

The Nonviolent Action Handbook

Excerpted from the [SOA Watch](#) website

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Introduction

Nonviolent action has played a key role in the struggle for social change all over the world. It has a long and proud history, but it is not only something from the past, it lives on in many struggles for freedom, equality and justice. It seems there is a current running from group to group, movement to movement. Women suffragists learned from the abolitionists; early labor activists borrowed from both of them, adding their own contributions. Civil rights activists, anti-war protesters, people with disabilities, battered women and farm workers (to name a few) all continued the process. Chinese students in Tiananmen Square held signs saying "We Shall Overcome." Sometimes nonviolent direct action responding to oppression or abuse of power seems to spring up spontaneously in apparently unrelated times and places. One of the reasons that these discoveries amaze and inspire us is that official histories and media accounts don't generally record these events.

Nonviolent civil disobedience requires discipline and preparation, as well as burning commitment and desire for change. Contrary to popular mythology Rosa Parks did not just sit down one day on the bus because she was tired. She was a woman trained for this nonviolent action which changed the course of history. Thousands of people, whose names we will never know, made the same preparations for various actions in the campaign for civil rights. Very few of the people we do hear about acted alone.

This handbook continues a tradition of sharing and passing on beliefs, strategies, values and tactics. It offers the combined experience and wisdom of many people who have struggled to make the world more just. It is not the final word, but falls on the people who read it, to honestly reflect on the guidance we offer.

We've organized this handbook as a tool for learning about different aspects of nonviolent civil disobedience actions. On this, its third printing, we are proud to say it has been used by activists using nonviolent direct action concerning a variety of issues, including: AIDS- activism, toxic waste protests, disabilities awareness, battered women protests, gay rights, abortion clinic escorts, weapons protests, anti-Gulf War actions and anti- violence protests, and more.

In 1978 the Clamshell Alliance produced a handbook for a civil disobedience action at the yet unbuilt Seabrook nuclear power plant in New Hampshire. In the following years many major civil disobedience actions produced their own handbooks following the format of this Clamshell one. We have borrowed from many of these handbooks. We have not been able to give credit to original authors in all cases. Many early handbooks were collective projects which did not acknowledge specific authors. In an attempt to give credit to all the volunteers who have labored over handbooks we are listing below the handbook committees of three ground breaking handbooks.

Throughout this handbook are photographs representing a wide range of nonviolent actions within the United States. Their diversity shows the scope of nonviolent resistance, from individual to mass actions, addressing many progressive issues. Most of the photos are from the 1980's, when this handbook was first produced. They serve as inspiration for those contemplating actions.

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for the Handbook Committee.

History of Mass Nonviolent Action

The use of nonviolence runs throughout history. There have been numerous instances of people courageously and nonviolently refusing cooperation with injustice. However, the fusion of organized mass struggle and nonviolence is relatively new. It originated largely with Mohandas Gandhi in 1906 at the onset of the South African campaign for Indian rights. Later, the Indian struggle for complete independence from the British Empire included a number of spectacular nonviolent campaigns. Perhaps the most notable was the year-long Salt campaign in which 100,000 Indians were jailed for deliberately violating the Salt Laws.

The refusal to counter the violence of the repressive social system with more violence is a tactic that has also been used by other movements. The militant campaign for women's suffrage in Britain included a variety of nonviolent tactics such as boycotts, noncooperation, limited property destruction, civil disobedience, mass marches and demonstrations, filling the jails, and disruption of public ceremonies.

The Salvadoran people have used nonviolence as one powerful and necessary element of their struggle. Particularly during the 1960s and 70s, Christian based communities, labor unions, campesino organizations, and student groups held occupations and sit-ins at universities, government offices, and places of work such as factories and haciendas.

There is rich tradition of nonviolent protest in this country as well, including Harriet Tubman's underground railroad during the civil war and Henry David Thoreau's refusal to pay war taxes. Nonviolent civil disobedience was a critical factor in gaining women the right to vote in the United States, as well. The U.S. labor movement has also used nonviolence with striking effectiveness in a number of instances, such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) free speech confrontations, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) sit-down strikes from 1935-1937 in auto plants, and the UFW grape and lettuce boycotts.

Using mass nonviolent action, the civil rights movement changed the face of the South. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) initiated modern nonviolent action for civil rights with sit-ins and a freedom ride in the 1940s. The successful Montgomery bus boycott electrified the nation. Then, the early 1960s exploded with nonviolent actions: sit-ins at lunch counters and other facilities, organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); Freedom Rides to the South organized by CORE; the nonviolent battles against segregation in Birmingham, Alabama, by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); and the 1963 March on Washington, which drew 250,000 participants.

Opponents of the Vietnam War employed the use of draft card burnings, draft file destruction, mass demonstrations (such as the 500,000 who turned out in 1969 in Washington, D.C.), sit-ins, blocking induction centers, draft and tax resistance, and the historic 1971 May Day traffic blocking in Washington, D.C. in which 13,000 people were arrested.

Since the mid-70s, we have seen increasing nonviolent activity against the nuclear arms race and nuclear power industry. Nonviolent civil disobedience actions have taken place at dozens of nuclear weapons research installations, storage areas, missile silos, test sites, military bases, corporate and government offices and nuclear power plants. In the late 1970s mass civil disobedience actions took place at nuclear power plants from Seabrook, New Hampshire to the Diablo Canyon reactor in California and most states in between in this country and in other

countries around the world. In 1982, 1750 people were arrested at the U.N. missions of the five major nuclear powers. Mass actions took place at the Livermore Laboratories in California and SAC bases in the Midwest. In the late 80s a series of actions took place at the Nevada test site. International disarmament actions changed world opinion about nuclear weapons.

In 1980 women who were concerned with the destruction of the Earth and who were interested in exploring the connections between feminism and nonviolence were coming together. In November of 1980 and 1981 the Women's Pentagon Actions, where hundreds of women came together to challenge patriarchy and militarism, took place. A movement grew that found ways to use direct action to put pressure on the military establishment and to show positive examples of life-affirming ways to live together. This movement spawned women's peace camps at military bases around the world from Greenham Common, England to Puget Sound Peace Camp in Washington state, with camps in Japan and Italy among others.

The anti-apartheid movement in the 80s has built upon the powerful and empowering use of civil disobedience by the civil rights movement in the 60s. In November of 1984, a campaign began that involved daily civil disobedience in front of the South African Embassy. People, including members of Congress, national labor and religious leaders, celebrities, students, community leaders, teachers, and others, risked arrest every weekday for over a year. In the end over 3,100 people were arrested protesting apartheid and U.S. corporate and government support. At the same time, support actions for this campaign were held in 26 major cities, resulting in an additional 5,000 arrests.

We also saw civil disobedience being incorporated as a key tactic in the movement against intervention in Central America. Beginning in 1983, national actions at the White House and State Department as well as local actions began to spread. In November 1984, the Pledge of Resistance was formed. Since then, over 5,000 people have been arrested at military installations, congressional offices, federal buildings, and CIA offices. Many people have also broken the law by providing sanctuary for Central American refugees and through the Lenten Witness, major denomination representatives have participated in weekly nonviolent civil disobedience actions at the Capitol.

Student activists have incorporated civil disobedience in both their anti-apartheid and Central America work. Divestment became the campus slogan of the 80s. Students built shantytowns and staged sit-ins at Administrator's offices. Hundreds have been arrested resulting in the divestment of over 130 campuses and the subsequent withdrawal of over \$4 billion from the South African economy. Central America student activists have carried out campaigns to protest CIA recruitment on campuses. Again, hundreds of students across the country have been arrested in this effort.

Nonviolent direct action has been an integral part of the renewed activism in the lesbian and gay community since 1987, when ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) was formed. ACT UP and other groups have organized hundreds of civil disobedience actions across the country, focusing not only on AIDS but on the increasing climate of homophobia and attacks on lesbians and gay men. On October 13, 1987, the Supreme Court was the site of the first national lesbian and gay civil disobedience action, where nearly 600 people were arrested protesting the decision in *Hardwick vs. Bowers*, which upheld sodomy laws. This was the largest mass arrest in D.C. since 1971.

