

American Phenomenology of the Russian Revolution: 1905 from the Other Side of the Atlantic

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Introduction

The foundations for the overall American vision of the Russian Revolution—the revolution that, according to the American observers, the society needed for its political renewal and progress—were laid precisely during the period of the First Russian Revolution (1905-1907). This revolution became the climax of the first American crusade for Russia's democratization, initiated at the close of the 19th century by Russian political immigrants and by George Kennan, the Liberal journalist who had made a journey to Siberia and acquainted the West with the punitive system of the Tsarist regime¹. As it watched the Russian Revolution unfold, the American society lived through its first cycle of hopes (concerning the prospects of Russia's modernization/westernization) and disappointments (with its results); as a consequence the Russian Empire became the object of the US world-reforming mission.

This article will be structured so as to follow through the distinct stages of this “cycle of hopes and disappointments”. When the cycle was on the upswing, it was, as a rule, dominated by liberal universalist myths that framed the image of the romantic Russian “Other” and shaped the range of meanings peculiar to the liberal universalist discourse: about the Russians' ability to carry out Western-type revolutions and to create “the United States of Russia”, about the essentially democratic Russian society that was dominated by the xenophobic and retrograde government, and about the Americans taking an important part in the process of reforming Russia. When the cycle was on the downswing, it was, as a rule,

¹ For details about the first wave of the American “crusade for Russian freedom” at the end of the 19th century, see: Victoria I. Zhuravleva, *Ponimanie Rossii v SShA: Obrazy i Mify, 1881-1914* (Moscow: Russian State Humanitarian University, 2012), 149-209; David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”. The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 12-33. On George Kennan's personal “crusade for Russian freedom”, see: Frederick F. Travis, *George Kennan and American-Russian Relationship. 1865-1924* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990).

dominated by Russophobic myths that played an important part in maintaining the image of the demonic Russian “Other” and shaped the range of meanings peculiar to the conservative pessimistic discourse : about the Russian political system as essentially authoritarian due to the peculiarities of the Russian national character ; about Russia’s imperial ambitions and the implementation of the “Russian way” that had negative consequences for the US foreign policy interests and for the entire civilized community.

The first and all the subsequent American “cycles of hopes and disappointments” about Russia² are impossible to explain outside of the American context. It is this context that has determined and still determines the hierarchy of Russia’s images, placing some of them at the center of the stage and delegating others to the periphery. This article does not consider all the existing images, but instead focuses on the central ones (of the “demonic” and “romantic” type) that reflected the current agenda of the American society and the socio-cultural traditions of its development.

The methodological framework of the article is grounded in the findings of social constructivism and is focused on comparative study of background ideas, images, cognitive stereotypes, and myths that operate at the normative level in a given national environment, as well as on the study of communicative traditions that are imprinted in the cultural and historical memory of a nation and use the conceptual pair “Self/Other.”³

Given such a methodological framework, the author does not limit her task to studying the process of mutual perception through the lens of narrative analysis—a customary tool for describing images of other cultures that allows us to assess the difference between the American images and the Russian reality. Rather, she strives to answer a broader set of questions. Why were the Americans imagining the Russian revolution in a given way and not in other ways? What kinds of discursive practices were used to create an image of the Russian revolution? What was the logic of verbal and visual writing used for its construction? Finally, what role did it play in the identity formation of the American society? Hence, we are talking not only about reflection, but also about self-reflection, since the answer to the *why* question is found in the American political and sociocultural context that engendered these images of other nations. The socio-cultural context helps us to determine the identity markers that have become dominant in the American soci-

² The next cycle after 1905-07 took place between the 1917 February and October revolutions; the last one (so far) has followed the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War.

³ In creating a methodological base, the author relied especially heavily on the work of those scholars who based their studies of identity problems in international relations on the concept of dialogism introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin. This framework posits the existence of the “Other” as a necessary condition for defining the “Self” and includes research on mental geography with an emphasis on the study of mythologization of time and space as well as studies that present the US foreign policy as a field of identity construction and analyze the ideological and cultural dimensions of this policy. The author list for the former current includes such researchers as Tzvetan Todorov, Edward Said, Larry Wolff, Iver Neumann, Alexander Wendt; the latter current is represented, among other authors, by Emily Rosenberg, Michael Hunt, David Campbell, and Walter Hixson.

ety in the long run. The American political context (or the agenda)—the specific configuration of domestic and foreign policy issues that are important at a given stage of development of the American society—explains the mechanisms through which the Russian «Other» is being used.

In terms of the sociocultural context, it has to be said that Americans could not remain indifferent to revolutions outside of the United States, because, ever since the US was founded, its inhabitants thought it to be their mission to present their country to the world as the ideal model of political regime that arose from an ideal kind of revolution. They became ever more convinced of their right to world leadership as they watched the unsuccessful attempts of other nations to reproduce their experience. France had spectacularly failed this test for the first time at the end of the 18th century and then again in 1848 and in 1870-71. The Latin American revolutions of the early 19th century were the worst nightmares of their northern neighbor come true. The Russians' turn to prove that they were capable of producing a true American-style revolution came in 1905, during the third revolutionary wave of 1890s-1910s, that also swept Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and China.

Michael Hunt, an American scholar, points to two different manners of evaluating the revolution that were used in the US and whose origins can be traced, respectively, to John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. John Adams feared the revolution that went over limits, when its destructive potential broke forth, and the revolutionaries were unable to protect society from anarchy and arbitrary power. By contrast, Thomas Jefferson saw the revolution as a cleansing hurricane that was beneficial to society. Over time, these two visions grew closer, since they both emerged from the same American revolutionary heritage. Both focused on the constitutional phase of the revolution as the final one. The capacity of the French and later of the Slavs to make a successful revolution was seen as an indicator of their readiness to become leaders of civilization development⁴.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the American society was living through the Progressivist era. Although Progressivism clearly influenced both the domestic and the foreign US policy, it was a rather amorphous ideological movement that was based on various strands of reformist ideas and on the faith in progress. The Progressivists' reformist zeal was focused on the spheres of industrial development and urban environment, as well as on various aspects of the US domestic political life and foreign policy. Progressivist leaders dreamt of leading the Nation (and with it the whole world) out of the late-19th century state of social chaos and into progress, with the help of the State and of the scientific and professional approaches to social problems. Progressivist ideas have stimulated a more active state involvement into the American foreign-policy expansion and have strengthened the Americans' sense of a civilizing mission that their country undertook in order to bring progress to all regions of the world. However, the mechanisms of this civilizing mission toward the backward countries remained the subject of internal debate among the Progressivists: while some advocated the

⁴ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 92-98.

use of military interventions, others proposed softer tactics, such as the promotion of education and Protestant faith through missionary activities and the spread of mass consumption goods. While the first group opted for the guns, the second chose school manuals, the Bible, the sowing and the reaping machines. This turn-of-the-century debate has remained important for the US foreign-policy makers and ideologues up to the present days.

The idea of the American mission attracted the national attention to the revolutionary movements and the political changes abroad; Progressivists believed that the American democratic government had to be useful not only at home, but also in other countries. Calls for domestic reforms and sacrifices in the name of greater justice for the less successful members of the American society were easily transformed into the demands for overseas “crusades” and missionary campaigns that would remake the world in the US image and likeness. The process of internalization of the American reformism has acquired new momentum, and the contemporaries took it as a sign of its success.

Taking part in Russia’s modernization and in its first revolution had become an important component of the Progressivist reform movement, since these processes fitted the Americans’ image of their own revolutionary heritage. Yet, it has to be noted that what stood behind the harsh tone and demands were plans for relatively moderate reforms, the Puritan worldview, and the patriotic fears related to the destruction of the traditional American ideals by the modern political and economic system (which produced an energetic rejection of the anarchist and the socialist varieties of radicalism). Actions were indeed taken to raise funds for the victims of Jewish pogroms or for the Russian political figures who undertook propaganda campaigns in the US. Yet, at times, the rhetoric became more important than the actions, and the crusading spirit of the Progressivist epoch could rapidly turn into disenchantment. The Russians had learned all of this first-hand during the 1905-07 Revolution.

The progress ideology influenced both the reformers and their more conservative compatriots. However, the process of observing Russia’s revolutionary experience made the differences in their positions all the more apparent both in their interpretations of events and in their judgements about the reasonable limits of social and political changes.

The author based her analyses on primary sources of different types ; press materials, including political cartoons, hold a special place among them. The main characteristics of a political cartoon relevant for this research are : its close connections with the engendering socio-cultural context, its timeliness, since a cartoonist, like a political journalist, always reacts to the current internal and international political situation, its disregard for the political and social taboos, its symbolism and grotesque style. A satirical drawing speaks to the emotional perceptions of the recipient audience, translates the facts from the language of logical concepts to that of visual images, and allows to express ideas that are at times difficult to verbalize.

Typologically, the cartoons analyzed in this article can be classified as “cartoons of opinion”. They appeared in newspapers and magazines of different party

affinities and regional origins. The author's analysis of the political cartoons as historical sources includes such aspects as the manner of its presentation, the language and symbolism of the cartoon and of its verbal component (the name, the caption, and the speech bubbles), its relationship with other texts about Russia, its location within the print issue—the cover, the center spread, or the editorial page ; within the text of the relevant article or apart from it (in the former case the impact on the reader is stronger). Special attention is paid to the moods of the Americans themselves (the American context) and to the evolution of their representations.⁵

The author's observations and conclusions about the image of the Russian Revolution in American political cartoons are based on reviews of newspaper and magazine collections at the US Library of Congress. The political drawings of then-famous cartoonists that have become the quintessence of press attitudes are analyzed in greater detail. These artists belong to what is rightly considered "the Golden Age" of the American political cartoon, which comes to its heyday in the three comic weeklies—the democratic "Puck", the independent "Life", and the Republican "Judge"—that have made a true revolution in political cartoon-drawing. At the turn of the 20th century political cartoons began to spread through the newspapers as well⁶.

For this particular research theme, cartoon analysis allows not only to detect the hidden evaluations that the Americans made about Russia, its historical past and future, but also to determine with greater accuracy the timing of real changes within the American society with respect to the Russian Revolution, since political cartoons both illustrate the current attitudes, prejudices, and stereotypes of the public to which they are addressed and at the same time serve to construct new social preferences.

Political cartoons, due to their specific genre, are a convenient mechanism for maintaining the "one-dimensional" perception of Russia, for emphasizing one set of components seen in the Russian reality and for downplaying other such sets, and also for visually framing long-standing American myths about Russia and Russians. Yet this is precisely what makes cartoons a valuable source for discerning long-standing trends of Americans' views on Russian Revolution determined not only by the Russian context, but also by the self-representations of Americans themselves.

In 1903–1905, the time of the first crisis in Russian-American relations whose main facets were the Kishinev pogrom, the conflict in the Far East, and the 1905-

⁵ On the methodology of cartoon analysis and their use as a historical source see, for example, Thomas M. Kemnitz, "The Cartoon as a Historical Source," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (Summer, 1973): 81–93; Ernst H. Gombrich, "The Cartoonist's Armory," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 62, no 2 (1963): 189–228; Zhuravleva, Foglesong, "Konstruirovaniye obrazov Rossii v amerikanskoy politicheskoy karikature XX veka," in: Vadim A. Kolenko, ed., *Mify i realii amerikanskoy istorii v periodike XVIII–XX vv.*, vol. 1 of 3 (Moscow: Institute of World History RAN, 2008): 187–193.

⁶ Frank L. Mott, *American Journalism. A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 250 Years. 1690 to 1940* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 512, 581–587; Stephen Hess, Sandy Northrop, *Drawn and Quartered. The History of American Political Cartoons* (Montgomery, Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1996), 59–60, 64–79.

