

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bayard Rustin Residence

other names/site number Apartment 9J, Building 7, Penn South, Mutual Redevelopment Houses

2. Location

street & number 340 West 28th Street

☐ not for publication

city or town New York

☐ vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☒ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Richard Purpoint DBAPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/31/15
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

Bayard Rustin Residence

Name of Property

New York County, New York

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private☐ public-local☐ public-State☐ public-Federal**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)☐ district☐ site☐ structure☐ object**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1 0 buildings0 0 sites0 0 structures0 0 objects1 0 Total**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**0**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concretewalls brick

roof

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Bayard Rustin Residence

Name of Property

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County and State

8 Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☒ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History**Period of Significance**1962-1987**Significant Dates**na**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Bayard Rustin**Cultural Affiliation**na**Architect/Builder**Herman Jessor**Primary location of additional data**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Bayard Rustin Residence

Name of Property

New York County, New York

County and State

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of property** Less than one acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	584630	4511357
	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Easting</i>	<i>Northing</i>
2			

3			
	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Easting</i>	<i>Northing</i>
4			

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Mark Meinke, Consultant (significance), and Kathleen LaFrank, National Register Coordinator (description)organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date September 2015street & number Peebles Island State Park, Box 189 telephone 518-268-2165city or town Waterford state New York zip code 12188**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The nomination encompasses the Bayard Rustin Residence, which is Apartment 9J in Building 7B of the Penn South complex. Because National Register regulations preclude nomination of a portion of a building, the nomination includes Building 7 in its entirety, and the nomination boundary is defined by the sidewalks surrounding it, which define its site with the larger development. Building 7 is part of a ten-building complex built by the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union and the United Housing Foundation and known as the Mutual Redevelopment Houses, Inc. It is commonly known as Penn South. The Penn South complex, completed in 1962-1963 and designed by architect Herman Jessor, has been determined eligible for National Register listing. The complex is located between West 23rd and West 29th Streets and between Eighth and Ninth Avenues in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood. West 25th and West 26th Streets traverse the center of the complex, following the grid, while West 24th and West 28th Streets also bisect the complex, on the south and north ends, but follow a curving path. The incorporation of curved streets within the site plan made it possible to orient all of the building east to west, thus providing for maximum light.¹ Building 7 is located in the north-central part of the campus, south of West 28th Street. It is flanked by recreation areas and garden spaces.

The complex includes five single-core residential buildings with cruciform plans and five double-core buildings, each with two cruciforms. Each of the ten buildings is twenty-two stories tall and nearly identical in design. The complex includes 2,820 units. In addition to the residential towers, the complex also includes low-scale shopping centers, a theater, a power house, recreation facilities, a parking facility, gardens and other open, green spaces. The redevelopment site provided by the city excluded several existing buildings, including a residential building on West 23rd Street, four churches and a school, all of which are within the boundaries of the complex. The site also contains a city playground.

¹ *The Story of the ILGWU Cooperative Houses* (New York: United Housing Federation, n.d.), 4.

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Building 7 is one of the five double-core buildings and features a double cruciform plan. It was constructed of steel-reinforced poured concrete and encased in red brick walls. It is characterized by regular fenestration and a series of recessed and projecting balconies with flat balustrades and slight setbacks at the top of the towers. Windows are metal and of several different types which repeat in regular patterns: main living areas have picture windows flanked by one-over-one double-hung sash; dining areas feature paired or single one-over-one double-hung sash; there are narrower sash in the bathrooms and shorter sash in kitchens and bedrooms. In 1995, windows were replaced with double-panel thermal windows, primarily in the same style as the originals, except for the bathroom windows, where casements were replaced with double-hung sash. Balconies are bordered by aluminum railings and some balconies have been enclosed.

A wide, curving sidewalk leads to the main entrance, which is located on the first floor in the center pavilion of the building, facing West 28th Street. The entrance is sheltered by a broad portico that extends across eight bays and extends out over the wide central bay that contains the door. Entrance is through double glass doors surmounted by a glass transom. The doors are flanked by large, floor-to-ceiling glass panels. Tan colored brick around the entrance provides a contrast to the red brick walls of the building. At each end of the portico the brick is perforated as screening. The entrance leads to two lateral hallways, one to the A side of the building and the other to the B side. Elevator banks are at the end of the halls. The building features plaster walls throughout. Lobby walls have always been concealed by decorative wall coverings. Lobby floors are terrazzo and hallways have painted plaster walls and ceilings. The lobby is furnished with planters, benches and mirrors. These furnishings have been routinely updated.

Building 7 features apartments in the wide center bank of the building flanked by apartments in each of the cruciform sections. Those in the broad center section lack balconies, as do those in the end pavilions (except for the top few floors, which are stepped back. The four pavilions that give the building an "H" shape feature

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balconies for every apartment. The upper floors of those pavilions are also stepped back, similar to the end pavilions. Above the lobby, the two cruciform sections are not connected. Instead, elevators in each of the end sections provide access to cross axial halls that lead to each apartment entrance on their respective sides. Hallways above the lobby have painted plaster walls and ceilings and vinyl flooring. Floorplans were standard but varied based on the size of the apartment. Apartments have hollow core steel entrance doors and plaster walls and ceilings. The only moldings are baseboards.

Rustin Apartment

The Bayard Rustin apartment, 9J, is located in the northeastern corner of the ninth floor. The apartment features a living room, galley kitchen, bathroom and two bedrooms. [see floorplan] It features plaster walls and ceilings, baseboard moldings. parquet floors in the living areas, original small gray and white tiles in the bathroom, and black and white linoleum tile blocks in the kitchen. The linoleum was installed by Rustin. Rustin also put up a thin plywood wall in the kitchen to create a separate dining area.² The kitchen features the original stove. A narrow rectangular deck is located adjacent to the living room. The Rustin apartment retains an outstanding level of integrity and is virtually unchanged since the time of Rustin's residence. The original plan and all finishes to Rustin's period survive. In addition Rustin's partner, Walter Naegle, still resides in Apartment 9J. He has retained many of Rustin's furnishings and historic and contemporary photos can be compared to show the same items.

² Walter Naegle, email message to Mario Mazzoni, 14 December 2015.

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SUMMARY

The Bayard Rustin Residence is significant as the most important resource associated with Bayard Rustin (1912-1987), a person of great importance in American political and social history. Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Rustin lived a peripatetic life as a social activist and organizer, living intermittently in a number of different homes. In 1962, Rustin purchased apartment 9J in Building 7 of the new Penn South Complex in the West Chelsea section of Manhattan. This was his longest and most permanent place of residence as an adult. He lived there from September 11, 1962 until his death in 1987. In 1977, Bayard's partner, Walter Naegle, moved into the apartment; Naegle continues to reside there, preserving the apartment almost exactly as Rustin left it.

Bayard Rustin, a gay African American Quaker, civil rights advocate, proponent of non-violence, and campaigner for social and economic justice, had an impact on many of the nation's social justice achievements since the 1930s. Over his long life, he worked on important campaigns in non-violence, pacifism, civil rights, economic injustice, human rights, and LGBT civil rights. In the course of his quarter-century residence in Penn South, Rustin organized and led the August 28, 1963 March for Jobs and Freedom in Washington DC. He helped create and led for many years the A. Philip Randolph Institute, an organization which became central to creating jobs and justice for trade unionists. He became a restless world traveler for Freedom House, a Human Rights and voting rights advocacy organization, and for the International Rescue Committee, supporting refugee resettlement and support. In the mid-1980s he recognized the struggle for Lesbian and Gay civil rights and lobbied the New York City government to support the lesbian and gay rights bill. Rustin testified at city council meetings against efforts to attach amendments to the bill, writing Mayor Koch that the lesson he had learned in fifty years of fighting for human rights was that "no group is ultimately safe from prejudice, bigotry, and harassment so long as any group is subject to special negative treatment."¹

¹ Michael G. Long, *I Must Resist: Bayard Rustin's Life in Letters* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2012), p.461.

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The fact that he lived as an openly gay man in the 1950s and 60s (and in fact was arrested on a morals charge in 1953) meant that Rustin had to relinquish credit for much of his work and/or forgo leadership roles. Some of the most well-known proponents of non-violence and civil rights, including the Fellowship of Reconciliation, American Friends Service Committee, the Southern Christian Leadership Council, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, at various times shunned him, refused his assistance, or employed him without recognition. These episodes, along with his earlier membership in the Young Communist League, refusal to be drafted into the army during WWII (for which he served a prison sentence), and later willingness to be arrested as part of non-violent civil rights protests (which led to 30 days on a chain gang) testify to his integrity, as well as to his continual outsider status from many of the groups within which he might have found shelter. More than once he stepped aside or worked behind the scenes in order to achieve a major social goal, thus exemplifying the indignities imposed on lesbian and gay Americans in the decades before the Stonewall riots of 1969.

Much of Rustin's work was grounded in the basic Quaker tenets – simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship – that he had learned from his grandmother, Julia Davis Rustin, a devout Quaker. In a 1986 letter replying to essayist Joseph Beam, Rustin wrote

My activism did not spring from my being gay, or, for that matter, from my being black. Rather, it is rooted fundamentally in my Quaker upbringing and the values that were instilled in me by my grandparents who reared me. Those values are based on the concept of a single human family and the belief that all members of that family are equal.... The racial injustice that was present in this country during my youth was a challenge to my belief in the oneness of the human family. It demanded my involvement in the struggle to achieve interracial democracy, but it is very likely that I would have been involved had I been a white person with the same philosophy. Needless to say, I worked side-by-side with many white people who held these same values, some of whom gave as much, if not more, to the struggle than myself.²

² Ibid., p.460.

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“THE PROOF THAT ONE TRULY BELIEVES IS IN ACTION.”

--BAYARD RUSTIN

PACIFISM AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Bayard Rustin was born in 1912 and raised by his grandparents, Janifer and Julia Rustin, in West Chester, Pennsylvania. As a young man, Rustin became a firm believer in pacifism and learned Quaker values. His grandmother's family had lived as free African Americans in Pennsylvanians for several generations and had close relations with Quaker families. His grandfather and uncle had been born into slavery in Charles County, Maryland. The name given to him, Bayard Taylor Rustin, clearly linked him to West Chester Quakers through his namesake, Bayard Taylor, a Quaker diplomat, poet and writer with strong connections to West Chester.

Rustin's first ventures in nonviolent action came while he was still in high school, from which he graduated in 1934, when he led friends and teammates (he was a popular high school track and football athlete) in breaching the segregation of southern Pennsylvania by refusing to sit in the segregated balcony at the cinema and organizing his teammates to insist on integrated housing for African Americans on high school teams and at away games.³ In a speech many years later he recounted one of his high school protests:

I went into the little restaurant next to the Warner Theatre and can you believe it there was absolute consternation. Can you believe it? That was the first time I knew West Chester {PA} had three police cars! ... I purposely got arrested. Then I made an appeal that all the black people, and white people that were decent minded, give ten cents to get me out of jail⁴

³ Daniel Levine, *Bayard Rustin ad the Civil Rights Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), p. 12. Levine records Rustin's resistance to segregated housing for high school athletes at away events. John D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 19, records the many recollections of local West Chester residents after Rustin's death of his refusal to sit in the segregated cinema balcony and his insistence on seeking service in segregated town restaurants. Jervis Anderson, *Bayard Rustin: Troubles I've Seen* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 27 records Rustin's organization of a revolt by the high school's black football players against segregated housing at an away game in Media, PA.

⁴ Bennett Singer and Nancy Kates, Independent Television Service, *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*, 2003, at 0:06:20 to 0:07:06.

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Later, in his career teaching nonviolence and direct action, Rustin declared

We need in every community a group of angelic troublemakers. Our power is in our ability to make things unworkable. The only weapon we have is our bodies, and we need to tuck them in places so wheels don't turn.⁵

In high school, Bayard Rustin was already an "angelic troublemaker."

In college, on scholarship at Wilberforce University in Ohio and at Cheyney State College in West Chester, Rustin continued to delve into nonviolent social protest, whether against the quality of the food at Wilberforce University or other aspects of segregation.⁶ James Dumpson, a fellow student at Cheyney recalled, "At Cheyney [Rustin] was always looking around for social causes in which to involve himself."⁷ He left both schools without a degree but returned to Cheyney in the spring of 1937 for his first training as a peace volunteer in a two-week program run by the American Friends Service Committee, an organization with which he would long be involved.⁸ Rustin was one of 160 college student peace volunteers who trained for two weeks before going to small towns in the north to speak publicly and teach.⁹

That year he moved to New York, living with his Aunt Bessie in Harlem. He worked odd jobs, singing (he was a gifted tenor) and joined the Society of Friends' Fifteenth Street Meeting, formalizing a Quaker connection that he had felt since childhood. He also enrolled at City College of New York, where he became active in the Young Communists League (YCL) because of its opposition to racial injustice. Rustin travelled for the YCL, organizing chapters of the American Student Union.¹⁰ In 1941 he was used to lead a campaign against segregation in the armed forces for YCL, a project which YCL abandoned when Hitler's forces attacked the

⁵ Ibid., at 0:02:30.

⁶ Anderson, p. 35.

⁷ Ibid., p. 39.

⁸ Long, p. 115.

⁹ Levine, p. 15.

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Soviet Union. Rustin's growing disillusionment with the YCL and communism led him to leave the organization. He commented in an October 17, 1943 lecture for the March on Washington Movement that the movement should remain all black and be wary because "good-thinking whites will come to meetings but it will be the Communists that will bore into the movement and control it."¹¹ Rustin's involvement with the Young Communists League would bedevil him politically for years to come.

In 1941, Rustin began an association with two important leaders, A. Philip Randolph and A. J. Muste, who would shape his contributions to the civil rights and pacifist movements over the next three decades. Both also became valued friends and mentors. These contacts also brought him onto the national stage in both pacifism and civil rights advocacy. In the wake of his resignation from the YCL, Rustin first renewed an acquaintance with A. Philip Randolph, who became Rustin's friend and supporter and remained so until Randolph's death in 1979. With Randolph, Rustin would achieve great strides in African American civil rights and campaigns for economic justice. Rustin's renewed acquaintance in June of 1941 involved him in Randolph's 1941 plans to march on Washington in opposition to federal policies that excluded African Americans from defense industry jobs. Rustin joined in eagerly, was assigned to the organization's youth movement, and began organizing march activities.¹² However, the planned march was called off by Randolph when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued an executive order banning discrimination in defense hiring. The cancellation marked the end of Rustin's logistical planning for the march.

Having already been moderately involved in peace work, Rustin moved full time into the pacifist movement in 1941 and began working with his second mentor, A. J. Muste, at the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), one of the nation's leading pacifist organizations. At the September 1941 annual meeting, Muste introduced Rustin

¹⁰ D'Emilio, p. 35.

¹¹ Levine, p. 20. Long, p. 9-10. See also D'Emilio, pp. 34-36 for an account of Rustin's activities in the Young Communist League.

¹² Anderson, pp. 38-39.

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as FOR's secretary for student and general affairs, in tandem with George Houser, secretary for youth affairs, and James Farmer, secretary for race relations. Muste and the three new secretaries were also Gandhians and ardent followers of Shridharani's exposition of Gandhian strategies and nonviolent direct action tactics in *War Without Violence*.¹³ Muste had called Shridharani's work the "most important explication" of Gandhian principles and Rustin himself called it "our gospel, our bible."¹⁴

Over the next thirteen years, Rustin worked for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, speaking across the country and internationally on behalf of pacifism and nonviolent social activism, organizing new pacifist groups and making the case for Gandhian nonviolent social activism. Muste supported Rustin's involvement in racial justice causes as part of his work at FOR and on his national speaking tours, linking pacifist causes with African American civil rights activities.

In 1942 Rustin and Farmer were seconded by Muste to support Randolph's newly planned March on Washington Movement, with which Muste hoped to continue the momentum generated by the march on Washington organizers the previous year. Muste wrote to congratulate Randolph and added that FOR would "be glad to render any help possible in the achievement of your goal."¹⁵ FOR injected Gandhian tactics into the civil rights struggle. In a 1942 report to FOR following a lecture and organizing tour, Rustin wrote "In the face of this tension and conflict, our responsibility is to put the technique of nonviolent direct action into the hands of the black masses ..."¹⁶

¹³ Anderson, pp.69-71. Anderson notes the creation of a study group of Muste, Randolph, and John Haynes Holmes who met to discuss the book.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 69. Levine, pp. 26-27.

¹⁵ Anderson, p. 83.

