

“PEOPLE’S POWER” REVOLUTIONS:

THE POWER OF THE
POWERLESS

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



Around the world, people have been rising up, to
challenge authorities and to make profound changes
in their governments...



Ukraine, the "Orange Revolution"...



In the Fall of 2004, millions of people in Ukraine overthrew their corrupt government...

They took to the streets, day and night, for weeks...



The "Orange Revolution" brought together all walks of life, rich and poor, young and old...



Lebanon, the "Cedar Revolution"

The cedar tree, on the Lebanese flag, became a symbol of freedom from Syrian domination...





Governments and
militaries are helpless
in the face of a
massive outpouring of
people...

In an outpouring like this, there is no "front" or "back" to the crowd. There is no center of activity. The activity is the people themselves.



The "Rose Revolution": Georgia

Instead of fighting with the security forces, demonstrators offered roses to them and tried to get their support...





As with the other "people power" revolutions, people stayed on the streets day and night, young and old, together...



What are the elements of a "people power" revolution?

"People Power"
Revolution:

Angry
Demonstrations:

Massive outpouring of people. A broad spectrum of the public. Too many people for government to kill. (young/old, Left/Right)

Narrow interest groups.

"People Power"
Revolution:

Angry
Demonstrations:

Overwhelmingly nonviolent;
No need for violence.

Actual violence, or the
possibility of violence; No
commitment to nonviolence;
Group may contain violent
elements.

"People Power"
Revolution:

Angry
Demonstrations:

Conscious effort to
connect to "The Other" for
support (police, politicians)

Blaming and attack on "The
Other".

"People Power" Revolution:

Angry Demonstrations:

Purposeful action, but not led by anyone; Action is spontaneous; "Leaders" are only catalysts. They did not start action and cannot stop it.

Mob activity.

"People Power" Revolution:

Angry Demonstrations:

Short, focused, powerful agenda/ goal. Once goal is achieved, everyone goes home.

No goals, just angry outbursts. (Violent element has a goal: to provoke a violent response by the government.)

"People Power" Revolution:

Angry Demonstrations:

Triggering event that mobilizes people for positive change.

Triggering event that provokes anger.

"People Power" Revolution:

Angry Demonstrations:

Actions targeted to the center of power.

Random acts wherever anger builds; Innocents hurt.

"People Power" Revolution:

Angry Demonstrations:

People are aware that they are making history, doing the impossible.

Expression of frustration with current situation; No thought about future.

"People Power" Revolution:

Angry Demonstrations:

Potent symbolism: (flags, slogans, chants). National symbols belong to the people, not the government.

Lack of symbols, or negative, anger-producing symbols.

...and, most importantly...

“People Power”
Revolution:

Passion: the movement is sustained by people's energy alone. No organization or direction necessary (or possible).

Angry
Demonstrations:

Anger: demonstrations disappear when anger goes away.



POSITIVE POLITICAL PASSION

(these are the "winners")

"Greater than the tread of many
armies is an idea whose time has
come."



Victor Hugo