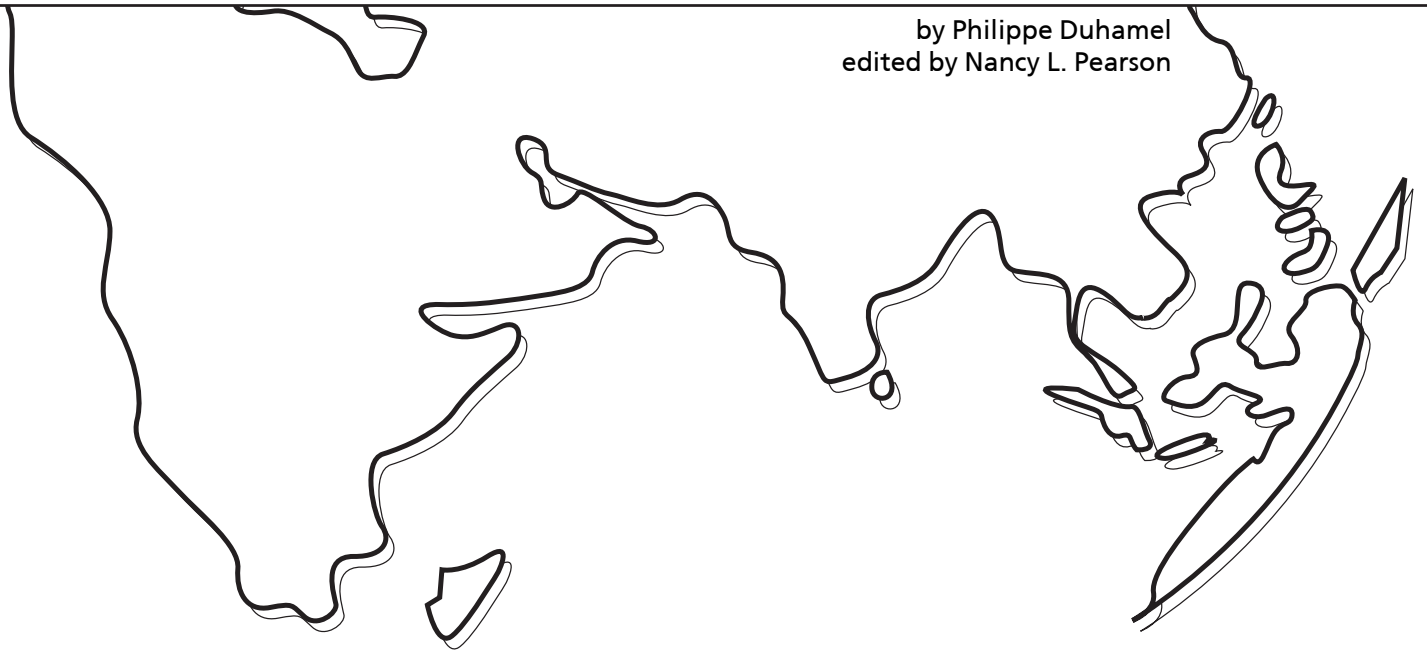


The Dilemma Demonstration

Using nonviolent civil disobedience to put the government between a rock and a hard place

by Philippe Duhamel
edited by Nancy L. Pearson



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Notebook Series Editor

Liam Mahony

Copyediting

Tricia Cornell

Layout

Bela Morris

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I first learned about the concept of a “dilemma demonstration” in a piece called “Seven Ways to Make Our Protests More Powerful” (available online at www.trainingforchange.org), written by George Lakey, director of an amazing movement education resource based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, called Training for Change. The work that George and his team continues doing has been a tremendous source of inspiration for many of us around the world. Merci.

My deepest, warmest gratitude to Nancy Pearson of the New Tactics Project. Without her loving, kind and pesky persistence, I would have never gotten around to doing this work. Her text-editing skills have also been a great contribution to this notebook. I also wish to thank Nicole Palasz, from the Center for Torture Victims, who so kindly introduced me to the New Tactics Project.

As explained later, the “Search and Seizure” tactic was developed from earlier models of action. Unlike 18th-century scientists who believed mice were spontaneously generated from sweaty underwear and husks of wheat, I think bold new tactics can only come from actual involvement in human affairs, shared activist experiences and a knowledge of movement history. And that is why the New Tactics project is so important. I want to salute its initiators, including Doug Johnson, for having recognized what is one of the world’s most pressing needs today—actual strategies and tactics to change this mess around—and for acting to meet those needs.

Last, but not least, I wish to acknowledge and celebrate the courage of all those who took part in the nonviolent direct action that this notebook seeks to recount. A very special thank you also to the relentless organizers and soulful members of SalAMI and to the countless generous supporters who make this work not only possible, but tremendously fulfilling and worthwhile. Finally, I want to express my love to Kerry, who became my best friend and soul mate after we worked together on this project, and to my son, Colin, who has also provided not only motivation, but amazing inspiration for my work.

Contact Information

Operation SalAMI
1-3570, St-Zotique E.
Montréal, Québec
Canada H1W 1E4
philippe.duhamel@sympatico.ca

Philippe Duhamel

Philippe Duhamel is an activist, organizer, facilitator, and educator who lives in Montreal, Québec, and Ottawa, Ontario, in Canada.

For over two decades, Philippe has organized grassroots campaigns on international solidarity, social justice, environmental and peace issues, including campaigns on uranium mining, the war industry, the apartheid system, military training over First Nation lands and sexism. He has designed and facilitated hundreds of nonviolent action, civil disobedience and popular education workshops.

Philippe now works as a trainer, course designer and speaker on strategy and tactics, nonviolent action, and the struggles for an alternative globalization. He is called upon by organizations interested in broadening their strategic outlook and their use of powerful, creative tactics. With his life, Philippe hopes to make a contribution towards a new society that fosters global justice, nurtures human fulfilment, and honours the natural world.

Operation SalAMI

Part of the emergent citizen-based movement resisting corporate globalization and new so-called “free” trade agreements in Canada’s province of Québec, Operation SalAMI was born out of a successful campaign in 1998 to help stop the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI, or AMI in French, hence the name of the group, meaning “dirty friend”). Initially conceived as a one-time action, SalAMI later built a broader movement involving hundreds who carried out important mass actions against globalization, including civil disobedience tactics.

SalAMI was driven by the desire to reverse the dynamics of impoverishment and destruction caused by the sway which a small elite holds over the resources and the peoples of the world. The efforts of this network were grounded in three key principles: nonviolence, mandatory training and tactical transparency.





September 2004

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the New Tactics in Human Rights Tactical Notebook Series. In each notebook a human rights practitioner describes an innovative tactic that was used successfully in advancing human rights. The authors are part of the broad and diverse human rights movement, including nongovernment and government perspectives, educators, law enforcement personnel, truth and reconciliation processes, women's rights and mental health advocates. They have both adapted and pioneered tactics that have contributed to human rights in their home countries. In addition, they have used tactics that, when adapted, can be applied in other countries and other situations to address a variety of issues.

Each notebook contains detailed information on how the author and his or her organization achieved what they did. We want to inspire other human rights practitioners to think tactically — and to broaden the realm of tactics considered to effectively advance human rights.

In this notebook you learn how Operation SalAMI created a situation that placed the Canadian government in a real dilemma regarding their position and actions in the negotiation process of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). When the government refused to make public the draft documents, hundreds of its citizens showed up at the Ottawa headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade holding "Search and Rescue Warrants" for the release of these draft documents. When the government responded by arresting one hundred citizens for requesting their right to information, the media and general public demanded to know what the government was trying to hide. Behind the success of the campaign was a strategy that included a number of common tactics, including petitions, letter writing, etc., but with the added twists of an unequivocal ultimatum, civil disobedience training on the premises of the Canadian parliament and the drama of the Search and Seizure Operation, a type of nonviolent direct action. Operation SalAMI's dilemma demonstration tactic, as part of a broader nonviolent campaigning strategy, pressured the government to act according to its professed values and at the requests of its citizens.

The entire series of Tactical Notebooks is available online at www.newtactics.org. Additional notebooks are already available and others will continue to be added over time. On our web site you will also find other tools, including a searchable database of tactics, a discussion forum for human rights practitioners and information about our workshops and symposium. To subscribe to the New Tactics newsletter, please send an e-mail to newtactics@cvt.org.

The New Tactics in Human Rights Project is an international initiative led by a diverse group of organizations and practitioners from around the world. The project is coordinated by the Center for Victims of Torture and grew out of our experiences as a creator of new tactics and as a treatment center that also advocates for the protection of human rights from a unique position — one of healing and reclaiming civic leadership.

We hope that you will find these notebooks informational and thought-provoking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Kelsch".

Kate Kelsch

New Tactics Project Manager

Introduction

On the morning of April 2, 2001, a group of citizens conducted the dilemma demonstration¹ dubbed a “Search and Seizure Operation” at the Department of International Trade and Foreign Affairs in Ottawa, capital city of Canada. Facing a line-up of police, three rows of anchored barricades and a crowd of journalists and media crews, they declared:

“We ask you, police officers, to do your duty and help us retrieve the documents to which we are entitled by right. Do not become accomplices in the secrecy and manipulation of this government. If you refuse to seek and retrieve the texts on our behalf, we will have no option but to attempt to retrieve them ourselves.”

