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Negotiated revolutions: the prospects for radical change in contemporary world politics

GEORGE LAWSON

Abstract. This article is an attempt to rescue revolution, both as concept and practice, from the triumphalism of the contemporary world. To that end, the article uses three transformations from authoritarian rule – the end of apartheid in South Africa, the collapse of communism in the Czech Republic and the transition from military dictatorship to market democracy in post-Pinochet Chile – in order to test the ways in which these contemporary manifestations of radical change compare and contrast with past examples of revolution. Although these cases share some core similarities with revolutions of the modern era, they also differ from them in five crucial ways: the particular role played by the ‘international’ and the state, the nature of violence, the use of ideology, and the process of negotiation itself. As such, they signify a novel process in world politics, that of *negotiated revolution*.

The two faces of revolution

Revolutions, like the temple of Janus, have two faces. One is an elegant, abstract and humanitarian face, an idyllic face, the dream of revolution and its meaning under the calm distancing of eternity. The other is crude, violent and very concrete, rather nightmarish, with all the hypnotic power, loss of perspective and breadth of understanding you might expect to go with nightmares.¹

From the time of the great exchanges between Thomas Paine and Edmund Burke over the sanctity or barbarism of the French Revolution, scholars have disagreed fundamentally over what John Dunn calls the ‘two faces of revolution’. For an activist like Paine, revolutions were ‘a renovation of the natural order of things, a system of principles as universal as truth and the existence of man, and combining moral with political happiness and national prosperity’.² Revolutions symbolised the march of progress and rationality, of irresistible and irreversible change. But for Burke, a staunch critic of the events of 1789, the revolution was nothing more than a ‘monstrous, tragic-comic scene’ with potentially fatal consequences for the future of Europe.³

In reality, revolutions neither fulfil the expectations of the romantics who advocate them, nor become the dystopia feared by those who promote their overthrow. In order to understand the significance of revolutions – in this age or any other – it is important to cut a swathe through both of these myths: the exaggerated fantasies of revolutionaries themselves and the claims of those, often conservative, thinkers who

¹ John Dunn, *Modern Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 4.

² Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, (London: Orion, 1993), p. 103.

³ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 12.

deny the importance of revolutions to domestic societies or to international relations. Revolutions do not start history afresh from a fictitious year zero nor can they be reduced to mere trifles or footnotes in history. Revolutions have a formative effect on the particular societies where the changes occur and on the wider international relations with which they interact. Yet, in reality, much of the new order is curtailed by old-regime structures and many elements of the revolutionary programme are never initiated in the first place.

In the present day, a great deal of the passion and drama that characterised the great debate about the two faces of revolution seems strangely out of place. To all intents and purposes, the age of revolutions has been consigned to the archives. Even one of the theorists most attuned to the *formative* impact of revolution on world politics, Fred Halliday, subtitles his most recent book on the subject, *The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power*. The term revolution has been reduced to a sound bite, more often a means to peddle magazines, sell cars or spin policy proposals than act as a call to action. Revolutions appear to have little place amidst the apathy and weariness of mainstream political discourse in advanced market democracies. In an era seemingly best captured by Fukuyama's infamous phrase 'the end of history', revolutions have been tamed and commodified, becoming irrelevant to a world in which the big issues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been settled.⁴

This article is an attempt to rescue revolution, both as concept and practice, from the triumphalism of the contemporary world. There are two main reasons why it is wrong to write off either the study or the practice of revolution. First, as Martin Wight points out, over half of the last five hundred years have featured some kind of conflict between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary states.⁵ From the 'Revolt of the Netherlands' (1566–1609), to the 'Springtime of Nations' (1848), revolutions have played a central, *constitutive* role in the making of the modern international system. The twentieth century, perhaps more than any other epoch in world history, was consistently punctuated by revolutions – social upheavals in the early part of the century in Russia, Mexico, Persia and Turkey were followed by uprisings in China, Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Iran, Nicaragua and elsewhere during the Cold War.⁶ Indeed, much of the drama of world politics between 1945 and 1989 was played out through processes of revolution and counter-revolution.⁷ As Fred Halliday writes, 'revolutions were not mistakes or detours but part of the formation of the modern world'.⁸

Since the end of the Cold War, the dream of a new world order founded on peace, prosperity and security has floundered in many parts of the world. A decade or so on from the apparent triumph of Western market democracy, world politics is marked by turbulence and instability. In the former Soviet states of Central Asia, a disturbing *mélange* of oligarchs, mafiosos and former party cadres are carving up the spoils of a failed transition. In Latin America, populists, past dictators and strongmen are

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992).

⁵ Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (London: Penguin, 1978).

⁶ Using fairly demanding criteria, John Foran calculates that there were 31 revolutions in the twentieth century. For more on this, see John Foran (ed.), *The Future of Revolutions* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

⁷ Barry M. Schutz and Robert O. Slater (eds.), *Revolution in the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1990).

⁸ Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 331.

returning via the ballot box.⁹ Armed conflict continues to plague Africa, from the Great Lakes to the Horn. In South-Eastern Europe, a decade of war has left a devastating legacy on the social, economic and political landscape of much of the region.¹⁰ Fundamentalist groups of various hues question the very foundations of modernity.

There is, as yet, no concrete understanding or general agreement about the predominant features of contemporary international relations. Questions loom large over whether the world is operating under the suzerainty of an American empire, if there is an imminent multipolarity marked by the rise of global institutions and organisations, or whether the fundamental challenge of the epoch is a clash between radically divergent views of modernity. Furthermore, the pressing concerns facing the world – civil conflict, poverty, inequality, disease, social dislocation and environmental degradation – hint at the continuing salience of radical change.¹¹ Given, then, both the relative openness and uncertainty which characterise the structural conditions of the contemporary era and the persistent conflicts which mar world politics, it seems strangely remiss to ignore the process which, throughout history, has had such a foundational influence on world politics and which remains, both as aspiration and practice, so relevant to the study and practice of international relations. Hegel argued that the ebbs and flows of world affairs tended to obscure, or even run counter, to attempts at controlling (or theorising) them. Both the instability of contemporary world politics and the eternal cunning of history make studying revolutions a timely venture.

The second point about the importance of revolution to the modern world is more theoretical. Many of those scholars who deny the importance of revolution to the contemporary world do so because they mistakenly equate revolutions with certain inalienable, *essential* features: class-based, violent, utopian and so forth. For the most part, revolutions are ascribed certain core features, masquerading as objective criteria, without which they are considered to be 'invalid'. Such a view is misguided because it reduces revolutions to static objects of analysis rather than seeing them as dynamic processes with features that change according to their historical and social

⁹ This trend is best epitomised by the example of Hugo Chavez, a former Venezuelan paratrooper who returned as president in 1998, six years after he had conducted an attempted coup, in order to lead a 'peaceful revolution' against the 'rancid oligarchs' and 'squealing pigs' of the old regime. But other examples are also pertinent – the former dictator of Bolivia, Hugo Banzer, was re-elected as president in 1997. Since Banzer's death in 2002, the country has witnessed a period of some turbulence, exemplified by the coup in October 2003 against the regime headed by Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. In Peru, Alberto Fujimori's period in office ended in 2000 with his forced exile amidst a welter of political and financial scandals. His successor, Alejandro Toledo, was forced to declare a state of emergency in 2002 as a result of increasingly violent grass roots protests. The current instability which mars Ecuador and Argentina, along with Colombia's longer-term volatility, serve as potent examples of the region's unsteady milieu. For more on this, see Michael Shifter, 'Breakdown in the Andes', *Foreign Affairs*, 83:5 (2004).

