

Dan Leahy's Book Outline:

REVOLUTIONS AND HISTORY

By Noel Parker (1999)

Introduction: Meanings of Revolution in Time and Space

An essay on both the history and idea of Revolution. A European idea and phenomenon -- Europe's intrusion in the rest of the world.

Too many termed "revolution" lately so instead of comparisons look at them as "historical phenomenon" (3). Start with synchronic definitions and diachronic evolution. (3)

Does history shape or is shaped by revolutions? His answer:

"Revolutions are doomed to be more and more the passive effects of historical forces from outside."(4)

Definition: A revolution .. "consists of a sudden, profound, deliberately provoked crisis about legitimate power over a society, tending to produce an upheaval and change in both the political and social spheres. (4)

Revolutions -- "overtake the normal capacity of the political and social order to reproduce itself." (Mexico's PRI regime?)

Other terms in Revolution:

Revolt, rebellion, insurgency, etc. -- with revolution, it is the "**breadth of the attack**" -- attacks the established power across the range of manifestations. (6)

The idea of **irreversible** change and historical sequence:

An idea associated with European modernity. One of the appeals of the idea of revolution... of one directional change... of a historical sequence and human actors have their place in this sequence. (7)

"By the end of the twentieth century not only is the particular sequence in dispute: the shared sense of a historical frame is weaker.... (7)

The **main theme of this book:** the way revolutions have meaning.

The Revolutionary narrative - the form of interpretation. He therefore talks separately about revolutions and the narrative of revolutions. (9)

1. 19 century "narrative" postulates people nation could recast their history along lines written by history itself.

2. A demonstrable overall trend from the 15 century in the incidence of revolution.
3. Revolutions are reactions to gradual spread of European study modernization.
4. Revolutions occur on the margins and on the margins of "global modernization."
5. As core expands, revolutions occur further from the centre.
6. As the core advance societies diversify, "it will be inherently less obvious what alternative future is to be put forward by a revolutionary challenge. (9-10)
7. The **historical story of revolutions has skewed** the perception away from agency towards structural breakdown.

HOW REVOLUTIONS HAPPEN (PART I)

Revolutions in Past History

Thesis: movements of history and global development have undermined the possibility for revolutions to repeat that central, 'historic' role. (16)

Revolts, not revolutions. Often turned toward secession rather than frontal attacks.. asking freedom from existing authority. in the 16/17c, "state transforming ideology had not yet locked horns with the state itself." (17) Peasant revolts not conducted as "revolutions."

Reformation Revolts: --

Hussite Revolt -- common language, common cause across groupings and operating on the edge (marginality) of monarchical authority (21)

The Dutch revolt succeeded, while others failed. Success due to wealth and commercial prosperity of the area. (25)

Reformation revolts - challenges to government will readily settle for private religious rights or complete withdrawal. (25). The English Revolution (1648--9) led by conservative men, but religious radicals..

State Finance and Armies -- I think he makes an interesting point here about financing armies and the army (or at least its costs) was the "major motor" of change -- Why did this dynamic make for revolt in one case, secession in another and revolution in another??

Spatial dynamics: England was a state with territorially confined power. (27) -- it presented a single governmental order.

Revolution needed a "site of overall change" -- In the absence of a single governmental order which a putative revolution may meet, crisis and change are diffused. (29)

Is this both today and also with a one world US power is there a site in creation? (National Security Strategy - Bush Doctrine).

The meeting of resistance and organized management of society emerges as a crucial marker to distinguish paradigm instances. (29)

Constitution-republican revolutions and the crises of absolutism.

Fiscal crisis as a key factor

Constitution - Government having clear principles in writing with broad social agreement for the good of the public - res publica (31)

American, French, Netherlands/Belgium (87/90), Germany 1790s, Ireland (1798), Spain (1820)... - democratic, Atlantic revolutions.

Formalize in secular terms the role of the state and found society on natural law where individuals possess "transcendent qualities." (32)

Not necessarily anti-monarch, but do hit the target - the pre-existing state itself.

Note: These revolutions did confront the state in their own territory. They were not marginal and they set the historical idea of revolution. What if, however, these revolutions were inherently "bourgeois" - yet the idea of revolutions is about belonging to a certain class?? Also, these revolutions did not bring "absolutism" to an end.

If they were "bourgeois" maybe we don't want a "revolution" - Maybe we want something else? What is it? Remember the role of the Bourdean Atlantic trade (Girondists) in the French revolution... or, of course, the leaders of the American "revolution."

Note: "**Democracy**" associated with this type of Revolution was only about "notions" , not results. (37). We have to conclude that - "democracy is opened up as **a possibility by the constitutional-republican revolutions; but it is not inherent** in them." (37)

Communist (social democratic) Revolutions.

