
Revolutions: An Insight into a Five Centuries' Trend *

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ABSTRACT

The year 2017 marked not only the hundredth anniversary of the Revolution of 1917, but also the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in Germany. It was just the Reformation that gave start to modern revolutions in Europe and the world. In the first part of the article we analyze the course of transformation of revolutions within historical process, in particular, how their world-historical role, the social bases, revolutionary ideologies, practices, and information technologies they applied have changed over the centuries. Then we show the important changes that occurred in revolutionary practice and the very understanding of the essence of revolution due to great revolutions. In the second part of the article we highlight some issues related to the theory of revolution, in particular, he defines the types of revolutions starting from religious to modernizing revolutions, and also points some important conditions for the revolutionary outbreak. In conclusion, we consider how and why the revolutions have been increasingly used as a geopolitical weapon.

The year 2017 marked not only the hundredth anniversary of the Revolution of 1917, but also the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in Germany.¹ We think that it was just the Reformation that produced the onset of modern revolutions in Europe and the world.² This explains the title of the article. In its first part we analyze the transformation vectors of revolutions within historical process, in particular, how the social bases, revolutionary ideologies, practices, and applied information technologies have changed over the centuries. While considering these aspects we also consider various points related to the theory of revolution. In the second part we deal with some additional aspects of the theory of revolution. In conclusion, we focus on how and why revolutions have been increasingly used as a geopolitical weapon.

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In the present paper there is no opportunity to survey numerous scientific approaches to the definition of revolution. We should note that there is no generally accepted definition and it will hardly ever appear (see Grinin, Issaev, and Korotayev 2016; Grinin and Korotayev 2016). If we regard revolutions as a violent change of regime, we can say that they accompanied political history for many millennia. But such revolutions are mostly characteristic for the polis-type states with regimes oscillating from oligarchic (or tyrannical) toward democratic and then back. Thus, prior to the early modern period the revolutions mostly occurred in the states with political regime less common for the pre-industrial period. From revolutionary perspective the history of some Hellenistic states and Rome may be also presented as a struggle between social and political groups for the distribution of resources and power (see, *e.g.*, Sorokin 1992, 1994; Nefedov 2007). We find something of political and social revolutions (or revolution attempts) in the medieval states (in Italy and some other countries). Social struggle was also observed in the history of some Eastern states but here the attempts to establish a new regime and, figuratively speaking, change ‘a constitution’, were quite infrequent. However, sometimes there would outbreak a kind of social revolution when socio-economic (distributive) relations were transformed.³ There also took place devastating uprisings which would sweep away dynasties, as it happened in China.⁴

However, with all the abovementioned examples, in ancient times and medieval period there were no revolutions that could enable societies' advance to a higher stage of social evolution. No doubt, revolutions played a role, but obviously less significant, in development in comparison with wars and other transformations. After revolutions the societies' production basis would not change so their progressive effect was much weaker than in the Modern era.

Only starting from the modern period the revolutions became one of the leading driving forces of historical process (see Grinin 1997; Semyonov, Gobozov, and Grinin 2007; Travia and Morgania 2004; Goldstone 1991). Why did it happen? The reason is the transition to a new – industrial – production principle which started in the late fifteenth century (yet, its precursors became evident much earlier; for more details see: Grinin 2006; Grinin L. and Grinin A. 2015; Grinin, Korotayev 2015). Along with changing production pattern it was necessary to transform all other relations, so that a society could give abundant scope for the development of new productive forces. It was the revolutions that provided the break of the relations that hampered development. Thus, in the present article we mostly deal with new-type revolutions which were practically unknown in the history prior to the sixteenth century. We describe them as an extremely important phenomenon in terms of unfolding historical process and as a means to carry out the society's progressive development to increase its economic, cultural, political, and legal level.⁵ In other

words, here we consider revolutions not just as a means of changing political regime, but also as a means of conflict resolution in the leading societies which already were the mainstream of technological, cultural and political development.⁶

Finally, we should note that the increasingly large role of revolutions in historical process was associated not only with the general technological transformations clearly manifested starting from the last third of the fifteenth century, but also with the concurrent breakthrough in information technologies. It is essential that any great revolution or a new wave of revolutions is somehow connected with emerging and essentially new or with improved media. In what follows, we try to trace this trajectory of revolutionary practices (in order to summarize it in the second part of the article).

Section 1. EVOLUTION OF THE REVOLUTION

1.1. Early revolutions (the 16th–18th centuries)

On some preconditions for the revolutionary outbreak. There are a number of preconditions for the outbreak, development and success of a revolution. We can hardly analyze all of them in the present article, all the more so since this is a rather controversial issue.⁷ Here we will focus on four conditions which are hardly debated but are closely interrelated. *The first precondition* is the existence of a relatively new or modified ideology (its distribution may take place already before the revolution or just in its course). In our opinion, a revolution (as distinct from a revolt or insurrection) needs a new or modified ideology that can do more than just unite people (this can be done by protest moods, exacerbated needs and disasters, increasing resentments from oppression and injustice). Ideology can give a more or less clear idea (yet, at the level of rather universal slogans) that a certain political regime is better than the existing one, and to have a better life it is necessary to change (alternate) the latter. *The second precondition*, as already mentioned, consists in the available information technologies which appear important for many reasons since they serve to spread revolutionary ideology and propaganda and to attract supporters. Thus, according to well-known Lenin's expression, they are both a collective propagandist and a collective organizer. *The third important precondition* is a high literacy rate since revolutions can hardly occur in societies with 2–3 per cent of literate population and demand a considerable number of literate people. *The fourth precondition* is that since the movements' ideology involves institutional changes in political and social system, the revolutions could repeatedly and regularly occur only in urbanizing society with a certain literacy and cultural level and with intelligentsia already formed as a social group; in other words, in the society with started and developing modernization (on the relationship between

revolution and modernization see Grinin 2013; 2017a; Grinin and Korotayev 2016).⁸

All four factors (new ideology, information technology, literacy and certain level of urbanization) are closely interrelated. Besides, we should note that revolutions may occur both in societies with majority or a large share of illiterate population and in a fully literate society. There are no any accurate criteria here. The same refers to urbanization level. But it is interesting to note that great revolutions may take place both in societies with predominant illiterate population (yet, the number of educated must be sufficeient enough, not less than 20–30 per cent) and in completely literate societies. Apparently, those revolutions turned great just because the revolutionary events actively engaged the most of population, *i.e.*, peasantry.⁹

Why may we consider the Reformation as the first revolution of the early modern period?¹⁰ By the start of the Reformation all the mentioned and other preconditions for the revolutionary outbreak in Germany and some other countries were evident. The germs of modernization could be also traced. Germany was one of the most advanced countries in Europe in terms of urban development, trade, and industry (especially mining). The European silver originated from the mines of Saxony and Bohemia (Nef 1987: 735) while the mining was highly mechanized (for details see Baks 1986; Grinin 2006; Grinin L. and Grinin A. 2015, Grinin, Korotayev 2015). Not incidentally, printing was invented in Germany as well.

Here it makes sense to pay attention to this new and enormously large-scale and powerful information technology which became the most important material basis preparing the religious revolution. As is well-known, the book printing appeared in the mid-fifteenth century (1445) and quickly spread in Europe. In the fifteenth century critical works, especially those related to church, were widely distributed in printed form, preparing the ground for the Reformation. Luther's theses were quickly printed and distributed throughout Europe. The printing technology started the fire of the Reformation. In the sixteenth century, that is during the period of rising and strengthening Protestantism in Europe, there were printed about 500 million copies of the Bible (Nazarchuk 2006: 79)¹¹ along with large numbers of other books. Naturally, the increasing market of printed books relied on growing literacy, and, in turn, influenced its distribution. Again, revolutions cannot occur in fully illiterate societies. And at the beginning of the sixteenth century the literacy rate was rather high even among peasants: in 1525 during the Peasants' War in Germany they would print their demands.

Thus, all crucial preconditions for revolution were evident: the increasing activity of broad masses of population, the emergence of new ideologies, the formation of amorphous parties and sufficiently clear programs, the aspirations for radical changes in society involving its property

and social relations, and a sharp split in the society leading to civil wars. There remains the issue of changing the political regime. Actually, the Reformation differs from a common type of revolution in this aspect since the change of political regime was hardly its aim. However, the Reformation to a certain extent was a political protest as well, in particular, against the foreign sovereign power of the Pope (*e.g.*, in German society) and against the church feudal states (archbishoprics, bishoprics, *etc.*). Later, religious wars were anyway associated to the political system. In particular, as a result of the Augsburg religious peace of 1555 in Germany there was proclaimed the principle: 'He who rules, his religion', in other words the major religion in the principality was determined by the confession of a duke or a ruler.

