

Revolution as a political concept.

a The word Revolution as a political concept is a rather young word. A sudden, unmanageable event that defies our notions of peace and order was called, in antiquity, mutatio rerum. Rebellion and sedition or Civil War was used in Latin for the 'cock-fight' as the Greek called internal strife and fratricide within one city.

Rebellion or Civil War often could be long and slow affairs; Mutatio rerum stresses more the sudden, unexpected character. Rebellion was lawless, mutatio rerum a merely descriptive term, without moral qualification. The temporal changes could be called reversiones or volumina, too. Revolution was not in use, except for the metempsychosis, the migration of the soul through a series of bodies.

b After 1200 A.D. however, this changed. With Dante, Revolution is used for the astronomic / rotation of sun, moon and stars. And in the late 14th Century, the turmoil in Italian cities often led to political constellations of so unexpected a type that they for their breath taking abruptness, were called 'revolution'. In this same sense, the Italian term seemed the only available word, when Henry the IV. the Huguenot King of France went to mass in 1594. This took the breath of his fellow countrymen and for that reason seems to have been termed 'la révolution' with a loan from Italian political theory which at that time, influenced the 'politicians' widely.

c In all these cases, the term is indifferent to value. Morally, Revolution before 1700, could be styled  $\pm 0$ , that is to say: the event is cosmic, transcending the earth, of astronomical size. Useless to argue about its merits. It was like hail or rain, 'beyond me'. A revolution, than, was an event surpassing / human understanding.

This is a valuable feature of the term revolution for any theory, as we shall see very soon.

In 1688, the term revolution, for the first time, lost its character of the 'beyond'. The Whig Revolution was that first cosmic intrusion on the political globe which was acclaimed as not only enormous but as Glorious as well. The grateful acceptance was the new feature. A Revolution dinner took place annually on the 5th of November.

Revolution, in England, never lost its positive sign of +, after that. This is important to remember because on the continent of Europe, this was not so. There, Revolution was still an event of  $\pm 0$ , as the French and German dictionaries of the 18. century show. The Revolution was neither 'glorious' nor 'progressive', nor 'inevitable'. It was a break in continuity, unpredictable, unmanageable. /

d In the American Revolution, the element that we moderns would classify as 'revolutionary' was not in the term Revolution at all. For, as the norm for a Revolution, the American Revolutionists looked back to 1688. Even today, the 10. first amendments to the American Constitution are called a

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 bill of rights; and the author of the Declaration of Independence derived the Right of Resistance from 1688. The American Revolution contained a revolutionary element; this however, is to be found in the word American. Here, a political created was cut out of the wide realm of nature, and the manifest destiny of the inhabitants of a vast continent was disclosed by the authority of geography.

e The American Revolution was the reassertion of the Glorious Revolution Principle / for a New World; the creation therefore, not of the political principles, but of the United States of America, was the revolutionary event. 'I am an American', a revolutionist of 1776 had to exclaim lest he be mistaken for a British subject. As a revolutionist, he might have been a loyalist. The notion and term of a 'revolutionary', as a man who fostered future revolution was unknown at that time.

f And now, we enter another period with the French Revolution. The French, shot through with British ideas and loran's (?) from the English enlightenment, expected some great event in the summer of 1789. The fall of the Bastille, on July 14, they took to be the equivalent of James II. departure from England in 1688. Only, they erred. The fall of the Bastille was not the end of the struggle. It was a beginning, to be compared to the British / rebellion in 1641. The fall of the Bastille needed to be followed up, to be interpreted, to be defended. Thus, after the 14 of July 1789, the cosmic event of super-human validity, the Revolution, was claiming for human and political support by mortals. The supporters of an existing state of Revolution, with a new and, in fact, absurd term, were called revolutionaries. Those who refused to see that the revolution had happened and was irresistible, became counterrevolutionaries.

