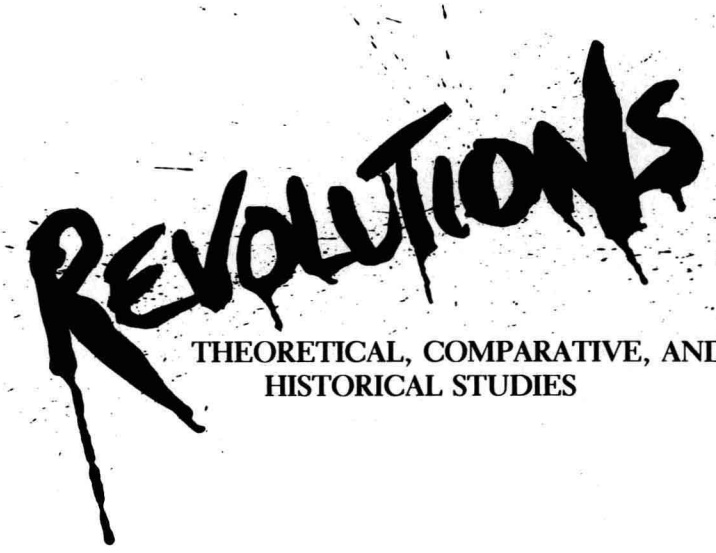
REVOLUTIONS

THEORETICAL, COMPARATIVE, AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

EDITED BY

Jack A. Goldstone



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PREFACE

This book began as a course on "Revolution and Social Change." I wanted to include readings by major thinkers and writers that would encourage students to think about revolution in terms of social theory, major historical events, and contemporary politics. Colleagues with similar interests shared with me a number of their teaching needs. Those teaching general courses in introductory political science or political sociology wanted a collection of essays presenting the latest controversies and ideas on the theory of revolutions. Those teaching courses on comparative revolution—who usually examine events in France, Russia, China, and other great historical revolutions—wanted some up-to-date and theoretically informed material on Iran or Nicaragua. Those teaching courses in the history and politics of specific areas—Latin America, China, Russia, and Eastern Europe—wanted essays that would introduce theoretical issues about the sociology of revolution and political change that would be pertinent to their particular region.

This book evolved to meet these varied needs. I have designed it for use as the core book for courses on revolution or as a supplementary text for courses in comparative politics and political sociology.

Part I presents theories of revolution from Marx, de Tocqueville, Weber, Huntington, Tilly, and Skocpol and Trimberger. Parts II through IV analyze specific aspects of revolution—the origins, the role of peasants, the outcomes—through historical and comparative case studies. The case studies range from the English and French Revolutions to the Mexican, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions—from Iran and Nicaragua to El Salvador, Cuba, and Eastern Europe.

These essays are addressed primarily to undergraduates who have some prior course work in social science. However, instructors can vary the scope of this volume by carefully selecting accompanying texts and lectures. My own students, from freshmen to beginning graduate students, have enjoyed this material and found it challenging.

The selections are analytical and thought-provoking, rather than merely descriptive: they assume that the reader has some knowledge of the outline of events in, for example, the French or Russian Revolutions. For readers who wish to learn more about specific events, suggestions for further reading at the back of the book list several of the more interesting works on individual revolutions.

All of the essays have appeared in books and academic journals; however, I have edited—and in some cases revised and updated—these texts for this book. I owe a great debt of thanks to the authors who worked with me. Of course, the responsibility for any errors in the way their work has been presented is mine alone.

In the interest of brevity, I have omitted footnotes and citations except for references to works likely to be found in most undergraduate libraries. Readers who

want more detailed information on the sources of quotations and data should consult the original works listed in the Copyrights and Acknowledgments section at the back of the book.

