

# A b s t r a c t s

## Revolution retour

Ilya Kalinin

Anti-revolutionary revolution remembrance policy  
Russia's regime and the spirit of the Revolution

Throughout 2017, the Russian leadership has been faced with a major challenge: It must integrate the memory of the October revolution into a historical narrative that rejects revolutions as a matter of principle. Its core message is one of reconciliation. However, the area of concern is not the civil war of 1917-1920. The past is merely a pretext. The real purpose is to have all criticism of the current regime branded as a threat to social peace, stigmatising criticism as a destructive revolutionary activity. The October Revolution is to be forgotten, to be replaced by a national patriotic commemoration of the social order that was toppled in October 1917.

Lev Gudkov, Natalia Zorkaya

Instrumentalisation, patchworking, suppression  
Russia's unwanted anniversary of the Revolution

The Soviet image of the October Revolution is only slowly disappearing from people's minds. Many still view 1917 from the perspective of the Party history written by Stalin and the literature produced for the masses during the 1960s. At the same time, the Putin regime is promoting a specific reinterpretation. The aim is to anchor stability and a strong state as the core political values among the population. Surveys show that this venture has succeeded. This point of view is supported both by those who regard the October Revolution as a catastrophe and those for whom the Bolsheviks overcame chaos and the dissolution of the state. By contrast, the liberal ideas of the February Revolution have been completely suppressed.

Nikolaus Katzer

A long goodbye  
The Revolution as past and present in Russia

Russia is in the throes of an identity crisis. The country has a contradictory history, which for a long time has been falsified and misused for political purposes. The 100th anniversary of the October Revolution offers an opportunity to take stock of the most recent historiography and politics of history. The hope of the ruling elite is that the remembrance of the October Revolution can be used to create unity. However, in the current politically charged atmosphere, there is almost no room for new scientific findings, clarification or processing of the events.

## Revolution categorised

Andreas Heinemann-Grüder

### Destruction and order

A brief, comparative sociology of the Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution was a global event. It served as a justification for anti-democratic counter-revolutions and marked the beginning of a new type of political regime : single - party dictatorship. It started a period of organised violence unprecedented in the history of mankind, brought the disintegration of a major empire to its conclusion and led to the establishment of the Soviet Union, which had a decisive impact on international relations during the 20th century. An analysis of the causes, progress and consequences of the October Revolution using the methods of comparative historical sociology leads to important insights for a general theory of inhibited and accelerated social change.

Lev Gudkov

### Soviet man

The emergence and reproduction of an anthropological type

The October Revolution was the starting point for a vast social project: the creation of a new type of human. Over the course of 70 years of Soviet rule, a specific anthropological type was indeed created: Soviet man. He is characterised by the ideological standards that he is expected to fulfil, and by the almost limitless power of the all-encompassing state institutions. He reacted to the omnipresent contradictions between reality and the official norms by adapting and developing double-think. The repressive state formed the mentality of people so firmly that this type began reproducing itself. In Russia, Soviet man was the basis for the resurrection of the authoritarian state.

Jan C. Behrends

### Legacies of communist rule

An approach to the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution

Today, large parts of Europe and Asia are marked by the consequences of the October Revolution. The Revolution led to the creation of the Leninist party state, the pillars of which – the secret police and propaganda – still dominate the mentality of the population and the political culture in the post-communist societies. However, the political practices of the late socialist regimes, which after Stalin's death largely abandoned the use of terror and mass violence, continue to play an important role in the states and societies in this region to this day. In Central and Eastern Europe, where communism prevailed for a shorter period than in the Soviet Union, and where it was brought to an end by the societies of those countries, this legacy was easier to overcome than in places where the civil war and Stalinist mass violence had already left deep wounds during the 1920s and 1930s. The future of communism in China, where the Bolshevik party state has been incorporated into the global capitalist economy, remains entirely uncertain.