Political Analysis

Power itself is not derived through violence, though in governmental form it is usually violent in

nature. Governmental power is often maintained through oppression and the tacit compliance of the majority of the governed. Any significant withdrawal of that compliance will restrict or dissolve governmental control. Apathy in the face of injustice is a form of violence. Struggle and conflict are often necessary to correct injustice.

Our struggle is not easy, and we must not think of nonviolence as a "safe" way to fight oppression. The strength of nonviolence comes from our willingness to take personal risk without threatening other people.

It is essential that we separate the individual from the role she/he plays. The "enemy" is the system that casts people in oppressive roles.

Nonviolent Response to Personal Violence

Nonviolence focuses on communication:

- 1. Your objectives must be reasonable. You must believe you are fair and you must be able to communicate this to your opponent.**
- 2. Maintain as much eye contact as possible.**
- 3. Make no abrupt gestures. Move slowly. When practical, tell your opponent what you are going to do before you do it. Don't say anything threatening, critical, or hostile.**
- 4. Don't be afraid of stating the obvious; say simply, "You're shouting at me," or "You're hurting my arm."**
- 5. Someone in the process of committing an act of violence has strong expectations as to how his/ her victim will behave. If you manage to behave differently - in a nonthreatening manner you can interrupt the flow of events that would have culminated in an act of violence. You must create a scenario new to your opponent.**
- 6. Seek to befriend your opponent's better nature; even the most brutal and brutalized among us have some spark of decency which the nonviolent defender can reach.**
- 7. Don't shut down in response to physical violence; you have to play it by ear. The best rule is to resist as firmly as you can without escalating the anger or the violence. Try varying approaches and keep trying to alter your opponent's picture of the situation.**
- 8. Get your opponent talking and listen to what s/he says. Encourage him/her to talk about what s/he believes, wishes, fears. Don't argue but at the same time don't give the impression you agree with assertions that are cruel or immoral. The listening is more important than what you say - keep the talk going and keep it calm.**

*- Adapted from an article
by Markley Morris*

Practicing Nonviolence

"Without a direct action expression of it, nonviolence, to my mind, is meaningless.
M.K. Gandhi

Practice is a key word in understanding nonviolence. A nonviolent approach assumes that people take active roles, making choices and commitments and building on their experience. It also presents a constant challenge: to weave together the diversity of individual experiences into an ever-changing vision. There is no fixed, static "definition" of nonviolence.

Nonviolence is active. Although to some the word nonviolence implies passivity, nonviolence is actually an active form of resistance. It analyzes the sources of institutional violence and intervenes on a philosophical and political level through direct and persistent actions.

Gandhi's vision of nonviolence is translated as "clinging to truth" or sometimes "truth force", which includes both determination to speak out even when one's truth is unpopular, and willingness to hear the truth of other people's experience. He also defined two other components of nonviolence: the refusal to harm others and willingness to suffer for one's beliefs. Many activists who adopt nonviolent tactics are reluctant to accept these aspects philosophically, or to prescribe them to others. For example, Third World people in the U.S. and other countries are often pressed to use violent action to defend their lives. Some feminists point out that since our society pressures women to be self sacrificing, the decision to accept suffering is often reinforcement of women's oppression rather than a free choice.

Jo Vellacott, in her essay "Women, Peace and Power", speaks of violence as "resourcelessness" seeing few options, feeling like one's self or small group is alone against a hostile or at best indifferent universe. Many societal institutions and conventions, despite their original intention to benefit at least some people, perpetuate this violence by depriving people of their lives, health, self-respect or hope. Non-violence then becomes resourcefulness - seeing the possibilities for change in oneself and in others, and having the power to act on those possibilities. Much of the task of becoming effectively nonviolent lies in removing the preconceptions that keep us from seeing those resources. Undoing the violence within us involves challenging myths that we are not good enough, not smart enough or not skilled enough to act. The best way to do this is to try it, working with friends or in small groups at first, and starting with role-plays or less intimidating activities like leafleting. As confidence in our own resourcefulness grows, we become more able to support each other in maintaining our nonviolent actions.

Anger and emotional violence Getting rid of the patterns of violence that societal conditioning has placed in us is not always a polite process; it involves releasing despair, anger, and other emotions that haven't been allowed to surface before. The myth that emotions are destructive and unreliable prevents us from trusting our own experience and forces us to rely on rigid formulas and people we perceive as authorities for guidance. Most of us have been taught that expressing anger especially provokes disapproval, invalidation and physical attack, or else will hurt others and make us suffer guilt. This conditioning serves to make us both repress our own anger and also respond repressively to each other's anger.

Anger is a sign of life. It arises with recognition that injustice exists and contains the hope that things can be different. It is often hard to see this clearly because, as Barbara Deming says,

". . . our anger is in great part hidden from others and even from ourselves and when it is finally allowed to emerge into the open - this pride - it is shaking, unsure of itself, and so quick to be violent. For now it believes and yet it doesn't quite dare to believe that it can claim its rights at

last."

To make room for a healthy expression of and response to this anger, it helps to create a general attitude of respect and support. Verbal violence - snide or vicious tones, interrupting, shouting down or misrepresenting what people say - is the antithesis of respect and communication. When people sense this happening, they should pause and consider their feelings and objectives. Clearing the air is especially important when people are feeling defensive or threatened; developing a sense of safety and acceptance of our anger with each other helps us concentrate all our emotional energies towards constructive, effective action.

"Non-violence is the constant awareness of the dignity and humanity of oneself and others; it seeks truth and justice; it renounces violence both in method and in attitude; it is a courageous acceptance of active love and goodwill as the instrument with which to overcome evil and transform both oneself and others. It is the willingness to undergo suffering rather than inflict it. It excludes retaliation and flight."

_ Wally Nelson, conscientious objector, civil rights activist, and tax resister

Nonviolence Training

Historically, nonviolence training was used extensively during the civil rights movement, in Gandhi's campaigns in India against the British, and in recent years in the struggles against nuclear technology, against U.S. policy in Central America and Southern Africa and for the rights of farm workers, women and people with AIDS, to name a few.

The purpose of training is for participants to form a common understanding of the use of nonviolence. It gives a forum to share ideas about nonviolence, oppression, fears and feelings. It allows people to meet and build solidarity with each other and provides an opportunity to form affinity groups. It is often used as preparation for action and gives people a chance to learn about an action, its tone, and legal ramifications. It helps people to decide whether or not they will participate in an action. Through role playing, people learn what to expect from police, officials, other people in the action and themselves.

Nonviolence training can range from several hours to several months. Most typical in the United States are sessions that run up to eight hours and have 10-25 people with two trainers leading the discussion and role-plays. Areas covered in a session include:

- History and philosophy of nonviolence, including role plays on the use of nonviolence and nonviolent responses to violence.
- Role-plays and exercises in consensus decision making, conflict resolution, and quick decision making.
- A presentation of legal ramifications of civil disobedience and discussion on noncooperation and bail solidarity.
- Exercises and discussion of the role of oppression in our society and the progressive movement.
- What is an affinity group and what are the roles within the group. - A sharing of fears and feelings related to nonviolence and nonviolent action.

A Creative Combination

This is the heart of my argument: We can put more pressure on the antagonist for whom we show human concern. It is precisely solicitude for his person in combination with a stubborn interference with his actions that can give us a very special degree of control (precisely In ,our acting both with love, if you will - in the sense that we respect his human rights - and truthfulness, in the sense that we act out fully our objections to his violating our rights). We put upon him two pressures - the pressure of our defiance of him and the pressure of our respect for his life - and it happens that in combination these two pressures are uniquely effective.

The Two Hands

They have as it were two hands upon him - the one calming him, making him ask questions, as the other makes him move.

- Barbara Deming, "On Revolution and Equilibrium"

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote that the philosophy and practice of nonviolence has six basic elements. First, nonviolence is resistance to evil and oppression. It is a human way to fight. Second, it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his/her friendship and understanding. Third, the nonviolent method is an attack on the forces of evil rather than against persons doing the evil. It seeks to defeat the evil and not the persons doing the evil and injustice. Fourth, it is the willingness to accept suffering without retaliation. Fifth, a nonviolent resister avoids both external physical and internal spiritual violence - not only refuses to shoot, but also to hate, an opponent. The ethic of real love is at the center of nonviolence. Sixth, the believer in nonviolence has a deep faith in the future and the forces in the universe are seen to be on the side of justice.

