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Four Charismatic Thinkers on Violence and Non-Violence: Analysis and Evaluation

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**Four Charismatic Thinkers on Violence and Non-Violence:
Analysis and Evaluation**

by

Thomas A. Forsthoefel

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of**

Master of Arts

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VITA

The author, Thomas Albert Forsthoefel, is the son of Mark Henry Forsthoefel and Joan (Linehan) Forsthoefel. He was born July 26, 1958, in Detroit, Michigan.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Throughout history there have been supporters both for the use of revolutionary violence and of radical non-violence as the proper means for the resolution of severe political conflicts. Some have even exalted violence, and some have utterly decried it. Some, while holding the violence of war justified, nevertheless are usually conscious of the many irrational acts that occur in war. Thucydides, for example, for all his concessions to the common need for war, agreed that men would commit acts in war which they never would contemplate in peace; "As usually happens at such times, there was no length to which violence did not go; sons killed their fathers, and suppliants were dragged from the altar or slain on it."¹

In recent years, the issues of war and peace have been debated with an increased urgency. Some policy analysts, for example, have argued for increases in the defense budget, and, in fact, a multi-billion dollar "star wars" project (the Strategic Defense Initiative) is on the drawing board. On the other hand, a substantial number of activists continue to be arrested for protesting the testing of nuclear weapons, the construction of Trident submarines, and the research and development of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Furthermore, various religious communities have

attempted to begin a moral re-evaluation of the defense build-up in the United States. Some, such as the U.S. Catholic Bishops, have sharply criticized the policies of the defense department, while hesitating to issue an outright condemnation of deterrence, the bedrock of U.S. defense policy. Other religious groups have condemned U.S. militarization, rejected deterrence, and have called for an immediate reduction in armaments.²

In keeping with the spirit of this debate, this paper will examine, compare, and contrast, the moral positions of four charismatic thinkers on violence and non-violence. The figures chosen for this paper--Tolstoy, Gandhi, Lenin, and Fanon--all are charismatic figures who never fully systematized their positions. The aim in this paper will be to articulate the moral and factual assumptions presupposed in their thought, and, where appropriate, determine the implicit logic in their charismatic appeals. The exposition, analysis, and evaluation of their appeals will serve as a heuristic device to generate questions and areas that need further study and investigation. The articulation of these considerations will occur in the concluding chapter.

Before moving into the body of this study, a clarification of significant terms is in order. These terms include violence, force, coercion, and non-violence. First, we need to establish the meaning of the term "violence." We

can begin by looking at the term etymologically. Viol is the latin root for "rape;" indeed, the spanish infinitive "violar" means "to rape." This makes sense, for violence seems to have something to do with violation, namely, the doing of harm or injury to another. Sergio Cotta calls violence the "function of despise", the "disprice", the taking away of the price or value of a situation, institution, or person, and the opposite of respect. Respect, here, involves a conception of the human person which involves profound acceptance of the Other in a reciprocal relationship.³ Violence is its opposite.

Another way of looking at this phenomenon involves the concept of inalienable rights; that is, those rights indissolubly connected with being human. Principal among these rights are two; first, the right to one's body. Without a body, the man or woman could not be a person. The second of these rights involves the concept of dignity, and may be defined as the right to personal autonomy.⁴ Such natural rights help to constitute what it means to be human; and acts that militate against these natural rights constitute violence.

There are many kinds of violent acts; and in fact violent acts are not easy to categorize. The most obvious category is physical violence. This would include such acts as mugging, beating, raping, and killing, in short, any doing of harm to another person's body without his or her

consent. In one sense, the height of physical violence would be war, with so many people's bodies being harmed at once. But war is already a complex activity in which many persons are subjected to profound fear, threats, and coercion. This is why it has often proven so difficult to assign moral culpability for the violence of war.

Thus violence must include other forms of deliberate harm to humans as well. Threats and extortion count as violence because a person loses autonomy through fear of threat or harm. The violent person violates the right of others to determine things for themselves, their right, as one author comments, "to be humans rather than dogs."⁵

The overcoming of another's will, by one's use of physical force or intimidation, is an important element in most forms of violence. Clausewitz' classic definition of war carries the spirit of this point, although he speaks of war's physical activity as violence and speaks of its effects in other terms. War, he says, is "an act of violence to compel the enemy to fulfill our will; violence is the means, imposing our will the end."⁶ Both in physical and psychological attacks on the human person, the common element is the contravention of another's will.

Still more difficult to categorize are social structures and patterns of human relationships that systematically deny the autonomy and dignity of persons in

the community. Slavery is a classic example of an institution intimately tied to violence. Moreover, some social patterns of prejudice and discrimination involve little overt physical violence. Yet, a systematic denial of options is one way to deprive autonomy, to violate the person's right to decide for herself what to do. So it is that morally flawed societies are often described by their critics as "violent," even in the absence of significant numbers of physical acts of violence. One member of the American Friends Service Committee, for example, has criticized American society in these words: "The 'good order' of society is the routine oppression and racism committed against millions of Americans every day."⁷

The suggestion is the violence implicit in such institutions is perhaps even more dangerous than overt physical violence. Jon Sobrino has spoken in similar terms of the socio-economic patterns that result in poverty, malnutrition, poor health, sickness, and death. He views this as the principal evil that needs to be challenged first in many societies.⁸ In a similar vein Reinhold Niebuhr comments in his article, "Why I left the F.O.R.": "I think it is quite probable that there are wealthy Quakers who abhor all violence without recognizing to what degree they are beneficiaries of an essentially violent system."⁹ A contemporary testimony from a Salvadoran campesino is even more pointed:

You gringos are always worried about violence done with machine guns and machetes. But there is another kind of violence that you must be aware of, too. I used to work on the hacienda. My job was to take care of the owner's dogs. I gave them meat and bowls of milk, food I couldn't give to my own family. When the dogs were sick, I took them to the veterinarian in Suchitoto or San Salvador. When my children were sick, the owner gave me his sympathy, but no medicine as they died. To watch your children die of sickness and hunger while you can do nothing is a violence to the spirit. We have suffered that silently for too many years. Why aren't you gringos concerned about that kind of violence?¹⁰

Now we need to discuss our last three terms: force, coercion, and non-violence. First, let us discuss force. Force and violence are not the same thing, but there seems to be an intimate connection between the two. Physical violence involves force, but force is not always violent. For example, a person might forcefully restrain an intruder, but also might forcefully argue a position. ¹¹ Moreover, Gandhi spoke of truth-force, and Martin Luther King spoke of soul-force. One broader definition of force, then, might be: the effecting of change or the capacity of effecting change. In this paper, where physical force and violence appear synonymous, the assumption is, unless otherwise noted, that physical force is employed in the service of violence, that is, it injures or harms another.

Another term often thought as synonymous with force is coercion; so it refers to the modification of a situation by overcoming resistance. But coercion usually involves making another submit to one's will, i.e. the

resistance overcome is the other's will; in this case, coercion is clearly closer in meaning to violence. Yet, the term is ambiguous; it sometimes seems quite different from violence. Ronald Miller uses the example of an adult taking a child into the water in order to eliminate the child's fear of it. In this example, there is coercion, but not violence in any proper sense. In blackmail or extortion, however, coercion exists that clearly involves violence.¹² For present purposes, then, coercion will refer to changing someone's action or will so that it matches the action chosen and desired by the coercer; but since coercion may be chosen for the person's genuine good, it is not necessarily violent.

For this reason, the morality of coercion is a very complex issue that has left moral and political theorists, including pacifists, much divided over the centuries. This is particularly true as the inherent coerciveness (or not) of the state is debated. Thus Reinhold Neibuhr, for example, criticizes the "ethical perfectionism" of certain pacifists who condemn all forms of coercion. In The Christian Century written prior to World War Two, Neibuhr writes:

...to refuse the use of any coercive methods means that it is not recognized that everyone is using them all the time, that we all live and benefit or suffer from a political and economic order that maintains its cohesion partially by the use of various forms of coercion.¹³

Neibuhr's point is that not all coercion is essentially

violent.

Our last term to clarify is non-violence. There have been many forms of non-violent action and many conceptions of non-violence in different historical circumstances. For the purposes of this paper non-violence will be taken to mean a person's refusal on moral grounds to inflict violence of any form on another person, whether physically or by threats or fear or other psychological means of harming others, as well as the refusal to participate in institutional patterns that are similarly harmful. Put positively, non-violence aims to heal relations between people, build up community, and remove the socio-economic patterns that cause harm to people. This initial definition will be amplified in the body of our discussion of non-violence. The following chapter examines the thought of two of the greatest proponents of non-violence, Leo Tolstoy and Mohandas Gandhi.

Chapter II

Tolstoy and Gandhi: Two Charismatic Thinkers on Non-Violence

Perhaps the most famous exponent of non-violence in its most complete sense--as a way of life as well as a tactic or strategy for social and political change--is the "great-souled" one, the little "coolie lawyer," from India, Mohandas Karamanchand Gandhi. The belief, conviction, and practice of non-violence--in this sense, the refusal to return physical or mental injury with injury--had influenced for many centuries many individuals and groups who lived such beliefs on primarily religious grounds, making religion the fundamental moral and factual starting point for many practioners of non-violence. Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Christianity all contained traditions of an ethic of love that resisted doing physical and other harm to others, even at one's own peril. In the Bhagavad-Gita, the Hindu song of love and the ancient scripture which Gandhi called the "dictionary of daily reference," for example, non-violence is held up as a superior ethical virtue.

I forsee no good will come
From killing my own kindred in war.
Even though they slay me, I wish not to strike them.
How can we be happy, having slain our own kindred
Though they, with hearts deadened with avarice,
See not the evil that will come. ¹⁴

There had long been, then, a tradition--or rather traditions--of personal non-violence through the course of history. The genius of Gandhi was to translate the personal

power of non-violent living into a political power aimed at social change. He attempted to channel the power of personal non-violence in such a way that it would transform the inequities in the social institutions of his country. Yet, Gandhi's path to non-violence, and the contribution he made to it in both understanding and practice, were neither automatic nor mechanical. As a young man, he wrestled with questions of violence. He later said that it was in reading Leo Tolstoy's treatise, The Kingdom of God is Within You, that he finally became convinced of the rightness of non-violence. Of that book, Gandhi writes, "Its reading cured me of my scepticism and made me a believer in non-violence. What has appealed to me most in Tolstoy's life is that he practiced what he preached and reckoned no cost too great in his pursuit of truth."¹⁵

This chapter, then, will articulate the moral and factual assumptions underlying the charismatic appeal to non-violence of the great Russian novelist, Tolstoy, and the dedicated Mahatma of India, Gandhi. Furthermore, it will attempt to discover and analyze the implicit logic of their appeals and evaluate it accordingly.

Tolstoy

Tolstoy was a volcanic personality who, upon his conversion to Christianity, considered that a faith-based morality was the only just expression of a life of love. For this reason, he parted with the institutional Orthodox

Church, with its ecclesiasticism, dogmas, sacraments, fasts, and prayers. Protesting against pietistic mysticism of any type, Tolstoy expressed his profound religious faith in morality. "Religion," he said, "is a certain relation established by man between his separate personality and the infinite universe of its Source. And morality is the ever-present guide to life which results from that relation." The first and foremost moral and factual starting point in Tolstoy's message is his profound commitment to God and, consequently, to personal morality. Having become convinced, at the age of fifty-seven, of the truth of the message of Christ and the Sermon on the Mount, Tolstoy abandoned the privileges he enjoyed as a nobleman and dedicated himself to a life of simplicity. Adopting plain attire and going barefoot, he worked and harvested the fields at the side of the peasants.¹⁶

In 1893, he completed The Kingdom of God is within You, his major work addressing non-violence and its implications. Convinced of a literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, he concluded that all forms of violence were completely antithetical to proper Christian living. Violence is first taken to mean physical harm, such as beating, hanging, punching, kicking, and killing. Later, Tolstoy describes and condemns institutionalized violence, the meanest expression of which for him was the state itself. The state, holds Tolstoy, is morally corrupt

because it uses physical violence against people and violently coerces its subjects under the "hypnotizing" ruse of the "common good." The army and the police are the institutional mechanisms for this violent coercion. Tolstoy concludes, therefore, that: "Christianity in its true meaning destroys the state," a conclusion not shared by Gandhi, as we shall see.

