

VALUES, POLICY AND THE CONTROL OF VIOLENCE

Selo Soemardjan
Professor of Sociology
University of Indonesia
Djakarta, Indonesia

The Sixth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences
San Francisco, November 25-27, 1977

VALUES, POLICY AND THE CONTROL OF VIOLENCE

Violence in this paper will be narrowly defined as behavior designed to inflict physical injury to people or damage to property. Although the intention on the side of the actor to inflict the injury or to damage the property is usually an integrated part of the behavior, it is very well possible that violent actions are carried out without conscious intentions to hurt or damage.

In this respect we would like to stress the point that violence should be distinguished from aggression, which can be either violent or non-violent. Aggression should be understood as action initiated with the use of physical, intellectual, political, or economic force or pressure to gain a desired position for the actor in relation with an opposing party. Under our definition of violence aggression with physical force may develop into violence, whereas aggression by the use of intellectual, political or economic pressure by itself can certainly not change into violent behavior. It should not be denied, however, that violent actions may accompany the latter type of aggression.

Violence by itself is generally negatively valued. There is hardly an individual in any society who likes to be treated with violence or who agrees voluntarily to have violence applied to his property. In line with the adagium that one should not treat others the way he does not like others to treat him, there is a strong prohibitive norm in most societies against the use of violence.

Only in

Only in cases of emergency like self defense and for culturally approved causes an individual is socially allowed to use violence. Consequently it is justified to conclude that the social value of violence is not intrinsic in the behavior itself, but that it is determined by the motivation violence is applied for. The social significance of the motivation also corresponds positively with the degree of violence exercised. The greater significance of a motivation allows for a higher degree of violence while an insignificant cause can justify only a softer type of violence or not at all. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth seems to be generally acceptable as a standard measurement in the valuation of violence in relation with its cause.

Aggression on the other hand can be encouraged and aggressive attitudes and behavior applauded in certain cultures favoring competition in its social system. The concept of competition, which includes peaceful aggression, is usually highly valued in cultures with a distinct identity of the individual, a strong drive for progress in stead of traditionality, and an appreciation of rational behavior to achieve a goal. Such cultural elements are distinctly observable in sports, where each individual has to show his best ability to attain records of greater speed, height, and strength.

In cultures as described here like in sports aggression is a part of life or of the game, but violence is accorded a different value system. There are branches of sports which are purposefully based on the application of violence, like in boxing, but a referee and a jury watch carefully that the game of violence is performed in the prescribed ways.

Having a

Having a negative attitude towards violence, but recognizing the need of violence in cases of emergency, most societies have entrusted the use of violence to the most powerful and encompassing of all social institutions, the state. The confidence of entrusting the monopolistic use of violence in the hands of the state is accompanied with the condition that violence should be used only to protect society against any harmful attacks, in the way prescribed by law and by duly authorized agencies.

Without minimizing the effects for society of violent actions by individuals the present paper is exclusively concerned with violence as a component of collective behavior in a society and the measures which can be taken by the latter to control that violence. Neither will this paper deal with violent actions between individual states or nations, which are usually called war.

As a rule violence is disruptive to social harmony and social integration, since violence by an individual inevitably breeds counter violence. In the case of two individuals of unequal strength the weaker one may not be strong enough to retaliate violence which was administered to him, but his hurt feelings, or shame, or hatred will eventually find its ways to return the violence he received, perhaps after long waiting for the best opportunity, and perhaps through another stronger individual.

The use of violence by private individuals is therefore severely restricted or totally prohibited by law in most of the modern organized societies.

Even when

Even when public opinion may justify the use of violence by private citizens as in the case of self defense or in other cases of emergency, the judicial system still requires that the case should be submitted to court for trial. It is up to the judge to take a decision of acquittal or to mete out a sentence, however mild. But whatever the matter, in a law based social system the law enjoys a supreme value and law takes precedence over public opinion.

Condemnation or justification of the use of violence becomes confused when violence is exercised by a collectivity, whether it is organized or not. Here again the nature of the cause determines the appreciation of the people regarding the violence used.

