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Mob Protests Solution to Nothing

THE FIRST amendment to the Constitution forbids Congress to make a law respecting "the right of the people peaceably to assemble."

It doesn't prevent Congress or the states from making and enforcing laws to break up mobs that go beyond being peaceable. This might include any violence, threat of violence, physical interference with rights of others, trespassing or damage to property.

Probably laws already exist to cover these wrongful actions, but they seem to lack effectiveness. The trend toward exercise of pressure by mob tactics seems to be increasing steadily.

A mob may be defined as a large, disorderly crowd, moving to attack or annoy. Congress, legislatures and public officials may deny they give in to such pressures, but the record shows otherwise. A victory by one demonstrative mob encourages others.

When labor unions aren't satisfied with wages, working conditions or

fringe benefits, they may call strikes to enforce their demands. Truck drivers, policemen and firemen have done so recently.

Groups that may feel they are victims of discrimination because of sex, age, color, height, weight or other reason have staged mob scenes. Their demands for "civil rights" often have been violent.

When certain farmers became dissatisfied with prices paid for their commodities, they drove tractors to Washington and interfered with rights of many people who could do nothing about their plight.

Teachers who were apprehensive that legislators would not fulfill their salary demands took time off from teaching to crowd the capitol in a show of strength and obvious threat of reprisals.

Gangs of people who may be genuinely afraid of nuclear power, who might be misinformed, or who could have other motives have intruded on private property to delay or block development of needed resources.

Truck drivers unhappy with availability and prices of fuel chose to blockade the business places of certain suppliers.

When homosexuals in San Francisco didn't like the outcome of the murder trial for one of their number, they started a costly riot.

The Ku Klux Klan has been marching again in Alabama.

The result usually is not negotiation or cooperative effort to solve problems. Frequently, it is a one-sided showdown by those who respond to fluent leaders who may have something to gain from violence.

Today's reasoning apparently goes like this: If you are for something, against anything, or want something, don't bother with debate. Just form a mob and demonstrate!

This procedure might disregard rights of others. It might be uncivilized. It could get someone hurt or killed. But as long as it produces results those involved demand, it will continue.