The Kingdom of God Within You is a call to the high ideals of Christian morality, as well as a vehement polemic against the institutionalism of church hierarchy, who, according to Tolstoy, "for the most part have lost the concept of what Christianity is." For Tolstoy, the essence of religion lies in the "property of men prophetically to foresee and point out the path of life, over which humanity must travel, in a new definition of the meaning of life, from which also results the whole future activity of humanity."¹⁷

Tolstoy formulated a theory of human development which was infused with his moral and religious assumptions. He proposed three "conceptions" of life, or three stages in humanity's evolution: the animal, the aggregate, and the divine. The first stage, the animal, focuses on personal gratification; this would be primitive man. The second stage involves the organization of humankind into family, tribes, groups and states, where personal gratification is set aside for the gratification of the will of the

aggregate. Christianity, not as a mystical teaching, but as a new, third concept of life, ushers in the revelation that the fulfillment of the will of God offers the deepest meaning for humanity.¹⁸ "True rational life is possible for man only in proportion as he can be a participant, not in the family or the state, but in the source of life, the Father." The error of institutional Christianity is that it has diluted the "vital teaching" of Christ and has made unobligatory its demanding moral appeals.

Tolstoy would condemn the "realism" arguments of someone like Reinhold Neibuhr, for example, who would hold that a dualistic morality in the modern world is not only permissible, but necessary. For individuals can be moral, Neibuhr tells us; but nations and states cannot. Instead Tolstoy sees only the demands of the "will of the Father"; in this he would probably agree with the stinging criticism of C. Wright Mills many decades later;

...the Christian record is rather clear: from the time of Constantine to the time of global radiation and the uninterceptible missile, Christians have killed Christians and have been blessed for doing so by other Christians.¹⁹

Tolstoy, as Gandhi after him, stresses the supreme importance of the ideal. However, for Tolstoy when the ideal becomes rigorized into a rule or law, it becomes uncreative or even destructive. Ideals are by definition unattainable; however, man is infinitely capable of changing and growing toward the ideal. Yet, lowering the demands of

the ideal means, in effect, destroying the ideal because the power of attraction and perfection is diminished. As Tolstoy says, "A moderated perfection loses its power to act upon man's soul."²⁰ For Tolstoy there exist two forces in the human person, the animal and the divine. The so-called divine force is simply the consciousness of a filial relation to God. Living out this filial relationship to God constitutes the meaning of true religion. The Sermon on the Mount, with its radical message of non-violence and love of enemies, constitutes the "signals on the infinite road to perfection."²¹

The aim of this third new concept of life is to "transfer by degrees into the sphere of habit, into the sphere of consciousness."²² For Tolstoy, as well as for Gandhi, habit, practice and experimentation are necessary to deepen and root the ideals. Indeed, Gandhi titled his autobiography, The Story of My Experiments in Truth. In this sense, Tolstoy and Gandhi may be seen as advocates of "orthopraxis," the radical commitment to the ideals of Christian or religious morality. Another term which expresses the same idea of a radical commitment to the person and to society would be Gandhi's term "ahimsa," which is broadly translated as "non-violence."

This type of radical morality has everything to do with Tolstoy's view of the human person. The faith-based love of the the Christian had firm foundations in the soul

and was, according to Tolstoy, totally unrelated to the humanitarian morality of the "positivists, socialists, and communists." These humanitarians hoped, in Tolstoy's estimation, to transfer the love of the family to the love of the state and, finally, to the love of humanity. Tolstoy agrees that the need for the widening of love is incontestable. However, he claims, the humanitarian love of the social scientists is some kind of "theoretical deduction from analogy." There is no power in it, according to Tolstoy. Indeed, "there is a weakening of sentiment in proportion as the subject is widened."²³ In this sense, he would agree with Professor Jan Narveson's Nietzschean criticism of the "love of humanity" found in some forms of pacifism: it is impossible to love "humanity;" we can at most love a few.²⁴ Yet Tolstoy goes where neither Narveson nor Nietzsche go, namely, he holds that only the power of the filial relationship with God provides the capacity and energy to extend one's ego boundaries. Tolstoy's doctrine of love and non-violence, then, rests on the metaphysical assumptions of the existence of a personal, omnipotent Creator and the individual human soul, the essence of which is love. Only faith, for Tolstoy, brings that love to life.

A radical love which refuses to take up or construct arms, or to kill, maim, or torture, and believes in the abolition of nation-states, the end of private property, and the non-resistance to violent coercion seems

downright impossible. Nevertheless, through habitual formation in this God-imbued love, it "will become as natural and as simple as the foundations of the family, the society, and the political life now appear to us."²⁵

Tolstoy believed humanity was and is in transition. In this respect, he assumed an evolutionary view of moral development. He believed that with the advent of the Christian concept of life, humanity had outgrown its social and political age and entered a new one. Yet, due to "inertia," humanity still clings to out-moded former patterns of the social concept of life, even though it knows the teaching that should be elemental to the new concept of life. This lack of correspondence between concept and practice produces a series of profound social and moral contradictions, which only further signal the need for conversion and change. These contradictions are economic, political, and international.

The economic contradictions involve the oppression of the working class. In this case, the peasants know themselves as beings of worth and dignity, yet find themselves enslaved by the rich and ruling classes. Tolstoy here describes and analyzes the plight of the working class with every bit as much acuity and passion as Marx or Lenin; the harms that the poor suffer--poor health, housing, and working conditions, and the police apparatus to enforce that poverty--are precisely the grounds for a just revolt in

marxist-leninist traditions. But, Tolstoy's response to the crises is clearly different. Where Lenin argues for institutional and material change, necessarily won only by violent force, Tolstoy always argues for the supremacy of the spiritual, the essential relationship being nonviolence.

The political contradictions that Tolstoy writes of are characterized by the obedience of the masses to laws "the rationality of which is doubtful." In this case, Tolstoy sees the masses as undermining their dignity as rational human beings by obeying unjust laws. These unjust laws include war taxes, import duties, church taxes, universal military service, and inequitable land distribution. Obedience to such laws jeopardizes human dignity. Gandhi some years later would write in similar terms regarding unqualified obedience to the State: "We are sunk so low that we fancy it is our duty and religion to do what the law lays down. If men only realize it's unmanly to obey unjust laws, no man's tyranny will enslave him."²⁶

The most scandalous contradiction between concept and practice is, for Tolstoy, the contradiction in international relations. Militarism only provokes "universal distrust" and encourages one national power to surpass the force of another, thus increasing the danger of war. Furthermore, militarism paralyzes the systems on which social and the individual welfare depend, increasing the evils of the war and the war economy.

The removal of these contradictions, says Tolstoy, is possible only by a change of life or a change of consciousness. Those who cannot or will not change their life, says Tolstoy, "drown their consciousness." The solution to the problem of war, for Tolstoy, does not lie in the hope for governmental arbitration or international treaties; it lies only in individual obedience to God. It is this obedience on a small, and then grand scale, that will eliminate war and, at the same time, abolish government. On this point, Tolstoy's views about the state and anarchism invite important comparisons with both Gandhi and Lenin; therefore, a brief explanation of Tolstoy's anarchism follows.

Tolstoy's idealism refuses to admit a near-just society. "Government by its essence has always been a justice-impairing force." The reason for this, according to Tolstoy, is the standing army and universal military service.²⁷ While a standing army does not necessarily need to function primarily as a repressive organ, the context of the Russian court at the end of the tsarist era bears repeating. Tsarism was approaching its nadir. Political power was reserved for the Romanovs, and the Romanovs assured their lock on power through the ruthless tactics of the secret police. On the basis of his Russian experience, Tolstoy concluded that it is an essential property of a government to subjugate its citizens. Government never

voluntarily renounces its power. For Tolstoy, this fact finds its expression in the standing army. In his estimation, it is quite erroneous to consider rampant militarism, war taxation, and the bursting ranks of the army as some kind of accidental phenomenon due to Europe's political situation. Instead, such a phenomenon is a logical development of the particular conception of life that sees the submission and sacrifice of the individual's will to the will of the aggregate. The determination of the meaning of life is transferred from the individual to the group; and so, the interests of individuals are eventually sacrificed for the interests of the aggregate. Unfortunately, the interests of the aggregate more often than not are the interests of a minority who impose their will on the masses. But those who resist bear the brunt of punishment and bodily violence in any case.

Tolstoy's criticisms of the state, then, include these charges. Power, the means by which the state acts, is for Tolstoy, based on bodily violence; state power involved using physical force to compel persons to act according to the will of the ruling elite. Tolstoy, moreover, saw the personal morality of individuals growing more refined over the centuries, while the morality of the state degenerated. For him, "Governmental power, even if it destroys inner violence, invariably introduces new forms of violence into the lives of men, and this grows greater and greater in

proportion with its continuance and intensification."²⁸ This violence of the state is supported by people's implicit or explicit assent to structures and institutions which crush or deny the dignity of the person. The phenomenon of physical violence used upon those who refuse to submit to the unjust institutions occurs to a greater or lesser extent in all forms of governments.

One criticism to be made of Tolstoy's reasoning focuses on his universalist assumptions. He often uses universalist language in describing the corrupt nature of governments. To be sure, his experience in Russia could easily lead to a cynical view of all governments, like his view that justice and state organization and power are all mutually exclusive. While there are indeed important tensions between the needs of the individual and the needs of the community, on which volumes have been written, it does not necessarily follow that this tension in every case leads to the moral corruption of either individuals or societies.

Tolstoy asserts his theories as if they were inexorable, universal laws; but this critical factual assumption needs to be examined. His argument, of course, is fairly tight, given his religious assumptions and definitions. Tolstoy's criticisms of politics is not dissimilar to the famous maxim of Lord Acton, "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." Yet,

arguments as Tolstoy's, and statements as Acton's, assume universal laws that can be easily disproved by pointing to good political rulers and good political institutions. It is more correct to suggest that there are strong tendencies toward corruption in political life. This, in the end, can actually lead us from Tolstoy's despair to fruitful action. If we speak of strong tendencies toward corruption in political life, then task is to build institutions, such as checks and balances, that lessen the likelihood of corruption and the use of violence by government.

For Tolstoy, the standing army and universal military service are the formal expressions of the violence of government, and these expressions introduce a "decomposing principle" in the social concept of life. Tolstoy assumes that the army exists not merely to defend against invasion, but to subjugate citizens. In tsarist and communist Russia, this had been amply proven true; yet, again, it need not be so in every case. Almost every country in Western Europe would serve as an example to disprove this assumption. For Tolstoy, the standing army only increases the dangers of war, as countries grow in fear and mistrust of one another. Now this tendency is certainly present in contemporary international relations: India fears Pakistan's militarization; Honduras militarizes to match the military build-up Nicaragua; Thailand is suspicious of the Vietnamese; the U.S. matches step for step or surpasses the

Soviet Union in military development; and so on. But Tolstoy's assumptions preclude and disparage dialogue as a means of defusing tense international difficulties. One wonders what is more dangerous, the tension in international relations or the abandonment of politics as something morally unredeemable. Given the extreme urgency of the contemporary international situation, the latter option appears wholly irresponsible.

Tolstoy argues in almost utilitarian terms against the justifiability of war, the inevitable outcome of immoral state power: "The menaces of war make all the perfections of social life useless and vain."²⁹ Universal military service destroys the advantages of the social life; taxes swallow the labor which the army is supposed to protect; military service takes men away from production. Finally the evils of war destroy social and moral cohesion.³⁰

How and why does this state of affairs, in which states immorally amass power, exist? Tolstoy cites four reasons, all of which operate under the assumption that all formally religious and political institutions are corrupting influences for the individual. The first reason is intimidation. The state's ability to use violence against individuals intimidates the citizenry into submission. In addition, a sense of the sanctity of the state is propagated; and those who refuse to accept this are punished. A second reason is bribery. A bureaucratic class

emerges whose wealth and comfort are dependent on their submission to and execution of the will of the government. They are, in effect, bribed into supporting it.

