JAROMÍR MRŇKA (ED.)

BEYOND THE REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA NARRATIVES – CONCEPTS – SPACES

100 YEARS SINCE THE EVENT

KAROLINUM — ÚSTAV PRO STUDIUM TOTALITNÍCH REŽIMŮ

KAROLINUM PRESS
Karolinum Press is a publishing department of Charles University
Ovocny trh 560/5, 116 36 Prague 1, Czech Republic
www.karolinum.cz

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF TOTALITARIAN REGIMES
Siwiecova 2, 130 00 Prague 3, Czech Republic
www.ustrcr.cz

Editor-in-chief: Vanda Vicherková
Translations and editing: Steve Coleman, Simon O'Flynn, Hynek Zlatník
Layout by Jan Šerých
Set the Czech Republic by Karolinum Press
First edition

The original manuscript was reviewed by Daniela Kolenovská and Karel Svoboda

ISBN 978-80-246-4858-3 (Karolinum Press); 978-80-88292-95-1 (ÚSTR)
ISBN 978-80-246-4859-0 (Karolinum Press, pdf); 978-80-88292-97-5 (ÚSTR, pdf)

Univerzita Karlova
Nakladatelství Karolinum

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The book is an outcome of the conference "Beyond the Revolution in Russia: Narratives – Concepts – Spaces. 100 Years since the Event" that took place at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague between 7 November and 9 November 2017. The History Students' Association of the Charles University Faculty of Arts (FFabula – Spolek studentů historie FF UK) organised the conference with generous support from the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Faculty itself. Namely, we would like to express our greatest thanks to the then Dean of the Faculty, Assoc. Prof. Mirjam Friedová, and to the deputy director of the Institute, Mr. Ondřej Matějka.

During the centennial of the Russian revolution, this event was the only international scientific gathering in the Czech Republic. The conference brought together junior and senior scholars from both the Czech Republic and other European countries, together with Russia and, surprisingly, also one participant from South America. We are most grateful to everyone involved in the organisation of this exceptional event, particularly to all our volunteers, participants, and contributors to this book.

INTRODUCTION

BEYOND THE REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA

JAROMÍR MRŇKA

One hundred years ago, the revolution in Russia opened up totally new horizons. The outbreak of a socialist revolution in one of the least industrially developed European regions was for contemporaries as surprising as the destabilising potential of new revolutionary thoughts and practices. The experience of revolution directly influenced the development of the East-Central European region in the immediate aftermath of the Great War (World War One). Its consequences were fully manifested, for instance, in young successor states of the Austrian Empire: Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The legacies and images of the Revolution were already evolving dramatically by the time Soviet rule was established in the late 1920s, which also took place under the rapidly changing Stalinism in the 1930s. Moreover, Stalin's conception of the Revolution directly shaped the reception and interpretations of these events in the newly established sphere of Soviet power in the Eastern Bloc after World War Two. Nevertheless, the image of the revolution was important not only for the countries under state socialist regimes but also for liberal democracies. To quote a classic, the spectre of communist revolution haunted both liberal and conservative governments at the time of the Great Depression as well as during the many crises of the Cold War. Therefore we were interested not only in the immediate influence of revolutionary events, but also focused on the transferring and transforming function of ideas, concepts, and practices of the Revolution both within the Russian, or rather Soviet, Empire, and in the East-Central European region.

In order to overcome the persisting distaste for the study of the Revolution in post-communist societies after 1989, we wanted to open up an entirely new perspective on the Revolution. This conception should have been different from the ossified mental patterns of dogmatic Marxism-Leninism that formed the canon under state socialism. We also did not want to get stuck in a traditional empirical description of events, typical for old-fashioned political history. We wanted to step out beyond the Revolution in Russia. For this reason, we tried to render the Russian revolution in its ambiguity between the event itself, the medium-term social and economic transformations, and the long-term reconfiguration of the spaces of power and politics. We saw the Revolution as a complex restructuralisation of the people's existence – as an event in itself – and simultaneously as a multi-layered process of the

ongoing (re)interpretation of this historical moment by different individuals and in the various worlds of meaning – as an event unto itself. According to this understanding of the Revolution, we distinguished three independent fields connected with different analytical subjects, i.e. narratives, concepts, and spaces, and we also followed this line in the basic structure of our book. The following introductory chapter **Revolution As "History's Locomotive" Or a Tool for Scientific Analysis?** by Miroslav Hroch considers a general theory of revolutions. He draws on the background of the Revolution in Russia to show that the most important condition of revolutionary "success" was the existence of a revolutionary situation, and attempts to justify his consensual concept of revolution through the typology of European revolutions. For Hroch, political reforms are not always complete contradictions of revolutions; on the contrary, each is inseparable from the other. It is more than natural that Radomír Vlček focused his final introductory chapter **Russian Political Reform – the Solution to the Crisis of the Russian State?** on the genealogy of the political reforms in the Russian Empire before the eve of the 1917 Revolution. Vlček also convincingly shows that the final attempt to open the Russian administration to modern ways of thinking failed due to hesitation on the part of the Tsar.

The first part of the book, devoted to different narratives of the Russian Revolution, deals with various historiographical concepts, layers of interpretation, and especially with the transformation of images of the Russian revolution in art and also in the current politics of memory. Anežka Hrebiková opens the topic with her chapter **The Role of the Russian Intelligentsia and the Decembrists in the First Half of the 19th Century as the Predecessors of the 1917 Revolutionaries** Illustrated by the case study of Russian intellectuals, Hrebiková strives to deconstruct the traditional explanatory patterns of the dogmatic Marxian historiography in order to connect the roots of the Russian revolution again with the generation formed by the Decembrist revolt of 1825. The role of Russian intellectuals continues in the second chapter entitled **The Image of the Russian Revolution in the Work of Aleksandr Blok**. In the work of this outstanding symbolist poet, Hana Kosáková found an image of the Revolution as a punishment for Russian intellectuals for their failure in the nation's history. The people and the masses, who should, according to Blok, replace them in the leading position, became the creative force of destruction. In some of Blok's texts the triggering of revolutionary violence is connected with the final culmination of history on the way towards a new era for humanity, whereas in others he shows the Russian revolution as a time of turmoil. The connection of traditional Russian culture with the horizons of the art newly opened by the Revolution also constitutes the main topic of the following chapter **From Platonov to Aitmatov; from Eisenstein to Abuladze (The Image of the Revolution in Soviet Literature and Film)**. Hynek

Skořepa follows the different images of the Revolution and its possible alternatives through the transformation of art from various avant-garde movements towards the production of late socialist realism. The final chapter of this part takes us completely to the present day, when Andrea Brait turns our attention to the **Representation of the Upheavals in 1917 Russia in War Museums**. Although the year 1917 was a crucial turning point in World War One, it remains underrepresented in the museum exhibitions of Central and Eastern Europe.