They proceeded to give their names and said, “I am here to exercise my rights as a citizen; please, let me through.” Two by two, they climbed over the police barricades. Their goal: exposing government secrecy by attempting to reach the building and retrieve the secret documents of a draft trade treaty.

For months, the Canadian government had persistently refused to make public the draft papers for the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), a trade liberalization treaty being negotiated among 34 countries of the Americas.

In the weeks prior to the action, the government was issued an ultimatum and a petition tens of thousands strong. We also used extensive media relations work, support demonstrations and a call-in and fax jamming operation for supporters.

All these efforts were brought to bear with Operation SalAMI’s dilemma demonstration, creating a climactic moment with the arrest of ninety-nine people by the police. No charges were laid and most were released within 24 hours. The larger impact was heard across the country, a new debate was raging around the question: Why is the government refusing to publish key public policy documents, choosing to arrest its own citizens instead? The pressure soon proved unbearable on the government.

Exactly one week after the Search and Seizure Operation, the Canadian International Trade Minister, Pierre Pettigrew, after consulting the negotiating partners, finally agreed to make the documents pub-



Powerful symbols, such as a magnifying glass sent with every press release and a giant key to “unlock government secrets,” were used to highlight the rationale behind the Search and Seizure Operation. (Ottawa, April 2, 2001; credit Benoît Aquin.)

lic and announced the release of the draft texts of the FTAA.

This nonviolent action is an example of a dilemma demonstration. To work, it first requires a demand that creates a dilemma for the target: In this case the Canadian government was faced with a demand for transparent access to information. The state could only refuse the demand at the risk of appearing secretive and undemocratic. Second, by articulating the demand through high-visibility, media-friendly, nonviolent civil disobedience, the state was forced to act—it could not stall or delay. And the nature of this civil disobedience was skillfully and ironically modeled after the accepted state mode of getting information that is being illegally withheld or hidden: the “search and seizure operation.” This created yet another immediate dilemma in which the police would be forced to arrest people for doing the same thing the police would do if roles were reversed—an irony not lost on the media. Finally, by maintaining firmly disciplined nonviolence, the demonstration created yet a third dilemma, in which the state appears to use repressive measures against an entirely peaceful and orderly demonstration asking only for what is a citizen’s legal right—access to information.

In this notebook I will describe, how Operation SalAMI turned our own dilemma—how to inform the Canadian public about the real dangers and inequalities of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas when we were not even allowed to see the documents—into a larger dilemma for the Canadian government by revealing the secrecy on which the approval of the agreement depended. Through a careful process of analyzing previous successes and failures of citizen interventions in trade agreement processes, we were able to realistically assess our own strengths and weaknesses as well as the lessons the Canadian government had learned from these same past actions. This provided the foundation for understanding our most potent leverage point—Canadian citizens’ right to information, a value we hold very dear. We then com-

¹The dilemma demonstration is a tactical framework that puts power holders in a dilemma: if the action is allowed to go forward, it accomplishes something worthwhile related to the issue or position being asserted. If the power holders repress the action, they put themselves in a bad light, and the public is educated about the issue or position.

bined a variety of tactics to call attention to this lack of information and generated a dilemma for the government by making a specific and public ultimatum requesting the release of these documents based on our right to know. The dilemma demonstration forced the government's hand by revealing the lengths to which the government wanted to keep the process secret. The resulting media and public outcry made our goal a reality—broader public awareness and debate on the FTAA.



Protesters read the citizen's warrant for "search and seizure" of the secret negotiation documents. (Credit: Magnus Isaacson, "View from the Summit," National Film Board of Canada.)

Background

The Free Trade Area of the Americas was an ongoing effort to unite the economies of 34 countries of the Americas (except Cuba) into a single trade zone extending from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, a region encompassing 800 million human beings and US\$11 billion in combined gross domestic product. The goal was to complete negotiations and sign this agreement by the year 2005.

The FTAA negotiations were formally launched in April 1998 in Santiago, Chile. High-profile summits have since been held every four years. At the time of the campaign, in 2001, the third Summit of the Americas in Québec City was only weeks away.

With its promises of prosperity and widespread democracy, the FTAA was premised on much the same precepts as Structural Adjustment Programs from the International Monetary Fund and trade liberalization rules established by the World Trade Organization. Despite official claims, opposition movements feared that the draft trade treaty would increase inequalities between the richest two countries of the hemisphere—Canada and the United States, with 80 percent of the economic power in the region—and the rest of the Americas.

As it was known at the time, the FTAA was based on the North American Free Trade Agreement. Critical observers and opponents alike saw the risk that, like NAFTA, the FTAA would allow foreign investors to sue governments whenever environmental or socially inspired legislation risked impeding corporate profits. Local powers and democratic safeguards would have to be relinquished, legislation rewritten and in some cases national constitutions amended to comply with the new provisions of the trade treaty.

We, along with a sizeable segment of civil society organizations and popular movements opposed the accord.

New enforcement measures for intellectual property rights on drug patents by large pharmaceuticals would preclude national governments from producing roy-



Seven days after the Search and Seizure Operation, Canadian International Trade Minister, Pierre Pettigrew, announced in Buenos Aires that the Free Trade documents would be published. "It's certainly not them who made me appear before my colleagues, trembling, to tell them we have to render the texts public. Their protest was a total failure," he said. "What is true is that I honestly believe that international trade negotiations will be better accomplished when citizens are better informed." Source: National Post Id Number: 200104140186, Saturday, April 14, 2001, Vinegar and Anarchy, Mary Vallis.

alty-free, cheaper drugs, even if millions of lives were at stake. Privatized health and education services, the prohibition of cultural protection policies, compulsory water export rights were also surmised to fall under the broad language of this new, powerful, so-called "free" trade agreement.

The stakes in the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas were very high. Its potential impact on the environment, on women, on education, public health, human rights, indigenous peoples was gigantic. And the draft treaty was being kept secret.

While heads of state and national executives did have access to the FTAA draft documents, along with over 500 accredited business representatives from key global corporations and some 900 full-time government negotiators, the average citizens of the Americas were being kept in the dark. No one else could see what was actually being negotiated. Not even our elected political representatives, members of Parliament in Canada (or anywhere else for that matter, except for U.S. senators), could see the actual words of the negotiations.

With no access to the documents, we still had to try to understand the expected provisions of the FTAA. We had to provide the public with logical and detailed explanations as to the mechanics of the agreement—





As they crossed the barricades, the nonviolent protesters were arrested. Most chose physical non-cooperation and forced police to drag them off to awaiting police vans in the underground parking under the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in Ottawa. (April 2, 2001, credit: Magnus Isaacson, "View from the Summit," National Film Board of Canada.)

the different clauses defining investment, services, national treatment, prohibitions on performance requirements, intellectual property rights, etc.—and how these could further erode our democratic rights. The treaty could very well “constitutionalize” investors’ privileges, to the detriment of democratic control and the rights of citizens. With the announcement of an “early harvest” of free trade provisions, that various parts of the agreement would be concluded piecemeal, one by one, the threat was looming nearer still than the set deadline of 2005.

We had to be in a position to counter with forceful and well documented arguments the diatribes of free trade advocates. Free trade proponents were already attempting to label the opposition movement as a movement of “fat cats” fighting to preserve their privileges at the expense of Latin America’s poor. We needed clear, well-articulated and hard-hitting answers to questions such as those asked of “trade opponents” by Canadian Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew when he spoke before the Inter-American Development Bank, in Washington, D.C., in August 2001:

“For those who, for whatever reasons, oppose free trade and trade agreements, let me ask: why would we exclude others from the kind of prosperity we enjoy, built on trade and engagement with the global economy? Why condemn to isolation the others of this hemisphere who aspire to the same quality of

life, range of choice and opportunity that we wish for ourselves? Why deny them the same paths that we ourselves have followed to prosperity? We cannot—we must not—let the voices of opposition undermine our efforts to ensure that all of our hemispheric partners share in the prosperity we have enjoyed.”

Facing such pressing issues, and the practicalities of mobilization only a few short months before the Summit, a question was nagging at us. Even if we stepped up exponentially our massive popular education campaign on the technical and political stakes of the FTAA, in a frenzied race against the clock, with the goal of rallying tens of thousands of people in Québec City, would we not be doomed to failure? Because our means were so pathetically minimal, because our educational sessions on the FTAA were just starting to roll and because the technical nature of the debate was likely to turn off the vast majority of our target audience, how could we succeed? How could we ensure that a great number of citizens quickly grasped what this new treaty was about? We felt democracy was at stake, that this was a life-or-death issue for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people throughout the hemisphere.

Such was our challenge: How could we ensure that the vast majority of people—not only those within nongovernmental organizations and unions, but also within the general public—became interested in opposing the Summit of the Americas and the FTAA?

Analysis of Strategic Context

The Citizen Search and Seizure Operation was part of an overall strategy aimed at the FTAA and the upcoming Summit of the Americas, to be held in Québec City April 21-23, 2001. In the months leading up to the action, as we pondered strategy, certain facts had become clear to us. Our analysis was based on a few key findings.

