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REVOLUTION AND RADICAL REFORM:
AN ETHICAL DILEMMA
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REVOLUTION AND RADICAL REFORM: AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

1. Setting the Theme

- Albert Camus: "Violence is at the same time unavoidable and unjustifiable."
- Che Guevara: "A Guerilla uprising cannot be brought about until all possible avenues of legal procedure have been exhausted."
- David Galula: "All wars are cruel, the revolutionare war perhaps most of all because every citizen, whatever his wish, is or will be directly and actively involved in it by the insurgent who needs him and cannot afford to let him remain neutral."
- Hannah Arendt: "no revolution is even possible where the authority of the body politic is truly intact, and this means, under modern conditions, where the armed forces can be trusted to obey the civil authorities."
- Regis Debray: "the guerilla movement is not an end in itself, nor is it a glorious adventure; it is merely a means to an end; the conquest of political power."
- Merleau-Ponty: "If we preach non-violence, we reinforce established violence, that is to say, a system of production (I should say; a social system) which make misery and war inevitable. However, if we enter the arena of violence, there is a good chance that we will be trapped there forever."
- V. I. Lenin: "A slave who is conscious of being a slave is already half free."



11. Summary

Any speaker must assume a common vocabulary universe with his audience. How can this be assumed, however, when the words under discussion are "revolution" and "ethics"? No two people define revolution--or radical reform--identically. Academics describe revolution, they analyze it and establish "typologies".

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Practitioners of the art (art?) seek not to explain but to persuade; the purpose of their discourse is to recruit. And they speak the language of promises as Francisco Julião, head of Northeast Brazil's defunct Peasant Leagues, wrote: "The first condition, and the only one, necessary to win the peasants' confidence in the revolution, is to tell them, 'You will have land'."

And what of the word "ethics"? There can be no ethics without freedom. Yet when have moral philosophers sought to justify revolution on any grounds other than its necessity? Is not necessity the enemy of freedom? Is Ellul right when he states that in political life a solution can only be just when it is not necessary? Indeed, if it becomes necessary other options have ceased to exist; and can one then freely (and ethically) choose revolution? If a revolution becomes necessary, how can it provide itself with safeguards against betraying its noble objectives? Will not the requirements of efficiency in strategy expose the purity of goals to dissolution? On the other hand, is not strategic efficiency a moral requirement of good revolutionary action?

Christian ethics of violence constantly stumbles over its residual links to the "just war theory" or, when the pendulum of reaction swings to "situation ethics", over a subjective persuasive model of the right conscience. Regamey insists, on the other hand, that the problem of violence places a Christian in an "ethics of distress situation". This apostle of non-violence faced with the contradictions inherent in violence itself, is obliged to say; "The worst distress possible for a Christian is to be forced to recur to violence. I think I see an extreme case of this in Camillo Torres of Colombia. I would go so far as to say that in such a case the man

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can be not only a hero, but even a saint."

The real "hangup" for Christians is:

--either advocate non-violence, thereby becoming accomplices of exploiters; or

--justify violence and thus sanctify history's aberrations in the name of a gospel which preaches love and respect for life.

Marxist moralists face different but equally perplexing problems; how to keep history open-ended, how to keep their means from becoming ends? Their basic constraint however, comes from the dogma which refuses (with minor exceptions among contemporary Czech Communists) to dissociate social alienation from religious alienation. Consequently, Marxists always need to rewrite history to prove to "religion-beguiled" masses that Christ, or Buddha or Brahman-Atman is their kind of social revolutionary.

My conclusion states that no ethical doctrine of revolution exists, there are only ethical options (free and responsible) for or against revolution. But after the option, what then? In the words of I. F. Stone, "For the Revolution, as for the Church, the world is full of snares and pitfalls; the unavoidable minimum of intercourse with things-as-they-are, the need for trade to earn one's bread....and the logic of statecraft which demands weapons, technology, compromise and duplicity. With the assumption of temporal power, the Revolution, like the Church, enters into a state of sin." In the words of Thomas Merton, "We are delivered to the god of power that we adore--our punishment is to have what we want."