The second part of the book strives to capture the different concepts that emerged as a result of the Revolution or, on the contrary, to analyse various concepts and discourses bound to the Revolution. The focus lies particularly with the Russian concept of revolution, its reception and discourses about the Revolution in Eastern European intellectual space. In the first chapter, **Beyond Revolutionary Declarations. Direct Implications of the Bolshevik Revolution**, Adam Bosiacki examines the first concepts of law that Bolsheviks enforced in their political system immediately after the Revolution. Despite the obvious lack of sources, Bosiacki reconstructs a totally new revolutionary legality as a closed system based on the Lenin's idea of law as an instrument of repression against enemies. According to Bosiacki, although a whole range of them was officially adopted under Stalin's rule, these legal concepts were already rooted in the vast transformations of civil war – in the praxis of war communism. The period of time between 1917 and 1922 is also crucial for the following chapter **We – the Revolution, We – the Scythians, We – the Proletkult** about the novel by the Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin. Analysing this first piece of modern anti-utopian literature, Olga Pavlova identifies two fundamental concepts – the decline of Western industrial civilisation, and the perverted praxis of the proletarian revolution in Russia. This perversion is usually associated with the later rule of Joseph V. Stalin, whose role in the Revolution used to be underestimated. On the contrary, Weronika Kulczewska questions these opinions in her chapter **Stalin for the Revolution, the Revolution for Stalin. The Actual Role of Joseph Stalin in the Bolshevik Revolution vs. How He Benefited from It during His Rule**. According to her, the Revolution played a significant role in Stalin's networking, and later enabled him to seize power. Finally, Michal Šmigeľ and Viachaslau Menkouski analyse the Revolution as a subject of contemporary Russian politics of memory. The chapter **The Revolutionary Year 1917 in the Russian Political Discourse and the Current Russian-language Historiography** shows that even though the Bolshevik coup remains an unchallenged crucial event in Russian history, the professional and public interpretations remain ambiguous.

The third part of the book is based on an idea that the Revolution opened up totally new spaces beyond the actual course of affairs, topographies, and events. The future-oriented expectations of contemporaries at the beginning

of the 1920s were important, such as in the field or urbanism and architecture. This becomes evident in the chapter **Dismantling Constructivism: Critique of the City-Machine, the Scientific Socialist Utopia of Soviet Modernisation**, where Rachel Pacheco Vasconcellos approaches Russian constructivism as a modern ideology of the production of space. Nevertheless, Vasconcellos came to the conclusion that the scientific socialist utopia of the city-machine never surpassed the abstractions of the capital. The spatial dimensions of the processes connected to the Revolution are also crucial for the following analysis by Sylvia Sztern. In the chapter **Let There Be Light! What Cured the Tsarist Russian Peasantry of Analphabetism – Revolution (1917) or Evolution (Catalysed by the Tsarist Railways)?**, Sztern argues that although the decline of illiteracy is usually explained by the Soviet reforms and industrialisation under Stalin's rule, the tsarist railroads played a far more important role in the process of opening rural areas up to the modern world. However, the Revolution also opened up a completely different imaginary space for the artists who had not experienced these ground-breaking moments personally, setting in motion a cognitive-cultural revolution. In her chapter **Being a "Revolutionary Artist" after 1917** Marija Podzorova explains that the Revolution gave rise to new motifs on the international scene. Western artists saw it as an opportunity to link their aesthetic research to political commitment, thus manifesting their revolutionary aspirations for international solidarity and the new approaches of the avant-garde as politically engaged art. Revolution affected not only contemporaries but also the survivors after the collapse of Soviet rule. In the final chapter **Post-peasantry Russia: the "Alienated" Spaces. How have the Media Affected This Phenomenon?**, Evgeniya Petrova presents a study of contemporary Russian everyday life and identifies the media as a crucial post-soviet factor for the alienation of peripheries following historical causes, e.g. collectivisation and resettlement.

In order to enter all the possible spaces connected with the Revolution, to cover all the legacies, and to capture the revolutionary events in all their plurality, at the very end of our book we present a chapter from the field of current Marxian political philosophy that really does go beyond the Revolution. In his chapter **Class Wars: The Relevance of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Actualisability of Socialism** Siyaveş Azeri explores the crucial role of Vladimir I. Lenin's thoughts in converting Marxian revolutionary theory into political praxis. Despite Azeri's enthusiasm, even though the ideals of the Revolution live on in the hopes of many oppressed people and shape the persistent legacy of the events of October 1917, we have to remark that the immense crimes committed by various communist regimes of the past and millions of their victims certainly remain an inexcusable dark side of revolutionary ideas. Even one hundred years after the event, this reminds us that one's dreams easily become another person's nightmares.

REVOLUTION AS "HISTORY'S LOCOMOTIVE" OR A TOOL FOR SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS?*

MIROSLAV HROCH

Very few terms have been and still are used with so much controversy and with so many different emotions as the term "revolution". There is perhaps no other term that is used with such a contradicting evaluation and in such different contexts. However, this does not concern the word itself, but the reality which it describes. It is hard to resist the temptation to recount the prehistory of the notion here, from Copernicus' *De revolutionibus coelestis* to the often quoted reply heard by Louis XVI after the fall of the Bastille in 1789: *No, Sire, it is not a revolt. It is a revolution*. And it was after the French Revolution that the fervour stirred for the first time, linked with this notion and the tumult of the following two centuries that it marked. There have been repeated conflicts between those who were for, and those who were against the revolution.[1]

As early as in the early 19th century one group saw revolution as a notion for events which moved the course of history forward, and in their eyes revolution was synonymous with progress and the liberation of man and citizen. This opinion found its metaphor in Marx's well-known statement about revolutions as history's locomotives.

