

Hannah Arendt and Nonviolence

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HANNAH ARENDT AND NONVIOLENCE

J'avais rêvé une république que tout le monde eût adorée. Je n'ai pu croire que les hommes fussent si féroces et si injustes.(1)

Camille Desmoulins

Hannah Arendt is one of the most prominent political theorists of the second half of the 20th century, whose work continues to wield a strong influence (on the academia and beyond) to this day. In this paper I will attempt to identify and critically examine a distinct theory or philosophy of nonviolence in Hannah Arendt's work. The article will focus on discerning various contradictions and moments of banality which limit the validity and relevance of her contribution to this field, especially in terms of the failure to fully appreciate the significance of class structure and class conflict, and the specific reverberations this has had on her theory of nonviolence. This theory of nonviolence will be examined with regards to two basic outlooks which she partly attempts to integrate into a single theoretical thread, particularly through her theory of power and her general rejection of the instrumentalist political logic.

From the general perspective I have just outlined, I analyze the connection between her theory of nonviolence and her theory of the democratic *social order* based on public freedom (including her concept of free associations or what might be termed "associative democracy", as well as deliberative/discursive democracy viewed through this prism of nonviolence, her approach to the structural factor in the functioning of social orders etc.). The second

interconnected theme I wish to explore is the role of nonviolence in her theory of democratic *social change*, particularly with regards to the question of the viability and applicability of her theories of power and political consensuality. Finally, I will try to establish whether and how these two basic perspectives consociate together in her thought, and what basic problems might be posed for nonviolence theory with regards to their pairing. In particular, I will explore how Arendt's rejection of political instrumentalism and violence interacts with the project of radical democratic social change.

INTRODUCTION

Arendt, who supported the death penalty for Eichmann for instance, was largely an advocate of pragmatic nonviolence (of a non-absolute kind), and her politics lack that "Gandhian" quality of compassion. Her political philosophy fundamentally stands in the rationalist tradition which renounces the use of emotions, or at least seeks to transform and rationalize them. For example, the American Revolution (which she herself portrayed as "the only revolution in which compassion played no role in the motivation of the actors" – 2) is portrayed as superior by Arendt largely because it is supposedly "independent" of emotional motives. Indeed, she seeks to "rescue" the rationalist core even in the act of forgiveness, a human faculty often dismissed as a "sentimentalist" or religious "prejudice". Forgiveness serves as a social corrective, for it keeps human destructive and self-destructive impulses in check. Love is substituted here for what she considers its political counterparts, solidarity and respect, "a kind of "friendship" without intimacy and without closeness." (3) Forgiveness and redemption are critically important as a way to reaffirm the role of the subjective element, maintain control of political processes and counter the prospects for violent reactivity and destructiveness. (4) In other words, Arendt focuses on nonviolence and nonviolent action as a specific manner of exerting power, or indeed, a source of power.

ARENDR'S THEORY OF POWER

No army can withstand the force of an idea whose time has come.

Victor Hugo

Max Weber perceives power straightforwardly, in terms of influence on the behavior of others. (5) Similar views are held by numerous authors, from Jouvenal through Voltaire to Sartre and C. Wright Mills. For Arendt, on the other hand, power is a social category. All power (as opposed to individual strength) is consensual simply by virtue of being social, by being based on the cooperation of

the population. (6) The participants of the social contract acquire power precisely through their commitment to mutual cooperation. Arendt's pluralist political ethics rest on the notion that benevolent or tolerant group interaction ensures greater and more sustainable power formations than those subjected to domineering and violence.

Power is "communicatively produced". Communicative action is the medium for intersubjectivity, through which individual and group realities are constructed.(7) "All political institutions are manifestations and materializations of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them." (8) Arendt talks of Danish unarmed resistance to the Nazis as an example of "the enormous power potential inherent in nonviolent action and in resistance to an opponent possessing vastly superior means of violence." (9) Indeed, it could be argued that organized nonviolent resistance is the central social invention of the 20th century, even if its potential is yet to be fully revealed to us.