(Stride Toward Freedom Perennial Library, Harper & Row, PP.83-88)

Affinity Groups

Affinity groups are self-sufficient support systems of about 5 to 15 people. A number of affinity groups may work together toward a common goal in a large action, or one affinity group might conceive of and carry out an action on its own. Sometimes, affinity groups remain together over a long period of time, existing as political support and/or study groups, and only occasionally participating in actions.

If you are planning to do civil disobedience, it is a good idea to either form an affinity group or join an already existing one. Affinity groups serve as a source of support and solidarity for their members. Feelings of being isolated or alienated from the movement, the crowd, or the world in general can be alleviated through the familiarity and trust which develops when an affinity group works and acts together. By generating this familiarity, the affinity group structure reduces the possibility of infiltration by outside provocateurs. However, participants in an action should be prepared to be separated from their affinity group .

Affinity groups form the basic decision-making bodies of mass actions. As long as they remain within the nonviolence guidelines, affinity groups are generally encouraged to develop any form of participation they choose.

Every affinity group must decide for itself how it will make decisions and what it wants to do. This process starts when an affinity group forms. If a new person asks to join an affinity group, she/he should find out what the group believes in and what they plan to do, and decide if she/he can share it. Some groups ask that all members share a commitment to feminism, for example, or to nonviolence as a way of life. Others, which have specifically formed to do a particular action, might have less sweeping agreements.

A group cannot hope to reach consensus decisions without having some base of agreement. Once a base is agreed upon, working out the details of specific issues and actions is not as difficult as one might expect, providing that there is a willingness to go along with a good idea, even if it is someone else's. If you find that you cannot work effectively with your group, it might be better to try to find another one.

Affinity groups for mass actions are often formed during nonviolence training sessions. It is a good idea to meet with your affinity group a few times before an action to get to know them if you are not already friends, and to discuss issues such as noncooperation and relationship to the legal system, the role your group will play (in a large action), etc. After an action, it is also helpful to meet with your group to evaluate and share experiences.

Roles Within the Affinity Group

These roles can be rotated: Facilitator(s), vibes-watchers, Spokespeople, Support people.

Support

The role of support in a civil disobedience action is crucial. Support people accept the responsibility of being a visible, involved contact to the outside once a member of the affinity group is arrested. They are the personal extension of the care and concern an affinity group shares among its members, an extension of the need all the participants have to see that individuals who participate in nonviolent direct action are not isolated, neglected, and overburdened because of their political statement.

It can be hard for you to decide whether to do civil disobedience or support. It is strongly encouraged that those considering doing support go through nonviolence training. In making the decision, you could consider how each role would affect your family, job, and other commitments, as well as your legal status (i.e. being on probation, not being a U.S. citizen, etc.). During and after a mass action, be sure to stay in touch with support people from other affinity groups, for information sharing and emotional support.

Before an Action:

Help the affinity group decide upon and initiate their action, provide physical and moral support, and share in the excitement and sense of determination.

- Know the people in your affinity group by name and description.
- Know where people who are arrested are likely to be taken.
- Make a confidential list with the following information:

Name of arrestee

Name used for arrest - Whether or not individual wants to bail out, and when.

- Who arrestee would like contacted and under what circumstances.
- Special medical information or other special needs info.

- Whether the individual plans to cooperate, and in what ways.
- Whether the person is a minor. • Whether the person wants/needs a lawyer.

For a mass action:

- Know who the support coordinators are.
- Know the phone number of the action office.
- Be sure the group fills out an affinity group check-in sheet.
- Be sure your name, phone number, where you can be reached, and how long you will be available to do support work are written on your affinity group's list.

During an Action:

- Know the boundaries of arrest and non-arrest areas, if applicable.
- In a mass action, give emergency info about yourself to another support person.
- Bring paper and pen, and lots of food for yourself and people doing civil disobedience (CDers).
- Hold ID, money, keys and any other belongings for CDers.
- Keep in touch with CDers for as long as possible, noting any changes in arrest strategies, etc.
- Once arrests begin, write down each individual's name, and the time and nature of the arrest, the activity of the person arrested, the treatment of the arresting officer (get the badge number, if possible), and who is noncooperating.
- At least one support person from your affinity group should stay at the place of arrest until all members of your group are arrested, and at least one should go to where those arrested are being taken as soon as the first member of your group is arrested.

At the Courthouse: (if that's where CDers are taken)

Be present during arraignments, and try to keep track of the following info for each person in your group. During a mass action, call this info into the office.

- Name of judge or magistrate.
- Name of CDer (Doe # if applicable).
- Charge
- Plea (Not Guilty, Nolo Contendre, Creative Plea, Guilty, etc.).
- If found guilty, sentence imposed.
- If not guilty:
 - Amount of bail, if applicable.
 - Whether the person pays bail or not.
- Date, time and place of trial.
- If there's a lawyer in the courtroom ask her/his name.
- Any other info that seems relevant.

After the Action:

- Call whoever needs to be informed about each person who was arrested.
- Go to trials or any other appearances of CDers; help with rides.
- Help gather information for pro se defendants.
- In a mass action, be sure to let the office and/or support coordinators know when/if you have to leave town and give them all relevant info about the people you've been supporting.

If CDers are in jail, it is important for someone to be near a phone so that call from jail may be received. You will probably be the go-between for your A.G. members who are not jailed together, as well.

- Contact the office (in a mass arrest) about people in jail and where they are being held.
- Be prepared to bring medication to the jail site for who ever needs it, and follow up on whether or not it has been administered.

- Visit your group members in jail, and pass on any messages.
- Take care of plants, pets, cars, etc., for CDers.
- Write letters to the people in jail; organize a support vigil in front of the jail.
- Be there to pick CDers up when they are released from jail.
- Support other support people working together will ease the load.

- *Nancy Alach*

Consensus Decision-Making

What is consensus?

Consensus is a process for group decision-making. It is a method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions, but also to promote the growth of community and trust.

Consensus vs. voting

Voting is a means by which we choose one alternative from several. Consensus, on the other hand, is a process of synthesizing many diverse elements together. Voting is a win or lose model, in which people are more often concerned with the numbers it takes to "win" than with the issue itself. Voting does not take into account individual feelings or needs. In essence, it is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, method of decision-making.

With consensus people can and should work through differences and reach a mutually satisfactory position. It is possible for one person's insights or strongly held beliefs to sway the whole group. No ideas are lost, each member's input is valued as part of the solution.

A group committed to consensus may utilize other forms of decision making (individual, compromise, majority rules) when appropriate; however, a group that has adopted a consensus model will use that process for any item that brings up a lot of emotions, is something that concerns people's ethics, politics, morals or other areas where there is much investment.

What does consensus mean?

Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing. Hopefully, everyone will think it is the best decision; this often happens because, when it works, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals.

Consensus takes more time and member skill, but uses lots of resources before a decision is made, creates commitment to the decision and often facilitates creative decision. It gives everyone some experience with new processes of interaction and conflict resolution, which is basic but important skill-building. For consensus to be a positive experience, it is best if the group has 1) common values, 2) some skill in group process and conflict resolution, or a commitment to let these be facilitated, 3) commitment and responsibility to the group by its members and 4) sufficient time for everyone to participate in the process.

Forming the consensus proposals

During discussion a proposal for resolution is put forward. It is amended and modified through

more discussion, or withdrawn if it seems to be a dead end. During this discussion period it is important to articulate differences clearly. It is the responsibility of those who are having trouble with a proposal to put forth alternative suggestions.

The fundamental right of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Coercion and trade-offs are replaced with creative alternatives, and compromise with synthesis.

When a proposal seems to be well understood by everyone, and there are no new changes asked for, the facilitator(s) can ask if there are any objections or reservations to it. If there are no objections, there can be a call for consensus. If there are still no objections, then after a moment of silence you have your decision. Once consensus does appear to have been reached, it really helps to have someone repeat the decision to the group so everyone is clear on what has been decided.

