

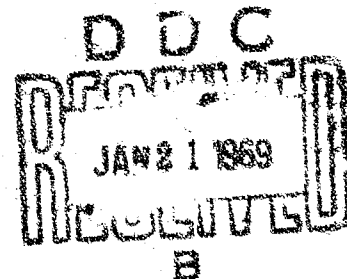
RESEARCH PAPER P-439

# ON THE POLITICS OF VIOLENCE

Part I

Joshua Menkes

November 1968



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

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Joshua Menkes

November 1968

Government is an association of men  
who do violence to the rest of us.

Leo Tolstoy

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ABSTRACT

Political violence is treated as one of the manifestations of a lack of communication between the government and the populace. A highly simplified model is proposed to represent the interaction between value determined behavior and value-free government functions. The validity of this model will be examined in a subsequent study of the violence in Colombia.

## PROLOGUE

Does history in fact repeat itself so that we always have a second chance, or is it our stereotypical response to the constantly changing Zeitgeist that gives us that déjà vu feeling? An idle question to some--the practical men, the pragmatists, the doers; very disturbing to those who weigh ends, means, and effects. Violence at different levels of organization apparently from the dawn of human existence has been a part of human behavior from the murder of Abel to Hiroshima. Has violence ever solved anything? If so, why the protestation of peacefulness on the part of individuals and nations; if not, why are we still pursuing it?

Any pretense that I could shed some light on those questions would be, well, pretentious. My intent here is simply to illuminate some of the forces at play that appear to drive individuals as well as groups into the use of violence while pointing out that there appear to be other forces that counteract those tendencies. My analysis of the problem is by and large intuitive; it is not, for instance, based on computer correlations of vast amounts of data.

As a case in point, I have chosen Colombia. Colombia's history at times presents its people as hard-working farmers, largely indifferent to the doings of their neighbors and the small urban elite. At other times, we face a country on the verge of total disintegration, devoted to mutual genocide. An unusual spectacle--does history repeat itself there? I do not think so. Every cycle of violence/nonviolence leaves its mark. Like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the dose necessary to effect the transformation gets bigger every time and the dose that eventually kills Mr. Hyde also kills Dr. Jekyll.

In my examination of violence I distinguished between political violence, organized as well as individual, and all other acts of violence. I shall concern myself only with political violence even though the two categories are related. For the purpose of this categorization, political violence is defined as comprising all those acts where force is used to change a state of social or political equilibrium or affect the rate of social or political change.

Equilibrium states are important for their own sake since they constitute stable configurations. However, from the point of view of examining violence--as a modality of political change--states of equilibrium are uninteresting since they tell us nothing about the forces that maintain them. A brief excursion into some elementary notions of stability might be appropriate here.

When one wishes to determine whether a system is stable or not, it is customary to subject it to a disturbance large or small. The system is stable if it responds by returning to its original state after the disturbance has ceased or if it tends to a different but stable state after withdrawal of the test disturbance. Unstable systems once disturbed not only fail to return to their original state but follow a course of continuous change without ever reaching a plateau. This rate of change can be catastrophically rapid or it can be so slow as to be imperceptible; a certain degree of instability is clearly necessary so that changes can take place.

Social and political systems cannot be submitted to such tests and the analyst must, therefore, rely on historical or anecdotal evidence obtained under anything but controlled conditions. For this reason historical political analysis deals largely with cataclysmic events where it is assumed that if the cause is significant enough the details of its interaction with and influence on the social system can be learned. This approach to the study of political change which is the one followed by most historians has usually yielded but little in the way of predicting the causal determinants for wars or the course of social change. It is in the fine details and their effects on the course of change that this information is buried.

My idea is to establish a dichotomy between those functions of government which are largely instrumental and can be assessed on a utilitarian basis and those which are subject to valuation. Valuation is a judgment not of utility but of consonance with a set of ethical precepts.\* My intent here is not only to avoid the ends-means trap, but to show in fact that ends and means, while judged differently, do affect each other.

In order to model this interaction, I have taken law enforcement to represent that aspect of government which can be subjected to a value-free analysis. Law enforcement in its most general connotation embodies all government functions pertaining to the execution of the law of the land. The narrower aspect of law enforcement, that is, maintenance of law and order, is, of course, subsumed here. In this broad context, law enforcement describes the actual business of government.

Which laws are to be enforced is a value judgment par excellence. Albeit both laws and law enforcement contain elements that are routinely subjected to value judgments as well as to utilitarian evaluation. The idealization introduced by the model is based on the common perception of the dominant feature of these functions. I wish to emphasize the fact that I am proposing a model rather than an explanation of violence.

It is here that a study of the violence in Colombia could make a real contribution. In the relatively short period of 50 years Colombia has passed through at least three cycles of violence and relative peace. The traditional historical cause could not be invoked as none could be identified. Colombia thus presents a unique opportunity to study the effects of violence and its containment. It, furthermore, permits us to do that without being distracted by the involvement in great international wars and their attendant sociological influences.

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\*The use of the term valuation is due to Gunnar Myrdal, Value in Social Theory, Harper & Brothers, N.Y., 1958.

In this document, Part I of a three part Research Paper, I examine some of the implications of the use of power for political ends. This discussion is quite general and is not specifically oriented toward Colombia. Part II, to be published later, leads off with a synoptic historical sketch of Colombia, followed by a descriptive account of La Violencia. Part III will contain whatever analyses and conclusions I am able to present.

## CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Concept of Power	3
Use of Military Power	5
Class Struggle and Wars of Liberation	8
The Insurgent Movement	11
The Government Channel	13
The Popular Channel	22
Centralization and Factionalism	26
Epilogue	29
Bibliography	31



## INTRODUCTION

Wars of liberation, insurgencies, Black Power, La Violencia--these are only a few of the terms used to describe a phenomenon widely held to be a unique attribute of our times. In fact, however, Babeuf, on trial for his attempt to overthrow the French government, said in 1797:

"There are epochs in history when the hard and inflexible laws of development have concentrated all the wealth of a people in the hands of a tiny minority.....The mass of the people is appropriated by others; they are confronted by a caste which has grabbed everything for itself and hangs on to it pitilessly. Such conditions determine the moment at which a mighty revolution breaks out. They precipitate one of these noble epochs, foreseen by the prophets of ancient times, in which a general upheaval in property relations becomes inevitable, and in which the revolutionary uprising of the poor against the rich becomes a historical necessity."\*

This was more than 50 years before the Communist Manifesto was issued, adding the theme that the poor cannot liberate themselves without changing [for the better] the whole society in the process.\*\* This same messianic trend is carried on by Mao Tse-tung and reappears in Guevara's advice to would-be guerrillas. There is a message here that seems to speak a universal language--the language of the have-nots. They are have-nots only in the sense that they have no material property. Nevertheless, it is they who are going to change the whole society and make it a better one. Their fight is not simply the fight of the poor against the rich; theirs is the fight of the whole human race:

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\*Julius Braunthal, History of the International, Volume I: 1864-1914, Praeger, N.Y., 1967, p. 33.

\*\*This view is also held by Stokely Carmichael and other radical Black Power advocates.

"In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class differences appears an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."\*

Needless to say, throughout history men have been willing to die for less.

Furthermore, inspired by this historical calling the movement has produced leaders which were the bane of the custodians of the status quo. Metternich's exasperated description has a hauntingly familiar ring as he exclaims:

"I have fought against the greatest soldier of our time; I succeeded in uniting Emperors and Kings, Tsar, Sultan, and Pope. But there was no man on earth who made things so difficult for me as that brigand of an Italian, lean, pale, in rags--yet eloquent like a tempest; ardent like an apostle; impudent like a thief; insolent like a comedian; unrelenting like a lover; and that man was Giuseppe Mazzini!"\*\*

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\*From the Communist Manifesto.

\*\*Braunthal, op. cit., p. 82.

## THE CONCEPT OF POWER

Talcott Parsons' definition of power as "the capacity to mobilize the resources of the society for the attainment of goals for which a general 'public' commitment has been made, or may be made,"\* fits our purpose very nicely. The exercise of this power leads, under certain circumstances, to war which is but a "continuation of state policy by other means" to use von Clausewitz's\*\* famous dictum. To von Clausewitz, war could never be separated from policy. In fact, he states:

"...war is an instrument of policy; it must necessarily bear the character of policy, it must measure with policy's measure."

Von Clausewitz (1780-1831), a contemporary of Metternich, lived during a period of history that had much in common with our own. The French Revolution reinvented the citizen army which, in his words, introduced:

"...that remarkable change...in the art of war in Europe, by which the best armies saw part of their method of war become ineffective and [French] military successes far beyond any previous conception were brought about."

He goes on to say:

"The tremendous effects...were evidently brought about much less by new methods and views introduced by the French in the conduct of war than by the change in the character of state craft and civil administration."

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\*Talcott Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies, Free Press, N.Y., 1960.

\*\*Karl von Clausewitz, War, Politics, and Power, Henry Regnery Co., Chicago, 1952.

One hundred and fifty years later, Bernard Fall observed: "We are not being outfought [in Viet Nam] but outadministered..."\*

In vain would we look for recipes to win wars, for the "best strategy," or for the ideal engagement, because, as von Clausewitz maintains, the nature of war tends to be governed by the policy of which war is only one of many instruments. The question is never answered as to how one translates policy objectives which can range from territorial acquisition to such vague goals as "maintaining an 'open door policy' in China," into military objectives and achievements. That is, of course, for good reason. Because it is only when the real achievements of war, which are defeat and destruction of the enemy's armed forces and the subsequent acquisition and control of enemy territory, are also congruent with the policy objectives that the translation can consistently be made. He blames the inability of governments to set military goals which would satisfy the nation's strategy objectives on the military as much as on the policy makers when he says, "...this did not occur because policy failed to consult its military advisors [for they themselves were] involved in the same error as policy, and, therefore, could not teach it better."

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\*Bernard B. Fall, Last Reflections on a War, Doubleday & Co., N.Y., 1967.

## USE OF MILITARY POWER

Wars can be classified as:

1. Wars of conquest
2. Political wars (civil as well as international)
3. Wars of liberation

The strategic objectives of wars of conquest are by far the simplest. The objective is to acquire a certain territory. The indigenous population is subjugated, and if expedient it is liquidated. This combination of territorial conquest and genocide is rare today but was quite commonplace in the period of colonization (1500-1800). In such a war, maximum military power is applied and the extent of the destruction wrought is usually not deemed important. Examples are the settling of North and South America.

Political wars are infinitely more complex. Those wars became more prevalent after the Industrial Revolution. The amount of territory that changes hands is usually quite small, while the ostensible ideological content of the casus belli is significant.

World War II is a good example of an international political war. Allied military power destroyed the Axis' war machine and in so doing brought the enemy governments down. The populations of the defeated countries accepted their new governments, which was the ostensible aim of this war. Territorial occupation by the Allies was mainly symbolic since violence actually stopped after the cease fire.

As a result of this war, Japan ceased to be the major military as well as economic power in the Pacific and was replaced by the United States. Germany lost its political hegemony over Europe and was replaced there by the United States as the major (and for a long time the

only) military power. Germany's industrial capacity was temporarily destroyed and those economic needs formerly supplied by Germany were satisfied by the United States. Italy lost relatively little.