The ruling group's control rests not "on superior means of coercion as such, but on a superior organization of power." (10) Arendt established that "to equate political power with 'the organization of violence' makes sense only if one follows Marx's estimate of the state as an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class." (11) In fact, we would argue, to the extent that violence is an instrument of power (rather than power itself), to the extent that coercion directly and indirectly leads to consent (either consciously or through semi- or subconscious forms of resolving "cognitive dissonance"), it can also be stated that coercion is indeed capable of creating power, though often of a less sustainable nature. It would be wrong to underestimate the role of coercion in consciousness formation and the perpetuation of consent in modern "democratic" capitalist societies. Violence can, under certain circumstances, also increase a group's power through strategic positioning towards resources and means of production broadly conceived. In any case, limitations apply to the power of "soulforce". An abstract mind-matter dualism does not apply. Still, the contingency of power preserves the possibility of freedom. Power is a relationship which cannot be permanently acquired, but has to be constantly reproduced. (12) According to Arendt, pure violence cannot secure long-term consent.

Arendtian concept of nonviolence, like some other approaches, bases itself on the power of social and economic noncooperation. (13) "It is the people's support that lends power to the institutions of a country", both in autocratic and more pluralist regimes.(14) In fact, as the experience of Eastern Europe under Stalinist "communism" indicated, overtly authoritarian systems of government might even be more vulnerable to the power of public opinion than modern "democratic" regimes, which possess stronger instruments of manipulation, accommodation and containment.

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

The law, in its majestic equality, forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets and to steal their bread.

Anatole France

Assessing Arendt's theory of power, Habermas stated that "she removes politics from its relations to the economic and social environment", and that "she is unable to grasp structural violence." (15) Her approach implies a fundamental difference in meaning between so-called "passive" and active violence. From an alternative viewpoint, one of the main lessons of Marx's Capital is precisely that capitalism connotes a set of social relationships, including often "hidden" forms of exploitation and oppression, as well as the culturally condoned and legitimized forms of open repression. For all his other mistakes, Sartre was right in pointing to the reactivity of the violence of the oppressed. (16)

Analyses of power which sidetrack the structural elements that are involved can provide only limited conceptual tools required for a comprehensive and interactive theory of social change. Important factors such as habit and tradition, "fear of sanctions, moral obligation, self-interest, psychological identification with the ruler, zones of indifference and absence of self-confidence, and absence of self-confidence among subjects" etc. have been identified by Gene Sharp, the noted theorist of nonviolent action. (17) These factors also put to the test Arendt's claim that violence is only capable of destruction, but is incapable of creating power. (18) A strong case could be made for the supposition that the Arendtian consent theory of power needs to be reconceptualized in a manner closer to Sharp before it can be effectively applied to the practical political knowledge of nonviolent action. Still, the question of coercion – including unarmed coercion – has to be engaged with. To what extent and in what form can the element of coercion constitute a positive factor in the victory over the powers that be and the construction and preservation of new realities?

Her persistent resistance to the incorporation of certain elements of the Marxist perspective did not simply result in a certain underappreciation of the plebeian efforts and aspirations in the processes of change – it also severely restricted her ability to fully grasp the crucial class dynamic of actual historical conflict, and to include it integrally into the body of her theoretical work. From an epistemological viewpoint, Arendt sometimes idealistically falls in the trap of searching for foundational messages in symbolism, almost as if it often isn't a secondary (some might say "superstructural") manifestation of lived experience.

The French Revolution, although bourgeois, was integral, rich in content – the American Revolution remained more clearly restricted to formal institutional transformation, confined precisely to that liberationist “freedom from” notion, poor in social content. This is the great contradiction in Arendt’s appreciation of the American Revolution, which offered so little in terms of non-formal, substantial public freedom and authentic citizen participation. The most democratic institution of the American Revolution, the committees of correspondence (rather than the famed town hall meetings which were a different, disconnected occurrence), are hardly a parallel to the Parisian communal councils. Democracy, in its classical meaning as the “government of the people, by the people, for the people”, is the lived experience of popular agency, wide participation in public affairs (encompassing political, economic and social institutions) and cooperative distribution of power and resources.

PUBLIC FREEDOM AND THE DEMOCRATIC ORDER

(P)olitical freedom, generally speaking, means the right ‘to be a participator in government’, or it means nothing.

Hannah Arendt

(19)

The social covenant is a source of empowerment through which individuals can acquire public freedom. (20) Here, we approach the democratic socialist concept of peaceful, free associations based on voluntary, reciprocal, participatory cooperation, or self-government. This democratic order is based on constructive democratic dialogue. (21) On the one hand, the process of deliberation is conceived as a form of reciprocal “maieutics”, a quest for truth as opposed to the more intellectually (and sometimes politically) barren discursive phenomenon of debate. Additionally, however, debate (that is, the conduct of political affairs “in the form of speech and without compulsion” – 22) itself represents a democratic alternative to violent forms of conflict resolution.