Religious revolutions and their transformations. Why was the religious revolution historically the primary form of revolution in Europe? To answer this question, we should define the difference between rebellions, insurrections, movements, peasant/people's wars and other forms of socio-political struggle of the medieval period, on the one hand, and revolutions of the early modern period – on the other. Within the former group of mass struggles, the only way to overcome disasters and crisis (in terms of changing the existing situation in political sphere with no account of social requirements) was viewed in revealing the 'truth' to monarch, recognizing the insurgents' demands, substituting a ruling person (a definite monarch, courtier and *etc.*) or, at best, a whole dynasty (as it was in China, where people believed that the sins of the dynasty deprive it of the Mandate of Heaven). However, a revolution requires institutionalized changes in political system, *i.e.*, a popular representation, restricted monarchy, and a republic.¹²

However, the outbreak of classical revolutionary forms with their clear requirements needs a long time to ripen and implies historical experience conceptualized in ideologists' writings as well as a certain maturity of the society.¹³ These were hardly present in the sixteenth century. Consequently, some intermediate forms should have emerged, thus, the religious split appeared a natural course of events. The Reformation contributed to ideological, and partly social and economic breakdown of the old regime and thus, it appeared an intermediate form between the old-type heresies and social-political revolutions of the early modern period.¹⁴

Of course, the religious component of revolutions could hardly quickly disappear. First, the Reformation and religious wars lasted almost until the end of the sixteenth century. Secondly, the next revolution (which is almost widely accepted as such) – the Dutch revolt (1566–1609) – also had a clearly religious nature. The Dutch Calvinists' rebel was caused by the fact that the Spanish government started harsh persecution against the Dutch and actively used a religious repressive body – the inquisition – for this purpose. But, however, as it often happens in such circumstances, Spain's intransigence in matters of faith and other things (taxes, trade rules, the

level of autonomy, *etc.*) led to the situation that the insurgents considered the separation from Spain as the only way to defend the Dutch rights; therefore, the republic of a new type emerged. Thus, along with the religious component, the Dutch revolution clearly manifested another dimension – national which manifested in the national liberation struggle. This form of social resistance later became one of the most spread types of revolutions.¹⁵

The further development of revolutions as recurrent phenomena was associated with the events in England in the first half of the seventeenth century. But this revolution still possesses a religious aspect. The English Reformation of the sixteenth century was carried out by Henry VIII from the top and led to the establishment of the Church of England. However, later the reformist movement went from the bottom, and there emerged Puritanism (close to Calvinism) in England. It required further changes in the state Church as well as in sociocultural life. The Puritans were persecuted, but they played a crucial role for the defeat of King Charles I.¹⁶ The religious factors hardly disappeared from English political life even after the revolution. In particular, the overthrow of James II in 1688 (the so-called Glorious Revolution) was caused by the King's attempts to restore the leading role of Catholicism in the country, whereas the majority of population and nobility was against it.

Thus, it had passed long time, more than a century, until a civil revolutionary ideology was developed during the Great French Revolution (see Grinin 2011: Lecture 8).¹⁷

Revolutions, political regime and opportunities for the development of society. After the emergence of the new-type republic in the Netherlands, the revolutions became inherently associated with changes in political system. Even if it was the matter of support of a contender for the throne (as it was in the nineteenth-century Spain), anyway the candidates were expected to change political regime. This aspiration to somehow change political system can be considered the most important attribute of revolution.

Why should revolutions bring changes in the political system? This was surely connected with the rigid and hierarchical form of government existing then (between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries). On the one hand, there was simply no other way to consolidate a society when the states were overpassing the medieval decentralization. But on the other hand, any urgent transformations required changes in laws which would inevitably encounter the rigid political structures. Starting from the Early Modern period the developmental rates had evidently accelerated due to technological development, trade, the Great Geographical discoveries, increasing urbanization, literacy, distribution of information, *etc.* It is clear that changes within societies in the course of accelerated historical development could hardly be permanently hindered and prevented.¹⁸

Thus, the substantial delays in urgent and expected changes, and all the more the attempts to aggravate the situation by prohibitions and violations (as it happened in the Netherlands and England) cause an inevitable breakdown of the old political frame.

After some societies obtained certain benefits from revolutions, the need for changes became even more acute. First, a permanent criticism of the regime (since the countries with a more liberal regime and higher developmental level would set an example for others, like England exemplified for France in the eighteenth century, and France for Russia in the early twentieth century) caused a certain shift in the minds of a part of the elite towards a realized need for changes (even by revolutionary means); yet, later history proved the utter futility of their position in terms of self-preservation (see below). Second, there also adds living under somehow liberalized and humanized regimes, as it occurred in France under Louis XVI and in Russia under Nicholas II. This simultaneously strengthens the opposition, increases its demands, reduces fear of reprisals, and gives more opportunities to revolutionaries to prepare the revolution.

The development of revolutionary movement: expanding the support bases, emergence of new features and radicalization. The evolution of revolution phenomenon was connected not only with increasing literacy level and advancement of printing, but also, and most importantly, with the expanding support bases of revolutions (engaging the bourgeoisie, townspeople, intelligentsia, workhands, *etc.*). In other words, in the course of revolutions their support bases increase and at a certain point engage the absolute majority of population. The Reformation involved broad strata, yet, the peasantry would mostly stand back from the struggle. Meanwhile, when the peasantry made attempts to become a social power, as it happened in Germany, their insurrections were ruthlessly suppressed. Although the Dutch revolution generated a new regime and new capitalist economy, as well as triggered the most powerful development of world trade, it still remained a national-liberation and religious struggle and was hardly related to internal contradictions. We should also add that the urbanization level in the Netherlands was uncommonly high for that time (in the early sixteenth century in the Southern Netherlands there was up to 50 per cent of urban population, see Blockmans 1989: 734) while the peasantry largely became farmers.

The English Revolution and the formed outlines of subsequent revolutions. The English Revolution was the first typical socio-political revolution. One should certainly regard it as the first great revolution due to its impact, the ideological boost for the future, and successful establishment of a new political regime. It introduced new realities and characteristics into all subsequent revolutions. First of all, it was a liberal and anti-monarchical revolution that ideologically divided countries into those with the royal right as a source of supreme power and those where this

source was the popular right. The English Revolution also transformed the civil war into a means of solving the power matters. Certainly, civil wars (including those for religious reasons) were hardly something new in history. However, the revolutionary civil wars supporting monarchy or republic can be treated as a novel phenomenon. New ideological banners, new principles of the (revolutionary) army formation and new tactics leading to success, king's trial and execution – these are characteristics adopted by subsequent revolutions.

Here one can also point to important changes in revolutionary ideology, strategy and tactics which started to involve a powerful and fierce struggle via new forms of printed word and political journalism in general.¹⁹ Here we should remember the so-called pamphlet war. There also emerged political groups that later would lay the foundations for political parties.

Meanwhile, the English Revolution followed a certain life-cycle: from the rise to decline of revolution and its transition into (Cromwell's) dictatorship, and later – to the restoration of the old system (of royal power).²⁰ But, of course, one cannot step in the same river twice in politics, so the Restoration appeared a swan song of the old monarchy even though the former revolutionaries were persecuted during that period (this was also a characteristic feature later recurring in other revolutions). The cycle was completed by a new and almost bloodless ('velvet') revolution of 1688, which marked the origin of constitutional monarchy (more details on the cycles of revolutionary uprisings see in the second part of the article).

Finally, since it was more a political than religious matter and the struggle occurred between two political centers: the king and the parliament, the English Revolution showed that revolutions are necessarily the struggle for power and prospects of political building.

The American Revolution was a struggle for independence in its form, but intrinsically it was a revolution. It was based on the ideas of the French Enlightenment; therefore, it introduced a number of innovations into revolutionary practice. These were, first, the declaration of rights, which became a common place in subsequent revolutions; second, the legitimacy of people's will, which becomes superior over the monarchial will; third, the constitution, which also became a commonplace in any revolution (since the English revolution had occurred much earlier there was no constitution in Britain but only a constitutional monarchy); and finally, a universal arming of the people also became a widespread practice (because there was no army in America). The American Revolution in many respects (except for terror and other excesses) can be called a rehearsal of the French Revolution (since some future French revolutionaries passed a 'practice run' there).