For the other group, revolutions were a criminal violation of law and order, an uncontrolled outbreak of passion, violence, which led to cruelty and barbarism, events that should never have happened.

Both camps were and were not right. Enough historical evidence could be found to support each of the two opinions. It depended on the point of view from which the facts were selected, i.e., whether the observer identified himself with the revolutionaries and their objectives, or with the victims of revolution, be they prominent figures of the old regime, or countrymen-traditionalists. This was a rather transparent polarity within which the notion of revolution somehow found its place during the 19th century, and even its

* The chapter presented herein is an abbreviated and materially reworked version of Chapter 7 of the author's book, HROCH, Miroslav: *Hledání souvislostí. Eseje z komparativních dějin Evropy [Looking for Contexts. Essays on the Comparative History of Europe]*. SLON, Praha 2018, 2nd edition.

1 The changes of the notion of "revolution" in the European region were discussed quite thoroughly by Karl Griewank, cf. GRIEWANK, Karl: *Der neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff. Entstehung und Entwicklung*. Böhlau, Weimar 1955. As far as the author knows, this unsurpassed work is still mostly unknown to English-speaking authors.

opponents appeased themselves with the fact that revolutions in the past had for ever changed the life of countries or nations. This can be best proven by the fact that even opponents of revolution accepted that the founding of the United States of America was the result of revolution, or that the revolutionary *Marseillaise* became the French national anthem.

As time went on in the 20th century and began to approach our present age, the differentiation became more complicated, as other revolutionary changes came on the scene, the most troublesome of which being the October Revolution. When the term "revolution" also came to be commonly used for historical twists that were seen as positive, such as the American Revolution, many observers, especially among politically involved commentators, felt that the same term could not be used for such a dignified act as the founding of the USA and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen on the one hand, and the groundbreaking and violent events brought by October 1917 in Russia on the other. So the meanings of terms such as "coup d'état", "putsch", or "seizure of power" that have been used and are still in use rather as synonyms for "revolution", were made up-to-date in Czech as well as in other languages.

The polarisation of opinions became yet more complicated. It was easy for those who considered revolution to be a contemptible form of change to have the term denote changes which they condemned. However, they hesitated to use it for changes that they welcomed, for instance, to call the Prague 1989 overthrow the "Velvet Revolution". In contrast, those who considered revolution as a driving force for progress used the term to denote changes which they welcomed, and rejected its use for events that they disagreed with; according to them the term "Velvet Revolution" is wholly acceptable. The core of the problem, however, lies not in words, i.e., in terminology, but in the content and definitions of this term. Which event, which change really does deserve to become the subject of dispute, or: how to define "revolution"?

This crucial question also had to be addressed by those serious researchers who still felt the need to keep using the term "revolution" in their work, even to refer to revolutionary changes they disagreed with. Owing to this, many studies were written between the wars and especially after World War Two, whose authors approached the study and comparison of revolution as a subject of observation which is neutral in value.[2] With most of them especially the "classic" revolutions became the subject of observation – the English Glorious Revolution of 1689, the American Revolution, the French

2 The understanding of the notion of "revolution" actually differed: 1. According to the opinion on the form of change; was it a form of a sudden violent upheaval, or a process? 2. According to the change that it brought: was it the political system that changed, or was it the whole social system? In the former case, political revolution is spoken of; in the latter, social revolution.

Revolution of 1789, the European Revolutions of 1848, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1949. Every author admitted that there have been many other less revolutionary upheavals, but in specific cases their opinions differed: How many revolutions were there actually in Spain in the 19th century? Was the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918 actually a revolution? Did February 1948 bring changes in Czechoslovakia which were of revolutionary nature? Can the revolution of 1848 also be seen as a revolution although it was suppressed? If the overthrow of the fascist regime in Italy was a revolution, was Mussolini's assumption of power the same a quarter of a century earlier?

What is to be done with this confusion of terms? We have three options. The first is unrealistic: to get rid of the term "revolution" and implement in its stead several codes – letters or numbers, the first of which would denote the general characteristics of the change and the following would specify its date, location and the nature of the changes it brought.

The second option is realistic. Let us leave the notion of "revolution" in place as referring to changes we like, which we approve as bringing progress, and, in the spirit of postmodern relativism, leave the choice of such events to the individual preferences of each user; on the contrary, let everyone use pejorative terms to refer to the historical changes which he rejects. However, this approach would be appropriate for a political commentary, but difficult to apply for scientific analysis.

I see the true solution in trying to neutralise the good old notion of revolution in its value, which means to define it most intelligibly on a consensual basis so that it becomes a tool objectivising the analysis of historical processes and transformations. I would describe this option as scientific.

However, someone may object at this point: Do we really need such a term to become a tool for scientific analysis? This objection would be valid to a certain degree only if we were to reduce history to microanalysis and refuse to study an individual's fate in the context of great social changes. But if I consider history and the closely linked field of historical sociology, and other social sciences, too, to be sciences on the transformability of history and the causal connections which determined historical change, such an objection would be nonsensical for me. I therefore assume that a definition of the notion of "revolution" must be found that is as consensual as possible.

The presumption for such an attempt is to verify whether it is possible to free oneself of the emotional burden and find a "neutral" definition of the notion so that it could be made into a useful analytical tool.[3]

3 The author proposed such an approach for the first time in 1995 in his article: HROCH, Miroslav: Zur Typologie der europäischen Revolutionen. Einige Überlegungen zur nicht bestehenden

First, it is in the interest of such a neutralisation to eliminate two important and prominent emotional characteristics of revolution. Critics of revolution primarily see it as an *a priori* bloody and violent event, hence unnecessary or even harmful. Secondly, on the other side of the evaluation scale, there is the identification of revolution with progress, the idea that progress can be achieved especially through revolutions or the threat of revolutions.

Looking for a generally applicable definition, we must begin with the characteristics that all or most authors agree on.[4] Firstly, it is generally assumed that revolutions had their agenda, and were based on the idea that not only should those in power be replaced, but primarily that the general circumstances should be changed. Therefore they strove to bring about a quick social or political change of a principal nature, a **change in the political system**, or of the social structure. It is also agreed that such a change was not the result of a decision of those who ruled, but came about against their will, i.e., by **violating the established legal or constitutional order**. Such a change would not be possible without force, but not only those changes which took the form of **applied violence** against the so far ruling state enforcement apparatus should be deemed to be revolution. Often the mere **threat** of violence was sufficient. The level of cruelty of the violent conflicts in the course of the revolution was not usually decided by the bloodthirstiness of the leaders of the revolution as much as by the nature and intensity of resistance from those against whom the revolution was aimed.

