COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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ARTICLE 18

Organization, Rationality and Spontaneity in the Civil Rights Movement

LEWIS M. KILLIAN

Continuity and emergence, planning and impulse, organizational strategy and individual spontaneity are polar tendencies which have been observed in the careers of social movements. "Classical collective-behavior" theorists have been charged with placing too much emphasis on the emergence of new norms and structures and thus reflecting and reinforcing the stereotyped conceptions of irrationality and spontaneity identified by Couch (1968). A concise characterization of "classical collective-behavior theory" is advanced by Aldon Morris (1981:745) when he writes:

> *Social movements are theorized to be relatively spontaneous and unstructured. Movement participants are often portrayed as nonrational actors functioning outside of normative constraints and propelled by high levels of strain.*

Morris (1981:745) adds that collective-behavior theorists "do not deny that organizations and institutional processes play a role in collective behavior," but he feels that they misinterpret them by holding that they "emerge in the course of movements and become important in their later stages." While he does not completely dismiss spontaneity as a factor, he feels that collective-behavior theorists have emphasized it too much, with a consequent neglect of internal structure (Morris, 1981:746).

Morris and other theorists identifying themselves with one or another variety of Resource Mobilization Theory have sought to discredit the older model which they believe to have dominated the theory of social movements. The alternative they offer, characterized by James Wood and Maurice Jackson (1982) as a "rational calculation approach," views social movements "as deriving from actors rationally estimating their chances of success by using social movements to attain their goals." These actors are seen to calculate their chances of victory and defeat and act accordingly" (Wood and Jackson, 1982:36). Morris (1981:746) declares that a central proposition of Resource Mobilization Theory is that "collective action is rooted in organizational structure and carried out by rational actors attempting to realize their ends." Thus individual rationality and organizational direction are placed in opposition to spontaneity and emergent structures. "Organizations, institutions, pre-existing communication networks, and rational actors are all seen as important resources playing crucial roles in the emergence and outcome of collective action," says Morris (1981:745).

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Taking a broader, more political perspective, Doug McAdam (1982) emphasizes the importance of "indigenous organizational strength," but only within a favorable structure of political opportunities. Pre-existing organizations are held to be crucial, for "in the absence of this supportive organizational context, the aggrieved population is likely to be deprived of the capacity for collective action even when confronted with a favorable structure of political opportunities" (McAdam, 1982:48). The rationality of individual action *within such an organizational* context is still emphasized.

Both Morris and McAdam frequently use the term "network" along with "structure" and "organization" as if they were interchangeable. The concept of pre-existing networks and the emphasis on their importance to the emergence of social movements are often associated with the work of Jo Freeman (1973, 1979) on the women's liberation movement, although the idea was advanced in 1960 by students of Ralph Turner, a "classic collective-behavior" theorist (Jackson et al., 1960). While Freeman clearly differentiates pre-existing communication networks from masses of unrelated individuals, she suggests that these networks can range from highly structured, formal organizations to rudimentary, informal associations of like-minded people at the grass roots. She makes it clear that the various types cannot be treated as interchangeable when she states, "What is needed is a model within which strategic considerations, both planned and spontaneous, leader-directed and grassroots, can be analyzed" (Freeman, 1979:170). While Freeman is critical of individualistic, grassroots theories of social movements, she clearly sees spontaneous action as being important and networks as sometimes evolving, sometimes fully formed at the outset.

STUDIES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Empirical support for challenges to classical collective-behavior theories comes from revisionist studies of the Civil Rights Movement (Morris, 1981; McAdam, 1982). Concentrating on the Sit-In Movement of 1960, Morris (1981:764) concluded that "pre-existing social structures provided the sit-ins with the resources and communication networks needed for their emergence and development." This, he argued, refuted the standard account that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and adult community leaders had rushed into a dynamic campus movement after it was well under way. Secondly, he concluded that it was the existence of a well-developed and widespread internal organization that led to the rapid spread of the sit-ins. The notion that spontaneity was an important aspect of the movement was an illusion—"the rapidity with which the sit-ins were organized gave the appearance that they were spontaneous"—but it was accepted, he charges, by such diverse students as Howard Zinn (1964), Meier and Rudwick (1973), and Piven and Cloward (1977). Morris (1981:754) saw the pre-existing internal organizations as centering around the black church as the coordinating unit in the typical movement center which perfected strategy and directed action between 1955 and 1960. Morris (1981:764) presented all three of his conclusions as refutations of what he criticized as a persistent portrayal of internal organization "as an after-the-fact accretion on student spontaneity."

McAdam (1982) traces the roots of indigenous *organizational strength farther* back, to 1876, and shows the importance of not only southern black churches but also black colleges and NAACP chapters as constituent parts of the organizational base. Whereas Morris takes up his analysis in 1960, McAdam begins with the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. His "political process model" differs from a resource mobilization model in the addition of a factor which he calls "cognitive liberation"—the development by people of a collective definition of their situation "as unjust and subject to change through *collective* action" (McAdam, 1982:51). Finally, both re-

searchers concur in their images of movement participants. They are seen as political beings "distinguished from nonparticipants on the basis of their greater integration into the established organizations of the minority community" (McAdam, 1982:63). They are rational actors working intentionally to achieve their ends, and their collective action is rooted in the pre-existing organizational structure of the minority community. Although neither spontaneous, impromptu action nor new movement organizations are explicitly ruled out in these analyses, they are ignored or treated as incidental to social movement development.

A part of the Civil Rights Movement mentioned only briefly by these authors is that which took place in Tallahassee, Florida, beginning in 1956. Interpretations of this submovement by Killian and Smith and others who studied it seem to fit collective-behavior theory better than the theories espoused by Morris and McAdam. Although not given notice in both contemporary and historical accounts equal to that accorded events in Montgomery, Greensboro, Little Rock and Selma, the Tallahassee Bus Boycott of 1956 and the lunchcounter sit-ins of 1960 were thoroughly studied by sociologist on the scene. As a result of continued interest by faculty members at both Florida A and M University and Florida State University additional data became available in later years. In 1978 Professor Jackson Ice of Florida State University taped 21 lengthy interviews with former participants in the events of the fifties and sixties. In May, 1981, Florida A and M University sponsored a symposium on the 25th anniversary of the Tallahassee Bus Boycott. One of the highlights was a speech by Wilhemina Jakes, one of the two women whose arrest had precipitated the protest.