But if the value system that supports the positive body of laws in a country undergoes a reformation and gives rise to mass actions to bring about social changes, then the supreme value of the law in the eyes of the people loses its solid foundation, while the otherwise unlawful use of violence can be regarded as opening the roads to a new and more satisfying value system.

Against this background of changing value systems relative to the use of violence in mass actions we would like to present a few cases for social analysis. The data used for presentation have been collected by the present writer either as an interested observer or as an active participant.

THE SENAYAN RIOT.

The arena of the riot is the Senayan sport stadium of Jakarta which can accomodate a public of 100.000. On 20 June 1977

some

some 80.000 soccer fans were gathered in the stadium to watch the final game between the Jakarta and Surabaya soccer teams in the national championship tournament. Only two to three minutes after the game started the captain of the Surabaya team submitted a protest to the referee for a minor violation of the rules of the game which went unnoticed by the referee. A dispute developed between the Surabaya captain and the referee, in which the former was joined by his teammates. The Jakarta team remained aloof. The dispute became so heated that the referee got physically attacked by the Surabaya players. At this point sport officials entered the field to separate the fighting parties, and to restore order. Dissatisfied with the referee, the Surabaya players left the field and consequently the game was terminated.

The reaction of the 80.000 man public around the field manifested itself in shouting at the Surabaya players who were considered unreasonable in their demands to the referee. It should be pointed out that the match was held in Jakarta, where the public was understandably in favor of their local team. The emotion of the public rose when they saw the Surabaya players attack the referee, while shouting and screaming reached a peak when the Surabaya team left the field. To show their discontent with the behavior of the Surabaya team many people among the public started to burn newspapers (this habit was also shown on previous occasions). From the public's excited shouting it was clear that their anger was directed against that team, but no physical contact between public and team was possible because of a three meters deep and six meters wide open basement which separated the amphitheater of the public from the field. To vent their fury the public choose substitute targets, the wooden seats, the doors and windowpanes of the stadium.

A wild mob

A wild mob action developed among the 80.000 people which broke seats, crushed doors, destroyed windowpanes and burned wooden articles which stood in the way of the angry mob. Violence ebbed away when anti-riot police units and the fire brigade managed to disperse the people and cleared the stadium.

This kind of mob behavior is typical of riots by unorganized masses of people who happen to be assembled in one location and become emotionally disturbed by some event. The shouting at the Surabaya team and the burning of newspapers among the public served as a self-accelerating process of contagious excitement which was bound to explode into violent actions.

The behavior of the crowd was clearly spontaneous and distinctly without plans or premeditation. It also had no leadership or programme which could guide the action of violence. It followed the classical lines of crowd behavior, whereby the anonymity of the individual in the crowd obscures individual responsibility for action, and where emotional contagion heightens the suggestibility to perform destructive behavior directed against a primary target or failing this, against substitute targets at hand. Individuals who were laughing and joking with their friends, or who were quietly reading newspapers when waiting for the games to start, became quickly inspired with the spirit of violence which caught the whole mass of excited people.

It seemed that the management of the stadium had taken preventive measures against the occurrence of such riots. The rather deep open basement around the field prevented the public from entering the field. The amphitheater was divided in separated sections to minimize emotional contagion.

Liquor was forbidden in the stadium area. As a matter of fact Indonesians have no habit of drinking alcohol, but still the prohibition was there, just in case.

Soft drink

Soft drink vendors and the public were not allowed to bring glass bottles into the stadium. Instead plastic bags were used to contain the drinks. Glass bottles can be thrown to hurt other people's heads, but not plastic bags. In addition to all those measures, anti-riot police units and the fire brigade were always present and ready to act when important sport events attracted large crowds to the stadium.

THE WEST JAVA RIOTS.

On the 10th of May 1963 two students of the Bandung Institute of Technology (BIT) engaged in a private physical fight at the campus, witnessed by a large number of other students. One of the fighting students was of Chinese origin, the other one was a non-Chinese Indonesian.