A revolution defined as a system change based on the intention to modify the existing state of affairs can be easily distinguished from the palace revolutions or uprisings and folk revolts which were to satisfy the objectives of the relevant groups by partial benefits, such as uprisings of peasants, apprentices or other professional groups. Such revolts can be found in the history of perhaps every continent. The revolutions described above, on the other hand, were originally a phenomenon that has only been seen in modern, or modernising, Europe. It is actually a specific aspect of European history that at a certain time Europeans began to hold the opinion that man does not necessarily have to passively endure his "valley of tears" but can, and should, seek to improve the conditions in which he lives. Such an improvement can be brought about by gradual pro-reform work of the rulers, but also through a quick change achieved through revolution by the ruled.

If we speak about a quick change, the speed is gauged by the nature and substance of the revolutionary change. It proceeded more quickly where

Diskussion. In: MACK, Karlheinz (ed.): *Revolutionen in Ostmitteleuropa 1789–1989*. Verlag für Geschichte und Politik – R. Oldenbourg Verlag, Wien – München 1995, pp. 20–30.

4 Such a consensual opinion has been formulated most recently e.g. by James De Fronzo in the first chapter of his *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements* (Routledge, New York 2018, 1st ed. 2015).

a change of the political system was primarily involved, i.e., with a political revolution. On the contrary, if it was a social revolution, too, i.e., when the revolution also brought about a change in the social system, the takeover of power – the political revolution – was a primary prerequisite; however, the actual social change could follow subsequently in stages, for instance, by means of reforms, which were in fact carried out by the new holders of political power.[5]

Such a distinction between the political and social revolution implies that the aforementioned broad definition could cover a broad range of different events, distinguished not only by the time they happened, but also by their objectives and arguments. However partial these differences are, for a specific event to be analysed it must be made clear to which it belongs and what its specifics are. A rough classification would ideally be made through typology which, however, must be based on a comparative approach. This is the only way that we can forestall the scholastic disputes over what still is and what is no longer a revolution. Moreover, we will avoid the risk of being accused of comparing the incomparable.

One of the rudimentary rules in applying the comparative method is, besides the need for a clear definition of the subject of comparison, also the choice of a suitable criterion which, in comparing specific revolutions, will help to characterise what they have in common and where they differ. Depending on which criterion we apply, every revolution will attain more than one characteristic, implying where it falls in the context of society's modernising transformation. I have already alluded to the first criterion. As the comparison criterion, I used the nature of the revolutionary changes, the sphere they affected. I used this to distinguish the political revolution from the social revolution which, however, incorporates a political revolution as a necessary prerequisite if it has to occur.

The relevance of all these criteria is not always the same. The most important ones are those that distinguish revolutions according to what system they intended to change, against what and against which social situation they were aimed.

As far back as at the dawn of the Early Modern Age, many conflicts arose that cannot be classified as mediaeval upheavals and uprisings. Discussion

5 As early as in the 1920s many American authors, evidently influenced by the Bolshevik revolution, held the opinion that the notion of revolution must be used primarily to denote fundamental social and, if necessary, economic changes. Cf. for example HYNDMAN, Henry M.: *The Evolution of Revolution*. Boni and Liveright, New York 1921; YODER, Dale: Current Definitions of Revolution. *The American Review of Sociology*, Vol. XXXII, 1926–1927, pp. 433–441; EDWARDS, Lyford P.: *The Natural History of Revolution*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1927. At the end of the 1930s George S. Pettee termed social revolution the third, and the highest, degree of revolution, cf. PETTEE, George S.: *The Process of Revolution*. Harper & Brothers, New York 1938 (2nd ed. 1971).

was rife as to whether the Hussite Revolutionary Movement, German Peasants' War or the uprising of a group of Castilian communities against Charles V can be termed Early Modern revolution. The dispute was especially about whether the changes those events aimed to bring about were really changes in the system. If we were to classify them as revolutions, we would have to devise for them a specific type of Early Modern revolution, which had no lasting effect. The first indisputable change in the political system was enforced by the Dutch merchant bourgeoisie in its fight against Spanish rule in the late 16th century. An even more radical end to the old regime was demanded by the English Puritan Revolution in 1640–1660: it replaced the monarchy with a republican system, attempted to establish a constitutional order, and in the *Agreement of the People* it established the first project to enable those of non-noble origin to participate in the rule of the state. It was defeated; however, its main objective, i.e. to replace absolutism with the system of elected representatives following fixed rules, was achieved permanently owing to the English Glorious Revolution in 1688–1689.

These early revolutions were an overture to the "classical" revolutions of the long 19th century, which were directed against the rule of absolutism and feudal privileges and which established civil rights in society and liberated the capitalist market business from feudal regulations. These principles, inspired by the European Enlightenment, were first enforced in the English settlements in North America. However, the example and inspiration for the European continent was the French Revolution. It influenced the revolutionary changes in Italy and Spain, and its influence continued in 1848–1849, when it contributed to the transformations that were taking place in Central Europe, from where the notion of revolution as the bearer of progress originated. This second type of revolution is one of the most well-known types and there is therefore no need to discuss it in greater detail here.

As the fosterlings of this perception of a revolution, we will find ourselves in difficulties if we have to use the same term to denote those political changes which turned against civil society and against the liberal and democratic political system in the first half of the 20th century. This, the third type of revolution, had two variants:

One of them, which we may describe as fascist (also including the Nazi revolution), was undoubtedly aimed against civil society and established an authoritative system instead of the liberal system.[6] However, its effect on private capital and entrepreneurship was limited, and was therefore

6 Such a broader understanding of revolution, which also includes a fascist revolution, is no longer exceptional among contemporary authors. Cf. for example the aforementioned work by J. De-Fronzo, further GOLDSTONE, Jack A.: *Revolutions. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014; SANDERSON, Stephen K.: *Revolutions. A Worldwide Introduction to Political and Social Change*. Routledge, Abingdon – New York 2015.

undoubtedly a political revolution by nature. This variant faded from Germany and Italy during World War Two and only survived in Spain.