WE WOULD NOT DUPLICATE SEATTLE

On November 30, 1999, a sit-in blockade forced the cancellation of an entire day of meetings of the World Trade Organization, in Seattle, Washington, USA. The cancellation of the WTO meeting was achieved through creative acts of civil disobedience organized by dozens of groups involving some 800 people. The action sealed off all access to the buildings and facilities being used for the meeting. The largely nonviolent blockade was maintained for several hours, peacefully resisting the police’s billy club assaults, chemical attacks and rubber-coated bullets.²

This approach contributed not only physically, but also politically, to scuttling, or at least delaying, a new global cycle of economic liberalization called the Millennium Round. One year after the defeat of the

Multilateral Agreement on Investments, Seattle confirmed the emergence of a citizen movement capable of success against the drivers of corporate globalisation. Many felt a resurgence of political activism not seen for many years in North America. Some hope now seemed in order.

The “Seattle model,” as it was called, was later attempted in various cities, against various targets: a meeting of the World Bank and the IMF in Washington, D.C., the Organization of American States in Windsor, Ontario, the Democratic Convention in Philadelphia, the Republican Convention in Los Angeles, etc. However, these attempts at duplicating the earlier model met with limited success. Trying as it did to replicate the same tactic over and over again, the nascent movement could not hold in check its fast-learning, and quite resourceful opponent.

In Québec City, in April 2001, the blissful repetition of the Seattle model could only promise disappointment. Over 4 km of fences were installed in the fortified city. The large “security perimeter” would be tightly secured and excessively militarised. We could hardly envision—even with the most optimistic scenario of hundreds mobilized for nonviolent civil disobedience—how Summit operations could be successfully hindered.

How could we, in a few short months, assemble and train 1,000 to 10,000 people who would knowingly subject themselves to police violence, of the likes displayed in city after city since Seattle? How could we be sufficiently organized to coordinate a creative and effective blockade? Logistical problems were overwhelming, with police in effect controlling all major housing and meeting venues in the city. Beyond logistics, the question remained: How politically pertinent would it be to repeat the same tactic against a changed political backdrop?

A SHUT DOWN OF THE SUMMIT WAS NOT POSSIBLE

Contrary to the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle, the Summit of the Americas was not under obligation to arrive at any concrete, specific and advertised result. The Québec Summit was not committed to signing any particular treaty or new initiative. In the eyes of its promoters, it was impossible for the Summit of the Americas to fail, because it had nothing specific to achieve.

This threatened to affect our own—as well as the media’s and the general public’s—perception of the success or failure of citizen mobilizations. Success or failure therefore had to be measured differently: in political, rather than technical, terms. Isn’t public sympathy always the real and final battleground?

Undoubtedly, our problem was that in large part, our mobilization remained only a reaction to the government’s agenda. We found ourselves fighting

on their terrain, rather than ours. At first glance, they had the benefit of the offensive. *They* selected the place and the time of the confrontation. The relative weakness of a defensive position is well known among strategic thinkers. How could we, in this context, seize another form of offensive?

Put simply, this was the question: Would we, as a movement, end up reinforced or weakened by the show-down at the Summit of the Americas?

Creating a dilemma

Armed, we thought, with a more realistic assessment of the situation, we set out to devise a strategy. We knew we wanted to create a dilemma for the authorities. We came to the dilemma demonstration in roughly four consecutive steps.

First, we defined our goals. Second, we carried out some political recognizance: staking out the various forces acting for or against our goals. Third, we reflected on what to do—letting the issues simmer if you will—hoping that inspiration would come on actual tactics (as it did). Fourth, we got on with the organizing, first meeting with allies to validate the strategy and bring them on board, then conducting extensive training for participants, then securing the logistics.

For steps one and two, a dozen of us rented a summer camp building with bunk beds for a weekend strategy session. We started with a discussion on our goals.

STEP 1: DEFINING GOALS

We started with a hope: that a citizens’ victory remained possible in Québec City. Despite formidable difficulties, we believed in achieving a victory on political grounds against the agenda of the Summit of the Americas and the objectives of the FTAA. Based on this optimistic assumption, we set out to refine our goals. These would serve to measure our eventual success or failure in mobilizing around the FTAA. We came to a consensus on our goals:

- Widely inform the population on the high stakes involved in the globalisation of economies.
- Describe and explain the objectives of the FTAA. Reach and educate people. Heighten public awareness.
- Call into question the very legitimacy of the process and demonstrate our rejection of it.

² Despite the nonviolent code of conduct that the blockaders had called for, small groups of masked individuals soon engaged in marginal acts of property destruction and violence. These served to publicly justify full-blown repression. As the media focused on broken windows, rock throwing and small fires, the National Guard was called in to occupy downtown Seattle. This is why the event is now mostly remembered as the “Battle of Seattle” or as a riot. Yet the undeniable success of the day, the shut-down and cancellation of the WTO meeting, was clearly the result of the nonviolent blockades, demonstrations, lock-ons (people locking themselves using various devices so they be very difficult to move) and sit-ins.



- Expand the forces of critical opposition and strengthen the strategic links between our networks.
- Offer thousands of citizens the means of getting involved in a positive, organized manner, with long-term effectiveness.
- Fuel the growth of functional, constructive and blossoming alternatives to the globalisation of markets (e.g. fair trade, organic agriculture sustained by communities, etc.).
- Create a real synergy among various methods of resisting neo-liberal globalisation.
- Show the diversity of individuals and constituencies opposing global capitalism from different viewpoints (cultural, ethnic, sexual, age and gender, environmental, and socio-economic backgrounds).

We knew from experience that such objectives could only be achieved through strategic, nonviolent discipline and dignified outrage in our mobilizations. Next, we used a number of tools to look at the political landscape in the hope of finding key pressure points.

STEP 2: MAPPING THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

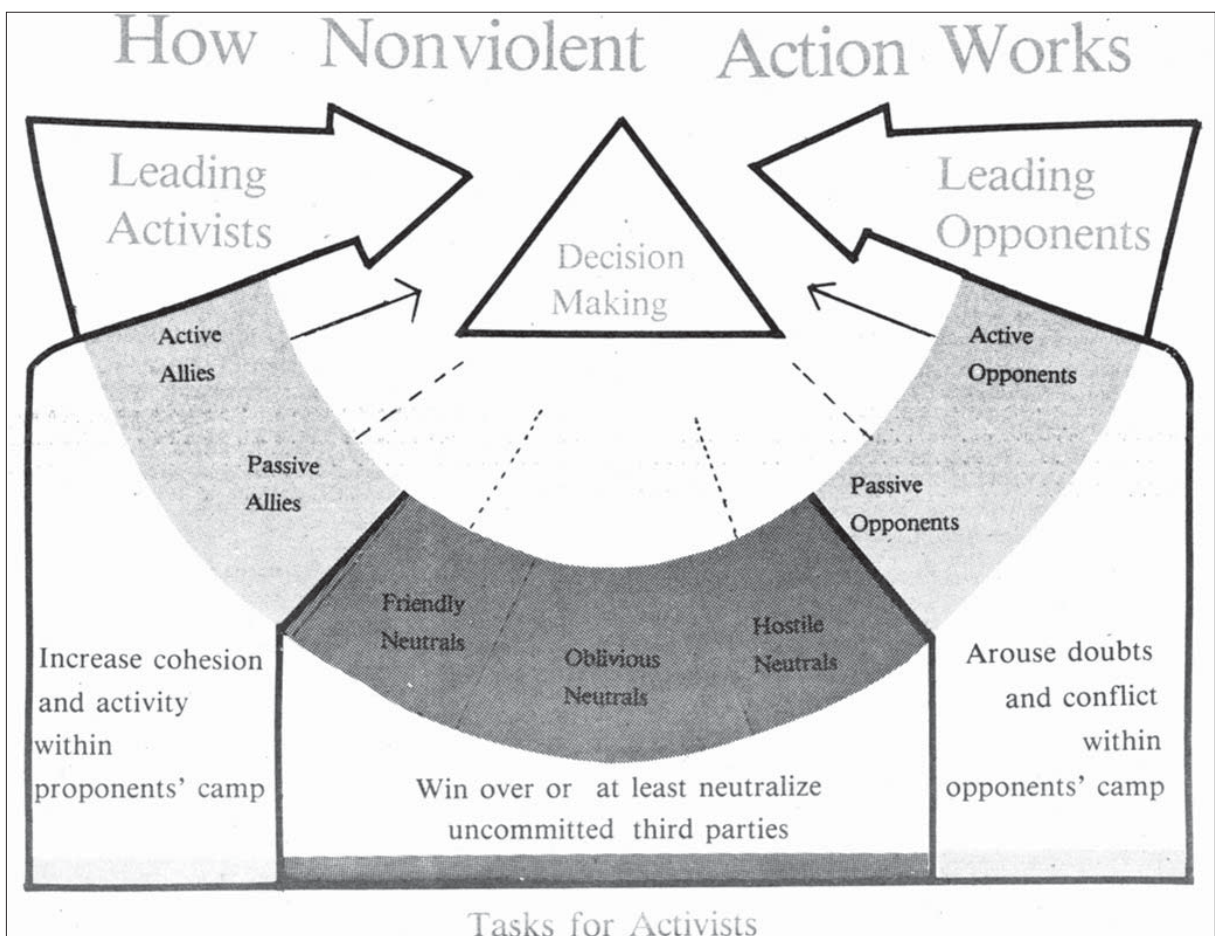
The second thing we knew we had to do was look at the various forces and constituencies around us. For this, luckily, there was a tool we knew about. It is called the "Spectrum of Allies," and it was originally devel-

oped by nonviolent activists in the U.S. and refined by George Lakey, from Training for Change.³

First, on one side of a big sheet of paper, we listed our closest allies. Then, we drew a line to the other side of the sheet and there we placed our fiercest opponents. Along that spectrum from allies to opponents, we tried to situate as many groups and constituencies as we could.

