



Stefan Rinke, Michael Wildt (eds.)

REVOLUTIONS AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONS

1917 and its Aftermath from a Global Perspective

campus

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**1917 and its Aftermath from a
Global Perspective**

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About the book

1917 was an important year in world history and not just because of the United States' entry into the First World War and the Russian Revolution. It is rightly considered the turning point of the war and the foundational moment for determining structures of the short 20th century.

Contemporaries realized these global connections, yet in a historiography limited to the nation-state they did not gain due consideration.

This book unites research discussing the transnational dimension of the numerous upheavals, rebellions and violent reactions on a global level. Experts from different continents contribute findings that go beyond the well-known European and transatlantic narratives making for a global history of this crucial period in history.

Vita

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Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions: An Introduction

Stefan Rinke and Michael Wildt

Revolution is a concept of modernity. As Reinhart Koselleck informs us, “revolution” in the pre-modern era meant “recurring crisis”.¹ In keeping with the times, Copernicus thus called his book on the movement of the stars, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*.² The North American and especially the French Revolution forged a new understanding of the term. Since then, revolution has marked a break in the continuity of history, a political and social upheaval and reorganization of social relations, and a radical opening of the historical horizon. At the same time, it is associated with the notion of progress toward a better world. “Revolutions are the locomotives of history”, Karl Marx remarked, aptly formulating this historico-philosophical narrative framework.³

But who are the locomotive drivers, the stokers, or the passengers of the “revolutionary train”? Who are its conductors? Theorists have been quick to identify the carriers of the revolution. Traditionally, it has been the people, the lower class, the oppressed. But rarely has it been recounted whether the people, the lower class, the oppressed actually participated in the uprising against their oppressors. The urban masses in Paris who stormed the Bastille and killed the commanders did not represent the French people. And, as the elections to the Constituent Assembly showed, the small group of Russian Bolsheviks could not even unite the majority of the Russian working-

class behind them.⁴ In Mexico, the various factions were so at odds with each other that they fought a protracted civil war which claimed more victims per capita than the First World War in all the belligerent countries of Europe. Who, then, are the “stokers”? The actual revolutionary actors who make sure in the various phases of the uprising that the course of events does not come to an abrupt halt? The ones who see to it that the king, the tsar, the president are overthrown, the existing political institutions are destroyed, and new representational systems are established? To fully grasp what a revolution is, a careful, nuanced look at its actors, their heterogeneity, and their fluidity, is indispensable.

Those who believe in the legitimate advance of history have no qualms about interfering with it. Indeed, they “organize” the revolution, as Lenin demanded, without the passengers knowing about it or even asking where they are headed. In this case, it is the avant-garde—those at the front of the locomotive holding the levers of power—that determines the timing and the legitimacy of the revolution. If the uprising succeeds, and the old regime collapses as in Paris in 1789, Mexico in 1911, or St. Petersburg and Moscow in 1917, then the revolution’s favorable outcome comes as a vindication to the revolutionaries.

This by no means settles the issue of legitimacy, however. It is precisely because the success cannot last and difficulties, setbacks, and threats inevitably arise that the victory at the seizure of power is not enough. Revolutionaries are measured by whether they manage to sustain the power they have acquired, to give lasting form to the upheaval. Increasingly, the revolutionary violence directed against the oppressors is turned against those who were themselves oppressed. In France and Mexico, as well as in Russia, the revolutionaries stood with their backs to the wall. In order to hold on to power, they resisted by

applying excessive force. This terror against the counter-revolutionaries, the “enemies of the people”, is inherent to revolution. Critical to its analysis, then, is an attentive and differentiated, not just an essentialist, study of violence. Such a study includes its forms, actors, perpetrators, victims, bystanders, locations, circumstances, and dynamics, as well as its radicalization.

While the revolutionaries prefer to blame foreign powers for the counter-revolution and to eliminate them as “enemies of the people” in order to maintain the veneer of a “united people”, the revolutions themselves are what divide society. Even when large masses of the population support the overthrow of the old regime, as in Cuba in 1959, Iran in 1978 or Ukraine in 1990, there are always other groups that do not support the revolution or even oppose it (if only because their welfare had been tied to the old regime). Counter-revolution is inherent to revolution.

