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Conclusion

Political practices tend to be untidy, unruly and contradictory. Revolutionary politics is definitely untidier, certainly more unruly and without doubt more contradictory than other forms of politics. These characteristics defy neat theorization, systematic conceptualization and unambiguous conclusions. If we try to fit complex and inconsistent practices into conceptual straightjackets and then label these uncompromisingly as 'good' or 'bad', we will simply miss out the paradox of revolutionary politics in democracies. The paradox is as follows. Even if we subscribe to the objectives of revolutionary violence, even if we understand the reason for the eruption of violence in democratic contexts, we can still believe that revolutionary violence is politically unwise or imprudent.

In order to demonstrate this contradiction, I make two distinct arguments in this work. Revolutionary violence can be justified. Revolutionary politics in democratic contexts is politically imprudent. How do we make up our minds on the issue? Before we proceed on that route, let me lay down the four propositions that are derived from this study.

Proposition I: Significance of the political context

Revolutionary violence does not permit of a general defence the way we would defend say the right to dissent or the right to civil disobedience. Any justification of political or revolutionary violence has to be contextual. This is true of the generic concept of violence as well. Take the case of a woman subjected to domestic abuse day after day, night after night. If one day this woman picks up a frying pan of boiling oil and pours it on the head of her errant spouse, will we

judge her in quite the same way we judge her spouse who intentionally tortures her? Criminal law recognizes extenuating circumstances, or the specificity of the context for the eruption of violence, even if judges fervently believe that violence is an unmitigated bad.

Accordingly, the argument in this work suggests that in certain and specified circumstances revolutionary violence lends itself to *prima facie* justification. That is the justification of revolutionary violence is context-dependent. For example, thousands of people in parts of India, now labelled the 'Red Corridor', suffer from triple injustice that is highly resistant to any sort of change. We can easily side with the argument that the only way of emancipating the poorest of the poor – the most discriminated against and those who lack voice in the public domain – from conditions that impair them is to smash the system through the use of violence. Violence becomes a weapon of the last resort in such cases. More significantly, revolutionary violence is intended to act as a catalyst in the transition to a less exploitative society and to give through struggle agency to the oppressed. This is the chief legitimacy claim of revolutionary violence, a claim that distinguishes it from other forms of political violence.

Notably, revolutionary politics is justified not only because people suffer extreme deprivation and social discrimination, but because democracy has either left unfulfilled or infringed its basic presupposition – democratic justice. The principle of democratic justice rules that no person will be deprived of an equal share of the benefits of a society. And no person shall have to shoulder more than her fair share of the burdens of society. If this norm of justice, which reflects and codifies the basic presupposition of democracy, equality, is infringed, the resort to revolutionary violence by affected groups can be justified.

Proposition Ib: Significance of the political context

If revolutionary violence is justified only by reference to the context, whether this form of politics will or will not succeed is also

context-dependent. For example, history teaches us that revolutionary guerrilla wars have won spectacular victories against colonialism. Whether it was the liberation war in Algeria, the first Indo-China war, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, Vietnam and China, guerrilla wars succeeded in mobilizing masses to their cause, secured support and won notable political victories. In all these struggles, the class project that was inspired by revolutionary Maoist ideology was part of a national anti-colonial struggle.

For example, Amílcar Cabral laid great stress on the development of revolutionary consciousness and on the institutionalization of alternative value systems in liberated zones. But for him the main contradiction was that between the colony and the colonizer. Revolution for Cabral meant the right of every people to have their own history, and the right to free national productive forces from colonial fetters.¹ The movement for liberation, arguably, fetched a mass following because the struggle had a national and not only a class dimension. In other cases too, it was nationalism/anti-colonialism that succeeded in sparking off political imaginations, and converting people to the cause of independence, than only the class struggle.

Consider China known for having fashioned a revolution that prioritized the peasant rather than the worker and guerrilla struggle rather than trade union action in urbanized and industrialized countries. In 1962, Chalmers Johnson who taught Chinese and Japanese politics at Berkeley and at San Diego Universities published his acclaimed work on *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937–1945*. Drawing on archives of secret Japanese wartime material that he had collected for his doctoral supervisor, Johnson controversially claimed that the mobilization of millions of peasants was made possible because the Chinese people, fired by nationalist fervour, were determined to resist the Japanese invasion in North China. The communist rise to power in China, argued Johnson, was a species of a nationalist movement. The movement from 1935 onwards concentrated on national salvation more than land distribution and class war.²

If nationalism rather than class war has been the dominant reason for the success of revolutionary wars in colonial contexts, then the prospect of a successful class war in a society that is independent, democratic and seen as legitimate by even the constituency of the revolutionaries is remote. Pessimism on this front is not unwarranted.

