

that many political experiences of nonviolent action can be applied to the field of national defense. However, there is currently no official effort to develop a nonviolent alternative to military defense, and interest in civil resistance as a complement to military preparations has been limited. Peace movement interest in the concept has waned since the end of the Cold War, although promoting nonmilitary methods of resisting occupation remains highly relevant in the quest for a less militarized world.

[See also Anti-Coup; Eastern Europe, Peace Movements in; Gandhian Theory of Nonviolence; Kelly, Petra; Nonviolent Action; Satyagraha; and Shanti Sena.]

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CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES. [This entry contains two subentries: An Overview and Methods of Nonviolent Action.]

An Overview

The modern African American civil rights movement is part of a multifaceted freedom struggle with deep historical roots. Since the start of the European slave trade to the Americas, African slaves and their descendants have engaged in varied forms of resistance against racial oppression and discrimination. During the late eighteenth century, European democratic movements stimulated this resistance. The American and French revolutions, in particular, influenced subsequent slave rebellions, most notably the successful slave revolt led by François-Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture in Saint-Domingue. In the North American colonies that became the United States, the egalitarian ideals associated with evangelical Christianity and expressed in the Declaration of Independence stimulated varied forms of resistance, ranging from large-scale slave conspiracies, such as those led by Gabriel in Virginia (1800) and Denmark Vesey in South Carolina (1822), to escapes by individual slaves and small groups that become known as the underground railroad.

More generally, the rights expressed in the Declaration and in the Constitution of the United States became the basis for continued efforts by slaves and former slaves to end slavery and racial subjugation. Although American abolitionists drew inspiration from the success of anti-slavery campaigns in French and British Caribbean colonies, the slave system continued in the United States until the Union forces defeated the southern Confederacy during the American Civil War (1861–1865). Even after the passage of postwar Constitutional amendments to abolish slavery (Thirteenth Amendment) and to secure legal equality (Fourteenth), as well as voting rights (Fifteenth) for former slaves, a century of civil rights struggle would be required to bring about federal enforcement of these amendments in the southern states. Moreover, during the final decades of the nineteenth century, African Americans faced new forms of systematic racial segregation and discrimination—often called the Jim Crow

system. In addition, by the end of the nineteenth century, the United States and European nations had expanded their imperial control, and most Africans and Asians became colonial subjects who were, like most African Americans, denied basic political rights, such as the right to vote.

During the early years of the twentieth century, African Americans began to develop distinctive tactics and strategies of collective advancement. Harvard-educated scholar William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was a pioneer in this respect, participating in the first international meeting to forge Pan-African unity (1900), helping found the Niagara Movement (1905) to agitate for racial equality, and joining white activists in 1909 to establish the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which has remained the largest and most enduring civil rights group. As editor of the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine until 1934, Du Bois influenced a generation of African American activists who challenged the cultural, intellectual, political, economic, and legal assumptions maintaining white supremacy. Du Bois promoted racial pride but denounced the black nationalism of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, which enjoyed a brief surge of popularity in black communities until Garvey was imprisoned in 1923 and later exiled on mail fraud charges.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s and 1940s, some African Americans were drawn toward revolutionary Communism, but most black civil rights leaders and activists backed reformist strategies, including NAACP leader Walter White's lobbying efforts against lynching; the legal campaign of Thurgood Marshall's NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund; the March on Washington Movement, initiated by labor leader A. Philip Randolph; and the small-scale civil disobedience experiments of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). By the end of World War II, such efforts had achieved only modest gains—notably when Randolph's threatened march prompted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue an executive order in 1941 against employment discrimination in the defense industries and when the NAACP won a Supreme Court ruling, *Smith v. Allright* (1944), against white-only primary elections.

In the postwar years, African American civil rights efforts were hampered by ideological splits. Du Bois and prominent entertainer Paul Robeson were among those calling for mass civil rights protests while also opposing the Cold War foreign and domestic policies of President Harry S. Truman, but Truman won the

1948 election with critical backing from prominent black leaders. While Du Bois, Robeson, and other black leftists—even the moderate Ralph Bunche—faced persecution for their increasingly controversial views, Marshall and his NAACP colleagues gained additional black support when the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 against segregation in public schools in the NAACP-sponsored case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Yet, even as the NAACP consolidated its national dominance in the civil rights field, local black activists acted on their own to protest racial segregation and discrimination. For example, a 1951 student walk-out at a Virginia high school led by sixteen-year-old Barbara Johns was one of the local efforts that culminated in the *Brown* decision. When the Supreme Court did not set a fixed time limit for states to desegregate their school systems and instead merely called for desegregation "with all deliberate speed," the stage was set for years of civil rights conflicts over public school desegregation and other discriminatory practices.

