



HST 201: History of United States F16 (Escobar Meta 20938 23214)

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The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Joe Escobar - Friday, November 11, 2016, 2:45 PM

This thread is for discussions on the The Revolution: Conservative or Radical topic. To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

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Agreeing with Degler

by Hope Kelley - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 9:44 PM

I agree with Carl Degler that the American Revolution was more conservative than radical. Conservatives don't really like change all that much and it kind of applies to the revolution. Change didn't happen all at once, it was gradual, things slowly started to happen. Degler said on page two "As a colonial revolt against an alien power, such a development is not surprising. But certainly--for better or for worse--the continuity brought a degree of social and political stability to the new nation rarely associated with the word 'revolution' and serves, once again, to illustrate the truly conservative nature of the American revolt." I believe his quote sums up why Degler says that the revolution is more conservative. The revolution was bound to happen and when it did the change that was caused by it was slow and did not happen all at once like the other argument says.

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Re: Agreeing with Degler

by Joshua Vieira - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 6:34 PM

I too agree that the Revolution was bound to happen. The colonies were showing opposition to British rule and tax measures. The Stamp Act riots of 1765 embolden the colonist with a feeling of power. This gave them a mentality that they could go against any act the Britain would implement. In our book there is a sentence that states "for the colonies, this conviction set the pattern of resistance for the next two imperial crises" (Life, Equality, Power, pg. 179). This statement makes me believe that change was on the wind, we were starting to resist the rule of the land and resisting was getting positive action.

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Re: Agreeing with Degler

by Eric Land - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 8:57 PM

I agree that it was a conservative movement, and that they don't like change. Just because they didn't want to rethink things as I would say. Its kind of like you working at a job and then you decide to trade jobs and have to do it all yourself so I do think that they did keep some things from the Mother Country. Also, change is happening everyday when people don't really know it. I do agree that the Revolution was going to happen and cause a lot of change.

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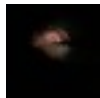
Re: Agreeing with Degler

by John Casares - Friday, November 18, 2016, 2:46 PM

I love the use of that quote to sum everything up. I also believe that the word “Revolution” was not used very often in this time but for some reason it is the one word used to describe the war in every textbook, website and general everyday conversation. Like Joe said recently during one of his lecture I think a better fitting name is the United States War for Independence because this perfectly encapsulates the movement and what was going on more so than revolution.

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Re: Agreeing with Degler

by Matt Oordt - Friday, November 18, 2016, 3:31 PM

I never thought about the terminology that the colonials used back then. I like what you have to say about this because I believe when you through out the labels it allows you to see a clearer and less bias version of what you are learning.

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the word "Revolution"

by Joshua Vieira - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 11:47 AM

That is a great assessment on the use of the word “Revolution”. I think to the colonist they didn’t see what they were doing was a revolution but a movement to better govern themselves. On the 3 minute web-video Dr. Skemp says “colonist were proud to be English” (Skemp, 1:50 sec) and “steeped in English rights...and a right for revolution” (Skemp, 2:33 sec). The use of the words revolution and radicals would be more used by the British to describe the colonist, just as we today use those words to describe Muslims revolutionaries. We use the words extremist, terrorist, and radicals to portray a people we see going against what we deem civilized. The British saw the colonist as a people going against civilized society and were deemed radicals or extremists. I still feel the American Revolution was a conservative movement and Degler really brings this home for me when he wrote “These Americans...had been a contented and prosperous people under the British Crown and they were, therefore, contented revolutionaries who wanted nothing more than to be undisturbed in their accustomed ways” (Degler, pg.128).

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Re: the word "Revolution"

by Hope Kelley - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 6:58 PM

Thank you for bring up the video, I attempted to watch it but it would not load on my computer. I agree with you that Degler's quote "These Americans...had been a contented and prosperous people under the British Crown an they were, therefore, contented revolutionaries who wanted more than to be undisturbed in their accustomed ways" (Degler, pg. 128) really explains that this was more of a conservative movement than radical. Again I do not think that the American Revolution was either fully radical or conservative but a mixture of both, with a little more weighed on the conservative side.

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Radical and Neoconservative

by Garrett Richards - Monday, November 14, 2016, 1:08 PM

When taking a look at both authors and what they have to say about The Revolution being Conservative or Radical, I have to agree with Gordon S. Wood. After reading his essay about how the American Revolution was radical, I found myself agreeing with more of what he was saying then Carl N. Degler. "If we measure the radicalism by the amount of social change that actually took place by transformations in the relationships that bound people to each other-then the American Revolution was not conservative at all" (131). This sentence really persuaded me into agreeing with Wood. Without those events happening in history you cannot say that the American Revolution wasn't radical. Thinking about if I am neoconservative or neoprogressive, I would say I am neoconservative. From another source "American Revolution, echoing the reactionary writer in the pay of the Austrian and English governments of the early nineteenth century, Friedrich von Gentz, tries to isolate the American Revolution from all the revolutions in the western world that preceded it and followed it" (MisesInstitute). After reading this article it helped me find out what I fell under but also helped me see the other side of neoprogressive. I still find myself as neoconservative but understand how people can find themselves as neoprogressive.

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Elaborate.

by Skye Lipson - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 12:57 AM

You say that you are neoconservative regarding historical interpretations in general, though you are also saying that you found the American revolution in particular to be Radical as the Gordon S. Wood argument states. Can you explain what you mean when you say you are neoconservative?

