

THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN BOSTON

by Noel Day

DESCRIPTION OF BOSTON

General

Boston is a seacoast city and the capital of the State of Massachusetts. It is also the largest city in New England with a population of over 1/2 million (about 640,000 according to the 1960 census).

Boston is an industrial city and a business city, known as the financial center of New England--it is part of the Northern end of the east coast megalopolis--the vast industrial and economic belt that stretches along the Atlantic seaboard with New York and Washington as its center.

The Boston Metropolitan area is composed of the city of Boston and fifty surrounding cities and towns that generally conform to the usual patterning of large metropolitan areas--that is, concentric circles composed of a deteriorating inner-city, a circle of neighborhoods in transition, and a larger circle of well kept middle class residential neighborhoods within the city itself, and a ring of industrial towns around the city radiating outward to upper middle income green belt suburbs and finally to high-income high-status suburbs with extremely restrictive zoning ordinances.

Historically, Boston has had a liberal tradition. Free Negroes lived in Boston prior to the revolutionary war, and the city was the spiritual home of the abolitionists before and during the Civil War. Massachusetts is still a leader in fair housing and other liberal legislation.

The Negro in Boston Today

About 70% of the Negro population in the state of Massachusetts lives in the Boston Metropolitan area (about 56% in the City of Boston proper.) Of the 64,000 plus Negroes in the city of Boston (almost 10% of the total population) about 1/3 have only been in Boston since 1950 (the Negro population increased by 50% between 1950 and 1960 at the same time that the total population of the city decreased by over 13%.) Of these "newcomers" many have come directly from the South while many others came to Boston after a relatively short stay in one of the other ports of entry to the North (Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, etc.)

Boston was ill-prepared to receive the Negro in-migrants, and the condition of the Negro in housing, education, employment and health clearly reflects Boston's reaction to this influx.

Housing:

As of the 1960 census, only 1500 Negroes lived outside of the long crescent shaped ghetto comprised of the Roxbury-South End-North Dorchester area of the city, and while the absolute number of Negroes in the suburbs increased, the percentage decreased, reflecting the rapid exodus of whites from the city. In the city itself, 40% (2 of every 5) of the units open to Negro occupancy are dilapidated or deteriorated (U.S. census) while rents for Negroes are 37% higher than the rent for comparable housing paid by whites. The average percentage of over-crowded units in the city (1.01 or more persons per room) is 7%, yet in the ghetto the percentage is twice as high (15%). Yet over 25% of the Negro families

pay over 30% of their income for rent (some as high as \$100 a month or more) and although Negroes constitute only 10% of the population, they occupy 30% of the substandard housing.

Education:

The percentage of adults who have only 8th grade educations or less ranges from 38.7% in North Dorchester to 52.8% in the South End (United Community Services of Boston, Profile for Planning). In addition the schools in the ghetto are inferior and segregated. (in 7 of the 58 school districts in the city, Negroes constitute 90% or more of the student population). Less money per capita is spent in the Negro schools, there are more substitutes, less guidance counselors, fewer and older textbooks and teaching materials, more overcrowding (as many as 45 children per classroom), older buildings, and a higher drop-out rate (estimated at three of every 5 Negro students.)

Employment:

The areas comprising the Negro ghetto have higher percentages of families with incomes of less than \$5000 a year than any other area of the city (range: from 44.1% in North Dorchester to 66.0% in the South End.) Although exact figures are not available, it is estimated that unemployment in the Negro community is about 15% or twice as high as the rest of the city) with a particular concentration of youth unemployment. The average Negro family income is about half as much as the average white family's income, although 30% more Negro mothers work.

Health and Welfare:

Four of the five highest neighborhood dependency rates occur in the ghetto area of Boston, and infant mortality rates there are 30% above those in the rest of the city. The TB rate in the ghetto ranges from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ times higher than the rest of Boston. Yet the Negro community has less social services and the city services than most other sections of the city.

The psychological condition of the Negro in Boston is much more complex and is intimately related to the class structure of the Negro community. The general personality dynamic, however, is similar to that outlined by Dr. Abraham Kardiner in The Mark of Oppression--that is, there is evidence of self-hatred and an externalization and projection of this hatred on other Negroes; a submissiveness and inability to display hostility (particularly to whites) or else; the common reaction formation of black nationalism (and the emulation of all things "black") with severe and open expression of non-directed hostility. The symbolically castrated male and ascendent female (matriarchial) figure are also evident.

The class structure of the Negro community is generally similar to that in other northern urban Negro communities except that it is somewhat complicated by "the old family" strata--middle aged and elderly people for the most part whose families have been part of the Negro status class for several generations.

The system of stratification is not as important as the operational dynamics however, and one of the effects of the freedom movement has been to begin to blur the clarity that existed several years ago. Several years ago, it was clear that the "newcomers" were resented by the "leadership" of the middle class. The "newcomers" (largely Southern, working class, and with a lower level of education, etc.) were perceived by the existing middle class as a threat (representative of all the stereotypes that they were seeking to escape).

