

So, you say you want a revolution? How about some Self-Purification first

Michael Downey
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A guy asked me if violent revolution is ever justified. I thought a little bit and replied;

The thing that justifies any direct action, including revolution, is the result. If the situation is improved then the action is justified. If you just make things worse than it is not justified.

A good example is the comparison between the French and American revolutions. The former resulted in the Committee of Public Safety coming to power and the reign of terror. Not a real good result. On the other hand the American Revolution resulted in the rule of law and a republican form of government. I might also mention the Jewish revolt against the Greek legacy of Alexander the Great that brought to power the Maccabees who were arguably worse than the Greek rule.

As in most endeavors, the result isn't known at the outset. The result, better or worse, only becomes apparent afterward.

Therefore violent revolution should only be undertaken as the last resort.

Here is a good rule of thumb from Martin Luther King;

In any nonviolent (I would add revolution also) campaign there are four basic steps:

- 1) collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive;
- 2) negotiation;
- 3) self-purification; and
- 4) direct action.

In my view, number 3 is the most important. If you skip this step you increase the probability that you will just change tyrants and make things worse.