The next morning a group of BIT and other students roamed the main shopping center of the town, followed by a non-student mob, and in a wild and violent action crushed show windows of the Chinese owned stores. Furniture and other goods were dragged out of the stores, dumped on the street and burned. The riot quickly spread to residential areas, but was clearly directed against houses owned or occupied by Chinese. The wild movement was not limited to the city of Bandung only but within a few days other cities in West Java, and even one city in the neighboring Central Java province, were affected and had to experience similar destructive riots against Chinese property. Post riot surveys disclosed that Bandung students moved in groups to other cities to excite local high school students into the riots. Many of the students were known as amicable and quiet youths who never would do anybody or anything harm in their daily life.

But yet in

But yet in this riot frenzy they damaged stores and houses and burned goods and other properties of Chinese people, even if the latter were their own personal good friends. In this riot only material goods were damaged and burned, but no harm was done to people. The riots stopped and further spreading was prevented when police and army units arrived at strategic cities, while an all night curfew was announced for about a week.

To understand the deeper causes of the West Java riots one should have some knowledge about the latent unfriendly relationships between the Pribumi (those who are one with the land, the indigenous population) majority and the Chinese minority in Indonesia. Since the arrival of the first Chinese in Indonesia about four hundred years ago they have been accepted only with reluctance by the Pribumi population. Under the three and a half century long Dutch colonial regime the Chinese profitably cooperated with the colonial administrators to acquire the best success in their trade, which has always been their principal source of living. The pribumi population on the other hand remained largely on the level of poverty. When the Indonesians rose in revolution against the Dutch in 1945 to gain political independence the Chinese were distinctly on the side of the latter.

The Chinese as a community in the country have a firm actual control on the economy of the people. It is reported that about 60% of business capital in the country is in the hands of this 2% minority.

It happened quite frequently in the past that for some unimportant reasons the anti-Chinese emotions among the Pribumi exploded into violent mass actions against ^{the} Chinese and ^{their} property.

In theory

In theory the best solution to prevent the outburst of anti-Chinese attitudes in the future is when a program of Pribumi Chinese physical assimilation could be made effective. Some efforts have been undertaken in that direction, but never seriously on either side, and with no observable results. The Chinese are a minority in Indonesia, but they are all over South-East Asia and they constitute a majority or near-majority in some countries in that region like in Hongkong, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. Their giant country of origin with a population growing rapidly to one billion gives the Chinese in Indonesia a strong psychological awareness of their strength in a wider area surrounding Indonesia.

The students' fight at the BIT Campus seemed for the pribumi students a manifestation of the danger that may come from the Chinese community against the rest of the Indonesian society. In such a psychological situation it was hard to prevent that the anti-Chinese sentiments came to the surface again, and with the help of a few agitators could materialize in destructive riots.

Personal relationships between Pribumi Indonesians and Chinese friends were temporarily submerged in the rising tide of anti-Chinese group feelings and the drive for solidarity between students.

Perhaps because the riots were incited by students, and not by the uneducated sections of the population, there was a bit of sophistication in them. They were not, as was said earlier, directed against the Chinese individuals, but against their material belongings. In this way the students, most obviously subconsciously, were not trying to act against racial issues as such, but they wanted to destroy the sources of wealth and prosperity which were considered as the cause of the

social and

social and economic inequalities between pribumi and Chinese. Typical to this notion about Chinese economic supremacy was the fact that in those riots special violent treatments were administered to the ancestor shrines in the homes of the Chinese. As some of the students afterwards explained the Toa Pek Kongs (pictures of ancestors or demigods in the shrines) were the spiritual guardians of the Chinese in their search of material wealth in this world, and thus had to be destroyed.

As long as the social and economic cleavages between the Pribumi majority and the Chinese minority cannot be effectively eliminated, there is always a chance that sometime in the future in some place in the country the Chinese community have to face hostile aggressions again from the side of the Pribumi population. Intermarriage has been academically considered as a good way to arrive at the assimilation of the two groups, but negative mutual feelings have rendered this remedy ineffective. In the early seventy's the Government encouraged the Chinese to exchange their conspicuous original names for pribumi names, but this caused even more enmity on the side of the pribumi. The selection by the Chinese of specific Indonesian names which in the Indonesian stratified social structure were considered exclusively upper class names created the impression that they identified themselves as upper class in the Indonesian society. The Chinese with adopted Indonesian names have also been accused of conveniently using either one of their two names, depending upon the largest profits they could collect from the specific groups they have to deal with. When communicating with Government officials, the overwhelming part of which are non-Chinese, the pribumi name was used, but when dealing with businessmen the Chinese name was presented as being more creditable.

