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IN EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

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As comforting as it is for civilized people to think of barbarians as violent and of violence as barbarian, western civilization and various forms of collective violence have always clung to each other. We do not need a stifled universal instinct of aggression to account for the bursting out of violent conflicts in our past, or in our present. Nor need we go to the opposite extreme and search for pathological moments and sick people in order to explain collective acts of protest and destruction. Historically, collective violence has flowed regularly out of the central political processes of western countries. People seeking to seize, hold, or realign the levers of power have continually engaged in collective violence as part of their struggles. The oppressed have struck in the name of justice, the privileged in the name of order, those in between in the name of fear. Great shifts in the arrangements of power have ordinarily produced -- and have often depended on -- exceptional moments of collective violence.

Yet the basic forms of collective violence vary according to who is involved and what is at issue. They have changed profoundly in western countries over the last few centuries, as those countries have built big cities and modern industries. For these reasons, the character of collective violence at a given time is one of the best signs we have of what is going on in a country's political life. The nature of violence and the nature of the society are intimately related.

Collective violence is normal. That does not mean it is intrinsically desirable, or inevitable. For century after century, the inhabitants of southern Italy endured malaria as a normal fact of life; today, American city-dwellers endure smog and nerve-rendering traffic as normal facts of life;

few people hail malaria, smog or traffic jams. Europeans of other centuries often destroyed children they could not provide for. Now infanticide has become rare. Few of us mourn its passing. But the fact that infanticide persisted so long in the face of persuasive teachings and fearsome penalties tells us something about the poverty and population pressure under which people used to live in western countries. It may even help us understand some apparently barbaric practices of people outside the West today. In a similar way, both the persistence of the phenomenon of collective violence and the change in its form within European countries over the last few centuries have something to teach us about their political life, and even about contemporary forms of protest.

#### Ours is Violent History

Long before our own time, Europeans were airing and settling their grievances in violent ways. "To the historians eyes," says Marc Bloch, the great historian of feudal Europe, "the agrarian rebellion is as inseparable from the seigniorial regime as the strike from the great capitalist enterprise."<sup>1</sup> The chief moments at which ordinary people appeared unmistakably on the European historical scene before the industrial age were moments of revolt: the Jacquerie of 1358, which lent its name to many later peasant rebellions; Wat Tyler's popular rebellion of 1381; the German peasant wars of 1525; the astonishing provincial insurrection against Henry VIII in 1536 and 1537, which came to be known as the Pilgrimage of Grace; the bloody revolt of the Don Cossacks in the 1660s. Much of the time the peasant suffered in silence. Now and then he found his tongue, and his voice was violent.

Collective violent as voice is a metaphor which occurs in almost all historians of popular movements before our own time. In their discussion of the English agricultural laborer, J.L. and Barbara Hammoned summed it

up for all their colleagues:

The feelings of this sinking class, the anger, dismay, and despair with which it watched the going out of all the warm comfort and light of life, scarcely stir the surface of history. The upper classes have told us what the poor ought to have thought of these vicissitudes; religion, philosophy, and political economy were ready with alleviations and explanations which seemed singularly helpful and convincing to the rich. The voice of the poor themselves does not come to our ears. This great population seems to resemble nature, and to bear all the storms that beat upon it with a strange silence and resignation. But just as nature has her own power of protest in some sudden upheaval, so this world of men and women--an underground world as we trace the distances that its voices have to travel to reach us--has a volcanic character of its own, and it is only by some volcanic surprise that it can speak the language of remonstrance or menace or prayer, or place on record its consciousness of wrong.<sup>2</sup>

And then the Hammonds proceed to read the rebellion of 1830 for signs of what was happening to the agrarian population of England.

Even with the growth of representative political institutions ordinary people continued to state their demands through violence. The French historian of England, Elie Halévy, stated the matter clearly:

Throughout the eighteenth century England, the sole European country where the reigning dynasty had been set up as the result of a successful rebellion, had been the home of insurrec-

tion. There had been an outbreak of anti-Jewish rioting in 1753, when the Government had decided to grant the right of naturalization to the Jews domiciled in England. The Cabinet had yielded and repealed the statute. . . . In 1768 there were riots against the Government. The popular hero Wilkes triumphed in the end over the opposition of court and Cabinet. In 1780 an anti-Catholic riot broke out; during four entire days the centre of London was given up to pillage. A Government without a police force was powerless either to prevent these outrages or repress them promptly. The right to riot or, as it was termed by the lawyers, 'the right to resistance,' was an integral part of the national traditions.<sup>3</sup>

That "right of resistance" was, in fact, a part of the English legal tradition the American colonists insisted on in the very act of separating themselves from the mother country, and emphasized in their writings about the new state they were bringing into being.

Nor did collective violence fade out with the American Revolution, or the French Revolution, or the multiple revolutions of 1848, or the American Civil War. Western history since 1800 is violent history, full enough of revolutions, coups, and civil wars, but absolutely stuffed with conflict on a smaller scale.

The odd thing is how fast we forget. When Lincoln Steffens visited London in 1910, he found distinguished members of Parliament convinced that England was on the brink of revolution as a result of the angry strikes of that time. The strikes and the talk of revolution spread through Great Britain during the next few years. In prickly Ireland--still

part of the United Kingdom, but barely--a real revolution was shaping up. Now we look back to England as a country which solved its internal problems peacefully.

During the American rail strike of 1911,

In New Orleans railroad workers stole company records, switched or destroyed identification cards on freight cars, and cut the air hoses of as many as fifteen to twenty cars a day. Mobs of varying size constantly bombarded nonstrikers with stones and gunfire. . . . In Illinois periodic incursions damaged or destroyed company property. On one occasion, strike sympathizers in Carbondale turned loose a switch engine, which rammed into a freight train on the main line. . . . Turbulence and bloodshed led to a complete breakdown of civil government in sections of Mississippi. . . . For two successive nights hordes swarmed through the streets of Central City, Kentucky. They set upon men in railroad cars and fired at employees lodged in temporary sleeping quarters. . . . In the neighboring state of Tennessee the strike bred a rash of mobbings, stonings, gun battles, and killings.<sup>4</sup>

Following the sacred ritual of such conflicts, the governor of Mississippi declared martial law and blamed his state's troubles on "foreign agitators." Then it was the Americans' turn to speak of revolution. Only comfortable hindsight permits us to congratulate ourselves on our peaceful resolutions of violence.

Few French people recall that as recently as the end of 1949 revolutionary committees blew up trains and seized control of railroad stations, post offices, city halls, and other public buildings in a dozen major French

cities, including Marseille, Grenoble, Nice and St. Etienne. Then the newspapers screamed "revolution" in fear or jubilation. Now November and December, 1947, look like little more than an exceptional period of strike activity--so much so that French and American newspapers alike commonly treated the momentous but essentially nonviolent student protests of May, 1968, as "the largest French movement of protest since the war." The memory machine has a tremendous capacity for destruction of the facts.

There are many reasons for historical forgetfulness, besides the simple desire to ignore unpleasant events. The record itself tends to cover the rebel's tracks. The most detailed and bulkiest historical records concerning collective violence come from the proceedings of courts, police departments, military units, or other agencies of government working to apprehend and punish their adversaries. The records therefore lean toward the views of those who hold power. Protesters who escape arrest also escape history.

Yet the most important reason is probably that so long as historians concentrate on political history as seen from the top, the only protests which matter are those which produce some rearrangement of power. The Hammonds again make the essential point when discussing the rebellion of 1830:

This chapter of social history has been overshadowed by the riots that followed the rejection of the Reform Bill. Everyone knows about the destruction of the Mansion House at Bristol, and the burning of Nottingham Castle; few know of the destruction of the hated workhouses at Selborne and Headley. The riots at Nottingham and Bristol were a prelude to victory; they were the wild shout of power. If the rising of 1830 had succeeded, and won back for the labourer his lost

livelihood, the day when the Headley workhouse was thrown down would be remembered by the poor as the day of the taking of the Bastille. But this rebellion failed, and the men who led that last struggle for the labourer passed into the forgetfulness of death and exile.<sup>5</sup>

This selective memory even operates at an international scale. Modern Spain and modern France have acquired the reputation of violent nations, while Sweden and England pass for areas of domestic tranquility. Such differences are hard to measure objectively. But if numbers of participants or casualties or damage done are the standards, then the actual differences are far smaller than the differences in reputation. One international estimate of "deaths from domestic group violence per million population" from 1950 through 1962 rates Sweden and England at 0, Spain at 0.2, and France at 0.3, as compared with 2 for Greece, 10 for Ethiopia, 49 for South Korea, or 1,335 for Hungary.<sup>6</sup> Of course Spain and France acquired their disorderly reputations well before the 1950s. Yet during the very period of these statistics France experienced the great riots brought on by the Algerian war and the series of insurrections which brought down the Fourth Republic. Obviously the amount of bloodshed is not what matters most.

The day-by-day record of these countries over a longer period likewise reveals much more collective violence in Sweden or England than their peaceable reputations suggest. The large difference in notoriety most likely comes from the fact that in Spain and France the protesters sometimes succeeded in toppling the regime. There is a real difference, an important puzzle: how did the British political system survive protest and yet change in fundamental ways, while Spanish regimes snapped and

crumbled? But the secret is by no means simply the contrast between anarchic peoples and law-abiding ones.

The record so far available suggests that the histories of collective violence as such in western European countries over the modern period have had a good deal in common. There have been large differences in the ways the rulers of different states have responded to collective violence, or initiated it, and consequently in its impact on the structure of power. There have been fewer differences in the evolution of the basic forms and conditions of collective violence.

In these circumstances, it is tempting to turn away from reflections on national politics or national character toward ideas about the impact of industrialization. A number of theories proposed to account for various forms of protest in contemporary nations as well as in the western historical experience suggest a standard cycle: a relatively integrated traditional society breaks up under the stress and movement of industrialization, the stress and movement stimulate a wide variety of violent reactions--at first chaotic, but gradually acquiring a measure of coherence. New means of control and ways of re-integrating the displaced segments of the population into orderly social life eventually develop, and finally a mature industrial society held together by widespread, generally pacific political participation emerges. In such a theory, the stimulus to collective violence comes largely from the anxieties people experience when established institutions fall apart.

