

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited

*A Comparative Analysis of England, France, and Russia*

This study aims to update a classic of comparative revolutionary analysis, Crane Brinton's 1938 study *The Anatomy of Revolution*. It invokes the latest research and theoretical writing in history, political science, and political sociology to compare and contrast, in their successive phases, the English Revolution of 1640–60, the French Revolution of 1789–99, and the Russian Revolution of 1917–29. This book intends to do what no other comparative analysis of revolutionary change has yet adequately done. It not only progresses beyond Marxian socio-economic “class” analysis and early “revisionist” stresses on short-term, accidental factors involved in revolutionary causation and process; it also finds ways to reconcile “state-centered” structuralist accounts of the three major European revolutions with postmodernist explanations of those upheavals that play up the centrality of human agency, revolutionary discourse, mentalities, ideology, and political culture.

Bailey Stone is Professor of European History and International Affairs at the University of Houston. Prior to his time at the University of Houston, he taught at Princeton University, and received his Ph.D. from Princeton University and his B.A. from Bowdoin College. Stone is the author of two books on judicial politics in old regime France: *The Parlement of Paris, 1774–1789* (1981) and *The French Parlements and the Crisis of the Old Regime* (1986). He is also the author of two books on the causes and trajectory of the French Revolution: *The Genesis of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1994) and *Reinterpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 2002). His work has been published in many leading journals, including *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, *French Historical Studies*, and the *Journal of Modern History*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited

*A Comparative Analysis of England,  
France, and Russia*

**BAILEY STONE**

*University of Houston*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of  
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107045729](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107045729)

© Bailey Stone 2014

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written  
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2014

Printed in the United States of America

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Stone, Bailey, 1946–

The anatomy of revolution revisited : a comparative analysis of England, France, and Russia /  
Bailey Stone.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-04572-9 (hardback)

1. Revolutions – Case studies. 2. Great Britain – History – Puritan Revolution, 1642–1660.  
3. France – History – Revolution, 1789–1799. 4. Soviet Union – History – Revolution,  
1917–1921. I. Title.

JC49I.S79 2013

303.6'4–dc23 2013019457

ISBN 978-1-107-04572-9 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for  
external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee  
that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*This volume is affectionately dedicated to all scholars, teachers, and  
students in the field of European revolutionary change*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
Introduction. From Revolutionary Theory to Revolutionary Historiography: England, France, and Russia	i
1 <i>Ancien Régimes</i>	45
2 Transitions: Breakthroughs to Revolution	111
3 Revolutionary “Honeymoons”?	186
4 The “Revolutionizing” of the Revolutions	254
5 Revolutionary Climacterics	318
6 Thermidor?	394
Conclusion. “Revolutions from Below” and “Revolutions from Above”	474
<i>Suggestions for Further Reading</i>	491
<i>Index</i>	523

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---



Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia  
Bailey Stone  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Preface

“Comparative historical analysis works best,” Theda Skocpol asserted in 1979 in the Introduction to her landmark study *States and Social Revolutions*, “when applied to a set of a few cases that share certain basic features. Cases need to be carefully selected and the criteria for grouping them together made explicit.”<sup>1</sup> This is excellent advice for any comparativist, especially if he or she is undertaking, as Skocpol did, an analysis of several major sociopolitical revolutions. In *my* particular case, the reader might well ask, why should I devote so much time to reappraising the causation, trajectories, and implications of (specifically) the mid-seventeenth-century English Revolution, the French Revolution of 1789–99, and the Russian Revolution of 1917–29? That these upheavals had previously attracted the attention of an eminent American historian, Crane Brinton, in his pioneering and elegantly written classic *The Anatomy of Revolution*, is all very well and good, and might be seen as providing in itself a rationale for revisiting the subject – if only to produce a badly needed “update” to Brinton’s analysis.<sup>2</sup> Yet are there *additional* reasons why I, too, should be *that* concerned to draw comparisons and contrasts between these three particular revolutions – as opposed to any others? In this brief Preface to what will be a fairly long work, I would suggest that there are, in fact, several compelling reasons for my doing so.