Freedom, as Arendt maintains, “is participation in public affairs.” (23) In addition to invoking the participatory archetype of the Greek polis, Arendt finds the antecedents of this ideal in the councilist experiments of earlier revolutions, such as the American town meetings, the Parisian sociétés populaires 1789-1793, the sections of the Paris Commune of 1871, Russian soviets and the German Räte, the Jeffersonian plan for “elementary republics” or “counties divided into wards”, an early expression of the principle of subsidiarity. “(T)he danger was that all power had been given to the people in their private capacity, and that there was no space

established for them in their capacity of being citizens.” (24) It is for this reason that Arendt describes the council system as “the best in the revolutionary tradition”, “the always defeated but only authentic outgrowth of every revolution since the eighteenth century”. (25)

For Arendt, it is the frustration of the faculty of action, of participation and public activity, which contributes to the development of violent impulses. (26) Arendt’s vision resembles the concept of deliberative democracy, a cooperative and inclusive polity based on pluralism where deliberation acts as a source of legitimacy and social creativity. However, consensus decision-making, which has often been presented as the least violent form of public deliberation, also has to be questioned from the point of view of nonviolence theory (in addition to questions regarding its efficiency). Firstly, there is the problem of possible disruption by a minority (27), the violence of minoritarian pressures and impositions. This problem is often exacerbated by the structural implications of the consensual form of decision-making. Conversely, “tyranny of the majority” is a parallel (mostly neglected) threat, as the pressure of the presumed need and expectations that a common decision needs to be reached can lead to the minority’s self-suppression of dissenting views, leading to a false and forced perception of group monism.

In addition to the violent impacts of bureaucratized social life, Arendt also warns of a tendency of returning to tribalistic nationalisms as a reaction against the instabilities induced by modern mass societies and globalistic capitalist integrative and centralizing processes, which disempower individuals and entire social groups. (28)

Arendt, pointing to the centrality of civic duty, identifies the escape from freedom (in the sense of the escape from public responsibility) as one of the central problems of all attempts at constituting a society based on public freedom. Furthermore, introducing a concept similar to the Sartrean notion of “bad faith”, Arendt points to the fatalism of Cold War warriors (with their slogans “better dead than red” etc.), their failure to commit the existential act by choosing outside the predetermined binary militarist schema. Arendt’s reaffirmation of participatory democracy, of the power of subjectivity in history, aimed at restoring dialecticity at a moment marked by fatalistic definitions of history obsessed by the impression of predetermined linearity, or that of chaos.

The speechless, anti-political nature of violence is a particular burden on the prospects for democratic life.(29) In contrast, deliberation and dialogue are the wellsprings of public freedom.

VIOLENCE OR DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL CHANGE

... no man shall show me a Commonwealth born crooked that ever became straight.

James Harrington (30)

For Arendt, revolutions aren't simply phenomena of progression from the past, extreme elements of a certain linear historical itinerary – they constitute a historical break, an interruption in the order of events and stages of development, bringing forth a new beginning. The fact that revolutions have often been intellectually conceived in terms of restoration, a renovation of Roman republican antiquity, has little bearing on this essential understanding.

The main currents in the discussion of the causes of revolutions have firmly established the centrality of immediate material interest: they should not confine our understanding of popular motivations to this sole element. Arendt's humanistic focus on self-actualization also evokes modern countercultural theories and sensibilities. Perhaps more than any before, our time appears potentially (and partially) open to the practical explication of an Arendtian democratic project. In the absence of torrential economic crises and mass, basic material deprivation in the developed countries, this utopian vision – impossible to realize in its entirety - acquires a regenerating creative meaning.