Carsten Herrmann-Pillath

## Blocked modernisation

State, property and revolution: Russia, 1917-2017

A century after the Russian revolution, light is finally being shed on the many consistencies between the Soviet and Tsarist regimes. The only real break with the past that resulted from nationalisation was with regard to property ownership. However, on closer inspection, there is continuity here, too. Since the age of Catherine the Great, the Russian state has been implementing radical changes to property ownership – be it nationalisation or privatisation – in order to stimulate modernisation. However, in the long term, this goal was never achieved. It was always the weakness of the state that prevented backwardness from being overcome. In the Tsarist Empire, the state was unable to assert the realisation of infrastructure projects against the absolute property rights of the nobility, while in the Soviet Union, the planned control of the economy remained a utopian vision. Equally utopian was the notion of stimulating progress through radical privatisation. In the neo-partimomial order under president Putin the authoritarian state has had renewed access to property, but the profits from the oil industry are mostly being used to support unproductive sectors of the economy.

Roland Götz

## Progress without anarchy?

The non-theory-based practice of Soviet economic planning

Marx and Engels were convinced that an economic system without market relations would follow on from highly developed competitive capitalism. Instead of competing with each other, people would produce sensible plans for production and its distribution. Precisely because they largely followed the basic approach taken by Marx and Engels, the plans created for the overall economy by Soviet planning practitioners were neither consistent nor efficient. In the Soviet Union, instead of planned management of the economy, there was a chaotic juxtaposition of bureaucratic mechanisms, individual political demands and shadow economy practices, while attempts to form a theory of overall economic planning remained without any practical relevance.

Helmut König

## The founding of freedom

Hannah Arendt and the theory of revolution

The October Revolution was intended to liberate Russia from Czarist rule, and led to the establishment of a totalitarian order. In her book about the American and French revolutions, Hannah Arendt presents a theory of the failure and success of revolutions. When the revolutionaries see themselves as executors of a legitimacy of progress, or when the revolution promises to fulfil basic human needs, then it will lead to tyranny rather than freedom. This applies to France in 1789, to Russia in 1917, and to all states in which the alleged revolutionaries incite attacks on democratic institutions in the name of the people.

## Revolution visualised

Ekaterina Makhotina

### No experiments

#### The 1917 Revolution in Russia's politics of history

Russia's elite used the 100th anniversary of the Revolution to call for national reconciliation. Politicians and publicists create a link between the Revolution and the historical "Smuta". In a similar way as during the "period of confusion", the period of revolution, with the defeat of Russia in the First World War, the loss of the empire and the civil war, is presented as a "catastrophe" for Russia. The Revolution preceded the division of the elites. All means must be applied to ensure that this is never repeated. For this reason, the Putin leadership warns against opposition and protest.

Jan Kusber

### What remains after 100 years

#### The Red October of 1917 and Russia

Almost nothing remains of the great promises of freedom of the Russian Revolution. Poverty and injustice are still prevalent, and freedom and emancipation were stalled by Stalinism and the authoritarian-bureaucratic etatism. International relations, too, were not reconfigured, the more so since the global revolution failed to materialise. Communism or socialism of the Soviet type has lost all attraction as a model of political order. The most important legacy of the Red October is that in Russia, authoritarian-imperial institutions and practices continue to exist today, and that in society, the values and norms of "Soviet Man" are being reproduced, even though the Soviet Union no longer exists.

Nikolai Plotnikov

### A conservative search for meaning

#### The Russian philosophy of the counter-revolution

The negative perception of the Revolution of 1917 in today's Russia has its roots in the Perestroika era. At that time, the writings of opponents of the Revolution, such as Nikolai Berdyaev, were published and read in huge numbers of copies for the first time. A key role was played by the re-issued collective volume "De profundis" (1918), the authors of which reflected on the metaphysical "meaning" of the Revolution. Many of them regarded the social cataclysm as being a punishment for the moral failures of the intelligentsia, and hoped for a national rebirth. This conservative "philosophy of the counter-revolution" strongly influenced the political mindset of post-Soviet Russia. Key elements are politics created in the spirit of religion, separate national paths of progress and the rejection of communism and liberal democracy in equal measure.

Margarete Zimmermann

### Unity and reconciliation

#### The Orthodox Church and the remembrance of the Revolution

The October Revolution marked the starting point of a persecution of the church that had no precedent in Russian history. The Orthodox Church was almost obliterated as an institution. Today, there is no mention of the perpetrators in the official church remembrance of the Revolution; instead, priority is given to the notion of reconciliation. The church leadership is seeking a position of solidarity with the state. The shared mantra of remembrance is that unity among the people is a prerequisite for the defence against liberal ideas. Only in this way can a new revolution be prevented.