¹⁶ Long, p. 7, a September 12, 1942 report to the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

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James Farmer, in April 1942, speaking in Columbus OH, called for a Congress of Racially Equality (CORE) to support African American civil rights with pacifist nonviolent methods. Rustin and George Houser, as FOR staffers, were authorized to dedicate their activities to race relations. Rustin, Farmer and Houser worked to establish CORE chapters as well as support for Fellowship of Reconciliation activities.¹⁷

In November 1943, Rustin's work for the Fellowship of Reconciliation and CORE was interrupted when he received a draft notice to report for induction into the army. As a staunch pacifist, he refused to report or conform to the conscription laws. He was subsequently arrested, convicted and sentenced to three years in prison. In his letter to Local Board No. 63, he explained

... The Conscription Act denies brotherhood – the most basic New Testament teaching. Its design and purpose is to set men apart ... that ends justify means that from unfriendly acts a new and friendly world can emerge.¹⁸

He was incarcerated from 1944 to 1946 in federal penitentiaries in Kentucky and Pennsylvania, where he launched civil disobedience campaigns over segregation in the prison facilities. In the segregated prison in Ashland, KY, Rustin led a hunger strike protesting segregation in the prison from shortly after his arrival in early 1944 until his transfer to Lewisburg prison in Pennsylvania in August 1945. While in Ashland, Rustin worked to explain to the warden his concerns and his nonviolent direct action strategies. At Lewisburg, Rustin continued to lead protests against segregation.¹⁹

On release from prison in late 1946, after serving 28 months, Rustin returned to work for the Fellowship of Reconciliation and for CORE as a travelling lecturer and inspirational leader. During Rustin's imprisonment,

¹⁷ Long, p. 8. D'Emilio, pp. 53-56 regarding the fact that "the young crusaders at the center of CORE made nonviolence a spiritual road to follow."

¹⁸ Long, pp. 10-12.

¹⁹ Scott H. Bennett, *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), pp. 124-125.

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FOR's Muste and Farmer had frequently discussed the link between nonviolence and racial justice, a topic that Rustin earnestly pursued on his release. At CORE, George Houser continued nonviolent actions that pressed the segregationist color line across the nation.²⁰ Rustin himself had articulated his understanding of nonviolent direct action to the warden while organizing protests during his Ashland imprisonment for draft resistance:

4. Nonviolent resistance does not mean any one kind of action but a variety of methods in which ends and means are consistent. Thus, nonviolent resistance may first and most effectively be education, or when such an approach fails, direct action.
5. The chief aim of such methods of dealing with social change is to so behave that the attitude of those who believe in a system which creates injustice shall be challenged, and over a period change their feeling, which in turn affects their ideas and their outward behavior. This is often a slow process and requires deft hands and a wide and considerate spirit.²¹

In explaining the performance of nonviolence to those in his audiences and training groups, Rustin maintained

There are three ways to deal with injustice. One is to accept it slavishly, or one can resist it with violence, or one can use nonviolence. The man who believes in nonviolence is prepared to be harmed, to be crushed, but he will never crush others.²²

Muste ensured that Rustin was free to work on civil rights issues as well as pacifist concerns and encouraged him to work with Houser. Together Houser and Rustin travelled the country offering race relations training institutes with a focus on nonviolent activism.

In the late 1940s, CORE planned a campaign of civil disobedience against interstate bus travel in the southern interstate bus system. Named the "Journey of Reconciliation," it was supported in 1947 by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which released Rustin and others to work on the project. The Journey of Reconciliation was co-led by Bayard Rustin and George Houser. Rustin led the working group that planned the action and organized

²⁰ Anderson, pp. 68-69.

²¹ Long, p. 16. From a March 30, 1944 letter to Warden R P Hagerman at Ashland Federal Correctional Institution in Kentucky.

²² Singer and Kates, 0:14:40 to 0:15:07.

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the travel from Washington DC. Rustin and Houser trained sixteen interracial riders in nonviolent resistance before the Journey of Reconciliation set out on April 9th. There were arrests, Rustin's in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, among them. Despite appeals, Rustin was sentenced to thirty days on a North Carolina chain gang, an experience about which he lectured following his release in 1949.

Though the Journey of Reconciliation brought no major victories in the battle against segregation, it did demonstrate the possibility of nonviolent civil disobedience in the South, on which basis much would be achieved in the next two decades. It ensured that nonviolent direct action could be an integral part of the American civil rights struggle.

An April 1948 Fellowship of Reconciliation conference in Chicago planned a revolutionary and disciplined pacifist activity and led to the creation of Peacemakers. Peacemakers was envisioned as a group formed to resist peacetime conscription into the military. Rustin saw Peacemakers as a more aggressive pacifist organization, using extreme nonviolent resistance as a preface to engagement and a recruitment tool. He proposed that "Peacemakers call upon some church and labor leaders etc. to do something *rash* now to try to raise to the surface some Christian, ethical or moral concern." Increasingly he saw racial issues as a conflict in which FOR should be active.²³ Historian and biographer John D'Emilio has noted, "He viewed apostles of nonviolence as roving champions of changes, always searching for the places of friction in society where their message might have the most compelling appeals."²⁴

That same year also found Rustin working closely with A. Philip Randolph's campaign to end segregation in the military by endorsing resistance to national peacetime conscription. Passage of a peacetime conscription law in

²³ Long, pp. 127-129, in a February 2, 1950 letter to A. J. Muste and John D'Emilio pp. 128-129.

²⁴ D'Emilio, page 197.

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June without an end to military discrimination led to pressure from Randolph on President Truman to end discrimination by executive order.²⁵ In support of the campaign, Rustin and Houser organized an independent League for Nonviolent Civil Disobedience to encourage African American resistance to conscription. Rustin postponed a planned trip to India to work on the new project. The league organized protest demonstrations, one of the largest occurring in Harlem in July 1948. Rustin and George Houser drafted memoranda for potential draft resisters, noting in *Memorandum on Penalties Contained in the Draft Law as Applied to Persons Who Are Conscientiously Unwilling to Serve in a Jim Crow Military Program* that

Civil disobedience today is not an easy course, but it is necessary as a means to lead our nation to abandon Jim Crow in military establishments.²⁶

On July 26, 1948 Truman issued an executive order that “there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible ...”²⁷

In the initial uncertainty over implementation, Rustin continued the League for Nonviolent Civil Disobedience’s resistance campaign, at odds with Randolph, and organized continued picketing at Harlem draft registration sites. Arrested in New York and sentenced to 15 days, Rustin was effectively removed from the civil disobedience campaign.²⁸ Nonetheless, the anti-draft campaign had raised important tactical issues regarding compromise and strategy that would inform later campaigns. It had also caused a rift with Randolph that would last several years. Rustin recalled years later

It was nearly three years before I dared to see Mr. Randolph again, after the terrible thing I had done to him ... But I and my colleagues were young and radical in the 1940s.²⁹

²⁵ Levine pp. 56-58.

²⁶ Long, p. 114.

²⁷ Long, p. 115.

²⁸ D’Emilio, pp: 157-160.

²⁹ Anderson, p. 128.

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In October 1948, Rustin left on his postponed trip to India, with stops in Europe en route and on return. It was Rustin's opportunity to study nonviolence and peaceful civil disobedience with the world's leaders in nonviolent strategy and tactics. The American Friends Service Committee pressed for Rustin to be one of the four invited Americans to attend a Gandhian conference on nonviolence near Calcutta and provided much of the funding. In India, Rustin lectured on nonviolence and pacifism but found that pacifism and nonviolence were not fully embraced. He advised his colleagues that

We should reevaluate the Gandhian movement. We have overlooked its negative aspects. It was nonviolent in its means, but essentially violent in its ends, which was nationalism.³⁰

Rustin's desire to prolong his visit to India was supported by others on the scene, including Muriel Lester, a British supporter of Gandhi, who wrote both Muste and others arguing that "it was a perfect example of God's providence" to have him there. A Gandhian movement member in south India also wrote "He can do a job here that no white westerner can do at the moment."³¹ Muste, however, was urging his return. The question was settled when Rustin was called to serve his term on the North Carolinian chain gang in March 1949. Rustin had no choice but to return and serve his sentence. Rustin's twenty-eight days on the North Carolina chain gang was a lesson in brutality, which he related in detail in a lecture at Chapel Hill immediately following his release. The account, which he wrote up and sent to media, prompted a review and reform of practices in the North Carolinian penal system's disciplinary procedures and led to appointment of a civilian watchdog committee. In his published report, *Twenty-Two Days on a Chain Gang* (1949), he wrote

Such unquestioning obedience may appear to be good and logical in theory, but in experience authoritarianism destroys the inner resourcefulness, creativity and responsibility of the prisoner and creates, in wardens and prisoners alike, an attitude that life is cheap... We must bear in mind that one result of the authoritarian system is to develop in the prisoners

³⁰ D'Emilio, pp. 166-167.

³¹ Anderson, pp. 132-133.

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many of the same attitudes they themselves decry in the officials.³²

He added that

To me the most degrading condition of the job was the feeling that 'I am not a person; I am a thing to be used.' The men who worked us had the same attitude toward us as toward the tools we used.³³

With the advent of military events in Korea, Rustin returned to the road for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, lecturing on pacifism and training others in nonviolence. In the gloomy atmosphere of the period, he particularly resented the capitulations of some pacifists to the anti-Communist rhetoric of the times. In a November 1950 memorandum sent to Fellowship of Reconciliation staffers, Rustin noted that

... the members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation have never, according to my view been more confused than they are at present. I find any number of liberals in the FOR ... who are going along with the present action in Korea and who, indeed, are in several places offering the most valuable support to the Administration's program ...³⁴

In 1952, journeying to attend the World Conference of Friends in Oxford, England, Rustin added a trip to Africa, his first experience in reaching out to anticolonial movements on the continent with a message of nonviolent resistance. Much of his August 1952 African visit was spent in Ghana and Nigeria, with Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe, in discussion of anticolonial movements and nonviolent resistance. His fall speaking tour for AFSC would include a number of Africa-connected titles. In late 1952 and early 1953, Rustin worked within FOR to build support for a "servants of Africa" program, an outreach to Africa and training in nonviolence. The plan was approved and Rustin looked forward to returning to Africa to help in the decolonization efforts there. In a November 30, 1952 letter to A.J. Muste, Rustin wrote

³² Devon W. Carbado and Donald Weise, eds., *Time on Two Crosses: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2003), pp: 46-47.

³³ Ibid., p. 51.

³⁴ Long, pp. 134-135.

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I trust that you will relay to the Council the deep sense of a calling I have to the issue of African freedom ... There is to my mind nothing that will help the cause of nonviolence in this country so much as our helping to raise in Africa further examples of the power of nonviolence against groups that are more formidable than the British were in India.³⁵

The Africa project and Rustin's career in the Fellowship of Reconciliation were abruptly curtailed by his arrest in Pasadena, CA, on a charge of lewd vagrancy and his conviction and sentence to sixty days in jail. In the climate of postwar homophobia, Rustin's 1953 conviction for homosexual activity was close to a career-ender and, like his earlier flirtation with communism, would haunt his career for years to come. The immediate outcome was his resignation from the Fellowship of Reconciliation and a total breach of his relationship with A J Muste. In announcing FOR's termination of Rustin, Muste wrote,

To our great sorrow Bayard Rustin was convicted on a 'morals charge' (homosexual) and sentenced to 60 days in the Los Angeles County Jail on January 23, 1953. As of that date, and at his own suggestion, his service as an FOR staff member terminated³⁶

Muste also noted in his statement that the AFSC announced the cancellation of Rustin's speaking engagements on its behalf. The perception that a leading proponent of nonviolent action was a "sexual pervert" dogged his relationship with the civil rights movement till his death, ensuring that Rustin would be, as the title of Nancy Kates and Bennet Singer's 2003 film biography *Brother Outsider* described him, an activist on the fringe of recognition. As historian John D'Emilio has commented,

When measured against the norms of the era, [Rustin] appeared rather comfortable with his sexuality and unusually open about it. But his chosen profession left little room for constructing a gay-centered personal life.³⁷

³⁵ Long, p.144.

³⁶ Long, p. 151-152.

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FROM PACIFISM TO CIVIL RIGHTS

In the spring of 1953, his sentence in California served, Rustin returned to New York. By the autumn, he had found a place with fellow radical pacifists in the War Resisters League (WRL). Rustin already served on WRL's board and many of his fellow draft objectors from World War II days were involved with the organization. Rustin had tendered his resignation to the WRL board after the Pasadena conviction, but the league turned it down. The league hired him in August to help plan its annual meeting. That autumn, a divided board hired Rustin as its program director; within a year he was executive secretary and began a twelve-year career with WRL.

The year 1955 saw the War Resisters League and Rustin involved in resistance to federal civil defense programs and the creation of *Liberation*, a new magazine of leftist independents on whose board Rustin served and for which he would write. New York pacifists resisted the government's planned June 15 Operation Alert practice for a nuclear attack. Twenty-nine pacifists, including Rustin, demonstrated in City Hall Park, while the rest of the country was in hiding. They were all arrested. Rustin sought amnesty for those arrested as well as all violators of the Selective Service Act. In late 1955, WRL and Rustin organized a December 10th demonstration at the White House in support of a Christmas amnesty. The demonstration was ignored.³⁸

Liberation appeared in April 1956 with strong financial backing from the WRL under Bayard Rustin.³⁹ A.J. Muste, renewing his relationship with Rustin, was a major proponent of the magazine and joined its editorial committee.⁴⁰ The magazine became a proponent of nonviolence, democratic participation and a forum for transmitting ideas and experience to the emerging New Left of the 1960s. It became a platform not only for

³⁷ D'Emilio, p. 197.

³⁸ Long, 162-163.

³⁹ D'Emilio, pp. 213-215.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 216.

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Dorothy Day and A.J. Muste but for emerging critics such as Paul Goodman and Michael Harrington. Rustin raised funds, wrote for the magazine, and shaped its outreach. It also provided him an opportunity to work again with Muste. He, Muste, David Dellinger, and WRL board chair Roy Finch met each week to discuss the next issue of *Liberation*.

Another opportunity to express his personal and political philosophy came in the mid-1950s, when Rustin joined an American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) project to write a principled dissent from current American policy. The group included, besides Rustin, Steve Cary of AFSC as chair, Norman Whitney, who had long been a spiritual mentor to Rustin, Robert Gilmore, the New York AFSC secretary, Jim Bristol an activist Quaker, and A.J. Muste.⁴¹ Together they drafted AFSC's dynamic *Speak Truth to Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence* manifesto, addressing the liability of a permanent military and advocating a nonviolent approach to international affairs and political struggle. Rustin's role in the creation was hidden by his omission from the list of authors at his own request, because of sensitivities over his homosexuality.⁴² However, the fourth section of the manifesto, *An Alternative to Violence*, is markedly Rustinian and presents practical applications of nonviolent response to injustice:

At its heart, it is the effort to maintain unity among men. It seeks to knit the break in the sense of community whose fracture is both a cause and a result of human conflict. It relies upon love rather than hate, and though it involves a willingness to accept rather than inflict suffering, it is neither passive nor cowardly. It offers a way of meeting evil without relying on the ability to cause pain to the human being through whom evil is expressed. It seeks to change the attitude of the opponent rather than to force his submission through violence. It is, in short, the practical effort to overcome evil with good ... It appears to us tragic that even though the present violent method of resolving conflict is widely acknowledged to be bankrupt, so many of the most creative people of our time still direct their total energies to the preparation

⁴¹ In 2010, the American Friends Service Committee added a note to *Speak Truth to Power* acknowledging Rustin's role in the creation of the manifesto.

⁴² Long, p. 160-161. In a December 17, 1954 letter to Steve Cary Rustin wrote "I feel that my being listed might very well lead to some new attack ..."

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of weapons for war and the development of policies of intimidation.⁴³

Participating in the drafting of the manifesto helped repair Rustin's relations with the AFSC, which had turned away from him following the Pasadena conviction. As Rustin noted in his December 17, 1954 letter to Steve Cary, who chaired the work group, "It was a wonderful opportunity to work with such a tremendous group."⁴⁴ In Rustin's centennial year, 2012, the AFSC issued a new edition of *Speak Truth to Power* that included an explanation of Rustin's role and why his name had been omitted. But it was the War Resisters League which continued to be his 'home' over the next ten years.

Following Randolph's 1948 campaign to integrate the military, Rustin had been only marginally involved in efforts to promote racial justice. He followed, of course, developments in the South, particularly in the wake of the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education decision.⁴⁵ He noted with concern the spread of the white Citizens' Council movement in the south, whose members he termed "the KKK in gray flannel suits."⁴⁶

In late 1955, he joined with Ella Baker and Stanley Levinson, with support from Randolph, to create a new group, "In Friendship," to support Southern black activists economically. In Friendship launched in 1956 and raised funds for activists but also for those who suffered because of their activism. These included farmers whose credit had been cut off and those in need of emergency funds for food and clothing. From offices donated by Stanley Levinson on East 57th Street in New York, Rustin and his two staff members organized

⁴³ American Friends Service Committee, *Speak Truth to Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence* (Philadelphia, n.p., 1955), pp. 35-36.