Arendt utilizes the existence of human agency as an argument in favor of the possibility of nonviolence. In particular, she made a contribution to a redefinition of revolution, or the foundational act, as a phenomenon which can be conceived outside the domain of violence. According to Arendt, Marx also stressed the importance of systemic contradictions over the role of violence in deep historical change.(31) Additionally, she claims that “violence, contrary to what its prophets try to tell us, is more the weapon of reform than of revolution.” (32)

The archetypal association of chaos with radical social change, or what Camille Desmoulins dubbed “torrent révolutionnaire”, was historically reinforced by its often criminal arbitrariness: “...the Reign of Terror eventually spelled the exact opposite of true liberation and true equality; it equalized because it left all inhabitants equally without the protecting mask of legal personality.” (33) According to Arendt, the task of republican foundation is incompatible with a grave curtailment of civil rights. Equally important, this foundation depends on the constitution of definite new laws and institutions. (34) Arendt criticizes this “revolutionary process which had become a law unto itself” (35) – the turbulences of power struggles pushed the process far outside of the boundaries of conscious (let alone rational or reasonable) subjective control. The basis of Arendt's constitutionalist argumentation lies in the understanding that strong new

organs of authority, capable of modulating the interactive relationship between permanence and change, have to be established. This is the link connecting her two differing notions of the political – the first being revolutionary politics as the politics of the historical break, while the second is conceived as a standardized, highly regulated political process once the basic framework has been cemented. She is interested in the problem of securing the necessary internal dynamic capable of maintaining popular participation and progressive social innovation. Much of her analysis in *On Revolution* is centrally concerned with the search for the “revolutionary absolute”, the bedrock or “perpetuum mobile” of political life. This “revolutionary perplexity” is the question of rooting revolutionary dynamism into the very political structure of the new order. (36)

Arendt accords the social question with that crucial destructive function in the revolutionary process, almost as if radical equality did not constitute the necessary precondition for positive freedom. True, there is a clear antagonizing component in the demand for substantive equality, and there is often a paradoxical twist to the plebeian self-preservation, for its elemental force challenges reason and can bring existential peril precisely when it most strongly seeks to defy it. On pain of death, the revolutionary social contract must not fall into the trap of corporatism. The vengeance of the oppressed will result in their own downfall. “*He who lives by the sword, shall perish by the sword*”, and the ancient cycle reasserts itself. But the struggle of the Sans-Culottes, in all social revolutions - if moderated by reason and a wider civic republican project – remains the closest approximation to the guarantee of direct democratic self-determination, the destruction of domination *en general*. A progressive synthesis should be sought. Thomas Paine powerfully expressed this humanitarian democratic sentiment in his speech to the Convent, opposing the death penalty to Louis XVI.: “My language has always been that of liberty *and* humanity, and I know that nothing so exalts a nation as the union of these two principles, under all circumstances.(...) If, on my return to America, I should employ myself on a history of the French Revolution, I had rather record a thousand errors on the side of mercy, than be obliged to tell one act of severe justice.” (37)

Arendt’s understanding of the boundaries of “mechanical” class solidarity in particular, its tendency towards uniformity based on the lowest common material denominator, is a useful reminder of the need for greater political sophistication in the founding of a new Republic. The struggle for legitimacy in particular is the great test of all revolutions (considering the pluri-centered nature of power), and it is crucial for the avoidance of violence. In turn, the avoidance of violence is also crucial for the preservation and expansion of legitimacy, not solely with regards to possible allies or opponents - it is often critical for the internal cohesion, motivation and resolve of dissenters themselves. Apart from political, cultural and moral or ideological considerations, the

paralyzation of normal life patterns and the concomitant insecurity can diminish the population's willingness to fight. Other usual side-effects of violence such as the centralist implications of military organization, or the extractive bureaucratic economy which supports the militarist system, as well as hatred and intolerance, sexism, etc. also diminish the prospects for the construction of a peaceful and democratic society. "(T)he practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world." (38)

The critical task for revolutionaries and reformers is to act as catalysts in the disintegration of consent for *status quo*, and to initiate the creation of counter-hegemony through a new alternative worldview built on elements of both continuity and discontinuity with the locally embedded cultural heritage (or *civiltá* in Gramscian terms) and a system of rebellious alliances. This "historical bloc" has to involve various social currents. Whether conceived as a united front or a "progressive alliance" (39), such a strategy requires an effort for respectful mutual conduct - both strategies exclude suppression of the autonomy of these allied groups, and the violent control of particular social characteristics of the allied participants in the process of change.