In the article explaining these concepts it is written that "Carl N. Degler argues the neoconservative view of the American Revolution", If you have accidentally mislabeled yourself consider reading the prompt explanation page again.

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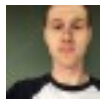
Re: Radical and Neoconservative

by Hope Kelley - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 3:43 PM

Dealing with the social change you mentioned, I agree that is it somewhat radical, but not all of it. There was a lot of change happening but it didn't all happen at once, it slowly happened because not everybody was on board with full on change, They didn't get ride of everything British, in fact they kept a lot of it, including part of their governmental system.

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Re: Radical and Neoconservative

by Jacob Parris - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 10:30 PM

However, they tried their hardest to make sure that a monarchy was not formed just like Britain had. They did not want to give all the power to one person who was calling the shots. This was a huge transition out of British monarchy rule which why I think it is still a radical movement.

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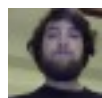
Re: Radical and Neoconservative

by Hope Kelley - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 7:58 PM

I agree with you that it was a radical movement but calling only a radical movement is silly in itself.

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General Discussion-y Babble

by Skye Lipson - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 11:48 PM

For the most part, monarchy had little presence on the colonial British mainland, some lords did make their way to the new world (Baltimore, York...), but many of the social leaders were just wealthy, and not aristocratic by British standards in the slightest. Though, colonial rule under governors

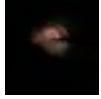
and appointed councilors were dependent on British authority, and so Woods was very accurate to point out how the war was radical in its eliminating the dependence on Britain by removing those ruling bodies from power. Monarchy and its ability to coerce the people was overcome in the war, that is undeniable, but I do actually contest the claim by Woods that "the revolution became a full scale assault on dependency." I understand how he meant it, but such strong language as that deserves criticism. Without denying that dependency was in many ways reduced as a result of the American revolution, I would argue that America did not truly break free of dependency on England until around the war of 1812 when economic coercion from both Britain and France led to a complex situation resulting in both French recognition of American Neutrality and American war with Britain. During Washington and Hamilton's administration a large portion of American Government was funded by import tariffs placed on British trade. I will stop right there actually because, that is all I need to explain the point, *the United States was still dependent on Britain after the war.*

Perhaps the reason we hold different opinions as to whether the war was radical or not is because we choose to focus on different details or see one set of details as being more important than another. I understand that the revolution led to many new changes, the overthrow of the concept of monarchy, dependence on British political power, and American Constitutionalism. When I look at the same event and call it conservative, I am coming from the perspective that the American revolution was a revolution but that in comparison to other revolutions which resulted in significantly more change and departure from norms, the American Revolution was not particularly radical. The leaders of the revolution had been primarily part of a class that already held positions of power before the revolution, even the idea that our revolutionary general (George Washington) had little that was tangible to gain from revolution says quite a lot to the idea that it was not a very radical revolution. The colonies themselves were a fairly radical experiment, and I would say that the difference between land and labour in America and Britain resulted initially in two very different cultures forming even if they both called themselves British. And to further that point, just think how much different it would have been in terms of interactions with foreign cultures. The Americans had to deal with a strange and sometimes hostile people on their frontier, while the British had no such issue to deal with in Britain. Now here comes radical, de facto federalism! America due to Britain's distance and the convenience of the situation was able to live democratically by rule of the states with little involvement with the Island except for trade. Clearly the colonies were a radical departure from European norms. Though, to assume that because Americans continued looking different from Europe in many respects after the war that the revolution was exceptionally radical seems a bit of a leap. Rather the fact that the colonies had already been different from Europe and that the changes that took place in the revolution were more than likely just extensions of ideas that already

existed in smaller form (abolition, land settlement by the poor, unspoken rights, trade based on cash crops), the American revolution was considerably irrelevant in affecting new ideas that differed from any that previously existed. Yet obviously, America as we know it today would not exist without the revolution. Of course that statement could be made of any revolution or slight change in power.

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Re: Radical and Neoconservative

by Matt Oordt - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 10:01 PM

I disagree with you to a certain extent. when it comes to your quote, I think social change should be expected when a young nation is at war , but I believe that the people held their conservative ideals to a higher standard.

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Re: Radical and Neoconservative

by Mariah Doyle - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 11:15 PM

I agree that social changes occurred during the American Revolution, however I can't agree with your quote from Wood due to the fact that he says the Revolution is not conservative in any way. When talking about significant events like this I don't think it should be answered in a "black or white" manner.

I believe that many of the social changes that occurred at the time of the Revolution would have happened regardless of the outcome of the Revolution. What I liked about Degler was that he acknowledged both sides of the debate while still asserting his opinion- "It is true that social and political changes accompanied the Revolution, some of which were destined to work great influence upon American institutions in the future, but these had been implicit in the pre-Revolutionary society. Moreover, important social institutions were left untouched by the Revolution" (127).