⁴⁴ Long, p. 161. Also, D'Emilio pp. 219-222.

⁴⁵ D'Emilio, pp. 223-224.

⁴⁶ D'Emilio, p. 224. See also Rustin's 1956 article "New South ... Old Politics" in Carbado and Weise where he notes. "The White Citizens Council—the KKK in gray flannel suits—are well aware that organized labor is part and parcel of the racial and economic progressive forces they loathe.", p. 99.

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operations. The new organization drew support and funding from labor organizations such as the State, County and Municipal Workers Union, the American Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Labor Committee.⁴⁷

As it happened, concurrent with the formation of In Friendship came a major racial justice challenge in Montgomery, where a citywide bus boycott had led to the bombing of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s home and the home of E. D. Nixon. The Fellowship of Reconciliation and the War Resisters League both sought to support the black bus boycott in Montgomery. A meeting of Randolph, Farmer, Bill Worthy, and Jerry Wurf, a union leader, looked to send a leader well-experienced with nonviolent techniques to support the boycott. The choice was Bayard Rustin.⁴⁸ James Farmer recalled that at the meeting

We decided that somebody should be sent by this group down to Montgomery. Somebody who had more experience with nonviolent technique. We decided by consensus that Bayard should be sent.⁴⁹

Rustin arrived on February 21st, the day leaders of the bus boycott were indicted by a grand jury. Among his first actions were drafting speaking points on nonviolence and organizing a startling (to white supremacists) mass surrender of those indicted. The journey to Montgomery brought Rustin together with the third man who would prove influential in Rustin's social justice career and life, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Within days of his arrival, Rustin began meeting with Dr. King and other leaders. In those initial meetings, Rustin and King and other local leaders discussed nonviolent direct action and the meaning and theology of nonviolence.⁵⁰ In his Montgomery diary Rustin recorded that a meeting of the Montgomery Improvement Association approved three recommendations:

1. The movement will always be called a nonviolent protest rather than a boycott in
2. order to keep its fundamental character uppermost.

⁴⁷ D'Emilio, pp. 224-226. Levine, pp. 84, 87. Anderson, pp. 194-195.

⁴⁸ Long, pp. 168-173.

⁴⁹ D'Emilio, p.227. Levine, pp. 78-79.

⁵⁰ Levine, p. 79.

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3. A pin should be designed for all those who do not ride the buses to wear as a symbol of unity, encouragement and mutual support.
4. The slogan for the movement will be "Victory Without Violence."⁵¹

From Montgomery, Rustin moved to Birmingham, where he met other African American civil rights leaders. When King travelled to New York in April 1956, Rustin arranged that he meet with Randolph, Muste and Farmer. As FOR had done in earlier years, WRL gave Rustin a two-month leave to work on supporting the protests and organizations in Alabama. Rustin was back in the center of racial equality and nonviolent organizing. In his articles "Fear in the Delta" and "New South ... Old Politics" in 1956, Rustin documented the climate of fear and repression in Alabama and Mississippi, remarking that "Few areas in the world are witnessing such a drastic and far-reaching transformation as is under way in the South today."⁵²

Working from New York but travelling frequently to the South, particularly Alabama, Rustin marshalled resources and funds to support the Southern black boycotts and nonviolent resistance. Through In Fellowship and other connections in the labor movement, funds began to move to support the Montgomery Improvement Association. One of the first to contribute was New York's United Packinghouse Workers.⁵³ In a February 1956 letter to Arthur Bowen and Ralph Gia (of WRL), Rustin remarked,

How complicated things become in the heat of a struggle – searching for nonviolent answers in a society that accepts so many assumptions of violence presents problems indeed.⁵⁴

He called on pacifist organizations to fund the work of nonviolence in the South. To Bowen and Gia he wrote that "This is an effort to avoid war = race war -- but war nonetheless." In a March 1956 memo detailing discussions with Dr. King, Rustin outlined the three services that

⁵¹ Carbado and Weise, pp. 58-65.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 66-101.

⁵³ Levine, p. 84

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those of us who believe in nonviolence can offer. They are:

1. Suggestions and plans for nonviolent education functionally applied to the bus protest.
2. Techniques for fortifying the will to resist Montgomery by nonviolent means.
3. Overall education to spread the ideas of nonviolent resistance.⁵⁵

The In Friendship group organized a fundraising concert and *Liberation* put together a special issue commemorating the anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott. In the autumn of 1956, In Friendship began organizing the fundraising concert in New York at which Dr., King's wife, Coretta, would perform. A December 1956 institute on nonviolence in Alabama drew 3,000 participants, among them ministers from elsewhere in the South, and demonstrated the enthusiasm for nonviolent action. Ella Baker and Rustin, co-founders of In Friendship, began thinking about a mass movement to come out of the Alabama protests. Both sought ways to organize and channel grassroots support. Baker recalled, "We began to talk about the need for developing in the South a mass force that would somewhat become a counterbalance, let's call it, to the NAACP."⁵⁶

The times seemed appropriate for a national movement to emerge from the boycott. From his first meetings with King, Rustin had raised the prospect of a permanent organization.⁵⁷ Dr. King issued a call for a January 1957 meeting in Atlanta at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Rustin prepared background for King, who then asked Rustin to help prepare for the upcoming Atlanta meeting. On December 23, 1956, Rustin forwarded three papers (including *The Negroes Struggle for Freedom* and *Memo*) reviewed with Stanley Levinson, to King. The sixth point in Rustin's *Memo* advocated

The next stage [in the racial justice movement] must see the development of a strategy group of national leaders who will be able to guide spontaneous manifestations into

⁵⁴ Long, pp. 168-173.

⁵⁵ Long, p. 175

⁵⁶ D'Emilio, p. 245.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

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organized channels. They will be able to analyze where concentration of effort will be fruitful and, while not discouraging any effort, be mobile enough to throw resources and support to areas where a breakthrough is achievable ...⁵⁸

At a preparatory meeting in Baltimore, King charged Rustin with preparing the working papers for the Atlanta meeting. Rustin's work sketched the historical and economic context, assessed ways of managing the white power structure, and focused in depth on the importance of a mass movement in the South to knit together the isolated instances of racial equality protests. He wrote that

Historically, the major emphasis in our struggle to obtain civil rights has been legal and legislative....The center of gravity has shifted from the courts to community action ... Law will be very important in this process but something new must be added ... We must recognize in this new period that direct action is our most potent political weapon.⁵⁹

At the Atlanta meeting some sixty ministers approved the project. A follow-up meeting in New Orleans furthered the project. The year 1957 saw the birth of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Rustin continued his lecture tours for the War Resisters League and the AFSC during this period of emerging racial justice actions. He explained to varied audiences the challenges and progress in the South and reinforced the relevance of nonviolent resistance. In his 1957 article, *Even In the Face of Death*, Rustin recounted the January 1957 meeting that created the SCLC:

The final meeting of the conference may go down in history as one of the most important meetings that have taken place in the United States. Sixty beleaguered Negro leaders from across the South voted to establish a permanent southern Negro Leaders Conference on Nonviolent Integration. This was the beginning of a region-wide nonviolent resistance campaign against all segregation.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Long, p. 182.

⁵⁹ D'Emilio, p. 248.

⁶⁰ Carbado and Weise, pp. 102-107.

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In the peace movement in 1957, growing antipathy to nuclear testing was galvanizing the pacifist community, and WRL, of which Rustin was a leader, worked with other organizations in planning a campaign against such testing. An April 1957 meeting of peace organizations in Philadelphia resolved to campaign against nuclear testing. Rustin and WRL worked with representatives from Catholic Worker, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and AFSC on applying nonviolent direct action in this campaign.

The organization that emerged was the Committee for Nonviolent Action (CNVA). Rustin served on the executive committee of the newly formed Committee for Nonviolent Action (CNVA), which coordinated antinuclear testing demonstrations. CNVA began organizing protests at testing sites in order to disrupt future tests at sites in the US and other territories. One group headed for the Pacific. Rustin was part of the European group headed for Moscow. In April 1958, he also joined the British antinuclear movement's march to Aldermaston, a nuclear weapons facility. Rustin's Moscow-bound group got only as far as Helsinki, where it became clear that the Soviets would not grant entry visas.⁶¹ CNVA members also tried to shut down US sites, including construction of the first intercontinental ballistic missile site in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Other site protests followed, precipitating dissension in the peace movement over tactics.

Rustin continued to be active in Southern racial justice issues during this period. King and the SCLC called on Rustin to organize a Prayer Pilgrimage to Washington to press for federal support of African American civil rights. Planned for May 1957 at the Lincoln Memorial, the pilgrimage's organization was once again the primary responsibility of Bayard Rustin, aided by Ella Baker and Stanley Levinson. In a 1957 memo (otherwise undated but likely after April) signed by Rustin, Baker and Levinson, moral and spiritual, organizational, political, and psychological goals of the Prayer Pilgrimage were listed and the event was tied to the early 1957

⁶¹ D'Emilio, 99. 255-261.

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conference that established SCLC and to President Eisenhower's "failure to come South to speak out for law and order."⁶²

Supported by the NAACP and In Friendship, the project drew strong support nationally. Rustin worked out of NAACP's New York office preparing for the event, which was directed at the Congress, where legislation was pending. The Prayer Pilgrimage drew a crowd estimated at 15,000 to 25,000.⁶³ Organizing the event at the memorial was, in effect, practice for the much more remarkable event in the same location six years later.

Rustin's dual involvements with WRL and the peace movement on the one hand and with SCLC and the racial justice movement on the other hand helped revive the peace movement. The SCLC's adoption of nonviolent resistance brought renewed attention to pacifist organizations, particularly the War Resisters League, which Rustin continued to lead. But Rustin's involvement with SCLC (he was put on its payroll) meant that he was less available to WRL.

The Prayer Pilgrimage gave SCLC new prominence nationally, as it coordinated involvement by longstanding civil rights organizations as well as in Southern communities.⁶⁴ It also involved the SCLC in the national debate over civil rights legislation in Congress.⁶⁵ In 1958, SCLC launched a Crusade for Citizenship, essentially a voting registration drive, led by Ella Baker because many of the ministers in SCLC objected to Rustin's sexuality and radical views.⁶⁶ Rustin worked on the project in the autumn, designing training along the lines of earlier race relations institutes he and George Houser had led years earlier. The crusade was not a success but it did spur subsequent voting registration drives.

⁶² Long, p 190.

⁶³ D'Emilio, pp. 262-265.

⁶⁴ D'Emilio, pp. 262-263. The Prayer Pilgrimage proved a great success and drew favorable press coverage.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.269.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 270.

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In September, at Rustin's urging, A. Philip Randolph called for a youth rally against segregationist actions in the South, particularly as recently seen in Little Rock, and asked Rustin to organize it. Rustin worked from the New York offices of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters preparing for a September 19th kickoff in Harlem. The October 1958 youth rally was so successful that there were calls for a second in April 1959. WRL grudgingly released Rustin again to help with the spring march, which galvanized labor and student organizations across the country to support the second march.⁶⁷ Rustin convened a meeting of major labor leaders (including the Transport Workers Union and the Central Labor Council) to support the second youth march and won the support of the National Student Association for circulation of petitions. The second march drew busloads (more than three hundred) of students and youth to Washington, where Harry Belafonte, Tom Mboya of Kenya, and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed the students. A delegation of students was received at the White House by presidential staffers.⁶⁸

The peace movement drew Rustin back again in 1959, as France announced its intention to test nuclear weapons in Africa. The French developed a test site deep in the Algerian desert. British antinuclear activists proposed an international direct action against the tests which drew the attention of the Committee on Nonviolent Action. Initial African support and a breakdown in organization in the UK led Rustin to take a hand when he arrived in London in October 1959 to support the project. As he wrote to colleague Rachelle Horowitz in October 1959,

I have been here almost two weeks and have been fruitfully engaged in ... trying to bring this Sahara Project off. It has not been easy as the whole affair of protesting the announced test ban has got ... involved in the struggle between ... forces for power in the cabinet.⁶⁹

He managed to secure the support of African leaders in London and set about organizing the group's protest march through the Sahara to the testing site.⁷⁰ Travelling to Ghana, Rustin used the opportunity to visit again

⁶⁷ D'Emilio, p. 274.

⁶⁸ Levine, pp. 112-114

⁶⁹ Long, p. 215.

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with Kwame Nkrumah, whom he had last seen in 1952. He travelled the country speaking to groups and meeting the leaders of the anticolonial movement. Rustin saw the support of Africans against nuclear testing as a major opportunity for the peace movement. Writing on November 5, 1959 to George Willoughby of CNVA, Rustin insisted that "You must bear in mind that this [the African campaign] is one of the most potentially important projects that the pacifist movement has been associated with."⁷¹ On the scene in Africa, he foresaw that a longer stay in Africa might be necessary to help the fledgling peace movement there.

At home, though, there was consternation over the prospect of Rustin's continued absence. Randolph and King both awaited his return. A November 11, 1959 cable to Rustin in Africa expressed feelings in the United States

Randolph expressed firm view civil rights struggle paramount ... Your indispensable role in domestic actions requires return which should not be regarded as desertion of responsibilities but assuming more effective role for both. Randolph ... maintained view that only correct conclusion was necessity to be back by the end of the year. A J Muste holds that Africa project potentially more important, capable of major contribution to civil rights struggle here as well as struggle against new nuclear colonialism and war which is primary War Resisters concern.⁷²

In the meantime Rustin continued fundraising and media outreach for the Sahara project. In December the international peace brigade set out from Ghana and was turned back three times. Though they didn't reach the test site, the enormous publicity the Sahara project garnered underpinned a growing international protest movement against atmospheric testing.⁷³

⁷⁰ Anderson, pp. 219-221.

⁷¹ Long., p. 222.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 223-224.

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PURGING RUSTIN

On returning to the United States, Rustin was confronted with dual projects: a position on King's and the SCLC's staff and also preparation for protests at the 1960 political conventions. At a meeting of the SCLC leadership board in late 1959, Dr. King had proposed, and the board accepted, inviting Rustin to become associate director and administrative assistant to Dr. King. King felt that Rustin's administrative help would free King to devote more time to building the SCLC into a mass organization.⁷⁴

Shortly after his January 1960 return from Africa, Rustin began work on the project to organize demonstrations at both party conventions that summer. He immediately began assembling a staff and organizing for the conventions.⁷⁵ The planning of demonstrations for the 1960 Republican and Democratic conventions was originally an A. Philip Randolph project. The need to organize was one of the reasons that Randolph had awaited Rustin's return from abroad.

National events in 1960 interrupted planning as a sit-in movement exploded across the South, with youth taking their lessons from nonviolent action training and from the examples of Montgomery's bus boycott and other voting rights actions. Nonviolent students were demanding service and challenging segregationist regulations at lunch counters and public facilities across the South. At the same time, in Alabama, Dr. King was indicted on tax evasion and perjury charges.

Rustin formed the Committee to Defend Martin Luther King and drew on his network of activists to raise funds for King's defense and for the SCLC. Enlisting Harry Belafonte to organize support in the entertainment industry, Rustin saw several fundraising events planned. On March 29, 1960, the Committee to Defend Martin

⁷³ Levine, pp. 16-118.

⁷⁴ Anderson, pp. 222,223.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 225.

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Luther King ran a full page ad, written by Lorraine Hansberry, in the *New York Times*. The ad stated “The defense of Martin Luther King, spiritual leader of the student sit-in movement, clearly therefore, is an integral part of the total struggle for freedom in the South.”⁷⁶ The ad precipitated libel suits from Alabama against not only the committee but also against leaders of the SCLC. This considerably agitated sentiment against Rustin, even though it was recognized that he had not written the ad.

The campaign to support King’s defense drew widespread support. In an April 1960 fundraising letter, Rustin wrote:

... as the student sit-ins and voting crusade struggle on with grim determination, a vicious attack was directed at Martin Luther King Jr. With calculation the State of Alabama indicted the leader of the historic Montgomery Bus Protest on obviously false charges of perjury.

What is the purpose of this sinister indictment? It seeks to destroy leaders indigenous to the South to whom the students are looking for support and guidance, and to cripple the voting crusade now under way.⁷⁷

An April conference in Raleigh, NC, sponsored by the SCLC and organized by Ella Baker, drew Southern student activists together and led to organization of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a newly militant Southern civil rights movement. While working on the plans for the 1960 political conventions, Rustin also began helping SNCC plan its own convention strategies.

In June 1960, in the midst of fundraising for the King defense and planning for the convention demonstrations, Rustin himself became an issue between Dr. King, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell. Initially Powell charged that King was “under undue influences ever since Bayard Rustin ...

⁷⁶ D’Emilio, p. 292.

⁷⁷ Long, pp. 232-233. The letter appealed for support and was signed by Ralph Abernathy, Bernard Lee, Nat King Cole, Harry Belafonte, A Philip Randolph, and Fred Shuttlesworth.

