pier, but foul weather stopped the proposed seaborne picketing of the *Proteus*.

\(^{28}\) *LT*, May 1, 1961, p. 6.


In December, 1961, six officers of the Committee were arrested under the Official Secrets Act\(^{32}\) for their intent to conduct civil disobedience demonstrations at NATO bases; they were subsequently brought to trial and convicted. At the demonstrations themselves, held at Wethersfield, Brize Norton and Ruislip, 860 of the more than six thousand participants were arrested.\(^{33}\)

The Committee still managed to draw out reasonable numbers for its demonstrations. In March, 1962, 1,172 persons were arrested during a sit-down in the five roadways leading into Parliament Square which had been called to "declare" Parliament in contempt.\(^{34}\) In the summer of 1962, it conducted civil disobedience demonstrations at the United States Air Force base at Greenham Common, near Newbury, and outside the American Embassy in London in protest against a space bomb test;\(^{35}\) in October, five hundred demonstrated and forty-four were arrested at Honenington Royal Air Force station, Suffolk.\(^{36}\)

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\(^{32}\) Official Secrets Act, 1911, 1 & 2 Geo. 5c. 28; Official Secrets Act, 1920, 10 & 11 Geo. 5c. 75; Official Secrets Act, 1939, 2 & 3 Geo. 6c. 121.


\(^{34}\) Ibid., Mar. 26, 1962, p. 6. Earlier in the year, the Committee had held a sit-in in Parliament demanding an end to hydrogen bomb tests, PN, Jan. 26, 1962, p. 10, and a sit-in at the Bristol tax office in protest against taxes being used for nuclear purposes, Ibid., Mar. 2, 1962, p. 11.


At the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the Committee held demonstrations outside the Russian and American embassies and a mass demonstration of several thousand in defiance of a ban by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works.

The tactics of civil disobedience were also used by the Committee on the Aldermaston Marches from 1961–64.

Other Activities. CND continued with activities similar to those discussed in Chapter VIII. In addition to the yearly Aldermaston March, changed in 1964 to an Easter March within London itself, CND took part in a campaign against the Polaris bases on the Clyde, held protests at the time of the Berlin crisis in 1961, the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, and on the occasion of the visit of the Greek King and Queen to Great Britain, and conducted supporting rallies for some of the Committee of 100's enterprises.

Presumably under the pressure of other work, but still expressing support of the movement's objectives, Collins resigned as chairman of CND in April 1964 and was replaced by Olive Gibbs. The theme "Is CND Dead?" was then played to its full by supporters and critics of the movement alike.


With the accession of Harold Wilson to the leadership of the Labour Party in 1963, CND recognized a more sympathetic Party leader, but the Party platform still did not measure up to CND expectations. Although the Labour Party had rejected the Conservative's version of the independent nuclear deterrent, all it had promised to do was reexamine the current nuclear weapons policy, renegotiate the Nassau agreement, strengthen the conventional forces, and integrate NATO's nuclear weapons under effective political control. Even with the Labour win at the polls in October 1964, CND viewed the possibility of real progress on disarmament against the background of a hard fight to alter the nuclear alliance system.

Aims and Motives

Both CND and the Committee of 100 had programs which emphasized certain positive policies for the British government to adopt. In addition to negative demands for the renunciation of nuclear weapons, the movement's program asked for a foreign policy based on positive neutralism, disengagement in Europe, peaceful coexistence with eastern bloc countries, a strengthened United Nations, efforts to effectuate a general, multilateral disarmament agreement, and a world-wide, united attack on hunger, poverty and disease. By 1963, the movement's opposition to weapons of mass destruction had been widened to include chemical and biological weapons, as well as nuclear ones.


The test-ban treaty signed in July, 1963, was greeted with mild enthusiasm by the movement, most activists viewing it as a first step toward peace but one that had to be backed up by further arms reductions, by the withdrawal of nuclear bases from foreign soil, by the beginning of disengagement in Europe, and by the establishment of nuclear-free zones. Policy within the various organizations of the movement shifted somewhat after the treaty had been signed, but not only as a result of the treaty.

By 1963, there was soul-searching within the movement as to the adequacy of its program. On the one hand, objectives were sought which were more readily obtainable than those in the stated program. It was thought that a program which could allow for tangible accomplishments in the foreseeable future, that is, one that had more limited demands, would have greater appeal to the mass of activists. Peace News called for an "objective which is closely related to the goal of unilateral disarmament but which is rather less messianic and utopian."42 The need was seen for the occasional success which would be more likely if there were specific aims, such as the abolition of civil defense programs, and abuses towards which the activists could direct their energies.

To this effect, CND began to emphasize short term objectives as well as long term aims. It placed emphasis on British withdrawal from NATO, on the renunciation of the British deterrent, and on the

42 PN, Jan. 18, 1963, p. 4.
active use of British influence to achieve limited disarmament agreements as steps toward general disarmament; but it also passed resolutions urging the government to remove strontium-90 from the milk supply, asking for the admission of China to the United Nations, and endorsing the Spies for Peace disclosures (to be discussed later). 43

In addition to a search for more limited objectives, there were some within the movement who wanted to tie the objective of unilateralism to a general attack on the existing political and economic framework of the society. Unilateral nuclear disarmament, Randle argued; "involves a complete break with the military and political tradition of the country...the millions of pounds spent since the war in the nuclear armaments industry have created a tremendous vested interest in the present policy, which is shared by almost everyone involved in the industry." 44 Unilateralism, he continued without being more specific, involved profound changes that were not possible within democratic capitalism.

But the overwhelming majority of activists, rightly or wrongly, regarded unilateralism as being attainable within the present system of government. To many in CND, it would only be possible with a Labour government in power; but in no case would it require a complete


44 *PN*, Mar. 10, 1961, p. 9. See also views of Alan Sillitoe on the revolutionary implications of nuclear disarmament, quoted in Nicolas Walter, "Because He Is a Man", *Anarchy*, No. 10 (December, 1961), 294-95.
transformation of the power structure. Even within the Committee of 100 there were elements that found much wrong with the present state of democratic capitalism in Great Britain, but who still saw the possibility of reform without rejecting the existing political parties or posing a direct threat to the state.

Both the CND and the Committee of 100 were for unilateralism; both were opposed to all weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological; both advocated withdrawal from nuclear alliances. But the Committee spoke with a militancy that CND did not:

We have found that we cannot oppose nuclear war without addressing ourselves to the causes of war; that we cannot advocate non-violence without considering all the causes of violence; that we cannot resist the "defense" policy of the government without coming up against the problem of the location of power in our society....Not all of us are agreed that this means we must reject the political parties and challenge the state in all its forms, but all of us are agreed that something is very seriously wrong with democracy in this country. Not all of us are agreed that we are a revolutionary movement, but we are all agreed that we want to see a revolution in the values of our society.

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The Committee's policy statement for 1964 illustrated the tendency to go beyond the objectives of nuclear disarmament:

45 Committee of 100, "1963 Policy Statement", (n.d.).
It is not enough to be merely anti-war. We are interested in the problems of building a new non-violent society.... We are, for example, actively involved in new thinking and action about education, housing, health, communication, transport and industrial relations. We have broken with party politics....We have ceased to believe in dependence upon representatives and officials.

Once again, it should be noted that the movement's heterogeneity made it difficult to expound the finer points of unilateralism. As was shown in Chapter VIII, there were those for whom the immorality of nuclear weapons made the issue one of simply renouncing their use, be it by Great Britain alone or as a contributory nation in NATO. Others wanted the movement to have as simple and united a policy as possible, with a fuller discussion of issues taking place in trade unions, party branches and Parliament. Still others were prepared for Great Britain to renounce the use of nuclear weapons while remaining within NATO and while seeking, although not immediately, the removal of American missile bases from British soil. The fine points of unilateralism differed even more than is suggested, but all arguments were joined by an overriding revulsion from nuclear weapons in spite of real differences in seeking a solution to the problem.

At times, the movement made demands that did not involve the alteration of some particular policy or that were not directed

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PW, July 3, 1964, p. 4.
primarily at the British government. At the time of the Berlin crisis in 1961, CND urged people in the country to speak out against Berlin's being made an excuse for war; but its solution was that the Western powers as a unit negotiate their position with the existing government in East Germany, that East Germany endorse the 1951 conditions of occupation in Berlin, that both sides consider the possibility of making Berlin a city of the United Nations, and that both sides consider the creation of a neutral, nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. Of the British government, CND asked that it make clear its refusal to go to war over Berlin and that it press for immediate negotiations on the disputed issues.

At the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, there was little that the movement could do in Great Britain. Collins wrote to U Thant; vigils and demonstrations were conducted outside Russian and American consulates; Russell wrote to Khruschev and Kennedy; but there was little to demand of the British government. In the Greek demonstrations in 1963, the objective was a protest against the confinement of Greek political prisoners by the Greek government; but there were no demands made on the British government itself.

**Tactics**

In the societies discussed in this thesis, disobedience of the rules of the political order occur infrequently; conformity to conventional and legal obligations is the normal pattern. The breaking of speed laws, the illegal performing of abortions, the failure to
pay income taxes, and the taking of narcotics are exceptions, even if fairly commonplace ones, to regularized law-abidingness; they are, as well, the activities of individuals done in private, concealed from the eyes of the authorities, and committed with the express intention of not being caught. Organized community or group disobedience, committed by people who are prepared to accept the consequences of their action, occurs very rarely. The infrequency with which civil disobedience occurs makes the groups which adopt and practice it all the more significant. In this section, I shall examine the reasons why DACANW and the Committee of 100 engaged in civil disobedience, their justifications for its use, the assumptions which underlied their practice, the forms which it took, and the reaction within the nuclear disarmament movement to its use. I shall then look at the tactics of legal persuasion used by CND for the period 1961-64; this will be followed by an examination of instances in which CND and the Committee of 100 together faced specific problems—the introduction of Polaris missiles, the Berlin crisis, the Cuban missile crisis, the Greek demonstrations, the role of independent political candidates, the role of industrial action, and the Aldermaston Marches.

Civil disobedience. As defined in Chapter I, civil disobedience is non-violent direct action taken in open defiance of a positive law for the purpose of opposing governmental policy. In the case of the nuclear disarmament movement, civil disobedience was of a primarily symbolic nature; the laws which were broken were not themselves objectionable, but they served as a convenient symbol of the Conservative government's nuclear policy. There were two exceptions to this symbolic
aspect of civil disobedience: one was the case of the Spies for Peace publication of classified information in direct violation of the Official Secrets Act; the other involved cases where there was direct physical obstruction of nuclear plants by sit-downs on the spot so as to stop or delay work at the plant or attempts to "reclaim" the plants for peaceful purposes.

There was unity within the nuclear disarmament movement on the objective of unilateralism; but from the very beginning there were differences on the most suitable tactics to be used in presenting the case. Collins, Priestley, Kingsley Martin and others would have agreed with Scott that demonstrations were needed to "bring home to our fellow countrymen the depth of our convictions." Where there was disagreement with respect to the tactics most likely to convince the public and the government of the correctness of their position. Scott and others were disillusioned with the parliamentary process and had lost confidence in parliamentary debate; Collins and others felt that persuasion by constitutional and democratic means could still make the nation and the nation's politicians aware of the consequences of nuclear warfare.

DACANW regarded its acts of civil disobedience---trespass on Air Ministry property, attempts to enter the missile base, and climbing the security fence if no entry was possible---as being illegal but morally necessary. It argued that such tactics made clear its refusal

47LT, Dec. 30, 1958, p. 3; see also Socialist Leader, June 3, 1959, p. 5.
to cooperate with what it considered to be an immoral government. In examining instances in which civil disobedience was used at nuclear weapons establishments, it can be seen that the activists had a multiplicity of objectives: first, to make the townspeople aware of the nature of operations at the establishment; secondly, to get the trade unions to declare "black" work on the site; thirdly, to get individual workers to leave the plant; fourthly, to raise the issue in the public consciousness; fifthly, to show the government the depth of feeling of a section of the population against its defense policy; and sixthly, to clarify and vitalize the problem by contributing to the creation of a conflict situation which might force the government into a confrontation on the defense issue. As one writer supporting such tactics pointed out, civil disobedience at this level tried to break down people's emotions, prejudices and thoughts on the disarmament question where argument and debate had failed:

"Until you can break open that complex you are not usually able to convince people. And you are not usually able to break open the complex by argument. It is usually some kind of action that is needed that will open people up, so they will listen to argument. The demonstration aimed to do this opening up."

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48 The best discussion of the objectives of local, civil disobedience problems is found in Pat Arrowsmith's novel Jericho (London: Cresset Press, 1965).

49 Alan Lovell, "Where Next for the Campaign?", Universities and Left Review, No.6 (Spring, 1959), 5.
DACANW used civil disobedience as an act of personal witness—to show people its willingness to suffer for its beliefs. In addition, it regarded civil disobedience as a tactical weapon capable of focusing attention on the policy of the government—at a time when there was little discussion of that policy in other quarters.

The Committee of 100 was organized to emulate the work of DACANW on a mass scale: "A new campaign is needed—larger and more radical than any that has previously taken place—to halt the landslide to catastrophe." The Russell-Scott call for volunteers cited the perils of the government's present policy, the manner in which facts on the dangers of nuclear weapons were being kept from the public, and the reasons why more had to be done in the way of mass action to awaken the government to the dangers of the present situation. Just as Great Britain was unable to wait for other powers to change their current policies on warfare of their own initiative, so too was the Committee unable to rely any longer on ordinary constitutional or lawful methods of persuasion:

Unfortunately, the opposition to sanity and mercy on the part of those who have power is such as to make persuasion by ordinary methods difficult and slow, with the result that, if such methods alone are employed, we shall probably all be done before our purpose can be achieved. Respect for law is important and only a very powerful conviction can justify actions which flout the law.

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50 Committee of 100 handbill, "A Call to Action", (n.d.).

Scott, in his letter appealing for volunteers, said, "It is my conviction that the effectiveness of our campaign is becoming dependent upon its endorsing a program of civil disobedience." 52

Those who volunteered to become activists in the campaign, while recruited from diverse sources, were joined in the belief that the public had to be made aware more fully and more dramatically than had been done so far of the dangers of nuclear war. Civil disobedience, whether a tactical weapon or part of a philosophy of life, was incorporated in a political program "to persuade Britain to abandon reliance upon the illusory protection of nuclear weapons." 53

It was a "shock tactic to rouse people to the danger", 54 a way of giving the public a jolt and of showing it that it was not impotent in matters of social change; it was "a method of challenging the image of loyalty, permanence and inevitability that surrounds all government programs and particularly its arms program." 55

It appears from the literature of the Committee of 100 that activists were pledged to take part in civil disobedience action for two kinds of reasons. Sir Herbert Read presented the personal case for civil disobedience based on support for the individual conscience against the authority of government: "My intention to commit an act

52 LT, Sept. 29, 1960, p. 12.
53 Scott and Russell, op. cit.
54 Quoting Michael Randle in PN, Mar. 10, 1961, p. 9.
55 Ibid.
of civil disobedience in opposition to official policy that contemplates atomic warfare is neither strategical nor political: it is instinctive."  

Russell presented the political case for civil disobedience. It was a tactic to try to change the government's policy, to use the necessary means of propaganda to counter the authorities (the politicians, the technical advisers, and the mass media of communication) who kept the truth about nuclear warfare from the public. He applauded the valuable work done by CND, but added: "...the press is becoming used to its doings and beginning to doubt their news value. It had therefore seemed to some of us necessary to supplement its campaign by such actions as the press is sure to report."  

Civil disobedience would show the depth of feeling against nuclear weapons and would cause "people to ask what had induced us to adopt such a course of action."  

The Committee appealed to people in Great Britain to act in their own behalf. In the declaration of intent posted on the Ministry of Defense's door during one of the sit-downs, the Committee compared Hitler's deeds with those of the East and West:

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We call upon people everywhere to rise up against this monstrous tyranny. We call upon the scientists to refuse to work on nuclear weapons. We call upon workers to black all work connected with them and to use their industrial strength in the struggle for life. We call upon people from all walks of life to take direct action to bring the production of nuclear weapons to a halt.

Where there were demonstrations at nuclear weapons plants, air bases and germ research centers, the objectives of the Committee of 100's activists were the same as the six reasons cited with respect to DACANW's activists. Where there were demonstrations in central London, the activists' prime concern was to create alternative means of publicity and to focus public attention on the question of nuclear disarmament.

In instituting a campaign of civil disobedience, the Committee of 100 assumed that the British government could not function indefinitely if faced with prolonged and widespread non-cooperation, which situation the Committee hoped to bring about, coupled with active opposition to its policies. It assumed that the government at that particular time did not reflect the will of the majority: the "electorate has had no opportunity of expressing itself on the subject." In addition, it assumed a certain minimum of popular


60 Quoting Scott, in Tribune, Jan. 16, 1959, p. 6.
control at all times such that what it regarded as being incorrect policies could be changed as soon as a majority of the citizens were persuaded of the need to do so. Perhaps above all, it assumed a measure of compassion on the part of the British government and a belief that it would not use repressive force to counter the acts of civil disobedience.

In so far as the precise forms of civil disobedience were concerned, the spectrum included: sit-downs on public thoroughfares, sit-downs in the path of nuclear plant equipment, attempted entrance into prohibited places, going limp or otherwise refusing to cooperate when asked to move, and refusing to enter into recognizance (being bound over) that the activist would not cause any further breaches of the peace. Usually the tactics of civil disobedience were accompanied by methods of legal persuasion: distribution of printed material; factory gate meetings; canvassing of villages; vigils; marches; and mass rallies. Those who agreed to participate received instruction leaflets and a legal briefing setting out the position of civil disobedience before the law. There were instructions

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61 See e.g., LT, Sept. 18, 1961, pp. 6, 10.

62 See, e.g., Ibid., Dec. 8, 1958, pp. 6, 10.

63 See, e.g., Ibid., July 1, 1963, p. 6.

64 See, e.g., Ibid., May 1, 1961, p. 6.

65 See, e.g., Ibid., Dec. 30, 1958, p. 3.
on non-violent discipline, binding over, non-cooperation, statements to the police, legal advice and welfare, as well as advice on how to deal with various situations which might arise.

When the nuclear disarmament movement first began, CND was not prepared to welcome civil disobedience as a formal tactic of the movement. While making allowances for membership in DACANW, CND stressed the need not to alienate Labour Party and trade union law. As the movement progressed, CND recognized that there was room for both conventional and law-breaking policies. But it still feared that an excessive use of civil disobedience would alienate public opinion, especially Labour Party opinion.