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Introduction

To The Common Man revolution means the illegal conquest of central political power for the purpose of tearing down the old social order and building up a new one. Social scientists, however, generally define it as any far-reaching change which transforms men's outlook, behavior, self-image or life style. Thus they speak of technological, communications, and sexual revolutions. Nevertheless, they usually pay scant attention to the time dimension. One wonders, however, if disagreement over what is revolutionary or evolutionary, reformist or radical would endure if all observers synchronized their discussion to fit the same time span.

Eric Wolf sees revolution as a "process by which varying components of the middleman layer and of the peasantry are mobilized and brought into contact with each other.¹ Fanon regards it as a method by which the oppressed man severs the umbilical cord that links him to exploiters and, more importantly, heals his psyche, by a renovative act that purges him of his inferiority.² For Camus, revolution is above all the construction of universal human justice after revolt has overthrown injustice. And Debray restates the classical Marxist doctrine that the purpose of revolution is the conquest of political power.

Revolution is, in effect, a special kind of total warfare engaging the violence of arms, economic rationing, manpower impressment, manipulative propaganda. Its aim is to seize power and alter the rules of collective decision-making. Though it enjoys climatic moments, revolution also knows the tedium of simply holding on when victory appears impossible and of painfully rebuilding institutions after the triumph. Mao in China, the fellagha in Algeria,

and Fidel in the Sierra Maestra have all illustrated the institution-building function of guerilla activity. Leaders are summoned to administer micro-societies in harmony with revolutionary ideals. In so doing they serve a political apprenticeship for the day when they will govern the macro-society.

In his dialogue, "The Statesman," Plato imagines that "the government of human beings was originally government by gods. In their control of the world things improve as if they were wound up on a spindle to achieve a high tension and power control. Then at a certain point the gods decide that they will let this unwind, and this is the period when human beings take over. After this happens, human beings become worse and worse at the art of government, until finally government degenerates into a kind of chaos, anarchy, tyranny, and so forth. When it gets bad enough, the gods decide they will take over again, and so they begin--perhaps through a man--to wind up the process again, and it begins to improve."³

This essay takes revolution to mean the illegal seizure of the central organs of political power, with the declared aim of instituting new, or restoring old, arrangements for running society, especially in its economic and political spheres.

We now move to our second term; ethics. Ethics presupposes freedom, and where freedom is, there is responsibility. A man acts ethically when he could have acted otherwise or refrained from acting. Responsibility is both accountability and the ability to respond to challenges issued by events, things, other men. Whenever freedom or responsibility are absent, there is no ethical problem. There may be a human problem--that man ceases to be human. But there is no ethical problem--that he ceases to be good.

1 - Revolution and Necessity

The original title of this seminar is; "Ethical Quagmire; Concomitant of Radical Change". Quicksand morality is not concomitant with every radical change, however. Religious conversion, for instance, is radical change; it goes to the roots of one's beliefs and meanings. Yet it leaves him secure in his ethical stance, not wallowing in doubt or indecision. Peopling a new frontier also entails radical change in the life of men; nonetheless, there is no ethical quagmire here because a break has been made with the past on the basis of hope, and dedication to the future poses no insoluble "case of conscience" to those engaged in the adventure.

That special kind of radical change we call revolution does, on the other hand, pose a dilemma to the human conscience. One's choice of alternatives is such that he cannot avoid committing evil. In the face of moral perplexity, men were instructed by moralists of the past to choose the lesser evil and to set their consciences to rest. This answer helps little in the case of revolution, for one cannot weigh on the same scale two opposite categories of evils-- the first, present and unbearable, the second future and unpredictable. If history teaches us anything about revolutions, it is that no one less than the revolutionary himself knows where his acts will lead. This is why many people who look at history conclude that there never has been a good revolution. Their point is, as Scott Buchanan explains, "that what the revolutions started out to achieve never came off. The people who started them suffered a good deal, destroyed a good deal, and never realized their original vision." This verdict is hardly acceptable because it assumes that

revolution is not about anything very important. In fact all revolutions go through a state at which they must reconsider, and perhaps even lose, their original aims and set new aims in the light of lessons learned during the revolution. Revolution is a very profound thing if it is a real one. It means that the people who revolt get reeducated as well as the people against whom they're revolting.⁴