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Neo-progressive, strict constructionist

by Joshua Vieira - Monday, November 14, 2016, 1:12 PM

After reading both Woods and Degler outlook if the revolution was a conservative or a radical event in America's history, I am torn on who I fully side with. Wood makes great points on the radical view that "the American revolution was integral to the

changes occurring in American society, politics, and culture..” (Wood, pg. 133, pdf). The revolution brought a new idea that even the lowest person could raise themselves up to be a top contender in society and politics as woods writes “ the Revolution...released powerful popular and entrepreneurial and commercial energies that few realized existed and transformed the economic landscape of the country” (Woods, pg. 135, pdf.). The revolution was radical in the sense that it broke ties of a two thousand mindset in western thinking that aristocracy was hereditary and limited to a few. Today America is known as a country that anyone can come to this country from a poor background and through perseverance and hard work you can accomplish anything. This is the dream that we have sold to people from all countries. Without the revolution I don’t think we would have our Rockefellers, J.P. Morgans, the Carnegies, and Ford. To the new families of fortune in America the aristocracy of Britain was a source of uneasy and they felt threatened that all their hard work wouldn’t have much say with established aristocratic families. As Woods writes “Men who had quickly risen to the top were confident and aggressive but also vulnerable to challenge, especially sensitive over their liberty and independence, and unwilling to brook any interference with their status or their prospects” (Woods, pg.135, pdf).

On the other hand Degler view that the revolution was a conservative movement must be examined. His view that the revolution was a conservative movement because it was orchestrated by a handful of already rich and prosperous men and in the end it would greatly benefit them as he writes “these fifty-five men are important patriot leaders and presumably among the chief beneficiaries of the Revolution they advocated” (Degler, pg.127, pdf). The conservative nature of the Revolution is apparent on who was causing waves to the, then, natural order of things. Degler writes “that no new social class came to power through the door of American Revolution. The men who engineered the revolt were largely members of the colonial ruling class” (Deglar, pg.125, pdf). After the revolution it is also apparent who reaped the greatest rewards of a new country and it was mostly the established ruling class already in power of the time. Some land did get redistributed among the lower class so they could have a voice in politics but mostly the real power went to the people who had great monetary gains at risk. Degler hits on this point when he wrote “eighty-nine percent of those who filled office before the revolution also occupied an office under one of the new state government...and the conclusion that the Revolution was thoroughly upper-middle-class affair in leadership and aim is escapable” (Deglar, pg. 127, pdf).

I am torn because yes on one side the Revolution brought about a change that everyone through hard work and determination could rise to the top echelon on politics and power and that was a radical concept under British rule but also it was conservative on that fact the coordinators of the Revolution were already rich and powerful elites who felt threatened by the aristocratic society and that there was a chance that they could lose everything to them.

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Re: Neo-progressive, strict constructionist

by Garrett Richards - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 9:37 PM

I like how you gave examples from both essays because some of the information that you are sharing comparing both sides can affect/change someones mind about the topic. I like the quote you used from the author Wood "the American revolution was integral to the changes occurring in American society, politics, and culture.." (Wood, pg. 133). This stuff really happened making Wood's side so easy to believe, but also information from Degler makes you think about if Wood's was really right about the events that went on in America's history.

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Revolution paving the way

by Judith Pohl - Monday, November 14, 2016, 3:00 PM

After reading the articles I tend to agree more with the views of Gordon Wood. While Carl N. Degler may say that the American Revolution was a conservative movement and I do believe it may have been FOUGHT for conservative motives, fighting for their liberty and to restore their traditional rights. I believe the methods and the outcome of what the Revolution led to make this more of a radical movement.

The big point that I saw here is addressed on page 133 of the article, "to focus on what the revolution did not accomplish-highlighting and lamenting its failure to abolish slavery and change fundamentally the lot women-it to miss the significance of what it did accomplish." The Revolution "made possible the anti-slavery and women's rights movements of the 19th century." As mentioned in class last week many Indians and enslaved African were offered freedom through fighting for the British, in Virginia alone 30,000 slaves walked away from their slave owners to fight for the British to gain freedom and after the war. Women had gained more rights, many women were left behind to be head of household and after the war this resulted in women seen as more equal to the husband (page 221 of text book). Women learned to read, write, and had their first academies formed. The Revolution led to laws that helped people own their own land, gave property to soldiers, and establish their selves in the communities. For this time this was a very radical change when compared to pre-revolution.

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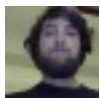
Re: Revolution paving the way

by Skye Lipson - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 1:34 AM

You make an excellent point! The revolution does seem to have been fought for conservative motives and it was led by the previous ruling class, but the revolution did ultimately seem to result in some radical changes. I think actually the most so is the point you bring up about how "in Virginia alone 30,000 slaves walked away from their slave owners to fight for the British to gain freedom", *that* is most definitely a large social change, and I believe this is the case that I un-doubtedly agree is a radical effect of the American Revolution. But, you also mentioned "women were left behind to be head of household and after the war" which had some impact on furthering the rights of women during the time. Though I think that arguably this was not a turning point in women's rights, but rather a slight upwards spike in a chart of several small up and down spikes denoting the slight increase in rights women were able to achieve after certain spectacular events that left society disheveled. Though, You also make a great point in saying that "The Revolution lead to laws that helped people own their own land, gave property to soldiers, and establish their selves in the communities. For this time this was a very radical change when compared to pre-revolution." I do generally agree with the sentiment that this might actually be a sign of radicalism in the revolution, though it may not be, much before the revolutionary war it seemed that it was the common men that would travel to the frontier to make their living, perhaps I am mistaken but I do believe that it was the common folk that tried to settle the Ohio territory, which happened to be relevant in leading to the initiation of the French and Indian War. Given that were the case, and my memory serves me correctly, then such land grants would not be a particularly radical action to take.