After the Russell-Scott call for the Committee of 100, Collins issued a statement to the Times in which he said "I think it is important that the campaign should not be associated with views that it does not represent, and particularly important that the Labour Party should not think the campaign stands for things which are the views of certain individuals." Soper, who himself had engaged in civil disobedience as a member of DACANW, elaborated upon the movement's relationship to the Labour Party, stressing the need for CND to express itself constitutionally in order to have its

66 CND Bulletin, March, 1960, n.p. The year before, the Executive had stated its disfavour towards civil disobedience, arguing "it is difficult to justify in a country with democratic rights". Ibid., March, 1959, n.p.

aims incorporated into the program of a political party. 68 Other members of CND found the split in tactics unfortunate at a time when the situation was particularly ripe for "converting not alienating public opinion,—which means, of course, primarily opinion inside the Labour Party." 69

It was argued further that since the means of persuasion being used by CND appeared to be having success, it was important that they be continued. Sanity contended that law breaking tactics were not warranted when persuasion by constitutional and democratic means were still possible. 70 At a different angle, Mervyn Jones warned that such tactics would merely gain publicity for themselves, but not for the arguments on unilateralism. 71

But those who supported the call for civil disobedience were far less concerned with influencing opinion exclusively or primarily within the Labour Party and far less convinced that the movement had, by September 1960, brought itself to a position of strength. They were more concerned with personal convictions, "that right must be done even if the established institutions of the state do stand.

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70 Sanity, February, 1961, p. 1; see also Donald Soper, "The Case Against Civil Disobedience", Tribune, Mar. 3, 1961, p. 3.

in the way — as they usually do. In addition, some of the activists agreed with Randle that where majority rule did not respect human rights, as he alleged was the case with the government's nuclear weapons program, such rule had to be disobeyed.

In any case, after the defeat of unilateralism at Blackpool, the nuclear disarmament movement had to decide upon appropriate tactics: how best to continue to make the argument about nuclear strategy vital and important; whether to continue to work within trade union branches and constituency Labour parties; what role to take with respect to independent political candidates; and whether to increase the use of civil disobedience demonstrations. The defeat at Blackpool appeared to affect the Committee of 100 less than it did CND; if anything, it strengthened the former's determination to resort to non-violent direct action utilizing civil disobedience. For there were many people in the Committee who, while believing that a Labour win was necessary for the realization of a policy of unilateralism, felt that the tactics of civil disobedience, by impressing the public, would assist the Party at the polls.

Legal persuasion. After the split within the nuclear disarmament movement over the use of civil disobedience, CND still used tactics similar to those discussed in Chapter VIII: cross-country

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73 PN, Apr. 21, 1961, p. 6.
marches; vigils; protest rallies and marches within London; and the like. In 1962, CND instituted "Operation Peanuts", a grass-roots campaign to draw in new supporters. Operating out of a Campaign Caravan, CND volunteer workers travelled over five thousand miles around Great Britain to acquaint local villages of the work of the organization and to present the case for unilateralism. Out of this campaign came the idea for Caravan Workshops, a mobile exhibition center to work with local CND groups in broadening the Campaign. In November 1963, CND began "Operation Fallex 63", aimed at making known the results of the NATO military exercises, Fallex 62, conducted in September 1962, and based on information published in the German newspaper Der Spiegel. Its purpose was to acquaint the British people with the government's arrangements for dispersal before a nuclear war.

**Joint activities of CND and the Committee of 100.** CND joined forces with the Committee of 100 over various issues which arose in the period 1961-64. The tactics used by both groups will be discussed below; in addition, I shall examine the different approaches used by the two groups with respect to independent political candidates and industrial action.

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(a) Polaris. At the time when Polaris missiles were being sited in Great Britain, the Committee of 100 demanded that the government renounce the Polaris base agreement made with the United States. It appealed to people in all walks of life to take action against Polaris: "We call upon local tradesmen to refuse to supply the base. We appeal to the Labour Movement to black all work connected with the base and to support the demonstrations..., We ask for an increasing wave of protest that can lead to the removal of US bases and to a Britain free of nuclear weapons." In its appeal for support, the Committee also attacked the government for its infringements on the right of free speech and the right of assembly by banning its meetings "solely because of the potential effectiveness of mass civil disobedience." It was important to protest now, the Committee warned, for it might be for the last time. In the middle of September, it held sit-downs in Central London in protest over both Polaris and the Berlin crisis.

The Committee's demonstration against the Polaris missiles should be examined alongside other forms of direct action used by the nuclear disarmament movement at the time. The government's decision to buy Polaris missiles and to provide anchorage for the carrying submarines in the Holy Loch off Scotland's Firth of Clyde was opposed even by Labour members who had been reticent about unilateralism in general.

78 Committee of 100 handbill, "No War over Berlin!", (n.d.).

79 Committee of 100 advertisement, "Banned", New Statesman, LXII (Sept. 8, 1961), 315.
Most had objected to the bases being placed so close to a large center of population. A protest campaign had been initiated in the autumn of 1960 by the joint efforts of regional CND groups, ministers of the Church of Scotland, and an active local trade union and labour movement. While sit-downs for unilateralism were conducted in London in February, 1961, ten thousand persons participated in a Polaris protest march in Scotland—the largest demonstration in the area since the 1926 General Strike. In addition to other marches in Glasgow and Dunoon in March, 1961, demonstrators at Holy Loch tried to impede the Polaris submarines, and block the pier.

(b) Berlin. CND and the Committee of 100 pooled their resources at the end of July 1961, when the Berlin crisis began and the danger of nuclear war appeared to many activists to be imminent. CND urged people in Great Britain to speak out against Berlin's being made an excuse for war; it set out to explain the facts of the current crisis to the public and to show why the West had to negotiate its rights in Berlin with the existing government of East Germany. War, CND argued, was not the solution to the crisis, but skilful and tough negotiations were. As to concrete action, CND activists were urged to write to the Prime Minister and the American and Russian ambassadors to Great

80 *LT*, Feb. 20, 1961, p. 16.

Britain "pressing for immediate negotiations to solve the Berlin crisis." 82

In addition, CND held protest marches and meetings. One week after a "March in Shame" of two thousand against Russian resumption of nuclear weapons testing, CND held a "No War Over Berlin" rally at which the current crisis was blamed on the policies which the major powers had been pursuing. Great Britain must make it clear, CND emphasized, that she refused to contemplate the possibility of nuclear war over Berlin and must demand immediate negotiations on the disputed issues. 83

Protest activity was intensified as the Berlin crisis continued and when the United States and the Soviet Union resumed nuclear testing. To commemorate Hiroshima Day, the Committee of 100 sponsored its "No War Over Berlin" rally in Hyde Park. While the rally was in progress, supplemented by sit-downs outside the American and Russian embassies, Russell, then eighty-nine and with failing voice, and three other Committee members were fined for contravention of park regulations prohibiting the use of microphones. 84


83 PN, Sept. 15, 1961, p. 10.

84 LT, Sept. 14, 1961, p. 6; see also ibid., Aug. 6, 1961, p. 4; Aug. 21, 1961, p. 5.
(c) Cuban missile crisis. The two protest organizations joined forces again when the Cuban missile crisis broke out in September 1962. Most of the activists were too bewildered by the swiftness of events and the sudden build-up of missile sites in Cuba to do anything about the crisis, assuming that something could have been done in Great Britain. Collins sent a letter to U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations, calling for "the dismantling of all nuclear and missile bases wherever they may be"; similar sentiments were expressed by the National Council of CND and in regional and local meetings. In addition, some local CND groups held vigils outside various Russian and American consulates in Great Britain.

Russell sent letters to Khruschev and Kennedy and the Committee of 100 held rallies and sit-downs outside the Russian and American Embassies demanding "Hands off Cuba—East and West." A mass demonstration over Cuba was called in defiance of a ban by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works; when held, the demonstration attracted several thousand people and 150 were arrested. Violence broke out between demonstrators and the police and arrests were made when demonstrators, who had been protesting at the Russian and Cuban

85 See the impressions of Ray Gosling, "No Such Zone", in Boulton, Voices from the Crowd: Against the H-Bomb, op. cit. pp. 146-50.

86 Quoted in Driver, op. cit., p. 144.

87 LT, Oct. 27, 1962, p. 5; see also ibid., Nov. 2, 1962, p. 12.

Embassies, surrounded the American Embassy; at the same time, eighty-six people were arrested in Bristol after a two mile protest march which ended in a sit-down and fifty-three in Manchester for obstructing footpaths and interfering with the police.  

(d) Greek political prisoners. Confrontation with the police marked another demonstration in 1963. In June, Collins warned that, contrary to government assurances to the Greek government, CND would stage a protest against the confinement of political prisoners during the state visit of the Greek King and Queen, since many of these prisoners had expressed sympathy with the cause of nuclear disarmament. The following month, CND conducted a quiet march to honor the memory of a member of the Greek parliament, G. Lamrakis, who had been active in the disarmament movement before his death. Violence broke out two days later when police battled with members of the Committee of 100 (whose composition was becoming more anarchistic)

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90 LT, June 26, 1963, p. 9. Earlier, Russell had endorsed the cause of Greek political prisoners. G. Lambrakis, a left-wing Greek MP who had been assassinated, had, previous to his death, established some links between the nuclear disarmament movements of both countries. For background of Greek protests, see Mark Arnold-Foster, "CND Survey Greek Campaign," The Observer, July 14, 1963, p. 4.


who, in protesting against the confinement of political prisoners in Greece, had broken through police barricades in an attempt to reach the palace where the Greek King and Queen were dining. Ninety-four persons were arrested for their part in the demonstration and subsequent sit-down in the road. Another protest which involved booing of members of the British royal family resulted in another scuffle between demonstrators and the police, and further arrests were made.

Many of those arrested argued that the physical outbreaks against the police were precipitated by various factors: the London police ban on demonstrations and leaflet distribution in key areas of the city; the Minister of Works' ban on the use of Trafalgar Square for a meeting prior to the arrival of the Greek King and Queen; the notification by police that the wearing of black sashes would constitute the wearing of a uniform; the rough handling of demonstrators at the actual demonstration. With other channels of agitation closed or curtailed, some demonstrators felt themselves forced into the use of violence, if only for the moment.

(e) Independent political candidates. The nuclear disarmament


movement argued its position on unilateralism without the support of a major political party. Unsuccessful in incorporating its views into the program of the Labour Party, it had no hopes of seeing its views become policy upon the latter's election. It therefore seemed plausible to argue that one of the most effective ways to get the message of the movement across to the electorate was to set up independent political candidates to run on platforms built around the unilateralist question; if elected, these candidates could represent the interests of the movement within Parliament.

The dilemma of supporting such candidates was examined in Chapter VIII. In 1962, Pembroke supporters of CND were rebuked by the CND Executive for their move to promote a parliamentary candidate in defiance of a national resolution against such action. While critics of the Executive agreed on the need for closer cooperation with and action in the Labour Party, they argued that independent CND action in the party political sphere, such as the running of CND candidates where none of the candidates had a suitable position on unilateralism, could present a direct challenge to the right-wing of the Labour Party and a clear choice to the electorate. Peace News also argued that by operating solely within the Labour Party, the movement was fighting on grounds favorable to the right-wing of the Party.

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97 _PN_, Feb. 9, 1962, p. 4.
The Labour Advisory Committee of CND, in stating its position against independent candidates, argued that CND had to win support from all areas of opinion by not supporting any particular party or any particular parliamentary candidate; but, it continued, CND supporters who were politically active must try to win over their respective political parties and insure the selection of candidates supporting their aims. The 1962 Annual Conference of CND supported the Labour Advisory Committee's views, stressing the need to remain a pressure group which would ascertain candidates' views but which would officially support none.

There was a significant element within the Committee of 100 which shared the earlier attitude of DACANW towards pronouncing on the suitability of individual parliamentary candidates. But since the Committee was preoccupied with other forms of direct action, and, in addition, contained a core of anarchists who were against running candidates of any political persuasion, the problem of laying down one line for all of the Committee to follow was never a serious one.

(f) Direct industrial action. DACANW and later the Committee of 100 emphasized in their campaign literature the importance of direct industrial action, that is, the downing of tools by the work force for political reasons, in the fight for unilateralism. Pat Arrowsmith, one of the founders of DACANW and the Committee of 100,


argued:

Short of wholesale resistance by the mass of people in this country—that is the industrial workers: the people with real power who can if they wish halt the economy of the country—it is unlikely we shall win this campaign, however many times we may walk to and from Aldermaston and sit down in strategic places singing "We shall not be moved".

But there had been relatively little direct industrial action in support of the movement during the period 1958–64. In October 1961, the Committee of 100 had sent a circular letter to sympathetic trade unions, expressing the hope that the latter would not handle any nuclear material on the docks or in the factories. But in July 1962, the National Council of CND, emphasizing the need to use normal and legal means of persuasion and fearing industrial anarchy, opposed strike action taken in sympathy with its objectives. This action caused Arrowsmith and Scott to resign from CND on the grounds that the National Council had paid no regard to Conference policy which had supported "token and direct industrial action, 


including the blacklisting of work, on the issue of disarmament". When Conference met again, the Executive was criticized for failing to follow up the previous resolution on industrial action.

Aldermaston Marches. Both forms of direct action—civil disobedience and lawful persuasion—were used during the 1961 Aldermaston March. In Chapter VIII, the role played by CND and legal persuasion on the March discussed. After the March had been concluded in Trafalgar Square, a break-away group, not officially organized by either CND or the Committee of 100, conducted a sit-down near the American Embassy, which resulted in the arrest of thirty-one persons.

The fifth Aldermaston March held in 1962 was the largest one to date; messages from the many other marches being held simultaneously throughout the world emphasized how important a protest ritual Aldermaston had become. The line of twenty thousand which marched in silence past the American Embassy in protest against the resumption of nuclear tests swelled to four times that size as crowds massed in and around Trafalgar Square. Collins said:


This is a magnificent response, a terrific concourse of people all determined to persuade Messrs. MacMillan, Gaitskell, and Grimond that they are not leading the British people where they ought to go. They always think the Aldermaston demonstration just a flash in the pan. I hope this year they will recognize it as a flash they cannot resist.

In the aftermath of the Square gathering, 350 persons, of a crowd of fifteen hundred bearing letters of protest, were arrested in a sit-down outside the American Embassy and fined for wilfully disregarding directions of the police by sitting in the roadway. Some of the demonstrators alleged that the sit-down was a spontaneous reply to the action of the police in trying to keep them from the Embassy.

By the time of the 1963 Aldermaston March, the activities over the Easter week-end had become not only a British tradition and a protest ritual but also internationally significant. For Peggy Duff, organizing secretary of CND, Aldermaston had come to symbolize "the revolt of ordinary people against the mad policies of governments." Ten thousand set off from Aldermaston and the peak of

109 Quoted in PN, Feb. 22, 1963, p. 3.
forty thousand, a sharp drop from the 1962 March, was reached at the Hyde Park rally, where in addition to the usual speeches, hundreds of tins of dried milk were collected to be shipped to the starving children of Algeria; this was CND's way of showing a better use to which the money spent on nuclear armaments could be put. 110

But the drama of the 1963 March was outside the moving columns of marchers. Four thousand copies of a document, "Danger! Official Secret RSG-6", which gave details of the system of government under which the country would operate in the event of a nuclear attack, were published by an anonymous Spies for Peace group and distributed to the marchers by the Committee of 100. It gave the location of the "regional seats of government" which would coordinate government activities after the nuclear attack and invited the Aldermaston marchers to detour the March to one such area in south England. 111 Four to five hundred of the marchers, heeding the advice of the document, headed for one of the "secret headquarters", but no arrests were made by the police even though defense officials, admitting that some of the material in the document was classified as secret, had announced


111 Committee of 100 reprint, "Danger! Official Secret RSG-6", (n.d.).
that the publication constituted a breach of the Official Secrets Act.\textsuperscript{112}

CND officials pleaded ignorance of the leaflets and condemned the Spies' outbreak as not being an official part of the March. For this criticism of the document, officials were in turn criticized by some members of CND who felt that even if the authors had broken the law, the revelations of the document outweighed in importance the tactics which they used.\textsuperscript{113}

Later, at its Annual Conference, CND officially endorsed the disclosures made by the Spies for Peace out of sympathy with the group's objectives if not its tactics.\textsuperscript{114}

Members of the Committee of 100 had warned, even before the Spies for Peace episode, that the Committee (to which it was believed that the Spies were affiliated) had been making tactical mistakes and miscalculations. Nicolas Walter, one of the original supporters of the Committee, assessed that the decentralization of the Committee in 1962 "turned out to be the beginning of a ritualized disintegration."\textsuperscript{115} As supporters withdrew from the Committee, a new kind of organization had grown out of the old;

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{LT}, Apr. 15, 1963, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{PN}, Apr. 19, 1963, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Sanity}, November 1963, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{115} Walter, \textit{Nonviolent Resistance: Men Against War}, op. cit., p. 32.
it was one more firmly committed to anarchist principles.

It was the new group of the Committee of 100 which felt after the Spies for Peace episode that:

"The nuclear disarmament movement in Britain has gone over to the offensive. The days of protest are over. We are beginning to see the basis of a genuine revolutionary mass movement, using tactics and methods appropriate to our society. The movement must encompass all those who are opposed to the present authoritarian and bureaucratic set-up." 116

On the 1963 March itself, more than seventy people were arrested when thousands of marchers on the final stages fought with police. 117 Under the leadership of the Federation of London Anarchists and the Committee of 100, thousands of young people broke through police ranks in order to take another route to the Hyde Park rally.

The 1964 Easter March replaced the traditional Aldermaston March after the CND leadership assessed that the March had outlived its purpose. The movement could still record that fifteen to thirty thousand people packed Trafalgar Square; 118 but after the traditional four days rallies, the Easter March was something of an anti-climax. National and international speakers spoke of


the importance of the movement, the importance of opposing the establishment, the need for unilateralism, and the dangers of accidental war, but the spirit of the earlier marathons was missing.

The Committee of 100, fearing a retrogression in activities at Easter when people were expecting the traditional Aldermaston protest, held a civil disobedience demonstration at the United States Air Force base at Ruislip. After a three-day march to Ruislip of one thousand people, three hundred people, undeterred by the earlier arrests of four Committee members under the Official Secrets Act, sat-down outside the base and were arrested. 119

Reaction

Public reaction. During this phase of the nuclear disarmament movement, adverse public reaction was directed primarily against the tactics of civil disobedience used by the Committee of 100; there was a supplementary reaction of disapproval towards the broadening of protest activities into fields less directly concerned with disarmament. Whether the Committee of 100 achieved publicity for its objective of unilateralism is debatable, but that it achieved publicity for its activities is certain. Russell's desire to have the press report the activities of the movement and to dramatize the urgency of its action was assured when police and reporters turned out in record strength to cover the novel.
often star-studded demonstrations. Sit-downs on the pavement and grass in front of government buildings, the arrest of the eighty-nine year old Russell, and the number of theatrical personalities who supplemented the hard core of pacifists, anarchists and radicals of the Committee made the press more anxious to report the demonstrations.

However, one gets the impression from analyzing the newspaper coverage and from personal contact with former activists that the public was less concerned with discussing the demands of the movement than with discussing its methods. Whereas in the initial phase of the movement, the public appeared prepared to debate the consequences of the new weapons of warfare, now it was worried by the consequences of civil disobedience. Arguments were raised in the press against civil disobedience as a tactic: that there was no place for it in a democracy; that it involved disrespect of the elected leaders; that it involved a minority forcing its views on a majority; that it relied upon improper channels of agitation; that the breaking of laws such as those which pertained to traffic had nothing to do with disarmament; and that it would lead to anarchy and disorder.