¹⁰ Although many states in the region, among them Serbia, Croatia and Kosovo, now bear the trappings of formal democracy, the region remains mired in deep-seated problems from which it will be difficult to recover, not least among them the spectre of a return to populist, authoritarian rule.

¹¹ There is also a demographic factor behind the continuing importance of radical change to the contemporary world. As David Willetts points out, of the world's twenty-five most youthful countries, sixteen have experienced major civil conflict since 1995. The average age in China at the time of the revolution was nineteen, in Iran at the time of the Shah's overthrow, it was seventeen. Conversely, of countries with the oldest populations in the world, only Croatia has experienced serious conflict over the last fifteen years. For more on this, see David Willetts, 'Too Many Kids', *Prospect*, October 2003, p. 18.

contexts. The concept of revolution exists in every major language group in the world – its heritage is diverse, drawn from a variety of cultural settings. As such, a study of its etymology would need to include the Greek concepts of *epanastasis* (revolt) and *neoterismos* (innovation), the Arabic terms *inqilab* (to rotate) and *thaura* (to revolt), the notions of *mered* (rebellion), *kom* (uprising), *marah* (revolt) and *kesher* (plot) in classical Hebrew, and the Chinese word *ge-ming* (change of life, fate or destiny).¹² In Europe, revolution – derived from the Latin verb *revolvere* – traditionally evoked a return to a previous order, for example the restoration of constitutional monarchy witnessed by the Glorious Revolution in England in 1688. Over the last two hundred years, deriving in part from the work of Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, the idea of revolution has become more circumscribed. During this period, revolutions came to be seen as volcanic ruptures, quasi-astronomical realignments, sharp breaks with the past from which societies could not turn back. In this way, the English Civil War of the 1640s was reinterpreted as a revolution during the eighteenth century, as was the Revolt of the Netherlands and, later on, the American War of Independence. After the French Revolution, the concept of revolution took on a kind of transcendental, metahistorical tilt that universalised, naturalised and ultimately, mythologised, the revolutionary experience.¹³ The vision of a utopian future became inexorably tied to the concept of revolution as did the notions of violence, and inevitable and total change. Each generation of revolutionary scholarship subscribed to this essentialist view, in a sense buying into the romantic fantasies of revolutionaries themselves. Rather than looking for similarities in revolutionary ideology, advocates fetishised revolutionary rhetoric. Rather than studying closely the relationship between violence and revolution, the latter became associated only with glorious fights to the finish in which the old order would surrender to the might and right of the revolutionary armies. Revolution became an almost metaphysical category, an invented social concept that bore little resemblance to actual experience.

Much of this ‘essentialising’ stemmed from a romanticism that equated revolutions with heroic fights to the finish in which nothing less than ‘death or liberty’ would suffice. This disguised a much more complex relationship between revolutions and violence than is usually understood. Often, revolutions have been relatively peaceful seizures of power. Violence stemmed, for the most part, from battles *after* the initial takeover of state power, resulting from the need by revolutionary regimes to shore up their rule in the face of domestic and international attempts at counter-revolution, a cycle that can be observed in France (in particular in the *Vendée*) after 1791, Russia during its four-year long civil war after 1921, and in Iran, by way of its war with Iraq and the brutal measures employed against the regime’s ‘un-Islamic’ foes after 1980. Nor have the revolutionary ideologies that ignited these struggles always been the novel utopian visions that their champions proclaimed. Third World revolutionaries from Mao to Castro, and Neto to Cabral have fused a basic grounding in Marxism with a dash of nationalism, and an occasional sprinkling of messianic, populist fervour. Even the leaders of the ‘great revolutions’ in France, China and Russia looked to the past as well as to a vision of a pristine future in order

¹² On this, see Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*.

¹³ For more on this, see Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), and Krishan Kumar, *1989: Revolutionary Ideas and Ideals* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

to justify their revolt. To be revolutionary, therefore, ideas do not necessarily have to provide some new set of original precepts. Rather, revolutionary ideology coalesces around a fertile blend of the time-honoured and the novel, inspirations to action in a given historical context. In this way, older ideals of freedom, justice and equality are just as much part of revolutionary rhetoric as any claims of remaking the world anew. Similarly, revolutionary victory has not been as total as is often imagined. Even the paradigmatic revolution of the modern era in France was, to some extent, overturned by the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815; many of the families who enjoyed positions of influence under the *ancien régime* retained their privileges during the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ The 'weight of habit', institutions and *moeurs* of the old regime became reinvested in the new order in France, as in Russia, Mexico, China, Indochina, Iran, Nicaragua, Angola and elsewhere.

It is difficult, therefore, to isolate any single characteristic that runs as a constant through all instances of revolution over time and place: revolutions have been conducted by nationalists, peasants, communists, radical military groups, liberals and religious fundamentalists. Beneath the generic category of revolution lies considerable variation in terms of the roles of violence and innovative ideology, and in the overall outcomes of revolutions. There is not, nor can there be, any universal quality or image that encapsulates this surfeit of characteristics. Revolutions are thus better seen as dynamic processes with features contingent on both their world-historical context and their particular social setting. As such, there is no theoretical reason to suggest that revolution cannot take a contemporary form in keeping with an era marked by globalisation and heteronomy. This form, I argue, is 'negotiated revolution'.

The term 'negotiated revolution' was first used in a book of that title written in 1993 by two eminent South African scholars, Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley. It was further popularised in South Africa by the journalist Allister Sparks, who used the term as the subtitle of his investigation into the secret talks between the apartheid regime and ANC leaders prior to the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990. Farther afield, the Hungarian social scientist, Gustav Tökés, used 'negotiated revolution' to describe the elite-controlled transition from communism to market democracy in Hungary. Outside these two area-specific settings, the concept has featured in some general literature on democratic transitions.¹⁵ This article both builds on and extends this legacy.¹⁶

¹⁴ Tocqueville was so taken with this restoration that, writing in 1852, he claimed 'nothing, or almost nothing has changed since 1789'. Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 8.

¹⁵ See Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *Negotiated Revolution: Society and Politics in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1993); Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution* (London: Heinemann, 1995); Rudolf Tökés, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Michael Kennedy, 'Towards a Theory and Practice of Negotiating Revolution', *Eastern European Politics and Society*, 13:2 (1999).

¹⁶ This article draws on a comparative research project into three contemporary transformations: the collapse of communism in the Czech Republic; the end of apartheid in South Africa; and the fall of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile. The Czech Republic is defined as having undergone a negotiated revolution in a 'maximum' sense because of the systemic transformation of its principal political, economic and social institutions since 1989. The South African case warrants the label 'minimum' transformation because some of the structures inherited from the apartheid regime (in particular economic institutions), have been difficult to break and remould. Chile is considered to be a case of transition rather than revolution, negotiated or otherwise, because while some important social,

Negotiated revolutions

Many theorists contend that 'modern revolutions', the type ushered in by the French Revolution a little over two centuries ago, pass through a series of stages. Crane Brinton, for example, bases his analysis of revolutionary anatomy on the path of the French Revolution from an initial period of moderation to the 'Terror' of the Jacobins and the 'Thermidor' of July 1794.¹⁷ Jaroslav Krejčí, in turn, argues that revolutions pass through a number of stages: onset, compression, explosion, oscillation, expansion, tightening, reversal, restoration and consolidation.¹⁸ In numerous texts, Fred Halliday refers to the modularity of revolutionary outcomes as constituting, in turn: a period of grace, domestic radicalism, accommodation and instability.¹⁹ It is important to be careful about extrapolating in this way from one revolution to another without recourse to contingency and particularity; if history tells us anything, it is to be cautious when employing terms like generality and necessity. Yet, there are some general features that can be extrapolated from modern revolutions: causes rooted in systemic crisis; the development of a condition of multiple sovereignty; a call to arms based on a utopian vision; a takeover of state institutions; the attempt to export revolution internationally; counter-revolution; and the growth of stronger, more bureaucratic, often tyrannical states.²⁰ To somewhat abridge a concept from Schumpeter, revolutions are processes first of creative destruction and secondly of destructive creation.