The other variant was a social revolution, of which the October 1917 Bolshevik Socialist Revolution is considered the prototype. However, this classification is not as indisputable in this case as it tends to be presented. In formal terms, it really destroyed the democratic political system established shortly before by the February Revolution. However, this system did not have enough time to become fully entrenched against the centuries-old Tsarist autocracy in Russia. The October Revolution was actually the culmination of the liquidation of the Tsarist political system, which was a relic of feudalism, and in this sense had something in common with the "classical" civil revolutions. What makes it different from these revolutions was clearly expressed both by political means, i.e., by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, as well as by its social content, which, besides the beginnings of civil society, also destroyed the nascent capitalist entrepreneurship. The failed revolutions of 1918–1920 in Germany and Hungary were then purely anti-civil, drawing inspiration from Russia. Fully in line with the anti-civil programme were the successful revolutions after World War Two, which the Soviet system generated purposefully and which include February 1948 in Czechoslovakia on the one hand, and the communist revolution in China on the other hand.

The fourth type of revolution is the opposite of the third: revolutions directed against authoritative systems; fascist first and later, around 1990, also against communist systems.

One peculiar type of revolution is usually considered to comprise those which deposed the colonial rule of European powers in Asia and Africa and which generally tried to establish, in their countries, something similar to a liberal democracy. In some cases, such as in India or Egypt, the change became the established system. In other cases, however, these revolutions enabled the emergence of a communist revolution, namely in China, Korea and Vietnam.[7]

In typological terms, revolutions can also be distinguished by other criteria: the differences between revolutions when we compare the objectives that they had declared, and their true results, provided of course that they were successful.

But otherwise, what is the measure of success for a revolution? In theory, the revolution may have won, but still fell short of realising its objectives – this is where the phenomenon of the so-called stolen revolution belongs, such as the July Revolution in France in 1830. The revolution might also have

7 These revolutions are addressed by the majority of contemporary researchers who focus on the topic of revolution. However, this is a topic very far from the European matters on which we are focusing, and I therefore take the liberty of leaving these opinions aside.

been defeated, but still launched changes in the system, as is often stated with the revolution of 1848 in the Habsburg Monarchy. Only a few revolutions achieved lasting success: the Dutch Revolution, the Glorious Revolution in England, the American Revolution and, to a certain degree, also the October Revolution.

Nevertheless, lasting success was also seen with many other national revolutions which occurred in the 19th century and which we can actually describe as a special type of civil revolution: their change to the system included the establishment of a national state. Formally speaking, the 16th century Dutch Revolution and the American Revolution were also national revolutions. Here, however, we mean the revolutions which gave birth to the national state in Belgium, Greece, Norway, Serbia, Bulgaria and Italy. Sometimes the national struggle was only an accompanying dispute in the context of the systematic transformation of society; in other cases, on the contrary, the revolution was dominated by the national interest. In fact all the national movements showed similar features to those already mentioned above with revolutions: they were movements from below which clashed with the state power of the old monarchist regime in multi-ethnical monarchies and which tended toward the establishment of the national state – hence to a change in the system. Let us remember that T. G. Masaryk referred to the establishment of Czechoslovakia as a revolution.

To what extent can we find a correlation between the success of a revolution and the degree of its violence or, if you like, its bloodiness? All the four aforementioned revolutions which achieved a lasting victory (Dutch, English, American and Russian) were violent, and their victory resulted from a long-standing internal war which cost many lives. Despite that, I do not believe that we can derive clear causality from this, as many bloody revolutions were eventually defeated: the French Revolution is one example.

The fact that a revolution failed to achieve a lasting victory does not necessarily mean that it was an event which left no consequences for further development. If we are to decide that success is the next criterion in the typology of revolutions, we can distinguish several other types of unsuccessful revolutions:

1. The lowest grade will be the revolutions which I'd refer to as "first step revolutions". These were actually attempts at revolutionary upheaval which succeeded in adopting several measures and then collapsed without adopting any change. Examples of this can be found in Vienna in October 1848, Poland in 1830–1831, the Paris Commune and in Germany in November 1918.
2. The second type comprises revolutions which initially were able to take advantage of their victory to bring about fundamental changes, many of which survived even the subsequent counter-revolution. Perhaps the

most well-known example today is the revolutionary year 1848 in Central Europe, but also in France; in addition, there was the 1873 Spanish Revolution and the 1905 Russian Revolution.

3. Revolutions whose importance is recognised because after their victory their leaders maintained power for several years and the changes which they implemented partially remained in place despite the counter-revolution, or society returned to them later. This was the case of the English Puritan Revolution in 1640–1660, the French Revolution and the revolutions which, owing to support from revolutionary France, led to the establishment of affiliate republics in Italy, Holland and Switzerland. The fascist and communist revolutions (with the exception of the Soviet one) also fall within this category.

A special transitional position in the typology-by-success is held by the October Revolution. Although it is true that the regime which it had established collapsed, over the next 70 years sufficient time passed for some of its characteristics to become permanently rooted in the public space. Unlike with socialist revolutions in other countries, which were overthrown with the aim of re-establishing the situation that existed before the revolution, the revolutionary turn associated with the downfall of the Soviet Union adopted a civil democratic political system and capitalist conditions in Russia, both of which had never reached full maturity in pre-revolutionary Russia.

If we choose the relationship between the objectives and results of the revolution as the next typological criterion, we must bear in mind that in formulating their objectives, the revolutionaries expressed their opinion concerning the relationship between the past and the future. In this respect, perhaps in every revolution the opinions of its agents differed. Depending on which of the streams prevailed, revolutions can be distinguished as those that intended to fully negate the past and begin with a kind of "year zero", and those where the idea of restoring the old laws and the ancient justice prevailed. The first, totally innovative, concept can be found in the French Revolution, as in the Russian or Chinese revolutions. On the contrary, the English Puritan revolutionaries, for instance, demanded that the relics of the feudal system be liquidated in the name of eliminating the "Norman subjugation"; the 1848 Magyar Revolution in Hungary fought for the renewal of old laws, the Polish revolutions wanted to achieve the re-establishment of the former aristocratic republic, and the civil anti-communist revolutions at the end of the 20th century called for a return to the civil society from before the communist revolution. Neither in the first nor in the second case did the revolutionaries achieve the full restoration of the previous order. In any case, the general rule is that the results of revolutions, even the successful ones, usually do not follow the intentions of their agents. This discrepancy

was especially remarkable in the case of the October Revolution; however, in general terms, it was nothing unique.

