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The latter years of the Sixties brought a wave of political violence to this country that paled the face of America in startled fear and utter disbelief. Unrest on college campuses, racial conflict, spiraling crime rates, and civil disobedience related to the Viet Nam War caused many Americans to identify this period as one of the most violent in U.S. History. Such a sense of public paranoia swept the country that on July 29, 1967 President Johnson issued Executive Order 11365 establishing a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. The nation remained tense and June 1968 saw the creation of the National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Violence.

Though the 1970's have seen less urban upheavel, political violence is still prevalent in the United States as witnessed by the latest rash of political kidnappings. Violent deaths and damage resulted from last year's independent truckers strike. The beginning of another school year introduced further racial violence in such cities as Boston as attempts were made to integrate their school systems. Farmers in the Midwest recently carried out threats of premature slaughter of young livestock hoping that such actions would force governmental response.

These acts of violence lead one to believe that political violence has been, is, and probably will continue to be common in America. Given the assumption of the prevalence of political violence, each American must ask what are the causes of political violence and what can be done about it? More particularly the profession of social work must examine what options it can exercise in response to political violence.

DEFINITION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

A number of political scientists and sociologists have rendered an analysis of political violence examining the causes of such violence. Perhaps the most comprehensive and theoretical analysis was made by Ted Gurr. He defines political violence as "collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors—inclu-

ding competing political groups as well as incumbents - or its policies"
(Gurr, 1970).

Political violence implies a mode of behavior that is designed to
inflict physical injury to people or damage to property. This behavior
often is motivated by a dissatisfaction with the perceived status of
current political arrangements. A violent attack on a political actor
also can be considered an act of political violence since it often has
political ramification even though it may not have been initially polit-
ically motivated. Last year's mugging and robbery of a Southern Sen-
ator brought strong cries for action on Capitol Hill even though such
acts of violence are prevalent in Washington, D.C.

CAUSES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Gurr proposes that the potential for collective violence is a
function of the extent and intensity of shared discontent among mem-
bers of a society. This becomes a potential for political violence in
as much as members of society blame the political system or its agents
for such discontent.

Collective discontent stems from the way values are allocated in
a political system. Values can be defined to include "the desired
events, objects, and conditions for which men strive", (Gurr, 1970:25).
Values can be categorized into 1) welfare values - values that contri-
bute directly to physical well-being and self-realization, 2) power
values - values that determine the extent to which men can influence
the actions of others and avoid unwanted interference in their own
actions and 3) interpersonal values - values of psychological satis-
factions found in non-authoritative inter-action with others. (Gurr,
1970:25-26).

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

Gurr believes that collective discontent is a result of a gener-
alized feeling of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation is a per-
ceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and value capabil-
ities. Value expectations include those goods and conditions to which
men believe they are rightly entitled and value capabilities include
those goods and conditions that men conceive they are capable of obtain-
ing or maintaining.

The potential for political violence then is quite dependent upon
the perceptions of members of society. Their value expectations and
value capabilities may be based in the reality of their society but of
most importance is their perception of that reality. The generalized
discontent that is the potential for political violence is based upon

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a perception of a discrepancy between a perception of one's value expectation and a perception of one's value capabilities.

The important distinction in Gurr's construct is the difference of relative deprivation as opposed to the mere existence of deprivation. The perceived difference between what people in society get and what they think is due them is more of a causal factor in political violence than what people in society are actually getting. Trotsky has written: "In reality, the mere existence of privations is not enough to cause an insurrection; if it were, the masses would always be in revolt." (Brinton, 1952:34).

Gurr delineates three major patterns of relative deprivation relevant to an increased potential for political violence: decremental deprivation, aspirational deprivation, and progressive deprivation. In decremental deprivation the value expectations of members of society remain constant but their capabilities of obtaining or maintaining these values decreases over time. Aspirational deprivation is the result of a collective groups value capabilities remaining constant but their expectations rise. A progressive deprivation results from a rise in both value capabilities and value expectations however the rise of value expectations outstrips that of capabilities. (Gurr, 1970).

An example of a progressive deprivation pattern is given by the Kerner Commission when they list as one of the basic causes of the summer urban riots of 1967 being frustrated hopes. They report that "the expectations aroused by the great judicial and legislative victories of the civil rights movements have led to frustrations, hostility, and cynicism in the face of a persistent gap between promise and fulfillment." (U.S. National Advisory Commission, 1968:204).

RELATED FINDINGS

Robert Fogelson indicates that along with an unprecedented rise in the expectations of Blacks, Blacks also "were more conscious of their deprivations — indeed, deprivation had a whole new meaning for them; they were dissatisfied with conditions that their fathers and grandfathers would have found tolerable (or at any rate inevitable)" (Fogelson, 1971:23). Blacks came to perceive the relative nature of their deprivation in comparison to a new Black reference group: White America. Their discontent became directed at the American political system and its actors.