Negotiated revolutions are *like* these 'modern revolutions' in three main ways. First, they are *conjunctural* processes that take place when two conditions above all are met: rulers can no longer rule and the ruled will no longer go on being ruled in the same way. Vladimir Ili'ch Lenin, perhaps the archetypal revolutionary, understood this well:

The fundamental law of revolution is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and the oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the lower classes do not want to live in the old way and the upper classes cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph.²¹

Revolutions are rooted in both long-term trends and short-term sparks, complex amalgams of systemic crisis, structural opening and collective action. Revolutions come about through a multiplicity of long-term and short-term factors, including

political and economic changes have taken place since 1989, these have largely been contained within the 'authoritarian enclaves' prescribed by the outgoing junta. These three cases are used in this article as the principal empirical material by which to test and illustrate the theoretical claims. George Lawson, *Negotiated Revolutions: The Czech Republic, South Africa and Chile* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). On the 'maximum' and 'minimum' dimensions of revolutionary change, see Eric Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973).

¹⁷ Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1965).

¹⁸ Jaroslav Krejčí, *Great Revolutions Compared: The Outline of a Theory* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994).

¹⁹ See, for example, Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1994), Chapter 6.

²⁰ Even within such a loose taxonomy, there are still exceptions. For example, the Mexican Revolution was an uprising *against* an authoritarian regime rather than a movement for an alternative utopian future, at least until the intervention of Lázaro Cárdenas del Río and his nationalisation drive during the late 1930s.

²¹ Vladimir Ili'ch Lenin, *On Culture and Cultural Revolution* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), p. 94.

international, economic, political and social factors. For John Foran, understanding revolutions in this way, as conjunctural phenomena, characterises 'fourth generation' approaches to the study of revolutions.²²

Second, although as pointed out above, revolutions take on various forms according to time and place, they do share a *sociological* logic. Rather than focusing on ascribed characteristics that can only deliver a static snap-shot of particular cases of revolution without comparative purchase, fourth-generation approaches adopt a sociological, dynamic understanding of revolution that entails focusing on the underlying processes that hold constant for both modern and contemporary cases. In this way, revolutions can be seen as: *the rapid, mass, forceful, systemic transformation of a society's principal institutions and organisations*.²³ Revolutions are systemic in the sense that they are processes in which the major institutions and organisations in a society are transformed. Ways of doing business and competing politically must change alongside shifts in values and attitudes if an example of radical change is truly to warrant the name revolution. Revolutions are not merely about the introduction of elections, the privatisation of one or two industries or the opening up of media outlets to allow mild critiques of the status quo – they are something much more fundamental and comprehensive. Revolutions seek to overturn a society's social, economic and political structures, and recast its international relations, all within a relatively short time-frame. This differentiates revolutions from evolutionary change that is comprehensive but takes place over the long-term, reform programmes that take place in the short-term but do not engender fundamental change, and transitions which see only a partial modification of a society's main institutions and organisations, and take place over a medium-term time-frame.²⁴ In other words, revolutions can be differentiated from other processes of social change primarily by their *scope, depth and effect*.²⁵ Revolutions are processes rooted both in the *longue durée*, which provides the seeds for the revolutionary crisis to emerge, and are caused by short-term triggers which ignite the revolutionary process. In this sense, revolutions both 'happen' and are 'made' – an 'organic crisis' joins with purposive action in the development of a revolutionary situation, in the playing out of revolutionary events and in determining a revolution's outcomes.²⁶ One must be prepared to delve around the

²² John Foran, 'Theories of Revolution Reconsidered: Towards a Fourth Generation?' *Sociological Review*, 11:1 (1993). The idea of there being an evolution to the study of revolutions with each generation building usefully on the insights of the last, stems from an article by Lawrence Stone: Lawrence Stone, 'Theories of Revolution', *World Politics*, 18:2 (1966). Also see Lawson, *Negotiated Revolutions*, ch. 2.

²³ Institutions and organisations are offered as a 'middle-level' analysis capable of unravelling and evaluating revolutionary transformations. For more on this, see Lawson, *Negotiated Revolutions*, ch. 1.

²⁴ For more on this, see Alexander J. Motyl, *Revolutions, Nations, Empires* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). A useful differentiation is made by James Rosenau, who distinguishes between 'personnel wars' that take place for control of the government, 'authority wars' that lead to a change of regime, and structural wars or social revolutions, which encompass a much broader transformation of power relations. James N. Rosenau, *International Aspects of Civil Strife* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964).

²⁵ For more on this, see Piotr Sztompka, *The Sociology of Social Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

²⁶ The notion of 'organic crisis' is drawn from Gramsci. For Gramsci, revolutions take place in an era in which, 'the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear'. Cited in Colin Bundy, 'History, Revolution and South Africa', Inaugural Lecture given at the University of Cape Town, 17 June 1987, p. 7.

historical archives as well as revel in the drama of revolutionary events themselves if one is to understand *why* revolutions take place *where* and *how* they do.

To constitute a revolution, systemic change must, at least in part, be the result of a significant contribution from social movements in civil society and substantially involve the wider public. Although led by an elite, revolutions are mass events in which the population is prepared to defy the old regime and overturn the existing order. This distinguishes revolutions from processes of reform from above, palace coup or putsch. Lenin and Castro may have seized power with only a handful of well-armed, committed revolutionaries, but their regimes were supported and sustained by popular legitimacy, at least in the short- to medium-term (although in both cases, the iron fist of dictatorship was never too far from the surface). Revolutionary regimes are propped up by consensus as well as by force. In contrast, the so-called 'Bolivarian Revolution' initiated by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, like those conducted by other members of the officer corps throughout the developing world, is better understood as a coup rather than a revolution precisely because it lacks sufficient popular support, is relatively limited in its aims and is hemmed in by embedded, structural forces. Similarly the shallowness, partiality and uncertain long-term effects of Indonesia's so-called 'quiet revolution' and President George W. Bush's 'revolution in foreign policy' indicates that they should be considered as something other than revolutions.²⁷

The third similarity between negotiated revolutions and modern revolutions is their *constitutive* effect on world politics. Revolutions have always been international events – revolutionaries follow the example of other transformations, the vision of revolutionaries cares little for national boundaries and all revolutionaries seek to export revolution abroad. Goals of world revolution may rarely, in practice, be either attempted or achieved, as strategic calculations about the availability of scarce resources and alternative ideologies like nationalism impede the spread of revolutions. But even as aspirations, revolutions play influential roles in the growth of protest movements, rebellions, coups and reform overseas.²⁸ The French Revolution, for example, introduced into the public domain concepts like 'nationalism', 'left' and 'right', and what Eric Hobsbawm calls its 'most lasting and universal consequence' – the metric system.²⁹ Although the initial direction of the revolutionary programme was subverted by Robespierre's 'Terror' and Napoleonic dictatorship, its impact travelled far and wide: counter-revolutionary alliances were formed to crush the revolution; other uprisings were carried out in its name; reform programmes were initiated to prevent revolutions taking place elsewhere. Revolutions, both as concept and practice, affect the very nature of the international system.