The list of teachers, colleagues, and students who have stimulated my interest in revolutions is far too long to print. Daniel Chirot, Robert K. Merton, and Judith Stacey were instrumental in setting this volume in motion; I greatly appreciate their support and advice. Much of what I know about revolutions is due to the diligence of my teachers at Harvard—Theda Skocpol, George Homans, and S. N. Eisenstadt. In addition, Roderick Aya, Daniel Bell, Victoria Bonnell, Randall Collins, Arnold Feldman, Gary Hamilton, Michael Hechter, Nathan Keyfitz, Joel Mokyr, Charles Ragin, Arthur Stinchcombe, Charles Tilly, Mark Traugott, Harrison White, and Christopher Winship have all made valued contributions to my general education. Two superb graduate students, York Bradshaw and Larry Radbill, helped me discover how to make best use of this material in teaching undergraduates.

Northwestern University has generously supported my study of revolutions both with funds and with that most valuable commodity for scholars, free time for research. The swiftness and acumen of the secretarial staff of Northwestern's Department of Sociology—particularly Nancy Weiss Klein, who took on the difficult task of turning a mass of heavily edited photocopies and rough notes into a neatly typed manuscript—made work on the final manuscript a pleasure. Allison McGown cheerfully helped in assembling the index.

While writing the study of England in Chapter 6, I benefited from a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies and enjoyed the intellectual stimulation and facilities of the Graduate Group in Demography at the University of California, Berkeley.

Finally, it is unlikely that the idea of this volume would ever have been realized without the encouragement and expert support provided by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. I owe deep thanks to my acquisitions editor, Marcus Boggs, who helped to develop this volume; my manuscript editor, Gene Carter Lettau; my permissions editor, Eleanor Garner; and my production editor, Ruth Cornell. It is hard to imagine an editorial staff that could have been more helpful.

Jack A. Goldstone

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Introduction

THE COMPARATIVE AND HISTORICAL STUDY OF REVOLUTIONS

> The laws are put out of doors. Men walk on them in the streets. . . . The king has been deposed by the rabble. . . . The people have reached the position of the highest divine court. . . . Every town saith: Let us drive out the powerful from our midst. *(The Lament of Ipuwer)*

This excerpt from 2100 B.C. describes the fall of Pepi II, pharoah of the Old Kingdom of Egypt. Written observations on revolution stretch back over 4,000 years. Why have certain governments fallen at the hands of their own people? This question has fascinated students of politics for almost as long as governments have existed.

Yet explaining why revolutions occur is not an easy task. Revolutions are complex events and originate in long and complicated causal processes. Ideas about how and why revolutions occur are widespread, but observers must constantly check those ideas against the evidence actual revolutions have left. Over the centuries, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, de Tocqueville, Marx, and many others have added to the observations of Ipuwer. And the study of revolutions has been one of the most active areas of modern social science. Consequently, people have learned a great deal about revolutions. But the process of testing and refining our understanding through studying the history of revolutions is a long, and still continuing, process.

Theories of Revolution: The Basic Problems

The basic problems in building a theory of revolution become clear if we consider some common notions of why revolutions occur. One view widely held among laymen is that "misery breeds revolt": When oppression becomes too much to bear, the masses will rise up against their oppressors. Although this view has an element of truth, it does not explain why revolutions have occurred in some countries but not in others. Revolt is only one of several paths the oppressed may take. The downtrodden may be so divided and powerless that they may be unable to organize an effective revolt or they may simply hope for a better life in the hereafter. Oppres-

sion and misery have been widespread throughout history, yet revolutions have been rare. Therefore, a theorist of revolution must ask: Does all oppression stir revolt? Or are there conditions under which people, no matter how oppressed, are unlikely to mount a revolution?

Another common view is that revolutions occur when a state faces an unmanageable accumulation of difficulties. When a number of severe problems occur together—a royal bankruptcy, a famine, a conflict within the ruling family, a war—the state collapses, opening the floodgates of revolution. Again, this view has an element of truth, but it, too, fails to explain where and how revolutions have occurred. The great empires of Rome and Charlemagne faced such difficulties, yet they first crumbled at the edges and then fell into parts which minor lords ruled or external enemies conquered. These empires died with a whimper, not a bang. So the theorist of revolution must ask: When do pressures on a government lead to revolution, rather than break-up into lesser states or conquest by external enemies?