Leadership was a coveted and guarded role closed to those who were not rich enough, educated enough, or light skinned enough to be acceptable (indeed, the "Boston's Brown Brazzins" did not even accept everyone who met those qualifications); there was no sharing of power or proportionate distribution of power in the Negro community, and the concessions and favors that the Negro leadership and politicians sought from the white power structure primarily contributed to their own welfare and was of only marginal benefit to the wider "grass-roots" community.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF BOSTON

The Mayor is presently the most influential figure in Boston, yet because there is no ward structure, even the Mayor often has to scramble for votes. However, since the Negro does have a relatively small population at 10%, the Negro does not hold the balance of power in traditionally Irish Catholic dominated Boston politics. The lack of the usual city machine ward mechanism also actively denies the Negro's political voice on even the lower levels of Boston politics (i.e. all of the City Councillors are elected at large as well as the School Committee.) The only political representation the Negro has is 3 members of the State Legislature who are elected from the ghetto where the only candidates are Negro, and they have been noted neither for their power or vision. The Attorney General of the State of Massachusetts is also a Negro, but he has made it clear that he neither depends on the Negro vote nor wishes to be considered a representative of the Negro (he moved out of the Negro community soon after his election).

Not only is the apparent potential of the Negro vote small, but a much more accurate appraisal is gained when the total Negro population (64,000 plus) is separated into age groups; only an estimated 26,000 Negroes in Boston are eligible by age to vote, and this figure is further diminished by residence and literacy requirements. The actual potential is then 17,000-19,000 and possibly less.

ASSESSMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN THE NEGRO COMMUNITY

(In some instances these brief assessments may be unfair or even untrue in detail--I believe they are generally valid however.)

Northern Student Movement (NSM):

Concentrates on educational programs, tutorials, and specialized programs in cultural enrichment. Not primarily an action group.

Strengths:

1. good contacts with local students and parents
2. good contacts for reaching college campuses
3. paid staff workers
4. developing radical vision
5. good grass-roots contact and feeling
6. developing training programs for members

Weaknesses:

1. lacking specific skills in group leadership and community organization
2. lacking funds
3. still uncertain of structure

CORE:

Has concentrated largely in the area of housing and some selective patronage and employment negotiations. Starting on rent strike organization.

Strengths:

1. excellent research (the best of all groups)

2. a newly opened store-front office in the ghetto
3. a known and respected national affiliate
4. good development of strategy and tactics
5. willingness to work with other groups
6. has vision on leadership level
7. has training programs for membership

Weaknesses:

1. lacking skills in community organization
2. not enough Negro membership
3. lacking funds
4. action programs not public enough
(a testimony to skill, but also to weakness is that more of their accomplishments have been made through negotiation)
5. all volunteer

Boston Action Group (BAG):

Has concentrated mostly in selective patronage, but worked in voter registration and supported other action programs.

Strengths:

1. majority Negro membership and leadership
2. a store front office in the ghetto
3. willingness to work with other groups
4. good grass-roots contacts
5. leadership has potential for developing vision
6. works hard

Weaknesses:

1. lacks funds
2. lacks skills in community organization and group leadership
3. tactics often unrelated to strategy
4. limited vision presently
5. no training program for membership
6. known primarily in Negro community and limited knowledge there

NAACP:

Has a wide range of programming in education, housing, employment, etc.

Strengths:

1. strong committee structure
2. relatively large paid membership
3. strong reputation in white community and with power structure
4. Negro leadership
5. paid workers
6. national affiliation
7. good research set-up
8. access to press
9. long experience and depth of knowledge

Weaknesses:

1. militant but not radical
2. not comfortable in direct action
3. not honest with press
4. not trusted by other groups
5. difficult to work with
6. leadership largely middle-class in orientation
7. lacking skills in community organization
8. lacking grass-roots contact and support
9. tactics often unrelated to strategy

Massachusetts Freedom Movement:

Has concentrated in protests against segregated schools (organizing boycotts), supports other action programs. Starting on organization of the unemployed, school and parent groups, and rent strikes in a three pronged Research-Education-Action program.

Strengths

1. committee structure
2. predominantly Negro (but interracial) leadership
3. access to press
4. paid worker
5. news magazine with 5,000 circulation
6. strong reputation
7. community and group skills on leadership level
8. radical vision on leadership level
9. past successful mass action programs
10. fairly successful in fund raising
11. works with other groups
12. developing consistent strategy planning
13. freedom schools program
14. developing grass-roots support
15. developing suburban affiliates
16. strongly resourced

Weaknesses:

1. no research program
2. need for developing community organization and group skills on membership level
3. organization has grown so quickly that leadership is strained
4. need more paid staff (still mostly volunteer)
5. no base of operations (office)
6. needs more funds (large budget organization)
7. still uncertain of structure
8. distrusted by traditional community leadership

Massachusetts SCLC:

Composed entirely of ministers and concentrating mainly on developing support for Southern action. Have strong relationship of shared action with the Williamston, N.C. unit of SCLC. Three teenage Freedom Choirs. Support other groups action programs.

Ministerial Alliance:

Represents over 30 churches. Dominated by old-line conservative Negro ministers although there is a small group of radical ministers who are challenging their position. The Alliance is afraid of direct action programs though, and resentful of the more militant emergent leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The direct action movement in Boston, as in most other cities, is young. It began in October 1962. Yet there are several distinct phases that are already identifiable in the development of this movement. Some of the problems that the movement has faced and is facing in Boston are common to other cities, and some of the organizational concerns, techniques, strategies and tactics can be adapted for use in other cities. Boston movements' history and the recent increase in sophistication there may be of particular benefit to Northern cities.

