

political involvement needs to be described in more realistic terms than are commonly used.

VIOLENCE

THE LEAST common denominator of all political action is violence or the threat of violence. Law adds enforcement and penalties to a general rule; men are forbidden to do what they otherwise would do, or they are made to do what they otherwise would not do. All government action is predicated upon government's willingness to use its basic instruments—its armies, police, courts, and jails.

At first thought, it seems extravagant to declare that the introduction of government into any human relationship means the introduction of violence into that relationship. Our perception is not tuned to sense violence unless it is 100 per cent violence, and overt. When violence is less than 100 per cent, and covert, we tend to be unaware of it unless the facts are brought home to us by reason. We know, for instance, that the relationships in a prison are not based upon voluntary consent. All, or nearly all, the persons confined would prefer to be elsewhere; but their wishes are not consulted and they are held against their wills. There is *covert* violence in this situation, and only

occasionally is there a prison riot with the covert violence becoming overt.

THE MORALIST AND VIOLENCE

VIOLENCE doesn't have to erupt before it becomes a concern of the moralist; covert violence is also within his legitimate field of study. After violence erupts and results in bloodied and bruised bodies, the medical man has work to do. But the detection of violence in its covert forms is a task of the moralist, because his is the science of human relations.

It is true that all life has been touched by violence at some time or place, and human action seems sporadically violent. But political action *invariably* carries undertones of violence in whatever it does. Once this nature of political action is understood, the matter of its limitation occupies a central place in moral philosophy.

A tiny grain of musk will scent a room for years; one part of dye will stain a million parts of water. In each of these cases, the effect is measured more by the intensity than by the amount of the cause. So it is with violence; a little of it goes a long way toward determining the quality and nature of the situation in which it is present. When violence is present in any quantity, it tends to take over.