

# DIRECT ACTION for a nonviolent world



New England Committee for Nonviolent Action

Telephone: 203-376-9970

RFD 1, Box 197B, Voluntown, Conn. 06384

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*Vigiling at the Sikorsky helicopter plant in Stratford, March 26.*

photos by Neil Haworth

*SIKORSKY: Brad Lyttle arrested for sitting down with six others at gate of helicopter plant.*

*MONTGOMERY: City Police break up a student sit-down protest near the Capitol building. Note kneeling policeman jabbing with his club.*

*Erica Enzer conducts a briefing session at high school seminar-work camp weekend at Polaris Action Farm.*



I arrived at the Sikorsky helicopter plant in Stratford with my mother and Phil Stiles about 11:00 Thursday night. There were a half a dozen cold-looking people standing next to the entrance to the plant with signs, not the least of which was an enormous "No More Helicopters For War" sign which two people held in full view of passing cars. The tombstone float of the Connecticut Anti-Communists was keeping solitary vigil across the road -- Mr. McCallum and his men had gone home. Mary Christiansen told us that the vigil had begun at noon that day and that we were planning to vigil in shifts during the night -- two hours of stoicism on the line and four hours of rest in rooms 116 and 118 of the Stratford Motel right across the street. We had arrived in the middle of a shift, so we stayed on the vigil until 2:00 a.m. Chris (Christiansen) talked to a young fireman for over an hour, but because of the physical set-up of the plant there was little chance of direct communication with passers-by.

It began to rain about 4:00 a.m. -- not to stop until noon. I was planning to commit civil disobedience on Friday so I stayed in the motel most of the morning to rest. Erica reported that a young man had said he was planning to run over anybody who tried to sit down at the entrance to the plant. After she and Ted talked with him for a long time, he said as he left, "If I listened to you all night, I'd end up picketing with you in the morning." My mother learned from the motel restaurant manager, who was very cordial to us, that old Mr. Sikorsky was upset by our demonstration, since, as he said, he had not originally intended his helicopters to be used for military purposes.

As soon as Dave Dellinger arrived -- about 11:30 on Friday -- those of us who had decided to commit civil disobedience gathered in the motel to plan our strategy. Altogether we made seven: Dave Dellinger, Brad Lyttle, Peter Kiger, Bruce Hicks, myself, and Jill Holden and Susan Williams, two 16-year-old girls from Massachusetts who had their parents' permission to participate. The discussion helped clarify for each of us what we wanted to do -- whether to go limp as we were carried off the road, whether to plead guilty at the arraignment, etc.

We rejoined the vigil line about 1:00. There were about fifty people in the line, five or six anti-Communists across the road, and many state troopers, policemen and newspaper and television reporters and photographers waiting for the civil disobedience to begin. About 1:20 p.m., the seven of us walked across the yellow "no-trespassing" line and sat down at the entrance to the plant. In one continuous motion, the gates to the plant were closed, an official read aloud to us the no-trespassing law, a loud speaker announced that we were all under arrest, and the policemen began to drag us off the road. They were extraordinarily gentle. I told the two policemen who were carrying me that I was sorry to cause them any trouble. They said, "That's o.k.," and one added, "I wish you would walk though, because my arms hurt." I laughed and said, "Mine kind of hurt too!" Thereafter they let me down gently to rest whenever they had to stop.

We were carried on a bus to the Stratford jail, where we waited for the trial that was especially held for us an hour or so later. At the trial we all pleaded nolo contendere to the charge of trespassing and made statements explaining the motivations for what we had done. Judge Williams was sympathetic. He asked us if we were planning to repeat our action. We said no, "on this particular day" we were not planning to repeat our action. He understood. He commended everyone concerned in the action -- the court clerks for working over-time, the policemen for their skill, the demonstrators for their restraint and "highest form of nonviolent civil disobedience." He ended with, "I cannot pass judgement in this case." It was quite an experience.

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#### VACATION AT POLARIS ACTION FARM

We have been making some preparations to have camping sites available for roughing it type peace people who have a tent or trailer. Electricity will be available, with water nearby. 30 acres of woods, swimming nearby, a challenging program. Let us know if you are interested.

Plans are still tentative about our summer program. We have been so busy with present activities that not much thought has as yet been given to the summer, but we plan to have several short training programs during the summer. We expect Paul Salstrom to be back from his return trip to federal prison (Paul is a draft refuser) and several of the QWG walkers will be here and Bob Swann will be around, returned from rebuilding churches in Mississippi. Some of our people have been to Selma. All in all the staff will have rich experiences to draw upon. There will also be guest speakers to add variety and spice to the program. Tentatively we are dividing the summer into two sections: June 28 - July 31 and August 2 - Sept. 4. More details in next bulletin.

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GENERAL KHANH IN NEWPORT. WE ARE THERE.