A third reason is "hypnotization." Both religious superstitions and the "savage superstition" of patriotism are used to dull the consciences and consciousnesses of the people. Operating with different assumptions and goals, Lenin, later, will use similar terms in his condemnation of chauvinistic patriotism and the "bourgeois lulling" of the oppressed. Both Lenin and Tolstoy speak contemptuously of "moral guides" who assuage the suffering of the oppressed with platitudes or political ideology.

For Tolstoy, there is also a fourth reason for the moral slavery of the masses to the state. This is the army itself, which uses "intensified methods of stupefaction and brutalization" to maintain the state's power. In this case, Tolstoy offers a powerful argument against the ethical validity of standing army. A dehumanizing process occurs to the peasant recruits which paradoxically results in a state of affairs where the oppressed oppress themselves.³¹

So Tolstoy speaks of the violated citizenry who "naively believed that governments existed for their good." He advocates society without government, although this is, for some, "a blasphemy which ought not even to be uttered."³² He concludes that fidelity to conscience and to the Father's will requires a kind of faith-based anarchism;

that is, a rejection of all political institutions "with which is connected the conception of everthing terrible."

Thus for Tolstoy the problem of government is subsumed under the problem of violence. He sees humanity at a fork in the road. One way is the way of violence--and this leads to moral and physical death; and the other is the way of non-violence--and this way leads to life:

People frequently think that the question of nonresistance to evil is an inverted question, a question which it is possible to circumvent. It is, however, a question which life itself puts before all men and before every thinking man, and which invariably demands a solution.³³

Violence, for Tolstoy, is the instrument used to win advantage for the ruling class. Only mobilized public opinion, begun first by those who refuse to march in step with the propaganda of government, will change the situation and begin to conform practice to the christian concept of life. It is these people, says Tolstoy, that governments fear more than socialists, communists, and anarchists because, finally, their loyalty is to no ideology but to God. It was the context of Russia, however, that blinded Tolstoy to the real possibility of genuine political service motivated by high ideals. The life of Dag Hammarskjöld and his book of Markings, for example, reveal that loyalty to God may not lead one away from political involvement to preserve a kind of personal purity, but may lead one directly into global and national politics as result of

one's personal conscientious response to the "will of the Father."³⁴

Gandhi

Gandhi's debt to Tolstoy was formidable, since in the Russian count's life and writings were vivid testimony to the power and example of radical love and non-violence. Yet, Gandhi did not accept wholesale Tolstoy's assumptions and conclusions. Indeed, the creative genius of Gandhi was to take the very best from different sources of ethical and religious inspiration, and in many cases put a fresh interpretation on it. In the end, Gandhi did not see himself as any founder of a sect, but a man who was simply a "humble searcher after Truth, (who) knows his limitations, makes mistakes, never hesitates to admit them." This section will articulate the principle assumptions and presuppositions of Gandhian non-violence.

The basis of Gandhi's thought is commitment to truth; indeed, one of the fundamental terms in Gandhian thought is "satyagraha" which means "clinging to truth." Truth in this sense suggests being or reality.³⁵ Indeed, the Sanskrit word "satya," means "to be," implying a connection between truth and existence. For Gandhi, there were clear metaphysical implications in this connection. According to Gandhi, what exists, or what lives, is true. For Gandhi, God is the ultimate living reality, and it is for this reason Gandhi often said "Truth is God." Truth,

then, links all life together, it is the unity of life; it is reality and so, in a sense, it is life itself. Truthfulness, therefore, is any action, disposition, policy or thought that affirms life, defends life, nurtures life, allows life to flourish, or brings lives together in harmony.³⁶ All thoughts, words, and deeds, then, admit the possibility of discovering the life-giving, or truthful option; and for Gandhi, finding truth in this broad, metaphysical sense meant discovering God.

Gandhi's non-violence, then, is very much related to this broader conception of truth. Truth is that which promotes life and respects the fundamental unity of all life. Non-violence, or ahimsa, is the attitude, disposition, and actions that is the means to truth. "In its positive form, ahimsa means the largest love, greatest charity."³⁷ Conversely, untruth is anything that inhibits, prevents, or impedes life; and this includes all forms of physical violence and its psychological and institutional embodiments as these harm or injure persons or groups. For Gandhi, violence, as a negation of life, was the virtual equivalent of untruth. Himsa, the Hindu word for violence, included not just the physical acts of violent force and injury, but included the very attitude of wanting that violence to come about. Ahimsa, similarly, included more than the absence of destructive action, but also the positive intentions of good-will for others, kindness,

generosity, and self-sacrifice. For Gandhi, ahimsa, or non-violence, was the litmus test of the commitment to truth.³⁸ Indeed, for Gandhi, "Non-violence and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them."³⁹

Influenced greatly by the Hindu sense of dharma, that is, the moral obligation to fulfill one's duties, Gandhi took non-violence to be a supreme duty in order to insure truthful or genuinely life-giving ends. In 1909 he wrote, "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree," and for this reason he refused any violent short-cuts to one's ends.⁴⁰ He did not want to risk destroying the goals of freedom and justice in India by using means, such as violent strategies, that in effect contradict or negate the ends. The means, in fact, insofar as they were more within the control of the agent than the end, were held to have a superior importance for Gandhi. Later, he expressed this idea quite simply, "If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later."⁴¹ So satyagraha, or "clinging to truth," for Gandhi, released power and energy that assured "victory" for the satyagrahis, though it meant certain suffering as well.

For Gandhi, the "force of love truly comes into play only when it meets the causes of hatred." Suffering in the name of justice and truth, and not a masochistic self-serving suffering, is at the heart of non-violence.

According to Gandhi, suffering for the sake of justice is the definitive means by which one will both claim one's own dignity and power and provide the necessary moment for the conversion of the opponent. In one passage, he writes,

...things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle....The appeal of reason is more to the head but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man. Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword.⁴²

There are several significant observations to be made here. First, Gandhi assumes that human suffering is creative and is by no means worthless. In this he would differ greatly from the revolutionaries considered later in this paper who would view nearly all forms of suffering as an assault on personal dignity. For Gandhi, however, whose aim was never merely a transfer of power, but a transformation of relationships, suffering, when it is the result of a non-violent struggle for truth and justice, provides the creative power to change hearts and minds. Suffering awakens the awareness of the fundamental bonds between people and lifts from the heart empathy and fellow-feeling.

Furthermore, Gandhi indicates that generosity and self-sacrifice, which are the virtues behind suffering, are those qualities which truly individuate the human person, not aggression or violence. In another passage he writes,

"Man as animal is violent, but as Spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within, he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses to ahimsa or rushes to his doom."⁴³ This view of the human person is very similar to Tolstoy's, who also saw two forces in persons, the animal and the divine. He, like Gandhi, believed that the divine force was the power which truly made possible full human living.

Finally, Gandhi believed that the efficacy of non-violence could be tested only in and through opposition and suffering. He argued frequently that non-violence in India would be a hollow thing and worth nothing if it depended for its success on the goodwill of the authorities. In this case, then, the fact that non-violent resisters suffer the brutality of their opponents paradoxically indicates the possibilities for a successful creative encounter between adversaries. Martin Luther King realized this years later;

As my sufferings mounted I soon realized that there were two ways that I could respond to my situation: either to react with bitterness or seek to transform the suffering into a creative force. I decided to follow the latter course. Recognizing the necessity for suffering, I have tried to make of it a virtue.⁴⁴

For Gandhi, the willingness to suffer for the sake of justice was an indication of the moral superiority of non-violence to violence as a way of life and as a strategy for social action. Furthermore, Gandhi assumes that ahimsa,

or non-violence, is in accord with the deepest truth of human nature, and in fact corresponds to the human person's innate desire for peace, justice, freedom and dignity. Violence, or himsa, degrades and corrupts the human person, so to meet violence with violence or hatred with hatred only increases one's progressive degeneration. Finally, because non-violence is the basic law of our being, it can be used as the most effective principle for social action; it heals and restores the person's nature, and gives him or her means to restore social order and justice.⁴⁵

For Gandhi, however, the superiority of non-violence to violence was determined not merely by his metaphysical assumptions, but also by a prudential examination of the utility of violence as a fitting means of conflict resolution. Gandhi believed that violence never completely overcomes evil, but merely suppresses it for a time. Yet, the evil only rises later with a redoubled vigor.⁴⁶ Here, Gandhi would agree with Helder Camara's consideration of the "spiral of violence," namely, that violence begets violence and never fosters genuine reconciliation and healing. Economic oppression, for example, is reinforced by violent military or paramilitary programs; such oppression and repression lead to revolutionary violence, and yet this violence paradoxically is used to justify further repression in an escalating crisis of societal fragmentation.⁴⁷ As Gandhi writes, "A

successful bloody revolution can only mean further misery for the masses."⁴⁸ Furthermore, the corrupting tendency of violence adds a further argument against its use as a fitting tactic for social change: "History teaches one that those who have, no doubt with honest motives, ousted the greedy by using brute force against them, have in their turn become a prey to the disease of the conquered."⁴⁹

While such temptations of power obviously do not always occur in violent overthrows, Gandhi nevertheless believed political history testified to a grave failure in the capacity of violence to properly transform social relationships. Non-violence, however, according to Gandhi, properly transforms relationships and puts a true end to evil; for its goal is to convert the opponent and transform hostility and fear to friendship and trust.

Naturally, such a position assumes that even in the most wicked persons there is some kind of core goodness that can serve as the grounds for a common human encounter. For this reason, Gandhi was careful to distinguish between the agent of violence and the act of violence. In his belief system, "we are all tarred with the same brush," and therefore we must look upon our world and all its circumstances with great humility.

Because we are divinely related to all human beings, "we must partake of the sin of every person whether he belongs to us or to another race."⁵⁰ He was therefore

reluctant to "invoke the beast" in others. While the non-violent resister would in every case refuse to cooperate with unjust policies, he or she nevertheless would also refuse to objectify, humiliate, or brutalize the opponent. Recalling again the principle of the unity and sanctity of life, Gandhi believed that to harm any human being was to do violence to the divine essence relating all people. As such, it would represent a fundamental denial of truth.

Such thoroughgoing non-violence precluded any forms of coercion. However, Gandhi later admitted that most of the "non-violent" campaigns in India were actually only "passive resistance" not thoroughgoing non-violence. They did not carry the pure intention of free, loving service, and were instead manipulative. Worse, some forms of passive resistance is a "non-violence of the weak." That is, some of those choosing this tactic do so from cowardice, and they would use weapons if they had the access and courage to do so. In the end, true non-violence is not a policy for the seizure of power. It is a way of transforming relationships to bring about a peaceful transfer of power, effected freely, without coercion or compulsion, by all concerned, because all have come to recognize it as just and right.⁵¹

According to Gandhi, for non-violence to be effective a whole effort, a way of life, is needed. So Western pacifists are misguided when they think that war can

be stopped by mere propaganda; the causes of war first lie in the hearts of men and women.⁵² The ending of war begins first with individual conversion and a commitment to loving service. Thus, when all people begin to act on the truth that we are all divinely related as brothers and sisters, then and only then wars will cease to occur.

For Gandhi, the aim to end wars is not "a matter of preaching, but of building, brick by brick, a new non-violent social order." Satyagraha, then, is not merely a radical confrontation to violent institutions, but an active, service-oriented disposition as well. This is the basis of Gandhi's so-called "Constructive Program," an attempt to mobilize volunteers to teach, work, and serve others so that the well-being of all Indians might be improved.⁵³ Through all of Gandhi's inspirations run the influences of the Gita ideal of "karmayogin," the perfect man, as well as the examples of Jesus, Thoreau, and Tolstoy. Morality is of supreme importance to Gandhi, as it had been for Tolstoy; yet, for Gandhi, as for Tolstoy, morality was a faith-based, thoroughgoing non-violence of heart, mind, soul, and body.