Comparing World War II to a typical war of conquest like the conquest of Mexico by Cortés, we find that:

WORLD WAR II	CONQUEST OF MEXICO
The major combatants were the most industrialized nations.	Spain, a highly developed country by the standards of the 16th century, subjugated a primitive people.
All combatants brought more or less the same level of technology to bear on the conflict.	Spanish war technology faced an enemy barely out of the Bronze Age.
The amount of territory which eventually changed hands was essentially trivial.	Mexico became part of Spain.
Political changes imposed by the victors were largely limited to the replacement of hostile governments.	The existing political system was completely preempted by the Spanish Crown.
Social changes imposed were essentially negligible.*	Social and cultural changes were monumental; e.g., introduction of Spanish as the language of the area, and, of course, the activities of the Catholic missionaries.

This simple juxtaposition, however, is quite misleading. The strategic objectives of the Allies were to replace the enemy governments with governments that would be committed to pursue policies, particularly foreign policies, which were compatible with those of the Allies. The military goal was unconditional surrender. Whether such an extreme military objective was, indeed, necessary to satisfy the political objectives is still a matter of considerable debate. However, the absoluteness of the goal once it was established permitted the uncoupling of military efforts from political consideration. It turned the war into "absolute

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\*Japan is an exception, although the social changes in post-war Japan were not directly related to the Allies' war aims. The interplay between the social forces that found expression in those changes and the U.S. occupation of Japan was exceedingly complex and no doubt related to Japan's defeat.

war" in von Clausewitz's terminology--i.e., a war to the finish, no holds barred, and no resources spared.

When viewed in this light the purely military aspects of World War II become indistinguishable from a war of conquest, only here conquest was used as an instrument of policy rather than as an end in itself.

## CLASS STRUGGLE AND WARS OF LIBERATION

The Marxist concept of the class struggle envisages a conflict between the industrial proletariat and the capitalists who own the means of production. At the successful conclusion of the struggle, the proletariat will have acquired the means of production and put them to use for the benefit of the working class rather than the privileged few. It is to be noted here that this concept presupposes the existence of means of production; the class struggle is to return to the workers what is rightfully theirs but has been kept from them. Marx felt very strongly that capitalism is a necessary evil in the inexorable historical evolution toward communism. In fact, the Marxist theoreticians at the turn of the century thought of Russia as a very poor prospect for a communist revolution because of the very low level of capitalistic development. According to Regis Debray,\* the Soviet Marxists-Leninists-communists still maintain this position and are taking a rather dim view of "communist insurgencies" in the under-developed countries.

Faced with this dogmatic dilemma with respect to China, Mao Tse-tung redefined the class struggle as a war of liberation. Through a war of liberation, it is alleged a country can proceed from a pre-capitalistic stage directly to a communist one. The confrontation here is between the rural masses on one side and the land owners and the urban entrepreneurs on the other side.

A war of liberation is a considerably more complex social process than a Marxist class struggle. A successful war of liberation, and there are only few such examples,\*\* must create entirely new formal and

\*Regis Debray, "Revolution in the Revolution," Monthly Review, Vol. 19, No. 3, July-August, 1967.

\*\*China, Cuba, North Viet Nam.



informal social associations and above all must generate the values appropriate for the support of the war as well as for its eventual goals. It is the latter that has given the would-be revolutionary leaders their worst headaches, as they are so often dealing with the rural proletariat--the peasant and the farmer.\*

The essential characteristics of a war of liberation are:

1. Political mobilization of the rural masses by an effective political organization.
2. De-emphasis to the point of neglect of the revolutionary potential of the urban masses.
3. Goals which are not simply a change of government but the dislocation of the existing power structure and the substitution of an entirely new political system based on a communist or a communist-inspired version of the sovereignty of the masses.
4. Various economic measures dictated by ideological considerations.

This orthodox view of a war of liberation according to Mao Tse-tung has been recently challenged, among others, by Regis Debray\*\*\* on ideological grounds and by Alberto Gomez\*\*\*\* on tactical grounds. The difficulty of transposing tactics from country to country was most recently illustrated by Guevara's failure in Bolivia. The position that Alberto Gomez takes derives from Lin Piao's dichotomy of the world into the rich and the poor. Gomez notes, however, that the poor are not necessarily to be found only among the farmers, and that the congruence of rich-city and poor-country might have been peculiar to China. By returning to the urban proletariat some of the revolutionary potential that was historically theirs he moves much closer to the pre-Mao European revolutionaries.

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\*Farmers are probably the most tradition-minded individuals. The necessity to conform to certain rigorous patterns for preparing the soil, seeding, harvesting, etc., has certainly much to do with it. As a consequence, peasant revolts have rarely been more than the spontaneous expression of the inability to suffer inequities any longer--nothing more than a social protest. E. J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, Praeger, N.Y., 1959.

\*\*Debray, op. cit.

\*\*\*Alberto Gomez, "The Revolutionary Forces of Colombia and Their Perspectives," World Marxist Review, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 59-67, April 1967.

It is unlikely, in view of the increasingly effective counter-insurgency operations of most Latin American armed forces that future outbreaks of wars of liberation there will be based on the Cuban model. It was characteristic of the Cuban experience that political organization followed the assumption of power rather than preceded it. The wars which we shall have to contend with will be much closer to the traditional civil war than to either the Chinese or the Cuban model. There will be one big difference, however -- the simultaneous development of a political organization or infrastructure planted and nurtured by an effective party apparatus.

## THE INSURGENT MOVEMENT

Some necessary (pre-)conditions for the existence of an actual or potential state of insurgency are presented here. This discussion is limited in its applicability to countries which are usually referred to as "underdeveloped."

