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(54) MULTI-MODE CONTROL LOGIC CIRCUIT FOR SOLID STATE RELAYS

(71) We, WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC CORPORATION of Westinghouse Building, Gateway Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States of America, a company organised and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, United States of America, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:-

This invention relates to electronic circuitry for control of electrical power and particularly to control logic circuitry for controlling the mode of operation of a solid state relay. In electrical power systems there has been increasing interest in the use of solid state relays for controlled energization of a load from a power supply. For DC circuits, this usually takes the form of some kind of transistorized switching circuit such as is shown in UK Specification 1500364.

In various applications, different modes of operation are required from a solid state replay. While the same basic power switching circuit may be employed generally in each of these modes of operation, they each require a different sort of control circuit in order to make the power switch operate in the required manner.

The functions desired of a solid state relay are directly analogous to the functions of electromechanical relays. The required functions include those referred to as normally open (NO), normally closed (NC), and latched. In normally open operation, the solid state relay (SSR) is to be OFF or to present an open circuit between the source and the load unless and until a control signal is applied to the power switch to close it and complete the circuit between the source and the load. In the normally open mode, the power switch will remain closed only so long as such a control signal is applied to it. In normally closed operation, the converse is to occur with the switch ON and the load circuit closed except when a control signal of a certain type is present that causes and maintains interruption of the load circuit. In both the normally open and normally closed modes of operation, a change of state of the relay occurs only as a result of a change in the applied control signal. In the third mode of operation, the latched mode, it is the case that the state of the relay can be changed by application of a control signal and will remain in the same changed state when the control signal is removed until a further control signal is applied to change the state again.

All of the types of operation referred to in the preceding paragraph relate to relays that may be called single pole, single throw (SPST) relays because the operation of the relay is to connect or disconnect between a single line or power pole and a single load. There are, however, systems that require operation between a plurality of lines and a single load or a single line and a plurality of loads with some interrelation of the individual relay functions such that one is to remain in or out of phase with the other. For this purpose, it is necessary that the relays be adapted for associating different control circuits in master-slave relationship.

Because of the number and variety of functions desired of an SSR, it has been previously necessary to make and use different specific control circuits for different ones of the required SSR functions, with the natural consequence of poor economics as compared with a single circuit that could serve multiple purposes.

It is, therefore, the principal object of this invention to provide an improved control logic circuit with a view to overcoming the above-stated disadvantages of the prior art devices.

The invention resides in a control logic circuit capable of controlling the operation of a solid

state relay in any one of a plurality of modes of operation, said circuit comprising: threshold sensing means for responding to an input voltage signal of a given polarity and at least a given magnitude by producing a logic signal of a relatively fixed, predetermined magnitude that follows the input in polarity; a logic gate having a first input terminal for receiving said logic signal from said threshold sensing means and a second input terminal selectably connectable to a system line potential point or a system power ground potential point to provide an output signal for operation of a solid state relay as either a normally open relay or a normally closed relay, respectively, said second input terminal of said logic gate having a fixed interconnection to internal means for generating a signal changing in logic state only upon a predetermined change in the waveform of said logic signal from said threshold sensing means; and means for overriding the signal from said internal means upon said second input terminal being connected to either a system line potential point or a system power ground potential point, said relay exhibiting a latching type operation when said second input terminal is free of connection to line or power ground potential points.

More specifically, a multimode control logic circuit provides the interface between a low level input control signal and a power switch in a solid state relay. Any one of a plurality of modes of operation is made possible with a single control circuit, including operation as either a normally open relay, a normally closed relay, or a latching relay. The same control circuit also makes possible combinations of such relays for operation in parallel with a second relay operating in or out of phase with a first relay.

The control logic circuit includes digital logic gates and associated components, preferably in a single package with certain internal interconnections within the package being fixed but also with a plurality of external terminals extending from the package. The external terminals are distinctly identified and include one terminal referred to as a "mode" terminal which is associated with the internal logic gates in such a manner that the external connection of the mode terminal to a line terminal (i.e., on the supply side of the power switch) provides a control circuit for normally open relay operation. The mode terminal is, alternatively, connectable to a power ground terminal in order to achieve normally closed operation. The mode terminal may also be left unconnected, in which case a latching relay results.