Nonetheless, although pluralism often ensures greater long-term stability and sustainability of power, it is also important to notice not only the possibility of constructing power through the subordination of the masses or their integration with a certain political project, but also certain benefits of relative cohesion and unity on crucial issues. Although the process of change often requires highly flexible compromises, especially in non-radicalized situations, the ideal of social partnership is threatened when differences in "subjective" and "objective" social interests bring to question the very existence of compatible solutions. Just as pluralism needed for the construction of a system of alliances poses serious problems to the necessary cohesion and coordination of the movement for change, this need for organizational cohesion and coordination poses the question of centralism, both in the movement and the new order, challenging the ideal of participatory public freedom and nonviolent social relations.

Arendt points to the totalitarian implications of Rousseau's "*volonté générale*", evocative of "*raison d'état*" in its unanimity and uniformity, which was effectively introduced by the French Jacobins as a "forced cohesion" (an approach also capable of easily integrating Rousseau's concept of internal self-policing of "particularistic" interests). She sensibly understood this uniformity could potentially lead towards an acceptance of revolutionary terror and towards a forceful collectivist position which negates the possible compatibility of public and private, general and particular, leading to a "terror of virtue". In response to this emphasis on merciless "justice", Arendt (despite her usual distrust of emotions in politics) posits that "compassion will transcend (virtue – D.J.) by

stating in complete and even naïve sincerity that it is easier to suffer than to see others suffer.”(40) She was right to point towards the hypocrisy of righteousness in those grandiose ideologies which undervalue the actual experiences of individuals, threading over sentient human beings in their pursuit of Virtue. “Par pitié, par amour pour l’humanité, soyez inhumaines!” (41) She strongly depicts the tragic destructive and auto-destructive implications of political fanaticism, paranoia, policing of oneself and others. Popular mobilization is no guarantee for progressive politics. There is, however, a clear difference between the tyranny of public opinion and the majoritarian implications of the ideal of public freedom, particularly outside of the context of isonomy (a system where no one rules). Arendt’s account of totalitarianism, however, often focused on the theory of psychological alienation and the crises of identity of the masses, the “loneliness of crowds”, without carefully examining the internal systemic contradictions often seen to give rise to totalitarian formations.

It should perhaps be mentioned how Arendt notices the conservative stabilizing function of post-WWI constitutionalism, pointing to the formalistic adoption of the constitutional concept which began to be used “as if a constitution was a pudding to be made by a recipe.” (42) She does not, however, openly identify the element of conservative stabilization in the preservation of American post-revolutionary minority privileges and minority rule. In addition to non-formalized differences in power and status, the constitution of the citizen as an entity in possession of legally defined rights also serves as a classification for the exclusion of non-citizens, yesterday slaves, today immigrants (and partly prisoners). This reality subverts the supposed meaning of “universal and inalienable” human rights (provided “by virtue of birth” alone). Arendt is correct in pointing to the uselessness of endearing proclamations which haven’t been incorporated into the body of positive law, but what is the point in using this finding (which pertains to all existing social orders) as a theoretical stick specifically against the French revolutionary tradition? This mainstream tune helps to reinforce the myth of America’s positive democratic exceptionalism.

In fact, Arendt’s admiration of the pluralist component in American revolutionary thought and practice partly functions as a misplaced imposition of modern political sensibilities onto a different historical context of an anti-monarchic American national liberation struggle led by a (relatively) socio-economically homogenous national elite. Her limited definition of the realm of politics prevents her from clearly differentiating between juxtaposed political conceptions. On the one hand, a truly democratic united front which transcends corporatist illusions (with their exclusivist identifications and conclusions, including peasant and workers’ economic particularism), yet bases itself on the political leadership and the historical claim of the oppressed and the have-nots. On the other, unprincipled class collaboration, which does not challenge the elite privileges and

the undemocratic distribution of wealth and power. Naturally, however, these are strategic ideal-types, and cannot be applied to the same extent and in the same manner regardless of concrete circumstances.