07 Revolution, hardly any issue of a newspaper or magazine that had an editorial cartoonist on staff came out without a “Russian” cartoon. The Russo-Japanese war had undoubtedly contributed to the fact that the “Russian theme” dominated the subjects of international cartoons. The themes of war and revolution were inextricably linked in American representations, while the use of dichotomies such as “East-West” and “Barbarism-Civilization”, the spreading of pro-Japanese attitudes through the American society and the position that the Washington administration occupied during the conflict in the Far East had facilitated the casting of the Japanese as the “Yankee of the East” and of Japan—as the catalyst of Russian Revolution. Thus, the Americans had symbolically “expelled” the Russian Empire from the “club of civilized powers”, while the Westernized Japan was, albeit temporarily, admitted into it.⁷

In 1904-1905, American public and political figures, religious activists and reformers, journalists and cartoonists started the first “image war” against the official Russia in the history of Russian-American relations, and honed the techniques of verbal and visual messaging that have been used ever since and up to the present day.⁸

I. “The United States of Russia”: on the wave of hopes

By the second half of 1904, serious and passionate talk about an impending revolution in Russia had begun in the US. In October 1904, the Society of American Friends of Russian Freedom (SAFRF)⁹ reemerged in Boston and began working at its full capacity, summoning a mass meeting in New York, whose attendants denounced the Tsarist government’s domestic policy and declared that Americans were ready to make their contribution to the cause of Russia’s liberalization. The

⁷ This idea was a constant in the publications of George Kennan, who supported his conclusions with references to Russian history, in which wars laid bare all the weaknesses of the regime, stimulated the popular discontent and usually ended in reforms or revolutionary explosions. See George Kennan, “The Social and Political Condition of Russia”; “The Economic and Financial Condition of Russia,” *Outlook* Vol. 76 (January 1904): 211-216, 261-265. See also: “The Emancipator of Russia,” *Outlook* Vol. 80, (June 1905): 357; Edmund Noble, “America and the Russian Crisis,” *Free Russia* (March, 1905): 35. For editorial cartoons see, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 24, 30, 1905; *Brooklyn Eagle*, January 27, 1905 ; *Los Angeles Times*, March 6, 1905; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 23, April 1, May 14, 1905 ; *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, March 12, 1905; *Life*, March 9, 1905.

⁸ For a more detailed account, see, Zhuravleva, *Ponimanie Rossii v SShA*, 544-568.

⁹ This society was modeled on the English SAFRF and was first created in Boston in 1891, through the efforts of the Russian revolutionary, Sergei Mikhailovich Stepniak-Kravchinsky and with the support of progressive American activists, whose ranks were dominated by former Abolitionists. In 1892, the American SAFRF began publishing “Free Russia”. In 1894, after the defeat of its campaign for the denunciation of the Extradition Treaty that the Russian Empire and the US signed in 1887 and that the Senate ratified in 1893, the activity level of the SAFRF and of the first wave of the American movement for Russian freedom began to decrease. This treaty gave the Tsarist government the right to demand the extradition of Russian revolutionaries that sought refuge in America, because it excluded regicides and their accomplices from the category of political criminals.

assembled held up to shame the despotism and the expansionism of the Tsarist government and encouraged their compatriots to create Societies of Friends of Russia Freedom all over the United States.¹⁰

Russian Liberals and Radicals that crossed the ocean in order to canvass American support for their fight to free Russia helped to convince Americans that Russian Revolution was going to be a constructive movement of the Western type. First and foremost among them were Pavel Nikolaevich Miliukov, a historian and a future leader of the Constitutional Democrats' Party, and Ekaterina Konstantinovna Breshko-Breshkovskaya, one of the leading Socialist-Revolutionaries who spent most of her life in prison and exile and became a true symbol of freedom fighting in Russia.

Miliukov was giving a series of lectures in the United States between 1903 and 1905, when he found himself in the middle of the first crisis in Russian-American relation. The image of the Russian Revolution, which he created, was that of a liberal-constitutionalist movement; it helped to feed the existing American illusions about Russia's prospects for political modernization and its readiness to adopt the Western development model. How could it be otherwise, if every Russian schoolboy knew Abraham Lincoln's biography and admired this emancipator-President?¹¹ *Russia and Its Crisis*, the book based on Miliukov's American lectures, made an important contribution in forming the Americans' ideas about the meaning and the contours of the Russian Revolution, while Miliukov seemed to be just the kind of Western-style revolutionary that they held so dear.¹²

Breshko-Breshkovskaya also assured her American public that a revolution was inevitable in Russia. In speeches that she gave at mass meetings, clubs, colleges, and private receptions, she avoided mentioning the terrorist methods used by the Socialists- Revolutionaries party, its peasant insurrection program, and the thorny issues of political assassination and radical revolution. Instead, she focused her attention on the fight for civil rights and freedoms, on transferring land ownership to the people, and on the political growth of the peasants through their participation in *zemstvos*. She never tired of repeating that the Russian people would know how to use their freedom wisely, were aiming for a social revolution that would establish a democratic form of government, and were more than ever in need of moral and material support from across the Atlantic.¹³

¹⁰ "The Awakening of Russia," *Review of Reviews* Vol. 30, (July 1904): 90; J.F. Green, "The Cause of Russian Freedom in the USA," *Free Russia* (November 1904): 88; Alice S. Blackwell, "The Friends of Russian Freedom," *Free Russia* (April, 1906):10.

¹¹ Pavel N. Miliukov, *Memuary* (Moscow: Political Literature Publishers, 1991):145, 148; "Talks of Situation in Russia," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 14, 1905

¹² Pavel Miliukov, *Russia and Its Crisis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905): 7-12. The author of the *New York Times* review of this book whose publication coincided with the Tsar's August manifesto welcomed Miliukov's main proposition about Russia being in the state flux and development that contradicted the myth of the "Immutable Russia": *New York Times*, August 26, 1905. See also the book review from *Nation*, "The Russian Crisis," *Nation* 82 (January 1906): 57-58

¹³ Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, in 2 volumes, volume 1 (New York, Da CAPO Press, 1970): 362; Blackwell, "Welcome to a Russian Woman," *Woman's Journal* Vol. 35

Breshko-Breshkovskaya's visit facilitated the creation of an SAFRF branch in New York. Together, the New York and the Boston branches became the operation centers of the renewed and expanding American crusade for the creation of a Free Russia. After the onset of the Russian Revolution, the New York chapter of the SAFRF became one of the main centers of the movement for Russia's democratization, as it broadened the scale of its activities and extended its membership to the members of the Jewish community and to all sorts of Progressive-era reformers. The latter were attracted to the SAFRF, since, according to the Progressivism ideology, supporting the fight for freedom beyond the US borders aided the cause of preserving freedom and democracy at home.

Overall, the Liberals and the Radicals who came to the US from Russia to boost support for their political causes were equally effective in fostering, *a la* George Kennan, an oversimplified picture of the Russian Revolutionary movement and in creating the romantic myth of the Russian Revolution aimed at founding "the United States of Russia" and at repeating the American experience. These simplistic representations fed the American messianic mood, created false illusions, and subsequently provoked a relatively fast transition from a universalist euphoria to pessimistic evaluations of Russia's overall revolutionary prospects and its revolutionary leaders.

After the "Bloody Sunday" of January 1905, the images of official-reactionary Russia and of popular-revolutionary Russia turned into two parallel realities in the representations of the American observers. An overwhelming majority in the US press had harshly condemned the shooting of a peaceful demonstration in Saint-Petersburg, seeing it as a display of medieval cruelty.¹⁴ This attitude and the spread of false information about thousands of victims¹⁵ also became reflected in the political cartoons that in their turn had helped to "barbarize" the image of Nicholas II. Some represented him as a satrap, up to his knees in blood of his subjects who received a load of lead instead of freedom and no longer trusted their ruler. In others, he appeared as Humpty Dumpty who fell from the wall of public veneration for "the Little Father" or as a passenger of the "Russia" ship that

(December 1904): 401; "Sympathy for Russian People," *Providence Journal*, February 23, 1905.

¹⁴ "The Massacre in St. Petersburg," *Outlook*, Vol. 79 (January 1905): 201; "World-Politics," *North American Review* Vol. 180 (March 1905): 461-466; "Loyalty to Czar Turns to Hatred," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 19, 1905; Noble, "America and the Russian Crisis," *Free Russia* (March 1905): 34-35.

¹⁵ "Troops Slay Two Thousands and Wound Five Thousands in St. Petersburg Streets," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 23, 1905. According to the official sources, there were 130 dead and 299 wounded (these figures were given in the report made by the Director of the Police Department to the Minister of Internal Affairs). See *Revolutsiya 1905-1907 gg. v Rossii: dokumenty i materialy* Vol. 4, Book 1 (Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1961), 103, 118. Subsequent research cites the revised figures of 200 dead and 800 wounded. See Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution. Agony of the Old Regime. 1905-1917* (Russian translation) (Moscow, ROSPEN, 1994), 35. Nevertheless, the Soviet historiography propagated the figure of 4600 dead and wounded that was presented by Vladimir Lenin in the 18th issue of the *Forward* periodical, published on January 31, 1905.

was hit by the “Saint-Petersburg” mine, with other mines—“Poland”, “Finland”, “Caucasus”, and “Moscow” at the ready around him. Yet others made him into an “Autocracy” scarecrow, surrounded by a pack of bloodthirsty wolves—“Official Oppression”, “Military Cruelty”, and “Bureaucracy”.¹⁶

Dissonant notes in this chorus were sounded by the publications of the *New York Herald*, a newspaper that belonged to James Gordon Bennett Jr. and whose staff had been in contact with the Russian Embassy in Washington since 1901, and also by the reports of the Saint-Petersburg correspondent of the *Associated Press* that tended to support the Russian authorities.¹⁷

The New York branch of SAFRF helped to organize a mass rally at the Music Academy of New York. After seeing Bartley Campbell’s melodrama *Siberia*, the moved public sang “La Marseillaise” and shouted: “Death to the Tsar!” The Russians, the Poles, the Jews, and the Finns were prevailing groups among those who took part in this rally, although many Americans were there as well. Meetings of this kind were also held in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities.¹⁸

The visual conception of the Russian Emperor that existed in the USA during the First Russian Revolution was constructed with the aid of two personal precedent images. The first image—that of Louis XVI—became a warning to the Russian Emperor not to repeat the mistakes that had cost the French king

his head. Thus, Joseph Keppler’s cartoon has the shadow of Louis XVI warning Nicholas II, seated on his throne and surrounded by darkness: “Warily, Brother”. The shadow points to the image of a guillotine—reminder of his execution by the risen French people and of the fate that awaits the Russian Emperor, should he not hurry to answer his people’s plea for reforms (represented as several pairs of hands raised towards the throne with a scroll of “Petitions”).¹⁹ (Figure 1)

Thomas Sullivant from the *San Francisco Examiner* gave an-



Figure 1: A Voice from the past

¹⁶ See the editorial cartoons in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 23, 24, 1905; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 30, 1905; *New York World*, January 30, 1905; *New York American*, January 25, 1905. See also the cartoon compilation in the *Literary Digest* Vol. 30 (February 4 and 11 1905):154-155, 195.

¹⁷ *Rossiya i SSHA: Diplomaticheskie otnosheniya v 1900-1917 gg.*, Grigorii N. Sevostianov, ed. (Moscow: MFD, 1999): 363-364 ; Goldman, *Living My Life*, 359.

¹⁸ “Cry Death to Czar at Big Mass Meeting,” *New York Times*, January 30, 1905.

