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198 Methods of Nonviolent Action

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198 METHODS OF NONVIOLENT ACTION

Practitioners of nonviolent struggle have an entire arsenal of “nonviolent weapons” at their disposal. Listed below are 198 of them, classified into three broad categories: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation (social, economic, and political), and nonviolent intervention. A description and historical examples of each can be found in volume two of The Politics of Nonviolent Action, by Gene Sharp.

THE METHODS OF NONVIOLENT PROTEST AND PERSUASION

Formal Statements

1. Public Speeches
2. Letters of opposition or support
3. Declarations by organizations and institutions
4. Signed public statements
5. Declarations of indictment and intention
6. Group or mass petitions

Communications with a Wider Audience

7. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
8. Banners, posters, and displayed communications

9. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
10. Newspapers and journals
11. Records, radio, and television
12. Skywriting and earthwriting

Group Representations

13. Deputations
14. Mock awards
15. Group lobbying
16. Picketing
17. Mock elections

Symbolic Public Acts

18. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
19. Wearing of symbols
20. Prayer and worship
21. Delivering symbolic objects
22. Protest disrobings
23. Destruction of own property
24. Symbolic lights
25. Displays of portraits
26. Paint as protest
27. New signs and names
28. Symbolic sounds
29. Symbolic reclamations
30. Rude gestures

Pressures on Individuals

31. "Haunting" officials
32. Taunting officials
33. Fraternization
34. Vigils

Drama and Music

35. Humorous skits and pranks
36. Performances of plays and music
37. Singing

Processions

38. Marches
39. Parades
40. Religious processions
41. Pilgrimages
42. Motorcades

Honoring the Dead

43. Political mourning
44. Mock funerals
45. Demonstrative funerals

46. Homage at burial places

Public Assemblies

- 47. Assemblies of protest or support
- 48. Protest meetings
- 49. Camouflaged meetings of protest
- 50. Teach-ins

Withdrawal and Renunciation

- 51. Walk-outs
- 52. Silence
- 53. Renouncing honors
- 54. Turning one's back

THE METHODS OF SOCIAL NONCOOPERATION

Ostracism of Persons

- 55. Social boycott
- 56. Selective social boycott
- 57. Lysistratic nonaction
- 58. Excommunication
- 59. Interdict

Noncooperation with Social Events, Customs, and Institutions

- 60. Suspension of social and sports activities
- 61. Boycott of social affairs
- 62. Student strike
- 63. Social disobedience
- 64. Withdrawal from social institutions

Withdrawal from the Social System

- 65. Stay-at-home
- 66. Total personal noncooperation
- 67. "Flight" of workers
- 68. Sanctuary
- 69. Collective disappearance
- 70. Protest emigration (hijrat)

THE METHODS OF ECONOMIC NONCOOPERATION: ECONOMIC BOYCOTTS

Actions by Consumers

- 71. Consumers' boycott

- 72. Nonconsumption of boycotted goods
- 73. Policy of austerity
- 74. Rent withholding
- 75. Refusal to rent
- 76. National consumers' boycott
- 77. International consumers' boycott

Action by Workers and Producers

- 78. Workmen's boycott
- 79. Producers' boycott

Action by Middlemen

- 80. Suppliers' and handlers' boycott

Action by Owners and Management

- 81. Traders' boycott
- 82. Refusal to let or sell property
- 83. Lockout
- 84. Refusal of industrial assistance
- 85. Merchants' "general strike"

Action by Holders of Financial Resources

- 86. Withdrawal of bank deposits
- 87. Refusal to pay fees, dues, and assessments
- 88. Refusal to pay debts or interest
- 89. Severance of funds and credit
- 90. Revenue refusal
- 91. Refusal of a government's money

Action by Governments

- 92. Domestic embargo
- 93. Blacklisting of traders
- 94. International sellers' embargo
- 95. International buyers' embargo
- 96. International trade embargo

THE METHODS OF ECONOMIC NONCOOPERATION: *THE STRIKE*

Symbolic Strikes

- 97. Protest strike
- 98. Quickie walkout (lightning strike)

Agricultural Strikes

- 99. Peasant strike
- 100. Farm Workers' strike

Strikes by Special Groups

- 101. Refusal of impressed labor
- 102. Prisoners' strike
- 103. Craft strike
- 104. Professional strike

