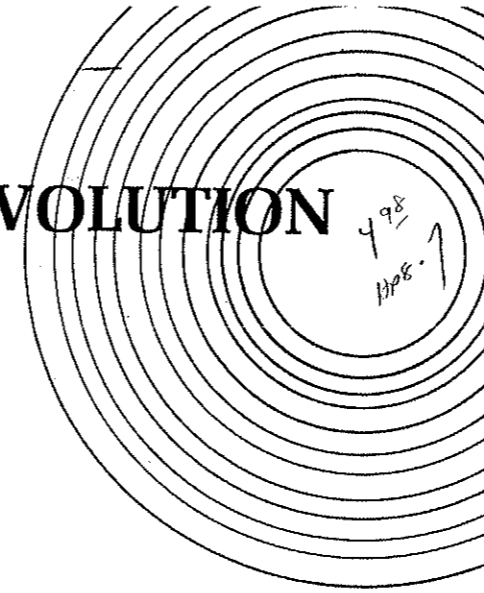


**REVOLUTION**



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The concept of revolution as forcible and fundamental political innovation was unknown to antiquity and the middle ages. Professor Griewank, who at the time of his death in 1953 was Dean of the Philosophical Faculty in the University of Jena (German Democratic Republic—East Germany), here traces the emergence of the modern concept of revolution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

## Emergence of the Concept of Revolution

KARL GRIEWANK

The word *revolution* entered the domain of political thought proper by way of natural philosophy [science]. The growing importance of the word for astronomy, and for science generally, coupled with an inclination to fit each change of the heavenly bodies into an astrological or scientific scheme, helped to make the word *revolution* an ever more popular term and paved the way for its introduction into the language of politics. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theorizers were very prone to link both the name and the course of every kind of cosmically-determined upheaval with that regular circulation of the firmaments to which Nicholas Copernicus had devoted his principal work, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Celestium* [*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*]. People were taking it for granted that the world they lived in was full of change. They could detect change most readily in political affairs, but there was no mistaking it in religion, mores, institutions and inventions as well: after all, a change in religion was often the evident cause of political change. Scientists, political theorists, and statesmen alike came to occupy themselves with the question of how these

changes, the decisive and sweeping political changes especially, were related to the motions of the heavens. So sober a thinker as Bodin did not disdain such endeavors [nor did the brilliant Johannes Kepler]. Kepler had, through observation and mathematics, discovered the laws of planetary motion, the foundation of celestial mechanics, which had hitherto been inaccessible to the purely speculative Aristotelian conceptions that had prevailed. Yet this same Kepler, for all that he fought against the superstitious pseudo-prophecies of the astrologers, constantly tried to puzzle out in what way the fluctuations in the affairs of men were connected with the motions of stars and constellations, believing as he did that the creator had instilled the same geometry and harmony into all things, creatures possessed of a soul and heavenly bodies alike. This pioneer of the new physico-mathematical science sought gratification for his intellectual longings in a speculative system deriving from Platonic and Neo-Platonic ideas, a system in which earthly creatures and heavenly bodies were embraced in a single universal harmony and were also jointly subject to disturbances. He associated the appearance of

From Karl Griewank, *Der Neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff* (Weimar: 1955), pp. 171-182. Translated by Heinz Lubasz with permission of the publishers, Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger. With one exception, the footnotes have been omitted. Reprinted with permission of The Macmillan Company, New York, from *Revolutions in Modern European History*, Heinz Lubasz (ed.), copyright © 1966 by Heinz Lubasz. Pp. 55-61.

comets with the genesis of "protracted evil doings" (*langwirige böse Händel*) which [according to him] were not to be attributed solely to the "departure of a potentate and the changes in government ensuing thereon" (*Abgang eines Potentatens ond darauff erfolgende Newerung im Regiment*). To be sure, Kepler himself was on his guard against the attempts of the "great crowd of astrologers" (*grossen Haufen der Astrologen [vulgus astrologorum]*) to conclude from the "revolution" of an astronomical year to a *Revolutio Mundana* [earthly revolution], to a lawlike regularity [*Gesetzmässigkeit*] in earthly affairs during the same time-span. But the belief in a very precise correlation between celestial motions and worldly changes nevertheless took root far and wide. It found expression, for example, in a dictum attributed to Kepler's Italian contemporary, Galileo Galilei: "The revolutions of the globe we inhabit give rise to the mishaps and accidents of human existence."

