

ON REVOLUTION

(A paper submitted by Shri D. B. THENGADI
to the National Executive of Bharatiya
Mozdoor Sangh on 23rd October, 1976.)



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Empire in India is the reward given by Allah sitting in the barrel of a gun."

The illustrious names of revolutionaries from 1857 to 1947 are too well-known.

Thus, political violence is a phenomenon not unknown to Indian history.

(It is, however, worth noting that the successor of king Vena became himself a tyrant in course of time.)

Marxism and Revolutions

Many in this country mistakenly identify revolutions with Marxism. They forget the fact that long before the birth of Marxism the West witnessed Cromwellian revolution of 1649, the American revolution of 1778, and the French revolution of 1789. Again, though Marxism preaches violence, and nothing but violence, it is significant that Engels wrote in 1847 in his treatise, 'Principles of Communism,' "Communists know only too well that revolutions are not only useless but even harmful. They know all too well that revolutions are not made intentionally and arbitrarily, but that everywhere and always they have been the necessary consequence of conditions which were wholly independent of the will and direction of individual parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat in nearly all civilized countries has been violently suppressed and that in this way the opponents of communism have been working towards a revolution with all their strength." Marxism is indisputably wedded to violence. But recently some national Communist parties have put forward the non-Leninist idea that they may conquer political power without violence, and, though their bonafides may not be above suspicion simple justice requires, as Prof. Sydney

Hook observes, "the recognition that they too find the ideologists of violence in some countries somewhat of an embarrassment."

In colonial Countries, the Marxist revolutionary leaders appealed to their compatriots in the name of patriotism, though they were cautious enough to state simultaneously that 'genuine patriotism' is 'part and parcel of internationalism.' For example Ho Chi Minh reported in 1951 "Our people are ardent patriots. This is our invaluable tradition. To-day, as in the past, every time the Fatherland is invaded their patriotism boils over in a wave of great violence that sweeps all dangers and difficulties and drowns all the traitors and aggressors." A recent trend in the Communist world to 'nationalize' Marxism by making it compatible with the national culture and traditions must also be taken into account. A determined effort by Mao to 'sinify' Marxism is already well-known in our country. The character of Marxism thus 'nationalized' becomes very much different from the text-book Marxism. It invariably contains an element of 'nationalism.'

This is just to suggest that straight-jacket thinking in this respect will not be realistic.

Excluded Categories

But some categories of violence do not deserve serious consideration here. Firstly, the instinctive or the pre-planned reaction of the people to the violence by opportunist hoodlums patronised by the government. Because, in fact, they are government agents and, in that sense, a part of the Establishment. Secondly, the unplanned violent reaction to the violence organised by a government against itself in a 'Reichstag Fire' style. For example, on March 6, 1971, the

Ceylonese Govt. alerted the army and the police, and staged a provocation by organising a petrol bomb attack on the US embassy. The Govt. attributed this action to the opposition despite its denial of responsibility, and invoked special powers under the Public Security Act. The Govt. declared Emergency, imposed a curfew throughout the Island, arrested all known militants and leaders of the people and shot down a number of them.

The on-the-spot reaction to this type of officially-inspired, provocative violence is obviously outside the purview of this paper.

Such official violence can also be directed against minorities, such as, the Jews in Hitler's Germany or the Hindus in Pakistan.

The Ku-Klux-klan-type activities, including lynching, can also evoke violent resistance. But it is also outside the purview because it does not or at least did not so far, bring about any change of regime.

The Forms

In his 'Coup d'Etat,' Edward Luttwak, improving upon the 'Technique of the Coup d'Etat' by Curzio Malaparte, says that a coup consists of the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder. 'Civil war' is actual warfare between elements of the national armed forces leading to the displacement of a government; 'pronunciamiento,' a take over by a particular army leader who carries it out in the name of the entire officer corps; 'putsch,' an attempt by a formal body within the armed forces under its appointed leadership; and 'liberation', in modern times, the

overthrow of Govt. by foreign military or diplomatic intervention, aiming first to set up a rival state structure. Basing his conclusions on the experience of the 88 coups and attempted coups in 36 countries between 1945 and 1967, Luttwak lays down certain pre-requisites for the success of a coup. It is evident from the facts furnished by him that in a vast and multi-central country like India, the technique of coup cannot succeed. In civil war, pronunciamiento, putsch, or liberation, the civilian population is allotted only a passive role; the people can neither initiate nor influence these operations. Consequently, it is the army, and not the people that dominate the new regime. If the army leaders choose to become authoritarian, - and there is no reason why they should not do so, the people are again equally helpless. They just shift from frying pan to fire. What people can bring about depending mainly upon their own will power is resistance, rebellion, revolt and revolution. True, even in this process, it becomes necessary to neutralise or win over the army. But the lead lies with the people, and role of the army becomes auxiliary or supplementary.