It is a cliché, albeit a useful one, to refer to the interaction of the government with the population as a "communication process," and mutatis mutandis to government agencies as "communication channels."\* It will become clear later that insurgents work simultaneously on two essentially nonviolent tasks--(1) to disrupt and if possible destroy or preempt the incumbent's communication channels, and (2) to establish their own. The latter attempt starts out as informal social organizations, overtly or covertly subject to party discipline, and eventually culminates in a full-fledged social communications network, i.e., a shadow or de facto government. Shadow governments just like the legitimate variety need to control individual freedom if the excesses of some are not to endanger the political appeal to the then uncommitted. The unusual savagery and brutality of the insurgent movements in Latin America is probably a good indication of lack of control, planning, and leadership.

Resting lightly on our introduction, let us then present four points:

1. The primary means of communication between the government and the population are its "law enforcement agencies."

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\*The considerable appeal of this purely descriptive metaphor derives from the possibility of describing various malfunctions as well as dysfunctions in such terms as: noise, channel capacity, etc., which have a high intuitive "information content." Douglas Pike, Viet Cong, The M.I.T. Press, Mass., 1966.

2. The primary means of communication between the population and the government are political (party) organizations.
3. Regional or social factionalism is a source of strength to the population and of weakness to the government. It facilitates intra-faction communication and impedes and at times minimizes the need for communication between the government and its people.
4. A low degree of interdependence between the factions and lower-level social organizational units promotes indifference to lack of communication with the government.

Points 1 and 2 are axiomatic whereas 3 and 4 can be and will be subjected to verification in Part III of this study.

Law enforcement in its most general connotation embodies all government functions pertaining to the execution of the law of the land. The narrower aspects of law enforcement, that is, maintenance of law and order, are, of course, subsumed here. In this broad context, law enforcement describes the actual business of government. The executive branch of the government is responsible for carrying out this mission.

Law enforcement in the sense which is intended here derives from the previously quoted definition of Talcott Parsons of power.\* Law enforcement as the execution of political power includes consequently the control and allocation of tangible assets like land as well as the disposition of revenue. Since manpower is an exceptional resource, the control of it must a fortiori be subsumed here. This control can be repressive as practiced in dictatorships or permissive as exemplified in a liberal democracy. The efficacy with which law enforcement is executed provides a useful scale against which the level of development of a country can be measured. Conversely, the level of development of a country sets an upper bound on the measure of political power the government can effectively wield at any given time. These two competing factors--level of development and government power--can be in equilibrium at a pitifully low level. The question then is how to disturb the equilibrium so that development can proceed. The communist doctrine

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\*Power is "the capacity to mobilize the resources of the society for the attainment of goals for which a general 'public' commitment has been made, or may be made," loc. cit.

asserts the need to acquire power first in order to force the rate of development up. The democratic way is to first force the rate of development up and hope that the appropriate political changes will follow. It is important to bear in mind that the time scales for those two approaches are radically different.

Based on our definition of law enforcement, the execution of government falls into three categories:

- (1) Resource acquisition
- (2) Resource control
- (3) Resource distribution

The first category provides the government with the wherewithal for the execution of its functions. It includes typically the collection of taxes and duties but also provides for the mobilization of the armed forces. All government activities in this category are likely to be of little direct benefit to the population and as such tend to be resented. On the other hand, those activities can be pursued even against strong opposition as long as the armed forces are sufficient in number and capability.

The second category embraces the protective, preventive, and punitive functions of the police and the judicial system. The control of physical resources includes such socio-economic measures as supervision of trade, both national and international, and currency restrictions. In this category, we find both kinds of activities--those that restrict an individual's freedom of action and those that protect it.

The last category is usually the responsibility of departments for education, social welfare, health, agrarian and business credit, etc. These departments distribute the benefits of living in an organized society.

#### The Government Channel

Civil servants, of sorts, are associated with each and every function indicated, and, therefore, on the person-to-person level, "communication" is effected by the civil servants in the responsible

agencies. Once the formal communication channel has broken down, it is difficult to re-establish it except by repressive means, even if only to capture an audience. Only a charismatic leader who can communicate directly with the people rather than through the civil service can still maintain contact.

The civil service looked upon as a communication channel is unidirectional, i.e., the flow of information is from the top government echelons down to the populace.\* By and large at the government-populace interface, the government is represented by the lowest ranking functionaries, e.g., by the tax collector rather than by the director of internal revenue. The director or occasionally even the finance minister will use the mass media to communicate with the population directly. Such attempts are fairly infrequent and pertain mostly to matters of principle rather than to the mundane business of collecting taxes.

Social organizations, whether large or small, operate according to certain rules. Some of these rules are codified into laws which are administered by the powers that be, while the "unwritten laws" are observed as expressions of a widely held value system. Such a value system encompasses, of course, infinitely more than what is categorized as "laws"; notably it includes what are commonly called norms and expectations. When these norms and expectations differ widely within

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\*The interchange of leadership for support takes place through what we call the system of representation. The basic structure of this system involves not only the formal mechanisms of government, but the various institutional practices found in democratic society--party systems and interest organizations--that serve to facilitate the interchange between authority and the spontaneous groupings of society which have specific interests. The representation system links authority (legislative, executive, and judicial) with a variety of subgroups such as religions, classes, ethnic groups, occupations, regions, and so forth. Representation is neither simply a means of political adjustment to social pressures nor an instrument of manipulation. It involves both functions. since the purpose of representation is to locate the combinations of relationships between parties and social bases which make possible the operation of efficient government. Introduction by Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Parties by Robert Michels, The Free Press. N.Y., 1962.

society, it may lead to a type of lawlessness engendered by what one may call social anomie. Personal anomie refers to a state of normlessness by an individual usually brought about by the absence of a reference group with which the individual can identify and with which the individual can communicate. Analogously, social anomie refers to the collective behavior of social groups under similar circumstances. When such a state exists, the enforcement of the unwritten laws, now being rejected by some part of the populace, adds to the already heavy burden of (written) law enforcement. This stage of mutual estrangement and dissidence is characterized by the fact that most of the written laws are still obeyed. If at this point the authorities feel that they are losing control, the tendency would be to use the police and other instruments of power, i.e., law enforcement agencies, in a repressive manner.

