

I stand before you convicted of an act of civil disobedience. I am writing this statement to express my thoughts on the situation. There are two kinds of civil disobedience. The first is classical civil disobedience, classical civil disobedience is the deliberate violation of an un-just, un-constitutional, un-humane law. Non classical civil disobedience is the violation of a law which may, or may not, be just. The violation of that law, however, not for personal gain, but for some higher purpose. I was convicted of the latter kind of civil disobedience. I am writing this statement to explain why.

There are many reasons given for committing civil disobedience, but they all boil down to the same thing. Non classical civil disobedience, as generally practiced in the United States, is the violation of minor laws for the purpose of stopping serious crimes against humanity that experience has shown can not be stopped any other way. People who commit civil disobedience violate a small law in the attempt to stop a vastly more serious crime. In Los Angeles County non classical civil disobedience has been used in four areas; 1-attempts to stop the crime of racial segregation in housing, 2-attempts to stop the crime of racial segregation in schools, 3-attempts to stop the numerous crimes against humanity that are being inflicted upon Negroes in the South, and 4-attempts to stop the crime of job discrimination. The case we are considering today is one of the latter.

The pattern of events leading up to civil disobedience is almost always the same. First--realization that a crime against humanity is being perpetrated, second--an investigation of all the facts to make sure that the individual that you are focusing on is, in fact, participating in that crime against humanity, thirdly--an attempt to stop the crime through established channels the courts, governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies, direct negotiations with the party concerned, etc. , fourthly-- attempts to stop the crime through traditional means of protest, leaflets, pickets, press statements, vigils, fasts, etc. , Fifthly-- when all else has failed an attempt is made to stop the crime through the use of civil disobedience. One more thing I wish to point out, when we commit civil disobedience we harm no one, we are non-violent even when we are physically attacked (which has happened on numerous occasions here in Southern California). When we sit down on a drive way or a floor, when we block the entrance to a restaurant, Federal Building, or Mayors Office, when we lay in the way of a paddy wagon or mail truck, we are harming no one. Occasionally we inconvenience somebody, occasionally we cause those who are committing crimes against humanity some small financial loss, but no one is actually being hurt either physically, mentally, or financially, Their victims, however, have not been so lucky.

Civil disobedience works in two ways to stop crimes against humanity, direct pressure and moral pressure. Basically direct pressure is the slight inconvenience or financial loss caused by our activities. The inconvenience of having to step over us or the loss of an afternoons bussiness because people are looking at us and the police rather than stepping over us to eat may be enough to convince some one to stop discriminating. Moral pressure is usually

more effective than direct pressure. Moral pressure also works two ways. First our acts of placing our bodies in jeopardy of physical harm and arrest may cause the person with whom we are trying to deal search their consciences. Secondly our actions awaken others to the crimes against humanity that is being committed, and they apply pressure to correct the situation. I know that if it had not been for the civil disobedience committed at the Los Angeles Federal Building and the civil disobedience elsewhere in the country many more than the 3 persons would have been killed in the struggle for the right to vote in Alabama, many more than 600 would have been tear gassed, beaten, and trampled with horses, and many more than 3500 would have been jailed for trying to register to vote.

In a previous paragraph I mentioned four steps leading up to civil disobedience, I want, now, to discuss those steps in relationship to the Van De Kamp's sit-in that I have been convicted of. For years we have realized that the crime of job discrimination has been causing untold harm in California. For years we have been reading the statistics---double unemployment rate for Negroes,---Negroes lumped in menial and low paying jobs,---Negroes not being promoted,---Negroes being last hired and first fired,---median Negro income only 3/5 that of whites,---median income of Negroes in Calif. below the poverty level,---etc. etc. etc., for years every government agency under the sun has published studies, studies, and more studies each showing how black Americans are being locked out of society. But you don't have to read government reports to learn about job discrimination. All you really have to do is walk down Central Ave, down Avalon, down Hooper, down 103 rd. St., down Beech. All you really have to do is look at the children playing in the streets of Watts, or at the jobless men walking San Pedro Ave. All you have to do is look at the lines in the unemployment office. All you have to do is look at the Beverly Hills bus stop as the Negro maids travel to and from work or at the Hod Carriers Union hall and at the shoe shine stands that dot downtown. All you have to do is talk to a Negro High school drop-out who knows that even if he did finish High School there would be no job for him. And all you have to do is to sit in a Municipal Court of Los Angeles and see Negro girl after Negro girl stand trial for prostitution because August even those who saw but would rather not see were forced to look at the truth of job discrimination. Those of us in the movement are haunted by the thought that if we had been successful in fighting job discrimination maybe those 36 people would be alive today.