The Committee of 100, as DACANW before it, was angered that discussions in the press, the labour movement and the Parliament were centered almost exclusively around the procedural issues of the demonstrations. At the time of the first DACANW demonstrations, supporters attacked the severity and archaic quality of the 1361 Peace Act and its repugnance to principles of civil liberty and fair
play; very few critics of the authorities' action in having the six DACANW members sent to jail were concerned with the reasons underlying the activists' action, and their purposeful breach of the law.

In 1961, when the National Council for Civil Liberties issued its report, *Public Order and the Police*, it also entered the debate on grounds of procedure. Citing thirty-one allegations of police violence arising from a sit-down in Trafalgar Square, the Council listed six issues on which the public was entitled to clarification, all involving questions of civil liberties. Even supporters of the government's foreign policy queried the handling of particular cases. In the incident involving Russell's arrest, supporters questioned the way in which Butler tried to evade responsibility for Russell's imprisonment, the naivete of believing that threatened or real imprisonment would deter the Committee of 100 and its supporters, and the stupidity of making a martyr of Russell and other celebrities and thereby giving sympathetic

120 These were: "1. The almost unprecedented refusal by the Ministry of Works of permission to book the Square on September 17. 2. The invoking of the Public Order Act, 1936, to prohibit all processions for 24 hours. 3. The announcement to the public of an extension of orders apparently prohibiting processions and assemblies when the police had no such powers. 4. The allegations of violence and misconduct made by members of the public against the police. 5. The remarkable statements by police officers on oath when stating that they had advised arrested persons of the Commissioner's directions under the Public Order Act when this appeared to onlookers to be almost impossible. 6. The refusal to permit contact with legal advisers or family to those under arrest." National Council for Civil Liberties, *Public Order and the Police: A Report on the Events in Trafalgar Square, Sunday 17th to Monday 18th, September, 1961* (London: Fish & Cook, n.d.), p. 15.
publicity to the cause of nuclear disarmament. What the authorities should have done, one of the government's supporter-turned-critic said, was nothing: "Eventually they [the Committee of 100] would have become tired of sitting down and gone away. As it is, a bad law has been used in a silly way to produce the opposite effect to what was intended." 121

Some anarchists argued that questions of civil liberties were not relevant to the movement as the protests were a matter of conscience. Judith Hart, MP, put the view in opposition to this. She viewed the movement as part of the democratic process, as part of the way of promoting change and of enlarging areas of national decision-making, and as a method of making the government responsive and sensitive to public opinion. Since the movement had in it people who were caught up in most of the other important movements for reform, it was important to counter infringements of civil liberties in one movement in order to secure the other movements. 122

As the big names dropped out of the ranks of the activists and as the demonstrations became rowdier if still basic non-violent, public reaction appeared to become more critical of the militant section of the movement. As a case in point, the tactics of the Spies


122 Hart, op. cit., pp. 91-5.
See also pamphlet "Free Speech? The Arrowsmith Case", foreword by Frank Allaun (Leeds: M. Ringsaleben, 1963) on the arrest of Arrowsmith on grounds of obstructing traffic while addressing a meeting of Liverpool dockers.
for Peace and the demonstrations concerned with distributing the Spies' document annoyed more people than did the revelations of "Danger! Official Secret RSG-6". The anarchistic element within the movement appeared to frighten more people than the arrangements to be made after the nuclear holocaust. The *Times* spoke of:

> those who are resolved to use this urgent flood of protest to serve their political aims—aims which in many cases would most effectively be achieved by a breakdown of law and order in Britain...The violent clashes with the police in London, attempts to encourage contempt for the Official Secrets Act; and the appearance of unilateralist emblems at almost any manifestation of civil disobedience on whatever pretext, are matters of the most serious moment. 123

Even the *Tribune* had "little interest in the content of the notorious 'Spies for Peace' pamphlet which had done the nuclear disarmament movement a great deal of harm." 124 Anarchy, in support of the document and its publication, replied for the Committee of 100:

The reaction of the press ("right", "left", and "centre") showed how futile the traditional channels of protest have become. When the CND leadership speaks of "marching into politics", is this the kind of politics they mean? With the publication of the RSG-6 document, a real challenge suddenly confronted people. Yet from the *Times* to *Tribune*, from the *Daily Mail* to the *Daily Worker*, from the "leaders" in Westminster to the "leaders" in Carthusian Street, traditional politics spoke with but a single voice: "The State is sacred. Down with the Spies". 125


125 "The Spies for Peace Story, op. cit., p. 214."
At the time of the Greek demonstrations, criticism arose over the relevance of the protests to the objectives of the nuclear disarmament movement. The demonstrations, as well as several others which had preceded it, were less disciplined, less concerned with strict non-violence, and had objectives which related less specifically to nuclear disarmament than had earlier ones. The Observer warned: "By becoming indiscriminate in their indignation, they are also becoming less effective—confirming the belief of those who dismiss protest marches as the symptom of a general social discontent in search of an outlet and a political pretext."  

Similarly, in September 1963, when six leaders of CND announced that they would not stand for election on the National Council, one of them, Jacquetta Hawkes, expressed her disapproval of too many diverse organizations coming under CND's "umbrella policy."

As for reaction to the more traditional mode of protest, the public appeared uncritical but unmoved. By 1961, the Aldermaston March had almost become a national institution. The Times called it "an annual spring festival which excites enthusiasm and derision in equal measure." But it appears that the March excited the public less once the tactics of civil disobedience were introduced as accompanying methods of agitation. The Marches' very acceptance by the public, in a sense its new-found respectability and conventionality,  

126 "Dissent and Society", The Observer, July 14, 1963, p. 10. 


detracted for some activists from its earlier importance in the movement. It was the reaction against this respectability that had made the Committee of 100 base its activities on a direct challenge to the government in what it hoped would be "a form that cannot be ignored by the authorities". While the public, as well as the government, did not ignore the form, they both succeeded in ignoring the demands associated with civil disobedience.

*Labour Party.* In this phase of the movement, the Labour Party took a harder line toward the movement, its role as a kind of pressure or ginger group and its objectives of an alternative foreign policy. With respect to the CND, with which the Party was more concerned than with the Committee of 100, the Executive tightened Party discipline in an effort to keep members from supporting candidates whom CND supporters put forward; membership or support of an organization which put forth its own candidates was made incompatible with membership of the Labour Party.

Relations between the Party and CND erupted after Gaitskell was heckled at a Glasgow May Day rally. To the jeerers, Gaitskell shouted the suggestion that nuclear disarmers who felt so strongly about their case should conduct demonstrations in the Soviet Union or hold their peace and concentrate more on helping the Labour Party

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129 Committee of 100 handbill, "A Call to Action", *op. cit.*

Gaitskell further alleged that the demonstrations against him had been organized by the Communist Party with the support of CND; these allegations were supported by Len Williams, General Secretary of the Labour Party, who, warning that some members of CND were bringing nearer the day when Labour would have to consider proscribing the movement, argued that CND obviously had been infiltrated by "anti-democratic elements." In addition, the Labour Party announced plans to conduct an investigation into Communist influence within CND; the results of the investigation, if it was carried out, were never reported.

This was the first time that a Labour spokesman had accused the Communists of having organized hostility to Labour through the CND. Various persons within the nuclear disarmament movement estimated the Communists' activities in the movement differently: some thought that they were out to wreck the movement for the benefit of the Soviet Union; others that they were hard workers who could be counted on to put across the unilateralist program; others that

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131 For Western peace demonstration in Moscow, see Driver, op. cit, pp. 134-40. Gaitskell's remarks appear in LT, Mar. 7, 1962, p. 5. George Brown was shouted down in like manner in a Hyde Park May Day rally. For other instances of heckling directed at Gaitskell, see ibid., May 19, 1962, p. 6; July 18, 1962, p. 7. In the May Day speech, Gaitskell said of his hecklers: "We know that when it comes to the ballot and voting in elections these people are not worth a tinker's curse. They are peanuts". Ibid., May 7, 1962, p. 5. The remarks prompted CND to call its grass-roots campaign "Operation Peanuts".

they were a nuisance whose motives were suspect but not a genuine threat: still others that they had a right to be in the movement so long as they did not attempt either to direct or to control it. 133

As for the Communist Party itself, it had welcomed the nuclear disarmament movement, for varied reasons and motives, but had never been in complete agreement with the movement's objective of unilateralism, preferring as it did the objective of multilateralism. Initially cautious towards the CND, it had thrown itself belatedly behind the Aldermaston Marches and other activities, again for varied reasons, after the appeal of the movement had proved successful. 134

Following on its tough line, the Labour Party waved a threat of expulsion over the heads of Lords Russell and Chorley and Canon Collins for their sponsorship of the Moscow World Congress for General Disarmament and Peace, but the National Executive Committee refused to approve a sub-committee's ultimatum on expulsion. 135

On policy issues, the Party continued with the Blackpool resolutions demanding an energetic Party campaign on the issue of

133 For role of Communist Party in CND, see PN, Jan. 11, 1963, pp. 6-7, Jan. 18, 1963, pp. 6-7, June 25, 1963, p. 3.

134 See issues of Daily Worker, 1957-64; also, Driver, op.cit., pp. 134-36.

censuring nuclear weapons testing by any country. By 1964, with a change in Party leadership, it offered a program which rejected the idea of an independent nuclear deterrent but still supported joint nuclear commitments with western bloc countries.

Government. In response to the tactics of civil disobedience, the sole area of response by the government to the movement, the government tried to prevent demonstrations from occurring in some instances as well as taking legal action once the demonstrations had taken place. When it found that placing a ban on the Committee's activities, as it did in the Berlin protests planned for central London, only increased the number of persons prepared to demonstrate in defence of the right of assembly, it sought to counter the demonstrations in other ways. In response to the demonstrations planned for the NATO bases in December 1961, the government announced the extensive physical precautions it was taking; at Wethersfield alone, the demonstrators were to be greeted by five thousand Royal Air Force Regiment men, 260 Royal Air Force and Womens Royal Air Force police, 850 civil police and special branch officers, seventy-five Air Ministry constabulary men, twelve Royal Air Force police Alsatians, two Belvedere helicopters and six and one-half miles of barbed wire fencing. 137

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Where arrests were made, they were usually on charges of wilful obstruction of police officers in their line of duty, trespassing on government property, obstructing traffic, refusing to be bound over on a summons accusing them of inciting others to break the law and commit a probable breach of the peace, disorderly conduct, wilful disregard of the direction of the Commissioner of Police, disturbing the peace, and a combination of the above charges.

One of the series of arrests turned into a major trial, designed to cripple the Committee. In December 1961, Special Branch officers

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\[141\]
See, e.g., ibid., Dec. 12, 1959, p. 6; Sept. 13, 1961, p. 5.

\[142\]
See, e.g., ibid., Sept. 18, 1961, pp. 6, 10.

\[143\]
See, e.g., ibid., also Mar. 26, 1962, p. 6.

\[144\]
See, e.g., ibid., Dec. 12, 1959, p. 6.
with warrants under the Official Secrets Act raided the London Office of the Committee of 100 and the homes of six of its members in search of documents relating to proposed demonstrations at NATO bases. Advance notice of the demonstrations, which were to be symbolic acts to block and reclaim the bases for civilian use, had been given already to the police, but under government regulations the airfields were prohibited places within the meaning of the Official Secrets Act. Five officials of the Committee—Terry Chandler, Ian Dixon, Trevor Hatton, Michael Randle, and Pat Pottle (Helen Allegranza later became the sixth)—were charged under the Act with having conspired together to incite others to commit a breach of Section 1 of the Act for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the state.

The six booked came to trial following the demonstration at Wethersfield and entered a plea of not guilty. Opening the case for the Crown, the Attorney-General stressed that the trial was not a political prosecution of people suspected of political offenses, but of persons whose conduct led to a criminal offense. The accused, as members of the Committee of 100, could legally hold and advocate their views on nuclear disarmament, but they must not attract attention to those views by criminal activity. Reading from documents of the Committee on the uses to which civil disobedience could be put, the Attorney-General warned of the seriousness of action geared

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to interfere with or immobilize part of the country's defenses. He argued that the immobilization of an airfield in a state of instant readiness was quite serious and clearly prejudicial to the safety and interests of the state.

The defence, for its part, argued that it was not in the interests of the state to have aircraft armed with nuclear weapons on British soil. The defence's efforts to establish the pertinency of the accused's views on nuclear disarmament (for example, on the effect of nuclear explosions, the possibility of an error in radar identification, the effect of fall-out, and the like) were cut short by the judge's ruling out evidence on the nature of Great Britain's nuclear weapons arrangements. The judge stated that Randle's view of the nature of nuclear war was immaterial, as was any expert evidence on whether the nuclear deterrent was beneficial or prejudicial to the state. The jury was to consider not personal views on the weapons question but whether Great Britain's defences would have been weakened if planes were unable to take off should the demonstrations have succeeded. 147

The jury brought in a verdict of guilty, adding a rider recommending leniency. The six were sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, reduced to twelve for Allegranza, after having refused to give an undertaking that they would not commit any further criminal offences. Upon appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal, the defence argued that

the accused, in trying to bring home to the public the danger of nuclear war, disputed whether entering the airfield was done for any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the state; in fact, having acted on certain facts, their purpose was to benefit the state. The defence objected to the judge's having disallowed the introduction of evidence called to support their intentions. The Court of Criminal Appeal held that it was the prerogative of the Crown to determine what was prejudicial to the state; evidence challenging that power was correctly excluded by the trial judge.

Upon appeal to the House of Lords, the appellants again argued that the trial judge had wrongly excluded certain questions in cross-examination and had disallowed evidence connected with the use of the word "purpose". They said that evidence relating to the danger of accidental explosion, accident due to human error, accident due to the failure of the air warning system, the effect of an atom bomb explosion, and the fact that the existence of such bases was in fact prejudicial because they attracted an immediate hostile attack by the enemy should have been admissible. But the Lords dismissed the appeal on the grounds that matters relating to prohibited places, which in turn were related to the armed forces, were within the exclusive discretion of the Crown and not a subject of legal remedy through the courts: "Anyone was entitled, in or out of Parliament, to urge that policy regarding the armed forces should be changed;"

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*Regina v. Chandler and Others, C.C.A., 2 All E.R. 314 (1962).*
but until it was changed, no one was entitled to challenge it in court."\(^{149}\)

When a similar possible breach of the Official Secrets Act arose, in the case of the Spies for Peace document, the government confiscated some of the documents, searched houses, warned against the reproduction of details of the document, but no official action against the anonymous authors, even those who subsequently named themselves when reprinting the document, was ever taken.\(^{150}\) In Parliament, efforts were made to gloss over the entire affair.\(^{151}\)

As was mentioned in Chapter VIII many of those who came to the defense of the activists did so on procedural not substantive issues. Anthony Greenwood, M.P., to cite one example, expressing his disapproval of both British foreign policy and civil disobedience, criticized the Minister of Works for prohibiting the use of Trafalgar Square and pointed out that many had come to the demonstration simply to protest against the infringement of political freedom by the Government. He summed up the principal queries of members of the Committee:

\(^{149}\) Quoting Lord Reid, at 146, in Chandler and Others v. Director of Public Prosecutions, H.L., 3 All E.R. 142 (1962).

\(^{150}\) LT, June 1, 1963, p. 8.

\(^{151}\) See PD(C), 646: 23–32 (Apr. 23, 1963).
In arguments with supporters of direct action and civil disobedience I have consistently urged that those who share my views on the bomb should seek to win support for those views through (a) public meetings, (b) Parliament, and (c) the political parties. In reply to my first argument they can now adduce Mr. Butler's recent behavior. In reply to (b) they point out that, in spite of the Berlin situation, the resumption of tests, the fighting in Katanga, and the crises in the United Nations, Parliament has been in recess. And in reply to (c) they ask me, since the Scarborough Conference of the Labour Party, what is the use of seeking to get their policy accepted by a political party if leaders can side-step decisions with which they disagree?

Similarly, where members came to the support of the movement in Parliament, it was either to criticize the government on procedural grounds or to criticize local police for ill-treatment of some of the demonstrators.  

Evaluation

To return to Smelser's criteria of a successful norm-oriented movement— one that "leaves an observable mark—a norm or an organization— in its wake"— then the nuclear disarmament movement failed on this score. While British defense policy had been altered in the

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152 LT, Sept. 22, 1961, p. 15. Similarly on procedural grounds, five Labour MPs demanded a judicial enquiry into the September 17th events.


154 Smelser, op. cit., p. 111.
years following the inception of the nuclear disarmament movement, changes appeared to be in response to technological innovation. The cancellation of Blue Streak and Skybolt by the Conservative government was not a result of the movement's propaganda. Even the split over the independent nuclear deterrent, with Labour under Wilson prepared to abandon it, could not be chalked up as a win for the movement. Through the time of the 1964 General Election, Labour policy was derived from the 1961 Conference's Policy for Peace statement: for if Labour in 1964 was prepared to abandon an independent strategic striking force, it still accepted the basic tenets of a policy based on nuclear strategy.

Unilateralism as an objective failed. Although the techniques of the movement had been copied in more than thirty countries by the time at which this study closes, nowhere had unilateralism been adopted as a foreign policy. The movement had failed to persuade the industrial work force to boycott work on nuclear weapons, or to convince a major political party to adopt and keep its program on unilateralism, or to convince the authorities that its demands had to be met lest there be mass social dislocation in the society.

Nonetheless it did score certain positive achievements. It rallied the converted, organized like-minded persons and let both the British public and the British government know how a minority felt on the question of nuclear warfare. It took up an unpopular position and threw unpopular ideas into the marketplace. It brought a vitality to the British political scene and threw open for discussion the entire question of western foreign policy. It awakened a slumbering
public, or one just beginning to rise from its sleep. It brought
to life the possibility of *ad hoc* political action by activists
operating outside of the party political sphere. Foot gave it
its fair due:

Aldermaston will be, whatever else it is, a
sign that the bomb testers, the great deterrent
theorists, the orthodox spokesmen about defence are *not* to be allowed to be the only voices
speaking for Britain....It has made argument
about nuclear weapons a central feature of
political controversy. Even when it has failed
to establish any hold on the levers of political
power, it might at a critical moment in inter-
national affairs help to determine the climate
of opinion and tip the balance in favour of
sanity. 155

In addition, the movement touched upon problems which might
otherwise have gone unnoticed. Questions of civil liberties which
had implications beyond the specific movement were broached. 156
Questions of police brutality, bans on public meetings, ramifications
of the Official Secret Acts, and other like cases once raised had
relevance to other political movements as well. It could be argued
that the framework of politics and economics that shaped policy with
respect to disarmament, shaped policy also with respect to civil
liberties, aid to underdeveloped countries, poverty, social welfare,
and revolutions in Asia. If certain principles could be established

Italics in the original.
in any one of these fields then one might be establishing principles, even if indirectly, in other fields.

