

# REVOLUTION !

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A revolution means the forceful overthrow of government. It connotes as well a full change in the institutions of power and authority, and, more importantly, in the accepted ideological justification for the structure of power and authority. In this way, there is a profound difference between a rebellion and a revolution. A rebellion is a forceful overthrow of officials misusing what are thought of as valid and acceptable institutions of power and authority. Thus, in rebellion, the focus of attack is not the idea but the "usurper". As amply shown in the history of China, rebellions are a tragic waste of human life, since they have led to the reinstitutionalization of despotic dynastic rule.

All revolutions lead to the loss of power and authority by a particular "class" of individuals. The word class best describes the grouping of persons ruling as well as those challenging their power. Aside from the obvious fact that those two classes must by reason of their mutual antagonism hold much in common among their respective groupings, their antagonism tends to heighten their internal allegiance. Those in power and their allies have a vested interest in remaining in power. In turn, those who are being oppressed have a vested interest, once they perceive it, in the overthrow of the ruling class. Unfortunately, all too often the revolting class adopts the ethic of the oppressor, with a vengeance. As the cycle of "revolution" intensifies, the besieged ruling elite cluster in desperate defiance. As the counterattack of the ruling elite increases in savagery, the revolutionaries become more alienated and determined. The entire population becomes polarized. For those who have nothing or little to lose, revolution is always a good gamble, since a state apparatus with total power can only decline in power as the mass of individuals are compelled by the growing battle to take sides. In a state which has total power and authority, the individual must consider all citizens of the state as co-belligerent neutrals who are giving economic and political support to his oppressors. When the state goes unchallenged, everyone may be considered to support the status quo. As the revolution progresses, more become explicitly opposed to the state. And, as the struggle increases, more persons attempt to disassociate themselves from the state. Thus, it should be evident that the decision to revolt is in direct relation to the growth of state power. (This is not, of course, an attempt to posit some naive theory of spontaneous uprising. The USSR is theoretically ripe for revolution; however, considerable work is required to create a widespread awareness of this among the population.)

Revolution can take many forms. It does not require terrorism against the life and property of innocent bystanders. The use of terrorism by leftist movements has been done to discredit the power and authority of the state. This is in keeping with the goal of all left-wing movements, which is the ruthless and unprincipled acquisition of power and authority.

The overthrow of state power can be accomplished without the initiation of force. However, it does require the ability and willingness to employ organized retaliatory force against the occupation forces of the state.

As rebellion is tragic for its failure to replace the fundamental "idea" lending validity to the existing institutions of power and authority, a movement which attempts to disarm the state merely with ideas is at least equally tragic. How can the peaceful surrender of power and authority be expected from those who have never hesitated to employ force when it suited their ends? Even more, how does one expect non-productive parasites with no consistent ethic to hand over stolen property - and in effect, their only means for sustaining themselves? This is certainly nothing more than self-delusion on the part of libertarians. Only in a few of the social democracies can libertarians hope for any possibility of a relatively peaceful surrender of power. One can hardly expect millions of bureaucratic functionaries and their dependents to revel at the idea of surrendering their prerogatives.

The method of libertarian revolution must be based on the principle of non-initiation of force. This does not mean that, once military hostilities have been initiated against libertarian forces, or in fact against anyone who seeks aid from the LRM, (and whom the LRM chooses to defend), then effective countermeasures, requiring the arrest or destruction of the aggressors, constitute the initiation of violence. They do not. They mean, in actual practice (as well as in principle) that libertarians have chosen to live as libertarians. The fact that powerful and organized aggressors are a grave threat to the LRM does not in anyway reduce the ethical validity of its actions or principles.

Starting with the basic premise of rational self-interest, an individual has no obligation to sacrifice his or her personal sovereignty to any other individual or group of individuals who asserts its authority to override his will by the threat of force. No individual is ethically required to be a slave. In fact, it is in the fundamental self-interest of any individual who desires to live in keeping with his volitional human character to resist, with all his means, the imposition of enslavement. Liberty requires, at the very least, that the individual renounce the coercive and fraudulent authority of the state. To do so, and to be willing to defend with force of arms against the incursion of the state, is fully in keeping with the libertarian concept of human nature and its ethical corollary of non-sacrifice.

Libertarian revolution means saying "no" with the ability and will to make it stick! Admittedly, translating this into practice will be difficult - but not impossible. Successful revolution requires a carefully laid out strategy which operates simultaneously on many levels, exploiting the weaknesses of the state apparatus and its collaborators. It requires lengthy prior preparation to create conditions which permit successful transition to each succeeding stage of advancement.

Each country requires its own unique strategy, but in general a succession of stages can be hypothesized. Assuming a military dictatorship, such as presently exists in almost every country of the Third World, the first phase must involve a non-antagonistic and quiet introduction of carefully preselected candidates to libertarian revolutionary ideology. University students, young entrepreneurs, and officer cadets would be prime targets for establishing a skeleton movement. No overt activity involving demonstrations, or any action which the regime could consider threatening, should be instituted in this early stage.

Establishing this intellectual underground will constitute dangerous work, especially as more advanced LRM's unfold in other countries. Statist oppressor regimes will undoubtedly increase their security against foreign provocateurs as well as stepping up their repression of domestic libertarian activities. This, however, will tend to play into the hands of LRM organizers as domestic sympathizers will be driven into

more radical actions.

The second phase commences with the completion of a solid network of a libertarian underground in education, business, the military, and in communications. Tactics in this phase include the establishment of long-term implants within groups in opposition to or potentially at odds with the state. These could include: student dissenters, discontented military officers, mistreated ethnic groups, homosexuals, lower- and middle-echelon civil-service employees, and any group suffering under heavy taxes and inflation (which is just about everybody). Every effort should be made to gain sympathizers within the ranks of customs officials, intelligence officers, and national and local police forces.