We knew that job discrimination was a clear and present danger to society, and that job discrimination was a slow fire eating away at the heart of our society, eating away and waiting to explode. We knew that Van De Kamp's was one of the main practitioners of this evil. We had investigated Van De Kamp's for months, and we found that it had one of the clearest patterns of job discrimination that I have seen in the three years that I have been in the movement. We tried to remedy the situation through direct negotiations with Van De Kamp's, but they flatly refused to even discuss the matter. And we tried to remedy the situation through outside groups. We took the case to the F.E.P.C. but they did nothing, in fact, to this date, even with the personal intercession of Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally they have done nothing. This did not surprise us however because it has been our experience that no government agency is effective in these areas because they are not allowed to have any power.

After all this failed we turned to traditional means of protest. We picketed. We leafleted. We called press conferences. All to no avail. Finally after all else had failed we turned to civil disobedience. We hoped that by our efforts so many persons would boycott Van De Kamp's that the resultant loss of sales would force them to stop discriminating, we also had some hope that

our sit-in would awaken their consciences were all else had failed to do so.

I want to say a word about our trial. Within the rules that have been set up by the law we received a more than fair trial, that is the voir dier, the rulings of the court, the prosecution, and the instructions to the jury were all more than fair. This has not always been true. However in a larger sense we could not, and did not, receive a fair trial. We could not receive a fair trial because it was being tried on the wrong issues. We were being tried as to whether or not we blocked an isle, we should have been tried as to whether or not we were justified in blocking that isle. Instead of being forced to plead "not guilty" there should have been a provision allowing us to plead "justifiable violation of 57.11c.11c". I would have been more than happy to admit that I blocked that isle if I was then given the opportunity to prove to the jury that my action was justified.

You have asked us what we have been doing since the last probation report. During the last part of 1964 I was in Berkley working with the Free Speech Movement. I was not, however, arrested. In February of 1965 I went to Alabama to work for Dr. Kings Southern Christian Leadership Conference. From February through the end of March I participated in the demonstrations centering around the right to vote that were taking place in Selma and Marion. I was in the group that attempted to march to Montgomery on Sunday March 6. I was among those who finally did march from Selma to Montgomery. From April to June I worked in Selma and surrounding counties organizing meetings, leafleting, and demonstrations around a boycott of the merchants that would not hire Negroes. I was also talking to Negroes in an effort to develop them to the point where they could go to the court house and try to register to vote. That is to help them find within themselves and to develop within themselves the "freedom spirit". It is very hard to explain and I see that I will not be able to exactly what we were doing. My third task was holding non-violent workshops. From June 1st until I left Alabama for this trial I was project director of Crenshaw County Alabama. I was the first civil rights worker to come into the county. Basically I had three jobs, to help the people develop themselves, to help them develop an organization through which they could deal with the problems facing them, and to help them get registered to vote. I was relatively successful in the first two tasks. Within a month the local organization had been strengthened to an extent that they were proceeding with out my help on many problems, many persons were going down to the courthouse to get registered, knowingly facing the retaliation that many of them suffered. Of the over 400 persons who attempted to register to vote however only 46 were actually registered. We (the local organizations and myself) worked on many other problems, with out notable success, we worked on desegregation of public eating facilities, desegregation of schools, desegregation of the county hospital, we also had to try to handle the problems of the people who were kicked off their farms for trying to register to vote, those who were removed from welfare and social security for trying to register and those fired from their jobs for trying to register. We were also trying to understand and deal with the War on Poverty program.

During the time I was in Alabama I was arrested 5 times. Once for driving without a valid drivers license, once for "contributing to the delinquency of minors", and three times for various combinations of the following charges (they were never clear as to what I being charged with)-disorderly conduct, picketing, parading without a permit, boycotting, and disturbing the peace. I plead guilty to the driving charge and force of circumstances made me plead

guilty to one of the three latter charges even though I was not guilty. The other three charges were transferred to Federal Court and I do not know what the disposition of them has been.

I can not promise that I will not committ civil disobediance again, in fact just the opposite, I will committ civil disobediance if there is no other way to fight against the crimes against humanity that are taking place. I want to be very clear about this, this is not a game with me or a wild fling of juvenile adolesance, it is not just a way of getting "kicks", and it is not just a way of rebelling against my parents. I can not stand idelly by and I can not put up only half a fight, only token resistance. I have been arrested before and I probably will be arrested again. To quote Thoreau "The question is not what am I doing in jail, but, rather, what are you doing out of jail", that philospny has echoed down through history ever since he wrote it, "...not what I am doing in Dachau, but what are you doing out of it". I have seen my Ifriends beaten, teargassed, and killed. I have saf in an Alabama courtroom while they aquited the murderer of one of my best friends, and I watched a corenors jury in Los Angeles justify the murder of innocent men are innocent children. If I have to go to jail then so be it. But make no mistake I am not going to turn around and I am not going to turn back.

As I said before you have been a more then fair judge, and now the time comes for you to sentence us, just as I must do what I feel is my duty you must do what you feel is your duty.

Bruce Hartford