When we arrived in Newport, R. I., on March 17th, the day General Nguyen Khanh was to speak at the Naval War College, we requested permission to hear the general and to give him a letter. Permission was denied, and we sensed -- four of us from New England CNVA farm who had been alerted the night before about General Khanh's visit -- that we were regarded as dangerous characters. We were told Security was terribly busy preparing for some expected demonstrators; we learned later that radio reports were coming thick and fast about us; newspaper people were looking for us. We went outside the Naval Base to set up our vigil, and were greeted by helmeted military police with a truckload of road barriers, several security police cars, and city police. Our quiet vigil and leafleting calmed the authorities, and we spent several hours handing out hundreds of leaflets to sight-seers who, hearing about us on the radio, drove by with their hands outstretched to take literature. As General Khanh was leaving with his escort of several noisy helicopters, we turned our signs upward and hoped that he and his military hosts would get the message -- there are Americans who want the slaughter in Vietnam to stop now. M. S.

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LITERATURE

UNITED STATES vs. THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM -- Bradford Lyttle has written a vivid account of the experiences of the Q-W-G Walk with the government and the attempt to go to Cuba in the SPIRIT OF FREEDOM last October. 15¢

MACHINE vs. MAN -- a general purpose leaflet for distribution at factories manufacturing weapons for war in Vietnam. \$1. per 100

THOREAU MONEY -- A unique leaflet in the form of money emphasizing opposition to paying taxes for war. Send with or instead of your income tax. Distribute as a leaflet. 1¢

AN EXPERIMENT IN THE SCIENCE OF NONVIOLENCE IN ALBANY, GEORGIA -- Brad Lyttle's story of the way the Q-W-G Walk met the problem of challenging a totalitarian government to permit elementary civil liberties. 10¢

THOUGHT, TALK, ACTION -- Our new speaker and film brochure. Free

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Please send me the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ UNITED STATES vs THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM @ 15¢. \_\_\_\_\_ MACHINE vs. MAN @ \$1. per 100

\_\_\_\_\_ Thoreau Money 1¢ each. \_\_\_\_\_ THOUGHT, TALK, ACTION - speaker and film brochure  
Free

\_\_\_\_\_ AN EXPERIMENT IN THE SCIENCE OF NONVIOLENCE IN ALBANY, GEORGIA @ 10¢.

I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the work of New England CNVA. I Pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month.

My name and address on the reverse are correct.

VISIT TO SELMA by Brad Lyttle Erica Enzer, Bruce Hicks, Peter Kellman and I are residents of Polaris Action Farm who visited Selma this past Month. This was my first participation in mass civil rights demonstrations. After a week in Selma, I was depressed by the violence and brutality in Alabama. During my stay, James Reeb died. Demonstrators were shot at with an air pellet gun; one Negro girl lost a tooth when a pellet hit her in the mouth. Hundreds of billy club armed state troopers, city policemen and sheriff's possemen surrounded and blocked off the Negro area where demonstrations were being organized. A group of demonstrators who ventured into Selma were threatened by a teen-aged gang. Jabbing with their clubs, policemen roughed up a student demonstration in Montgomery. A second demonstration was scattered by rope and club swinging possemen. And at a federal court hearing in Montgomery, State Trooper Director Al Lingo and other witnesses pieced together a picture of planned ambush, repression, misunderstanding and insensitivity. In years of demonstrating for peace throughout the United States, in western Europe, and in East Germany, Poland and Russia I had never seen totalitarianism as raw as that in Alabama.

The reaction of the Negroes and other demonstrators was magnificent, by and large. Never were the freedom songs sung with more spirit. New ones were composed while I was there. Stirring speeches by James Bevel, Hosea Williams, C.K. Vivian, Ralph Abernathy and Martin Luther King kept us informed of developments and roused us for each new protest action. SNCC students demonstrated seemingly without any concern or fear about the hostility of the authorities.

Nonviolence played a part in the movement's strategy. All participants were required to be nonviolent. Violent self-defense and retaliation were discouraged. However, the obvious gains were achieved by federal court orders and almost all of the movement's leaders appealed for police and federal protection.

Selma was a "crossroads of the world." I met dozens of old friends there, Unitarians I had not seen for years, members of other direct action peace projects, peace organization officers, people from San Francisco and Long Island. Their presence showed how modern communication and transportation can fit into a strategy of nonviolence.

I recommend that everyone acquire some experience in massive civil rights activities. They are helping to change the country for the better and advancing as well the cause of nonviolence.

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IF WISHES WERE HORSES

Our wish list is short this month. We are fixing up one of the chicken coops for a dormitory and lecture-study room. Red, orange or yellow denim or burlap curtains for the 7 windows (3½' long) would cheer the place up. With spring at hand, we are starting our garden. Vegetable, flower and grass seeds are needed.

CALENDAR

		NEW ENGLAND CNVA	BULK RATE
		RFD #1, Box 197B	US POSTAGE
April 9-11	New Haven Youth CORE weekend at the farm.	Voluntown, Conn. 06384	2 7/8¢ PAID
April 12	7 week spring training program at the farm begins.	April 12, 1965	Voluntown Connecticut Permit No.1
April 14-15	Thoreau Walk from Walden Pond to Boston.	<u>RETURN REQUESTED</u>	
April 17	SDS sponsored March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam.		
April 30 - May 2	Weekend for Hartford area work-campers at the farm.		
May 14-16	Weekend for Boston area work-campers at the farm.		