Not only scholars hold such a theory. It is our principal folk theory of social change. It reappears almost every time ordinary Americans (and, for that matter, government commissions and well-informed journalists) discuss riots, or crime, or family disorganization. It encourages, for example, the general illusion that highly mobile people and recent migrants to the city

have greater inclinations to rioting, crime, or family instability than the general population. It encourages the dubious notion that if poor nations only become rich fast enough they will also become politically stable. But the theory runs into trouble when it turns out that recent migrants are not more disorganized than the rest of the population, that murder is about as common (proportionately speaking) in the country as it is in the city, or that the world's wealthiest nations are quite capable of domestic turmoil.

Politics and Violence

My own explorations of western Europe, especially France, over the last few centuries suggest a more political interpretation of collective violence. Far from being mere side effects of urbanization, industrialization, and other large structural changes, violent protests grow most directly from the struggle for established places in the structure of power. Even presumably non-political forms of collective violence like the anti-tax revolt are normally directed against the authorities, accompanied by a critique of the authorities' meeting of their responsibilities, and informed by a sense of justice denied to the participants in the protest. Furthermore, instead of constituting a sharp break from "normal" political life, violent protests tend to accompany, complement and extend organized, peaceful attempts by the same people to accomplish their objectives.

Over the long run, the processes most regularly producing collective violence are those by which groups acquire or lose membership in the political community. The form and locus of collective violence therefore vary greatly depending on whether the major political change going on is a group's acquisition of the prerequisites of membership, its loss of those prerequisites, or a shift in the organization of the entire political system.

The impact of large structural changes such as urbanization, indus-

trialization and population growth, it seems to me, comes through their creation or destruction of groups contending for power and through their shaping of the available means of coercion. In the short run, the growth of large cities and rapid migration from rural to urban areas in western Europe probably acted as a damper on violent protest, rather than a spur to it. That is so for two reasons:

1. The process withdrew discontented people from communities in which they already had the means for collective action and placed them in communities where they had neither the collective identity nor the means necessary to strike together.
2. It took considerable time and effort both for the individual migrant to assimilate to the large city, and thus to join the political strivings of his fellows, and for the new forms of organization for collective action to grow up in the cities.

If so, the European experience resembles the American experience. In the United States, despite enduring myths to the contrary, poor, uprooted newcomers to big cities generally take a long time to get involved in anything--crime, delinquency, politics, associations, protest, rioting--requiring contacts and experiences outside a small world of friends and relatives. These things are at least as true of European cities.

In the long run, however, urbanization deeply shaped the conditions under which the new groups fought for political membership, and urbanization's secondary effects in the countryside stirred a variety of protests. The move to the city helped transform the character of collective violence in at least three ways:

1. by grouping people in larger homogeneous blocs (especially via the factory and the working-class neighborhood) than ever before;
2. by facilitating the formation of special-interest associations (notably the union and the party) incorporating many people and capable of informing, mobilizing and deploying them relatively fast and efficiently;
3. by massing the people posing the greatest threat to the authorities near the urban seats of power, and thus encouraging the authorities to adopt new strategies and tactics for controlling dissidence.

For the people who remained in the country, the rise of the cities meant increasingly insistent demands for crops and taxes to support the urban establishment, increasingly visible impact on individual farmers of tariff and pricing policies set in the cities, and increasingly efficient means of exacting obedience from the those in the country. All of these, in their time, incited violent protest throughout Europe.

Of course, definitive evidence on such large and tangled questions is terribly hard to come by. Up until very recent times, few historians have taken the study of collective violence as such very seriously. As Antonio Gramsci, the Italian socialist philosopher-historian, put it:

This is the custom of our time: instead of studying the origins of a collective event, and the reasons for its spread . . . they isolate the protagonist and limit themselves to doing a biography of pathology, too often concerning themselves with unascertained motives, or interpreting them in the wrong way; for a social elite the features of subordinate groups always displaying something barbaric and pathological.

violence have dwindled very slowly, but very steadily. Now they occur only rarely, only at the margins of organized politics.

The reactionary forms, by contrast, burgeoned as the national state began to grow. That was far from coincidence; they most often developed as part of the resistance of various communal groups to incorporation into the national state and the national economy. But the state won the contest; in most countries of western Europe the reactionary forms of collective violence peaked and then faded away in their turn during the nineteenth century. They gave way to modern forms of collective violence, characterized by larger scale, more complex organization, and bids for changes in the operation or control of the state apparatus, rather than resistance to its demands. Although during very recent years we have seen what might be signs of another large shift in the form and locus of collective violence, for the last century the modern forms have pushed all others aside.

#### Primitive Collective Violence

Primitive varieties of collective violence include the feud, the brawl among members of rival guilds or communes, and the mutual attacks of hostile religious groups. (Banditry, as E.J. Hobsbawm has said, stands at the edge of this category by virtue of its frequent action against the existing distribution of power and wealth, and its frequent origin in the state's creation of outlaws as part of the attempt to extend legal authority to formerly ungoverned areas.) Primitive forms of collective violence share several features: small scale, local scope, participation by members of communal groups as such, inexplicit and unpolitical objectives. Almost regardless of the questions at issue, for example, Frenchmen could count on a national political crisis to produce battles between Protestants and

Since World War II, however, a considerable number of French and English historians, and a much smaller number of Americans, have begun to study and write history "from below"--actually trying to trace the experiences and actions of large numbers of ordinary men from their own point of view. This approach has had a special impact on the study of protests and rebellions. As a result, we are beginning to get a richer, rearranged picture of the political life of plain people in France and England (and, to a lesser extent, other European countries) over the last few centuries.

The new variety of evidence makes it possible to identify some major shifts in the predominant forms of collective violence in those countries over the modern period. Without too much shoving, we can place the forms of collective violence which have prevailed during that long period in three broad categories: primitive, reactionary, and modern.<sup>8</sup> The primitive varieties once predominated, until centralized states began dragging Europeans into political life on a larger than local scale. As Thorstein Veblen put it in his sardonic Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution, ". . . so soon as the king's dominions increased to such a size as to take him personally out of range of an effectual surveillance by neighborly sentiment . . . the crown would be able to use the loyalty of one neighborhood in enforcing exactions from another, and the royal power would then presently find no other obstacle to its continued growth than the limit placed upon it by the state of the industrial arts."<sup>9</sup> In the process, the king's retinue produced the apparatus of the state, which then acquired momentum of its own. That transformation accelerated through much of western Europe after 1600. Since then, the primitive forms of collective



Catholics in Nîmes and Albi. Attacks on the persons and properties of Jews accompanied eighteenth-century rebellions in England and nineteenth-century rebellions in France. The vendetta and the bandit raid, too, took on a degree of political significance in times of national crisis.

The rixes de compagnonnages--the battle royal between members of rival craft corporations--often left blood in the streets. In 1830, a characteristic rix in Bordeaux involved 300 artisans; two were reported dead, many were wounded, and the local inns were left a shambles. In 1835, the newspaper Le Constitutionnel carried the following story from Châlons-sur-Saône:

The compagnons du Devoir, called Dévorans, following an altercation on the previous day and a challenge by letter to fight the compagnons de Liberté, called Gavots, in the open country, attacked the mother house of the latter in the rue St. Antoine. Huge stones, big enough to kill an ox, were thrown through the windows.<sup>10</sup>

The very prevalence of such fracas gave the inhabitants of nineteenth-century French cities a wide acquaintance with collective violence. In London, likewise, "It was usual for the boys of St. Anne's parish to fight those of St. Giles armed with sticks for 'a week or two before the holidays.' This fact survives, because in 1722 the captain of the boys of St. Giles, a chimney sweep aged twenty-one, was killed by another boy, aged sixteen. Earlier still, 'prentice riots were serious and frequent disturbances to the peace of London.'<sup>11</sup> The prevalence of the rix in Europe before modern times simply expressed the intense solidarity of each group of urban crafts men, for (as has been said of German artisans) "Their group spirit turned against other groups and took an insult to an individual as an affront to the whole association."<sup>12</sup> Something like that solidarity lies close to the

core of most of the primitive forms of collective violence.

This does not mean the fighting was always in rage and deadly earnest. Just as today's lumbermen or sailors on a weekend will now and then tear up a bar out of sheer boredom, frustration, or high spirits, the workmen of Berlin or Turin sometimes brawled for the fun of it. On such occasions, the traditional enmities provided no more than the pretext. In the European city of the pre-industrial age, funerals, feasts, and fairs provided public occasions out of which flowed collective violence offering diversion to the young as well as expressing deeply-rooted communal rivalries.

Students, and even schoolboys, displayed some of the same violent propensities. At the Jesuit college of La Flèche, during the carnival days of 1646, the boys declared they had been dishonored by the public flogging of some of their number, and staged an armed mutiny. "The rebels . . . stood in the avenues, armed with swords, sticks, blackjacks, and stones, driving back the pupils who came out when the bell rang to go to the classrooms."<sup>13</sup> In England:

There was indiscipline and rebellion everywhere. At Winchester, in the late eighteenth century, the boys occupied the school for two days and hoisted the red flag. In 1818 two companies of troops with fixed bayonets had to be called in to suppress a rising of the pupils. At Rugby, the pupils set fire to their books and desks and withdrew to an island which had to be taken by assault by the army. There were similar incidents at Eton.<sup>14</sup>

Again, the intense solidarity of the students--a kind of brotherhood in league against their masters--facilitated their indignation and their common action.

A number of the other common primitive forms of collective violence had this curious combination of esprit de corps, recreation, and grim determination, a combination which the English somehow managed to transmute into the sporting spirit. The free-for-all among men from different towns (from which it is said, in fact, that various forms of football developed) has some of this character. So does the rag, charade, or charivari. Yet it would be quite wrong to consider the primitive varieties of collective violence as nothing but early versions of soccer. The deadly vendetta, the endemic banditry of the European highlands, the pervasive Sicilian scourge called Mafia, and the occasional millenarian movements which have racked southern Europe share many traits with the apparently trivial kinds of collective violence. What sets the primitive forms of violence off from the others is not a lack of seriousness, but their activation of local communal groups as such, and usually in opposition to other communal groups.