Negotiated revolutions share this formative impact on world politics. By embracing the norms, rules and operating procedures of advanced market democracies – the formation of liberal constitutions and free elections, the liberalisation of economic relations, the establishment of a free press and so on – negotiated revolutions strengthen the legitimacy of market democracy both as an aspirational project and as a

²⁷ For contrasting views, see Lex Rieffel, 'Indonesia's Quiet Revolution', *Foreign Affairs*, 83:5 (2004), and Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

²⁸ For more on this, see Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*.

²⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London: Abacus, 1994).

tangible goal. Also, as exemplars of a novel form of revolutionary change, negotiated revolutions stand as paradigmatic models of radical change, as 'great revolutions' with potentially deep lessons for those states sharing similar problems or going through comparable processes. One only has to look at the level of attention paid to South Africa's transformation to see its appeal as a model of radical change.³⁰ However, crucially, negotiated revolutions also challenge some of the very foundations of contemporary world politics. Negotiated revolutions aptly demonstrate the follies of a fundamentalist belief in the good of the market (rising inequality and unemployment) and the dangers which come from failing to support nascent social and political institutions (an increase in extremism, corruption, a legitimacy gap between elites and civil society). This point is well illustrated by the example of the Czech Republic.

In the Czech Republic, the opening up of the economy through privatisation and liberalisation programmes has produced uneven results: an initial drop in GDP followed by a sudden period of growth before a second tailing off and the return of more steady, if slower, growth. This series of lurches has led to a rise in unemployment as the state and the business sector have struggled to come to terms with the demands of a relatively unrestricted market economy.³¹ Perhaps as a result, there has been a concomitant increase in corruption. Indeed, a welter of corruption scandals has plagued the Czech government since 1989. A prime example is the case of Jaroslav Lizner, a businessman who not only ran the main privatisation scheme conducted by the state during the early- mid-1990s but also headed a leading private investment fund at the same time. Lizner was found with Kr 8.3 m (over US\$ 300,000) cash in a briefcase for use as a bribe to enable his company to buy a stake in a leading dairy enterprise. Lizner did not deny the charges, instead pointing out that such a deal was normal practice, a facilitation fee for services rendered. In 2002, a senior official in the Foreign Ministry, Karel Srba, was found with over \$750,000 cash in his apartment, gains from a shady property deal. According to the World Bank, a quarter of Czech firms frequently pay 'irregular unofficial payments to get things done'.³² In 2003, an EU accession team reported that corruption was 'a serious cause for concern'.³³

Furthermore, one of the unintended consequences of the move to market-democracy in the Czech Republic has been the destruction of old, informal networks of support. Where once an extended family provided childcare or a neighbour supplied cheap goods, an individualistic culture has emerged in which social relations have been formalised and routinised. As the transition has become more painful, so levels of social capital have declined. Trust in the new Czech Republic has fallen markedly: in January 1991, 71 per cent of Czechs said they trusted parliament but by 2003, this support had dropped to 29 per cent; Czechs have the lowest trust in the region in the military and the judicial system.³⁴

³⁰ Similarly, one only has to look at the failings of the 'transitions from above' in Afghanistan and Iraq to draw parallel cautionary lessons.

³¹ For example, in the Czech Republic, unemployment rose from a statistically redundant 0.8 per cent of the working population in 1990 to over 10 per cent in 2003.

³² World Bank, *Czech Republic: Completing the Transformation of Banks and Enterprises* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2002). It is worth noting that the comparable figures for Poland and Hungary are 33 per cent and 31 per cent respectively. However, in Slovenia the figure is as low as 8 per cent.

³³ Europa Publications, *Central and South Eastern Europe* (London: Europa, 2003).

³⁴ Figures taken from Economist Intelligence Unit, *The Czech Republic: Country Profile* (London: EIU, 2004).

The collapse of communism has provided fertile ground for the growth of racism in the Czech Republic. The removal of old certainties afforded by the restrictive shell of communism has allowed previously submerged and latent prejudices to bubble to the surface. Fuelled by worsening economic conditions during the mid- to late-1990s, the strong electoral performance of the neo-fascist Republican Party and the rise of publications like *Politika*, a focal point for anti-semitic writing, racism has emerged as a pervasive problem in the post-communist era. During the 1990s, there were over 1,500 violent attacks reported by skinheads against Roma, resulting in 30 deaths. The Secretary of the Republican Party, Jan Vik, makes no apology for such actions, 'Roma murder, rape and rob decent people. It is high time to resolutely stop the raving of these black racists who are acting as parasites to the detriment of the whole society.'³⁵ In 1998, the mayor of Usti'Nad Labem announced plans to build a wall around a Roma housing complex on the grounds that it was necessary 'to separate the decent people from those who are not'.³⁶ In 1999, the leader of the Republican Party, Miroslav Sladek offered a car to the Czech mayor most successful at expelling Roma from their town. Half of all Czechs favour the expulsion of Roma from the Czech Republic and another third want Roma to be isolated or concentrated in particular areas; 87 per cent say they *would* mind Roma living in their neighbourhoods.³⁷ Such views are given further credence by official policy. The Citizenship Law of 1993 deemed 100,000 Roma to be stateless through retroactive residency requirements and demands that Czech citizens have clean criminal records. In the mid-1990s, 62 per cent of the police force said that they thought racially motivated crimes were provoked by Roma themselves. Those crimes that are investigated rarely end in prosecutions.

As Erin Jenne writes, the result of this official and privately held prejudice has been the construction of a Roma 'ethnaclass'.³⁸ Roma are heavily discriminated against in the workplace and over-represented in a range of negative social categories, from unemployment rates to residency of mental asylums. Recent government figures found that Roma unemployment was anywhere between 70 and 90 per cent, and that nearly three-quarters of Roma children were being educated in schools for the mentally handicapped. The infant mortality rate for Roma is twice that of the national average while Roma life expectancy as a whole is ten years below that for white Czechs.³⁹ It was therefore little surprise that in 1997, many Roma seized the chance to emigrate *en masse* to Canada following the lifting of visa restrictions. Over 1,000 were admitted in the six months before requirements were reintroduced; 800 more were allowed to enter the UK in 1998 on the basis of racial discrimination.

In these three ways, therefore, negotiated revolutions like that in the Czech Republic are comparable to the 'great revolutions' of the modern era – the changes they provoke are fundamental, if not always desirable. But, importantly, negotiated revolutions move away from the prevalent patterns associated with modern revolutions in five main ways. From a suspicion of revolution which frequently led to

³⁵ Rick Fawn, 'Czech Attitudes to the Roma', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53:8 (2001).

³⁶ John Nagle and Alison Mahr, *Democracy and Democratisation* (London: Sage, 1999), p. 159.

³⁷ For more on these polls, see Robin Shepherd, *Czechoslovakia: The Velvet Revolution and Beyond* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

³⁸ Erin Jenne, 'The Roma of Eastern and Central Europe: Constructing a Stateless Nation', in Jonathan R. Stein (ed.), *The Politics of National Minority Participation in Post-Communist Europe* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2000).