NAACP activist Rosa Parks's unplanned refusal on 1 December 1955 to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus to a white man stimulated a sustained bus boycott that soon inspired mass protests elsewhere to speed the pace of civil rights reform. On 5 December 1955 a group of local leaders established the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to coordinate the boycott and chose as its leader Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister with a doctorate in systematic theology. Although initially motivated by his Christian social gospel beliefs, King, with the encouragement of veteran activists such as Bayard Rustin of the War Resisters League and Glenn Smiley of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, soon became the nation's most influential advocate of Gandhian concepts of nonviolent resistance. Despite the bombing of King's house and other acts of intimidation, MIA leaders were able to sustain the boycott until November 1956, when the NAACP won a Supreme Court order to desegregate the bus system. In 1957 King and his supporters founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to provide an institutional framework supporting local protest movements. King moved cautiously, however, and SCLC did not initiate any mass protests during the next five years.

Four black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, sparked a new phase of the southern civil rights movement on 1 February 1960 when they staged a sit-in at a drugstore lunch counter reserved for whites. Thousands of students in at least sixty communities,

mostly in the upper, urbanized South, joined the sit-in movement during the winter and spring of 1960. Student protesters typically acted without direction from existing civil rights groups, although the well-organized sit-ins in Nashville benefited from training sessions organized by the Gandhian divinity student James Lawson. Despite efforts by the NAACP, SCLC, and CORE to impose some control over the sit-in movement, the student protesters formed their own group, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), to coordinate the new movement. SNCC gradually acquired a staff of full-time organizers, many of whom were former student protesters, and launched a number of projects designed to achieve desegregation and voting rights. Although its nonviolent tactics were influenced by Lawson and King, SNCC organizers typically stressed the need to develop self-reliant local leaders to sustain grassroots movements.

The Freedom Rides of 1961 were initiated by CORE, but these efforts to desegregate southern bus terminals were continued by independent student activists after attacks by white mobs in Alabama forced the group to abandon its initial campaign. Nashville students then sustained and expanded the freedom rides, eventually recruiting new groups of riders, who traveled to Jackson, Mississippi, where they were promptly arrested for disobeying racial segregation rules. Despite Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy's plea for a "cooling-off" period, other young activists also rode buses to Jackson to join the students already in jail. During the remaining months of 1961, the Mississippi Freedom Rides encouraged similar protests elsewhere against segregated transportation facilities. Young freedom riders became part of the regional community of activists who self-consciously saw themselves as the spearhead of the southern freedom movement. This was particularly the case as students who spent part of the summer of 1961 in Mississippi jails emerged from the experience with greater self-confidence and awareness of nonviolent tactics. Some of these Mississippi veterans joined the staffs of SNCC, SCLC, and CORE, and a few remained in Mississippi to spearhead civil rights efforts in that bastion of segregation. As the southern movement expanded from small-scale sit-ins to sustained mass protest campaigns, SNCC began to challenge King's cautiousness and top-down approach. These differences over tactics and strategy were evident when SNCC workers criticized King's brief involvement late in 1961 in the Albany Movement's sustained protest campaign in southwest Georgia.

Learning from the largely unsuccessful campaign to desegregate Albany during 1961 and 1962, King and his colleagues initiated a major campaign in Birmingham during the spring of 1963. While SNCC organizers focused their attention on rural areas of Mississippi and Alabama, SCLC leaders worked with Baptist minister Fred Shuttlesworth to orchestrate confrontations between nonviolent demonstrators and the often brutal law enforcement personnel directed by Eugene T. "Bull" Connor. International news coverage of these clashes disturbed many white Americans and prompted President John F. Kennedy to introduce legislation that would become the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Similar mass protests in dozens of other cities made white Americans more aware of southern racial inequities and particularly the antiquated Jim Crow system, but black militancy also prompted a white "backlash." These protests culminated on 28 August 1963 in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which attracted over 200,000 participants. As the southern struggle's most well-known spokesperson, King used his concluding "I Have a Dream" speech at the march as an opportunity to link black civil rights aspirations with traditional American political values, insisting that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution constituted "a promissory note" guaranteeing all Americans "the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

While media attention was concentrated on the urban demonstrations in Birmingham and elsewhere, the voter registration campaign in rural Mississippi and Alabama, spearheaded by SNCC but also involving the other groups under the auspices of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), stimulated the emergence of resilient indigenous leadership and of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). COFO director Robert Moses directed a summer project in 1964 that brought together voting rights organizers and hundreds of northern white volunteers. Although the deaths of three civil rights workers focused national attention on Mississippi, the MFDP failed in its attempt to unseat the regular all-white delegation at the 1964 national Democratic convention. During the following year, however, mass protests in the Alabama cities of Selma and Montgomery led President Lyndon Johnson to introduce legislation that became the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Selma-to-Montgomery march in March 1965 would be the last sustained, southern protest campaign that was able to secure widespread support among whites