Tatiana Zhurzhenko

### Reinvention and disposal

#### Ukraine: the Revolution of 1917 in the light of the Maidan

In the Ukrainian collective memory, the Russian Revolution plays a secondary role. Instead, all attention is focussed on the revolutionary period and the attempts at creating a Ukrainian state between 1917 and 1921. Many observers see parallels between that period and the “Revolution of Dignity” on the Maidan in 2013/2014. In both cases, there is a desire for freedom, national self-determination and an independent state. Others regard the Maidan as being a second attempt at revolution that followed on from the anti-totalitarian uprising of 1989. And for undogmatic leftists, the “Revolution of Dignity” had the potential for a social movement in the fight for social justice and human rights against oligarchical capitalism and the corrupt political system in Ukraine. The revolution on the Maidan throws a new light onto 1917, on the “Soviet century”, and on Europe as it is today.

Kateryna Mishchenko

### Speechless revolution

#### The Ukrainian Maidan. A review

The Maidan was a revolutionary experience. The people involved acted together and as a result became a political entity; they showed solidarity and liberated themselves from authoritarian rule and coercion. Little remains of this constitution of freedom, and violence and war are to blame. Society is deluded into seeking out internal and external enemies instead of taking a critical look at itself, and the emancipatory language of the revolution is repressed.

Lyudmila Novikova

### A more complex historiography of the Russian Revolution

Since the opening up of the archives following the collapse of the Soviet Union, there has been a new revival in research into the Russian Revolution. Historians have obtained new insights into the non-Bolshevik parties, the situation in the regions and on the periphery of the Empire and on the national governments who fought the Bolsheviks. By embedding the

Revolution more strongly into the European context as a whole, such as the First World War, the structural crisis of the continental empires and the revival of national movements in Europe, representations of and explanations for the Russian Revolution have gained greater substance, depth and comparability.

**Aleksei Bratochkin**

**Hybrid remembrance**

**The October Revolution in Belarus. A literary review**

To date Belarus has not officially broken with the Soviet past. However, while the Soviet myth of the “Great Socialist October Revolution” continues to be perpetrated, it has been subject to change. 1917 is remembered in whichever way is expedient to the regime under Aleksandr Lukashenko. The spotlight has increasingly been directed towards the national issue and the proclamation of the Belarusian People’s Republic in 1918 in order to legitimise Belarus’ own statehood. The Soviet presentation of the Revolution as a breakthrough for justice and equality is still upheld, while at the same time, the term “revolution” has been increasingly negatively connoted. The authoritarian Lukashenko regime fears overthrow and change like the devil fears holy water.

**Kristiane Janeke**

**Revolution in the museum**

**1917–2017: delicate commemoration**

Museums play an important role in the official presentation of history. This applied in particular to the Soviet museums of the revolution. In today’s Russia, the state also exerts influence on museums. At the same time, they are being altered by greater professionalisation and international networking due to economic pressure. Museums bring together politics, science and the general public. Their work tells us a great deal about the state’s policies on history and changes to its own self-image. The exhibitions held to mark the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution in the “Museum of Contemporary Russian History” in Moscow and the “Museum for Political History” in St. Petersburg differ significantly in terms of their concepts, museum design and political statement, and reflect the uncertainty in terms of history policy as to how to handle this delicate commemorative year.

**Phillip Bürger**

**Moving history to the “Bad Bank”**

**The Revolution in Russia’s education policy and school textbooks**

The October Revolution was the founding myth of the USSR, and determined the way in which Soviet citizens viewed history. With the collapse of the USSR, the history of the Revolution lost its binding force; since then, there has been much debate in Russia as to how it should be interpreted. The Putin government wants to harmonise history textbooks in order to promote national unity. But the complex legacy of the October Revolution prevents it from being exploited for the purposes of patriotic educational programmes. The centenary could provide an opportunity for renewed consideration of the Revolution and its consequences. However, those in power are attempting to ignore it to a large degree.