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The Revolution of Preservation

by Skye Lipson - Monday, November 14, 2016, 3:20 PM

Interpretational Philosophy Whig, Imperialist, or Conflict?

I would say that I am more of an Imperialist interpreter of History, as I find it easy to relate to the reasons that Britain acted in the manner that it did, while I am also less familiar with the mannerisms of the American Colonists. Though, that is not to say that I am staunchly on one side such that I can not understand the rhetoric of the other. Part of the reason I see myself as more Imperialist is that in my understanding of the era leading to the revolution, it seems that the French Indian was for the most part started by an American Colonist zealotry for expansion and their encroachment in the Ohio territory which was controlled at the time by the French allied tribes, and by french traders. The point being that ultimately the war was triggered by the Americans leading to Britain having to spend itself deeply into a debt that the Americans later would refuse to help pay off, even though the war was mostly in there benefit and led to their frontiers being better protected from the threat of invasion. The Americans were then denied their craving for further expansion by their British protectors, though, they really had no right to that territory in the first place.

The British mandated that all further expansion into the land would have to be legally purchased from the Native-Americans who owned it, and even offered the French Canadian province of Quebec permission to continue and expand catholic worship, under the Quebec Act. I believe that the British were in the right here, as the further expansion of the colonies westward would result in the destruction of many of the native tribal lifestyles.

Construction loose or strict?

As for whether I see myself a strict constructionist or not, I would say that I believe the definitions being used to describe the two have gotten themselves backwards. Why must strict construction suggest something less clearly defined by the words revolution and loose construction mean the literal interpretation of the text as is. In other fields I believe this way of looking at the two would be contested. Out of the two though I am most definitely a loose constructionist as it is defined by historical experts. I believe this is the case because when given the common definition of revolution I get something along the lines of: "A forcible overthrow of a government or social order in favor of a new system." (Dictionary Application on Mac) Which to me seems by the most literal definition to include an expansive and broad range of events including a revolution of a seemingly conservative nature given that they did in fact overthrow the old de jure rulers. Which in the case of the American war for independence did in fact happen.

War for independence Conservative or Radical?

Whether or not I see the event as a revolution (I do), it can still be debated whether that event was conservative or radical. The paper by Carl N. Degler is even titled "A New Kind of Revolution", and still he argues that the event was conservative. My point being that a revolution can be recognized to have happened while simultaneously being viewed as a conservative event. I personally will take the side of it being a conservative revolution as well. The paper by Gordon S. Wood claims that the event was radical by saying that under Jefferson "Virginia grant[ed] fifty acres of land to every man that did not have many.", he goes on to write that "nothing could be more radical than this attempt to make every man independent", though I would argue that westward expansion by individuals seeking independence by means of property ownership was already a feature of pre-revolutionary America, so such an act is not in any large means a radical change from what was already the American norm under the rule of Britain. Actually the argument that most resonated with me and ultimately led me to agreeing with Carl N. Degler that the revolution was a conservative one is that he explained how the wealthy and ruling class for the most part remained so, of course with the exception of those representing the monarchy which were removed given the event as I would define it enough of a power replacement to be considered a revolution in the first place. Degler writes that, "no new social class came to power through the door of the American Revolution." He goes on to elaborate this claim by informing that "[t]he men who engineered the revolt were largely members of the

colonial ruling class. Peyton Randolph and Patrick Henry were well-to-do members of the Virginia Assembly; Washington reputed to be the richest man in America, was an officer in the Virginia militia.” He continues this trend into Massachusetts as he writes that “it has been shown that chief revolutionists in the western counties were old leaders, so that no major shift in leadership took place there either as a result of the revolution.” Degler then sums up these points by writing that “[a] large part of the governing class remained to guide the Revolution and reap its favors.” So, given that point it seems hard to assume that much of a radical change really did take place due to the revolution.

Another point that I think is important in expressing that the revolution was conservative is that the “social and political changes [that] accompanied the Revolution ... had been implicit in the pre-revolutionary society.” Furthermore after the revolution had finished many of the “social institutions were left untouched by [it]” Degler lists these as being: “the class structure”, “the distribution of property”, “the capitalist economy”, and “the ideas of the people concerning government”. For instance the Americans already had democratically elected assemblies in, I think, all of the states until the revoking of the Massachusetts charter. Degler writes that “...Americans ... had been contented and prosperous people under the British Crown and they were, therefore, contented revolutionaries who wanted nothing more than to be undisturbed in their accustomed ways.” Such a statement makes it sound as if nothing much really changed at all, and that really, as it was seen by the Americans at the time, they were fighting a war for the preservation of their ways. Which is truly the grounds of a conservative revolution. Americans feared that Britain was out to steal their liberties as Free-Englishmen, and so reacted by taking their leave (forcefully) from British control.

Another important point in favor of the conservatism of the American war for independence, is that religion was not attacked as it was in other revolutions. According to Carl N. Degler, “[t]he American concept is not antireligious at all.” In defense of this statement he write, “[o]ur presidents invoke deity and offer Thanksgiving prayers, our armies and legislatures maintain chaplains, and the state and federal governments encourage religion through the remission of taxes.” Other revolutions I would argue are much more radical than America's in the matter of religion. For instance Russia and China aimed to eradicate religion through their revolutions.