Minimum Pre-requisite

The minimum pre-requisite for the launching of a violent revolutionary war has been prescribed by Che Guever in the following words :

“It must always be kept in mind that there is a necessary minimum without which the establishment and consolidation of the first centre (of rebellion) is not practicable. People must see clearly the futility of maintaining a fight for social goals within the framework of civil debate. When the forces of oppression come to maintain themselves in power against established law, peace is considered already broken.

In these conditions, popular discontent manifests itself in more active forms. An attitude of resistance crystallizes in an outbreak of fighting, provoked initially by the conduct of the authorities.

Where a government has come into power through some form of popular vote, fraudulent or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, the guerrilla outbreak cannot be promoted, since the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not been exhausted."

It is noteworthy that industrial backwardness of and discrimination against Scotland and Wales, internal conflicts in Canada and Belgium along linguistic regional lines, or infusions of migrant foreign labour in West Germany, Switzerland, France and Britain, have not given rise to any revolutionary efforts, and in U. S. A., though there are black revolutionaries resolved to overthrow the social system, the vast majority of Negroes, Red Indians, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans are not yet a party to any such move. The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) continues to believe in constitutional pressures, and the disciples of Martin Luther King are still clinging to the possibility of achieving their goal through non-violent mass action and the Christian appeal. Notwithstanding the revolutionary potentialities of the young and the black in U. S. A. the surge of West German student demonstrations in 1967, tumultuous events of May-June 1968 in France, and the Catholic revolt in Northern Ireland, it can be safely asserted that the cult of violence is not gaining any appreciable ground in Western democratic countries. It is presently of only peripheral significance.

A new trend in some national communist parties, like those in Italy and France, is already mentioned. It is, however, a fact that the situation in undemocratic countries is different.

Personal Equipment

It is noteworthy that the personal equipment of an underground activist of a non-violent revolution is very much the same as that prescribed by Carlos Marighella for a guerrilla fighter, though the material equipment prescribed by him for the latter is certainly irrelevant in case of the former.

For example, Marighella says that guerrilla fighter must have courage, a spirit of initiative, imagination and creativity. He must be a good tactician (and a good shot) and must make up for his inferiority in weapons, ammunition and equipment by his skill and cunning. He must be mobile, flexible, able to adapt to circumstances, and able to keep a cool head. He must be a good walker, resistant to fatigue, hunger, rain and heat. He must be able to hide and keep watch, know the arts of disguise, never be intimidated by danger, act as easily by night as by day-but never precipitatively, possess unlimited patience, keep calm and clear-headed in even the worst predicaments, never leave a trace behind, and never be discouraged. He must not appear different from anyone else..... He must never speak of his activity to anyone. He must have a great capacity for observation. He must be well-informed, specially as to the enemy's movements, good at asking questions, and thoroughly familiar with the terrain he is working in———, Addresses, names, telephone numbers and route plans must never be written down. Plans should be secret — everyone knowing details

pertaining to his own assignment. Notes on the margin of newspapers, papers left somewhere, visiting cards, letters, tickets—all these should be destroyed. He must memorise meeting places. A guerilla who is arrested must say nothing that could damage the organisation, causing the arrest of any other comrades, or the discovery of any of the places where they keep arms and ammunition.

(For revolutionary leaders the supreme quality required is mental, rather than mere physical toughness. The will power ! Both Che Guevara and Charu Muzumdar suffered from chornic maladies.)

The following seven deadly sins deserve to be avoided as much by a non-violent guerrilla as by a violent guerrilla : Inexperience; Under-estimate or Over-estimate of strength; Boast-fulness; Over-valuing one's own role. Disproportion between our action and our logistic infrastructure; Precipiteness-out of impatience; Temerity, and Improvisation.

In 1950 Ho Chi Minh instructed his revolutionary followers to 1) heighten discipline; 2) strictly carry out orders from higher leaves; 3) love the soldiers; 4) respect the people; 5) take good care of public property and war booty; 6) sincerely make criticism and self-criticism.

He further drew their attention to the following points: 1) conducting propaganda; 2) not indulging in subjectivism and under-estimating the enemy; 3) winning time in order to make preparations; and 4) keeping absolute secrecy.

Such instructions are equally useful, with some variation for organising non-violent revolutions also.

Terrain : The Base.

The favourable nature of terrain is important for the success of violent revolutionary guerrilla activities. For exa-

mple, as Robert Taber states about the base' of the Cuban revolutionaries under Castro, "Sierra runs more than one hundred miles east and west and is fifteen to twenty five miles deep. Simple arithmetic shows how impossible was the task set for the army given a trackless terrain of precipitous and thickly-wooded mountains." Airforce or artillery cannot do much against revolutionary force in such a terrain. In India, Shivaji could not have successfully employed his guerrilla tactics in the vast Gangetic plains which disappointed Tania Tope who adopted guerrilla tactics after the fall of Bareilly and Lucknow, and showed skill in mobile warfare in Central India (which comprises such terrains). Could Tania's following General Order be implemented in the Northern plains :—

"Do not attempt to meet the regular columns of the infidels because they are superior to you in discipline, bandobast, and have big guns, but watch their movements, guard all the ghats on rivers, intercept their communications, stop their supplies, cut their daks and posts, keep constantly hanging about their camps, give them no rest."