The differences in operation result because the mode terminal has a fixed connection internally in the package to one input of a logic gate which may be an "exclusive OR" gate whose output is a "1" when any one but not all its inputs has a "1" on it. The use of an "exclusive OR" gate gives the mode terminal the functions as just described in the circuit to be specifically described as an example hereafter. Other logic gates may be used and may be associated with the rest of the control logic circuitry such that the mode terminal achieves other modes of operation than those referred to. The point is that circuits in accordance with the present invention take advantage of the fact that by having a logic gate with an externally available terminal (the mode terminal) one may achieve any of the different modes of relay operation by tying that terminal to a point which maintains a "1" on that input to the gate (e.g., by trying it to the supply or line), or to a point that maintains a "zero" (e.g., power ground), or by leaving that terminal unconnected (not tied to "1" or "zero") but, internally, that gate input sees a "1" or a "zero" according to the state of other internal elements in the control logic circuit.

In addition to the mode terminal, control logic circuits in accordance with this invention have separate "master" and "slave" terminals available for interconnecting between the two relay units to achieve the required two pole arrangements. The master terminal is one that bears an output "1" or "zero" from an internal logic gate. This output signal may be the same or different, by choice of design of the internal circuitry, that the output of the control logic circuit that goes to the power switch. The master output terminal, when used, is connected to the slave terminal, or slave input terminal, of another relay's control logic circuit. The second control logic circuit therefore has one of its logic gates with an input tied to an output of the first so they can be made to operate in or out of phase.

Since the control logic circuits in accordance with one embodiment of the invention need include only a relatively small number of individual logic gates and their associated components, they may be readily miniaturized and included in a single package along with the rest of the relay components. All required functions are provided by use of eight external terminals: line, load, control input, control ground, mode, master output, slave input and power ground. Control logic circuits in accordance with this invention therefore provide much greater flexibility in use than if distinct control logic circuits were required for each individual mode of operation.

The invention will become more apparent from the following description of an exemplary embodiment thereof when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a general schematic diagram of a solid state relay incorporating a control logic circuit in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a schematic diagram of a typical example of the solid state relay of Figure 1;

Figures 3 to 6 are schematic diagrams of single unit relays for use in different modes of operation;

Figure 7 is a set of waveforms for understanding the operation of the relay in the mode of Figure 6; and,

Figures 8 to 10 are schematic diagrams of master-slave combinations of relays for use in different modes of operation.

Referring to Figure 1, there is shown a generalized circuit schematic of a solid state relay (SSR) connected between a Direct Voltage Source and a Load. The SSR principally comprises a Power Switching Circuit that is directly connected between the Source and Load and has a control input from a Control Logic Circuit which in turn has an input from a Control Input Circuit.

The Control Input Circuit is one that is responsive to some system condition to produce a signal which may influence the operation of the relay. U.S Patent Specification No. 4086503 discloses a suitable Control Input Circuit. All references herein to sources of additional description are intended to incorporate the descriptions thereof in their entirety. The Control Input Circuit preferably also includes means providing electrical isolation between the source of input signal and the Control Logic Circuit.

The Control Logic Circuit includes at its input a threshold sensing circuit portion for determining if the character (for example, the magnitude and polarity) of the signal from the Control Input Circuit is of the type desired for the operation of the Control Logic Circuit. The Control Logic Circuit principally includes logic gates for producing a signal applied to the Power Switching Circuit in accordance with a predetermined logic design.

The Power Switching Circuit may take various forms in accordance with known practice of which one preferred form is generally in accordance with UK Patent Specification No. 1500364.

It is particularly to the Control Logic Circuit that the present invention is directed. Although of more general utility, the Control Logic Circuit will be principally described as a circuit developed for use where high reliability (e.g., good noise immunity), low power dissipation, and suitability for miniaturization are important, such as in aerospace applications.