Revolutionaries face a much more formidable enemy than colonialism in the democratic state, even if the norms of justice have been imperfectly institutionalized in this state. Even if political equality is attended by social and economic inequality, even if political equality does not give to people equal 'voice' as distinguished from an equal 'vote', the idea that we can elect and dismiss governments is a seductive one. The *idea* of democracy is seldom matched by the institutionalization of democracy. But it is precisely the power of this *idea* that has moved millions to protest and motivated others to vest confidence in democratic institutions and in the constitution. The more critically inclined may carp and complain about imperfectly just democracies, but we cannot deny that electoral democracy possesses its own unique charm. It gives hope that at some time things will become better. Perhaps the government may listen to the voices of the disprivileged, perhaps civil society groups may take up their cause, perhaps elected representatives will become less insensitive and more responsive and accountable and perhaps the rest of society will be liberated from selfish and narrow preoccupations with the self and begin to think about the well-being of fellow citizens.

Not surprisingly, in democracies, political mobilization by revolutionaries turns into a contest between existing loyalties to power holders and evoking loyalties to a cause weighted in favour of the poorest and the most exploited. It is not clear which way the tide will turn because as in the case of India, though the state is coercive, the Maoists have also displayed remarkable inclination to coercion. If the Maoists struggle for social and economic justice, the Indian state is also the dispenser of largesse. When it comes to winning hearts and minds a democratic state, undeniably, commands infinitely more symbolic and material resources than our revolutionaries. The

Maoists have appropriated land from landlords, vide kangaroo courts, and redistributed it to peasant who had worked on other's land for generations in return for a pittance. But when the state gets into the act, it gives to the landless legal title to land. Private property has its uses; it converts the constituency of revolution into landlords of small- or medium-size landholdings. And proprietors of land have a stake in upholding the establishment. History bears witness to this. Sumanta Banerjee tells us that in Naxalbari, the rural poor who joined the armed Maoist insurrection have today dropped out of the movement and accepted economic benefits, such as a small piece of cultivable land, higher wages for labour and participation in decision-making offered to them by the parliamentary Left. While travelling in the Bengal countryside, he writes, 'I listen to a new generation of rural people who nurture dreams of a better future within this system rather than change it through an armed revolution.'³

When it comes to converting people into stakeholders in the system, no institution works as well as that of private property. Private property dissolves radicalism and fosters the status quo. It is this very strategy which is being used by the government to divide poor and landless peasant from each other and from those who would fight their cause. There is after all no section of society that is politically more conservative than those who own private property.

If constituencies are so easily won over by sops such as ownership of small pieces of land, the vanguard party has obviously failed to politicize popular consciousness in the direction of revolutionary consciousness which passionately desires a new society. Unless the use of violence is subordinated to the political cause of revolutionizing consciousness, the peasant will tend to choose the softer option. Why should she not? Assured land rights are much more tangible and secure than a life of Hobbesian uncertainty.

Ultimately, it is for the villagers to decide which way they want to go. But if they have to decide which way they want to go, or which path will lead to the recovery of agency, the political context has to be free of violence both of the state and of the Maoists. No one can make

choices in a context that is shaped on all sides by one sort of violence or another. Violence is simply not conducive to the recovery of agency. Both the democratic state and our revolutionaries deny to people who have been stripped of agency the appropriate political context in which they can choose how they want to make their own history.

In sum, colonial powers deployed awesome military power against nationalist guerrilla war, but in country after country, the revolutionaries won notable political victories. Revolutionary wars against independent democratic governments have never quite succeeded in their objective. In Nepal, the Maoists gave up their weapons and joined the electoral process. In India, the struggle of the Maoists has continued in one form or the other and in one state or the other. They have not given up, but they have also not been able to secure liberated zones.