"A region that is more rural than urban, mountainous rather than flat, thickly forested rather than with extensive railway lines and roads, and an economy that is preponderantly agricultural rather than industrial," is eminently suited for guerrilla activity.

The limitations of military power in difficult terrain were highlighted by Senator George Mac Govern when he said "There in the jungle of Asia, our mighty nuclear arsenal, our 50 billion arms budget, our costly new "Special Forces" have proved powerless to cope with a band of ragged guerrillas fighting with home made weapons....."

So far as India is concerned, though it is for the experts to precisely locate, on the strength of an analysis of the geographical and demographic structures, areas favourable for initial guerrilla operations, it can be safely stated that our vast plains are not suited to such operations, that the suitable areas are not fairly contiguous, and that the political, administrative centre of the country is situated in the midst of plains only. The terrain counts in war as well as in revolutions. Had the adjacent areas of Delhi been mountainous, the invader of 1761 would have been vanquished even before he could reach the battlefield of Panipat.

No doubt, Carlos Marighella has perfected the technique of urban guerrilla warfare. Murder and kidnapping of foreign officials; the burning down of television and radio stations; the bombings of newspaper offices and government and military buildings; train robberies; bank robberies; release of political prisoners through the seizure of hostages; expropriation of arms and goods belonging to the government, large capitalists and landlords; tactical street fighting to gain the participation of the urban masses, mutinies inside or attacks on prisons; industrial strikes; all these have their own importance: but these can be effective only under certain conditions. In most Latin American countries 50 per cent or more of the total population lives in three or four major cities, while in Uruguay or Chile almost one third of the population lives in one city. Urban terrorism cannot yield results where the population is distributed in different fashion - which is the case in India.

Outside - Help

The non-violent revolutionaries do not consider it ethical to receive any material aid from any foreign power

though they certainly realise the value of international propaganda. On the other hand, most of the successful revolutionary wars after the second world war were fought with the help of some foreign power or other. The Algerian revolutionaries received considerable aid from Egypt, and had their privileged sanctuary in Tunisia. General Giap has himself acknowledged 'the significant change that was brought about by Red China's occupation of the areas bordering on Vietnam in December 1949. By the end of 1950, the entire Sino-Vietnamese border was cleared of French-held forts, and the Chinese territory on the other side of the border became active sanctuary for training regular Vietnamese divisions and fulfilling logistic and other military requirements of the Vietnamese guerrillas.

The strategy of Mao to convert an area on the Sino Soviet border into his base of operation is quitewell-known. The Greek revolutionary army depended for its supplies upon Yugoslavia and Albania. Meo tribesmen in North Thailand were trained in North Vietnam. Who is not already aware of the role of Cuba in some revolutions in Africa and Latin America, and the Chinese assistance to Nagas of India, Shans and kachins of Burma, revolutionaries in Laos, Malasia iand Cambodia, Palestinain Guerri-llas the PFL of the Arab Gulf, and guerrilla fighters in some African countries ?

It can be concluded that 'no guerrilla campaign in recent years has ultimately prevailed without large-scale infusion of out side aid and arms,' though such an aid does not come forth to assist the guerrillas of any country whose success is not likely to have any impact on inter national order, as was the case of guerrillas of tiny Chad fighting against the French rule. On the contrary, Tupa-

maros of Uruguay acquired importance out of all proportion to the size (less than 19 million hectares) and population (3 million) of their country because it is sandwiched between the two giants of the continent—Argentina and Brazil. And both Castro of Cuba and Allende of Chile saw Uruguay as a centre for promoting successful revolutions throughout South America.

Even today, the 5000 Rhodesian black guerrillas have made their base in Mozambique and are receiving supplies from and through Zambia.

Recently, Dr. Agostinho Neto, Angolan President, has publicly expressed his "most profound gratitude" to at least 9 communist and 5 non-communist countries.

Arms and Popular Support.

The arm-chair revolutionaries are under an impression that the first and foremost requirement of a violent revolution is an adequate supply of sophisticated arms. They will be surprised to learn from the A. P. report that :

"Often a Vietcong unit is organised initially with no weapons. The political organiser tells his men and women, they must fight at first with handmade arms—spears, daggers, swords and crude shotguns. To get better weapons the unit must capture them from the enemy."

Though arms are certainly important, the outcome of a revolution is decided by the people, not by sophisticated weapons.

Che Guevara observes, "The guerrilla fighter needs full help from the people of the area. This is an indispensable condition. This is clearly seen by considering the case of bandit gangs that operate in a region. They have all the characteristics of a guerrilla army : homogeneity, respect for

the leader, valour, knowledge of the ground, and often, a very good understanding of the tactics to be employed. The only thing missing is support of the people. And, inevitably, these gangs are captured and exterminated by the public force." Neither supplies nor civil organisation, nor intelligence, nor propaganda, nor sabotage, nor medical care, nor even concealment is possible without popular support.