These differing conceptions of democratic politics do not necessarily precondition the level of violence. Paradoxically, however, with all its inherent brutality, it is the civil war component in radical social change, with its explicit class dynamic, which has enriched the French and European republican tradition. American national unification against foreign control, and the concomitant nationalist class collaboration, represent an important factor in the multi-causal process of US historical development which has contributed to the particularly strong entrenchment of plutocracy, and the erosion of egalitarian democratic values in the American society. Republican institutional oversight, very valuable as it is, nonetheless reveals its secondary position in the face of capitalist class power, as (to give an example) the similar nature of the covert British MI5 and MI6 on the one side, and the formally more public and democratically controlled FBI, CIA and NSA on the other, poignantly illustrates. None of this is intended to negate the importance and value of formal checks and balances, and of political pluralism – only to illustrate their limits and contradictions, which tend to remain hidden when the corrosive influence of anti-democratic privileged power is overlooked, and social reality is approached outside of the context of class interests and class politics. Lucidly, Arendt reminds that “only power arrests power.” (43) But here again, her omission is at least as important as what she actually does say, and she does not address the questions of collusion of formally separate branches around shared interests, and whether the separation of political institutional powers can defend the population against control and organized structural violence of special interest organizations (economic organizations, employers’ associations, political parties etc.) and their networks. The “let’s all get together” ideology of social partnership is a poor response to the existence of social antagonisms. The veneer of “rational impartiality” is often implied in this type of deliberative processes. Arendt acknowledges the centrality of self-interest in history, but fails to draw out the necessary conclusions out of this. Privilege will not simply “self-abolish” itself, and this realization has definite repercussions on strategies for change. Reformist strategies will certainly remain important elements of serious movements for change (sometimes in the form of “transitional demands” and “non-reformist reforms”), yet long-term power equilibriums in cases of struggle between systemic opponents remain unrealistic. Opportunities for the re-consolidation of the elite’s power are quickly seized upon. Similarly, the self-preservation of the political “vanguard” as an organizational force also tended to become more important than the preservation of original reformist and revolutionary goals, which were distorted and manipulated according to the interests of the new elites.

To summarize with regards to her central views on nonviolent resistance, the use of violence often leads to a loss of public legitimacy. In the longer run, violence diminishes the power of those who use it.(44) Arendt calls this the “backlash phenomenon”, a strategic category also known as “jiu-jitsu” in the theory of nonviolent resistance. This term serves to denote a process in which violence backfires as it induces resentment and moral outrage, usually of third parties, but often also including elements within the same party that used violence. However, Arendt might be overestimating the effectiveness of asymmetrical warfare when she speaks of “a complete reversal in the relationship between power and violence.” (45) We should note in this context that the Arendtian requirement of consent applies to the state machinery and military as well. Arendt mentions the importance of (partial) military defection from its former functions if the revolutionary process is to have a serious chance for success. (46) It would have been interesting had she attempted to develop this type of practical observations more thoroughly. Unfortunately, her analysis of the phenomenon of consent remains on a very high level of abstraction.

THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL INSTRUMENTALISM

Good political life – i.e. participatory deliberative democracy - is an end in itself. (47) Arendt challenged the instrumentalist ethos of modern revolutions and modern thought, she “recalled the proverb that the only way to fight a dragon is to become a dragon oneself, and doubted whether the price was worth paying.” (48) She was adamant about the need to consistently oppose alienating, instrumentalist logic, which she identifies in the focus on goals in general. Keenly aware of the phenomenon she dubbed “the idiocy of technocracy”, her concern with alienation largely centered on the civilization’s fabrication of war (in modern US this takes place in the form of what she described as “the military-industrial-labor complex”), which has come to dominate over humankind and its future prospects.

The uncertainty of the final outcome of political struggles, according to Arendt, also leads to the primacy of means over the contingency of ends. For her, “violence can remain rational only if it pursues short-term goals (...) (T)he danger of violence, even if it moves consciously in a non-extremist framework of short-term goals, will always be that the means overwhelm the end. If goals are not achieved rapidly, the result will be not merely defeat but the introduction of the practice of violence into the whole body politic.” (49) This has been the unfortunate trajectory of many revolutions so far.

Let us put aside the paradox that she dismisses nonviolence *per se* (as a wide-ranging system of morality, an ethics), and perceives it more as a tool in the processes of constituting and perpetuating an order based on public freedom. The

rejection of goal-oriented perspectives is actually misleading, since the relationship between ends and means isn't a one-dimensional process. "Arendt fails to see that while ends, or norms, may lead us into violence, they can also restrain us from violence." (50) A dialectical approach is indispensable. The ends also shape the means, and the means are impoverished when the outcomes are forgotten. By "subsuming strategic action under instrumental action" (51), she neglected the importance of direction and effectiveness in political action. Her own academic identity, which partly remained reminiscent of Karl Mannheim's ideal of the free-floating intellectual, was an impediment to the development of such a strategic outlook.