The democratic state has also shown itself capable of inflicting awesome violence to repress any sign of insurrection. Revolutionary forces, as suggested in the previous chapter, have to focus on mere survival against the onslaught of a militarized state. Where is then the space or the time for political mobilization of the constituency? Certainly, the suppressed recover voice and acquire agency when they pick up the gun and confront the oppressor. There is probably nothing as heady as confronting the oppressor with a weapon in one's hand. Fanon had, however, warned us that unless violence is harnessed to a political project of liberation, the revolutionary momentum of the war will be lost. It will just peter out.

The two propositions offered above focus on the importance of political contexts in justifying revolutionary politics and also point out the difficulties confronted by this form of politics. Revolutionary violence is justified by the context or the circumstances in which people are forced to live stark and bare lives. In such circumstances, revolutionary violence becomes a weapon of the last resort, as well as a scalpel that cuts through the strong threads that bind multiple injustices together. Considering the sort of lives that people live in the region termed the 'Red Corridor' in India, we have few defences

against the argument for revolutionary violence. The context in this case justifies the text.

The second proposition holds that the larger political context whether of colonialism or of independent democratic states will greatly influence the outcome of revolutionary violence. In colonial contexts, the enemy is clear, an alien power that has taken away from the people of the territory the right to self-rule. Anti-colonial guerrilla wars had a strong nationalist component, and it is not unfeasible that people clustered around the movement not by reasons of class but by reasons of anti-imperialism.

In independent and democratic countries, the chances of success of revolutionary politics become much more difficult. Mobilization by the revolutionaries can be outmatched by the democratic state employing all the resources as its command to 'win hearts and minds'. The outbreak of violence is also outmatched by the democratic state employing deadly weapons against its own citizens. Democratic governments have succeeded in legitimizing torture, illegal detentions, encounter deaths and imposition of draconian laws that take away civil liberties by reference to national unity and security. Again, it is the notion of the 'national' that helps in consolidating public opinion against revolutionaries. In turn, revolutionaries confronted by the legitimating strategies of a democratic state and intense coercion have to focus energies on guarding their flanks. The net outcome is that we have on our hands violence without politics or rather political mobilization of the constituency that will give to dispossessed people awareness of injustice, the need to break inflexible bonds of oppression through violence and the need for a new society that does not tolerate injustice and that respects the dignity of all. If revolutionaries have few chances in a democracy to pursue the agenda of political awareness and mobilization, both of which give to the dispossessed voice, we have on our hands a peculiar phenomenon – violence as theatre. To put the point across starkly, democratic states are not the best contexts in which to pursue a revolutionary agenda. In democratic countries, we find the phenomenon of revolutions sans politics. This leaves only

violence, which converts people into consumers rather than citizens who have recovered voice through struggle.

Proposition II: Violence without politics

Without politics in command, violence not only goes berserk, it reduces prospects that the marginalized will be able to confront an unjust system in a sustained manner, or that they will be able to stand up and speak back to history. The mandate of revolutionary violence is not only violence, the mandate is to transform society and to show the way to a better one, in which little babies will not die of neglect and in which people will not be diminished because the preconditions of a life of dignity have been denied to them. But without sustained mobilization, we get only violence. What we do not get is revolutionary politics that can transform entire societies. Without an agenda of transformative politics, violence misplaces its chief legitimacy claim and becomes a spectator sport.⁴ It is just a bad way of doing politics because it subjects people to violence but does not enable them to exercise agency.

More significantly, without revolutionary mobilization, spectacular acts of violence reduce people into an audience and to bystanders. And revolutionary violence is transmuted into a theatre of the absurd. Extravagant acts of political violence may appear courageous, praiseworthy, ruptural and harbingers of change, but they belong to the realm of illusion. For nothing has changed, nothing ever could. Masses might admire and acclaim militants for personal bravery, but they remain untouched and steeped in political passivity. Revolutionary agents lack the capacity to invite them into history or call upon them to make their own history. The people are condemned to remain spectators of actions performed by others and condemned to live out their lives as subjects, not agents.

And those who become rulers will have blood on their hands, blood that does not wash away quite so easily. This is the lesson we learn from the French Revolution. What were the gains of the French

Revolution of 1789 asks the historian Simon Schama rhetorically in his magisterial *Citizens*? If one had to look for one indisputable story of transformation in the French Revolution, it would be the creation of the juridical entity of the citizen. But no sooner had this hypothetically free person been invented than his liberties were circumscribed by the police power of the state. This was done in the name of republican patriotism, accepts Schama, but the constraints were no less oppressive for that. Just as Mirabeau and the Robespierre of 1791 had feared, liberties were held hostage to the authority of the warrior state.