The availability of these resources, some embodying the research of social scientists done a decade or more ago, some being contemporary reconstructions by participants, made possible a reexamination of that part of the "standard account" of the Civil Rights Movement which involved Tallahassee. Specific events and sequences of events were reexamined in the light of revisionist critiques of the earlier research. The data, including published studies, an unpublished doctoral dissertation, and transcripts of interviews and speeches made between 1978 and 1981, were reviewed with the following questions in mind:

1. Which critical events could be characterized as spontaneous and which were clearly the result of strategic planning?
2. What was the role of pre-existing, local, minority organizations as compared with that of organizations which emerged during the course of the movement?
3. What was the relationship between pre-existing and emergent organizations?
4. What was the relationship of local movement organizations with external sources of support and other movement centers?

In his unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Tallahassee Sit-Ins and CORE," Robert M. White (1964) characterized the Civil Rights Movement in Tallahassee as a "sub-movement" within the larger, region-wide Civil Rights Movement. Its course ran so nearly parallel to that of the larger movement that the casual observer might easily conclude that it was being directed from a central command post, unless simple contagion could explain the parallels. The Montgomery Bus Boycott began in December, 1955; the Tallahassee Boycott in May, 1956. The demands in each were worded almost identically. The Greensboro sit-ins occurred on February 1, 1960, while several students from Florida A and M University were arrested during a sit-in on February 20.

THE BUS BOYCOTTS: MONTGOMERY AND TALLAHASSEE

The widely held belief that Rosa Parks was a woman who had no conception of herself as a social activist but instead impulsively defied a white bus driver because her feet hurt has been discredited. She had a long history of active par-

ticipation in the local and state NAACP organizations, and had been put off Montgomery buses several times previously for refusing to move to the rear. Apparently, however, she had not planned this particular act of defiance as the beginning of a campaign against bus segregation. Even though her act was spontaneous, her old friend E. D. Nixon, president of the Montgomery NAACP, saw it as a strategic opportunity. After signing the bond for her release, he called nineteen black ministers, including Martin Luther King, Jr., and asked them to join in sponsoring a boycott. Nixon revealed in an interview with journalist Milton Viorst (1979:27–28) that the idea of a boycott was not something that just sprang into his head:

> *We talked about the bus boycott all year. I kept saying that the only way we're going to do any good is to hit those people right where it hurts, and that's in the pocketbook.*

While the Montgomery NAACP was clearly involved in the initiation of the bus protest and continued its legal fight against segregated seating, the emergence of the Montgomery Improvement Association made the boycott what McAdam (1982:138) terms a "church-based operation headed by a minister." He accepts Pat Watters's (1971) assertion that all the other southern boycotts and the organizations conducting them were imitations of this model.

McAdam (1982:138) mentions the Tallahassee Bus Boycott as one of these imitations and accepts the version of its origins advanced by Thomas R. Brooks: "The Reverend Charles K. Steele visited his friend, Martin Luther King, in the winter of 1956, and returned home to Tallahassee, Florida, to organize a bus boycott." What happened in Tallahassee does not sustain this version of Steele's role, however, and upon close examination the sequence of events proves to be quite different from that in Montgomery.

The precipitating incident was the consequence of what was clearly a spontaneous action by two students with no record of activism and no organizational connections outside Florida A and M University. Moreover, they never became activists in the movement they "started," going almost immediately into final examinations and then returning to their homes for the summer, much relieved to get out of Tallahassee and the glare of publicity. The incident was described 25 years later by Wilhemina Jakes (1981), one of the two women.

> *The bus boycott came into focus when Carrie and I boarded a city bus here in Tallahassee on Saturday afternoon. We dropped our dimes into the meter and sat next to a white lady on the seat behind the driver. It was the only seat available. When we sat down, the driver said, "You girls can't sit there." I said, "Why?" He said, "You just can't sit there." I got up, went to him and said, "Give me back my dime and I will get off." He said, "I can't give you your dime." I returned to my seat and I sat. He drove the bus to the nearest service station; he went into the station and made a call. He returned to the bus and parked and said, "Everyone remain seated." Within five minutes three cars loaded with policemen came. Two of the officers came on the bus. They talked with the driver and then came over to Carrie and I. One of the officers said, "Are you girls having a problem?" I explained to him what had happened and told him that I would get off if the driver would give me my dime. He then said, "You girls want to ride—then I'll give you a ride; come with me." So Carrie and I, we followed the officer to his car and got in. He took us to the police station. When we got there it appeared as if the entire police force was there to greet us. It was somewhat frightening. He charged us for inciting a riot. We were really surprised and shocked. The dean of city students sent a bondsman to bail us out. The next morning when we read the paper, "Carrie Patterson and Wilhemina Jakes arrested for Inciting a Riot," we tried to call our parents and let them know what had happened, and that we were alright. Then about 9 a.m. Sunday Reverend Steele and a representative of the NAACP came to see us. They told us that when they read the paper they thought that we were still in jail and they had been there to bond us out. We told them the story: they offered us their support.*

Perhaps Steele eventually would have, like E. D. Nixon, seized upon this incident as the occasion for organizing a bus boycott, mobilizing the resources of internal organizations such as the NAACP and the black churches to support the effort. He never had the opportunity to initiate the boycott, for events transpired very quickly after his inconsequential visit to the two women. Late Sunday afternoon a cross was burned in front of their off-campus residence. They fled to a dormitory, and the word of the cross-burning spread rapidly over the campus. By the next morning the officers of the Student Government Association had posted notices calling for a mass meeting of students. In the words of Jakes (1981), "The student body met the next morning. Carrie and I were asked not to attend the meeting. We did not attend. Immediately following this meeting, the Tallahassee Bus Boycott began." The Chaplain of Florida A and M University confirmed this account:

> *Students were there in full number, it was a full auditorium, as many faculty as could get in—many of us were there. Well, the students decided that they would protest the action of the bus company and the police officers, and that they would withdraw student patronage of the bus company and that they would ask the community to join them in withdrawing patronage or boycott the bus company. (Ice—Hudson Interview, 1978)*

On questioning, Chaplain Hudson could not remember whether any of the leaders of the black community were there. This was a meeting called by the student leaders and conducted by them. Indeed, the Dean of Students, who had posted bond for the two co-eds, thought that no one but students were at the meeting (Ice—Miles Interviews, 1978).