5 The French Revolution, carried forward by Revolutionaries against Counter-revolutionaries, became the paradigm for the rest of the world. It was the Great Revolution, / from which Mexico and Poland, Belgium and Greece derived the standards for how to make a national revolution. The Glorious Revolution of an Island was followed by a Great Revolution setting up the law for the whole continental world of Nations and allowed the national democrats everywhere to think of themselves as potentially revolutionaries.

h Even these liberals, however, reserved the adjective revolutionary to that minimum of violence and lawlessness that society had to pass through in order to shed the feudal fur. Revolution though positive in result, was not acclaimed as positive in itself. The terror of 1794 struck so deep and people disclaimed to be revolutionaries except when no other / lawful way could be found.

The British who wished to foreclose any second Glorious Revolution, represented the subjective character of the French term. And they, with great sagacity, coined a phrase that eliminated the continental infiltration by revolutionaries, effectively. Their Glorious Revolution of 1688 had transcended all the wilful planning or plotting of individuals. As a parallel, for

the 19th century, an equally objective 'revolution' was put in the place of the French. This was called 'Industrial Revolution'. In the usage of 'Industrial Revolution', the predemocratic, pre-French way of thinking of a revolution was preserved in the English political dictionary.

i Industrial Revolution corresponds / to Glorious Revolution about as accurately as sportsman to gentleman or as 19th century to 17th. It was a face-saving term because it allowed to liberalize British institutions without reference to the Jacobine principles of 1789 although, in fact, their pressure forced the hands of the British Reformers throughout. Industrial Revolution, then, is a counterrevolutionary term, from the French viewpoint, or a term within the framework of English institutional life, for digesting new problems.

The objective Italian - astronomic - usage of Revolution, the objective mixed with positive appraisal (British - American), the subjective - objective of the French did not exhaust the potentialities of our term.

j In 1847, the Communists declared war to the French Revolution. They acclaimed the right of changing the political world in its entirety logically. / This is a remarkably bold attempt to insert Revolution in the rank and file of man-made products, "yet leaving to her the cosmic and universal character. All the alterations of the orbs from whom we do exist and cease to be", now had to become correlated to the process of logical dialectics of human brains: the unpredictable event that overthrows human political concepts. The World Revolution, was going to be, altogether, a logical, arithmetical, mathematical result, too.

k The men who predicted, forethought, precalculated revolution, long before it happened or could happen, a kind of cooks of the revolution, became a new type of professionals. Anyone who shunned loyalties, legality, career and conventions of the existing order could claim to prelive and to anticipate that cosmic surprise of the future, and / label himself a 'revolutionary'.

This cold, technical, scientific usage of Revolution is inherent to Marxian and Bolshevik principles. Where the French Revolutionary defenders of the ideas of 1789 are hot, lyric, pittoresque, the Russian chemists and cooks are drycut, scientific, logical.

l Still it is important not to mistake their aloofness and coolness for the impartiality of a liberal observer of Revolution. Nothing would be more misleading. / The Marxian - Russian coldheadedness of social engineers of Revolution is balanced by their claim of being scientific. The sober, cold private individual may see his own interests. The revolutionaries of the World Revolution claim to realize the world's laws, the world's process of evolution. This superb arrogance of knowing the divine spirit and its movements to the minute, makes them akin with the former worshippers of superhuman Revolutions.

Nearer and nearer does man get to the cosmic universality and scientific necessity implied in our term. When it was used first, in Italy, the

political unity was smallest, a city; the astronomic and celestial dignity of the term was in all the minds. In glorious Revolution, the term conquered a whole nation, in the Great Revolution the civilized nation, in the Russian the World. It is, today, nearest to a universal event, including all of us / inescapably, in our ways of thinking, working, planning, hoping or fearing. The fascist powers are making Communism the issue in China and Japan, in Spain and Brazil. As if it were a compensation to this growth into a universal catastrophe, we think of the part to be played in it by man, to a larger extent than four hundred years ago. Then, the event was beyond all human planning. Today, it, at least, we may become conscious of the maelstream we are in, in time. We may time the cosmic event.

Revolution of the sky	Area of the revolution	Human share
1400	city	none
1688	country	positive appraisal, grateful acceptance
1789	civilisation	defence of its ideas
1917	world	conscious of its materials

#### The Philistines of Revolution.

All the four usages which we listed, agree in one viewpoint. All of them respect Revolution as a cosmic fact about which there is no argument. It may be like a thunderstorm, it may be one Glorious and gracious Opening, once and for ever, it may be the Dawn of Reason for all the civilized nations or as with Russians, it may be the acceptance of a perpetual world-struggle of the underdog - in all these cases, the speaker who uses the term, bows to great superhuman necessities.

