

Rebellion

Rebellion and revolution: a cognate pair. The fact is, that revolution is the richer of the verbal pair, implying a wholesale overturning of the whole history in which it is embedded. Rebellion, as properly used, is brusque, often violent, and often a one-time event, quelled, and thus squashed, on the spot. The rebellion may have had significant antecedents, and complex grounds, but they are all wrapped up inside it, and ready to blossom out.

This internal condition of the rebellion—the actual condition of the guys shouting on the wharf, or the coal miners storming the company office, or the teachers breaking out in a wildcat strike—this condition is best viewed as a social nucleus. The condition is best likened to a seething, a non-gelling teeming within a given social unit, quite probably agitating for an improvement in working conditions, though often wanting simply to vent anger.

The American War of Independence, fought by the Colonists across the Northeast quarter of the United States, was a rebellion, as first accessed. There were regular outbreaks of rebellion, in which settlers broke forth in violent squalls of attack. The Colonists were exploding with anger at such outrages as unjustified—and in their own opinions unjustifiable—new taxes on tea. The caveat wrapped in here—‘in their own opinion’—is characteristically required by accounts of rebellions, for the rebellion is often the product of strong and one sided opinions.

It is manifestly incumbent on a contemporary state, to reduce rebellions to a minimum. These breaks in the normal functioning of a state—even when they involve such normally docile social beings as public school teachers—are consequential for the level of dissatisfaction they may indicate. A small rebellion, in a controllable interest group, is worth treating with high legal attention.