FIRST PHASE CHRONOLOGY

The first phase in Boston began when a Boston area college student called together a small group of students and young militant residents of the Negro community to discuss the possibilities of selective patronage as a viable technique for developing employment opportunities for Negroes in Boston. (The student initiating the idea had worked with MSM on selective patronage in New York City.) About 150 students responded to a call sent out by the group and it was decided to undertake a "buying pattern" survey and educational campaign in an area of the community with two public housing projects and other low income characteristics. The campaign was conducted on a door-to-door basis on Saturdays, and worked out of a store front church in the area. The student canvassers were mostly, but not entirely, white and had prepared mimeographed materials to leave with residents. Within several weeks, the group took the name Boston Action Group (BAG), and in December of 1962 approached St. Mark Social Center for technical aid in developing organization skills. The expressed need at that time was for aid in keeping students interested in a campaign that was, at that time, unexciting and unromantic. For many of the students it was also the first time that they had been confronted with the reality of the ghetto and it shocked them. At St. Mark Social Center, group work and intergroup relations methods were utilized in training BAG workers for organization of the community around selective patronage. The major techniques used to maintain a high level of involvement were:

1. Weekly reports on progress and the use of a map to make the progress visible and concrete.
2. The use of role playing to prepare workers for door knocking experiences.
3. Refinement of mimeographed educational materials to make it more dramatic and appealing and to provide more ~~relevant~~ information.
4. Assignment of workers to canvassing teams.
5. Sociological descriptions of the community and information on the psychological patterning of the Negro personality.
6. Evaluation sessions after each day of canvassing in order to provide the opportunity for workers to share their feelings or raise questions about their experiences.
7. Use of a report form for each canvasser that collected data on areas and addresses covered, the names of residents who agreed to act as street captains, and questions asked by residents (answered by telephone.)

By February, 1963, BAG had entered into negotiations with the Continental Baking Co. (makers of Wonder Bread). Negotiations first took the form of an expression of interest and inquiry as to hiring policies, and finally at the third meeting, the presentation of demands for a specific number of demands. Finally, at the expiration of a "good faith" period, a selective patronage campaign was initiated. The first actions were leafleting at lecture appearance of Martin Luther King, and a picket line of 100 workers that marched through the community. Press releases were sent to all the newspapers (but reported only in the Negro weeklies) and leaflets distributed through local retail grocery stores. Stores were also asked to cancel their orders and picketed if they refused. Door-to-door canvassing was increased and sound trucks were used. Ministers were asked to announce the campaign from their pulpits and residents were asked to solicit the

support of their ministers and churches.

The Continental Baking Co. succumbed at the end of 29 days. BAG was then approached by Hood Milk and the New England Telephone Company in order, as they put it, to implement recruitment programs in the Negro community before BAG "hit" them.

For several months, April to May 1963, BAG underwent a reorganization, elected a chairman on a six month rotating basis, and decided to become an "all-black" organization, with white students assigned to research. It was felt that this was necessary in order to attract the grass-roots Negro community to membership. At the same time, a store front office was opened in the heart of the ghetto.

During the same period, NRM began tutorial programs in cooperation with settlement houses in the community and planning for a summer program in a housing project. CORE was concentrating on housing discrimination, using interracial teams of testers, and filing individual complaints with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. CORE also filed a joint complaint with the NAACP against the Boston Housing Authority charging discrimination in tenant placement and the existence of de facto segregation in public housing projects.

The NAACP was also working in a wide range of concerns including education and voter registration with the cooperation of BAG in the latter area.

FIRST PHASE ANALYSIS

I call this the first phase of the movement in Boston. It has not yet ended, and there is a chronological overlap with the second and third phases, but it is, I believe, a distinct developmental phase in terms of the kinds of people involved, the type of involvement required, and the structure of the community and organizational relationships.

In the first phase programs the initiators of action have been primarily white college students involving individual residents of the community in action forms requiring individual and relatively isolated acts of protest, (i.e. a selective patronage campaign largely involves stimulating individual housewives to withhold their patronage as individuals. It is their individual acts that collectively develop the power of this type of program rather than collective mass action). For this reason first phase programs don't permit the development of a true mass-based, grass-roots community action organization where decisions are shared and planning and action implementation are a coordinated mass function. This type of program also permits different organizations to function as individual groups. (In fact, in Boston the only communication between groups doing first phase program ming in the several areas of housing, employment, voting, etc. occurred due to the multi-memberships of several individuals, and in many instances, there was no inter group communication).

Despite many drawbacks to first phase kinds of action programs there are also several advantages worth noting. Most important, of course, these programs provide a relatively easy "first step" for people who have been taught to feel powerless or are not used to acting or feeling that their actions can be effective. Secondly, this type of program is usually of short duration and therefore permits a direct relationship to be drawn between the act and the accomplishment. Third, this type of program permits an evaluation of community "readiness" for further and more radical forms of action.

SECOND PHASE CHRONOLOGY

This phase began on a Sunday evening in May, 1963 when two ministers and their wives, and a social worker, and his fiancée were having a social evening. They were discussing the situation in Birmingham, Alabama and decided that a demonstration of sympathy would be appropriate. They decided to hold a Sympathy Rally on the

Boston Common the following week. Starting with those six people a Rally was held seven days later that was officially sponsored by more than 40 organizations, the major Jewish and Christian denominational leaders, and attended by over 10,000 people who contributed enough money to buy a voter registration bus for SCLC.