A third view is that revolutions arise when new, radical ideas shake people out of their accustomed lives. This idea also has merit, for people generally fight great revolutions under the banner of radical ideas. Yet what causes such ideas to take root and to lead men and women to revolt? Many ideals of a better, more just existence take the form of religious movements focused on a better life in the next world. And many radical ideas stimulate people to behave in different ways in different times and cultures. The ideas of democracy and citizenship were current among Greeks and Romans; why did they only become revolutionary ideas in Europe 2,000 years later?

In sum, common observations about revolution, though not totally inaccurate, do not provide a full understanding of the historical pattern of revolution. Popular revolts, the process of the collapse of states, and the role of ideologies all need closer scrutiny.

In this century, studies of revolutions have moved through three generations of scholarship, each adding to our understanding: the *natural histories* of the 1920s and 1930s; the *general theories of political violence* of the 1960s and early 1970s; and the *structural theories* of the late 1970s and 1980s.

The Natural History of Revolutions

In the 1920s and 1930s, a number of historians and sociologists surveyed the most famous revolutions of the West: the English Revolution of 1640, the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, and the Russian Revolution of 1917.[1] These writers wanted to identify common patterns of events in the process of revolution. They succeeded in finding a remarkable correspondence among the major events in each of these revolutions. Several of their observations on the "natural history" of revolutions have been valid so often that they appear to be law-like empirical generalizations:

1. *Prior to a revolution, the bulk of the "intellectuals"—journalists, poets, playwrights, essayists, teachers, members of the clergy, lawyers, and trained members*

of the bureaucracy—cease to support the regime, write condemnations, and demand major reforms. These attacks on the old regime even attract the attention of the regime's natural supporters. French aristocrats applauded the plays of Voltaire and Beaumarchais; English Lords supported Puritan preachers; and Russian nobles demanded local parliaments and other democratic reforms.

Why is the mass desertion of the intellectuals so important? Primarily for what it portends. When hereditary nobles, high officials, and professionals countenance such public criticism, the regime must be failing to provide services such as security of property and rank, high-level positions for the children of prominent people, and victories and spoils in war, important to its own supporters. The desertion of the intellectuals on a vast scale thus implies an unusually widespread and pervasive dissatisfaction with regime performance. This dissatisfaction extends even to the highest ranks of government and society. Such uneasiness often presages a reluctance of elite leaders to suppress popular uprisings and even more often portends elite revolts against the regime.

2. *Just prior to the fall of the old regime, the state attempts to meet criticism by undertaking major reforms.* Examples from the past have included the reforms of Louis XVI in France, the Stolypin reforms in Russia, and the Boxer reforms in China. Such reforms often attempt to absorb additional groups into the regime without giving them any real influence by adding parliaments or councils with strictly advisory powers. However, such reforms generally serve to further undermine the regime. They act both as an admission that the regime is flawed and as an encouragement to others to pressure the government for further changes. This pattern bears out Machiavelli's warning to rulers: "If the necessity for [reforms] comes in troubled times, you are too late for harsh measures; and mild ones will not help you, for they will be considered as forced from you, and no one will be under any obligation to you for them."

3. *The actual fall of the regime begins with an acute political crisis brought on by the government's inability to deal with some economic, military, or political problem rather than by the action of a revolutionary opposition.* The crisis may take the form of a state bankruptcy or a weakening command of the armed forces. Revolutionary leaders, who may have been active but relatively powerless for a long time, suddenly find themselves with the upper hand, due to the incapacity of the old regime. The sudden onset of revolution thus stems from a weakening or paralysis of the state rather than from a sudden gain in the strength of revolutionaries.

4. *Even where revolutionaries have united solidly against the old regime, following its collapse their internal conflicts eventually cause problems.* After enjoying a brief euphoria over the fall of the old regime, the revolutionary opposition becomes rapidly disunited. Usually the revolutionaries divide into three factions: conservatives who seek to minimize change (many of whom eventually return to support for the ousted regime), radicals who seek rapid and widespread change, and moderates who try to steer a middle course. The results of such disunity among revolutionaries range from coups to civil war.

