

THE QUEST FOR THE HUMAN

Whatever else the second half of the 20th century may be, it is the half-century of the liberation of ⁿman - perhaps hopefully also of the freedom of man.

Liberation and freedom are not quite ^{the same} ~~synonymous~~.
Liberation from ~~yoke~~ and bondage, from oppression and injustice, constitutes the negative aspect of freedom. Freedom in its fullness includes more than Liberation. ^{There is} ~~The~~ positive aspect of "freedom ~~for~~" ~~as distinct from~~ "freedom from" which is the main constituent of liberation; ^{is "freedom for". It is more than liberation} ~~Man's~~ quest for ultimate freedom. It is man's effort to be truly man - the quest for the human.

This quest for freedom which is the central ^(first) thrust of human history has in our half-century received a particularly strong push. There are great landmarks in previous centuries - the French Revolution, the American War of Independence ^{abolition} ~~and the abolition~~ of slavery, and the Russian Revolution of our own century are milestones in the slow process of human emancipation. In the second half of the 20th century there have been four significant and inter-related movements of liberation.

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The half-century got on its way with the forward swing of ~~de-e-e-e-e-e~~ de-colonialization. The gaining of national independence by the Philippines, India, Burma, Pakistan, Ceylon, and Indonesia, and the liberation of China from western dominance marked the beginning of the

the half-century. This movement spread with unexpected speed and some 1500 million people were liberated from the colonial yoke. Today only a few last bastions of colonialism remain - Angola and Mozambique under Portugese colonialism and the black peoples of southern Africa under the inhuman ~~dominian~~ domination of a hardened and reactionary white minority of colonizers. Southern Africa, geographically remote from the rest of the world, continues to be the theatre of political bondage simply because the conscience of the powerful nations of the ~~West~~ has not been sufficiently aroused/~~in order~~ to enable them to take diastic action. The United States and Britain as well as the Portugese, the Dutch and the Belgians bear a heavy share of the responsibility for the frustration of freedom in these lands.

Spurred on by the liberation of a large sector of the black peoples of Sub-Sahara Africa a second movement of liberation began in America. It was initiated through quiet non-violent events like the sit-ins and bus boycotts, but has slowly led to the self-affirmation of the down-trodden people of the U.S.A. - chiefly the blacks, but eventually all the poor and the oppressed. It is an upsurge of freedom which cannot be stopped or bottled up. It has to explode yet, threatening the security of the oppressor and drawing into the wake of the struggle all men of goodwill, even from among the unoppressed. We

are still watching the initial stages of this movement of liberation which is bound to change the face of America in the course of the next decade. When it gains enough of a victory and some self-confidence, this movement of the blacks and the liberals of this country will not only change the shape of the American city, but may also come to the aid of the oppressed blacks in southern Africa. It is not perhaps totally idle to hope that the uprising of "the poor" of America will lead also to the emancipation of the poor of the world who are still oppressed and exploited by the rich of this world.

A third movement of liberation begins to break a yoke which was created in this century - the oppression of peoples by totalitarian communism. Yugoslavia was the first to fling the challenge in the face of external domination and exploitation of one communist China's defiance of Russia was the high watermark of this revolt, country by another. China's defiance of Russia was the high watermark of this revolt. Albania followed. Then Romania asserted herself. The Hungarian effort was frustrated

by superior Russian might. ^{Armed, perhaps with too} ~~Now~~ Czechoslovakia has quietly ^{of optimism to} ~~and without too much fanfare staged a programme of liberalization, which has caused some precipitate reactions~~ ^{The superior might of Russia has temporarily stifled this movement} on the part of Russia, but we have not yet heard the last of this. The Russian writers and literary men are beginning

to assert themselves. Communist intellectuals in many parts of the world are beginning to question some of the fundamental assumptions of Marxism. A new Reformation is breaking out in the Marxist world which goes far beyond questions of simple revisionism or choosing between Russia and ~~Gh~~ China as the leader of the Communist world. When a leading communist intellectual life Roger Garaudy says that under a communist regime man must still ask the question of the meaning of existence and that the heart of man must not lose its depth, he is talking about more than simple revising the economic interpretation of history or questioning the accepted strategies of revolution. These new Marxists are raising a new revolution within Communist society. The new ~~Marx---Marxists-are-raising-a-new-revolution-within~~ Communist Marxist is also in a process of liberation, engaged in the urgent ~~g~~ quest for the new humanity.