Gandhi's appeal to non-violence rests fundamentally on his philosophical and religious assumptions. In viewing the universe as sustained by a benevolent Creator, he subsequently held firm to an extremely optimistic interpretation of the human person. He

believed in the basic goodness of the human person and in the process of searching for Truth, which he identified as that which gives life. Indeed, he held a kind of "moral epistemology" in which he believed definite, observable, "truth" could be discovered in the search for that which gives life. Those who consider these assumptions inadequate or, worse, false, might judge his appeal to non-violence, not as the call to a superior tactic for social change, but as extremely naive and therefore dangerous. In the face of certain brutal oppressors, the objector would claim, the call to thoroughgoing non-violence presumes a capacity for sacrifice that is in all likelihood beyond most persons. Gandhi would respond to this objection by humbly claiming that every one of his accomplishments was more than attainable by the average person. Moreover, a look at the verifiable effects of non-violence--inner peace for the individual, the construction of the good society, the willingness to sacrifice in the face of unjust laws or circumstances in order to effect positive change--argues as deeds and examples perhaps better than any words do for non-violence as effective strategy for social change.

Still other objectors might argue that non-violence is only genuinely effective in nations where there are political structures and institutions that are already fundamentally open to social change. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has adressed this issue in comparing black activist

movements in the United States and South Africa. In the United States, activists in the civil rights movement of the 1960s needed to claim their legal rights already guaranteed them in the Constitution. In South Africa, blacks not only must contend with racist attitudes and policies, but also with the severe political limitations constraining them which are actually written into the South African Constitution, the law of the land in that country. Tutu fears that such a fundamental lack of political openness in South Africa will doom the non-violent movement in that country and eventually lead to great bloodshed.⁵⁴

Similarly, the question of the appropriateness of non-violence is raised in the face of brutal dictators like Hitler and Stalin. While there are limited accounts of non-violent resistance in World War Two, usually taking the form of heroic individuals and communities risking their lives to protect Jews, certain strategists of non-violent action have agreed with the critics that for non-violence to approach any measure of political effectiveness, at the minimum an extensive network of organization and training needs to be in place; otherwise, the dictator need only to imprison, exile, or assassinate the charismatic leader and thus subvert the momentum of the movement.⁵⁵

With the absence of such a network, and sometimes even with it, we can imagine regimes so brutal that non-violence can no longer be considered as an efficient

strategy for social change. Some advocates for non-violent action, however, would contend that non-violence accomplishes superior gains for humanity even in the most desperate and doomed situations. The argument here involves giving great weight to spiritual values of witness, redemptive or sacrificial love, and faith; while demonstration of this point involves analysis that is beyond the scope of this paper, certainly the two thinkers examined in this section would argue for non-violence even in the most desperate circumstances by appealing to these spiritual values.

In concluding this chapter, I will identify the principal points of comparison between Tolstoy and Gandhi, especially in their sets of shared assumptions. First and foremost is the metaphysical assumption that men and women are related to a personal, powerful, and caring God. The belief in a benevolent God naturally led both men to construct a value system which placed a high priority on service and justice. Gandhi and Tolstoy believed that fundamentally all men and women were brothers and sisters. Both, then, placed an absolute value in the primacy of a faith-based morality; at the same time, however, they valued a detachment from results in favor of relationships. Both Tolstoy and Gandhi would hold an ethic of ultimate ends: "Do rightly and leave the rest to God." Each individual was obliged to live rightly and to respond vigorously to the

call of conscience. It is for this reason that Tolstoy was convinced that persons faithful to their conscience were more of a threat to governments than communists or anarchists. For Gandhi, the importance of one's obligations, best expressed in the stories found in the Bhagavad-Gita, meant practically for him that faithful, non-violent attention to the means for social change would assure that the goals for change would not be subverted.

Another similarity shared by the two great exponents of nonviolence is their distrust of and skepticism toward modern social institutions. Tolstoy saw humanity as breaking forth from the social concept of life into the divine concept of life, but saw institutions growing more implicated with violence. This led to a kind of christian anarchism. Gandhi was also critical of the attractions of luxury, greed, and materialism that surface in the lifestyles of adherents to certain political and social ideologies. He called these tendencies a "positive menace to the moral growth of man." In his estimation, greed and materialism have the effect of dulling both the reason and conscience of the individual; reason is "employed at deception" and "worships at the altar of wealth and happiness," and conscience either "connives" with such dulled reason or is extinguished. For Gandhi, there existed an inverse relationship between material progress and moral

progress. In fact, for him material affluence and moral turpitude were intimately connected.⁵⁶

In Gandhi, however, there is always, as with Tolstoy, the belief in the divine possibility of the human. For Tolstoy, the Son of God sought to be liberated from the heart of the individual, and, for Gandhi, man may not "be God, but neither is he different from the spark of God." The indictment, in both figures, is against structures and institutions created by men and women; for these contain the nearly inevitable possibility of enslaving people instead of freeing them. Tolstoy saw the state as the ultimate violater of human dignity and freedom, and saw anarchism, rooted in conscience and non-violence, as the only way a person of dignity and faith could respond. Gandhi, however, rejected anarchism, though he clearly saw the corrupting tendencies of the state and politics. Still, he thought anarchists were "the enemy of the people," and considered non-violent activists as the true benefactors and philanthropists of the state, for they had in their best interest the welfare of the state, which was and is, in the end, the welfare of men and women.⁵⁷ So while Gandhi and Tolstoy both shared a skeptical view of the nature of social and political institutions, only Gandhi genuinely appreciated the redeeming and socially beneficial potential of these institutions.

This view of Gandhi's reflected a view of power quite different from Tolstoy's. Tolstoy assumed power to be in every case antithetical to christian living. He assumed the basis of power to be physical violence in every case. But it is probably more correct to say that violence can be used in the service of power. Such power is used by some to control, extort, coerce, or compel the will of others. Such is one form of power; but it is not exhaustive of the possibilities. Tolstoy seems to overlook that one can speak of the "power of truth" or the "power of love," the basis of which is, indeed, a kind of force, but one that does not crush, destroy, or violate persons. Such such a power does indeed intend at times to provoke moments of crisis in order to gain new breakthroughs or new understandings; but it need not always violate people's dignity.

For Gandhi, however, the basis of power for good is not a passive subject, but an engaged citizenry. The state does have a distinct power of direction; but its effectiveness depends on its ability to elicit other forms of power to support its own. Power, for Gandhi, was a by-product of social activity and human relationships. He considered, unlike Tolstoy, the possibility of the purification of politics, and he believed that a state is only as directive and powerful as the citizens permit.⁵⁸ In this sense, people of conscience are indeed the true benefactors of the state since they challenge corrupt

policies of the government and are willing to risk reputation and even life to do so. The March, 1986, peaceful revolution in the Philippines, with the proud exaltation of "people power" serves as an illustration of the possibilities of social change when there is an "engaged citizenry."

Finally, both figures were convinced of the evolutionary possibilities of the human person, and saw non-violence as gradually developing within the species. In a passage very similar to Tolstoy's discussion of the three concepts of life, Gandhi writes;

Thus from being a nomad he settled down to civilized stable life, founded villages and towns, and from a member of a family he became member of a community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive ahimsa and diminishing himsa. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared.⁵⁹

This passage reflects an optimism and the growth possibilities of the human person and community. While himsa does pervade the world, ahimsa grows within individuals and communities. New habits, "experiments in truth," help non-violence to grow in the minds and hearts of people. New ways of being and relating are discovered, and one of them is the realization that violence is not a mechanistic necessity in conflict situations, a conclusion not shared by many revolutionaries. For Gandhi and Tolstoy, however, non-violence always offered the right and best response to evil or injustice because of its basis in faith, truth, and the unity of life. For points of comparison, we

are now ready to turn to two revolutionaries, many of whose assumptions and principles could not be more different than those of Tolstoy and Gandhi.

Chapter III

Two Charismatic Thinkers on Revolutionary Violence: Lenin and Fanon

Lenin

...a long period of birth pangs lies between capitalism and socialism; violence is always the midwife of the old society; that a special state (i.e., a special system of organized coercion of a special class) corresponds to the transitional period between bourgeois society and socialist society, namely, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.⁶⁰

...as long as no violence is used against the people, there is no other road to power....⁶¹

There is no question that Vladimir Ilyich Lenin ranks as one of the top three or four most influential historical figures of the twentieth century. His adaptations of Marxism and his enormous organizational powers were instrumentally directed to one question: what could be done to bring about the socialist revolution in Russia?⁶² His answer, which included both an instrumental view of and a charismatic appeal to the use of violence, was based on certain moral and factual assumptions which will be explored in this section. Further, I will determine the implicit logic of his appeal to physical violence and evaluate it accordingly.

The first and foremost starting point in Lenin's call to revolutionary violence is Marxism. Marx and Engels had provided a thoroughgoing analysis of capitalism and had

explained the misery of working class Europe in the mid-nineteenth century as being a direct result of the conflict generated between those persons who owned the means of production, capitalists, and those persons who were forced to sell their labor power in order to survive, industrial workers. Marx and Engels had predicted that the plight of the workers in Europe would worsen, that a greater polarization between capitalists and workers would occur, and that these antagonisms would lead eventually to the demise of capitalism and to the birth of socialism. The degradation of human beings to the level of animals would be the catalyst which would ignite the workers to spontaneously rise up and cast off the burden imposed on them from the capitalist system. In his earlier writings, Marx assumed that spontaneous rejection of exploitation and the advent of the socialist era necessarily meant a violent revolution. The familiar cry in the Communist Manifesto bears recalling;

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.⁶³

It is clear in this passage, and many others, that Marx was convinced that physical violence was necessary for the transition to socialism. The principal justification for this resort to violence seems to be economic oppression conjoined with overt repression. Workers are first degraded

to the level of animals by the exploitation of the capitalists. The hunger, disease, and early deaths due to poor working conditions constitute violations of their dignity suffered on the part of the workers. A second level of violation is directed against the worker in the form of overt, physical repression as workers begin to organize for their rights. The economic oppression and the polarization created by the physical repression was the basis of Marx's early predictions of a violent revolution as the precondition for a successful transition to socialism.

However, in his later years Marx was both less strident and more ambiguous in his language on revolution. Without renouncing his basic belief that the socialist revolution would be in most countries have to take place by physical force, Marx also envisaged the possibility of a non-violent path to socialism in certain countries.⁶⁴ In 1872, for example, Marx delivered a speech in which he claimed that in countries such as America and England, "workers can attain their goal by peaceful means."⁶⁵ At the same time, he was quick to qualify that in most countries, "the lever of our revolution must be force." Within the context of his speech, Marx intended "force" to mean the use of physical violence.

The assumption that violent revolution is needed in most countries appears to be determined by the lack of genuinely free and democratic structures in those countries.