We are placed in an ethical dilemma. Only because, revolutions can be good as well as bad. To my knowledge, their ethical justifications always rest on necessity. Moralists consider revolution to be dangerous, possibly even very bad. Yet, the argument goes, men are at times so cruelly victimized that they must revolt to defend their humanity. The evolution ^{of} Camilo Torres illustrates the point. In 1963, speaking as a priest, he disapproved of violence as contrary to Christian morals. As a sociologist, however, he sought to refrain from value judgments, lest he confuse positive science with normative science. Three years later, Camilo wrote: "The people do not believe in elections. The people know that legal paths have been exhausted. The people know that only armed battle remains open to them. The people are in a state of despair and are resolved to risk their lives so that the next generation of Columbians will not be slaves... Every sincere revolutionary has to acknowledge that armed combat is the only alternative that is left."⁵

In a recent publication of the National Council of Churches, we are asked: "Is it lawful for the Christian actively to participate in revolutionary movements that may resort to violence, in cases where the goal of social transformation does not appear viable by any other means, but which is indispensable from the point of

view of social justice and human well-being?"⁶ (Italics mine).
 Once again a plea is made to allow violence, because there is no other way.

My argument is that if we have no alternatives, we have no dilemma. Moralists have always taught that no one is obliged to do the impossible. If social justice is impossible except through violence we are not morally bound to use futile, non-violent means. Furthermore, ethics forbids the use of "intrinsically bad" means. Yet it has always condoned police coercion, defensive war, military assistance given to embattled allies. Violence, in a word, has never been treated as an intrinsically bad means. Many contemporary moralists, it is true, condemn the ABC (atomic, bacteriological and chemical) instruments of violence as inherently evil. But these are hardly the weapons used by insurgents; We therefore ask moralists, "why haven't you always preached that revolutionary violence is unequivocally good? In the light of your own principles, it has to be good because it is not intrinsically bad and it is sometimes the only option possible." Consequently, a dilemma exists because we speak of ethics, which presupposes freedom, while pleading necessity, the antithesis of freedom.

Ellul contends that no political solution can be just if it is necessary, is it is not free. In delicate political matters, justice depends primarily on the moment at which decisions are taken rather than on any lofty conception of justice of their author, his good intentions, or the particular political line he follows. "A decision must be reached", he says, "before irreparable acts have been committed, before public opinion has been aroused...."

In effect, when a situation is nascent, it is not necessary to intervene; consequently, the act runs the risk of seeming gratuitous.... A just solution can in fact be found only in the freedom of the decision-maker who has a gamut of solutions and possible combinations before him. Once circumstances evolve and solutions get progressively eliminated, the freedom of the actor diminishes at each step and finally there remains but a single solution which imposes itself of necessity. It thus becomes necessary; and we may say that in all such cases, this solution simply reflects the greatest measure of power, but never of justice. In politics a solution imposed of necessity is never a just solution."⁷

We can now explain, why there is a dilemma. Ethics assumes revolution to be good because it is inevitable. Once revolution becomes inevitable, however, it is too late to build into the conduct of it safeguards against absolutizing its means, against betraying the justice and brotherhood of its "cause" in the name of strategic efficiency. Revolutionaries can always argue that any realistic ethic posits strategic efficiency as a moral requirement of good revolutionary action. Even the Gospel warns us against building a tower unless we can finish it, or launching a war unless we can see it through. In a word, ethics can easily justify launching a revolution but is at a loss to impose limits on its conducts.

If we reject this analysis of political justice, determinism then nourishes both our good conscience and our dilemma. Our good conscience, because we justify revolution as necessary. Our dilemma, because we cannot control revolution. By its very nature revolution forces us to tread paths whose destination is unknown.

