

Summer '72
Research Assembly

NEW SOCIAL VEHICLE TACTICS
Working Copy: David McCleskey Lecture

Judi Weigel
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Tactics

Our task this week is to find out what a New Social Vehicle tactic is. No one knows yet what a NSV tactic is, and if you think you know, I suspect that you ought to forget what you think a NSV tactic is. And I want to remind us that this is not really a lecture but simply getting us into the arena of tactical thinking and to remind us of some of the things that we in the Movement have learned about it out of our past experience.

My image for tactical thinking is still largely rooted in our study of Mao Tse Tung some years ago and in the early studies of some clergy in Chicago who had been in several PLC's together and were discovering what it meant to work corporately. The greatest impact on us, particularly in the area of guerrilla warfare, had to do with tactical thinking. Tactical thinking has not a great deal to do with resolve and philosophy. It has not a great deal to do with things that you have dreams about or your goals or your images of what ought to happen in the new society-or anything like that. Tactics have to do with the concrete particular activities that you engage in day by day. And therefore, just as in guerrilla warfare, you have to consider always whether you are going to live through the next campaign or not.

What impressed me so much about guerrillas is that they are always quite shrewd and subtle about the kind of tactics that they engage in. One of the things in particular is that you always go in and attack your enemy at this weak spot. You find out where he is a little bit more vulnerable and there you strike. And if he strikes back at you on that front, you withdraw. Strategic withdrawal is just as important in winning a war as any attack or getting some particular pillbox in an area.

And so that kind of thinking is there. And when you start thinking in that area, you soon see that tactics are precisely what we are doing all the time. They are the activities that you engage in day by day. In fact, you do not live anywhere else, and more important you do not die anywhere else than in your tactics. Chances are you will be lucky if you die in a bed since you will be engaged in a tactical activity at the time that your death occurs.

So we are looking for those kinds of tactical things. Now what would that be in terms of the NSV? All of us have been saying that the answer lay in the proposals--the clusters--the thrust that you wrote out of them. What were these proposals saying in terms of the kind of tactical activity that we need to be engaged in and devise? We have in mind that this week we would produce some 15,000 such tactical activities that we could then weld into some kind of a picture, a book or a manual. It would have a 5 x 5 x 5 x 5 x 5 -- where you could organize all those 15,000 activities -- and then somehow next week we can put it into a system that we can begin to work through over the next several years.

My image of a NSV tactic is something like this: it always has to do with gerunds. When you are doing something--some action--the way you describe it is by pointing to it with a gerund. This morning we were eating breakfast, and before that we were worshipping. Those are describing activities we were engaged in. So I have to find some new language here: we have to learn how to "new social vehicling" people. We have to learn how to, in every situation, encounter we have to individually or in groups bring about the new social vehicling that is going on in people. That means a new kind of economic activity in people --and political and

social. How do we get that done? Or re-program it?

I think it first began to break through for me in the research station, which met on Wednesday night as a guild. We did not know what a research guild ought to be, or if there even ever should be a research guild, except that all the other stations were having guilds and we thought that we ought to have a guild too, just to be in common with everyone else. And so we fumbled around trying to find out what a research guild was. Finally one night someone suggested that if we wanted to know what a guild was, we should just be a guild, and should imagine ourselves as back in our local church someplace assigned the global monetary system to build tactics for.

First, we all thought it was ridiculous--how could any local church build a global monetary system? But after we began to talk, what we decided was sure, every local church has to build the global monetary system for its local community. Global monetary systems are not some grandiose thing having to do with money (although hopefully that will happen)--in terms of local tactics it has to do with our family budgets. And for me to deal globally with what it would mean for the whole economic community to be interrelated would begin to open me up. I would also have to deal with my local community, and maybe even with the local banker and people in the community who have industries that are related around the world. You can begin to think of tactics that you could do that would begin to make people more inclusive in those areas of their economic life--decision making and so on.

