
Palmer Talbutt

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First, Sorokin's views on the stages of revolution anticipate Jowitt, with his stages of "combat", "consolidation", and "inclusion". (See the 1967 reprint edition of Sociology of Revolution with the author's new preface alluding the third phase, well before the time of Gorbachov.) Secondly, Sorokin sees authoritarian, even proto-socialistic, regimes as resulting from acute economic and political breakdown. Jowitt looks for authoritarian, not liberal, regimes to arise for current chaos.

Thirdly, and most importantly, Sorokin regards the current times as "overripe sensate", leading into a renewal of "ideational" values. When Jowitt points to the roles of Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Islam and to the increased power of "ethnic" self-identities within regions undergoing strife, and all-out tensions with "civic" values, the resemblance to Sorokin is striking.

In their respective days, Sorokin and Jowitt have brought unsettling messages which still deserve a careful hearing. This is especially true given their audiences' predisposition to wishful thinking.

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This short collection of eight excellent essays had marked the bicentennial of the French Revolution; their originals were delivered at Oxford in 1989.

What do they usefully say to the civilizational scholar, indeed to the educated reader? First of all, attention to the many dimensions of this complex event, or interlude of interconnected events, is appropriately paid. Such aspects touched upon are political, social, economic, religious, military, diplomatic, international, but the compactness of the several discussions, rewarding and stimulating though they be, demands the refreshing of fallible memories. So I myself found Lefebvre's The Coming of the French Revolution quite helpful, especially with R.R. Palmer's 1988 Preface, and William Doyle's Oxford History of the French Revolution providing timely reminders. The latter's concluding chapter, "The French Revolution in Perspective" is a fine overview, complementing the essays, notably Lucas' Introduction and Colin Jones' "Bourgeois Revolution Revivified," along with Palmer's Preface to Lefebvre. (All of the latter deal with differences between allegedly "Orthodox" and "Revisionist" historians, the resolving of which apparently takes place when the term "bourgeois" is sufficiently qualified. Attitudes, diversely shaped by interest and probably historical generations as well, come into play here. Along a temporal co-ordinate, one may foresee yet
more perspectival variations, given the "Leninist extinction" (Jowitt's term) and the motivational collapse of the cold war.

As far as civilizational crossings are concerned, "modern political culture" has traveled with its inevitable changes (to which the comparativist should attend) from the "First World" to the "Second", and latterly to the "Third." (Consider the messy conditions of Haiti, whose revolutionary origins were largely French inspired.)

Given a certain amount of background review, if needed, Lucas's brief anthology should repay careful examination. In my own case, review was certainly required. I was impressed especially by Darnton's, Jones', Bergeron's and Blanning's papers. (Historical particularities are desirable to qualify plentiful generalizations from sociologists, political scientists, and philosophers, to say nothing of ideological.

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The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC) has been an active learned society since the early 1970s. At annual meetings and through the semi-annual journal, Comparative Civilizations Review, many thoughtful persons have shared their scholarship on a truly remarkable range of topics. Among them is Vytautas Kavolis, Distinguished Professor to Comparative Civilizations and Sociology an Dickinson College, who has been President of the Society and Editor of the journal.

In Moralizing Cultures, Kavolis has revised into a coherent argument a series of papers he has presented over many years on the themes and topics of moral culture. The result is an extraordinary achievement in "civilization analysis," a mode of theorizing and a manner of inquiry which has been cultivated, nourished, and now harvested within the intellectual environment of the ISCSC. The book is indeed an abundant yield of careful analytical distinctions, broad vision, and plentiful information, resulting from a comparative analysis of moralizing behaviors and institutions across many historical civilizations and world religions.

According to Kavolis, a moral culture contains a moral vision as well as organized components which can be referred to as moralizing institutions. While both can change, they usually do so at different rates. Kavolis insists that one should compare moral cultures "at the same level of complexity." he distin-