Hudson, while a university official, was also president of the Tallahassee Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, an association of black ministers. He says he called a special meeting of the Alliance on Tuesday, the day after the boycott had started. Steele, a member of the Alliance but also president of the local NAACP, claims that he and Hudson got together and called a joint meeting (Ice—Steele Interview, 1978). Hudson's version is that he and the pastor of the church in which the meeting was to be held "contacted community leaders and all other interested persons who would like to meet and talk over the situation" (Ice—Hudson, 1978).

The black ministers assembled at this meeting and set up a committee to talk to the bus company officials. It was headed not by Steele but by J. Metz Rollins, one of the newest ministers. What proved to be a more significant action was the calling of a mass meeting for that night. Steele was the one who proposed this, but the student-inspired bus boycott had already been under way and spreading for 24 hours.

The mass meeting was attended by a large portion of those black leaders, both lay and clerical, who had been engaged in any sort of civic activity in previous years. At this point it is evident that what Morris has identified as essential pre-existing social structures were becoming involved in the emerging movement—but only after the protest had been initiated by the students. What was the nature of these organizations and what resources could they provide?

There were the black churches which did, as in other southern communities, come to constitute important resources. Up until the beginning of the bus boycott, however, none of them included social protest on their agenda. The largest black social structure in Tallahassee was the Florida A and M student body, but despite the existence of a student government it did not constitute so much a formal organization as a communication network—all students belonged but few were active participants. Again, this structure had no history of social activism.

There did exist a local chapter of the NAACP as well as a student chapter at the university. Steele had been president of the Tallahassee chapter for about two years—he had moved to the city only three years before the boycott. There also existed an organization called the Tallahassee Civic League, something like a black Rotary Club, and there was the Ministerial Alliance. Smith and Killian (1958:6) character-

ized the organizational activity—or the lack of it—in the two years between the 1954 school desegregation decision and the boycott in these words:

> *Perhaps because of the peaceful accommodation in race relations, Tallahassee was virtually devoid of organizations active in intergroup relations at the time of the Supreme Court ruling. The local chapter of the NAACP was small and weak. . . .*
>
> *It was not until the formation of the Negro Inter-Civic Council that any organization embarked on a program of action either for or against any form of segregation in Tallahassee.*

The Inter-Civic Council (ICC) was born at the mass meeting. It constituted a merger of the NAACP, the Ministerial Alliance and the Civic League. The NAACP was the only one of the three with an action orientation, but it had been relatively inactive. Steele made it plain why the black community, goaded into action by the students, did not unite under the banner of the NAACP:

> *It was the decision of the people and the fear of some people that if the NAACP sponsored it [the boycott] it would be jeopardized by authorities, so they decided to form a new organization that they were not acquainted with. (Ice—Steele, 1978).*

Although Steele was elected president of the new body, it was not just the NAACP under a new name. As Steele himself said to Ice, it was named the Inter-Civic Council because "it would include representatives from all of the civic organizations in town interested in racial progress."

From the officers of the ICC came the "new leaders" identified by Killian and Smith (1960) in their study of Negro protest leaders. The change in the style of leadership from accommodating to militant was accompanied by a change of personnel. Not all of the new leaders were ministers, although most were. One of the most important was Dan Speed, a businessman who later became a minister but continued to operate his grocery and market near the university campus. He was elected to chair the transportation committee, charged with the task of organizing a car pool in support of the boycott. A model for such a system already existed in Montgomery, and it is likely that the Tallahassee leaders knew about it.

Although white opponents of the ICC did attempt to represent it as merely the NAACP in disguise, manipulated by "outside agitators," it was an autonomous organization. It was identified by the black community as being the primary organization supporting the boycott. Its leaders were not the same people who had been known as "Negro leaders" before the boycott. Under their leadership it engaged in a broad range of activities, as described by Killian and Smith (1960:257):

> *Finally these "new" leaders have sought to keep the Negro community of Tallahassee militant and dynamic by continuing weekly meetings of the ICC, the organization formed to promote the bus protests, conducting institutes on non-violence, taking preliminary steps toward school integration, working to get more Negroes registered and voting, and making many local and nonlocal public appearances in connection with the uplift of Negroes.*

The pre-existing organizations provided a communication network and a cadre of potential activists when the students precipitated a crisis. They did not become movement organizations in the sense that the emergent ICC did. The Civic League continued to exist but lost its prominence, and the NAACP, as a separate organization, was in evidence primarily as a channel through which outside aid could be obtained.

There is no evidence, however, that either outside aid or influence were of any significance in the initiation of the Tallahassee submovement, despite the suggestion that Steele conferred with King and then went back to organize the boycott. Although he had known King since the latter was a boy—"Martin was born the same year that I started preaching"—he did not credit him with originating the idea of a bus boycott. Like many other black ministers in the South, he knew that the Reverend Theodore Jemison had led the first

bus boycott of modern times in Baton Rouge in 1953. In fact, Steele seemed to consider the Tallahassee movement as a rival of the Montgomery movement rather than an offshoot. When asked, "Did he [King] give you some words of encouragement or advice?" he answered:

> *No. He gave us encouragement. Fact is they gave us $3,000 during our struggle. From Montgomery. But as far as our sitting down and he say you do this, we didn't have that because in the first place I considered Tallahassee beyond Montgomery. I still think that. Our demands were greater than Montgomery, our results were greater than Montgomery. We had 98 percent, we put the bus company off the road, we put black drivers on before they did, and so on. And another thing, I have pictured the Montgomery effort as being the handwriting on the wall for the South, and I've considered Tallahassee as a little Daniel came along and interpreted that handwriting. (Ice—Steele, 1978)*

Not until the boycott was well under way and the car pool in full operation did the external resources of the NAACP come into play in Tallahassee. No lawsuit challenging the segregation ordinance was ever filed, but when drivers in the car pool were arrested for operating "For Hire" vehicles without a license the state NAACP office sent a lawyer from Tampa to defend them.