Its goals change within its own processes and its participants are educated to a truth yet to be revealed. Perhaps we can "free the present from the past" but who will free the future from the present? Is not Djilas right, that "throughout history there have been no ideal ends which were attained with non-ideal, inhumane means, just as there has been no free society which was built by slaves. Nothing so well reveals the reality and greatness of ends as the methods used to attain them. If the end must be used to condone the means, then there is something in the end itself, in its reality, which is not worthy."⁸

Purists want revolution and love simultaneously, but these are incompatible. Revolution consists in loving a man who does not yet exist. "But the man who loves a living being," says Camus, "if he loves him truly, can only accept to die for that living being, not for a man who does not live yet."⁹ To the Marxist who objects that his ethic spurns love in favor of justice, Camus replies, that when morality is formal it devours, for no one can be virtuous for someone else.

Revolution moves men by denouncing the injustices they suffer in their flesh and blood. Yet it perpetrates new injustices on that flesh in the name of an idealized man who lies at the term of history. This is why if it wishes to be human, revolution must come to terms with relativity.¹⁰ The virtue of adversaries resides in their choice of means, for, in the last analysis, the ends of all combatants are good. At its ultimate level, the debate is over two acts of faith. Any revolution must wed power to love. The crucial question is: will love bow in submission to power, because it is too weak to triumph in the real world? Or will power accept love's gentle yoke in recognition of its own impotence to serve human purposes?

Fanon believes "that only violence pays....The exploited man sees that his liberation implies the use of all means, and that of force first and foremost."¹¹ But Thomas Merton places his act of faith in love: "the non-violent resister is persuaded of the superior efficacy of love, openness, peaceful negotiation and above all of truth. For power can guarantee the interests of some men but it can never foster the good of man. Power always protects the good of some at the expense of all the others. Only love can attain and preserve the good of all. Any claim to build the security of all on force is a manifest imposture."¹²

Transcending rational discourse on the ethics of violence lies the option for one of these faiths. In both cases the believer falls into an "ethics of distress" situation. Whatever he chooses, he cannot predict or control the outcome of his options. Violence on behalf of justice can become repression under the banner of "eliminating counter-revolutionaries". Non-violence for love's sake just as readily paves the way for the greater violence of desperation. One cannot avoid taking chances; and if he is lucid, his conscience is in distress. Lucidity is essential; so is advertence to the ambiguity of the word "necessity". Marx calls class struggle a necessity. Even when "enlightened" exploiters carry out reforms, they unwittingly deepen class antagonisms and prepare the day of ultimate violence. History moves ineluctably towards conflict and human consists solely in rarifying history's dialectics ahead of history's apocalyptic deadline.

For Ellul, necessity signifies the failure to meet freedom's deadline and the resulting loss of options. Not that it is wrong to

begin a revolution, but that once revolutionaries have burned their bridges, they have no leverage to counter the tendency of revolution to subordinate purity of goals to efficiency of means. The revolutionary has to parody Christ, "he who is not with me is against me." Both insurgents and counter-insurgents need every citizen and "cannot afford to let him remain neutral."¹³ Under both kinds of necessity, ethical choices lose their meaning; they become either impossible or superfluous.

11 - Christian Ethics in Distress

There is no Christian ethic of revolution. There are attempts by Christians to interpret complex issues in ethical terms. Many such efforts have foundered on the shoals of the "just war theory". This theory posits a number of criteria for a just war:

- a) war must be declared by legitimate authority;
- b) the cause must be just. This has usually been interpreted to mean self-defense or helping a beleaguered ally under attack;
- c) leaders waging war must preserve a right intention. Their goal must remain peace, not war, reconciliation not vengeance, equity not conquest.;
- d) only lawful means are permitted. That is, means must be morally indifferent or inherently good. This criterion urges moderation in destruction and advocated "proportionality" between damage inflicted and benefits obtained. The principle of licit means obviously assumes the operational difference between combatants and non-combatants, and knowledge of what constitutes a good or a bad instrument of violence.

Some years ago these principles were revised to fit

revolutionary situations. They now read as follows:

- a) It must be certain that legitimate authority has lost its mission, that is, become tyrannical or incapable of administering the common good;
- b) all peaceful means must be exhausted before revolutionary violence is lawful;
- c) revolution's anticipated "good" effects must outweigh the harm it causes;
- d) revolutionary leaders must entertain reasonable hope of success;
- e) no intrinsically evil means can be employed;
- f) it is forbidden to exacerbate the pre-revolutionary situation in order to precipitate the outbreak of violence.