The existence

The existence of China-towns in the large cities is also detrimental to the process of friendly inter-group relations between the Pribumi and Chinese population. Initially organized by the Dutch administration for purposes of security control the China towns have in fact functioned to maintain and strengthen the bonds between Chinese individuals into strong and introverted Chinese communities. There exist in Indonesia a number of places where the life style of the population is so distinctly Chinese that only the Chinese language can be used in that community with the exclusion of the Indonesian.

THE INDONESIAN NATIONAL REVOLUTION.

Some 350 years ago Dutch traders arrived in Indonesia in search of spices. The trade in that commodity became so profitable in the European market that the Dutch decided to protect their trading company VOC (Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie) with military force. This led to the expansion of military into political power which finally subjected the whole Indonesian archipelago to Dutch colonial rule.

While expressing their pride of their 80 year stubborn resistance to Spanish rule in their homeland, the Dutch always forcefully suppressed any movement which may ultimately result in Indonesia's independence. While teaching democracy at their universities the Dutch maintained an authoritarian regime in Indonesia. At the same time that Dutch missionaries preached equality of man before God, the colonial administration treated the indigenous population as politically and socially inferior.

In short

In short to maintain their dominant position in the country the Dutch denied the Indonesian people the political rights, the economic opportunities, and the social privileges that a society normally enjoys within the system of real democracy.

Indonesian intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century became aware of this overall deprivation and made efforts to change the situation to the better. Political organizations came into being, aiming at a free Indonesia. Frequent small and local uprisings occurred against the colonial regime, but could always be suppressed by the Dutch colonial army. Large parts of the uneducated population had even developed an attitude of political indifference as an escape mechanism to avoid the frustrations of people under foreign rule.

Indonesia came under Japanese military occupation when the Dutch surrendered to the Japanese armed forces in 1942. But when the Japanese in turn surrendered to the Allied Forces in the middle of 1945 the Indonesian political leaders immediately and effectively made use of the subsequent short administration vacuum to proclaim the country's national independence.

This proclamation, broadcasted over the radio at a momentum of deeply felt suffering of the entire population, aroused an enthusiastic hope all over the country that only a free and independent Indonesia could bring an end to the suffering of the masses. The people were ready and felt confident in defending their newly gained freedom with their life. Consequently when the Dutch armed forces returned to restore their former colonial power they were met with hostile actions of the masses. Five years from 1945 to 1950 the Indonesians fought a guerilla warfare against colonial forces, thereby sacrificing the lives of thousands of their young fighters for independence.

If the United

If the United Nations in 1949 did not decide to interfere in favor of the Indonesians, the latter were determined to carry on the fight indefinitely to defend that element in the life of a nation which enjoys the highest social value, the freedom to determine its own destiny.

The international recognition of the new Republic of Indonesia as an independent and sovereign state did in fact not terminate the struggle of the people to defend the country. The turmoil of the armed revolution released social forces which could be manipulated by dissident guerilla and political leaders to rally groups of the population into armed rebellions against the national government. Not less than thirteen such violent uprisings had to be coped with by the new republic between 1948 and 1966.

A sociological observation of the Indonesian national revolution and the dissident movements against the newly established Republic of Indonesia reveals consistent patterns in the process of building up these violent mass actions. Some of the principal patterns are presented below, followed by some general remarks about measures which could be taken to prevent the outbreak of mass actions with the use of violence.

THE PROCESS OF REVOLUTION BUILDING.

A revolution does not come by itself, it is always the end product of a process generated from wide spread feelings of continued dissatisfaction about the existing social or political situation. If that dissatisfaction manifests itself in actions to bring about normative changes in society we will call those actions insurrection.

But if the

But if the actions develop from value conflicts between the ruling and ruled groups and therefore are aimed at the establishment of principle value changes, we consider those actions to fall under the heading of a revolution.

The development process of an insurrection or a revolution usually takes a long time. While it is developing it always shows to the trained social observer signs which grow more and more distinct the further the process develops. For purposes of theoretical analysis that process can be broken down into five stages, each one built upon the former and the last one showing an explosion of collective, and sometimes mass actions with or without violence.