The Aldermaston March showed the strength of the nuclear disarmament forces, made an appeal to a larger public than the already converted, and gave an identity to the movement. But it also accustomed people to working and acting together; it gave them the confidence to express in public what they had previously held in private; it allowed them to find kindred spirits. Peace News said:

Anything which tends to break down centralized power and give more power to individuals and groups of ordinary people, anything which works against a mass and stereotyped culture and which makes people more personally creative, discriminating and critical, anything which destroys authoritarianism and creates self-reliance, and anything which breaks down fear and helplessness and creates a sense of confidence and strength, also tends to widen the area of resistance and to work against power politics and nuclear weapons. Campaigners can thus adopt attitudes and take action relevant to the campaign in almost all areas of life. 157

The above achievement was on the personal side. On the political side, the movement was handicapped by the nature of its program. The kind of changes which it sought to promote in the society had definite drawbacks. First of all, the movement offered few tangible benefits to the British people; this is not meant to imply that the changes it sought were any the less important. Secondly, the movement

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*PN*, Apr. 20, 1962, p. 4. See also Brian Richardson, "What Has It Got to do with the Bomb", *Anarchy*, No. 26 (April, 1963), 100-03.
failed to have a hierarchy of goals from the very beginning, some of which might have been obtainable immediately. It had ultimate general objectives but too few short range objectives. Unilateralism failed to appeal as a political issue to enough people; that is, to a sufficient number who were prepared to immobilize the society.

Thirdly, the movement operated in an area, as the Cuban demonstrations showed, where the individual often was powerless once the crucial stage had been reached. At the point of no return, protest movements mattered far less than they did when policy was being debated and the environment could be changed. The Cuban crisis, Greenwood could say upon reflection, showed that nuclear weapons provided the British people with no defence at all. For others, the crisis showed that "the prospect of nuclear war had...a powerful pacificatory effect on both the Mr. Ks." Arrowsmith's flight to West Ireland during the crisis to avoid the holocaust of the nuclear war should not detract from the positive achievements of the movement. But it should illustrate the powerlessness which even convinced activist felt when the moment of nuclear obliteration appeared to be at hand. By 1962, it is true to say that the "balance of terror" seemed a greater preserver of peace to most than did the renunciation of British intentions to escalate the arms race.


The objective of this thesis is to examine a certain kind of collective behaviour (the norm-oriented movement) and explain why it occurs where it does, when it does, and in the way that it does. In this chapter, using Smelser’s six determinants of collective behaviour, I shall offer an explanation of Australian political strikes, which are essentially a form of non-violent direct action whose purpose is to convey certain demands to the authorities: structural conduciveness and structural strain could assist in explaining why such strikes occur in Australia; the growth of a generalized belief and the role of precipitating factors why they occur when they do; and the mobilization of the participants for action and the operation of social control why they occur in the way that they do.

However, this section of the thesis poses certain difficulties in methodology. While the use of political strikes by some Australian trade unions has much in common with the methods of non-violent direct action used by the civil rights and nuclear disarmament movements, there are also some significant differences.

First, with respect to the differences, I am not concerned in this section with the demands of the trade union movement per se but with the demands of the militant section (to be defined later) of the movement. While the objectives of civil rights and nuclear disarmament were embraced by a whole movement and commanded general agreement throughout the movement, political strikes and their objectives were not always supported by the
trade union movement as a whole, but only by militant sections of it. In concrete terms, the Printers' Union did not bear the same relationship to the Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF) on the question of banning goods to South Africa as the NAACP did to CORE on the question of slum clearance in Chicago.

Second, political strikes, unlike direct action for civil rights and nuclear disarmament, have been an intermittent phenomenon with wide gaps in time between their appearances. Third, activists in political strikes had to be members of trade unions. In the other two movements, association with the movement was largely a result of choice, although convention may have had something to do with that choice.

To counter these differences, I wish to make three points. First, the prevalence of strikes in the coal and maritime industries, the nature of the disputes in these industries, and the left-wing composition of the Miners' Federation, WWF and Seamen's Union separate these latter unions out from the rest of the trade union movement. In a sense, with a few other unions, these became the "militant movement" within the broader trade union movement. Like movements in general,1 these militant unions share a desire to change institutions, a turnover of membership without a loss of identity, and an awareness of their common interests; in addition, they attract, while not formally containing,2 other organized groups and individuals.

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1 See Chapter I, pp. 10, 11.

2 Ibid., p. 10
Applying Kerr and Siegel's comparative analysis of the industrial propensity to strike to Australian coal and maritime industries, I would argue that the location of workers in these industries (namely their geographical or social isolation from the general community) and the nature of their jobs (namely hazardous and unpleasant working conditions) turn them into a cohesive group of militant, isolated workers with mass, as opposed to individual, grievances. Kerr and Siegel state:

The strike for this isolated mass is a kind of colonial revolt against far-removed authority, an outlet for accumulated tensions, and a substitute for occupational and social mobility. The industrial environment places these workers in the role of members of separate classes.... their own class of miners or longshoremen.... Thus the isolated mass in a classless society may become something like the isolated class in a class society, more or less permanently at odds with the community at large.

Kerr and Siegel do not deny that other theories on the propensity to strike may apply to the coal and maritime industries. But theories on the economic environment, the political environment, human relations, the trend of historical development, dominant personalities, adherence to ideological views, the selection of good bargaining techniques, and key bargains are better for explanations of individual situations than for strike propensity.


5 Kerr and Siegel, op. cit., p. 193.
in particular industries.

While the high propensity to strike in these industries cuts across national boundaries, it is important to note that in Australia the militant unions in these industries have been influenced by Marxist or Communist ideology. While there is no logically necessary connection between militancy and a specific ideological orientation, historically, Australian militant unions (or the leadership thereof) have been left-wing adherents to the theory of class conflict and the clash of class interests. Whether it was so in fact or not, it is significant that at certain points in time, parliamentarians, employers, and other trade unions have considered the militant unions to be subject to Communist control (when decisions were made by officials of the Communist Party) or Communist influence (when decisions were modified, affected or swayed by officials of the Communist Party). Even then, it was recognized that only a very small proportion of the rank-and-file need be Communist for the unions to be thought of in these terms.

The significance of this Marxist or Communist influence appears to be a factor in the kinds of strikes in which these Australian unions were prepared to engage (of which more later). Thus, the composition of the unions and the nature of their disputes is another cohesive factor of the "militant movement" in Australia.

Secondly, by taking a connected period of time in which there were a series of political strikes, namely the period 1937-50, I would argue that one could apply Smelser's determinants of collective behaviour to the militant trade unions in the same way as they were applied to the other two political movements.
Thirdly, I would argue that these unions bear major similarities to voluntary associations even though activists were required to join them either through law or convention. I support the contentions of Turner and Gollan that the decisions of the leaders are subject to the scrutiny of the rank-and-file, that decisions of the leaders can be negated, and that decisions of the leaders are subject to the boundary lines drawn up by the rank-and-file.  

It is the similarity which the militant unions have to the civil rights and nuclear disarmament movements which I find of interest and which make the three sections comparable within the limitations discussed. All three exhibit distinct patterns of behaviour which are based on deviations from the conventions and laws of the societies in which they operate. All three include groups which use conventional and illegal tactics as a regular part of their activities. All three are forms or related parts of norm-oriented movements which are concerned to alter rules or policies of the society in the name of certain generalized beliefs; none of the three are out to reconstitute the values of their respective societies by their specific use of non-violent direct action.

Introduction

With some minor exceptions, the activities of Australian trade unions do not differ from those of most other pressure groups operating in systems

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of democratic capitalism. The unions (1) try to obtain their objectives by influencing political parties or governmental bodies without themselves trying to govern; (2) pursue aims which are consistent with the existing framework of society and which do not call for a total realignment of economic and political patterns; and (3) are primarily concerned with the welfare of their own members, the representation of some economic or political interest, or the promotion of a specific cause or particular set of beliefs. Often trade unions will try to change the policies not of the government itself but of some larger trade union body or some important group of unions; but the unions still bear the characteristics associated with other pressure groups. 7

While most trade unions do want to bring about changes in society, they are content to win measures of reform while playing the game of government according to the conventions and laws upon which democratic capitalism operates. In Australian practice, this requires that industrial action be used for particular kinds of purposes, that the unions rely upon legal means to secure their demands, that they respect the judgment of the authorities on matters of government policy, and that they

abide by the established arbitration system. By accepting some kind of responsibility for the efficient functioning of the capitalist economy, trade unions operate on a standard of law abidingness. They use normal democratic methods of persuasion to present their demands. While they do not rule out the use of direct action, only in a minority of instances do they use, or actually threaten to use, as an arguing point their prime source of strength — the withdrawal of their labour.

The arbitration system is responsible for the decreased use of methods of direct action and the increased settlement of industrial disputes by court awards binding on the respective parties. While the system does not demand either the complete renunciation of the right to strike or penalization for all strikes, methods of direct action common to other countries, such as the United States and Great Britain, are not as important a part of union activities.

All societies exhibit a discrepancy between the values and norms of the society and actual behaviour. In Australia, the role of arbitration in industrial relations bears witness to this conflict. For while there are numerous instances in which penalties, required by legislation or written into court awards, have not been enforced, these penalties

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still appear on the statute books. While trade union attitudes towards arbitration are mixed, with less support from the left-wing of the movement, Walker's estimation is correct: the "unions support and operate through the arbitration system despite their disappointment with the gains it has brought the workers."¹⁰

Most trade unions are prepared to obey and conform to the conventions and laws which regulate their activities for various reasons: because they regard them as legitimate, rational and obligatory; because they fear the legal actions should they do otherwise; or simply out of habit. Most trade unions would appear to agree with the sentiments expressed by the Australian Worker: "The defiance of a law enacted by Parliament, obnoxious though that law may be, would react disastrously upon the working-class movement, which aims at the realisation of its great and beneficient objectives by the exercise of parliamentary power."¹¹

Not all trade unions place such a high priority on law and order; nor are all trade unions content with minor reforms along conventional lines. Militant unions deviate from this general pattern of activities and are prepared to wage a vigorous, all-out fight for their aims and objectives without necessarily stopping at the borderline of propriety. They are prepared to rely upon direct industrial action particularly the strike when compliance with arbitration procedures, legislative enactments, 


¹¹ Australian Worker, July 5, 1939, p. 17.
or other traditional forms would be more acceptable and more conventional. Among trade unionists who regard the right to strike as sacred, there is usually felt a responsibility not to strike until other alternatives have been thoroughly exhausted. But it seems doubtful if miners, waterside workers, or seamen would be as concerned with the following questions before resorting to strike action as was a more moderate unionist:

1. Has every method other than direct action been used to establish what he wants to establish?
2. If so, does a majority of his membership want to strike?.....
3. Is the issue serious enough to warrant a strike?
4. Can more good be gained from the strike than can be achieved by other methods?
5. Is there a reasonable chance of winning?

While reaffirming uncompromising opposition to strikes over trivial issues and strikes undertaken without proper union endorsement, militants who regard strikes as their chief weapon in the class struggle, would object to restrictions "calculated to prevent legitimate freedom of action, to stifle working-class initiative, and to hamstring the taking of justified action to defend or improve the conditions of our members and take part in activities in the interests of the working-class in general."13

While the militant unions will work within the existing capitalist framework even though most of them are convinced that the working-class cannot achieve any real or permanent improvements under capitalism, they are prepared to use direct action as a means of persuasion in a variety

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of situations in which other trade unions and other sections of the community would censure its use. Militant unions are unlikely to regard strikes as outright breaches of the law or of awards or as instances of contempt of the arbitration courts. Nor do they see strikers as criminal offenders. When they reject the arbitral process or withhold their labour for any reason whatsoever, they do so in terms of rights which they regard to be theirs by virtue of their being workers.  

Militant unions are unusual not only in their attitudes toward strikes but also with respect to the kinds of strikes in which they are prepared to engage, specifically political strikes — concerted work stoppages which are not concerned with the changing or sustaining of conditions of employment but with broader objectives.  

For the militant unions, political grievances do not stand in sharp contrast to economic grievances. For them, all strikes, political and industrial, are trials of strength, demonstrations of a political nature illustrating class conflict, and protests against the existing policies of the authorities. Stoppages in support of the vital, immediate demands of the workers and those that call for some far-reaching political changes are considered of equal importance for working-class interests. Militants recognize that because of their strategic position in the society, non-cooperation through the withdrawal of their labour is their most effective

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14 These impressions are based on views expressed to me in various interviews with leaders and members of the W.W.F., the Seamen's Union, and the Miners' Federation, in Sydney and Melbourne during the period 1963-65.

15 See Chapter I, pp. 20, 21.
method of making demands upon employers and authorities alike. Unlike most trade unionists who profess preparedness to engage in strikes only when genuine industrial issues are involved,\textsuperscript{16} militants regard the strike as their main fighting weapon to be used whenever the cause of the working class needs to be advanced.

Trade union strike action was nourished by the tradition of direct action within the Australian labor movement. For Communist militants, the belief in the importance of political strikes was derived from the writings of Marx\textsuperscript{17} and Lenin\textsuperscript{18} translated to the Australian situation by L. Sharkey, one-time general secretary of the Communist Party. In his *The Trade Unions: Communist Theory and Practice of Trade Unionism*, Sharkey attacked the "Economists", those in the trade union movement who argued that the tasks of the unions should be confined to the economic questions of wages and hours; similarly, he decried those suffering from trade union narrowness, who concentrated almost all of their attention on the immediate and practical problems of the unions.

\textsuperscript{16} See, e.g., the authorized statement by L. Short (National Secretary, Federated Ironworkers' Association), *Strikes - and You: Ironworkers' Policy on Strikes* (Sydney: Cumberland Newspapers, n.d.).


Communist theory demanded that Communists be the best trade unionists, able to lead the fight for economic demands while ready to introduce politics into the unions' problems. Sharkey argued that "[a]ll strikes have political significance, since everything that deals a blow to the capitalist deals a blow to the capitalist order."\(^{19}\) Strikes against the government, an organ of the capitalist, or against arbitration, a device for preserving the capitalistic status quo, must be adopted by militants: "political strikes are a higher form of struggle than economic strikes. Such strikes challenge the Government, the State, the rule of the capitalist class."\(^{20}\)

It may appear that political strikes as practised by militant unionists, especially by Communists, fall outside the boundary lines set by norm-oriented political movements. I would argue, however, that the specific demands of political strikes in Australia were attached to a militant section of the trade union movement that was demanding normative changes and not one that was directly challenging the values of democratic capitalism. The grievances related to specific policies, laws and customs and did not demand alterations in the values of either democracy or capitalism.\(^{21}\)

In this chapter, for the period 1937-50, I shall examine: the factors responsible for the militants' decisions to disobey legal regulations or conventional obligations; the specific tactics used; and the

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20 Ibid., p. 35.
reaction to the tactics, especially the historical factors, both political and economic, which determined the authorities' readiness to penalize the unlawful or unconventional behaviour of militant trade unions either through specific trade union legislation or by some other means. I shall then offer an evaluation of the successes and failures of Australian political strikes.

While I have limited my analysis to the period 1937-50, it is important to note that behind this period lay the experiences of four other political strikes and a tradition of militancy within this section of the trade union movement.

Temporal Phases

*Pig-iron ban.* - In the late 1930's, industrial labour found little support from either the parliamentary wing of the Labor Party or from the Lyons government for its criticism of the inadequacies of Australian defences and its fear of the Japanese. Militants within the trade union movement, initially agitated against any involvement in "imperialistic wars"; but as the Japanese increased the tempo and severity of their

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22 See Appendix B for political strikes which occurred in the period 1916-64.


attacks against China and as her designs in the Pacific appeared to be increasingly aggressive anti-war sentiment was overshadowed by agitation about events in the Pacific area.  

Japan, however, was too important a trading partner, especially in wheat and wool, for many in influential circles to regard her as a threat to national security. When the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), acting under strong pressure from the left-wing of the New South Wales Labor Council, called for a nation-wide boycott of Japanese goods and an embargo on the export of scrap iron to Japan, support came mainly from the already converted – the militant sections of the trade union movement, peace bodies, some church organizations, some intellectuals, and the Communist Party.

By 1937, the trading problem had crystallized around the sale of iron ore and related products to Japan. Considerations of trade were discussed in the newspapers, in Parliament, and in the trade unions. There was concern with the financial rewards of trade with Japan, the domestic

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25 Some of the opposition to Japan came from sections of the Labor movement which had a tradition of racialism stemming back to Chinese immigrants in the 1870's. However, there was also a strong anti-war element in the Labor movement dating back to the Boer War. See Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics: A Study of Eastern Australia, 1850-1910, op. cit., pp. 78, 158, 197. The pre-Second World War period is more complex than would appear due to Catholic splits in Labor movement over the question of Spain, the Communist Party's concern over the dubious role that the Soviet Union was playing, and labour sentiment opposed to rearmament in any case.


27 Much of this information comes from the files of the Waterside Workers' Federation, which were made available to me by the federal office in Sydney.
needs for materials currently being sent abroad, the possibility of
provocation should Japanese offers to buy be refused, and the con­
tribution which might be made to Japanese aggression by the continued sales
of such materials. Class and party lines were frequently crossed
when pronouncing on the government's trade policy with the Japanese.
Western Australians of all persuasions, including John Curtin, leader
of the federal Labor Party, wanted mineral areas in the state developed
by the Japanese who had expressed an interest in doing so; iron and steel
employees and employers were concerned about the depletion of scrap iron
stocks; the ACTU demanded the suppression of profits from trade in arms.

The specific question of strategic materials came to a head when
the Japanese entered into an agreement to extract iron ore from the rich
Koolan Island deposit on the northwest coast. It was against this back­
ground that talk against trade with Japan was turned into action. Begin­
ing in October 1937, as a result of a lunchtime meeting, members of the
Fremantle Lumpers' Union, an affiliate of the WWF, refused to load a
Japanese whaling ship; in the following months, waterside workers in
various Australian ports refused to load goods, in particular iron ore
products, for Japan. The initial actions preceded the ACTU policy on

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28 See, e.g., SMH, Mar. 6, 1937, p. 17; Workers' Weekly, Mar. 9, 1937,
p. 2.

29 SMH, Oct. 13, 1937, p. 17. (Fremantle); Argus, Oct. 25, 1937, p. 1;
Oct. 26, 1937, p. 13; Oct. 29, 1937, p. 11 (Geelong); SMH, Jan. 19,
1938, p. 14 (Pyrmont); Jan. 26, 1938, p. 9 (Walsh Bay). The Sydney
branch of the WWF had initially refused to load the "Canberra Mary",
but subsequently decided to continue to work the ship in view of
the New South Wales Labor Council's scheduled discussion of the
subject; see SMH, Sept. 30, 1937, p. 11.
boycotts and resulted from individual port action without prior consulta-
tion with federal officials of the WWF. According to Jim Healy, then
general secretary of the WWF, a general directive had not been issued for
fear that the Transport Workers' Act would be invoked for those ports
to which it applied; it was decided to leave the decision about loading
cargoes to each union branch, which could in turn decide whether the
branch was in a position to defy the Act. However, by January, 1938,
the campaign had the full support of the entire Federation.