#### Reactionary Collective Violence

Reactionary disturbances are also usually small in scale, but they pit either communal groups or loosely-organized members of the general population against representatives of those who hold power, and tend to include a critique of the way power is being wielded. The forcible occupation of fields and forests by the landless, the revolt against the tax collector, the anti-conscription rebellion, the food riot, and the attack on machines were western Europe's most frequent forms of reactionary collective violence. The risky term "reactionary" applies to these forms of collective violence because their participants were commonly reacting to some change which they regarded as depriving them of rights they had once enjoyed; they were backward-looking. They were not, however, simple flights from reality. On the contrary, they had a close connection with routine, peaceful political life.

For ordinary Europeans of a few centuries ago, the most persistent political issues were the demands of the nation-state and of the national economy. And the food riot, as unlikely as it seems, illustrates the pressing nature of these demands very well. Seemingly born of hunger and doomed to futility, the food riot actually expressed the indignation of men and women who felt they were being deprived of their rights and who, by rioting, were often able to restore a semblance of those rights--if only temporarily.

The west European food riot had a classic form: seizure of grain being stored or transported in a town, demonstrations (and sometimes bodily harm) directed against those presumed to be profiteering through the shipment or hoarding of grain, and sale of the grain at a publicly-proclaimed just price, the proceeds going to the owner of the grain. Such food riots occurred throughout the eighteenth century in England, and during the first third of the nineteenth century. They were, indeed, one of the chief components of England's large agrarian rebellion of 1816. A.J. Peacock describes the beginning of one of the principal incidents of that rebellion:

A crowd had started assembling in the market place at about nine o'clock that morning. About an hour later some women came along who announced that their men were following them but had stopped along the Thetford road to collect sticks. Eventually fifty or more, all armed, and led by William Peverett, a labourer, marched into the square carrying white and red flags. Willett, the butcher, who was amongst the crowd, told Peverett that the parish would let them have the flour at 2s. 6d. if they would disperse, and asked for a deputation to go along with him to meet the magistrates. Helen

Dyer, a married woman, had earlier told Willett that, although she could not read, she had a paper containing the crowd's demands, which she wanted shown to the magistrates.

On it was written, "Bread or Blood in Brandon this day."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, after several days of milling, grumbling, stoning of windows, and pulling down of buildings, the magistrates:

. . . guaranteed the price of flour at 2s. 6d. per stone, with an advance of wages to 2s. per head for a fortnight, and unless the millers reduce their prices by that time, the officers of the parish will purchase their grain at the cheapest rate, and furnish the poor with provisions at prime cost.<sup>16</sup>

To modern eyes, the curious feature of this event is that the rioters did not loot, did not steal, but demanded to buy food at a price they could afford. Furthermore, it is clear that the crowd directed their anger at the authorities, expected them to act, and, indeed, bargained with them.

In fact, the food riot was an attempt to make the merchants and the municipal authorities meet their traditional responsibilities: holding grain within the town to meet local needs before permitting it to enter the national market, and assuring the town poor of a supply of grain at a price properly adjusted to the local level of wages. As great cities grew up in western Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and national markets in grain developed to feed them, it became harder and less profitable for merchants and officials to give priority to local needs. And so men rioted to hold them to the bargain. The geography of the food riot (at least in France, where it has been best mapped) suggests as much: not in

the areas of greatest famine and poverty, but in the hinterlands of big cities and grain-shipping ports.

The case of Italy points up the importance of the control (as opposed to the sheer quantity) of the food supply.<sup>17</sup> In England, the classic food riot virtually disappeared after 1830; in France, after 1848; in Italy, toward the end of the nineteenth century. The timing of that disappearance corresponds approximately to the pace of technical improvements in the production and distribution of grain. It also follows the destruction of traditional controls over the grain trade, but at a significant distance.

The bad harvests of 1853, for example, brought food riots through much of western Europe. In the Italian peninsula, the riots of that year concentrated in the prosperous North--Piedmont, Parma, Tuscany--although shortage was at least equally acute in the silent South. The northern authorities had generally adopted policies favoring free trade in grains; in the southern Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, paternalism reigned.

In 1859, however, the new, progressive King Francesco of the Two Sicilies began to liberalize the grain trade. In 1860 he faced widespread food riots of the South. At the time of the October, 1860, plebiscite on the unification of Italy there were rebellions in the South, to the theme "The old king fed us." The old king was Francesco's father, who had maintained the traditional controls.

All this may appear unduly complicated for anything so simple as a food riot. That is the point: the extent to which these recurrent, apparently spontaneous events rested on and grew from the local structure of politics, and the extent to which the crises of local politics were responses to pressures from the center. Far from being a momentary, rural,

local reaction to misery, the food riot recorded the urbanization and centralization of European nation-states.

The food riot had companions. The anti-conscription rebellion, the resistance to the tax collector, the violent occupation of fields and forests, the breaking of reapers or power looms all had many of the same characteristics. Although they often appeared in bunches, each of the events was more or less local and self-contained. Instead of pitting one communal group against another, they stood a significant segment of the population against the local elite or the representatives of the central power. ("When the French peasant paints the devil," said Karl Marx in 1850, "he paints him in the guise of the tax collector.")<sup>18</sup> The organization of the formations taking part was rudimentary. It was essentially the organization of everyday life: users of a common market, artisans of the same shop, a single commune's draft-age boys, and so on. Because of this tie with everyday groupings, those who took part often included women, children, and old people. The participants were either resisting some new demand (taxes, conscription) laid on them by outsiders, protesting against what they viewed as a deprivation of their traditional rights (the prohibition of gleaning in fields and forests, the introduction of machinery), or both. All of them, in one way or another, amounted to action against the forcible integration of local groupings into the national economy and the national state. I believe--but this is a hunch for which little evidence is yet available--that all the reactionary forms of collective violence will turn out to have had an extraordinary appeal for just those segments of the European population whose political and economic identities these changes were dissolving. The large numbers of rural artisans whose livelihoods disappeared with the expansion of urban industry during the nineteenth

century are the most important case, but agricultural day-laborers and petty nobles faced some of the same problems.

The rural unrest of England during the early nineteenth century falls into this general pattern. In addition to recurrent food riots, the English countryside produced movements of protest in 1816, 1822, 1830, 1834-35, and 1843-44, with the 1830 rebellion covering much of southeastern England. During the events of 1830, the village rebels concentrated on three sorts of action: (1) levying a once-traditional contribution of beer or money on the local rich; (2) imposing a wage agreement on the employers of day-laborers; (3) destroying new farm machinery, especially threshers. For those who resisted, the crowds reserved personal attacks, the tearing down of buildings, and the burning of hayricks. During one of the larger outbreaks, in Wiltshire,

The mob destroyed various threshing machines of Mr. Bennett's farms, and refused to disperse; at last, after a good deal of sharp language from Mr. Bennett, they threw stones at him. At the same time a troop of yeomanry from Hindon came up and received orders to fire blank cartridges above the heads of the mob. This only produced laughter; the yeomanry then began to charge; the mob took shelter in the plantations round Pyt House and stoned the yeomanry, who replied by a fierce onslaught, shooting one man dead on the spot, wounding six by cutting off fingers and opening skulls, and taking a great number of prisoners.<sup>19</sup>

As hopeless as this sort of popular agitation may seem, it actually had a measure of success. As E.J. Hobsbawm states it, "The day-laborers succeeded to a large degree in destroying the machines and achieving wage

raises and other improvements, and they held onto their gains for some years, mostly because the unexpected sight of their massive force . . . instilled a salutary fear in the rural gentry and farm owners."<sup>20</sup> Of course, this was only a delaying action; the reactionary forms of rural protest did not last much longer, mechanized farming did win out, and millions of agricultural workers eventually left the land. Nevertheless, in the context the actions of 1830 had a logic poorly conveyed by words like "riot" and "protest."

The same may be said of the handloom weavers, whose nineteenth-century rebellions stirred the countryside in most sections of Europe. What we loosely call Luddism took the form of a well-concerted avenging action. Ned Ludd, the mythical enemy of shearing-frames and power-looms, who in 1811 and 1812 issued threats and manifestos from his retreat in Sherwood Forest, had much in common with Captain Swing, the equally mythical leader in whose name the agrarian rebels of 1830 wrote their warnings. Here is a Luddite letter:

We will never lay down Arms (till) The House of Commons  
passes an Act to put down all Machinery hurtful to Common-  
ality, and repeal that to hang Frame Breakers. But We.  
We petition no more--that won't do--fighting must.

Signed by the General of the Army of Redressers

Nedd Ludd Clerk

Redressers for ever Amen.<sup>21</sup>

The Army of Redressers, they called themselves. Their pseudonym epitomizes the defensive, indignant, focused, rule-bound character of their rebellion. "Luddism," says E.P. Thompson, "must be seen as arising at the crisis-point in the abrogation of paternalist legislation, and in the imposition of the

political economy of laissez faire upon, and against the will and conscience of, the working people."<sup>22</sup> Far from reacting in aimless confusion, the Luddites, and most of the European machine-breakers, knew what they were doing. While the food riot and machine-breaking were quite distinct in form and content, they shared the same sort of crude rationality.

Much of the popular protest which took place during the Italian Risorgimento has this reactionary character. During the 1850s there were scattered strikes in the industrial centers and a few revolts of a fairly modern variety in cities like Milan, Livorno, and Genoa. But most of the disturbances took the familiar form of the food riot, or consisted of occupazioni delle terre--mass squatting on lands formerly held in common as a means of demanding their distribution in compensation for lost rights in the commons. Even as Garibaldi marched up the peninsula on his way to unifying Italy, Sicilians were attacking tax collectors and occupying the commons. At times, villagers in the South shouted "Down with the Constitution," "Down with the Nation," "Long live the King"--a set of cries which recalls the much older motif of French tax rebellions, "Vive le roy et sans gabelle."

By this time, a rather different (and, to us, more familiar) kind of collective violence had been taking shape in the cities of Italy, as it had been in most cities of Europe. There, political clubs, secret societies, and workers' organizations were organizing collective action through strikes, demonstrations, banquets, meetings, and military coups. The most advanced sections of the countryside were also being drawn into these newer forms of action. Although they were not intrinsically violent in themselves, the new political and economic forms became increasingly important contexts for collective violence.