The French Revolution and the formation of classic features of revolutions. In this section we will briefly define new features resulting

from the French Revolution since we have no opportunity to talk about its history (we will briefly discuss it in the second part of the article).

So, what new features did the French Revolution introduce in the perception of revolutions? First of all, this revolution obtained a broader support bases than the English Revolution, since the majority of population, *i.e.*, the peasantry, had joined the revolutionary process.

Second, the French Revolution became profoundly social in order to solve issues of equality and land reformation. It raised in its entirety the problem of abolition of estates and total legal equality. All people became citizens.²¹

Third, the Revolution had an evident anti-feudal (anti-liege) character since the former land and class relationships in rural areas would gradually change. Along with other features this gave the Revolution a particularly large scale.

Fourth, certain changes occurred in ideology. On the one hand, the French revolution turned out to be fundamentally antireligious unlike the English Revolution, which tried to affirm the right to freedom of belief. As a result, the desire not only to take away the church property, but also to undermine the very necessity of faith in God became characteristic of revolutions to come along with the attempts to impose a new secular ideology instead of the religious one.

Fifth is the radicalization of revolution and constantly increasing demands. In the course of its development any revolution becomes radicalized (it became already clear during the Reformation, when the Lutherans were forced to fight against the Anabaptists and other radical reformers). As Samuel Huntington (1968) notes the main struggle (especially in the West) usually unfolds between the moderates and the radicals. But the French Revolution made this tendency become especially evident. During the first five years of the Revolution one observed how the increasingly radical groups snatched power one from another, and in 1794, after the Thermidor, there were (failed) attempts of such coups on the part of the extreme left-wingers.

Sixth (resulting from the fifth) is terror, which due to its unprecedented scale became a new (and mutually) dangerous weapon.

Seventh are the new revolutionary bodies and societies which were the prototypes of revolutionary parties.

While the English Revolution demonstrated that a revolution may result in civil war, the French revolution showed that the ousted elite may be even ready to welcome foreign forces in order to come back to power. The struggle against intervention determined the creation of the people's revolutionary army and promoted emergence of new tactics as well as opportunities for the promotion of talented commanders from the masses (this was also characteristic of the earlier revolutions). Thus, the foreign intervention and the struggle against it became a rather common feature of revolutions.

1.2. The heyday of Revolutions (the 19th – the first half of the 20th century)

Differentiation of revolutions. It is not without reason that the nineteenth century was called the Age of Revolutions (Hobsbawm 1996), yet, the twentieth century obviously surpassed it by the number. The increasing number of revolutions allows elaboration of their typology, since different states, societies and peoples had different problems and goals²²; and moreover, there was a strengthening conviction that revolutions may help solve various problems. Earlier revolutions used to result from a combination of circumstances; meanwhile, in the twentieth century along with objective factors, respective ideology, criticism of the existing regime and aspirations for changes there appeared conscious and long-term efforts to prepare revolutions along with professionalization of the revolutionaries' activities. Finally, the following new features of revolutions were formed: 1) revolutionary organizations, including secretive ones (it is not surprising that the old forms of such organizations, *e.g.*, Masonic lodges, were also actively employed for this purpose); and 2) conscious and extensive agitation for revolution.

It is interesting to note that there no religious revolutions took place in the nineteenth century (although the demands for freedom of religious beliefs became universal).²³ Meanwhile, there is observed an advent of new types of revolutions. What are those types distinguished between the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century?²⁴

1. Revolutions implying what today would be called state-building, aiming at uniting the nations separated into many states but considering themselves as a single entity. First of all, we mean here Germany and Italy. With respect to the latter, it should be mentioned that this was one of the few, if not the only revolution that together with the state contributed to the unification of the country (Piemonte). Later Germany was united in a 'top-down' manner. But during the German revolution of 1848–1849 the National Assembly worked there, albeit it was ineffective.

2. Nationalist revolutions, when nations endeavored to gain independence or autonomy. Nationalism accompanied industrialization, modernization, and cultural development. In 1848–1849 such revolutions occurred, for example, in the Czech Republic and Hungary. It is worth noting that while nationalist revolutions became increasingly widespread and remain the same until present, the uniting revolutions appear a rare phenomenon.²⁵

3. Liberal-political revolutions, whose major task was to establish a certain form of democracy or of a more liberal political system and to expand rights and freedoms. These were, for example, the revolution of 1830 in France, the revolutions of 1848–1849 in Austria, Prussia, and a number of German states.

4. Social/Socialist revolutions, where social issues were considered of paramount importance and the change of political regime was regarded as a means of achieving social objectives. At a certain stage the revolutions of 1848 and of 1870–1871 in France were of this kind. But social revolutions of the type are characteristic already of the twentieth century, when after October 1917 they started to acquire socialist features.

5. Anti-colonial revolutions (which started in 1812 in Latin America but in the twentieth century covered Asia and Africa).²⁶

The emergence of new information technologies, *i.e.*, telegraph and telephone, led to a significantly increased intensity of revolutionary events. The information about revolutionary events would spread in lightning speed. So the response to them would also accelerate, if there were suitable conditions for it in the society. Revolutionaries and groups could move quickly by trains. Yet, this would change the government's tactics as well.

We can also identify the following emerging phenomena in revolutions:

1. The armed revolutionary rebellions in cities (we should note that the role of capitals particularly increased since the time of the French Revolution, although in a number of cases, *e.g.*, in Latin America, one could observe the pattern of revolutionary movement spreading from the periphery). Respectively, such insurrections developed the revolutionary tactics of constructing barricades in narrow streets (which became characteristic in the following century). The July Revolution of 1830 in France was the first such violent popular uprising.

2. Internationalization of revolutionary movement. Although the first such 'international' was established by the European monarchs in 1815, after 1849 the Internationals became the most important part of revolutionary movement. Their ideology was expressed in the slogans like 'Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!'

3. The establishment of revolutionary political parties (both legal and illegal).

4. The definition of support bases proper which expanded (involving proletariat, intelligentsia, and with increasing education – students) and systematic propaganda among these strata.

5. The emergence of ideologies promoting the proletariat to the leading position while downgrading the role of peasantry and the lower middle class.

6. The increasing role of intelligentsia in revolutionary ideology and revolutionary actions.

7. Newspapers as the most important information ideological weapon.

It is characteristic that the revolutionary events of the nineteenth and even early twentieth centuries were not associated with mass terror, alt-

though in certain cases the governments would resort to massive repression of the insurgents.

However, the spreading revolutionary ideologies aimed at radical changes in society and property redistribution *etc.*, there emerged new ideas and tactics implying the seizure of power via a successful rebellion (blanquism). Another tactics which was established and unfortunately, became a curse of our age, was revolutionary terrorism (first it was an individual terror against the authorities aiming at revenge, or to manifest oneself and intimidate the authorities but later it transformed into mass terror against casual people). Undoubtedly, that was the new means of information distribution (when people would quickly learn about terrorist attacks) that to a great extent supported the development of this tactics. Perhaps, the Italian Carbonari were the first to employ it, and it was also actively used by the Irish nationalists. At that the political terror against the head of state was probably the invention of the Russian populists.

The strengthening socialist ideology in the revolutions of the nineteenth – early twentieth centuries. The development of industry, increasing number of workers and urban population, general humanization of life, along with the need to maintain hygiene and order in cities, *etc.*, led to the growing requirements to the minimal level of living standards and hygiene and social guarantees from the part of a society. Here also adds the emergence of such type of social disaster as economic crisis which could significantly aggravate the workers' economic situation. Meanwhile, the concentration of working people in certain places and at enterprises facilitated their organization and struggle for the rights (and also made them a powerful source of social instability as well as revolutionary force). Simultaneously, we can observe intensifying sympathy with the working class on the part of the well-off layers of the society and intelligentsia. For a long time growing production volumes combined with existing or even increasing social stratification and a gap in the living standards (in current terms, the Gini coefficient was high and sometimes substantially increased). All this would reinforce socialist ideologies focusing both on criticism of reality and on projects of social restructuring. The Revolution in Paris in July 1848 turned into a social one along with the subsequent revolution of 1870–1871 (the Paris Commune).