The fact that on the one hand the connection between taxes paid and government services rendered is not always visible, while on the other hand the individual tax collector is the only government representative the farmer is likely to encounter with any regularity makes tax collection an important irritant, if no worse. Let us then consider tax collection as a typical law enforcement activity and examine some of the plausible avenues for the expression of dissatisfaction by the tax payer.

The individual tax payer has learned from experience if by no other means that the individual tax collector is the "lowest man on the totem pole" and that complaints against the levying of taxes must be presented elsewhere. This is not to imply that the tax collector is accepted but that the unidirectionality of the civil service (as a communication channel) is a well recognized fact.

Should the tax payer feel that he is being taxed unfairly, he may seek relief either as an individual or in concert with like-minded citizens by the following means:

- A. Have the tax laws changed by legally available means, or go to legitimate (and different) tax agency personnel for redress.
- B. Bribe the tax collector and/or his superiors.
- C. Refuse to pay.
- D. Run the collector out of town.
- E. Kill the tax collector.

The extent to which the degree of lawlessness represented by successive responses B to E is institutionally acceptable depends on a number of factors. Let us then consider each response separately.

A. Have the tax laws changed by legally available means, or go to legitimate (and different) tax agency personnel for redress. This is the constitutional approach. In order for this response to be effective, the tax payer has to have access to and influence on the law makers. To be successful, the tax payer must be provided with a channel where the flow of communication is opposite to the civil service chain and be independent of it. This apparatus has traditionally been the political party. Where the law makers depend on the vote of the tax payer this institutional channel has worked fairly well. When the legislators are elected by a privileged elite or are "appointed" by a ruling oligarchy, they have shown little inclination to incur the displeasure of their benefactors in exchange for popularity. Where this situation prevails, the tax payer may choose any one of the remaining options. It is important to recognize that option A is the only "legal" one, and if this approach fails, the citizen has only two choices: either submit with resignation to a law perceived as unjust, or revert to extra- or nonlegal pressures. It should be emphasized that the fact that an act is illegal does not make it ipso facto socially unacceptable and vice versa. Where the acceptable level of violence is quite low the farmer may bribe the tax collector and/or his superiors.

B. Buying off the tax collector is facilitated by the absence of an effective supervisory apparatus. To the extent that the law enforcement capabilities of the government are marginal, the tax collector has to turn over at least part of his collection.

C. Where law enforcement is submarginal, the tax payer may refuse to pay. He feels justified to pursue this course for three reasons:



1. The tax is unjust,
2. The tax collector turns over to the government only a part of what he collects, and
3. He (i.e., the tax payer) can get away with it.

D. As the ability of the government to enforce its laws decreases, the defiance of the tax payer may lead him to an active antigovernment stance which may find its expression by making the (government) man lose face by running the collector out of town. Such an act would seriously impede the flow of communication between the government and the populace, since in underdeveloped countries the resource control and distribution services are in most cases either nonexistent or at best rather ineffective. Thus the lack of alternative channels almost forces the government to reopen the only one that operated even if that might and often does involve a show of force to rescue a faltering tax collection program. Since the law enforcement capability of the government is inadequate, otherwise things might have not deteriorated so far, it will not be able to protect the tax collector permanently.

E. The hostility engendered by repressive military or police actions might then give vent in an attempt to kill the tax collector.

In summary, we may classify generically the five responses as

- A. Constitutional redress.
- B. Corruption within the constitutional framework.
- C. Civil disobedience.
- D. Vigilantism.
- E. Violent disobedience ranging from isolated acts to full-fledged military actions--open insurgency.

These options are not mutually exclusive, in fact they usually co-exist ranging from the highest degree of lawlessness present to constitutional redress.

Let us now examine the plausible government responses. The government is likely to be driven by their perception of what they ought to do and their realizations of what in fact they can do. This might be taken as a definition of the perceived "slip" in control. This conflict between belief and reality, between value and utility or effectiveness

spawns institutional violence just as the conflict between belief and perceived reality drives the population into insurrection. If the slip be large, as it is very likely to be in underdeveloped countries, the government may attempt to gain and actually succeed to regain control by the ruthless application of force.

Such repressive activities of the authorities during the period when their actual control is slipping is referred to by Fals Borda\* as purposeful violence. The implication is that the authorities purposely engage in acts of violence to foster their own political motives and to impose their value systems onto the dissident population.

This official terror tends to be counterproductive because the authorities have no way of telling the fine differentiations between those who are their reluctant supporters and those who are in open rebellion. The many shades of dissent are all blended into one as objects of the indiscriminate official suppression. The reason, of course, that this situation prevails is that bidirectional lines of communication between the government and the rebellious population have never existed or, if they did, they were cut and all that remains is the unidirectional civil service.

For this repressive approach to accomplish its goal, it is crucial that any local successes be widely disseminated and for the message to be received by all dissidents and prospective insurgents. To the extent that the communication channels have been deactivated, the message will not be received or, if received, will be garbled. The insurgent network, if it is working, will, of course, take propagandistic advantage of the fact that while X incidents have taken place, the government was only responding Y times. The insurgents thus quite correctly identify the difference X-Y as a measure of inability of the law enforcement agencies to suppress the revolt. It is at this point that the dissidents and not only the leadership realize that laws can be broken with impunity. The gradual increase of lawlessness leads to

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\*Mons. German Guzman Campos, Orlando Fals Borda, Eduardo Umaña Luna, La Violencia en Colombia, Estudio de un Proceso Social, Volume I, Bogota, Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1963.

deeper and deeper estrangements till at one point the authorities are considered as the outsiders. If at this point in time the dissidents remain basically disorganized, they may engage in simple criminal lawlessness. It is very important to realize that criminal violence which is disorganized is relatively harmless from a political point of view.