There exists, however, the overwhelming majority of Philistines who simply wish to be left alone, with their every day Peace and evolution and endless discussion of things. To them, revolutions, even today, are the things that simply ought not to be. / They profane and abuse it as an abortion, like any crime. Revolution is madness, to them, sterile, destructive. It is outside the pale of the human affairs which they deign to consider, like museums, concerts, discoveries etc. Mr. Sorokin and Mr. Merton are good examples of writers on revolution who feel absolutely sure that they are unbiassed, untempted, disinterested onlookers. They see a strange, alien, abominable crowd and mob psychology domineering during the revolutions and they shrug their shoulders. This group is the counterrevolutionary group. It consists of that brittle part of society which is no longer conducive of electric waves and subteranean currents. These Philistines / once they become the majority of the ruling class, make the outbreak of revolutions inevitable

since they themselves no longer are in touch with what is going on.

As in illnesses of the body our only safety lies in immunity acquired by vaccination or similar anticipation of the disease, the only attitude towards revolutions of the body politic which promises survival, is vaccination. A man who thinks that never could he become a revolutionary either ignores his heart or has none. In both cases, he excludes himself from the body of mankind that experiences revolutions. And he denies the one great truth, conveyed by all and every right usage of the term Revolution. And this great truth is / that Revolutions in order to deserve their name, must be events of cosmic rank, concerning all humanity, disclosing new political principles valid universally. And furthermore, that there are those breathtaking, shocking events. The totality of a revolution must include anyone who wishes to talk about it. A scientist who tries to theoretize Revolution from the outside, cripples its very object to insignificance. The scientist is not expected to be or to become a revolutionary. I am none. What he, however has to admit that this or that revolution has given him a mental knockout, that it has overthrown his political concepts to which, otherwise, he might cling. A revolution / must upset the standards of common place and common sense political reasoning or it is no cosmic event. Revolution, then, is an event that throws our political concepts out of gear. Why this is possible and even inevitable, is not under discussion here, where we try to save, from the development of seven hundred years, the majesty of the term Revolution. As an unexpected unmanageable event that overthrows our human notions, it claims universal character, and this word universal must be taken literally enough. It must include the sociologists who study revolution or it is no revolution.

A comparison may help us. In physics, the effect of dynamite falling on a rock, will be studied as part of the / science dealing with dynamite. The rock's reaction is a part of the action of the agent dynamite. Similarly, no medical man will describe a new remedy and omit, in its description, its effects on the human body. Quite the contrary. The biological scientists easily will put the reactions of his patients to his new medicine first. They are the really important thing.

With a revolution, the mind of the sociologist must be saturated. His mind is shot through with emotional repercussions from the revolutions he has studied. His brain is the rock, his mind is the biological system which is reacting against the vaccination with the germ revolution. As a rock in a wisely manipulated blasting will move out of / our way, as a medicine will cure the patient because it is administered in a slight dosis, the shock from the revolution in the human mind may be small. Only, we must not deny the shock. Or we deny our scientific qualification for dealing with the facts.

Physical events are marked in rocks. Biological events leave their marks in bodies. Social events are retraceable through changes they produce in our

minds. Now, a revolution, by definition, is that social event the traces of which are to be found universally in every mind. The detached sociologist who claims that he is not changed, shell shocked, tempted, remodelled from standing at the edge of the abysses called revolution, is less vital, less fit, less representative, in his opinion or judgement than the man in the street.

Typewriting from a handwritten manuscript of Eugen Rosenstock-Huëssy by Lise van der Molen, Winsum Gr. on March 2 1988. The pages are marked a still it and here in the typewriting marked with %.

The manuscript is incomplete. There is no date mentioned in the manuscript. From p. I venture the date between 1936 and 1939. of social and economic change in Germany... (The rest of the page contains extremely faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the document.)