

Today (31Aug82) Arafat left Beirut, so the threat of major PLO violence is permanently over--right? Right, I think. Why, then, does almost everybody I read disagree with me? Because most of the writers I read are fellow-liberals, and liberals think violence is impending wherever there's injustice: physical "violence" as NEW force against OLD force (often termed "systemic violence")....Anybody's opinion on violence and its distance/imminence reveals a host of assumptions orbiting a world-paradigm, and mine is no exception--as you can see:

1. BL/BALL/ABOULIA--a root, a common word, a psychiatric term: you're "aboulic" if you can't hurl yourself ball-like into some future, some energy-using situation-shaping plan/action. Among the means the "boulic" have and use is violence, physical force to deter/destroy/control/possess. Now, individuals/groups/movements move back and forth along a psychic violence-gamut under the energies of (a) predisposition, (b) imagination-in-situation, (c) calculations of violence success/failure. Here is the VIOLENCE-GAMUT:

(1) Extreme non-violence, as Jesus' advice (ironic? hyperbolic?) to go out of your way to cooperate with those who impose their will on you (Mt.5.41). (This was not Jesus' only stance on violence-oppression; other thinksheets survey him on this.)

(2) Non-violence.

(3) Non-violent resistance--refusal to obey orders/laws one considers unjust + refusal to use violence in defending oneself against the consequences of disobedience.

(4) Non-violent interference with public affairs/processes one views as unjust--on which see M.L.King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (self-exposure not as a trouble-MAKER but as a trouble-EXPOSER, a revealer of the otherwise public-invisible injustices against the "powerless," and a participant in and so displayer of their pain).

(5) Violence neutrality, a hypothetical center of the gamut. But more than that.

(6) Violence leathness, a temperamental or occasional disinclination to the use of physical force. E.g., USA foreign affairs since "Vietnam." Important third possibility: ideological disinclination. E.g., Hitler overestimated the influence of the peace movements in potential-enemy countries. And Argentina wrongly guessed that Britain was a sleeping giant that would stay asleep at the loss of the Falklands. And the USSR rightly guessed that the West would stay asleep at the loss of Afghanistan.

(7) Violence willingness. Meg Thatcher against Argentina, Israel against the PLO. Empires are built and endure as long as potential uprisers cannot (1) sustain their dreams and (2) obtain adequate followings--and these two conditions for overthrow cannot be met when the supervening power meets two conditions: (1) adequate deterrence (monopoly of violence) and (2) willingness to use adequate force to maintain the public tranquility (through justice and in spite of injustice).

(8) At the other end of the gamut, violence eagerness. "Terrorism" of all varieties (Jewish against British, successful in 1947; PLO against Israel, unsuccessful in 1982). And imperial expansionism--e.g., Khomeini's Iran at present (as in his ISLAM AND REVOLUTION: WRITINGS AND DECLARATIONS OF IMAM KHOMEINI, Mizan Press/81). A pathological example: self-immolation of Jim Jones' People's Temple.

2. Now for the "and" in the thinksheet's title. Violence gets mixed up, in dreams and ideologies and rhetoric, with means/ends/end (in)evitability. I.e., the "boulic" (planner-actors) do/don't see violence as evitable(avoidable) or inevitable--and so with success: it does/doesn't follow from the logic of one's paradigm. Inevitabilists remind me of the old Gold Medal flower ad: "Eventually. Why not now?" I go with the Bible's eventual Kingdom of God, but not with Marxian inevitability or Koranic (Khomeini) inevitability (which holds Israel impossible because it's territory is part of "the Islamic Homeland"; but see his great, biblical-prophet-like 1941 "A Warning to the Nation," pp.169-173;) and see my #1393 on him).

3. Thanks to physics, our universal human vulnerability and insecurity is exposed: nucleophobia is one result (cf. nucleo-myths in current JAAR).

4. Violence to earth by humans. Infanticide "normal" but illegal; abortion? Terrible

that more and more people are starving: more terrible (eventually) to feed them? Violence inevitable!