¹⁹ *Puck*, February 8, 1905 (cover).

other interpretation of the same idea and by adding to the shadows of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, executed during the French Revolution, that of Charles I who fell during the English Revolution. The three shadows point to the smoking ruins around the enthroned Nicholas II and caution him not to repeat their sad fate.²⁰

The other precedent historical image used at that time was the figure of Ivan the Terrible. John McCutcheon's cartoon has this tsar move the hand of Nicholas II as he is signing the order to shoot the peaceful demonstration and looking at the portrait of Louis XVI. McCutcheon portrayed Ivan the Terrible as the founder of the Romanov imperial dynasty, even though Ivan died 29 years before this dynasty came to power. The cartoonist did not care about making this historical substitution: what mattered was the invariant of perception of this precedent name, activated through a graphical representation.²¹ (Figure 2)

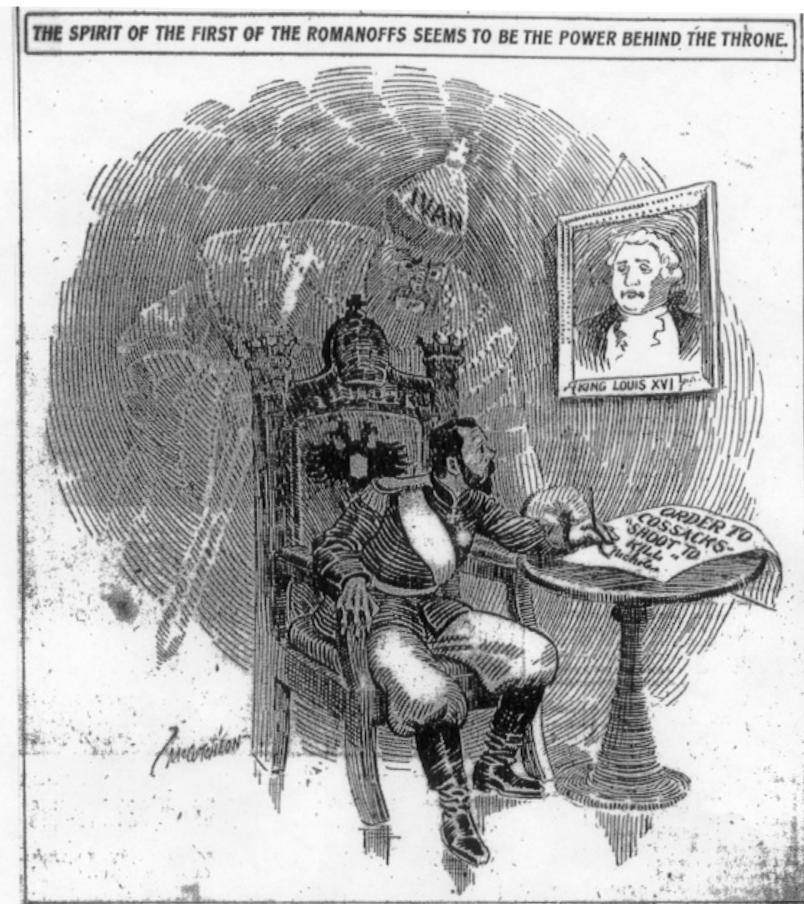


Figure 2: The spirit of the first of the Romanoff seems to be the power behind the throne.

²⁰ *San Francisco Examiner*, February 3, 1905.

²¹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 24, 1905.

It must be noted that the English translation of the tsar's name ("Ivan the Terrible") had a very clear negative connotation, and his image functioned as a semantic code that fixed the perception of "medieval" and "uncivilized" methods of government used in the Russian Empire and of its autocratic ruler's "bloody deeds". In general, the opposition "Medievalism vs. Modernity" became one of the favorite communicative strategies used in American visual representations of the Russian Revolution.

Meanwhile, the American Russophiles who advocated modernization from above, since it would preserve the unique Russian culture and the unity between the Tsar and the people, wrote with much enthusiasm about the readiness of the Russian Emperor to promulgate reforms. Their high spirits were boosted by three decrees that Nicholas II had signed in February, in which he exhorted the population to help the authorities to restore order, invited opinions on questions of State-building, and instructed the Minister of Internal Affairs, Aleksandr Grigorievich Bulygin, to write a draft law about the creation of a legislative-consultative body that was soon christened as "Bulygin's Duma".

Charles Emory Smith, the US ex-envoy to Russia who had done a great deal to strengthen friendly relations between the two countries during his time in Saint-Petersburg, wrote in an article that Russia was a country of extraordinary contrasts and that its history was as multi-faceted as its reality: "It is illuminated with the progressive measures of the great Emancipator. It is darkened with the shadows of the Kishinev and the Finnish oppression. The far-reaching reforms which are now dawning on the nation give promise of a new and more hopeful era. Russia has prodigious recuperative power; [...] and if through the disasters she is now suffering she shall through the shackles of the bureaucracy that have weight her down and come to share the progressive spirit of the age, she will through present tribulations and final regeneration enter, as we hope she may, on a new and brighter epoch."²²

However, it soon became clear that the concessions made by Nicholas II were half-hearted, and that he was so hesitant and so late in making them that they were counterproductive and only caused further discontent. The American press wrote that Russia's road to freedom was filled with pogroms, massacres, and assassination attempts, while Nicholas II lacked the wisdom to grant his people their freedom, and the people no longer trusted him. By consequence, anarchy and violence replaced law and order, respect for life and property disappeared, class rose against class and race against race, and various regions of the country were falling into a civil war of the worst kind.²³

²² Charles E. Smith, "Russia," *The National Geographic Magazine* Vol.16, no 2 (February 1905): 63.

²³ Emile J. Dillon, "Progress of the Russian Revolution," *Review of Reviews* Vol. 32 (August 1905): 202. See also: "The Condition of Russia," *Quarterly Review* Vol. 202 (April 1905): 581-606; "Progress of Revolution Spirit," *Review of Reviews* Vol. 31 (May 1905): 536; "Changing Russia (Topics of the Time)," *Century* Vol. 69 (April 1905): 954-955; "World-Politics," *North American Review* Vol. 181 (August 1905): 309-310.

The June issue of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* opened with John McCutcheon's cartoon, in which Nicholas II was drowning under the rain of "Revolution". His tiny figure could hardly be seen next to a pair of enormous "State boots". The cartoonist's idea was made clear by the caption: "Wanted—a Washington, a Napoleon, or a Bismarck"—anyone of these three could fill the shoes that are too big for the Russian Tsar who was too petty and narrow-minded to handle the State problems in Russia.²⁴ Frederick Morgan, the cartoonist of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* also used an American precedent image, but instead of George Washington he referred the reader to the President-Emancipator Abraham Lincoln. In his drawing, the Russian people appear as a figure tied to a pillory by the chains of autocracy. Next to the figure there is a soup bowl with the inscription "Promise of Reforms"; the caption "Wanted—A Lincoln" refers the reader to the American development model: the Russian people are waiting for a Russian Lincoln that would come and deliver them from political slavery²⁵. Thus the communicative strategy "Freedom vs. Slavery" found its visual representation in the American cartoon drawings.

The "romantic" image of the people's Russia was being constructed in parallel with the "demonic" image of the official Russia—the reign of darkness, despotism, and arbitrary power, of the country that a deceitful ruler and a mediocre government were pushing into the abyss of chaos and defeat. The American society was living through a period of genuine enchantment with the Russian revolution and placed its best hopes on the Liberals who, it was thought, could best accomplish its main purpose—introduce political reforms and establish a constitutional government. This Universalist euphoria overshadowed not only the doubts that the American Liberal-Universalists had as to whether the Russian "dark people" were sufficiently enlightened and prepared to take part in the government process, but also the Conservative perceptions of the "Immutable Russia" that emphasized its "alien" and "Eastern" nature. All these fears and doubts were eclipsed by the "romantic" image of Russia—a country ripe for political revolution and religious modernization and ready to adopt the Western development model. What the Americans had to do was to help Russia to secure itself on this path.

The divergence among the images of the Russian Revolution created by the Conservative, Liberal-Universalist, and Radical discourses would only become evident later, by the early 1906. Yet, during the early phases of the First Russian Revolution, the different political currents were in relative agreement that the peculiarities of Russian development trajectory and national character would not impede the progress of freedom through the Russian Empire. According to the *Saturday Evening Post*, cities, towns, and farmsteads all over the United States were unanimous in their condemnation of the official Russia.²⁶ The pages of the American newspapers and magazines were full of images of Russian people rising from dark dungeons to fight for their rights and freedom, struggling to break the bondage of the Romanov dynasty, coming to the helm of the State ship, cutting the tentacles of "Despotism", "Religious Intolerance", "Exile", "Cossackism",

²⁴ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 1, 1905.

²⁵ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 13, 1905.

²⁶ *Saturday Evening Post*, May 27, 1905.

“Greed”, “Incompetence”, and “Oppressive Taxation” from the “Bureaucracy” octopus, urgently knocking the door of the “Department of Justice” and rightly demanding reforms, or coming out of the “Revolution” bottle like a genie.²⁷

Charles Bush managed to create the image that synthesized the sentiments of the American society in the days of its enchantment with the Russian Revolution and propagated them : Russia is called to arise and fight by a woman with a sword in her arm and a Phrygian hat on her head—an object that, since the end of the 18th century, symbolized not only freedom, but also revolution.²⁸ (Figure 3)



Figure 3: Arise!

²⁷ *Harper's Weekly* Vol. 49 (February, 1905): cover; *Atlanta Constitution*, February 4, 1905; *Life* (June 22, 1905): cover; *New York World*, February 6, May 31, 1905; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 5, 1905; *Puck* (June 21, 1905): two-page spread; see also the cartoon from the *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, reprinted in the *Literary Digest* Vol. 30 (June 17, 1905): 882.

²⁸ *New York World*, May 31, 1905.

This cartoon could have been a perfect illustration for Edwin Markham's poem *Russia, Arise!*, first published in 1905:

This is the hour; awake, arise!
 A whisper on the Volga flies;
 A wild hope on the Baltic lips,
 A terror over the Neva creeps;
 A joy is in the trail that goes
 Reddening the white Siberian snows;
 The cliffs of Caucasus are stirred
 With the glad wonder of a word;
 The white wave of the Caspian speaks,
 And Ural answers from her peaks,
 The Kremlin bells in all their powers
 Wait trembling for the Hour of Hours,
 When they shall cry the People's will—
 Cry Marathon and Bunker Hill.²⁹

It is no accident that the Battle of Bunker Hill appears in the poem, since this was the first great battle of the War for Independence between the British troops and the American Colonists. Even though the British forces gained victory that day, their losses (1054 dead) were much greater than those suffered by the Colonists (450 dead). This battle raised the morale of the Americans who in 1776 were beginning to make their own revolution that successfully concluded in 1789 with the adoption of the US Constitution and the creation of a new state.

The press publications of that time were full of analogies between the American and the Russian Revolutions. The Americans were searching for Russian "Founding Fathers" among the characters of the 1905 historical drama. Some thought to find them in *zemtsy* with their "bill of rights", others presented Pavel Nikolaevich Miliukov as a new George Washington, yet others pointed to Sergei Yulievich Witte who, after a visit to the US, drafted the text of the October 17 Manifesto and was preparing a draft law on the elections of the Duma deputies.³⁰ The "Bloody Sunday" victims were compared with those of the "Boston massacre"³¹, while the shadow of Patrick Henry³² hovered over the Tsar's domain³³. The pro-

²⁹ Cited from: *St. John Sun*, July 30, 1906.

³⁰ Arthur W. Thompson, Robert A. Hart, *The Uncertain Crusade: America and the Russian Revolution of 1905* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1970), 25.

³¹ The Boston massacre—the clash between British and Colonial troops that took place in Boston on March 5, 1770 and left five Americans dead. This event catalyzed the consolidation of the patriotic movement in the American Colonies.

³² Patrick Henry—member of the legislative body of the Virginia Colony, and one of the radical-wing leaders of the patriotic movement in the Colonies. His famous phrase "Give me liberty or give me death" became the battle call for the champions of American Independence.

³³ Thompson, Hart, *The Uncertain Crusade*, 30, 34, 100. See also: *Outlook* Vol. 79 (January, 1905): 218. Some authors went as far as trying to trace the influence of Theodore

gressive magazine *Arena*, well-known for its social-reformist orientation, insisted that the Russian people were capable of making a political revolution and ready for self-government, and that wise and intelligent leaders akin to Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington would promptly appear on the revolutionary stage.³⁴ All in all, the American observers thought that the Russians were fast approaching their analogue of the American 1776. The main hopes were obviously placed on the Liberals who would direct the reform process and defend the cause of freedom from extremist attacks from both the Left and the Right.³⁵

Meanwhile, in winter and spring of 1905, US religious leaders felt very inspired by the idea of a religious reform that would lead to freedom of worship in Russia. While the Catholic publications expressed hopes that the Lithuanians and the Poles could improve their situation, members of Protestant Churches argued that the spread of Protestantism would become part and parcel of Russia's national revival³⁶. The news about the Freedom of Worship Manifesto issued by Nicholas II in April 1905 received special attention on the other side of the Atlantic. George von Lengerke Meyer, the US Ambassador to Russia and the US President Theodore Roosevelt's close friend greeted it with much enthusiasm,³⁷ while, as David Foglesong rightly notes, the Adventists, such as Ludwig Richard Conradi, and the Methodists, such as George Simons, saw the Manifesto as a signal to step up their campaigns to spread "the true faith" through the Russian Empire.³⁸ At the same time, the *Missionary Review of the World* published an article, whose author turned to the all-too-familiar comparison of the Russian and the Ottoman Empires as states with no political or civil freedoms, where the rulers were reluctant to introduce reforms and eager to cancel them afterwards, and emphasized that even though Russia's 70 million peasants did need both religious and civic guidance, the Protestant missionaries would not be successful there, unless they accepted the leadership of the Young Men's Christian Association and collaborated with the Orthodox Church.³⁹

Discussions about the religious reform in the Russian Empire helped to turn it into an object of the US world-reforming mission. In the first half of 1905, "the

Roosevelt's books *The American Ideals* and *The Strenuous Life* on Father Gapon: V. Bienstock, "Father George Gapon," *Independent* Vol. 58 (February 1905): 352.