Prior to the Birmingham Rally there had seemed to be little indication that the community was "ready" to make a commitment to mass action. The Birmingham Rally both provided an indication of this "readiness" and stimulated the coalescence of the 43 sponsoring organizations into a loose federation called Citizens for Human Rights with one of the initiators of the Rally as Chairman. In addition the success of the Rally further encouraged the initiators to consider other and more local areas of concern where action might be effective.

Late in May 1963, several weeks later, the leaders of the Rally decided to organize a school boycott. Their rationale was that a school boycott, not only was a valid form of protest against inferior and segregated schools, but would involve the mass of people in the community and educate them on the reality of the Negro's condition in Boston. (This evaluation was possibly naive.) A meeting was called to discuss the plan and each civil rights action group was asked to send a delegate. At the meeting, the NAACP representative indicated that they were requesting a hearing for June 11 and asked that a boycott not be scheduled until after that date.

It was decided to honor the NAACP's request, but to begin quietly and immediately to develop the organizational base for a boycott.

The first contacts were made with High School and Junior High students on the basis of personal acquaintance, and an afternoon mass meeting was scheduled for the following week. Each student was asked to bring as many others as possible. Seven attended. However, the meeting was carried out as if there were 700 and another meeting was called for a few days later. Thirty five students and four parents attended the second meeting. At a third meeting about 100 people showed up.

After the June 11 meeting between the NAACP and the Boston School Committee failed to obtain a commitment to meet the community's demands, the boycott (or Stay-Out for Freedom as it was called) was announced. The sponsoring organization was an ad-hoc group of ministers, social workers, housewives, and representatives of civil rights groups (about 15 people) that was quickly put together for the purpose of organizing the "Stay-Out" for June 18.

The School Committee immediately agreed to negotiate with the NAACP on 14 points starting with an admission of the existence of de facto segregation and covering a range of inferior school conditions. The reporting of the failure of negotiations each day was utilized as the organizational issue, and the refusal of the School Committee to admit the existence of "de facto" segregation or "racial imbalance" was exploited in a series of nightly mass meetings in various churches in the Negro community. The mass meetings were largely educational and informative in format, and provided information about the conditions in the schools. At the same time the speakers at the mass meetings sought to establish in the minds of the people attending the relevance of the issues in Boston to the struggle for Freedom in the South and other northern cities (demonstrations were going on at building sites in New York and Philadelphia). Student song leaders were also used to teach and lead freedom songs. At the mass meetings parents and students were asked to "testify" about their experiences with the schools and relate incidents that demonstrated bigotry or the inferior quality of the educa-

tional experience offered Negro children. Each meeting opened and closed with a prayer by one of the ministers in the local Ministerial Alliance.

The meetings were organized by distributing leaflets to students outside of the schools and through supermarkets and retail outlets. Press releases went out each day and the extremely good press coverage reached people that did not attend mass meetings. In addition, students and parents were recruited for membership on the ad-hoc "School Stay-Out Committee" from among those who testified at each mass meeting until the committee numbered 40 to 50. Attendance at mass meetings was averaging 500 to 700 by that time, and volunteers were calling into the emergency office that was set up.

On Saturday evening, June 15, 1963, (three days before the boycott) the negotiations broke down for the final time and the ad-hoc "Stay-Out Committee" called a mass meeting for the following night. At that meeting (attendance 900 plus) the final decisions to go ahead with the Stay-Out was announced. Parents were invited to attend a Freedom School training session the next evening, and a partial list of Freedom School locations was announced to the community and the press. (The list of Freedom School locations was only partial at the time because the entire Ministerial Alliance had not yet determined to support the Stay-Out and permit the use of their churches, although a group of about 5-6 of the younger and more radical ministers had committed their churches early in the development of the action program. The following day, however, the ministers agreed to permit the use of their churches, although they voted not to support the "Stay-Out". This was interpreted as a move to be able to be on the "winning" side whether the "Stay-Out" was a success or a failure.)

The actual idea for the Freedom Schools grew out of a concern for planning activities for students participating in the Stay-Out (both to keep them off the streets and to provide an opportunity for them to feel a part of a mass action.) The first ideas were picketing and a "Freedom Dance", but the ad-hoc committee decided that if the protest was against school conditions and the quality of education, then the form of the protest should be consistent. Freedom Schools were therefore decided upon as a method of providing a model for the kind of educational experience that was lacking in the public schools--that is: education that was relevant to the needs of the children, treated them with dignity, involved their interests, and challenged their capabilities.

Once the idea was formulated and decided upon (four days before the "Stay-Out") it was necessary to develop curriculum, recruit and train staff, find facilities, write lesson plans and assign children. A small committee of about 6 people was designated to this task. The curriculum was developed around three areas: Negro History, the meaning and practice of non-violence, the Freedom Movement and Citizenship. Standard lesson plans were written in each area, and the night before the "Stay-Out", the faculty volunteers were assembled for a four hour training session. The training included:

1. Review of situation leading up to "Stay-Out"
2. Assignment of faculty to Freedom School locations
3. Proper use of lesson plans
4. Schedule for "Stay-Out" Day
 - a. morning - lectures
 - b. afternoon - discussion groups
5. Discussion group topics
6. Discussion leading techniques
7. Role playing
8. Administrative procedures--registration of students, ordering lunches and

and milk, dealing with unexpected problems, etc. Materials were distributed to the faculty in mimeographed form.

