POLITICS AND VIOLENCE: A STUDY OF GUJARAT UPSURGE

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PREFACE
Historians, statesmen, philosophers, sociologists and political theorists have always acknowledged the tremendous role that violence plays in human affairs. Violence is said to be an integral part of politics and intrinsically related to the social process. But very strangely violence has very rarely been singled out for full discussion and comprehension particularly in Indian context. Why so much violence in society? Why violence so integral part of politics? Why men use violence to attain political goals? Why people protest and rebel? The purpose of this dissertation is to discuss some of these problems.

The introductory chapter is meant to give an idea of political violence, of the interaction of politics, power and violence. The second chapter is about the etiology of political violence, a critique of some major assumptions, theories and approaches. It is here that we have taken the liberty of criticizing Gurr's concept of R.D. (Relative Deprivation), Davies J-Curve theory, Feierabends-Nesvold theory of systematic frustration and Huntington's theory of poverty vs. modernization. While agreeing with their framework (particularly Gurr's) about "development of discontent, politicization of discontent and its actualization in violent action against political objects and actors", we
disagree with their various theories and approaches of the causes and origins of discontent. Their theories tell only about superfluous causes and ignore the real causes. Exploitation, inequality and poverty are the real causes of political violence, other causes such as instinct of domination, lust for power etc. being the secondary causes and by-product of the basic cause. This exploitation is based on the existence of dominant socio-economic groups. Political violence is the by-product of interaction between dominant socio-economic groups having monopolist control over the political apparatus of society and the subsequent exploitation of the multitude of the underprivileged and alienated masses. It is the institutionalized nature of exploitation that leads to various forms of violence. Masses are generally used as tools by the dominant groups for the concretization of their vested interests and during intra-dominant group conflicts people are made to fight with one-another. During revolutionary situations, however, masses fight against the dominant groups but only when political consciousness has dawned upon them.

I have taken up the study of Gujarat upsurge to test the validity of exploitation-inequality-poverty hypothesis. I collected data both from primary and secondary sources. For field survey, observation and interviews, I was in Gujarat thrice - first during the upsurge itself,
secondly during February-March 1975 and lastly during May-June 1975.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that first half of Chapter II has been published in January 1976 issue of the *Social Scientist* and is being reproduced in the *Seminar*. The first chapter as such has been accepted for publication in a leading Indian journal. A third article entitled "Protest Movements and Political Violence in post-independent India: A Study of Gujarat Uprising" is being considered for publication by a foreign journal.

In the end of this preface, I beg to submit that I owe everything to the Centre for Political Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, and the benevolent and inspiring guidance of my Supervisor, Professor Rashoeddin Khan, who has showered his affections on me abundantly and extravagently. But for him this thesis would have remained in complete. I thank Professor Praveen N. Sheth of Gujarat University and Dr. Chanshyam Shah of Surat for helping me in collecting data and conducting interviews and in drafting chapters 3-6.

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