We focused our attention on key groups in the neutral zone, people who were currently sitting on the fence or simply unaware of the issues. We thought moving them was the key to winning. We had to go beyond preaching to the converted, on the one hand, and beyond frustration at trying to move our most dedicated opponents, on the other. We decided influencing the neutral zone should be a focus of our strategy. Included in that section of the spectrum were such vague constituencies as "the general public," "teachers" and "some journalists." These were the people who could be moved by some clever use of tactics.

³See George Lakey, Training for Change at <http://www.trainingforchange.org/tools/spectrum-design.html>



From *Movement for a New Society*, "Why Nonviolence," newsprint brochure, 1985.

How could we move the middle spectrum towards a rejection of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, or at least get them to start questioning the process?

Another strategy tool that we used was the Force Field Analysis.³ This tool also allowed us to look at the big picture. We used it to see what restraining forces we were up against (and how to mitigate them) and what driving forces we could muster (and how to maximize them).

We also studied the official line—the government's expressed views—on our movement. We read and analyzed speeches by government ministers and studies made public by our government's secret services, the Canadian Intelligence and Security Services.

Media strategy. As part of our goal of encouraging the neutrals to question free trade, we chose to focus on the mass media perspective on the negotiations. That was, we thought, the most efficient way to move the middle ground closer to our side.

There is no doubt that developed, industrialized countries are greatly influenced by the media. For better or for worse, the media here play a central role in defining "important issues" and shaping political relationships. This is why we dedicated a sizeable amount of energy to nurturing positive relationships with journalists. The upcoming Summit generated a lot of interest on their part. We briefed individual journalists, helping them understand the issues, the groups on the ground and our strategy. We adopted a policy of complete truthfulness and honesty (no manipulations, no secrecy) with the media. Our trainings and some of our meetings were open to selected media. The policy paid off. We appeared in all print and broadcast media in the country even before the operation.

One of the effects of this mobilization was that it served as a pre-mobilization prior to Québec City. This action would awaken public opinion to the crucial issues of concern in the FTAA with a—metaphorical—bang.

The action, like the campaign around it, was covered by virtually every media in the country and generated sufficient pressure to coerce the government into action. The general tone in the media also shifted dramatically around the time of this action, from "What are violent protesters up to?" to "What is the government hiding from us?"

³You can find a number of descriptions of this tool on the Internet. Google will give you over 10,000 references, mostly used in the business context. For a description in a community context, see for instance <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/tools/forcefield.html>



A protest spokesperson tells police officers how they really should be helping protesters to get the secret documents. The media covered the action extensively and a movie is being made. (Ottawa, April 2, 2001, credit: Benoît Aquin.)

My arresting officer agreed that, right now, the rich are ruling things. The difference between us was that he felt it was inevitable, and I sure as heck don't. — Michael Gagne, protestor

STEP 3: LOOKING FOR INSPIRED TACTICS

We also tried to put ourselves in the shoes of our opponents. What would be the greatest challenge for them? Which of the opponents' positions would be most difficult to justify in the eyes of some of their key allies? How could we show in broad daylight the dark side of our opponents' policies, so they become untenable? We were looking for the Achilles' heel, the inherent weakness in their position. We thought we could win by challenging the legitimacy of the process.

We asked ourselves this question: What is a widely-held value that the current trade negotiations are violating?

We remembered how the secret Multilateral Agreement on Investments was torpedoed in 1998. First, it was leaked on the Internet and, as a result, people started paying attention. From there, many realized the horror of its objectives and the mobilization was launched. To win the battle against continental free trade, we had to spur the same level of interest in the FTAA that had sunk the MAI.

What was the Achilles' heel of the Summit of the Americas in general, and of the FTAA in particular? At last, we found an answer. It was its secrecy. In other words, what was one widely held value that the current Free Trade negotiations violated: The right to information, the basis for democracy. Certainly, the right to information was also a value widely shared by journalists. We were on to something...

Fighting for the right to know. Based on this analysis, we decided the first strand of our demands, and the one which—both on the educational and tactical lev-



els—would be the most powerful and compelling, was to *demand the complete texts of the FTAA* (in a draft form at this stage of the negotiations). It was our firm belief that “free” trade promote investors rights to the general detriment of citizens and the environment. Our long-term goal remained a complete rejection of the agreement. However, focusing on the process of the negotiations could bring many more people to see the danger inherent in such disregard for democracy. In so doing, they might then be moved to act before the agreement was signed. That step was in the right direction.

The demand for the texts would be clear to all: Our country was preparing to sign a treaty that was being hidden from its citizens. A treaty is a powerful, supra-constitutional agreement that supersedes the authority of national and regional governments and local society. Regardless of their prior opinions on “free” trade as such, far and wide certainly, people would agree it was unacceptable that citizens could not put their hands on the draft FTAA and debate it.

A dilemma demand. Now, it seemed insufficient to make our demands and then wait passively for an answer that would probably fail to come. To demonstrate our seriousness to the federal government as well as to the entire population, our demand had to be physically embodied. We needed to provide a deadline. To be more than an ineffectual wish, our demand should be backed by a series of pressure tactics and sanctions that could be applied if the claim was not fulfilled.

As a matter of fact, we did know that a complete updated draft of the FTAA text was to be made available to heads of state, negotiators and business lobbyists one month prior to the Québec City summit. We opted to demand that the entire text be given to civil society organizations and to the population at large at the same time. We chose to ask for the integral text, not some form of summary, substitute or public relations document. We thought it wise to formulate our demand precisely in order to avoid being given the run-around or some form of creative evasion.

The activists were peacefully protesting the secrecy of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) meetings. They were met by RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] photographers and aggression. Why is the government afraid? Are they concerned about what the protesters will do? Or what the protesters will say? The images of armed government goons engaged with protesters who are predominantly students is reminiscent of the events in Tiananmen Square. — Matthew Crosier, letter to the editor, Ottawa XPress, April 5, 2001.

We would give advance warning, through an ultimatum, requesting that key public interest documents be published by a reasonable deadline. Authorities were warned that if demands were not met, the Citizen Search and Seizure would be conducted.

We formulated the demand as such:

We demand that before the 20th of March, 2001, the Canadian Government publish the integral version of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, as it stands at this stage of the negotiations. We want 5,000 copies of the draft agreement in French, 10,000 copies in English, 1,000 copies in Spanish and 500 copies in Portuguese. We demand that the four versions be put on the Internet and be updated monthly. Hard copies of the document and the online versions must be made available by March 20, 2001, at 12:00 noon (Eastern standard time) at the very latest.

This demand, it seemed, was unassailable. It was credible, legitimate, understandable by everybody and absolutely realistic. It met the fundamental criterion of a sound strategy: It put the opponent in an insoluble dilemma.

Should the Canadian Government give us the document, it would grant us a small victory, which would feed the movement’s momentum. The publication would generate people’s interest. A look at the contents of the draft text would outrage people still in the dark about the true meaning of “free” trade, thus helping the movement to grow.

On the other hand, if the government refused to give us the document, it would confirm the clandestine nature of the process, which would further undermine its legitimacy. Such a refusal would infuriate all those who believe in the democratic right to full and open information (including the media, which we needed). This too would feed public outrage and the momentum of the opposition movement.

Whatever option the State chose would reinforce the Québec City demonstrations and public support for them. The government could hardly win. The government was faced with a damned-if-you-do-damned-if-you-don’t situation. As kids say: “Heads, I win. Tails, you lose.”

Regaining the offensive: A place and time of our choosing. We probably did not have much choice but to see the mobilization towards the Summit as a stairway which would have to be climbed step by step. For the mobilization to be numerically impressive in Québec (a fundamental objective from our point of view), we had to plan “warning shots” and pre-mobilizations to flex our muscles for the Québec “Olympics.”

Furthermore, regaining the offensive and the moral high ground appeared to be the crucial element of a strategy designed to bring a political victory against the Summit of the Americas. We thought we should be able to ensure that success prior to mid-April 2001. Ideally, as we entered Québec City, we would harvest the success of our mobilizations as we might a ripe fruit ready to fall from a tree.

