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It's time to throw stones

Vladimir Platonenko

1 January 2023

Kropotkin wrote that great revolutionary upheavals, which give rise to great revolutions, occur on average once every one hundred and twenty-five years. He counted four such great uprisings and world revolutions: the Hussite Wars, the Reformation, the English bourgeoisie and the Great French Revolution. And he predicted a fifth, which was the Great Russian Revolution.

And each of the new revolutions that spawned these revolutions covered a larger area than the previous one. If the first embraced only the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, the latter, which began in 1910 with the Mexican Revolution and ended in the 30's (the last echo of which was the Spanish Revolution 1936–1939), covered almost all of Europe, half of Asia and parts of the Americas (Mexico, Argentina (although whether to consider the events in Argentina in 1919 lost revolution or just a boom in activity is an open question)). Interestingly, a hundred and twenty-five years before the Hussite wars there was another great revolution, which can be considered “zero” — it covered a still very small space — three Swiss cantons.

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Retrieved on 9th March 2023 from avtonom.org
Original translation.

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And now, attention! From 1910 one hundred and twenty-five years will expire in 2035. Given the upward and downward time spread, the revolt must begin somewhere between 2020 and 2050. In other words, we have already entered the “probability band”. It should cover even more space than the last one. And what are we seeing? Iran is boiling. Social upheaval has not yet begun, but is brewing in China. Syria is burning. Iraq is smoldering. If all of that happens at the same time, it will spread to Russia, where people are disconnected and inert, but poor and bitter at the same time, to Europe, where France is in turmoil from time to time, to Turkey, to India, which has its own problems that will be amplified in case of a world wildfire, and many other places. Then there is Africa, by the way, with its replicating Europe of the century before last, South Africa, the devastated DR Congo, the rapidly growing Nigeria and a host of other countries.

I’m not sure it will all start by 2025. Or even by 2035–2040. But that between 2023 and 2050 it will start, I’m pretty sure. And most likely it will start either now or in ten to fifteen years. And it will last for two or three decades.

I, like Kropotkin (poor consolation), have not been fortunate enough to meet the revolt already old and crippled. Although I still have a chance of gaining the strength to hang in there, if it doesn’t start too late. Those in their twenties, thirties or even forties, on the other hand, have a chance to be part of it all.

Ironically, history, like state power, mobilises without asking for consent. So if anyone regrets having to live in an era of change, I can only sympathise with them. No one asked me either if I wanted to live in an era of calm before the storm. Times, as you know, do not choose.