The peculiar features of social revolutions made them transform into socialist ones (as in case of the Paris Commune). Thus, the increasing radicalization of such revolutions was explained by the fact that the most important societal institution, *i.e.*, private property, was challenged. This already meant an extreme and drastic reorganization of the whole social structure and most of a society's institutions. *As a result, the public consciousness developed along an important path of growing popularity of the ideology of radical social changes via revolutions, when the latter*

were claimed to be the key to the kingdom of the future fair society, something like a bridge from prehistory to real history.

The socialist revolution in Russia ran much further than its predecessors both in terms of terror and of radical social changes.

We should note the following new revolutionary technologies which emerged in the course of that revolution.

1. The establishment of a totalitarian party, which became the most important revolutionary weapon that succeeded to integrate even regions with different ethnic characteristics. At the same time, the idea of a complete monopoly of power was reinforced not immediately, but already in the course of the Civil War and after the victory it became the basis of a new system. The totalitarian party internationally appeared a completely new phenomenon.

2. Totalitarian power, that is, a complete monopoly on power in all its forms, not only in the political sphere but also in economic and spiritual ones. We already observed such a turn during the French Revolution, but it was short-run. Now this was the basis of a new socio-political regime and would be reproduced in different versions in other societies.

3. A significant expansion of revolutionary time frames within which the return to normal life was incomplete. This was caused by the fact that the social breakdown turned out to be extremely radical; thereafter, the resistance to it and terror against actually and potentially dissatisfied people were very strong. The scale and ideas of social breakdown were so immense and the number of potential enemies of those ideas was so large that it took a long time to realize them.

The previously employed revolutionary methods were more actively and widely used. These included mass terror and execution of hostages, creation of a special punitive body, and involvement of military specialists from socially hostile environment with their families' lives at stake; creation of revolutionary committees at grassroots levels, mass distribution of new revolutionary authorities, and a complete reorganization of the whole governmental system.

The Chinese socialist revolution is the only great revolution which witnessed revolutionary movement spreading not from the center but from periphery. The Chinese revolution was completed in the course of a new stage of the civil war in 1946–1949, when the Chinese People's Liberation Army led by Mao Tse-Tung and his military leaders marched triumphantly from remote inner lands of the country to the capital. Such tactics was typical for the American revolutions but not the European ones.

1.3. The diminishing role of revolutions in historical process (the 19th century – the second half of the 20th century – the beginning of the 21st century)

In the period between the 1950s and 1990s there occurred many revolutions that captured peripheral or at best semi-peripheral countries, so their

role was hardly significant for historical process. Here we can mention several socialist revolutions (the completed revolutions in Vietnam and Cuba), a number of national liberation movements that turned into bloody wars, including civil wars (Algeria, Mozambique, and Angola) and the already mentioned Iranian revolution.

At the same time, a great number of 'revolutions' were actually military coups, although they seem full-fledged revolutions with respect to change of political regime (from monarchy/dictatorship to republic or people's republic, *jamahiriya*, *etc.*), the scale of changes, social perturbations and resultant increasing activity of people's forces. The most famous here are the 1952 revolution in Egypt, as well as several coups in the Middle East, including the 1969 revolution in Libya led by Muammar Gaddafi.

This kind of revolutions can be called modernization revolution since it starts with a definite purpose of accelerating a country's development (meanwhile, the choice of socio-political path or regime is determined mostly by the considerations of momentary advantage). We observed revolutions of this kind in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (*e.g.*, in Latin America, Turkey).

The anti-socialist revolutions against totalitarian regimes became a new type of revolutions. Those were revolutions in Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and in Poland in 1981. They can be regarded to some extent as national liberation, since their aim was disengagement from the USSR influence. This also explains why some of them were initiated from above.

Finally, the year 1989 witnessed a revolutionary wave in the European socialist countries. Some of them were 'velvet', like the revolution in Czechoslovakia. Yet, not all of them (including the revolutionary movements in the former USSR republics) can be considered as genuine revolutions since they associated with a geopolitical cataclysm, namely, with a rapidly reducing sphere of influence and collapse of the Soviet Union which brought the formation of a unipolar world.

As to the 'velvet' revolutions, the history of similar political coups started with the English Glorious Revolution of 1688. Several revolutions of the kind took place in the last decades and we can in particular mention the 'Carnation Revolution' of 1974 in Portugal. As a rule, such revolutions make the last act of revolutionary changes, that is, they complete a rather long history of attempts at democratic transformations and previous revolutions so they usually pass rather quickly and nonviolently. If a society is not modernized enough, the 'velvet' revolution will hardly occur since great changes can hardly proceed easily. Therefore, even if the first stage of revolution passes quickly and nonviolently, the further revolutionary steps may bring exacerbation and reinforced internal strug-

gle. The latter may be exemplified by the events in Egypt in 2011 that triggered daunting violence of exceedingly bloody terrorist acts.

The last wave of revolutions is represented by the so-called 'color revolutions' (for more details see Grinin *et al.* 2016: Introduction). These revolutions have become a tool of geopolitical struggle and this completely reduces their role as a factor of historical progress. On the other hand, some of modern revolutions were not 'color'. So while there are debates concerning the role of external influence in the events of the 'Arab Spring' in Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen, in my opinion, these revolutions were generally caused by internal processes and forces, despite the fact that the protesters' position was greatly improved by the pressure on the governments (*e.g.*, Hosni Mubarak's) on the part of the USA and other countries with respect to prohibitions on the use of military actions.²⁷

Therefore, we have examined the five century's path from great revolutions to 'velvet' and then to 'color' ones. What conclusion can we make?

Anyway, we see that at a certain point revolutions somehow reach their heyday. We mean that starting from the early Modern Era it is just the revolutions that advanced the leading societies into the mainstream of historical process. Later revolutions started to shift to the semi-peripheral societies, yet, the latter would fail to become the societies which by means of revolutions could pave the way for the rest. Thus, the revolutions gradually lost their role as a driver of progress and in 1917–1949 they mostly contributed to the development of an alternative trajectory of historical development (in particular, socialism). Since then their creative potential has been constantly decreasing.²⁸ Time will show what the new revolutions will be like. Perhaps, they will involve countries with sustainable democracy which previously managed to escape revolutions (due to other legal and institutional mechanisms for changes available in such societies). The recent events in the USA or Spain (in Catalonia) prove that modern democratic societies are not always capable to resolve conflicts precisely in institutional terms, so the majority of their citizens are ready to get their ways through a direct struggle and by means of claims which obviously contradict the constitution and the fundamental laws of the country.

Section 2. ON SOME ASPECTS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY THEORY

The first paragraph of this section links it with Section 1. The second paragraph deals with an important aspect of phases of the cycle that revolutions and post-revolutionary epochs pass. Finally, the third paragraph refers to psychological aspects of the elite before and during the revolution.

2.1. About information technologies

We have mentioned that revolutions are closely related to new information technologies and actively use them for their own purposes. We

should note that every new revolutionary epoch employs its own means: the English Revolution made a wide use of pamphlets and other publicist and agitation literature (the newspapers were not a serious political weapon yet). The development of mail also promoted dissemination of information; in particular, it greatly facilitated communication among revolutionaries, although it also provided the secret police with a powerful means to reveal the discontented. Pamphlets played a great role before and in the course of the French Revolution. Yet, pamphlets already gave way to political newspapers. Successful pamphlets became periodic, as, for example, the well-known Marat's pamphlet 'The People's Friend' (*L'Ami du peuple*). As a result, the political newspapers of the kind became the main type of journalism. Along with common newspapers, (which generally disseminated news) they became the leading information technology in the nineteenth century along with books, magazines and leaflets (pamphlets also continued to play a significant role). A well-known example for the Russians is 'The New Rheinische Zeitung', for which K. Marx made contributions during the revolution of 1848–1849. For a very long time newspapers remained the most important form of revolutionary agitation. The more mail and distribution system of newspapers were developed, the more important role they played. But new opportunities for revolutions were provided with the emergence of telegraph and telephone.²⁹ The opportunities for revolutionary mobilization significantly increased with development of the Internet and social networks. We should note that although in the twentieth century there were invented fundamentally new media, namely, radio and television (in addition to cinema and newsreels), they hardly played as important role in revolutionary waves as newspapers or social networks did. On the contrary, along with cinema they became a rather powerful support for the emerging totalitarian regimes. In our opinion, this is explained by the fact that these media are more centralized unlike newspapers and social networks, so it is easier for governments to control them. Television is the media, which requires huge investments (unlike newspapers and even radio); therefore, the revolutionary opposition is unlikely to widely use them.³⁰ Moreover, it was extremely difficult to get access to such means under conditions of hard-line regimes, while within a true democracy the political ambitions are aimed at victory at the election and not at barricades. Therefore, the emergence of computer technologies and especially of the Internet and social networks, which are decentralized unlike television and able to purposefully impact a huge number of users, played a critical part for the new wave of revolutions in the 2000s.