Violence was not an unpleasant aspect of the revolution, nor did it distract from the accomplishments of the revolution, concludes Schama; it was the motor of the revolution. While it would be grotesque to implicate the generation of 1789 in the kind of hideous atrocities that were perpetrated under the Terror, it would be naïve not to recognize that the former made the latter possible. All the headlines in newspapers, revolutionary festivals, painted plates, songs and street theatre, regiments of little boys waving their arms in the air swearing patriotic oaths in piping voices, all the paraphernalia that was designated as the political culture of the revolution, were the products of the same macabre preoccupation with the just massacre and the heroic death.⁵ A violent revolution generated and legitimized state violence in the post-revolutionary phase of French politics.

The lesson is clear. Unless those who practice revolutionary politics understand that violence has to be controlled and managed by political visions and imaginaries, we will land up with nothing but violence in our hearts and gore on our hands. This was precisely the argument that Gandhi had made in 1909.

Gandhi's negation of violence

In *Hind Swaraj*, the 1909 classic written on board the ship that carried Gandhi from London to South Africa, the 'reader' suggests to the 'editor' (who lip syncs for Gandhi) that violence might succeed

in securing Indian independence. 'We may have to lose a quarter of a million men, more or less, but we shall regain our land. We shall undertake guerrilla warfare, and defeat the English.' Gandhi's response quivers with outrage, '[d]o you not tremble to think of freeing India by assassination?'⁶ Gandhi's incensed response to the suggestion that violence may be able to secure freedom not only addressed the interlocutor and prospective readers, but also practitioners and defenders of a cult of violence that had consumed Indians both in India and in London at the turn of the twentieth century.⁷

He set out to expose the major and the little vanities of political violence. The task was difficult. Though violence was no solution to the problems posed by colonialism, undeniably it *was* the injustice and the violence of the colonial state that had triggered off this cult. In the period following the 1857 revolt, the colonial government set out to implement a policy of vengeance. Rage and resentment at the arrogance, the contempt and the high-handedness of colonial policies built up, accumulated and spilled over into public spaces. Colonial practices had been stripped bare of rhetorical frills and flourishes and revealed for what they were, starkly brutal and essentially dehumanizing. Brought up as they were amidst chilling tales of colonial brutality, educated and often unemployed youth advocated that dishonour could be wiped out, and a sense of self restored to the community, if only they were to pick up the 'gun' and train the barrel at the colonial power. Armed with the conviction that violence by the colonized was the only response to colonial violence, a number of organizations dedicated to the advocacy of this particular form of politics sprang up in the country, particularly in Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab and the United Provinces. A number of forums were established to provide martial training to young people bent on avenging colonial violence. The partition of Bengal in 1905 set off a chain of reactions from the split of the Congress into the moderates and the extremists, to the upgrading of violence as the currency of politics.

This was the political context in which Gandhi set out to examine violence. The specific trigger for these reflections was the murder of a

British officer Sir Curzon Wylie by a young Indian in London. Hailing from a propertied and an influential Hindu family living in Amritsar, Punjab, Madan Lal Dhingra, as a student in London, came under the influence of V.D. Savarkar. Savarkar at that period of his life tended to lionize and exalt violence.⁸ On 10 May 1909, India House radicals organized an annual celebration to honour the martyrs of the 1857 revolt against British colonialism. Speeches brimming over with angst and vengeance peppered the occasion, and charged denunciations of colonial brutality stimulated, or so it appears, this young Indian student to take a life. This was his personal gesture of protest against the hounding of Indian patriots in India.

News of the assassination reached Gandhi who was at that time sailing to London as part of a deputation from Transvaal South Africa. Gandhi was acquainted with Curzon Wylie, but grief at the death of an acquaintance was outstripped by dismay. Violence, he had come to believe by 1909, was not only utterly futile, it was corrupt, corrupting and sterile. Nothing good came out of violence but violence, nothing ever could. This deep conviction had shaped his choice of political strategies – satyagraha, or the pursuit of the truth – against the racist regime in South Africa.