³⁴ "The Russian Situation," *Arena* Vol. 33 (February 1905): 210-213.

³⁵ "The Lines of Russian Reform," *Nation* Vol. 80 (June 1905): 450; Charles Johnston, "The Leaders of the Russian People," *Harper's Weekly* Vol. 49 (August 1905): 1226, 1243.

³⁶ Thompson, Hart, *The Uncertain Crusade*, 75; Noble, "America and the Russian Crisis," *Free Russia* (March 1905), 35.

³⁷ George von Lengerke Meyer to John Hay, May 5, 1905 in: *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1905*, (Washington: the US Department of State, 1906), 76 ; George von Lengerke Meyer to Theodore Roosevelt, May 5, 1905, in: Mark Antony De Wolfe Howe, *George von Langerke Meyer: His Life and Public Services* (New York, Dodd Mead, 1920), 149.

³⁸ Foglesong, "Redeeming Russia? American Missionaries and Tsarist Russia, 1886-1917," *Religion, State and Society* Vol. 25, no 4 (1997): 356-357; Foglesong, "The American Mission and the 'Evil Empire'", 34-36.

³⁹ George Washburn, "The Government, Church, and the People," *Missionary Review of the World* Vol. 28, (September 1905): 641-642, 645-646.

“crusade spirit” hovered over America, and the Russians were placed next to the Cubans in the messianic plans of political and public leaders, religious activists, philanthropists, and journalists. Plans to give real help to the Russian people in their struggle for freedom were discussed in earnest on the pages of newspapers and magazines, in clubs and at mass rallies, at churches and universities, in trade union and immigrant societies, at business and charity meetings. Proposals included sending over ships loaded with weapons, food, medicine, and, most importantly, printed materials—political pamphlets explaining the principles of American democracy and religious ones expounding the advantages of rational faith.

Telegrams, petitions, editorials, and resolutions addressed to the President and the Secretary of State contained demands for more drastic actions: breaking diplomatic relations, denouncing the Russian-American Trade and Navigation Treaty of 1832, excluding Russia from participation in the next Hague conference, turning US embassies and consulates on Russian territory into safe havens for political and religious dissidents, and, finally, organizing a “humanitarian intervention” similar to the Cuban campaign during the Spanish-American War. The Russian version of such a campaign would include sending a military fleet over to the Gulf of Finland, from where Saint-Petersburg could be attacked in case of necessity.⁴⁰ Such rhetoric greatly inspired Russian Revolution-makers who were not always aware of how fickle the general mood could be in the US and of the fact that “the crusade spirit” of the Progressivism epoch did not always turn into real actions.

Political cartoons published in the first half of 1905 serve as an excellent indicator of American public preferences, related not only to the real events in Russia, but also to their own visions of an ideal revolution, their messianic enthusiasm,

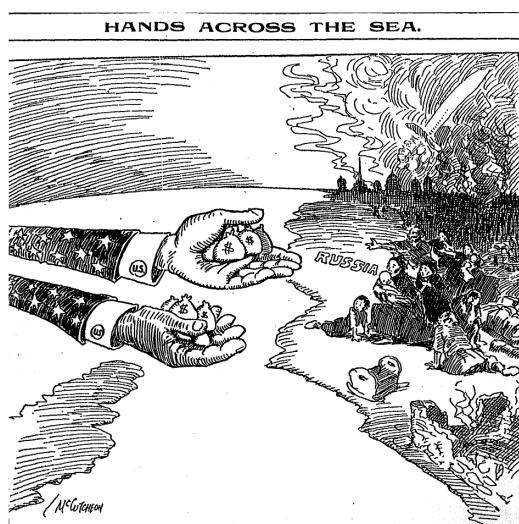


Figure 4. Hands across the sea.

ideological zeal, and political ideals. Playing with the images of Darkness and Light became the cartoonists’ favorite communicative strategy for representing American messianic sentiments. In their drawings, “the Sun of Freedom” rose time and again, coming from over the ocean towards “the Empire of Darkness” in order to disperse the clouds of “Ignorance”, “Oppression”, “Anarchy”, and “Assassination” and to shine the light of “Peace”, “Prosper-

⁴⁰ Thompson, Hart, *The Uncertain Crusade*, 19-20.

ity”, and “Intelligence” over the Russian people⁴¹. Hands full of American dollars were stretched across the ocean from the land of Light to the victims of Jewish pogroms in the land of Darkness.⁴² (Figure 4)

Frederick Morgan’s 4th of July cartoon expresses these messianic sentiments most clearly. In it, Uncle Sam holds a torch that sends “sparks of freedom and independence” flying over the head of a chained *muzhik*, representing Russia. Packs of dollars are scattered around the prisoner’s feet, and he asks, looking at Sam’s happy face: “I wonder if I’ll ever have a glorious fourth like that?” This text has a double meaning, since it reflects both the messianic impulse felt by the Americans and their perception of Russia as a “dark twin” of the United States⁴³. (Figure 5)



Figure 5. The Glorious Fourth.

John McCutcheon entered into direct dialogue with this text through his ingenious cartoon that visualized Russia’s image as the “Other” of the United States:

⁴¹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 31, 1905; *New York World*, February 25, 1905; *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, November 1, 1905. See also the cartoon from the *Minneapolis Tribune*, reprinted in the *Literary Digest* Vol. 27, (July 18, 1903).

⁴² *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 13, 1905.

⁴³ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 4, 1905.

Roosevelt receives greetings from his jubilant people on the day of his inauguration, graced by fireworks and the American national anthem, while a horrified Nicholas II awaits his last hour, hearing the thunder of the Japanese cannons, surrounded by bombs, insurgents, and revolutionaries who curse him while waving red flags and brandishing knives. The caption functions as a semantic code : "U.S.A.—RuSSIA."⁴⁴ (Figure 6)

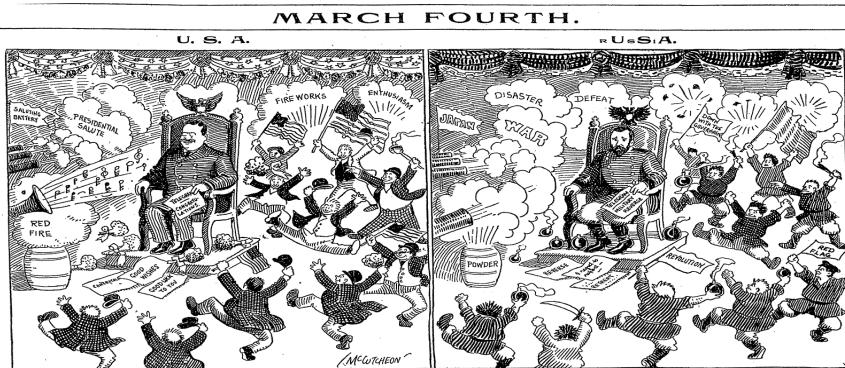


Figure 6. March Fourth.

Drawing parallels between the Russian Revolution and the two major 18th-century revolutions—the American and the French—became one of the favorite communicative strategies in American representations, and this communicative strategy demonstrated that the Americans considered the Russian Revolution to be a political movement of the Western type.⁴⁵ However, the American and the French models played different roles: the first one was a reference, while the second was used as a reminder about the dangers of social chaos, anarchy, and terror that accompanied an all-out destruction of the “old order”. According to Michael Hunt, even the French who stood next to the Anglo-Saxons in race hierarchy had not proved capable to follow the American revolutionary script, for even small differences in national character had produced quite divergent political behaviors,⁴⁶ and the Russians would do well to take into account the sad experience of the French. This kind of reasoning explains the large number of references to the French Revolution made by the press as well as by the American diplomats, businessmen, public and political leaders. This comparison was first made in late 1904, when *zemtsy* held their assembly in Moscow,⁴⁷ and remained important all throughout the First Russian Revolution.

⁴⁴ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 6, 1905.

⁴⁵ "Is a Russian Revolution Imminent?", *Harper's Weekly* Vol. 49, (May 1905): 640; "The Representative Institution Proposed for Russia," *Harper's Weekly* Vol. 49 (May 1905): 785.

⁴⁶ Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 117.

⁴⁷ See, for example: "Is there Hope of Self-Government for Russia?", *Harper's Weekly* Vol. 48 (December 1904): 1832-1833.

The Ambassador George von Lengerke Meyer filled his letters and dispatches with references to the revolutionary France of the late 18th century. In December 1905, he compared Witte to Necker, the Duma to the General Estates, and Nicholas II to Louis XVI and lamented that the Russian Tsar had not given himself time to study the sad story of his French counterpart. In January 1907, as he observed an interminable train of assassination attempts, von Lengerke Meyer reminisced about the Jacobin terror and the Paris Commune in a letter to his wife.⁴⁸ The American Consul in Warsaw agreed that the current Russian situation brought to mind the “Great Terror” of the French revolutionary epoch.⁴⁹ The Putilov workers’ strike in January 1905 was compared with the disturbances that preceded the break-out of the French revolution. Commentators drew parallels between the August law on the election of deputies to the “Bulygin’s Duma” and the convocation of notables and then of the General Estates by Louis XVI⁵⁰.

The historical reference models of the Russian Revolution that, one after another, came to dominate the American discourse allow us to evaluate the overall evolution of its American representations. This process of using the historical past in the construction of the “Other” national image has an underlying general logic: the movement from the precedent images of the Western-type revolutionary movements (from the American revolution as the ideal to the French one as a warning) to the “Revolution à la russe”.

II. Crossing the limits of the acceptable in revolution: on the wave of disappointments

There is no doubt that political terrorism and growing social tensions within the Russian Empire did preoccupy the American radical and partly liberal reformers, and not just the Conservatives. However, press analysis allows us to draw a firm conclusion that some observers enchanted with the Russian Revolution had condoned political murder, albeit indirectly and temporarily, as a means of speeding up political modernization in countries as backward as Russia.

This trend became apparent as early as July 1904, when the reactionary Minister of Internal Affairs, Vyacheslav Konstantinovich Plehve was assassinated, because he impeded the progress of reforms. At that time, most American periodicals would have concurred with the *Philadelphia Press* that called Plehve’s murder “a natural retribution for his crimes,”⁵¹ because “the bomb was still a reformer’s weapon in Russia,” where the reformers had to contend with despotism and arbitrary power.⁵² Samuel Harper, a Liberal and a Russophile who was in Russia at that time, reported than even members of conservative circles approved the

⁴⁸ Howe, *George von Langerke Meyer*, 233-234, 241, 327-328.

⁴⁹ Albert Leffinwell to Robert Bacon, December 1, 1905 in: National Archives and Record Service (NARS), Record Group (RG) 59, Dispatches from U.S. Consuls in Warsaw, Microfilm (M) 467, Reel (R) 3.

⁵⁰ “Rioting in St. Petersburg,” *Independent* Vol. 58 (June 1905): 174; “The Russian Reforms,” *New York Times*, August 20, 1905.

⁵¹ Cited from the *Literary Digest* Vol. 29 (August 1904): 155.

