

- This is an exposure of the crimes, corrupt practices, and violent methods now used in practically all the countries of the world and a general suggestion for a cure. The author is a distinguished Italian leader and writer.

## FORCE AND CORRUPTION IN POLITICS

In a world which for the most part is weary of murders, betrayals, and useless death, a more direct relationship can be established between the human conscience and the movement for change, provided that this movement is as forceful as it is nonviolent. Moreover nonviolent action is also revolutionary in that, with its profound appeal to the human conscience, it sets in motion other forces which use other revolutionary methods. Everyone who aspires to the new makes a revolution in his own way. One gets more inspiration for struggling for a new world from the writings of true revolutionaries than from those of the true quietists.

In contrast, those who think that war is the highest form of struggle, the way of evening out inequalities, still

have a very limited vision of man and of humanity. Anyone with genuine revolutionary experience knows — and must admit — that in order to change a situation one must appeal, whether explicitly or tacitly, to moral rather than material considerations, for they take precedence; that a call for more clearly defined principles and a higher morality has a powerful force; and that revolutionary action is, therefore, also that which helps to evolve a new sensitivity, a new capacity, a new culture, new instincts — human nature remade.

To succeed in building a world of peace we must have the boldness to embrace the new, however inconvenient or dangerous it may be or seem to be, to immerse ourselves in undertakings bigger than we are. The powerful, the

exploiters, the real outlaws can hardly maintain themselves in their positions unless they are supported and defended by those who have sold out to them. But there is as yet no sufficiently clear and widespread understanding (and this is one of the best indications of the ambivalence and inadequacy of the traditional religious) of the need not to collaborate with and to boycott insane initiatives.

How are we to explain, for example, that even persons of undoubted ability and professional rectitude will consistently work for newspapers which, behind their facades, are readily seen to be mean, false, even murderous? The process of self-justification is often extremely primitive: the value of the work performed is judged by the price paid for it, and the recipient's moral opinion of himself is based on what his stock is quoted at. Another easy alibi is to say that one will burrow from within, be a Trojan horse. Very often, this ambivalent attitude is supported by the excuse of technical

specialization or the myth of pure science. This is who it was possible to build and operate Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and Mauthausen.

Is there also at the bottom of all this a certain costly moral naivete? By accepting money and power where these are most easily to be had, people may think they are doing right by coming to grips with their own problems first. Thus in various parts of the world first-class minds are being wantonly misused to produce and cleverly advertise mediocre or useless or harmful products; immigrate to countries which scientists by the thousand can offer them better research. In many areas, members of parliaments will change parties four or five times, sometimes ending up on the opposite side, merely in order to remain afloat; while leaders who have reached high office through popular support will sell themselves to the highest bidder, with an effect on the confidence of the voters that can be easily imagined. It is because of this widespread readiness to sell or barter oneself that the client system

can rise to the national and international levels.

To choose according to need and to one's conscience, to reject any occupation or opportunity that will involve one in exploitation and assassination, or merely doing something one does not believe in, is a basic prerequisite for smashing the client system, from the level of the street to that of international affairs.

To exert leverage you must have a solid point of support. This elementary principle of all strategy makes it necessary for the nonviolent revolutionary to be especially careful in his choice of fulcrums. His dislike and hatred of his personal enemies will exert no leverage, but his just indignation at intolerable methods and situations will. He will exert no leverage if his support is rotted through, but he will if he relies on the solidarity of those who are most concerned and best informed; he will exert no leverage by resorting to savage cunning or lies to destroy the adversary, but he will if he is the best spokesman of the common interest and if he supplies

unimpeachable evidence to show that the masses are being oppressed and strangled by inhuman minorities.

Exerting leverage by using as support the highest laws of morality and the best laws on the statutes, or, for that matter, even minimally democratic laws, has this advantage: since they are laws, even though they may not in general represent the highest points of culture and morality, anyone who is shown to be a violator of the social contract is by the same token shown to be a true outlaw. To know exactly what action they ought to take, the people must know beyond any doubt, without any preconceived notions or superstitions, who the real outlaws are.

