

Revolution

We have distinguished between *rebellion* and *revolution*, limiting the former to short time outbreaks of protest. With significant roots, typically of growing dissatisfaction, the rebellion can be quelled by any superior managing force, while the revolution is there to stay, at least for a while.

The revolution, on the other hand, has even longer roots. Whereas the rebellion can spring from something as minor as a shop room quarrel or a chance word that transgresses tribal red lines, a rebellion is more likely to have, say, the simple desire for lost rights, or growing disgust with incompetence or suppression.

The revolution, as its name implies, has to do with a return in time, presumably to a better and purer time. That time, when true value will be restored, thus tends toward the future, envisaging the better future, but also, characteristically, the revolution imagines virtues inherent to the past, which was not yet corrupted. (This ambiguous temporal drive further differentiates the revolution from the rebellion, which is unidirectional, future oriented, and typically prepared to accept short term solutions to its demands.)

In what concerns the individual in a society—we tend to talk western European industrialized—he or she may, if involved—endure some of the consequences of a rebellion in his society-- but that depends on his proximity to the issues involved in the rebellion. A revolution, on the other hand, can turn a society upside down, forcing every member of it to reexamine his life. A massive Revolution—the Russian, French, or American—can reconfigure the shapes of global history.