Yet another point that can be made against the supposed radical nature of the American revolution is actually made in the essay by Gordon S. Wood, he writes that “the revolutionary leaders did not expect poor humble men— farmers artisans, or tradesmen— themselves to gain high political office. Rather, they expected that sons of such humble and ungentle men, if they had abilities, would as they had, aquire liberal and genteel republican attributes perhaps by attending Harvard or the College of New Jersey at Princeton, and would thereby rise into the ranks of

gentlemen.” What strikes me about this quote is that such colleges had been around long before the Revolution and I think they must have been utilized as some sort of a source of social advancement before this ideal came to be brought up by the founding fathers, and on top of that America is a place where new wealth was found by many who were able to get the right land. So, I would imagine that many of the founding fathers' families found wealth and power having initially started out from a low position in society as it had been suggested by them in the quote they believed others could do. My point about this overall being that there were many points in the pre-revolutionary period in which social mobility took place and therefore it is not a unique characteristic of the Revolution itself.

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Conservative

by Eric Land - Monday, November 14, 2016, 7:01 PM

I think the American Revolution was a conservative act. The definition of conservative: Holding to traditional attitudes and values and cautious about change or innovation, typically in relation to politics or religion. It also, explains that separation between church and state was in effect in Virginia in 1786. (Stated in the article) So I really believe that religion has nothing to do with the American Revolution. I do believe the fact that the taxation after the seven years war was a huge impact. Mainly, because everyone was kind of "all up in their feelings". The thirteen colonies wanted to reject the British Monarchy and overthrow it to secede from the union. So while trying to do this, the British were making taxation on things that the thirteen colonies didn't have, like tea. Which later resulted in the Boston Tea Party in 1773. Then the Treaty of Paris ended the Revolution in 1783. By then, the U.S. was finally made and sort of formed in 1776.

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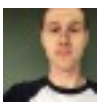
Re: Conservative

by Hope Kelley - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 8:21 PM

I agree with you strongly. To raise another point, a lot of American elites did not see eye to eye. As a recent example, The Jeffersonians and The Hamiltonians. Jeffersonians were more liberal and for smaller government, while the Hamiltonians were more conservative and wanted a big government. It was federalism and anti-federalism and it became a huge part of politics at the time.

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Radicalism of the time

by Jacob Parris - Monday, November 14, 2016, 8:09 PM

In today's culture, we tend to have a different definition of what "radical" or "progressive" mean and the same with "conservative". I think this important to understand as we talk about these two opinions of whether the American Revolution was conservative or not.

Based on the two articles, I tend to lean towards the side of stating that the American Revolution wasn't conservative. In Gordon S. Wood's article, he has the opinion that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement. When he says on page 134 that "The Revolution not only changed the culture of Americans-making over their art, architecture, and iconography-but even altered their understanding of history, knowledge, and truth." This statement reinforces my belief that this revolution was in fact radical because it changed the way the people of the time thought and how they understood. Wood goes on to say that the American Revolution was the first of its time that a group of people willingly defied their government to create their own nation. Even though in western Europe, social transformations did exist, but America's was different in that it led to an entire shift in culture and modernization.

To conclude this thought, Wood goes on to state that the American people weren't under any real oppression comparative to other nations that revolted because of their oppression. They just wanted to progress as their own individual nation.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Radicalism of the time

by Eric Land - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 10:26 PM

I do agree that we do have different definitions because over time there can be more slang or even different thoughts on the definition. I was always taught that Radical was explained as like wanting to kill all the time and not stop. I like the fact you always stated what the articles said. Even though the Mother Country was way different, I still think that we took somethings away from them. One thing I really think of is having one person in charge. But, with this, we made laws basically saying that the president doesn't have a lot of power like the Monarchy's did.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Radicalism of the time

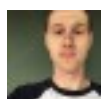
by Judith Pohl - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 9:13 AM

Very good point here, Jacob. Its hard to put on lenses of the 18th century and not look at this from a 21st century perspective. That being said...for the time I completely agree with you. While I do see that it was an effort to restore their traditional rights and for their indepance, many things remained the same. But I would like to think it lead to some very radical movements further on because of the Revolutionay war.. Many things changed in their personal lives "many slaves won freedom, and women struggled for greater dignity. Both succeeded..." (Page 218). Things also changed within the government,"Nothing resembling American federalism had ever been tried before. UInder this new system, sovereignty was removed from government and bestowed on the people...it was a *novus ordo seclorum*, a new order for the ages (Page 236).

Like I said in a previous post it may have been fought for conservative reasons and ideas, but the outcome and what ended up being gained, to me there's nothing conservative about that.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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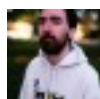
Re: Radicalism of the time

by Jacob Parris - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 6:34 PM

Thank you for your concurrence, to elaborate on what you said about change within the government. As was stated in the 3 minute video above, American culture was something revolutionary in itself, not just the cry for independence or what led up to the war. The way the economy was ran was revolutionary, the legislation and government was something unique to the rest of the world of the time, and the social ladder was something new of the time as well. If you worked hard, you could make it at almost any job of the time. This is a strong factor into what we know as the American Dream. The whole attitude of the time was revolutionary and that just bled onto the battlefield.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Dylan Mandoli - Monday, November 14, 2016, 10:34 PM

Carl N Degler's paper, "Conservatives can be Innovaters," raises valuable and interesting points on the issue. However, while I agree with many of his arguments, I find I disagree with his fundamental point. His essential assertion seems to be that, because the social values at the core of the American Revolution were already incarnate in the American zeitgeist, no true 'revolution' can be said to have occurred. Instead, he views them as simply protecting and codifying an already extant culture. The American people already were the society they sought to build.