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went to Alabama to help in the bus boycott.”⁷⁸ Powell criticized King and Randolph for not consulting Wilkins of the NAACP before a June 9th press conference announcing planned demonstrations at the Republican and Democratic party conventions. Powell ratcheted up the pressure on King in mid-summer by quietly threatening to charge that King and Rustin were having a homosexual affair.

Pressure against Rustin had been building internally within the SCLC since January 1960, and King had appointed an internal committee. As historian Taylor Branch describes it,

King finally appointed an SCLC committee under Rev. Thomas Kilgore – Ella Baker’s pastor and one of King’s preaching mentors in New York – and Kilgore, with King’s blessing, informed Rustin of the committee’s conclusion that Rustin should break off contact with King ... [Rustin] resigned from the Committee to Defend Martin Luther King. Fundraising for the *New York Times* libel cases fell off drastically as a result.⁷⁹

Rustin resigned from his SCLC position and abandoned the 1960 convention project and all of his racial justice activities. In a February 6, 1961 letter to *Harper’s Magazine*, responding to an article by James Baldwin on Martin Luther King Jr. in which Baldwin had addressed Rustin’s resignation from the SCLC, Rustin quoted from his resignation statement:

Congressman Powell has suggested that I am an obstacle to his giving full, enthusiastic support to Dr. King. I want now to remove that obstacle. I have resigned as Dr. King’s special assistant and severed relations with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Mr. Powell has stated that the only thing that can stop the forward march of the Negro is a ‘lack of unity, or division, within his ranks.’

I sincerely hope that in the light of my resignation Mr. Powell will now see his way clear to lend his special talents to the building of such a movement and to the support of Dr. King and the other leaders in the South who are on the firing line.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Quoted in Long, p. 237.

⁷⁹ Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Touchstone - Simon and Schuster, 1989), p. 329.

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The purge from the civil rights movement was devastating to Rustin personally; however, it also weakened fundraising for Dr. King's defense and the execution of the political conventions campaign.⁸¹ Subsequently, Rustin's relations with Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Council went into hiatus for the next three years. Rustin's chief aides --Rachelle Horowitz, Tom Kahn, and Norman Hill—moved on to other positions.⁸² Rustin's invitation to address the October 1960 SNCC conference in Atlanta was withdrawn after the AFL-CIO threatened to withdraw funding if Rustin appeared.⁸³

Rustin was again the "brother outsider" in the movement for racial justice. Bayard Rustin had never been closeted about his same sex attractions, although he believed it a personal matter. He was at pains to explain, when asked, that he did not blame Dr. King for his purge from SCLC and the racial justice movement. In a 1987 interview with Redvers Jeanmarie, Rustin explained that

My being gay was not a problem for Dr. King but a problem for the movement ... I told Dr. King that if advisors closest to him felt I was a burden, then rather than put him in a position that he had to say leave, I would go.⁸⁴

Writing years later, in answer to Joseph Beam's invitation to contribute to *In The Life: A Black Gay Anthology*, Rustin wrote on April 21, 1986

I did not 'come out of the closet' voluntarily—circumstances forced me out. While I have no problem with being publicly identified as a homosexual, it would be dishonest of me to present myself as one who was in the forefront of the struggle for gay rights ... While I support full equality, under law, for homosexuals, I fundamentally consider sexual orientation to be a private matter.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Long, p. 243.

⁸¹ D'Emilio, pp. 296-300. See also Anderson pp. 236-237 and Long, pp: 237 -241 for details of the Rustin purge.

⁸² Anderson, p. 231

⁸³ Branch, p. 345. Indeed the Rustin issue became a major internal issue at SNCC's conference.

⁸⁴ Carbado and Weise, pp. 292-293.

⁸⁵ Long, p. 460.

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In an interview with Peg Byron for *Southern Exposure* magazine the following year, in 1987, Rustin went farther, arguing that being open was better:

... I want as many young gay people to declare themselves. Although it's going to make problems, those problems are not so dangerous as the problems of lying to yourself, to your friends, and missing many opportunities.⁸⁶

Following Rustin's resignation from SCLC and racial justice activities, he continued as a leader at the War Resisters League and in the pacifist movement. Rustin resumed participating in Committee on Nonviolent Action (CNVA) meetings and prepared to attend the War Resisters International meeting in India in 1961. With his knowledge of the international peace movement from earlier travels to India, Europe and Africa, Rustin confronted the problems inherent in building an international movement that would bridge the divergent national views. As he wrote to A.J. Muste in a letter May 10, 1961,

We made the tragic mistake (in all goodwill) of promising to clear the [CNVA] leaflet with all European communities. Of course, we really had no choice, since they insisted.⁸⁷

Norman Whitney, one of his early mentors in the pacifist community, and others embraced Rustin as a speaker for the new umbrella organization for peace and internationalist groups, Turn Toward Peace (TTP). Whitney noted, "I know few speakers whose depth of conviction, breadth of experience and penetrating understanding match Bayard's. Moreover, he is not only a clear and competent speaker, easy to listen to, he reaches his hearers at spiritual levels." Rustin served on TTP's steering committee⁸⁸

The conference in India brought out resentments over colonialism and economic domination that were met by European distrust of Indian militarism. For the first time, the War Resisters International embraced nonviolence

⁸⁶ Peg Byron, "No More Back Seat," *Southern Exposure* Volume 16, number 3 (Fall 1988) pp. 45-46.

⁸⁷ Long, p. 245.

⁸⁸ Long, pp. 247-248.

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for social justice as well as peace; Asian and African delegates were preoccupied with using nonviolence in opposition to imperialism.⁸⁹

On the return home, transiting through London, Rustin was drafted into representing CNVA in organizing the San Francisco-to-Moscow peace walk. CNVA leaders had a European representative, April Carter, to handle European logistics but needed another CNVA representative to “be in Europe to work for a protracted period with April Carter.” Rustin was chosen for the task.⁹⁰ Unfortunately, Rustin’s involvement in the peace walk was truncated by visa issues in the United Kingdom that necessitated his departure before the march was launched.

Rustin’s time in Europe had revived his interest in African decolonization and bringing nonviolent action to that struggle. He saw parallels between the American peace struggle and the anticolonial liberation movements. As he wrote in his 1961 African proposal, Rustin felt that

... there was a very close connection between the anti-war movement in the West and the African and Asian uncommitted nations who stood for neutralism and independence in the Cold War.⁹¹

With support from Julius Nyerere in Tanganyika, he proposed a nonviolent training center in Dar es-Salaam. The War Resisters League endorsed the plan, and Rustin was on his way by February to Addis Ababa for the Pan African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa conference, where he presented the case for nonviolent action. In the US between international commitments, Rustin continued to fundraise for WRL and to speak around the country, frequently on college campuses.

⁸⁹ D’Emilio, pp. 304-305.

⁹⁰ D’Emilio, p. 307.

⁹¹ D’Emilio, p. 317.

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Still sidelined from much of the US civil rights movement following the purge in the summer of 1960, Rustin maintained relationships as best he could, particularly with youth and SNCC. SNCC's New York office was then hosted in space at the War Resisters League offices, where Bayard Rustin had his office. In 1961 and 1962 he engaged in a series of public debates with Malcolm X in New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC that drew large audiences and kept Rustin in the civil rights headlines if not the spotlights.⁹²

Most importantly, he continued to be in close contact with A. Philip Randolph. A December 1962 visit to Randolph turned to discussion of the upcoming Emancipation Proclamation centennial and then to the possibility of a major march on Washington. He recalled that he was "... deeply involved emotionally. ... I knew [Randolph] always had a hankering for a march and my emotional commitment was ... to bring about what had always been one of his dreams."⁹³

Early in 1963, with Tom Kahn, Rachelle Horowitz and Norman Hill, Rustin began outlining plans for a march that would target economics as well as civil rights. They suggested that a two-day event in June should be linked with the centennial of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. Plans initially called for a Friday of lobbying Congress "to flood all congressmen with a staggered series of labor, church, civil rights delegations from their own states" and a delegation to the White House followed by a Saturday "with the two-fold purpose of projecting our concrete 'Emancipation Program' on the nation and of reporting to the assemblage the response of the President and Congress to the action of the previous day."⁹⁴ The point of the march and lobbying effort was to combat "fundamental economic inequality along racial lines" and call for action by the President and Congress.⁹⁵

⁹² D'Emilio, p. 324; Anderson, p.237.

⁹³ D'Emilio, p. 327.

⁹⁴ Long, p. 257.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

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As discussions progressed, Rustin's connections with SNCC and CORE brought them on board for the march on Washington. Randolph's Negro American Labor Council, formed in 1960 to work against discrimination in the labor movement, signed on as the first national organization in support of the march. This was a position other national organizations, such as the NAACP, could not afford to ignore. At a March 1963 institute on nonviolence for 50 key SCLC leaders, led by Rustin, A.J. Muste and Glen Smiley, they built further support for the proposed march. However by May, when Randolph announced a march, the NAACP was still not on board and the SCLC remained undecided.⁹⁶

But then Bull Connor and the televised police repression of protests in Birmingham horrified the nation and ignited support for the march. King was now ready for a mass mobilization. In a June 1, 1963 conference call with Stanley Levinson and Clarence Jones to discuss President Kennedy's refusal to meet with him and to discuss the recent events in the South, King said "We are on a breakthrough. We need a mass protest."⁹⁷ The Kennedy administration's proposed civil rights legislation, announced June 11th, provided yet another reason for a public showing. Planning of broad policy was put in the hands of A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, Jim Farmer, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis, collectively known as the "Group of Six."

By July 2nd, the march still did not have a director to organize it. Rustin was the obvious choice, but some civil rights leaders opposed a role for him. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP informed Rustin beforehand that he would oppose naming him director of the march. Rep. John Lewis recalls

There was a discussion about whether Bayard Rustin should be the director of the march. And there was a caucus that took place between James Farmer, Dr. King, and me, because two of the so-called Big Six, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young, thought that because of Rustin's sexual orientation, members of the Senate, especially Southerners would try to smear the march. We caucused and we came to a conclusion ... we would select A. Philip Randolph and let

⁹⁶ Anderson, pp. 241-243.

⁹⁷ Branch, p. 816.

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Mr. Randolph select his own deputy. We all knew that he would select Bayard Rustin because they were that close.⁹⁸

Randolph did take on the official role himself and then deputized Rustin to assist him. Rustin took official charge of the mass protest he had proposed the previous December. In New York, Rustin worked from offices at 170 West 130th Street in Harlem donated by the Friendship Baptist Church, as well as from his home at 340 West 28th Street in the Penn South complex. Several workers at the march's national office in New York also resided in Penn South, including Eleanor Holmes (now Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton), Rachelle Horowitz, and sisters Joyce and Dorie Ladner, so the day's work would often spill over into evening meetings at Rustin's home.⁹⁹ As the credibility of the civil rights movement became identified with the prospects for the march, the participating organizations worked harder for it.

Randolph and Rustin saw the march as a demand for economic justice as well as civil rights, as noted in the draft plans drawn up by Rustin, Kahn, Horowitz and Hill in late 1962. This was recognized in the name of the action, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.¹⁰⁰ By drawing in labor and religious leaders, the scope broadened and the acerbity of demands ameliorated. Confronting establishment fears of violence during the march, Rustin created a force of out of uniformed black officers from East Coast cities to serve as march marshals and police the march. Hundreds volunteered. Similarly Rustin organized a massive clean-up crew to leave the Mall and the Memorial as clean as they had found it.

In Congress, Senator Strom Thurmond attacked the march and the civil rights movement. On August 2nd and 13th, Thurmond railed about communist influence in the projected march, including references to Rustin's radical involvement. Thurmond placed negative information about Rustin in circulation. He put into the

⁹⁸ Long, p. 261.

⁹⁹ Communication from Walter Naegle, Rustin's heir and partner, September 14, 2015.

¹⁰⁰ Long, pp. 254-258.

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Congressional Record materials about Rustin's 1953 Pasadena arrest and conviction two weeks before the date of the march.¹⁰¹ Contrary to Thurmond's expectations, the attack by the white supremacist galvanized the senior leadership of the march. At a press conference in New York on August 16th, A. Philip Randolph spoke for the march organizers in saying

I am sure that I speak for the combined Negro leadership voicing my complete confidence in Bayard Rustin's character ... I am dismayed that there are in this country men who, wrapping themselves in the mantle of Christian morality, would mutilate the most elementary conceptions of human decency, privacy, and humility in order to persecute other men.¹⁰²

Rustin himself wrote to the press on August 14th, that

I am not the first of my race to be falsely attacked by spokesmen of the Confederacy. But even from them a minimal affection for the facts should be expected.¹⁰³

Roy Wilkins and Dr. King rallied to Rustin's defense, which quelled the opposition.¹⁰⁴

The morning of the march, up at dawn, Norman Hill and Rachelle Horowitz watched as Rustin was questioned by a journalist on the Mall who, seeing so few people, wondered if everything was going all right. Pulling a pocket watch and a piece of paper from his pocket, he looked at both of them and turned to the reporter and said everything was on schedule. The piece of paper was blank.¹⁰⁵ As history has shown, the day went exceedingly well and the numbers attending met or exceeded the organizers' fondest dreams. City police put attendance at 250,000 people. A week after the event, *Life Magazine* profiled Randolph and Rustin on the magazine's cover. More importantly, the march showed the strength of mass nonviolent protest and underscored the black civil rights movement's determination to demand and receive redress. As A. Philip Randolph declared in the keynote address,

¹⁰¹ D'Emilio, pp. 346-350.

¹⁰² Long, p. 267. D'Emilio, p. 349. Levine, p. 142.

¹⁰³ Long, pp. 264-266.

¹⁰⁴ Long, p. 263.

¹⁰⁵ D'Emilio, p. 354. Anderson, p. 255.

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We are the advance guard of a massive moral revolution for jobs and freedom ... But this civil rights demonstration is not confined to the Negro; nor is it confined to civil rights; for our white allies know that they cannot be free while we are not ... Those who deplore our militancy, who exhort patience in the name of a false peace, are in fact supporting segregation and exploitation.¹⁰⁶

For Rustin, on the stage at the Lincoln Memorial, it seemed that “the day belonged to him as much as it did to King. A decade earlier, Rustin had been unemployed and shunned, a convicted “sex offender” fresh out of jail ... He would never return to the shadows, not after this day.”¹⁰⁷

Though many consider the 1963 March on Washington to be Rustin’s principal achievement, his career did not end on August 29, 1963. When he returned home to Apt. 9J at 340 West 28th Street in New York (where the FBI began tapping his phones on November 15, 1963) there was more to do.¹⁰⁸ Rustin urged the leaders of the March on Washington to maintain the organization, arguing, particularly in the wake of the September Birmingham church bombing,

The dissolution of the movement can injure the morale at a critical stage in the civil rights revolution. ... Continuation of the movement can provide us with the moral and material strength to meet the current counter offensive.¹⁰⁹

Despite his momentous achievement in organizing the march, Rustin still did not have a secure position in the civil rights movement, nor a ‘bully pulpit’ from which to advocate. The continuing March on Washington organization, without continuing support from the civil rights movement, was scheduled to wind up at the end of the year, despite the ongoing bombings in Birmingham.

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, p. 257.

¹⁰⁷ Jerald Poldair, *Bayard Rustin: American Dreamer* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2009), p. 66.

¹⁰⁸ D’Emilio, p. 365. See also Long, p. 279-280 for J. Edgar Hoover’s October 28, 1963 letter to AG Robert Kennedy requesting a phone tap on Rustin’s phone.

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In early 1964, yet another controversy scuttled prospects for a New York position for Rustin with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, this time over his and Randolph's February 1964 meeting with a peace group at the Soviet Embassy. FBI reports led to print media coverage of the meeting at the Soviet Embassy to the UN and undermined what support there was within SCLC for a staff position.¹¹⁰ SCLC did give Rustin a position on Dr. King's Research Committee, but it was not a leadership position.

As a campaign for pressing desegregation in the New York City schools progressed in early 1964, Rustin joined the effort of the grassroots coalition of community organizers that were working with NAACP and CORE for a February 3rd boycott of the city schools. He put his logistical and organizing abilities at the service of the boycott. Rustin proposed alternative "freedom schools" for the children not attending on that day, but the relatively new United Federation of Teachers declined to cooperate. The boycott was inconclusive in its results and the coalition of concerned groups did not hold. Competing demands of labor and civil rights undermined the protest, demonstrating again the importance of building firm coalitions in support of campaigns.

