

The Civil Rights-Black Power Era, Direct Action, and Defensive Violence: Lessons for the Working-Class Today

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The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) is re-examined to provide lessons for a renewed labor movement in this age of globalization and the accompanying obliteration of both labor and basic human rights. It is argued that the CRM was successful not because of non-violent civil disobedience. Instead, radical counter-ideology, violent self-defense, societal education, independent movement media, and even rebellion supplemented and made possible all other protests. In fact, it was through direct action that rights were finally wrestled from government. Therefore, it is proposed a new social movement be formed to promote both labor and human rights in the United States based on the tactics of the CRM which have been historically proven to be effective. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2010 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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INTRODUCTION

The working class has been defeated on a global scale while the remnants of the Western European welfare State wither away as labor and conservative governments (Democrats and Republicans in the U.S.) take turns governing their de facto corporate states. Now, declining unionization rates and increasing globalization are accelerating the concentration of wealth by the hyper-rich. Consumer debt, foreclosures and contingent work are at all-time-highs surpassed perhaps by peoples' disillusionment with the 'American nightmare'. Welcome to the McDonaldised world where you can super-size anything but your Wal-Mart wage.

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