A fourth and exceedingly significant movement of freedom in our half-century is what may be called the student revolt. It began before our half-century - primarily in/ the early 40's in the independence movement of India. The students left their class-room in large numbers to shout "John Bull, Quit India," and were somewhat surprized to find that John Bull did really quit in 1947. Since then all political parties have sought to use the university student community as an ^{Sc}early available instrument of demonstration.

Today the phenomenon of student protest and demonstration spans the whole wide world. In Japan, Korea and Turkey, students have scored some significant ~~vietim~~ victories in changing Government policy. The Italian student revolt had focussed on university reform, but it soon led to a bloody clash with the Police in down tome Rome ~~last March~~, and without pre-planning the student protest now focusses on the evils of Italian society.

The West Berlin protest against the Axel Springer newspaper chain, led by Rudi Deutschke ^{has now} ~~may soon~~ spread to West German universities, though the democratic tradition has a hard time striking roots in German society. In ~~Spain~~ the protests at the universities of Madrid and Barcelona may soon turn into revolts against the oppressive social, political, and economic structures of that country. In France, the cité Universitaire revolt was first directed against university regulations requiring men and women to live in separate dormitories, but has now spread to other universities like Nanterre and the Sorbonne and begins to focus on world political and economic structures. The Polish student demonstrations, now temporarily suppressed by the authorities by such drastic action as dismissing the demonstrators and then drafting them into the army, may soon erupt into a violent revolution in that country, though the recent Czech experience may hold them in check for a while.

In a country like Greece, where the present military Government follows policies painfully reminiscent of the early activities of Hitler's Third Reich, in a so-called heroic effort to revive the ancient glories of the Christian-hellenic civilization that was Byzantium, many look to the university community to be the centre of truly heroic and sacrificial resistance.

There is no need to speak of the student protest in America - of Berkely^e and Duke, Cornell^l and Columbia. I am told that there were 71 student demonstrations in ~~this country~~^{the U.S.A.} during the first two months of 1968. Only a very small percentage - possibly less than 3 per cent - of the 6 million university students in the U.S.A. were involved. But the trend is clear. The movement is spreading rather than waning. ~~The end of the academic year of course cooled things off for a while. But the possibilities are that this summer's events will lead to further and better planned student activities in more campuses when the universities reopen in September. Such activities may be less sporadic and sporadic and hopefully less violent, but they are not going to decrease in extent and scope.~~

These four movements - liberation from the colonial yoke, the self-affirmation of the poor and the oppressed, the eruption of truth and freedom in communist countries, and the universal phenomenon of

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student protest, add up to one thing. Society is sick, both nationally and internationally, and the symptoms call for drastic surgery and therapy.

II

And it is at this point that we need to go beyond analysis and diagnosis, to do some bold positive planning of the contour of a healthy human society. "Freedom from" has begun to operate in a manner and dimension that is impossible for mankind to ignore. The quest for the human has begun. Fear of the symptoms can lead only to attempts to suppress them temporarily. This in turn can complicate the pathology and render the cure more difficult.

Clear and bold thinking, and equally decisive action alone can begin to show the way forward. It would be futile to prescribe a complete course of surgery and therapy at this moment. But the removal of certain fundamental misconceptions is a prerequisite to wise prescription of remedies. And this paper shall attempt only the questioning of four of these false assumptions, from a definitely Christian, but not necessarily ~~Brill~~ Biblical or dogmatic point of view.

1) The first set of wrong assumptions has to do with the dialectic between planned change and revolutionary change. It was Professor André Philippe of the Sorbonne who proposed in an article in the preparatory

volumes for the Church and society World Conference at Geneva, 1966, that revolution as a means of effecting change is obsolete. His argument was that we are living in a technological society and that one of the basic characteristics of technology is that the machinery for change is built into the technological system. Constant research, constant revision of technique, continuous projection of the future and preparation for it belong integrally, according to Professor Philippe, to any modern society. Revolutions are caused by unpreparedness for the future and failure to provide in time for the necessary change in political and social economy.