This new picture of a universe of stars rotating in regular motion, and of the earth moving within it, gave many people something to hold onto in their attempts to understand life and the world at a time when they no longer found security in the medieval-Christian doctrine of a harmonious world order. The astronomical conception of *revolution* suggested that it was possible to fit worldly changes into an orderly scheme; and this thought provided one important impetus, though not the only one, for the introduction of this conception into the language of politics. This despite the fact that the traditional desire prevailed for a time to conceive of change as circular, as a return to the good old ways, and so to think of *revolution*—akin to the ancient idea of *reformation*—as a turning away from abuses, lapses, and aberrations. Bodin, for example, sought to interpret the "conversion" to

monarchy of insecure democratic and aristocratic regimes as the *re-establishment* of a stable and felicitous state of affairs. When Henry IV (Bodin's ideal king) disarmed his enemies, the League, by converting to Catholicism, and they all one by one went over to his side, it was widely said, "This is a revolution"—meaning that a reversion to a state of affairs similar or equivalent to an earlier one had taken place as irresistibly as a star rotates, so that resistance to it had become pointless. The contemporary *Histoire des dernières troubles de France* of 1599 observed that the king had accomplished a salutary change in the state (*changement en l'Etat*) at a moment when sun and moon were propitiously placed.

The great English Revolution of the seventeenth century (a term which may be used to designate the whole course of development from the outbreak of the Great Rebellion in 1640 to the Glorious Revolution of 1688) has often been made the basis of a cyclical conception of revolutions, following Polybius' old cyclical theory of constitutions: from the collapse of monarchy and aristocracy through a more and more democratic republic to military dictatorship and eventually back to monarchy. A cycle of this sort did indeed recur in the great French Revolution, and one can find it adumbrated in classical antiquity, in the Greek city-states and in the Roman Republic. But this must not be allowed to obscure the fact that modern revolutions [do not simply return to their starting points; they] always have further effects which shape and direct the subsequent development of the nation, and of those nations connected with it. We must understand the English Revolution in terms of the same preconditions as the Dutch struggles for independence from Spain which began in the sixteenth century (and which, in their turn, strike us as so much

## EMERGENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF REVOLUTION

more modern than the Swiss struggles of the fifteenth). The thrust of political revolution took several directions, which stemmed from a spectrum extending all the way from conservative Calvinism to the anti-ecclesiastical, chiliastic sectarian movements of religious Puritanism. These revolutionary assaults were directed against the royal, episcopal, established church; against the monarchy itself; against compulsory religious institutions; and, finally, against every sort of political discrimination against the less powerful. The common objective of these endeavors was to secure the personal rights of individuals—rights which were derived from the birthright of free Englishmen (a right supposedly dating from Saxon times, but not extended to Papists or unbelievers); from the divinely-ordained right to freedom of conscience; and from the natural right to life, liberty, and property—three kinds of right that largely merged into one another. Chiliastic movements—which, incidentally, were increasingly coming to accept the principle of private property—were defeated by socially more conservative movements like Cromwell's which aimed only to change the social and political situation of certain segments of society without altering the structure of society as a whole. Parliament, which was evolving from an assembly of estates into the acknowledged organ of popular representation, gained the ascendant over king and church. At the same time it accepted as the fundamental principle of the constitution, if not the explicitly democratic ideas of the Rebellion, then at least the inherent individual rights of all Christian Englishmen (Catholics excepted). These changes acted as powerful forces making for the integration of the English

nation and of that growing number of nations in the old world and the new which followed its example.

It has been shown elsewhere, in conjunction with some striking texts,<sup>1</sup> that it was not the—to us—revolutionary events of the years 1640 to 1660, but rather the return to tranquil conditions and to the old order, which some people at the close of the "Great Rebellion" connected with the motions of the firmaments and welcomed as a *revolution*. In the House of Commons Clarendon introduced the restoration of the monarchy with the following words: "The good genius of this kingdom is become superior and hath mastered that malignity, and our good old stars govern us again." And Hobbes, the sworn enemy of all insurrection against a political authority [which he conceived of as having been] created by a contract of all the citizens—Hobbes writes at the close of his *Behemoth* concerning the acts of the Long Parliament, on the occasion of Charles II's return: "I have seen in this revolution a circular motion of the sovereign power through two usurpers, father and son, from the late king to his son." In fact, he was overjoyed to see that now, at the close of the upheaval, Parliament was definitively conceding to the king a right which hitherto he had only been able to derive unilaterally from his sovereign title. This it was that Hobbes regarded as the positive outcome of the whole matter. The republican Commonwealth of 1649 had, for its own part, sought to legitimate itself with the claim that it represented the restoration of ancient liberties. In that way it had made allowance for the still deep-seated desire for a return to the olden ways; the legend inscribed on the Great Seal of 1651