Difficulties in reaching consensus

If a decision has been reached, or is on the verge of being reached that you cannot support, there are several ways to express your objections:

Non-support ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")

Reservations ("I think this may be a mistake but I can live with it.")

Standing aside ("I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it.")

Blocking ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. It is immoral." If a final decision violates someone's fundamental moral values they are obligated to block consensus.)

Withdrawing from the group. Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations or stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it.

This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus and it is just as desirable as a lukewarm beer or a lukewarm bath.

If consensus is blocked and no new consensus can be reached, the group stays with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable. Major philosophical or moral questions that will come up with each affinity group will have to be worked through as soon as the group forms.

Roles in a consensus meeting

There are several roles which, if filled, can help consensus decision making run smoothly ' The facilitator(s) aids the group in defining decisions that need to be made, helps them through the stages of reaching an agreement, keeps the meeting moving, focuses discussion to the point at hand; makes sure everyone has the opportunity to participate, and formulates and tests to see if consensus has been reached. Facilitators help to direct the process of the meeting, not its content. They never make decisions for the group. If a facilitator feels too emotionally involved in an issue or discussion and cannot remain neutral in behavior, if not in attitude, then s/he should ask someone to take over the task of facilitation for that agenda item.

A vibes-watcher is someone besides the facilitator who watches and comments on individual and group feelings and patterns of participation. Vibes-watchers need to be especially tuned in to the sexism of group dynamics.

A recorder can take notes on the meeting, especially of decisions made and means of

implementation and a time-keeper keeps things going on schedule so that each agenda item can be covered in the time allotted for it (if discussion runs over the time for an item, the group may or may not decide to contract for more time to finish up).

Even though individuals take on these roles, all participants in a meeting should be aware of and involved in the issues, process, and feelings of the group, and should share their individual expertise in helping the group run smoothly and reach a decision. This is especially true when it comes to finding compromise agreements to seemingly contradictory positions.

Working Together for A Change

Many of the problems we run into in movement groups are those of domination within the movement.

People join a social change movement in order to alleviate an external problem. Too often we are confronted with the same kind of behavior we find in our everyday lives. We're all too often stifled by heavy-handed authority: bosses at work, parents or spouse at home and teachers at school.

People want not only to be accepted in these groups, but also to make a contribution and be active participants. In order to work successfully to change things we must also pay attention to our own behavior. More often than not, men are the ones dominating group activity. Such behavior is therefore termed a "masculine behavior pattern," not because women never act that way, but because it is generally men who do.

Men are beginning to take responsibility for their behavior. The following are some of the more common problems to become aware of:

Hogging the show. Talking too much, too long, too loud.

Problem solver. continually giving the answer or solution before others have had much chance to contribute.

Speaking in capital letters. Giving one's own solutions or opinions as the final word on the subject, often aggravated by tone of voice and body posture.

Defensiveness. Responding to every contrary opinion as though it were a personal attack.

Nit-picking. Picking out minor flaws in statements of others and stating the exception to every generality.

Restating. Especially what a woman has just said perfectly clearly.

Attention seeking. Using all sort of dramatics to get the spotlight.

Task and content focus. To the exclusion of nurturing individuals or the group through attention to process and form.

Put downs and one-upmanship. 'I used to believe that, but now...' or 'How can you possibly say that ... ?' Negativism. Finding something wrong or problematical in everything.

Focus transfer. Transferring the focus of the discussion to one's own pet issues in order to give one's own pet raps.

Residual office holder. Hanging on to former powerful positions.

Self-listening. Formulating a response after the first few sentences, not listening to anything from that point on, and leaping in at the first pause.

George Custerism. Intransigence and dogmatism; taking a last stand for ones position on even minor items.

Condescension and paternalism.

Being 'on the make'. Treating women seductively; using sexuality to manipulate women.

Seeking attention and support from women while competing with men.

Running the show. Continually taking charge of tasks before others have the chance to volunteer.

Graduate studentitis. Protectively storing key group information for one's own use and benefit.

Speaking for others. 'A lot of us .think that we should. . . "or "What so and so really meant was..."

The full wealth of knowledge and skills is severely limited by such behavior. Women and men who are less assertive than others or who don't feel comfortable participating in a competitive atmosphere are, in effect, cut off from the interchange of experience and ideas. If sexism isn't ended within social change groups there can't be a movement for real social change. Not only will the movement flounder amidst divisiveness, but the crucial issue of liberation from sex oppression will not be dealt with. Any change of society which does not include the freeing of women and men from oppressive sexrole conditioning, from subtle as well as blatant forms of male supremacy, is incomplete.

Here are some specific ways we can be responsible to ourselves and others in groups:

Not interrupting people who are speaking. We can even leave space after each speaker, counting to five before speaking.

Becoming a good listener. Good listening is as important as good speaking. It's important not to withdraw when not speaking; good listening is active participation.

Getting and giving support. We can help each other be aware of and interrupt patterns of domination, as well as affirm each other as we move away from those ways. It is important that men support and challenge each other, rather than asking women to do so. This will also allow women more space to break out of their own conditioned role of looking after men's needs while ignoring their own.

Not giving answers and solutions. We can give our opinions in a manner which says we believe our ideas to be valuable, but no more important than others' ideas.

Relaxing. The group will do fine without our anxiety attacks.

Not speaking on every subject. We need not share every idea we have, at least not with the whole group.

Not putting others down. We need to check ourselves when we're about to attack or "one-up" another. We can ask ourselves, 'Why am I doing this? What am I feeling? What do I need?'

Interrupting others' oppressive behavior. We should take responsibility for interrupting a brother

who is exhibiting behavior which is oppressive to others and prohibits his own growth. It is no act of friendship to allow friends to continue dominating those around them. We need to learn caring and forthright ways of doing this.

- from an article by Bill Moyelri

Legal Issues / Risking Arrest

The decisions that we make are political, not legal. The reaction of the government to what we are doing, to what we stand for, will also be political. We can have quite an impact on what happens to us in jail, in court and during processing, if we are prepared. It can be as important a part of our nonviolent opposition as anything that comes before the arrest.

In a large demonstration, the police may separate us from each other, breaking up affinity groups and possibly isolating individuals. In order to maintain our spirits and effectiveness, we must develop an ability to deal with the legal system, while trusting in the solidarity of other demonstrators. Solidarity is, in reality, more a state of mind that unites us through a long struggle than a specific course of action that everyone follows. Solidarity does not demand that everyone make the same choice in every situation. It is an internal force within each of us and among us as a group. It is our commitment to one another and to our common cause; it is our dedication to support one another and to pursue our common goals at all times, in every situation, to the best of our ability. Solidarity cannot be broken by courts, jails or other external forces. If we hold fast to it, it is ours.

Our approach to the legal system is up to us. We retain as much power as we refuse to relinquish to the government - city, state or federal.

The criminal "justice" system functions to alienate and isolate the accused individual, to destroy one's power and purposefulness and to weave a web of confusion and mystification around any legal proceedings. If we are well prepared for our contact with this system, we can limit the effect it has upon us, both personally and politically. It is extremely important that we be firmly rooted in our own spirit and purposes, our commitment to one another and history and tradition of social struggle of which we are a part. We should try to maintain our nonviolent attitude of honesty and directness while dealing with law enforcement officers and the courts.