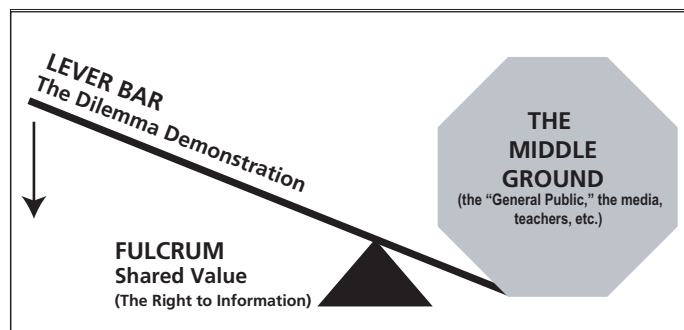
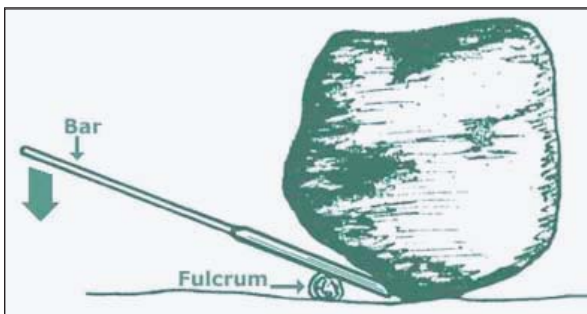
To avoid a strictly defensive posture, to overcome the “reactive” logic inherent to anti-summit demonstrations, it seemed appropriate to try to move the location and the time of the confrontation, and turn it to our advantage. A basic principle of strategy is to avoid concentrating all your forces in a locked confrontation that is at the time and place of your opponent’s choosing, where it is strongest. Therefore, a goal of our action was to retake the offensive. Its effect was

to move our nonviolent confrontation to terrain more vulnerable for the government than that of fortified Québec City.

Now to those tactics that would serve as sanctions.

Coming up with the tactic: The Search and Seizure Operation. The idea of a specific tactic to be used as a sanction if the government failed to publish the texts only came after we let the matter rest for a while. One of the biggest challenges faced by social activists is how to come up with new tactics, or at least innovative ways to frame them.

Interestingly, inspiration came to me while I lay in bed, half asleep, still unsure about what could be an inspiring tactical climax for the campaign. Despite all the



The dilemma demonstration works like a lever. It musters social power to move bigger constituencies towards social justice goals.

Historical roots of the tactic: From India to Ottawa

A direct inspiration for the tactic was a watershed moment in the struggle for Home Rule in India: the nonviolent raids on the salt depots in Dharsana. The action demonstrated with great eloquence that nonviolent resistance is no meek affair.

After successfully leading his Salt March to the sea, which sparked mass civil disobedience against British rule, Gandhi had planned to step up the nonviolent rebellion by raiding and taking possession of the salt depots at Dharsana. As was customary for Gandhi before taking action, he had written to the Viceroy asking him to remove the salt tax and the prohibition on private salt making.

Gandhi and other leaders were soon arrested. Ms. Sarojini Naidu, a poet, took up the leadership of the action. The first raid took place on May 21, 1930, with the most demonstrative raid taking place on June 1 of that year. During the raids, columns of volunteers—2500 had gathered—walked silently and bravely toward the heavily guarded mines, knowing they would be beaten and perhaps killed, even having watched the sickening deaths of their colleagues in front of them.

For inspiration and context, on the eve of the Search and Seizure Operation in Ottawa, the scene of the raid on the Dharsana salt depots, movingly re-enacted in the 1982 biographical movie *Gandhi*, was shown to all participants.

(For more about the history of nonviolent conflict in the 20th century, see *A Force More Powerful*, a book, film and web site—www.aforcemorepowerful.com—by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall.)





Protesters (some wearing Robin Hood costumes) cross barricades to try and search the offices of International Trade minister Pierre Pettigrew for the draft trade agreement. (Ottawa, April 2, 2001, credit: Benoît Aquin.)

strategy tools, the meetings, the brainstorm, creativity sometimes comes in mysterious ways. In any case, there it was : We would send an ultimatum for the texts to the government and, when it failed to publish them, we would simply go and try to retrieve them ourselves from the minister's office. Hence the Search and Seizure Operation.

In the Citizen Search and Seizure, citizens trained in nonviolence would raid the facilities of our unresponsive government to gain access to the key documents being denied to us.

Upon failure on the part of authorities to release the important information by the set deadline, we would issue a Citizen Search Warrant. This is the time when the support base we had rallied and trained would be called to action. We would finalize logistical organizing and finish training participants for the Operation.

On the given day, groups of citizens would line up before the building most likely to hold the secret information and announce, in the name of democracy and public interest, that they would attempt entering the premises to search for and seize the documents.

The tactic would purposefully use the language and procedures of a police raid, but it would be conducted nonviolently.

From nonviolent raids to citizen's arrests. In addition to historical examples, a second source of inspiration were actions I helped to organize with the Alliance for Nonviolent Action in Canada, during the late 1980s and early 1990s. For example, one was a campaign against the G7 Summit in Toronto in 1988. We read our "Citizens Arrest Warrants" in front of the police and global media. As trained participants, we then proceeded to nonviolently cross the barricades in well-organized, successive waves. The arrests were quite brutal. Some 160 of us were tightly handcuffed and sent to jail. In headlines around the world, the story of the protest upstaged the bland photo-ops of the G7 leaders. Before the term was coined, you could say this was one of the very first "globalization protests."

Eight years later, I helped organize a "citizens arrest" action when Henry Kissinger came to address the 1996 Montreal Conference on Globalized Economies as a keynote speaker. As immigration authorities failed to respond to our letter pointing to evidence of Mr. Kissinger's involvement in crimes against humanity, nonviolent blockades were set up around the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, early in the morning on the day of the conference, to try to catch the suspected war criminal. Later, a group showed up at the doors of the hotel and read a "Citizen's Warrant" for the arrest of Mr. Kissinger. They asked the police for help in enforcing the law, quoting the Canadian Criminal Code. As the officers refused to move, the protesters advanced slowly, open hands at their sides, towards the police. Half a dozen nonviolent protesters were arrested and charged with "assault," with much media fanfare. The action upstaged the proper decorum and quiet respectability of the conference, as controversy now surrounded Mr. Kissinger's record. The protesters were later acquitted.

STEP 4: GEARING UP FOR ACTION

A campaign framework. The demand and ultimatum became part of a letter-writing, petition and endorsement campaign. Via mail, fax, e-mail, the Web and the media, we solicited broad support for our demands from thousands of groups, unions, associations and individuals. The endorsement form included a space for organizations to declare their commitment to the various "sanctions" being planned in case our demand was not met. Similarly, a petition engaged individuals and invited their support for nonviolent action if the government failed to act. In a few sort weeks, we collected over 18,000 signatures and pledges.

We held many meetings with our allies in social movements across eastern and central Canada and the north-eastern United States. The word, and the support, spread quickly.

Nonviolence as strategic framework.“The overall campaign and the Search and Seizure tactic was based on the strategy of nonviolent action.”⁵

It is sometimes assumed that “nonviolence” is a mere (and meek!) tactical outlook. In fact, many theorists have understood that nonviolent action is based on very different assumptions about the nature of power. As such, nonviolent action operates according to a whole other paradigm, different insights about the nature of power and violence.

It is usually assumed that power is a “thing” that some people have and some others don’t. The powerful own power. The powerless do not own any. In fact, however, power is a dynamic. Those who seem powerful only hold the power that others lend them. No tyrant can survive without the obedience of his subjects. Should the subjects withdraw their obedience, the tyrant will fall as if a carpet were pulled from under him.²

Properly understood as a shift in the analysis of social power, nonviolence presents a real strategic framework, not just a tactical option. Using its insight on power, nonviolent strategy aims to pull the rug from under the authorities by systematically reducing their base of support. When activists refrain from the use of violence, the strategy works for them in two ways: It hampers the “striking hand” of power by making it look really bad when it does strike; and it accelerates the process of reducing the base of support, because people will naturally sympathize much more easily with nonviolent actors.

To ensure the nonviolent strategy behind our actions, we wrote and published specific guidelines for all those wishing to be involved (see Appendix).

TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

A key component of the campaign to secure the release of the FTAA texts was training in nonviolent direct action. A one-day preparatory workshop was required of anyone wishing to take part in the Search and Seizure operation. (See the sample agenda, next page.)

Certainly not a barrier to “spontaneous” involvement in social action, training helps prepare participants for types of action that involve high risks. Police and authorities who deal with protests and other dissent activities usually benefit from extensive training in the areas of crowd control, making arrests, conducting interrogations and the like. Their use of tactics and strategy, including violent repression, sometimes intends to startle and scare people. It only seems fitting that citizens and activists too should train when they contemplate forms of action that may put them into contact with a trained repressive apparatus.

Training for nonviolent action provides a number of benefits. It provides a safe environment where potential participants can get to know and weigh carefully what risks are involved in a planned protest before they decide to take part in the event. Training also allows individuals to form small action groups called “affinity groups.” These provide a support system and help build solidarity among participants.

A dilemma... even in training! At an organizing meeting in Ottawa, the coordinator of the Solidarity Network, one of our allies, proposed that instead of holding a demonstration on April 1, we could hold a People’s Parliament on the FTAA including civil disobedience training—but with a twist. She proposed we hold the event at a highly unusual place: the very home of Canadian democracy, our fine Parliament buildings.

Using provisions allowing members of Parliament to personally book rooms at the House of Commons, she asked two sympathetic opposition MPs to book the rooms for us. Understandably, when Prime Minister Jean Chrétien found out about the anti-FTAA event and the civil disobedience training, he was not pleased. Yet, he could not stop it without projecting a dictatorial image; he therefore refrained.