2.2. Stages of revolutionary changes³¹

Revolution, the Thermidorian law and reaction. The fact that revolutions and epochs generally associated with them, may pass through similar stages

was discussed already at the end of the eighteenth century. It became even more evident after the end of the period associated with the Great French Revolution and the Bourbon Restoration (see above on Maistre). A century later, after the October Revolution this became clear for the majority of intelligentsia. One of the ideas was that a revolutionary tide should be followed by a low tide. 'Every revolution ends in reaction. It is inevitable, it is a law' wrote the famous Russian thinker Nikolay Berdyaev (Berdyaev 1990: 29).³² There was another name for the reaction – the Thermidor, which originated from the French Revolution.³³ The Russian intellectuals who did not support the October revolution, but realized that it had to be accepted and recognized as an indisputable fact as well as act suitably, could think and dream of the Thermidor after the October events, which would allow the country and them to return to their former life at least to some extent. That is why, already in 1921, Nikolay Ustryalov gave the title 'The Way of Thermidor' to the second part of his article 'Patriotica' published in Prague in his seminal collection 'Smena vekh' [Change of Landmarks]³⁴ (Ustryalov 1921). He offered to accept the fact of the revolution and expect a transition to the Thermidor, that is to a reasonable account of reality. 'A difficult task – but may God give it success!' – he exclaimed. Ustryalov started his research by pointing that he was not the first to talk about Thermidor in the context of the Russian Revolution. The Kronstadt rebellion was a signal that made some Russian publicists in Paris start talking about the 'Russian Thermidor'. In particular, several articles in the Russian-language newspaper 'The Latest News' edited by Pavel Milyukov (who was, by the way, a very intelligent historian) were devoted to establishing an analogy between the process which had occurred in Russia and the Thermidorian period of the Great French Revolution. Ustryalov tried to define to what extent these analogies were valid and what was the 'Thermidorian path' like, and he came to the conclusion that it was of small importance whether the overthrow of former revolutionary idols and the alteration of the direction would take place, or the actual leaders would appear quite pragmatic to change the direction. The matter is that the Thermidorian path implies a transformation of the very fabric of revolution as well as of its actors' souls and hearts. As a result the revolution is released from its own superfluity and passes to a reasonable consideration of the situation (*Ibid.*).

The transition to NEP actually brought hope for the Thermidorian Reaction in the Russian revolution. But Ustryalov, Milyukov, and other researchers did not account that the very revolutionary pattern had changed in the course of historical process and that unlike the French Revolution which experienced only a rather short period of terror, the Russian revolution would witness a new round of revolutionary changes starting nine years after the expected Thermidor, along with a new round of social terror which would almost surpass the revolutionary one by the

scale of destruction. Moreover, terror had to become a permanent feature (later the Chinese and some other socialist revolutions would follow the same path).

Several years later after the discussion of the Thermidorian path among the Russian emigration, Leo Trotsky and his supporters, who suffered a defeat in the intraparty strife, spoke about the party Thermidor.³⁵ It is important to take into account that the Trotskyists adhered to the left-wing positions implying an increasing activity of the world revolution and accepting the impossibility of building socialism in a separate country while Joseph Stalin and his supporters intended to build socialism in the USSR without waiting for the world revolution (which hopes became more and more delusive).

Thus, the transition from violent destruction of social and other relations and the apogee of violence and terror to a more moderate policy is considered to be regularity for some revolutions. In this context, we should point an interesting fact that in Soviet historiography they were reluctant to accept the presence of such regularity not only in socialist, but even in the bourgeois revolution. In particular, the Great French Revolution was dated back to 1789–1794 (see Manfred 1974), whereas it is widely recognized (including the contemporary Russian historiography) that though with less intensity the revolution actually lasted until Napoleon seized the power. In 1795 the new Constitution of France was adopted and the Convention was respectively dismissed. There was established the Directory, which was a collective state government consisting of five directors. After the coup of 18th Brumaire, Napoleon formally replaced the Directory by the Consulate, which remained a revolutionary body until 1804 (when Napoleon was declared an Emperor).

Ideology and the Thermidorian law. Therefore, ideology is the most important element of revolution. Naturally, ideology is always an outcome of: 1) common material causes: technological development, population growth, urbanization, literacy growth, *etc.*; and 2) socio-economic demands, needs, and aspirations. But, naturally, it is always the result of intellectual and spiritual work of a group of leaders/ideologists or intelligentsia. The result often depends on a number of historical features, as well as the ideologists' individual reasons and spiritual inclinations.

Despite the fact that ideology is related to objective factors (in the sense that the emergence of ideology may be caused by various changes and processes), it is always inherently detached from practice since it aspires for perfection and ideal. Hence, the practical implementation of ideology always faces reality that later becomes a more formidable obstacle. It is so typical of revolutionaries to overcome obstacles regardless of costs; for them, on the contrary, the steeper the breakdown – the better. In this context, the deeper the ideology is implemented, the stronger are the emerging contradictions. After all, politics is the art of achieving the possible. The

attempts to introduce a pure ideology always end with severe problems as well as with the inevitable departure from revolutionary ideals.

What does the Thermidor law mean with respect to revolutionary ideology and revolution? It shows that we need a compromise between traditions, common sense, practical needs and revolutionary ideology. Thermidor is considered to be a serious attempt of pragmatic search for the ways to complete revolution (Polyakova 2014). This usually does not mean an open break with revolutionary ideology, but life brings its own rules. Therefore, to continue to stay in power a revolutionary regime needs to create a governmental system that will somehow restrain fantasy and take the account of objective laws of life. Sometimes this requires the adjustment of ideology, otherwise, they pretend that the existing situation is just what was planned to achieve. But, anyway, eventually there emerge different variations of relying on reality. We can observe how they start 'wind down' from a great utopia towards a sound approach to a renewed reality and devotion to it (Ustryalov 1921).³⁶

The radical ideology can become efficient only if imposed in balanced and 'diluted' manner, like a highly concentrated substance. Otherwise it causes harm or even death. Socialism was exactly that radical ideology, which could be imposed only in a gradual and partial manner and in certain spheres. As practice showed this could give a positive effect and become an important part of system only in certain periods of time or in particular societies. The consequences of attempts to build life according to this ideology were bad. This also refers to fervent nationalism and religious ideology (*e.g.*, Islamism). Thus, although it may seem cynical, the loyal adherents of ideology lead society to deplorable results, whereas opportunists can lead it to more successful results.

The radical ideology like revolutions, in general, brings the greatest benefit when its supporters, being in opposition, put forward the slogans and demands, which more pragmatic ruling elites have to take into account and somehow realize.

The Thermidor law manifests in a peculiar way in societies that objectively do not yet reach the level when revolutions become inevitable. However, in more developed countries certain groups and mass media are formed due to borrowing of ideologies and practices of revolutions, as a result, social protests and discontent are canalized into an objectively higher social form than one should expect. In our opinion this was the case with revolutions in the East at the beginning of the twentieth century. In such case a return to dictatorship may occur quite quickly, as it happened as a result of the Xinhai revolution in China.

A revolutionary cycle. The history of the French Revolution clearly showed that a revolution follows a life-cycle. Schematically it can be presented in the following way. First, there is observed an escalation of revolution. Then, either more radical revolutionaries come to power, or there

occurs radicalization of forces in power (but, of course, there occurs a dissociation within the revolutionary camp). Finally, a revolution and terror reach their apogee.³⁷ Then, when the support of the revolution reduces since the society becomes tired of it, and economy declines (as well as when the main military threats recede), there occurs certain backslide. This comes as a natural reaction to the overreach and can be manifested in fierce discussions, splits, direct struggle within the revolutionary camp and sometimes even in physical elimination of the most radical revolutionaries are of (as it occurred in France at the end of the eighteenth century). Then there would start the Thermidorian period which could have several stages. For example, with respect to the USSR one could speak first about the revolutionary Thermidor associated with the introduction of the new economic program at the 10th Congress of the RCP(B) and the ‘tightening of the screws’ via reinforcement of the party discipline (the prohibition of factions, *etc.*), and then also about the political Thermidor (Trotsky dated it start to 1924 [Trotsky 1935], but this became especially noticeable after the years 1927–1928), when as a result of fierce party discussions, there was made a decision about the possibility of building socialism in an particular country. By 1929 all opposition movements had been eliminated, and their leaders were sidelined (Trotsky was exiled), and later repressed. As to the party discipline ‘the screws have been tightened’ strong enough. It is interesting that the end of the Thermidorian coup in the party coincided with a new revolutionary tide of 1929–1933, after which the peasant property was abolished, and the peasantry as a class (social group) was actually transformed into state-owned serfs.