Special attention should be given to aid and rehabilitation of criminal elements. Careful selection and education should be carried out among those convicted of victimless crimes and non-violent political dissent, to infiltrate the penal system as well as the criminal underground(s).

The third phase culminates the stage of underground organization. At this point, the intellectual underground solidifies its organization into paramilitary form. Two parallel structures are established. One is basically a loose social network of sympathizers and casual supporters; the other is based on trusted volunteers working within a hierarchical table of organization and military command structure. The social network serves primarily as a recruiting device and a means for funneling money and supplies to the LRM.

Intensified recruiting and expansion of influence and discontent should be concentrated in the lower-echelon military officers and among civil-service workers. Tax-resistance groups and occupation of public buildings by students, along with protest demonstrations by anti-statist dissidents, should be introduced to step up the pressure on the state apparatus.

The opening phase of the revolution could commence with the arrest of local bureaucrats in one or more outlying towns or villages, depending on the size of LRM forces. These places should be preselected in regions distant from the main centers of power of the metropolitan bureaucracy. Local representatives of the central government should be captured and disarmed with as little violence as possible. Once in detention, prisoners should be treated with leniency and courtesy (the exceptions being secret police, informers, etc., who should be executed in public, swiftly and painfully). Full opportunity should be provided by the LRM for re-education of prisoners.

A careful investigation of complaints and claims by local persons against captured officials should be made. The main objective of LRM courts should be to provide just restitution to those victimized by individual officials. Those having been convicted of crimes will be ordered to retribute their victims or legitimate claimants. Full restitution will be required, although state officials will be freed to work off their debts. Those found guilty of unrepentable crimes such as murder will be executed. All "public" property will be distributed on a prorated basis for losses incurred by local citizens on account of the metropolitan bureaucracy.

The LRM will be supported by the sale of registration and enforcement services on contracts, as well as the traditional funding procedures of black-marketeering, smuggling, and extortion and waylaying of target governments and government officials. (It is expected that the local population will voluntarily contribute support

to the LRM, although this should not be counted upon as a source of revenue.)

This kind of action will be only the beginning of what will be a long, drawn-out struggle. The main strategy must be to gain the allegiance of the population and to spread the experience of libertarianism. Undoubtedly, the metropolitan bureaucracy will at first marshal vastly superior military forces. Liberated areas will be re-occupied and LRM guerillas will have to recede into the countryside. However, the resumption of metropolitan rule will mean repression for those who had claimed what was theirs. The state apparatus will make enemies in the country and the city; among the peasantry as well as the bourgeoisie.

The network of illicit commercial activities largely based in urban centers, protected by a dedicated cadre of libertarian warriors, will corrupt the bureaucracy and infiltrate deep into the ranks of the military. Entire neighborhoods and their populations will come to rely on LRM protection against statist intrusion and enforcement of laws against illicit local industries such as drugs, gambling, prostitution, smuggling, after-hours nightclubs, pornography, abortion, and homosexual clubs. Money and weapons will be derived from these sources as a base of support for the rural guerilla movement. Armed protection (by the LRM) for black-marketeering and smuggling will be among those services sold to local industries to buy supplies.

The full strategy of libertarian revolution can only be theorized at this point. How the movement just described will ultimately defeat the forces of statism, and make the transition to a libertarian society, is a complex problem. However, it is evident that the libertarian movement must be a worldwide phenomenon which crosses over every culture, and every national frontier. Ultimately, the battle for freedom will be waged on a world scale - and resolved in large-scale military confrontations.

The first LRM in a "Third World" country will be the most difficult. It will, more than likely, require years of preparation to even reach the phase of rural uprising. Even the problems and potential tragedies to the would-be LRM fighters will be enormous. However, there are literally tens of thousands whose futures have been cut short or embezzled by statist policies, many of whom have received military training - these and many others are often willing to make the most speculative investments to gain their freedom.

Still, very few of these will be available for the struggle in other nations. The LRM will have to be home-grown. It will have to be an institution that festers (in the eyes of the statists) and grows over long periods of time; one that takes roots in local traditions. In this regard, the IRA and the Basque revolutions are potentially proto-libertarian revolts. The spread of libertarian ideology can eventually tame and redirect these violent revolts towards the formation of libertarian societies. Rothbard is correct in regarding local ethnic and "national-liberation" insurgencies as a favorable element in the advance towards world libertarianism. But Murray deceives himself if he believes that state power will of itself wither away to permit personal sovereignty to bloom.

If one looks closely at the political geography of the world, the overall tendency exhibited in the past fifty years is toward political statist consolidation. The Soviet Union, China, India, the USA, Brazil, Nigeria, and Indonesia - i.e. seven countries out of over 140 - hold well over 2 billion humans and well over half the world's land area. The ethnic and racial complexity repressed into these nations is enormous. And yet, they are all extremely viable political entities.- that is to say, if one accepts their present stability as an indicator. Of the seven, only In-

dia is having problems keeping its diverse multitudes together; but Indira Gandhi felt strong enough to jail her political opposition. Admitted, Nigeria suffered a tribal civil war with its secessionist Ibo tribe; but that was put down, and there are no signs of its resurgence. Thus Rothbard should consider more carefully before singing lullabies of an irresistible progress to freedom. There will not be one libertarian society established without the loss of life. For those who don't like that prospect, they are welcome to accept what they have now - and more of it as time goes on...

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*either/or*