I do not agree with this assessment. It seems to me that this is the nature of all revolutions, and that the social American Revolution simply happened on a much longer timescale than the war with which it concluded . A set of people within a given society develop a set of values, which they believe to be more noble, true, and just than the established paradigm. These people may assert their will to power, creating revolution and bringing their values to the forefront, or embrace oppression and bear an unjust society. The American people did the former in every sense, first by forming into the society they wished to live in, and second by asserting their right to do so.

I do not believe the values inherent in the revolution can be said to have been conservative without a very limited scope of what 'conservative' means. Europe had been torn to shreds by wars in the wake of the protestant revolution, and the British Empire in particular suffered to no end because of the division between catholics and protestants. Even before the reformation, the death of Thomas Becket in 1120 shows that the divide between Church and State was a long and bloody conflict in English society. For the Americans to so unanimously and thoroughly reject that very conflict, to say that *both* sides of such struggles were detrimental to the good of the people, was a new and revolutionary idea to the world as a whole, and to English culture in particular.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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A New Kind of Growth

by Taylor Freeman - Monday, November 14, 2016, 10:39 PM

Obviously there are both conservative and progressive aspects of the American Revolution. It would be silly to imply that it was only one thing. That being said, I believe that the American Revolution was more progressive than it was conservative. One of the big things for me is the idea that after the revolution, new states could be formed that had the same rights as the 13 originals. To my knowledge, this is something that hadn't ever been done before. Many European nations had developed colonies all over the world but they did not choose to make those colonies truly a part of their nation with the same level of power and with them same rights as themselves. I believe that this idea had a radical impact on the size and power of the America we know today.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: A New Kind of Growth

by Eric Land - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 10:35 PM

I do agree with you with the fact that there was both aspects involved and had their fair-share in the Revolution. Also to agree that this has never happened before and that I don't think it will to my knowledge.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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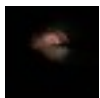
Re: A New Kind of Growth

by Hope Kelley - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 9:50 PM

I strongly agree with you that it is silly to choose one side because there are aspects of both in the revolution. Example for radicalism the revolutionaries had no real plan when they separated from the loyalists, with odds stacked very much against them, but still went for it anyways. Example for conservatism is that the movement was more for restoring British rights to the American colonists.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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The Revolution = Conservative

by Matt Oordt - Monday, November 14, 2016, 11:00 PM

Both Degler and Woods provided incite on the topic that I could sympathize with, but if I had to pick a side I would have to side with Degler and say that the Revolution of America was indeed a constitutional movement. One thing that defines us as Americans according to the declaration of independence is that "all men are created equal." Even during the revolution this proved true to the people of the colonies. The colonials stayed true to the constitution and what they believed in even times of trouble. I like how Degler gets this point across in his article by exposing the view point of travelers from other countries. Degler quotes French traveler Brissot saying "that the Americans more than any other people are convinced that all men are born free and equal." He added, "we must acknowledge, that they direct themselves generally by this principle of equality." (P.124). Degler goes on to quote German traveler Johann Schoepf's observation of America stating, "rank of birth is not recognized, is resisted with a total force. . . . people think, act, and speak here precisely as it prompts them. . . ." (P.124). This alone shows me that the people of America were not swayed by the Revolution, but stood their ground and held their conservative values.

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Re: The Revolution = Conservative

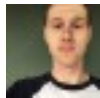
by Skye Lipson - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 11:09 AM

So to sum up what I think your point is: you are saying the revolution was a conservative movement because the Americans held the beliefs shown to be key parts of the constitution long before it was produced as an official document?

I think this is definitely part of the argument for how the Revolution could be seen as conservative, though I do not believe that this is necessarily reason enough to say that the Revolution was not radical. The largest part of why I agree the movement is conservative is because there was little socio-economic turnover as a result of the revolution and overall as I think you are saying, trends before the revolution such as common behaviors and social philosophies are mostly retained. Degler hints at this fact by writing "important social institutions were left untouched by the revolution".

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Re: The Revolution = Conservative

by Jacob Parris - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 6:41 PM

However, based on the 4 minute video, the workforce labor was something that changed a lot in the 13 colonies, as technologies advanced and more jobs became available, people could start climbing the ladder towards individuality and materialism which was a dramatic change compared to British way of life. The Americans had been preparing for revolution even before the war based this type of thinking and culture.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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holding to beliefs

by Joshua Vieira - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 12:14 PM

I agree with you that the colonists were not swayed by the revolution but stood their ground and the revolution was a byproduct of that. In the 4 minute web-video they quote John Adams "the Revolution was in the minds of the people ten to fifteen years before a single drop of blood was spilt at Lexington (2:34). Even then, people didn't see what they were doing was a radical movement but a movement to hold onto traditional values and this shows, to me, that it was a conservative movement. The colonists were conserving their way of life that, they, had been living for a hundred and fifty years.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The Revolution = Conservative

by Mariah Doyle - Friday, November 18, 2016, 12:05 AM

I agree that overall the revolution was conservative, but when you mention that before and after the Revolution that Americans valued the notion that "all men are equal" I automatically think about how slaves come into play. The Revolution was important for the issue of slavery because there were many slave owners (who would likely never have done this before the Declaration/Revolution) who decided to free some or all of their slaves because they realized that they too deserve the freedom/liberty that they were fighting for at the time. For example in 1782, a man in Virginia named William Binford freed 12 slaves because he decided that "freedom is the natural right" for everyone including black slaves (Degler 124).