I could, of course, start off here by noting that I am and have always been a Europeanist – and, at that, a Europeanist with a pronounced weakness for eighteenth-century and revolutionary French history – and that I consequently lack the kind of research competence in (or at least general familiarity with)

<sup>1</sup> Cited from Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1938). Brinton brought out “revised” and “expanded” versions of this book in 1952 and 1965.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

areas outside of Europe that many regional specialists, political scientists, and comparative sociologists could legitimately claim. Consequently, because dramatic and violent transformations of states and societies *within* “Europe” lie somewhat more securely within my scholarly ken than do transformative cataclysms in, say, Eastern or South Asia, Africa, or the Americas, they are that much likelier to elicit from me an analytical commentary that (I can only hope) fair-minded readers will be able to find informed and worth pursuing.

Yet other, more substantive considerations have also motivated me in my choice of revolutions to analyze, compare, and contrast. For one thing, as the entire book to come should demonstrate, historians who, like Crane Brinton, have devoted themselves primarily to *European* revolutionary change have quite rightly developed “stage” or “natural life-cycle” interpretations of what, precisely, transpired in England from 1640 to 1660, in France from 1789 to 1799, and in Russia from 1917 to the late 1920s. They have, that is to say, plotted out a general progression in all three cases from violent overthrows of inefficient, antiquated, and noncompetitive “old regimes” to early, hopeful “honeymoon” seasons of reform in state and society to increasingly radicalized, even “terroristic” systems to convalescent “new regimes” in which public policies seem – more or less – to “work better” than in the past. This is to say that, by concentrating on the *process of change* as such, Brinton and like-minded analysts have isolated three periods in European history that are not only amenable to comparative analysis but also are strikingly different from everything before or since, at least in English, French, and Russian history. This in turn means that to analyze these three revolutions in such *processual* terms can allow today’s specialist to distinguish between “revolution” as experienced at length in England during 1640–60 and the much more condensed “Glorious Revolution” of 1688–89; between “revolution” as it unfolded in France during the 1790s and “revolution” as it briefly flared up in 1830, 1848, and 1871; and between “revolution” as it developed in Russia from 1917 to 1929 and the cataclysmic but less “processual” statist developments ensuing under Stalin in the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> Again, to hone in on the *process* of revolution during the years 1640–60, 1789–99, and 1917–29 in England, France, and Russia, respectively, can afford the scholar something of a counterweight to analysis of revolutionary *causation* and *consequences*, thereby requiring that he or she confront the actual, flesh-and-blood protagonists in the three revolutions and grapple with issues of personal agency and contingency that are all too easily deemphasized or overlooked altogether in exclusively “structuralist” accounts of these events.

<sup>3</sup> This is one reason why I tend – and I explain this in detail in the Introduction and Conclusion – to reject the arguments of Steve Pincus and others minimizing the “revolutionary stature” of the events in England during 1640–60 as compared to those of the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688–89. But for an appetizer, see Steven C. A. Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), esp. the extended historiographical discussion on revolutions in Chapter 2.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xi

Then, again, there is the question of the unique *international context* of these three revolutions. As readers will come to see in Chapter 1, all three of our upheavals, as defined in the preceding paragraphs, occurred within a fiercely competitive “system” of European (or, in Russia’s case, at least European-oriented) states contending for security, survival, and (at times) hegemony – a dynamic, cutthroat system rooted originally in the localized diplomacy of fifteenth-century Italy, but then spilling out into the rest of western and central Europe and, eventually, catching up in its toils all of Eurasia and (by the twentieth century) the entire globe. What this meant most fundamentally was that, in our three successive revolutions, the origins, process, and results of transformative change in both government and society reflected at all times a dialectical relationship between *increasingly severe* external and internal pressures on governance. In other words, as readers move in our analysis from England to France to Russia, they will find diplomats, administrators, politicians, polemicists, and just “ordinary” people entrapped in ever more sharply defined conflicts between statist objectives and concerns, on the one hand, and humdrum domestic concerns of a social, cultural, and economic nature, on the other. Just as all three of our revolutions reveal in the way they unfolded *internally* a roughly similar sequence of events, so they all – and *they alone* – inhabited a world of geopolitics whose “system” of alliances and counter-alliances and imperatives of prestige, security, and hegemonic drives, developing by fits and starts over a span of 450 years or so, and radiating outward from its European epicenter, stamps it as unique in history.