³⁹ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Czech Republic: Country Profile*.

counter-revolution, the international, both in terms of structure and agency, actively welcomes the insurgent states. The utopian vision that often resulted in extremism is exchanged for a revolutionary ideology rooted in longer-term principles of freedom, a return to normalcy and a desire to 'catch up' with other states. A violent conflict between rival forces is replaced by the acceptance of mutual dependency, the undesirability of ongoing civil conflict and a greater role for structural, latent forms of violence. From a fight to the finish comes a process in which the old regime and revolutionaries together negotiate the destruction of the old order and the birth of a new nation. Rather than the creation of a stronger, more bureaucratic state, a relatively weak state emerges both in terms of despotic authority and infrastructural capacity, hemmed in by independent actors, both national and international. As such, negotiated revolutions are tangible signs of an imminent modularity in world politics in which radical change is based around the idea of liberation rather than the dream of utopia.

From Burke to Paine

Revolutions are intricately bound up with the international. First, they are, to an extent, reliant on international context. During the Cold War, for example, a relatively impermeable operating environment tended to foreclose opportunities for revolutionary change. Any disruption to the status quo was considered, usually by both blocs, as a hazardous disruption to the global constellation of forces. In this way, the United States favoured authoritarian strongmen, most noticeably in the Americas, even at the cost of democratically elected heads of state. For their part, the Soviet Union rarely intervened openly to help even apparent allies in the developing world, at least at nothing like the level of assistance offered by, for example, Fidel Castro in Cuba.⁴⁰ Over the past two centuries, international statesmen and diplomats whatever their overt political stripes have tended to view revolutions with Burkean suspicion, often backed up by active support for counter-revolutionary measures.⁴¹ Order, time and again, has trumped demands for justice.

However, the end of the Cold War led to an opening up of this closed international order and removed many of the negative connotations associated with revolutionary change. The apparent 'triumph' of market democracy and the collapse of a viable alternative system acted as a spur for radical change around the world. As long as revolutionaries framed their story as one of a return to normalcy (Chile), emancipation from the Soviet yoke (the Czech Republic) or as liberation from a system whose time had long since past (South Africa), as long as they agreed to abide by a series

⁴⁰ There is increasing evidence, however, that the Soviet Union supported revolutions in the developing world *covertly*. At a seminar held at the London School of Economics in November 2003, Vladimir Shubin, a Russian expert on Southern Africa, claimed that the Soviet Union was involved in nineteen conflicts in the Third World during the Cold War.

⁴¹ The importance of counter-revolution lies in what Philip Windsor calls 'the vulnerability of the great powers'. In order to maintain their position, status and credibility, great powers are forced to quell moments of disorder, intervening in order to demonstrate their steadfastness against threats to their hegemony. This 'system-pressure' is, as Windsor points out, a kind of 'weakness-in-strength'. For a fuller discussion of this, see Nick Bisley, 'Counter-Revolution, Order and International Politics', *Review of International Studies*, 30:1 (2004).

of neo-liberal reforms and signed up to a welter of international institutions and normative frameworks, so the great powers welcomed what had previously been outcast states into the community of nations. Burkean suspicion was supplanted by an almost Paine-like enthusiasm. Just cause was given a rare opportunity for realisation.

International assistance for negotiated revolutions varied from the normative (the recognition of the legitimacy of the revolutionary struggle) to the material (aid packages, election monitors and so on). The revolutionary transformations in the Czech Republic and South Africa succeeded because of the structural opening afforded by the end of the Cold War and the active support of international agencies – state departments, key individuals and global institutions alike. In Chile, the international played a major role in the transition, witnessed for example by the example effect of democratisation in neighbouring states, the US government's partial funding for the 'No' campaign against the dictatorship and the pressure applied by Washington on the junta to accept the result of the 1988 plebiscite on whether the military regime should stand down.

One of the striking elements of negotiated revolutions is the transformation which they induce in foreign policymaking. Rather than building up armies in order to shore up their regimes from internal and external enemies, both the Czech Republic and South Africa have sought to join and strengthen international institutions, regimes and organisations. In the Czech Republic, post-revolutionary foreign policy has turned firmly to the West. In June 1991, the Czech Republic joined the Council of Europe, an organisation whose members had to be committed to free elections and the rule of law. In October 1993, an Association Agreement with the EU was signed, marking the onset of negotiations leading towards eventual membership of the Union. In October 1995, the Czech Republic became an official Associate Member of the EU and in 1996, an application for full membership was lodged. The Czech public voted overwhelmingly in favour of joining the union in a referendum held in June 2003 and accession procedures were completed in May 2004.⁴² Likewise, after joining NATO in March 1999, the government committed Czech troops to specialist work and peacekeeping roles in hotspots around the world. In February 2004, 100 Czech special forces launched the first combat mission conducted by Czech forces since World War II in Afghanistan.

Between 1948 and 1994, apartheid South Africa practised what Peter Schraeder describes as 'the diplomacy of isolation'.⁴³ Since 1994, South African foreign policy has been undergoing a process of transformation. After an unpromising start in which a coterie of diplomats, exemplified by Director-General Rusty Evans, attempted to forestall substantial policy and personnel changes, an extended range of actors including the Department of Trade and Industry, the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Defence has begun to

⁴² Just over 80 per cent of Czechs voted in favour of membership in the June 2003 referendum.

⁴³ Peter Schraeder, *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002). Some diplomatic efforts were made, particularly by Pik Botha, Foreign Minister between 1980 and 1994, to establish apartheid South Africa's legitimate credentials. But in Africa, only Malawi and the Côte d'Ivoire recognised the apartheid state. Elsewhere, South Africa maintained cordial relations with Israel, particularly after 1973, as it did with Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's Iran. Some states, among them the United States, Britain and West Germany, established a working relationship with Pretoria, but by and large, the apartheid regime was an outcast, excluded from multilateral bodies and ostracised by most of the international community.

contribute in a meaningful sense to the foreign policymaking process. The scope of South Africa's external missions has increased: forty-three new embassies have been created since 1994, over half of them now staffed by black South Africans. 'Second-track' diplomacy has seen South African think-tanks and policy institutes like the Foundation for Global Dialogue, the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes and the Centre for Conflict Resolution play a role in democratisation in Nigeria, Congo, Sudan and Burundi. Overall, foreign policy has become associated with a broad interventionism that has seen the new look SANDF take part in a number of engagements abroad. In 1999, the government became actively involved in conflict resolution in Burundi and in 2002, South African troops were sent to Congo to safeguard its fragile peace settlement. South Africa has also played an energetic role in conflicts in the Comoros Islands, Rwanda, Madagascar, the Ivory Coast and Sudan. Between 1994 and 2000, South Africa signed seventy multilateral treaties, joined the WTO and rejoined both the OAU and the Commonwealth. The same period saw South Africa host a welter of international conferences, including the annual meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the UN World Conference on Racism and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. All this is crowned by President Mbeki's call for an African Renaissance, which has seen South Africa actively promote democracy and human rights around the continent and take the lead in international organisations like the African Union. In Greg Mills words, South Africa has gone from being 'a pariah to a participant'.⁴⁴ Once the world's 'polecat', South Africa now plays an active part in a number of international agencies, standing as a pivot between north and south and as a standard bearer for developing nations.⁴⁵

From utopia to normalcy

Scholars often lament the lack of a utopian vision or grand plan in the revolutions of 1989 and after. In these cases, it is argued, revolutionaries had no world vision to match the dreams of equality and liberty espoused in France and Russia. But, as noted above, demanding that every revolution conjures a new world vision as an essential criteria for its definition would disqualify almost every case from being labelled as a revolution. All revolutionaries have looked to the past as much as the present, let alone to a vision of a future utopia, to legitimise their revolt. Revolutions are at once both ruptures and restorations, Janus-faced processes which as Barington Moore puts it, 'march into the future facing resolutely backwards'.⁴⁶ In this sense, there is no contradiction in labelling the events of 1989 and after as 'rectifying revolutions' or indeed, as negotiated revolutions.⁴⁷ Revolutionaries in 1989 followed their predecessors by looking backwards as well as forwards, to 1688 and 1848 as well

⁴⁴ Greg Mills (ed.), *From Pariah to Participant* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1994).