When and how fast this happened varied from country to country. But

it happened almost everywhere. The numerous disturbances which occurred in France at the middle of the nineteenth century were mixed in character. The great bulk of them fit the standard reactionary models: tax rebellions, food riots, machine-breaking, and so on. The 1848 Revolution notwithstanding, strikes, demonstrations, and revolutionary movements produced only a small share of the collective violence. The violent disturbances of the 1930s, by contrast, grew almost entirely out of organized strikes and demonstrations; with the important exception of the Resistance during the second World War, the 1940s and 1950s brought little change in this respect. In between the 1840s and the 1940s a profound transformation of the character of collective violence took place. Even in the mid-nineteenth century, a growing minority of conflicts involved more complex and durable organization, more explicit and far-reaching objectives, a forward-looking perspective. After 1848, these very rapidly became the prevailing characteristics of the events producing collective violence.

In the process, solid citizens and national leaders developed an acute fear of the masses and organized a whole set of new means for maintaining public order. The elite feared the ordinary people of country and city alike, although they concentrated their efforts at crowd control in the cities where they themselves spent most of their time. It was true in England. Looking back from the 1860s, novelist and pamphleteer Charles Kingsley wrote:

From the middle ages, up to the latter years of the French war, the relation between the English gentry and the labourers seems to have been more cordial and wholesome than in any other country of Europe. But with the French Revolution came a change for the worse. The Revolution terrified too many of the upper, and excited too many of the lower classes; and the stern Tory system of repression, with its bad habit of talking and acting as if "the government" and "the people" were necessarily in

antagonism, caused ever-increasing bad blood. Besides, the old feudal ties between class and class, employer and employed, had been severed. Large masses of working people had gathered in the manufacturing districts in savage independence. The agricultural labourers had been debased by the abuses of the old Poor-law into a condition upon which one looks back now with half-incredulous horror. Meanwhile, the distress of the labourers became more and more severe. Then arose Luddite mobs, meal mobs, farm riots, riots everywhere; Captain Swing and his rickburners, Peterloo "massacres," Bristol conflagrations, and all the ugly sights and rumours which made young lads, thirty or forty years ago, believe (and not so wrongly) that "the masses" were their natural enemies, and that they might have to fight, any year, or any day, for the safety of their property and the honour of their sisters.<sup>23</sup>

Kingsley's pronouncement is bad history and worse explanation. But it states a popular theory with extraordinary force. Englishmen and other Europeans of the time developed a set of beliefs which are still widespread today; the beliefs equate the "working classes" with the "dangerous classes" and argue that misery, crime, personal disorganization and rebellion sprang from approximately the same causes and occurred in approximately the same segments of the population. The causes were the breakdown of traditional social arrangements, the desperation brought on by extreme poverty, and the demoralizing overpopulation of the great cities.

A unique essay contest run by King Maximilian of Bavaria in 1848 produced hundreds of fearful statements from middle-class Germans concerning the rise of overpopulation, mechanization, and immorality.<sup>24</sup> It matters little that many of the analyses (for example, those attributing the growth of the urban population to the increase in illegitimacy) were wildly mistaken. The fear was there. And in France:

On the bourgeois opinion of the time, we can take the work of Balzac as the most remarkable piece of evidence, above all because it bears the marks of these two facts: on the one hand the blending of the working classes and the dangerous classes, the proletariat and the underworld, misery and crime; on the other hand, the division between two categories of the population, that daily settlement of differences of which criminality is an expression, and that sporadic settlement of differences of which riots and revolution are the expression.<sup>25</sup>

In response, some French, Germans, and English organized inquiries into poverty; others organized police forces.

For several centuries before this time, the central task of the European police had been control of the grain trade, markets, and, by extension, public assemblies. The notion of a professional organization devoted mainly to the detection and apprehension of criminals took hold in the nineteenth century. But before that professionalism developed, the European states were expanding and reorganizing their police forces very largely as a means of dealing with the new threats from "the masses." The new police began to replace both the army and those older repressive forces which had been fairly well matched to the primitive and reactionary forms of collective violence: the local militias, part-time constabularies, the personal employees of justices of the peace. Sir Robert Peel's organization of the London metropolitan police in 1829 (which immortalized him by transferring his nickname "Bobby" to the police officers themselves) had the well-recognized dual purpose of putting aside thugs and putting down rebellions. It is even clearer that the setting up of a nationwide provincial police by the Rural Police Act of 1839 "was precipitated by the Chartist disturbances of that year and, in particular, by the desire to

relieve the military of a pressure which was in the highest degree inconvenient and injurious."<sup>26</sup>

European police forces of the period acquired great political importance, not only as agents of crowd control, but also as the organizers of political espionage via networks of spies and informers. Their reorganization throughout Europe in the early nineteenth century marked a victory of the national over the local, a nationalization of repressive forces. As Allan Silver says, "The police penetration of civil society . . . lay not only in its narrow application to crime and violence. In a broader sense, it represented the penetration and continual presence of central political authority throughout daily life."<sup>27</sup> Although the new police forces by no means succeeded in eliminating collective or individual violence from everyday life, they did speed the decline of the older forms of protest. By matching more complex and specialized organization of repression to the more complex and specialized organization of the newer forms of protest, they probably even earned some of their reputation for staving off revolution.

#### Modern Collective Violence

The modern varieties of political disturbance (to use another tendentious term) involve specialized associations with relatively well-defined objectives, organized for political or economic action. Such disturbances can easily reach a large scale. Even more clearly than in the case of reactionary collective violence, they have a tendency to develop from collective actions which offer a show of force but are not intrinsically violent. The demonstration and the violent strike are the two clearest examples, but the coup and most forms of guerrilla also qualify. These forms deserve to be called "modern" not only because of their organi-

zational complexity but also because the participants commonly regard themselves as striking for rights due them, but not yet enjoyed. They are, that is, forward-looking.

In England, the modern varieties of collective violence came into their own fairly early. Joseph Hamburger, whose general purpose is to refute the notion that England came close to revolution before the 1832 Reform Bill, nevertheless describes some good-sized disturbances in 1831:

There were also disturbances in London during the days immediately after the Lords' rejection of the Bill. They mainly occurred in connection with a procession that was organized, with Place's help, by two London Radicals, Bowyer and Powell. Organized by parishes, people were to march to the palace and present an address in support of the Bill to the King. When it took place on October 12, 300,000 persons were said to have taken part. The Home Secretary informed the deputations that the King could not receive their petitions, but they could present them through County Members. Hume received some of them in St. James Square and later left them at the palace. The procession then marched past the palace as a demonstration of its size and resolution. It consisted of 'shopkeepers and superior artisans'; nevertheless, during the day there were attacks on some Tory peers as well as the usual broken windows.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, the violence in this case was minor, but the order and size of the demonstration was impressive. Much more so than in the case of reactionary disturbances, the extent of violence in this sort of event depends heavily on the reactions of the demonstrators' opponents.

During the widespread Chartist agitation of the following two decades the standard routine involved a fire-eating speech by a Chartist leader, followed by a procession through the streets, spewing threats and displaying weapons. The threats, however, rarely came to anything except when they confronted the Queen's soldiers. While once in a great while a member of the crowd fired at the troops, their usual tactic was to stone them: "At Preston, during the Plug-Plot disturbances, a mob which had belaboured the soldiers with stones stood its ground for a while when the order to fire was given and several of its members were struck, but the shooting of a ring-leader, who had stepped out in front of the mob to encourage his followers to continue the assault, put a damper on the proceedings, and caused the crowd to disperse."<sup>29</sup> The British army and police soon developed effective, and largely non-violent, methods of crowd control.

Despite the development of effective policing, England still witnessed plenty of collective violence later in the century. There was a wave of "riots" in London in 1866, another in 1886 and 1887: most of these events consisting of demonstrations which got out of hand. But the real resurgence of this form of violence came early in the twentieth century, as the movements for temperance and (more importantly) for woman's suffrage began to mount demonstrations in the course of which the women showed unwonted determination: ". . . they smashed windows, fired pillar-boxes, slashed pictures, throw things at M.P.s, and even burned down churches and houses; in reply they were treated with great roughness by policemen and worse by crowds. They were kicked and beaten; their hair was pulled and their clothes half-torn off; hatpins were pushed into them; they were knocked down and trampled upon."<sup>30</sup>

It was about this time that Lincoln Steffens heard English leaders



talking about the possibility of revolution. For three different movements were swelling and coalescing in the years just before World War I: the demand for woman's suffrage, huge (and sometimes insurrectionary) strikes, and opposition to war. A famous leaflet of the time communicates some of what was happening:

You are Workingmen's Sons.

When we go on Strike to better Our lot which is the lot also of Your Fathers, Mothers, Brothers and Sisters, You are called upon by your Officers to Murder Us.

Don't do it. . . .

Don't you know that when you are out of the colours, and become a 'Civy' again, that You, like Us, may be on strike, and You, like Us, be liable to be Murdered by other soldiers.

Boys, Don't Do It.

'Thou shalt not kill,' says the Book.

Don't forget that!

It does not say, 'unless you have a uniform on.'

No! Murder is Murder.

Think things out and refuse any longer to Murder Your Kindred. Help Us to win back Britain for the British and the World for the Workers.<sup>31</sup>

Some of these movements (like the drive for woman's suffrage) succeeded; some (like the various demands of organized labor) met a mixture of success and failure; and some (like pacifism) failed utterly. England survived. But the essential point is that the characteristic forms of collective violence accompanying those movements differed fundamentally from those which had prevailed a century before.

The rise of the strike as a context for collective violence followed

a similar rhythm. Although they often reimposed one restriction or another, most European states legalized the strike some time during the nineteenth century: England in 1824, Saxony in 1861, France in 1864, Belgium in 1866, Prussia in 1869, Austria in 1870, the Netherlands in 1872. That did not, however, make all subsequent strikes peaceful. Occasionally the violence began when the workers themselves attacked a factory, mine, or manager's home. Sometimes the workers demonstrated, and the demonstration turned violent. More often the violence grew from a confrontation between strikers assembled at a workplace and troops, police or strikebreakers sent in to thwart or control them.