The overall structure on "Stay-Out for Freedom" Day included ten Freedom Schools (and three spillover centers that were staffed) each with a faculty of 10-15 (A dean, lecturers, discussion group leaders, registrars); a central coordinating office (with a "hot line" phone number known only to faculty members) that coordinated the assignment of buses, lunches, the opening of spillover centers, and press and public relations. One Freedom School was supplied with an "all-star" staff as a model for the press (on the faculty there were college professors, intergroup relations experts, an Episcopal and a Methodist Bishop, star athletes, and civil rights leaders.)

On the day of the "Stay-Out" local ministers were assigned to stand outside of the public schools as a precautionary measure since violence had been predicted by city school officials, and two roving citizen patrols in cars drove around.

By 9:45 a.m. all the Freedom Schools (including spill-over centers) were full and operating. There were about 3,000 Junior and Senior High School students in attendance.

After the "Stay-Out", the NAACP requested another meeting with the School Committee and was refused. Intermittent picketing began on an unorganized basis with different civil rights groups or churches taking responsibility for providing picketers. Finally, after the threat of a mass demonstration, the School Committee granted a meeting in August but indicated that discussion would be "limited to educational matters and therefore not de facto segregation." The meeting was held and adjourned within 15 minutes at the first mention of the forbidden words. Picketing began again on a more organized basis, and a three day sit-in was held. These tactics were notably ineffective. After the failure of the sit-in terminated at the request of the NAACP because it was felt that continued action would damage the chances of a Negro who was running for School Committee in the November elections. Most of the civil rights groups then became involved in voter registration programs and canvassing for the Negro candidate.

The elections, in which the Negro candidate lost by two places and the most forthright bigot won by a larger majority than the Mayor, marked the end of phase two.

PHASE TWO ANALYSIS

The phase two type of action programs are initiated by residents of the community and involve community people in forms of mass action where they act together in highly visible situations. However, Mass Organization does not necessarily result from Mass Action, and in the phase two action programs in Boston, people still acted as individuals in a mass way, rather than as part of a mass movement. As in phase one, organizations continued to exercise autonomy in decision making around the form of actions they would take and the interpretation of their actions, although there was more coordination of effort than in phase one. Organizing methods were also more refined:

1. Student captains were set up in each school to distribute information.
2. Mass meetings were utilized for the first time.
3. More community people were involved in decision making and organizing

+(insert) (terminated by a fortuitous bomb scare) direct action programs were

through "student captains and "ad-hoc" committee structures.

4. Press relations were handled more from one central source although it was usually more intra-organization than inter-organization. As a result, press coverage was greatly expanded. (In phase one, press coverage was limited by a "black-out" to local Negro newspapers)

Phase two program had several positive effects:

1. In the community:
 - a. community people were enabled to act together
 - b. they saw leaders from the community and identified with the community initiating action
 - c. the form of action was highly visible, therefore the community could relate to and identify with its success
 - d. grass-roots leadership potential that had been submerged and unrecognized in the past began to emerge.
 - e. people were enabled to begin to see their condition clearly
2. Outside the community
 - a. the power structure of the city was confronted for the first time
 - b. white liberal groups became at least marginally supportive of the action, and a process of individual and organizational confrontation was initiated that forced self-examination by those who had "liberal reputations."
 - c. it began to strip away some of Boston's liberal facade

The most negative feature was the failure to follow up the success of the "Stay-Out" with sound organizational efforts, and the lack of planning and strategy for the rest of the summer. The picketing, sit-in, and other activities that took place after the "Stay-Out" were, therefore, on a tactical rather than strategic level and evolved on a day-to-day basis rather than as a logical part of a larger strategic planning within an overall goal oriented program.

However, despite these very real inadequacies a core of commitment was formed and nurtured through the on-going Freedom School structure. The purpose of the on-going Freedom Schools was (and is) to develop a group of people committed to social change and to educate them for that purpose. They have met weekly at four locations in the community ever since June '63, and represent the single most important result of the first "Stay-Out": they are a vehicle for change.

PHASE THREE CHRONOLOGY

Phase three began inauspiciously during the vacuum that followed the School Committee election. The vacuum lasted from November until the middle of January when a conflict erupted on the granting of an urban renewal contract for building a shopping center under the renewal program operating in a section of Roxbury. In brief, the dispute was between two developers: one had a Negro lawyer and architect, the other had promised a scholarship fund to the community. The furor that resulted split the community in half, and a group of grass-roots people who had emerged during the first "Stay-Out" and some of the principals and faculty of the on-going Freedom Schools called for a meeting to discuss this matter. There were a series of three meetings on this matter with another ad-hoc committee being formed as a vehicle (The Citizens Committee for Equal Opportunity). At the second of these meetings, it was announced that a meeting was being scheduled in New York to discuss the possibilities of a coordinated national school boycott and

a delegate from Boston was requested. The delegate was authorized to commit Boston to this plan.

(Note: The urban renewal section above is included because it demonstrates a growing degree of "readiness" on the part of the community, as formerly submerged potential grass roots leaders begin to define problems and problem areas and call for action on their own.)