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My intent is not to refute this teaching point by point as it applies to revolution, for these criteria, even refurbished, obviously ignore political realities. Let us take the first principle, for example: who will judge whether or not legitimate authority has lost its mission? A majority of voters? But what if voters represent but a minority of citizens? A revolutionary minority party? By whose mandate do they speak for the body politic? The masses? A particular class? Through what mechanism can this judgement be tested, according to what rules?

As for exhausting all peaceful means, what does a budding revolutionary group do if it expects to be wiped out unless it conceals its opposition to the ruling elite until it is ready to engage in combat? And who can predict a revolution's possible "good" and "bad" effects? How does one gauge a "reasonable" prospect of success? Holden Roberto's GRAE (Governo Revolucionario de Angola no Exilio) has now been fighting seven years and still seems far

from victory. Nevertheless, if we are to believe Mao and Ho Chi Minh, the revolutionary who perseveres to the end is certain to win. Indeed, it took the Algerians more than seven years to win their battle.

Why belabor the point? The "just war theory" fails to come to grips with the psychological and political realities of revolutionary situations; it is worthless.

What of some form of Christian situation ethics? There is something to recommend this approach, it is true; it is often quite hard-headed. But it provides no norms other than purely subjective ones for evaluating objective situations. There is good reason to fear that a man's ideology, class interests, occupational bias, heredity, environmental conditioning, to say nothing of his personality characteristics, go far towards inclining him towards violence or non-violence. Can any right conscience truly exist if the ultimate appeal is to subjective persuasion? At best the direction such a position can take is that of moral ambiguity. Niebuhr was right thirty-five years ago in arguing that: "the struggle for a social justice in the present economic order involves the assertion of rights, the rights of the disinherited, and the use of coercion. Both are incompatible with the pure love ethic found in the Gospels. How, then, do we justify the strategy of the 'class struggle'? We simply cannot do so in purely Christian terms. There is in the absolute sense no such thing as 'Christian socialism'".

The Gospels contain no ethic of socialism, of the status quo, or or revolution, all ethical positions, in personal life as in political affairs, compromise Jesus("pure love principle". Where Niebuhr's analysis falters, I believe, is in assuming that pure

love is meant to be an ethical norm. Christianity urges the dynamics of love, but love's demands cannot adequately be expressed in juridical terms. Jesus advocates love of enemies, eschatological hope in God's defense of the victimized, the sacrifice of one's rights for the sake of brotherhood, not as moral laws but as a spiritual ideal which will constantly thrust us beyond ethics and beyond the "realistic" dictates of political or personal wisdom. The worst distress for a Christian is indeed to be forced to recur to violence. Distress means not being free to work on behalf of love without, at least tentatively and temporarily, professing one's impotence to love, to forgive, or to transmute his earthly despair into eschatological hope. It is no weakness of Christianity or bankruptcy of the Gospel that breeds distress; it is man's condition in history. Were man more than human he could create goodness, justice, and freedom for all men without having to destroy them in those he calls enemies. If man did not live in history, he could "free the present from the past". Yet, no revolutionary can totally free the present from the past. Destruction never leaves the destroyer unscarred and free to build with a blithe heart and a clear conscience. Revolutionaries, like ecclesiastics and politicians, cannot avoid compromises. I. F. Stone warns that "for the Revolution, as for the Church, the world is full of snares and pitfalls: the unavoidable minimum of intercourse with things-as-they-are, the need for trade to earn one's bread ... and the logic of statecraft which demands weapons, technology, compromise and duplicity. With the assumption of temporal power, the Revolution, like the Church, enters into a state of sin."¹⁸

Revolutionary situations place one in a dilemma whose only issues are heroism or compromise. One can of course escape distress by

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fleeing reality or by abdicating ethics, but these are pseudo-solutions. Even the man who cannot rise to heroism must avoid escapism: if he wishes to be moral he can never resign himself to the determinisms of violence or the passivities of non-violence. Neither violence nor non-violence can be absolute: total non-violence is connivence with the violence of exploiters, whereas total violence is rationalization of evil.

