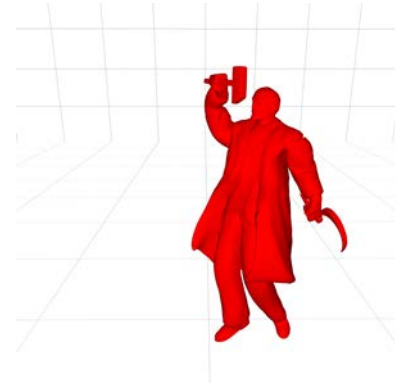


INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“ONE HUNDRED YEARS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD: FAILURES, LEGACIES, AND FUTURES OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION”

DATE: 5-7 OCTOBER 2017

VENUES: UNIVERSITY OF ST. GALLEN; LITERATURHAUS, ZÜRICH;
PALACE, ST. GALLEN



CALL FOR PAPERS

Centennials have always served as occasions for retrospection and reconsideration, especially if the events under consideration are generally seen as concluded. They urge us to explain the making of an event; to revisit its impact; to gauge its legacy; to debate and/or question its continuing relevance; to imagine the possibility of restaging or redeployment, etc.

The revolutionary events that took place in Russia were declared accomplished after the mythologized storming of the Winter Palace at 2.10 a.m. on Thursday, 25th October 1917, as the mantle clock in the Hermitage's "White Dining Room" indicates to this day. Due to the global changes these events set in motion, the Russian Revolution continues to loom large in intellectual debates one hundred years later.

The conference “One Hundred Years That Shook the World: Failures, Legacies, and Futures of the Russian Revolution” aims to look back at the Russian Revolution, to turn to its siblings and stepchildren, and to discuss the idea of a “revolution” in general. Accordingly, the conference serves as a stage for three related discourses: (a) the Russian Revolution; (b) comparative perspectives; (c) conceptual challenges.

a) The Russian Revolution

- Was there something specifically “Russian” that made this event possible? Does the Russian context promote a particular understanding of political practice? How did it affect/shape/influence policy-making in Russia, political formations and movements, and post-revolutionary theory?
- What changes did the Russian Revolution bring forth in everyday life (on the social, political or legal level, concerning gender issues, labor rights etc.)?
- How was the Russian Revolution conceived, imagined, and re-enacted in the cultural realm?

b) Comparative Perspectives

While acknowledging the importance of the American, French, and other transatlantic revolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, we would like to focus on historical comparisons between the Russian Revolution and the revolutions that directly preceded (1848, Paris Commune, 1905) or succeeded it (the November Revolutions of 1919, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, as well as the anti-colonial revolutions in Latin America, Africa, and South Asia). More recent phenomena like the so-called revolutions in Eastern Europe or the “Arab Spring” deserve consideration as well. These events raise a second series of important questions:

- What perspectives were opened for the restaging of revolutionary action(s), and how do they influence our current understanding of such action(s)?
- How is the historical memory of revolutions transmitted and reshaped by later generations? What role do different forms of memory and commemoration play?
- What do we mean when we talk about the success or failure of a revolution, and what are the most common pitfalls during their unfolding?

c) Conceptual Challenges

Lastly, we turn to the concept of revolution proper. Whereas the Left seems to be divided between a reluctant use of this notion – due to its totalitarian manifestations – and an unconditional, sometimes romanticized support, mainstream media do not mind using the label of revolution for current events in a fairly loose manner (umbrella revolution, etc.). This leads to a final series of questions:

- What in fact allows us to refer to an event as a revolution? Are there any distinctive criteria – objectives, organizational models, and/or strategies – that need to be fulfilled? What distinguishes revolutionary action from other types of political action and/or structural changes (revolt, insurrection, insurgency, riot, social movements, etc.)? What do we know about the temporality and spatiality of revolution?

- How does the rise of new subjectivities endanger or enrich the thinking and reenacting of revolutions? How do new technological and communicative means, current economical regimes, and social structures alter our understanding of revolutionary action?
- What are the representational strategies – in media discourse, in the visual arts, historical fiction, etc. – that shape contemporary views of the revolutionary past and the future possibility of revolutions?
- How do political revolutions relate to events and processes labeled as “revolutions” in other fields (digital revolution, scientific revolution, etc.)?

The organizers invite scholars from all levels and across disciplines (preferably philosophy, Slavic studies, political science, and history) to consider these and other questions in a collective attempt both to rethink the significance of the Russian Revolution and to further our critical understanding of the concept and practice of revolution today.

ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS:

Invited speakers: There will be six keynote lectures and 36 short presentations organized in four time slots consisting of three parallel sections with three presentations each.

The confirmed keynote speakers are: **Geoffroy de Lagasnerie** (Paris), **Christoph Menke** (Frankfurt/Main), **Jean-Luc Nancy** (Strasbourg), **Donatella Della Porta** (Florence), **Sylvia Sasse** (Zurich), **Karl Schlögel** (Berlin).

Target group for the CFP: The CFP is addressed to postgraduate students, doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, junior and senior faculty members. Work-in-progress or cooperative contributions are explicitly invited, as well as artistic projects and literary contributions.

Conference Language: English.

Applications: Abstracts for applications should not exceed *400-500 words*. A biographical note should also be included. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is *February 15th, 2017*. Candidates will be informed by *May 1st, 2017* and should confirm their participation by *May 15th*. Paper presentations should not exceed 20-25 minutes. They will be presented in three concurrent panels, and will be followed by a 20-15 minutes of discussion. No complete paper is to be delivered before the conference takes place.

Apart from the more general topics outlined in the Call, following sub-topics could also be taken into consideration as signposts for the abstracts:

- The Russian vs. the Cultural Revolution
- Notions of the Permanent in Revolutionary Processes
- Concepts & Aesthetics of Revolutionary Practices
- Social Imaginaries, Utopian Visions & Revolutionary Subjectivities
- Ethics of Revolution: Emancipation, Self-Determination, Violence
- Post-Communist Regimes & Neoliberalism
- Propaganda and Manipulation: Pathologies or the Revolution’s Second Nature?
- Typologies of Revolution: Intensity, Discursive Settings, Operational Limits, Goal-Dependency and the Contextual Embeddedness of Revolutionary Practices
- Leadership and Mass Movements

Additional Events: Beside the conference itself conducted at the University of St. Gallen on October 6-7, 2017, there will be two additional events targeting a broader audience: a panel discussion at the Literaturhaus Zürich on October 5, with selected speakers from the conference (conducted in German), and a “wrap-up” conveying central findings from the conference to a broader audience in the evening of October 7, 2017 at the cultural center “Palace” in St. Gallen.

Publication: A publication of the conference proceedings is already being planned.

ORGANIZERS:

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY ST. GALLEN (Prof. Dr. Dieter Thomä, Dr. des. Thomas Telios);
DEPARTMENT OF RUSSIAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY, UNIVERSITY OF ST. GALLEN (Prof. Dr. Ulrich Schmid);
LITERATURHAUS ZÜRICH; PALACE, St. Gallen