In the mid-1960s, Rustin's attention was drawn to President Lyndon Johnson's commitment to marshalling civil rights legislation through a recalcitrant Congress and to his attention to economic issues. As Rustin replied by letter October 13, 1964 to questions from Jack Heyman about his support for Johnson who was expanding the Vietnam intervention, he explained he would

... vote for Johnson not because he is perfect, but because he is for civil rights, Medicare, and the poverty program, and because he is for progress. ... I, secondly, want Johnson to know that the Negroes, liberals, intellectuals, students and the labor movement are giving him his majority—for I want him to be more dependent on us.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ D'Emilio, p.361.

¹¹⁰ D'Emilio, p. 370-371.

¹¹¹ Long, p. 297-298. See also D'Emilio, pp. 376-379 for discussion of Rustin's views of Johnson and his commitment to civil rights.

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Rustin became more deeply involved in Democratic Party politics as the decade wore on. In the controversy over seating of a dissident Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) delegation to the Democratic Party Convention in Atlantic City in place of the white segregationist delegation, Rustin ultimately supported Johnson's plan to admit a token two MFDP members as part of the state delegation (in the expectation that the white supremacists would walk out if required to take a loyalty oath and if Negroes were seated with them).¹¹² Other civil rights leaders were appalled at Rustin's support and at a stormy meeting at Atlantic City's Union Temple Baptist Church he was publicly denounced as a traitor by one of the SNCC members for arguing that Negroes needed allies and that pressing the MFDP claim wasn't going to help.¹¹³

NEW VISIONS AND BROADER MISSIONS

Further underscoring the growing differences between Rustin and his colleagues at CORE, SNCC, and SCLC over his growing vision of a pragmatic politics of coalition building to tackle issues of economic as well as racial justice, Rustin published an articulate and prescient account of his evolving philosophy in an article in *Commentary* in February 1965 entitled "From Protest to Politics: The future of the Civil Rights Movement." Rustin paid tribute to the period from 1954 to 1964 as "the period in which the legal foundations of racism in America were destroyed" and in which direct action tactics were instrumental. But he saw a growing need to address issues of economic inequality,

The very decade which has witnessed the decline of legal Jim Crow has also seen the rise of *de facto* segregation in our most fundamental socioeconomic institutions. More Negroes are unemployed today than in 1954, and the unemployment gap between the races is wider. The median income of Negroes has dropped from 57 percent to 54 percent of that of whites ... These are the facts of life which generate frustration in the Negro community and challenge the civil rights movement.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Levine, pp. 166-168.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 168.

¹¹⁴ Carbado and Weise, p. 118.

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He saw the civil rights movement “compelled to expand its vision beyond race relations to economic relations, including the role of education ...”¹¹⁵

Outlining the interrelated nature of problems, Rustin underscored the important role of government, and therefore politics, in moving those solutions forward. He noted that in Mississippi, protest was moving toward political action.

A conscious bid for political power is being made, and in the course of that effort a tactical shift is being effected: direct-action techniques are being subordinated to a strategy calling for the building of community institutions or power bases... What began as a protest movement is being challenged to translate itself into a political movement.¹¹⁶

It was a struggle that he termed ‘revolutionary’ in its emphasis on transforming social, political, and economic institutions. Rustin asserted that Negroes could not do this alone.

Neither [the civil rights movement] nor the country’s twenty million black people can win political power alone. We need allies. The future of the Negro struggle depends on whether the contradictions of this society can be resolved by a coalition of progressive forces which becomes the effective political majority in the United States ... Negroes, trade unionists, liberals, and religious groups.¹¹⁷

He firmly believed that the civil rights movement awaited transformation into a political force:

The civil rights movement is evolving from a protest movement into a full-fledged *social movement*—an evolution calling its very name into question. ... I believe that the Negro’s struggle for equality in America is essentially revolutionary. ... The revolutionary character of the Negro’s struggle is manifest in the fact that this struggle may have done more to democratize life for whites than for Negroes. ... the term ‘revolutionary,’ as I am using it, does not connote violence; it refers to the qualitative transformation of fundamental institutions, more or less rapidly, to the point where the

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 116-129.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 117.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 125.

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social and economic structure which they comprised can no longer be said to be the same.¹¹⁸

But the transformation could not be carried out by the Negro alone. Rustin argued that in arriving at political decisions, numbers and organizations are key. Therefore, the transforming civil rights movement must seek allies and build coalitions.

There are those who argue that a coalition strategy would force the Negro to surrender his political independence to white liberals, that he would be neutralized, deprived of his cutting edge, absorbed into the Establishment. ... the Negro vote will grow in importance in the coming years. ... But we must remember that the effectiveness of a swing vote depends solely on other votes. It derives its power from them. In that sense, it can never be independent, but must opt for one candidate or the other, even if by default. Thus coalitions are inescapable, however tentative they may be.¹¹⁹

Still without a platform to articulate his evolving philosophy, it became important for Rustin to find a new leadership role. With support from Randolph and from the labor movement, the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI) was created in March 1965 with Bayard Rustin at its helm. The AFL-CIO was among major contributors to APRI. APRI was created to continue the struggle for social, political and economic justice for all working Americans. APRI was envisioned as an organization of black trade unionists to fight for racial equality and economic justice. APRI would be Rustin's institutional home until the end of his life. Rustin started at a modest salary of \$10,000 at APRI's first office at 217 West 125th Street in New York, the offices of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

As antiwar sentiment grew among leftists in the US, Rustin found himself somewhat estranged from the peace movement. He resigned from the War Resisters League following the founding of APRI and dropped out of the Committee for Non-Violent Action.¹²⁰ He did maintain his ties with Turn Toward Peace and the World

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 121-125.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 125-126.

¹²⁰ Anderson, p. 291-293.

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Without War Council. For a time he continued with the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) but leaned towards the moderate pacifist groups. In a letter to the *New York Times* in 1967, he wrote that no effective peace movement could “win influence with the American people, which becomes publicly identified with groups that want not peace but a Viet Cong victory.”¹²¹

Staughton Lynd, a prominent opponent of the Vietnam War and former colleague wrote Rustin directly accusing him of apostasy:

Why Bayard? You must know in your heart that your position betrays the essential moralism which you have taught myself and others over the years. The lesson of your apostasy on Vietnam appears to be that the gains for the American Negroes that you advise them to seek through coalition politics within the Democratic Party come only at a price.”¹²²

In the wake of a stinging follow-up article by Lynd attacking him in the June 1965 issue of *Liberation*, he severed his ties to the magazine, writing to A.J. Muste in November 1965, that “I reluctantly feel that the only responsible thing for me to do now is to resign from the editorial board.”¹²³

Rustin concentrated his initial work at APRI on linking civil rights and economic justice, particularly with support for Johnson’s War on Poverty. As he had noted in his February article in *Commentary*, economic justice could not be separated from the advancement of civil rights. In a June 1965 address at Howard University, President Johnson linked racial justice to an expansive agenda like the one that Rustin was advocating for the civil rights movement; Johnson pledged that “we will increase, and we will accelerate, and we will broaden this attack” on “inherited gateless poverty.”¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid., p 293.

¹²² Long, pp. 301-302, letter of Staughton Lynd to Bayard Rustin, April 19, 1965.

¹²³ D’Emilio, p. 416.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 417.

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As Johnson planned a major White House conference for the autumn, particularly in the wake of disturbances in Watts in Los Angeles, Rustin became deeply involved in shaping the direction of that conference and in urging civil rights organizations to take it seriously. Johnson had named A Philip Randolph honorary chairman of the conference and Randolph delegated Rustin as his representative. Rustin wrote to the civil rights organizations in October “that the success or failure of the conference will depend on the attention and work expended by the major civil rights organizations.”¹²⁵

The planning did not go well, due to participants’ expectations being at odds and an absence of concrete proposals. It did provide Rustin with an opportunity to raise APRI’s proposed Freedom Budget, a plan to greatly expand the War on Poverty by committing \$100 billion over ten years to economic justice issues. The actual conference did focus on issues of economic security and development and brought together some 2,000 participants: civil rights leaders as well as business, government, labor, higher education, foundations, and religious organizations.

The civil rights scene veered towards issues of black power, such as James Meredith’s June 1966 March Against Fear in Mississippi, interrupted when he was shot, but continued as a massive unifying march of civil rights organizations unfolded in Mississippi. It was in the last days of the march that Stokely Carmichael introduced the slogan and concept “Black Power!” SNCC and CORE turned more confrontational and isolationist. As other organizations backed away from the march, King invited Rustin to get involved, but Rustin preferred to concentrate on APRI’s Freedom Budget in 1966. On a conference call with King and his advisers, Rustin said “it might degenerate into a black nationalist thing.”¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 422.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 427.

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By the end of the summer, Rustin had more than 600 endorsements of the plan, including those of labor leaders and activist liberal organizations, evocative of the Negro-labor-liberal alliance he sought to build. The Freedom budget was formally unveiled in October 1966 at a press conference in Harlem. Initially well-received, it ran afoul of antiwar sentiments because it found defense spending to be a side issue. In a letter to Irving Howe, Rustin did assert that "I believe further that the Freedom Budget is the first major domestic program to present a meaningful alternative to expanded and increased defense spending."¹²⁷ He and Randolph fervently believed that payment for the war should not fall on the poor, as he wrote to sociologist Herbert Gans in late 1966:

Mr. Randolph and I emphasized that we believe the poor should not pay for the war when we spoke before the Ribicoff Subcommittee.¹²⁸

The Freedom Budget, announced to much approbation, did not fare well. Within a year the crumbling of the liberal coalition undermined it. By late 1967, pre-occupation with the war and an increasingly strong turn towards conservative, and Republican, solutions further undermined the budget's prospects. As the war came to dominate domestic politics, the civil rights movement and liberals were focusing on other issues. Foreign policy issues came to divide Americans in new and disturbing ways. Rustin's strategy of building a new coalition became the victim of these unforeseen challenges. If Rustin and Randolph's strategy was not wholly unsuccessful, they did redirect much civil rights focus to economic issues. As John D'Emilio noted,

The mainstream civil rights movement did come to see its core mission as including more than a commitment to legal equality ... Minimum wage legislation, protecting the right of workers to bargain collectively and to strike when necessary, expanding access to welfare for those who could not work, and campaigning for full employment ... came to be the agenda of organizations like the NAACP, the National Urban League and the Leadership Council on Civil Rights.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Long, p. 322.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 323.

¹²⁹ D'Emilio, p. 345.

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Rustin's relationship with King endured, though he did not endorse King's public antiwar stance. In 1967, as King planned the Poor People's Campaign, in which King appeared to move toward the coalition politics Rustin advocated, Rustin offered his help.¹³⁰ He drafted a memorandum which he presented to King's Research Committee on January 29, 1968 in which he tried to more narrowly focus the aims of the campaign and in which he warned that massive disruption could lead to backlash:

A failure to achieve some major victories in the nation's capital at this time will, I believe, cause frustration nationally. Thus, demands should be broad enough to insure some of them being won soon. Given the mood in congress, given the increasing backlash across the nation, given the fact that this is an election year, and given the high visibility of a protest movement in the nation's capital, I feel that any effort to disrupt transportation, government buildings, etc., can only lead in this atmosphere to further backlash and repression.¹³¹

The murder of Dr. King in Memphis in April 1968 stunned the racial and social justice communities, setting back planning for the Poor People's Campaign. Rustin flew to Memphis to lead the second march there, which King had planned to lead. As planning for the Poor People's Campaign faltered, Ralph Abernathy, who had succeeded Dr. King, turned to Rustin for help with organizing the planned Solidarity Day at the end of May (rescheduled for June 19th).

Rustin took over organizational details and began setting plans in motion. On May 24, 1968 he issued a press release announcing that "I have assumed the task of national coordinator for the forthcoming Washington Mobilization in support of SCLC's Poor People's Campaign."¹³² In early June he issued a Call to Americans of Goodwill to Join a National Mobilization in Support of the Poor People's Campaign. The anti-Rustin faction of

¹³⁰ Anderson, pp. 305-311.

¹³¹ Long, pp. 341-343.

¹³² Ibid., p. 347-348.

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the SCLC resisted Rustin's plans and caused his withdrawal from the campaign after only three weeks, on June 8th. The Poor People's Campaign descended into a disarray in which Rustin had no hand.¹³³

In the fall of 1968, long simmering disputes within the New York City school system and with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) came to a head over transfer of white teachers out of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville experimental community-controlled district. Community control issues had arisen out of the longstanding segregation of the school system.¹³⁴ As the school year opened, the UFT went on strike over issues of due process for teachers transferred out of the district. The largely white teachers union became a target of racial rivalry.

Rustin and APRI warned that the decentralization of control should not be allowed to entrench segregation. Community control could be an innovation strengthening democratic control or it could be a Trojan horse for separation and stratification. Rustin supported due process for the teachers and warned against community control becoming a means of opposing racial justice. Publicly he framed the strike in terms of collective bargaining rights and due process. In an October 9, 1968 letter to his friend Bob Currin, Rustin wrote

I think that democratic rights, due process, defined and well-established procedures are crucial to Negro advancement in this country. A minority can only be protected by legal safeguards. ... I am very disturbed by the deterioration of democratic principles among our young Negroes, and quite frankly don't know what to do about it.¹³⁵

Rustin's position was attacked by a variety of his leftist colleagues. One letter (Thelma Griffith to Bayard Rustin) pointedly reminded him that "you were black before you were a trade unionist," while others used more

¹³³ D'Emilio, pp. 463-465.

¹³⁴ Levine, pp. 207-2215.

¹³⁵ Long, pp. 354-355.

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inflamed language including the term “house nigger.”¹³⁶ The polarizing effect of the strike lingered on into the new year.

Nixon’s advent in 1969 marked an end to much of the liberal and leftist coalition of the 1950s and 1960s. Rustin was still the “brother outsider” only more so. The strategies of coalition building and the move from protest to a political movement that he had championed in the middle of the decade lost ground as Republicans and the forces of conservatism advanced. Just as he had opposed in 1968 the tendencies towards separatism offered by community control of the schools, so Rustin opposed the growing popularity of black separatism and of black studies. In his 1969 article on *The Myth of Black Studies*, he closed by stressing

I want to conclude by emphasizing that I am opposed to any program in Black Studies that separates the contribution of black men from the study of American history and society. Racist textbooks and historians have played this game too long for black people to add to the damage that has already been done. The magnificent contribution of black people to America must be recognized and recorded, not only by black people, but also by whites who can benefit at least as much from such knowledge.¹³⁷

He characterized black separatism as a form of escape and withdrawal from a world with which its adherents would rather not have to deal. Writing in 1970 on *The Failure of Black Separatism*, he remarked “... the failure of America to respond to the demands of Negroes has fostered in the minds of the latter a sense of futility and has thus seemed to legitimize a strategy of withdrawal and violence. ... Such actions constitute a politics of escape rooted in hopelessness and further reinforced by government inaction. ... ordinary Negroes will be the victims of its powerlessness to work any genuine change in their condition.”¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Anderson, pp. 331-332; D’Emilio, pp. 470.

¹³⁷ Carbado and Weise, pp. 214-216.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 217-221.

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In October 1971, Rustin suffered a heart attack which sidelined him for the rest of the year. Returning to APRI in early 1972, he relinquished leadership of the A. Philip Randolph Institute to Norman Hill. He agreed to serve as chairman, a ceremonial title, of the Social Democrats USA, following a split in the Socialist Party in 1972. In the 1970s Rustin turned more and more to issues of international human rights. Walter Naegle, Rustin's partner and heir, observed that

In the last years of his life he was returning to where he had started: the belief that we are all members of one human family.¹³⁹

Rustin's humanitarian concerns, already well demonstrated in his African journeys, were turning still more internationalist. Rustin championed the Jewish community in the Soviet Union. In 1966 he had chaired the Committee on the Rights of Soviet Jewry in New York and presided at the first hearing on the plight of Jews. As Moshe Decter, a convener of the committee remarked, "Bayard moved from the far left to somewhere else and that somewhere else is not easy to define ... He remained a social democrat but it didn't matter to him what labels were. He was sensible to all the party lines."¹⁴⁰

In 1970, Rustin and APRI invited prominent African Americans to join in a newspaper advertisement supporting the dispatch of US arms to Israel. Two years later, he was the sole African American leader to attend a memorial service for the victims of the 1972 Munich attack on Israeli athletes. He similarly chaired the Committee on Conscience of the Holocaust Memorial Council. His support of the Jewish community was in keeping with the breadth of his concern and in many ways reflected his Quaker upbringing and the Quaker injunction to see that of God in everyone. In a 1969 letter to Maryann Greenstone, who had suggested Rustin underestimated anti-Semitism in the African American community, he wrote

My best friends, closest associates, and colleagues-in-arms have been beaten and assassinated.

¹³⁹ Singer and Kates, 1:18:47.

¹⁴⁰ Anderson, p. 326.

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Yet, to remain human and to fulfill my commitment to a just society, I must continue to fight for the liberation of all men. There will be times when each of us will have doubts. But I trust that neither of us will desert our great cause.”¹⁴¹

The Jewish community recognized his support, even creating a scholarship in his name at Hebrew University in 1976.