What distinguishes revolutionaries from bandits is their idealism, their zeal for the 'cause' their moral and ideological superiority to the forces of the Establishment; on account of these factors, people consider them as more trustworthy.

It is impossible to stamp out guerrillas in rural areas where they have support of the rural population, which ensures, among other things, co-operation regarding intelligence also.

The primary effort of the guerrilla is to militate the population, without whose consent no government can stand for a day. Conscious efforts are made to disturb links and lines of communication between the Administration and the people, and to bring about psychological estrangement between the two.

'A guerrilla fighter is an armed civilian whose principal weapon is not his rifle, nor his machete, but his relationship to the community, the nation.'

A guerrilla is more political than military in character. Moral superiority, idealism and self-sacrifice of revolutionaries; counter-terrorism or repressive measures by the Govt; propaganda value of guerrilla action on national and international plane; dislocation of orderly administration and transport; need to ensure continual crippling pressure of armed guard at every place, every time; the intolerable strain on the exchequer and consequently on the taxpayers;

all these factors have a cumulative effect of antagonising the entire population against the Establishment, and the consequent popular support to revolution is the ultimately decisive factor. That is why the revolutionaries could succeed in Ireland, Cuba, Zanzibar, Cyprus and Israel (anti-British) with a comparatively modest figure of casualties on their side.

The following facts, expressed in the words of the authorities on the subject of 'revolution' are quite revealing.

The main reason for the failure of the three-year Greek revolution (1946-49) was the alienation of the guerrilla forces from the general population and their terrorism against civilians, though there were other contributory factors also, such as, their dependence upon foreign bases and supplies, and their premature decision in 1948 to hold ground and to expose large formations to a numerically, technologically, logistically, and organisationally superior army of the Establishment.

Magsaysay could foil the designs of the Huk revolutionaries in Philippines because the latter failed to establish anything like a popular front during a period when, urban support, the participation of students, industrial workers and the poorer white collar class, was clearly required. They failed to seize and hold the popular imagination and so to create the broad mass unrest needed to topple the Government or to build a revolutionary army capable of confronting and defeating the Govt. army.

In Malaya, the Malayan Races Liberation Army had very few Malaysians in it, being composed almost exclusively of Chinese, and more particularly, of the large squatter population of recent Chinese immigrants, with no deep roots in the country. That is why the insurgents could be

isolated from the people, more particularly after the implementation of a massive resettlement programme for the benefit of half a million Chinese Squatters. Isolated from the people, the revolutionaries were starved into submission or lured into disastrous ambushes.

The April, '71 insurrection of Ceylon was a failure because, in the words of Rohan Wijeweera, ".....the conditions were not ripe for organising an armed revolutionary uprising to seize state power..... It has not reached a stage where the masses saw no other solution but revolution."

Raul Sandie of Uruguay failed in his plan on April 14, '72 because he did not take due cognizance of the people's verdict against revolution in the Presidential election of November 28, '71.

In 1948, the Communist Party of Soviet Union abruptly changed its international policy at the inspiration of Zhdanov and consequently the CPI announced that India was ripe for a revolutionary seizure of power; but in the absence of mass support its strategy ended in fiasco, notwithstanding its limited success in Telengana.

Regarding the Naxalite Movement the following remarks of a correspondent of 'Economic and Political Weekly' (22nd July 1972) are worth being quoted extensively :

" Misinterpreting the symptoms of discontent in the wake of spiralling food crisis, all agog over reading Lin Biao's thesis about how the country surrounds and encircles the city, they concluded that the revolution was for the taking. No need to organize the masses before the event, they will join the revolution once the sparks start flying, no need to be excessively mulish about imparting political education to fresh recruits, even the so-called anti-social

elements, wagon-breakers and professional murderers included, would be pressed into service; let violence be afoot for fire turns everything pure and once the revolution is abroad in India in the afterglow nobody will be sorry if the person who slashed the throat of the class enemy was a genuine ideologue or a ruffian from the market place. Revolution by the short cut was Charu Muzumdar's obsession. The pragmatist goondas with whom he had struck an alliance soon deserted him; the police,..... they soon discovered, had a better percentage to offer. Amble down the streets and by-lanes of Calcutta, it will be a revelation of a sort; the same young men who, two seasons ago, steeped in the teachings of Muzumdar, were scribbling invocations to Mao Tse-Tung are now engaged, on a full time basis, in deification of Indira Gandhi..... so much is lost for the traditional leftist movement in the country. Who knows what historical process has been served by this rearsome catharsis. ?”

All these examples illustrate the axiom that without mass participation and popular support, there can be no revolution.