Referring to Figure 2, a circuit schematic is shown of an example of an SSR including a Control Logic Circuit in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The input is developed by a control input circuit 10 that may, for example, include an optical isolator P1, but which could instead have a transistor, co-amp, or a relay for the purpose.

Optical isolator P1 provides electrical isolation which is desirable. The Control and Control Ground terminals have no coupling to the rest of the SSR except through P1. The Control terminal in this example receives a signal from elsewhere, such as the trip circuit disclosed in UK Patent Specification 1383380, but that trip circuit could also be incorporated in the relay package as part of the control input circuit; also see the referred to US Patent Specification No. 4086503.

When control current begins to flow through the light emitting diode D1 of P1, radiation turns on the photo transistor Q1 of P1. When the transistor portion of P1 begins to turn on, its collector voltage will drop to the threshold of Z1A which is an exclusive OR gate connected as a non-inverting (or buffer) amplifier.

The output of Z1A goes to "zero" when the control signal is applied (both inputs "zero") and now begins to charge capacitor C1 at a rate determined by the current source capability of Z1A and the size of capacitor C1. This controlled fall time provides the required control noise immunity for the circuit. Since Z1A acts as a controlled current source in both the high and low states, symmetrical noise immunity is obtained.

The voltage across C1 is sensed by Z1B, also an exclusive OR gate connected as a non-inverting amplifier. Z1B, along with R3 and R4, forms a Schmitt trigger with positive snap action around the threshold voltage of Z1B. This provides a clean logic signal for the remainder of the control circuit. Z1A has a pair of inputs of which one is connected to the regulated B+ supply through resistor R1 and to the collector of phototransistor Q1. The other input of Z1A is connected to the power ground. Z1B also has an input connected to the power ground while its other input is connected through resistors R2 and R3 to the output of Z1A and resistor R4 is connected in a circuit branch between that input and the output of Z1B. Capacitor C1 is connected from the B+ line to a point between resistors R2 and R3. The elements Z1A, Z1B, R1, R2, R3, R4 and C1, connected as shown, may be referred to as the threshold sensing portion 12 of a control logic circuit 14 which also includes logic circuit portion 13.

The logic circuit portion 13 includes exclusive OR logic gates Z1C and Z1D of which Z1C may be regarded as the "main" gate as it is operative in all modes and combinations. It has an input 16 with a fixed connection, through R6, to the output of Z1B. The same input 16 is connected to the slave input terminal of the relay through resistor R7. The output of Z1C

goes to the power switch as well as to one input of Z1D. Z1D is an "auxiliary" gate operative only when the illustrated relay is connected from the output of Z1D (the Master Output terminal) to another relay as will be described.

5 The main gate Z1C has a second input 18 that is permanently connected, through R8, to Z2 at terminal Q. Z2 is a D type flip-flop connected to toggle. The toggling action occurs when the clock input (C) of Z2 goes positive. Input 18 of Z1C is also connected through R9 to the external mode terminal, and CR2 is connected between input 18 and power ground.

10 Before proceeding with the description of logic circuit portion 13, Power Switching Circuit 20 should be introduced primarily to shown how the Line, Load, and Power Ground terminals come out of the relay. While a specific example of switch 20 is shown for completeness, it is generally in accordance with the referred to UK Patent Specification No. 1383380 and will not be discussed in detail.

15 The SSR of Figure 2 will now be recognized to include the building blocks of Figure 1 and will also be seen to have eight external terminals illustrated in Figure 3. Here the SSR is contained in a unitary package with the eight terminals identified on the package in some manner, such as:

L	-	Line;	LD	-	Load	
MD	-	Mode;	PG	-	Power Ground	
20 S	-	Slave Input	M	-	Master Input	20
CG	-	Control Ground	C	-	Control	

Proceeding now to a description of the logic circuit portion 13:

25 With no connection to the Slave Input and with the Mode input tied to Line, as shown in Figure 4, the output of Z1B goes through R6 to Z1C which, with a "one" on the Mode input, acts as an inverter. The output of Z1C, in phase with the Control Input, then goes to "one" and turns on Q2 and Q3 which control the power stage 20. Thus the SSR acts as a Normally Open switch in the connection of Figure 4. Resistors R8 and R9 are sized such that inputs at the Mode input dominate over any signals from Z2.