Legal System Flowchart

STEPS	DESCRIPTION OF WHAT HAPPENS	CHOICES
Warning or Command	Officer may give warning to or leave or command to stop doing something.	- Stay or leave - - Don't do or stop doing actions.
Arrest	Officer physically grabs you, takes you to police wagon or squad car. May say you are under arrest. Pat search, sometimes handcuffs. Taken to holding area.	- Walk - Go limp - Flee (if left unguarded)
	Police question arrestees concerning information for arrest reports (name/address/occupation/social security	-Decide what, if any, information to give police; e.g. false, correct or no

Processing and Booking	number/ financial); may try to get additional information for intelligence. Possible photographing/fingerprinting/property and clothes may be taken.	name. - Refuse to post bond -Demand no cash bonds or equal bonds for all (bail & jail solidarity)
Charging	Prosecutor decides what charges to pursue	
First Court Date	Appear in court alone, or most likely with other arrestees Attempt to dispose of case by plea or trial, or continue case for bench or jury trial or plea negotiations later. Prosecutor not always ready for trial.	-Lawyers or Pro Se - Plea - Bench Trial - Demand jury trial in future
Trial	Trials can vary from: - a few minute bench trial with or without a lawyer - to a full jury trial with expert witnesses lasting a week or more, - or any place in. between.	- Defense based on noncommission of acts and/or necessity of actions - Small or large resources of time and money
Verdict	judge or jury decides - Acquittal (not guilty) - Guilty	
Sentencing	Hearing on appropriate sentence	Can testify why actions were justified, necessary, etc., and your background. Sentencing statement is powerful opportunity to bring out political and moral issues, show non-recalcitrance. Remain silent

Nonviolent action draws its strength from open confrontation and noncooperation, not from evasion or subterfuge. Bail solidarity, noncooperation and other forms of resistance can be used to reaffirm our position that we are not criminals and that we are taking positive steps towards freeing the world from oppression.

Discuss the issues raised in this legal section with your affinity' group - particularly noncooperation and your attitude toward trials. Think out various hypothetical situations and try to understand how you will respond to these situations.

Some demonstrators refuse to cooperate partially or wholly with court procedures; they refuse to enter a plea, to retain or accept a lawyer, to stand up in court, to speak to the judge as a symbol of court authority (but rather speak to him or her as a fellow human being), to take the stand or question witnesses. They may make a speech to those assembled in the courtroom or simply lie or sit on the floor if they are carried in, or attempt to leave if not forcibly restrained. The penalties for such noncooperation can be severe, because many judges take such action to be a personal affront as well as an insult to the court. Some judges, on the other hand, overlook such conduct, or attempt to communicate with the demonstrators.

Physical noncooperation may be sustained through the booking process and through court appearances; it may continue through the entire time of one's detention. This might involve a refusal to walk, to eat, to clean oneself and one's surroundings. It may even lead prison officials to force-feed and diaper the inmate.

Another form of noncooperation is fasting - taking no food and no liquid except water, or perhaps fruit juice. While abstaining from food can be uncomfortable and eventually risky, abstaining from all food and liquid can be extremely dangerous almost immediately. Five or six days is probably the longest a human can go without liquid before incurring brain damage and serious dehydration. Usually authorities watch persons who are "water fasting" closely and take steps to hospitalize them before serious consequences occur, but no demonstrator can ever count on such attention and should therefore be prepared to give up the fast or perhaps be allowed to die, as did several Irish freedom fighters during the H-Block hunger strike in 1981.

There are other forms noncooperation may take and other reasons for it to occur. The refusal to give one's name undoubtedly springs from a desire to resist and confound a system that assigns criminal records to people, that categorizes and spies upon them and that punishes organizers and repeat offenders more strenuously. It relays a message that none of us should be singled out: we'll be doing this again and again.

Many nonviolent activists, however, acting with the openness and confidence that characterizes and strengthens nonviolent action, do not choose to hide their identities. They may still noncooperate, however, by refusing to reveal an address, or by refusing to promise to return for trial, increasing the burden on the courts to quickly deal with the demonstrators and enhancing their solidarity and strength as people working together, filling the jails.

Representing Yourself

"When arrested while making a statement through an act of civil disobedience, I prefer to go pro se (represent myself) because of the control it gives me in the courtroom. It means that I am a woman in charge of my life and responsible for my decisions and behavior, and that I am prepared for the results of my actions. Using a lawyer means that I must sit quietly and humbly through specious legal arrangements over my behavior and the proper punishment for it. It means that I am like a child with parents arguing about my naughtiness and what to do about it so that I will "learn a lesson" or "will have learned a lesson." I should add, however, that having a lawyer around to advise and explain potentially complicated issues is helpful. "

-Catherine de Laubenfels,
arrested at
Women's Pentagon Action

1980, 1981

The Constitution gives you the right to represent yourself. The right is founded in the understanding that someone else may not say quite what you want said in your behalf, or may not say it in the way you want it said. You therefore cannot be forced to let someone speak for you.

Trials and hearings resulting from civil disobedience are particularly suited to unearthing the reasons behind, and the possibilities for, selfrepresentation. Perhaps the CDer can better explain his or her own motivation. Why water down a deeply political and personal act of civil disobedience with a lot of legalistic jargon? Why let the application of the energizing ideas contained in the philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience stop with the arrests? If you choose to participate in action, it will be a result of much thought and consideration. Why not continue to involve yourself fully all the way through the trial? A lawyer must adhere to the legal restrictions of the courtroom and translate everything into the proper categories. You as a pro se litigant have much greater leeway. If you don't understand something don't hesitate to ask questions about what is happening during the trial.

Representation by an attorney may be the best route, if you desire an acquittal at any cost. In a group trial, the option of having some but not all defendants represented by counsel is often available. You should speak to people who have represented themselves. The most important thing is to remember that you have choices. The system teaches us to think that there is only one way of doing anything, but because we question that we choose to do civil disobedience in the first place.

In November of 1980, as part of the first Women's Pentagon Action, one woman chose to sing her "defense. " She sang Malvina Reynolds' "It Isn't Nice to Block the Doorway." She was found guilty.

It Isn't Nice
-by Malvina Reynolds

It isn't nice to block the doorway, It isn't nice to go to
jail
There are nicer ways to do it, But the nice ways always
fail.

Chorus 1

It isn't nice, it isn't nice
You told us once, you told
twice
But if that is freedom's price We don't mind

It isn't nice to carry banners or to sleep in on the floor.
Or to shout or cry of freedom At the hotel and the store.

Chorus I

Well we tried negotiations
 And the token picket line.
 The government didn't see us,
 They might as well be blind.

Chorus 2

Now our new ways aren't nice
 When we deal with men of ice
 But if that is freedom's price
 We don't mind.

Noncooperation

A refusal to cooperate with the imprisonment of oneself or others is sensible and natural to many of us. The deliberate and punitive denial of freedom that jail consists of is abhorrent to all of us. Many of us oppose prisons altogether, viewing the inequalities and injustices of our society as its culprits, not the victims who end up rotting in its jails.

For many who join in civil disobedience actions, noncooperation with the criminal justice system is important because it impedes their removal and prolongs their ability to accomplish their goals of stopping the violent business-as-usual of their targets. By becoming great burdens to the courts and jails they demonstrate how difficult and costly it is for these institutions to protect the "status quo" and hope to convince others that this price is too high.

One way of refusing to participate in arrest and detention is by going limp. A decision to go limp is a decision to approach the arrest situation with peaceful resistance and may involve discomfort and strained communication between the demonstrator and arresting officer, largely because one of the two people is being dragged along the ground, and one is struggling to carry the other. Although very common, even going limp is not an easy way to noncooperate: we are forcing the police to either join us or carry us away. We frequently find ourselves being carried or dragged by an angry police officer, unsympathetic to our claims that we are acting as much on her or his behalf as on our own. This is an uncomfortable dilemma which runs throughout every act of noncooperation and which can only be eased, if at all, by one's ability to explain one's actions with sensitivity and sincerity.

"By our refusal to cooperate, we keep reminding them of our dissent, refusing to allow them the godlike sense that their will alone exists." - Barbara Deming

Many activists also choose to resist the codification of people by social security numbers. The questions that are asked about background and employment are means to facilitate both the system's processing of individuals and its preparation of files about them. The very fact that demonstrators may be privileged enough to have jobs and perhaps be ushered in and out of jails more politely and efficiently than other "criminals" is something that some are unwilling to take advantage of.

Noncooperation is difficult. It is rewarding, powerful and inspiring, but it can be frustrating, time

consuming, and even painful. Noncooperators must be careful not to pressure others into joining them. Anyone who tries to noncooperate must feel flexible enough to give it up if it becomes too much to handle.

It might be best to try out various levels and different approaches to noncooperation, as they feel appropriate. Noncooperation can be very powerful as a response to unjust demands by guards. If feels particularly natural and effective at such times.