The resources available to the ICC were meager and there is no evidence that the activists in Tallahassee, from the two co-eds to the leaders, anticipated the possible costs of the movement. Smith and Killian (1958:19) observed in 1958, "There is no evidence that this movement was planned in advance of the events of May 27, 1956. In fact, the confusion of the first few days of the movement strongly indicates a lack of planning." Human resources, people who would boycott the buses, attend mass meetings, drive in the car pool and contribute money when collections were taken, quickly rallied to the emergent movement. Large sums of money to pay for the car pool were harder to come by. They were badly needed to provide bail and to pay legal costs for arrested drivers and the 21 members of the ICC Executive Committee arrested and charged with operating a transportation system without a franchise. Neither the pre-existing organizations nor the new movement organization had large "war chests." According to Steele, most of the money was raised through his personal efforts, with no external organizational support. He stated:

> *I was running hither and thither all over the country trying to raise $11,000. See, Martin Luther King could go to New York—I remember he went to New York one year and spoke six times in various areas in the New York area and raised $6,000. I could go to New York and speak the same number of times, maybe I would raise $1,500. Usually someone interested in Tallahassee would arrange an itinerary for me and I would speak in Newark, Brooklyn, New York. Then I'd preach on Sunday for my expense money. (Ice—Steele, 1978)*

Another important source of funds was not an organization but an individual—Dan Speed, Chair of the Transportation Committee. He was selected for this role because he was a very successful businessman who owned a store which was something of a community center. He described his role as the "banker" of the movement in the following exchange:

Q: How many cars did you need in this transportation system?

A: Oh, we had about 60, an average of 60 cars. I can answer that because when we first got started we didn't have any money.

Q: It must have cost a lot of money for those volunteers.

A: I financed it.

Q: How much did that cost you?

A: It cost me a whole lot. I gave them credit, they paid my money back. I was reimbursed on monies they raised, collections. (Ice— Speed. 1978)

Speed was not, of course, the only individual who contributed or lent funds. Chaplain Hudson, also an officer of the ICC, remembers that there was a Ways and Means Committee which "included such faithful women as 'Mother' Cora

Stokes and 'Mother' Robbins and others." Its task was fundraising. These women were distinguished and had earned the honorific "Mother" by long and faithful service in the various churches to which they belonged.

The Tallahassee Bus Boycott did not terminate in any clear-cut resolution of the issues. The demand for the employment of black drivers was met during the third month. After the Supreme Court declared segregation on city buses in Montgomery unconstitutional, the City Commission resorted to the device of a seat-assignment ordinance in attempting to prevent integrated seating. Three university students were arrested for refusing to sit in seats assigned by a bus driver. During ensuing months, while these and other cases wended their way through the courts, blacks gradually returned to the buses but not in the numbers prevailing before the boycott. At the same time, enforcement of the seating ordinance became increasingly lax; the bus company had no desire to lose its black customers again.

THE SIT-INS

It might seem that the ICC, which continued to exist as an organization, would have become the core of one of the movement centers which, in Morris's analysis, provided the organizational foundation for the subsequent student sit-in movement. Steele had become vice-president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and continued as Chair of the ICC, although there was no formal relationship between the two organizations until the mid-1960s. He continued as president of the Tallahassee NAACP until 1960, when he was forced to resign because of what amounted to a jurisdictional dispute with ICC. Most of the black churches continued to be connected to the ICC through their ministers. Yet, according to White (1964:70), following the bus boycott:

> *As the movement tempo subsided . . . the new leaders and their movement organization stabilized at a position of inactivity. The NAACP-ICC combine, the new leaders, and the condition of no communication between Negro and white power structures were institutionalized as conventional patterns in the community.*

The Florida A and M student body was mobilized into action once again, however, but not as part of the Civil Rights Movement. A black co-ed was raped by four white men. In Smith's (1961:225) words:

> *Again, the student body took action. They closed the University by refusing to attend classes, held mass meetings, and soon they were on national TV demanding justice.*

On February 1, 1960, the lunch-counter sit-in in Greensboro, North Carolina, occurred, and became known as the beginning of the "sit-in movement." Louis Lomax (1962:121), a black journalist, called it "the second major battle of the Negro revolt" and a "revolt against both segregation and the entrenched Negro leadership." He also dramatized it as an entirely spontaneous action, taken without planning or organizational influence.

> *Greensboro happened by itself; nobody planned it, nobody pulled any strings. Negro students simply got tired and sat down. Once they made their move, however, three national civil rights organizations came into town to help them. This was the beginning of a pattern that would spread over the Deep South. (Lomax, 1962:122)*

It is this image of spontaneity and lack of structure which Morris challenges by showing that the four Greensboro youths had been active members of an NAACP youth council at one time or another, had participated in action-oriented churches in Durham, and knew about the less well-publicized sit-ins which had occurred in the preceding three years. He counters with the declaration, "Thus, the myth that four college students got up one day and sat-in at Woolworth's—and sparked the movement—dries up like a 'raisin in the sun' when confronted with the evidence" (Morris, 1981:755).

According to McAdam (1982:139), the student sit-in movement spread in the following

weeks, first within North Carolina, then to neighboring states, and then to "such traditional centers of southern black life as Tallahassee, Atlanta and Montgomery." He suggests, "The uniform nature of these demonstrations again suggests the presence of a well-developed communication network linking the southern black college campuses into a loosely integrated institutional network" (McAdam, 1982:138).