<sup>1</sup> E. Rosenstock, "Revolution als politischer Begriff in der Neuzeit," *Festgabe der rechts- und staatswissenschaftlichen Fakultät in Breslau für Paul Heilborn*, Abhandlungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Cultur, Geisteswissenschaftliche Reihe, 5. Heft (Breslau: 1931), pp. 83–124.

read: "In the third year of freedom by God's blessing restored." In just the same way Charles VIII of France, upon the overthrow of the Medici in 1494, had had himself fêted as the restorer and protector of the freedom of Florence (*restitutor et protector libertatis florentinae*). In all these instances the concept of the cycle was employed for the purpose of justifying a new state of affairs which, following upon an upheaval, was looked upon as final.

But the concept of revolution which astronomy had made familiar did not remain restricted to such conservative usage in the quest for tranquility and permanence and, thus, in a restorative sense. It would in fact be completely wrong to ascribe the introduction of the concept of revolution into politics and statecraft to astrological speculations and astronomical parallels exclusively, or even to regard these as having played a decisive and enduring role in the transmission of the concept. At a time when political thinking was becoming more flexible, the keen political mind could see a variety of possible applications for the simple notions of revolving, rotating [*Umwälzung, Umdrehung*]. In the seventeenth century the word *revolution* was already linked with that objective, non-evaluative conception of *transformation* introduced by Machiavelli on the basis of classical models, and subsequently extended to the social realm—albeit, once again in a more limited and conservative sense—by certain French statesmen. A new, dynamic conception of political change underlies the words which the Duke de Rohan used in dedicating his *Interest des Princes et États de la Chrestienté* to Richelieu in 1634, a conception of change that is no longer bounded by fixed conditions and that flies in the face of every known piece of political wisdom, ancient or medieval: "Whatever it is that causes the cyclical revolutions of the things of

this world, also causes the basic principles of good government to change." Revolution here becomes synonymous with reversal and alteration in things political, and with alteration in the world generally. The word *revolution* replaces the old terms *mutazione, commutatio, conversio*, and *changement* to denote alterations that have taken or are taking place on the objective plane; and though it does not denote subjective manifestations such as insurrections and conspiracies, still it carries with it that overtone of restlessness and movement which attaches to it from earlier and vulgar usage. Therewith the word *revolution* becomes the standard term for the doctrine of political and worldly change whose emergence we have been able to trace from the sixteenth century on.

The most important step in the history of the term was the event which permanently introduced the word *revolution* into historical writing and political theory—the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In contrast to the period of the civil war (1640–1660), which had been introduced into historiography by its first historian, Clarendon, as "the Great Rebellion," the later event, which brought about lasting political changes with far less internal turmoil, was unequivocally labeled a *revolution*. Historically, that was in keeping with current usage. A history of *England's Revolutions from the Death of the Protector Oliver to the Restoration of the King* (Charles II) appeared in Paris in 1689. It was a very superficial chronicle, most deferential to monarchy in general and to the French monarchy in particular. The author takes it for granted that his readers will take transformations of the kind he describes to be *revolutions*, not in the modern sense, as being manifestations of insurrection and disintegration, but simply as being turbulent changes in the body politic. The under-

taking which had led to yet one more revolution of this kind was termed *glorious* because of its successful outcome: writers of biographical and political apologies for William of Orange thought it important to call his domestic and foreign policy illustrious because it was successful. By calling it "the Glorious Revolution" they meant that it was really just one more change of sovereigns, albeit one that had taken place in circumstances reflecting glory on the king and on the nation represented in Parliament. An apologetic tract in Latin, published in London, correctly translated the phrase into the ancient wording: "*insignis nostra rerum commutatio*" or "*rerum conversio*." "*La dernière Révolution d'Angleterre*" [England's latest revolution]—with this phrase one more change was added to a long line of changes.