On the contrary, the Irish revolutionaries of the Easter Rebellion who were unpopular in 1916 began to win popularity after the fifteen leaders of the Rebellion were shot dead by the British who also prepared a repulsive conscription act to draft Irishmen of military age as recruits for first world war. Martyrdom of Terence Macswiny who died in Brixton Jail after a hungerstrike lasting seventy four days, finally united the entire people against the foreign rulers, while the whirlwind tour of U. S. by De Valera mobilised world opinion in favour of the Irish cause. The counter-terrorism of the government defeated its own purpose. With the hostility of the entire population, the Britishers found it unprofitable and too costly to hold on in Ireland.

Explaining the factors responsible for the guerrillas' success in Cyprus, General Grivas, the leader of the non-communist, patriotic guerrillas, writes, "I laughed aloud when I read that General A or Brigadier B had come to Cyprus to put into operation the methods that had won him fame elsewhere. They could not understand that the Cyprus struggle was unique in motive, psychological circumstances, and involved not a handful of insurrectionists but the whole people."

The long march of Mao which lasted a year and covered about eight thousand miles could not have been undertaken at all, had the popular sympathies not been with the revolutionary forces. Resistance movements operating against collaborators with the Nazi occupation forces in Europe had all-out support of their respective peoples.

Lacking weapons and manpower and the capacity for sabotage or guerrilla warfare, the revolutionaries in Palestine and Morocco resorted mainly to individual terrorism against their British and French masters respectively. Their purpose was to demonstrate to the foreign rulers the immense cost in money and manpower of continuing to rule in the face of popular resistance, and to arouse the people until one and all were united in opposition to the foreigner.

The tenacity of Algerian guerrillas, who fully utilised the inaccessible Aurès region and the massive support of the people, enabled them to defy French forces and create a huge drain on French manpower and the French treasury. Full scale guerrilla warfare was launched by them more for its psychological effect than for practical military reasons.

In all these cases, a situation was developed under which the authorities could have maintained themselves

only by making war on the entire population. No foreign power can continue for long under such condition; the continuance becomes still less practicable in case of native dictatorships.

Ian Smith of Rhodesia and John Vorster of South Africa will also be forced to realise this fact before long.

A careful study of a recent survey of over 80 organisations engaged in some kind of violence of guerrilla nature, urban or rural, in nearly 50 countries, will prove conclusively that while both, arms and popular support, are essential for the success of a violent revolution, the latter is more decisive than the former.

It is true that it is comparatively easier to win popular support for a struggle against foreign rulers; but it is not that simple when the government to be opposed is swadeshi, though the matters are less difficult when such a government is a known satellite of some foreign power.

Revolutionary Education

Internal propaganda is sufficient to ensure popular support. But the cadres cannot be raised only on the strength of propaganda. This necessitates revolutionary mass education. Again, every revolution is expected to accomplish two different tasks — destruction of the present regime and construction of a new order. The first one may in some cases be carried out even without revolutionary mass education; but in its absence it is simply impossible to consolidate the gains of the first phase of revolution and undertake and accomplish the second task. Hence the importance of such education.

Education is to be distinguished from mere propaganda. Propaganda aims at winning over the popular sympathies in varying degrees—the least to be expected from it being

the benevolent neutrality. Education enables the people to become equal partners in revolutionary activities. Propaganda is a one way traffic, proceeding from the top to the bottom. Education is a dialogical process in course of which the leaders come in direct and constant contact with the people, learn from them (i. e., the people) what they consider to be their problems, conduct joint thinking accepting the people as co-partners, and reconvey them in clear terms what they receive from them confusedly. Revolutionary education starts from the needs of the masses—the needs that are uppermost in their conscious minds and also those of which they are not yet conscious. To make them conscious of their own inner urges is a very patient process; but there is no substitute for it. And, again, the subjects of joint investigation must be the actual needs perceived by the people. They are to be helped in discovering their own mental processes, and this cannot be done unless these leaders understand perfectly the mind of the masses, allow the latter to understand their own (i. e. the leaders') mind, and strive jointly to understand the reality surrounding them. When as a result of his patient process the people begin to place trust in themselves and in the revolutionary leaders, as the former perceive the dedication and authenticity of the latter, the higher idealism of the latter is unconsciously absorbed by the former.

This is a very slow and patient process. The leaders addicted to the get quick popular methods of parliamentary democratic system may find it extremely difficult to adapt themselves to this process. Again, the size of the population and general level of literacy and political consciousness are the factors that must be taken into account.

Revolutionary Leadership

The revolutionary leaders do not treat people as things

to be used. They love the people and are willing to sacrifice themselves for them. Che Guevara says, "Let me say, with the risk of appearing ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of love. It is impossible to think of an authentic revolutionary without this quality."

Because of this instinctive love, revolutionary leaders do not manipulate; they educate and organise.

As Frier puts it, "Leaders who do not act dialogically but insist on imposing their decision, do not organise the people, they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated; they oppress." Such leaders have no faith, no trust in people. They consider the latter as intrinsically deficient, incapable of dialogue, and consequently utilise the same procedures as are used by the oppressors. They try to win the people over, forgetting the fact that, "the revolution is made neither by the leaders for the people, nor by the people for the leaders, but by both acting together in unshakeable solidarity. This solidarity is born only when the leaders witness to it by their humble, loving and courageous encounter with the people."