Even though revolutions do not necessarily involve bloodshed, it is a rule that violence has always played an important role in them. This stemmed both from the fact that the effort was aimed at bringing about a change against the will of the ruling group and the fact that revolution was always the work of a determined minority. Depending on how significant the violence was, we can again differentiate according to the following typology:

- Revolutions that took an almost "legal" course, or pretended to, and simply the threat of violence was enough to break the resistance of the old ruling elites; this was the case of Vienna in the spring of 1848, Berlin in 1933, Prague in 1948 and 1989.
- Revolutions which succeeded after a short victorious battle with the defenders of the old system, as happened in the July Revolution of France in 1830, the February Revolution in 1848 and the English Glorious Revolution.
- Revolutions that began violently and developed into protracted armed conflicts that took place in the centre as well as in the provinces, as was the case in Holland, England after 1640, France in 1789, the Magyar Revolution in Hungary in 1848 and also in China and Vietnam. The October Revolution began with a quick and almost bloodless seizure of power, but then escalated into an extraordinarily bloody conflict.

The general rule is that the extent to which violence was used in revolutions primarily depended on the strength of the resistance from the old ruling elite. The more the revolution faced armed resistance from the old system, the greater the violence. Sometimes resistance from the old system was further intensified by foreign intervention, as we are familiar with especially from France and Russia. In these cases, the foreign intervention also contributed to the radicalisation of the revolutionary process.

Another typological criterion could be the relationship between the revolutionary and pro-reform component of the transformations during the revolution, or, more accurately, the role played by the relationship between the revolution and reform in that great transformation process of the 19th century which we can refer to as modernisation, the transition to capitalism and to civil society.

A mere textbook-like overview will teach us that in some European countries, revolution accompanied this process to a considerable extent, while in other countries it took place mostly through reforms. We should not also forget that the relationship between the revolution and reform was not that of two antagonistic mutually exclusive types of change. They were two complementary sides of the modernisation process. A series of reforms in many countries led to results similar to those achieved by a one-off revolution in other countries. And vice versa, where revolutionaries came to power,

they became the new ruling elite which implemented the following changes as decisions from above, i.e. through reforms.

Depending on the ratio of revolution and reform in the modernising transformations of the individual countries, we can distinguish several types of transition to civil capitalist society in Europe:

1. Revolution was the dominating factor, the true locomotive of history, often only partially successful and complemented with reforms (France in 1789, 1830, 1848, Spain, Italy).
2. The development toward modern society began with a political revolution, but the following course was decided by reforms (England, USA, Norway). Russia's modernisation also belongs to this type, the difference being that it took place not in a civil society, but in the conditions of a society striving for socialism.
3. At the beginning of the transformations there was a "national" revolution, followed by reforms and sometimes by another revolution (Holland, Greece, Serbia, Italy).
4. The transformation began with reforms and these were later accelerated by a revolution (the German states, Habsburg Monarchy).
5. The process of transformation was carried out without revolutions, solely by reforms, some of which were of the nature of "revolutions from above" (Denmark, Sweden, Finland).

The differences between these development types have left their traces in mindsets and stereotypes perhaps even until today, when we note different attitudes to authority and different opinions on resistance against state power in nations such as France and Italy on the one hand, and, for instance, in the Scandinavian states on the other. Differences can also be found in the political culture and in the structure of collective memory. This is a difference that T. G. Masaryk tried to explain more than a century ago in his study *The Social Issue*. He pointed out that revolutions are more often seen in Catholic countries, while reforms prevailed in Protestant countries, and stated, putting a somewhat simplified emphasis on the spiritual dimension of revolutions, that Protestant countries had already experienced their great revolution during the Reformation and did not have to pursue their liberation from authority in the 19th century.[8]

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8 MASARYK, Tomáš Garrigue: *Otázka sociální. Základy marxismu sociologické a filosofické [The Social Issue. The Sociological and Philosophical Foundations of Marxism]*. Jan Laichter, Praha 1898, p. 532ff. This opinion, however, was not fully original. A similar approach to the relationship between reformation and revolution had already been applied by G. F. Hegel.

Revolutions were therefore not an "obligatory" part of the history of every country, and their causes and presumptions must therefore be sought case by case – i.e. why they happened. I will therefore dedicate the second part of this chapter to the **causality of revolutions**. Attempts to explain revolutions are just as old as revolutions themselves, and they were keenly studied by the social sciences at a time when the Western world saw them as a topical threat, i.e. in the 1960s and 1970s. I don't want to tire the reader with a systematic overview of opinions, but will instead choose several "theories" – those that authors repeatedly refer to as "classical", and some of those I consider to be inspiring and still topical today.[9]

A classical example of pre-scientific research is the book by the French sociologist Gustave Le Bon, *Psychology of the Masses* (1895), in which revolution is referred to as a manifestation of social pathology and crowd psychosis. Close to Le Bon was the Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin who, in his study entitled *The Sociology of Revolution*, considered revolution, certainly under the influence of the Bolshevik revolution, to be a deviation of social development, but did not distinguish it in typological terms from other "internal unrest". However, his work has been overlooked by other researchers.[10] One of the period critics of this concept worth mentioning, back at the turn of the century, is the American sociologist Charles Ellwood, who believed the cause of revolution lay in social conditions, the growing resistance against existing institutions which do not change and which harm broad echelons of society. Unless the ruling class adapts to this and changes its social customs, a revolution occurs. Ellwood took Russia as an example as early as in 1905.[11]

What has become truly classic is the still quoted comparative analysis *The Anatomy of Revolution* (1938) by the American sociologist Crane Brinton, who stated that in all three revolutions that he analysed, he found five factors which incite revolutionary action:

1. Society was in a state of overall prosperity and economic growth, 2. a strong class antagonism was apparent between those in power and those without access to power, 3. intellectuals became the decisive critics of the existing system, 4. the state apparatus was inefficient, and 5. the old ruling class was losing its self-esteem as well as its ties to tradition.[12]

9 This chapter does not aim to present a systematic overview of the theories of revolution. Primarily works which formed the basis for the study of revolutions and which comprised the rudimentary models of interpretation to which authors later referred with various modifications, are mentioned herein.