III - The Frailties of Marxist Ethics

In 1850 Engels wrote that "The worst thing that can befall a leader of an extreme party is to be compelled to take over a government in an epoch when the movement is not yet ripe for the domination of the class which he represents, and for the realization of the measures which that domination implies. What he can do depends not upon his will but upon the degree of contradiction between the various classes, and upon the level of development of the material means of existence, of the conditions of production and commerce upon which class contradictions always repose. What he ought to do, what his party demands of him, again depends not upon him or the stage of development of the class struggle and its conditions ... Thus he necessarily finds himself in a unsolvable dilemma. What he can do contradicts all his previous actions, principles, and the immediate interests of his party, and what he ought to do cannot be done. In a word, he is compelled to represent not his party or his class, but the class for whose domination the movement is then ripe. In the interests of the movement he is compelled to advance the interests of an alien class, and to feed his own class with phrases and promises, and with the asseveration that the in-

terests of that alien class are its own interests. Whoever is put into this awkward position is irrevocably lost."¹⁹

As sadly as any purist Christian, Engels laments the betrayal, not of Gospel love, but of proper class interests. Like contemporary Christians, he sees his elite in the grip of an insoluble ethical dilemma. Engels like Ellul defines political ethics as a function of time, the moment in the history of class struggle, and not of right objectives or lofty and sincere personal goals. Interestingly, he concedes that revolutionary leaders must lie and manipulate men. "Whoever is put into this awkward position", he concludes, "is irrevocably lost!"

Marx regarded violence as an ontological necessity whose use poses no problem of principle.²⁰ But times have changed. There may well be, in the words of I.F.Stone, "something anachronistic in Castro's Cuba and in Che's mission to build a new and bigger Sierra Maestra in the Andes. The hard realities of the hemisphere are very different from the revolutionary cliches of Castroism. How do you create new managerial and scientific cadres to replace the old oligarchies and American aid? How do you inspire and organize for hard work over many hungry years an illiterate mass quite different in its conditioning and past from, let us say, the immemorially productive people of China? For after the music of the Revolution dies down, everybody still has to go to work."²¹ Let us grant with Debray that the goal of guerrilla warfare is the conquest of political power; what does one do with political power after his revolution is successful? Is he, as Engels feared, simply trapped by the objective conditions of history's capricious moment?

The history of Marxist revolutions in the Soviet Union, China, and to a lesser extent in Cuba, does not leave us very optimistic as to the possibilities for revolutionary governments of maintaining an open-ended attitude towards the future. The mobilization of the oppressed by the use of a pedagogy whose central themes are class struggle and the suppression of exploitation almost necessarily elicit, engender or reinforce simplistic allegiances to a dogmatic utopianism ill-prepared to be self-corrective once power has been gained. Mannheim challenges Communism for requiring its adherents to draw a blank check on their future.

"The dangerous fallacy in the communist argument is that its champions promise to pay for every inch of lost freedom in the intermediary period of dictatorship with an undated check on a better future... Once a dictatorial system, whatever its social content, seizes the educational apparatus, it does everything to obliterate the memory and need of free thought and free living; it does its utmost to transform free institutions into tools of a minority."²²

Djilas' query about means and ends has to this day not been met satisfactorily by Marxists, I feel. No doubt the Communist "leading edge" - Garaudy, Althusser, Adam Schaff and a few others - embraces dialogue. A joint Communist/Christian group is even now debating the possibility, in Marxist terms, of dissociating religious alienation from social alienation. By and large, however, Marxist ethics, is in a state of disarray and raises more questions than it can answer. China's cultural revolution, for example, seriously undermines the

assumption of all revolutionaries since 1789, namely, that a radical act of violence will burst open the door to a better society.

As The Economist commented a year ago (January 14, 1967, p.99):

"It is this belief that Chairman Mao has now finally and perhaps decisively put in doubt. What is needed, and what he has set himself to achieve, is perpetual revolution -- to be precise, a regular succession of upheavals, following each other at intervals of a generation or less. He believes that nothing short of this will keep the original revolutionary impetus alive." Yet Mao is charged with heresy by the Holy Office of Marxist orthodoxy and he is challenged by many of his old Yenan revolutionary comrades. Even if Mao is proved right, why should downtrodden men sacrifice their all for a revolution that itself needs to be discarded every fifteen years?