If Professor Philippe is right, then the universities, where research and planning can be effectively undertaken, should be the last places to call for a revolution. And yet it remains a fact that great universities like Sorbonne and Oxford are the greatest resistors of change today. What Professor Philippe fails to take into account is the fact of vested interests in the established order which obstinately resist change. If change involves loss of privilege to those in power, then the best research is likely to be shelved without being translated into effective action. The need for change is often more

acute for those who lack controlling power, and research itself is often biased in the direction of protecting the interests of ^cthose in power. Diagnosis of what ~~i-~~^e is wrong in society will be different, depending on whether it is the oppressed or the oppressor who initiates the research and translates it into action. Revolutionary change is attempted often because the diagnosis and cure proposed by the victims of oppression ^{are} ~~is~~ not acceptable to those in power. In many Latin American countries, there is an impressive body of evidence that salvation can come only by a ^othrough overhauling of the political and economic ~~sty~~ system, which would include emancipation from North American political and economic power. But those who hold political and economic power within these countries are themselves beneficiaries of American political and economic power-play. In such situations it seems foolish to expect that the holders of power will initiate the necessary research, planning and implementation for ~~bringin~~ bringing about a juster social, political and economic order. To talk about constitutional change and democratic planning and implementation in those countries is to say that the oppressors should be allowed to umpire the battle between themselves and the oppressed. In such situations there seems to be no alternative to revolutionary change.

No wonder then that Che Guevarra becomes the hero of the oppressed as well as of the intelligent and the perceptive.

Planned change within the constitution should take place in all societies, whether in America or in Cuba, in Russia or in China. If this ceases then that society becomes, like Stalin's Russia, dangerously sick. But to say that it will always be possible to ^{peacefully} bring about the necessary changes within the existing system of law and order is to go contrary to two of the basic affirmations of the Christian faith. The present structure of law and order is a human creation. To make it into an absolute that cannot be questioned is to turn a human human creation into an object of worship. This is the sin of idolatry. Law and Order as a way of social organization seems to be God-given and belongs integrally to human existence on earth. Man cannot live in anarchy. His social existence has to be controlled and directed by order and organization. Even the revolutionary knows that ~~he~~ cannot function without a revolutionary law and order. This is clear in the extraordinary efficiency of the Black Militants in Hamilton Hall at Columbia.

Idolatry comes in when any existing system of law and order is absolutized. The particular system of law and order under which we live was created in order to promote justice and dignity and the peaceful pursuit of the interests of all men. But if it is no longer

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adequate for that purpose, how can we still call it a good thing, and shape our thinking primarily in terms of defending ~~propety~~ property, preserving law and order and so on?

The Christian faith also objects to man being a slave of the law. "For freedom Christ has set you free. Resist, therefore, and be not enslaved again" says the Apostle Paul to the Galatians. (5:1). The law, when it is good, exists as an external framework, which each citizen is required to interbrize. The law says "Thou shalt not murder". But if my not murdering is due only to the fact that the law makes that demand on me, then I have not yet become a man, but am only a criminal restrained by the strong arm of the law, and therefore not genuinely free. If, on the other hand, I have genuinely interiorized the law, in such a way that even if the law did not exist, I would not murder, then as far as I am concerned the law makes no difference to me, except in so far as it restrains other criminals from murdering me or my children. In other words the law has no meaning except in so far as there are people in the world who have not grown up enough to be free from the law. The law is ~~for~~ for the immature and the children. Once I have interiorized the law, I am free from the law.

The same applies even to taxes. If I acknowledge my social obligations and therefore am convinced that I have to make a contribution to the institutions ~~that~~ ^{which} render certain co-ordinated services for the whole ^a society, and ~~if I am convinced~~ that my tax money will be used in a responsible way by those to whom it is given in trust, then even without the law of taxation I shall gladly pay my taxes, and fulfil my other obligations to society. It is only because not all people are mature enough to acknowledge their social obligations in full and because those to whom the taxes are given in trust are not mature enough to use them responsibly, acknowledg~~ing~~ their own social obligations, that we have ^{to have} the whole legal machinery of law and order.

We find today that both in socialist or communist countries and in ~~so-called~~ democratic states like India or U.S.A., the State, or the system of law and order is alienated from man. It is something which man has created, ^{but} has actually run away from him and is now threatening to master and overpower man. By our ~~ideolog-~~ idolatry of the present system of law and order, we are increasing this process of alienation, and thereby making true social and personal maturity mere difficult for man.

2) The second set of wrong assumptions in our dealing with the current malaise of man relates to the dialectic between violence and non-violence.