10 SOROKIN, Pitirim: *The Sociology of Revolution*. J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia 1925.

11 ELLWOOD, Charles: A Psychological Theory of Revolutions. *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XI, 1905, pp. 49–59.

12 BRINTON, Crane: *The Anatomy of Revolution*. W. W. Norton, New York 1938.

Back during World War Two, the American historian Louis Gottschalk, known for his studies on the French Revolution, attempted to systematically generalise the interpretation of revolutions. In his multi-causal interpretation, he worked with three factors: 1. causes categorised as demands: the people's discontent with the social and political situation, 2. causes categorised as hopes: there is a programme of change which is presented by an entity which the people trust, and 3. the inability of the old elites to manage the situation by implementing the necessary changes.[13]

It is remarkable that Gottschalk characterised his concept as an intentional adaptation of Lenin's analysis of the revolutionary situation; however, not because he would approve or prepare a revolution but in order to provide guidelines on how to prevent it. This connection deserves separate consideration. From the viewpoint of the relationship between theory and practice, the October Revolution has a remarkable primacy in that it was the first revolution which took place as if "following to a formula". Several years before it broke out, V. I. Lenin had prepared a theory of the revolutionary situation, i.e., a situation without which a revolution is bound to fail. In doing so, he followed up on the critical reflection of Marx's opinions from the time of the revolution in 1848 and the years that followed.[14] According to Lenin, the revolutionary situation is characterised by three attributes: 1. the ruling classes are no longer able to maintain power, unable to carry out changes and are in crisis, 2. the oppressed classes live in need and their discontent grows, and 3. the political activity of the masses begins and intensifies. The principal condition for a revolution to break out in such a situation is the entity – the revolutionary party, which is able to formulate and popularise the revolutionary objectives and to mobilise the masses to achieve these objectives. It is remarkable that the interwar theories of revolutions mostly work with these four factors, using different variants and verbalisations, and only differ in making these factors more accurate and attaching varying significance to each of them. The majority of them, however, unlike L. Gottschalk, were probably completely unfamiliar with Lenin's theory.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the American economist James C. Davies created a stir when he linked the social psychology of the masses with economic indicators. His model was based on the idea that the revolutionary situation does not arise from impoverishment but, on the contrary, from a constellation that occurred after the end of a period of growing prosperity and the start of a decline. People who expected a further growth in prosperity

13 GOTTSCHALK, Louis: Causes of Revolution. *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. L, 1944, No. 1, pp. 1–8.

14 CHURCHWARD, Lloyd: Lenin on the Revolutionary Situation. *Australian Left Review*, No. 24, Apr.–May 1970, pp. 40–45.

were disappointed and their frustration led to aggression. The relationship between the expectation of growth and the real decline was expressed by Davies in a curve in the shape of a reversed letter J.[15]

The American political scientist Chalmers Johnson worked with a broader range of factors. He based his research on the idea of society as a balanced and integrated system, in which partial imbalances ("dysfunctions") occur again and again, but are compensated for by means of reforms by the ruling elites. If dysfunctions amassed somewhere because the ruling elites were unable or unwilling to resolve them by reforms, the possibility opened up for a social conflict of interest, expressed by a political conflict. However, such a possibility only became reality when a "dysfunction accelerator" came into play. Johnson designated it as "Factor X", as its role could be played by a charismatic leader as well as an institution, political party, army officers or even external intervention.[16]

This concept was critiqued as being too depersonalised by the English historian Lawrence Stone. In his opinion, it was not Factor X as an automatic machine which stood in the reality of dysfunctions of revolutionary actions, but rather specific people who made decisions faced with a personal choice. Moreover, Stone, like other authors, criticises Johnson for having based his research on the mistaken idea that society's "normal" condition is a kind of a harmonic state. On the contrary, Stone designated society as a non-harmonic system which is always governed by tension and internal conflict, and it is therefore not easy to determine and define what a dysfunction actually is.[17]

Also the historian Eric Hobsbawn, the author of a once classic book on the "age of revolutions", criticised political scientists for treating the category of "society" as if it was a homogeneous unit free of inner conflict. He also considered it to be a weakness of politological comparisons that authors based their generalisations only on the study of several "great" revolutions and were uninterested whether their results could also be applied to the less renowned revolutions. He also stressed that a revolution cannot be understood unless we study it as the outcome of critical situations. He enriched the characteristics of a revolutionary situation by referring to the difference between the systematic actions of the revolutionaries and the spontaneous and unpredictable actions of the masses. One shortcoming of Hobsbawm's analysis was that in the spirit of orthodox Marxism, he considered revolution as a historically necessary form of social change on the road towards

15 DAVIES, James C.: Toward a Theory of Revolution. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. XXVII, 1962, No. 1, pp. 5–19.

16 JOHNSON, Chalmers: *Revolution and the Social System*. The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University, Stanford 1964; IBIDEM: *Revolutionary Change*. Little Brown & Company, Boston 1966.

17 STONE, Lawrence: Theories of Revolution. *World Politics*, Vol. XVIII, 1966, No. 2, pp. 159–176.

progress, and was focused solely on the social contents of revolutions, while he considered political revolutions as being merely a kind of an accompanying phenomenon.[18]

A substantial response was met at the end of the 1960s by the American political scientist Barrington Moore, who moved the focal point of his comparative analysis to a consideration on what further developments were opening up by revolutions. By comparing the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, Moore arrived at the conclusion that the form of the post-revolutionary system was affected by the social composition of the agents of revolution. A revolution mainly driven by the urban classes, such as the French Revolution, led to a civil society and a system of elected representatives. On the contrary, peasant revolutions opened up the way for dictatorship.[19]

One work accepted as a thoroughly comparative study of revolutions is the book by the American sociologist Theda Skocpol, published ten years later. She explores the same three great revolutions as Barrington Moore did. Unlike him, however, she does not analyse their consequences as much as their causes, rejects the *a priori* formulation of theories, and her analysis is based on empirically obtained factography. The actual choice of the revolutions she compares made it inevitable that Skocpol, too, focused on social revolutions.[20]

What lesson can be learnt from these analyses? Primarily, it is the fact that the typological diversity of the subject of comparison was overlooked. Together with an unclear definition, this caused the majority of the authors to compare revolutions which were diverse in typological terms: revolutions aimed against the old regime (such as the French Revolution) and revolutions fighting civil society (such as the October Revolution and the Chinese Revolution). Another misunderstanding lay in the fact that some authors addressed political revolutions while others focused on social revolutions. Each in their own way therefore had their "own truth" applicable to a specific type of revolution.