First half of the 20th - more associated with democracy in sense of mass base and stated intentions, but rarely successful.

Only **China and Russia** as success... although results disputed.They overtake ailing absolutism on margins of existing state system.

Given spatial marginality -- why were these two meaningful (39) for the next 70 years. Both sides agreed they were "historic" -- Maybe - perceptions of revolutions are a greater political force than their reality. (39)

(NOTE: Certainly applies today with the Al-Qaida notion of attack and "significance." What is the purpose of recognizing their significance. Why Russian revolution such a threat?)

National Liberation Revolutions

1945-70 - Former colonial to independent with establishment of recognized nation state. - Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cyprus, Algeria, Kenya, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Bangladesh. (39)

1. Established state a faraway metropolitan power.
2. Uneasy alliance between national elites and rural power holders.
3. Weaker core state control due to aftermath of war, modest urbanization and narrow industrialization, leads to greater role for rural militarized resistance.
4. Westernizing national elites -- therefore, debate over direction of change.

Contemporary Revolutions

Difficult to define, but could be categorized as Western and anti-Western, such as Iran and Afghanistan

1. Iran and Afghanistan -- Began with attempt at top-down westernizing revolution. Shah of Iran (White Revolution) and Taraki/Karmal in Afghanistan.
2. Clans, Warlords, town bazaars, religious groups oppose. West and East funnel war materiel - outcome??
3. Pro-Western.

Mass demonstrations against incumbent communist party

Major reformation with CP subject to broad elections

Absence of retaliatory action: morale collapse.

USSR withdrawal from Afghanistan

Most regimes in debt to Western finance.

Dan Note: Is this guy a geographer?? Spatial relations? -- difficulty today: "revolutions have left the geographical setting which gave them coherence -- therefore singularity of their previous aspirations." I guess he means Europe and its intrusive activity.

WHY REVOLUTIONS HAVE OCCURRED

Three explanations

System breakdown

Overarching direction of change

Agency - it's logical to seek an agent (46)

1. Breakdown

1. de Tockqueville's account of French Revolution formative case. Revolution brought about by the political order it destroyed. (47)

2. It occurs when civil society (potentially autonomous) and state are out of balance.

3. He also is an originator of "statist" analysis -- ie the state is a determinating factor in revolution and outcome. (47)
4. Crane Brinton's of necessity time to time. Or - an upsurge of primal collective impulses - or Gurr's notion of violence out of relative deprivation, or balance of forces theories of Rousseau. Or, Huntington (68)
5. Return to "status quo ante."

2. **Change, Progrss and Modernization** (progress breaks)

Revolutions are part of the overall direction in historical development. (52)

1. Enlightenment idea of "progress of human spirit toward greater rationality... " toward a better good.
2. Marx's idea of advancement, but not evenly. (53). Marx sees French Revolution as making progress on "abstract level."
3. **Weber's Switch** from "progress to modernity" ?? Modernity is also goal-less -- a transition rather than a sequence of improvements toward fulfillment. (54) which is "progrss."
4. Revolution as a "progress break in modernity." Huntington instructed about how to avoid it (68) and Chambers Johnson. Barrington Moore also writes in this context as maintaining a societal balance as modernity faces rural power.

Skocpol - (Page 56 summary and critique): Competition among states; some fall behind; nobility and rural forces break control. Urban elites step in to replace control, but too narrow a base. Therefore they resort to centralization of authority -- ala - Napoleon, Stalin and Mao. (56).

3. **Will of human agents**

Marxist agency comes in that exploited class is engaged, but it is Lenin who says it can not happen spontaneously.

Modern, specialist skills in organization and leadership are called for... provided by a party of professional revolutionaries. (58).

Trotsky argued that will and agency in the Russian Revolution had been predominant.

Lukacs (Hungarian revolt) argues that the working class can overcome "alienation" -- or lack of agency.

EP Thompson was to find a will which mounts effective resistance

Tilly -- forms of resistance have purpose behind it. Revolution are moments when various social groups have mobilized to contend over control of state apparatus. (60).

Parker's question: What is the framework for the will of human agents at the end of the 20th century. The pattern has been to deny human agency (Scopkol)

My question -- what is the role of humans, then? If agency is either not possible or has never been a part of it anyhow, what do we do here in this class?

I also want to read What is to be Done? Drive away from spontaneity and economism.

THE TREND IN REVOLUTIONS

The relationship between WHRE and IMPACT for intended change, and influence on other states and type of perception.

But it also sets a problem about where, and in what form revolutions could be expected for 21st century...Yeh!

Modernization. Breakdown and Modernization. Change and Will. and Revolution and modernity.

