

REPORT ON THE WALK I want to sketch in a few of the accomplishments of the Walk and
by Bob Swann the civil disobedience at Portsmouth. This report must necessarily be brief; a complete report would make a small book.

Outreach: Thousands of people were contacted directly through public meetings, on the streets, and informally in their homes when entertaining walkers. There was an average of one public meeting every day of the Walk (in some places, as in Boston, 2 or 3 in one night). These meetings consisted of showing the 11-minute sound film, "Polaris Action" (available upon request), background on CNVA and nonviolence, and excited discussion involving walkers and audience. Attendance averaged between 20 and 60 people, in many cases persons totally new to pacifism.

Special note should be made of the meeting at the University of New Hampshire before an audience of over 150 students and faculty. As result of that meeting a number of students participated in the vigil and walk in Kittery and Portsmouth the following day. Parenthetically it should be noted that as a result of my appearing at this meeting, a local proponent (former FBI agent) of the "Operation Abolition" film "threatened" publicly never again to appear at the University of New Hampshire. Several professors as well as students thanked me for doing them this favor.

Publicity was amazingly good, not only in every city and town through which we walked, including the upper New England area where pacifists were on the front pages for literally 2 weeks straight, but also throughout the nation. One gratifying aspect was the relatively objective or even sympathetic reporting. This was true even in Portsmouth and Dover, where the Navy and Air Force provide 50% of the cash income of the area. A front-page feature column in the Reading, Mass. paper noted that the Walk had "given us something to think about" and that "in this age of conformity it was a pleasure to meet someone who had the courage to be a 'crackpot'." Radio and TV coverage were equally good. Many interviews were held, and we were on Portsmouth radio daily for at least 2 weeks, including an 8-minute recorded statement by Henry Bailey Stevens, 70-year-old member of the Dover Friends Meeting and elder statesman of the U. of New Hampshire, on why he was joining our vigil and walk.

Participation: Starting off with about 75 people at Kittery, the Walk involved over 300 people either walking or providing hospitality through the New England phase; when we reached New York, some 800 other people joined us. This is an intensive experience, and the constant challenge of meeting new people, answering questions, public speaking, etc. develops abilities and sharpens minds very quickly, as well as the demands for meeting nonviolently such situations as having cherry bombs thrown at us.

We stayed in Friends meetinghouses, churches of many denominations, YMCAs, and private homes. Although we were turned down on many requests for hospitality, some ministers were so impressed by the discussions which resulted that several mentioned that for perhaps the first time their congregations had to face the true implications of Christianity. We are most grateful to all those who took us in, fed us, and provided meeting places, as well as to the local "contact persons" who made arrangements.

We made contacts in many colleges and universities, speaking with students at the U. of New Hampshire (where the student who wrote the front page story for the school paper joined us for the vigil and walk, and then brought four others to New York for the wind-up); Tufts, Harvard, Boston U., and Brandeis in the Boston area; Wellesley, Smith, Amherst, Mt. Holyoke farther west; Wesleyan U. in Connecticut.

I want to note one other point: as a result of the solid refusal of the walkers to back down in their intentions of walking and leafleting in Portsmouth, Haverhill, and Monson, the authorities had to change their minds about enforcing local ordinances, and in the case of Portsmouth, admitted publicly that the ordinance was unconstitutional.

Though our bookkeeping is not completed, it appears the Walk cost about \$1000. In view of the results, it seems money well spent. We still have some bills on it to pay, and we have costs of the on-going program, intensified by the momentum of the Walk. We shall most certainly appreciate any contribution you can make at this time.