Indeed, the major studies from Michel Vovelle or François Furet and Denis Richet on the French Revolution demonstrate the centrality of tradition and religion, especially in the provinces and the rural and agricultural areas where the call for an uprising is met with incomprehension and resistance.⁵ Or how, as in the Russian case, the peasants constituted the backbone of an alleged proletarian revolution because it was the previous czarist rule that had destroyed the traditional order in the countryside. The Bolsheviks not only promised peace, but also a just social order in which the soil would belong to those who cultivated it. The aims of the followers of Emiliano Zapata in Mexico were similar. It was nearly a “revolution” in the traditional sense: Zapata’s Plan de Ayala in November 1911 and the decree on the soil (one of the first policies issued by the Bolshevik government at the beginning of their rule in October 1917) meant the

restoration of the rural community that had been destroyed by its dependency on lease agreements with landowners.

Just as the French revolutionaries liked to invoke antiquity and to portray themselves in terms of past models, the Bolsheviks had a tendency to view themselves as Jacobins—as dogged and unyielding revolutionaries who would brook no compromise with the old ruling class. The Mexican insurgents, on the other hand, appealed to a mythicized indigenous past. The fact that the revolution promised a better future, while legitimizing itself on the basis of a putative history, indicates the continuing ambivalence of “revolution” as a concept. An uncertain leap into the future, after the institutions of the present have been smashed, is easier to make when it is perceived as the restoration of a previously just order that was defeated by the former rulers.

A revolution thus merges entirely different ideas, wishes, expectations, and hopes that are supposed to be satisfied through the overthrow of the old and the establishment of something new. Perhaps this is what defines the revolutionary moment: As the confluence of otherwise disconnected things, it gives rise to the force, the violence, that bursts open and sweeps aside the ruling system. Nothing could be more misleading, therefore, than to comprehend revolutionaries as a homogeneous political or even social unit. Rather, it is necessary to differentiate between various groups and interests, which, in turn, are able to develop and realign themselves in different ways over the course of the revolution. It is, finally, important to not simply buy into the self-descriptions of unity and cohesion that the revolutionaries present to the public.

A revolution, not least, opens up a realm of opportunities. The innumerable everyday descriptions from revolutionary Russia tell us, first of all, that the overthrow of the old order meant the empowerment of the many. The masses seized power, which was ripe for the taking, and satisfied

their own needs. It was a scene of anarchy and violence, in which the people simply took from the propertied class what they wanted. The Bolsheviks' universal call to plunder the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie—to delight in their property and to carry out violent looting as compensation—led to the radical obliteration of the old social order. It was on the latter's ruins that the Bolsheviks were then able to emerge as an order-giving power.

As we know, the annihilation of the regime in 1917 was not exclusively a Russian problem. It was certainly not strictly a European one, either. The Europeans, who pounced on each other in August 1914 as if suddenly released from their cages, used the term "world war" even before the hostilities began. They of course firmly believed in their own importance as a center of the world, but, in the age of imperialism, a war among the great powers of Europe could only be a world war. The combatants, after all, had colonies throughout the world that were naturally drawn into the conflict. "World", accordingly, meant the major European powers, along with their non-European colonial appendages.

This Euro-centric view has been slow to change in historiography and the historical consciousness over the last hundred years. Indeed, the international nature of the war and the interdependencies with the so-called "global south" were largely ignored. Nevertheless, over the last several decades, there have been works of historians from Asia, Africa, Australia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe that deal with the contribution of their own regions to the war.⁶ Above all, they have pointed out the, in some cases, horrendous casualties from the colonies, in which soldiers were sacrificed on European battlefields or forced to do the lowliest work behind the frontlines. We now know that the battlefields in Eastern Europe and beyond the European continent claimed huge losses, including among the civilian

population. This is especially clear when looking, for example, at Asia Minor, where “ethnic cleansing” touched off the genocide against the Armenians.