outside the region. The passage of voting rights legislation, the upsurge in northern urban racial violence, and white resentment of black militancy lessened the effectiveness and popularity of nonviolent protests as a means of advancing African American interests. In addition, the growing militancy of black activists spawned an increasing determination among African Americans to achieve political power and cultural autonomy by building black-controlled institutions. Ideological conflict between "black power" proponents, such as SNCC chairman Stokely Carmichael, and more conventional civil rights leaders, such as King, came to a head during a march through Mississippi held in June 1966 following the wounding of voting rights proponent James Meredith, who had desegregated the University of Mississippi in 1962. The "black power" slogan popularized by Carmichael encapsulated the emerging notion of a freedom struggle seeking political, economic, and cultural objectives beyond narrowly defined civil rights reforms. By the late 1960s, not only the NAACP and SCLC, but even SNCC and CORE faced challenges from new militant organizations, such as the Black Panther Party. Often influenced by Malcolm X (1925–1965) and by Pan-African ideologies, proponents of "black liberation" saw civil rights reforms as insufficient because they did not fully address the problems of poor and powerless blacks. They also dismissed nonviolent principles, often quoting Malcolm X's alternative imperative, "by any means necessary." Questioning American citizenship and identity as goals for African Americans, black power proponents called instead for a global struggle for human rights and national "self-determination" rather than merely for civil rights.

Although King criticized calls for black separatism and armed self-defense, he agreed that African Americans should seek compensatory government actions to redress historical injustices and end poverty. During the period from the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 until his assassination in April 1968, King participated in campaigns in Chicago and Memphis designed to confront the endemic economic problems of black ghettos, including slum housing and insufficient job opportunities. He also strongly criticized U.S. military intervention in the Vietnamese civil war, insisting that war was immoral and that the American government had wrongly opposed nationalist movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In December 1967 he announced a Poor People's Campaign intended to bring thousands of protesters to Washington, D.C., to lobby for an end to poverty. But

after King's assassination, the Poor People's Campaign floundered, while the Black Panther Party and other black militant groups encountered intense government repression from local police and the FBI's Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO). In 1968, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (also known as the Kerner Commission) concluded that the nation, despite civil rights reforms, was moving "toward two societies (one black, one white), separate and unequal" (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, p. 396). By the time of this report, claims that black gains had resulted in "reverse discrimination" against whites were effectively used against significant new civil rights initiatives during the 1970s and 1980s.

As the era of sustained mass militancy came to an end, the civil rights legislation of the 1960s became the basis for affirmative action programs that increased opportunities for many black students and workers as well as for women, disabled people, and other victims of discrimination. These reforms did not, however, have much impact on the living conditions or opportunities of the poor. Militant protest activity declined after the 1960s, and increased participation in the American electoral system lessened black reliance on extralegal tactics. Black elected officials, including mayors, began to exert greater influence than either black power proponents or advocates of nonviolent civil rights protests, although civil rights issues continued to stimulate protest, particularly when previous gains appeared to be threatened. Individual civil rights leaders, like John Lewis, Andrew Young, and Rev. Jesse Jackson, successfully entered politics.

Overall, the twentieth-century struggle for civil rights produced an enduring transformation of the legal status of African Americans and other victims of discrimination. It also increased the responsibility of government to enforce civil rights laws and the provisions of the post-Civil War Constitutional amendments. Civil rights reforms did not, however, alter other determinants of the subordinate status of African Americans, who remained in racially segregated communities with inferior housing, public schools, and healthcare services. Like freedom struggles in Africa, the African American freedom struggle eliminated slavery and legally mandated forms of racial oppression, but the descendants of former slaves and colonized people generally remained in a subordinate position within a global capitalist economic order. Despite the enormous twentieth-century gains in the field of human rights, neither of the twentieth-century strategies—nonviolent

mass resistance or revolutionary nationalism—proved capable of dealing with the damaging social consequences of long-standing historical injustices.

[See also Gandhian Theory of Nonviolence and King, Martin Luther, Jr.]

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Methods of Nonviolent Action

The U.S. civil rights movement (1955–1965) of the mid-twentieth century owes its success in part to its implementation of the technique of nonviolent struggle, using scores of nonviolent methods, or action steps. The hundreds of documented nonviolent sanctions, or methods, fall generally into one of three fundamental categories, identified by the scholar Gene Sharp as protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention. Protest or persuasion methods send a message and include demonstrations, marches, petitions, and vigils. Noncooperation methods suspend cooperation and assistance and include economic noncooperation, such as consumer boycotts and strikes, and political noncooperation, such as civil disobedience—the deliberate violation of decrees, laws, military or police orders, ordinances, or regulations regarded by those ruled by them as illegitimate, immoral, or unethical. Nonviolent intervention methods intentionally disrupt and include