CONCLUSION

Arendt's concept of public freedom rests on the nonviolent social covenant and participatory deliberation, which are perceived as the basis of authentic sustainable power. Her understanding of genuine, deep change is predicated on the development of democratic discursive space and political institutions capable of providing these participative processes with an ordered historical durability. However, the categorical rejection of instrumentalist logic, with its concomitant neglect of strategic considerations, left important questions unanswered. These include the issue of the form and extent of nonviolent coercion, the problem of basing counter-hegemonic work on new, truly nonviolent structural solutions which would transcend the dominant contemporary doctrine of "social partnership", the questions regarding the synthesis of tolerant pluralism and political cohesion, democratic participation and effective organizational coordination etc. Nonetheless, her work provides one of the early theoretical underpinnings for an explicit concept of nonviolent change and a nonviolent social order.

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- 23) *Ibid.*, p.22.
- 24) *On Revolution*, p.256.
- 25) *On Violence*, p. 22.
- 26) "To expect people, who have not the slightest notion of what the res publica, the public thing, is, to behave nonviolently and argue rationally in matters of interest is neither realistic nor reasonable.(...) the greater the bureaucratization of public life, the greater will be the attraction of violence." (*Ibid.*, pp.78-80).
- 27) Alan McCluskey, *Consensus building and verbal desperados*, 1999 – www.connected.org/govern/consensus, Retrieved January 3rd, 2007.
- 28) Extending her model of the social contract to the field of international affairs, Arendt, speaking of "*the bankruptcy of the nation state and its concept of sovereignty*" (*On Violence*, p.6), implies that the birth of international political sovereignty might serve as a remedy for international wars. She does not explore the issue of civil wars and their origins, and she argues that the path towards establishing global institutions should focus on *internationalist* rather than *supernational* approaches and solutions. (Hannah Arendt, *Thoughts on Politics and Revolution*, in *Crises of the Republic*, Harvest Books, 1972, p.230) She does not address the contradictions in building new global institutions on the

basis of the existing, intergovernmental, national frameworks, nor does she address the fact transnational approaches have often been more conducive to the establishment of new types of relationships, as the independent UN activities (that are not directly based on its member states) illustrate.

- 29) “Where violence rules absolutely, as for instance in concentration camps of totalitarian regimes, not only laws – *les lois se taisent*, as the French Revolution phrased it – but everything and everybody must fall silent.” (*On Revolution*, p.9).
- 30) James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, 1656, in Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p.206.
- 31) *On Violence*, p.11.
- 32) *On Revolution*, p.79.
- 33) *Ibid.*, p.98.
- 34) “The experiences of the French Revolution with a people thrown into a ‘state of nature’ left no doubt that the multiplied strength of a multitude could burst forth, under the pressure of misfortune, with a violence which no institutionalized and controlled power could withstand. But these experiences also taught that, contrary to all theories, no such multiplication would ever give birth to power, that strength and violence in their pre-political state were abortive.” (*Ibid.*, p.173.)
- 35) *Ibid.*, p.175.
- 36) Writing on the American Senate and the Supreme Court, she stated: “The question is only whether that which made for stability and answered so well the early modern preoccupation with permanence was enough to preserve the spirit which had become manifest during the Revolution itself. Obviously this was not the case.” (*Ibid.*, p.223).
- 37) Thomas Paine, *Collected Writings, Shall Louis XVI. Have Respite?, Speech in the Convention*, January 19, 1793, The Library of America, 1995, p.389.
- 38) *On Violence*, p.80.
- 39) For a modern example of this approach, see Harry Targ, *Advancing the Progressive Majority: The Socialist Contribution* – www.cc-ds.org/discussion/advancing_progressive_majority.html, Retrieved January 4th 2007.
- 40) *On Revolution*, p.76.
- 41) *Ibid.*, p.79.
- 42) Arthur Young in J.M. Thomson, *Robespierre*, Oxford, 1939, p. 489 in Hannah Arendt, *ibid.*, p.135.
- 43) Hannah Arendt, *ibid.*, p. 142.
- 44) *On Violence*, p.53.
- 45) *Ibid.*, p.10.
- 46) *On Revolution*, pp. 106-107.
- 47) Jürgen Habermas, *op.cit.*, p.77.
- 48) Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1992, p.167.
- 49) *On Violence*, p. 79.

- 50) Roger W. Smith, *Redemption and Politics*, Political Science Quarterly, 86/2, June 1971, p. 223.
- 51) Jürgen Habermas, *op.cit.*, p.84.