5. *The first group to seize the reins of state are moderate reformers.* This axiom,

observed in major revolutions a century and more ago, again proved accurate in Iran recently where Bazargan, the moderate critic, first took power after revolutionaries forced the Shah's government out.

6. *While the moderates seek to reconstruct rule on the basis of moderate reform and often employ organizational forms left over from the old regime, alternative, more radical centers of mass mobilization spring up with new forms of organization.* In France, the moderate Girondin assembly faced the radical Jacobin clubs; in America, the moderate Continental Congress had to deal with the more radical Patriots Societies; in modern Iran, the moderates of the executive branch (Bazargan, Bani-Sadr, Gotzbadeh) competed in their attempt to rule the country with the radical, mass-mobilizing Islamic theologians.

7. *The great changes in the organization and ruling ideology of a society that follow successful revolutions occur not when the old regime first falls, but when the radical, alternative, mass-mobilizing organizations succeed in supplanting the moderates.* This step generally occurs because the moderates, seeking continuity, do not rid the government of the liabilities that caused the old regime to fail. Hence they inherit the same inability to deal with urgent economic and military problems. The success of the radicals generally comes from their willingness to take extreme measures, both in dealing with pressing problems and in securing their rule.

However, as the American Revolution shows, the triumph of the radicals, though common, is not inevitable. Yet only to the extent that the moderates repudiate and dissociate themselves from the old regime—a task in which they are unlikely to equal the radicals—are they likely to succeed. Only in a war of colonial liberation—where the old regime enemy is clearly external—are moderates likely to have a chance for survival. For example, in Indonesia in 1945, in Algeria in 1962, and in Guinea in 1958, as in America in 1787, relatively moderate regimes were able to stay in power because in fighting colonial forces, the moderates could maintain unity with other factions. On the other hand, in Nicaragua and Iran, where the enemy of the revolutionaries was an internal regime, radical leaders supplanted the moderates.

8. *The disorder brought by the revolution and the implementation of radical control usually results in forced imposition of order by coercive rule.* This is the stage of "terror," familiar from the guillotine days of the French Revolution, and known to later generations through Stalin's *gulag* and Mao's cultural revolution.

9. *The struggles between radicals and moderates and between defenders of the revolution and external enemies frequently allow military leaders to move from obscurity to commanding, even absolute, leadership.* The long roster of national leaders who emerged in this fashion includes Washington, Cromwell, Napoleon, Attaturk, Mao, Tito, Boumedienne, and Mugabe.

10. *The radical phase of the revolution eventually gives way to a phase of pragmatism and moderate pursuit of progress within the new status quo.* In this phase, the radicals are defeated or have died, and moderates return to power. They condemn the "excesses" of the radicals and shift the emphasis from political change to

economic progress within a framework of stable institutions. This phase began with the fall of Robespierre in France, Khrushchev's repudiation of Stalin in Russia, and the fall of Mao's allies, the "gang of four," in China.

These ten propositions, the legacy of the natural historians of revolution, provided a valuable guide to understanding the process of revolution. However, using this approach alone left many basic questions unanswered. Chief of these was the question of causes: Why did revolutions arise? What were the sources of opposition to the old regime? These issues became the focus of a second generation of analysts who were adherents of the general-theory school.

General Theories of Political Violence

In the 1950s and 1960s the emergence of new nations captured the attention of scholars. Political changes were clearly part of the process by which traditional societies, as they gained in education and economic growth, developed into modern states. Yet the widespread violence that accompanied these changes was striking: Revolutions, coups, riots, and civil wars suddenly seemed to arise everywhere. Some scholars developed general theories to explain all these kinds of political violence.

General theories of political violence took several forms. The psychological approach, as set forth by Davies and further refined by Gurr,[2] attempted to improve the view that "misery breeds revolt" by identifying precisely the kinds of misery likely to lead to political disorders. These authors argued that people generally accept high levels of oppression and misery if they expect such discomforts to be their natural lot in life. Only when people expect a better life, and have their expectations frustrated, are they likely to develop feelings of aggression and resentment. Therefore, any change in a society that raises people's expectations for a better life without providing the means of meeting those expectations can be politically destabilizing. Such expectations may include cultural contacts with more advanced societies or rapid but uneven economic growth. Davies argued that one combination of events in particular, a period of growing prosperity that raises people's expectations for a better life, followed by a sharp economic downturn that dashes those expectations (the "J-curve" of economic growth), would yield exceptionally sharp feelings of deprivation and aggression.