The event in Tallahassee to which he refers was a lunch-counter sit-in on February 13 conducted by eight Florida A and M Students and two black high school students. It was organized by CORE—the newest civil rights organization in the city. No demonstrators were arrested; they simply sat at the counter for two and a half hours without being served.

How did the Tallahassee submovement become part of the spreading sit-in movement? Was it planned on the model of the sit-ins which had occurred in North Carolina the previous week? What was the involvement of the indigenous organizations which had developed during the bus boycott? When did outside resources from the national leadership organizations come into the community? Why was the sit-in sponsored by CORE, a new campus-based organization, rather than by the NAACP combine led by Steele?

White's detailed account of the career of Tallahassee CORE offers many answers to these questions. By the summer of 1959 both the Tallahassee NAACP and ICC had become relatively inactive. The two local organizations had overlapping leadership, particularly through Steele, Speed and Daisy Young, who served as secretary for both. Speed provided free rent [and] an office for the joint headquarters in the building in which his store was located. In an interview in 1983 he asserted, however, that the organizations maintained their separate identities. Daisy Young confirmed this, describing how Steele was forced to give up the presidency of the NAACP when he sought to bring King into a march on Tallahassee planned by the state NAACP.

The person who brought CORE to Tallahassee was a co-ed at Florida A and M University who had not been involved in the previous boycott. During the summer of 1959 she attended a CORE-sponsored Interracial Action Institute in Miami. Upon returning to Tallahassee in the fall, she set about organizing a chapter of CORE, seeking support from a small circle of fellow students and white students from Florida State University who, during the previous two years, had been attempting to organize an inter-university organization. ICC had been a black organization, although it did receive some surreptitious support from a few whites. By its constitution, CORE had to be interracial. Patricia Stephens succeeded in her efforts, helped by a CORE field secretary who came to Tallahassee for an organizational meeting.

While needing the support of the pre-existing organizations, CORE was a new and independent organization. The chief connecting links between it and the earlier ones were Daisy Young, who became a member of the executive committee of CORE, and Dan Speed's building, where CORE was also given space. On one occasion CORE even used ICC stationery (White, 1964:112). According to White, however, the key figure in CORE during the sit-ins was the faculty adviser, a young man who had lived in the community for only five years and had not been a leader in the bus boycott, if he was involved at all.

Organized early in the fall, Tallahassee CORE's first action was a test of the success of the bus boycott. Members conducted test rides on city buses and found that drivers were no longer attempting to make black passengers sit in the rear. Next, on November 11, 1959, 3 members actually sat down at a white lunch counter in Tallahassee and requested service—nearly 3 months before the Greensboro incident. This, too, was merely a test, and the black students left when they were refused. On December 1, two more CORE members requested service at a lunch counter and were refused. This early, unpublicized series of tests was not intended as demonstrations nor were they CORE's only activities. The main effort had been in another di-

rection, testing the compliance of bus companies serving Tallahassee with the Morgan decision forbidding segregation in interstate travel.

The first sit-in *demonstration* by Tallahassee CORE was not spontaneous but neither was it planned as part of a well-thoughtout, ongoing strategy. This was the sit-in on February 13, two weeks after Greensboro. White (1964:112) describes how it came about:

> *Early in the month of February national CORE contacted Tallahassee CORE by telephone to inform them of a forthcoming region-wide sympathy sit-in. It was to begin at eleven o'clock on the thirteenth of February and to end at two o'clock on the same day. A meeting was quickly called, at which time the members of Tallahassee CORE decided to participate in the regional sit-in. . . . Eight Florida A and M students and two Negro high school students [Steele's sons] volunteered to participate in the project. The project group, according to [the faculty adviser], was "hastily organized . . . and with too little preparation."*

It was not until a week later, February 20, that the first sit-in demonstrators were arrested in Tallahassee. This demonstration had been planned by local CORE. After the arrests the NAACP-ICC did become involved for, according to White (1964:117), the faculty adviser "contacted three NAACP leaders" and "bond was furnished by a local NAACP-ICC leader." During the following week a more extended organizational network became involved.

> *Legal aid was secured from the NAACP office in Miami, a Tallahassee CORE Defense Fund was established, and an appeal was made to national CORE for financial aid. (White, 1964:117)*

At the same time, it appears that CORE was operating quite independently of the other indigenous organizations until such time as financial or legal aid was required. It also appears that they had no assurances of the availability of such aid before their costly ventures.

Events which followed arrests during a major sit-in demonstration on March 12 illustrate the mixture of planning and spontaneity. These sit-ins were carefully planned, following the manual, *CORE Rules for Action.* After the arrests, which took place about 11:30 a.m., the president of CORE returned to the Florida A and M campus, entered the cafeteria, and said to the lunch-time crowd, "The police have arrested FAMU and FSU students at Woolworth's. Let's march on Woolworth's and McCrory's—to fill the jails if necessary" (White, 1964:123). This impromptu action, taken without the consent of other members of the executive committee or other organizations, was in direct violation of CORE rules. It resulted in a march of about 100 students to the downtown area, the arrest of 17 more, and a confrontation with a group of club-wielding whites. No violence occurred and the students returned to the campus. Later in the afternoon, however, a march of from 800 to 1,000 students was stopped by police, who attacked the marchers with tear gas and then "began indiscriminately arresting students who remained in the general area" (White, 1964:127).