Frier further observes, "Denial of communion in the revolutionary process, avoidance of dialogue with the people under the pretext of organising them, of strengthening power, is really a fear of freedom. It is fear of or lack of faith in the people. But if the people cannot be trusted, there is no reason for their liberation; in this case the revolution is not carried out for the people, but by the people, for the leaders: a complete self-negation. Dialogue with the people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution. This is what makes it a revolution, an authentic revolution, as distinguished from a military coup..... conversely, revo-

lutionary leaders who do not act dialogically in their relation with the people either have retained characteristics of the dominator and are not truly revolutionary, or they are totally misguided in their conception of their role, and, prisoners of their own sectarianism, are equally, non-revolutionary. They may even reach power. But the validity of any revolution resulting from anti-dialogical action is thoroughly doubtful. ”

And, unfortunately, this has been invariably the case with the leaders of all violent revolutions. That is why every such successful revolution was followed by the authoritarian regime of the ‘revolutionary’ leaders who no longer continued to be ‘revolutionary’. The leaders of non violent revolution have to lean heavily upon this dialogical process; in fact it constitutes their main source of strength. All the various programmes adopted by them have as their main motive such a dialogue. The best illustration of such a programme is the Dandi March by Gandhiji for Salt Satyagraha. Coming in close and constant personal contact with the people, a non-violent revolutionary learns directly about the people and their problems, and, in course of time, becomes identified with them.

Faith In Ultimate Victory

Faith in ultimate, inevitable victory is essential for the success of both types of revolution. Che Guevara says, “ whoever does not feel this undoubted truth, i. e. that the victory of the enemy against the people is impossible, cannot be Guerilla fighter.” Neither can he be a successful non-violent fighter without this conviction.

Time Element

Time element is important in all revolutionary wars. What brings about ultimately the downfall of a regime is the full ripening

of its inherent self-contradictions. A satyagraha or a guerrilla warfare accelerates the process of ripening; but the full process takes a longer time.

Intra-party rivalries and dissensions, progressively increasing, strain on the exchequer and the tax-payers, spiralling up of prices progressive reduction in growth-rate alarming growth in unemployment, disastrous position of the balance of payments, discontent in the forces of law and order. administrative breakdown, mounting indifference, disquiet and disaffection of the masses, neutralisation and subversion of armed forces, loss of the regime's credit-worthiness in international sphere, - all these factors take their own time to mature.

The economic and political self-contradictions can be contained for a longer time by a regime supported by the committed ideological cadres; but the Govt. not having at its disposal the services of such cadres cannot manage these self-contradictions that long depending only on the bureaucratic machinery. But, in any case, time element is essential. As one leader of a successful revolution puts it:

"Time is required, not alone for political mobilisation, but to allow inherent weaknesses of the enemy to develop under the stress of war." About another revolutionary leader it has been observed, "his patience was infinite; he could wait and watch until others got impatient, acted and failed."

International Propaganda

Both types of revolution have in them an international component. But in case of a non-violent revolution it is confined to propaganda only.

During our fight for freedom the Indian National Congress had made consistent efforts in this direction. It

had set up a special sub committee for this purpose. Even in the second struggle for freedom, i. e., against the Indira regime, this aspect has been properly taken care of.

Nanasaheb Peshwa of 1857 fame was also fully aware of the importance of international contacts; his letters to Napoleon III of France, and his plan of sending Ajimulla Khan, his emissary, to Great Britain and other countries amply prove how he had not lost sight of this aspect.

The Establishment is generally nervous about the contacts of the foreign embassies and foreign journalists with the revolutionists. What the government is afraid of is publicity of the revolutionary activities within the country and abroad.

Every government has to maintain some appearance of stability, in order to assure the other members of the alliance that 'contracts will continue to be honoured, that treaties will be upheld, that loans will be repaid with interest, that investments will continue to produce profits.' One of the strategies of both types, of struggle is to destroy the stable image of the Govt. to deny it credits, to dry up its sources of revenue, and to create dissensions within the frightened owning classes and the bureaucracy.

If the constitution of the imperialist country is democratic it becomes feasible for the native guerrillas to win over a sizeable section of its population and bring its pressure to bear upon the imperialist power.

For propaganda abroad, both types of activists try to influence and press into service the media of mass communication in different countries. But their means are often different. The seizure of the Cambodian Embassy in Prague on behalf of the NIF of the deposed Prince Norodom; the capture of the Indonesian Embassy in Hague in September, 1970, by Ambonese refu

gees; the exploding of bombs outside the Portuguese Embassy and the Rhodesian Information Office in Washington; the Palestinian guerrilla attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics which cost seventeen lives; bomb explosion in Singapore on the eve of the National Day Celebrations of 1970; various recent hijackings of aircrafts: all these and other similar moves were calculated to focus the attention of the world on the issues concerned.