Gandhi's negation of violence was born out of his familiarity with militant revolutionaries in India and with London-based Indians. While in London, Gandhi made it a point to connect with the revolutionaries, attend their meetings and hold extensive discussions on various issues. Their one-sided dedication to the cult of violence appalled him. Despair motivated him to intellectually and politically address political violence. Gandhi consequently embarked on the project of theorizing the nature and the impact of violence, of showing why violence was counterproductive and unproductive as a weapon and of indicating how it could be negated. *Hind Swaraj* was, as he remarked later, his 'answer to the Indian School of violence, and its prototype in South Africa.' 'I', continued Gandhi, 'came in contact with every known Indian anarchist in London. Their bravery impressed me, but I feel that their zeal was misguided. I felt that violence was no remedy for India's ills,

and that her civilization required the use of a different and higher weapon for self-protection.⁹

Gandhi's arguments against violence rested on the belief that this mode of politics is neither pragmatic nor productive. The violence of colonialism is likely to precipitate violence as resistance, but as history shows, the second category simply does not work. In 1920, Gandhi at a public meeting in Calcutta asked the audience to ponder on the history of British rule in India. Did not history, he demanded, demonstrate that Indians have never been able to either resist or counter violence with violence? 'Whilst therefore I say that rather have the yoke of a Government that has so emasculated us, I would welcome violence, I would urge with all the emphasis that I can command that India would never be able to regain her own by methods of violence.'¹⁰ To use violence against a state that possesses superior military technology is to commit political hara-kiri.

Gandhi recognized the enduring and the emasculating power of colonial violence. He appreciated the attraction that violence holds for a people frustrated and exhausted by the depredations of colonialism. But he believed that it was possible to negate violence. If only we knew, Gandhi seemed to suggest, what violence is about we would willingly forswear it. He warned us that the power of violence over human beings must not be underrated. It is best compared to a drug. 'In my view', wrote Gandhi, 'Dhingra was innocent. The murder was committed in a state of intoxication. It is not merely wine or bhang that makes one drunk; a mad idea can do so. That was the case with Dhingra.'¹¹ He was correct in his reading: Dhingra had reportedly consumed bhang (opium) on the morning he set out to commit an act of political bravado.

The power of violence consumes those who wield it and those who witness it. Therefore, even if independence is won through these means, Gandhi seemed to suggest, people will remain caught in the vice-like grip of this brand of politics. It is simply not possible for them to lay aside violence, as if it were a handy tool employed to hammer a nail into a wall. Even if India could be freed at the cost of torn feet and bloodied

hands, her people would never be able to realize what is rightfully theirs or come into 'their own'.

When violence becomes the architect of history, Gandhi suggested, it can only replace one sort of oppression with another sort of oppression. Nothing is transformed if violence is used to craft historical transitions from colonialism to freedom. 'Those who will rise to power by murder will certainly not make the nation happy. Those who believe that India has gained by Dhingra's act and other similar acts in India make a serious mistake. Dhingra was a patriot, but his love was blind. He gave his body in a wrong way; its ultimate result can only be mischievous.'¹²

In sum, Gandhi tells us that negative liberty in the sense of freedom from British colonialism would not serve the purpose of liberation. What is the advantage of acquiring freedom from one set of rulers if another set of rulers replaces them? What is the point, he asked, of acquiring freedom unless people understand freedom in the deeper sense as *swaraj* or as self-rule.

The concept of *swaraj* was defined by Gandhi in a number of different ways on different occasions. In 1924, he wrote, 'Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen... I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange King Log for King Stork.'¹³ Freedom for him could only be meaningful when the poorest Indian could be freed from want and misery.

Therefore, the enervating effect of violence on popular energies had to be neutralized, and people brought to realization that the attainment of *swaraj* requires an enormous amount of hard work, courage, commitment, steadfastness and above all a system of public ethics. It is only then that millions could be motivated to struggle together for freedom and reinvent both themselves and society.