Again Tallahassee CORE had to seek outside aid:

> *Late Saturday night, the CORE Executive Council contacted national CORE to seek advice about getting legal aid for the arrested demonstrators. They were advised to contact the Miami branch of the NAACP, which they did and out of which they were offered legal aid as requested. (White, 1964:128)*

As in the early days of the bus boycott, Tallahassee was once more in crisis. Yet the "New Leadership" which emerged during the boycott was not leading this phase of the movement. SCLC, of which Steele was vice-president, was never involved; a representative who went from Nashville to Florida to offer SCLC's collaboration was rebuffed. Furthermore, although White indicates that the individual NAACP-ICC leaders helped to arrange bond after the first arrest, they were not acting as officers of the two organizations. White (1964:129) says of the officers of CORE, "They held joint meetings with

some of the more active NAACP-ICC leaders, who, after the second arrests, had indicated to CORE that they were interested in assuming some leadership in local interracial activities." On March 23 there was a joint NAACP-ICC-CORE mass meeting in a Negro church; the main speaker was the new national field secretary of CORE.

Although CORE continued with its social action through a drive to raise funds to help the arrested students and a selective buying campaign aimed at downtown merchants, there were no more sit-in demonstrations. There was, however, extensive debate over whether to have more. During one meeting, this time to discuss a possible "kneel-in" on the steps of the capitol, the lack of integration within the movement center was revealed. White (1964:151) reports:

It was at this meeting that an NAACP-ICC leader [Steele] openly objected to CORE conducting demonstrations without the approval of the "adult leaders," since it is they (adult leaders) who "must answer for the consequences anyway." [The faculty adviser] answered his assertion with a rather mild challenge, but did not debate the issue. However, after the committee meeting, CORE members voiced strong dissatisfaction with the NAACP-ICC leaders' comments.

Movement activities continued in Tallahassee until after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. They involved attacks on segregation in restaurants and theaters and resulted in even more arrests. At one time, over 500 students were in jail. All of these activities were led by CORE and involved Florida A and M students and some high school students.

In 1961, after both the bus boycott and the sit-ins, Charles U. Smith assessed the roles of students, of various movement organizations and of the black community. First he wrote:

Through mass meetings and other demonstrations the FAMU student body was able to influence the majority of the Negro community of Tallahassee to boycott the city bus service for several months. They found that the adult members of the Negro community would listen to their ideas and cooperate with their efforts. (Smith, 1961:225)

Of the emergence of the sit-ins he stated:

By the time the sit-in demonstrations began in Greensboro in 1959, the FAMU student body were emotionally and spiritually prepared to enter into any legitimate fray on behalf of the rights of Negroes, and it was only incidental to this preparedness that CORE organized a chapter in Tallahassee in the Fall of 1959. This writer is firmly convinced that even without the support of CORE, it would only have been a matter of time until members of the FAMU student body started their own demonstrations. (Smith, 1961:226–27).

Finally, of the adult community Smith said:

Adult, non-student participation in Tallahassee has been largely confined to arranging bail bonds and assisting with the procurement of legal counsel for the students. (Smith, 1961:229)

There was another, less tangible, type of support provided by the adult community—the moral support for the activists expressed from the pulpits of the black churches. There were many black ministers who, from the time of the emergence of the ICC, constituted a significant portion of the new, protest leadership. The best known of these adult leaders was the charismatic and energetic C. K. Steele. His activities not only made him one of the best known and most feared blacks in Tallahassee but also extended beyond the city because of his dynamism as a speaker, his unquestionable courage and his position in the SCLC. Yet there is no evidence that he was a grand strategist of the civil rights movement in Tallahassee, as was widely believed in the white community.

During the period when CORE was the dominant movement organization, after the sit-ins began, Patricia Stephens was a strong leader showing a marked degree of autonomy. Asked how much influence Steele had on CORE's decisions, Daisy Young replied, "You could have a meeting and think a decision had been made but

Pat felt that since she had brought CORE here the decisions were hers. She believed in drastic action. So you'd find out she'd decided to do something drastic that hadn't been decided on at the meeting!" (Killian—Young Interview, 1984).

Furthermore, Steele did not underestimate the crucial contribution of the students. In 1978 he declared:

> *Without the students, there would have been no protest, there would have been no movement. They are the militants. They are the soldiers. You don't have a great number of people in a community or a city who have either the time or the energy really to get in a march. (Ice—Steele, 1978)*

While the students could be aptly characterized as "soldiers," they were not troops who merely followed. They were themselves leaders who, by their actions, created crises and galvanized the whole black community into action. Some of their actions were spontaneous; the most significant organizations were emergent ones.

THE MEANING OF SPONTANEITY AND EMERGENCE

The concepts "spontaneity" and "emergence," "spontaneous" and "emergent," are of critical importance in the analysis of social movements, yet just what they mean to scholars who use them is far from clear. Like many sociological concepts they are borrowed from lay language but used as if they had the precision desired in scientific discourse. Some attempt at clarification is demanded before the preceding case history is analyzed.

"Spontaneity" hardly qualifies as a sociological concept—it seems more like an ordinary adjective used occasionally by sociologists as if the meaning were self-evident. Perhaps the association alleged to exist between it and classical collective-behavior theory is related to Herbert Blumer's usage in his oft-cited essay on collective behavior, originally published in 1939 but reprinted in later editions of *Principles of Sociology* ([1946] 1951). There he defined collective behavior as that which arises "spontaneously" and "is not due to pre-established understandings or traditions" (Blumer, [1946] 1951:168). A little farther on he wrote, "Milling, collective excitement and social contagion are present, in varying degrees, in all instances of spontaneous group behavior" (Blumer, [1946] 1951:176). Here there is an implication that spontaneous behavior is emotional, impulsive, even irrational—the ideas ascribed by some critics to both Gustave LeBon and classical collective-behavior theorists. Yet by dictionary definition and in much of popular usage the term is more strongly related to such synonyms as "unpremeditated" and "unplanned" than to "impulsive." *Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus* lists as the antonym "premeditated." Other contrasting terms given are "deliberate, predetermined, preplanned, studied, and thought-out" (1976:772).

It is this meaning which is evident in Jo Freeman's (1979:170) call for a model in which decisions, both planned and spontaneous, can be analyzed. It is in this sense that "spontaneous" will be used in this analysis. Human actors can and do make on-the-spot decisions which are not part of a plan for continuous action and whose consequences are unanticipated. Such decisions and the resulting actions may or may not be accompanied by excitement or strong emotions. Whether they are rational must be determined by application of the same criteria by which the rationality of planned actions is judged (see Turner and Killian, 1972:9).