Here lies the core of the debate on violence in Marxist theory. If the Marxist call to violence is based on the fact of repression in certain countries, then the absence of repression and, conversely, the presence of democratic political structures, renders void the call to violence. Indeed, toward the end of the nineteenth century, as repression against workers diminished, and material advantages were being accrued to the workers precisely through the political process, certain Marxists began to speak of socialism won by evolution, not violent revolution. While Marx did warn against mere reformism and castigate liberals in his famous "Circular Letter," he nonetheless did foresee the possibility of a peaceful transfer to socialism. After Marx's death, Engels seemed to soften the Circular Letter's insistence on revolutionary class struggle as the only acceptable political strategy for a socialist party. Elsewhere, he argues that modern technology had rendered obsolete classic street fighting and declared the decisive "shock force" of the international proletarian party to be the two million voters it sends to the ballot boxes. Still, his concluding words in Tactics in a Social Democracy reinforce his commitment to the Marxian idea of revolutionary class struggle.⁶⁶

In sum, there is an ambiguous legacy in Marx and Engels' call to violent revolution. While there are certainly appeals to the use of violence in the writings of

Marx and Engels, there are certain nuances as well that raise the critical question: does revolution in Marxist terms necessarily imply violent revolution? The debate has raged for decades. For Lenin, however, there was no debate, nor ambiguity. In State and Revolution and other works, Lenin sought to re-capture the "revolutionary soul" of Marxism and to establish within Marxist thought the full legitimacy of taking power by force and violence.⁶⁷ Lenin considered violent revolution to be the essential component of Marxist thought, and, accordingly, brooked no compromise with putative Marxists urging a gradualist approach to socialist transformation.⁶⁸

Lenin's criticisms were levied against social democrats as Eduoard Bernstein, who sought to explain the failure of Marx's predictions of violent revolution in Western Europe near the end of the nineteenth century. Conditions for workers in Western Europe were improving, not worsening. They were not getting poorer, repression against them was relaxing, and the bourgeoisie was not contracting, but expanding. Furthermore, the state, which in Marx' view was the principal vehicle for class domination, began finally to recognize the claims of the proletariat: workers began to enter European Parliaments, and social welfare programs, insurance programs, and restrictions on working conditions began to be legalized.⁶⁹ If economic oppression conjoined with violent repression was the implicit principal

justification in Marx for the use of violence to redress these net ills, the factual developments in Western Europe by the end of the nineteenth century seemed to render invalid the original conclusion and call in Marx for revolutionary violence. In one place in Europe, however, did the social and political development of workers completely fail to improve, and that was in Tsarist Russia. The Russian context, as we will see, is crucial.

Lenin, influenced both by the long tradition of Russian revolutionary activity and by Marxism, condemned Bernstein's evolutionary socialism as an outright distortion of Marx. In the vicious and repressive milieu of Tsarist Russia, Lenin, in What Is To Be Done?, set aside problems in Marxism raised by the failure of Marx's predictions and instead focussed on other ambiguities in Marx, for example the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat. Lenin chose an activist interpretation of Marx, first by rejecting the claims of some who thought the proletariat was capable of coming to revolutionary consciousness without the education and training of social democrats well versed in Marxism. The most an "uneducated" proletariat could hope for, Lenin argued, is what he called "trade-union consciousness"; they would not aspire to an end to capitalism, only to mere reforms within it. Lenin pointed out that the socialist and labor party had grown up independently of each other. Therefore, it was proper to

conclude that a "true" social democratic consciousness, which recognized the irreconcilability of classes within capitalism and the consequent necessity of revolution, had to be imparted from without.⁷⁰ In a major revision of Marx, Lenin argued that a vanguard party was necessary in order to lead the revolution on behalf of the proletariat.

Again, the Russian context is perhaps the single most important factual starting point in Lenin's categorical rejection of peaceful, gradual transition to socialism. The exploitation of Russian workers in the late nineteenth century was perhaps only matched by the suffering of Western European workers forty years earlier. Furthermore, few strong democratic political structures were in place in Russia, owing both to the repressive tactics of the Tsar's secret police and to the lack of, in comparison to other Western European countries, an extensive literate and urban citizenry; Russia's social strata was still largely dominated by the rural and uneducated peasantry. These factors, concluded Lenin, necessitated the creation of a vanguard party to effectively lead the revolution.

The original Marxist justification for revolutionary violence--economic oppression conjoined with repressive violence in a political context in which were present no democratic structures--appeared applicable to the Russian case as nowhere else. For Lenin, the revolution was paramount, and the revolution depended on the workers

gaining social democratic consciousness. Given the relative backwardness of Russia and the interest of the monarchy in preventing revolution through its secret police, only one course of action, according to Lenin, was open to the true marxist: the formation of a vanguard party of professional revolutionaries, able to work through and outside of labor unions, and who were skilled enough in conspiratorial tactics to overcome the subversion of the police. As such, this too constituted a major revision of Marx, who, in later years came to accept the idea of a party, but always viewed it as being internally democratic.

Lenin argued that by stupidly or naively adhering to democratic forms, socialists invited ruin. For him the revolution was paramount, and therefore, in the context of Russia, any political amateurishness on the part of socialists was intolerable. For genuine social democratic consciousness to emerge among workers, a secret elite needed shrewdly to match and surpass the conspiratorial tactics of the police. Lenin's argument for a conspiratorial elite is based precisely on the same assumptions that are used in arguments which conclude that non-violence would never work in countries with no tradition of respect for democratic expression. Secret police would kill or capture the leaders of an open movement and thereby render destroy the effectiveness of its, in this case, non-violent strategies.

Effectiveness is not always the deepest concern

for certain advocates of non-violence, including Gandhi and Tolstoy. It is an axiom in their thought that the goal or objective cannot be evaluated apart from the means. In the means are contained the ultimate end. Therefore, if peace, respect, fairness, community, and non-violence are ultimate ends, then these must be practiced in the means as well as the more mediate objectives. Fidelity to the ultimate ends in our choice of means suggests that, despite the odds, the ends will eventually take care of themselves.

Such a methodology, however, would strike Lenin as absurd. Yet, one cannot underestimate the effect of Lenin's cultural conditioning upon him. First, the use of violence had a long history in Russian revolutionary tradition. Moreover, Lenin, convinced as he was of the truly liberating possibilities of socialism, was confronted by the violence of reactionary Russia. For him, the choice was clear: revolutionary violence was a necessary element in the transformation of Russia to socialism. Lenin also tended to reduce the world to a titanic struggle between oppressors and oppressed, namely, the capitalists and the proletarians and peasantry. The forces of good, with the vanguard leading the proletarians and peasantry, inevitably must clash with the forces of evil, tsarist autocracy allied with the larger capitalist interests in Russia and the world.⁷¹ He assumed, probably correctly given his context, that his opponents would use any means at hand to crush socialism's

development. Therefore, he would use any means to advance it. "An oppressed class which does not strive to use arms and to acquire arms deserves to be treated like slaves."⁷²

Lenin ridiculed socialists who refused to take up arms. He called them the "spineless hangers-on" of the bourgeoisie who are prepared to "wade into the water provided they don't get wet."⁷³ Implied in this statement is the identification of courage with the use of violence and implicitly, the taking of life. Gandhi, however, identified the boldest form of courage as the refusal to take another's life, even at the cost of great personal suffering. Elsewhere, Lenin mocks christian socialists who recoil in horror at the use of arms to redress society's ills. "Capitalist society," he argues, "is and always has been the horror without end." He criticizes "social parsons" who envision a dream of a peaceful socialism. These persons, according to Lenin, refuse to reflect on the "fierce class struggle" and the class war necessary to achieve that vision. The words he chooses here are not metaphors but are intended to mean physical, violent confrontation.

In arguing that the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" is an essential component of "true Marxism" in his political text, State and Revolution, Lenin criticizes "sham socialists" (obviously the later Marx notwithstanding) who imagine a peaceful transfer to socialism. To redress

the institutional and repressive violence of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat needs state power, "a centralized organization of force, an organization of violence," in order to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to lead the oppressed in the work of organizing a socialist economy.⁷⁴ Addressing the issue of disarmament in a speech written in 1916, Lenin asserts as essential elements of Marxist theory both violent revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and explains that this phrase is to be understood in terms of this theory:

But whoever expects that socialism will be achieved without a social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a socialist. Dictatorship is state power based directly on violence. And in the twentieth century--as in the age of civilisation generally--violence means neither a fist nor a club, but troops. To put "disarmament" in the programme is tantamount to making the general declaration: We are opposed to the use of arms. There is as little Marxism in this as there would be if we were to say: We are opposed to violence!⁷⁵

For Lenin, violent war is an inevitable result of the assumed irreconcilability between capitalists and workers. In his view, this conflict presupposed war. "He who accepts class struggle cannot fail to accept civil wars."⁷⁶ The implied inevitability of violence, which serves as a justification for violence as well, is primarily based on a dialectical interpretation of history and the concept of class struggle. Both of these concepts need to be analyzed.

When Lenin speaks of violence as always the midwife of the old society, and rebukes those who fail to see the historical prospects of the battle between socialism and capitalism, he assumes an apparent dialectical inevitability of violent revolution. Dialectical "laws", however, tend to inject a priori assumptions into the analysis of social change: they report that history develops through a process of negation and qualitative leaps from one stage to another, and that violence is the necessary negation for the transition from one economic stage to another.⁷⁷ But, as Arthur McGovern has pointed out, what violent revolutions can be posited which marked the transition from ancient to feudal society? Further, many societies, particularly in Western Europe (with certain exceptions such as the English and French Revolutions), have changed from one level of economic development (in terms of class relationships and productive forces) to another without civil or international wars. McGovern concludes that to establish the necessity of violent revolution one must look to other grounds other than dialectical inevitability.⁷⁸

Another assumption that Lenin makes is in his equation of class struggle and civil war. On the one hand, class struggle can be viewed as a social reality and the object of Marxist analysis. Yet, a recurring criticism of radical Marxist analysis, one that Lenin is subject to as

well, is the tendency to reduce a complex set of class divisions to two antagonists: capitalists and workers. Similarly, in this account of things a complex set of causes for social conflict are reduced to one cause: class struggle. Actual social change is much more complex in its causality.⁷⁹

On the other hand, class struggle can be viewed not just as an objective reality, but as a program for social change as well. The logic runs like this: the capitalist system creates conflicts, therefore, to eliminate conflicts, change the system. This implies the activist interpretation of Marx, adduced to earlier. Provocation, education, agitation, and eventually the use of violence, in the name of class struggle, follows under this activist interpretation. While Lenin could not speak for all marxist-leninists, this activist interpretation can fall to the temptation to absolutize the cause; in such cases there is present as well the temptation to justify any means in order to attain the end. Even Lenin himself said, "Morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletariat's class struggle."⁸⁰ The creation of a new society won and perhaps enforced by blood and terror severely damages the bonds of trust, confidence, and joy which are so important to healthy community life; this suggests that few societal goals, if any, are worth resorting to any means, particularly terror, bloodshed, and tyranny, in order to achieve them.

In the name of class struggle and the movement to socialism, Lenin categorically identified as just both colonial wars of liberation and civil wars in industrialized countries. Conversely, he declared unjust any imperialistic wars, such as World War One, because such wars were driven fundamentally by the drive for accumulation and aggrandizement. Arguing that the relatively well-off workers in Western Europe had betrayed fundamental socialist truths and had been "bribed" by the super-profits generated by colonialism, Lenin stood alone in taking this radical stance vis-a-vis World War One. Rejecting patriotism, social chauvinism, and pacifism, he called on each socialist to work for the defeat of his own country, and urged that the international war be turned into civil wars in all European countries.⁸¹ Civil war based on the socialist drive for liberation was, for Lenin, "the only war that is legitimate, just, and sacred."⁸²

Lenin's appeal to violence, then, is based on the traditional Marxist vision of a new society where full human potential is realized. A heroic battle to create the new society forms the "sacred war of the oppressed to overthrow the oppressors and to liberate the working people from all oppression."⁸³ Civil wars, then, are considered by Lenin to be fully legitimate, progressive, and necessary, when they represent the struggle of the working class to overcome the oppressor class and usher in a new society. However, as

argued earlier, certain other historical changes do not suggest the dialectical inevitability of violence and, furthermore, the raw equation of capitalism with oppression and socialism with complete human liberation tends to reduce complex social and economic causes of conflict to two abstract protagonists and, consequently, underestimates human tendencies to power, greed, and corruption, but also cooperation and mutual recognition of needs.