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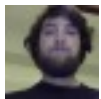
The Revolution was Radical

by Moe Uetake - Monday, November 14, 2016, 11:35 PM

I'm influenced by progressive-conflict school of historical interpretation. I am more neoprogressive in my approach to the study of the American War for Independence and its aftermath because I agree with the idea that "America was the first nation to hold democratic values, allowing ordinary people to make money, pursue happiness, and rule themselves." I believe the changing of social relationship, for example, people are not forced by some big authority and people can manage their life, is the meaning of revolution. I most agree with Wood because he claimed that the poor did not superseded the rich, but the social relationship that is how people related each other was changed significantly.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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About the quote you used.

by Skye Lipson - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 11:18 AM

You quote, "America was the first nation to hold democratic values, allowing ordinary people to make money, pursue happiness, and rule themselves.", though I actually find this statement to be slanted by the interpretational style it was derived from. Though Britain was led somewhat by a monarch, their parliament was an elective body and had significant power in the political realm. Not to mention that other countries throughout history have been partially democratic as well. Though I admit that America definitely broke ground in the *extent* of their democratic values.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The Revolution was Radical



by Eric Land - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 8:48 PM

I agree with Skype, I look at this quote in a different way as you as well. I think that most governments have some form of democratic involvement and influence today.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Conservative Ideals

by John Casares - Monday, November 14, 2016, 11:44 PM

I believe that overall the American Revolution was a conservative movement. Of course at its core a revolution is a radical movement that insights new ideas and extreme change (which is most often associated with Radicalism in general). Where I think is the line that decides if it was a radical or conservative movement, is the fact that they did not tear down everything related to Britain and their previous established ways of live and societal behaviors. Sure we tore down a lot of what they had built in the Americas and colonies but a whole lot of what we base our ideals off of were pre conceived from the British way of life. I like to believe that it was led by very conservative people and the radicals ideas were kind of swept to the wayside eventually. The articles vouching of it being a conservative movement states "The men who engineered the revolt were largely members of the colonial ruling class". If these people who in my opinion were inherently conservative, then I would say the Revolution is a conservative movement.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Conservative Ideals

by Joshua Vieira - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 6:03 PM

You bring up some good points. When you wrote "is the fact that they did not tear down everything related to Britain and their previous established ways of live and societal behaviors. Sure we tore down a lot of what they had built in the Americas and colonies but a whole lot of what we base our ideals off of were pre conceived from the British way of life.", that to me is why I see the side of the revolution as a conservative movement. At the time the American colonies emulated the British way of life from their dress, attitudes, language, and behavior. There wasn't a radical change to completely break all societal connection to Britain. Even after the war the new "Americans" still dressed and acted like British citizens just with a new government.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Conservative Ideals

by John Casares - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 1:11 PM

Exactly! I mean at its core conservative ideals were always holding an important place and the British were a very conservative people, so of course a new country that is broken away from Britain would also be considered conservative in its actions. When I think of Radical happenings I usually think of a complete separation and cutting off all connective tissue with their previous ideas or governing bodies, that just isn't the case here. The British government was a hybrid system and I believe the American revolutions job was to cut out the parts that they saw unfit and rebuilt it into what was the functioning early American government.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Agreement +

by Skye Lipson - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 2:39 PM

I agree, and to further extend your idea that "they did not tear down everything related to Britain and their previous established ways of [life]" and that "a whole lot of what we base our ideals off of were pre conceived from the British way of life", It seems almost obvious that this was the case as the first political party in power after the revolution was that of the Federalists, who sought a close relationship with Britain, and emulated the British Court to an extent in the manner in which they chose to run the federal government government.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Agreement +

by Joshua Vieira - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 12:02 PM

Sheila Skemp makes your point in the 3 minute web-video when she says "Colonists were proud to be English, loved to be English" (Skemp, 1:54). The colonist saw themselves as English in every way political, societal, dress, and mannerisms. When the government came to power they even based most of their doctrine on British attitude and preconceived notions of freedom and what freedom meant to them. In the 4 minute video them narrator says " the colonist saw themselves the freest people in the world" (4:33sec). This shows that the colonists didn't see what they were doing as a radical movement but a conservative movement to restore the values they believed in.

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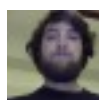
American Revolution

by Vanessa Chenoweth - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 7:06 PM

I would say that I side with the Whig's view of the American Revolution because I agree that yes the American colonists won the revolution and got their independence from the British. But with winning their independence they now face paying back the soldiers that fought in the Revolution as well as paying in full the foreign debt to the allies that helped them defeat the British. The colonists were also able to establish a government run by themselves. Those that did not relish the colonists winning the Revolution would be the Native Americans and perhaps half of the African American because both wished for the British to win the Revolution instead. One so that the colonists would be forced to move off of Native American land, and the other so that the African American slaves might finally be free from their masters.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: American Revolution

by Skye Lipson - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 3:08 PM

You base your being a Whig historian on believing that "yes the American colonists won the revolution and got their independence from the British". Though it would seem a blatant denial of historical fact to say that America did not *literally* achieve its independence from Britain. I am sure even the most staunchly Imperialist historians would agree that America did in fact win the Revolution. Even the short video we watched by a British war historian was called "How Britain Lost the War". Perhaps a more appropriate justification for considering yourself to be a Whig historian would be if you tended to interpret American history with a more centered focus on how it affected Americans and why Americans did what they did, with a general leaning toward the idea of American Exceptionalism.