During the stage of political development when the state of anomie or of cultural and moral alienation of the population deepens, it is almost impossible to tell whether the social organizational patterns that will develop will be based on traditional values or on new values preached by some messianic movement that might be trying to benefit from this state of tabula rasa to impose its own values.\*

A useful indicator of impending social tension can be found in the attitude toward social roles and status. Status is, after all, a manifestation of the existing social system and its values. When people begin to resent the attributes according to which status is established, it is the first indication of a rent in the social fabric.

It is obvious that the organization of modern western industrial nations is quite different from the original rural patterns. One of the first steps in the evolution of modern organizational patterns is the rationalization of agriculture. The land owner is replaced by a manager as the source of authority vis-à-vis the farmer. The manager has all

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\*Talking about social changes in American society, Merton makes the point that some tension is necessary: "...Strains [which]...represent a strategic source of [social] change...are the following: the extent to which Americans of different social strata have in fact assimilated the same culturally induced goals and values; the operation of social mechanisms, such as social differentiation, which minimize the strains resulting from those seeming contradictions between cultural goals and socially restricted access to these goals; the operation of psychological mechanisms whereby discrepancies between culturally induced aspirations and socially feasible attainments are made tolerable; the functional significance for the stability of the social system of having diverse occupations which provide distinctive nonpecuniary rewards, perhaps thus curbing otherwise intolerable strains; the extent to which these strains exert pressure for change upon the culture (substituting "security" for "ambition") and upon the social structure (changing the rules of the game to enlarge the area of economic and political opportunity for the previously disposed)." Social Theory and Social Structure by Robert K. Merton, The Free Press, 1964.

the ostensible attributes of authority except the intangible ones that the farmers are accustomed to associate with the status of landlord. This creates a fairly clean role conflict. The manager feels that he is not accepted in his role by the farmer, and the farmer finds it hard to identify the parvenu with the traditional source of authority. Once it has become clear to the farmer that authority can be delegated, it is only a small step further to ignore it.

All that we said so far is quite rational, but human behavior patterns are not solely based on sweet reason. The farmer and his landlord or local chieftain more likely than not had a special relationship. The master was accorded certain privileges and homage which in turn obligated the master to take care of his subjects in a certain way. Those are the unwritten laws of society. When the manager takes over, not only is he likely to be insensitive to this arrangement but, moreover, the farmer is likely to be quite unwilling to accept any largesse when not offered in the accustomed manner. In other words, the farmer may not reject the traditional values but only the official interpretation. A crucial question is how long a section of society can remain dedicated to its traditional values while losing confidence in its implementation. This is the conflict between ideal norms and expectations and the realistic assessment of achievement. Up to this point the dissidents are more nearly reformists; once they lose faith in the system they become truly revolutionaries.

This revolutionary attitude may remain hidden for a long time, waiting to be harnessed by an organization that has the ability to exploit its potential. A source of great puzzlement is the apparent willingness of revolutionaries to take upon themselves great hardships and to pursue a course that on the face of it appears hopeless. If the state of social anomie is in any respect comparable to personal anomie, then the individuals will be possessed by rather forceful suicidal tendencies, with the characteristic attitude that there is nothing to live for any more. This forceful and almost irreversible rejection of the traditional life when utilized by and channeled into a millenarian doctrine can become very heady stuff.

It is there that the resonance of communist doctrine with the traditional mode of thinking becomes of utmost importance. The most important religions of the Orient, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and their isomorphs are not really religions in the western sense. To the extent that they are at all deistic they represent syncretic deviations. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism are above all ethical systems and provide the individual with rules of behavior and prescriptions for personal salvation. Communism fits this pattern admirably--the quotations by Chairman Mao Tse-tung have all the frivolity of a catechism. The tone is exceedingly moralistic, and the exhortations to the faithful are couched in terms implying that each individual must make his contribution to the attainment of the millennium. The notion of the historical inevitability of the socialist takeover--which is used over and over again--is quite understandable to a farmer who is not at all concerned with questions of freedom of will and the attendant individual moral responsibility.

Catholicism, the dominant religion in Latin America, has been interpreted by rebellious priests as primarily a transcendental moral system without denying its divine inspiration. Leaning heavily on the teachings of Christ rather than the dicta of the Church, they have been able to reconcile religion with rebellion and collaboration with left-wing leaders.\*

The puritanical virtue so prominently displayed by some and aspired to by all the communist cadres is functioning to distinguish the true revolutionary, albeit an outlaw, from the common bandit. In this total state of confusion of traditional values rejected, status roles distorted, supportive social bonds broken, it is the communists with their "old-fashioned honesty" who represent moral strength.\*\*

In summary then, the ability of the government to communicate with its people is contingent upon an effective law enforcement apparatus--the government channel. A representative and responsive government needs in addition a feedback apparatus--the popular channel.

\*See, e.g., *The Revolutionary Manifesto of 35 Peruvian Priests*, La Prensa, Lima, Peru, March 22, 1968.

\*\*The moral fervor of the Black Muslims is another example.