In France, occasional strikes broke out in the biggest cities as early as the sixteenth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century, several rounds of strikes--notably those of Lyon in 1831 and 1834--bubbled up into bloodily-repressed insurrections. But the first sets of strikes approaching a national scale came at the end of the Second Empire, in 1869 and 1870. A major strike movement swept the textile and metal-working plants of Alsace in July, 1870, with some 20,000 workers out in the vicinity of Mulhouse. Then:

Peaceful parades took possession of the streets. First the carpenters: the evening of 4 July, 400 to 500 men 'walked through the city, singing, in an orderly fashion'. And for three days the processions continued across the city, in groups, men, women, children, marching 'in a fairly disciplined way.'<sup>32</sup>

Then the demonstrations grew. In a number of towns, the strikers kept the nonstrikers out by force. Eventually the troops came in, and the minor violence ended. Total: a few injuries, a little property damage, perhaps 70 arrests.

Not all strikes were so peaceful, however. During the same period, a number of mining strikes involved pitched battles between troops and demonstrators. In the course of a strike of 15,000 miners around St. Etienne in June, 1869, the troops killed 13 and wounded another 9 members of a crowd which attacked them; this encounter went down in history as "the massacre of La Ricamarie." At Aubin (Aveyron), later in the year, the troops shot 30 to 40 strikers trying to break into a metal-working plant, and managed to kill 14 of them on the spot. The point is not that people sometimes died in the course of these conflicts. It is that both the strikes involving trivial damage and those involving loss of life took essentially the same form.

The tremendous Paris Commune of 1871 broke the continuity of modern collective violence to some extent. Its organization greatly resembled that of earlier Parisian rebellions, and its leitmotifs--local control, communal autonomy, equalization of advantages--went against the prevailing nationalization of political conflict and the formation of special-interest associations. But the break occurred as the Prussians marched through northern France, as the government fled, as the rest of the nation, in effect, seceded from Paris. The break was short. With Paris tamed and the national government reinstalled, French people returned quickly to the modern forms of violent conflict.

Later on strikes grew in amplitude and frequency. As they spread, they became increasingly common contexts for collective violence, even though a decreasing proportion of all strikes were violent. After 1890, a number of strikes took on an insurrectionary character, with both the doctrine and the practice of the general strike growing in importance. (It was at just this time that Georges Sorel, in his famous Reflections on Violence, placed the "myth of the general strike" at the center of revolutionary action.) And the character of strike activity continued to change as the structure of labor

unions, the structure of industry, and the relations of labor management and government all evolved. France's peak years for strike activity--1906, 1919-20, 1936, 1947, 1968--have all been years of great social conflict in other regards as well. Each of those crises marked a new stage in the scale and sophistication of conflict.

#### The Transition to Modern Collective Violence

Unlike the food riot or the occupazioni, all this is terribly familiar stuff to the twentieth-century reader. In it he sees the collective violence of his own era. The only reason for reviewing it is to notice the deep differences in character among the primitive, reactionary and modern forms. They lend importance to the fact that so many western countries shifted from one type to another rapidly and decisively.

The nature, timing and causes of these shifts from one major type of collective violence to another are complicated, controversial, and variable from one country to another. Just as complicated, controversial and variable, in fact, as the political histories of European nations. The transformations of collective violence depended on transformations of nonviolent political life. Rather different political systems emerged in different corners of Europe: communist, socialist, liberal-democratic, corporatist. Each had a somewhat different experience with collective violence. Yet everywhere two things happened, and profoundly affected the character of violent protest.

The first was the victory of the national state over rival powers in towns, provinces and estates; politics nationalized. The second was the proliferation and rise to political prominence of complex special-purpose associations like parties, firms, unions, clubs and criminal syndicates. The two trends generally reinforced each other. In some countries, however, the state gained power faster and earlier than the organizational changes occurred; Russia and France are cases in point. In others, the organizational

revolution came much closer to the nationalization of politics; Germany and Italy fit that pattern. In either case, the times of overlap of the two trends produced the most dramatic changes in the character of collective violence.

Some of the contrast appears in tabulations of violent events occurring in France during the three decades from 1830 to 1860 and three later decades from 1930 to 1960.<sup>33</sup> The representative set of conflicts includes 1,265 events, involving 3,015 formations (distinct groups taking part in the collective violence). The distribution over time appears in Table 1. The figures

- Table 1 about here -

show that France did not, by any means, become a peaceable nation as urbanization and industrialization transformed her between 1830 and 1960. The two decades from 1850 to 1860 and 1940 to 1950 produced the fewest violent events; what actually happened is that during two extremely repressive regimes (following Louis Napoleon's 1851 coup and during the German occupation and Vichy government of the 1940s) there was almost no open large-scale violence. If we were to omit the large, if unsuccessful, rebellion which greeted Louis Napoleon's seizure of power, the 1850s would look preternaturally calm. The large numbers for the 1930s include the factory occupations of 1936 and 1937. Even without them the depressed thirties would look like troubled times. So would the prosperous fifties. In boom and bust, the French continue to fight.

We can look at the distribution of formations taking part in the violent events in Table 2. The figures show a decided decline in the participa-

- Table 2 about here -

tion of the ordinary, mixed crowd without any well-defined political or economic identity, and a compensating rise in the participation of crowds labeled as supporters of particular creeds and programs. We find no marked change in the involvement of repressive forces in collective violence, but see an impor-

tant shift of the task of repression from military forces to police. "Natural" groups like users of the same market (who were typical participants in food riots, invasions of fields and other small reactionary disturbances) disappeared completely over the 130-year span.

Altogether, our table shows the rise of specialization and organization in collective violence. Just as industry shifted its weight from the small shop to the large factory and population rushed from little town to big city, collective violence moved from the normal congregations of the communal groups within which people used to live most of their lives toward the deliberate confrontations of special-purpose associations. Collective violence, like so many other features of social life, went from a communal basis to an associational one.

As a consequence, the average size of incidents went up. Table 3 presents measures of magnitude for the 1,265 violent events in the sample. The

- Table 3 about here -

figures, of course, describe the average event, not the total amount of violence a decade produced. They show a distinct rise in the average number of people taking part in a violent encounter, despite a strong tendency for events to narrow down to a single day. As the burden of repression shifted from the army to the police, interestingly enough, the use of widespread arrests declined while the number of people hurt stayed about the same. Relative to the number of participants, that meant some decline in the average demonstrator's chance of being killed or wounded. The main message, once again, is that collective violence persisted as France became an advanced industrial nation, although the predominant forms of collective violence changed in fundamental ways.

The twentieth century figures from France include almost no primitive violence. By the beginning of the century, the primitive forms had been

fading slowly through most of western Europe for three centuries or more. In at least some countries, however, the transition from predominantly reactionary to predominantly modern forms of collective violence occurred with striking rapidity. In England, the reactionary forms were already well on their way to oblivion by the time of the last great agrarian rising, in 1830, although they had prevailed thirty years before. In Germany, demonstrations and strikes seem to have established themselves as the usual settings for collective violence over the two decades after the Revolution of 1848.

The situation was a bit more complicated in Italy, because of the deep division between North and South. The transition to modern forms of collective violence appears to have been close to completion in the North at unification. By the time of Milan's infamous fatti di Maggio of 1898, in which at least two policemen and eighty demonstrators died, the newer organizational forms unquestionably dominated the scene. In the South, mixed forms of the food riot and tax rebellion were still appearing at the end of the century. Within ten years after that, however, even in rural areas the agricultural strike and the organized partisan meeting or demonstration had become the most regular producers of violence on the larger scale.

Spain, as usual, is the significant exception: while the country as a whole displays the long-run drift from primitive to reactionary to modern forms of collective violence, it also displays a marvelous array of regressions, mixtures, and hesitations. Surely the country's erratic industrialization, uncertain, fluctuating unification, and exceptional military

involvement in politics lie behind its differentiation from the rest of western Europe in this respect. Spain, as Gerald Brenan says, "is the land of the patria chica. Every village, every town is the centre of an intense social and political life. As in classical times, a man's allegiance is first of all to his native place, or to his family or social group in it, and only secondly to his country and government. In what one may call its normal condition Spain is a collection of small, mutually hostile, or indifferent republics held together in a loose federation. . . . Instead of a slow building-up of forces such as one sees in other European nations, there has been an alternation between the petty quarrels of tribal life and great upsurges of energy that come, economically speaking, from nowhere."<sup>34</sup>

Thus Spain becomes the exception that proves the rule. For the rule says the shift from predominantly reactionary to predominantly modern forms of collective violence accompanies the more or less durable victory of the national state and the national economy over the particularisms of the past. In Spain, that victory was not durable, and the forms of violence wavered.

The precise timing and extent of the shift from reactionary to modern forms of collective violence in these countries remains to be established. For France, it is fairly clear that the shift was barely started by 1840, but close to complete by 1860. Furthermore, France experienced great, and nearly simultaneous, outbreaks of both forms of collective violence in the years from 1846 through 1851. The well-known events we customarily lump together as the Revolution of 1848 and the less-known but enormous insurrection of 1851 stand out both for their magnitude and for their mixture of reactionary and modern disturbances, but they came in the company of such

notable outbreaks as the widespread food riots of 1846-47, the Forty-Five Centime Revolt of 1848-49, and the unsuccessful coup of 1849.

If this account of the transition from reactionary to modern collective violence in western Europe is correct, it has some intriguing features. First, the timing of the transition corresponds roughly to the timing of industrialization and urbanization--England early, Italy late, and so on. Furthermore, the most rapid phase of the transition seems to occur together with a great acceleration of industrial and urban growth, early in the process: England at the beginning of the century, France of the 1850s, Germany of the 1850s and 1870s, Italy of the 1890s.

Second, there is some connection between the timing of the transition and the overall level of collective violence in a country. Over the last 150 years, if we think in terms of the frequency and scale of violent events rather than the turnover of regimes, we can probably place Spain ahead of France, France ahead of Italy, Italy ahead of Germany, and Germany ahead of England. France is in the wrong position, and the contrast much less than the differences in reputation for stability or instability, but there is some tendency for the latecomers (or non-comers) to experience greater violence. If we took into account challenges to national integration posed by such peoples as the Catalans, and differences in the apparatus of repression, the connection would very likely appear even closer.