Remember: this guy is a modernity guy. Revolutions as reaction to this goal less force of transition.

Modernization and Theories

The long term process by which our modern world came about. Either spread and interaction or evolution between and within layers of given systems.

1. Braudel, Wallerstein and Arrighi are the spread and interaction school. The capitalist city and now the world economy of Europe and now the US.(66)

2. Wallerstein -- system as a whole is a mechanism to extract surplus wealth generated in economic processes and in transfer from periphery to core. (Notoriously unamendable to human agency)

(I am not sure what Parker is doing here to advance his argument.)

Breakdown, Progress and Modernization

Revolutions occur where states are conduits of the pressure from the expanding, modern global system.

Global pressures not the end of the story, nor do they preclude the possibility of a revolutionary situation, as Wallerstien or Skocpol would conclude.

Agency: nearer the revolution occurs to center of expanding core, the greater the scope of human agency to make a deliberate choice. (WHY??) (77) - **Need to discuss this.**

The French occurred in Center and therefore not exemplary of revolutions... As you move from the center it is harder to argue about presence of agency.

Mexico: (His discussion is facile and uninformed, me thinks) Forget Cuba and Peru therefore.

SUMMARY -- What is he saying about the "trend?" -

REVOLUTIONS AND MODERNITY IN 20TH CENTURY

In his introduction, he outlines his argument. It's a good summary:

Revolutions are a reaction to European centered modernity.

Revolutions closest to this center therefore have a chance to effect the spread of modernity -- i.e. the French only.

Therefore, you can see why the French had or was perceived to have such an influence and why 3rd World Revolutions fade.

However, modernity has different -shifting centers, since as the shift to the United States. **Some revolutions can take place between different versions of modernity and therefore amend its given forms.** (88)

What does he mean by between? When the center is shifting? When the hegemon isn't in place?

Three types: Mid-Century National Liberation Revolutions

Anti-Westernizing Revolutions

Post USSR Pro Westernizing

National Liberation

There were "internal divisions" at the center. WWI was a conflict of new comers to modernity (Japan, Germany) and the old center. The older center aligned themselves with a newer version, the US.... (See the "betweens"?)

Algeria. French trained elites mobilized rural people displaced by French colonizing to defeat a Metropolitan area bent on keeping control of oil. Political disagreement resolved by military coup in 65, led to oligarchy benefiting from oil. (90)

Vietnam. Three spatial-temporal "ripples:"

Colonial power had already been displaced by Japan

Vietnam had a well grounded pol/econ integrity

On boundary of new East/West modernity created "space"

Threw off European modernity for US imperialism

Conclusion: - Areas of the globe less integrated into Europe in the first place exhibit the late 20th century challenge to modernization per se. (92) !!! and WHY IS THAT?

Anti-Westernizing Revolutions

These revolutions were against states who were acting as "conduits" for modernization.

Iran . British tobacco interests first, then Russia and Britain divide Iran in 1907. Then ended in competition by USSR and West over modernization ideas for next six decades. The northern "GILAN" soviet repressed by SHAH and then used to repress soviet style ideas until revolution of 1979.

Shi'a utopian version, cassette tapes, social networks of the bazaar and gerontocratic authority... basis for revolution against both competing forms of modernization.

The Iranian revolution: First to succeed in using Islam to overturn an existing, native, political order. (95) -- **A new form of modernity with a future orientation** for social organization within nation-state notion. Is it flexible enough?

Afghanistan British occupations until leftist coup in 78 and subsequent USSR invasion and anti-Soviet mujahedin led to Taliban with split in Islam (Iran to north/Pakistan/Saudi Sunnis to Taliban).

Conclusion: Not sure if there is a global future for this form of modernization. Islam in power "exhibits can opaqueness to popular inspection that leads to corruption" which even Iran may fall to. (96)

Post Soviet-Pro-Western.

The in=power elites were not willing to defend the collapse, nor were the opponents able to sustain their post soviet vision. New Forum, Civic Forum and Solidarity were overcome by Westernizing forces external to the rejecting nations.

Collective human agency overcome by being on margins of global order and having to negotiate (by oil if they have it) or for coalescence -- (probably entry to EU).

Possibilities on the margin

Turkey. Secular, Turkic and Western, but isolated by the West with no entry to EU. Top down, militarized, industrialized but still marginal.

China. Special spatio-historical classification. It has lasted for two millenia as a integration political and cultural unit. And, it has seen that foreign capital can be used without "political demoncratization." (107). - Create an "Asian version of modernity."

WHY REVOLUTIONS MATTER, PART II

REVOLUTIONS AND HISTORICAL CHANGE: (NARRATIVE)