The present travail of Marxist revolutionary ethics reveals that old doctrinal certitudes are being eroded by the relativities of political life. Even wily old Togliatti complained before his death that Communists were incapable of recognizing the new forms of alienation they had generated in their own societies. In a word, Marxist revolutionary ethics also founders in a quagmire.

IV - Conclusions

We now come to an ambiguous term: Conclusions. Nothing I have said is definitive or final; on the contrary, it is all very inconclusive. To conclude, however, also means to finish, not just to close debate. And what has our excursion along the thorny paths of revolutionary ethics shown us?

First, that we are still in a quagmire, but we know how we got there and why we are stuck. If to be conscious of one's state of slavery, as Lenin remarked, is already to be half free, then we are better off than when we started. The problem is necessity: to the extent that determinism limits ethical choice, freedom is reduced proportionately, as is the scope of ethical goodness. This is so whether we take necessity to mean simply the lapse of options with the passage of time, or the impersonal determinism of history's laws.

Secondly, I have argued that there is no ethics of revolution; there are only ethical (i.e., free and responsible) options for or against revolution. Since the old "just war theory" and situation ethics are both powerless to untangle our perplexities, the only options left, short of heroic witness to love and human goodness, involve compromise. Each man must therefore choose the causes for which he will compromise: revolution, law and order, tradition, gradual change, reform, socialism, and so on. He can never fully convert another man to his point of view, because if he is perfectly lucid, he cannot fully convert himself. Certain positive values are served by each of the options, but no single individual or group can fully bear witness to all of these values. This is why Regamey, who preaches non-violence, can recognize heroism and, yes, even sanctity in a Camilo Torres!

My third conclusion can be phrased as a question: after the revolution, what? If successful revolutions are invariably tempted to become idolatrous, they must tolerate dissent. In the words of Camus, "a revolutionary is also a revolted man or he ceases to be a revolutionary. But if he is revolted, he will end up opposing the revolution ... Every revolutionary ends up being either an oppressor or a

heretic. In the purely historic universe which they have chosen, both revolt and revolution lead to the same dilemma: either the police or folly".²³

After the revolution, there abide the twin problems of perpetual renovation and of technology's hold over romanticism. What happens when revolutionary fervor confronts the impersonal logic of advanced technology? How does one avoid those new modes of alienation unknown to Marx which afflict all developed countries today, irrespective of their ideologies?

A fourth conclusion states that we must insist on basic definitions: each theorist of radical change must be made to define his concepts with precision. The efforts of Furtado, Hirschman and others to establish typologies of revolutionary situations is a positive step, but typologies are descriptive, never normative. Fals-Borda has moved further and incorporated overt value positions on subversion and revolution into the very fabric of his social science analysis. His boldness may well constitute a major breakthrough in overcoming the communications barrier between different categories of experts on revolution.

My fifth remark is that no one can feel very secure about passing on moral enlightenment to others regarding the ethical dimensions of revolution. I echo Domenach's advice: "Carry on your revolution if you wish; in the extreme case, wage your war if you wish. But stop preaching someone else's war. When the moment comes to take up guns, then let the intellectual resort to arms, but not to words which place bullets inside guns at a distance!... What weight can we give to the bad conscience which preaches war without waging it -- or the good

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conscience which preaches peace and justice without forcing the means to establish them?"²⁴

My final word is the very first word contained in the outline to this seminar: "Violence is at the same time unavoidable and unjustifiable."²⁵

END

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹Eric R. Wolf, "Reflections on Peasant Revolution", Carnegie Seminar, Indiana University, April 3, 1967, mimeo, p. 10.
- ²Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, Grove Press, 1966, passim.
- ³Scott Buchanan, On Revolution, a Conversation, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1962, pp. 1-2.
- ⁴Idem, p. 6.
- ⁵Camilo Torres, in the Collection SONDEOS No. 5, Cldoc, Cuernavaca, Mexico, 1966, p. 116; second citation p. 374.
- ⁶"A Theological Reflection by Latin American Christians on Violence and Non-Violence", Latin American News Letter, National Council of Churches, No. 66 December 1967, p. 9.
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