It is likely that noncooperators will be subjected to intimidation and legal threats. For this reason, it is important that demonstrators prepare themselves for this ahead of time, rather than planning to change their minds about noncooperation under duress. Successful intimidation from the guards will only encourage them to treat the remaining noncooperators more harshly.

On the other hand, cooperation with the indignity and injustice of jail is no easier. The paths we choose may vary. The decision to cooperate or noncooperate with part or all of the arrest procedure is a personal and political one. For some of us noncooperation is one way we will continue the struggle inside prison walls.

Jail Solidarity

Jail solidarity may be defined as complete unity of purpose of those incarcerated or imprisoned. The ultimate objective of that unity is for everyone committing the same act to be treated equally and fairly in jail and in sentencing. Refusing citations, bail, fines, community service or probation keeps us together as a community with the potential for collective bargaining to meet that objective.

For jail solidarity to be most effective, the issues surrounding it must be addressed and resolved to the greatest extent possible before reaching jail. jail authorities are not going to patiently wait for us to reach consensus on solidarity agreements before they start employing "divide and conquer" tactics to weaken our bargaining power.

One divisive tactic used by the prison/legal system is different treatment for certain individuals or groups. These people risking harsher testament usually include noncooperators, repeat offenders, known organizers, people of color, lesbians and gay men. Discussions of solidarity should always include the issue of how to give these people the extra protection they need.

Coming to agreements about solidarity goals and tactics is a powerful but difficult process. To reach true solidarity with the greatest number of participants, people must have enough information and time to make wise decisions. Solidarity tactics that are employed successfully are empowering. Ill-considered, unfocused uses of solidarity tactics are less successful and drain our energies.

Some of the issues that cause the most controversy around solidarity include interpretation of the nonviolence guidelines, and under what circumstances, if any, we will keep solidarity with those who have previous records, are on probation or have not followed the nonviolence guidelines for that action.

People's motivations for participating in CD will affect their attitudes toward the police and jail guards. Some people are motivated to CD as a protest against the multiple structures in society

which work together to create a weapons industry. The prison/judicial system is seen as one of these structures.

The effect of this political viewpoint on behavior in jail can be very dramatic. Often people refuse to cooperate with the authorities at all. Some ways they do this are by going limp during arrest, not abiding by prison regulations, and refusing to participate in arraignment. Some of these acts serve personal moral goals; others are initiated as levers to make the legal system mete out equal and fair sentences to all.

Another group may reflect a different set of motivations and approaches. For some people for example, their fundamental reason for CD stems from an awareness of the destructive power of nuclear weaponry. Their fear and outrage over these weapons may be their only motivation to do civil disobedience. Often these people will stress more of the need to communicate with the human beings behind the helmets, uniforms and roles. They will talk to the police, perhaps befriend the prison guards, and try to use persuasion and dialogue to raise questions about these roles.

The differences between these two approaches will frequently lead to conflict. The stress of the jail experience tends to intensify conflict but by discussing differences beforehand their effect on jail solidarity can be minimized. Conflicts that arise in jail must be acknowledged and dealt with at the time or they may become divisive. Conflict is an expression of opposing viewpoints and should not be confused with violence.

Often it is not possible for everyone to agree to stay in jail for solidarity purposes. Sometimes there are people who question the need to struggle inside the jails when the action's primary goal is something else. Some people, because of outside responsibilities, cannot afford the time jail solidarity may demand. Others find jail conditions physically or emotionally intolerable. And still others take the political stand that we're more effective back on the streets encouraging other people to take a stand. Whatever the reason,, for not participating in jail solidarity, individuals should make this information known beforehand since it may affect decisions of the group Those who must leave jail are no betraying the group - there are many ways they can continue supporting those inside: by speaking to the media, to the movement and to the public about conditions inside by fulfilling responsibilities for those inside, by carrying messages to family, friends, and employers.

Jail solidarity must never become coercive. In jail, solidarity is our strength and the strength of our solidarity comes from the free agreement of all who take part in it.

Serving Time in Jail

Any act of civil disobedience implies the willingness to risk jail for one's convictions. For those who land there as a consequence of conscious decisions, jail can present an opportunity for testing, and strengthening spiritual and -political convictions. Though it should not be courted imprudently, it is something that must be faced and can certainly be endured. Those arrested as a result of civil disobedience have the advantage over most prisoners of knowing that they are there having made a conscious choice. That knowledge can make the difference between what is otherwise a thoroughly miserable situation and a larger possibility for reflection and education. What is more, it can provide you, when the time comes, with a reserve of strength of which you were previously unaware.

Being in jail can give a rounded picture of the militaristic, oppressive society against which we struggle in our nonviolent resistance. It is an education in the underside of justice. In state prisons throughout the country most of the people who are locked up are people of color. The vast majority are poor, in jail for poverty-related crimes or awaiting (and waiting and waiting) trial, because they cannot afford bail.

Jail is a lonely place. It aims to weaken solidarity, to try to isolate people from one another and reduce one's concentration to dealing with the demands of authority and of one's survival. However, no one in jail for affirming her or his conscience is ever alone. Remember that and you should have no trouble getting by.

What exactly can you expect? Jails differ as to particular conditions, regulations and privileges allowed. Yet, jails are enough alike that it is possible to make some rough generalizations. Entering prison is like going into another culture - new behavior norms' language, symbols, new reality. Go slow, and use common sense. To quote someone who served a year in Rhode Island's Adult Correctional Institute, "It took me six months to figure out what was really going on in prison. And I am not such a slow learner. So, be humble and be quiet, and listen and learn. "

You can expect overcrowding, which means frustrating and irritating levels of noise and distraction, little personal space or privacy' and scant regard for cleanliness. You must exercise patience, consideration and discipline to preserve peace and sanity. It will be difficult to sleep, there will be blaring radios and TV's, slamming bars, and loud arguments, which may make you irritable and short-tempered. Learn to watch for this in others and try to respect their need for space. Time will be distorted: Days will slip by but each hour will seem like an eternity. Food will be starchy and dull (don't expect vegetarian menus). You will learn to wait, for a phone call, a shower, a meal, the answer to a question, the time of day.

You may be issued a uniform. In that case, your clothes will be confiscated along with all your other belongings. You can expect a complete strip search including rectal and vaginal examination for contraband, the first of many other casual assaults on your dignity. The guards have a great deal of power and they are aware of this. And because they are human beings, this knowledge tends to have a bad effect on them. Long exposure to jail, whether as a prisoner or a guard, tends to have a corrosive effect on one's confidence in human nature and goodness, and the guards are victims of this as well. They expect the worst out of people, and, not surprisingly, they are not often disappointed. Their principal concern is to preserve order, which demands an atmosphere of unquestioning respect (fear) for authority. This is their contribution to the process of "rehabilitation," supplanting personal responsibility with thoughtless obedience and submission. You should try not to indulge them in their exalted self-image. Keep expecting that they should act with respect and compassion and you may be surprised by the results. Perhaps you may surprise them into remembering that they and the prisoners in their charge share a common humanity. At least you may establish a basis for dialogue. But at the same time that you recall the humanity of your guards don't forget that, in the end, you and they have different jobs to perform. Let them be responsible for keeping order. You are responsible for keeping your conscience. Just because your body is detained doesn't mean you've got to turn in your conscience and convictions along with your other belongings. Whether in jail or on the "outside," the freedom we enjoy is always the freedom we claim for ourselves. Being under lock and key does not deprive you of your essential freedom as long as you continue to insist on your power to say "yes" or "no" within the limits of whatever situation you find yourself. It was your commitment to make decisions for yourself about what you should and shouldn't do that landed you in jail in the first place, and it remains a good principle to live by, even in jail.