"Emergence" occurs more frequently in sociological and psychological writings. George H. Mead (1982:108) said of the act, one of his central concerns, "The act is novelty, an emergent." But he also made explicit what he meant by "novelty," relating it to emergence when he said, "the novel is constantly happening and the recognition of this gets its expression in more general terms in the concept of emergence. Emergence involves a reorganization but the reorganization

brings in something that was not there before" (Mead, 1934:198). Irving Zeitlin contends that the concept of emergence is central to what he describes as "the dialectical philosophy" of Mead. Thus, says Zeitlin (1973:233), "There is then a dialectical relation between the individual and his world resulting in the reconstitution of both."

Blumer not only elaborated on the emergent nature of the individual act but also extended his analysis to what he called "joint" or "collective" action. He took for granted the relationship of such action to earlier structures and norms, saying, "One is on treacherous and empirically invalid grounds if he thinks that any given form of joint action can be sliced off from its historical linkage, as if its makeup and character arose out of the air through spontaneous generation instead of growing out of what went before" (Blumer, 1969:17). He balanced this emphasis on the influence of pre-existing structures and traditions with stress on the formation, or emergence, of every instance of joint action through the interaction of individual participants. Thus he asserted:

> *In dealing with collectivities and with joint action one can easily be trapped in and erroneous position by failing to recognize that the joint action of the collectivity is an interlinkage of the separate acts of the participants. This failure leads one to overlook the fact that a joint action always has to undergo a process of formation; even though it may be a well-established and repetitive form of social action, each instance of it has to be formed anew. (Blumer, 1969:17)*

It is this notion of the construction of new, in the sense of reorganized, modified or transformed, norms and structure which is embodied in the emergent-norm approach advanced by Turner and Killian (1972). This approach was derived not only from the Mead-Blumer symbolic interactionist tradition but also from the social-psychological theories and experiments of Muzafer Sherif. The latter saw the principle of "levels" and the corollary processes of emergence and continuity as essential to understanding not only the relationship between individual and group behavior but also that between the past and the present, declaring:

> *It is becoming a recognized fact that the emergence of different and new qualities—structural transformations—occurs not only on the level of human group interaction, but also on all levels of physical, biological and historical events. In particular the work of Gestalt psychologists on perception and in other fields has helped to establish the fact of structural properties of wholes, interdependence of parts, qualitative transformations with the coming of new factors into the situation. (Sherif, 1948:157)*

"Emergence" does not imply discontinuity with the past. It is complementary to continuity, but sensitizes the observer to that which is new without denying its roots in that which has gone before. To speak of the emergence of new structures and norms in a social movement, such as the one described here, is not to deny the influence of pre-existing organizations.

ANALYSIS OF THE CASE HISTORY

While reflecting the importance of pre-existing organizations and strategically planned action, the civil rights movement in Tallahassee also highlights the significance of spontaneous action and the emergence of new structures. This may be an idiosyncratic case which can shed no light on social movement theory or it may represent a variation, a less frequently occurring subtype, of the pattern presented by Morris and McAdam in their much more comprehensive studies. It may be that if the events in more of the other submovements or movement centers were examined on the microsociological level similar modifications of the revisionist models would appear warranted. What are the theoretical implications if we take the Tallahassee case as significant?

First, if we take the term "spontaneity" to denote the unplanned nature of an event or action rather than its irrationality or novelty, it is clear from the Tallahassee case that this element cannot be ignored. Spontaneity is especially likely to

be important in the early stages of a social movement and during periods of transition from one type of action to another. Thus the precipitating act of the two co-eds clearly meets this criterion for spontaneity. The reactions of the bus driver and the police were not anticipated, nor was the burning of a cross in front of their residence. There is simply no evidence that they expected to precipitate a boycott. The other point at which spontaneity is evident is in the transition from the period of quiescence after the boycott had run its course to the new phase of demonstrations, beginning with the activities of CORE in late 1959. The early activities of this campus-based organization, which was even newer to the community that the ICC, had a groping, impromptu character. This changed when conducting lunch-counter sit-ins became the primary activity. There was greater coordination with national CORE, but the very significant marches on Tallahassee by Florida A and M students on March 12, precipitated by Pat Stephens's impromptu action and ending with a mass confrontation with the police, showed the continuing importance of spontaneous action even during a period of careful planning. Furthermore, from the outset Florida A and M students undertook costly actions with little or no assurance that the resources to "cover their bets" would be forthcoming.

At the same time, the importance of pre-existing structures—both organizations and networks—is inescapably evident. The student body, the black churches and the local NAACP constituted the "supportive organizational context" which McAdam (1982:48) emphasizes and the cooptable communication network stressed by Freeman (1983:9). Yet there is no indication that either the student leaders who called the first mass meeting or the leaders of the black community who mobilized the community in support of the impromptu boycott had any more than a vague idea of what resources they could rally. Neither the black churches nor the black secular organizations had any record of participation in the kind of social action being proposed, action which would require both personal and financial sacrifice. The movement was launched more on faith than on the basis of an inventory of resources in reserve, internal or external.

The pre-existing organizations, of crucial importance during the first few days, were soon displaced by an emergent structure, the Inter-Civic Council, and were transformed in the process of merging into it. Smith, who was present at the organizational meeting, said in an interview in 1983:

> *I know the NAACP had been sporadically active in the state . . . but in Tallahassee the NAACP was present but was not attacking racial segregation at all. I think the reason that the ICC was formed on the second day of the bus boycott was because there was no organization situated strategically enough and viable enough to carry out this activity. . . . It was thought that this would be a special organization that would cut across religious lines, lay lines, involve the lay community, the religious community, the student community, and that's how this organization came into existence. (Killian—Smith Interview, 1983)*

The ICC endured even after the boycott, along with the older organizations. While it, in combination with the NAACP, became involved in and supported the sit-in movement, it did not plan, lead or control it. White (1964:231) says of the relationship. "From the very first CORE meeting three leaders of the NAACP-ICC combine, acting in individual capacities, kept in touch with the submovement. . . . As an organization, the NAACP group remained indifferent and aloof from the submovement. Even the three friendly NAACP-ICC leaders remained outside of the submovement structure, and communicated their interest in its activities to the two established leaders." Once again a new, student-based organization acted independently to precipitate a crisis and revitalize the movement.