30 If the Mode input is connected to Power Ground, as shown in Figure 5, Z1C becomes non-inverting, and the switch becomes Normally Closed.

35 If the Mode terminal is left open, Figure 6, the function of the circuit is best understood by reference to the waveforms of Figure 7. Waveform A shows a possible shape of the input signal to Z1A, ignoring noise, and B is the Z1B output which is applied to Z2 clock at terminal C of Z2.

40 With the Mode terminal open, the output of Z2 at terminal Q (wave C) is now effective. It and the output of Z1B are connected to the inputs 16 and 18 of exclusive OR gate Z1C whose output is as shown at wave D. The switch thus toggles on and off only at the falling edge of the signal to Z1A thus providing Latched operation of the relay (wave E). The initial state of the switch is determined by the connection of CR1 and R5 to the input terminal S of Z2.

45 Gate Z1D is connected as an inverter to provide a Master output signal inverted with respect to the state of Z1C ("one" when Z1C is off). The Slave input is designed, through R6 and R7, to override normal control input signals and to directly control the state of Z1C. With the Mode control connected to the Line input in the Slave Unit (Figures 8 and 9), a Slave switch will assume the same state as the Master it is connected to. With the Mode control connected to Power Ground in the slave Unit (Figures 10 and 11), a Slave switch will assume the opposite state as the Master it is connected to.

Power for the control logic is derived from the line input through R16.

50 The following table summarizes the operation of the SSR in the various connections described:

	<i>Function</i>	<i>Connect Mode Terminal To</i>	
	Normally Open	Line	
	Normally closed	Power Ground	
55	Latching	(Not Connected)	55
	Non-Inverting	Line	
	Inverting	Power Ground	

The following table identifies components, merely by way of further example, suitable for use in the Control Logic circuit 14 of Figure 2 and operable to meet the following requirements:

5	Control voltage	16-32 v. DC	5
	Control current	less than 50 mA	
	Control isolation	greater than 5000 Mohm	
	Control Noise Immunity	1-5 m Sec.	
	Components		
10	Resistors R1 and R4	1 Megohm	10
	Resistors R2 and R5	20,000 ohms	
	Resistors R3, R6 and R8	100,000 ohms	
	Resistors R7, R9 and R10	10,000 ohms	
15	Capacitor C1	0.1 microf.	15
	Zener diode CR1	3.3 V.	
	Zener diode CR2	8.2 V.	
	Exclusive-OR gates Z1	MC 14507	
	D Flip-Flop Z2	MC 14013	

20 The Control Logic Circuit in accordance with one embodiment of this invention is particularly advantageous because all of the electrical components of the entire relay can be mounted on a single substrate in a single package.

25 The Control Logic Circuit as described above has been developed with a particular intention to provide a small lightweight device that is suitable for aerospace applications or which may be subjected to severe environmental conditions. The utility of the Control Logic Circuit is, of course, not so limited and where space and durability considerations are not so critical, it may take other forms while retaining the advantages of providing a single control logic circuit with the capability through selectable interconnecting external terminals to provide the various functions of the relay including normally open, normally closed and latched in single or two pole configurations.

30 The general principles of the Control Logic Circuit are, for example, applicable to AC, as well as DC, power relays. An AC version would require merely an AC Power Switching Circuit with a DC power supply for the Control Logic Circuit. The AC Power Switching Circuit may be selected from various known forms with the Control Logic Circuit supplying gating signals.