⁴⁵ This shift should not be seen as an even nor as an unproblematic process. For a fuller analysis of South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy, see Chris Alden and Garth Le Pere, *South Africa's Post-Apartheid Foreign Policy: From Reconciliation to Revival?* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003).

⁴⁶ In Kumar, *Revolutionary Ideas and Ideals*, p. 166.

⁴⁷ The term 'rectifying revolutions' was coined by Jürgen Habermas.

as to 1789 and 1917. Furthermore, there was something novel about the role of ideas in 1989 – the deliberate lack of a utopian vision; what Václav Havel calls ‘anti-ideology’ and György Konrád ‘antipolitics’. Central and Eastern Europeans wanted to return to Europe, to catch up with the West, to become what they perceived as normal again. Precisely what they did not want was the autocracy that flows from fidelity to a grand vision or theory.

By eschewing the obedience to a particular ideology which served to legitimise many of the excesses carried out in the name of revolutions in the past, negotiated revolutions avoid the patterns of domestic and international terror, counter-revolution, autarchy and war that have characterised many previous revolutions. Negotiated revolutions seek to build a new order without the despotic coercive control exerted by their predecessors but one that boasts a commitment to democratic political relations defined by a written, liberal constitution; regular, free elections competed over by a range of political parties; the separation of the state from the security apparatus and the military; and an internationalist perspective which demands an active role in relevant international institutions and organisations. Economically, negotiated revolutions undergo programmes of liberalisation and privatisation which open up the domestic market to foreign competition, establish an independent financial sector and maintain trade policies in keeping with prevailing international regimes. Socially, negotiated revolutions foster a relatively open environment featuring a free media and education system; enshrine equality of race, gender and religion in law; and develop a means by which to reconcile past injustices, usually by way of a truth commission.

Truth commissions are perhaps the best means of assessing the novel role of ideology in negotiated revolutions. All revolutions require some mechanism for dealing with the injustices of the old order, a means of moving from old to new which establishes the authority and legitimacy of the incoming regime while also providing an outlet for people’s sense of outrage and thirst for revenge. In the past, these needs were satiated through a mixture of firing squads, guillotines, show trials, gulags and purges. Negotiated revolutions, founded on principles of restorative rather than punitive or retributive justice, institute truth commissions as an innovative way of dealing with these issues.⁴⁸ The character and outcomes of truth commissions closely reflect the nature of both the polity and the particular society within which they take place: secretive and repressed in Chile, kept firmly behind closed doors by an old guard determined to cling on to power; messy and violent in South Africa, a perambulating Pandora’s box held in the full gaze of a disorientated public; uncertain and limited in the Czech Republic, where the main body of evidence was police files held over from the communist era. There is therefore no single route map for societies escaping from, or seeking to escape from, entrenched conflict. In South Africa, a truth commission has been a valuable symbolic tool representing the birth of a new nation; in Chile, it was only the arrest of the former dictator in 1998 which moved the transition on apace; in the Czech Republic, a flawed law – *lustrace* – has

⁴⁸ This is not to say that truth commissions originate with negotiated revolutions. In fact, they first appeared during the 1980s in Latin America as a means of hearing from, and compensating, families of those who had ‘disappeared’ under military dictatorships. As they have developed, truth commissions have become far more complex, reaching their apogee, at least to date, in South Africa.

failed to provide a sense of resolution between an autocratic past and a democratic future.⁴⁹

What these processes share is a commitment to the generation of a foundational narrative for a new nation out of which a collective rather than a disjointed history can emerge. As such, they fulfil the age-old need to provide an outlet for the victims of the old regime, a moment when innocent people get the chance to tell stories which would otherwise go unheard, a weapon of the weak turned back against seemingly almighty oppressors. But at the same time, they perform this task in a novel fashion – by trading truth for punishment. For all their flaws, TRCs represent central elements in the ideological differentiation of negotiated revolutions from past examples of revolutionary change. They are one element of the attempt to reconcile what were apparently intractable differences. As such, TRCs are a crucial step in the argument which states that real conflicts and social cleavages cannot, nor should they be, emasculated behind a façade of consensus but that conflict by civil war, firing squad or show trial is disastrous for a nation's future wellbeing. For that reason and that reason alone, they represent the distinctiveness of negotiated revolutions from the modern revolutions of the past two centuries or so.

From festivals of violence to festivals of hope

In the modern era, revolutions have been seen as festivals of violence, fights to the finish in which one side vanquishes the other, an ultimate victory in which a new order is instituted while the ashes of the old are still burning. Of course, history tells a somewhat different story: the 1789 Revolution ushered in a decade of domestic strife in France, opening up the way to dictatorship and war; the Bolshevik Revolution was followed by a four-year civil war in which foreign armies and their proxies fought fiercely with the Red Army; the two-stage Chinese Revolution was separated by a battle for domestic hegemony which lasted for three decades. Even after these revolutions, the new regimes struggled to impose their authority on their wider societies, hence Robespierre's Terror, Stalin's forced collectivisation and

⁴⁹ *Lustrace* was flawed in numerous ways. First, the investigation commission set up by the law relied on secret police documentation which many argued was incomplete, could have been doctored to appease bosses or implicate enemies, and failed to differentiate between formal informers and those who unwittingly helped the security services. Second, the law did not exempt anyone on the grounds of mitigating circumstances, even torture, threat or blackmail. Third, *lustrace* presupposed guilt, requiring the accused to prove their innocence rather than accusers to establish culpability. This allowed *lustrace* to become both a powerful political tool and a moral condemnation of people who were, at least initially, unable to defend themselves. Names of people under investigation were regularly leaked to the press, only later for them to be found innocent. In the most famous, or perhaps infamous case, Jan Kavan, a dissident who had spent much of the communist period in exile abroad claimed that he had no knowledge that he had been targeted by the secret police, had been denied access to crucial files and prevented from presenting witnesses. Kavan won his appeal and later became Foreign Minister, but not before comparing *lustrace* to McCarthyism, declaring 'we are at the top of the league at witch-hunts'. For more on this, see Nagle and Mahr, *Democracy and Democratisation*; Kieran Williams and Dennis Deletant, *Security Intelligence Services in New Democracies: The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); and Kieran Williams, 'Lustration as the Securitization of Democracy in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic', *Journal of Communist Societies and Transition Politics*, 19:4 (2003).

purges, and Mao's Cultural Revolution, all attempts to shore up revolutionary regimes from opposition at home and abroad, real and imagined.⁵⁰

Negotiated revolutions offer a radically different conceptualisation of violence than past examples of revolution. Negotiated transformations are not violent fights to the finish but relatively peaceful processes in which deals are struck between revolutionaries and their adversaries. First, overt violence is contained – both sides seek a settlement of previously irreconcilable differences without recourse to coercive power, although, of course, these conflicts featured varying degrees of overt violence leading up to the revolutionary dénouement itself. Second, violence tends to appear in latent, structural form rather than as an explicit policy tool. Structural violence emits an unfortunate residue for the incoming regime; the social legacy imparted by authoritarian rule on the new order remains a difficult and pressing issue for Czech, South African and Chilean leaders. Yet this is a long way removed from the divisiveness and rupture experienced by past revolutionary states. Third, the outcome of the revolutionary struggle is not the battle between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces common to previous revolutions. This is because the proselytising vision offered by these states is one rooted in the underlying principles, norms and practices of the international system itself: support for multilateralism and international organisations; a liberal view of progress; and a concern for welfare and development. In this way, negotiated revolutions avoid the extreme levels of violence, both domestic and international, which have plagued so many revolutions in the modern era.