Conferences between shipping interests and the WWF failed to end the
continuing walk-offs, which by April, 1938, had spread to Melbourne. The

30 The Transport Workers' Act 1929 was known in union circles as the
"Dog Collar Act" and viewed by militants as a deliberate attempt
to smash the unions. Introduced by the Bruce-Page Government in
1928, the Act provided for the licensing of waterside workers and
was heralded by the government as a protection for the primary
producer against rash and irresponsible individuals who did not
care if products rotted in the sheds or on the wharves while they
pressed for their industrial demands. It permitted anyone to obtain
a licence so long as he evidenced good behaviour and a willingness to
obey Arbitration Court awards; with a licence, anyone might be picked
for labour but the selection was entirely at the discretion of those
requiring labour. One could have envisaged a situation in which the
more militant unionists might be passed up. Licences might be can-
celled by the licensing officer if the officer was satisfied that the
worker had either refused to comply with a direction given to him in
relation to his job, had failed to work in accordance with the terms
of the ruling award, or had intimidated another worker into doing
either of the above. As of July 1, 1938, the licensing provisions
applied to most Australian ports except Sydney; but the Act could
be clapped onto any port by government enactment. For trade union
attitudes on the Act, see issues of the Daily Standard for September
and October, 1928.

31 Jim Healy to R. West, secretary Brisbane WWF, Feb. 28, 1938, in Branch
Correspondence, Waterside Workers' Federation files, Sydney.

32 SMH, Apr. 21, 1938, p. 12.
men were adamant in refusing to load munitions and could not be put off by assurances that the scrap iron would not be used in the manufacturing of war materials. Nor initially were they put off by threats of the government to apply the Transport Workers' Act. However, under an official threat by the government to apply the Act to the Sydney port, the WWF agreed to load all cargoes offering.

In May, 1938, the government announced a complete ban on the export of iron ore in order to conserve resources, but trade in iron ore by-products was still allowed.

The union ban on strategic goods to Japan was lifted only temporarily. In November, 1938, Port Kembla waterside workers refused to load pig iron on the steamer "Dalfram" for Japan. In their support, Sydney maritime unions said they would not work the ship should the cargo be loaded by non-union labour. A conference of seventeen unions strongly endorsed

33 Ibid., Feb. 19, 1938, p. 11; see also statement of Healy's in Workers' Weekly, Apr. 15, 1938, p. 3.
34 SMH, May 26, 1938, p. 12; Maritime Worker, June, 1938, p. 1.
35 Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates [hereafter CPD], 155: 1259-76 (May 19, 1938).
36 The WWF suggested that this inconsistency was to placate the Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP).
37 Illawarra Mercury, Nov. 18, 1938, p. 11.
38 SMH, Nov. 30, 1938, p. 15.
this action; it emphasized its determination not to cooperate with any non-union labour that might be employed to load the ship, recommended that the metal trades unions refuse to repair any vessel loaded by such labour, and pledged its "sympathetic support" to the WWF. 39 A strike involving the four thousand workers at the Port Kembla steelworks was threatened; and the Australian Railways Union (ARU) agreed not to have its members rail pig iron to other ports. 40 When the WWF continued to refuse to order loadings, the government clapped the licensing provisions of the Transport Workers' Act on the port.

On the Port Kembla wharves, no volunteers offered to take out licenses, and, subsequently, no vessels were loaded. Mass meetings and rallies were held to increase support for the WWF, and pledges were forthcoming from the Illawarra Trades and Labor Council, the South Coast Miners' Federation, the Port Kembla Ironworkers' Association (FIA), the ARU, and other branches of the WWF, as well as previously committed sections of the community. 41 The dispute spread to Sydney, when waterside workers refused to load consignments of pig iron on the steamer "Nellore" and the liner "Taiping", on the grounds that the action at Port Kembla had turned the cargo "black." 42 Mediation efforts initiated by the ACTU failed to resolve the dispute. The management of the Port Kembla works of Australian Iron and Steel, a subsidiary of the BHP, closed down its plant, more likely to force public opinion against the WWF and to try to split the

42 Ibid., Dec. 14, 1938, p. 17.
trade unions, than because of a shortage of ships in which to transport the company's products.\footnote{Maritime \textit{Worker}, Jan. 14, 1939, p. 1; \textit{SMH}, Jan. 13, 1939, p. 10.} After two months of standing their ground, but under the pressure of expenses and hardships created by the extended dispute, the waterside workers agreed to load the disputed cargoes, "under duress", provided that the government removed the licensing provisions and agreed to hold discussions on the banning of further shipments of war materials.\footnote{Jim Healy, "General Secretary's Report on the Recent Pig Iron Dispute - Port Kembla", n.d., in Waterside Workers' Federation files, Sydney.}

When two other shipments had to be loaded, members of the WWF were too exhausted to call another strike and loaded "under protest".\footnote{\textit{SMH}, Feb. 16, 1939, p. 9; Apr. 28, 1939, p. 12.} The outbreak of the war some months later ended the controversy about further shipments.

\textit{National Register boycott.}-- In 1939, under the leadership of the ACTU, trade unionists were advised not to fill in the compulsory National Register forms lest the detailed information of available manpower resources be used by the Lyons government to regiment labour for industrial and military purposes. Many key trade unions (metal trades unions, Miners' Federation, ARU, WWF, Munition Workers' Union, public utilities unions, engineering unions, Printers' Union, Miscellaneous Workers' Union, Road Transport Union, Federated Clerks' Union) pledged themselves not to apply for registration forms. Some even promised retaliatory action should
those who refused to fill out the forms be punished. It was hoped that the government would revoke the National Register Act when it felt the impact of mass protests and witnessed public burnings of the forms. However, under pressure from the Labor Party, which was concerned about its chances at the next election, the ACTU modified its stand to working toward legal repeal or modification of the law. Although the militant unions held out for a more defiant campaign, most of the pledged unions agreed to lift the boycott.

Ratliff-Thomas. In 1941, Horace Ratliff and Max Thomas, Communist trade unionists, were interned by the Commonwealth government under the National Security (Subversive Associations) Regulations. Their arrests followed upon their release from prison where they had served a six months' sentence for possessing illegal literature. In protest, Ratliff and Thomas went on a hunger strike. Spearheaded by Communist-led trade unions, protests arose demanding the release of the men; sections of the labor movement also demanded a less repressive policy towards the Australian Communist Party now that the Soviet Union was on the side of the Allies. The protests culminated in a one-day sympathy stoppage of thirteen thousand South Coast trade unionists and Cessnock miners. More demonstrations followed when Prime Minister Menzies announced that the War Cabinet had decided against releasing the men; but they fell far short of the militants' expectations


47 National Registration Act, 1939.

48 SMH, July 19, 1941, p. 11.

49 Ibid., July 25, 1941, p. 8; July 26, 1941, p. 11; July 29, 1941, p.7.
and pointed up the split within the labour movement over wartime trade union policy. The men were released in October, 1941, when changes had occurred in the domestic and international situations.

Post War Political Strikes. - The pig-iron dispute was played out in terms which became archaic by 1945; for it rested on an assumption which both sides were prepared to accept, \(^{50}\) that the militant activists, right or wrongly, had elevated their right of conscience above the government's power to set foreign and trade policy. The political situation in Australia after the Second World War was bound up with the extent of Communist control of the trade union movement. There had been deep concern over Communist influence in the trade union movement ever since the formation of the Communist Party in 1920, but this concern was greatly intensified as the Cold War left its indelible mark on the domestic political scene. \(^{51}\) By 1945, Communists had important positions of leadership in the Miners' Federation, the ARU, the FIA, the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), the WWF, the Seamen's Union, the Sheet Metal Workers' Union, the Building Workers' Industrial Union (BWIU), the Federated Clerks' Union, the New South Wales Teachers' Federation, and Actors' Equity.

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50 Only once during the pig-iron dispute Menzies doubted the sincerity of the WWF, imputing to the leadership more concern with "the usual Communist Technique than they are with international politics." 

There was no disputing the domestic agitation by the Communists who hoped to exploit the unrest and dislocation that accompanied the transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy. 52 Partially as a result of Communist take-overs in Eastern Europe, there was fear of domestic Communist infiltration and some sections of the Labour and Liberal parties were demanding some form of control over Communist movements in Australia. 53

In no way should the militancy of the Communist Party, its disillusionment with the arbitration system, and its heavy reliance on direct action in both economic and political struggles be under-emphasized. Not should the rise in Communist Party membership in the 1940's, 54 its influence in trade unions and in front organizations during and immediately after the War, 55 and its attempts to be a major influence in the labour movement be disregarded. But it is just as inaccurate to ascribe near-mystical powers of organization and infiltration to the Communist Party, as both its opponents and its own leadership had done, by making it the single cause of worker discontent.

The post-war situation was characterized by more than the influence of the Communists. Industrial and political stoppages occurred in an atmosphere where hopes for improved standards of living among the working class


had not materialized to the degree expected. Worker discontent, as a result of the slow maturation of hopes for a better life which had been nourished by the 1930's depression and the war, characterized the period, not only in Australia but in other countries as well. In trying to control inflation, the Chifley government also had to continue with policies of consumer rationing, high taxation levels, and other measures of wartime austerity. Housing shortages, petroleum rationing, wage-pegging, and the like put off the day of improved living conditions for many Australian workers, militant as well as moderates.

On the international scene, Australia had to face the growth of nationalist and independent movements in Asia. While Labor had a tradition of racism in so far as the country's immigration policy was concerned, it also had a tradition of anti-colonialism which helped it to look favourably upon events in Indonesia, India and the like.

The first political strike after the Second World War occurred in September, 1945, when the Federal Executive of the WWF, having been approached by Indonesian seamen in port in Sydney and Brisbane, declared a "black ban" on all Dutch ships bound for the Netherlands East Indies. It was argued that any cargo transported would be used to suppress the newly established Indonesian government. In addition, the WWF organized Indonesians living in Australia into "Committees of Indonesian Independence to act as a pressure group on their Dutch employers resident in Australia. The Dutch authorities insisted that the ships in question were to carry food, medicine, and clothing for the relief of the civilian population in the East Indies; these assurances were discounted by the WWF. It had been suggested that the ban could be lifted in the case of bona fide mercy ships, provided that these were supervised by the United
Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association (UNRRA), but no agreement on this point was reached.56

Strike action spread when workmen at the Rose Bay flying-base workshops in Sydney (affiliated with the Australian Society of Engineers), the AEU, the Electricians' Union, and some other trade union bodies refused to service any Dutch aircraft after two trade unionists at the base had been dismissed for their refusal to repair a Dutch plane.57 The Sheet Metal Workers' Union, in support of the WWF, instructed its members similarly to refuse to service Dutch ships or planes.58

In an attempt to break the deadlock on the ban, hearings were held before the Conciliation Commissioner. The Dutch vetoed proposals which called for an observer who met the approval of the trade unions to accompany a trial relief ship from Australia in order to scrutinize the distribution process.59 In any case, the trade unions themselves could not agree on an observer who suited both the militants and moderates within the movement.60

Attempts at settlement, most of which were undertaken by the ACTU, were not very successful. The ban remained in force as the months dragged on and more ships were refused service. The ban was kept, even when a temporary truce had been reached in Indonesia late in 1946, at the request

56 Jim Healy to R. Pettyman, Secretary, Permanent and Casual Wharf Labourers Union, Oct. 15, 1945, in Waterside Workers' Federation files, Sydney.
58 Ibid., Nov. 3, 1945, p. 5.
59 Ibid., Mar. 1, 1946, p. 3; Mar. 21, 1946, p. 4.
60 Ibid., Mar. 13, 1946, p. 3.
of the Indonesian government which feared a Dutch blockade of the newly-recognized republic. With the resumption of the war in July, 1947, any settlement of the ban was postponed. The new flare-up revoked earlier ACTU policy and a conference of federal unions voted to impose a total ban on the movement of all Dutch goods in Australia. Telegrams were sent to maritime unions in other countries asking that similar action be taken elsewhere. Under pressure from Chifley, the ACTU modified its stand to cover only ships carrying munitions or service personnel which might be used against the Indonesians.

In May, 1948, after another truce had been reached in Indonesia, federal transport and waterfront unions voted to relax the ban to allow normal trade to be resumed between the Australians and the Indonesians. But the WWF reinstituted the ban in December, 1948, when fighting in Indonesia was resumed. With the signing of a final agreement between the Dutch and the Indonesians at the end of 1949, the ban was finally lifted.

63 J.B. Chifley to ACTU officials, Aug. 7, 1947, in ibid. It was also feared that a total and complete ban would affect the supply of food for Great Britain, the occupation forces in Germany, wheat for India and the carrying of wool supplies from Australia and Europe to Asian countries.
65 Circular No. 32, JH/DN, July 4, 1948, in ibid.
At the same time that the Dutch shipping ban was in effect, other political strikes were occurring.

In 1946, Sydney waterside workers refused to load flour which they believed was bound for the Shanghai black market. Upon assurances from UNRRA that the flour would be used to alleviate famine conditions on mainland China, the men agreed to work the ships.\(^67\)

In 1947, the WWF banned the export of goods to Spain until the Franco government should be replaced.\(^68\) In the same year, the WWF issued a ban on the export of soap until the domestic supply should return to a normal level.\(^69\) Some months later, Sydney waterside workers refused to load galvanized roofing iron for New Guinea until such materials were used to repair storm-damaged Redfern homes.\(^70\) In all three instances, the bans were short-lived.

In 1948, Sydney waterside workers, seamen, and ship's painters and dockers stopped work for four hours, while South Coast mines closed down for the day, to march with the women of the New Housewives' Association in protest over high prices and black marketing in food and clothing.\(^71\) Later that year, the Seamen's Union placed a boycott on all Greek ships in protest

\(^{67}\) *SMH*, July 18, 1946, p. 3; *Tribune*, July 23, 1946, p. 6.

\(^{68}\) *SMH*, Jan. 25, 1947, p. 1; Jan. 28, 1947, p. 1; see also Waterside Workers' Federation Circular No. 16, February 8, 1947, in Waterside Workers' Federation files, Sydney.

\(^{69}\) *Maritime Worker*, Feb. 8, 1947, p. 3.


\(^{71}\) *SMH*, Mar. 6, 1948, p. 3.
against the Greek government's treatment of Greek trade unionists; this boycott also was shortlived.  

In 1949, as a result of certain comments made to a newspaper reporter, Sharkey, then general secretary of the Communist Party, was charged and convicted under the Crimes Act for having uttered a seditious statement. The Miners' Federation, the Seamen's Union, the Newcastle Trades Hall council, the Illawarra Trades and Labor Council, the Sydney Sheet Metal Workers' Union, the Port Kembla WWF, and the Sydney AEU held stoppages and demonstrations in protest against the court's action. Similarly, when Jack McPhillips, Communist assistant secretary of the Federated Ironworkers'  

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73 Questioned on a statement of Maurice Thorez, Sharkey said: "If Soviet forces in pursuit of aggressors enter Australia, Australian workers would welcome them. Australian workers would welcome Soviet forces pursuing aggressors as the workers welcomed them throughout Europe when the Red troops liberated the people from the power of the Nazis. I support the statement made by the French Communist leader. Invasion of Australia by forces of the Soviet Union seem very remote and hypothetical to me. I believe the Soviet Union will go to war only if she is attacked. I cannot see Australia being invaded by Soviet troops. The object of Communists is to struggle to prevent war and to educate the masses of the people against the idea of war. The Communist Party also wants to bring the working class to power and if fascists in Australia use force to prevent the workers gaining that power communists will advise the workers to meet force with force."


Association was charged and convicted of contempt of the Arbitration Court, the Sydney and Newcastle branches of the FIA, the Miners' Federation, the ARU, the Seamen's Union, the Ships Painters and Dockers' Union, the Port Kembla and Sydney WMF, the Australian Society of Engineers, and the Road and Transport Workers' Union held protest stoppages.

The period of these political stoppages was one of industrial unrest, when militant trade union leaders, Communist and non-Communist alike, who had to deal directly and solely with the problems of the working class, became contemptuous of the political leaders who had to conciliate other sections of the community as well. The Communists had a distinctive trade union policy, but they found it difficult to apply. They had effective organizations at work in the unions, but they found the workers difficult to attract on other than bread-and-butter issues; the Marxist heritage meant little to men who considered themselves better off than their comrades in the Soviet Union.

The Coal Strike. In 1948, the Communist Party abandoned its period of accommodation with the Chifley government. Warning of right-wing

76 McPhillip is alleged to have told a trade union meeting of five hundred: "The basic wage in existence is not related to the standard of living. This issue will be determined outside the Arbitration Court. We do not trust the people in charge of the Court to play the game. We want an immediate cash increase of not less than 30/- a week".

moves in the Labor Party, R. Dixon, then president of the Communist Party, argued against moderate policies which hid measures designed to stifle the working-class. He warned of legislation which would curtail the right to strike and of state control of elections through the secret ballot:

...examination of the mass of anti-trade union legislation enacted by Australian parliaments during the last eighteen months is sufficient to show that the bourgeoisie and their Labour lieutenants are out to destroy their capacity to protect the workers... The trade union movement must be awakened to the danger confronting the working class. It must expose the reactionary laws and organise the masses to oppose and defeat them.

When in May 1949, the Combined Mining Unions (CMU) failed to secure claims lodged with the Joint Coal Board, it called for aggregate stop-work meetings to discuss future action. Unless a satisfactory settlement of its claims was reached, the Federation


79 R. Dixon, "Trade Unionism under Fire", ibid., March, 1948, p. 68. Compare with his report to the Central Committee in September, 1947, when he spoke of the Party's need to develop a united front of the working class, middle-class and farmers, and the need to support the Labor Government on bank nationalization and other progressive economic measures; R. Dixon, "The Economic Crisis", ibid., October, 1947, pp. 675-84.

80 Consisting of deputations from the Miners' Federation, Colliery Mechanics, ABU, Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association (FEDFA), and Blacksmiths' Society.
proposed to issue a call for a general strike.\footnote{Common Cause, June 26, 1949, p. 1.}
The Coal Board refused to be intimidated, granted the coal owners an injunction restraining the miners from calling strikes, stoppages or pit-top meetings for three months, and also postponed publication of the agreement on two of the claims that had been granted.\footnote{SMB, June 16, 1949, p. 1.} The Federation refused to accept restrictions on its right to strike and held aggregate meetings which voted in favor of the proposed strike.\footnote{Common Cause, June 26, 1949, p. 1.} Further negotiations failed and the strike began on June 27th.

New South Wales,\footnote{For reasons of space, I shall concentrate this analysis on the New South Wales area which was the heaviest hit by the strike.} particularly the Sydney area, had been transformed even by the threat of the strike: milk supplies were cut by two-thirds; bread supplies were reduced; the most drastic power and gas restrictions ever imposed on industry in the state were gazetted, as shops, warehouses, theatres and public halls were made to douse their lights; hospital services were available for emergency cases only; land and sea transport was immobilized; and the wartime atmosphere was recaptured when the Emergency Transport Coordinator arranged to reestablish the Road Transport Pool which had operated in the early 1940's. By June 21st, more
than two hundred thousand people were out of work; half the state's working population were out of work the following week. The list of industries affected by power cuts increased daily; sugar production was brought to a standstill and the beer supply steadily diminished. In Victoria, less affected because of the state's development of brown coal resources and the importation of coal from overseas, power and gas restrictions were intensified; trams and trains were curtailed and workers were laid off. South Australia could not escape the spiralling effects either, and along with all of the other states shared in the imposition of transport and power restrictions and the side effects of labour displacement.

