

Anarchy, Revolution, Violence and Terrorism

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In the modern world these terms have become almost synonymous. This has happened mainly due to our ignorance and to some extent due to the media. In my talk i wish to discuss on each of these terms, their exact meaning and the reason for this ambiguity. So, first, I will start with the definition of revolution. Strictly speaking according to the dictionary revolution can be defined as “A vast change brought about in a very short time for a common good”. However, as my topic suggests i will be speaking in a political perspective and hence i would like to modify my definition a bit. So, in the political sense revolution is a social change in which one class overthrows another and the overthrowing class has a better production power than the former. In case this condition is not satisfied the consequence is a counter-revolution. Due to counter-revolution, two possibilities open up. Either the former class comes back to power (which is quite a rare phenomenon) or, it gives rise to anarchy. The 1917 revolutions in Russia are good examples of successful revolutions. The March revolution toppled the rule of the Czar and brought the nationalist bourgeoisie into power. However, counter-revolution overthrewed the bourgeoisie and brought the proletariat into power. Other than that, the Chinese revolution, Cuban revolution, French revolution can as well be cited as instances of successful revolutions. Now, going back let us look at anarchy once again. To the majority of population anarchy means violence, disturbance and disorder. However, this is a complete misinterpretation. Anarchy never promotes use of violence, in fact it condemns terrorism. Anarchism promotes a society of no government, laws, police, or other authority. Society should be a free association of all its members. Now, the point of violence. Anarchism defines violence to be a form of self-defence against the dictatorial and capitalist state machinery. Infact, European philosophers like Johann Most and Emma Goldman openly supported use of violence against capitalism. Anarchism never says a person to make the first attack. It never

says that go out and spread terror and violence just for the sake of creating disorder. It says, if the state machinery is not able to satisfy your minimum needs, you first protest. If it doesn't work out then only apply your force and violence. Thus, anarchism to some extent seems similar to the non-violent concept of Satyagraha but after a certain point it has taken a departure from it. In Satyagraha even if you are provoked, you are not supposed to reply back by violence however, in anarchism you must attack. Thus, it is quite evident that the ideals of anarchism is quite different from terrorism. If at all anarchism sets on a social structure, it provokes a social upheaval which eventually leads to social revolution. In anarchism, each and every individual gets equal importance and social freedom. Thus, anarchism also has one of the fundamental postulates of socialism. Some philosophers have even gone to the extent of saying anarchism as a non-violent resistance and this fact is reflected in the works of Tolstoy especially his novel 'The Dispossessed'. Now, the question that arises is: If anarchism is so stable a social structure why are there regular disturbances in the African continent especially countries like Somalia, Chad, Sierra Leone. Now, an anarchist structure depends mainly on the mutual co-operation of its people. Hence, complete eradication of corruption is one of its primary conditions. This idea seems quite unrealistic and proper anarchism is still a dream. So, what appears to us as anarchism is in reality a disturbed unstable social structure. Proper anarchism has never been put to test and hence it would be unfair to come to any definite conclusion about its consequences. But, at the same time it should not be confused with terrorism and raw violence. Anarchism is the creative independence for humanity and the concept of mutual co-operation is embedded in every human being. It is a part of human nature and socialism is its logical extension. Now, let us go back to history and ask a few questions:

1) Why do revolutions occur at all?

2) Has there been any successful non-violent, bloodless revolution? The root of revolution lies in class distinction. Class distinction gives rise to class contradiction and inequality. This inequality results in class oppression where the upper class literally expands its dictatorial rule on the lower classes. After a certain point they retaliate and if the movement is a popular one, it results in revolution and overthrow of the ruling class. The oppressed class comes to power. For the second question the answer is a big NO. The root cause is not more psychological than political. The oppressive master who is in power won't step down on his own. So, the only way to end the rule is to force him and such a process can never be simple and non-violent. People are killed and oppressed even when there is no resistance and so, when resistance starts the movement becomes all the more violent. Thus, this conclusively proves that that violent revolution is the only way out and my

claim is supported by history. Bolshevik revolution, Long march, Vietnam everywhere we look it is the same. Although it may be non-violent in some parts of it however, the basis of the revolution has to be violent. Let us look at the Indian perspective. At a time it seemed that Satyagraha was probably the most strongest weapon but actually it did not have any large impact on the freedom struggle...in fact I won't like it to a struggle because no change was brought about in the basic social structure or economy of the state. The state machinery continued like it was during the time of the Raj. In fact, in rural areas it consisted of feudal lords, farmers and landless labourers. So, there was no change in the ruling class. It actually gave rise to the class of 'comprador' who were just managers of foreign capital. Even, the recent land acquisition for SEZ was originally through a British law. It is easy for the privileged classes who are revolutionaries only in words, to support non-violent movement but for the lower oppressed classes who are the receiving end of the violent state machinery, it is impossible. In the name of non-violence, we sacrifice their lives as if they are cheap and expendable and all for no social change at the end. The oppressed masses who sacrifice their lives in any movement, violent or non-violent are the real heroes but, as for ourselves, the privileged classes lending any support to non-violence is nothing but sheer hypocrisy. Finally, comes the issue terrorism. I think it a completely relative concept. Any violent retaliation to the oppression unleashed by the ruling classes strikes terror in their hearts and therefore, they term this as terrorism. But, to the masses who are retaliating, it is a movement of liberation. Similarly, what the present governments call peace-keeping or pacification operations are nothing but acts of terrorism to the masses. In this light we can say that the "Peace Keeping forces of military junta" in Myanmar, "Anti-terror front led by U.S.A", are the actual mass-murderers and terrorists. The way the media portrays, terrorism has got a new definition to us. Terrorism to us is now a violent act committed by some bearded outlaws living in the Middle-east terrains. However, the rightful rulers of the world are none but the toiling masses. Then, we must agree that the acts and only the acts of violence against the oppressed classes are actual terrorism.

Thus, any act of violence simply cannot be tagged as act of terrorism or consequence of anarchy. First, we have to look into the situation judge it properly whether it was an act of retaliation or not and then only can we come to some conclusion. Infact, it is rightful to strike back at an oppressive ruler than to sit back quietly in submission....which is nothing but a moral degradation. I like to conclude by saying:

"Where injustice prevails- Rebellion is justice! Where humiliation of humanity prevails- Revolution is the only answer!"