Later, as shown by the English Revolution and the French revolutions of the late eighteenth century and 1848, the throwback of the revolution (Thermidor) could continue and transform into the regime of personal dictatorship which could later evolve into a kind of monarchy. While in Britain Cromwell’s dictatorship did not become a monarchy,³⁸ in France, in cases of both revolutions, the republic changed into empire. This regime was called Bonapartism. The dual character of this regime which was neither republican nor monarchic in traditional sense (since the new emperor was treated as an usurper) was expressed in peculiar characteristics associated with the attempts to maneuver between different strata of society, to change the course, and to gain popular support. It was Karl Marx who first spoke about Bonapartism in a broad sense in ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte’ written in connection with the military coup carried out by Napoleon I’s nephew, Louis Bonaparte, who was the President of the French Republic from 1848. A year later he became Emperor Napoleon III.³⁹ Thus, as Marx noted (Marx 1957: 141), the revolution proceeds downward. The term ‘Bonapartism’ initially denoted the post-revolutionary dictatorship, and later it started to define any regime of personal power maneuvering between different social forces, and was and

is currently used in the political discourse. In particular, Trotsky employed it in the above-mentioned article when speaking about Stalin's regime (Trotsky 1935).

Thus, we may conclude that every revolution is a jump ahead; this especially refers to great revolutions which can go too far in the matter of social destruction.⁴⁰ At some stage this leads to a backslide. Revolutions are often an attempt to organize life not in accordance with practical criteria, but with ideological patterns. But this gap between aspirations for embodiment of revolutionary ideal in practice and the realities that hardly fit the bookish model cannot last for a long time. Hence, a slowdown of the revolutionary wave (*Thermidor*) is inevitable along with the subsequent return to the previously existing norms (*Bonapartism*).

On the assumption of aforementioned, we can distinguish several stages within the revolutionary period (but this certainly applies only to a successful revolution). Some of them, like R. R. Vakhitov, define three stages: with respect to the Great French Revolution 'They are usually called, Jacobinism, Thermidor and Bonapartism respectively' (Vakhitov 2004). But that is not quite true. The fact is that Jacobinism can in no way be the first stage. Jacobinism is the apotheosis of the revolution, and this peak is preceded by at least two periods (of an easy victory of revolution and of increasing revolutionary demands), then a more radical force may come to power and only then there starts extreme radicalization (Jacobinism). Let us consider the revolution of 1917. One can count at least two main stages prior to the October events: for example, before April 1917 and from April to October. And then there was a period before the start of the Bolshevik terror in summer 1918; thus, this just period up to 1920 can be considered a peak (Jacobinism).

We have also mentioned above that there might be such stages as restoration and then a recurrent revolution (like the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in Britain). On the other hand, some stages may be absent in the course of a particular revolution.

2.3. The elite losing the sense of self-preservation

We should start the discussion with the statement that was expressed in the literature, but, unfortunately, did not become widespread. Meanwhile, it deserves considerable attention. The point is that the ruling elite, as well as the closely adjacent strata, seem to lose their sense for self-preservation⁴¹ during certain difficult periods, including the initial revolutionary phases. They appear simply unprepared to unite when facing the imminent danger of popular unrest and to support an unstable authority which is much closer to them despite all its shortcomings and flaws. They either express discontent with the existing power, or directly agitate against it, welcoming the revolutionaries and oncoming revolution, or even directly participate in revolution. The perception comes only in the course of revolution, especially after the revolutionary breakdown engages wider

population and various institutions and terror is used for such a breakdown, sometimes even after the revolution. Thus, between February and March 1917 all the commanders of the fronts supported the revolution in Petrograd, none of them supported the Emperor and the commander-in-chief Nicholas II; on the contrary, everyone advised him to abdicate from the throne. And only later did they realize that the revolution, which they hoped would somehow intensify military activities, led Russia to military defeat and catastrophe. 'Betrayal, cowardice and deception is everywhere!' – wrote Nicholas II in his diary on March 2, 1917 (The Diaries... 1991: 625). But the emperor himself did not show any will to power at this decisive moment; on the contrary, he hurried to abdicate, as if this was a good reason to cast off the burden of rule. Then his brother Mikhail easily renounced the throne, which had been strengthening for 300 years, and none of the royal family decided to lead the struggle for preservation of monarchy. In 1991 and 1992, the leaders of the Communist Party of the USSR and the newly emerged Communist Party of Russia easily allowed destroying both the USSR and the CPSU. In 1993 during the opposition between the President and the Supreme Council many of them were to pay for it.

However, such a loss of will to power and of a sense of self-preservation is characteristic not only for Russia but also for many other revolutionary epochs.

In May 1789 in Paris the Estates General were gathered which consisted of the elected representatives of the three estates. However, as a result, many representatives of nobility and clergy would join the representatives of the third estate to form a revolutionary Constituent Assembly, whose decrees actually triggered the Great French Revolution. Meanwhile, the French nobility and clergy enjoyed exceptional privileges.⁴²

We should note that the instinct for self-preservation along with the perception of necessary struggle for power and for preservation of one's positions can be lost during other crucial epochs as well. Thus, in 1939–1940 after surrender of France to the enemy already after the first defeat, the French military leaders looked amazingly helpless and unwilling to sacrifice anything for the sake of the country. This awesome cowardice (after a powerful activity during the First World War), however, became apparent already from the mid-1930s, when France would lose one position after another to rising but still weak Germany.

In 1909 soon after the first Russian Revolution a famous miscellany 'Vekhi' appeared with the subtitle '*A collection of articles about the Russian intelligentsia*' (Vekhi 1909).⁴³ It was actually devoted to the Russian Revolution and role of intelligentsia in it. In Nikolay Berdyaev's article 'Philosophical Truth and the Moral Truth of the Intelligentsia' from this collection, the intelligentsia's position was sharply criticized. In Berdyaev's opinion, the Russian intelligentsia practically worshipped the

people and revolution, while the struggle against autocracy became the criterion of assessing any phenomenon. At the same time, the intelligentsia 'has always blamed external forces for everything, thus justifying itself' (Berdyayev 1909: 26) thus, forgetting about the truth, and about the fact that one has to take the responsibility and 'stop blaming it all on external forces' (*Ibid.*). In the article 'Creative Self-Consciousness' a historian, literary critic and philosopher Mikhail Gershenzon (who initiated the publication of the collection of papers) wrote:

What did our intellectuals do over the last half a century? – I'm talking, of course, about the intelligentsia. A bunch of revolutionaries went from house to house and knocked on every door: 'Everybody, right outside! It's a shame to sit at home!' – and everybody... poured out into the square ... Half a century they are hanging about in the square, shouting and swearing. They have dirt, poverty, and mess at home, but the owner is out. He is in public, he saves the people – and it is easier and more amusing than common labour at home (Gershenzon 1909: 84).

This particular intelligentsia claimed for power, showing a kind of messianism and believing that educated people are supposed to know how to reorganize life in a proper way. And without the slightest doubt, they were ready to reorganize it not from below but through claims for participation in power and even for the supreme power (as the leaders of the Cadet Party used to). All this turned fatal for our country's history and the pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia of which many nobles were a part.

However, one would think, that after the First Russian Revolution, it would have been necessary to reconsider the situation, to understand that the people's revolution would sweep away not only the autocracy, but also the intelligentsia. Gershenzon wrote about it quite frankly: 'The way we are we can hardly even dream of merging with the people – we must be scared of it more than any executions of power and bless that power, which with its bayonets and prisons still alone protects us from the people's rage' (Gershenzon 1909). But these words produced an opposite reaction. The author was condemned by every conceivable allegation. However, we are well aware of what happened with the Russian intelligentsia as a result. Those whom the steamboats took abroad in 1922 were lucky, since they would not be drowned on barges in rivers.

