

198 Methods of Nonviolent Action

Far too often people struggling for democratic rights and justice are not aware of the full range of methods on nonviolent action. Wise strategy, attention to the dynamics of nonviolent struggle, and careful selected methods can increase societies and movements chance of successful campaigns and initiatives.

Gene Sharp researched and catalogued 198 methods and provided a rich selection of historical examples in his seminal work: *The Politics of Nonviolent (Vol 3)* Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973. These methods are:

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: (1) 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: (2) 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

Source: Gene Sharp, [*The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Vol. 2: The Methods of Nonviolent Action*](#) (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973).