The much-cited “seminal catastrophe of the 20th century” (George Kennan) was thus by no means limited to Europe. Many of the battle lines existed outside Europe. Fighting predominantly erupted where the German Reich had colonies. Unlike the Second World War, the battles took place (albeit often with less intensity than in Europe) in large parts of Africa, including south of the Sahara; in the Pacific from Tahiti to the Chilean coast; in the Far East; in Siberia; and in the vast Ottoman Empire.⁷

In the course of the war, the British and French enlisted large numbers of troops from their colonies, often using coercive tactics. The British Dominions Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were greatly involved here, and yet more than a million soldiers also came from other parts of the Empire, including one million from India alone. France issued a call to arms to around half a million men from its colonial empire in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, which sparked racist and anti-colonialist sentiments in Germany. Beyond this, around 36,000 workers from China, so-called “coolies”, were recruited.

In the global context, the war was also carried out in other spheres. It was a truly worldwide conflict, for it shook the global financial and economic system, along with the cultural values that underpinned the Europeans’ sense of global supremacy. In the 19th century, London became the center of the international financial system. Great Britain’s entry into the war thus sent financial shockwaves across the world. To finance the spectacularly expensive war, its participants needed money, and lots of it. It now had to come from the United States, which was transformed from being a net debtor to a net creditor. Debtor countries such as Latin America, who until 1914 had received their loans

in London, were now forced to turn to Wall Street.⁸ As Adam Tooze recently stressed, the global economy increasingly oriented itself toward the United States.⁹

International trade likewise charted a new course. To begin with, it was badly shaken by the Entente's naval blockade and the Central Powers' submarine warfare. Free trade came to a standstill. Even the neutral states were affected. The warring powers cared little about their national sovereignty or, for that matter, existing treaties and international agreements. Still, the globalized system did not completely founder—it was merely realigned, specifically toward the needs of the belligerent Entente powers.

Especially fortunate were the countries of the south that could provide war-critical raw materials like copper and rubber. Saltpeter from Chile, moreover, was necessary for the production of gunpowder, and wool and leather from Argentina was highly desired for soldiers' equipment. During the war, food imports from overseas became increasingly important as European producers lost their lives on the frontlines. The advantage that the Allies had in being able to freely call on these global resources, unlike the Central Powers, was critical to the outcome of the war.

From the beginning, the warring parties also framed the conflict as a "cultural war". Propaganda took on a new dimension in the First World War and it was directed not only inwardly but also outwardly to the colonies and the neutrals. Europeans now accused each other of betraying civilization and committing barbarism. Given what was happening on the battlefield, this claim did not seem very far-fetched. In Africa, Asia, and Latin America, this propaganda was counterproductive to some degree, for it greatly undermined the myth of the Europeans' inherent superiority.¹⁰

The anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movements that existed before the war were strengthened considerably in many places during the war years. This was not only due to the effect of the propaganda, but also to the real impact of the war on the working class in both the city and the hinterlands. In many cities of the south in particular, the hostilities in Europe triggered a state of emergency. Unemployment, runaway inflation, and the simultaneous explosion of consumer prices plunged many people into a state of existential distress. The result was increasing social tensions.

These developments, moreover, took place against the backdrop of hopes and promises that were connected to participating in the First World War, especially in the colonies. The sacrifices that were made in what now seemed to be a senseless war were rarely acknowledged. The urban workforce's willingness to protest increased markedly under the influence of the Russian Revolution in 1917. There was rioting in many places, although it was not usually directed against colonial rule as such, but rather at achieving better living conditions. The step toward radicalizing these demands, however, was not a difficult one to make.

With the Bolsheviks' conquest of state power in November 1917, the political tectonics of Europe and the world underwent a fundamental change. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, communism not only represented a real force that dominated half the world. It also continued to hold out a promise—despite or because of its deformation in the Eastern Bloc—of a better society that could mobilize millions.