Thus, the elite or some its strata, figuratively speaking, quite often bite the feeding hand without understanding that they can exist only under this 'bad' in their opinion regime. The Soviet creative upper classes, which had peculiar privileges and a huge audience and was provided with food and lodging thanks to the state's policy, demanded freedom of speech, thinking that one could have freedom of speech, including unrestrained criticism of power, and still preserve the former protection from

the state. Meanwhile, did those people standing at the top of culture before 1991 achieve anything simply remarkable, not to speak of great? One can hardly remember, there was almost nothing ... The fact is that the creative intelligentsia could exist only under the Soviet regime, but not the market economy.

Why does this loss of sense for self-preservation happen? This issue needs a further exploration. But we can assume that it is the result of the following factors:

1. A certain effeminacy of the elite which ceases to fight for its positions. In the fifteenth century a similar case was described by Ibn-Khaldun (Ibn-Khaldun 1980; see also: Grinin 2011: 83–84) when the third-generation rulers due to their propensity for luxury and similar stuff would bring a dynasty to fall.

2. The increasing level of education and of humanization of relations among the elite, in their families when the strictest relations are concealed from children, *etc.* In this situation, some members of the new generation are 'infected' with ideas hardly combining with their position.

3. Foreign influence on the part of societies with superior cultural level and relations in society; the elite focuses on them (to some extent), yet they appear improper for domestic affairs.

4. A rather soft (not too repressive) regime and ruler.

5. Raising awareness that elite should be formed by merit persons and not due a birthright or other particular rights.

6. Overproduction of elite. On the one hand, a great number of people lose touch with elite but still claim for the place of honor. Moreover, since a part of the generation inherits its position with little effort while the aspirations for a place in the elite increase the criticism of the elite also intensifies. As a result, many representatives of the elite acutely perceive any criticism of the upper strata and government.

7. Long-lasting criticism of the government makes some members of the elite take it seriously and believe that they can change the situation. Here manifests a significant role of ideology, which penetrates all strata of society and not only the more discontented people.

CONCLUSION. REVOLUTIONS AS A GEOPOLITIC WEAPON

Revolutions as a geopolitical weapon and overground and underground politics of a state began to be used systematically in the twentieth century (although they were used sporadically earlier, for example, when boosting the uprisings in nineteenth-century Poland against the power of Russia). During the First World War, Britain and France supported cadets and other oppositionists who stood against monarchy and, in fact, called for a revolution (and according to some reports the embassies to some extent coordinated these intrigues). There are different points of view on the position of our allies concerning the revolution, one of them argues that by means

of revolution they sought to immediately achieve two goals: to continue taking advantage of Russia as an actively fighting ally and to find an opportunity to avoid keeping their promises to transfer the Black Sea straits and Constantinople to Russia. As you know, Germany tried (and rather succeeded) to play revolutionaries especially the Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, who advocated for an immediate war termination. In fact, immediately after the October Revolution the USSR systematically promoted revolutions and this became a constant element of its foreign policy (see Grinin 2017c). The Western countries less frequently made use of revolutions. There have also been failed attempts to export Islamic revolutions.

The collapse of socialism, as we have mentioned above, have completely proved that revolutions are no longer an acceptable means of social progress in the modern period. But paradoxically, since that time that the USA and the Western countries have reversed their attitude to revolutions and regard them today as positive and beneficial phenomena for Western countries (since there is no longer a threat of the emergence of communist regimes as a result of the revolution). As before the revolutions are again associated with democracy while the latter has been recognized as an undoubtedly positive form. However, this is not true.

As we see, the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century has become a period of a new type of revolution with increasing share of external interference and incitation, the use of 'man-made' and non-spontaneous revolutions to overthrow undesirable regimes. A chain of such revolutions, called 'colored', swept through a number of countries. As it has already been mentioned, the Western countries used these revolutions as a major geopolitical means to strengthen their influence and undermine the power of rivals, as well as to propagate the superiority of their own regime. For this purpose, in the target countries they actively supported opposition which was preferably trained by Western instructors; NGOs and diplomatic missions of all kinds were used as coordinators and headquarters. Unfortunately, most often the positive effect of such revolutions was minimal while the negative consequences turned destructive. Even a supporter of such revolutions Jack Goldstone notes that 'In most countries where 'the color revolutions' took place there occurred no rapid and reliable transition to democracy' (Goldstone 1991); he also shows that revolutions continue to start with the overthrow of the old regime, but they await a complicated and long-lasting process of establishing a new one. Revolutions inevitably cause new difficulties along with another struggle for power and good chance of lapsing into authoritarian regime (*Ibid.*: 161, 183). The idea that revolution is a very destructive way of progress for modern social life is confirmed again and again (see Grinin 1997, 2007). And we do not share Goldstone's hopes that 'revolutionary heroism, and not revolutionary nightmares' will prevail in the future (Goldstone 1991).

NOTES

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¹ On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther, Doctor of Theology at the University of Wittenberg nailed his famous Ninety-five Theses, in which he sharply criticized the existing practices of the Catholic Church, in particular the sale of indulgences.

² Although some features of the coming revolutions were already manifested in the Hussite movement and in some uprisings in Italy in the 14th century.

³ For example, the reforms conducted in the fourteenth-century B.C. by Uru-inimgina who was probably elected the ruler of Lagash after the popular uprising (Dyakonov 1951; 1983: 207–274; 2000: 55–56); about similar uprisings and the establishment of a peculiar form of government see also Shtyrbul 2006.

⁴ Among the Chinese popular uprisings the Taiping Rebellion of 1850–1864 is the most similar to revolution (see, *e.g.*, Ilyushechkin 1967).

⁵ Of course, we can denote it progressive one only in the final account (since revolutions proved to be a rather costly way of development and sometimes temporarily threw society back).

⁶ However, as we will see below, in the twentieth century due to the changing historical role of revolutions, the latter could bring a society to the non-mainstream path of development. Such paths were socialism and fascism (*e.g.*, in Spain); the religious revolution in Iran can also be referred here.

⁷ For the analysis of some of these conditions see Grinin 2017b.

⁸ Not without reason the revolutions, if they ever occurred in antiquity and medieval period, would outbreak in urban societies where the level of literacy was relatively high.

⁹ On the great revolutions and their role see Grinin 2017b. We should note here that great revolutions or something that substituted them occurred with the interval of about half a century after the beginning of the Great French Revolution. In 1848–1849 the European revolutions occurred, and then in 1905 a revolutionary wave emerged in Russia. In China, the revolution succeeded in 1949, yet it actually lasted for twenty years more.

¹⁰ We define the early modern period from the late fifteenth century, as it is conventional in Western historiography and was accepted in pre-revolutionary historiography in Russia and increasingly spread among the contemporary Russian historiographers.

¹¹ We should note that believers were not advised to read the Bible by themselves, and the number of copies was limited, since it was mostly rewritten (although it was printed in the fifteenth century, which, in fact, appeared the basis for ripening of religious unrest).

¹² However, the change of dynasties became a very important institutionalizing instrument for the establishment of constitutional monarchy.

¹³ The early modern period was crucial with respect to the revolutionary ideology. In fact, for two centuries the ideologists (especially in England and France) developed a program for the reorganization of society. Obviously, a great variety of new ideas, principles, slogans, demands would emerge in the course of revolutions. The migration from the countries where revolutions occurred also had

a great impact on the distribution of ideologies (including the conservative, counterrevolutionary one).

¹⁴ Due to the confiscation of Church lands, the dissolution of monks and nuns and other step.

¹⁵ The utmost importance of the religious issue for this revolution is proved by the fact that 10 out of 17 southern Dutch provinces, where Catholicism prevailed, did not want a total break-up with Spain and eventually remained a part of the Habsburg monarchy, preserving the Catholic faith. Thus, only seven Northern provinces, where the Calvinists predominated, founded the republic, it was the Dutch Republic (Republic of the United Netherlands).

¹⁶ The Church of England reasserted its firm positions during the Restoration of the Stuart Dynasty, remaining predominant in England since then.

¹⁷ Although the American Revolution (the struggle for independence) was secular, the role of the Puritans and other Protestants who moved to the American colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was very significant at that time. And the fact that they were fighting against the king, who headed the Anglican Church, inspired them even more.

¹⁸ It is important that along with the diffusion of technologies one sometimes observes a direct migration of those who owns them (as it happened in England, where craftspeople from Flanders and from Huguenot France had moved). The transfer of dissident ideology is also associated with this.

¹⁹ The Reformation was rather a war of sermons than that of printed word, despite the fact that the role of the latter enormously increased.

²⁰ Basing on the history of the English Revolution, Joseph de Maistre (1997: 158, 169, 187–188), one of the leading conservative analysts of the French Revolution, predicted in 1796 the restoration of the royal power in France.