#### WHAT WE CLAIM IS:-

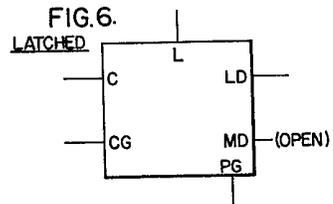
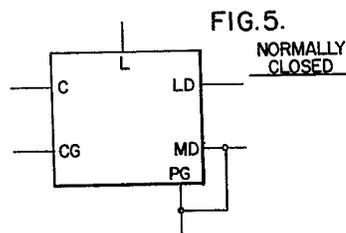
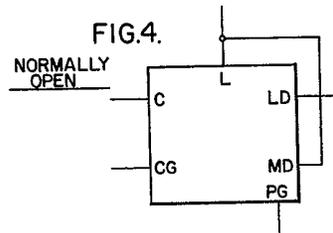
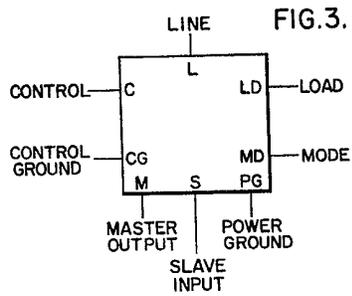
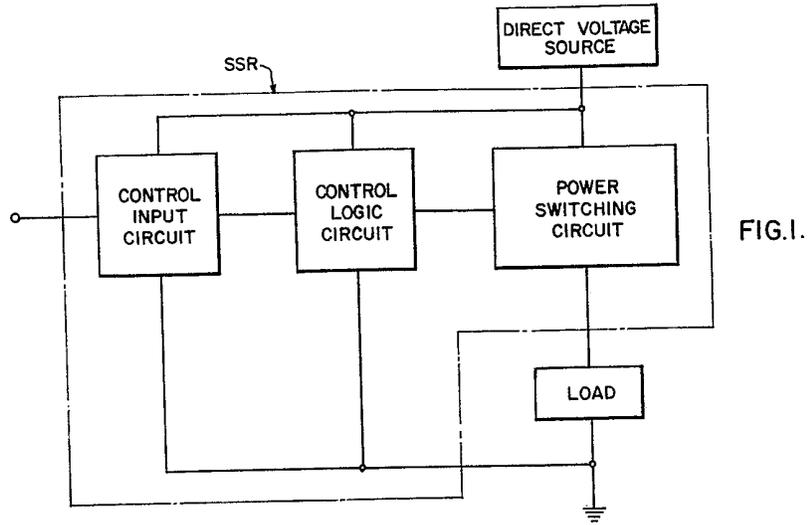
1. A control logic circuit capable of controlling the operation of a solid state relay in any one of a plurality of modes of operation, said circuit comprising: threshold sensing means for responding to an input voltage signal of a given polarity and at least a given magnitude by producing a logic signal of a relatively fixed, predetermined magnitude that follows the input in polarity; a logic gate having a first input terminal for receiving said logic signal from said threshold sensing means and a second input terminal selectively connectable to a system line potential point or a system power ground potential point to provide an output signal for operation of a solid state relay as either a normally open relay or a normally closed relay, respectively, said second input terminal of said logic gate having a fixed interconnection to internal means for generating a signal changing in logic state only upon a predetermined change in the waveform of said logic signal from said threshold sensing means; and means for overriding the signal from said internal means upon said second input terminal being connected to either a system line potential point or a system ground potential point, said relay exhibiting a latching type operation when said second input terminal is free of connection to line or power ground potential points.

2. A control logic circuit as claimed in Claim 1 wherein: said logic gate has an output terminal that is connected to an input terminal of an auxiliary logic gate which has another input terminal for connection to a line potential point, said auxiliary logic gate having an output terminal for connection to a control logic circuit of a second solid state relay.

3. A control logic circuit as claimed in Claim 1 wherein: said first input terminal of said logic gate also has connected thereto an external terminal for receiving a logic signal from a control logic circuit of a second solid state relay.