## The Popular Channel

Lipset's comments on representation\* lend validity to the claim of all governments of being representative in a fashion. A government that is truly nonrepresentative will in a nonstatic society be also non-responsive and eventually dysfunctional. The proper question to ask, therefore, is not whether this or that government is responsive or not but to whom it is responsive. The broad representative characteristic of a democracy insures responsiveness to a wide section of the population, as was so well stated by Dr. Eduardo Santos in his presidential inaugural address in Bogotá in 1938:\*\*

"Political and social coexistence in our country implies the existence of distinct forces and [political] parties which interact. This interaction must take place without loss of identity of the various doctrines and aspirations; all of which must be accorded the same rights before the law."

He goes on to say:

"The indispensable and foremost prerequisite for this to take place is the realization within the government that during the pre-election period it must not put itself preferentially at the disposal of one group or another. It must dedicate itself to the task of protecting the freedom of expression of the citizens so that the formation of public power and the orientation of national policy can proceed without threat and fraud."

The manner in which this "representation" is accomplished takes many forms. In small social units, every voter can participate directly. In a modern industrial state, which is another extreme, representation takes often a tortuous path. Voters designate spokesmen who in turn may designate representatives. Where one man represents thousands of voters, he will have to be guided by some broad concepts and guidelines which he has reason to believe he shares with those he represents.

Attempts to solve the representation problem by ombudsmen or grievance cadres have not been successful.\*\*\* In either case, one has to

\*Footnote, p. 16.

\*\*El Tiempo, March 7, 1968.

\*\*\*The Ombudsman or Citizen's Defender: A Modern Institution, The Annals, Vol. 377, May 1968.

start from the premise that the legal framework for the redress of grievances exists, that the government is not only willing and able but in fact does satisfy the citizens, and that all that is required is to bring it to the government's attention. The rub is, of course, that the ombudsman represents an unorganized populace or an individual and thus cannot compel the government to act. Political parties, however, permit the people to deal with their government very much like collective bargaining of organized labor vis-à-vis management.

The current world-wide student unrest is a rare example of the effects of poor communication between one section of society and the government. It is truly fascinating to watch student behavior in New York City, Tokyo, Paris, Warsaw, Bogotá, Berlin, Madrid, and London and observe the same social process at work, completely independent of the fact that the governments range from liberal to conservative, from parliamentarian to authoritarian, from left to right, and all degrees in between.

The point I am trying to make is that no matter what the political system is called, it must perform basically the same functions. In order to perform these functions effectively it needs a channel to popular sentiment. The requirement on the channel is that it be independent of the law enforcement apparatus but parallel to it. Where this feature is lacking, communication is effected by extralegal means such as demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience, general strikes, assassinations, and eventually open rebellion.

Professor Jean-Claude Filloux, a sociologist who has been teaching at the Sorbonne for a number of years, observed that the student upheaval is:

"...very much a revolution in communication. While still forced to speak in old concepts, the students are on the verge of building a new political vocabulary to fit new conditions and new needs."\*

Even while democracies have been experimenting with multiple popular channels, authoritarian governments, both of the left and of

\*New York Times, May 17, 1968.

the right, have been trying to achieve the same goal through the single allowed party channel. It appears that neither the democratic system nor the authoritarian system is able to cope with a direct challenge to the law enforcement apparatus. Neither system has shown the flexibility demanded by a situation such as the one presented by the student unrest.

Nevertheless, it was only a few years ago that the simplistic division of the world, like Gaul of old, into three parts--(1) free, (2) communist, and (3) uncommitted--was believed to have some validity. Commenting on this phenomenon, a columnist for El Tiempo who writes under the nom de plume, SWANN observes:\*

The capitalistic and bourgeois thesis presupposes the existence of political minorities and concedes them the right to express themselves and to participate in government and society. This is violently opposed by the communist totalitarian antithesis which physically and intellectually eliminates its adversaries and proscribes any freedom of discussion which is considered a personal deviation. It appears, however, that we are rapidly approaching the threshold of the synthesis,...

\* \* \* \* \*

There are the unequivocal signs expressed in the modernization of the Catholic church and its desire for integration with the separatist churches; there are the guerrillas; there are the student rebellions in all countries; there is the permeability of national boundaries; there are the common markets; there is the political alliance of groups of countries and the dislocation of other groups before such consolidation. There is the demographic anxiety, the anxious yearn for rebellion and democratization of the socialist countries and the socialist and totalitarian clamor in the liberal countries.

\* \* \* \* \*

Therefore, even were one finds that this is not an exclusively economic crisis like in the early times of Marx and the spinning mills of Manchester but it is universal and metaphysical.

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\*El Tiempo, April 14, 1968.



The relevance of the student riots to a better understanding of the function of the popular channel lies in the following. When a serious problem arises and the existing channels appear unable to handle it, new channels arise spontaneously or otherwise. If the government recognizes this channel as legitimate, the sort of adjustments that Lipset refers to can take place. If the government, however, for whatever reason refuses to tune in, then there are ordinarily only two options left: either the resort to extralegal pressure such as violence or the attempt to activate existing and accredited channels to carry the message.

Resort to the former is facilitated by the precipitants of revolution, i.e.,

In each case, a dictatorial figure or group openly and cynically denied the electorate the opportunity to select its own leadership. Such open defiance of the nation was more than simply a breach of constitutional norms: it showed contempt for the citizenry. In each case, the arbitrary and violent measure discredited the group involved [the incumbents] revealed its reliance on force rather than consent and provided moral and political justification for revolution.\*

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\*Cole Blasier, "Stories of Social Revolution: Origins in Mexico, Bolivia, and Cuba." Latin American Research Review, 1, 1, p. 39, 1967.

