

The New Brotherhood of Violence

By Brian Crozier

A British journalist and author of "The Rebels: A Study of Postwar Insurrections" and "The Struggle for the Third World," Crozier has made a special study of political unrest, subversion and violence.

WHAT HAVE these names in common: Stokely Carmichael, Che Guevara, Regis Debray, Frantz Fanon, Houari Boumedienne, Fidel Castro, Tariq Ali, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Herbert Marcuse, Rudi Dutschke, Karl Dietrich Wolff?

Answer: All advocate revolutionary violence and all have shown, by word or deed or both, that they consider Marx and Lenin obsolete. One might go so far as to add three more names to the list: Mao Tse-tung, Lin Biao and Vo Nguyen Giap.

If one is searching for a common denominator, an all-embracing label for the philosophy these people preach and practice, one might do worse than to term it "post-Leninist violence." The collective label that appeals to me most, for members of the group as a whole, is "the new brotherhood of violence."

Lurid though this label is, it is far from fanciful. Nor need one subscribe to the conspiratorial view of history to trace the spiritual and sometimes personal links between the apparently disparate names I have mentioned.

The Guevarists

TAKE, FOR INSTANCE, Tariq Ali. This young Pakistani, living in England and apparently aware that he is safer there than he would be at home, would not, I imagine, object to being called a professional agitator.

In the current fashion of this unusual calling, he has been seen heading demonstrations — to be accurate, stu-

dents' protest demonstrations — not only at universities up and down the United Kingdom but also in several European countries. Interviewed not long ago on television and asked about his politics, he hesitated, then said: "I suppose you could say I'm a Guevarist."

Similarly, Rudi Dutschke, the German student leader critically wounded in an affray in Berlin in April, named his baby son Hosea Che. The late Che

Guevara, deprived so early of his life after the collapse of his guerrilla movement in Bolivia last October, would surely have been sensitive to this sincerest of compliments.

Dutschke's fellow countryman Karl-Dietrich Wolff was in London in March, together with Tariq Ali, whipping up what was to have been a peaceful anti-Vietnam war demonstration in Grosvenor Square to a suitable pitch of violence in front of the Ameri-

can Embassy. While declaring himself in favor of freedom of thought, like Rosa Luxembourg—the legendary German Communist of the 1920s—he is careful to specify that "freedom of thought can be misused." Some, in other words, must be freer than others.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, much in the news lately as a major leader of Parisian student riots, goes further. "We claim freedom of expression within the faculty," he said in a recent interview, "but we deny it to supporters of the Americans."

Third Worlders

THIS, OF COURSE, is totalitarian talk, and it is well to be aware of it. But there is another strand in Cohn-Bendit's equipment: identification with the colored peoples' "struggle," especially in the Third World. As he sees it, it is the duty of the militant students to help the struggle of the Third Worlders by destroying the centers of exploitation in France and other Western countries.

Similar views are expressed by such American student leaders as Tom Hayden, Carl Oglesby and Mark Rudd. The countries such young people visit for inspiration are North Vietnam and Cuba.

A generation ago, Moscow would have been their magnet, but the Cohn-Bendits and Rudi Dutschkes of this world now find Russia dull, conservative and repressive. They see little point in pulling down Western society merely to hand over to another power orthodoxy. Their target is the depersonalized industrial state, whether its label is "liberal" or "Communist."

If one turns from the youthful agitators to their sources of emotional and

See VIOLENCE, Page B4, Column 3



VIOLENCE, From Page B1

intellectual stimulus, one finds such names as Marcuse, Guevara, Fanon, Giap and Mao, especially the first three. In student riots in Berlin and Italy, Marcuse cohabited with Marx and Mao on the slogan banners, the important thing to note being that Marx without Marcuse would stir little excitement while Mao is revered less as a philosopher than as the wielder of a revolutionary sword.

It is important to ask why the radical students reject Marx and accept Marcuse and Mao. It is not simply that Marx is out of date, his field of vision limited to Dickensian England. More important is the fact that Marx was basically optimistic and constructive. Destroy, yes, but rebuild afterward.