The following is a list of observations and suggestions from people who have served time:

- Pay attention to how the other women/men are doing. Don't feed into others' bad vibes
- You'll make good friends but do set limits. Know what your needs are.
- Keep your mouth shut and listen. Things are not often what they appear.
- Keep a realistic viewpoint. Pay attention to your needs, but remember that you are there for a short time and most of the others are there much longer.
- Don't proselytize. Be clear and be proud but don't hit people over the head with your story and beliefs.
- Don't talk more than you have to with the guards; the other inmates will not trust you. If you are in prison for a long time you'll be able to figure out which guards you can trust.
- Bring in some cigarettes to share with others even if you don't smoke. Bring a few books, pens, paper, envelopes and stamps. The worst that can happen is you won't get them or they'll get lost.
- Be patient; hurry up and wait is often the prison time frame for no apparent reason.
- . It is all right to be afraid, lonely, unhappy. It is also all right to feel wonderful, happy and proud.

Oppression

To fight for peace and social justice is not only to struggle against the brutality of our foreign and domestic policies, but also to challenge the insidious institution of oppression in our daily lives. In our various struggles against bombs, U.S. intervention, for housing, sexual freedom, etc. it is important to struggle against other forms of violence that confront us. Specifically, other violence comes in two forms that affect our lives:

1. daily physical and/or psychic violence against all people, such as rape or murder, and specifically against oppressed people;
2. psychic and attitudinal violence within our movement reflected in ways we treat each other and ourselves.

These two forms of violence are strongly interconnected with governmental policies from the making of bombs to lack of health care. It is the same system that is responsible: a system based on domination, on the belief that some people have more value than others. The same system that creates a bomb designed to destroy humans and retain property intact also deprives elderly people and disabled people of life resources and encourages individuals to compete with each other and treat each other disrespectfully.

Because we believe it is the system and all of its forms of violence that we are fighting, we must make a commitment to fight the violence that occurs around us and between us. The Oppression Section of the handbook specifically addresses these concerns, both within a societal context and within the context of interpersonal relationships.

Confronting the violence between us can be painful. Speaking of oppression or using the words such as sexism or racism can often result in people feeling guilty, or hurt or reacting defensively. Most of us benefit from some form of privilege; many of us suffer from discrimination from one or more sources. Because oppression distorts the power dynamics between us and, as a result, divides us, it is harmful to everyone.

None of us alone has the power to end the institutions of discrimination. It is both the individual and collective challenge to these forms of discrimination that will lead to the social and political changes that will benefit us all.

- thanks to the International Day of Nuclear Disarmament Handbook

-"Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor;

it must be demanded by the oppressed." Martin Luther King, Jr.

Peacekeepers

In numerous demonstrations of the past it has been found that the effectiveness and nonviolence of the action has been greatly enhanced by the participation of people with special skills. These specialized participants, or peacekeepers, perform specific facilitating roles for the action. Even if you have not decided to specialize in the role of peacekeeper, however, you may find yourself in a conflict situation in which peacekeeper skills will be useful. In a nonviolent action everyone is, to some extent, a peacekeeper.

Peacekeepers:

- 1. Set the tone for the action.** They establish a positive and affirmative atmosphere by being warm and helpful to participants, by leading songs and chants, and by providing needed information to the group as a whole.
- 2-Act as a communication network.** They act as an important face-to-face communication link between the coordinators of the action and the participants as well as the internal communication system for the coordinators themselves.
- 3. Provide emergency medical and legal aid.** Peacekeepers are frequently the first people on the spot when a medical or legal emergency arises. They can play an important supportive role for the person who needs assistance.
- 4. Maintain the internal self-discipline of the action.** Peacekeepers facilitate the movement and action of large groups of people by directing traffic, encouraging people to walk and not run and providing information to the group. Peacekeepers are also prepared to handle conflicts among demonstrators.
- 5. Act as mediators between authorities and demonstrators.** It may be important to have people as buffers between law enforcement officials, workers, and demonstrators. Peacekeepers help to maintain the nonviolent self-discipline of the demonstration and act as mediators in confrontations between authorities and protesters. Peacekeepers have primary responsibility to the participants in the action, but they should be prepared to protect legal authorities, workers, and non-participants from demonstrators if necessary.

Some Guidelines to Help Peacekeepers Do Their jobs:

- 1. Be warm, friendly, and helpful.** The tone of the demonstration depends on how you respond to your fellow demonstrators, police, the media, and workers. Our attitude should be one of openness, friendliness and respect toward all officials and participants. Peacekeepers are not junior police, and this is no place for authority trips.
- 2. Be creative.** Nonviolence does not mean being aloof or failing to act. You must be creative in your attempt to intervene and resolve a conflict.
- 3. Be firm, but not rigid.** If you have agreed to be a peacekeeper you must have agreed to uphold the nonviolent principles of the demonstration. This occasionally means pushing people to do things they do not want to do. Stick to your commitment to nonviolence and strongly encourage others to do the same.
- 4. Be forthright.** Deal fairly and honestly with people engaged in conflict, no matter what they have done. If you don't know the answer to something, say so.
- 5. Be calm.** It is a rare person who does not become angry or afraid under stress. Don't think that you are weak if you have fears. The important thing in being a peacekeeper is learning how to control your feelings by remembering the overall goal of the action. Try to deal with fears and anger before the demonstration rather than during it.

6. Be forgiving. Give up resentment over the wrong you are trying to set right. Gandhi said, "Hate sin, and love the sinner." This applies to conflicts between demonstrators as well as to conflicts with police, workers, onlookers,....

7. Work as a team. You don't have to do everything yourself. Use and rely on the support you can get from other peacekeepers and from your fellow demonstrators.

8. Do your job. If you feel you cannot perform a specific task due to either physical, emotional, or moral reasons, inform a peacekeeper coordinator so that a person can be found to replace you. It is not a disgrace to say "no, I can't do it." If you feel you cannot handle yourself nonviolently in a situation, notify another peacekeeper and step away from the conflict. It is better to step out than to risk an escalation of the conflict.

9. Peacekeepers will avoid other responsibilities during the time they 'on duty' as peacekeepers, This includes caring for children, carrying signs or banners, working at a concession or table, distributing literature for other organizations, etc.

- *Adapted from Rocky Flats Action Group nonviolence manual*

We Make A Difference

At times the political work that we do is exciting. Everyone we know is involved; our campaign is the focus of local and national attention; change seems imminent. Other times, all this work seems less rewarding - friends aren't that interested in being involved, everyone's moved on to another issue. Nobody even thinks about, say, draft registration, anymore. Sometimes, we even achieve success, and that takes the wind out of our sails; or suddenly it's not so clear what direction to take.

Movements have stages. They peak in energy and excitement, and then seem to fade away. But in reality it's these quiet times when very important research and networking and grassroots organizing takes place. Seeing our work as part of this larger cycle is one of the ways we get through what could otherwise be a permanent slump. We are building, during these times, the campaigns to come.

Another important part of strengthening and empowering our movement is recognizing and celebrating our victories. The abolition of slavery, the attainment of the eight hour work day, suffrage for women and blacks were all only dreams to people like us who believed that change was possible. Recently Reagan and Bush have publicly taken credit for the "negotiating climate" that allowed for a reduction of Euromissiles and other arms reduction agreements with the Soviets. Are these agreements a credit to their negotiation - or hours and hours of demonstrating, lobbying, marching, dying-in, and leafleting on both sides of the Atlantic? Think about daycare for children. It changed from a frivolous issue to a presidential platform plank all by itself? Not likely.

The fact that "date rape" and "rape inside marriage" are issues at all is testimony to the years of organizing and consciousness-raising by women about the reality of violence in our lives. Think about nuclear power and the shift from "safe power that is too cheap to meter" to "cost effective, independent energy with acceptable levels of public risk" to recent news stories of New York's governor offering to buy Shoreham so that it would never open.

Those of us working on U.S. policy in Central America should remember the words of Daniel Ellsberg, speaking more than a decade ago after learning that the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong was delayed nearly three years because of pressure from the American peace movement:

'Those who demonstrated against the war saved hundreds of thousands of lives, and we are in their debt for having avoided a probable nuclear war . . . none of the letters to Congress, none of the draft board raids, none of the draft resisters, none of the acts of resistance by soldiers, none of the demonstrations and rallies and visits to Congress; none of it was too soon, none of it was too much, none of it was less than essential, none of it was wasted. NONE OF IT WAS LESS THAN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR THE ENDING OF THIS WAR.'