Prime Minister Chifley and James McGirr, Labor Premier of New South Wales, were adamant in their stand that the only solution lay through the arbitration process and that no amount of industrial and political pressure could force either federal or state governments to operate outside that process. While the miners received support from some federal unions (ARU, FIA, AEU, WWP, Seamen's Union, Federated Clerk's, BWIU, Blacksmiths' Society, Ships Painters and Dockers' Union, Sheet Metal Workers' Union), the ACTU cast itself in the role of mediator. When attempts at peaceful settlement failed, the Commonwealth government assumed powers proximate to those needed to meet a wartime emergency: it froze the funds of participating unions; it jailed the leaders of participating

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unions who refused to disclose details about union funds; it ordered other unions to move coal produced before the strike and now "at grass"; it imported coal from abroad; it used troops to extract coal from open cut mines. These moves, as well as lessening trade union support, forced the miners to capitulate. Terms proposed by the ACTU, which had been rejected earlier because of a provision that the unions resubmit their claims to arbitration, now became acceptable. These called for: (1) a return to work within a week of resumption of negotiations with the Arbitration Court; (2) application to be made for the release of jailed union leaders; (3) application to be made for a decision by the Coal Industry Tribunal on long-service leave, with broad discussions on terms before it could be finally determined; (4) resumption of conferences of all parties concerned on a shorter working week and other matters; and (5) decisions of conferences to be ratified by the Tribunal, or failing agreement, the question to be determined by the Tribunal. The rank-and-file of the CMU rejected any continuation of the strike and seven weeks after it had begun the

87 SMH, July 12, 1949, p. 3; July 14, 1949, p. 1; July 17, 1949, p. 1. The coal lifts occurred without incident, although not without agitational opposition from miners; only the FEDFA, the Boilermakers' Union, and the BWIU refused to work in plants where the "black" coal was to be used. Barrier Miner, July 15, 1949, p. 1; SMH, July 17, 1949, p. 3.

strike collapsed.\textsuperscript{89}

1950. In protest against the High Court's upholding of the jailing of Sharkey, New South Wales miners and Sydney waterside workers and seamen stopped work for one day.\textsuperscript{90} Miners at the South Bulli colliery tied in their protest with one on the High Court's invalidation of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Act.\textsuperscript{91} In the same year, when the Menzies government introduced legislation to outlaw the Communist Party, some Communist unions held stop-works and protest stoppages.\textsuperscript{92} Later that year, the executive of the Seamen's Union issued an order against the transporting of war materials to Korea,\textsuperscript{93} but the union's rank-and-file voted to dissociate itself from the ban and the executive was forced to rescind the earlier order.\textsuperscript{94}

\textbf{Aims and Motives}

Most of the demands made by the militant unions were for an alteration in some aspect of government policy. With respect to


\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Ibid.}, Oct. 19, 1949, p. 3; Oct. 20, 1949, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Ibid.}, Oct. 12, 1949, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{92} \textit{Ibid.}, May 4, 1950, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Ibid.}, July 8, 1950, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Seamen's Journal}, July, 1950, pp. 1, 4.
foreign and trade policy, the unions demanded: (1) a ban on strategic exports to Japan; (2) a ban on exports to Dutch forces in the Netherlands East Indies; (3) a ban on flour exports to Chinese blackmarkets; (4) a ban on exports to Spain until the Franco government was replaced; (5) a ban on the export of soap and galvanized roofing iron until the level of domestic supplies had risen.95

With respect to domestic policy, the militant unions demanded: (1) the repeal of the National Registration Act; (2) the release of Ratliff and Thomas, Sharkey, and McPhillips; and (3) the control of high prices and black marketing in food and clothing.96

The 1949 coal strike is less readily classified as a political strike than are the other strikes which have been discussed in this section. The CMU served a log of claims upon the colliery employers and the Joint Coal Board for a thirty-five hour week, thirty shillings a week increase, long-service leave, and improved pit and town amenities. But a close examination of the chronology of negotiations between the unions and the coal authorities indicates that the demands behind the strike were not industrial. While the political

95 Similar issues were involved in the following: Korean War ban; the Indo-China ban; the Vietnam barbed-wire ban; and the South African ban. See Appendix B.

96 Similar issues were involved in the following: anti-conscription stoppages; Paul Freeman case; Father Jerger case; Walsh and Johnson case; Pharmaceutical Benefits Act protest; Communist Party Dissolution Bill protests; and Crimes Act protests. See Appendix B.
demands of the miners' leadership were never stated explicitly, it seems apparent that the Miners' Federation wanted to show the futility of arbitration and the fertility of direct action and to suggest that orthodox trade union policies held no hope for the workers' future betterment.

The political quality of the coal strike becomes more apparent when it is contrasted with the 1917 general strike. First, the 1917 strike was precipitated by an industrial dispute in the Government Tramway Workshop in Sydney; the 1949 strike was engineered by the Communist Party operating through the leadership of Miners' Federation whose genuine industrial grievances made its membership receptive to the call for a strike. Secondly, Turner writes that although the government regarded the 1917 strike as political and without any industrial grievances, the strike could have been solved in industrial terms; the coal strike, however, could not have been solved by meeting the industrial demands of the CMU. For even when it appeared that the various government authorities operating in the coal industry were prepared to grant the CMU what it asked for in its log of claims, the Miners' Federation still pressed ahead with the strike. The coal strike involved political demands; it could only have been settled by the Commonwealth government overriding the agents of the arbitration system.

Occasionally, there was a demand on a foreign government. This

97 Turner, op. cit., pp. 240-76.
was the case of the boycott on Greek ships until the Greek government would alter its repressive policies toward certain Greek trade unionists. 98

Tactics

Withdrawal of labor took the form of either strike action (the direct downing of tools) or of a boycott (the refusal to handle or produce certain goods or to operate certain services). Either usually was accompanied by various forms of legal demonstrations (such as mass meetings, marches, rallies and picketing) and other forms of constitutional pressure (such as deputations). Both forms were designed to have repercussions on both the public and the authorities. Both forms of direct action were regarded as being either a very likely way of winning demands or as the only way in which the working-class could make known its position. In most instances, the militant unions had little influence with either the government or the party in opposition; denied access to the authorities, the unions abandoned methods of negotiation.

The activists appealed not only to individual consciences and the authorities but also, by relying on direct economic action, actively prevented the smooth running of the wheels of government and industry in whatever way they could. They hoped to set an

98 A similar issue was the stoppage and boycott in retaliation for the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti by the United States. See Appendix B.
example, to call upon kindred spirits to support their demands, and to initiate a pattern of response to government policy which others could follow. They hoped that their refusal, made at the price of turning down some employment opportunities or at the price of disciplinary action, would give a lead to other sections of the community. By engaging in political strikes, they hoped to make some useful contribution to the field of political ideas and political activity. They hoped that what on the surface might appear to be a useless protest, doomed to impotence and ineffectiveness, might, over a period of time, be a factor in social change.

Their strike action was justified by the activists on various grounds. First, in many instances, the militants argued that their action had been taken in the name of something higher than their individual welfare, such as international working class solidarity or humanitarian considerations, and that it was taken in the public interest and for the general welfare. They often attacked the authorities for not having acted in the "real" public interest and for being active group partisans whose decisions were determined by their own interests whether those were the same as those of the industrialists or reformist and right-wing elements in the Labor Party.

At the time of the pig iron ban, Healy put the case that the men could not be expected to surrender "the right of the individual to refuse to participate in any action towards which he may have conscientious objection". Their refusal to participate in the

99 Quoted in *Workers' Weekly*, Apr. 15, 1938, p. 3.
business of munitions manufacturing, was similar to their later refusal to assist the Dutch to reassert control in the East Indies. They claimed that they "retain(ed) their personal rights and perogatives one of which was to aid persons engaged in a struggle for freedom". Secondly, militants recognized that other sections of the community, such as commercial interests, were not standing idly by while the government set policy.

Spokesmen for the activists often implied that they were representative of the majority of Australian, while the authorities were not. In 1938, the Maritime Worker said that:

A small section of the community [BHP] is definitely dictating the policy of the Government in relation to the export of these materials, and that section of the community is much smaller [sic] numerically than the W.W.F.; and the small sections of commercial interests are apparently powerful enough to determine the policy of the Government, in defiance of the voice of the majority of the Australian people, which has definitely expressed itself in favor of the action taken by our members.

Healy expressed the resentment of many militants towards Menzies' attack on their right to assert pressure on governmental policy while at the same time being prepared himself to accept "dictation

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Maritime Worker, June, 1938, p. 4.
from big commercial interests". 103

Thirdly, militant trade unions regarded themselves as the vanguard of the labor movement. As such, they considered that they had to give a lead to other sections of the movement, be it with regard to humane causes, matters of conscience, or political struggles. As far as Communist theory was concerned: "The struggle of the workers arouses the rest of the toiling masses. An energetic struggle on the part of the workers wins them as allies of the workers, and establishes the leadership of the labour movement over these masses. 104

Fourthly, by resorting to direct action as a political tactic, militant unions were serving notice publicly that they could no longer rely upon remedies of peaceful persuasion; the time had come when they had to act with the force available to them in order to impress upon the government how urgent their demands were. They considered that it would have been far worse to abide by policies which they considered immoral or incorrect than suffer the consequences of their direct action.

Decisions to strike, be they for political or industrial demands, were tempered with considerations of success and support.

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103 Quoted in SMH, Dec. 8, 1938, p. 11. See also Maurice Blackburn's attack on the government for attacking the WWF for its act of conscience while not rebuking the doctors who threatened to sabotage the national health insurance scheme; CPD, 158: 2295 (Dec. 8, 1938).

104 Sharkey, op. cit., p. 34.
Militants, no less than other kinds of trade unionists, were not prepared to take wild gambles and throw caution to the wind; they, too, initiated a strike hoping for some measure of success. Communist theory emphasized the need for generalship in strikes:

Those who are leading the strike must regard it as a battle, in which they, the leaders must carefully estimate the strength of the enemy at any given moment, must realise the need to manoeuvre, the need for good tactical leadership, to be able to understand when the strike has been definitely lost; to be able to retreat while the strikers are still not divided and demoralised, to be able to prevent the exposure of the workers to undue punishment, in the event of the loss of the strike, and so on. 105

Militants had to assess the authorities' responses, primarily to determine how committed the latter would be to breaking the strike. In assessing, the repercussions of their action, they assumed that the authorities had a distaste for prolonged, widespread industrial action, particularly on issues which challenged government policy in the political sphere. But they also assumed that there were limits beyond which the authorities probably would not go in repressing political strikes.

Healy had had grave doubts about crossing swords with the BHP in 1938 because he feared "this would give Lyons and Company an opportunity to rush in with some kind of intimidating action." 106

105 Ibid., p. 36.
Similarly Communist trade union leaders abandoned any proposed support for a rocket range ban when the government instantaneously introduced strike-breaking legislation.107

In the post-war period, militants had to contend with those in the trade union movement who disapproved of the irritation stoppages, both industrial and political, which were being called. The moder­ates within the movement feared not so much that the militants were out to capture control of the movement, although some moderates thought that they were, as that these tactics made the employers and the government less receptive to what they considered to be the more legitimate and pressing demands. Militants had to examine the kind of support they could expect from those in the labour movement who agreed in principle with their demands but not with the means used.

In 1949, for example, even if it could be argued that the Miners' Federation had some justification for its claims that arbitration had failed the workers, this was a question that came to seem less and less important; the tactics offended many in the trade union movement who felt a strike would split the movement and

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The government had signed the Long-Range Weapons Project agreement with Great Britain to set aside areas in the interior of South and Central Australia for use as testing grounds for guided projectiles. Initial protests of concern for Aborigines in the area had subsided [see CPD, 190: 435-40 (Mar. 6, 1947)] when the problem was raised afresh after some Communist trade union leaders recommended that a "black ban" be placed on the range so that monies could be used for peaceful, domestic pur­poses [see e.g., SMH, May 10, 1947, p. 11]. The proposal was dropped after it met strong opposition in the trade union move­ment [see, e.g., ibid., May 13, 1947, p. 1].
cause unnecessary discomfort to the overwhelming majority of workers. The miners' failure to embarrass the Labor government and become the key voice in the trade union movement was based on a miscalculation. The leaders of the strike recognized that the established leadership in the labor movement had been conditioned by years of participating in an atmosphere of parliamentarianism and arbitration which had blunted the edge of the militant sword and shaped inclinations and habits in the direction of legal rather than direct action. But the miners failed to recognize that the workers had been subjected to the same milieu. By seriously misjudging responses, militants faced the possibility of producing wide divisions within their ranks and isolating themselves from large numbers of workers.

Reaction

Public. Most of the political strikes were too short for public responses to have been noted. However, on three of the longer strikes reaction can be gauged.

(1) Pig iron ban. Within the community there appeared to be little concrete response to the various boycott proposals that had been put forward by the ACTU and the militant unions. While some groups and individuals sympathetic to the WWF's stand passed resolutions in support of the union's action,\textsuperscript{108} trade figures did

\textsuperscript{108} Based on material in the Waterside Workers' Federation files, Sydney.
not indicate any sharp drop in Japanese imports or exports. Adverse reaction to the ban did come from exporters who were suffering trade dislocation; they accused the waterside workers of being "little Czars", dictating trade policy to the government, and asked the government to take action appropriate to having the ban lifted.

(2) Dutch shipping ban. The government itself recognized that many groups and individuals in Australia wanted to see Dutch rule ended in the Netherlands East Indies. Chifley spoke of an anti-colonialism that "runs very deeply through the whole trade union movement in this country, and does not exist merely among a few Communists. It runs much wider than the trade union movement". Community activity in support of the Indonesians was reflected in the Indonesian Medical Aid Appeal set up by some Australian church and business leaders and a successful, well-attended protest march by Sydney University students outside the Dutch consulate; in


110 SMH, Apr. 23, 1938, p. 12.

111 CPD, 186:W(Mar. 6, 1946).

112 K'Tut Tantri, Revolt in Paradise (London: Heinemann, 1960), pp. 290-96; see also demonstration at Woolloomooloo wharves, SMH, Nov. 8, 1945, p. 5.
addition enthusiastic audiences flocked to see Joris Iven's
documentary, *Indonesia Calling*.

However, it was argued that delayed cargoes would destroy
trade opportunities that could be developed to the benefit of the
Australian economy. This was countered by arguments that Australia
would have greater opportunities for trade with a free Indonesia,
in which the standard of living of the people had been raised,
than with one still under Dutch rule. As with the pig iron ban,
exporters and other commercial interests accused the unions of
dictating policy to the government and demanded that these efforts
be countered.

(3) Coal strike. More than in any other strike, the militants
were anxious to take their case to the public. But in so doing the
activists had official and unofficial obstacles to clear before they
could get a hearing: limited funds; a hostile press; unsympathetic

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Which in comparison to the monies available to the other side
seemed even more limited; to cite but one example - the Federation
had £32,500 in financial backing for strike benefits when the
strike began, while the Commonwealth Government spent nearly
£25,000 on advertising alone between June and August. For some
Commonwealth expenses, see *CPD*, 204:313 (Sept. 15, 1949).

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Which according to Edgar Ross, editor of *Common Cause*, ignored
or mutilated public statements and reported favourable informa-
tion in obscure parts of the paper; see Edgar Ross, *The Coal
Front: An Account of the 1949 Coal Strike and the Issues It
radio networks; an official bureaucracy ready to impose hurdles or ready to prosecute should the line between Communist propaganda and seditious utterances be crossed.

It was unlikely that the public, inconvenienced as it was, would support the strikers. The daily papers announced each day in bold type that the miners had "stopped you from having a hot bath or from washing your clothes in hot water, stopped you cooking more than 2 meals a day, cut your transport services.... cut your bread and meat supplies...." while contributing to severe losses in goods and wages.

Labor movement. Militant trade unions have relied upon themselves and secondly upon related working-class organizations to present their demands to the authorities. Militants have had a varying relationship with the Labor Party, which has depended upon both historical circumstances and Labor's being in power or in opposition. In the political strikes which have been discussed, there were a few instances in which the militants were supported in their demands by the Labor Party and other sections of the Labor movement.

The WWF received support for the pig iron ban from the Miners' Federation, the AEU, the Seamen's Union, the ARU, the Building Trades

116 The ABC had refused equal time to the Miners' Federation to answer a broadcast by the Chairman of the Coal Board, *ibid.*

117 For example, no amplification for Domain meetings and a ban on a March through the City from the Central Railway Station to Town Hall. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

Federation, several Trades and Labor Councils, the ACTU, and several branches of the Labor Party. It did not receive official support from Parliamentary Labor. At the time of the Dutch shipping ban, the WWF received support from the FIA, the Boilermakers' Union, the Ships Painters and Dockers' Union, the Road Transport Workers' Union, the Tally Clerks' Union, the Seamen's Union, and some Trades and Labor Councils. The WWF appealed to the ACTU to support action calculated to defeat Dutch policy in the Netherlands East Indies, but the Council did not make any policy recommendations along that line. Rival factions within the trade union movement on the question of the ban began to champion their respective positions; from 1946 on, there were the WWF supporters who wanted to keep the ban until such time as the Indonesian government should request its removal and ACTU supporters who wanted to moderate the ban as the military situation in the Netherlands East Indies improved.\[119\]

Trade union agitation in the post-war period fostered the growth of anti-Communist agitation in the labor movement and led to the formation of the industrial groups.\[120\]

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119 See, e.g., ibid., Mar. 16, 1946, p. 3. The ACTU had been charged itself by the parliamentary opposition for having publicly adopted Communist techniques of intimidation when it called for a series of public demonstrations against the Arbitration Court for the forty-hour week. Ibid., Feb. 26, 1946, p. 4. Not wanting to endanger its industrial chances, the ACTU Executive thought it best to disassociate itself from the WWF's policy. See Monk's statement, ibid., Mar. 13, 1946, p. 1.

movement had been forecast by the protests against the Sharkey and McPhillips stoppages. These were made explicit at the time of the coal strike. The New South Wales Trades and Labor Council went on record with a condemnation of the strike as a menace to the labor movement by endangering relations between miners and other trade unionists, while the Melbourne Trades Hall Council refused to censure the Chifley government for its introduction of the emergency strike legislation. Both bodies, as well as the ACTU and some key unions (Builders Laborers' Federation, Australian Workers' Union, Road Transport Workers' Union) offered support for the Prime Minister's action and urged the miners' leaders to resubmit their case to the Coal Industry Tribunal. Officials of the New South Wales and Federal Labor Party launched an intensive propaganda campaign on the coalfields: distributing fifty thousand leaflets; speaking over coalfield radio stations; addressing public meetings; and generally decrying the strike which they argued had been brought about to insure the defeat of Labor at the forthcoming general election. The strike collapse was assisted by the failure of all-out support for the

121 SMH, Mar. 24, 1949, p. 1; Mar. 25, 1949, p. 1; Apr. 12, 1949, p. 3.

122 Ibid., July 2, 1949, pp. 1, 3.

123 Age, July 1, 1949, p. 1.

124 SMH, June 30, 1949, p. 1; Age, July 1, 1949, p. 1.
miners from other trade unionists. The Australasian Society of Engineers endorsed the government's efforts to bring coal "at grass" into use, while the land transport unions, including the New South Wales branch of the ARU (in defiance of a federal executive directive), agreed that union labor should remove all such coal "at grass" and in trucks. The latter unions also agreed to work with troops if operations were carried out under governmental directives.