The information we have on hand, then, suggests that the processes of urbanization and industrialization themselves transform the character of collective violence. But how? We have a standard notion concerning the life cycle of protest over the course of industrialization and urbanization:

an early stage consisting of chaotic responses to the displacements and disruptions caused by the initial development of urban industry, a middle stage consisting of the growth of a militant and often violent working class, a late stage consisting of the peaceful integration of that working class into economic and political life. This scheme is largely incorrect. Certainly we must correct and expand it to take account both of other groups than industrial workers and of the connections between industrialization and urbanization as such and changes in the political system as such. For the information concerning the character of collective violence we have already reviewed raises grave doubts whether the underlying process producing and transforming protest was one of disintegration followed by reintegration, and whether the earlier forms of protest were so chaotic as the scheme implies.

The experience of France challenges the plausible presumption that rapid urbanization produces disruptions of social life which in turn generate protest. There is, if anything, a negative correlation over time and space between the pace of urban growth and the intensity of collective violence. The extreme example is the contrast between: a) the 1840s, with slow urban growth plus enormous violence and b) the decade after 1851, with very fast growth and extensive peace. Cities, like St. Etienne or Roubaix, receiving and forming large numbers of new industrial workers, tended to remain quiet while centers of the old traditional crafts, such as Lyon and Rouen, raged with rebellion. When we can identify the participants in political conflicts, they tend to grossly under-represent newcomers to the city and draw especially from the "little people" most firmly integrated into the local political life of the city's working-class neighborhoods. The geography of the conflicts itself suggests as much. It was not the urban neighborhoods of extreme deprivation, crime, or vice, George Rudé reports, "not the newly settled towns or quarters that proved the most fertile breeding-ground for social and political protest,

but the old areas of settlement with established customs, such as Westminster, the City of London, Old Paris, Rouen, or Lyons."<sup>35</sup> The information available points to a slow, collective process of organization and political education--what we may at least loosely call a development of class consciousness--within the city rather than a process of disruption leading directly to personal malaise or protest.

As a consequence of this process, the great new cities eventually became the principal settings of collective violence in France. Furthermore, collective violence moved the city faster than the population did. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the towns and cities of France produced a disproportionate share of the nation's collective violence. Yet tax rebellions, food riots, and movements against conscription did occur with fair regularity in France's small towns and villages. After these forms of contention disappeared, the countryside remained virtually silent for decades. When rural collective violence renewed, it was in the highly organized form of farmers' strikes and marches on government buildings. This sequence of events was, to some extent, a result of urbanization.

Early in the nineteenth century, the expansion of cities incited frequent rural protests--obviously in the case of the food riot, more subtly in the case of other forms of collective violence. We have some reason to believe that groups of people who were still solidly established within rural communities, but were losing their livelihoods through the concentration of property and the urbanization of industry, regularly spearheaded such protests. The most important group were probably the workers in cottage industry. Their numbers declined catastrophically as various industries--especially textiles--moved to the city during the first half of the century. Large numbers of them hung on in the countryside, doing what weaving, spinning, or forging they could, eking out livings as

handymen, day-laborers, and farmhands, railing against their fate. Within their communities, they were able to act collectively against power looms, farm machines, tax collectors, and presumed profiteers.

Slowly before mid-century, rapidly thereafter, the increasing desperation of the French countryside and the expanding opportunity for work in the new industrial cities drew such men away from their rural communities into town. That move cut them off from the day-to-day personal contacts which had given them the incentive and the means for collective action against their enemies. It rearranged their immediate interests, placed them in vast, unfamiliar communities, and gave them relatively weak and unreliable relations with those who shared common interests with them.

The initial fragmentation of the workforce into small groups of diverse origins, the slow development of mutual awareness and confidence, the lack of organizational experience among the new workers, and the obstacles thrown up by employers and governments all combined to make the development of the means and the will for collective action a faltering, time-consuming process. Collective violence did not begin in earnest until the new industrial workers began forming or joining associations--trade unions, mutual aid societies, political clubs, conspiratorial groups--devoted to the collective pursuit of their interests. In this sense, the short-run effect of the urbanization of the French labor force was actually to damp collective violence. Its long-run effect, however, was to promote new forms of collective action frequently leading to violent conflicts, and thus to change the form of collective violence itself.

This happened in part through the grouping together of large numbers of people sharing a common fate in factories, urban working-class neighborhoods, construction gangs. Something like the class-conscious proletariat of which Marx wrote began to form in the industrial cities. This new scale of congregation

combined with new, pressing grievances, improving communication, the diffusion of new organizational models from government and industry, and grudging concessions by the authorities to the right of association. The combination facilitated the formation of special-interest associations. At first workers experimented with cramped, antique, exclusive associations resembling (or even continuing) the old guilds; gradually they formed mutual aid societies, labor exchanges, unions, national and international federations.

The new associations further extended the scale and flexibility of communication among workers; they made it possible to inform, mobilize and deploy large numbers of men fast and efficiently in strikes, demonstrations and other common actions. These potentially rebellious populations and their demanding associations proliferated in the big cities, in the shadows of regional and national capitals. They therefore posed a greater (or at least more visible) threat to the authorities than had their small-town predecessors. The authorities responded to the threat by organizing police forces, crowd-control tactics and commissions of inquiry. The associations, in their turn, achieved greater sophistication and control in their show of strength. The process took time--perhaps a generation for any particular group of workers. In that longer run the urbanization of the labor force produced a whole new style of collective violence.

The experience of the industrial workers has one more important teaching for us. In both reactionary and modern forms of collective violence, participants commonly express their feeling that they have been unjustly denied their rights. Reactionary conflicts, however, center on rights once enjoyed but now threatened, while modern conflicts center on rights not yet enjoyed but now within reach. The reactionary forms are especially the work of groups of people who are losing their collective positions within the system of power, while the modern forms attract groups of people who are striving to acquire or

or enhance such positions. The reactionary forms, finally, challenge the basic claims of a national state and a national economy, while the modern forms rest on the assumption that the state and the economy have a durable existence--if not necessarily under present management. In modern disturbances, people contend over the control and organization of the state and the economy.

What links these features together historically? The coordinate construction of the nation-state and the national economy simultaneously weakened local systems of power, with the rights and positions which depended on them, and established new, much larger arenas in which to contend for power. In western European countries, as locally-based groups definitively lost their struggle against the claims of the central power, reactionary conflicts dwindled and modern conflicts swelled. The rapid transition from one to the other occurred where and when the central power was able to strengthen rapidly or to expand its enforcement of its claims. Accelerating urbanization and industrialization facilitated such an expansion by providing superior means of communication and control to the agents of the central power, by drawing people more fully into national markets, and by spreading awareness of, and involvement in, national politics. In the process, special-purpose associations like parties and labor unions grew more and more important as the vehicles in the struggle for power, whether violent or nonviolent. Thus urbanization and industrialization affected the character and the incidence of collective violence profoundly, but indirectly.

#### The Logic of Collective Violence

Before rushing to clamp this analysis of European collective violence onto current American experience, we should pause to notice how much of it is an historical analysis--helpful in sorting out the past and identifying the context of the present, but not in predicting the future. Categories like primitive, reactionary, and modern have more kinship with timebound

terms like Renaissance, Liberalism, or Neolithic than with rather timeless concepts like urban, clan, or wealth. I would not argue for a moment that forward-looking protests are necessarily larger in scale than backward-looking ones, although that has been the usual experience of western countries for several centuries. For those were centuries of growth and centralization, in which to look backward meant to lean toward the smaller scale. As a general statement, the analysis is too one-dimensional.

To take the problem out of time, we must deal with at least two dimensions. One is the organizational basis of routine political life. To simplify the problem, we might distinguish between politics based on small-scale, local, traditional groupings (communal politics) and politics based on large-scale organizations formed to serve one well-defined interest (associational politics). Then we could say that both the primitive and the reactionary forms of collective violence spring from communal bases, although under differing circumstances, while the modern forms of collective violence develop from an associational base. In the primitive and reactionary cases, the links among those who join together in collective action--whether violent or not--come from traditional, localized, inherited, slow-changing memberships. The rhythm of collective violence therefore follows the rhythm of congregation and dispersion of existing communal groups; market days, holidays, harvest days produce more than their share of violence. In the purely modern case, on the other hand, deliberately-created formal organizations provide the crucial links. The organizations help shape the aspirations and grievances of their members, define their enemies, determine the occasions on which they will assemble and the occasions on which they will confront their antagonists, and thus the occasions on which violence can occur. The communal/associational distinction is one of the hoariest in the study of social life, and it turns out to apply to such apparently antisocial behavior as violence.

We have to consider another dimension: the relationship of the groups involved to the existing structure of power. Again simplifying radically, we might imagine a division among groups unrepresented in the existing structure of power, groups in the process of acquiring positions in that structure, groups holding defined positions in that structure, and groups in the process of losing defined positions. Then it would be right to say that on the whole primitive conflicts involve groups holding defined positions in a (certain kind of) structure of power, reactionary conflicts involve groups losing such positions, and modern conflicts involve groups acquiring them.

Strictly speaking, these are not types of violence. The distinctions do not apply to acts of violence, or even to the collective actions characteristically producing violence. They sort out groups of people into differing political situations. Their relevance to violence as such rests on a simple argument: a population's organization and political situation strongly affects its form of collective action, and the form of collective action stringently limits the possibilities of violence. Thus each type of group takes part in a significantly different variety of collective violence.

That clarification gives us the means of putting the two dimensions together. We discover that there are some other possible types not discussed so far:

		RELATION TO STRUCTURE OF POWER		
		<u>Acquiring position</u>	<u>Maintaining position</u>	<u>Losing position</u>
			PRIMITIVE	REACTIONARY
ORGANIZATIONAL BASE	Communal	?		
	Associational			?
		MODERN		



It is not so hard to fill in two of the blanks. There are really two varieties of MODERN collective violence, a frenzied variety on the part of people like the Suffragettes who are trying to storm the system, and a more controlled but massive show of strength by groups like parties already established in the system. Violent movements of protest like Poujadism, on the other hand, resemble those I have called reactionary except that they have an associational base. That suggests placing them in the lower right-hand corner; the characteristic collective violence of groups losing position in a system built on an associational basis.