⁵² *Forum*, Vol. 36 (October, 1904): 193-194.

murder of this man, who became a symbol of ruthless repression, and that terror seemed politically justified, since it allowed to secure concessions.⁵³

February 1905 brought another important political assassination—that of the Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich, the Tsar's uncle, close friend and adviser, Moscow's governor-general and an ardent opponent of the reforms. The American press responded to this event with numerous publications arguing that this act of vengeance was provoked by Nicholas II himself, since his reluctance to make good on his promises induced further growth of the revolutionary violence. The murdered Grand Duke was known as “Ivan the Terrible” of modern Russia, since he was infamous for his depravity, cruelty, and unscrupulousness, as well as for his fanatic hatred of Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. This leader of the reactionary party, a consistent champion of autocracy, and a convinced opponent of more enlightened forms of government for the Russian people was responsible for the Khodynka tragedy and for the disappearance of donations that the Russians had made to the Red Cross Society for helping soldiers wounded in Manchuria. The death of this individual was seen as an exceptional case, that of a political murder that could help to establish internal and external peace.⁵⁴

Samuel Harper who monitored not only the events of the revolutionary Russia, but also the Americans' reaction to them, ascertained that, at first, the latter found the terror justifiable: “The bombing of grand dukes was all right, and perhaps even the peasant attacks on landlords were understandable.”⁵⁵ After all, this seemed to be the Russian way to freedom. Terror was also accepted by members of American Friends of Russian Freedom societies as a legitimate means of struggle against autocracy, since it was supposed to facilitate the establishment of a Western-style parliamentary regime. After the assassination of the Grand Duke, Edmund Noble prepared a special survey for *Free Russia*, in which he emphasized that neither the American press, nor the US President had even attempted to make any analogies between the fate of the Grand Duke and those of the assassinated US Presidents—Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, and William McKinley.⁵⁶

The March 1905 issue of the *North American Review* magazine featured a pamphlet entitled *The Czar's Soliloquy* that sounded a clarion call to resist the tyrants and was written by Mark Twain, who was an old-time member of the American Friends of Russian Freedom movement. The pamphlet presented Nicholas II just after the “Bloody Sunday” as a puny naked man who had just come out of a

⁵³ Samuel N. Harper, *The Russia I Believe In. The Memoirs of Samuel N. Harper. 1902-1941*, Paul V. Harper, ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 20.

⁵⁴ “Hated by Russian People. Sergius Called a Modern Ivan the Terrible,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1905; “Sergius Held Harsh Views,” *San Francisco Examiner*, February 19, 1905; “Sergius Hated Talk of Reform,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 19, 1905; “Aid to Peace in Sergius’ Death,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 19, 1905. See also the cartoons published by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 18, 20, 1905; *New York World*, February 19, 1905; *Life*, March 9, 1905.

⁵⁵ Harper, *The Russia I Believe In*, 29.

⁵⁶ Noble, “American Views of Russian Assassination,” *Free Russia* (April 1905): 50-51.

bath and was looking at himself in a mirror, while the author, masked as another, imaginary monarch was evaluating and condemning him. Using the ironic paradox as his main artistic technique, Mark Twain made the masked antihero expose serious ideas about civilization, the human nature and the nature of power, true and fake patriotism, submission and the right to insurrection. Quotes from the New York and the London *Times* as well as the Tsar's own comments masterfully woven into the text made it sound as a complete negation of autocracy's very foundations and as an exoneration of the revolutionary violence against the Tsar.

Mocking the moralist's musings about the viciousness of regicide, he pontificates: "There is no Romanoff of learning and experience but would reverse the maxim and say: 'Nothing politically valuable was ever yet achieved except by violence'. The moralist realizes that to-day, for the first time in our history, my throne is in real peril and the nation waking up from its immemorial slave-lethargy ; but he does not perceive that four deeds of violence are the reason for it : the assassination of the Finland Constitution by my hand ; the slaughter, by revolutionary assassins, of Bobrikoff and Plehve; and my massacre of the unoffending innocents the other day. But the blood that flows in my veins—blood informed, trained, educated by its grim heredities, blood alert by its traditions, blood which has been to school four hundred years in the veins of professional assassins, my predecessors—it perceives, it understands! Those four deeds have set up a commotion in the inert and muddy deeps of the national heart such as no moral suasion could have accomplished; they have aroused hatred and hope in that long-atrophied heart; and, little by little, slowly but surely, that feeling will steal into every breast and possess it. In time, into even the soldier's breast—fatal day, day of doom, that! [...] The nation is in labor; and by and by there will be a mighty birth—Patriotism! To put it in rude, plain, unpalatable words—true patriotism, real patriotism: loyalty, not to a Family and a Fiction, but loyalty to the Nation itself!"⁵⁷

Assassinations of reactionaries in Russia were heartily welcomed by the inhabitants of the New York East Side who harbored radical ideas, by the Socialist-leaning periodicals created with the participation of Russian-Jewish immigrants, and by the American radicals in general, who saw the Russian Revolution as a great inspiration for the US Socialist movement that they considered to be still in its infancy.⁵⁸ As the Revolution turned more radical and passed from the political to the social stage, respectable Americans grew increasingly disenchanted with what they considered to be the violation of permissible limits in making a revolution. The American Socialists, by contrast, grew ever more enthusiastic about it.

Jack London, who was a member of the US Socialist Party and one of the leaders of the most radical SAFRF—the Californian one, made a lecture tour of the US after "the Bloody Sunday" and presented his ideas about the meaning of the Russian Revolution and its special romanticism to students, businessmen, and

⁵⁷ Mark Twain, "The Czar's Soliloquy," *North American Review* Vol. 180 (March 1905): 324.

⁵⁸ Vladimir Simkhovich, "Terrorism in Russia," *International Quarterly* Vol. 11 (July 1905): 266-287; Thompson, Hart, *The Uncertain Crusade*, 70-73, 82.

people of very diverse professions and political views. Jack London perceived this revolution as “the heroic battle for freedom is being fought almost exclusively by the Russian working-class under the intellectual leadership of Russian socialists”. This revolution inspired him by its fundamental difference from the Western ones.

In March 1905, Jack London published *Revolution*—an article based on his lectures that justified political assassination: “There has never been anything like this revolution in the history of the world. There is nothing analogous between it and the American Revolution or the French Revolution. It is unique, colossal. Other revolution compare with it like asteroids compare with the sun [...] It passes over geographical lines, transcends race prejudice, and has even proved itself mightier than the Fourth of July, spread-eagle Americanism of our forefathers [...] The government executes the revolutionists. The revolutionists kill the officers of the government. The revolutionists meet the legal murder with assassination [...] I speak, and I think, of these assassins in Russia as ‘my comrades’. The worth is shown by the fact that we do back up the assassinations by our comrades in Russia. They are not the disciples of Tolstoy. Nor are we. We are revolutionists.”⁵⁹

The strong-spirited character that had always been the focus of Jack London’s literary work now had all the markings of a Russian Revolutionary, with his desperate heroism, sense of self-sacrifice, and a great gift for advocacy. *The Iron Heel*—London’s novel written between August and December 1906 and published in 1907—was the result of his reflections about the Russian Revolution.⁶⁰

Yet those who thought that political assassination was an admissible method for politically backward countries were far from being the majority in the American society. Talks about “Russia backslding into Nihilism” and about the extraordinary activity of the revolutionary party made up of “Nihilists and bomb-throwers” began right after Plehve’s murder.⁶¹ Some have even gone as far as seeing this act as a proof that the Russians were “Oriental” and incapable of governing themselves.⁶² As the use of political terror in Russia kept growing, the Americans evaluations of this method of political struggle began to shift from positive to negative, and this change of attitude indicated that the Universalist euphoria and the enchantment with the Russian Revolution were on the decline in the American society.

After the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich, even the *New York Times* that had always denounced absolutism as the cause of revolutionary violence remarked that “this awful crime” impeded the restoration of order and the advancement of freedom in Russia.⁶³ The *Atlanta Constitution*—a newspaper that supported the Democratic Party—published Lewis Gregg’s ambivalent

⁵⁹ Jack London, “Revolution,” in: *Revolution and Other Essays* (London& New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), 12-14, 16-17.

⁶⁰ Jack London, *The Iron Heel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908).

⁶¹ “The Recrudescence of Nihilism,” *Harper’s Weekly* Vol. 48 (August 1904): 1237-1238; “Revolutionary Progress in Russia,” *Review of Reviews* Vol. 30 (September 1904): 280.

⁶² Thompson, Hart, *The Uncertain Crusade*, 23.

⁶³ *New York Times*, February 20, 21, 23, 1905.

cartoons, one of which, entitled “Who is next?” presented a terrifying spirit of the Russian Revolution with a bomb in its hands hovering over the Grand Duke’s lifeless body. In another cartoon, Gregg drew some drunken Russian Nihilists who were amusing themselves in a “bomb-shooting gallery” that had the figures of Russian Grand Dukes as targets.⁶⁴ Claudius Maybell from another Democratic-leaning independent newspaper *The Brooklyn Eagle* later took up this theme of “bomb-throwing as a special kind of sport and diversion” in Russia and created

the image of a “Russian terrorist-athlete” in a “shot put circle”. Authors of some publications took the assassination attempts against Russia’s high officials as evidence of the perverse methods used by Russian Revolution-makers and of the dangerous trends of that Revolution. The Conservative *Los Angeles Times* published a cartoon, in which a peasant in a frock coat with a scroll of demands in his hand looked disapprovingly at an Anarchist armed with a bomb and a dagger and said bitterly: “And the world thinks he represents us.”⁶⁵ (Figure 7)



Figure 7. It is a mistake.

sian commoner in a Phrygian hat who looked like a French sans-culotte and was climbing out of the “Revolution” cauldron.⁶⁶ (Figure 8)

Through these images and texts, the perception of the destructive Russian Revolution that resembled a spasm of the social organism got fixed in American representations. A politically respectable magazine the *North American Review* warned its readers that the Russian Revolution was so radical that it could not be compared even with the French Revolution, let alone with the American one, and insisted on the necessity of gradual learning about the foundations of parliamentarism. Its Saint-Petersburg correspondent emphasized that “the Bloody Sunday” was the watershed, after which the Russian Revolution entered a new phase, characterized by the disorganization of bureaucracy, mass strikes and conspiracies,

⁶⁴ *Atlanta Constitution*, February 19, 26, 1905. See also the February 20, 1905 issue for “Fear of Dread Bomb Grips Russ Royalty.”

⁶⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1905. See also: *Living Age* Vol. 244 (March 1905): 696.

⁶⁶ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 1, 1905.



THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Figure 8. The beginning of the end.

ubiquitous bloodshed and anarchy, and red and white terror. His conclusion was that, for the first time in Russian history, the autocracy had come to depend fully upon the Army and the police, while the entire society was being revolutionized. On one side of the trenches stood a feeble-minded Tsar that made and broke his promises, backed by the police that acted arbitrarily and instigated ethnic strife; on the other was the general insurrection, backed by bombs and dynamite.⁶⁷

Andrew Dickson White, a diplomat and a historian, who in 1892-94 served as the US envoy to Russia and later as the first president of Cornell University, wrote a comprehensive article about the Russian crisis for the *Collier's* magazine. In it, he argued that the autocratic bureaucracy stood in the way of Russia's effective development, hindered the advancement of education, and suppressed individual initiative. Yet, at the same time, he expressed a deep mistrust of Russian reformers and revolutionaries—"Nihilists, Socialists, and Anarchists". Like many American Conservatives, White insisted that constitutional government and parliamentary traditions could only be introduced by an enlightened people, and that the Russians did not fit into that category. Therefore, this American intellectual considered that the Russian autocracy had to reform itself first and then undertake the

⁶⁷ *North American Review* Vol. 180 (February 1905): 300; (April 1905): 620-626; (May 1905): 780-788.

task of educating its “dark people.” Without this, the reforms would turn into a political farce.⁶⁸ In the end, the participants of the Conservative-pessimist discourse about Russia were the first ones to begin describing the Russian Revolution as a meaningless and ruthless mutiny.