### Centralization and Factionalism

Adam Smith wrought a truly monumental political revolution with his concept of "division of labor." According to this precept, each produces that for which he is best qualified by virtue of equipment, resources, or both. This applies to individuals singly or in association, as well as to nations. The implementation of this economic strategy did much toward maintaining the underdeveloped countries as suppliers of resources and in their state of development. Division of labor, however, was a mixed blessing for both the industrialized nations who processed the raw materials and the countries that concentrated on extractive industries. While this arrangement made large colonial empires economically very attractive, it made them also in the long run politically unstable. The interdependence which was the functional feature for the colonial powers was dysfunctional for the economic development of the dependencies. Being dysfunctional, it required more and more force on the part of the colonial powers to hold their empires together, till the cost of maintaining the empire exceeded the benefits of preferential economic bonds with the colonies. At this point, the arrangement became dysfunctional for all concerned and the empires disintegrated. Interdependence here as everywhere else created the need for governmental police power.

On a smaller scale within a nation one meets again with the problems created by division of labor, with the ensuing interdependence and the need for a central government to wield the police power. In an underdeveloped country, however, one starts out with a situation where the bulk of the population is engaged in agriculture and produces almost everything for the satisfaction of the needs of the family or clan. Their dependence on outsiders is usually limited to suppliers of salt, clothing, medicine, possibly liquor and tobacco. The trade involved is generally so small that one can hardly talk of a money economy. It is difficult to see at that stage any function a central authority could usefully perform. The government, such as there is, in its quest to raise the standard of living, must transform this pastoral way of life into one compatible with a money economy.

When the existing social order with its geopolitical divisions is based on economic interests fortified by ethnic or cultural bonds, it presents to the central government a tough nut to crack. The nut must be cracked if Lokalpatriotismus is to be replaced by a sense of nationhood. As long as the traditional order is viable, it is a source of strength in the fight against the encroachment of the power of the central government. The strength derives from the simple view that the central government has apparently nothing to offer that the traditionalists would like to have. It is in this spirit that Ralph Waldo Emerson exclaims: "The less government we have--the better."\*

The communists have always appreciated the need to foster economic interdependence in order to force dependence on the central government. The ruthless collectivization of agriculture serves this purpose very well. The elimination of minifundias with their tiny cash crops and subsistence farming drives the peasants into a larger money economy and into reliance on the regulatory functions of the central government. Once the government is able to present itself as a functional organization, it can also begin to establish a basis for the workings of its law enforcement machine, i.e., the acquisition and control of resources.

The democratic way to an effective central government is a rocky road indeed. Democracy, both political and economic, is based on a dynamic state of equilibrium of social and economic tensions brought about by the interaction of many relatively small units. This fosters traditionalism and factionalism which is completely antithetical to the spirit of a strong central government. The dilemma then is how to bring about the needed modernization without destroying the polycentrism so essential to the workings of a democracy.

Assuming that the central government claims to represent the forces of democracy while the insurgents are labeled as communists, one is likely to be confronted with a rather odd scenario. The government, in order to establish and assert political (not military) control of the countryside, engages in "pacification" programs. These efforts are meant to raise the standard of living of the farmers while simultaneously engendering loyalty

\*Ralph Waldo Emerson, On Politics, 1841.

and dependence on the capital. Pacification thus tends to undermine the independence that is so much a feature of the democratic process.

The insurgents on the other hand encourage separatism as an obvious counter to government control, relying however on the transcending unifying power of an ideology based on the concept of the identity of interest of all exploited. The revolution is thus embedded in a traditionalist-matrix--not destroying it, but slowly dissolving it--that is the true nature of political subversion. It is the employment of traditional means for revolutionary ends.

## EPILOGUE

The model which I have presented is to serve as a conceptual framework for the analysis of violence and political change. There are at least two ways to analyze any phenomenon: assume a model and try to see whether the data corroborate the model, or attempt to extract a model from the analysis of the data. I have chosen the former. Model-building has to be always ahead of the available facts if the model is to serve as a guide to the ordering of the data and be the driving force behind the analysis. This mixture of perception and pre-scientific analysis which model-building requires Schumpeter calls the researcher's vision. Specifically, he notes:

"This work [of model-building] consists of picking out certain facts rather than others, in pinning them down by labelling them, in accumulating further facts in order not only to supplement but in part also to replace those originally fastened upon, in formulating and improving the relations perceived--briefly in 'factual' and 'theoretical' research that go on in an endless chain of give and take, the facts suggesting new analytic instruments (theories) and these in turn carrying us towards the recognition of new facts."\*

I have attempted to preserve in my model the functionalistic viewpoint so eloquently defended by Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, and their followers while paying heed to Gunnar Myrdal's admonition that "there is no way of studying social reality other than from the viewpoint of human ideals."\*\*

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\*"Science and Ideology," *The American Economic Review*, March 1949, p. 350 (quoted in Value in Social Theory).

\*\*Gunnar Myrdal, Value in Social Theory, Harper & Brothers, N.Y., 1958.

I have tried to avoid the Scylla of ultimate functionalism which in a reductio ad absurdum could reconcile itself to Mussolini's fascism since "he made the trains run on time," without falling into the Charybdis of sterile dogmatism. A true revolution is man against machine: be that the computer or bureaucracy, diesel locomotives, or the multiversity. The fight is for the control of the machines; the destruction attempted by the Maschinenstürmer was counterrevolutionary if anything.

Values determine in the last analysis who is to control what for whose benefit rather than considerations of efficiency or effectiveness. When this controlling function becomes divorced from the popular will and ceases to be amenable to popular influence for lack of communication, one reaches a situation where "taxation without representation" becomes unbearable and open rebellion is born.

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<p>Political violence is treated as one of the manifestations of a lack of communication between the government and the populace. A highly simplified model is proposed to represent the interaction between value determined behavior and value-free government functions. The validity of this model will be examined in a subsequent study of the violence in Colombia.</p>		

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