The latest example of successful international propaganda is furnished by the SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) of Namibia which is receiving moral support from the U. N. and the World Court.

The non-violent revolutionaries use for this purpose the method of self-torture and self-immolation.

Self immolation of Buddhists in S. E. Asia has certainly been more effective. Martyrdom of a Lumumba, a Kennedy, or a Martin Luther King can earn more international sympathies, compassion being a sentiment stronger and deeper than terror. Even international critics of Allende were not sympathetic to his assassins.

Promise and performance

There has always been a wide gap between the promise and the performance of every violent revolution. For example, which revolution has fulfilled its assurances to its peasantry? which revolution has made workers, owners of their own plants?

Vergnaniand observed that 'the revolution devours its own children.' The indictment contained in a letter to the leadership of the Soviet bureaucracy from three Soviet intellectuals, academician Andre Sakharov, historian Roy Medvedev, and, physicist Volentin Tourchine, was a revealing commentary on the nature of the post-revolutionary totalitarianism.

As Ronald Segal wrote, "Aside from the crude imperial aspect of Soviet rule, there is, in the proclaimed socialist homeland itself, more than enough to provoke a revolutionary idealism. Over half a century since the revolution of 1917, liberty, equality, fraternity, the cardinal values of socialism, are a mockery and rebuke: when not, in various attempts to express them, tried and punished as crimes against the State. Economic discrepancies are everywhere evident."

'The New Class' deals with the outcome of all communist revolutions. The proposition of the 'New Class' proceeds according to its author, Djilas, as follows:

"The Society that has arisen as the result of communist revolutions, is torn by the same sort of contradictions as are other societies. The result is that the Communist society has not only failed to develop towards human brotherhood and equality, but that out of its party bureaucracy, there arises a privileged social stratum, which, in accord with Marxist thinking, I named 'the New Class.'"

Djilas further observes in his 'The Unperfect Society', "Communism, once a popular movement that had in the name of science inspired the toiling and oppressed people of the world with the hope of creating the kingdom of Heaven on earth, that launched, and continues to launch, millions to their deaths in pursuit of this unextinguishable primeval dream, has become transformed into national political bureaucracies and states squabbling among themselves for prestige and influence, for the sources of wealth and for markets—for all those things over which politicians and governments have always quarrelled, and always will. The Communists were compelled by their own ideas and by the realities in their society first to wrest power—that delight above all delights—from their

opponents, and then to scramble for it among themselves. This has been the fate of all revolutionary movements in history. "

The experience of non-communist revolutionary dictatorships is not very much different. The 'Night of the Long Knives' in course of which Captain Rohm and his officers were brutally murdered by their own comrades-in-arms is not a peculiarly German phenomenon; it is typical of all dictatorships determined to silence the dissenting voice even within the ruling party. Liquidation of dissenters outside that orbit of the party is nothing to be wondered at. The Russian forces suppressing the strikes of Siberian workers or the upsurge of the people of Hungary, E. Germany, and Czechoslovakia were as 'revolutionary' as the 'revolutionary' army of Napoleon pitted against the Spanish guerrillas or the Nazi troops liquidating opponents at home and freedom fighters abroad.

The Psycho-analysis

Since the fourteenth of July 1789 (the date on which the term 'revolution' was first used in its modern sense by Liancour in Paris) to this day this has been the inevitable fate of every violent revolution. It is not as if this is a result of personal whims, caprices, or idiosyncracies of revolutionary leaders. This constitutes an integral part of the methodology of violent revolutions.

Hannah Arendt observes in 'On Revolution', "To the extent that the greatest event in every revolution is the act of foundation, the spirit of revolution contains two elements which to us seem irreconcilable and even contradictory. The act of founding the new body politic, of devising the new form of government involves the grave concern with the stability and durability of the new structure; on the other hand, what those who are engaged in this grave business are bound to have is the exhilarating awareness of the human capacity of beginning, the high spirit which has always attended the birth of something new on earth. Perhaps, the very fact that these two elements, the concern with

stability and the spirit of the new, have become opposites in political thought and terminology — the one being identified as conservatism and the other being claimed as the monopoly of progressive liberalism — must be recognised to be among the symptoms of our loss."

And, again, "The failure of post-revolutionary thought to remember the revolutionary spirit and to understand it conceptually was preceded by the failure of the revolution to provide it with a lasting institution."

"The revolution, unless it ended in the disaster of terror, had come to an end with the establishment of a republic. But in this republic there was no space reserved no room left for the exercise of precisely those qualities which had been instrumental in building it.....if foundation was the aim and the end of revolution, then the revolutionary spirit was not merely the spirit of beginning something new but of starting something permanent and enduring; a lasting institutions embodying this spirit and encouraging it to new, achievementsNothing threatens the very achievement of revolution more dangerously and more acutely than the spirit which has brought them about.....should freedom in its most exalted sense as freedom to act be the price to be paid for foundation ? "

Condorcet had remarked, "The word 'revolutionary' can be applied only to revolutions whose aim is freedom."