Stage 1: The popular feeling of deprivation.

This stage shows a situation in which a group of the population, which may be small or overwhelmingly large in size as in the case of a country under foreign rule, feels continuously deprived of things which in their opinion they should have. This deprivation may be political in character when a part of the population is barred from representation in the legislative institutions of a supposedly democratic country, or if they are denied by the ruling group the freedom of public expression, freedom of organization, or freedom of movement.

The deprivation can also be felt as economic in nature. The economic system in the country may be beneficial only to certain classes or groups, while others may be economically or normatively blocked from the use of economic facilities.

The rich,

The rich, including those in power, get richer, while the poor remain on the same low level of economic development.

There is also a possibility that the deprivation is almost all inclusive when the ruling group and the ruled masses are from different races. The problems which arise from such a controversy are racial in nature, and they invariably include political, social, and economic discrimination at the same time.

Somewhat different from the kinds of deprivation as described here is the occurrence of an enduring social psychological stress as reported by Alexander H. Leighton in his report on The Governing of Men. The population of a Japanese Relocation Camp in Poston, Arizona, during the time of the second world war, was subjected to long lasting stresses which adversely affected their social psychological conditions. A situation developed in which it was felt that life became bound by a past that was full of bitterness (the factors which forced them to emigrate to the USA), a present that was intensely uncomfortable (their life in the relocation camp), and a future that was uncertain, threatening and beyond control. The inattentive policies of the relocation administration towards these stresses opened the way to social frustrations leading to violent aggressions.

Reactions of people who are subjected to enduring deprivations or stresses can be manifested in different ways. Those with weak moral principles and who want to make the best out of the situation may choose to seek cooperation with the ruling group.

Others who

Others who resent the policies of the ruling group, but do not feel strong enough to enter into actual reactions, may adopt an attitude of passive resistance or even of withdrawal from any concrete relationship with the ruling group. The third kind of reaction is the one engaged in by those who have the courage and the support of others to launch an aggression against the group in power. But whatever the reactions of the people under deprivation or stress, if that deprivation or stress is real, sooner or later the third kind of reaction is bound to erupt.

The people in Indonesia, subjected to three centuries of Dutch colonial rule, maintained their psychological balance in a situation of enduring political, social, and economic humiliation by developing a philosophy of despair, that submissiveness is the best way to final glory. Many people found an escape from reality by way of mysticism and by a belief system whereby the inner self of man can engage in direct spiritual communication with the Divine Being. In times of heightened despair people used to resort to the ancient hope for the Ratu Adil, the King of Justice, who will come to save people from further suffering. But when oppressive control collapsed with the surrender of the Dutch to the Japanese, and subsequently of the Japanese to the Allied Forces in 1945, all of a sudden the people rose into a violent revolution which ultimately resulted in the emergence of an independent Republic of Indonesia.

Buell G. Gallagher in his analysis of the social attitude of the Negro population in the USA vis-a-vis the Whites observes that denied the equality of status, the Negro develops a diversity of attitudes.

He may

He may "laugh it off". He does not face the issues of life squarely, (but) he sings his sorrow songs and waits for the future. Clowning is a definite social pattern used by Negroes to pull the leg of gullible whites. It feeds the vanity of the white; but it violates the selfrespect of the hypocrite who is forced to debase himself to save his skin.¹⁾

Stage 2. The general perception of social injustice.

More important in the process of revolution building is the people's perception of deprivation rather than the actual deprivation itself. In other words it is the relative deprivation which counts, and not so much the real deprivation.

Relative deprivation presupposes the existence of various groups with different degrees of social facilities and privileges. The social system may be of such a nature that inter communication and cooperation between the various groups make for a socially accepted mutual dependence. But it may also happen that the operation of a specific political system results in the polarization between privileged groups vis-a-vis deprived groups.

In a community where every member shares the same life of poverty, materially as well as educationally, there is not much chance for social conflicts of a serious nature to develop, let alone insurrections or revolutions. But in a society with a considerable degree of political, economic and social diversity one can easily detect controversial issues that can lead to collective actions.