The Kerner Commission enumerated a number of basic causes for the violence of the summer of 1967. The Commission indicates that three basic causes involve deprivation: 1) pervasive racial discrimination and segregation, 2) Black migration to major cities and a White exodus resulting in depleted city resources to create a crisis of deteriorating

facilities and services and unmet needs, and (3) Black ghettos. The
Commission adds that three other causes act as a catalyst on the pre-
viously listed causes. These new factors involve the Black perceiving
the relative nature of his deprivation and the selection of violence
as an expression of discontent. These factors are: (1) frustrated
hopes aroused by the civil rights movement, ["The dramatic struggle for
equal rights in the South has sensitized Northern Negroes to the eco-
nomic inequalities reflected in the deprivations of ghetto life." (U.S.
National Advisory Commission., 1968: 204)], (2) Blacks came to believe
that they were being exploited politically and economically by the
White "power structure", and (3) a climate legitimized violence as a
form of protest.

    These basic causes were a volatile mixture that needed only a
spark to result in the actualization of violent acts. The Commission
felt that such a spark came from the incitement and encouragement of
violence by extremists and the police who came to symbolize White power.
"All of the major outbursts were precipitated by the arrests of blacks
for minor offenses by white police." (U.S. National Advisory Commission,
1968:204-6)   The police were seen by Blacks as actors in a political
system which was responsible for their discontent.

    Crane Brinton's historical analysis of revolution supports Gurr's
concept of relative deprivation as an important aspect of political
violence. Brinton found that "economic grievances—usually not in the
form of economic distress, but rather a feeling on the part of some of
the chief enterprising groups that their opportunities for getting on
in this world are unduly limited by political arrangements—would seem
to be one of the symptoms of revolution." (Brinton, 1952:36). In
other words an important symptom of revolutions is the existence of a
group that blames the political system for impeding their capabilities
to realize value expectations.

LOCUS OF POLICY CHANGE

    In order to restore an equilibrium between value expectations
and value capabilities, three major levels of political policy may be
attacked as the locus of necessary change. These policy levels in-
clude (1) the basic value system that underlies the social order—con-
stitutional issues, (2) the way in which this value system is carried
out—rules-of-the-game issues, and (3) specific activities or programs
to distribute the values—programmatic issues.

    The political violence of the 1960's involved primarily rules-
of-the-game issues. "Hence the 1960's riots were attempts to alert
America, not renounce its principles. They were not insurrections,
and not because blacks lacked the numbers, powers, and leaders but

rather because they wanted a change in norms not in values" (Fogelson, 1971:12-3). Blacks subscribed to the basic values of America but were unsatisfied with the ways those values were being carried out. Similarly most of the participants in the demonstrations against the Viet Nam War did not oppose the constituted value system of America, but these demonstrators vocally opposed many governmental activities which were being practiced in the name of those same constituted values. George McGovern attempted to capitalize on this widespread discontent with his plea "Come Home America".

Political violence involving programmatic and rules-of-the-game issues would tend to be in the form of turmoil and result in spontaneous and rather unorganized strife such as riots, strikes, and demonstrations. Political violence involving constitutional issues would tend to be either highly organized with limited participation (conspiracies) or else highly organized with widespread participation (internal war).

VIOLENCE POLITICIZED

Not all collective violence needs to have political motives but a cross-national study indicates that in an overwhelming number of cases there were apparent political motives for the civil strife, (Gurr, 1971). Economic and social motives were much less likely to be factors in civil strife. This same study also found that in the 1950's and 1960's people were more interested in and dissatisfied with economic concerns rather than political issues. Similarly it was found that economic deprivation was more closely correlated with the total magnitude of civil strife than political deprivation. Gurr states: "The implication is that most discontents in the world are not political but politicized", (Gurr, 1971: 179). Another finding of this cross-national study was that political actors were the most likely target of civil strife.

Gurr suggests that discontent is even more apt to be directed at the political system today. He gives two characteristics of contemporary societies that help focus diverse discontent on the political system: (1) "the ambiguity of origin of many deprivations in increasingly complex societies", and (2) "the widening scope of governmental responsibility in fact and in popular expectation for resolving value-distribution conflicts and generating new values." (Gurr, 1971:179).

CAUSAL SEQUENCE REVIEWED

Reviewing the causal sequence of political violence as outlined in this article, a society would first possess a group that experienced deprivation of desired events, objects, and conditions which that group sought. That group would perceive that this deprivation was dissonant with what values they expected to be allocated to them. This group would experience discontent which would become politicized in as much

as that group blamed the political system for their plight. Finally if
this discontent were sufficiently extensive and intensive, that society
would experience the actualization of violent acts against political
objects and actors.

