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0521620090 - Taking Power: On the Origins of Third World Revolutions

John Foran

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## Taking Power

*Taking Power* analyzes the causes behind some three dozen revolutions in the Third World between 1910 and the present. It advances a new theory that seeks to integrate the political, economic, and cultural factors that brought these revolutions about, and that links structural theorizing with original ideas on culture and agency. It attempts to explain why so few revolutions have succeeded, and so many have failed. The book is divided into chapters that treat particular sets of revolutions: the great social revolutions of Mexico 1910, China 1949, Cuba 1959, Iran 1979, and Nicaragua 1979; the anticolonial revolutions in Algeria, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe from the 1940s to the 1970s; the reversed revolutions of Iran (1951–53), Guatemala (1944–54), Bolivia (1952–64), Chile (1970–73), Jamaica (1972–80), Grenada (1979–83), and Nicaragua (1979–90); failed revolutionary attempts in El Salvador, Peru, and elsewhere; political revolutions in the Philippines, South Africa, and elsewhere. It closes with speculation about the future of revolutions in an age of globalization, with special attention to Chiapas, the post-September 11 world, and the global justice movement.

JOHN FORAN is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he is also involved with the programs on Islamic and Near Eastern Studies, Latin American and Iberian Studies, and Women, Culture, and Development. His books include *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution* (1993), *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran* (1994), and *Theorizing Revolutions* (1997).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo  
 Cambridge University Press  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
 Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York  
 www.cambridge.org  
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521629843

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First published 2005

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Foran, John.

Taking power: on the origins of Third World revolutions/John Foran.  
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-62009-0 (alk. paper) – ISBN 0-521-62984-5 (pb.)

1. Revolutions – Developing countries. 2. Revolutions – Developing countries – History – 20th century. 3. Insurgency – Developing countries. 4. Social change – Developing countries. 5. Developing countries – Politics and government – 20th century. 6. Developing countries – Social conditions – 20th century. I. Title.  
 HN979.F67 2005

303.6'4/091724 – dc22 2005045780

ISBN-13 978-0-521-62009-3 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-62009-0 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-62984-3 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-62984-5 paperback

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No book can ever convey the greatness of a people in revolt.

Enrique Oltuski, *Vida Clandestina:  
My Life in the Cuban Revolution*,  
translated by Thomas and Carol Christensen  
(New York: Wiley, 2002), xxii

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## Acknowledgments

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Discounting an essay written in 1975, while a sophomore in college, on the revolutions of early modern Europe (I had a rather elegant – or was it sophomoric? – theory that those on the bottom ended up on the top), this book traces its own origins to 1990, when I began to think about the Iranian revolution – to which I had devoted my research in the 1980s – in comparative perspective. But for a revolution in my own life – the arrival of Cerina in 1996 and then Amal in 1998 – this might have taken only *ten* years. I therefore thank my editors at Cambridge University Press, and especially Sarah Caro, for their patience with me over the years.

Funding for this project came from many sources, including the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the Sawyer Seminar of the Advanced Study Center of the International Institute at the University of Michigan, the World Society Foundation in Zurich, the University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, the American Sociological Association Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation on Anthropological Research, as well as from two wonderful educational institutions: Smith College, where I worked from 2000 to 2002, and UC Santa Barbara, which has sustained me for the long run, through the generosity of the Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research, the Academic Senate, and the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center.

First versions of parts of this book have appeared in the journals *Critical Sociology*, *Theory and Society*, *Third World Quarterly*, and *Political Power and Social Theory*, and in my edited books, *Theorizing Revolutions* (Routledge, 1997), and *The Future of Revolutions: Rethinking Radical Change in the Age of Globalization* (Zed Press, 2003). I am grateful to all these outlets for their support of my work and for permission to use this material in various ways, and each is cited in the appropriate place.

I would like to acknowledge the critical feedback of a number of individuals who read and commented on parts of this work, including Richard Appelbaum, Chris Appy, John Booth, Kate Bruhn, Krista Bywater, Rani Bush, Joe Conti, Eve Darien-Smith, Francesca DeGiuli,

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## Acknowledgments

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James Dunkerley, Terry Elkiss, Mark Elliott, Anthony Francoso, Wally Goldfrank, John Mason Hart, Zeynep Korkman, Josef Liles, Alan Liu, Edwin Lopez, Fernando Lopez-Alves, John Marcum, Chris McAuley, Tim Mechlinski, Becky Overmyer-Velasquez, Marifeli Pérez-Stable, Elizabeth Perry, Charles Ragin, J.-P. Reed, Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, Amandeep Sandhu, Rich Snyder, Alvin So, and Tim Wickham-Crowley. Three special readers and comrades in arms – Jeff Goodwin, Bill Robinson, and Eric Selbin – offered helpful comments and valued encouragement on the whole manuscript. I have still not been able to fully address the many excellent questions all have raised in this work, whose final shape remains my own responsibility, though the product of the labor of many.

I am also indebted to students in a number of classes, and to my research assistants and students Joe Bandy, Keely Burke, Jackie Cabuay, David Espinosa, Tara Farrell, Jennifer Freidman, Noelle Harrison, Jenn Kagawa, Ariana Kalinic, Linda Klouzal, Brianna Kromprier, Edwin Lopez, Maria Mark, Markus McMillin, Tim Mechlinski, Sadie Miller, Camellia Millet-Lau, Veronica Montes, Daniel Olmos, Magdalena Prado, Javad Rassaf, Tamara Simons, Tanya Tabon, Megan Thomas, Veronica Villafan, Becca Wanner, Joan Weston, Richard Widick, Jen Wu, and Vanessa Ziegler for help on the many cases covered in these pages. Their innumerable particular contributions are acknowledged in the appropriate places.

Finally, there are many friends and others to thank on a personal basis for support over the past decade and a half – my parents, Jack and Ramona; my Oakland family – Mary Jane, Bruce, and Alex; my Holyoke family – Bob, Carole, Bobby, Mike, and Betsy; my England family – Nil, Manju, Reena, Ian, Ashoke, Arun, Anil, and Anjuli; my India family – Chetan, Eknath, Anjuli, and Prabhu; and Tom Madden, Nina Sharif, Rich Kaplan, Judy Hamilton (my therapist), and countless others.

This book is wholly dedicated to its inspiration – mi compañera Kum-Kum Bhavnani, who has accompanied me on the journey of life in these revolutionary times, and to the memory of her mother, Raj Bhavnani, who set me an example of how to live, love, and laugh.