A second general-theory approach, developed largely by Smelser and Johnson,[3] argued that instead of focusing mainly on popular discontent scholars should examine social institutions. These authors stressed that when the various subsystems of a society—the economy, the political system, the training of young people for new positions—grow at roughly the same rate, the government will remain stable. However, if one subsystem starts to change independently, the resulting imbalance will leave people disoriented and open to considering new values. When such imbalance becomes severe, radical ideologies that challenge the legitimacy of the status quo will become widespread. During such periods, a war, a government bankruptcy, or a famine may bring the government down.

In an influential work, Huntington[4] synthesized these two approaches. He argued that modernization led to institutional imbalance because the resulting education and economic growth would increase people's desire to participate in politics faster than political institutions could change to accommodate this desire. This gap between desire for change and accomplished change would create frustrated expectations about political life, which in turn could lead to riot, rebellion, and revolution.

The psychological and the system-disequilibrium theories of revolution tried to explain why popular discontent and opposition to the regime arose. Tilly[5] developed a third general-theory approach focusing on resource mobilization. Tilly pointed out that discontent alone is unlikely to lead to revolution if the discontented remain unorganized and lack resources. Arguing that discontent and conflict are a normal part of politics, he stressed that political violence is likely to occur only when aggrieved parties have the means to make such violence count—namely, when they have the resources and the organization to take significant actions. In this view, although modernization may bring discontent, it does not necessarily lead to revolution. Instead revolution will probably occur only when opponents are able to mobilize the massive resources needed to take command of a geographical area and effectively challenge the old regime.

General theories thus moved from 1) approaches stressing relative deprivation and frustration to 2) approaches stressing institutional imbalance to 3) Tilly's approach stressing resource mobilization by challengers. This work led scholars to study not merely individual discontent, but changes in institutions and resource mobilization by organized groups. Still, *all* the general theory approaches had certain problems in explaining where and how revolutions occurred.

First, the general theories viewed revolutions as purposive movements of an opposition that sought to wrest control of the state. They explained revolutions mainly by explaining the origins of the opposition and its recourse to violence. Yet often revolutions began not from the acts of a powerful revolutionary opposition but from the internal breakdown and paralysis of state administrations which rendered states incapable of managing normally routine problems. The general theories of revolution and collective violence provided no help in understanding the conditions behind the internal breakdown of states.

Second, during the period when theorists of revolution debated whether modernization engendered revolutions by raising expectations, by disequilibrating the sectors of society, or by shifting resources from authorities to regime opponents, our view of modernization greatly changed. Scholars recognized that the notion that all societies would face the same general process of modernization was too simple. Moore[6] argued that different kinds of societies experienced different kinds of social change. For example, Moore demonstrated that whether or not modernization led to revolution and what *kind* of revolution occurred depended on the relationship between peasants and landlords, a relationship that was very different in England than in France or Germany, and different again in Russia and China. Scholars recognized

that in order to explain why revolutions occurred in some countries but not in others and to understand their outcomes they needed to study in detail *differences* among political structures and agrarian relationships. The general theories of revolution overlooked these differences.

So scholars in their search for the bases for revolutions turned from general theories of political violence to historical and comparative studies of the structure of different kinds of states and agrarian relationships. These studies have led to structural theories of revolution.

Structural Theories of Revolution

Structural theories posit that states vary in structure, and thus are vulnerable to different kinds of revolution. They further contend that revolutions begin from some *combination* of state weakness, conflicts between states and elites, and popular uprisings.

STATES AND ELITES

Structural theories of revolution start from a few straightforward observations about states: 1) All states are organizations that gather resources from their society. 2) States are in competition—for territory, for military strength, for trade—with other states. 3) Some kinds of state organizations are likely to fare badly in such competition and experience severe political crises.