The fall of the czar was proof that the old forces were no longer sacrosanct. Simultaneously, it spurred the hope in Europe that war would now come to an end. Throughout Europe, the press reported on the call of the Petrograd Soviet in late March 1917 to the masses of the world,

especially German workers, to free themselves “from the yoke of their semi-autocratic regime”, to no longer be “an instrument of conquest and violence in the hands of kings, landowners, and bankers”, and to end the war. In mid-May 1917, the Party Committee of the German Social Democratic Party welcomed “the victory of the Russian Revolution and the international peace efforts kindled by it (with) ardent sympathy”.¹¹

All across and beyond Europe, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets, went on strike in the factories, or deserted from the army. They not only wanted to bring an end to the war, but demanded democratic reforms and national self-determination in the remaining autocratic and imperial realms. While the rulers repeatedly managed until 1918 to quash the strikes and riots with armed violence and forced recruitment, and to punish deserters with harsh court martial judgments, the signaling effect of the Russian Revolution was obvious. It spelled the end of the old monarchical regime and empires and it now seemed possible to establish a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

The Bolshevik seizure of power in October/November 1917, however, also summoned enormous bourgeois fears of dispossession and destruction. Reports of how the Bolshevik politics of violence would lead to chaos, anarchy and “Asiatic conditions” were pervasive, not only among the right wing, but also within the social democracy. None other than Karl Kautsky warned against the violent dictatorship of a “Tartar socialism”. In doing so, he also invoked an occidental discourse that had been a permanent part of Western political thought since Greek historiography on the war against the Persians—an allegedly civilizational defensive war of the West against the barbaric attack from Asia. This gave the counter-

revolutionary criticism a global historical dimension early on, which is frequently glossed over in the history books.¹²

The presence of anti-Semitism cannot be ignored here. The fact that a number of prominent revolutionaries in Russia, as in the rest of Europe and in the Americas, came from Jewish families was enough for the political propaganda to equate Bolshevism with Judaism and even to represent Bolshevism as the product of a Jewish conspiracy. The so-called *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—first published in Russian in 1903, then in French and in German in 1920, alongside many other languages—reached a large audience with several hundred thousand copies in a variety of editions. This crude fabrication reproduced the minutes of an alleged secret meeting of Jewish elders, who wanted to use both liberalism of the West and Bolshevism to subvert all social order and take over the world. The “Jewish century”, as Yuri Slezkine called the 20th century in reference to the catastrophe of the Shoah, also had its beginning in St. Petersburg in 1917.¹³

The year 1917 would turn out to be an important milestone for the non-European world: The United States, but also many Latin American countries and China, formally entered into the war which took place (if only officially) outside of their own hemisphere. As a consequence, the war’s persistent pull on the world as a whole became much stronger. The political and socio-economic problems that had been apparent since August 1914 were exacerbated and the emotional character of the public debates gained in intensity. In addition, the events of 1917 gave rise to new fundamental questions about power politics and the world order.¹⁴

The hope for a quick end to the war after April 1917 soon dissolved. As the bloodshed dragged on for another year and a half, shortages were felt around the globe. The Allies used their power to force the export of products from

regions where people were suffering from hunger and despair. During the course of 1918, the so-called “Spanish flu” made matters worse, causing millions of deaths around the globe. Social unrest followed. It was not only fueled by internal causes, however, for the revolutionary rhetoric emanating from Bolshevik Russia was also heard in distant corners. The radicalization of social conflicts soon dampened the enthusiasm that broke out with the armistice on November 11, 1918, which was a truly shared global moment. War appeared to seamlessly transition into revolution. The Argentine intellectual Augusto Bunge remarked with noteworthy foresight in early January 1919:

“If the approaching peace does not bring a fundamental solution to the current problems of the civilized world, it will be nothing more than an armistice during which the war will continue with other and no less devastating means than the armed conflict and which will lead to new and perhaps even more horrific confrontations”.¹⁵

The peace negotiations of 1919 already gave cause for concern. In a positive sense, however, the end of the war and the peace encouraged strong political mobilization and spurred the public interest in politics.

The right to self-determination for all peoples—propagated by Lenin and Wilson and institutionalized in the League of Nations—remained an utopian dream. The unfulfilled promise gave rise to a general dissatisfaction, which in the years to come proved to be fertile ground for many of the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movements in the global south. Thus, in the lives of millions of people outside of Europe and North America, the First World War was a devastating and far-reaching experience. They demanded answers to the question of European

responsibility and questioned the legitimacy of the Old World's power.