This point is exemplified through the example of South Africa. As Pierre du Toit writes, under apartheid, South Africa was the most repressive society in the world: three-and-a-half million people were forcibly uprooted from their homes; an insidious and pervasive ideology of racial superiority denied the rights of nearly nine-tenths of the population to basic needs, schooling and work; significant groups in South African society ranging from the church to the medical profession were complicit in the oppression of their fellow citizens by turning a blind eye or actively sanctioning police brutality and abuse; discrimination and humiliation were used as everyday instruments of psychological torture to erode the dignity, self-belief and security of non-white South Africans.⁵¹ The result was a society of violent crime, rape, drug abuse, alcoholism and family breakdown.

Yet despite these levels of structural violence, South Africa did not experience an overtly violent overthrow of apartheid. There was no sudden seizure of power in South Africa, no date when the revolutionary army swept through the streets of Pretoria. For many participants and observers alike, this lack of a revolutionary moment and the watering down of opposition demands and goals amounted to a betrayal of the revolution itself. But such a viewpoint is based on a fallacy, that the alternative to negotiation was the outright victory of the liberation movement. Revolutionaries lacked the capacity to win a military victory over the old regime, just as the old regime could no longer carry on ruling in the same way. It was mutual dependence and mutual weakness which bought combatants to the negotiating table. Negotiation offered a route out of impasse, an end to the tyranny of an authoritarian

⁵⁰ The proclivity of revolutionary regimes to domestic tyranny is evidenced today by Fidel Castro's regular crackdowns on domestic dissent in Cuba.

⁵¹ For more on this, see Pierre Du Toit, *South Africa's Brittle Peace: The Problem of Post-Settlement Violence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

system and containment of the excesses of oppressors and freedom fighters alike. But, by its very nature, the deal struck between adversaries was less than perfect, involving concessions from both sides of the barricades. This does not diminish the country's transformation since 1994. Rather, the containment of violent struggle has generated an outcome perhaps less dramatic than past examples of revolutionary change, but also less damaging to the long-term fabric of the country itself.

The crucial point is that, if a negotiated revolution is to succeed, both sides must renounce violence as a legitimate policy tool. As the old regime tends to retain control of the coercive apparatus longer than any other means of authority, this decision is primarily the preserve of the old guard. Hence the concern over the night of 5th October 1988 that the Chilean junta might not accept the result of the plebiscite which ended its rule, the relief among leaders of the 1989 general strike in the Czech Republic that the army was not called in to restore order, and the uncertainty among leading ANC cadres over whether the armed forces would play a neutral role during the negotiating process and the 1994 elections. In each case, the role of the coercive apparatus was critical but uncertain. In each case, elites chose not to use the force available to them.

The lack of a recourse to armed conflict by old regime elites in Chile, South Africa and the Czech Republic contrasts starkly with the decision by the Chinese *politburo* to employ the army against student protesters in Tiananmen Square in June 1989, a policy which helped to successfully defuse large scale opposition to the regime over the subsequent decade. It is now common knowledge that in East Germany, Erich Honecker came close to deploying the armed forces against protesters, until he was persuaded otherwise by Mikhail Gorbachev among others. In Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu's elite force, the *Securitate*, failed to defend the leadership against a determined uprising. Neither China nor Romania experienced negotiated revolutions, yet East Germany did. In each case, it was a conjunction of elite action, domestic opposition and external forces, both structural and agential, which determined the immediate path of the insurrection. These examples provoke two main lessons. First, violence and revolution are tied together contingently rather than by necessity. Second, revolutions do not follow settled, inexorable paths. They are critical junctures which may lead in any one of a number of directions. At all times, revolutions are a complex interplay between changing structural conditions and collective action. One element which differentiates negotiated revolutions from past revolutions is that, once the revolutionary situation is in place, actors from both sides of the barricades choose roundtables rather than guillotines.

From guillotines to roundtables

The great revolutions of the modern era are all marked by a particular event, an icon which comes to embody the very essence of the revolutionary struggle itself. The storming of the Bastille, the raid on the Winter Palace and the Long March undertaken by the remnants of Mao's army are all revolutionary mementos *par excellence*, symbols of the might of the revolutionary struggle and the relative weakness of the old regime. Negotiated revolutions do not lack for these great moments. The daily demonstrations in Wenceslas Square and the release of Nelson

Mandela aptly indicate the emotive appeal of these transformations. Yet while the central motif of past revolutions has been explicitly associated with armed rebellion, negotiated revolutions take on a somewhat different character – the power of the masses to be sure, but not that of the mob. Rather, the control of fervour and the dignity of protest rise above the social context defined by the old regime. Central to this success is the process of negotiation between old and new elites.

As stated above, revolutions must be relatively quick in order to differentiate them from processes of transition and longer-term evolutionary change. This does not rule out some degree of variation – the whirlwind of talks held in three short weeks in the Czech Republic seems light years away from the tortuous three years of stop-start negotiations in South Africa. But what unites these cases with past revolutions is that the outcomes were neither inevitable nor miraculous, neither the necessary consequence of particular structural alignments nor the intended, rational consequence of people's individual's actions. Negotiated revolutions are marked by uncertainty and flux, moments when the outcomes were unclear and the path to peaceful resolution unlikely. As such, these processes serve as powerful examples of the dynamic interplay between structure and agency, necessity and contingency, cause and outcome.

Again, a counterfactual helps to clarify this point. In the early 1990s, Burma (Myanmar) appeared to contain all the necessary ingredients for a negotiated transformation. The end of the Cold War removed the last vestiges of international support for the military junta. The regime ruled over an inherently unstable, corrupt, devalued political order; the economy was in a parlous state; and the atomised social order shut off the elite in Rangoon from the views of the general public. Opposition coalesced around a popular leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, who represented a viable alternative, boasted considerable domestic and international legitimacy, and possessed the necessary resources with which to challenge the authority of the military regime. Although some reforms were initiated, including the onset of roundtable talks, the opposition failed to oust or even significantly dent the authority of the military regime. In a way reminiscent of how the military junta in Chile successfully saw off opposition protests in the early 1980s, Burma's generals kept a firm grip on power. Despite displaying the right credentials, neither a transition nor transformation has taken place in Myanmar over the last decade. This failure serves as a warning to those who ignore the intricacies of revolutionary processes and who postulate from the lofty heights afforded by hindsight on the inevitability of historical processes which, on close inspection, reveal a logic quite removed from their suppositions. Revolutions, negotiated or otherwise, are an intricate conjunction of historical context, social conditions and political action.