Next, in considering pre-existing structures it is important to distinguish between organizations and networks, as Freeman implies. Social structures lying toward the network or grassroots pole of the continuum, such as the student body and the members of the several churches,

are well suited to provide resources and serve as communication networks but not to function as coordinating staffs which devise strategy and direct action. They are very different from protest organizations devoted single-mindedly to promoting change, such as ICC, CORE, SCLC, SNCC and even the NAACP. It may be hypothesized that it was because the latter were, as movement organizations, both protest oriented and emergent (NAACP excepted) that many of them had careers which were spectacular but brief.

Recognizing that pre-existing structures have a critical influence on the development and course of social movement does not justify neglecting the emergent properties which make a social movement novel. Even as older organizations continue to exist they are transformed as they become parts of a new gestalt in which protest constitutes a common goal. Both continuity and emergence were evident in the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement, as in all social movements.

Finally, the absence of clearly available resources at the time when precipitating actions were taken suggests the greater relative importance of social-psychological factors as against tangible resources. It is obvious that both the bus boycott and the sit-ins in Tallahassee emerged in a nationwide atmosphere in which black protest not only appeared more feasible than ever before but was even becoming normative, especially for black students. Smith (1961:228) even suggested in 1961 that for black college students "a spirit of competition has found its way into the civil rights arena, and no college or university wants to be left behind or be found wanting in this kind of courage and conviction." Events in Montgomery, Little Rock and Greensboro, as well as the rallying of the students and the black community in Tallahassee during the bus boycott and the rape case, justified the hope and faith of students and then of adult activists that resources to back up their bold actions existed and could be mobilized.

This sort of feeling is more akin to Ralph Turner's concept "the sense of injustice" (Turner and Killian, 1972:259) and McAdam's (1982:34) later "cognitive liberation" than to the utilitarian assessment of resources suggested by some versions of Resource Mobilization Theory. Freeman (1979:172) suggests a bridge between different *types* of resources when she defines the potential time and commitment which people may provide as an *intangible* resource, saying, "People are the primary intangible resource of a movement, and movements rely very heavily upon them." Martha Prescod Norman (1983), a former SNCC field worker, portrayed this intangible factor graphically when she reminisced:

> *One of the things I learned from organizing was how many resources even powerless people have. We didn't have resources of wealth, prestige, political power. Our main resources was faith in ourselves—faith that if we had our souls and bodies we could change the world!*

CONCLUSION

New developments in theory have reminded us that organization, resources and planning are essential to the success of a social movement and should not be neglected in practice or in research. V.I. Lenin's famous work, "What Is to Be Done?" was a call for systematic and methodical preparation for the work which a revolutionary movement would have to do. Yet he emphasized the complex relation between planning and spontaneity when he wrote:

> *We have spoken all the time about systematic and methodical preparation, but we have no desire in the least to suggest that the autocracy may fall only as a result of a properly prepared siege or organized attack. Such a view would be stupid and doctrinaire. On the contrary, it is quite possible, and historically far more probable, that the autocracy will fall under the pressure of one of those spontaneous outbursts or unforeseen political complications which constantly threaten if from all sides. But no political party, if it desires to avoid adventurist tactics, can base its activities on expectations of such outbursts and complications. We must proceed along our road, and*

steadily carry out our systematic work, and the less we count on the unexpected, the less likely are we to be taken by surprise by any "historical turn." (Lenin, 1929:116)

Again, it is being suggested that while spontaneous, unplanned and unforeseen events have a high probability of precipitating social movements they are never sufficient to generate viable structures capable of sustained activities. While never relying on it, planners must be prepared for the unexpected, Lenin seems to be saying.

Hence we conclude that while organization and rational planning are key variable, social movement theory must take into account spontaneity and emergence and the forces which generate them. It must treat as important, not as irrational, the feeling states and the cognitions which sometimes cause individuals to throw caution to the winds and act in the face of great or unknown odds. It must include as an essential part of its analysis how social movement organizations and their leaders deal with the changes in the course of a movement which unpredictable, spontaneous actions introduce, and how they themselves are transformed or even superseded in the process.

POSTSCRIPT: THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

Writing some twenty years after the events occurred, Morris concluded from his data that theorists of the period placed too much emphasis on spontaneity and lack of structure in the Civil Rights Movement. Having reviewed some of the data, the present author concludes that in the Tallahassee case there were indeed spontaneous acts which were of central significance and that emergent organizations were more important that pre-existing ones. From the beginning of the current research it has been evident, however, that there was another reason why many contemporary observers emphasized any evidence they discovered indicating spontaneity and lack of planning. This was essentially a political reason, stemming not from a conservative bias but from sympathy for the values of the Civil Rights Movement. One of the charges most frequently used as a weapon to discredit the Movement was the accusation. "Our local blacks were satisfied until outside agitators like the NAACP came in and stirred them up." In Tallahassee, despite clear evidence to the contrary, the white press and the authorities persisted in the belief that somebody must have "put these two women up to sitting on the front of that bus." Glenda Rabby (1984:324), the latest scholar to study the events of this period, writes that a serious white accusation was that Tallahassee racial disturbance were engineered by outside agitators, out-of-town troublemakers, the national NAACP, or, even worse, the international communist party." There was an enduring belief in the white community that both the bus boycott and the sit-ins were the result of a conspiracy led by Steele and other "newcomers."Evidence of spontaneity, of impulsive protest against tired feet as well as against white supremacy, and of lack of organization and planning was welcome as ammunition against such charges to those researchers who wrote as the conflict was going on.

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