4. A control logic circuit substantially as described with reference to, and as shown, in the accompanying drawings.

Agent for the Applicants  
RONALD VAN BERLYN  
Chartered Patent Agent



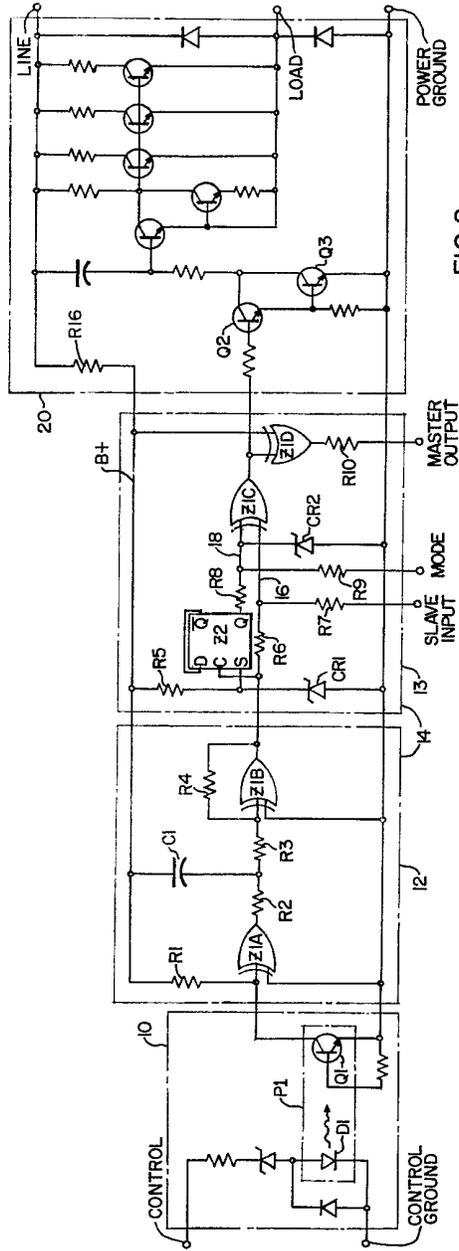


FIG. 2.

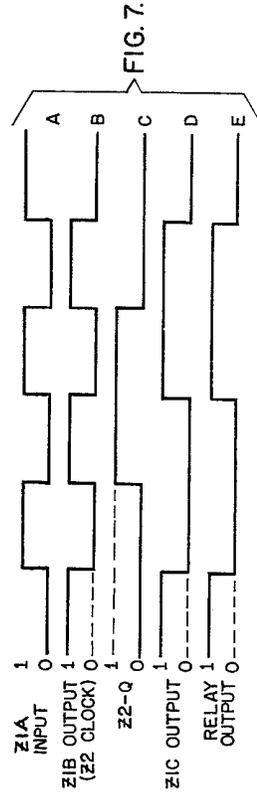


FIG. 7.

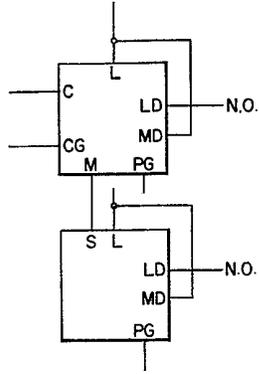


FIG. 8.

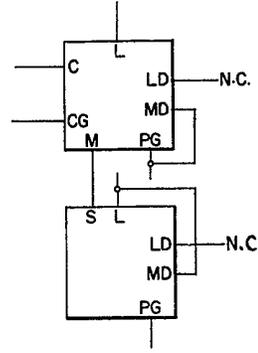


FIG. 9.

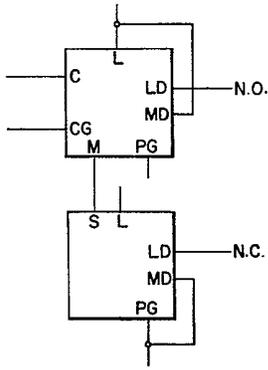


FIG. 10.

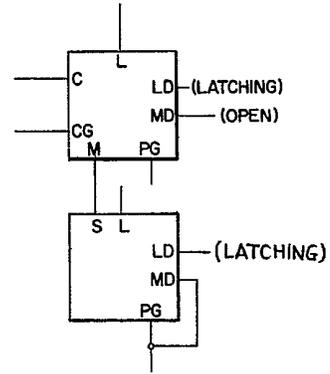


FIG. 11.