From the early 1970s, Rustin became a roving ambassador for the Freedom House, an organization created in 1941 to support democratic elections and human rights. He also became a strong supporter and advocate of refugee rights through the International Rescue Committee (IRC), similarly established in the 1940s. Rustin became vice chairman of the International Rescue Committee. The IRC’s original work had been with Jewish refugees, a cause with which Rustin was already identified. Rustin became an advocate for Southeast Asian refugees, Ugandan refugees, and refugees in East Asia and Central Asia. Following the US exit from Southeast Asia, Rustin made four trips to the refugee camps in Thailand and returned to lobby for greater and greater acceptance of refugees into the US. He managed to enlist the AFL-CIO in support of his resettlement projects.

For Freedom House, of which he chaired the Executive Committee, Rustin served as an election observer, initially in the Dominican Republic, but subsequently in Zimbabwe, El Salvador, Lebanon, South Africa, and Barbados. In 1981, Rustin and Charles Bloomstein visited Poland to advise the Solidarity movement on democratic nonviolent resistance. For Freedom House, Rustin visited South Africa three times between 1983 and 1986. He resisted calls for complete sanctions against South Africa for fear that they would devastate the economy to such a degree that they would paralyze moves toward a non-racial democracy.

Writing in November 1983 to Rep. Steven Solarz following a trip to South Africa, Rustin reported that

¹⁴¹ Long, p.361.

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All of the liberal and progressive elements with whom we met saw the effort to strengthen the Sullivan Principles [six guidelines for the equal treatment of black workers in South Africa] as a positive step. Recognizing that fundamental change must ultimately come from within the South African community, they questioned the effect that the principles or, for that matter, any outside pressure could have. Nevertheless, they saw the value in strengthening and implementing the Sullivan Principles, particularly if they were made mandatory, were more stringently monitored, and provided for sanctions on those not abiding by them.¹⁴²

Project South Africa, which Rustin designed, was aimed at creating financial support for South African grassroots social organizations that would provide education in democratic decision-making processes.¹⁴³ As Rustin saw it,

The fundamental issue is democracy. You could destroy apartheid without achieving democracy. Whenever it comes to the question of human rights, democracy is the place to begin.¹⁴⁴

Rustin's involvement with labor issues and his championship of the working man's rights and due process, which had landed him in controversy over the UFT strike in the late sixties, brought him one of his final arrests (he himself counted a career of 24 arrests), when he supported striking Yale clerical workers in September 1984. Seeking answers, he wrote to the Yale administration, which had recently conferred on him an honorary degree. He directed his letter to Bart Giamatti, president of Yale, with six questions regarding the strike, noting that

It would be very helpful if you could take the time to provide me with answers to these questions. I can then decide whether the union is justified in the charges it makes ...¹⁴⁵

Receiving no answer, he joined a silent protest on October 26, 1984.

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 440-441.

¹⁴³ Levine, pp.242-243.

¹⁴⁴ Anderson, p. 326.

¹⁴⁵ Long, pp.. 446-447

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In the mid-1980s, Rustin, never a closeted gay man, became increasingly involved with gay community issues, particularly as AIDS began to devastate the gay male community. Having seen his own career stymied and attacked at times because of his homosexuality, he was acutely aware of the effects of homophobia. Rustin's partner, Walter Naegle, whom he had met in 1977, attuned Rustin to the nuances of the LGBTQ political and social landscape. In 1985 and 1986, Rustin lobbied Mayor Ed Koch of New York and the city council to support the lesbian and gay rights bill. Rustin testified at city council meetings against efforts to attach amendments to the bill, writing Mayor Koch that the lesson he had learned in fifty years of fighting for human rights was that "no group is ultimately safe from prejudice, bigotry, and harassment so long as any group is subject to special negative treatment."¹⁴⁶

Indeed, Rustin granted several interviews to gay historians and publications in which he discussed his own homosexuality and the plight of homosexuals in a hostile and polarized society. It was clear to Rustin that homosexuals had become the new focus of oppression in America, in the same way that African Americans had been. He ended a 1987 interview with the magazine *Open Hands* with the statement that "... gay men and lesbians have now become the barometer and the litmus test of human rights attitudes and social change."¹⁴⁷

In July 1987, Rustin and Naegle left on what would be Rustin's last mission for Freedom House. With Bruce McColm of Freedom House they journeyed to Haiti to study prospects for democratic elections in that country. Naegle had accompanied Rustin on earlier journeys to South Africa and India. The prospects for democratic elections were dim, they found, and the country's poverty was appalling.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.461.

¹⁴⁷ Carbado and Weise, p. 291.

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Returning to New York, Rustin fell ill with what appeared to be an infection acquired in Haiti but which proved to be a perforated appendix. Admitted to Lenox Hill Hospital, doctors performed emergency surgery on Friday, August 21st. Over the weekend Naegle spent most of his time at the hospital. On the 23rd, Rustin's condition worsened and Naegle was recalled to the hospital. Late in the evening of the same day, Rustin went into cardiac arrest and he died shortly after midnight on August 24, 1987.

ASSESSING RUSTIN

The first biography of Bayard Rustin didn't appear until a decade after his passing. Though those who lived through the struggles for racial and social justice of the 1940s, 50s, 60s, and 70s certainly knew Rustin, his significance and contributions were not academically considered until the early years of this century in connection with the centennial of his birth in 2012 and the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 2013. At present there are four book length biographies of Rustin: by Anderson (1997), Levine (2000), D'Emilio (2003), Podair (2009) and the biographical film *Brother Outsider* (2003).

As historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. wrote in 2013,

If you had been a bus captain *en route* to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August 1963, you would have known who its organizing genius was, and you wouldn't have been surprised to see his picture on the cover of *Life* magazine a week later. Yet of all the leaders of the civil rights movement, Bayard Rustin lived and worked in the deepest shadows, not because he was a closeted gay man but because he wasn't trying to hide who he was. That, combined with his former ties to the Communist Party, was considered to be a liability.

Still, whatever his detractors said, there would always be that perfect day of the march, that beautiful, concentrated expression of Rustin's decades of commitment to vociferous, but always nonviolent, protest. It was, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said, the "greatest demonstration for freedom" in American history. And it is why, on this 50th anniversary [of the 1963 March] I ask that if you teach children one new name from the heroes of black

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history, please let it be Bayard Rustin.¹⁴⁸

President Barack Obama, in awarding the Medal of Freedom to Bayard Rustin (posthumously) on August 8, 2013, remarked

Bayard Rustin was an unyielding activist for civil rights, dignity, and equality for all. An advisor to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., he promoted nonviolent resistance, participated in one of the first Freedom Rides, organized the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and fought tirelessly for marginalized communities at home and abroad. As an openly gay African American, Mr. Rustin stood at the intersection of several of the fights for equal rights.”¹⁴⁹

In its coverage of Rustin beginning with wiretapping at his West 28th street residence, the FBI paid inadvertent tribute to Rustin in an internal memo in 1963:

Rustin is a very competent individual who is widely known in the rights field. He is personally familiar with numerous individuals with communist backgrounds. As one of Martin Luther King’s closest advisers, he is in a position to wield considerable influence on King’s activities.¹⁵⁰

John D’Emilio, author of a major biography of Rustin and a historian of the LGBTQ experience, wrote

[Rustin] deserves a place in our national memory as one of the key figures of his time. More than anyone else, Rustin brought the message and methods of Gandhi to the United States. He insinuated nonviolence into the heart of the black freedom struggle. He presided over the transformation of direct action tactics from the cherished possession of a few initiates to its embrace by millions of Americans. He resurrected mass peaceful protest from the graveyard in which cold war anticommunism had buried it and made it once again a vibrant expression of citizen rights in a free society.

Rustin was a visionary. ... Rustin was smart. ... Rustin was inspirational to the many thousands

¹⁴⁸ Henry Louis Gates Jr., “Who Designed the March on Washington,” *The Root*

http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2013/08/march_on_washington_meet_bayard_rustin_its_architect.2.html.

¹⁴⁹ White House citation, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/08/president-obama-names-presidential-medal-freedom-recipients>

¹⁵⁰ Anderson, p. 267.

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who knew him. ... Rustin was also wildly controversial in his lifetime.¹⁵¹

Perhaps the best considerations of Rustin's historic role in pacifism, racial justice, social justice, and refugee support comes from those who worked with him.

The late Julian Bond, co-founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and later of the Southern Poverty Law Center, was a colleague of Rustin's in the 1960s in the civil rights movement. In a 2013 interview with Amy Goodman of "Democracy Now" on public radio, Bond commented about Rustin's affect on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

But his significance with King is King really had a very, very limited idea about nonviolence. It is Bayard Rustin who really tutored him, who said, "This is what you have to do." And King—Rustin was horrified to see these pistols in King's home, you know, and these armed guards around King's home, because it just went against everything he believed in about nonviolence. If it hadn't been for Bayard Rustin, Dr. King wouldn't have had any understanding, I don't think, of nonviolence. And Rustin tutored him and made him into the person we know he became.¹⁵²

Leo Cherne, chairman of the International Rescue Committee, wrote that Rustin

... had a remarkable gift for injecting reason, for reconciling a group of people who were at each other's throats. When he worked within a group, he was not interested in satisfying his sense of political importance. He was concerned mainly with the practical and useful results of his work. That was a sign of his talent at welding coalitions. I have never known another human being who possessed that attribute to the degree that Rustin did.¹⁵³

Actress Liv Ullmann, who worked with Rustin on many refugee support and resettlement projects for the International Rescue Committee, said at the October 1987 celebration of his life that

I wish I could list all those to whom he devoted his efforts and to whom he invariably brought

¹⁵¹ D'Emilio, p. 1-3.

¹⁵² Amy Goodman, "Democracy Now," August 22, 2013,

http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2013/8/12/part_2_civil_rights_leader_bayard_rustins_role_in_organizing_the_march_on_washington

¹⁵³ D'Emilio., p. 345.

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help and hope, whether they were in flight from Ethiopia or denied freedom in Afghanistan or human rights in South Africa. He helped the Jews who sought release from imprisonment in the Soviet Union, the Lech Walesas of Poland, those seeking a safe and peaceful future even as they were being uprooted in Salvador, and the victims of total dictatorship in Haiti ... Bayard, you never showed fatigue ... You believed that there is no freedom which is not freedom for all ... You gave your life in the pursuit of the highest purposes that are encompassed in the word 'human .' ¹⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

A letter of support received from the War Resisters League notes that the nomination of Bayard Rustin's Residence is important because

future generations need to know that ordinary citizens living simply among us could and did simply stand up – proud as a Black man, proud as a gay man – and change the course of history. They may not all know the name Bayard Rustin, working as he did outside of the main limelight of the civil rights movement. But walking the streets of the City, young people should know that it was not up in some university tower, or just down south in a well-preserved church pulpit, but in an urban housing complex here in New York that plotting and planning led to widespread acceptance of the human rights of lesbians and gays, of people of African descent and all people. ¹⁵⁵

Professor D'Emilio concludes: "despite Rustin's extraordinary accomplishments, his life and work remain unfamiliar to most Americans. Placing his residence on the National Register will be an important and welcome step in giving more recognition and visibility to this extraordinary life" ¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Long, pp: 476-477.

¹⁵⁵ Ware Resisters League to Colleagues, 3 December 2015.

¹⁵⁶ D"Emilio to National Park Service, 1 December 2015.

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☐ See continuation sheet

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the attached map

Boundary Justification

The nomination recognizes Apartment 9J, the residence of Bayard Rustin. Because the National Register cannot list portions of buildings, the nomination boundary includes Building 7 in its entirety. Building 7 is located within Penn South, a housing complex that has been determined eligible for National Register listing. The boundary was drawn following the sidewalks that surround Building 7 and define its site within the community.

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Bayard Rustin Residence
New York, New York Co, NY

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number add inf Page 1



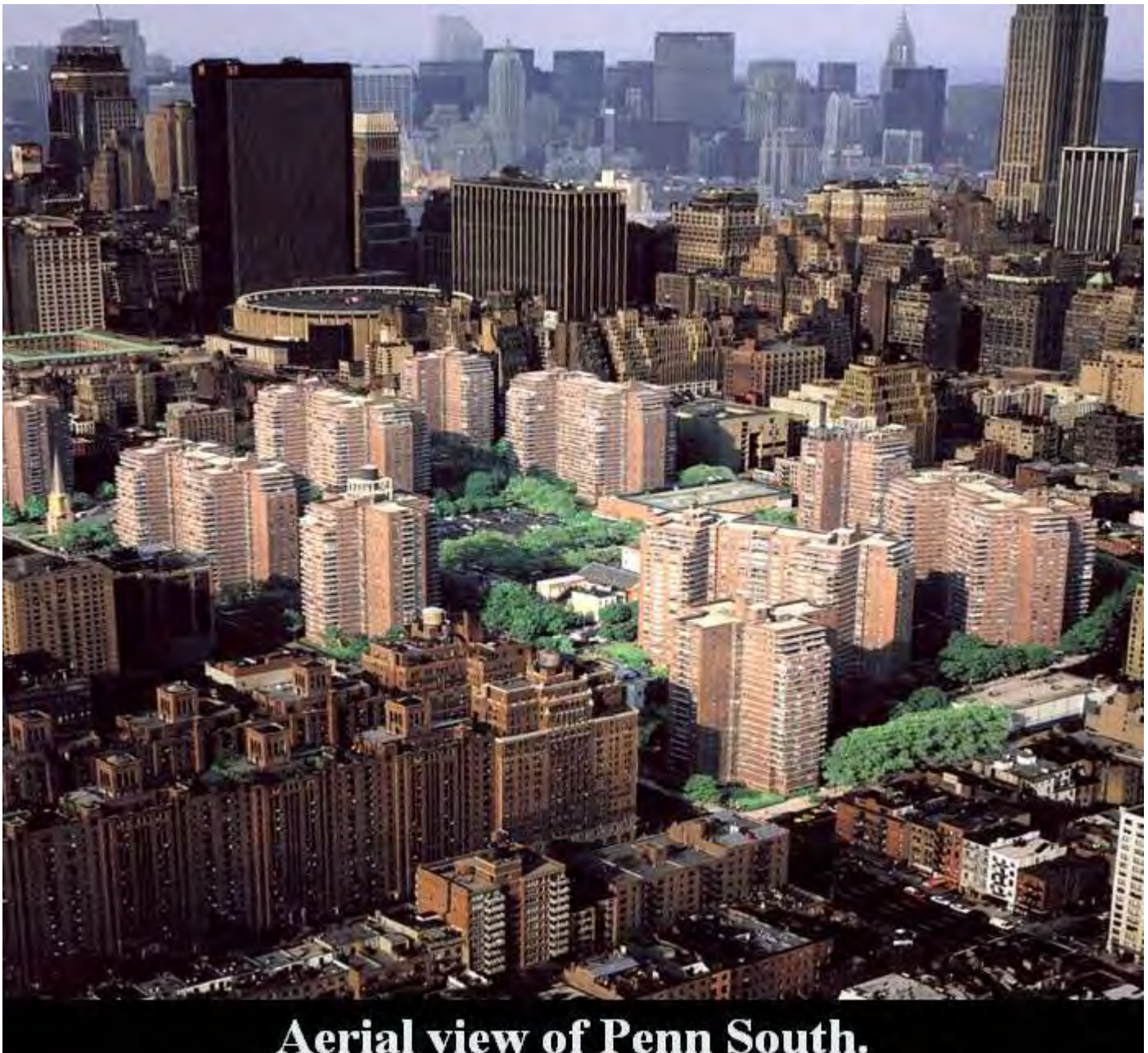
Penn South
Construction Photo

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Bayard Rustin Residence
New York, New York Co, NY