In fairness to Lenin, we must add that his conviction in the liberating potential of socialism was so strong that he believed that all wars would soon be abolished with the advent of socialism. Yet, that remains a tenuous hope, especially when any means necessary to achieve that vision is acceptable. This is especially so because Lenin insisted as essential to Marxist socialism the formation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, a centralized organization of the ruling proletariat using whatever violence necessary to crush the bourgeoisie and other reactionary forces. Lenin argued that essential to Marxism is this repressive organization of the Proletariat, although Marx himself rarely spoke of a repressive role for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and when he did he insisted that these tactics were to be conjoined with peaceful tactics. Furthermore, Marx stressed that the Dictatorship was to be a rule of the workers as a whole, and not by an elite vanguard.⁸⁴

The willingness to use repression to win full human freedom appears to be a serious contradiction between the means and the ends of human community. The use of violence introduces considerable material and psychological costs in a country. Guilt, fear, depression, remorse, hatred, anger, destruction, and poverty are all obvious psychological and material defects that are often the result of the use of physical violence. Many lives are lost, and the people who survive the violent upheaval are often materially and psychologically in a worse position both as individuals and as communities than prior to the violent revolution. While this tendency might not be inevitable, its repeated occurrence in history should generate serious hesitations for advocates of violent revolution who genuinely value personal and social human growth. While Lenin aims for the liberation of the exploited, he offers no thoughtful assessment of the damage that the use of violence might do to individuals and societies.

Furthermore, the tendency to absolutize or to exalt "the vision," whether capitalist or socialist, tends to blur the distinction between ends and means. Absolute conviction in socialism's liberating power may tend to cause some to overlook or even to advocate certain repressive and violent actions which otherwise might naturally appear to be offensive and destructive to human community. If socialism modestly proposes a solution not to all human ills, but only

those based on the economic, social, and political conditions, then it would appear to be in the socialist's favor to guard faithfully against violent excesses. The excesses in Stalinist Russia, Communist China, and in Cambodia, for example, naturally lead to the suggestion that absolutized socialism, far from promoting genuine human realization, is completely antithetical to it. As Sidney Hook once said, "Under communism, man ceases to suffer as an animal and suffers as a human. He therefore moves from the plane of the pitiful to the plane of the tragic."⁸⁵

While the tendency to absolutize socialism, which includes the tendency to obscure the critical importance of the means of social change, need not be present universally among socialists, the tendency is certainly present in Lenin. Coming from his particular background in repressive, reactionary Russia, he saw in Marxism an answer to the social and economic ills of his country. Influenced as well by Russian revolutionary tradition, he concluded and appealed to revolutionary violence, justifying it on grounds of class struggle and dialectical inevitability. In his appeal to violence, however, was the tendency to absolutize socialism, thus permitting in his followers violent excesses which contradict the very goals that he intended.

Fanon

Frantz Fanon was a humanist who eventually espoused revolutionary violence in order to relieve the oppression of the colonial system.⁸⁶

(Fanon is) the most eloquent panegyrist of violence, a writer who celebrates it with savage lyricism.⁸⁷

The name of Frantz Fanon has for over two decades charged political debates with emotion and fury, inviting both staunch celebration from his admirers and strident condemnation from his opponets. The publication in 1961 of the radicalized French psychiatrist's book, The Wretched of the Earth, became a clarion call for revolutionary violence in black African independence movements. A famous preface by Jean-Paul Sartre "dared" Europeans to have the courage to read Fanon's book, while Sartre himself uncritically interpreted Fanon as an indiscriminate zealot for the use of revolutionary violence. While in the last analysis Fanon does issue a call to revolutionary violence in no uncertain terms, some scholars have argued that, putting aside Fanon's rhetoric, his panegyric on violence is nothing more than an adaptation of the principle of self-defense.⁸⁸ Understanding that oversimplifying Fanon can occur in both his admirers and opponents, I will aim in this section to uncover the moral and factual assumptions and the logic implied in Fanon's charismatic appeal to violence, and then evaluate it accordingly.

A major, and I think valid, criticism of Fanon is his careless use of terminology.⁸⁹ Often he fails to define such crucial terms as violence and liberation, and he further obfuscates what meaning can be implied in the text by using one term when another might be more appropriate. For example, Fanon often speaks interchangeably of violence, force, and coercion. Any attempt, then, to understand The Wretched of the Earth needs to decipher the possible meanings of his principle term, violence.

His call to revolutionary violence is a call to use physical force--arms, bombs, guns, and the like--to overthrow the established order. This view of violence is decidedly instrumental, and the locus of this instrumentality is the colonial situation. It is his analysis of the colonial situation, however, which soon renders his use of the term ambiguous. "Colonialism is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence."⁹⁰ By this he implies that in the very fabric of colonialism are social, cultural, and physical patterns of relationships that are injurious to the native. This seemingly all-pervasive detriment is "violence in its natural state," a concept not further explained. From Fanon's rambling discussion we can discern, besides physical acts of violence, violence embedded in institutions and in psychological relationships. The only means to remove such patterns of injury to the native is the

resort to physical violence, e.g., a war of independence. A further explanation of this analysis of colonialism is needed.

For Fanon, the violence of colonialism begins first with the overt physical violence used both to establish and to maintain imperial authority over indigenous people. "It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force."⁹¹ In the colonies, rational persuasion is replaced by "rifle butts and napalm." The overt presence and utilization of military force to maintain rule makes a mockery, according to Fanon, of so-called Western values. The military presence, especially in its use of torture and other repressive tactics, is the first and foremost component of what Fanon calls "the atmosphere of violence" in the colonies.

A second aspect of colonial oppression discussed by Fanon is the outright economic exploitation of the native. Here institutional violations of the dignity of human individuals and communities result directly from the inequitable distribution of material and social resources. Good housing, medical care, sanitation, food supplies, fair wages, education and other goods and services are first reserved for the rich, in this case, the white European settler. The native person's consequent suffering due to a deprivation of these basic goods and services is a direct

result, according to Fanon, of the colonialist/capitalist system.

In this analysis of economic exploitation, Fanon makes use of certain marxist categories and adapts others to his needs, anticipating later more controversial theories of unequal development. These theories regularly explain the poverty and misery of lesser developed countries, the so-called periphery, as the result of the siphoning off of their raw materials and surplus value by the "center," namely, Western Europe, the United States, and Japan. While unequal developmental theories are not the object of this paper, let it suffice to say that this theory has been amply criticized for oversimplifying the historical, cultural, and economic character of the internal relations of the former colonies and their external relations with other countries. Furthermore, unequal development theories tend to ignore the phenomenal growth of formerly undeveloped countries as Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong, let alone offer an explanation for the Republic of China's recent, gradual, but sure move to free enterprise. Fanon's account is subject to similar criticisms.

Nevertheless, Fanon does make effective use of certain categories of Marxist thought to explain the misery of the native people. The following is a passage which aptly describes the inequitable distribution of resources with the colonial setting;

The settlers' town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow all the leaving, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about ...The settlers' town is a well-fed town, an easy-going town; its belly is always full of good things ...

The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light.⁹²

The lack of food, health care, sanitary living conditions, and other goods and services, which injures the health and well-being of the native, is a result of the socio-economic institutions of the colony. The institutions themselves seem to do violence against the native, so we are prompted to speak of this as "institutional violence." But there is a problem with this expression, which is also a problem with Fanon's account of exploitation, namely that we do not normally speak of holding institutions responsible for violence. Does this mean that no one is responsible? If not, then perhaps this phrase is best avoided, and we should continue to speak of violence embedded in institutions as we have in Chapters One and Two.

The impact of overt physical violence and violence embedded in institutions is worsened, in Fanon's account of the colonial situation, by a third kind of injury,

psychological injury or injury to the spirit of oppressed individuals and peoples. Here again it may seem appropriate to speak simply of "psychological violence"; but again there is a problem. The problem lies in the fact that psychological or spiritual relationships between people do not have the definite demarcations that relationships between bodies do. Because the latter end in space at definite points, acts crossing boundaries are relatively easily defined. But healthy and constructive psychological or spiritual relationships are no less interactive than injurious ones. Calling the latter "violence" appears to tell us the nature of the injury when in fact it does not. Consequently, it seems better to speak of psychological or spiritual injuries or violations of people's dignity.

Fanon writes extensively of colonialism's "neurotic pathology," as he calls it. This is the imposition of European customs, values, and traditions at the expense of indigenous culture. The native experiences a loss of self-worth and identity as the imposition of European culture fragments and breaks down traditional patterns of life and culture. Fanon views this degradation of indigenous culture as a form of violence for it is fundamentally injurious to the soul or psyche of the native.⁹³

In Black Skin, White Masks, Fanon's psychological work which antedated by two years The Wretched of the Earth,

Fanon speaks of the natives internalization of an "inferiority complex," precisely the result of the overt and covert messages of colonialism: white European culture is superior to black African culture.⁹⁴ Internalizing this inferiority causes psychic alienation, one of the fundamental pre-conditions and starting points which lead to Fanon's eventual prescription of violent redress. The following passage exemplifies in the extreme the messages of psychological injury, which, if internalized, lead to alienation;

... the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil. Native society is not simply described as a society lacking in values. The native is declared insensitive to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense he is absolute evil.⁹⁵

Closely connected with such psychological violations of human dignity is racism. According to Fanon, for a black person to gain social and economic advantage, he or she must wear "white masks"; that is, he or she must appropriate the values and customs of the European at the expense of his/her own. Moreover, an entire legal and constitutional framework, as well as the aforementioned military structure, is created to protect and to preserve the interests of the colonizer.

It should be noted that the physical, institutional, and psychological aspects of "violence in its natural state," implied in Fanon's general discussion of the

colonial system, are all very much related and inter-dependent. In Fanon's analysis, the racist and capitalist policies of the colonial system, initiated and maintained by physical violence, generates of itself injury to both the soul and body of the native. It thus creates the "atmosphere of violence," cited earlier in Fanon. Indeed, it creates, according to Fanon, a situation so thoroughly ruled by domination that no rational persuasion nor conciliation is possible.

The two dialectically opposed forces, oppressor and oppressed, "follow the principle of mutual exclusivity." Their mutual negation in violent conflict eventually generates the "new man," that is, the free native. The most obvious negation is the settler, which recalls Sartre's chilling description of the confrontation between native and settler,

The rebel's weapon is the proof of his humanity. For in the first days of the revolt you must kill: to shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man, and a free man; the survivor, for the first time, feels a national soil under his feet.⁹⁶

In Fanon's assumption of dialectical conflict, there is more than a little hint of Hegel. In Black Skin, White Masks, Fanon recalls the Hegelian dialectic where fundamental conflict is the catalyst in the movement toward the absolute reciprocity, or mutual recognition, of two self-consciousnesses.⁹⁷ At root here is the moral

assumption that recognition is a fundamental human need. As long as the black person remains defined by the Other, he is unfree, and, Fanon would say, not fully human. "At this risk, I would say the black man is not a man."⁹⁸ In order to claim his/her humanity, the black person must make herself be recognized, and not merely passively accept the paternalistic recognition of the Other. Fanon assumes this forceful action of self-assertion must be violent. But in fact, forceful self-assertion need not be violent; nor must recognition of the black person always be paternalistic.

Nevertheless, there is in Fanon a clear and certain ring of the existential anguish over real human responsibility and freedom. Indeed, his concept of alienation owes more to Sartre than to Marx: the African remains inauthentic as long as she internalizes the stereotypes the Other has of her.⁹⁹ For Fanon, freedom is the basic moral value, motivation, and goal of his works. Though nowhere does he fully explain the nature of freedom, he does suggest that it is present in the act of rejecting the objectification of oneself.¹⁰⁰ In Hegel, the slave wins recognition by turning to the product of his labor; soon the Master paradoxically becomes aware of his dependence on the slave's productive ability, and the two see themselves as mutually recognizing the other.¹⁰¹ For Fanon, however, inherent in the colonial situation are such violent contradictions that turning to one's labor would only

perpetuate the black person's reduction to a thing. The African must actively turn to the white man and say "No." This action is both an action of freedom--asserting oneself over and against the psychic determination of the Other--and for freedom, for it removes the obstacles to greater self-realization, namely, the physical acts, institutional structures, and psychological relationships that have caused the poverty, injury, and alienation of the native.