Therefore structural theorists ask: What kinds of state organizations are apt to experience fiscal or military crises in competition with other states? Scholars have found several answers.

States with relatively backward and unproductive economies, compared to the states with which they are competing, may face overwhelming outside pressures. The extreme case of this is Russia in World War I. The Russian state collapsed under defeats by more advanced Germany; these defeats ushered in the Russian Revolution. Other countries have faced similar, if less severe pressures; France, fighting more economically advanced England in the eighteenth century; and Japan, China, and Turkey, fighting the more advanced Western powers, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Yet states sometimes do collapse without defeat in war. The probability of an internal collapse generally depends on the relationship of the state to members of the elite, whether they are hereditary nobles, local landlords, or clergy. Skocpol[7] has pointed out that attempts of the state to meet international competitive pressures by increasing government income or authority often run counter to elite interests, for state goals may require suspension of traditional elite privileges and may threaten the resources of elites. The vulnerability of the state to a political crisis then depends on the extent to which elites can influence the state and can use resources against it.

For example, the eighteenth century French monarchy required the cooperation of noble-controlled *parlements*, independent judicial bodies that could block and challenge the directives the Crown issued. More recently the Iranian clergy, because of their financial supporters in the bazaar economy, their role in the traditional courts, and their network of influence in the mosques and schools, retained control of resources with which to mount a challenge to the Shah. Thus when conflicts between the monarchy and elites arose—in France over the state bankruptcies arising from the Anglo-French wars of the eighteenth century and in Iran over the Shah's rapid modernization plans—the elite's opposition was able to cripple and paralyze the central government.

The loyalty of the army is also crucial. Where the government openly recruits officers from all classes, provides long training for the rank and file, and keeps troops isolated from civilians, the army is usually a reliable tool for suppressing domestic disorders. Yet where army officers come primarily from a landed elite, they may sympathize with their own class in a conflict between the central government and elites. Where troops are recently recruited and fraternize with the populace, their sympathy for their civilian fellows may override their allegiance to their officers. In either of the latter two cases, the unreliability of the army increases the vulnerability of the state to revolution.[8]

In sum, where a powerful elite outside the state bureaucracy has the resources to paralyze the state in times of conflict, and outside allegiances weaken the army, severe political crises are liable to occur when states attempt to increase their authority or resources. This kind of conflict became crucial during the French, English, Chinese, and Iranian Revolutions.

However, two other kinds of societal structure are also prone to state breakdown. And again, the relationship between states and elites is the key factor. First, even if there is no strong independent elite outside the state bureaucracy, conflicts between states and elites may still occur. Trimberger[9] has argued that this is likely when officials who lack great personal landholdings or ties to landlord classes but who share a tradition of state service and elite training hold positions *within* the bureaucracy or armed forces. This may occur when a state provides certain civil or military officials with special status and/or elite training. If exceptional military or economic pressures from abroad threaten the state and this elite decides the state is failing to meet those pressures, the elite is likely to initiate what Trimberger calls an "elite revolution." Powerful civil or military officials may seize control of the central administrative apparatus and reshape the pattern of resource distribution and extraction in an effort to solve the military and economic difficulties that threaten the nation. Lacking a vested interest in the current economic structure, such officials are free to respond to international pressures by implementing radical reforms—including land reform, abolition or attenuation of traditional status distinctions, and rapid industrialization. Examples include the Meiji restoration in 1868 in Japan, Attaturk's takeover of Turkey in 1923, and Nasser's revolutionary coup in 1952.

Second, certain states (labelled "neo-patrimonial" by Eisenstadt[10]) have a

structure characterized by a high degree of patronage. In such states, the government is extremely personal. The chief executive maintains his or her position not with a strong bureaucracy which enforces the law but with the support of elites and bureaucrats secured through an extensive and informal system of personal rewards. In such a state, the leader may keep the bureaucracy and armed forces weak and divided, while he or she may encourage corruption to keep military and civil officials dependent on the patronage of the chief executive.