ALTERNATIVES

        This sequential model of the causes of political violence can act
as a catalyst to illuminate potential options that can be exercised in
response to political violence. The options fall into three major classes:
(1) Support political violence as a means to accomplish a desired end,
(2) Strengthen the means of forceful social control to reduce the like-
lihood of any extensive expression of political violence, or (3) Alleviate
the causes of relative deprivation that lead to political violence.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AS A STRATEGY

        The first option of support of political violence raises many
ethical questions for a profession such as social work. How far can one
go in the expression of political violence as a strategy to accomplish
some desired end? Certainly the accepted community organization strategy
of "contest" borders on a strategy that sanctions the use of political
violence.[1] Many of the actions of social workers in the Sixties resulted
in violence against property and in some cases violence against persons.
Saul Alinsky and Harry Specht have wrestled with this very question of
the moral limits of social change agents in conflict situations (Alinsky,
1972 and Specht, 1969). Unfortunately there are no clear answers to the
question though such issues should be raised prior to engagement in social
change activity to permit the change agent to define his limits in his own
mind. This writer would be hard pressed to justify the use of violence
that results in physical injury to people if for no other reason than the
belief that such an activity has an extremely high probability of being
counterproductive. This is in spite of a belief of the necessity of
major change in our society in terms of "rules-of-the-game" issues and
"programmatic" issues.

        Occasionally riots, strikes, and demonstrations that do not
result in the conspired infliction of physical injury appear to be viable
and necessary social change strategies. Michael Betz examined Piven and

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1.) See Roland L. Warren, "Types of Purposive Social Change At The
Community Level", (in Readings in Community Organization Practice,
Edited by Ralph M. Kramer and Harry Specht, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:
Prentice-Hall, 1969, pp. 205-222.

Cloward's contention that social pressure and unrest are required in order to expand welfare relief programs (Betz, 1974). Betz studied the change of expenditures for welfare programs over the decade of the Sixties in the forty-three largest cities in the United States. He found that the twenty-three cities which experienced a major riot had twice the percentage of increase in welfare expenditures as opposed to the twenty cities that had experienced either no riots or only minor riots during the Sixties

The results of the utilization of political violence are often unpredictable and counterproductive. The demonstrative activities of the Sixties lead to a backlash in the form of "Law and Order" and many other Watergate types of espionage on private citizens. "Public protest in the United States is a slow and unwieldy instrument of social change that sometimes inspires more obdurate resistance than favorable change." (Graham and Gurr, 1969: 817). Even though controlled and restrained political violence should prove to be an effective strategy, the ethical question of how far one is willing to go in order to effect social change must be at least personally resolved.

TRANQUILITY THROUGH COERCION

The second major option in response to political violence is to strengthen the means of social control in order to reduce the probability that any groups would risk open conflict. In many ways the cry for "Law and Order" in the 1970 elections was a cry for the utilization of forceful means of social control. It is ironic and yet instructive to recognize the current plight of many of the then most avid politicizers of "Law and Order".

The public has been served an unfortunate lesson through Watergate as to how various public agencies, though overtly designed to serve some desired public purpose, can covertly be utilized to exert despicable social coercion on that same public. Most Americans were alarmed to learn of an actual White House "Enemies List" and how the Nixon Administration had requested the Internal Revenue Service to audit the taxes of "anyone attending a rock festival or burning a draft card". The nature of President Ford's pardon of Nixon has permitted the perpetuation of an Orwellian Big Brother paranoia in our country.

What most Americans have only recently recognized, welfare recipients have known for a long time. Besides the semi-national police system, the national welfare system in our country has possessed and utilized some of the most coercive means of social control. Piven and Cloward (1971) have done much to alert all of us as to the regulatory functions of public welfare. Goroff's (1974), more recent exploration of social welfare as coercive social control concludes with a call for a major

restructuring of the public welfare system based upon the principle
that all human beings are entitled to an adequate level of financial
assistance as a right. That value judgement can not only be supported
on moral hortatory grounds but it also makes sense as a viable alternative
to the expression of political violence. A response to generalized dis-
content that relies upon force and coercion to minimize violence is at
best indeterminate. "If popularly supported, public force will contain
specific outbreaks of private violence, but is unlikely to prevent their
recurrence. At worst, public force will so alienate a people that ter-
rorist and revolutionary movements will arise to challenge and ultimately
overthrow the regime." (Graham and Gurr, 1969:815).