Ordinary Industrial Strikes

- 105. Establishment strike
- 106. Industry strike
- 107. Sympathetic strike

Restricted Strikes

- 108. Detailed strike
- 109. Bumper strike
- 110. Slowdown strike
- 111. Working-to-rule strike
- 112. Reporting "sick" (sick-in)
- 113. Strike by resignation
- 114. Limited strike
- 115. Selective strike

Multi-Industry Strikes

- 116. Generalized strike
- 117. General strike

Combination of Strikes and Economic Closures

- 118. Hartal
- 119. Economic shutdown

THE METHODS OF POLITICAL NONCOOPERATION**Rejection of Authority**

- 120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance

Citizens' Noncooperation with Government

- 123. Boycott of legislative bodies
- 124. Boycott of elections
- 125. Boycott of government employment and positions
- 126. Boycott of government depts., agencies, and other bodies
- 127. Withdrawal from government educational institutions

- 128. Boycott of government-supported organizations
- 129. Refusal of assistance to enforcement agents
- 130. Removal of own signs and placemarks
- 131. Refusal to accept appointed officials
- 132. Refusal to dissolve existing institutions

Citizens' Alternatives to Obedience

- 133. Reluctant and slow compliance
- 134. Nonobedience in absence of direct supervision
- 135. Popular nonobedience
- 136. Disguised disobedience
- 137. Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to disperse
- 138. Sitdown
- 139. Noncooperation with conscription and deportation
- 140. Hiding, escape, and false identities
- 141. Civil disobedience of "illegitimate" laws

Action by Government Personnel

- 142. Selective refusal of assistance by government aides
- 143. Blocking of lines of command and information
- 144. Stalling and obstruction
- 145. General administrative noncooperation

- 146. Judicial noncooperation
- 147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation by enforcement

agents

- 148. Mutiny

Domestic Governmental Action

- 149. Quasi-legal evasions and delays
- 150. Noncooperation by constituent governmental units

International Governmental Action

- 151. Changes in diplomatic and other representations
- 152. Delay and cancellation of diplomatic events
- 153. Withholding of diplomatic recognition
- 154. Severance of diplomatic relations
- 155. Withdrawal from international organizations
- 156. Refusal of membership in international bodies
- 157. Expulsion from international organizations

THE METHODS OF NONVIOLENT INTERVENTION

Psychological Intervention

- 158. Self-exposure to the elements
- 159. The fast
 - a) Fast of moral pressure

- b) Hunger strike
- c) Satyagrahic fast
- 160. Reverse trial
- 161. Nonviolent harassment

Physical Intervention

- 162. Sit-in
- 163. Stand-in
- 164. Ride-in
- 165. Wade-in
- 166. Mill-in
- 167. Pray-in
- 168. Nonviolent raids
- 169. Nonviolent air raids
- 170. Nonviolent invasion
- 171. Nonviolent interjection
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Social Intervention

- 174. Establishing new social patterns
- 175. Overloading of facilities
- 176. Stall-in
- 177. Speak-in
- 178. Guerrilla theater
- 179. Alternative social institutions
- 180. Alternative communication system

Economic Intervention

- 181. Reverse strike
- 182. Stay-in strike
- 183. Nonviolent land seizure
- 184. Defiance of blockades
- 185. Politically motivated counterfeiting
- 186. Preclusive purchasing
- 187. Seizure of assets
- 188. Dumping
- 189. Selective patronage
- 190. Alternative markets
- 191. Alternative transportation systems
- 192. Alternative economic institutions

Political Intervention

- 193. Overloading of administrative systems
- 194. Disclosing identities of secret agents
- 195. Seeking imprisonment
- 196. Civil disobedience of “neutral” laws
- 197. Work-on without collaboration
- 198. Dual sovereignty and parallel government

Without doubt, a large number of additional methods have already been used but have not been classified, and a multitude of additional methods will be invented in the future that have the characteristics of the three classes of methods: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation and nonviolent intervention.

It must be clearly understood that the greatest effectiveness is possible when individual methods to be used are selected to implement the previously adopted strategy. It is necessary to know what kind of pressures are to be used before one chooses the precise forms of action that will best apply those pressures.

[1] Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973 and later editions.

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