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Violence

An universal fact

The violence is historically a human phenomenon. For its ontologic aspect, the violence cannot be dissociated of the human condition. The biblical stories of the Judeo-Christianity -first pages of Genesis- mention to this reality originated in the zoological human group from its appearance. It is the same image that Dante Alighieri -in literary valuable synthesis of the theological christian thought- consigns in his famous Man from Crete -symbol of the human society-, cracked by nature and generator of conflicts, disorders and violence. Also in other old cultures, as the Greek, it is recognized to the violence their deeply human condition. The conflict is healthy, creator, generator of the history. It derives of the human same condition. For Heráclito, "the conflict is father and king of everything". For Empédocles, one of the two fundamental principles of the history, is -together with the attraction (filia, love)- the repulsion (neikos, discord). The Greek tragedy not condemns the violence in itself, but in its consequences, since it is product of some 'desmesura' (ubris) or of some demoniac madness (ate).

Among the Latins, the word "vis" designates, at the same time in Spanish, what we call "force" (an use of the force with destructive tendency, something inherent and constructive of the human condition) and "violence". So influential authors in the western thought as Hegel, don't reject the violence but rather they are about integrating it -by means of the dialectical (master-slave)- in the historical process of human development. It is necessary condition of the development, although he doesn't magnify it to him, as they have tried to make it Marxist later interpretations of Hegel.

In our XXI century, the violence acquires citizenship identification. They are several focuses (approaches) characteristic of the modern disciplines:

- the psychological one that considers the violence like an explosion of force, product (unconscious) of some pressures (or urgencies from the interior) that can end in destructive aggressiveness, following a return tendency to the inorganic thing (to the nirvana). It exists the psychoanalytical explanation and the behaviorist.

- the sociological one that discovers in the violence an answer to the felt lacking in material goods, that which engenders dissatisfaction and - through the frustration and the anger - it ends in social violent fights, of those that there are remarkable examples in almost all the societies and human groups.

- the politician that considers the violence like the employment (legitimate or illegitimate) of the force with an eye toward being made of the political power of the State or to retain it.

- the juridical one and criminal that come in the violence the descriptive behavior (singular or social) that, to obtain goal-success, it appeals to the use of means institutionally proscribed (criminal), but effective.

- the moral one that assists to the aspect of justice or injustice, of ethical employment of the force, when this affects goods, life or freedom of others.

Definition

When it is about defining this human complex reality that is the Violence, the Dictionary Lalande mentions to the illegitimate "employment, or at least illegal, of the force." There is who defines it as "the use of the force with an unnecessary intensity, in form non predictable, generally with destructive ends". The violent action is "an action that disorients deliberately or not, the behavior of others."

In all the forms of violence there is a common element and it is the destructive of this employment of the force. "Something unavoidable that blocks the human fulfillment (John Galtung)". "Treatment or handling that it spreads to cause corporal damage or to hinder for the force the personal freedom "(J.M. Mackenzie). It is "a very non functional form of conflict" (R. C. Williamson). It is an "aggression" that embraces what some authors call "fight instincts". The aggression, indeed can or not to end in the violence (collective or singular). For Domenach, the violence consists

on "the use of a force with the purpose of obtaining of an individual (or group) something to what the such one doesn't want to consent freely." He underlines, with reason, that the violence is "an exercise of force, with the intention of causing damage."

With the previous elements, we can affirm that "*the violence is a human behavior of answer, characterized by the exercise of the force and with destructive intention*", that is to say that looks for to cause damage to people or the goods.

For the conceptualization and appropriate use of the term, we think that it helps distinguishing the several plans or types of violence that exist :

- The violence understood as existence of economic, cultural, social, juridical and political structures that are cause of the human being's oppression and they impede their liberation and total realization. This is: "*violence of the structures.*" The latinoamerican bishops mention it when they denounce in Puebla (1979) the "sin structures."

- The sign violence contrary to the previous one, refers to the suppression and rupture of the previous structures and their substitution for other new ones. It is denominated "*revolution of the structures.*"

- The violence understood as use of the weapons to constrain to other, with the force, to give in. It is the "*armed violence*". When it is exercised it to him -fair or wrongly- on the part of a sovereign State against other, you call it "*war.*" When it is exercised -fair or wrongly- on the part of the armed arm of the State against its own citizens, you call it "*coercitive armed repression.*" When the violence is exercised on the part of individuals, bands or armed groups against the established powers of the State or of the society, youcall it "*revolutionary armed violence.*" Tactically it can have diverse forms, such as "guerrilla peasant or urban", "terrorism", "armed insurrection", "coup d'etat."

- In opposition to the previous ones, a type of violence exists but for no-armed procedures (you denounce public, peaceful manifestations, occupations

of public places, civic boycotting, civic disobediences). It is the "*no-violence active*", or better call "*passive resistance*". It was the effective weapon used by Ghandi against the British empire; it was Martin's weapon Luther-King jr. in the fight for the rights of the black ones in USA; the weapon of Helder Camera and other Christian liberationist groups in our continent. A document of Vatican favors this action type on other, when it affirms:

"Because of the continuous development of the techniques employees and of the growing graveness of the dangers implied in the recourse to the violence, what calls you today 'passive resistance' it makes headway more according with the moral and not less promising principles of success."

Violence and change

Among the theoretical ones there are authors that clearly have put of relief the nexus that exists between the violence and the change. Hanna Arendt considers the violence like "the instrument of the direct intervention in politics", and in consequence, it postulates that "a theory of the revolution cannot try more than of the justification of the violence." This author distinguishes among the violence that is used to overthrow the existent power and the violence that is applied as indispensable prerequisite of the change. Dahrendorf conceives the revolution like a political and social, quick change and force. It looks for to establish the correlation between violence and change. For him, the violence is framed in the fight by the power, anyone that it is. And it is only characterized to the violence by the illegality, being supposed that legitimate cases can be given. Stone simply covers with the term "revolution" all violent change: it is "government's change and/or régime and/or society, executed by means of the violence." For a social great philosopher of XIX century in Colombia, José María Samper, "the revolutions are not another thing that violence that transform the social established order for the time being, in order to founding one better, based on the truth and the justice. We speak of the true revolutions, not of the insurrections of commanders or bandits"