



1688: The First Modern Revolution (The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-C)

Steve Pincus

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For two hundred years historians have viewed England's Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689 as an un-revolutionary revolution—bloodless, consensual, aristocratic, and above all, sensible. In this brilliant new interpretation Steve Pincus refutes this traditional view.

By expanding the interpretive lens to include a broader geographical and chronological frame, Pincus demonstrates that England's revolution was a European event, that it took place over a number of years, not months, and that it had repercussions in India, North America, the West Indies, and throughout continental Europe. His rich historical narrative, based on masses of new archival research, traces the transformation of English foreign policy, religious culture, and political economy that, he argues, was the intended consequence of the revolutionaries of 1688–1689.

James II developed a modernization program that emphasized centralized control, repression of dissidents, and territorial empire. The revolutionaries, by contrast, took advantage of the new economic possibilities to create a bureaucratic but participatory state. The postrevolutionary English state emphasized its ideological break with the past and envisioned itself as continuing to evolve. All of this, argues Pincus, makes the Glorious Revolution—not the French Revolution—the first truly modern revolution. This wide-ranging book reenvisions the nature of the Glorious Revolution and of revolutions in general, the causes and consequences of commercialization, the nature of liberalism, and ultimately the origins and contours of modernity itself.

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