Why is it that tortures, poisonings, abuses, electoral hanky-panky, and large-scale waste are generally kept secret or are at least camouflaged, even when those who practice them are solidly in power? Because those who practice them fear the force, the weight, of the condemnation of others.

Public opinion, especially if duly aroused, can make the

distinction between the father whose children are hungry and who picks a basketful of tomatoes in a field that does not belong to him, or the Negro driven by humiliation into getting drunk or throwing a Molotov cocktail, and those who bear primary responsibility for intolerable situations. The public has sufficient intuition to realize that some court sentences are a mockery of justice and to guess by whom and how those sentences were purchased, but it has difficulty in fitting isolated facts together until they form a picture.

Does a police force resort to torture? No morality today can sanction torture. The practice must be documented, denounced case by case, on an ever increasing scale; in this way, despite the obvious difficulties, the police and their conduct will be identified as being outside the law. Is there widespread exploitation, insecurity of employment on such a scale that the unreflecting masses accept these things as being almost natural? A wealth of precise documentation must be published and

charges leveled systematically, until their weight becomes crushing. (Some of the poorest countries are given to grandiloquence; but is there not a law on the books, vague and general as it may be, which guarantees employment and which can be used for leverage?)

Are there shady political deals which prevent the expression of the people's true needs? They must be documented case by case, country by country, region by region, systematically and on an increasing scale, without taking it for granted that these things are already known, until the people's eyes have been opened to them (photographs can be useful here). Is there waste of every imaginable kind? We must learn to use for leverage the economy-oriented mentality of our times, from the local level to the general level of interest, documenting the stupidity of wasting enormous energy and enormous wealth and of failing to develop existing resources.

There are veritable monsters in our midst. They are no mere dragons 50 feet in

length, spitting fire at thirty paces out of two maws, burning down a house or two, and terrorizing the crowd in the village square. These veritable monsters of ours, replete with the flesh and blood of their victims, have electronic nerves and sinews of steel; their poisonous breath blots out the sky; their excrements pollute rivers, lakes, and seas. They can spread terror thousands of miles away; they can spit fire over an area of hundreds of square miles and burn to ashes in an instant millions of human beings and cities it has taken millions of men thousands of years to build. And one maw of the monsters can threaten the other; its claws can meet in combat. The most horrendous fantasies of the past, from the visions of the Apocalypse to the many monsters imagined by artists or dreamed up by the commercial horror-mongers to distract a well-fed public from its boredom, are so naive in comparison as to make us smile.

It is not enough to know, not enough to document, not enough to denounce. We must not only deflate these monsters by not feeding them and not allowing them to feed on us. We must clearly realize, we must know in every fiber of our being, that we have built these monsters and that we can destroy them.

Who are the more numerous, the people in whose interest it is to bring about major changes in order to arrive at a world fit for all, or the people who think that it is in their interest to maintain the status quo? If we succeed in interpreting and expressing the deepest needs of thousands, millions, and billions of human beings and help them to gain precise knowledge of themselves and their problems, to start constructive action of every kind, from the lowest to the highest level, and to make their weight count, we shall have succeeded in setting in motion a practical revolutionary

force. New people, new groups who reject second-hand thinking and second-hand living and who are committed to making a better world, already exist. We must lose no time in recognizing them, meeting them, comparing experience with them, and forming new organic fronts together. — *Daniilo Dolci, Extracts from Saturday Review, July 6, 1968.*

### THE DISSENTING ACADEMY

For most Americans, a declining measure of intellectual independence in the universities is probably of no more concern than the discontinuance of a favored line of groceries at the supermarket, and probably for the same reason. Higher education offers commodities to the customer who rarely regards academics as individuals whose services should include social and humanistic criticism. As John Kenneth Galbraith has suggested, the university is growing great as a servant — not as a critic — of the industrial society. . . . The engagement of academic intellectuals in government policymaking and as consultants to industry, the growth of the government research contract, the very success of higher education can be as dangerous to independence as overt political pressure. — *Peter Schrag in Saturday Review February 17, 1968.*