After the New York meeting, the delegate reported that it had been decided to aim for a national boycott on February 11, with each city free to change dates if necessitated by local conditions. Shortly afterwards it was announced that the second "School Stay-Out" in Boston was being called for February 11. It was decided to use as the official organizing body the "Massachusetts Freedom Movement". Until that time, the "Massachusetts Freedom Movement" had been a "straw" organization to cover a bank account that had been started to finance lobbying on the Civil Rights Bill. A steering committee (about 30 people) was formed by contacting those who had been on the ad-hoc committee for the first "Stay-Out" and others who had emerged during the summer and fall. In addition several key students were asked to join the Steering Committee. Student leaders were contacted for each school by utilizing the old school captains list, and the Freedom School registration forms, and a mass meeting for students was scheduled. A significant addition came from the Freedom Choirs (formed by the Boston unit of SCLC after a visit of Williamston, N.C. unit of SCLC's Freedom Choir.) On the steering committee there were also people with influential positions in other civil rights groups although they were not official delegates.

Several mass meetings were called, first for students and then for students and parents. The method of distributing leaflets through the schools was refined by recruiting captains for the individual classes under each school captain and setting up an adult sub-committee of the Steering Committee that was responsible for coordinating the organization of schools.

About 13 other sub-committees were also formed: each chaired by a member of the Steering Committee who was responsible for recruiting his own committee members. Some of the sub-committees were:

1. school organization
2. leaflet preparation and distribution
3. church liaison
4. mass meeting planning
5. door-to-door canvassing
6. newspaper
7. press and publicity
8. legal advice
9. freedom schools (faculty recruitment and training)
10. freedom schools (curriculum)
11. freedom schools (locations)
12. suburban liaison
13. informational materials
14. liaison with civil rights committee of teacher's union
15. logistics

The two co-chairmen of the Massachusetts Freedom Movement were responsible for coordinating the efforts of all the sub-committees, liaison with other civil rights groups, and interpreting the action program to the public. The Steering Committee met each week to make formal reports and policy decisions but held informal conferences with the co-chairmen as the need arose.

Most of the other civil rights groups announced complete support immediately, but one in particular was reticent and seemed to resent the fact that they had not been consulted. An assessment was undertaken to determine how Massachusetts Freedom Movement should react. The assessment revealed the white power structure of the city believed that the "reticent organization" had vast grass-roots support. This belief was one of the most important levers this organization had. The Massachusetts Freedom Movement decided to announce that it would proceed with or without the support of the "reticent organization" under the theory that the "reticent organization" could not afford to take the chance of opposing the boycott and then have the boycott turn out to be a success. That would, of course, reveal their lack of grass-roots support to the power structure and deprive them of their lever.

So organization proceeded, mass meetings continued, the "reticent organization" announced its support, and the NAACP permitted Massachusetts Freedom Movement (MFM) to use some spare office space in the NAACP building.

By this time, the mass meetings were being held several nights a week in different sections of the community, and MFM had begun publication of "Freedom's Journal," an emergency newspaper-propaganda sheet to carry its message to the community (circulation started at 3500 and rose to 5000 in three weeks).

A group of students had also requested that the date of the "Stay-Out" be shifted from February 11 to February 26 because of an examination period the week of the 11th and a city finals basketball game conflict. The Steering Committee agreed to the change of date and a public announcement was made. It is important that students felt free enough to approach the leadership with their suggestions and understood that the leadership respected their opinions enough to give them serious consideration. This is one other example of the power-sharing process in operation.

Although some members of the Steering Committee felt that the change of date might be confusing, it actually had two significantly positive effects:

1. It permitted more time for organization. Two more issues of "Freedom's Journal" were published as a result and several more mass meetings held.
2. It permitted a longer tension build-up both in the community and in the city. It was found that the longer tension build-up forced more confrontation and developed support.

Several significant policy decisions were also made during the last three weeks before the "Stay-Out."

1. It was decided that MFM would continue to operate after the "Stay-Out."
2. It was decided to extend Freedom Schools on the day of the "Stay-Out" to include Grades 4-6 (at the behest of the NAACP).
3. It was decided to consciously integrate Freedom Schools on two levels:
 - a. racially
 - b. city-suburban

Note: Again the idea was to offer an alternative educational model of racial integration with a creative curriculum and also to demonstrate that divisions between city and suburbs can be overcome in both social and political planning terms.

4. To the same end it was decided to encourage the establishment of Freedom Schools in the suburbs for elementary grades and to bus children out from the ghetto.
5. It was decided to request that children in grades 1-3 be kept home on "Stay-Out" day in order to listen to a 1 hour "Freedom School on the Air" (a taped program that included an African folktale, a message to parents, songs by the Freedom Choirs, and a survey of Negro History in dramatic form).

In addition, three large mass meetings were scheduled (with special guest speakers invited) for the last two weekends and the night before the "Stay-Out." At the first two, held in churches, Don Harris of SNCC and Louis Lomax were the speakers. The final one, held in the largest theater in Boston, had Dick Gregory, Theodore Bikel, and Nana Mahomo of the South African Government-in-Exile as special guests. Tickets for the unreserved seats at the final Freedom Rally were sold for one dollar in the ghetto and three dollars in the suburbs with the frank admission that it was a subsidy for the ghetto dwellers.

By this time the form of mass meetings was highly refined, and the "Freedom Choirs" were a thrilling addition at the large rallies. In each instance they marched in after the opening prayer singing "March to Boston in the Morning, Lord," and marched around the church singing and clapping before taking their seats. They usually sang two or three other times in the course of the meetings, each time marching up and down the aisles, and for the first time Boston audiences (usually fairly reserved) began getting up out of their pews and marching too.