ERADICATION OF RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

        The third option that one might employ in response to political
violence is to alleviate the causes of relative deprivation that led to
political violence. Eradication of relative deprivation can be achieved
either through lowering a group's value expectations or through the
enablement of that group's value capabilities in order that they might
achieve their value expectations. Social work does utilize the strategy
of lowering value expectations often under the guise of enabling the client
to better view "reality". On another level the profession has similarly
been associated with the perpetuation of rigid means tests that abetted
the denial of "unworthy" individuals of even partially realizing their
value expectations. Those "worthy" individuals who are fortunate enough
to meet the subjective means tests are maintained at levels of support
that are well below our society's own stated standards of poverty.
Similarly many family service agencies have sliding fee schedules that
in essence price their product right out of the real world of many low
and moderate income families.

        The preferred alternative is to exert an effort to alleviate the
conditions that caused the discontent that resulted in violence. These
conditions are those that unduly inhibit the realization of an individual's
or group's value expectations. As previously mentioned in this paper three
areas are appropriate for change in this regard. First one must examine
the constituted value system of a society to identify potential value
statements that need either admendment or further clarification. The
"Bill of Rights" is an excellent example of the clarification of the
constituted value system of a society in an effort to help insure the
enhancement of individual and group value capabilities. A more recent
example would be the women's right admendment that is currently awaiting
ratification by various states. Efforts to enact change of constituted
values often finds the change agent working through the legislative
processes. However, another level of involvement for the change agent
includes the whole "consciousness raising" strategy as exemplified in
the current women's movement.

        The second level of policy change in a society involves various
rules-of-the-game questions. Since the rules are often stated in laws

of a society this level of change also is primarily accomplished in the legislative arena. However, many changes of policy on this level are also wrought through various court decisions and the efforts of some legal aid lawyers have been most productive in this regard. It also appears that social workers could capitalize on the works of Galbraith (1973) to point out how the constraints of a non-competitive planning system economy virtually guarantees profits for giant corporations at great expense to the rest of society. On the same token the economic theories of Boulding and others which posit a grants economy could prove to be a most valuable vehicle to raise public consciousness to the current government largesse to wealthy America while at the same time bombing middle and poor America in the name of a war on inflation.[2] Such efforts could potentially change various tax rules and other laws that unduly inhibit the attainment of many individual's and group's value expectations.

A third level of change involves programmatic issues. A recent article by Williamson spells out six different types of programmatic approaches to poverty that have been attempted.[3] Social Workers have had alot to do with both the success and failure of these approaches. Congress may legislate an anti-poverty program but recent history with OEO had elucidated the vast potential influence that administrators have over the actual implementation of such programs.[4] Since social work is intimately involved with the carrying out of various welfare programs, this level of potential change is probably the likely locus of social work involvement even though change at this level is marginal by definition.

This brief exposition of potential levels of change in order to enhance an individual or group's value capabilities was not meant to be exhaustive. Many more strategies and levels of involvement could be explored for a social worker concerned about the eradication of relative deprivation. No doubt there are nearly as many strategies as there are social workers who take up this cause.

An effort to eliminate the conditions that cause discontent may greatly tax the resources of a society but such efforts pose less serious problems than do other alternatives. The Kerner Commission concluded that

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2.) Various writings by Boulding. A good beginning is: Kenneth Boulding, Martin Pfaff, and Janos Horvath, "Grants Economics: A Simple Introduction", American Economist, XVI (Spring 1972), pp. 19-35.
3.) John B. Williamson, "National Income Insurance: Some Implications for Political and Economic Inequality", Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, II (Fall 1974), pp. 27-38. Besides listing the six major types of anti-poverty programs that have been tried, Williamson makes a case for another type which is national income insurance. A subsequent article by Williamson in that same issue examines the case against a national income insurance program.
4.) Gawthrop has recently written a book which examines the role of the program administrator in social change. Louis C. Gawthrop, Administrative Politics and Social Change, New York: St. Martins Press, 1971.

"none of us can escape the consequences of the continuing economic and social decay of the central city and the closely related problem of rural poverty. The convergence of these conditions in the racial ghetto and the resulting discontent and disruption threatens democratic values fundamental to our progress as a free society." (U.S. National Advisory Commission, 1968:410).

CONCLUSION

In summary violence appears to stem from an awareness of a group's relative deprivation and in as much as the group blames the political system for its deprivation there is a potential for political violence. It also appears that for a number of reasons violence is more likely to become politicized today than in the past. Forced means of social control to minimize violence are often ineffective over time though they may initially be effective. A preferred alternative to violence is the eradication for social and economic inequalities that are the causes of discontent. The profession of social work has a moral commitment to assist in such eradication, but extra motivation to engage in such social action to alleviate social and economic injustices is the minimiration of the potential for violence and the maximization for human growth. As Martin Luther King (1967) has written: "Social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention. There is no other answer. Constructive social change will bring certain tranquillity; evasion will merely encourage turmoil."

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