Because the colonial system is so irrationally rampant with violence and injury, according to Fanon, violence and injury are needed for the creation of the "new man." The following is a passage from Black Skin, White Masks, in which are clear Fanon's humanist values;

... man is a yes... Yes to life. Yes to love. Yes to generosity. But man is also a no. No to the scorn of man. No to the degradation of man. No to the butchery of what is most human in man: freedom.¹⁰²

The question of course arises, what does "yes to life" and "no to the scorn of man" mean? It certainly could be said that Mother Teresa of Calcutta has responded through her works among the world-wide poorest of the poor with a "yes to life" and a "no" to human degradation. Can a dedication to violence, as Fanon implies, win material and spiritual liberation for persons and communities? Or is it merely a sign pointing to where greater liberation needs to occur? Can matching "terror, counter-terror, violence, counter-violence," be the formula for building genuine human

community, and, in the African case, communities of respect between blacks and whites? Fanon does not seriously consider other possible answers to these questions.

Yet, it is Fanon's quest for freedom, given the context of the colonial situation, that serves as his primary justification for the use of violence. Viewing the colonial situation as thoroughly rapacious and unprogressive (unlike Marx, who did see colonialism as an essential step, however sadly oppressive, in the worldwide socialization of productive means), he considered the colonialists to have so debased themselves that they have lost touch with rationality. By implication, he seems to argue that once things have fallen to the level of the irrational, only the irrational can effectively counter the irrational. According to this view, the enemy had become the incarnation of the irrational by using violence and injuring the native in every way, and therefore must be restrained or overthrown by violence in order to protect the human values of the oppressed.¹⁰³

Marie Perinbam uses the paradoxical term "holy violence" as a metaphor to suggest a "destructive force creative beyond belief."¹⁰⁴ Yet Fanon's commitment to violence is, in the end, based on his interpretation of what it means to be a free human, as contrasted with the all-pervasive violation of human dignity in the colonial setting and his understanding of the ruling class in Algeria as

intransigent and wholly irrational. In fact, seen in the context of one-hundred thirty years of resistance against the French, when political options had been tried and had failed, Fanon's call to revolutionary violence could be seen, if we lay aside his inflammatory rhetoric, as an application of the principle of self-defense. His message, then, would be that we are justified in using physical violence to defend basic human rights in the case where other options have been tried and have been suppressed. Once the commitment to violence has been made, however, it appears, given his assumptions, to be total (i.e., in relation to the oppressor), otherwise there would be the danger of "nothing but a fancy dress parade... a few reforms at the top... and down there at the bottom an undivided mass endlessly marking time."¹⁰⁵

Fanon cites three "positive and creative" qualities to the use of violence. First, the practice of violence binds together the different resistance movements and creates a "great organism of violence," ready to meet the pervasive violence of the settler. This unifying aspect of violence apparently breaks down regionalism and tribalism as the resistance movement is focussed on the enemy. Second, the violent war of liberation introduces in the consciousness of the native protagonist ideas of common cause and national destiny. Third, Fanon ascribes a therapeutic value to the use of violence at the level of the individual.

Violence is a "cleansing force." "It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect."¹⁰⁶

This last attribute recalls Fanon's adaptation of Hegel and Sartre mentioned above.

An evaluation of these assertions of Fanon is in order. First, Fanon tends to assert these positive qualities as if they are general truths of the property of violence. If he suggests a "law-like" character to the unifying, regenerative and therapeutic qualities of violence, then only one case would suffice to prove it false. While others have argued that Fanon did not intend to generalize from the case of Algeria, his style does tend to suggest that these qualities of violence are universal. But a view of the facts regarding violent uprisings shows that violence often is not in the least a unifying force, either for the people as a whole or even for revolutionary organizations. Examples of the violent responses made by groups in Lebanon and Central America reveal that power politics and fragmentation often plague revolutionary fronts, confusing both the issues and strategies in the fight for freedom. Lawrence Stone writes, too, that the use of violence is, in more cases than not, self-defeating, as it generates bitter divisions and enmity causing social cleavages that may take between seventy to one-hundred fifty years to be healed.¹⁰⁷ This is similar to the criticism

made in the analysis of Lenin's prescription of violence. A thoughtful assessment of all the material and psychological costs needs to be made before the simple emotional appeal to "justice" and "liberation."

Furthermore, it may not be "violence" at all that is the unifying attribute that Fanon has in mind. Instead, as Adele Jinadu suggests, the "need for social change" may be a more correct account of the catalyzing force in such political movements. I think Jinadu is correct, especially in the face of the obvious divisive tendencies in the use of violence. If Fanon wrongly identifies the principal unifying element in the struggle for liberation, as I think he does, then his conclusion to the imperative of violence needs to be called into question.

The role of violence as an effective means of conflict resolution has been seriously questioned by psychiatrists as well. Erich Fromm, the German psychoanalyst, writes,

Any glorification of violence is not only dangerous, it is based on untruth... Killing is never leads to the realization of what is human. Killing is always a violation of what is human, both in the killer and in the killed. It is condoned by many as being in the service of life, but it must always be atoned for because it always is a crime against life; it always hardens the heart of the killer, it always violates humanity.¹⁰⁸

Fromm's statement contains its own moral assumptions, principally, that humans are essentially relational beings oriented toward life and life-giving

activity. Yet, his work as a psychiatrist has given him ample case histories to give credence to his assumptions. Other psychiatrists have also cited the negative effect of violence on the perpetrators of violence, not to mention the victims of violence, on whom the ill effects are all too obvious.¹⁰⁹ Some conclusions seem to be that violence committed on the part of the perpetrator tends to generate feelings of self-hatred and hatred for the other, brutalization of the psyche, insensitivity, and contempt. These negative psychological effects seem to hold true both for urban crime and war time violence.

J. Glenn Gray writes that upon crossing a field after battle, the experience of being "oppressed by a spirit of evil" was palpable. He baldly suggests the enduring appeal of battle and war is not just comradeship, which might be likened to Fanon's sense of solidarity or common cause, but the raw delight in destruction as soldiers lose themselves in the fury for survival. He quotes a soldier in World War One;

I was boiling with mad rage, which had taken hold of me and all the others in an unspeakable fashion. The overwhelming wish to kill gave wings to my feet. Rage pressed bitter tears from my eyes. The monstrous desire for annihilation which hovered over the battlefield thickened the brains of the men and submerged them in a red fog... A neutral observer might have perhaps believed that we were seized by an excess of happiness.¹¹⁰

Astonishingly, this kind of brutalization of the human psyche is reported by Fanon himself in a chapter

titled, "Colonial Wars and Mental Disorders." In it, he details the emotional pathologies of both French soldiers and Algerian revolutionaries. The evidence he records clearly indicate that there is a high cost in the use of physical violence to the perpetrator of violent acts. This suggests that there must have been a profound internal conflict between Fanon, the clinician dedicated to health care, and Fanon, the political philosopher. In his calculus of values, based on his moral and factual assumptions in Algeria, Fanon the political philosopher needed to overrule Fanon the psychiatrist. Marie Perinbam suggests there may have been a high personal cost to Fanon in this choice. Apparently, in the years preceding his death, Fanon became withdrawn, hostile, and belligerent, as if personally incarnating the very qualities he advocated.¹¹¹

Another criticism that can be levied against Fanon's argument focuses on his assumptions about the colonial situation. His option for violence is surely in accord with Lenin's theory of the just wars of national independence. Yet, Fanon concludes to the prescription of violence by characterizing the antagonists in categorical terms. Whites are the oppressors, blacks are the oppressed. Whites, in effect, have lost touch with their humanity and rationality in their infusing of patterns of degradation and violence into the very fabric of the colonial system. They are, in effect, inhuman; this loss of humanity grants them

permission and justification to use physical violence to overcome them. It is precisely this kind of dangerous logic and rhetoric which has contributed in no small part to such moral catastrophes as, for example, World War One, when propaganda fueled the myth of the "monstrous Hun."

Three further comments are in order. First, according to Fanon's logic, the colonial system so corrupts the white person that any and all whites are stained, as, conversely, any and all blacks are its victims. The implicit logic of this train of thought runs to the absurd conclusion aptly drawn by Michael Walzer in his book, Just and Unjust Wars: European children become appropriate and legitimate targets for the violence necessary for the therapeutic cleansing and social liberation of the African.¹¹² Such a conclusion is likely to offend even the most callous moral intuitions.

Probably one of the most impossible tasks for an individual or a community is to determine or judge the extent to which another person or group has entirely lost touch with their humanity. When does a person or a group become "inhuman?" By contrast, the basic assumption in Gandhi's philosophy is that people can never completely lose their humanity. "Their humanity may be distorted by ideology, warped by a desire for power, obscured by habits of violence, but it is always there."¹¹³ Even the mental disorders of the French torturers and the callousness of

Algerian revolutionaries seem to be the body/soul's way of saying, "You are not meant to inflict pain on others." Because we know both that the measurement of a person's humanity is nearly an impossible task, and that the infliction of pain upon another has enormous physical and psychological consequences for both the victim and the perpetrator of violence, it may be well to proceed under the assumption that no person ever is totally corrupted of his humanity.

A second comment on Fanon's characterization of the colonies is in order. Fanon writes as if there are only two racial protagonists, Blacks and Whites. However, the mode of social stratification appears to be more complex, and includes Arabs and Asians. The consequent social structure is less of a monolith. The colonial situation then is "ethnically split and spiritually divided," as the members of varying groups experience different levels of commitment, either to colonialism or to the struggle for liberation.¹¹⁴ Since Fanon's call to violence is largely based on the assumption of two separate camps of competing rivalries, the factual complexity of both racial groups and their commitments and values necessarily introduces a mitigating factor to Fanon's appeal.

A third comment on Fanon's characterization of the colonial situation. Fanon adapts Marx and Lenin in his assessment of the colonies and holds that the peasantry and

the lumpenproletariat, the unemployed urban workers (held with great suspicion by Marx), were the truly revolutionary class. However, after Algeria won its independence, the peasantry appears not to have galvanized the country in revolutionary ideology, but have returned to their former ways:

The peasants, for their part, have not proven to be as revolutionary as they were during the war of independence. They have not agitated to obtain an agrarian reform or to force the government to give more attention to their problems.¹¹⁵

This suggests an all too easy tendency to overestimate the virtues of the new society and to underestimate human imperfections and limitations. In owing a debt to Marx and Lenin, Fanon shares the same risks of reductionism and absolutization mentioned to in the analysis of Lenin. These tendencies in his analysis and rhetoric seem to make the use of violence a more readily accessible option; for both "the enemy" and "the goal of the oppressed" each are treated as unambiguous terms. Yet, in real life things are rarely unambiguous. Systems do not always work, and all people, black, white, capitalist, socialist, are prone alike to movements toward life and generativity and to temptations to selfishness, power, greed, or corruption.

Unfortunately, it is the very self-assured certainty of the two great ideologies of capitalism and socialism which has led to the spilling of so much blood in recent history. Albert Camus raised precisely this point it

his striking text, Neither Victims Nor Executioners. Both capitalism and socialism promise great individual and social advantages but at a sure and high cost: some persons must die. Camus argues for a kind of Copernican rethinking; by placing as our priority human lives, and not the establishment of certain socio-economic systems, we risk not knowing what the future will bring. But we will know one thing, and this due to our priority established in policy: we will not kill.¹¹⁶

Lenin and Fanon both operate under the assumption that socialism will definitively eliminate poverty and oppression. They justify their call to violence on the grounds of the economic oppression and physical repression suffered by the oppressed class. In Fanon's case, there is the added crisis of the existential alienation of the black person; that is, that the very humanity of the African is jeopardized by the presence of racist, colonialist, and capitalist institutions. While socialists like Lenin and Fanon often have rightly noted, described, and analyzed mechanisms of violence and exploitation in socio-economic systems, the evidence at hand suggests that the creation of new systems does not guarantee the elimination of severe social and economic difficulties. In addition, the option for violence often exacerbates those difficulties.

This section has uncovered the moral and factual assumptions in Fanon's appeal to violence, as well as

determining the implicit logic in his appeal. Fanon, using both marxist and existentialist categories, views violence as dialectically necessary for the winning of the freedom and genuine humanity of the black person. He ascribes positive and therapeutic qualities to the role of violence in independence movements. I have offered a variety of criticisms based on certain empirical and logical considerations vis-a-vis the moral and factual assumptions in Fanon's appeal to violence. To conclude, there is an extreme danger in negating the very values liberationists hope to achieve in the new society when the option of violence is readily promoted as historically inevitable, psychically necessary, and morally acceptable in the face of a portrayed inhuman opponent.