1) William O. Stanly et al: Social Foundation of Education, The Dryden Press, Inc. New York, 1956.pp.173-174.

In their indifference to social problems people may be aware by feeling only of some undesirable situations in their social surroundings, but such a stage of awareness is not strong enough to excite them into action. It needs the applied skills of an opinion leader to articulate the state of deprivation in the life of the population, and subsequently to sharpen the awareness of people into rational identification of social problems. The role of mass communication media is at this stage of crucial importance. It is a widely known phenomenon that many people like to have those media confirm what they actually already know. The notion that their knowledge is shared by everybody in the country leads ^{to} a greater confidence in the truth of their knowledge.

Some opinion leaders, who are at the same time active in political life, may even venture to manufacture new social problems of deprivation. From the awareness of social deprivation there is only one step needed to jump to the notion of social suffering, and from there to the idea of social injustice.

The idea of being subjected to social injustice is a strong motivation which can be manipulated into a justification of actions to remove that injustice, if necessary with violence.

Stage 3. Activities of agitation.

Relying upon the built up popular perception of social injustice and the justification of collective action there follows an active period of mass propaganda to develop confidence with the masses in their strength and in the ability of established or self-appointed leaders to organize a social movement and to lead the people towards their desired goals.

In order

In order to give the movement a more concrete form leaders identify targets for collective actions. They are shown to the masses as the source of all deprivations and injustices. To be understood by the people the targets chosen should be sufficiently concrete and visible. They may be personalities in power, or groups supposedly responsible for the suffering of the people, or they may be institutions known to the masses.

Again, the skillful use of mass media of communication is in this stage indispensable.

Stage 4. The organization of the movement.

After having boiled up the people's spirit to the point of action the leaders should stand ready with their organization. In an organized mass movement one can almost always distinguish three different parts of participants. There is the core of leadership, made up of top leaders or sometimes called commanders, responsible for the general policies and strategies of the movement. They are the decision makers at the top of the organization. Directly in contact with the top leaders are the vanguards of the movement. They are usually young people, inspired by the movement and proud of being selected to serve as an active link between the leaders and the masses. The more they are engaged in activities, the more prestige they gain with the body of followers, and the higher their spirit for real actions.

The third group in the organization are the masses of followers, ready to be guided into action by the vanguards of the movement. This movement can, as said previously, take the form of a non-violent civil insurrection or a violent revolution.

It is most

It is most essential for the leadership of the movement to know which groups of the population are on their side and which on the side of the other party.

Stage 5. The action of the masses.

Collective actions of the masses are usually preceded by incidental small skirmishes between selected members of the vanguards with elements of the selected targets. This is to test the strength and effectiveness of the organization, and also to find out the weak spots of the other party. It also serves to keep the spirit of the masses alive. But it also opens the way for the other party to know the strong and weak points of the movement, both politically and organizationally.

For the masses to be mobilized into real actions the leadership usually waits for some incident to occur, usually provoked at a selected time and place.

MEASURES FOR THE PREVENTION OF MASS VIOLENCE.

While it is almost impossible to prevent riots of the Senayan type because of its sudden and unanticipated emotional outburst, there seem to be ways and methods to prevent organized and premeditated uprisings against a ruling legal government.

Social upheavals like the West Java riot and any physical revolution like the Indonesian national revolution for independence finds its basic cause in the general feeling of deprivation or enduring stress with the population at large.

If this

If this argument is accepted, then the logical step in the prevention of any violent mass action is the removal of the deprivation or stress from the suffering society. If removing of actual deprivation is not yet possible, efforts should be made to eliminate relative deprivation. This means that steps should be taken to soften or eliminate the feeling of social injustice which is an essential part of the concept of relative deprivation. In short if actual deprivation has per force to be tolerated, it should be shared by the population as a whole. The visible existence of privileged groups and deprived groups within one society creates, wrongly or rightly, a feeling of social discrimination and social injustice. But if everyone is equally poor or equally rich, including the group in power, then there is no ground for the emergence of such feelings.

Even unsuccessful efforts for the elimination of social injustice can prevent the people from taking mass actions if they know that the efforts are seriously and honestly done. The hope or expectation that the efforts will render the desired effects in future can frequently work as a deterrent of social actions by the masses of the population.