Contemporary observers were very aware of these global connections. But in national historiographies these global connections were overlooked for decades. This has changed in recent years. New research has analyzed the transnational links between the innumerable revolts, rebellions, and revolutions and the violent reactions that followed in other parts of the world.¹⁶ It has focused on scarcely known incidents far away from the global "centers", investigated south-south relations, and revealed new lines of research. This book draws on and represents this new research. Its contributions compare the revolutions and counter-revolutions of the years 1917-1920. Their entanglements are analyzed in a global context. How did the revolutionary potential develop in different world regions before 1917? What was the impact of the Russian Revolution? How should we describe transfers of knowledge, experiences, and practices? What kind of images were spread on a transnational scale? How are we to comprehend the relationship between local and external causes? What was the impact of violence in the disputes of the late war years and the early post-war years? What were the reactions to it? To what extent were revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements in different contexts and continents linked to each other?

In his introductory contribution Jörn Leonhard focuses on the globally rising expectations during the period from 1917 to 1920—political and social as well as national and anti-colonial expectations, often overlapping with each other and thereby reinforcing complexity. When the American President Woodrow Wilson developed his vision of a new world order in 1917, his focus on the right of national self-determination, particularly that of small nations, played an almost fundamental role. Both the war

and the Wilsonian moment, Leonhard argues, provoked globally rising expectations of what a peace settlement after a totalized war would have to achieve. The hitherto unknown number of war victims which had to be legitimized through the results of the peace, ever radicalizing war aims, the ideal of a new international order which would make future wars impossible, as well as the new mass markets of public deliberations and the new relation between “international” and “domestic” politics in an age of mass media and democratic franchise: all these elements contributed to a massive disillusion and disappointment when the results of the peace settlements became obvious. The image of the war changes if we open our European narrative into a global one. Leonhard summarizes that the formal end of the war gave way to a broad spectrum of new spaces of violence on a global level—wars of independence, ethnic cleansing, wars to revise terms of the peace-treaties—which transcend chronological compartment of 1914-1918.

The following section deals with the Russian Revolution of 1917, its international legacy, and its opponents. Dietrich Beyrau studies the Russian Revolution as a global challenge. The revolution has been a polarizing event in Russia as well as in Europe and in the world. On one hand in the metaphor of H. G. Wells: a burning script at the Eastern wall of Europe, a portent for the Western civilization. On the other hand in the understanding of the Russian revolutionaries: by violence to salvation. And by their Russian critics and foes the revolution: an experience in catastrophe and apocalypse. Beyrau argues that the civil war in Russia was a product of the Bolshevik militancy and, at the same time, shaped the Bolshevik dictatorship and its worldwide strategy. Over the following decades the export and support of revolutions became a constitutive part of the Soviet power politics. The Bolshevik revolution challenged the socialist parties in Central and Western Europe.

Beyrau's paper sketches out that almost all fundamental discussions about a political order after the First World War had to define their position in relation to Bolshevism. Its rejection became a constitutional part of the political identity of most of the non- and anti-Bolshevik ideologies and political positions: Liberalism, democracy, nationalism, authoritarianism, militarism, (clerical) fascism and not least national socialism.

In his paper Jan Claas Behrends regards the Russian Revolution as a laboratory of modern politics which cannot be understood without the tsarist regime in the context of a global world. From the 1890s onwards the tension between developing society that began to articulate itself in the public sphere and the regime rose to new levels, Behrends argues. With the Bolshevik upheaval and the establishment of Lenin's government one-party rule, permanent dictatorship became a new option in modern politics. The Bolsheviks proved that a few committed men could seize the commanding heights of the state machine, use it to defend power and further their radical goals. Violence played a decisive role in the Bolshevik's struggle for power. Behrends outlines that the Bolshevik leadership around Vladimir Lenin had two approaches to win the civil war: the willingness to commit to the unrestrained use of force—including mass-terror—and the building of new institutions. The international debate about the Russian Revolution which Behrends analyzes in the second part of his article followed national lines, focusing on the debate between Karl Kautsky and Leo Trotsky. This type of modern state would be adopted by other dictators—not merely in Europe but across the globe, Behrends states. It was not tied to Leninist thinking and could be legitimized by other ideologies. After 1991, still refusing to adopt the Western model, Russia has once again become a laboratory of modern politics, successfully combining its traditional

autocracy with the control of modern media and an eclectic mixture of conservative ideologies.