Chapter IV

Conclusions

This essay has examined the moral and factual assumptions in the appeals to non-violence and violence in four charismatic thinkers representing two traditions of response to political, economic, and spiritual ills. It has analyzed and evaluated many of these assumptions as well as the implicit logic of their charismatic appeals either to violence or to non-violence. Some concluding considerations are in order, as well as directions pointing to the need for further study in the areas of non-violence and political change.

First, each of the appeals of the four thinkers we have studied presumes a certain philosophical or theological anthropology. Furthermore, it is assumed that the human person or community will realize inner and social harmony when responsibility for acting on this implicit or explicit anthropology is accepted. For Fanon, man is essentially free, and needs to assert and to act for freedom to establish his humanity. Where severe obstacles impede this natural drive for identity and freedom, violence is a necessary and even creative act. For Lenin, borrowing from Marx, man is a free, creative, producer, yet enslaved by capitalism. In order to enjoy the fullest realization of human freedom and creativity, violence is the necessary

means to overcome both the slavery of capitalism and the inevitable resistance of reactionary forces.

An apt description of Tolstoy's anthropology might borrow from Karl Rahner. For Tolstoy, man is being-in-relation-to-God, and, as such, is able to determine his moral principles from the life and example of Christ. His experience of God led Tolstoy to a radical interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. His principles for action--you shall not kill, return no injury with injury, offer no resistance to the wicked--strike most people as difficult enough options in the occasional personal conflicts that arise. Translating these principles into public policy appears virtually impossible, given both the extraordinary tasks of directing and sustaining an extremely broad social and political community and the differences in moral development among persons in that community. Gandhi, however, was able to enjoy modest successes in teaching, mostly by example, the virtues of non-violence to large masses of people. Like Tolstoy, Gandhi experienced God as a personal Creator and Sustainer. He held a moral epistemology, as it were, in which he identified truth as that which lives or gives life. As Gandhi and Tolstoy derived most of their principles for action from the fundamental experience of God, a brief consideration of the role of religion in violent or non-violent revolutionary movements is in order.

A cursory scan of history suggests that religion's role in political movements is often very ambiguous. It appears that every positive contribution religion has made to social and political conflicts has been cancelled out by an equal negative one. On the one hand, for example there are the examples of St. Francis, St. Martin de Porres, the Hindu and Buddhist saints, the holy ones of Judaism, the Mennonites, the Quakers, and others. On the other hand, there have been the crusades, the fanaticism of certain Muslim sects, the identification of the sword and the cross in Latin America, and other abuses. It appears that religion can no more offer definitive guidance than can other programs or strategies. Further, religion does not remove us from the pain of moral choices, nor from the pain of doing good work. It appears that religion's best contribution, while we work out the anguishing moral choices we sometimes need to make, is the revelation that we are loved by our Creator and we are related one to another. From this consideration does not follow at all an exhaustive set of principles for action, but it does shed light upon a general pattern of responses that fosters relatedness and community; this pattern would include actions that care for one's neighbor and generally supports the health and welfare of the community. general welfare

Religion's influence on Tolstoy and Gandhi has been documented in chapter two of this essay. Lenin, on the

other hand, considered religion to be socially harmful. He not only viewed it, as Marx did, as a symptom of an alienated society, but worse, as drug imposed by the oppressors to lull the oppressed into submission.¹¹⁷ For Lenin, Marxism "is relentlessly hostile to religion," because of the insidious use of it in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Thus, he writes, "Every religious idea, every idea of a god, even every flirtation with the idea of god is unutterable vileness;...it is vileness of the most dangerous kind."¹¹⁸ The more progressive and enlightened the religion, the more dangerous it was in Lenin's view. Indeed, he excoriated Tolstoy as nothing more than a cleric with progressive ideas, the worst kind, in Lenin's estimation;

...we have the preaching of one of the most abominable things on earth--religion, the endeavor to replace priest officially appointed by priests who are priests by moral conviction, i.e., the cultivation of the most subtle, and therefore particularly disgusting, clericalism.¹¹⁹

The assumption here is that religion and socialism, or, religion and full human realization, are mutually exclusive terms. Here, the anthropologies clash. While in this era there certainly have been many theologians and socialists who have been studying the common ground between the two world views, the arguments in Lenin appear to afford neither dialogue nor discussion.

Fanon criticizes religion in similar terms as Lenin;

The colonialist bourgeoisie is helped in its work of calming down the natives by inevitable religion. All those saints who have turned the other cheek, who have forgiven trespasses against them, and who have been spat on and insulted with shrinking are studied and held up as examples.¹²⁰

Fanon shares the same assumption as Lenin, namely, that religion is reactionary and unprogressive, forever aligned with the oppressive bourgeoisie. But Lenin's criticism is even harsher, seeming to absolutely preclude in religion any positive moral contribution. There appears no way to circumvent Lenin's criticism; so thoroughly convinced is he of his view of the human person and society that any idea apart from his is a lie, deception, and heresy. There is, for Lenin, no arguing either for the existence of God or for the redeeming effects of religion.

In Fanon and Lenin, positive values of human freedom and community are the goals of human action. Violence is argued implicitly and explicitly as the necessary means to these goals. Yet, the question remains how much of the goal is cancelled out by the use of the means. Thus, Nikolai Berdyaev writes,

Revolution seeks triumph at all costs....Triumph is achieved by force. This force inevitably turns into violence. There is a fateful mistake of the makers of revolution which is connected with their relation to time. The present is regarded exclusively as a means, the future as an end....But the future which the exalted end was to be realized never comes. In it there will again be those same repulsive means. Violence never leads to freedom. Hatred never leads to brotherhood.¹²¹

While Berdyaev is not completely accurate-- violence led to freedom for the thirteen U.S. colonies in 1776, for example--his overall point returns us again to the consideration of means and the ends for our charismatic thinkers. If a legitimate goal of justice and freedom is held up, how absolutely important is the goal in relation to the means? The danger exists, in the practice of the means, in partially or entirely negating the goal.

Fanon, for example, considered hatred an essential component to the revolutionary fervor needed to achieve victory for the oppressed. Yet, hatred has clear negative consequences for the person who hates.¹²² Nevertheless, Che Guevara, in following Fanon's principles, remarks that hatred must be considered an essential factor in the struggle; "intransigent hatred which impels one to exceed the natural limitations of the human being and transforms him into an effective, violent, selective, and cold killing machine."¹²³ Yielding to such passions, warned against by advocates of religion yet often not demonstrated in practice, appears to negate the positive goals of community by generating an attitude that adamantly refuses reconciliation and healing.

If religion leaves an ambiguous legacy in its contribution in thought and deed to questions of violence and non-violence in the movement toward social change, an area of study that may prove helpful in providing insight to

these questions is the rational grounding of an ethic of non-violence based on a philosophical understanding of the human person and human community.

A preliminary grounding for this ethic would essentially include a view of the human person and, in addition, a view of the human community. For we are related to one another. As individuals, we are persons of hopes, dreams, loves, joys, sorrows, sadnessess. But we also share, no matter how culturally different we may be, these common experiences of our humanity. Furthermore, this common humanity leads to common projects; everything from the simplest enterprise to the most complex--say, from little league baseball to inter-stellar exploration--reflect common interests, play, curiosity, and wonder. We discover that we become invested in one another; we need each other to help us to achieve our hopes and dreams as well to help give understanding and meaning to countless events in our lives. In a very real sense, then, we are truly related to one another.

However, the experience of physical violence--kicking, stabbing, punching, strafing, bombing---and injurious psychological relationships--threatening, manipulating--destroys and damages this natural relatedness between persons, groups and nations. Violence, in the words of Simone Weil, turns the "other into thing." With this understanding of violence then, there would seem

to be at least a prima facie case against the justifiability of violence in human relations on the grounds of the pre-eminent value of the human personality. Thus the burden of proof about the justification of the use of violence will be with those who say that violence is acceptable, and not with those who say that violence is wrong.

It may be argued that being violent is not only obviously evil and damaging to the victim, but also to the agent of violence. Indeed, depending on how the victim responds to the violence, the experience of violence at times can even paradoxically deepen the nobility of the attacked person; positive moral values as courage, perseverance, mercy, and self-sacrifice may be the lived responses of the attacked person. However, it is often the case, as Fanon himself reported in his text, that the agent of violence often becomes a victim of violence as well. For in yielding to violence not only is the victim devalued, but a brutalization and de-humanization of the agent occurs as well. The common human measure of the worth of every human being is lost or cancelled in violent exchange.

It is only in and through relationship that we gain understanding of our own individuality. But violence assaults this coexistence and cohabitation, and feeds isolation and narcissism.¹²⁴ As Sergio Cotta says, "violence dissolves coexistence into material dominance."¹²⁵ The violent person in the end is formed by the habits of

violence; the rupture of relations he causes harms himself, and this rupture needs to be healed for him to continue growing as a human person. Non-violence offers the possibility for that healing and transformation in that it calls forth and nurtures the core humanity in each person, even the most brutalized opponent. A philosophic ethic on non-violence might begin here.

Several illustrations of the proposal that we are oriented more toward the life and generativity presumed in non-violence than the destructive tendencies inherent in violence will be useful. The first is the astounding report of a World War Two general who discovered that of all front line soldiers, only twenty-five percent actually aimed and fired their weapons at the "enemy." The general, S.L.A. Marshall, viewed this as a testimony to a powerful natural prejudice against the use of force intended to kill or injure, and, as a matter of fact, a prejudice the Army needed to diminish or eliminate in order to be an effective fighting force.¹²⁶ This amazing report seems to confirm what British pacifist Vera Brittain said in 1948, that she retained the "unfailing conviction that even in the midst of war there is love between peoples, bonds of humanity which the virulent propaganda can only temporarily submerge."¹²⁷

Roy Finch writes of an anarchist who felt the "bond of suffering" with the victim of his assassination attempt, "For an instant a strange feeling, as of shame,

comes over me; but the next moment I am filled with anger at the sentiment, so unworthy of a revolutionist. With defiant hatred I look him full in the face."¹²⁸ This rejection of empathetic feeling is a rejection of a common humanity, and, in the end, may do more harm both to the individual who chooses the violent option and to the cause for which he is struggling.

This preliminary case for non-violence needs much more study and work. At the same time, it needs to take seriously the serious crises in political relations where non-violence may be seen to presume a heroism and self-sacrifice far beyond the capacities of most people. This always has been at the heart of most criticisms of non-violence. Furthermore, leaders of non-violence need to be idealistic enough, yet at the same time shrewd enough to manoeuvre in complex political situations so that when the crisis is at its peak, the project is not abandoned to the Stalins and Robespierres who completely divorce the means from the ends.¹²⁹ If persons as Tolstoy and Gandhi are revolutionary, it is because they act completely within the realm of the present. They are about effecting both the revolution of the human spirit and, subsequently, the construction of the good society. This recalls Martin Buber's apt phrase, namely, that if a revolution is to give birth to a new society there must first be a conception and

gestation; you don't get a new society from an empty womb.¹³⁰

The immediacy of Tolstoy's and Gandhi's thought is found in the implicit logic of their formulae. When we live in harmony as brothers and sisters, then wars will end. The responsibility rests on individuals and communities now. In Lenin and to a lesser extent Fanon, however, the process is one step removed. When we arrive at socialism, we will live in harmony and wars will cease. The difficulty remains in assuming that socialism, or, in Fanon's case, nationalist independence, is the supreme or absolute goal, thereby reducing the importance of the means to that goal. Non-violence proposes first, as an immediate goal, the construction of a good society. Second, as a strategy of political action along the lines of Gandhian methodology, it proposes as much or more attention to the means of action as to the goal of action; as such it reduces the risk, present in Fanon and Lenin, of the cancellation of the positive aspirations of the goal by the negative actions of the means.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

12/8/87
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