Despite these shortcomings, we can say that the older research formulated so many theories and so many causal interpretations of revolution that it is very difficult for anyone to conceive an original and new theory today. However, the possibility of an eclectic approach remains, which will then try to construct, on the grounds of a combination of the opinions of each author, a model of prerequisites for the revolutionary situation.

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18 HOBSBAWM, Eric: *Revolution*. XIV. International Congress of Historical Sciences, San Francisco 1975 Reports. Arno Press New York 1977.

19 MOORE, Barrington jr.: *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Beacon Press, Boston 1966.

20 SKOCPOL, Theda: *Social Revolutions in the Modern World.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994.

To give a general framework for the model, I would present Hobsbawm's recommendation that attention should be paid to the longer-term roots of revolutions, i.e. what preceded them. First of all this means that the model should also incorporate deepening conflicts as the manifestations of crises in pre-revolutionary societies, and secondly, we must ask what the mentality was at the time. To what extent can these conflicts be treated as "dysfunctions" and how did the individual echelons of society respond to them? Here it would be appropriate to combine Johnson's dysfunctions and the application of Davies' J-shaped curve. Such a model is then ready to incorporate, in their modified form, also the components from Lenin's characteristics of the revolutionary situation:

- A significant weakening of power on the part of the rulers, which could be due to internal conflicts, economic decline, war or the unwillingness to reform the existing circumstances. This weakening also includes an inadequate repressive (police, military) apparatus or a reluctance to resort to violence to defend one's positions.
- The populace, or the majority of it, is disappointed in its expectations and quite dissatisfied with the system of rule.
- People are increasingly interested in political conditions. The majority of the discontent population realises, or convinces itself, that it has nothing to lose.
- There is an entity which is connected to the telecommunications network and is able to formulate an understandable and (at least seemingly) realisable vision of a systemic change, i.e. an alternative to the political system or social conditions. The share of cultural transfer is not precluded.

In addition to that, three more conditions should also be included:

- There is a segment of people in society who are able to develop a *system transcending fantasy* (Habermas).
- The external circumstances (international policy, economy) are unfavourable for the ruling group and, on the contrary, favourable for a strike against the existing system.
- The degree of social communication and the possible media manipulation is sufficient to infiltrate the masses.

CONCLUSION

If we proceed from the fact that a revolutionary situation requires all the aforementioned components of the model, we can assume that the social and political conditions in modern-day Europe do not have the features of a revolutionary situation, irrespective of the type. Considerations of a revolution

therefore now lack political topicality, which is an advantage for an unbiased analysis and for the historisation of a phenomenon which in the past stirred up great fervour. We can therefore make the term revolution, however burdened with political connotations in the past, a tool for scientific analysis.

The first step for such a historisation is to neutralise the term itself by using it for a rapid change in the system, pushed purposefully from below against the will of the ruling group.

Given that a very diverse range of changes will be then covered under the umbrella term of 'revolution', it will be very necessary to typologise the revolutions, not only by one but by several criteria.

We have to proceed from the fact that revolution was originally a European phenomenon, but can also be found outside Europe in the 20th century.

To analyse revolutions, we will moreover have to take into consideration the impact of the cultural transfer, both diachronically and synchronically: the later revolutions learned from the earlier ones, and propagated revolutionary ideas as well as events. They could become an example to follow, as well as a cautionary example which persuaded the ruling elites of the need to reform and eliminate dysfunctions.

All these considerations are historical in nature and stem from, and focus on, past events. It would be a mistake to try to apply them, without prior consideration, to the present day, which fundamentally differs from the past both in its social and economic coordinates of the globalised world and in the different quality of the nature of social communication.

RUSSIAN POLITICAL REFORM – THE SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS OF THE RUSSIAN STATE?

RADOMÍR VLČEK

INTRODUCTION

The chapter entitled *"Russian Political Reform – the Solution to the Crisis of the Russian State?"* addresses the origins and development of the reforms through which Pyotr Arkadievich Stolypin (1862–1911), an important early 20th century Russian politician who was the Prime Minister of the Russian Empire in 1906–1911, tried to modernise Russia in order to forestall the impending revolutionary collapse. The text outlines the development of his ideas, which make it clear that Stolypin was a man who sought to promote a broad and far-reaching complex of changes. The most important changes were those concerning the agrarian issue. That is the reason why literature often only mentions the economic effects of the Stolypin reform. Even though it is undoubtable that the economy was Stolypin's most important concern, his other efforts to bring about other changes should not be left unnoticed, especially at the social, administrative and judicial level. These are mentioned herein also in order to demonstrate that in the first decades of the 20th century, the revolutionary course of development was not the sole option that Russia was facing, as is often claimed.[1]

The chapter is an example of the search for alternatives to the development of the Russian state and Russian society. It is in the form of a case study which, given the absence of analytical works on this topic in Czech historiography, stems from foreign – primarily Russian – resources and editions of sources, a major portion of which is now available on the internet. This text is focused on two substantial dimensions: political and economical. Stolypin's aim was to merge these, by which he was aiming to modernise Russia and transform it into a state which could compete with the developed European countries as well as the USA. In conjunction with the social changes anticipated by Stolypin and the repressive measures that were then in place against the radical opposition, these two dimensions were expected

1 FIGES, Orlando: *Revolučné Rusko 1891–1991 [Revolutionary Russia, 1891–1991]*. Premedia, Bratislava 2015, pp. 17–74; FITZPATRICK, Sheila: *Ruská revoluce [The Russian Revolution]*. CPress, Brno 2017, pp. 42–53; PIPES, Richard: *Dějiny ruské revoluce [Concise History of the Russian Revolution]*. Argo, Praha 2017 (2nd issue), pp. 19–49.