Patrick J. Houlihan examines the global Catholicism's crusade against Communism from 1917 until 1963, at a middle ground on the ideological spectrum between extremes of communism and capitalism. Initially greeting the Russian Revolution with enthusiasm for the fall of Tsarist Orthodoxy, the Vatican became an anti-Communist key player in the following period. Compared to its shrinking pre-1914 scope in international affairs, the Great War was a moment of consolidation, renewal, and spiritual advancement for the Catholic Church. Houlihan emphasizes the role of Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) and his successor Pius XII (1939-1958). In 1937 Pius XI warned that the "all-too-imminent danger [...] is bolshevistic and atheistic Communism, which aims at upsetting the social order and at undermining the very foundations of Christian civilization", and Pius XII praised Franco's Spain: it had "once again given to the prophets of materialist atheism a noble proof of its indestructible Catholic faith". Even the Nazi mass crimes did not change the anti-Communist view of the Vatican fundamentally. Houlihan's article outlines how Catholicism played a major role during the Cold War in conceptualizing a variety of Third World responses between the US and Soviet camps. As a legacy of 1917 that continued through the twentieth century, Houlihan sums up, the Catholic Church weathered total war and confronted the challenge of the Cold War. In a post-1945 world, Communism was still an ideological and material threat; a contrasting global worldview competing for mass loyalty of souls.

Abdulhamit Kırmızı takes a look at the Ottoman Empire. There was alliance between Turkish nationalism and Bolshevism after the revolution. Kırmızı describes how Mustafa Kemal tried to get the support of Bolshevism from the very first moment he started organizing his "anti-

imperialist” national movement and considered implementing its principles for the liberation of the country without endangering Islamic and Turkish traditions and values. The idea of world revolution was sold to the Muslim world within an embassage of pan-islamism. Mustafa Kemal acrobatically managed to maintain good relations with the Bolsheviks while not allowing a Sovietization of his own country. During the resulting nationalist independence war, fought against British imperialism as much as against Greek invaders, Kirmızı’s paper outlines, Mustafa Kemal used at times very clearly anti-imperialist discourse, while leaning towards Soviet Russia. Kemal secured support not only from Bolshevik Russians through his communist-flavored anti-imperialist rhetoric, but also from Indian and central Asian Muslims with his pan-Islamic rhetoric. The examination of the connections between the Russian Revolution and the “Anatolian Revolution” as the emergence of the Turkish nation-state is understudied in view of new historiographical perspectives, Kirmızı argues. Bolshevism, among other ideologies, like pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism, became instead one potential source for the Turkish nation-building process.

While violence was obviously a constituent element of the Russian Revolution and the counter-revolutionary activities, the third section of this book is focusing on this aspect. Robert Gerwarth emphasizes that violence was central to how Bolshevism was perceived by its opponents across the globe and integral to the response with which it was met even in countries in which a Communist revolution was unlikely. The Russian Civil War was obviously very brutal, with at least 3.5 million people killed, but the rumours about Bolshevism that flourished and drifted westwards were even worse: stories of a social order turned upside down, of a never-ending cycle of atrocities and retribution amidst moral collapse in what had previously been one of the Great Powers of Europe. Gerwarth’s paper analyses

different forms of anti-Bolshevik violence throughout Europe between 1917 and the outbreak of World War II. Although counter-revolutionary violence across Europe was directed against a wide range of real or perceived enemies, Jews featured particularly prominently. The notion that Bolshevism, Gerwarth argues, was essentially a Jewish ideology clearly originated from Russia, most notably from White propaganda, but the idea found widespread approval across Europe. The first fateful legacy of the years 1917-1923 lay in a new logic of violence that permeated domestic as well as international conflicts. Central to this new attitude towards 'enemy civilians', Gerwarth argues, was the widely perceived need to cleanse communities of their 'alien' elements, and to root out those who were perceived to be harmful to the balance of the community.