²¹ The concept of citizenship was undoubtedly inspired by ancient, in particular, Roman stories, in this and some other respects (the idea of the consulate was also taken from the Roman tradition). Certainly, the French revolution was a kind of imitation of ancient examples.

²² For a brief analysis of the nineteenth-century revolutions see also Grinin's Chapter 11 'Revolution and Revolutionary Movements' in the second volume of the book *Historical Globalistics* (Zinkina *et al.* 2017).

²³ A revolution of the kind unexpectedly broke out in Iran in the second half of the twentieth century (1978–1979), which, in my opinion, was connected with two factors (along with historical peculiarities of the relationship between religious leaders and secular authorities in Iran): with the fact that the Middle East reached the typological level of European development of the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, and with the fact that the role of revolutions in historical process has decreased in the world. The Islamic revolution in Iran was a new ideological model, competing with the 'Western' and 'Eastern' revolutionary traditions and significant ideas (Dzhanabi 2015: 58–59). However, it is important to note that the first Iranian revolution (1905–1911) also had an evident religious color, also the clergy played a great part during its first stage (Doroshenko 1998: 8–9). The ignorant, fanatically believing and bound by religious traditions people obediently followed not so much the 'liberals' but their spiritual leaders. And when the Shia clergy turned against the revolution, the obedient crowd followed

it. Doroshenko also cites other Iranians' views that the participation of the religious establishment in the revolutionary movement was connected with the rivalry with secular authorities in the fields of education, law, influence on the people; they were also interested in weakening of the secular power and preserving its influence over the state policy. The Ulemas and mullahs diverged from the revolution after its 'anti-Islamic potential' became more obvious for them (Doroshenko 1998: 13–17). According to other researchers, the revolution of 1905–1911 was a 'direct clash' between two ideologies: Islam and Western modernism (*Ibid.*: 18). The same refers to the 1978–1979 revolution. With the account of this fact the Iranian revolutions, especially taken together, appear unique phenomena and to a certain extent have no analogues in history (*Ibid.*: 8).

²⁴ Almost the whole range of revolutions emerged during the period of the European 'Spring of Nations' between 1848 and 1849. This is one of the reasons to consider this sequence of revolutions as a single great revolution due to its consequences.

²⁵ Later there hardly occurred a revolution of this rare kind, except for the one in 1989 in the GDR, where the very desire to unite with Western Germany appeared the key factor. We may possibly regard the events in the Donbass and a little bit earlier – in the former Soviet space in Transnistria and South Ossetia (with certain reservations) in the same context.

²⁶ The given typology is just one of many possible typologies, which can be applied for various reasons. For the Russian readers the following Marxist typology is the most familiar: the bourgeois (including bourgeois-democratic) and socialist revolutions.

²⁷ Quite another matter is Syria and especially Libya, where the inspiration from abroad and direct intervention in the events were much more active.

²⁸ The opinions that revolutions are 'a social malady' which can be avoided and that a society can develop through some other means (reforms, in particular) and revolutions cost too much, etc. were widely spread already after the Great French Revolution. Starting from the second half of the nineteenth century it became a dominant idea in social philosophy especially after the spread of Herbert Spencer's evolutionary ideas. In the twentieth century this almost became a postulate in academic social studies (*e.g.*, Adams 1913; Sorokin 1925; Edwards 1927: 9; Pettee 1938; Brinton 1965 [1938]; Brogan 1952: 96; Carr 1955: 710; Wolfe 1965: 7; Berger and Neuhaus 1970: 53; Dunn 1972: 11–12; Boulding 1953: xiv; Ellul 1971: 39, 43).

²⁹ Therefore, it should come as no surprise that to seize the telegraph and telephone stations was the most important aim during the October uprising.

³⁰ Television could be used as a means to evoke sympathy for revolutions in the periphery (or vice versa). Also, the rise of terrorism was not least connected with the spread of television. Rather, the role of the latter was important only in a series of anti-communist revolutions in Europe, when opposition representatives had many supporters on television and actively prepared countries for changes employing the idea of freedom of speech and information.

³¹ Here I will pay attention only to some aspects of this issue, in particular to the connection of the cycle of revolution with the development of its ideology.

³² For the analysis of this 'law' see: Grinin, Korotayev 2014.

³³ On 9 Thermidor, according to the French Republican Calendar (27/28 July) 1794 there took place a coup that ended the Jacobean dictatorship. Maximilien Robespierre, Louis Antoine de Saint-Just, Georges Couthon and other revolutionaries were executed, while Joseph Fouché and Paul Barras and others, who united the opponents of Robespierre, came to power.

³⁴ Its predecessor, the collection *Vekhi* [Milestones] is described below.

³⁵ However, Trotsky himself did not claim primacy, pointing out in one of the anti-Stalin articles that it is not easy to determine who was the first to appeal to historical analogy with Thermidor. Anyway, already in 1926 a group of 'democratic centralism' (V. M. Smirnov, T. V. Sapronov and others executed by Stalin in exile) confirmed: 'Thermidor is fait accompli!' (Trotsky 1935). In 1938, Crane Brinton systematically and thoroughly described the stages of revolutions. He pointed out Thermidor as the last one and devoted to its examination a whole Chapter 8. (The other stages he defines are: the first stage ending with the victory of revolutions; the subsequent stages are the Rule of the Moderates; the Accession of the Extremists; Reigns of Terror and Virtue) (Brinton 1965 [1938]). Among modern scholars studying the Thermidor stage one can mention Bronislaw Baczko (1994), Shultz (2015); Mau and Starodubrovskaya (2001).

³⁶ On the correlation between ideology and practice see Nazaretyan 2016.

³⁷ However, both during this period and later, there may be attempts to carry out even more radical transformations, but they usually do not receive support or are defeated. With respect to the French Revolution we should mention the so-called 'The Enrage' and Gracchus Babeuf's 'Conspiracy of Equals' (1796), whose participants set a goal to equalize property. In Soviet Russia on the eve of the introduction of NEP there were many hotheads who wanted to march to Europe in order to approach the coming of the world revolution.

³⁸ Yet, there were some efforts in this direction, since Oliver Cromwell assigned his son Richard as a successor of the Lord Protector.

³⁹ The renewal of the mandate for ten years was enshrined by the referendum on December 21, 1851; the transformation of the presidency into a monarchy – by the referendum on November 21, 1852. The actions of Louis Bonaparte were approved by an overwhelming majority of votes in both referenda.

⁴⁰ The moderate revolutionary demands represent a certain prerequisite for a successful revolution (in the sense that society overcomes a moderate revolution rather easily and quickly returns to normal life as well as gets a rather strong impulse for development). The increasing social demands in case of the success of a revolution bring drastic and costly societal transformations with temporary shift away from the general historical mainstream. At the same time, it is important that a slower but more peaceful development finally turns out to be more successful, that is to say, slow and steady wins the race.

⁴¹ In particular, Thorstein Veblen argued that sometimes a leisure class may lose the instinct for self-preservation. For example, that was the case with the Romans during the barbarian invasions in the late Roman Empire. Yet, in a book analyzing sociological theories the authors tried to correct Veblen arguing that the leisure class loses not the sense for self-preservation but the skill to self-defense, that is, that the Romans probably forgot how to protect themselves, that is forgot how to do it since the barbarians had replaced them everywhere (Adams, Sydnie 2002: 253). Sometimes, we observe a real helplessness as showed, for example,

by the European administrators facing the invasion of migrants in 2015. In Russia's best-known fabulist Ivan Krylov's words, they failed to 'use the power'. This can be observed when not autochthons, but the newcomers work in the most important positions, for example, in manufacturing. Samuel Huntington (1968) also notes that on the eve of revolution the former elite 'loses will to power and the ability to rule'. But there are situations when the elite loses just the instinct for self-preservation. This can be also exacerbated by the desire to imitate the more developed societies via establishing institutions that do not correspond to the elite's interests and to which society is not ready. The establishment of democratic institutions after which the elite may lose its power, is quite frequent. As far as I remember, this happened under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev in the USSR, though there was no need for such an abrupt turn to democracy.

⁴² It is characteristic that the king still ordered the Life Guards to disperse the disobedient deputies, but when the guards tried to enter the hall of minor pleasures where they gathered, Marquis de La Fayette and some remaining noblemen blocked their route with swords in their hands.

⁴³ For an interesting analysis of this miscellany see Eidelman n.d.

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