"Only where change occurs in the sense of a new beginning where violence is used to constitute an altogether different form of government, to bring about the formation of new body politic, where the liberation from oppression aims at least at the constitution of freedom can we speak of 'revolution.'"

Judged by this criterion, violent revolutions in the past appear to be less than 'revolutionary'."

The Alternative

The methodology of non-violent revolutionaries is entirely different. The main weapon in their arsenal is soul-force, not terror. They believe in purity of means. They reject the dictum: 'ends justify the means.' They have firm faith in the inevitability of their ultimate triumph, because they visualise it as a triumph of the Truth, the Cause. They believe that those who refuse to be defeated can never be defeated, that there is nothing like failure in the struggle for Truth, there is only incomplete success. They are convinced that no individual can be governed for long without his willing consent. What they seek is progressive purification of 'self' through penances, and not physical annihilation of the enemy through violence.

A non-violent revolution is necessarily preceded and accompanied by revolutionary mass education. 'Passive resistance' as defined by Aurobindo, 'Chatuh Sutri' of Lokmanya Tilak, 'Satyagraha' of Mahatmaji, - all these envisaged intimate inter-relationship between struggle and mass education. Mass education through struggle, struggle through mass education.

Against this background, all the moves - big or small, acquire new significance. Even simple, innocent gestures of the non-violent activists. Deputation, badge-wearing, protest resolutions petitions, silent processions, slogan shouting token hunger-strikes, hartals, display of posters, distribution of literature and new bulletins, big funerals of martyrs, observance of martyrdom anniversaries, demonstrations, propaganda of the atrocities by the authorities, educative group-meetings, boycott of legislatures and government functions, general strike or 'bandh,' fast unto death, satyagrahas, no-tax campaign, all-out non-co-operation and civil disobedience, establishment of 'Janata sarkar', peaceful agitations for the redressal of local or sectional grievances: all these are as much a part of struggle as of revolutionary education.

When Thoreau explained in his 'Civil Disobedience' why he preferred to go to jail rather than pay a tax to a govt. which condoned human slavery, he could hardly have imagined what impact his theory was going to make on the political scene of this land of Prahlad. Is it a mere coincidence that his thesis for individual action was developed into the technique of mass movement in this distant land? Our spiritual tradition was conducive to the growth of such a system of thought and action. That is why Aurobindo could say, "to break an unjust coercive law is not only justifiable but, under given circumstances, a duty."

Tilak proclaimed that he wanted to take the country "outside the Penal Code." And Gandhiji initiated and perfected the technique of 'satyagraha,' which is not just the passive resistance of the weak but the active non-violent defiance of the strong. In his recent article in 'Illustrated weekly' (dt. 15-8-76) Acharya Kripalani explains how the technique of Satyagraha was followed by Prahlad, Mirabai, Socrates, Jesus Christ, muslim martyrs, social reformers, scientists and others; how satyagraha can be practised in the family, the village, the province or the State, and how it cannot be conceived of as an anti-social activity. "It recognises the social utility and necessity of the state and the laws and yet allows the individual to enjoy his liberty as a human being. The Satyagrahi even in chains is a free man. He can call his soul his own. He is not afraid of his opponents. Enemies he has none. His opponents are afraid of him, and not he of them. He can even stand alone, while the violent resister must have others to join or follow him."

Mr. Dhillon, while not endorsing completely the tenets of Gandhism, comes independently to conclude:

"It would appear from contemporary experience that revolutionary organisations of the classic type—thoroughly conspiratorial, militarily disciplined, and ideologically united—are not

essential. — Revolution is not essential "for victory over the communist oligarchs and bureaucrats, — civil wars are even less necessary. However, recourse should be had to all other forms of struggle - demonstrations, strikes, protest marches, protest resolutions, and the like, and most important of all, open and courageous criticism and moral firmness. All historical experience to date confirms this."

Through violence it may be possible to shoot down every agent and leader of the Establishment; but violence cannot guarantee establishment of a rule which will be considered by all citizens as their own. People cannot be the masters of the post-revolutionary regime, unless they are also the real masters of the processes of revolution. And again, if they are equipped mentally only for destruction, they will prove to be very poor instruments of subsequent construction. The methodology of non-violent revolution necessarily includes mass education in both the aspects of revolution, - development of the soul - force of the masses, and their involvement in and leadership of the various phases of revolution. It is an authentic revolution, - of the people, for the people, and by the people. For such revolutionary leaders, "organisation, means organising themselves with the people. Their method is dialogical communion, not communique, they do not own the people; they are co-authors of revolution along with the people. Consequently, the ultimate victory belongs "not to the leaders alone, but to the leaders and the people - or to the people, including the leaders." This eliminates all possibility of dictatorship following the revolution.

This may appear to be a long way. It certainly is. But, as M. N. Roy remarked about the patient process of mass education:

"It may be a long way; but if it be the only way, - then it is also the shortest one."