Media reports that morning said police had advised hospitals in the region to be ready for a high numbers of injuries on the day of the Search and Seizure operation, as they expected a riot. Needless to say, security personnel at the Parliament buildings were initially quite tense. Everyone coming to attend the People’s tribunal was frisked and questioned. After a few hours, however, tensions subsided. Guards were soon joking and looking with amusement as people were dragging each other along the corridors of Parliament, preparing for the action the next day.

And so it was that 250 participants came to hear a spectrum of dissident voices on free trade and train for civil disobedience in the very committee rooms that should have been used to review the draft trade treaty. The national media, used to the venue but quite amazed at such a major departure from its more traditional use, were all over the story. On the eve of a

⁵For a more in-depth look at the theoretical underpinnings of nonviolent action, I warmly recommend the work of Gene Sharp (especially the three-volume set *The Politics of Non-Violent Action*, Porters Sargeant, 1973) and other resources found under the appended bibliography.

⁶This insight dates as far back as the early 1550s when Étienne de la Boétie wrote in his *Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*: “Resolve to serve no more, and you are at once freed. I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break into pieces.”

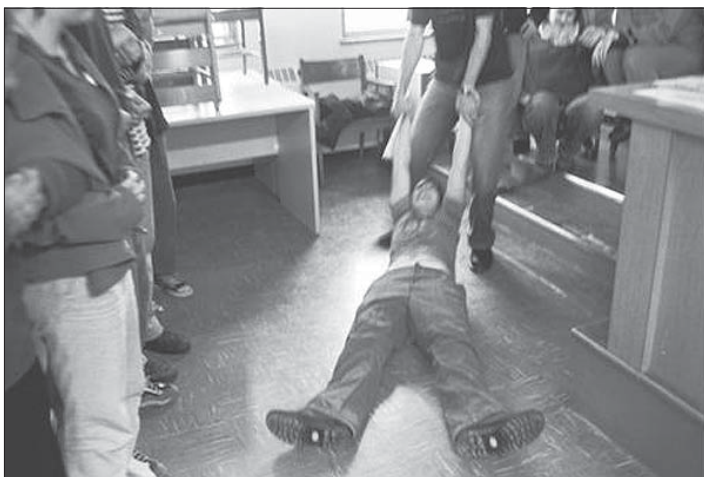




Some 250 people took part in a People's Tribunal to indict Free Trade, at our very fine Parliament buildings, in Ottawa, on April 1st 2001. (Credit: Benoît Aquin.)



The Hassle Line is an exercise that allows participants to practice staying calm in heated confrontations (training for nonviolent civil disobedience held in the Parliament buildings, in Ottawa, April 1st 2001). credit: Benoît Aquin.



Nonviolence training involves role-plays to get the feel of, and prepare for, challenging situations. Here, a participant practices being dragged by role-playing "police" and learns how best to avoid injury (training held in Montreal, March 2001). credit: Benoît Aquin.

major direct action, the event provided much needed attention, legitimacy and cohesion for the movement.

What we learned

The overall campaign and the specific tactic did work amazingly well. Although the texts were probably published as quickly as they were (just a week later) because of existing pressure even before the campaign, the Search and Seizure operation likely gave the final push that made the release of the texts unavoidable.

Timing played a big role, as national and international media focused on Canada and the protests and gave larger prominence to the issues around international trade and globalization. The use of multiple tactics geared towards multiple constituencies—a clear departure from the way groups usually cling to one or two pet tactics geared toward one or two key constituencies—also helped tremendously.

With respect to the Search and Seizure tactic itself, I would venture to say that its success also rested on what I would call—"premonitory power," an anticipation of the change we seek. In other words: the future is now. Take for instance the sit-ins for racial integration at lunch counters in the United States in the 1960s. One key source of their power was the spirit of "Be the change you want to see," as Gandhi said. Do not wait for some authority to grant you permission. Do not plead endlessly for somebody else to do something for you. Just do it. Act now as you intend to act in the future. When race won't stop you from eating where you want to eat, you will just walk up to that counter and sit. Do it now.

The Search and Seizure operation was based on acting as if we really did have the power right now to investigate and confiscate representatives who fail to be accountable. The act of issuing an ultimatum, then a warrant, and then having the nerve to show up at the door and demand access to an official's offices—that is an action that embodies a powerful vision of the future. Inspiration is the basis of powerful demonstrations. Another feature of the tactic, and one that should not be underestimated, is that it required courage. Facing a line-up of police and the threat of arrest and then to go over that barricade anyway, that takes some guts. People respect that. Courage is powerful.

Finally, the tactic probably worked because it carefully dosed boldness and decorum. For example, we chose to go over the barricades two by two, at first, only increasing the pace slowly as the hours went on. We could have "stormed the barricades" and overwhelmed the police (albeit for only a very short time, to be sure). We did not want to do that. We did not want to hand control over the action to the police. By pacing the action carefully, we were calling the shots.

We kept it that way, much like a dance. We gauged what we could get away with and pushed the envelope only so far that, for one, we could not be ignored (they could not just let people try to enter the building) and yet we could not be crushed with all-out repression (their hands were tied because we were too dignified). In fact, the mix of confrontation and respectability was such that the repression they could use was just enough to make them look bad, without weakening our spirit. It is a fine line to walk, but it can be done.

Challenges

The campaign faced a number of challenges that made our work very difficult at times. Paramount among them was the lack of resources. We ran on an extremely low budget—just over \$10,000, with just one staff person overloaded with administrative work. We also had only a handful of experienced and skilled organizers facing very tight time constraints.

On the political education side, there was little knowledge of the principles and underpinnings of nonviolent action as a general theory of conflict and means of social power. More specifically and in part because of the language barrier, the meaning and requirements of civil disobedience as a tactic were quite unknown in the French-speaking province of Québec.

The dilemma demonstration tactic was the apex of months of strategizing and broader public campaigning, involving a number of complementary tactics. In order to maximize impact, it required much collaborative action among many groups.

We understood that most organizations would assess that they were not in a position to openly participate in the more high-risk aspects of the campaign, namely civil disobedience. Therefore, we tried to keep our expectations realistic and sought to respect the constraints of each organization. A whole range of involvement in terms of participation and support was possible, desirable and necessary. We tried to build as many synergies and collaborations with interested groups as we could.

Even so, the perception in many circles, especially in some sectors of the labour movement, was that the tactic was too radical. There were some fears, often based on the profound misunderstanding that civil disobedience was just another name for rioting and rock-throwing. Meanwhile, there was also a perception that the tactic was not militant enough in other circles, especially among younger radicals. We did face multiple challenges against nonviolent action and nonviolence guidelines from proponents of “respect for a diversity of tactics” (tactics including property destruction and violence against police).

Nonviolent Direct Action Workshop

SAMPLE AGENDA — TOTAL DURATION (NOT INCLUDING BREAKS): 4 HOURS 30 MINUTES

	Time	Total
1. Surprise role-play	(15 min)	00:00
2. Workshop introduction	(5 min.)	00:15
3. Introduction of participants	(15 min.)	00:20
4. Nonviolence spectrogram exercise	(20 min.)	00:35
5. Hassle line	(30 min.)	0:55
6. An analysis of power	(20 min.)	1:25
7. Affinity groups/support roles	(15 min.)	1:45
8. Quick consensus decision-making	(20 min.)	2:00
9. Action scenarios	(15 min.)	2:20
10. Health and safety tips	(20 min.)	2:35
11. Civil disobedience role-play	(45 min.)	2:55
12. Prison and non-cooperation	(15 min.)	3:40
13. Legalities	(15 min.)	3:55
14. Where am I? Fears, enthusiasm, commitment	(10 min.)	4:10
15. Follow-up: building affinity groups	(10 min.)	4:20
16. Evaluation	(10 min.)	4:30

In the months leading up to the Québec City Summit, we saw the rising phenomenon of violent demonstrations in globalisation protests, some involving acts of aggression from masked provocateurs, property destruction, and taunting and assaulting police officers and sometimes even fellow protesters. The response of course was an escalation of brutal police repression, accompanied by a corresponding drop in public support. While we realized that the protests would not remain nonviolent without some marshalling, we lacked the resources and the time to organize effective teams of peacekeepers.



Before conducting the Search and Seizure Operation, participants chose to “surround and secure” the premises, by holding a human chain around the buildings. (Ottawa, April 2, 2001. credit: Benoît Aquin.)

Of course, the media attention turned increasingly unfavourable and there was considerable fear-mongering around demonstrations of any kind. There also appeared to be an active smear campaign against key activists, mostly in the form of unsubstantiated rumours, anonymous Internet messages and anonymous slander articles in some anarchist periodicals and web-based news media. We chose to ignore those attacks to focus on our short-term organizing tasks. This proved to be a strategic mistake, as the perception grew among younger, uninformed activists that explicitly nonviolent tactics were an unqualified failure and a moral betrayal of militant solidarity, if not a downright police ploy to have people arrested like lambs being brought to the slaughterhouse.

