

## Crane Brinton on Revolution

INTRO: Crane Brinton wrote Anatomy of a Revolution in 1938; it was reprinted in 1956 and added to in 1964. His idea of revolution was an overthrow of power, which led to extremists coming to power, then a subsiding into a more moderate time. He likens it to a fever that rises due to complaints among a people. Symptomatic of that fever is the breakdown of the body of power. The fever rages, then it is made clear that the people cannot tolerate the fever, and this rage is replaced with an improved body of power and a happier people. Brinton's idea of a revolution is in fact a very specific schedule of events that are supposed to take place. It shows the change, the fever, and the resolution of revolution.

This model and definition says two things: that revolution is a process, and that not much essentially alters from pre-to post-revolution. His theory, however, was based on revolutions prior to 1945. Also Brinton was very specific in his approach to defining a revolution and how it functions. Is a revolution always going to do these things?

Here are the four phases of Brinton's revolution theory and their "symptoms":

### *Phase One—Preliminary Stage Characteristics*

1. Class Antagonism
2. Government Inefficiency
3. Inept Ruler
4. Intellectual Transfer of Loyalty
5. Failure of Force

### *Phase Two—First Stage Characteristics*

1. Financial Breakdown
2. Government Protests Increase
3. Dramatic Events
4. Moderates Attain Power
5. Honeymoon Period

### *Phase Three—Crisis Stage Characteristics*

1. Radicals Take Control
2. Moderates Driven From Power
3. Civil War
4. Foreign War
5. Centralization of Power in a Revolutionary Council Dominated by a Strong Man

### *Phase Four—Recovery Stage Characteristics*

1. Slow, Uneven Return to Quieter Times
2. Rule by a Tyrant
3. Radicals Repressed
4. Moderates Gain Amnesty
5. Aggressive Nationalism