For all that, the Glorious Revolution constituted a new point of departure for the political significance of the concept of revolution. The application of the word *revolution* to this event may be regarded as a counterblow to the restorationist concept of revolution held by Clarendon and Hobbes: a victorious Parliament was snatching from the hands of a king who had jeopardized the laws of the land, from the hands of a king in flight, the very concept of revolution that had been used in behalf of his predecessor! In the same way the concept of restoration, which had first been used by rebels, in Florence and then in London, to signify a "restoration of liberty," had subsequently been turned against them and used in behalf of the restored monarch.

The Settlement of 1688–89 was not an act of reversal. It was the confirmation of a constitutional state of affairs which Parliament considered it essential to legitimize in accord with all extant principles of English law, historical and natural. It was, therefore, a revolu-

tion only in the sense that it was a return to stable conditions after a period of fluctuation. It was a "liberation" of the Church of England and of the English nation from the arbitrary will of the monarch, a revolution without rebels or rebellions. But it was at the same time an event of the kind hitherto known as a *mutation*: a transition to a new dynasty upon new conditions which, with whatever foundation in law, had been laid down by Parliament. As an historical event the Revolution of 1688 itself soon came to be looked upon as something final and unrepeatable and, thus, as something not to be drawn into precedent [*etwas theoretisch nicht weiter Verwertbares*]. At the end of the eighteenth century Hume and Burke were still speaking of *revolution* as a unique historical event—and what they had in mind was the event of 1688. The naming of the "Glorious Revolution" was the beginning of the successful career of the modern meaning of *revolution* as a non-evaluative term for great transformative events, first and foremost in the political realm, but also for natural cataclysms and intellectual changes.

The American Revolution, which created another new nation by severing the ties of external dependence, was later to build upon the intellectual arsenal of the English Revolution. But with the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the United States that arsenal was once again enlarged in characteristic fashion. The equality of all men, their inherent and inalienable rights, and the sovereign right of peoples to institute their own governments were now no longer derived from historical or divinely ordained rights but exclusively from the rational right of nature which had been elaborated in west European thought. The French Revolution, however, being a process of purely internal transformation, was to have a

truly incalculable impact upon the moulding of old and new nations in Europe and throughout the world. Its impact proceeded from a number of enduring fundamental principles. These principles were not drawn from the peculiar right of a particular people, as they had been in England; they were formulated in comprehensible terms of universal validity.

Professor Harry Eckstein of Princeton University has worked extensively on internal war studies. He has also been studying the factors correlative with democratic institutions, using the smaller countries of Europe for this purpose.

## On the Etiology of Internal Wars

HARRY ECKSTEIN

### THE CONCEPT "INTERNAL WAR"

The term "internal war" denotes any resort to violence within a political order to change its constitution, rulers, or policies.<sup>1</sup> It is not a new concept; distinctions between external and internal war (*guerre extérieure* and *guerre intérieure*) were made already in the nineteenth century by writers on political violence.<sup>2</sup>

Nor does it mean quite the same thing as certain more commonly used terms, such as revolution, civil war, revolt, rebellion, uprising, guerrilla warfare, mutiny, *jacquerie*, *coup d'état*, terrorism, or insurrection. It stands for the genus of which the others are species.

Using the generic concept alongside, or even in place of, the more specific terms is justifiable on several grounds.

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<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere I have used more cumbersome specifications for the term, holding that internal war is "a kind of social force that is exerted in the process of political competition, deviating from previously shared social norms, 'warlike' in character (that is, conducted practically without mutually observed normative rules), and involving the serious disruption of settled institutional patterns." *Internal War: Problems and Approaches* (New York, 1964), 12. The differences between the two formulations are due to the fact that here I am defining a term, while in the other essay I was delimiting a theoretical subject. (For what I mean by delimiting a theoretical subject, see *ibid.*, 8-11.)—I am grateful to the Center of International Studies at Princeton University for supporting the work that went into this study as part of a wide-ranging set of inquiries into internal war. The Center's internal war studies, in turn, have been supported by grants from the Carnegie Foundation. Another, very different, version of the paper was published in a report prepared by the Research Group in Psychology and the Social Sciences, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., *Social Science Research and National Security* (government circulation only).

<sup>2</sup> For example, in Pierre Kropotkin, *Paroles d'un révolté*, ed. by Elisée Reclus (Paris, not dated, but circa 1885). The term was used by Count Fersen as early as 1790 and occurs also in the writings of Sismondi and the Federalist Papers.