As for acquiring position in a communal system, common sense says it can't be done. But we might throw common sense aside and speculate that the millenarian, transcendental and fanatical movements which rack backward areas from time to time provide men with the means of acquiring totally new identities through religious conversion. That would lead us to expect these other-worldly protests to turn into modern protests as the organizational basis shifts from communal to associational. Some features of millenarian movements in such European areas as Andalusia and Southern Italy lend this speculation a snippet of plausibility, but it is still only a speculation.

We have filled in the boxes. The table now looks like this:

		RELATION TO STRUCTURE OF POWER		
		<u>Acquiring position</u>	<u>Maintaining position</u>	<u>Losing position</u>
ORGANIZATIONAL BASIS	Communal	OTHER WORLDLY?	PRIMITIVE	REACTIONARY
	Associational	OFFENSIVE	INTEREST-GROUP	DEFENSIVE

The boxes are not air-tight. We can easily locate groups standing halfway between the communal and associational forms of organization, or just barely maintaining their political positions. Organized criminals come to mind as an example of the first; languishing protest parties as an example of the second. The point of the scheme is to suggest that their usual collective actions, and therefore their usual forms of collective violence, will also fall halfway between those of their neighbors in the table.

All this box-filling would be no more than a scholastic exercise if it were not possible to draw some interesting further hypotheses from the discussion. The first is that, regardless of their organizational basis, groups acquiring position are likely to define their problem as the achieving of rights due them on general grounds but so far denied, groups losing position to define their problem as the retention of specific rights of which they are being deprived, and groups maintaining position to pay less attention to rights and justice. Second, the actions of those acquiring or losing position are likely to be more violent than those maintaining position. Third, a larger proportion of collective actions on a communal basis result in violence, because the associational form gives the group a surer control over its own actions, and thus permits shows of force without damage or bloodshed. While historically the shift from communal to associational bases for collective violence did not, by any means, stop the fighting, it did bring into being a number of alternative nonviolent mechanisms for the regulation of conflicts: the strike, the parliament, the political campaign.

So when does this line of reasoning lead us to expect that collective violence will be widespread? It suggests that over the very long run the transformation of a population, a movement or a society from a communal to an associational basis of organization diminishes its overall level of violence, but only over the very long run. If we were to consider external war

as well as internal civil disorders, even that timid inference would look dubious. The scheme implies much more definitely that collective violence clusters in those historical moments when the structure of power itself is changing decisively--because there are many new contenders for power, because several old groups of power-holders are losing their grips, or because the locus of power is shifting from community to nation, from nation to international bloc, or in some other drastic way. Violence flows from politics, and more precisely from political change.

The extent of violence depends on politics in the short run as well. Violence is not a solo performance, but an interaction. It is an interaction that political authorities everywhere seek to monopolize, control or at least contain. Nowadays almost all collective violence on a significant scale involves the political authorities and their professional representatives: policemen, soldiers and others. That happens, first, because the authorities make it their business to intervene and thus maintain their monopoly on the use of force; second, because so much collective violence begins with a direct (but not necessarily violent) challenge to the authorities themselves.

As odd as it may seem, authorities have far greater control over the short-run extent and timing of collective violence, especially attacks on persons rather than property, than their challengers do. That is true for several reasons. The authorities usually have the technological and organizational advantage in the effective use of force, which gives them a fairly great choice among tactics of prevention, containment and retaliation. The limits on that discretion are more likely to be political and moral-- Can we afford to show weakness? Could we fire on women and children?-- than technical. If the criterion of success is simply the minimization of violence, repression often works. In recent European experience, few countries have been freer of civil disorder than Spain, a normally turbulent nation, when Spain was under the tight dictatorships of Primo de Rivera and

Franco. In the heydays of the German and Italian fascists, virtually the only violence to occur was at the hands of government employees.

The authorities also have some choice of whether, and with how much muscle, to answer political challenges and illegal actions which are not intrinsically violent: banned assemblies, threats of vengeance, wildcat strikes. A large proportion of the European events we have been surveying turned violent at exactly the moment when the authorities intervened to stop an illegal but nonviolent action. That is typical of violent strikes and demonstrations. Furthermore, the great bulk of the killing and wounding in those same conflicts was done by troops or police rather than by insurgents or demonstrators. The demonstrators, on the other hand, did the bulk of the damage to property. If we sweep away the confusion brought on by words like "riot," "mob" or "violence" itself, a little reflection will make it clear that this division of labor between maimers and smashers follows logically from the very nature of encounters between police and their antagonists.

All this means that over the short run the extent, location and timing of collective violence depend heavily on the way the authorities and their agents handle the challenges offered to them. Over a longer run, however, the kinds of challenges they face and the strength of those challenges depend rather little on their tactics of crowd control and a great deal on the way the entire political system apportions power and responds to grievances.

Discussions of these matters easily drift into praise and blame, justification and condemnation, fixing of responsibility for violence. If, when, where and by whom violence should be permitted are inescapably difficult questions of moral and political philosophy. My review of

European historical experience has not resolved them. Its purpose, after all, was the more modest one of sketching social processes lying behind the actual occurrence of collective violence in western countries as they have existed over the last century or so. Yet the fact that the analytic and historical questions drag us so close to political philosophy underlines my main conclusions: collective violence is part and parcel of the western political process, and major changes in its character result from major changes in the political system.

**If that is the case, very recent changes in the character and locus of violent protest bear careful watching. Through much of Europe, students have reached a level of activism and anger never before equalled; the French Events of May, 1968, were only the most spectacular episode of a long series. Separatist movements long thought dead, ludicrous or at least under control-- Welsh, Scottish, Breton, Basque, Slovak, Flemish--have sprung up with energy. Demands for autonomy, cogestion, insulation from state control, which virtually disappeared from European political debate a half-century ago, now appear to be growing rapidly. Of course it is possible that the widespread emergence of autonomist themes in collective violence is a coincidence, a passing fancy or simply my misreading of the character of the new movements. If none of these is the case, we might consider the possibility that they record a transfer of power away from the national state, perhaps in part because its own weight keeps it from dealing with the most burning aspirations of its own citizens, and in part because power is devolving to international blocs of states. Then we might be witnessing a transformation comparable in scope to the nineteenth-century shift from reactionary to modern forms of collective violence. These are speculations, but they, too, emphasize the political significance of violence.**

I leave it to the well-informed reader to apply this analysis of European experience to the civil disorders of contemporary America. Naturally, analogies immediately come to mind. Studies of ghetto riots of the 1960s produced a picture of the average rioter which much resembles what we know of many nineteenth-century urban conflicts: the predominance of young males, the over-representation of long-time residents rather than recent migrants, the relative absence of criminals, and so on. But why search for easy analogies? The chief lesson of the European experience is not that riots are all the same. Far from it! What we have seen, instead, is a close connection between the basic political process and the predominant forms of conflict, both violent and nonviolent. That makes it hard to accept a characterization of American ghetto riots as "mainly for fun and profit."<sup>36</sup> It raises doubts about attempts to reduce current student rebellions to one more expression of adolescent anxiety. It makes one wonder whether the recent revival of violent and nonviolent separatist movements in such different western countries as Belgium, Canada, Spain, France, and Great Britain indicates some larger change in international politics. For the basic conclusion is simple and powerful. Collective violence belongs to political life, and changes in its form tell us that something important is happening to the political system itself.

#### Afterthoughts, from the Seventies

The near-decade since these reflections went to press have added a great deal of collective violence to the world's record. In the same time, reams of writing about violence have also appeared. It is easy for scholars to confuse the two, the more so because scholarly writing tends to drift with the current of events: guerrilla warfare in the 1950s, riots in the 1960s, terrorism in the 1970s, who knows what in the 1980s. Yet in looking back at essays on violence -- or, more generally, on conflict and collective action -- written during the

crises of the late 1960s, we ought to ask two separate questions: 1) In the light of later scholarship, how well do those essays stand up now? 2) Do they help us understand anything that has happened in the world since then?

The last person you would want to ask for an unbiased answer to these questions is the author of the essay. After all, the author has a lot at stake. If he is mainly a scholar, he is probably skilled at smoothing out the inconsistencies between things he said in the past and things he says now. If he is mainly an activist, he is probably adept at making things he said in the past seem to be reasonable steps on the way to the position he now advocates. If your author, like me, is one of those scholars who turned out (often fearfully and sometimes grudgingly) for the demonstrations and picket lines of the late 1960s and early 1970s, you might reasonably expect him to defend the correctness of whatever he wrote in 1969.

Consider yourself fairly warned: In general, the arguments of this 1969 paper still look valid to me, but you should check them out for yourself. As it happens, since 1969 scholarly sentiment has shifted toward the sort of formulation I was offering then. Interpretations of collective violence as an expression of group derangement and of individual fury have lost much of the popularity they once had. In their place have proliferated treatments of collective violence as a form, or as an outcome, of rational action. On the whole, scholars have come to reject the notion of a sharp separation between routine politics and violent conflict. Instead, they have devoted a great deal of energy to tracing the connections between violent and nonviolent struggles for power.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, historical and comparative studies of collective violence have flourished in the last decade; social scientists have taken up historical analyses with enthusiasm, as historians have somewhat more guardedly adapted concepts and models from contemporary social-scientific work.<sup>39</sup> As a result of all these changes, essays in the style of 1969's Violence in America have become quite common.