Izao Tomio's chapter analyzes an act of international violence that outlived the end of the First World War. It explores the significance of the "Siberian intervention" (1918-1920) in modern Japanese history. Izao first analyses discussions within the Japanese government about the desirability and possible form of an invasion of Siberia, demonstrating that the Japanese sought to protect their interests in the region by agreeing to a "joint U.S.-Japan expedition". On paper, the main objective of this international intervention was the protection of the Czechoslovakian Legion, and, as the Japanese government emphasized, to help the Russian people in their fight against the Bolsheviks. Yet, in reality, Japan was involved in an economic war with the US, and fought a losing battle against the Russians. Izao argues that this defeat of the foreign intervention troops and counter-revolutionary armies in Siberia was Imperial Japan's first ever "lost war". Concentrating on two particularly painful events, the Battle of Yufta (1919) and the Nikolayevsk Incident (1920), it reveals the ways in which Japanese politicians, journalists, and public grappled with the losses that were suffered, and

the political consequences they had both inside and outside Japan. The invasion that had started as an international intervention against the Russian Bolsheviks by now had evolved into the frontline not only of Japan's struggles with Russian political forces but the Korean Independence Movement as well.

China entered the war in 1917. Xu Guoqi claims that few nations have been more deeply influenced by the Russian Revolution than China. In the early 1920s, the future Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong declared that the sounds of guns from the Russian Revolution delivered to the Chinese Marxism-Leninism. Yet, as Xu contends, Mao was not completely correct here. The message of Marxism-Leninism was not really influential in China until the 1920s. In other words, the Chinese were not really interested in the Russian revolutionary model until after the post-war peace conference in 1919. The paper argues that it was in fact the First World War and its immediate aftermath that formed the crucial temporal setting for China's age of revolutions as well counter-revolutions, while the Russian Revolution and Chinese reality served as an important spatial background. The Great War was initially perceived by China's elite as an opportunity to realize their desire to transform the country into a modern and strong nation-state. Yet, the Allies' decision in Versailles to give Shandong to Japan inspired the May Fourth Movement that rejected the Western model and inspired the search for a third way into the future, which later was to be found in Russian communism. On the other hand, attempts to advance China's national interests in the world and demonstrate its national strength by joining the war triggered domestic unrest and counter-revolutionary activity. The chapter concludes that even though there have been few eras in Chinese history that were more stormy, the journey of internationalization and national renewal on

which China embarked during this period still affects the country to this day.

The impact of revolution and revolutionary violence had a global reach which developed under specific local conditions. In general, in combination with the effects of the World War it caused crises. Sometimes the crisis remained limited to the discursive level but more often than not it reached the streets, leading to massive social unrest and political violence all around the world. For instance, by 1917, the presence of the First World War in Latin America was no longer limited to just economic and propaganda warfare. Instead, the conflict's political and military dimension had pulled the subcontinent along in its wake. Stefan Rinke's chapter explores the responses of Latin American political and intellectual leaders to this global conflict. Concentrating on the region's published discourses, it analyzes the debates over who was to be included in the nation, who was to participate in decision-making and what role the continent should and could play in the global context. Rinke addresses these questions in relation to three developments that influenced countries throughout the region. First, the rise of nationalism and its effects on thinking about politics, race, economy, and culture. Second, the striving for social participation reflected in the mobilization of the youth, workers and women. Third, the growing impact of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism on the ways in which observers in Latin America looked at the world and the ideas they formulated about the region's role in a newly to be formed world system. These discussions illustrate that as a result of the First World War the future became more open than ever. Even when the war was not the only factor triggering these emancipatory ambitions, the hostilities aggravated long-existing sources of potential conflict everywhere, thus serving as a catalyst and transformer of the movements

that shaped the future of the region far beyond “the birth year of revolutions”.