Political strikes were supported at all times by the Communist Party.

Government. The reaction by the authorities to political strikes was conditioned by the prevailing historical circumstances, but there were no instances in which the authorities welcomed action that exceeded constitutional forms or which challenged its authority. The authorities were confronted daily with attempts by groups and individuals to influence legislation, but they were neither used to nor prepared to accepted attempts to influence legislation by intimidation. The authorities' punishment of unions for engaging in political strikes which challenged specific policies of the

125 *SMH*, July 12, 1949, p. 3.


128 Based on relevant issues of *Workers' Weekly* and *Tribune*. 
government depended upon weighing the consequences of taking disciplinary action against the consequences of allowing the success of the strike to lead to further attempts to demand other changes in the political or industrial sphere.

In deciding upon a course of action, the authorities were only being advised and pressured by different groups with different axes to grind, not all of whom carried equal weight and prestige with the decision-makers, but they were also concerned with notions of the "general welfare" or the "public interest". In dealing with political strikes, the authorities explained their action in terms of a public interest to be found over and above that of any one sectional interest, and implied that this interest was over and above the sum of all sectional interests. It also appeared that when the authorities settled a controversy in the public interest, they assumed that, in the long run, all sectional interests would be better off as a result of the harmony and order which their decision made possible.

In Australia, there appeared to be a parliamentary ethos which considered certain organized activities to be outside the bounds of permissible and legitimate action. This ethos respected the distinction between persuasion and coercion and considered all attempts to force concessions from the government as being contrary to the rules and requirements of parliamentary democracy. As applied to trade unions, the ethos required disputes to be about real issues which involved concessions from employers; then, within the limits set down by the arbitration system, trade unions could
back up these demands by the use of direct action. But disputes could not be tinged or tainted with political demands made upon the government. Trade unions could play upon public feelings or upon government sensibilities with as many legal, persuasional devices as they saw fit to use, such as meetings, speeches, pamphlets, parades and marches. They could argue against policy in an attempt to have it altered or redirected. By arguing, persuading and trying to convince the authorities, afforded no legitimate grounds on which they could back up their demands with direct strike action.

At a time when some militant trade unions were contemplating placing a "black ban" on the construction of the Mount Eba rocket range in central Australia, the Chifley government introduced penal legislation to deal with persons who declared or attempted to declare "black" any finally approved defense project.129 In supporting the government's action, Attorney-General Evatt elaborated upon the distinction between political opinion and political action: "Just as the endeavor to change decisions by open expression of opinion is of the essence of democracy, so attempted boycott to prevent the government carrying through a defense project approved by Parliament would be the antithesis of democracy, and no government could tolerate it".130 In other words, the ethos allowed persons to

129 Approved Defence Projects Protection Act, 1947.

hold to their different views on matters of government policy so long as they did not try to give effect to those views by force or intimidation. While there could be full and open discussion of policy under consideration, the dissident parties had to abide by a finally decided policy.

When trade unions were attacked for using industrial weapons for political purposes and on political issues and for rejecting the "old and legitimate conception of industrial action for industrial purposes", they were accused of violating their relationship with the government. Under the terms of that relationship, they were "entitled to form their own opinion on any issues, whether political, social or economic, but they have no right to attempt enforcement by resort to strike action". If dissatisfied with the state of affairs, they had recourse to the polls: "The essence of democracy is that obedience should be rendered to Government founded upon a popular vote".

There were various grounds on which the government refused to tolerate political strikes. First, it was argued that dangerous precedents were established if a single section of the community

131 Quoting Menzies on wage-pegging strikes, CPD, 190:21 (Feb. 20, 1947).

132 Quoting Mr. Justice Gallagher on the South African boycott, Canberra Times, Sept. 11, 1964, p. 3.

133 Menzies on pig iron ban, SMH, Dec. 22, 1938, p. 11; see also Curtin, ibid., Feb. 10, 1938, p. 11.
was permitted to act alone: no government could "permit any
section of the community to usurp the functions of the Government....
[this would be] in conflict with the recognized principles of
orderly government and international trading". It was con-
sidered that the section was both usurping the government's
function by seeking to impose its own policy on the community and
also defying the majority will vested in the government. When
minorities set themselves against a policy or piece of legislation,
they were refusing to subordinate private feelings to public re-
quirements. The government argued that once the will of the people
was expressed in a legitimate act, a trade union leader had a
greater duty to the mass of people than to his own sectional group;
for while he had to protect the interests of his immediate group he
had to be careful not to destroy his obligation to the community and
the state. 

Secondly, it was argued that the government framed policy with
the interests of all, the "public interest", in mind, while a trade

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\textit{SMH}, Nov. 18, 1938, p. 11. This was the position of Lyons
government in the pig iron dispute; the position of the
parliamentary opposition in the Dutch shipping ban; and the
position of the Arbitration Court in the coal strike.

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See \textit{Taylor v. Australasian Coal and Shale Employees Federation
and Others}, 64 C.A.R. 741 (1949), at 745; see also Mr. Judge
Foster in sentencing J. King, Miners' Federation official,
union was concerned with a purely section interest. Even though there were occasions when a sectional interest coincided with the public interest (the government deciding what the public interest was), there were also occasions when the two conflicted; since the public interest had to be decisive at all times, it was a dangerous precedent to allow a sectional interest to set policy even once. The government stressed time and time again that a harmony of interests was possible only when all sections of the community obeyed laws enacted for the benefit of all. Furthermore, by imposing its will on the community the trade union was not only voicing its individual conscience but was preventing others from voicing theirs; for example, when the waterside workers placed a ban on certain cargoes, they were preventing those who genuinely believed that those cargoes should be loaded, from doing so.

Thirdly, political strikes destroyed the status quo under which the authorities were accustomed to operating. If the government allowed this kind of action to succeed, then industrial pressures would be used to effect changes in all spheres.

Both parties to a dispute tempered their decisions with considerations of strategy, success and support. The precise reaction

136 The position of the Lyons government during the pig iron dispute.

137 The position of the Arbitration Court during the coal strike.
of the government varied as other phases of national and international life changed. There was the constant factor of prestige, for the government resented having to tolerate the acts of the usurper of its functions;\textsuperscript{138} nor did it welcome the taunts of the parliamentary opposition that it was a flabby, shadow government which accepted orders from Communist trade unions and continuously submitted to industrial blackmail.\textsuperscript{139} But there were also the variables. First, the government had to consider the reaction of sections of the community other than the strikers. During the pig iron dispute, the government had to show a firm hand in order not to antagonize one of its best customers for primary products or the domestic manufacturers of those products. It also had to placate sections of the community who were complaining of any other section's applying pressure on the government. During the coal strike, the problem was more complex than merely victory at any price. There was an outraged public whose mundane comforts had to be attended to; there was a mounting list of unemployed; there was a parliamentary opposition demanding war on the belligerent miners; there was a labour tradition which questioned the use of repressive measures against fellow workers.

\textsuperscript{138} See, e.g., Menzies on the pig iron dispute, \textit{CPD}, 158:1999 (Dec. 8, 1938).

\textsuperscript{139} See, e.g., parliamentary opposition on the Dutch shipping ban, \textit{CPD}, 185:5818 (Sept. 25, 1945); 186:135 (Mar. 8, 1946); 186:1467 (Apr. 11, 1946).
Secondly, the government had to consider how much community support the strikers had. The humane objectives of a wide range of participants tempered its action in the Freeman case; and widespread community support led it with caution through the anti-conscription stoppages, the pig iron dispute (particularly the early stages), the Dutch shipping ban, and the South African boycott. But where political strikes appeared to be lacking in outside support, for example, in the Korean War stoppages or the Indo-China ban, the government could act with greater severity.

In 1938, before the Lyons government decided to invoke penal measures on the offending members of the WWF, it had to consider that the men had acted on humanitarian and conscientious grounds that would appeal to the public, that the action had been in line with ACTU policy, that, while localized in Sydney, the action was not causing any serious disturbances. But it also considered that the militants could find little support from parliamentary labor. In emphasizing that "the foreign policy of Australia is the responsibility of the government and not of groups of individuals", 140 Lyons found support from Curtin, who similarly condemned the sectional outbursts of those who took the initiative in matters of foreign trade. 141

During the Dutch shipping ban, Chifley judged that pro-Indonesian

140 Quoting Lyons, SMH, Jan. 29, 1938, p. 11.

141 Ibid., Feb. 10, 1938, p. 11.
feeling was not confined to a few Communist trade unions. He argued that many people in Australia wanted to see a changed situation in Indonesia. The Labor government itself had spoken of the "legitimate aspirations" of the movements for independence in Southeast Asia; Evatt had argued: "We must work for a harmonious association of democratic states in the South-East Asia area, and see in the development of their political maturity opportunity for greatly increased political, cultural and commercial cooperation". Given this predisposition towards the Indonesians, Chifley was not prepared actively to repress the WWF's activities; nor was he willing to justify them because of the industrial and political consequences which might accrue.

The shipping ban, like other political strikes of the post-war period, was a part of the delicate problems which confronted a Labor government in its relationship to the trade union movement: how to intensify its campaign against the Communist Party while taking care not to make inroads upon the freedom of the labor movement in the process; how to alleviate genuine worker

142 CPD, 186:16 (Mar. 6, 1946).

143 Evatt, in CPD, 192:3687 (June 6, 1947).

144 CPD, 190:164 (Feb. 26, 1947). For opposition attack on supporting the independence movements, see Menzies, in CPD, 201:263-91 (Feb. 15, 1949).
discontent without strengthening the hands of the Communists who would claim victory for benefits won by direct action; how to counter the parliamentary opposition's cries of being flabby, inactive, and Communist sympathizers; and the working class's cries of being traitors, heartless, and unsympathetic bureaucrats; and how to show concern for the interests of the whole country while being fair to the interests of particular sections.  

For Chifley, the Dutch shipping ban was not simply a Communist plot, as the parliamentary opposition alleged. Within the Labor Party, some argued that the ban was an action undertaken for the highest motives, as in the pig iron dispute when the waterfront workers "placed the nation first, and penalized their dependents by refusing to work"; others, that it was part of a tradition on the waterfront which "has always taken a positive attitude on questions of international importance". The pragmatic approach advised by Chifley was for the government to weigh the consequences of using discipline in a dispute the motives of which were at least partially a reflection of the sentiments of the community.

Thirdly, in cases involving trade, the government considered

On Labor's activities to counter the Communist Party, see SMH, May 28, 1945, p. 4; Ibid., June 8, 1946, p. 3; Ibid., June 17, 1946, p. 1; Ibid., July 5, 1946, p. 1.

Quoting Ward, CPD, 185:5829 (Sept. 25, 1945).

Quoting Beazley, CPD, 189:169 (Nov. 13, 1946).
the amount of trade involved. At the time of the pig iron dispute, Japan was too valuable a trading partner to antagonize on any score. But where the trade involved was negligible or the trading partner not that important, as in the case of the Dutch in 1945, financial considerations figured largely in a reverse sense; the government did not feel the same kind of pressure to redress the exporters' grievances. Chifley asked during the Dutch shipping ban: "Does the honorable member suggest that in order to have a limited quantity of supplies [worth ca. $A3,000,000] loaded for some particular part of the globe we should have allowed an industrial dispute to flare up on the waterfront that would have involved the whole industrial movement and the whole of the shipping trade of the country?"148 He also argued that the cancellation of Dutch orders for goods in Australia was due more to limited Dutch finances than to the waterfront workers' ban.149 R. Pollard, then Minister for Commerce, subsequently maintained that much of the loss was due to competitive pricing more than to the lack of transport facilities.150

Fourthly, the government took advantage of splits in the trade union and labor movement before deciding upon appropriate action. In 1937, the labor movement was split on the trade question. ACTU

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148 CPD, 186:17 (Mar. 4, 1946).

149 CPD, 186:1438 (Apr. 11, 1946).

150 CPD, 196:308 (Feb. 27, 1948).
policy on Japanese boycotts and embargoes, if a victory for those on the left advocating a united front program, was not official Labor policy. Parliamentary labor held out against enmeshing Australia in the problems of the disordered old world. By 1945, the labor movement showed signs of being more disunited. The Labor government took advantage of trade union splits during the coal strike by arguing that it was not acting against its own members but the deceivers of its members. Chifley contended that the strike was not a pure industrial dispute called to bring about a just settlement of grievances, but an attack on arbitration calculated to undermine the government and its instrumentalities; as such it had to be treated in an extraordinary manner. While the government weighed the possibility of industrial repercussions should it punish the strikers, it decided to chance the possible industrial retaliation.

There were special problems involved if strikes occurred while a Labor government was in office. For a Labor leader, there was the added problem of the possible electoral liabilities of prosecuting industrial leaders. Since the Labor Party depended upon the organized support of the trade unions, this became a factor in the way in which it handled political strikes. Labor's responses to the post-war period were colored by Chifley's affirmation: "I do not agree with the strikers, but... I shall not at any time join a crusade to crucify

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But the Labor Party leader is also influenced by allies who fall outside the working-class—nationalists, small farmers, petty bourgeoisie, Catholics, intellectuals. See Childe on this point; Childe, op. cit., pp. 79-80.
the workers of this country, to whom I belong...". During the coal strike, Chifley refused to invoke the Crimes Act; for in addition to the labor movement's traditional opposition to the Act, Chifley believed that the "general public does not regard men who have been engaged in industrial troubles as criminals". Nonetheless, he realized that the coal strike was no ordinary industrial dispute led by representatives of the workers but a political strike called by men and "using the miners for their own treacherous purposes".

It was made explicit by the Labor government at the outset of the coal strike that the only authority empowered to adjudicate the miners' claims was the Coal Industry Tribunal and that there could be no further proceedings before that body until the miners agreed to call off the strike. Although it seems clear that the government had the power to launch prosecutions against the miners either under the Crimes Act or by invoking Section 54 of the Coal Industry Act. 

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153 CPD, 203:1561 (June, 28, 1949).

154 Quoting an advertisement authorized by Chifley, SMH, July 20, 1949, p. 4.

155 A strict reading of the Commonwealth's Coal Industry Act 1946, Clause 18 (2), indicated that while there was directional power on the Prime Minister over the Coal Board, Chifley's decision not to intervene was a political not a legal decision.

156 Crimes Act, 1914.
Act 157, it was disinclined to do so if there was a possibility of settlement by other means. When settlement seemed impossible, the government introduced specific legislation to meet the crisis. 158

The courts. The only political strike in which the courts played a significant part was the coal strike. The Arbitration Court, acting under the powers of the emergency legislation passed by the Commonwealth, issued restraining orders to four unions (the Miners' Federation, WWF, AEU, and FIA) and the Communist Party prohibiting them from directing their funds towards assisting the coal strike. When on the following day the High Court upheld the emergency legislation, 159 the Arbitration Court handed down penalties for the unions' failure to comply. 160 These decisions were in due course upheld by the High Court.

Both the Coal Industry Tribunal and the Arbitration Court placed strong emphasis on the need of the civilized community to operate on the basis of the rule of law; both argued that a harmony of all sectional

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157 Coal Industry Act, 1946.


interests was possible only when all sections obeyed the general laws. Rather than disobey the law, groups and individuals must appeal to democratic institutions to resolve competing loyalties, for such institutions had the good of the community at heart. Minorities could not set themselves above the law: "Once the will of the people is expressed in the act...[one has] a greater duty to the mass of the people" than to one's own sectional group. 161

**Evaluation**

Political strikes, like all the forms of non-violent direct action which have been examined in this thesis, are not tactical weapons in a battle between equals. To illustrate: (1) In the pig iron dispute, at the end of nine weeks, the striking workers had lost £100,000 in wages while the ship owners had lost £3,000 in goods. 162  (2) In the coal strike, the government had both legal devices to bring the miners to their knees and means of easing the coal crisis; it also had the upper hand in the propaganda battle. The Miners' Federation had £32,500 available for strike benefits when the strike began. The Commonwealth government spent nearly £25,000 for advertising on the strike alone between June and August, 1949. 163

The strikes, even where they did not achieve their demands, demonstrated to the government that official policy or particular

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161 *The King v. Taylor*, op. cit.

162 *SMH*, Jan. 23, 1939, p. 11.

163 *CPD*, 203:313 (Sept. 15, 1949); see also Ross *op. cit.*, pp. 65-68.
pieces of legislation were unpalatable to a section of the community. In the pig iron dispute, the WWF had made sure that Japan's original contract for twenty-two thousand tons of pig iron would not be filled and that exporters and the government would question the wisdom of any future shipments. However, the action of the WWF had not bound the government to any change in trading policy.

Concretely, the Dutch shipping ban had held up forty thousand tons of cargo. The ban also struck a blow at colonialism, as far as the WWF was concerned, and brought the Indonesian case before the Australian public. Other political strikes discussed had less notable effects.

The coal strike cost £100,000 in lost production, £30,000 in lost pay, and 2,149,900 tons in lost coal. In political terms, it issued in the following warnings to the workers: from one side, to be ever watchful of any attempt in the future to embroil them in

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See statement of Ted Roach, Secretary of the Port Kembla branch of the WWF, in Ironworker, September, 1941, p. 1; see also Jim Healy to Ted Roach, Jan. 25, 1939, in Personal Files of Jim Healy, Waterside Workers' Federation files, Sydney; Healy, "General Secretary's Report on the Recent Pig Iron Dispute - Port Kembla". op. cit.

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CPD, 204:426 (Sept. 21, 1949); 204:999 (Oct. 5, 1949). See also Ross, op. cit., p. 6, where somewhat higher figures are given.
industrial disputes which were designed for purely political motives;\textsuperscript{167} from another; that "in the great test of battle between the workers and the capitalists the Labor government and the Right wing leaders of the Australian Labor Party join forces with the capitalist to make war upon the worker".\textsuperscript{168} The parliamentary opposition, not content with the action taken during the strike, demanded that the government bring in legislation to ban the Communist Party and to introduce secret ballots into trade union elections; when the Liberals came to power at the end of 1949 the strike acted as a stimulus for proposals which culminated in the Communist Party Dissolution Bill of 1951.