In general, Americans looked favorably upon the Russian Revolution as a possibility, but when it actually occurred and broke the prescribed scenario, it caused anxiety and disenchantment by its “dangerous trends”: the growth of social tensions, naval and army uprisings, strikes and lock-outs, the creation of workers’ deputies’ Councils (Soviets), and the never-ending Jewish pogroms—to sum, all the manifestations of Freedom-fighting that became known as the “Revolution *à la russe*.⁶⁹

A radical change in the American sentiments towards the First Russian Revolution occurred in November-December 1905. The October general strike and the Tsar’s October 17th Manifesto that made provisions for introducing the freedoms of conscience, speech, assembly, and associations and also granted law-making powers to the Duma constituted an important watershed in American perceptions. Many American periodicals likened this Manifesto unto the Great Charter of Liberties and compared the importance of the date of its adoption to July 4th, 1776 in the US and to July 14th, 1789 in France.⁷⁰ However, when these events were followed by a growing tide of social violence instead of the anticipated stabilization, the euphoria of Universalism began to turn into the notion that the Russians were crossing the limits of the acceptable and that their revolution could plunge the country into anarchy and chaos.

These changes in the American public preferences can already be detected in November 1905 press reviews, even though harsh criticisms of Nicholas II continued (especially in reformist publications).⁷¹ The Tsar’s cartoon images also remained extremely negative: he was a weak-willed and frightened dwarf-ruler who had lost all power and control over the situation in his domain, and the only freedoms he had granted to the Russian people were those that he could not impede them to take by force.⁷² At the same time, the *New York Tribune* and the *Chicago Examiner* doubted whether the Russian society had sufficient self-governance experience to draw upon. The *Chicago News* observed that the majority of Russians would do well to go to school for a few years before starting to experiment with a republican form of government, while the *Chicago Record Herald* thought that the Russian Revolutionaries were as unreasonable as college freshmen.⁷³

⁶⁸ Cited from: Noble, “America and the Russian Crisis,” *Free Russia* (March 1905): 36.

⁶⁹ “Civil Liberty Proclaimed in Russia,” *Outlook* Vol. 81 (November 1905): 531; Johnston, “The Dawn of Liberty in Russia,” *Harper’s Weekly* Vol. 49 (November 1905): 1630; “The Russian Magna Carta,” *Review of Reviews* Vol. 32 (December 1905): 656-657.

⁷⁰ “Civil Liberty in Russia,” *Outlook* Vol. 81 (November 1905): 544.

⁷¹ See, for example, the cartoons in the *New York World*, October 29, 1905; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 2, 1905; *Harper’s Weekly* (November 18, 1905); cover; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 7, 1905.

⁷² See press reviews in the *Literary Digest* Vol. 31 (November, 1905): 733; Noble, “American Views of the Russian ‘Self-Effacement’,” *Free Russia* (December 1905): 129-130.

The cartoonists' decision to abandon the romantic image of the Russian people (as did for example, Claudio Maybell in the drawing that he created in response to news about Jewish pogroms in Russia) helped forward the changes in the conceptions of the Russian Revolution.⁷³ (Figure 9)



THE RUSSIAN IDEA OF FREEDOM.

—Maybell in the Brooklyn *Eagle*.

Figure 9. The Russian idea of freedom.

The tide of anti-Jewish violence that began to rise in the fall of 1905 with a pogrom in Odessa and grew again in the summer of 1906 with the Belostok pogrom did much to stir the public opinion on the other side of the Atlantic and to make the Americans reject their romantic ideas about the Russian Revolution in general. While in 1903 diplomats and consuls, public leaders and priests, journalists and cartoonists tended to demonize the political regime and censure the Russian authorities, now they talked about "the barbaric state" of the Russian society,

⁷³ *Brooklyn Eagle*, November 3, 1905. This cartoon was also used as illustration for a Literary Digest article entitled "Jewish Massacres with Official Approval," *Literary Digest* Vol. 31 (November 1905): 732.

contaminated by Judaeophobia and about the strength of anti-Semitic feelings among the Russian people.⁷⁴

Americans of Christian and Jewish faith reacted to the growth of anti-Jewish violence in Russia with heated protest meetings and mourning processions, numerous press publications, Congress resolutions, and the creation of the National Aid Committee for Pogrom Victims. Together with rabbis and Jewish periodicals, the *New York Times* reprimanded the Christian clergy and the American press for their passivity.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, the *New York Evening Journal* that formed part of William Hearst's "newspaper empire," entered into its characteristic sensationalist mode and summoned Americans to donate millions of dollars to help the Russian Jews and the American government—to take immediate action. William Hearst, who was campaigning for the New York Mayor's office and thus needed the support of the Jewish East-Side, reminded one and all how he had helped to start the war for Cuban liberation in 1898 through his press campaign. Now this newspaper tycoon declared his readiness to make the Russian Jews the object of the American emancipatory mission.⁷⁶ Such declarations, together with the political cartoons, did much to stir his compatriots' messianic sentiments.⁷⁷

Meanwhile, the influential leaders of the Jewish community, with Jacob Schiff first and foremost among them, tried to put pressure on the White House and the State Department in order to compel the Washington administration to engage in "humanitarian diplomacy," citing the US "humanitarian intervention" in Cuba as a precedent.⁷⁸ Yet, neither the President, nor the Secretary of State had any intention to take steps in that direction. In his letters to Jacob Schiff, President Theodore Roosevelt called Schiff's proposal to create an international humanitarian coalition a chimera and insisted that such actions would be completely useless, while a war of all against all was going on in various parts of the Russian Empire and its authorities were incapable of restoring social order and of guaranteeing their subjects' safety: "What would such a coalition do: enforce liberty or order—restore the autocracy or install a republic? Therefore, it is evident we could do nothing, and where we can do nothing I have a horror of saying anything [...] The

⁷⁴ Thomas Heenan to George von Lengerke Meyer, June 29, November 8, 1905, in: NARS, RG 59, Dispatches from U.S. Consuls in Odessa, M 459, R 7; Albert Leffinwell to Robert Bacon, November 20, 1905, in: NARS, RG 59, Dispatches from U.S. Consuls in Warsaw, M 467, R 3; "The Life and Death Struggle in Russia," *Missionary Review* Vol. 29 (January 1906): 59-62; "Russia and the Jews," *Living Age* Vol. 247 (December 1905): 681-683; "Jews Hacked to Bits by Russian Mobs," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (December 13, 1905); "Another Jewish Massacre in Russia," *Outlook* Vol. 83, (June 1906): 394; *Nation* Vol. 83 (October 1906): 298.

⁷⁵ "American Aid to the Suffering Jews of Russia," *Literary Digest* Vol. 31 (November 1905): 773-774.

⁷⁶ Thompson, Hart, *The Uncertain Crusade*, 106-109; Moses Rischin, *The Promised City. New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 229-230.

⁷⁷ See, for example, the double-spread of the *Judge*, September 30, 1905.

⁷⁸ Jacob H. Schiff. *His Life and Letters*, Cyrus Adler, ed., in 2 Vols., Vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1928), 134-138.

outrages on the Armenians were exactly the same as those perpetrated upon Jews of Russia both in character and in extent. But we did not go to war with Turkey.”⁷⁹

Overall, the growth of social tensions and political radicalism became the main factor that catalyzed the U turn in the American social preferences. The pages of newspapers and magazines were filled with reports about strikes and lock-outs, endless terrorist acts, unrest in the Army and the Navy, the December armed uprising, and the peasant riots. The authors began to talk about a civil war, in which workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors, as well as ethnic and religious minorities entered into an armed struggle against those that they saw as their oppressors—the government, the capitalists, the landed gentry, and the Army officers. The discussion now revolved around the metamorphoses of the freedom struggle in Russia, the transformation of the political revolution into a social one, whose prospects looked gloomier every day. The word “anarchy” became a peculiar kind of semantic code that was especially frightening for Americans, as were the musings about the October Manifesto that gave millions of illiterate Russian peasants more freedoms than they could handle, given their complete lack of self-government experience.⁸⁰ In Samuel Harper’s apt summary, “while there had been sympathy for the Revolution before it came, it caused concern when it in fact developed.”⁸¹

Finally, the change of public mood in the USA was also a reaction to the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War. After the Portsmouth Conference, the American investment in Russia began to grow, while the relations between the Washington and the Tokyo governments grew colder, which in turn produced a decrease of Japanophilia within the American society. All of this favored the diffusion of more nuanced perceptions about the official Russia.

The latter trend was also strengthened by the hopes that were placed on Sergei Yulieievich Witte. His good performance as the Minister of Finance, his position in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War, his skillful negotiation tactics during the Portsmouth Conference, and, finally, his role in the drafting of the October Manifesto all added to his prestige. To the American observers, Witte seemed just the kind of strong leader that could save Russia from its descent into revolutionary chaos and anarchy and coach its gradual renewal through reforms. In sum, he appeared to be the much-needed “Russian Lincoln” who could free the Russian people from the shackles of political and civil slavery.⁸² Positive evaluations of

⁷⁹ Theodore Roosevelt to Jacob Schiff, December 14, 1905, in: *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (LTR)*, Elting E., Morrison, ed., in 8 Vols., Vol. 5 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1952-1954), 113. See also: Theodore Roosevelt to Oscar Straus, April 10, 1906; Theodore Roosevelt to Jacob Schiff, July 26, 1906, in: *Ibidem*, 207, 336.

⁸⁰ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 28, November 3, December 29, 1905; *Christian Advocate*, November 9, 1905; *New York Herald*, November 28, 1905; *World Today* (December, 1905): 1255-1256; *Literary Digest* Vol. 31 (November 1905): 688; (December 1905): 867; George F. Wright, “The Russian Peasant,” *Nation* Vol. 81 (November 1905): 441-442; “World-Politics,” *North American Review* Vol. 182 (January-June 1906): 303-309.

⁸¹ Harper, *The Russia I Believe In*, 29.

⁸² Isidore Singer, “Sergius de Witte and the Bankruptcy of Russia,” *Independent*

Witte's performance dominated the press, even though his image in the American socio-political discourse was not all rosy, especially due to his readiness to turn to the repressive measures advocated by the Police Chief and Saint Petersburg's Governor-General Dmitri Fedorovich Trepov. Illusions about Witte had, albeit temporarily, softened the criticisms directed at the official Russia, even as the political revolution turned into a social one. Yet, by early 1906, Witte's image started to lose its romantic aura, as it became increasingly clear that this "Russian Necker" could not handle the situation, and was losing confidence both of the ruling circles and of the Liberal opposition.⁸³ This evolution from the model of the American Revolution (the "Russian Lincoln") to the model of the French Revolution (the "Russian Necker") was very symptomatic per se.

In November-December 1905, the American political cartoonists, who were taking an active part in the formation of simplistic images of the Russian Revolution (be they romantic or demonic), illustrated the irreversible turn of the Russian Revolution into a bloody life-or-death skirmish, a wild bacchanal of Nihilists, peasants, and workers.⁸⁴ The Moscow armed insurrection of December 1905 was harshly condemned by the American press that wrote about the ungrateful Russians who went to the barricades and ignoring the opportunity they had to create a constitutional regime. What is more, the Russian government was accused of not being decisive enough in restoring order in the country and exposing the surrounding countries to the risk of catching "the revolutionary disease."⁸⁵

The last upsurge of general interest for the Russian Revolution in the USA was related to the convocation of the first Duma in April 1906. Many American observers initially thought it to be the exit from social chaos and financial crisis,

Vol. 59 (August 1905): 509-511; "The First Russian Prime Minister"; "The Russians and Constitution," *Outlook* Vol. 81 (November 1905): 596-598; (December 1905): 859-860; Perceval Gibon, "Witte: A Great Man Facing Failure," *McClure's Magazine* Vol. 26 (April 1906): 655-662; *Literary Digest* Vol. 31 (November 1905): 688; "Has Witte Left the Czar," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 24, 1905; See the editorial cartoons in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 28, November 1, 1905; *New York World*, November 1, December 7, 1905; *Judge* (November 25, 1905): page spread.

⁸³ "The Russian Revolution from Various Points of View," *Review of Reviews* Vol. 33 (January 1906): 86; "Disintegration in Russia," *Quarterly Review* Vol. 204 (January 1906): 269-270, 274. See, for example, the editorial cartoons in the *New York World*, December 19, 1905; January 7, 1906.