One reason why the word "revolution" scares many people in our time is its invariable association with broken skulls, machine guns and blood-baths. The words "revolution" and "violence" are often used more emotionally than rationally. What do these words mean? It is clear that when we ²spak of the technological revolution and the Bolshevik revolution we are not using the word 'revolution' in the same sense. The use of the word in expressions like technological revolution or industrial revolution refer primarily to a change in the means of production and distribution ~~which have~~ ^{with} a sweeping impact on human social relations and living conditions. When we speak of political revolution on the other hand, we mean the application of force to change the seat of power from one socio-economic class to the other. Expressions like~~d~~ "permanent revolution" only confuse the issue. What is meant by such an expression is that the change of the seat of political power does not solve the problem, but that the new incumbants² of power have to be vigilant, disciplined and hardworking² enough to build the nation's economic power so that it may not again be enslaved by others.

A revolution always involves violence in the sense
(1) that the transfer of power is not accomplished with
the consent of the previous holders of power, but against
their will, and (2) that it is not effected by legal
processes acknowledged as such by the holders of power.
It may sometimes be accomplished with a minimum of skull-
breaking or shooting, as for example in the Greek
military junta's taking over power in Greece ^{two} ~~last~~ years ago.

Violence itself is a highly ambiguous concept. It
means really violating the will of the other, or making
~~really-violate~~ him act against his will. It is not
necessarily the application of physical force to hurt
the body of the other. It is the application of force
to make the other do what you want against his will.
Wars and revolutions are not the only available forms
of violence. Violence is endemic in all systems of law
and order, so long as there are the oppressors and the
oppressed. Violence is there, built into the system,
when a group of people are forced into the slums and are
reduced to sub-human ways of living. Violence is there
where big business concentrates power in their hands
and can use that power to bend the government to act
in their interests. Violence is there where justice
is denied to the weak or the dignity of man is violated.
Almost all the existing national and international
systems of law and order, whether they be so-called

communist or so-called democratic nations, embody forms of endemic or systemic violence.

Such use of violence or force or power in the interests of injustice and exploitation call for a reactionary or revolutionary violence from the victims of injustice and oppression. And many people are convinced that in certain countries at least, the holders of power cannot be made responsive to the demands of justice by ^{ve}permission or constitutional methods. It is in such countries where the degree of endemic or systemic violence is so high and the possibilities of constitutional change so low - as clearly for example in ^UDr Valier's Haiti^K, that revolutions can be justified. If one fails to support revolution in such a case on the grounds of convictions of non-violence, then one is supporting the endemic or systematic violence in the status quo which is destroying the life and dignity of Man.

Some times violence can be resorted to by the oppressed when they are convinced that the constitutional means available to them are so slow in their efficacy to change the will of the ruling class. There are people for example, who think that the violation of the dignity of the black man in America can be ^{arrested}~~removed~~ by constitutional means, given time and patience. It is becoming clear

however that the ~~aw~~ avowedly non-violent southern Christian Leadership conference will itself soon have to resort to civil disobedience, i.e. to use an illegal and unconstitutional move, in order to keep up the struggle to achieve racial equality, economic opportunity and human dignity for the black man in this country. Martin Luther King himself was aware that the negro struggle could not be carried on by constitutional means alone. Besides an oppressed people often feel, with some justification, that they have to be defiant and rude to their oppressors in order to make clear that they are not receiving their dignity as a concession from the oppressor but claiming it as a birthright of man. This is the only way to understand Black Power in its essential origin and spiritual dynamic. This is also the best way of understanding a great deal of the anti-Americanism or anti-westernism of the two-third world of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Violence has, of course, its own nemesis. It is not possible to use hatred and violence as tools of regaining self-esteem and dignity without having a price to pay in terms of consequences. Ultimately, man has to overcome violence and hatred, just as he needs to overcome law as an external master. But violence and hatred are overcome when man becomes capable of receiving forgiveness and forgiving others.

The Christian faith does not condone violence and hatred. In fact it condemns violence and hatred. But it does so not only when violence and hatred takes the form of revolutionary overthrow of those in power, but also when violence ^{endemic} ~~evident~~ in the system destroys human dignity. That is the whole point of the prophetic message which pictures God Himself as violent and full of hate in his retribution of ~~the~~ justice.

It is not Christian to assume that we can get through to our chosen goals without conflict. The whole gospel is a message of a battle with the powers of evil in which victory has already been won, but the struggle goes on.

Sacrifice belongs to the essence of ~~prayer~~ progress. There is no smooth passage for man towards his destiny.