\textsuperscript{167} Australian Council of Trade Unions, "Decision of Full Executive Meeting, August 15–19, 1949", in Riley Collection, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Tribune}, Aug. 17, 1949, p. 3.
In this concluding chapter, I plan to reassess the three political movements in terms of Smelser's six determinants of collective behaviour. In his own work, Smelser does not attempt to apply the determinants consistently to any single historical instance, but generally and comparatively to various historical instances of the major forms of collective behaviour. In this thesis, I applied each of the six determinants to three examples of norm-oriented movements which (a) occurred in stable societies of democratic capitalism, and (b) had in common the use of unconventional or illegal tactics as a regular part of their activities. However, I have found that while Smelser's classifications were valuable for setting up a model by which to trace the sequence of events which made up the life period of the movements, they were less helpful in assessing the successes and failures of different kinds of movements. Therefore, in this chapter, I shall supplement Smelser's work with an evaluation of my analytical findings.

The civil rights movement, the nuclear disarmament movement, and the selected aspects of the trade union movement were examples of norm-oriented movements which attempted to induce governmental authorities to modify or create norms in the name of a generalized belief. Their objective was to institute new or modify old laws or policies of the existing system; that is, to affect the norms or regulatory principles by which democratic capitalism operates. While these movements contained some groups or some individuals who challenged the values of democratic
capitalism, the movements as a whole were limited to demands for normative change.

Two other factors are important about these movements. First, they were minority movements which challenged norms accepted by the majority. Their membership was a minority of the population, their views were minority views, and their protest was a minority's protest. The majority either confidently or apathetically supported the norms which the minority wanted to change; the latter, thus, had immediate disadvantages. The Negroes, the Aldermaston marchers, and the militant trade unionists, unlike the followers of Gandhi who were in a majority in India, the women suffragettes who represented a large percentage of the population, or the American trade unionists in the 1930's who had friends in the national government, were minorities with few financial resources and few friends in a position to set policy.

Secondly, while the nature of the changes sought were basically normative, they had at all times valuative consequences and implications. But even though normative, they were changes of great magnitude. They were changes to alter well-established domestic or foreign policies. These policies often had deep historical roots; in all cases, they were policies that were supported by sizeable and significant vested interests.

I wish now to turn to Smelser's six determinants of collective behaviour, bearing in mind two points. First, that these determinants are useful guide-posts for examining the movements' sequence of events. Secondly, no single determinant can explain why and how the movements developed as they did; but all six determinants are, in effect, the necessary conditions which constituted the sufficient condition for the
movements to have occurred.\(^1\)

1. **Structural conduciveness.** Certain structural characteristics permitted or encouraged these political movements by providing channels through which demands for normative change could be made upon the authorities. In addition to the availability of existing media to communicate beliefs, a common language, and such pre-established institutionalized structures as pressure groups, political parties, and ethnic and religious groups, the political movements had access to certain devices: "petitions, elections, initiatives, referenda, letters to congressmen, letters to the press, demonstrations, public opinion polls, requests for court injunctions, etc.\(^2\)

This parallels the first of Dahl's conditions for insuring the peaceful adjustment of conflict:

> The likelihood of peaceful adjustment to a conflict is increased if there exist institutional arrangements that encourage consultation, negotiation, the exploration of alternatives, and the search for mutually beneficial solutions. Conversely, the prospects of deadlock and coercion are increased if institutional arrangements severely inhibit such activities.\(^3\)

The choice of channels depended upon the movements' composition, historical circumstances, and tactical considerations. For example, some in the nuclear disarmament movement believed that the radio and press were boycotting their activities and sought to use tactics which the media

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\(^{1}\) Smelser, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 282.

of communication could ignore less easily; the civil rights movement had lost faith in both the parties of Eisenhower (Republican) and Eastland (Democrat); Australian waterside workers and Negro sharecroppers did not have the formal skills for engaging in petitioning and letter writing; Negroes in New York City boycotted schools because other channels (research, policy statements, newspaper articles, speeches, public debate) had been tried and found wanting.

Smelser argues that the structural setting not only must make some avenues of protest available but also must close some channels of expression. But he appears to confuse the movements' generalized beliefs and their means of expression. Movements are classified as norm-oriented because of the nature of their demands and not because they find obstacles to engaging in outbreaks of hostility, mob violence and coups d'état. It would be significant if CORE organized hostile mobs in Harlem; but it could do so in the name of slum clearance projects. In countries where there is a traditional method which most norm-oriented movements follow, this method acts to confine the boundaries of any norm-oriented movement. This is so even in movements in which the use of non-violent direct action is unconventional; the traditional methods still operate as a referent to direct action.

2. Strain. The movements indicated diverse kinds of strain: (a) new information on the destructive potential of nuclear weapons contributed to the formation of CND; (b) dissatisfaction with the post-World War II situation contributed to the calling of political strikes; (c) the

\[4\] Smelser, op. cit., pp. 285-86.
disharmony between the social and economic conditions of the white middle class and the "black bourgeoisie" contributed to the discontent of the Negro middle class; (d) the attempts of the American government to bid for Asian and African support, in the context of the Cold War, by citing the equality ideology embodied in the American Creed contributed to the discontent of the domestic Negro population.

These strains exerted pressure for change in the social system by creating demands for altering some aspect of that system - in the case of the three movements studied, normative aspects of the system. The strains by themselves did not make for change in the system; but they did represent a possible source of change.

3. Growth of generalized beliefs. In the presence of appropriate conditions of conduciveness and strain, generalized beliefs were activated. The beliefs, more complex than mere causes, explained or identified the dissatisfactions or inadequacies within the society, made the situation meaningful to the potential activists, and suggested methods of correcting the dissatisfactions or inadequacies. In the movements studied, federal civil rights legislation was envisaged as bringing equal rights to American Negroes; an Australian ban on pig iron sales to Japan was regarded as decreasing the latter's chances of aggression; and a programme of unilateralism was considered to represent a chance to remove Great Britain from the moral and military destructiveness of nuclear weapons.

In the movements, certain results were promised, hoped for or expected if certain normative changes were made which would alter what the movements regarded as the situation of strain. Smelser points out that
in the search for solutions to conditions of strain, people develop a belief which "'short-circuits' from a very generalized component directly to the focus of strain." He continues: "Collective behavior, then, is the action of the impatient.... This is one reason for defining collective behavior as uninstitutionalized; it occurs when structural social action is under strain and when institutionalized means of overcoming strain are inadequate."6

4. Role of precipitating factors. A specific event which came to symbolize the conditions of conduciveness and strain set the movements in motion. The belief, in other words, was given an immediacy and urgency. The Labour government’s toughening attitude toward the Australian Communist Party, manifested, in so far as the latter was concerned, in the court convictions of Sharkey and McPhillips, was a factor precipitating the coal strike. The changed attitude of Bevan on unilateralism, or rather the hopes of the unilateralists in the Labour Party that Bevan would champion their position, precipitated action outside the Labour Party for the defence policy objectives. The arrest of Rosa Parkes precipitated the Montgomery bus boycott; the success of the boycott stimulated later direct action measures for civil rights. In some instances, the condition of strain and the precipitating factors were the same, for example, the revelations of the 1957 Defence White Paper in Great Britain.

5 Ibid., p. 71. Italics in the original.

6 Ibid., pp. 72-73.
5. Mobilization of the participants for action. In the body of this thesis, I have discussed the class composition of the movements, the role of the leadership, the diverse strategies and tactics which the movements adopted, and the manner of action of the affected groups. At this point, I would like to offer a more general explanation of the unconventionality of these three political movements.

Two main problems faced the movements: first, to command the attention of the nation; and second, to make the authorities more responsive to the urgency of their situation and, hence, to their demands. The question was how best to approach these problems: how to draw attention to their case: how to present arguments for their position; and how best to apply pressure on the national authorities to enact the kind of legislation which they saw as curing their ills.

The general answer was non-violent direct action, of which there were two kinds. First, "immediate" direct action posed a direct threat to the institutions being attacked. The outcome of sit-ins at lunch counters, sit-ins at weapon plants' roadways, shop-ins at food stores, rent strikes and political strikes was partially dependent upon the economic dislocation which they caused. The loss of trade as a result of direct action demonstrations was a factor in integrating public accommodation; while the fact that weapons production continued unimpeded allowed the authorities to ignore the nuclear disarmament activists. Considering their strategic location in the society, militant trade unions won surprisingly few of their strikes; the idea of their being able to force the society to a standstill, like Sorel's myth of the general
strike, sustained their enthusiasm and maintained their willingness to engage in many strikes, but it brought few concrete results.

Secondly, it was hard for most activists to take immediate direct action; they had to be content with symbolic direct action – parades, marches, vigils, sit-downs in public thoroughfares, stall-ins. In these cases, the extent of the social rather than the economic (financial) dislocation was a factor in the demonstrations' outcome. Two thousand people peacefully sitting down in Parliament Square could be ignored by the authorities; for there was no indication that if they were ignored they would be more numerous or less peaceful at later demonstrations. But three hundred Negroes conducting a sit-down at a hospital site in New York City could not be ignored, since the authorities feared that the next time they might be a hostile, violent group of one thousand led by the Black Muslims.

The reasons for using both immediate and symbolic direct action varied. Some people regarded it as a personal statement of where they stood on the issues raised by the movements and as an end in itself. But most people regarded it as a political act. Non-violent direct action was considered to be supplementary to political action and to conventional politics; it was an act to "force" the authorities to yield what they would not give of their own. Except in the case of the trade union movement for whom direct action, as a form of action, was an integral part of their traditional activities, the civil rights and nuclear disarmament movements regarded it much more so as a "last resort"

7 Sorel, op. cit., pp. 41-46.
to be used either when other methods seemed inappropriate or when ordinary means of persuasion had failed, or out of impatience with the speed of conventional means of demanding change.

What strikes the observer is how appropriate non-violent direct action was to a mass society. It was a dynamic method. It was suitable for long, drawn-out struggles. It could be used by people whose prime resource was their bodily strength; it required little money, few skills and simple techniques of organization. It could be used by both those to whom it was a part of a philosophy of life and those to whom it was a politically expedient tactic.

The intellectuals in the civil rights and nuclear disarmament movements spoke of the alienation of modern man - the problems connected with doing meaningful work and playing a meaningful role in the mass society. In the highly organized economic and social structure, with its legal and political intricacies and complexities, what Fromm calls "expressions of a constellation in which the individual is confronted by uncontrollable dimensions in comparison with which he is a small particle"\(^8\), non-violent direct action gave people far from the corridors of power a chance to affect the political process. It allowed them to become possible vehicles of social change in a manner appropriate to their situation. A sit-down, a mass march, a boycott, and a black ban, simple as they were, stood in sharp relief to the complexities of mass society described by Lederer,\(^9\)


Non-violent direct action threw up its own problems. These were discussed in detail in the thesis. But, in brief; firstly, occasionally militant forms of direct action overshadowed the movements' demands. Few cared what Brooklyn CORE demanded as the price for calling off the stall-ins; the dangers of radioactivity took second place to the consequences of the Committee of 100's acts of civil disobedience; the shortcomings of the arbitration system mattered little to the inconvenienced population of Sydney; the revelations of the Spies for Peace document mattered less than the Spies' breach of the Official Secrets Act.

Secondly, all three movement searched for allies, for they feared that alone they could not bring enough weight to bear on the authorities. But the need to have allies entailed the need to consider tactics and strategy in terms of the former's possible support.

Thirdly, once non-violent direct action was used, the movements found it difficult to rechannel energies into the ordinary political processes.

This problem was particularly acute in the civil rights movement. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it was difficult for activists to move from dynamic measures of direct action to the necessarily slower and often frustrating business of exerting energy by means of the vote and other forms of political action.

Fourthly, as some sections within the movement began to argue that other changes (often, but not always, valuative changes) had to take place in the society before the movements' demands could become meaningful (paradoxically, this argument was advanced least often in the militant, usually Communist-led, trade unions), it became less simple to pinpoint objects to attack. Automation, to cite one example, was less easy to protest against with the aid of non-violent direct action than was a segregated lunch counter.

6. Social control. The agencies of social control existed before the formation of the movements, but I was concerned in this thesis with measures which were activated after an episode of collective behaviour had materialized. The specific measures of social control were discussed in the main body of this thesis. The following remarks are of a more general nature.

In general, the authorities could encourage the movements, hold out the promise that demands could be obtained, use dilatory or vacillating tactics, ignore the movements, or repress them by inhibition or prohibition. The authorities could open up or close off some of the avenues of protest; they could remove or minimize the conditions of strain or make the strains appear tolerable; they could make normative changes which were less than those sought by the movements, but which the authorities regarded as a necessary palliative.
The authorities never welcomed non-violent direct action; it bewildered them, annoyed them, and created confusion. The techniques of the protest movements were considered to be dangerous precedents, ones that encouraged disrespect of the conventions and laws of the society, ones that bordered on infringements of majority rule, ones that bordered on disrupting the democratic processes, and ones that upset the status quo. The authorities feared that if non-violent direct action was successful, it might be adopted by other groups in the society to press for more far-reaching demands.

Although the authorities did not welcome the protest movements, the latter's activities were carried on with the consent of the authorities where they were held to be more valuable as a safety valve than as a measure of social action (civil rights movement); where punishments were held to be costly and capable of precipitating disorder (trade union movement); where they did not threaten widespread disorder (all three movements); where, if left alone, it was thought that they might collapse on their own initiative (nuclear disarmament movement). Action was taken against tactics which the authorities found particularly odious, such as the stall-in, the breach of the Official Secrets Act at the Wethersfield air base, and the coal strike.

I agree with Smelser that because beliefs are generalized, success cannot be measured solely in terms of the realization of the beliefs. Movements which achieved some measure of success continued to agitate along the same or similar lines — witness the civil rights movement; those which were unsuccessful declined — witness the nuclear disarmament movement and the decreased use of political strikes by the militant trade unions. But
even where the movements did not establish a normative innovation, they brought some measures of change to the society.

When the observer takes an over-all look at the movements, the most obvious question is why the civil rights movement achieved success (it left, in fact, "an observable mark - a norm or an organization in its wake") to a far greater extent than did the other two movements. I should like to offer an explanation of the reasons for its success; I suggest that the explanation reveals something important about protests movements in general.

The situation in the United States differed from that in the other two countries because of the degree to which the ideal of equality (from which the generalized beliefs drew sustenance) was inculcated into the values of American society. The movement drew its inspiration from American ideology, but there was no anti-war ideology similarly entrenched in British society and no comparable, deeply-felt ideology in Australia which the trade unions could call upon to bolster their case. In fact, in those cases in Australia where there was an historical tradition, such as anti-Japanese and anti-colonialist feeling in the labour movement, the political strikes received greater community support.

Certain aspects of the civil rights movement may have been novel, especially the unprecedented scale on which the action took place, but the issues had been with the country for nearly one hundred years. There were years of struggle by Negro groups, steady pressure from radicals and liberals, growing encouragement from the courts, and the gradual transformation of the South into an industrial society in which some of the discriminatory practices were costly.

16 Smelser, op. cit., p. 111.
The strains which the civil rights movement spoke about were strongly felt by more groups and individuals outside the movement, including some of the authorities, than was the case in the other two movements. The civil rights activists, unlike those in the other two movements, did not have to engage in an educative campaign, before the purpose of their non-violent direct action could make sense. Nor did they have to divide their energies into both educating the population on the reasons for their position and taking a stand on that position itself. What the civil rights movement was talking about was widely recognized in the community; but radioactive fall-out, Japanese aggression, and the failures of arbitration were not matters with which the public had much knowledge.

It would appear that one factor in a movement's being successful, then, is the degree to which the views are widespread, the degree to which views become widespread when called to people's attention, and the degree to which views are not held at all. The remoteness with which most people regard matters of foreign policy and the complexity with which they regarded matters of defence policy made it more difficult for movements to succeed in these fields. It was easier for people to see the implications of civil rights and for the authorities to institute change in this field, while it was harder to see the immediacy of the nuclear disarmament and trade union movement's demands and more complex for the authorities to alter policies in these fields.

This is not meant to imply that movements for nuclear disarmament or for changes in foreign policy are doomed to impotence at the start. It means that they have to wage a harder and longer campaign to get their demands through. It means that they have to educate (also an element in social change) until the time has become ripe for a change.
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METHODS OF NON-VIOLENT DIRECT ACTION

- Constitutional Action
  - Petitions
  - Deputations
  - Lobbies
  - Negotiations
  - Fact Investigation

- Propaganda
  - Letters to press
  - Leaflets
  - Pamphlets
  - Canvassing
  - Public Meetings
  - Exhibitions
  - Conferences

- Symbolic
  - Parades
  - Marches
  - Vigils
  - Rallies

- Economic
  - Strikes (industrial or political)
  - Boycott
  - Picket

Civil Disobedience
- Open contravention of unjust laws through acts of omission or commission
- Trespass
- Obstruction
- Revenue Refusal

In certain circumstances may become Act of Civil Disobedience
APPENDIX "B"

AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL STRIKES*

1916 Anti-conscription stoppages: various unions involved in refusals to file compulsory war census questionnaires; stop-works in protest over conscription referendum

1919 Paul Freeman case: WWF refused to work ship until Freeman, alleged undesirable alien, was released

1920 Father Jerger case: WWF refusal to work ship until Jerger; alleged undesirable alien, was tried

1927 Sacco Vanzetti case: various unions hold stop-works in protest over executions of Sacco and Vanzetti in the United States; ACTU passes consumer boycott on American goods

1937-39 Pig-iron ban: WWF refusal to load various strategic goods for Japan

1939 National Register boycott: various unions refuse to fill in National Register forms

1941 Ratliff–Thomas case: various Communist unions hold stop-works demanding release of interned Communist trade union leaders Ratliff and Thomas

1945-49 Dutch shipping ban: various unions, WWF in particular, refuse to load goods for the Netherlands East Indies

1946 Flour ban to China: WWF refusal to load flour bound for Shanghai black market

1947 Boycott on goods to Spain: WWF refusal to load goods for Spain

1947 Soap ban: WWF refusal to load soap for export

1947 Galvanized roofing ban: WWF refusal to load galvanized roofing iron for New Guinea

* This list does not purport to be complete.
1948  Prices protest: various unions hold stop-works in protest over high prices and black marketing in food and clothing

1948  Greek ships ban: Seamen’s Union refusal to work Greek ships

1949  Sharkey and McPhillips case: various unions hold stop-works in protest over jailings of Sharkey and McPhillips for contempt of court

1949  Coal strike: Combined Mining Unions' protest over arbitration system and related causes

1950  Sharkey case: various unions hold stop-works over jailing of Sharkey

1950  Communist Party Dissolution Bill stoppages: various unions hold stop-works over the introduction of bill to ban the Communist Party

1950  Korean War stoppages: Seamen’s Union refusal to transport war materials to Korea

1951  Roach and Healy case: WWF refusal to load ships in protest of jailings of Roach and Healy

1954  Indo-China ban: WWF declaration of freighter "black" for carrying arms to Indo-China

1960  Crimes Act stoppages: WWF holds stop-works in protest against proposed amendments to Crimes Act

1962  South Vietnam ban: WWF refusal to load barbed wire for South Vietnam

1963-64  South Africa ban: WWF refusal to load or unload cargo involved in trade with South Africa