The Search and Seizure Operation can only work reliably, and with some degree of political expediency, if it is conducted nonviolently. It is a bold, confrontational gesture. It will usually be violently repressed. It involves facing lines of trained police. Organizers need to make sure no needless provocation or retaliation occurs. This would give police an “excuse” to unleash the full force of violent repression. Protester provocation would also ensure that the media portray the movement in a negative light. Any form of violence on the part of protesters would undermine public support for the tactic and the movement. It would remove constraints on repression by the authorities.

Interestingly, the tactic does not rely on the opponent itself (government authorities, police, etc.) to act fairly and nonviolently. There is no expectation that the authorities will refrain from violence. Quite the opposite is true. The expectation is that the authorities *will* be using some form of repression, even serious violence. The strategy of nonviolence is devised to use that repression. With the nonviolent strategy, repression, even brutal repression, is used to strengthen the movement. Again, it is a question of dosage.

In our case, we knew the repression would most likely involve arresting everybody taking part in the Search and Seizure Operation. We were not disappointed. Ninety-nine people were arrested and detained for a

number of hours. Nonviolent discipline is key. Violence on our part can destroy the movement’s credibility and wherewithal. When this happens, repression cannot be restrained. Only public support can provide some protection and cover. When this support wanes, activists become as exposed as fish on the ground.

It was our experience, three weeks later when the Summit of the Americas was held in Québec City, that the lack of a strategic planning and nonviolent discipline led to ruthless repression. After protesters started smashing media vehicles and throwing stones and various objects to the police, “hunting season” was on for the police. Countless rounds of tear gas were fired. Hundreds were arbitrarily arrested, including bystanders. Most were held for days under horrible conditions. Despite the fact that close to 50,000 people demonstrated in Québec City, the movement’s momentum declined after protest violence was prominently displayed in the media.

Other uses for the tactic

Other uses of the nonviolent raid have been reviewed earlier (see “Historical roots of the tactic,” above). Remember that the idea is to dramatize an issue. The avowed public aim of the action does not need to be achieved as such. In a way, such actions are dramatic political theatre, a very involved form of popular education. Yet the action is very powerful because of its premonitory power, its role as symbolic inspiration. In 1999, the Canadian group Homes Not Bombs applied the same tactical framework in its campaign to transform the “War Department” (National Defence Headquarters) in Ottawa into the “Housing Department” to cure the crisis in homelessness in our country. On that occasion, the rationale for the nonviolent raid was that renovation teams had to enter the building to convert it into an affordable housing project for the homeless.

In 2001, I adapted the tactic as a “nonviolent inspection” of a highly polluting magnesium refining plant in Asbestos, Québec. When police and security agents retreated behind the facility’s fences, the “citizen inspectors” proceeded to climb over the fences in an

attempt to reach the plant. It is certainly the case that the tactic could be modified and used effectively in a variety of contexts. With some imagination, the same tactical model could be adapted to other campaign aims. A few other uses for the tactic that one could imagine include:

- Nonviolent inspections of various facilities
 - military bases, for example, in search of weapons of mass destruction
 - prison facilities in search of torture implements or evidence of torture or unjustly imprisoned people
 - university facilities in search of illegal weapons research or animal experiments, etc.
 - workplaces for enslavement of child labourers
- Searches of corporate offices for documents being withheld or evidence of prior knowledge of environmental risks, etc.
- Union takeovers of incompetent business administrations
- Citizen raids on legislative assemblies or national parliaments to replace corrupt, undemocratic or unelected officials

Conclusion

Creating the conditions for a dilemma demonstration must rely on strategic analysis of your goals, the strengths and weaknesses of your own capacity as well as the strengths, weaknesses and capacity of your opponent in order to determine a means by which you can place your opponent in position where their opposition to a commonly held value or position significantly reduces their own standing and support. The dilemma demonstration relies on the coordination of many supporting tactics, careful planning and especially a strict adherence to nonviolent action.

In this regard, there is a need to train more extensively in the theoretical underpinnings of the strategy of nonviolent action and its history, in order to develop a better understanding of, and a deeper commitment to, the new paradigm among social activists. That is what the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s did for months and years before launching their most successful large-scale campaigns. New activists need to understand the strategy.

When repression is likely, proper planning and training are especially important. Under certain circumstances—some of them extreme, as under dictatorships—the police may use pepper spray, tear gas, dogs, horses, beatings, even shootings, as well as other more overt and covert forms of repression. These risks need to be carefully assessed.

Organizers need to weigh carefully the likely intensity of repression, based on past experiences, the current political climate and the discipline of the protesters. Arguably, the tactic can work even under

the most ruthless conditions, provided it is done in a well-organized, dignified manner, with proper training and discipline, on issues that receive widespread support, and articulated around well-known demands that seem broadly reasonable. Saying that the tactic can—“work” does not mean, again, that no repression will be used. Saying that the tactic can “work” means that it contributes to strengthening the position and social power of the protest movement, to the detriment of the opponent’s legitimacy and perceived authority.



Appendix 1

GUIDELINES FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION

The following guidelines will apply on the site of actions involving the Convergence Table (for groups, networks, unions and coalitions that oppose the Summit of the Americas through peaceful means). Because such guidelines constitute the only guarantee that our actions will not be blindsided by provocation or violence, they are an integral part of our projects and will not be modified. These are minimum parameters which will be insisted upon in a strictly nonviolent manner. In no way do they constitute abstract moral judgements. Rather, they provide a framework for the use of strategic nonviolence in the context of our actions. Since every person present on the designated sites will be committed to respecting these parameters, no opening is made for foggy interpretations attempting to justify uncontrolled vandalism or violence against people.

Where and how guidelines apply: To guarantee the proper unfolding of actions and ensure their success, the following guidelines will prevail on the various sites of our actions, including the premises and other locations used for the immediate preparation of our mobilizations. The effectiveness of these rules will first and foremost rest on the personal commitment and the self-discipline of each activist. In case of non-respect, the collective approach used to apply these rules will be one of persuasion and of nonviolent intervention between citizens, never one of violent repression.

The epicentre and the perimeter constituting the site of the actions will be clearly determined, known and publicized in advance. Our guidelines and our intervention will be limited to the immediate surroundings of the sites which we will be using and occupying, not anywhere else. Our parameters will aim to protect the integrity and the nonviolent character of the specific actions organized by us. A diversity of tactics certainly entails respect for the environment of those who wish to engage in strategically nonviolent actions.

These parameters for nonviolent action will apply to any individual present on the site of our actions.

Training: Every person participating in actions of nonviolent civil resistance will have attended, beforehand, a training workshop on nonviolent direct action and related matters (jail solidarity, health and first aid, legalities, etc.). Training materials are provided, and should be read. No prior training will be required of individuals participating in support demonstrations, teach-ins and other low-risk events. In any case, information workshops will nevertheless be open to whoever wishes to attend.

Weapons: No weapon may be brought or used on the various sites of our actions.

Violence: During our actions, people present on site will abstain from any physical or verbal violence, including insults. Our attitude will be one of openness towards anyone we encounter.

Damage to property: Individuals present on the site of our actions will not commit any property damage.

Drugs and alcohol: Individuals present on the site of our actions will not consume alcohol or mood-altering drugs.

Masks and hoods: Individuals present on the site of our actions will not attempt to hide their identity from others, whether by wearing a mask, hood or other disguise. Obvious exceptions to this rule are those who may cover their faces for artistic reasons, whose aim is not concealment. Collective solutions will be proposed to mitigate the effects of the chemical weapons, should they be used by repression forces.

Running: Individuals present on the site of our actions will, to the extent possible, avoid running.

Peacekeeping: A nonviolent peacekeeping service, primarily geared towards information and citizen-based intervention will ensure that the guidelines are respected on the site of our actions. This is in order for the actions to unfold as planned, while maintaining their nonviolent character and, as much as possible, protecting everyone from physical harm.

Appendix 2

DECISIONS FOR AFFINITY GROUPS

A number of decisions need to be taken by your affinity group to determine the role your group intends to play within the framework of the action, as well different roles you want certain individuals to play within your affinity group. We invite you to gather with your affinity group to discuss and come up with the decisions that are best for you.

Roles of affinity groups

Your affinity group should decide which of the following roles it intends to play on April 2.

Participation in the blockade of access roads and parking;

The first role to enter into play will be the blockading of access roads and parking lots. This involves obstructing any vehicle that would attempt going into the DFAIT property. The affinity groups that will take on this role will have to decide in what manner they intend to carry out their blockade, be it with a stand-up human chain (less stable, but more visible, especially as a vehicle is approaching), a sit-down blockade (more stable, but make sure you are visible), with or without the use of a banner (that widens the area covered), road pylons, construction barriers, yellow tape, etc.

Participation in the human blockade that will obstruct all doors and pedestrian access points to the building (including any opening in a likely police perimeter);

This second role involves blocking all pedestrian access to DFAIT. The logic of the DFAIT blockade follows somewhat police procedure when they conduct a raid: We want to stop people from entering the building to ensure that the search operation is done properly. Groups that will take on the human blockade should be sufficiently mobile to move into any opening that could be created somewhere around the building. Depending on numbers, many waves of blockaders could prepare to replace each other at a specific location around the building, especially if arrests are made. Standing up could be sufficient, but be prepared to sit down if you are pushed around or if arrests become imminent. Here also, a banner would be very useful.