Finally, what helps to distinguish the English, French, and Russian Revolutions, as defined previously, from both earlier upheavals of a less politically and socially *concentrated* nature and later sociopolitical maelstroms in the “extra-European” world is the fact – obvious, perhaps, but significant nonetheless – that they broke out in and (to varying extents) *further modernized* Great Powers that had been recognized for centuries as sovereign states untrammelled by any kind of “colonialist” dependency on other Powers. They stood, in a sense, halfway between the ever-imperiled, semi-dependent city-states and ducal territories of a not-too-distant, medieval European past and the ancient civilizations in Asia, Africa, and the Americas whose territorial integrity, cultural identity and dignity, and very existence were to be so brutally threatened in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the seemingly irresistible forces unleashed across continents and seas by what we retrospectively term the “New Imperialism.” In this sense, too, we appear to have a “family” of revolutions distinct both from what had come before in the way of societal change and from what was destined to come in the future.

Of course, writing this Preface is especially pleasurable in that it furnishes me the opportunity to acknowledge some of those individuals without whose personal support, professional counsel, and contributions to the field of

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

revolutionary studies I could not have possibly written this extended essay of synthesis.

My thanks go first of all to two of my long-standing friends and colleagues, Jack Goldstone and Tom Kaiser. At various critical points over the past ten years, they have encouraged me in my labors on this ambitious project; since early in 2011 they have played an especially indispensable role as careful and judiciously critical readers of my manuscript in its initially completed form. I thank them wholeheartedly for the time they took out of their own busy schedules to assist me in this respect, and can only hope that the arguments I put forth in these pages will in no way cause them to regret the long hours so spent on my behalf!

I have also profited from the advice and ideas of a number of other friends/scholars. Several of my current or past confrères here at the University of Houston have (I trust) enabled me to avoid some misstatements concerning issues of revolutionary causation, process, and consequences in the cases of seventeenth-century England and early twentieth-century Russia, and enriched my knowledge of these two countries: I refer, specifically, to Cathy Patterson, our Tudor-Stuart specialist, and Rick Thorpe, an expert in the performing arts and culture of late Imperial and early revolutionary Russia. I should also acknowledge at this point two University of Houston Faculty Development Leaves: the first one, awarded for the 2002–03 academic year, gave me the time I needed free of the usual teaching and administrative responsibilities to begin seriously to conceive this study, and the second, awarded for 2009–10, made it possible for me actually to undertake (and largely complete) the writing of what has become my longest manuscript to date.

I have also benefited in the usual ways from scholarly exchanges at major conferences I have attended in recent years. In this connection, I would single out for special mention two noteworthy symposia: *Into Print: European Cultures of Enlightenment*, a meeting held at Princeton University in April 2006 to celebrate the accomplishments of my erstwhile mentor Robert Darn-ton; and *Liberty, Monarchy, and Regicide: The Trial and Execution of Charles I*, a symposium sponsored by the Liberty Fund in Cleveland, Ohio, in October 2007. (In the latter connection, I should register special thanks to David Carithers of the Department of Political Science at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, who apparently honored me with the assumption that I had something meaningful to say about the English Revolution and the dramatic run-up to the execution of Charles I!) As many of my readers will happily attest, such exchanges can play a crucial role in stimulating scholars to rethink old issues and thus be in a position to frame conventional questions in novel and ultimately revelatory ways.

I am grateful as well to Lewis Bateman, currently Senior Editor of Political Science and History at Cambridge University Press in New York City, and to his editorial associates, for helping me to prepare my manuscript for publication. This will be the third time I have had a book come out with Cambridge; the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04572-9 - The Anatomy of Revolution Revisited: A Comparative Analysis of  
England, France, and Russia

Bailey Stone

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*Preface*

xiii

relationship has been a fruitful one, and I can only hope that it will continue in the future.

Finally – in connection with this project as with all my earlier works – I owe much to some very special people in the private corridors of my life. As is invariably the case, they know who they are.