The structure of Freedom Schools was also refined:

1. Forty Freedom School locations were found in churches, settlement houses, masonic Temples, etc. (social agencies were available for the first time following a statement of support by the National Association of Social Workers).
2. Schools, wherever possible, were assigned on a neighborhood basis with elementary children receiving priority.
3. More buses were provided and, though coordinated through a central office were assigned where spillovers were most likely (over 3000 children were bussed or walked to spillover centers).
4. Curriculum was changed to focus on schools and employment with discussion groups more structured, and a briefer Negro History section in the afternoon. Elementary curriculum was geared to younger children.
5. Faculty training was intensified. There were several training sessions, and the 2000 plus volunteers permitted some selectivity.
6. Freedom Schools were set up in Wellesley, Newton, Rockport (all suburbs) and three predominantly white inner city communities.

As a last ditch effort, the School Committee threatened the arrest of the leaders for contributing to truancy. A firm stand was taken by the leaders indicating their willingness to go to jail if necessary, and the week before the "Stay-Out" over 200 others, (religious leaders, professionals, and community people--black and white, city and suburban) signed a statement that they shared in the leadership and insisted on sharing any legal liability.

On the day of the "Stay-Out" about 10,000 children attended Freedom Schools,

and 2000 demonstrated at City Hall that afternoon.

Since then MM has become a permanent organization with ongoing sub-committees on:

1. Freedom Schools as a permanent operation (expanded to include suburbs)
2. urban renewal
3. suburban liaison (the possibility of chartering the 30-40 suburban groups is being considered)
4. Freedom's Journal (as a semi-monthly publication)
5. action program development had developed a set of criteria for MM action programs:

- a. Communication value
- b. Educational value
- c. Goal oriented
- d. Tension build-up
- e. Appropriate to time and situation
- f. Mass organizational potential
- g. Specific demands and conditions for termination
- h. Visibility
- i. Permits various levels of commitment, etc.
- j. Leadership building and power sharing potential.

Note: Other criteria can be specific to each city.

It is also recognized that all action proposals will not meet all of the criteria and priorities will have to be set at times. The most important thing, though, is that it is possible for an action group to develop criteria and guidelines for action that are consistent with the group's goals.

In addition, the general outlines of a three-pronged research-action-education program has been approved by the Steering Committee. The three prongs are:

1. Education -- follow-up on the "Stay-Out" by
 - a. continuing Freedom Schools
 - b. organizing parent groups at each school to research and attack problems in each school and as organizational units for larger action programs.
 - c. student councils at each school (but outside of school structure) to serve the same purposes as above.
2. Housing -- development of Rent Strike (with CORE and BAG)
3. Employment -- to be initiated by a conference on unemployment in the community and run by community people (one expected outcome is the organization of a union of the unemployed).

A first program that is being considered at the suggestion of a community resident is a program to recruit Negro families and Negro men to act as "Big Brothers" to young boys on probation. Although this is not an action program, it is significant that program ideas are beginning to emerge from the community.

PHASE THREE ANALYSIS

Although only a few months old, phase three is readily identifiable. As in phase two, action was initiated by community people, but in phase three the initiating group was larger and represented a broad community cross-section.

The form of action was mass action as in phase two, but with a much more sophisticated approach that consciously sought to educate and inform the participants and to involve them in a mass organization as an on-going operation.

The brunt of the organizational responsibility for the "Stay-Out" was also widely shared and utilized as an educational and radicalizing experience. As a result of this, ideas began to emerge from the community as people were enabled to feel significant and effective. This has been the single most important result of phase three -- that grass-roots people feel they have a part in conceiving and planning constructive alternatives to anguish and frustration.

The emergence of ideas for self-help programs, also indicates growth because it is a realization that changes must be made within the community as well.

Methods of organizing were refined (both by coincidence, i.e., Freedom Choirs, and by design, i.e., Freedom's Journal, sub-committee, etc.), and a structured approach to sophisticated planning for action programs and self-help programs has begun to be developed.

We have reached a critical stage in Boston now, and greater skills will be necessary if we are to move beyond this point.

The community is ready to act in protesting around clear issues, but the process of radicalizing (seeing the connections between issues and constructing a concept of alternatives within a vision of a new society) must be pushed and nourished if the movement in Boston is not to become bogged down in the goal of just "getting a better slice of that beat of all possible American pie." In other words, we have to begin to develop a community that is committed to true social change rather than mere social alteration -- modification of institutional priorities rather than mere modification of institutional practices on the lower levels of their structures.

Also strong group work and group leadership skills will be needed both to encourage the further emergence of leadership from the grass-roots, and to insure that it does not then stifle or inhibit the emergence of other leadership or the free expression of feelings and ideas.

It is also important that emerging structures not be permitted to constrict, but rather to free.

Another present weakness is that NFM has only one paid coordinator and a gigantic task that will have to be carried out largely by volunteers with other full-time commitments.

However, evidences of a greater coordination of civil rights groups may help to overcome this disadvantage, in addition to training programs that have already started (i.e., training in organizing, leading and resourcing parent groups) or are projected (training for Freedom School faculties in Negro History and Perspectives for the Movement), and the on-going publication of Freedom's Journal.