Gandhi's notion of violence was theorized inadequately and dwelt upon only as an introduction to the politics of non-violence. It is however remarkable how Gandhi's political perspective on

violence as a means to liberation approximated Marxist visions. For Marxists, participation in a common struggle establishes a reciprocal relationship, between collective action and individual sensibilities. Struggle educates, motivates and transforms. No person, once he or she has been radicalized, can ever be the same. And no society, once it has been radicalized, can ever be the same. Gandhi's rejection of irresponsible acts of violence as a catalyst for change was based on a similar logic. Much like the Marxist vanguard, the small body of men and women who had prepared themselves for satyagraha through rigorous training, who intended to challenge all manners of wrong and who were prepared to face the consequences would awaken public opinion. The satyagrahi or those who held steadfastly to the truth, 'must first mobilise public opinion against the evil which he was out to eradicate by means of a wide and intensive agitation ... the success of the satyagrahi's efforts must necessarily depend not merely on the appeal to his own conscience *but even more on the awakening of the slumbering conscience of a large number of people*'.¹⁴

Gandhi's language and imaginaries are of course radically different from those of the Marxists or Maoists. He spoke more of satyagraha as a way of realizing our inner selves that are indispensably ethical and of realizing our connectedness to other people. His satyagrahi does not use violence to overthrow the system. He or she seeks to convert the unjust to justice and to awareness of injustice. Marxist theories of revolution involve standing a system on its head and expunging it of every remnant of injustice or inequality. Gandhi advocated that politics should be embedded in a system of public ethics; it is only then that the rulers come to realize the enormity of injustice and the need for justice. This was his answer to revolutionary militants who worshipped at the altar of violence, and who were completely uninterested in politicizing and mobilizing people in the cause of freedom, making them aware of the possibilities offered by politics, and in building up a mass movement.

The realization of swaraj demands hard work, attention to detail, vast organizing ability and an awakening of national consciousness

among the masses. 'It will not spring like the magician's mango. It will grow almost unperceived like the banyan tree. A bloody revolution will never perform the trick. Haste here is most certainly waste.'¹⁵ Without transforming popular consciousness, violence seeks to imprint the body politic. In the process, this mode of politics reduces people to onlookers instead of participants. Conversely, violence becomes a spectator sport.

Proposition III: Democracy and justice

Arguably, there is no essential connection between democracy and justice. A democratic society is not automatically a just society. Most democracies are imperfectly just and therefore inadequately democratic. Justice has to be wrenched out of the greedy hands of individuals and groups who monopolize political, economic, social and cultural power and resources, through struggles that invoke democratic justice. These struggles can range from collective action in civil society to campaigns to revolutionary violence in regions marked by triple injustice. The inspiration for these struggles is the norm of democratic justice; that no one will be denied an equal share in the benefits of society and no one will be forced to shoulder burdens in excess of what others carry. This norm of justice is a broad norm; it can be adjusted for the specific needs of society, for example women, minorities and groups who have been historically disadvantaged, but on balance, it reflects and codifies the basic presupposition of democracy, equality.

Proposition IV: Democracy and revolutionary politics

To address the question asked in the first chapter on the relation between democracy and violence, we can now reiterate that democracy and revolutionary violence occupy the same political space. This metaphorical space has been rendered vacant because democracy

has waylaid its own presupposition: that of democratic justice. When institutions of the democratic state foster injustice, when people's interests are betrayed and when the people who are subjected to injustice are faceless both for the state and for civil society, the space that should have been filled in with democratic contestation, social movements, campaigns, protest petitions, marches, demonstrations and strikes becomes vacant. Into this space step in the revolutionaries armed with a vision of a new society that will be free of oppression, exploitation and injustice.

It is then democracy and revolutionary violence occupy the same space. Even if revolutionary violence is riddled with contradictions between theory and practice, it mounts a powerful challenge to violations of democratic justice and to an unfulfilled democratic agenda. In such cases, it is the responsibility of democratic governments to neutralize the challenge and deliver justice to people whose backs have been broken under the burden of triple injustice. Paradoxically, revolutionary politics proves successful in democracies, when it is rendered irrelevant by the institutionalization of justice. The defeat of the revolutionary agenda signifies the success of democracy. The victory of revolutionary politics signifies the defeat of democracy. I am not suggesting that the institutionalization of justice will make violence go away. Violence, we have learnt, is part of the human condition. The political trick is to make it stay on the margins and prevent it from occupying the space of democratic politics. And this can be done, for revolutionary wars are not a law and order problem; these are political wars and have to be dealt with politically. The political negotiation of violence demands innovation, creativity and imagination, but it can be done. Otherwise, violence revolutionary or otherwise will continue to occupy the same space as democracy. And, society will continue to pay heavy costs for the waylaying of democratic justice.