None of this means, to be sure, that the discussion of collective violence has lapsed into tidy, boring consensus. Students of conflict, a contentious lot themselves, have moved from wrangling over whether collective violence is a normal, rational phenomenon to discussing how rational it is, and what sort of rationality it involves.<sup>40</sup> No single, powerful theory of violence has appeared to sweep away disagreement. On the contrary, the weakening of their common opponent -- arguments portraying collective violence as an expression of irrational sentiments released, or even caused, by massive social change -- sharpened the differences among three different lines of argument: 1) theories in the tradition of Max Weber, stressing the importance of shared beliefs (however "rational") in the orientation of collective action, including violent action; 2) theories in the tradition of John Stuart Mill and the Utilitarians, stressing the role of rational individual calculation; 3) theories in the tradition of Karl Marx, stressing the significance of economically-rooted interests and solidarities in a wide variety of conflicts.<sup>41</sup>

In the process, North American scholarly attention has broadened from violence as such to a wide range of conflict and collective action. No doubt one reason for the declining preoccupation with violence itself was the subsiding of the sensational conflicts of the 1960s: ghetto rebellions, campus revolts, protests against American warmaking in Southeast Asia. In the relatively calm period which has ensued in North America (although certainly not in the world as a whole), editors have grown bored with essays on violence, foundations have lost interest in financing research on violence, students have ceased flocking to lectures on violence. Researchers, writers and professors -- sensitive to the loss of their audience, alert to new opportunities, and not much more resistant to fashion than anyone else -- turned their attention to other, more current issues. The dwindling band who stuck with the study of collective violence found, furthermore, that they could make much more sense out of violent actions

by connecting them deliberately to their nonviolent context. With some dissent from psychologists and ethologists who sought to trace collective violence back to individual aggression, and from there to fundamental characteristics of the human organism, most specialists adopted some idea of violent conflict as a special case, or outcome, of a broader process which was not intrinsically violent: collective action in general, conflict in general, and so on. The Weberian, Millian and Marxian theories on which they leaned encouraged them to expand the range of their analyses. So a combination of waning public interest in violence with partly autonomous intellectual developments broke up the once-prosperous industry of violence analysis, and regrouped its remaining entrepreneurs in other nearby enterprises.

All things considered, these changes were beneficial. They reduced the prevalence of snappy slogans and quick fixes in the study of violent conflict. They tipped the balance toward sustained, careful inquiries, including intensive case studies, controlled comparisons and broad historical analyses. They brought about a recognition that violence is not a phenomenon sui generis, but a contingent outcome of social processes which are not intrinsically violent. In particular, the further research and reflection strengthened the idea that collective violence, generally speaking, appears as a by-product of political processes: as a by-product of struggles for power, of contention over the authoritative allocation of collective costs and benefits, of efforts to defend or augment collective rights. Since that idea lay at the center of my 1969 essay, I could only applaud the new direction of work in the field.

Nevertheless, the formulations of that 1969 essay leave many problems unsolved, and some of them obscured. To start with the most important: the classification of violent events into primitive, reactionary and modern types has turned out to be a useful preliminary sorting device, but then to cause more and more trouble as analysis proceeds. The scheme gains its plausibility and utility from the rough correlation of several quite different features of

violent events: the form of action (e.g. inter-village fights vs. strikes), the sorts of social groups involved (e.g. peasant communities vs. political parties), the relationship of the groups involved to the rights and privileges at issue (e.g. defending threatened, long-established rights vs. claiming rights never yet enjoyed) and the tendency of one type to take over from another (e.g. the contemporaneous decline of reactionary events and rise of modern events). In the western experience of the last few hundred years, those correlations are strong enough to make a simple summary useful: primitive forms of collective violence gave way to reactionary ones, which in turn ceded their place to modern forms of collective violence.

Then the complications begin. Even in the western historical experience, the correlations are only rough. The strike, for example, does indeed enjoy a historical connection with special-purpose workers' associations, has indeed served particularly to advance new claims, and did indeed begin to supersede a number of older forms of worker action during the nineteenth century. But strikes have often served defensive purposes: holding off wage cuts, resisting the firing of union organizers, stopping speedups, and so forth. Once a form of action is available, people adapt it to their own interests. That is true not only of the strike, but also of the artisans' brawl, the demonstration, and many other forms of action which commonly produced violence.

The second complication is just as weighty. The primitive/reactionary/modern scheme advertises itself as a classification of violent actions. Looked at closely, the advertising is misleading on both counts. First, the basic actions which identify most of the forms involved are not violent. Even the action we loosely call "machine-breaking" actually consisted, for the most part, of a sequence in which a group of workers demanded that an employer stop using a labor-saving machine, threatened punishment if he did not comply with their demand, and only broke up the machine when repeated demands, entreaties and threats failed to produce the desired results. When it comes to such forms of action as demonstrations and mocking ceremonies, the great majority of cases

have occurred without violence; in general, violence has only occurred when rival groups, authorities or repressive forces have tried to stop the action of the demonstrators or mockers.

In addition, the events classified as primitive, reactionary and modern are not really actions, but interactions. A food riot is nothing at all without a baker, merchant or city official to attack, a strike nonexistent unless a boss is somewhere on the scene. If that point seems obvious, its implications are not so self-evident. For it means that no explanation based entirely on the experiences of the rioters or strikers can be adequate; at a minimum, an adequate explanation of a strike includes an account of the behavior of the workers, an account of the behavior of the employers, and an account of their interaction. The portrayal of primitive, reactionary and modern forms of collective violence offered earlier in this paper emphasizes the experiences of historical underdogs very strongly. It therefore lacks an analysis of the actions of their opponents, and an account of interactions between underdogs and their opponents. As an unintended result, the lopsided argument ends up suggesting that collective violence is an expression of underdog experience alone -- exactly the sort of conclusion the paper set out to attack.

The paper's basic argument has at least one other major defect: it offers only the vaguest identification of the interests on which people have historically been prepared to act collectively. Despite some concrete discussion of the rights and interests at issue in such events as invasions of fields and tax rebellions, I eventually sum up the central processes involved as the loss, maintenance and acquisition of political power. Another of those classifications which serves usefully as a first approximation, but becomes a burden when pushed very far. Let me leave aside the possible misunderstandings generated by using the word "political" so broadly. The real trouble lies elsewhere: although in any given country in a given period there are standard processes by which various groups lose, maintain or acquire power, and although those processes do, indeed, account for much of the ebb and flow of collective violence, people rarely

fight about power in general. They fight about the particular rights, privileges and opportunities to realize their interests which constitute their power, or which their power guarantees. For lack of a systematic discussion of those interests, the earlier discussion gives the impression that power, sheer power, serves as an end in itself.

Over the historical experience discussed in this paper, two large processes made the greatest difference to the interests of ordinary people. One was the expansion of capitalist property relations, the other the rise of the national state. Increasingly, ordinary people worked for wages, those who controlled capital made the basic production decisions, and the entire range of goods, services and property people needed to survive became available to buyers who could pay the price. That growth of capitalism attacked the interests of small producers, of people who survived by relying on communal rights in forests and fields, and many others. It created new groups of workers and employers with quite different interests and rivalries. We have seen the expansion of capitalism operating concretely in the food riot and the invasion of fields, but also in the strike. The state also grew, and momentously: superseding local governments and squashing local rights, demanding taxes, supplies and conscripts, building up armies and bureaucracies. That process, too, attacked old interests and established new ones. We have seen statemaking at work concretely in the tax rebellion and the anti-conscription riot, but also in the demand for female suffrage. The expansion of capitalism and the rise of the national state together created the world we live in. They set the frame for the changing forms of collective action, and therefore of collective violence. They did so by transforming the basic interests people considered worth fighting for, and the means they had of acting on those interests. Collective violence was no more than a contingent by-product of these momentous processes. Yet the connection between the character of the by-product and the character of the processes generating it was -- and is -- very strong. As a result, the history of collective violence reflects the history of human collective experience as a whole.

## NOTES

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In revising this paper for the new edition of Violence in America, I have cleaned up some editorial slips and obscure passages, substituted better data for the preliminary results concerning French collective violence reported in the first version, brought the footnotes up to date, and written a brief epilogue. Anyone who takes the trouble to compare the old text with the new will discover that, sensitized to my language by recent feminist exhortations, I have changed a number of masculine nouns (e.g. "men") into neutral or collective forms (e.g. "people").

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30. G.D.H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, The British Common People, 1746-1946 (London: University Paperbacks, 1961), p. 490.
31. Ibid., pp. 453-454.
32. Fernand L'Huillier, La lutte ouvrière à la fin du Second Empire (Paris: Colin, 1957; Cahiers des Annales, no. 12), p. 65.
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41. For an effort to sort out theories of collective action into these lineages, see Tilly, From Mobilization to Revolution, chapter 2.

Table 1. The Frequency of Violent Events in France, 1830-1860 and 1930-1960

<u>Period</u>	<u>Number of events</u>	<u>Number of formations</u>	<u>Formations per event</u>	<u>Estimated total participants (thousands)</u>
1830-39	285	563	2.2	300
1840-49	293	734	2.5	450
1850-60	116	263	2.3	100
1930-39	336	803	2.4	750
1940-49	93	221	2.4	200
1950-60	169	431	2.6	350

Table 2. Formations Participating in French Violent Events, 1830-1860 and 1930-1960

Type of Formation	1830-39	1840-49	1850-60	1930-39	1940-49	1950-60
Simple crowd	16.8%	17.4%	9.1%	1.6%	4.1%	1.8%
Ideological crowd	13.7	9.1	12.5	47.8	19.9	34.2
Guerrillas, bandits and paramilitary forces	3.7	1.0	20.2	2.1	1.8	1.4
Public officials*	7.8	11.8	17.5	1.5	4.1	1.8
Military	16.8	13.5	9.9	3.1	9.5	2.1
Police	5.3	8.9	10.3	17.5	20.8	30.7
Military and police	4.8	4.9	6.1	6.8	8.1	3.9
Occupational group	16.7	17.3	3.9	14.9	27.1	17.1
Users of same market, fields, woods or water	2.5	4.4	1.9	0.8	0.0	0.0
Others	<u>11.9</u>	<u>11.9</u>	<u>7.6</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>4.5</u>	<u>6.9</u>
TOTAL	100.0	100.2	99.0	100.1	99.9	99.9

\*Includes formations consisting of public officials plus police and/or military.

Table 3. Magnitudes of Violent Events in France, 1830-1860 and 1930-1960

	1830-39	1840-49	1850-60	1930-39	1940-49	1950-60
Mean number participating	1,093	1,482	923	2,202	2,410	2,197
Mean person-days expended	1,895	2,584	1,518	2,223	2,386	2,184
Person-days per participant	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.0	1.0	1.0
Percent lasting more than one day	16	18	24	4	4	5
Mean killed and wounded	28.2	17.6	33.0	19.4	185.2	23.0
Mean arrests	30	30	139	23	23	84