TOWARD SOME CONCEPTS

In this final section I will try to list and explain some of the general concepts, tactics, and techniques that we have been able to identify in our Boston experience.

First, that strategy should derive from and be consistent with goals, and action tactics should derive from and be consistent with strategy. In other words, tactics should not be on a day-to-day basis; the reactions that might be formed to each tactic should be anticipated and alternate tactical possibilities considered.

Strategy should be evaluated constantly. For instance, the first "Stay-Out" in Boston insisted that the School Committee admit the existence of de facto segregation and a great amount of confusion resulted (some people felt it was a semantic problem, others that it was begging a point). The second "Stay-Out" assumed the existence of segregation and demanded that a plan for integration and a timetable be developed.

Each action program or tactic should be evaluated to determine not only what it accomplished, but also what it didn't accomplish, and what it did that wasn't desirable.

Assessment should be an integral part of all levels of the community organization process. The power structure (or portion of it) that you are attacking should be assessed to determine as far as possible what the weaknesses are, where the points of strength are, and how they might react to attack at the different points. Then an assessment of the power structure in the community should be made, or organizations and individuals (i.e., who makes decisions or has made them in the past, what is their power based on, what are their levers on others, who will oppose your action, who will support it, what kind of levers do you have on them, what kind of levers can you develop, what kind of resistance will a power shift from bourgeoisie to grass-roots encounter and at what point in your program will it develop, is there any way of postponing it and how will you deal with the resistance, etc.). Finally, an assessment should be made of community readiness (who is ready to act and how, what support do they need, etc.) and an assessment of what organizational units will be most productive to use or easiest to use. In other words, there may already be units in the community (schools, neighborhood associations, churches, settlement houses, bars, beauty parlors, other civil rights groups, parents organizations, unions, masonic orders, etc.) that already provide a structure for the dissemination of information and the discovery of key people. In Boston, the schools were the unit; the parents were reached through class and school captains, and leaflets were also distributed through bars, beauty parlors, barber shops, grocery stores, supermarkets, and on the streets.

Research needs to be intensive; what are the facts, how do they relate to the needs of the community, what is the best method of attack and why, etc. Interpretation should be simple and clear.

Power-sharing is one of the most basic concepts we developed and used as a criteria of effectiveness in Boston. It grew out of a realization that in the past small groups of "leaders" bargained for concessions with the power structure and the results then trickled down to the grass-roots without substantially

altering their condition or bringing about a feeling of individual effectiveness and dignity. A determination has to be made, however, as to when and how you begin this process, how fast it proceeds, and when and how you prepare people to participate in it. It depends on how sensitive the organizer is to "hearing" the needs and the readiness of the community.

Goals should be clear and mixed. They should be mixed in the sense that there are long range, medium range and short range goals; some goals that are hard and some that are easy included in a package and presented so that the accomplishment of some can be utilized to further build your organization and encourage the participants.

Begin preparation of the community for other actions or other programs in the midst of one program:

1. So that you don't have an actionless and unplanned vacuum when you are preparing for some other program.
2. So that if all demands are met unexpectedly you have another area to direct community fervor towards. For example: the Freedom's Journal, although primarily concerned with the "School Stay-Out" began in the first issue to print articles, editorials, and organizational information about rent strikes.

Any crisis can be used. The crisis in Birmingham was helpful in starting phase two in Boston, and internal crises can be utilized in many cases both to organize and to educate. Crises can also be profitably created at times.

Develop, wherever possible, constructive aspects to the action protest program to suggest alternate models so that the community and others can visualize what you mean (i.e., Freedom Schools, or Voter Registration Citizenship Schools)

Respect the strengths of other organizations as well as recognizing their weakness. Try to exploit these strengths. For instance, the NAACP had been trying to negotiate school problems for several years before the first "Stay-Out". They had a formidable collection of data and information about schools. When the threat of radical action protest was made the school committee agreed to negotiate and all the other groups decided that NAACP would be appropriate in this role. When negotiations failed so dramatically, the NAACP was further radicalized and pushed to direct action.

Four other techniques that we found to be tremendously effective were:

1. Centralizing press relations so that no statements were made without the approval of the press relations person. Strict honesty with the press has paid off too.
2. Testimony as part of the mass meetings so that the problems were seen as a common and shared experience of the community.
3. The ability to spin off organizations (to form and dissolve them as needed and incorporate them in other organizations). This permitted great freedom at times (to speak in the name of an organization without having to check through a policy-making body; or to, in the name of a "straw-organization" speak the policy decisions of a larger organization that might want to remain in the background.
4. Insisting on orientation and making all orientation programs specific to need so that people know what they are supposed to be doing and why, and are supplied with the necessary material, information, and skills.

The best three books on "grass-roots" organization that I know of are still:

- 1) Reveille for Radicals, Samuel Alinsky
- 2) On Guerilla Warfare, Che Guevara
- 3) Red Star Over China, Edgar Snow

Augusta Strong's article on the Southern Negro Youth Congress in the Winter 1964 issue of Freedomways also provides good background.

The most important thing we've learned in Boston is that there are no rules, only some guidelines. The chief guidelines are to try to know exactly what you believe, for your vision will then indicate how you act and treat people and will also permit you to be honest. Try anything that is respectful of human dignity.

Even those of us who are trained and paid as more or less professional community organizers are really just learning how to organize for action.