My favorite one is world government. How can you have world governmenting going on in your family? There is a tactical question for you. It is an extreme example, but one that points concretely and for which, I think, we can devise tactics, so that I can make inclusive decisions on behalf of all men in the midst of my family and community. And so this kind of re-programming of people in terms of the NSV is the arena that tactics deals with.

Now what is a tactic? I looked up what we have had to say about tactics in the past, and jotted down these that you might fool around with as you work in your workshops. They are the is not's and is's. First of all, a tactic is not a principle. One of our principles, I would say, is "All the earth belongs to all the people." Well, nobody ever died his death in "All the earth belongs to all the people." You die your death in getting some local man in a particular time and particular situation to live comprehensively. What would be a tactical activity that would do that principle is more the question.

Secondly, it is not our philosophical insights into the nature of reality, metaphysics or existential philosophy--nobody ever died in tactics there. Maybe some people teach a course in existential philosophy, but in that case their tactical activity would be teaching a course; and they would have to break that down as to how to teach the course.

Also it is not a goal. All the earth belongs to all the people--you might look at that as a goal. But that is not a tactic either.

It is not even your strategic objectives that you are to bring about. In the movement, for example, we have set out to bring about regional institutes that would

be training. When you go looking in most regions for a regional institute you discover that there is no building that a regional institute is in; there is no particular place or time; there might not even be a regional institute. In the next region there might be one, or there may be a course taking place. It is not your strategic objective as such, but it is that which will bring off your strategic objective. And therefore it is usually of short duration.

And a tactic is not something over a long timeline, but of some short duration. Probably it is not even a program. This is one of the struggles in the Local Church Experiment. How is it that the programs that go on in a local church are not your tactics? Nor are you setting up something in addition to those tactics, but tactics are particular things that you might do within the programs.

Say, for example, that want to devise a curriculum. Some of you will probably be working with formal methods. A course for formal methods might be coming up as a tactic. The content of that course would not be a tactic, you would have to have a course on social methods withing that. Your tactic is the particular workshops and problem solving units you set up in order to get social methods taught. And so again, it is those practical tactical steps.

Therefore, a tactic is always a happening. For example, in the broad social arena today, a peace march is a tactic. But what you notice about tactics is that they do not alter society necessarily by what particular activity they are engaged in--a peace march in one sense changes nothing. It does however, alter the mindset of the people. But if you said that your tactic was to alter the mindset of the people against the war, noone would know what you were going to do. Your tactic is the march itself. And that alters the mindset.

Therefore, we never do anything but tactics. In the broad span of the human race, nobody ever did anything but a tactic. The question is what tactics are you going to live in. Going to the bathroom is a tactic. Your strategic objective of that tactic is to live in a particular situation in a particular day. And the overall goal of that is, I suppose, physical survival. But the tactic is going to the bathroom.

So that is what we are out to do, and where we are at this particular moment. 385 proposals have been brought together into 96 clusters from which we have written 96 statements about thrusts. As I was reading through them I was quite excited about how you got hold of the thrust that came out of each cluster. Also, as I read through them, I began to fall into despair when you put into those eight paragraphs what seems to be twenty or more tactics or indications of tactics, which means that for every tactic there may be hundreds of particular tactics you would do. I say that I was in despair not because you should not have done it, but because it indicates how complex this job is.

When you read those eight or ten paragraphs, you are going to find that there are several different directions indicated for any particular thrust. I suspect that you are going to have to find a way of tracing each one of those down until they get to the particular activities and to hold the major ones. Probably where you should begin however, is on that little box called comprehensive practical thrust

underneath the triangle on one of your sheets. I found that was the most help in getting hold of where that thrust was headed. I would like to see 1000 different tactics underneath every one of those, though we probably will not get that many.

In other words, our task is to get from proposal to tactics, with that thrust to help us get started. We now have one link in the bridge across the river, and there will be several others before we can get to tactics. But I do not know how we are going to build the middle one, a NSV tactic, which means that we are going to be in a week of feeling our way. And that means to me that you slow down some.