Anna Schor-Chudnovskaya

Revolution and the Soviet Union

On historical awareness among young Russians

Many people in Russia have difficulty accepting the collapse of the Soviet Union. This feeling is also shared by members of the younger generation. Their values and norms are almost identical with those of their parents and grandparents. In interviews on the significance of their family remembrance of the Soviet past, it has emerged that they know little about the Revolution and the history of the Soviet Union. In almost every family, violence and repression are remembered, but at the same time, the Soviet Union is regarded as a country that promised progress and a better life. Today, young people complain about the loss of prospects for the future. Their recourse to the past satisfies their longing for security and stability.

Andrej Linchenko, Daniil Anikin

Bad revolution, good tradition

Russia's parties and the October Revolution

Revolution is in principle negative, while tradition – including Soviet tradition – is positive. The parties close to the state – particularly the “president's party”, One Russia – share this position and re-interpret the Revolution as being a preliminary stage to state consolidation. The Russian nationalist LDPR goes one step further and represents a monarchist view. The CPRF, which regards itself as the protector of the legacy of the revolution, has to perform clever manoeuvres in order to attract voters whose world view is shaped by the resurgent Orthodox church. Only Yabloko, the liberal party, regards the February Revolution as having left a positive legacy that was then destroyed by the October Revolution.

## In revolution's wake

Bärbel Schmidt-Šakić

The revolution of women

Alexandra Kollontai and gender equality

The Russian revolutions of 1917 had a lasting impact on relations between the sexes. Russia was the first country in the world to lay down full gender equality between men and women in law. A key contributor to this development was the Marxist theoretician, feminist and revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai. Her utopia of the new woman and free love was a radical emancipation concept. Gender equality between men and women was considered to have been fully achieved in the Soviet Union. In reality, women were indeed granted social and economic rights, but the same did not apply to the political sphere. The revolution of women led to an irreversible sexual revolution with regard to gender relations. In today's Russia, Kollontai's historic contribution towards the emancipation of women is neither recognised nor honoured. The relationship between gender and power is more unbalanced today than ever.

Zaal Andronikashvili

Ostracised and forgotten

Georgia's social democracy in history and remembrance

2017 as the year in which the Revolution is commemorated is of no interest to Georgia. In 2018, the country will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first Georgian nation state, and in 2021 it will commemorate the destruction of that state by the Bolsheviks. This purely national perspective – just like that of the devotees of Stalin, who are still to be found – ignores the significance of Georgian social democracy, its social and national reformist ideas and their implementation from 1918-1921. In order for them to be rediscovered, the national Bolshevik myth must be questioned as well as the image of history that focuses solely on the nation state.

Daniel Weiss

On the language of the Soviet system (a linguistic perspective)

The official idiom of Soviet power, referred to here as “newspeak”, was by no means a random cluster of heterogeneous stylistic features, but a uniform whole that was systematically and thoroughly organised to create higher-level, semantic polarisation. As with all propaganda, the central axis emerged from the separation of the familiar and the foreign, or the “good guys” from the “bad guys”. At the same time, however, the means used to do so covered large areas of what had originally been value-neutral lexis, starting with pronouns such as all or every, as opposed to several or some, adverbs such as always as opposed to sometimes, modal expressions such as must or necessary as opposed to can or possible. In so doing, they had a profound effect on sentence semantics and syntax.

Svetlana Malysheva

Dead in red

Funereal rites in Russia after the Revolution

The Bolsheviks introduced “red funerals” after the October Revolution. These civilian rituals were designed to replace Christian rites and spread the worldview of the new state. Outside of the major cities, however, this type of ceremony never took hold. It was abandoned at the latest after the Great Patriotic War, and religious customs were revived. Only state funerals at the Kremlin necropolis had to be conducted in observance of official Soviet rites. However, even these apparently worldly rituals were rooted in the Christian tradition. At the same time, many people regarded the Soviet practices, particularly the cremation of important individuals, as being a severe breach of cultural traditions.

Oula Silvennoinen

From border country to nation state

The Russian Revolution and Finland

The history of independent Finland begins several weeks after the October Revolution. The day Finland declared independence did in fact only mark the starting point of the civil war. The fight for Finland's independence, which is often presented in linear terms, was in reality heavily fractured and characterised by inner conflicts. The Russian Revolution and the Russian civil war from 1918 played an important and often ambivalent role in Finnish statebuilding. The crises and fissures of the early 20th century cast a long shadow, and their traces can still be seen in the political system of contemporary Finland.