Participation in the special teams of those who will carry out the citizen search operation;

This part of the action will be particularly demanding. Affinity group members will have to show great nonviolent self-restraint and persistence to take on this role. Pacing will be very important. Initially, only two people at a time will be going towards the police line or barricade. At all times, we should avoid the perception that we are attempting to brutally "rush" through the police line. For this reason, we will walk at a slow, careful pace, our hands on each side of the body. Then, as we approach the police, each person will stop and read out the Citizen Search Warrant (you may want to practice reading it in a clear, loud and dignified tone of voice, you'll be on camera!). After a short while, those conducting the search can continue walking on slowly until stopped by the police (line or barricade). If people are pushed back (by a hand push, a nightstick, or otherwise), they will return to their initial position and another delegation of two can take over. We can repeat this many times, at least until each affinity group has had a chance to go once. Citizen search teams should be ready to do this for hours. We have all day, remember? The warrant should be read again and again, like a mantra. A sense of crescendo should inspire this action. In the afternoon, if need be, we can escalate the nonviolent action, sending more people each time. At some point, we might also try going over the metal barricades or attempt to find a way through the police lines. We should act with quiet perseverance and unwavering determination, avoid getting unnerved and remain dignified.

Your group may also decide to act in the blockade early in the day, then go on to the citizen search, if nothing happens after a while. For instance, your group may choose to stop vehicles until noon, then join the citizen search and rescue teams.

On the nights of March 31st and April 1st, we will be looking at the needs in terms of participants in the various roles. Your group will need to report back on the roles and locations it is prepared to take on. Depending on the wishes and numbers of the other affinity groups, some flexibility might be necessary. Inevitably, we will need to adapt and coordinate ourselves so that all areas of the site and every role is covered.



Appendix 3

ROLES WITHIN AFFINITY GROUPS

A number of support roles are essential to making this type of action possible and more effective. Most affinity groups will want to try to provide people who can help with each of these tasks. Each affinity group will need to know how many of its members intend to play a role involving a risk of arrest and how many will act in support roles.

Among support roles, please try to have somebody take on one or many of the following roles. One person may take more than one role (in fact this may sometimes be better, i.e. combining spokes and communications). We strongly suggest your affinity group have someone to take on the following roles.

- ♦ **Logistics coordination:** One or more support people in the group should help coordinate logistics, food, and clean-up. This person can also look after your luggage.
- ♦ **On-site affinity group spokesperson:** This person will take part in spokes meetings to coordinate the action. If need be, s/he will liaise for decisions that your group may want to make as part of spokes caucuses on the action site.
- ♦ **Media spokes:** If your affinity group wants to have an official spokesperson for the media, you may want to identify this person. It would be preferable that he or she feels comfortable discussing the issues with the FTAA, the action itself, etc. It may be helpful to prepare a few “sound bites” that summarize the message you want to give, media statements and interviews.
- ♦ **Communications:** This person will be the eyes and the ears of your affinity group, who will rely on her/him to know what is happening around the site. This person will be trusted by you and will be in a position to check on the information that gets around (be careful with rumours, they are frequent in these actions).
- ♦ **Legal support:** This person is in charge of liaison with the legal support team, including lawyers. Making sure that everyone in the group has filled out the “Jail Support Sheet,” s/he hands them over to the legal support team. ID cards and wallets can be left with him/her, and may be safely given to the legal support team as well. On the day of the action, that person notes down who is getting arrested, at what time and by whom if possible. Once arrests are completed, the legal support person calls the legal support line to give them the list. In the long term, that person should be a permanent link between your affinity group and everything to do with legal follow-up, up to the time of a possible trial, months after the action.
- ♦ **Medical support:** If your affinity group includes someone who knows first-aid techniques, all the better. Otherwise, a first-aid team will be on site. Just make sure that you leave with someone in the affinity group a dose of any medication (asthma, diabetes, etc.) you might need.
- ♦ **Police liaison** to act as a communication go-between between the group and the police.
- ♦ **Food and clean-up**, because nothing is possible without good fuel, good food.
- ♦ **Transportation person** is responsible for vehicles and transportation logistics.
- ♦ **Arts and props** provide the “life of the party” and can powerfully convey the message.
- ♦ **Leafleting**, supporters who can distribute leaflets to passers-by, workers and onlookers.
- ♦ **Jail support**, people who will stand vigil at the local police station where protesters may be held.

JAIL SOLIDARITY

Jail solidarity is used to achieve some measure of counter-power in a jail situation, by using non-cooperation, with a view of reaching certain goals. In the context of this action, we suggest affinity groups contemplate two situations that may call for some form of non-cooperation.

A demand that police serve people in the language of their choice, in French or in English. We propose that bilingual people speak their mother tongue, so that unilingual people (especially francophones) not be singled out. If “service” is not offered in French, it is suggested that everybody refuse to answer questions until that demand is met. This has worked before.

A refusal to sign conditions that would restrict our right to demonstrate and our freedom of association. This choice entails a possibly longer detention period. We will explain this in our meetings.

Appendix 4

CHECKLIST FOR TRANSFERRING THE TACTIC

Here is a summary checklist for people interested in transferring the tactic.

- Conduct a careful analysis of the situation.
 - Know the key players and your issue inside and out.
- Plan ahead and strategize as much as you can.
 - Strategy tools such as the Spectrum of Allies and Force Field Analysis can be very useful.
 - Try building a tactical “staircase,” each step of which builds to the next one.
 - Plan an effective and realistic timeline.
 - Build alliances and networks continually through each stage.
- Choose carefully the one demand that the widest constituencies can agree on and that presents a clear dilemma to the authorities.
 - Pick a powerful symbol.
- Select a continuum of tactics that different constituencies can use, gradually nurturing a willingness to take risks.
- Define nonviolent action guidelines.
- Secure sufficient resources.
- Train your activist cadres and organizers.
- Write up, deliver and publicize your ultimatum.
 - Use press conferences or other means.
- Have a call to action and invite participants.
- Conduct basic legal research on likely charges and outcomes.
- Build an action plan.
 - Scout the area (draw up a map, check buildings’ entrances, exits and security features).
 - Study the comings and goings on a day similar to the one when you plan to do your action.
 - Think ahead of all possibilities, potential problems, likely alternatives. Have a plan B and a plan C, maybe even more.
- Train participants in nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience (ask for outside trainers if necessary).
- Set up action logistics.
 - Hold last-minute nonviolence trainings (do not lower your training standards just to accommodate a large number of last-minute participants).
 - Arrange food and accommodation.
 - Choose and train media spokespeople, write releases, print media kits.
 - Arrange meeting space on the eve of the action.
 - Have jail support forms for everybody.
 - Plan a staging area.
 - Arrange first aid and jail support.
 - Set up action headquarters with telephones, faxes, computers, printers, email, etc.
 - Find knowledgeable staff and lawyers.
 - Review detailed action scenarios (have a plan A, B, C...).
 - What could the police do to stop the action?
 - If leaders and organizers may be arrested ahead of time, consider adopting an “onion skin” structure, with two or three levels of replacement leadership.
 - Will there be a “security perimeter”?
 - Decide ahead of time on which conditions the action will be called off or lifted.
 - Prepare an “out” in case the authorities choose to ignore the action.
- Leaflet workers and warn them about the action, ask for their support
- Choose a police liaison. That person should have experience and be accountable
- Organize and train action marshals.
- Organize jail support and vigils at the jail.
- Prepare a debriefing with participants.
- Plan an in-depth evaluation.



Appendix 5 - Resources

BOOKS

Sharp, Gene. *Social Power and Political Freedom*. Boston: Porter Sargeant, 1980.

Sharp, Gene. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargeant, 1985.

Vol. 1: Power and Struggle is the smallest of the three volumes (only a hundred pages) but is in some ways the most important because it focuses on the nature of power. The view of power described here is crucial to understanding why nonviolent strategies can be so effective.

Vol. 2: The Methods of Nonviolent Action examines 198 different kinds of nonviolent actions, giving historical examples of each.

Vol. 3: The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action is an exploration of nonviolent strategy and tactics that can be used against violent and repressive regimes.

War Resisters League Organizer's Manual, ed. Ed Hedemann, War Resisters League. 1981.

WEB

Training for Change: www.trainingforchange.org

Nonviolence International (includes extensive bibliography on nonviolent action): members.tripod.com/nviusa/biblio.htm

VIDEOS

View from the Summit / Vue du sommet, a film by Magnus Isacson, produced by Les Productions Erézi Inc. in co-production with the National Film Board of Canada, in association with Télé-Québec and TVOntario; released in 2002. www.nfb.ca/viewfromthesummit

Pressure Point: Inside the Montreal Blockade / Opération SalAMI : Les profits ou la vie, a film by Malcolm Guy, Magnus Isacson, Anna Paskal, produced by Productions Multimondes, released in 1999. www.pmm.qc.ca/salami

A Force More Powerful, A Century of Nonviolent Conflict, by Jack DuVall and Peter Ackerman. www.aforcemorepowerful.org

Gandhi, by Richard Attenborough, 1982, 189 min.

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forums for discussion with other human rights practitioners.



The Center for Victims of Torture
New Tactics in Human Rights Project
717 East River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55455
www.cvt.org / cvt@cvt.org
www.newtactics.org / newtactics@cvt.org