Zooming in on the Argentinean case, María Inés Tato argues in her chapter that the Russian Revolution constituted a global moment, whose repercussions extended far beyond the European scene. This landmark event was appropriated in various ways in other world areas, where the intellectual and political horizons continued to be dominated by previous models and traditions, and where other decisive global moments had a stronger effect. Tato assesses the impact of several simultaneous global moments on the circulation in Argentina of different transnational ideologies related to the representation of national identity. By comparing responses to the First World War and the Russian Revolution, it seeks to elucidate the complex entanglements between global and local dynamics during the year 1917 and its aftermath. The article argues that until 1917 the Great War was appropriated and experienced mostly through the prism of a pan-latinist definition of Argentinity (*argentinidad*). Yet, in response to the unrestricted German submarine warfare and the United States' entry into the war, notions of pan-Americanism and pan-Hispanism partially replaced this earlier version of a transnational identity. In comparison, the impact of the Russian Revolution on notions of national identity was more limited. Only in 1919, at a moment of social unrest known as the “Tragic Week”, did counter-revolutionary sentiments surge that resulted in the creation of the Argentine Patriotic League. It was this organization that fueled a more extreme nationalist movement that opposed nineteenth-century liberal and cosmopolitan visions.

In 1917, the Spanish liberal monarchy underwent a serious shock. During that year's summer months, the press insisted that a major “revolution” was underway in Spain. The chapter by Enric Ucelay-Da Cal studies the

unfolding of this so-called “Crisis of 1917” within the context of the long-term development of the Spanish political system. It presents the events of 1917 against the breakdown of the political agreement reached between liberals and conservatives in 1885. The arrangement, characterized as *turnismo*, presented a common electoral norm of continental liberal monarchies that ensured pre-election agreements among political opponents. Although relatively successful, the parliamentary system entered into crisis after the popular revolt in Barcelona in 1909. As a result of internal discord and the growing political influence of Catalan nationalists, parliamentary dynastic parties disintegrated, resulting in their reduced presence within civil society. Political tensions grew further between 1913 and 1916 as a result of a sluggish economy, insecurities related to the First World War, and especially the rift within the army caused by the Moroccan campaigns. The article demonstrates that in this context of weakening party structures and growing dissatisfaction, the leader of the Catalan nationalists Francesc Cambó managed to forge a unity of hostile parties, and bring together in Barcelona an “Assembly of Parliamentarians” that sought to transform the monarchy in depth. While this “democratic breakthrough” failed, the “Crisis of 1917” did nonetheless turn into a watershed moment that many came to consider the starting point of new politics.

Birgit Aschmann analyzes the dimension of gender focusing on the role of women in Spain from 1917 until 1939. By placing two women in the spotlight (Dolores Ibárruri and Pilar Primo de Rivera), Aschmann sheds light on central female actors of revolution and communism on one side and counter-revolution and Francoism on the other side. Although communism initially was a very marginal phenomenon, Dolores Ibárruri, the “*pasionara*”, became the “face” and public symbol of the Spanish communist movement. Raised as a miner’s child and

religiously educated, she saw in communism the only possibility to find a way out of material misery and personal insignificance: the Catholic faith was replaced by communism. The decisive break was the year 1917. Her memoirs, as Aschmann points out, characterize the perception of the Russian Revolution as the central turning point in her life. From then on, her life was orientated on the Soviet Union. Pilar Primo de Rivera, sister of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the fascist Falange, was the head of the women's section of the Falange, and represented a quite ideological program, also centered on the "revolution". *Sección Feminina* struggled for a coherent gender picture. On the one hand, Aschmann argues, it was necessary to distance oneself from the image of the "Republican" and "the Red". On the other hand, it was necessary to counteract competing ideas about women within one's own ranks, and, thirdly, to address the model of female submissiveness preferred by men. Aschmann summarizes that Dolores Ibárruri as well as Pilar Primo de Rivera were of immense importance for the history of the Republic, the Civil War and Francoism. Despite the fact that all actual political course settings were implemented by others (men), their female rhetoric and their political, social and organizational actions were crucial to the acceptance, the way, and the dimension of their implementation.

Klaus Weinhauer compares social movements in two cities, Hamburg and Chicago, in a "glocal" perspective. In Hamburg local food protests mark the surfacing of localized social movements. Consumer protests and strikes from 1917 onwards transcended local boundaries, and were translocally interlinked with each other. Social movements reconfigured urban space as well as industrial space. In contrast to Hamburg, Weinhauer explains, in Chicago there was a broader spectrum of collective social actors. Voluntary organizations (clubs, churches) organized