From tyranny to weakness

In the past, the causes, events and outcomes of revolutions were closely bound up with the state. First, the revolutionary situation emerged out of a crisis rooted in the state. Defeat in war, economic collapse and the like served to fatally destabilise the old regime. Second, revolutionary events were largely ordered around a fight for control of the state. Third, the revolution was considered to be over in the short term

when one side seized control of key state apparatus. Finally, in the long term, in order to shore up their regime from opposition both at home and abroad, revolutionaries built vast state bureaucracies and armies, exerting domestic authority through rigorous mechanisms of surveillance and control. As a result, post-revolutionary states possessed a double strength. In Michael Mann's terms, they enjoyed both a considerable infrastructural capacity and a despotic potency, strengths which more often than not spilled over into tyranny.⁵²

This pattern is not repeated by negotiated revolutions. Like past revolutions, negotiated revolutions stem from systemic crisis in which the declining legitimacy of the old regime is of cardinal importance. But at no point does the old regime collapse. There is no process to mirror the French defeat in the Seven Years War, the Russian trauma over defeat by Japan in 1905 and the First World War, or the Japanese invasion of Manchuria for the Chinese. These events fatally undermined the old regime, providing staging posts in the slide towards a revolutionary situation. But in negotiated revolutions, both the old regime and belligerents approached the negotiating table from positions of mutual dependence. Neither side in the Czech Republic or South Africa, nor for that matter in Chile, had any hope of outright victory. It was the weakness of both sides which compelled them to negotiation.⁵³ The process of the revolutions themselves is also distinct from the fight over the state common to past revolutions. Negotiators deal with a set of issues far removed from those which concerned previous revolutionaries: the make up of transitional bodies, the electoral process, the role of a constitutional convention and so on. Similarly, the outcomes of negotiated revolutions fall some way short of the tyranny which marred revolutionary states in the past. Because negotiated revolutionaries seek to 'catch up' with democratic states, they sign up to a raft of international treaties, institutions and ordinances which restrict their freedom of manoeuvre, particularly over fiscal policy. The negotiations themselves circumscribe the potential for radical change, witnessed for example by the sunset clauses and power-sharing agreements which formed a central part of the negotiations in South Africa. Because they face neither substantial domestic nor external opposition, revolutionaries have no need to build up mass armies or extend coercive control around the country. In fact, in all three cases, incoming governments sought to contain rather than expand the authority of the armed forces and security apparatus. Such revolutionaries have no desire to export their revolution abroad by force. Equally, no counter-revolutionary force is unleashed to contain or overthrow the new regimes. Negotiated revolutions offer no proselytising vision but that offered by the dominant constituents of world politics themselves. As such, they serve to strengthen the liberal international order.

Whither revolution?

In the contemporary world, while citizens of what Robert Cooper calls the 'post-modern world' enjoy what seems to be a perpetual peace, around a billion

⁵² For more on this, see Michael Mann, 'The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results', *European Journal of Sociology*, 25:2 (1984).

⁵³ In this sense, there was a seemingly permanent state of what Charles Tilly (*pace* Leon Trotsky) calls 'dual sovereignty'. Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978).

people, or one in six of the world's population, live in countries mired in civil war or at high risk from falling into such conflict.⁵⁴ Neither of these worlds is without its problems. In advanced market democracies, uncertainty, social dislocation and the difficulties associated with managing freedom – what the novelist Monica Ali calls the 'limits of autonomy' – all present their concerns for policymakers.⁵⁵ In Cooper's 'pre-modern' world, poverty, disease and increasing inequalities generate friction which all too often spills over into open conflict.⁵⁶ At its heart, therefore, modernity appears to be an inherently contradictory process, one marked by greater affluence but also rising inequality; secularisation but also fundamentalism; global forms of governance alongside a drive to local autonomy.⁵⁷ As numerous scholars, among them Stuart Hall and Anthony Giddens, point out, modernity has fashioned a world without certainties, one in which people must get by without either the absolute values or the social institutions that sustained order in the past. Given the incongruity and uncertainty that characterises modernity, a continuation of the constitutive role played by processes of radical change seems assured.

The part to be played by negotiated revolutions in this story is one born out of both hope and challenge. In the first instance, negotiated revolutions demonstrate the possibility of states 'catching up' with the West in a way which would have been recognisable to Trotsky almost a century ago. On the other hand, negotiated revolutions contest some of the core features of world politics, not least the role played by unfettered markets. As Karl Polanyi pointed out over half a century ago, a market economy cannot succeed without a 'market society' – all economic acts are necessarily embedded in social structures.⁵⁸ All too often, states undergoing negotiated revolutions have seen a commitment by international actors to establishing free markets fail to be matched by a nurturing of the social and political institutions which are germane to the functioning of a consolidated market democracy. Heeding Polanyi's lesson as to the necessity of nurturing a 'market society' alongside a 'market economy' is critical if international agencies are to deal more effectively with societies facing similar pressures and going through comparable processes in years to come.

Above all else, it is clear that the management system of contemporary world politics, whether that be the bequest of an imperial power or hegemon, a coalition of great powers or multilateral centres of governance, needs to take ongoing pressures for radical change seriously. The example of South Africa, one of the most remarkable testimonies to the politics of the possible of this age, or any other, reminds us of what can be achieved through human agency. Even in the most inhospitable of domestic environments, belligerents convened a common future based on mutual respect for what appeared to be inalienable differences. Not everything in South Africa has changed – nor has it done so in previous revolutions. But in South Africa, a radically new order has been instituted which bears little

⁵⁴ Figures taken from Paul Collier, 'How to Stem Civil Wars: It's the Economy, Stupid', *International Herald Tribune*, 21 May 2003, p. 13.

⁵⁵ For more on this, see Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity: How to Live in a Connected World* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997).

⁵⁶ Robert Cooper, *The Post-Modern State and the World Order* (London: Demos, 2000).

⁵⁷ On the double nature of modernity and globalisation, see Ian Clark, *Globalisation and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁵⁸ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1944).

resemblance to its predecessor. Contrast the case of South Africa with the current state of affairs in West Asia, particularly in Iraq, and it becomes clear that there is no inevitable set of conditions which dictate that future transformations will be carried out along relatively peaceful lines. Rather, the prospect and actuality of violent conflict remains one of depressing familiarity to people all around the world. In Myanmar, Cuba, North Korea, Turkmenistan, Togo and other such societies, authoritarian regimes hold an unsustainable grip on their publics. If the events of 1989 and after tell us anything, it is that even the most apparently unyielding of systems is inherently unstable. The essential question of our times is, will this instability be resolved through the pitched battles and firing squads common to times of yore or via the roundtables and negotiated settlements which offer an alternative path out of seemingly intractable conflicts?

Negotiated revolutions are reminders of the persistent capacity of world historical processes, inherent in human agency, to surprise: there were few academics, activists or mystics who foresaw the collapse of communism, the end of apartheid or the overthrow of the Pinochet regime. As such, it does not seem out of place to see negotiated revolutions as a contemporary form of what E. H. Carr calls a 'realistic utopia': the promotion of peaceful change rooted in the conditions of the age, yet which carry with them the possibility of progress.⁵⁹ Over upcoming years, we will see whether negotiated revolutions traverse the recalcitrant line between idealism and realism, avoiding the perils of an overly optimistic, naïve altruism on the one hand and the crudeness of a raw struggle for power on the other. Either way, it is clear that the age of revolutions is not over. The debate which has raged since the time of Paine and Burke over the two faces of revolution remains one of immense significance to the contemporary world.

⁵⁹ Unfortunately, Carr's vision of a world in which 'British policy must take into account the welfare of Lille or Düsseldorf or Lodz as well as the welfare of Oldham or Jarrow' looks unrealistic even today, 65 years after it was first proposed. E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 219.