For the purpose of creating an awareness of social justice, or more concretely for the purpose of eliminating a feeling of social injustice, the best policy a ruling group can engage in is that of open management. Everyone who knows something about government agrees that there are always certain subjects which for reasons of state security a government cannot disclose to the public, but on most of the actions and decisions of the government factual information should be made available to the public, either through legislative bodies or directly through the press.

Through

Through the same channels of communication the government should allow the people to express their opinion on public affairs and be critical of the administration of the country.

It is sometimes argued that the operation of a free press in a developing country tends to create an unreasonable criticism on the group in power or on public affairs in general, because of the immaturity of the people in dealing with the public interest. This unreasonable criticism in turn can create an unnecessary rebellious atmosphere among the people, which is of course not conducive to the maintenance of law and order. The government could react by the publication of facts and reliable figures which can create a stronger confidence of the people in the government. If a government cannot cope effectively with such criticism it must be concluded that it is lacking the power to do so, and soon will have to resign for a stronger government.

As a temporary measure in cases of actual or threatening disorders it could be condoned that a state of emergency is declared to restore law and order, but such measures should be really temporary in nature and should be lifted as soon as peaceful life of the people can be secured. It should never be extended for the convenience of administration or to suppress opposing groups with force, since that would inevitably create new deprivations and stresses which will give more reasons for mass insurrections or even revolutions.

People generally feel more content if they get the chance to voice their opinion on matters of their own or of public concern. The opportunity to contribute one's ideas to some public issue gives the feeling of actively being involved in the solution of such an issue.

It is

It is therefore a good measure to obtain the largest possible degree of popular involvement if the administration of a country could be actually decentralized and deconcentrated. With decentralization the authority of taking decisions is spread from the central government to regional governments, whereas deconcentration involves the dispersion of government power to public institutions on the same level. The sharing of responsibility over large groups of institutions and people has the effect of diminishing criticism and eliminating the concentration of people's actions on one central point.

It is sometimes very difficult for a political leader with responsibility in the government to obtain actual access to reliable and unbiased information from the people. Such a leader can be so busy that he cannot afford to spend enough time for reading newspapers carefully, and to come in frequent and direct contact with the population. He almost inevitably has to rely on his assistants and associates, who are more often than not people with the same political attitudes and the same interests as their leader himself. In that case such a leader and decision maker is deprived from current public opinions on certain social problems, and thus is not in a good position to take effective decisions for the solutions of those problems. It is essential for decision makers in the government that they take time to meet the people directly, or to have regular free discussions with the press, in order to secure an effective two way communication, and thereby come to know the actual or relative deprivations which may exist in society.

Political leaders in power should never close the lines of communication with their opponents or with anyone having political, religious, or economic influence in society.

Friendly

Friendly communications with such personalities *are* imperative to keep him informed about what is going on in society and to build up an informal network of cooperation which may be needed in times of emergency.

But whatever administrative and political measures have been taken to prevent the emergence of mass actions, in a democratic society there always is a chance that such actions for some real or imagined reasons erupt. In that case it is essential that ways should be found to prevent the actions from using violence. One of the ways to do this is to channel the action through legislative institutions or the press.

Another measure that can be taken is the removal of fire arms from unauthorized people. The more weapons are in the possession of the people, the easier violent actions are induced.

When chances of frequent mass actions are great it is wise for any government to have a well disciplined and properly trained police force, loyal to the legal administration. But it should be always remembered that the use of a police force, or a military force in more serious cases, is only a last resort when all other peaceful means have failed to restore law and order.

But when compelled to use forceful actions against mass insurrections the first target of police action should be the responsible action and opinion leaders of the movement, who have to be separated from the vanguard and the followers until such time that their communication with them is no longer dangerous as to create the use of violence by the masses.

Bibliography.

Alexander H. Leighton : The Governing of Men.

Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton
University
Press, 1945.

Harvey A. Hornstein et al : Social Intervention,

A Behavioral Science Approach, The Free
Press, New York, 1971.

Paul F. Lazarsfeld et al : The Uses of Sociology,

Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, New York
1967.
