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ON THE TACTICAL USE OF DEMONSTRATIONS & CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

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Since violence is not a part of the CORE philosophy, and since the average CORE member and CORE chapter is unacquainted with the tactical use of nonviolent methods of resistance, it is the purpose of this paper to bring to their attention the numerous methods available, to

arrange them on a scale of intensity of effect, and to suggest some methods for utilizing these available methods in such a way as to obtain the greatest possible effect with the least amount of loss in the effectiveness of these tactical weapons.

It is an established fact that repeated presentation of a stimulus and/or prolonged presentation has several undesired effects. 1) repeated pres ultimately produces some long term adaptation to the stimulus. 2) prolonged pres will result in short term adaptation, but the stimulus may be effective again after a passage of some amount of time. 3) following repeated pres the organism will learn how to "cope" with the stimulus, i.e. will learn the quickest and most efficient method of removing it without conceding to our demands. 4) this is also true of the case of prolonged presentation.

It is also the case that if the most intense stimulus available does not succeed in eliciting the desired response, then this response may never occur, i.e., other methods of obtaining the response (rewards) are generally not available to a CORE chapter.

Another fact to keep in mind is that once the aversive stimulus has been presented and the desired response is not obtained, withdrawal of the stimulus may reinforce some undesired response simply by being accidentally correlated temporally with that response. The result of this, of course, is that we may be in a worse position following the withdrawal of the stimulus than we were prior to the presentation of it, i.e., we have a net loss instead of a gain or even no change.

Since the majority of the research dealing with the effects of aversive stimuli in the laboratory have used electric shock we shall borrow their method of designating the level of shock and arrange our weapons along an arbitrary scale of intensity. Arbitrary in the sense that we have no really objective measurements, but useful in the sense that we have a wealth of personal observations of the effects under actual conditions of conflict with the power structure.

Negotiations would of course be the first point on the scale, for the very act of entering into negotiations constitutes the presentation of an aversive stimulus. The ordering and classifying of stimuli that may be presented during the negotiations stage is a subject in and of itself and must be dealt with in a separate treatise. It is, at this point, sufficient to point out that the openings of negotiations with the power structure is in itself an aversive stimulus, ^{v.e., punishment for past responses.} and that during these negotiations the threat of the use of the remainder of our tactical weapons will constantly be available to the skillful negotiator as additional aversive stimuli.

Following are the standard weapons of a CORE chapter arranged in order of aversiveness:

1. Threat of picketing.
2. Picketing.
3. Threat of sit-in (etc).
4. Sit-in (etc).
5. Threat of economic boycott.
6. Economic boycott.
7. Threat of civil disobedience.
8. Civil disobedience.

It should also be kept in mind that in addition to "opening of negotiations" as an aversive stimulus, the "threat to break off negotiations" should be used in conjunction with any and all of the above actions so that it will come to serve as a signal for impending danger to the power structure.

We have then, two classes of weapons, threats and actions. The first class to be used during negotiations and the second class to be used IF AND ONLY IF the threat of their use fails to produce the desired response.

IT SHOULD CONSTANTLY BE KEPT IN MIND THAT ANY MOVE BY THE POWER STRUCTURE, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REINFORCED BY THE REMOVAL OF THE THREAT OR THE ACTION. FOLLOWING AN APPROPRIATE LAPSE OF TIME NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE REOPENED AND THE THREAT PUT INTO EFFECT AGAIN.

It is important that certain very definite procedures be followed in the tactical use of these weapons.

1. Negotiations must be kept open at all times. Contact with the power structure must be maintained

in order to utilize the first class of weapons. Once contact is broken, one-half of the weapon system is rendered useless. This does not mean that we cannot break off negotiations following a threat of action. But as soon as the threatened action is put into effect, negotiations must be reopened or contact reestablished.

2. A threat to engage in action which does not result in a favorable response by the power structure must ALWAYS be followed IMMEDIATELY by that action. This is extremely important in increasing the power of the threat and firmly establishing it as an aversive stimulus, i.e. as a signal that worse things will certainly follow. Unless the threat and the action are closely paired in time the threat will not be fully effective.

3. The order in which the weapons are used is also important. Each failure by the power structure to respond properly must result in more intense punishment. If, at any time, a failure by the power structure to respond properly results in a reduction in punishment then the probability of IMPROPER responses is immediately increased (and conversely, the probability of the desired response is immediately decreased).

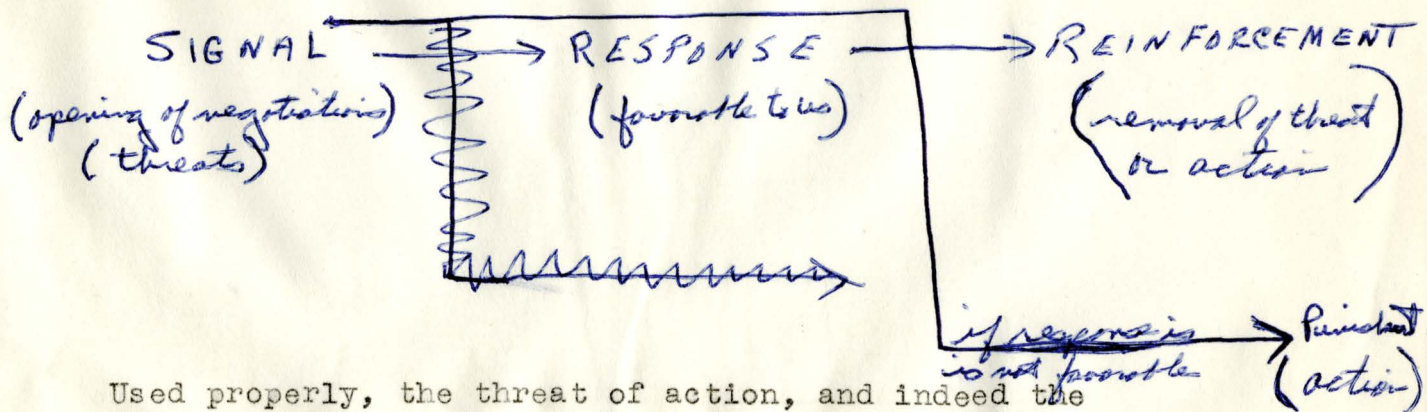
4. Once a new mode of action is decided upon and put into effect, ALL ENERGIES must be directed to that one action. The only exception to this rule is the economic boycott. The economic boycott should be continued, and even increased when possible, even though we decide to engage in civil disobedience.

This is true for two reasons:

1. The pattern and time course of the economic boycott is such that it becomes increasingly aversive to the opponent each day. His losses are cumulative and each day more people will join in the boycott adding to his cost.

2. Civil disobedience is in itself merely another form of economic pressure, but usually directed against the power structure per se rather than a business or corporation. It increases operating costs for any city and state - police, jails, courts, etc. If it can also directly effect the business involved and thereby also increase their costs it is of course doubly effective, but this is not a necessity

The paradigm for this approach to social change is of course very simple. It is a combination of Pavlovian and Operant conditioning familiar to any behavioral psychologist.



Used properly, the threat of action, and indeed the opening of negotiations itself will become a signal that worse things are just around the corner. The result of this is obvious: the threat of action or the simple opening of negotiations will become a powerful source of punishment in and of itself.