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number add inf Page 2



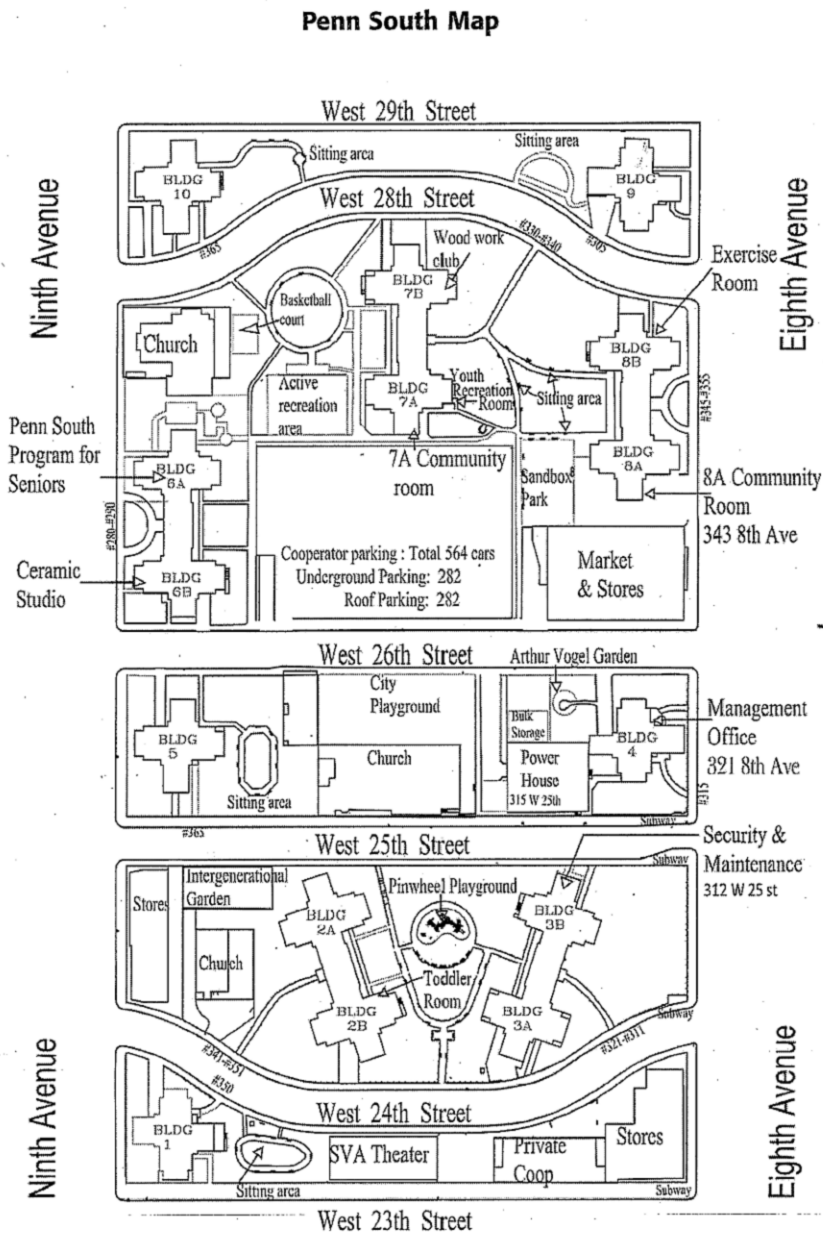
United States Department of the Interior
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Bayard Rustin Residence
New York, New York Co, NY

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number add inf Page 3

MUTUAL REDEVELOPMENT HOUSES INC. • HANDBOOK

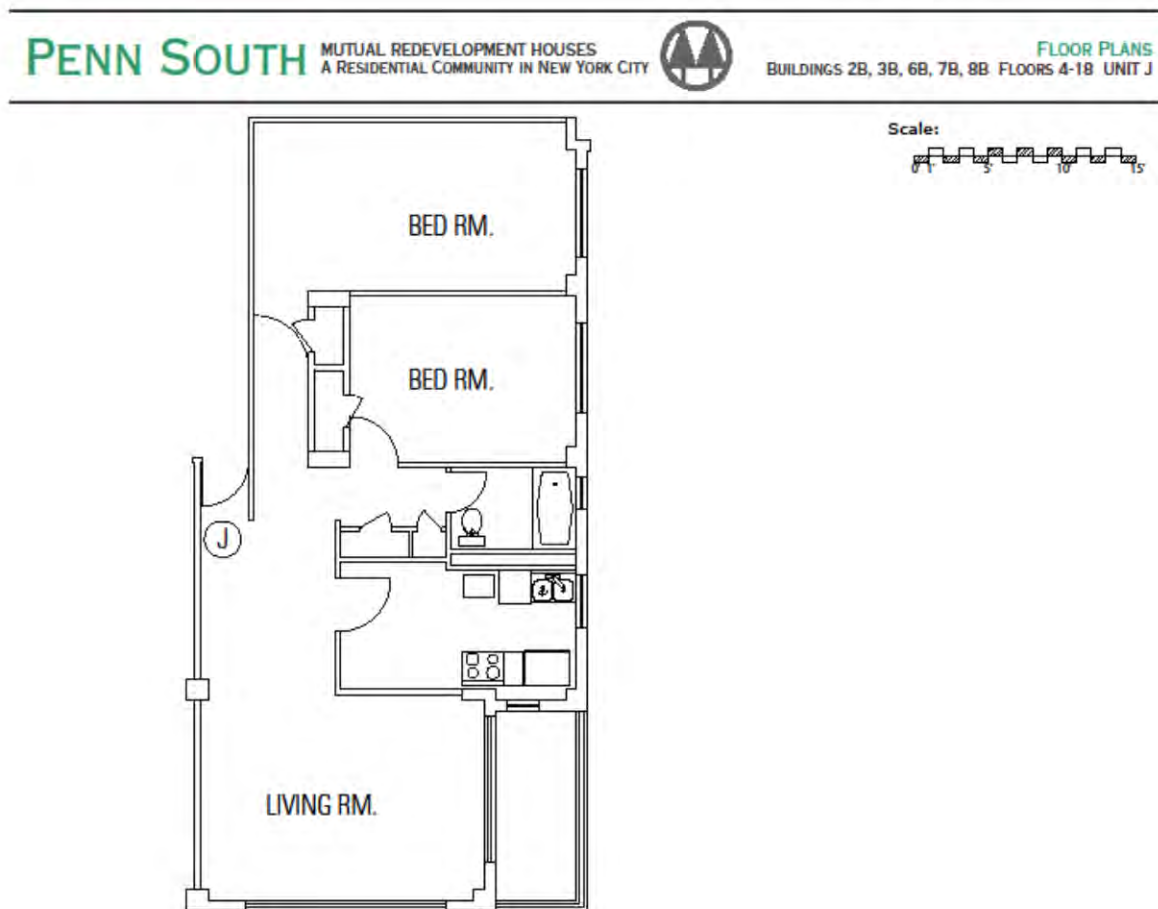


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Bayard Rustin Residence
New York, New York Co, NY

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number add inf Page 4



Plan of Rustin Apartment

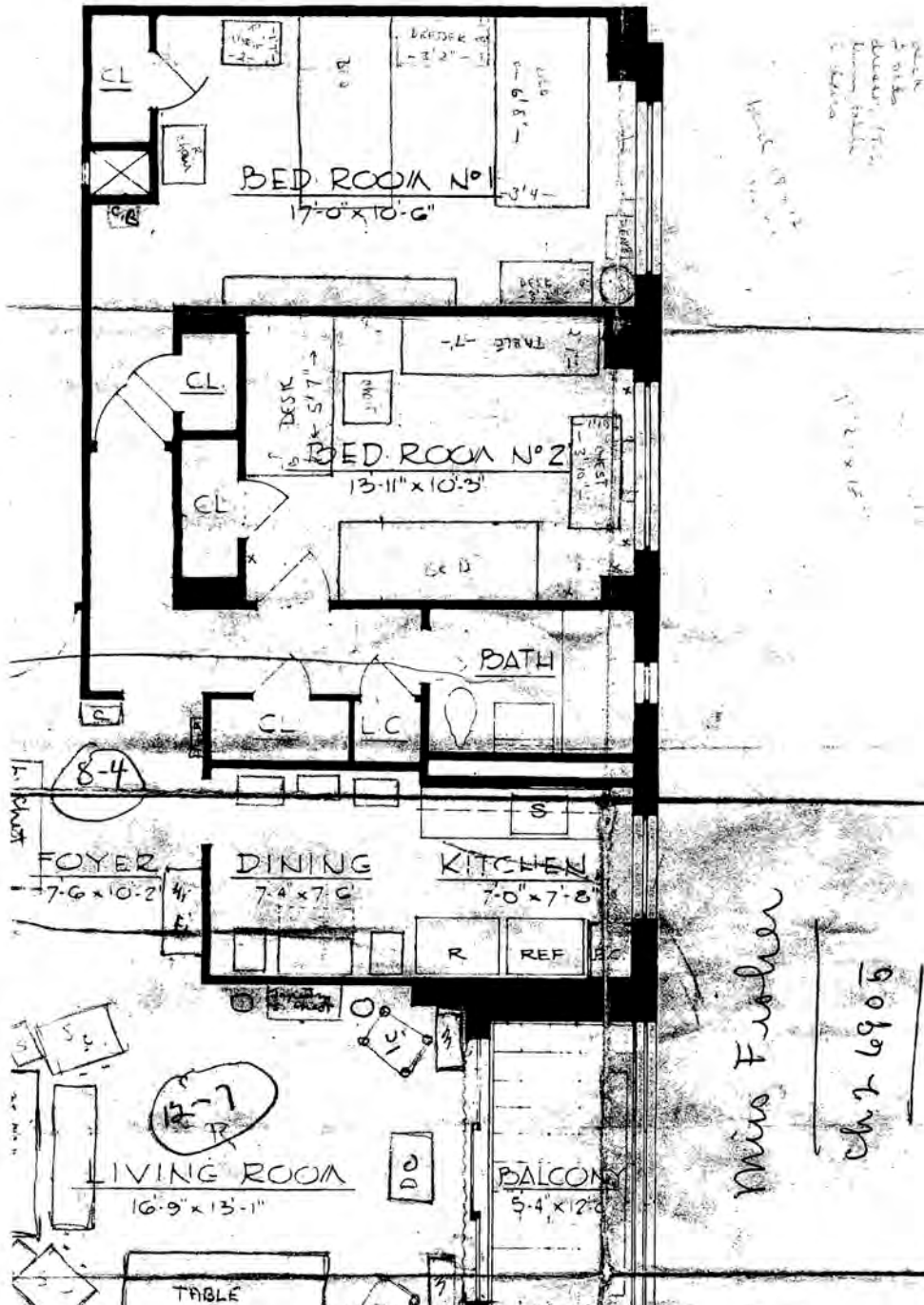
☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Bayard Rustin Residence
New York, New York Co, NY

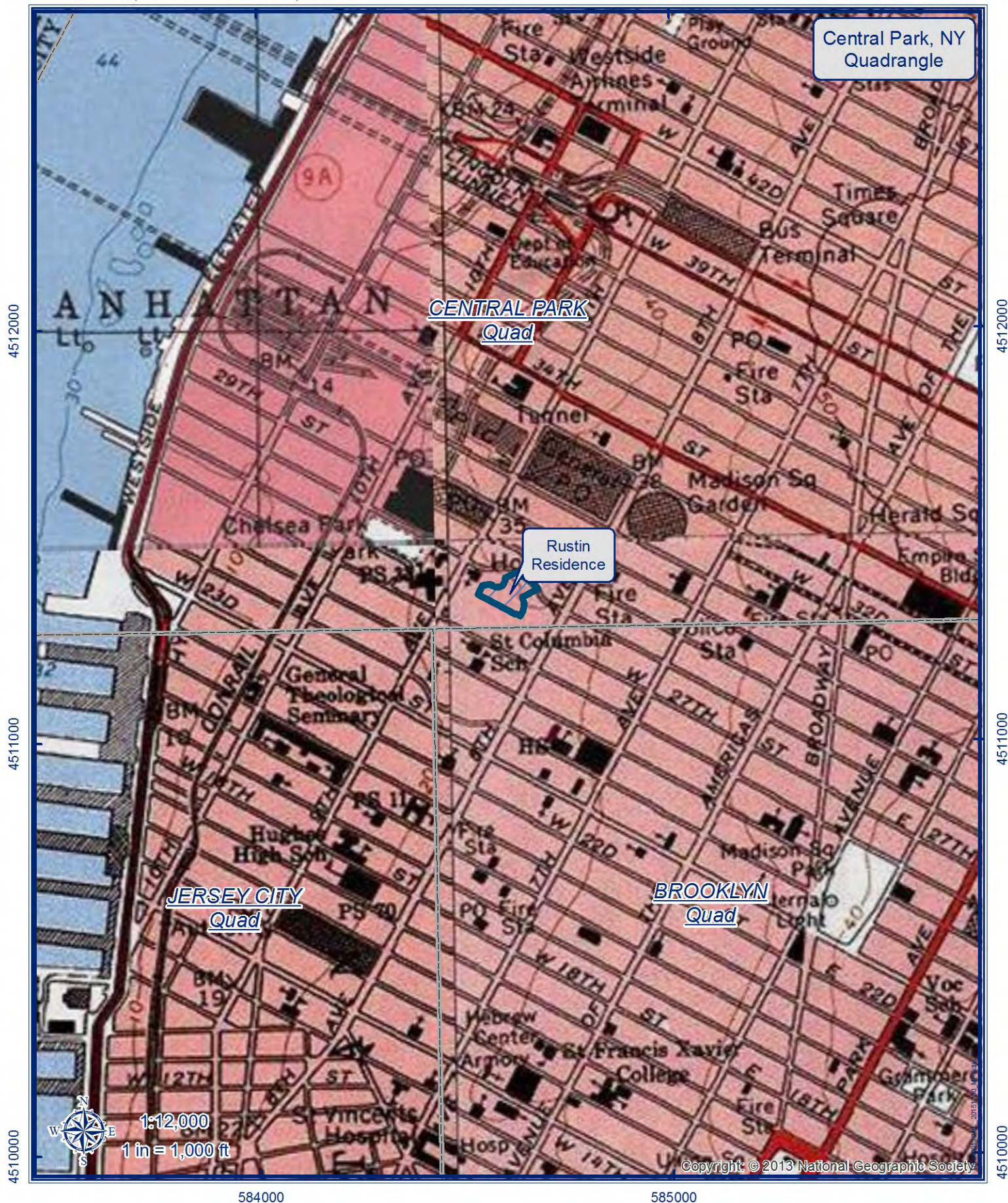
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