This kind of state is particularly vulnerable to economic downturns or military pressures. A period of economic stability and growth provides the executive with the resources to build an extended patronage network; however, a sharp economic downturn or military setback may then deprive the executive of the means to continue to reward his followers. In this event, the patronage network may begin to crumble, and the competition once encouraged within the bureaucracy may reduce the loyalty of the followers. If at this juncture even a limited popular uprising occurs, the internal divisions and corruption of the bureaucracy and armed forces may limit the state's ability to suppress it quickly, and this failure may lead to the fall of the state.

This type of revolution is distinct from other revolutions in that its leaders' first aim is overthrowing the personal rule of the discredited chief executive, not changing the system of government. Indeed, the chief executive is often attacked for betraying an already-existing democratic constitution, which the regime's opponents promise to restore. Nonetheless, because the government is bound up with the person of the chief executive, the crumbling of the patronage network combined with even a limited popular uprising can bring the collapse of the entire regime. The reconstruction of the state may then bring far-reaching changes in government and social organization. Such a revolution at first generally lacks a strong ideological component, and considerable time may pass before the revolutionaries decide what form of government should replace the old personal state. Examples include the Mexican Revolution, the Cuban Revolution, and the recent Nicaraguan Revolution.

Certain state structures lack the vulnerability of the preceding types. These are relatively resistant to revolution even in times of crisis. One such type is the open, public state typical of modern democracies. Another is the elite or aristocratic government where the state is effectively a committee of a united ruling elite. Examples include the ancient Roman republic and the English landlord state of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Today's republic of South Africa bears a structural similarity to such a state.

In all these cases, revolution depends on elites with independent resources who have substantial grievances against the state over taxation, corruption, attacks on the elite, or over the state's failure to stand up to foreign pressures. Over 2,000 years ago, Plato observed that "All political changes originate in divisions of the actual governing power; a government which is united . . . cannot be moved" (*Republic*, Book VII). This observation is no less true today: Precisely those states that

are structurally prone to internal conflicts between states and their elites are most vulnerable to revolution.

Yet the paralysis of the state is only one component of revolution. Elite opposition may disable a state and open it to coups or elite revolution, but a full-scale revolution only occurs through the conjunction of such opposition with widespread popular uprisings.

POPULAR UPRISINGS

Popular uprisings range from traditional food riots to modern industrial strikes. For convenience, we may divide them into two kinds of uprisings that have been critical in actual revolutions: peasant revolts and uban workers' uprisings.

Peasant Revolts. Peasants the world over have a long history of oppression. Their control over the land they farm is often weak, and they frequently must pay one-third to one-half of their crop to landlords and to the state as rents and taxes. In agrarian societies, outbreaks of peasant protest over the terms of these payments and over control of land have been as common as factory strikes in industrial societies. However, most peasant revolts are small-scale, local, and easily suppressed. A successful peasant revolt is likely only where several key relationships exist simultaneously: peasant solidarity, peasant capacity, and landlord vulnerability.[11]

Peasant revolts generally stem from obvious grievances such as landlords taking over peasant lands, major increases in state taxation or in rents, or famines and military disasters. As Scott has remarked, "The great majority of peasant movements historically, far from being affairs of rising expectations, have rather been defensive efforts to preserve customary rights or to restore them once they have been lost."[12]

Yet what appears to be important is not merely the level of grievances, but whether such grievances are widely shared and widely directed at the same target. When the state sharply increases taxes or landlords raise the dues of whole villages or seek to take over village lands, entire villages share common grievances toward obvious targets. But where villages have few or no communal lands, or where each family holds land under different obligations to landlords, some families may suffer great hardships and yet whole villages will not rise in revolt.

Peasants also must have the organizational capacity to plan and act in common before revolts can be successful. This is readily possible where self-governing village councils traditionally exist. Such councils played an important role in the peasant villages of Old Regime France and Tsarist Russia and in the Indian communal villages of rural Mexico. Where peasants have no traditional self-government but are under the close supervision of local landlords or their agents as in England after 1500, in Eastern Germany after 1600, and in Latin America haciendas, major revolts are extremely rare.

The vulnerability of landlords is also a factor. Landlords having their own means