

SECTION FIVE: SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS, Lesson Plan

I. Names reminder

II. Sure thing or gamble?

III. Preconditions for social revolution: structural & voluntarist approaches

I. Everyone remember names

II. Activity

Revolutions require collective action. This simple activity, used during the week on revolutions, demonstrates the difficulty of carrying out collective action. Upon entering class, students are given the following directions:

"Take out a small piece of paper, and put your name on it. You have two options for how section will end this week. Your first option is that you may leave five minutes early, no questions asked. I will not be covering any material in the last five minutes, so students who remain in class will gain no advantage either from substantive discussion or from participation. To take this option, write ~~5 min~~ on your sheet of paper. The second option you have is to gamble for the opportunity to leave 10 minutes early. If you choose to gamble, write ~~gamble~~ on your sheet of paper. After everyone has made a decision, I will collect all of the sheets of paper. I will count the number of people who chose to gamble, and I will roll a die that many times. If I roll a 6 in any of those tries, EVERYONE may leave 10 minutes early. As should be obvious, the more students who choose to gamble, the better your odds are of leaving 10 minutes early. If I do not roll a 6, those who gambled must stay the entire section, while those who chose to leave 5 minutes early may do so.

Consider your decision, and write it on the piece of paper. There are no consequences for your grade or participation to your decision."

After making their choices, the class compares the outcome to situation of peasants in a revolution and discusses anyone did or did not choose to free ride.

III. Preconditions of social revolution

Some theories that don't discuss the collective action problem

-Marx -- revolutions happen inevitably - class in power sows seeds of own economic collapse

-Davies -- relative deprivation -- revolutions happen when expectations are rising but are frustrated - draw the J-curve on the board

- Where do revolutions come from?

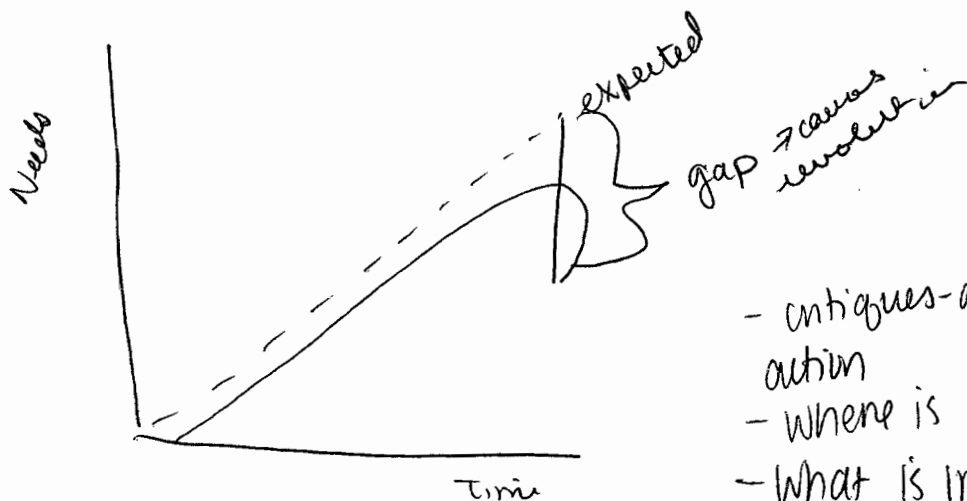
- Inevitable response to class conflict

- history repeats itself

- Bourgeoisie were productive but didn't profit from it under feudalism → bourgeoisie rev. → est. capitalism

- Under capitalism, proletariat are productive but don't profit from it. As they're increasingly immiserated → proletariat-led revolution - establishment of socialism.

- Critiques: didn't happen.



- critiques - assumes collective action
- Where is the state?
- What is important for establishing revolutions

Skocpol's argument

International influences

- first: spread of capitalism (spread of industrialization, technology)
- second: competition (military) that required industrialization

The state

- the state is not just an arena
- the state is "a set of administrative, policing and military organizations headed ~~by~~ by an executive authority." (29)
- potentially autonomous. Crucial thing is the extent to which they are *actually* autonomous
- agrarian bureaucracies - captured by landed elites and thus inherently vulnerable to peasant rebellions
- can't modernize well
 - only places with separate bureaucrats (who aren't landed elites), like the Japanese Meiji
- preconditions for susceptibility to foreign pressures

Overwhelming foreign pressure (created because the state can't modernize well) --> even more weakened state

- peasant rebellion
 - institutionally based collective solidarity
 - autonomy from direct, day-to-day supervision and control by landlords
 - chinese case: exception that proves the rule. More stratified organizations of peasants, which chinese communists had to destroy, engage directly with the peasants to create a group capable of collective action.

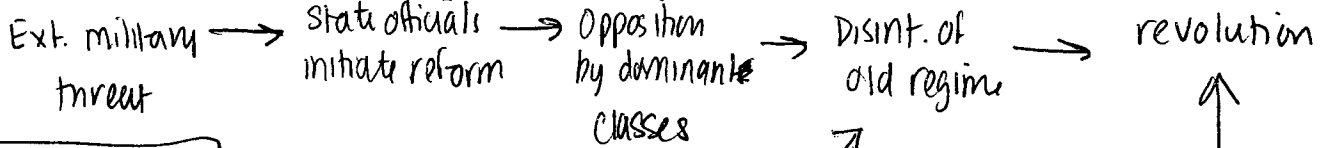
Counterarguments

- selbin - leadership
- role of culture -- perhaps facilitating collective action

World characteristics:

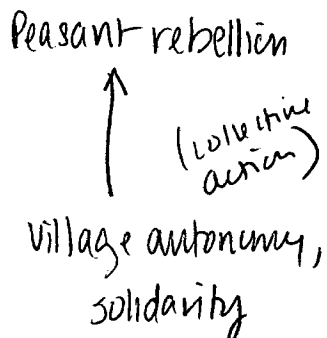
other critiques?

- uneven econ. dev.
- military competition



nature of state

Dominant classes have ind. econ. bases of state power



nature of peasants