In comparison, Marcuse is pessimistic and nihilistic. His one-dimensional man, alienated from the industrial, affluent consumers' society, must of course reject it. But what comes after that? Some unspecified utopia?

Racism Is Awkward

MORE UTOPIAN still, and more nihilistic, is the philosophy of the late Frantz Fanon, the French-speaking Negro psychiatrist from Martinique who became the ideologist of the Algerian National Liberation Front during its long war against France. In his major work, "The Wretched of the Earth," he expounds a simplistic philosophy.

Addressing the colonized peoples of the world, he says in effect: "You are the oppressed, the wretched of the earth. Your exploiter is the white man: kill him. Only in violence can you achieve your dignity as a man." And after that, nothing. Fanon's message begins and ends with violence.

It is, of course, a racist message, and this has proved an awkward thing from the point of view of the radicals of the New Left. Some years ago, it was possible for white and Negro leftists to cohabit and collaborate. But disillusionment set in—on both sides.

The Negroes turned to Black Power and to the inspiration of Frantz Fanon. It was not surprising to find Stokely Carmichael turning up in Algiers last summer and declaring that the works of Fanon had introduced him to Algeria's revolutionary struggle.

Nor was it surprising that his travels had taken him to Cuba and North Vietnam as well as Algeria. In Havana, where Carmichael had attended the Latin American Solidarity Organiza-

tion's conference, he described the American Negroes as "internal Vietnamese" and called for Negro guerrilla warfare in the streets of American cities.

Fanon, revered in Houari Boumedienne's Algeria and Fidel Castro's Cuba as a major revolutionary prophet, thus serves as a spiritual link

between Black Power and the Fidelista guerrillas in Latin America. And when Cohn-Bendit proclaims solidarity with the Third Worlders, he is echoing Fanon's message of anarchic hate.

A Growing Legend

THERE ARE, however, other inspirational links in this new brotherhood of violence. If Fanon is the link between Carmichael, Castro and Boumedienne, Regis Debray is the link between the rebellious students of the West and the Latin American guerrillas.

The Debray story had all the elements to attract rebellious youth: his own youth, his rejection of an impeccably bourgeois background, his intellectual prowess, his decision to join Che Guevara's guerrillas in the Bolivian mountains, his utopian advocacy of rural warfare and dismissal of the Communist Party's leadership in favor of the charismatic figure of a Fidel Castro. As he languishes in his Bolivian jail, his legend grows, and so do the sales of his explosive little book, "Revolution in the Revolution?"

In no way, however, can Debray's legend compete with Che Guevara's. As Sorel, that French advocate of violence of the generation before last, shrewdly pointed out, the fact that a myth is objectively incredible is of little consequence.

The Che myth, carefully fostered by Castro's intelligence service, is of the great guerrilla leader and theorist, liberator of a half-continent, the Simon Bolivar of the 20th century. Objectively, the truth is that he was a moderately successful tactician whose only major success was a pushover victory against a bankrupt regime in Cuba, and he was uniformly unsuccessful elsewhere.

The Greatest Pinup

NO MATTER: the students want their myth and they will have it. Che Guevara is therefore the greatest revolutionary pinup of today, greater than aging Ho Chi Minh and even than that truly masterly strategist of revolutionary war in all its horrors, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap. And he is greater, cer-

tainly, than Mao Tse-tung, for all the welcome excesses of his Red Guards, or Marshal Lin Piao, for all his utopian calls to the countryside of the world to rise up and encircle the "cities" of capitalism.

It would be beyond the scope of this necessarily limited analysis to deal with the long-term consequences of this inspirational ferment. For different reasons, post-Leninist violence is as worrying to Moscow as to Washington, although the Russians may be better placed than the rest to exploit and canalize the violent movements that are springing up all over the world, including the Communist world. But the organized societies of the West will ignore them at their peril.



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