⁸⁴ See cartoons from the *Boston Globe* published in *Literary Digest* Vol. 31 (November 11, 1905): 689; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 12, 1905; *New York World*, December 3, 7, 19, 1905; *Puck* (December 27, 1905): page spread. See cartoons from the *Brooklyn Eagle*, *Pittsburg Dispatch*, *Baltimore Evening Herald* published in *Literary Digest* Vol. 31 (November, 1905): 689, 732, 733.

⁸⁵ "Madness Not Revolution"; "Russian Chaos," *New York Times*, December 5, 17, 1905; See cartoons in the *Detroit News*, *Minneapolis Journal* published in *Literary Digest* Vol. 32 (January 1906): 3. These cartoons were used to illustrate the article "Lack of Sympathy for the Moscow Rebels". See also the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 28, 1905; *Literary Digest* Vol. 31 (January 1906): 3-4; Stanley Washburn, *The Cable Game. The Adventures of an American Press-Boat in Turkish Waters during the Russian Revolution* (Boston: Sherman, French & Company 1912), 100-101.

the basis for a peaceful transformation of the autocratic regime into a constitutional one, the beginning of a real fight for freedom, and the chance to avoid the Russian versions of both the Jacobin dictatorship and the Thermidor reaction⁸⁶. Yet, in spite of all these hopes, the prospects of a Duma dominated by Constitutional Democrats (*Kadets*) and Radicals caused heated discussions and ambivalent comments within the American society. Some felt inspired by the election results, seeing them as the proof of that the Russians were in fact ready for a constitutional government and hoping that the Duma would be able to stand up to the forces of the old order. Others were pessimistic in their forecasts, due to Witte's loss of prestige and his subsequent dismissal in April 1906, which seemed to make more difficult the dialogue between the State and the Duma. Yet others talked about the apathetic peasants, incapable of comprehending the very idea of a representative government, let along their rights and obligations within it. Some pointed to the financial and moral bankruptcy of the Russian authorities, to the discredited Nicholas II who was hardly capable of taking into account the lessons of the French Revolution and avoiding the fate of Louis XVI. They doubted that the Russian aristocracy could avoid the mistakes made by the French aristocracy and that the Duma deputies would be wiser than the deputies of the National Assembly.⁸⁷ The image of the French Revolution was still used as a precedent and a warning, while parallels with the late 18th-century events in France had completely displaced the ideas about "the Russian 1776" that prevailed in the early 1905.⁸⁸

Even though the American press was generally sympathetic towards the first Russian experience in popular representation and continued to criticize "the Russian Louis XVI", the demands made by the Duma deputies had not found favor with the American public that considered them to be too radical. Indeed, it was hard to make sense of such proposals as universal suffrage for a country where the majority of the population could neither read nor write, or universal amnesty and abolition of the death penalty, while terrorism and crime were rampant and were said to be means of political struggle, or the dissolution of the Duma's upper chamber that was the only institution capable of restraining the unreasonable ideas of the lower chamber, or the obligatory alienation of lands without compensation, demanded by the Labor group in the Duma (*trudoviki*). The high hopes that the Americans placed on the Constitutional Democrats were frustrated, as the *kadets* proved incapable of directing the revolutionary movement into the channel of parliamentary competition and, with reckless impatience, rejected gradual

⁸⁶ "Evolution or Revolution," *Outlook* Vol. 82 (April 1906): 924-925; H.M. William, "Is the Russian Revolution Constructive?", *North American Review* Vol. 33 (April 1906): 464-466; "Duma and Tsar," *New York Sun*, June 18, 1906; "New Epoch in Russia," *Washington Star*, July 21, 1906. For cartoons, see *New York World*, May 11, 27, 1906; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 11, 14, 17, 22, 1906; *Puck* (June 6, 1906): cover.

⁸⁷ "How the Elections Went," *Review of Reviews* Vol. 33 (June 1906): 657-658; Dillon, "The First Session of the First Parliament: A Forecast," *Contemporary Review* Vol. 84 (May 1906): 744-748; "World-Politics," *North American Review* Vol. 182 (January-June 1906): 783-784; "Russia's Great Experiment," *Harper's Weekly* Vol. 50 (May 1906): 729.

⁸⁸ "The Demands of the Duma," *Independent* Vol. 60 (March, 1906): 1186.

reforms and dialogue with the authorities. On the other hand, American observers lamented the inability of the Russian people to advance strong political leaders from their own ranks – the defect that was readily ascribed to affectivity and impracticality that were so characteristic of the Russian national character.⁸⁹

After the dissolution of the First Duma, voices that urged Russia to learn the main lesson of American Progressivism grew ever stronger. Reforms were to be carefully designed and prepared and were meant to improve the existing system, not to destroy it, while the Russian revolutionaries wanted to renew Russia through destruction, terror, and anarchy. Even the radical *Independent* that had been discussing the possibility that “the Socialist Gospel” would take root in Russia *à la française*, through the realization of the destructive component of its revolution, now insisted that historical parallels of any kind between Russia and France of the late 18th-century no longer worked.⁹⁰ The eventual rejection of the Western historical precedent images (of the American and the French Revolutions) indicated that the Americans no longer perceived the Russian Revolution as the Western-style movement.

While in 1906 the Revolution was only beginning according to many Russians, for the majority of Americans it was already over, because it had degenerated into a universal insurrection of the people against their government, an insurrection that was fraught with political and social chaos and symbolized the nation’s regress from civilization to barbarism. The American press insisted that the Russian Revolution had chosen riots, strikes, and terrorist acts as its main weapons,⁹¹ and that its destructive forces had manifested themselves most clearly in Poland and in the Caucasus. The murder of the American Consul William Stuart in Batumi on May 20th, 1906 was cited as the best proof of this revolutionary mayhem.⁹² The events in the Russian Empire had demonstrated that the Russian

⁸⁹ “The Peasants Land Bill,” *New York Sun*, July 9, 1906 ; *North American Review* Vol. 183 (1906): 144-145; “The Duma and the Emperor,” *Outlook* Vol. 83 (June 1906): 491; “The Duma Defiant,” *Independent* Vol. 60 (May 1906): 1247-1248; “The Russian Parliament,” *World’s Work* Vol. 12 (June 1906): 7593-7594; “Political Neurasthenia in Russia,” *Review of Reviews* Vol. 33 (June 1906): 737-738; “Duma’s Fight All in Vain,” *New York Sun*, July 15, 1906; “Stormy Time in the Duma,” *Boston Transcript*, July 5, 1906.

⁹⁰ “The Russian and French Revolution (Editorial),” *Independent* Vol. 61 (August 1906): 409-410.

⁹¹ “The Russian Crisis”; “Terrorism in Russia,” *Independent* Vol. 61 (August 1906): 360-361, 480-481; “Rebellion in Russia,” *Outlook* Vol. 83 (August 1906): 826; “The Russian Reign of Terror,” *Review of Reviews* Vol. 34, (October 1906): 407; “Attempt to Assassinate Stolypin,” *Current Literature* Vol. 41 (October 1906): 381-386; “World-Politics,” *North American Review* Vol. 183 (October 1906): 682-683; “Massacre of Polish Police; Terrorist Murders Go On,” *New York Sun*, July 16, 17, 1906; “Bomb Thrower Slays Governor; Murder-Robbery Not Diminishing,” *Halifax Herald*, August 4, 23, 1906; “Girl Carries Bomb to Kill”; “Terrorists Show no Mercy”; “Assassination vs. Reform,” *New York Sun*, August 11, 29, 30, 1906 ; “Very Close Call for Grand Duke,” *Washington Star*, August 11, 1906; *Revolution in Russia ! As Reported by the New York Tribune and the New York Herald, 1894-1921* (New York: The Viking Press, 1967), 78-86.

⁹² For the diplomatic correspondence on this issue, see: *FRUS, 1906* (Washington, the US Department of State, 1907): 1290-1295.



THE FOE IN FREEDOM'S PATH.
—Carter in the *New York American*.

Figure 10. The Foe in Freedom's Path.

were still inspired by the depth and breadth of social revolution in Russia, while Liberal-universalists stressed the great importance of Russia's first parliamentary experience. However, on the whole, the euphoria of universalism was replaced by rancid Russophobia, and the myth of the "immutable Russia" returned to the center stage. Americans were no longer interested in the revolution on the other side of the ocean, and this disappointment in the outcomes of the First Russian Revolution was very well demonstrated by the disappearance of "Russian cartoons" from the American periodicals. The political cartoons that were at once the indicator of the social mood and the mechanism for the formation of new preferences now transmitted the image of Russia as a country that has proved unable to assimilate the Western experience and remained hostile and alien. While the political cartoons simplified the "Russian picture" and fixed the two central images of the Russian revolution (the romantic and the demonic), verbal texts captured the perceptions of the Russian Revolution in a much more nuanced manner that makes it possible to distinguish between different images, produced by the Conservative, the Russophile, the Liberal-Universalist, and the Radical discourses.

A good example of the Conservative discourse is found in the writings and reflections of George von Lengerke Meyer, the US Ambassador to Russia, who has exerted a significant influence on the perceptions that the American Conservative establishment, and especially Theodore Roosevelt, formed about the prospects of the Russian Revolution. The Ambassador wrote to the President: "Russia is entering upon a great experiment, ill-prepared and really uneducated [...] The great mass of the Russian people are not much superior to animals with brutal instincts [...] Every step or attempt that has been carried on in a revolutionary way has been made without reference to what has gone on before or what is to follow. They do

people could only reach freedom through enlightenment and education, since freedom and revolution *à la russe* were the fruits of popular ignorance. Robert Carter has captured this dominant opinion in a visual image that has contributed to the formation of a long-term American vision of the Russian revolution, its logic and general scheme.⁹³ (Figure 10)

In 1906, periodicals still published reports about the Poles' fight for Independence; there were also calls for granting autonomy to Finland and denunciations of repressions and government terror.

Champions of radical discourse

⁹³ Reprinted in *Literary Digest* Vol. 32 (June 1906): 967.

not know what they want, except that they want everything at once – what has taken other nations generations to acquire.”⁹⁴ Meanwhile, Theodore Roosevelt himself saw the causes of the first Revolution’s sterility in the fact that it was “led by leaders of the Gorki type” or “the silly visionary creatures who follow Tolstoi and his kind.” In Roosevelt’s view, Russia’s future directly depended on whether it could adopt the values of the Western development model and to stay on the road of gradual modernization, avoiding the extremes of anarchy and despotism.⁹⁵

In their turn, the American Russophiles, such as the well-known translator Isabel Hapgood, came to the conclusion that the Russian people needed control and leadership of a monarchy, since they were prone to fall into anarchy and recklessness. This conclusion resonated with the utterances of the American Conservatives about Russians not being ready for self-government, although, unlike the Conservatives, Hapgood did not consider the Russian national character to be an insurmountable obstacle on the way to progress. What forms this progressive development would take and at what speed it would occur was a different matter.⁹⁶

American Liberal-Universalists thought that the principal gain of the Russian Revolution was to set the stage for parliamentarism and did not lose from sight those political visitors who kept coming to the United States from Russia in search of moral and material aid and adding new fuel to the fire of American Universalist Liberalism as the American society got progressively disenchanted with the outcomes of the First Russian Revolution. Taking stock of the 1905 Revolution ten years later, George Kennan, the father of the first American crusade for a Free Russia, identified three criteria of a successful revolution : its goals, its social bases of support, and knowledgeable and capable leaders that react sensitively to the changes in the political situation. According to this scheme, the main shortcoming of the First Russian Revolution was precisely the lack of competent leaders that could have set adequate goals and consolidate the Russian society in order to achieve them. Neither the *kadets*, nor the Saint-Petersburg Council (Soviet) of Worker Deputies could accomplish this mission, much as they had tried. George Kennan’s sense of where the limits of the Russian Revolution lay was consistent with his notion that this revolution was a political movement of the Western type that would have a tangible and predictable result, equally valued by all social strata : a constitutional regime, democratization, and a gradual process of solving the most pressing social and economic problems within the private property framework and without violent spasms of the social organism.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ George von Lengerke Meyer to Theodore Roosevelt, 8/21 May, 1906, September 2, 1906, in: Howe, *George von Langerke Meyer*, 286, 306-307.