Eight or nine different clusters are assigned to each ecclesiola. And you ought to put the emphasis on not covering all eight or nine of those, but finding out what a tactic is. That is, if you need to spend all day today on one of those clusters, that would be fine. And then tomorrow, work on another one. In other words, slow it down some, so that while we work on this we can remain conscious of what we are doing. It may be that after we see the results of this afternoon's workshop, we will say that this is the wrong direction, and will back up and move in another direction. You have to be able to be that flexible a body of people. And if you tell us when we are heading in the wrong direction, that will help us to monitor the whole situation.

I think that you are also going to find that you do not have much experience in this dimension. That is, being the NSV is not something that most of us be most of the time. We live our lives going to this meeting and that meeting, operating on a voting method. That is the old social vehicle that you are participating in, which happens most of our lives. It is the old social vehicle that we live in. And so we have a meager experience in the areas of these tactics. That is my first experience.

However, if you have the eyes to see, you can begin to see those tactics everywhere. For example, someone pointed out to me the other day that probably the way that the Order is changing society the most is in our kitchen, because we have certain kinds of buying practices that most institutions would never be caught dead having. In fact, most people come in and think that we are fools, because we are in a different buying pattern than everybody else. They say that we are changing the market patterns in Chicago, mostly through our kitchen.

Take the Democratic convention for example. If you look at that on the surface, it is still operating on a very old social vehicle, with all the old paraphernalia. (I think they did cut out some of it this time.) But if you look behind the scenes, where do the decisions really get made? It is my contention that there is no decision being made today that is not being made on the consensus methodology. The problem is that our present social machinery is not set up that way. And so people are meeting in hotel rooms and various other places where the decision are getting made. They do not vote in those meetings. They never voted yet in a hotel room, I do not think. Our task is looking and being able to see, and coming up with those creative insights about the things that are happening which need to be intensified or accelerated.

So we will be trying to walk the tension between those practical thrusts that

you articulated and some concrete tactics that might be done. We are not yet dealing with movement tactics. That is, do not try to stretch your mind to what we might do next Monday morning. If you come up with some of those, that would be fantastic, but do not press yourself in that direction. Just ask how this would concretely get done in society today. Therefore, again I would suggest you select the one in your list that you can do that with.

The way that these lists are organized, when you get them, you will see numbers down the left hand side of each of the clusters. That is the order they are in by the number of dots in them. And therefore the one at the top of the list is the most important one, and this is the one that I would spend the day on--until I got some clarity on what a tactical action was. In some cases the second one is also a crucial one. In other words, we are beginning to see that some of the clusters are far more powerful and more important than others. I listed six areas (not clusters.) Some of these will have two or three clusters in them. For example, Societal Paradigms and symbols is probably key in all of symbols. There are probably some others there too. We will come to how we value them later, but the one that has the highest valence potential is Social Morality, which has three clusters in it. I noticed that Ecclesiola Q has two of those and Ecclesiola N has one of them. Those are the ones that I will be looking at to see what you come out with in those areas. Formal Methods is another one that has three clusters in it. I am just trying to give you a clue that those are the ones that I suspect we are going to have to spend the most time on, and need the most wisdom on. Community Groupings--two of its poles are clusters: Vocational Organizations and Voluntary Societies. And so it is crucial. Legislative Consensus is also a crucial area.

Well that kind of following our nose, if you will, is going to be the kind of activity that we will be engaged in. And remember one thing. If you can keep what you are searching for in mind, then I think that you will come out with great creations. What are those specific concrete do's that will bring the NSV into happening in the world. What are the NSV do's that we have got to do. You might find a help in going back to some of the documents of last summer. Documents A, B, C, E--those are the ones that are already indicated in the proposals that you can bite on, you can get your teeth around. You might bear in mind that those kind of things will be things that could happen any place in society and not just in a local community. Whatever we come up with this week, it will be the things that we will be doing over the next twenty years and therefore it is crucial to get the job done in order to find out for us where the NSV is going.