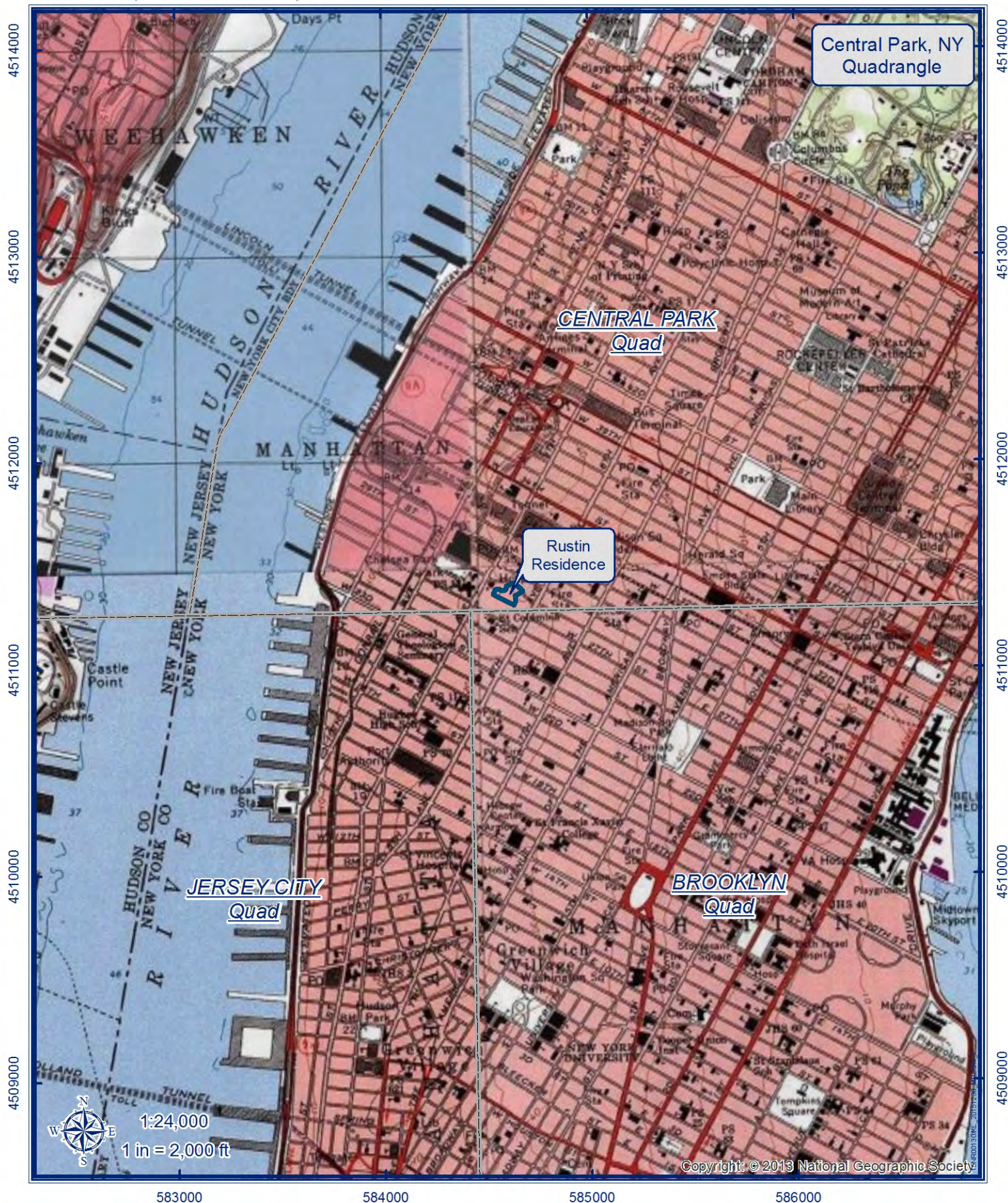
Section number add inf Page 5

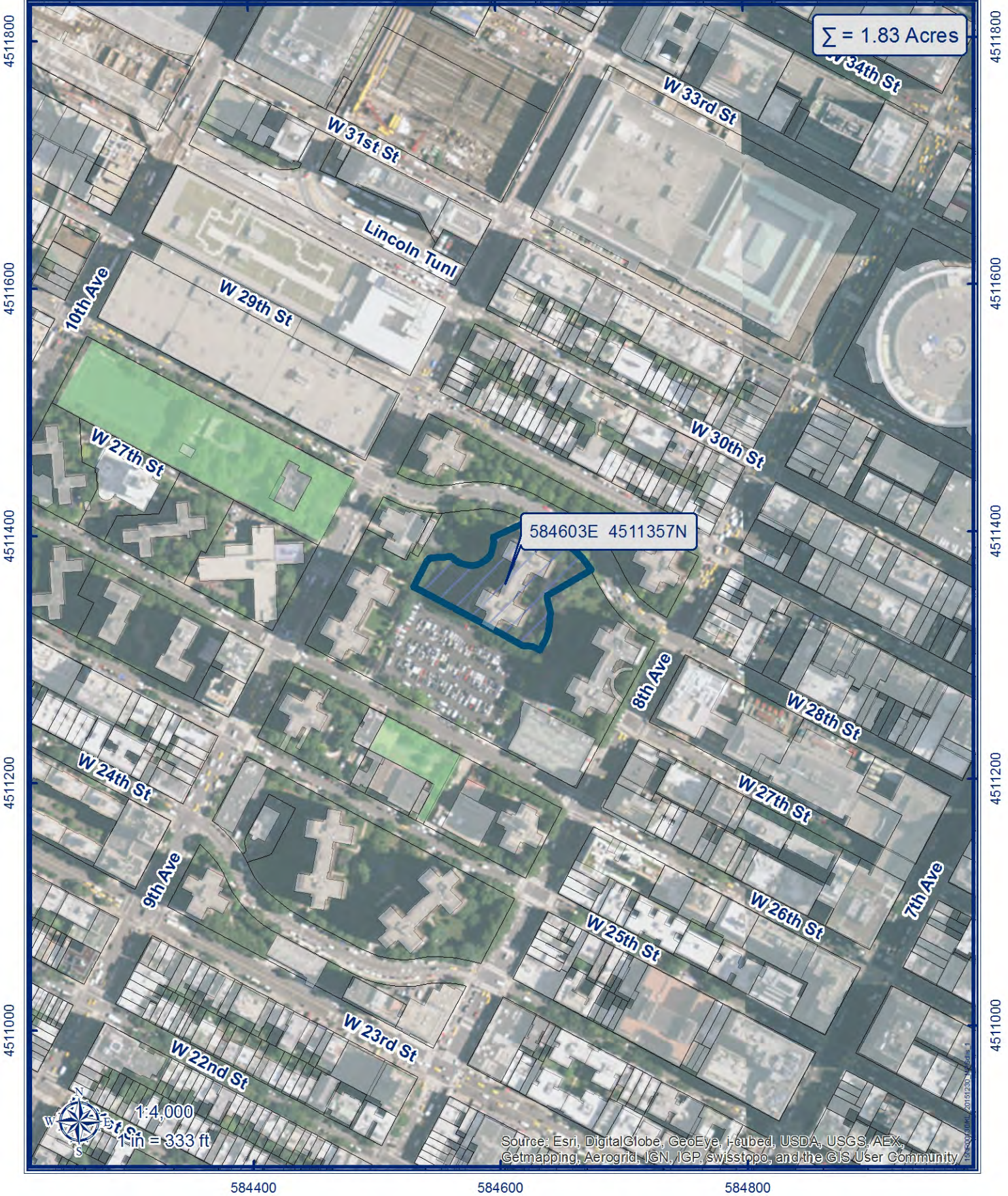


Rustin's marked up plan
showing where furniture
should go when he moved

☐ See continuation sheet







Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Rustin Residence



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



$\Sigma = 1.83$ Acres

584603E 4511357N

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Bayard Rustin Residence
New York, New York Co, NY

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 1

Photographer: photos 1-4

Mario Mazzoni
Director of Education and Communication
Mutual Redevelopment Houses, Inc.
321 8th Ave
New York, New York 10001

Date : 2015

Photographer: photos 5-6

Walter Naegle
340 West 28th Street
Building 7, Apt 9J
New York, New York 10001

Date: 2015

Photographer: photos 7-9

E'Lois Kinnon (Chicago photographer, c1960s)

Date: mid-1960s

Tiff Files: CD-R of .tiff files on file at
National Park Service
Washington DC

and

New York SHPO
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Bayard Rustin Residence
New York, New York Co, NY

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 2

Photo Views:

- 0001. Building 7, Penn South, rear (north) elevation
- 0002. Building 7, Penn South, looking north at façade and (west) side elevation
- 0003. Building 7, Penn South, looking north, façade
- 0004. Building 7, Penn South, façade, detail, main entrance
- 0005. Bayard Rustin Apartment, dining area
- 0006. Bayard Rustin Apartment, main seating area
- 0007. Historic photo, c1965, showing Rustin in his apartment; same view as photo 0006
- 0008. Historic photo, c1965, showing Rustin watering plants in his apartment
- 0008. Historic photo, c1965, showing Rustin watering plants on his terrace



Landmarks Preservation
Commission

Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

November 4, 2015

Sarah Carroll
Executive Director
SCarroll@lpc.nyc.gov

Ruth Pierpont, Deputy Commissioner
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7902 tel
212 669 7797 fax

Re: Bayard Rustin Residence, Building 7, Penn South, Manhattan

Dear Deputy Commissioner Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the Bayard Rustin Residence, located at 340 West 28th Street in Manhattan, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission's Director of Research Mary Beth Betts has reviewed the materials submitted by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau and has determined that the Bayard Rustin Residence appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Carroll".

Sarah Carroll

cc: Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research

LaFrank, Kathleen (PARKS)

From: Glenn Josey <gjosey95@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 30, 2015 2:51 PM
To: LaFrank, Kathleen (PARKS)
Cc: Clerk of 15th Street; Julie M. Finch
Subject: Re: Fw: Support letter for Bayard Rustin nomination

Kathleen,

Below is a minute from 15th Street Monthly Meeting approving the meeting acting as a co-sponsor for Bayard Rustin's home.

2015.9.15 Julie Finch of the Peace and Social Justice Committee presents a request for the meeting to co-sponsor the nomination of Bayard Rustin's home, an apartment at 340 West 28th St, New York, NY 10001, as a New York State landmark and as a site on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places. Friends approve the request.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Warmly,

Glenn Josey
917.923.9348 - C

On Mon, Nov 30, 2015 at 2:34 PM, <parkerhead@earthlink.net> wrote:

from Julie

-----Forwarded Message-----

From: Mark Meinke
Sent: Nov 30, 2015 12:12 PM
To: parkerhead@earthlink.net
Subject: Support letter for Bayard Rustin nomination

The Rustin nomination is going before the NY board in early December with a projected nomination to the National Park Service at the end of the month.

I never received a written minute of the Meeting's support. Did you mail it to me or give it Walter Naegle? You may email it to the National Register Coordinator at Kathleen.LaFrank@parks.ny.gov. If you'd like to send it directly to Albany, please direct it to

Kathleen LaFrank



339 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10012
(212) 533-4335 tel
(212) 228-6193 fax
info@ajmuste.org
www.ajmuste.org

December 3, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

As the organizational owner of an historic building in Manhattan's NoHo neighborhood, we are well aware of the significance of space, preservation, and remembrance in the context of social movement. Popularly called "the Peace Pentagon" by both activists and nationally-recognized architects and journalists specializing in the field, our institutional home has seen historical figures grace our hallways and office space – from third party presidential candidates to union leaders, from youth activists fleeing apartheid South Africa interviewed in our work space by mainstream media representatives to Occupy Wall Street campaigners camping out in our corridors making their own alternative media. Yet we have not been able to maintain our space – and are soon facing a move after several decades of dedicated work.

The New York residence of Bayard Rustin is in some ways even more significant than our own long-time home. Bayard, it should be noted, was a student and colleague of our namesake, A.J. Muste – and a friend to a number of our Board members and advisors. His space served as a base of operations for the chief architect of two modern civil rights movements – a place where Rustin could host friends and colleagues for informal conversations that led to the mass campaigns which substantively changed the way both African Americans and LGBT citizens are treated throughout the USA today. In a world often unready to recognize or support a man now considered one of contemporary history's behind-the-scenes giants – a man posthumously awarded the highest honor bestowed upon US citizens – Rustin's New York residence provided refuge and sustenance to this uniquely American and New York hero.

It would be a sad oversight not to have the NYS Board of Historic Preservation or the National Park Service bestow special status upon the residence of the special man who pushed so hard to enable all Americans to feel special enjoyment of our democratic freedoms.

Sincerely,

Matt Meyer
Of behalf of the Board of Directors

Heidi Boghosian
Executive Director

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Ann Douglas
Larry Gara
Nat Hentoff
George M. Houser
Rep. John Lewis
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Saul Mendlovitz
Christopher Muste
Jean Muste
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Jo Ann O. Robinson
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Building Superintendent



WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

Resisting War at Home & War Abroad since 1923

3 December 2015

Dear colleagues,

As you may be aware, civil rights organizer Bayard Rustin was a member of War Resisters League national staff at the time when he served as coordinator of the March for Jobs and Freedom held in front of Washington DC's Lincoln Memorial in August 1963. Participants heard Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. proclaim a great dream for America on that historic day, but the delicate balancing of all the many speakers and singers, the methodical planning of buses from across the country, the training of peace-keepers to assure that the day ran smoothly, and the follow-up which carried people's hopes, dreams, and freedom struggles to a new phase of political influence was largely designed by Rustin. The oft-forgotten yet enormous and effective one-day schools boycott which swept across New York City the following year was another example of Rustin's special skill at bringing people together to work for a better society.

The space where Rustin could relax and reflect, could plan and review the movements which would push our country to live up to our democratic principles, is now under review for historic preservation status. At War Resisters League, we not only support this initiative because Rustin was one of our own beloved members, not only because – like us – Rustin believed that nonviolent direct action was the best way to force change on sometimes stubborn opposition; we strongly support that special status be bestowed because future generations need to know that ordinary citizens living simply among us could and did simply stand up – proud as a Black man, proud as a gay man – and change the course of history. They may not all know the name Bayard Rustin, working as he did outside of the main limelight of the civil rights movement. But walking the streets of the City, young people should know that it was not up in some university tower, or just down south in a well-preserved church pulpit, but in an urban housing complex here in New York that plotting and planning led to widespread acceptance of the human rights of lesbians and gays, of people of African descent and all people.

War Resisters League still believes that every person can make a difference to make the world a better place, and we are proud of our history with Bayard Rustin and the movements he helped build. In order to help continue this work, we urge the NYS Board to bestow preservation status upon Rustin's New York home – shining a light on Rustin's and New York's often-unknown parts of a history we should all be proud of.

Yours in Peace,

The War Resisters League

WRL National Office|339 Lafayette St. |New York, NY 10012|(212) 228-0450|(212) 228-6193 (fax)|wrl@warresisters.org|www.warresisters.org

WRL New England Regional Office|P.O. Box 1093|Norwich, CT 06360|Staff: Joanne Sheehan|. (860). 639-8834. (ph/fax) |joanne@warresisters.org

National Committee|Ellen Barfield|Clare Bayard|Frida Berrigan|Rick Bickhart|Matt Daloisio | Sky Hall|Nouri Khouri|Susan Kingsland|Bob Meola|John M. Miller|Sixte Vigny Nimuraba|Manju Rajendran|Rosalie Riegle|Samia Shafi|Benjamin Hart Vigés

National Office Staff|Emma Burke|Ali Issa|Tom Leonard|Uruj Sheikh|Tara Tabassi|Linda Thurston

LaFrank, Kathleen (PARKS)

From: Megan Springate <meganspringate@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 02, 2015 1:46 PM
To: LaFrank, Kathleen (PARKS)
Subject: Bayard Rustin NR Nomination

Dear Ms. LaFrank,

I am writing in whole-hearted support of the Bayard Rustin National Register Nomination written by Mr. Mark Meinke. Rustin, a relatively openly gay man, has had an important impact on American history, particularly in his role as advisor to MLK. His importance has been largely overlooked, though his contributions have recently begun to be acknowledged. This National Register nomination is a key piece in recognizing Rustin's role in the Civil Rights movement and twentieth century American history.

I support this nomination moving forward in the process to becoming listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Best regards,
Megan Springate

UIC COLLEGE OF
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

December 1, 2015

Gender and Women's Studies (MC 360)
Room 1208, University Hall
601 South Morgan Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607-7107

To the National Park Service:

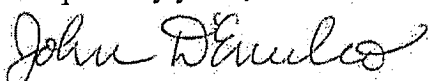
I am writing in support of the application to have the residence of Bayard Rustin included in the National Register of Historic Places. I am Emeritus Professor of History and Gender & Women's Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Among the 10 books that I have written or edited is *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin*, an award-winning biography that I spent a dozen years researching and writing.

Bayard Rustin was, without question, one of the most important social justice activists of the mid-twentieth century. Based in the United States, his work and influence extended across four continents. Rustin is arguably more responsible than anyone for bringing Gandhian nonviolent methods of activism to the United States. He personally tutored Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Gandhian methods; created the plans for what became the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; and played a key role in strategizing Dr. King's emergence as a national leader. As chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, he deserves the credit for its stature as an iconic event in U.S. history. Rustin also organized globally to stop the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. He was a key figure in building the movement that created the pressure leading successfully to international treaties to end such a destructive and dangerous practice. Rustin also brought issues of economic equality into the heart of the African American freedom struggle. In the later years of his life, he became a voice for fair and generous treatment of refugees displaced by war in Asia and Africa. And, he accomplished all this as an individual known to be gay during the decades when the oppression of LGBT people was unrelenting.

Rustin lived the last twenty-five years of his life in Apartment 9J of Building 7 of the Penn South Complex in the Chelsea section of Manhattan. Much of his most significant work for a more just and equitable society and world was done while he was living there. The links between his work and his residence are highlighted by the fact that the Penn South Complex was built by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and Rustin was a strong supporter of trade unions and their mission to increase economic equity.

Despite Rustin's extraordinary accomplishments, his life and work remain unfamiliar to most Americans. Placing his residence on the National Register of Historic Places will be an important and welcome step in giving more recognition and visibility to this extraordinary life.

Respectfully yours,



John D'Emilio

Emeritus Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago

Mark Meinke
10702 Norman Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22030
Email: mwmeinke@gmail.com

December 1, 2015

New York State Board for Historic Preservation
New York State Historic Preservation Office
P O Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Sirs:-

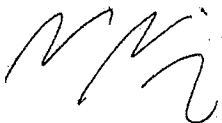
It gives me great pleasure to know that the Board is considering landmark status for the Bayard Rustin home at 430 West 28th Street, New York City, NY. This is a site richly meriting such recognition, as is New York's long-term resident Bayard Taylor Rustin.

Rustin's contribution to social and racial justice movements in New York State and in the United States cannot be overestimated. Though often sidelined at the time of his achievements by those uncomfortable with his homosexuality, Bayard Rustin, gay African American Quaker resident of New York City, is recognized nationally not merely for his role in achieving the 1963 March for Jobs and Freedom in Washington, DC but for his seminal role in bringing a commitment to nonviolent direct action to the national movements for racial and social justice. Rustin is recognized now for his founding role in the Congress for Racial Equality, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. The 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s would have been a very different landscape without him. Rustin's home on West 28th became his home and in many ways his operational center from 1962 until the end of his life.

On the international stage, Rustin's peace activism involved him in worldwide campaign against atmospheric nuclear testing and in favor of disarmament. He brought nonviolent direct tactics to decolonization campaigns in sub-Saharan Africa and in Asia. He was a tireless campaigner on behalf of refugees worldwide and in support of democratizing initiatives in Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America.

I trust that the Board will grant the recognition the site so richly deserves.

Sincerely,



Mark Meinke
Co-founder Rainbow Heritage
Founder Rainbow History Project, Chair (2000 to 2010)