⁹⁵ “Theodore Roosevelt to Upton Sinclair, March 15, 1906”; Theodore Roosevelt to Theodore Roosevelt, Junior, November 20, 1908, in: *LTR* Vol. 5, 179; Vol. 6, 1372.

⁹⁶ Isabella F. Hapgood, “The Russian Peasant: How and Where He Lives,” *Craftsman* Vol. 9 (February 1906): 647-648; David Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore. American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003): 71-72.

⁹⁷ Kennan, “Russia After the War: the Chances of Revolution,” *Outlook* Vol. 109 (April 1915): 977-979; Kennan, “THE Attitude of the Russian People,” *Outlook* Vol. 84 (October 1906): 328-332.

By contrast, the American Radicals neither made analogies between the Russian Revolution and the American and the French ones, nor based their vision of it upon precedent historical models. They thought that the First Russian Revolution was an unprecedented event and, as such, found it very inspiring for those who thought that the American society itself needed renewal. Representatives from various currents of American radicalism, Socialist or not, constructed their own ideological identities as they reflected upon this Revolution. The “Gentlemen-Socialists,” such as William English Walling, Arthur Bullard, Durland Kellogg, made a special contribution to the formation of a radical discourse about Russia. Like the Marxists, they thought that the essence of the Russian revolution was in its social dimension, but considered the peasants to be the carriers of social democracy. According to them, the road to Socialism passed not through the industrial capitalism, but through a «peasant revolution». Like Kennan and other Liberal “crusaders,” they took the negative traits of the Russian national character to be the result of a despotic regime and were confident that the Russians were capable of building a democracy. Yet they saw the significance of the Russian Revolution in the uniqueness of the social message it was sending to the entire humanity, and not in a movement for the creation of “the United States of Russia.”⁹⁸

All these discourses maintained their place in the American society through 1906-07, even though the Conservative discourse, with its characteristic Russophobia and the emphasis on the “eternal Oriental,” became dominant. Russian Liberals could not give the Revolution a constructive course, and its people lacked education, were not ready for a representative form of government, and did not know how to use their freedom. While the Revolution was coming to its end in Russia, the first “cycle of hopes and disappointments” about Russia’s modernization prospects was ending in the US.

Conclusion

The American attention to the First Russian revolution has actualized the role of the Russian “Other” in the analysis of the American domestic agenda. This phenomenon became reflected in the deliberations of the political and intellectual establishment, public and religious leaders, journalists and political writers, as well as in the drawings of the editorial cartoonists. Parallels between Russia and the US were drawn not only in order to criticize Russia or the domestic political situation in the US, but also in order to demonstrate that the United States, in spite of its imperfections and social conflicts, remained a bastion of freedom and democracy in comparison to the Russian Empire.

First, mass disturbances in the Russian Empire during the 1905 Revolution were compared to the social unrest in the US, especially to the events in Chicago, the city that became the center of the workers’ movement and the site of the pow-

⁹⁸ William E. Walling, *Russia's Message. The True World Import of the Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1908); Arthur Bullard, *Russia's Revolution: 1905-1906*, in: Princeton University, Mudd Library, Manuscript Division, Arthur Bullard Papers, Box 5 ; Kellogg Durland, *The Red Reign: The True Story of an Adventurous Year in Russia* (New York: Century Co., 1907).

erful May 1905 strike that was marked by the protesters' bloody clashes with the police.⁹⁹ American Russophiles pointed to the social unrest in Chicago in order to highlight that Americans who criticized Russians would do well to pay more attention to the events at home. Meanwhile, the conservative press had appropriated the image of "Russian nihilist bomb-throwers" as the symbol of the hostile "Other" and used it in its critique of the US political radicalism in order to show that this phenomenon was completely alien to the American model of development and had been brought in by immigrants. For example, the editorial cartoonist of the *Los Angeles Times* represented peaceful citizens of Russia, Chicago, and Warsaw who used brick-proof umbrellas to protect themselves from both the bombs thrown by the strikers and the bullets fired by the army that confronted them.¹⁰⁰

Second, Russia's image was used on a broader scale as a negative marker in the discussions of the sour points of domestic political development, as the American society was going through a period of racial confrontations, social unrest, and ideological disenchantments. Thus, the Grand Dukes of Russia were mentioned in critiques of political bossism, the captains of the US industry were called Siberian wolves, despots, and bloody autocrats of the monopolist world, who lived in luxury and sent their "personal Cossacks" to disperse workers' strikes. Boston and New York slum dwellers were said to be no better off than the inhabitants of the miserable huts and hovels in the Tsar's domain, etc.¹⁰¹.

Third, the 1905 Revolution provided a new mold for the analogy between the abolition of slavery in the US and the end of serfdom in Russia that was commonly used on both sides of the Atlantic and had a tradition of growing stronger whenever the bilateral relations became closer. The opposition Freedom-Slavery that was already integrated into the American discourse about Russia, thanks to the efforts of the participants in the first «crusade» for the cause of Russian freedom, had now acquired new overtones. The image of Abraham Lincoln was thus established as a firm reference for all occasions when Americans had to form an idea about the current figure that "liberated the Russian people from the shackles of political and spiritual slavery," be it Sergei Witte in 1905, Pavel Miliukov in 1917, Alexander Solzhenitsyn in 1974, or Boris Yeltsin in 1991.¹⁰²

Forth, the anti-Semitism problem in the Russian Empire resembled the racism issue in the US. The search for analogies between the Jewish *pogroms* and the lynching of African Americans and the state policies towards these two ethnic groups had turned into a very common communicative strategy. The critics of racism in the United States compared the "Jim Crow laws" with Russian anti-Jewish laws, drunken White Americans who lynched Black Americans with vodka-intoxicated Russian peasants killing Russian Jews. Atlanta, the site of an especially cruel African American *pogrom* in 1906, was compared to Kishinev. Quite un-

⁹⁹ See, for example, Thomas May's cartoon from the Detroit *Journal* re-published in *Literary Digest* Vol. 30 (May 20, 1905): 732.

¹⁰⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1905.

¹⁰¹ Thompson, Hart, *The Uncertain Crusade*, 5-17, 22, 79-80.

¹⁰² Zhuravleva, Foglesong, "Konstruirovaniye obrazov Rossii v amerikanskoy politicheskoy karikature XX veka," 202, 248.



Figure 11. Welcome, Russia!

derstandably, these kinds of analogies were faithfully reproduced by the official and semi-official Russian press and eagerly used by the Tsarist government and its diplomats every time when the US seemed ready to intervene into the solution

of the “Jewish question” in Russia. At the same time, quite a few others used Russia as the “dark twin” of the US and insisted that the Jewish *pogroms* in Russia were infinitely worse than the ones against African Americans. At the other extreme of the social spectrum, some white Southerners referred to Pleve’s murder in Russia in order to show that lynch trials could at times be justified.¹⁰³

The American enthusiasm for the First Russian Revolution as the climax of the first American crusade for Russia’s democratization has played an important role in the creation of the American phenomenology of the Russian revolution as such.

After the end of the 1905-1907 Revolution the “romantic” image of

Figure 12. Going home.

¹⁰³ For further details on the subject of Jewish *pogroms* vs. African American *pogroms* dichotomy, see Zhuravleva, *Ponimanie Rossii v SShA*, 468-487, 694-704.



Figure 13. Loaded. But wait until he sobers up.

gies and the rhetorical devices that were honed during the First Russian Revolution and became an important mechanism for maintaining long-term American myths about Russia, both the Liberal-Universalist and the Conservative-pessimist varieties. The former included the faith in the capacity of the Russian people to carry out a Western-style revolution and the create “the United States of Russia,” the conviction that the Russian society was democratic by nature and oppressed



Figure 14. Guiding Him.

Russia did not resurge until the wake of the 1917 February Revolution. It became dominant once more in winter and in spring¹⁰⁴ (Figure 11-12); by the fall it was already replaced by a worrisome, although not yet altogether negative image of the Russian Bear who was drunk senseless on freedom¹⁰⁵ (Figure 13), and in November the «demonic» image of Russia that had strayed from the «right path» was back again.¹⁰⁶ (Figure 14)

The “romantic” and “demonic” images of Russia that appeared in 1917 were constructed with the help of the communicative strategies and the rhetorical devices that were honed during the First Russian Revolution and became an important mechanism for maintaining long-term American myths about Russia, both the Liberal-Universalist and the Conservative-pessimist varieties. The former included the faith in the capacity of the Russian people to carry out a Western-style revolution and the create “the United States of Russia,” the conviction that the Russian society was democratic by nature and oppressed

by a retrograde and xenophobic government, and the belief that Russia’s historic destiny was to follow the trail blazed by the Western countries, with the US in the lead. The Conservative-pessimist myths portrayed Russia as a country forever kept behind by its non-Western traditions and culture, linked the authoritarian nature of its political system to the peculiarities of its national character. The Liberal myths gained ground during the ascending phase of the “cycle of hopes and disappointments,” the Conservative ones dominated during the descending phases.

¹⁰⁴ *Life* (May 10, 1917).

¹⁰⁵ *Judge* (September 8, 1917).

¹⁰⁶ *New York World*, November 9, 1917.

Meanwhile, the carriers of the Radical discourse created a different, though no less mythologized image of the Russian revolutionary “Other.” Yet this was the only American discourse about Russia, in which it took on the role of a teacher and not of a student in what concerned the universal significance of its revolutionary message.

Both in 1905 and in 1917, the Americans “invented” romantic and demonic “mental images” of Russia on the basis of their ideology of progress and expansion, their own vision of the ideal political and social arrangements, a true revolution, the place of the US in the world, and its role in the process of its democratization and harmonization.

Throughout the entire 20th century, as the American society witnessed the events in the Russian Empire, USSR, or the post-Soviet Russia, it repeatedly oscillated between the universalistic euphoria and the myth of the “Immutable Rus,” the enthusiasm about rapid westernization of Russia and the pessimism on the account of its “orientalism,” and between the faith in the readiness of Russian civil society to break the grip of the rulers and in the liberals’ capacity to lead the constructive process of modernization on the one hand, and deliberations about the immutability of the Russian national character on the other.

Americans experienced a feeling of discomfort, because it was impossible to denounce the evil in other countries, while the American society itself could easily become the object of a fierce critique and was in need of serious renewal (the metaphor of the “glass house”). Meanwhile, American reformism was clearly acquiring an international dimension. As a result, at the turn of the 20th century, the fight for freedom far beyond the US borders was already seen as an important tool for preserving democracy at home and as a peculiar mechanism for overcoming the national identity crisis.

Americans that awaited the liberalization of the Russian Empire in 1905 and hoped for its speedy modernization tended to exaggerate both the scale of the changes that took place in Russia and the degree of American influence in the matter. It must be noted, that Russian liberals and radicals did much to perpetuate this trend, as they kept coming to the United States for moral and material support and appealing to the Americans’ messianic feelings and their faith in liberal universalism. By the turn of the 20th century, they and the American “friends of Russian freedom” had created a very particular image of the Russian revolutionary. It was for this reason that George Kennan, William Foulke, and Edmund Noble saw Leon Trotsky and Vladimir Lenin as impostors who had usurped the fruits of the battle fought by Liberals such as Pavel Miliukov and “moderate Socialists” – Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinsky, Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaya, Nikolai Chaikovsky, Aleksei Alad’in, etc. In this sense, Americans got caught in their own “imagological trap”.

During the First Russian Revolution, the eagerness to remake the Russian Empire into the image and the likeness of the United States had reached its peak and Russia became the object of the US world-reforming mission. The first American «crusade» for the democratization of Russia had provided the blueprint for the subsequent campaigns : for the liberalization of the Russian Empire in 1917,

of the Soviet Union during the Second World War, and of post-Soviet Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. As David Foglesong persuasively demonstrates in his book *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”*, the crusade for Russia’s renewal also went on between these episodes of heightened activity, and this never-ending quest has strengthened the Americans’ faith in the special destiny of their country to be the torchbearer of freedom and democracy for all the people of the world. These developments have given rise to two important issues that still remain relevant in our days: the right of humanitarian intervention and the expediency of imposing American ideals on those to whom the Americans wanted to bring «the blessings of freedom», regardless of their own wishes.

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