No one who wields greater power in the political mainstream is likely to voluntarily acknowledge our impact as activists on the important issues of our time. In many ways, that just leaves us the victories to claim. Our efforts, combined with those of the millions of people who have worked for peace and justice throughout history, have made and will make a tremendous difference.

Campaigns

Most movement programs revolve around organizing single, unrelated events-demonstrations, forums, whatever. Were these activities strung together in an integrated fashion - building on one another - the impact and potential for success would be magnified dramatically. Such is the advantage of campaign organizing.

The campaign provides an escalating series of actions over a period of time focused on a target in order to achieve specific goals. Persistence and a systematic approach are key ingredients of a campaign.

All this is not to say demonstrations should not be organized on individual dates like Hiroshima Day (August 6), International Women's Day (March 8), Martin Luther King Day, and so forth. But, when possible, actions which are part of campaigns can make a stronger statement.

Planning a Campaign

While a demonstration takes a good deal of careful planning, a campaign requires considerably more attention.

The first step is to do the basic groundwork of self-education on the issues and problems to be combated. This can be accomplished through research, study groups, workshops, and conferences. The next step is to decide where to focus our initial efforts. What you need to find are weak points in the opponent's "armor," which will provide levers or handles to focus criticism and action. During one phase of the Indian campaign for independence from Britain, Gandhi selected the British monopoly on salt as the focus for a campaign. At first this appeared to be an insignificant issue to worry about, compared with independence itself. But because salt affected everyone on this rather hot subcontinent, because its cost was a hardship on the masses, and because it was relatively easy to manufacture (and thereby violated the salt laws), it became an ideal symbol of why independence was being sought. The British viewed the Salt Campaign as "nothing less than to cause a complete paralysis of the administrative machinery." In retrospect, the year-long campaign was the most spectacular effort in the 28-year struggle for independence.

The United Farm Workers grape boycott is another example of a well chosen campaign in the struggle to win union recognition and better conditions for farm workers.

One of the most important steps in a campaign, after determining the target or focus, is to choose the short range goals. Long range goals are easy, e.g., world peace or an end to sexism. But

sometimes if short range goals are not clearly defined, then the campaign could be stalled. Short range goals should be winnable within the near future (providing a boost and the encouragement needed to keep your group moving toward the longer range goals), measurable (you ought to be able to tell when you have accomplished them), set on a timetable to allow for periods of evaluation, be a significant step towards the long range goal(s).

For example, in opposing the establishment of a Junior ROTC unit in a local high school, your medium (or short) range goal might be to prevent the unit from setting up. A short range goal could be getting the local paper (or student body) to come out against the unit. An example of something which is not a short range goal would be the holding of a @ forum or having a picket. These represent vehicles toward your goals, rather than goals themselves. Saying that a short range goal is "to educate the student body" has little value as a goal unless it is measurable (e.g., a poll or vote).

In setting goals, you might consider establishing a bottom line on what is acceptable, to guard against being coopted into ending the campaign without making any fundamental change.

Analysis

After the goals have been set, an analysis should be made to see who the participants in the campaign are and how they can aid the campaign. Who do you need to participate if the campaign is likely to succeed? Who is on your side now? How are those people reached? Write, call, or visit the community groups which are likely to be sympathetic: cooperatives, clinics, some veterans groups, women's groups, Third World groups, student groups, religious organizations, women's groups, and so forth.

Who are the opponents? How can they or their supporters be won over or neutralized. In the example above, the opponents might be the school board or principal. The supporters of the opponents might be the community, PTA, local paper, or clergy.

After this analysis, a plan of action set on a timetable is needed. This plan of action should be in a step-bystep escalation. Escalation is necessary if the pressure on opponents needs to be increased. This does not necessarily mean the previous level of activity is abandoned, but simply that an escalated stage of activity is added to the previous stages. For example, education should be a constant and complementary component of every campaign - never being abandoned. In the campaign above, the first level of action is to approach the school board and ask them to turn down the JROTC application. Should that fail, set up study commissions to analyze the value of a JROTC unit; solicit outside opinions; hold, public forums; write letters to the editor; etc.

Should an escalation be necessary, picketing, leafleting, or boycotts might be next. Beyond that, demonstrations, marches, and rallies could be organized. Then, perhaps, a student strike, and maybe carefully chosen civil disobedience actions.

Organizers should not lightly go from one level of a campaign to the next. Each stage should be evaluated and considered seriously. Remember, shifting to the next stage does not mean activities at earlier levels should always be forgotten (e.g., going from picketing to a sit-in does not necessarily mean picketing should be discontinued).

Step by Step Escalation in a Nonviolent Campaign

Investigation and research

Checking facts and allegations; building an airtight case against opponents and preparing for countercharges

Negotiation and arbitration

Meeting with opponents to settle conflict before going public; ultimatum issued before moving to next level

Public forums, letters to editor, etc. Basic public education on issues

Picketing, leafleting, etc

Public contact with opponents

Demonstrations, rallies, marches

Show of strength by maximizing numbers

Limited strike

Involving those immediately affected

Boycott

Against company or product in question, if appropriate

Limited noncooperation

By those most immediately affected

Massive illegal actions

Noncooperation, civil disobedience, direct action

General strike**Establishing a parallel government****Analyzing a Campaign**

This outline is an expansion of an outline used by Joan Bondurant in her analysis of Gandhian campaigns. It can be used either in evaluation of a campaign or in preparation for a campaign.

1. Dates of the Campaign**2. Goals***Long range*

What were the ultimate goals being sought?

Short range

What goals were set?

Were they achievable?

Were they measurable? Can you tell if they've been accomplished? Would reaching them have brought the campaign measurably closer to the long range goals?

Timetable

Was a timetable set to allow for periodic measurement of progress of the campaign? What was it?

Bottom line

Were there any minimum acceptable goals set in advance, so as to avoid being compromised or coopted?

3. Participants

Who was on "our side" at the beginning?

Who was needed if the campaign was likely to succeed?

How could those people we needed have been reached?

Was there a core of people organized and prepared to stay with a sustained campaign so as to provide continuity?

4. Opponents

Who were the opponents?

Who was calling the shots in opposition to the campaign?

Was it necessary to win over or neutralize supporters of the opponents in order for the campaign to succeed?

How were supporters of the opposition won over or neutralized?

5. Organization and Constructive Work

What was the organizational structure to carry out the campaign? How were decisions made? How was the campaign funded? Were there parallel institutions to replace those being opposed or any constructive work done during the campaign?

6. Preparation for Action

What research and investigation was done?

Education? Public forums? Mass media?

Training for the main actions?

Was there adequate preparation for anticipated repression (jail, levies, violence)?

7. Preliminary Action

Were approaches made to opponents? Negotiation and arbitration? Petitions or letters?

Was an ultimatum issued? If so, what was the response?

8. Action

What forms of action were used: picketing, leafleting, marches, etc.? Was it necessary to escalate to a higher level of struggle?

Why and when? Were there strikes, boycotts, or limited noncooperation?

Did the campaign escalate to civil disobedience, mass noncooperation or some form of mass direct action? Why?

Why did the action end when and where it did?

9. Reaction of opponents

Were participants jailed? Beaten? Repressed?

Property seized?

Lies spread? Media blackout? Intimidation? Ridicule?

Concessions or coopting attempted?

Was campaign basically ignored?

10. Results

Were the short range goals achieved?

Any progress made towards the long range goals?

What happened to jailed or injured people?

Was property returned? Amnesty? Did any of the opponents lose support?

Any property destruction by participants?

11. Analysis

Were appropriate tactics used at appropriate times?

Was the best target chosen? Was the timetable realistic? Did the campaign meet the time. table? If not, why not?

Was consciousness raised among the general public?

Did the actions clearly communicate the myths, secrets, and realities of the issues and society?

If short range goals were not achieved, why not?

How could the campaign have been improved?

If there was property destruction, did it help or hinder the campaign? Was the organizational structure adequate to conduct the campaign? Was the decision making responsive to participants?

Were there problems in making decisions or lack of decisiveness?

Who had the initiative during the campaign?

Were there any surprises which hurt or helped the campaign?

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