I actually see myself as more of an Imperialist interpreter, as I have before becoming a part of this class been interested in learning some general English history, and I developed a minor understanding of the values of monarchy. Though I in no sense believe that monarchy is a preferable form of government to our democracy in America, I can sometimes be known to follow history from monarch to monarch, enthusiastically learning the exploits of each. Furthermore and relating more to the issue concerning the American Revolution, I find myself relating to the British in that they were (at first) just trying to get the Americans to help pay for costs that they had incurred through the French and Indian War. Plus the added mention that the British were not out to steal the Americans' liberty, and that they helped enable religious diversity through the Quebec Act while the Americans were much less open to religious toleration between christians, helps me to relate better to the British perspective and interpretation of the historical events.

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Sum of ratings:3 (1)



Re: American Revolution

by Vanessa Chenoweth - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 10:03 PM

I agree with you it did take some time before the American colonists literally achieved their Independence from Britain. I agree with you on the bit that you said that if I considered myself to be a Whig historian and to interpret American history in a more centered focus on how it affects the Americans did what they did, with a general leaning toward the idea of American Exceptionalism.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Agreeing with Degler

by Vanessa Chenoweth - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 11:43 PM

I agree with Carl Degler that the American Revolution was more conservative than radical. People who were conservative back then weren't really on board for change. It occurred more slowly than some would have liked during the revolution. Degler says on page seven, " These Americans, for all their talk, had been contented and prosperous people under the British Crown and they were, therefore, contented revolutionaries who wanted nothing more than to be undisturbed in their accustomed ways." I believe that with this quote it shows why the Revolution was more conservative than radical because it shows in a way why the American colonists wanted to break away from the British Crown and have a new meaning to their existence as a people.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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New Meaning?

by Skye Lipson - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 3:58 PM

Is not breaking away from the British Crown itself, to some extent, a radical move to make? Further, you write "American colonists wanted to break away from the British Crown and have a new meaning to their existence as a people." the very idea of radical is "new" or different than the old norms, yet you call the event conservative and say that the Americans "have a new meaning to their existence as a people", which sounds like it could be an ending statement in an argument claiming the revolution was in fact radical.

Though actually, I too agree that the event was conservative, and here is why: If we are to consider departure from the crown in its literal sense radical, then it is hardly possible that the revolution could be anything but. Whereas I think that

taking that perspective is actually detrimental to the conversation, as we are not discussing straight-forward literal facts, but rather subtle variations in the conservatism and radicalism of an event that - taken by its most literal nature - is fairly radical. So, looking past that initial seemingly radical action of departure from royal authority, when we see a quote from an expert saying that Americans were set in their British mannerisms both before and still after the Revolution, how could it possibly be denied that strongly conservative aspects were prevalent in the event.

Furthermore though, regarding whether or not a revolution is indeed a revolution if did not include large amounts of either social or political uprooting, I would say it is. Why? Because the word literally denotes "a forcible overthrow of government" (Mac dictionary Application), to suggest that this word is limited only to its metaphorical connotative use: which compares the idea of overthrowing government with change because overthrowing government implies *change* of government, for example, a large social paradigm shift representing a large amount of change can be represented with the word revolution because it is metaphorically similar to an overthrow of government in that they are both significant changes. But to expand on my earlier point, to say that an overthrow of a governing power is not a revolution, would be completely inaccurate in that you would have to be ignoring the primary/denotative meaning of the word and only recognizing the word's use in metaphorical terms. For this same reason I have problem with strict construction meaning the ignoring of the words actual definition, I think strict more reasonably would refer to a strict adherence to the proper (non-metaphorical) definition. Loose constructionism would in that case mean, to, without care for the rules pick out the most vague fluffy magical interpretive definition available for the word and then pretend that the literal denotative definition is non-existent. My point overall being that in the case of the American Revolutionary War, there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to assume that it was not indeed a revolution, as it in fact involved the political overthrow of the British governing power over the territory in question, and the official formation of a new government that took its place, even if that new government was led by the same people as who led the colonial governments.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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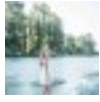
Re: New Meaning?

by Vanessa Chenoweth - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 10:29 PM

Thank you for the feedback, I agree with you on the matter of whether or not a revolution is indeed a revolution and how that if it did not include large amounts of either social and political uprooting and how you put it as a "forcible overthrow of the government." I also agree with you on how it involved the political overthrow of the British governing power over the territory in question.

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Sum of ratings: (1)



Why the Revolution was more Conservative than Radical

by Mariah Doyle - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 12:50 PM

I believe that the American Revolution was more of a conservative movement than a radical movement. It sought to preserve what was already good in the colonies, and the main goal was not to create a massive social/economic change. The colonists just wanted to rid of the Mercantile laws, the payment for the war, and the Sugar/Quartering/Stamp Acts in order to get things back the way they were, not to cause a huge societal change. Because of this, I have tended to side with "loose constructionists" - people who believe that the American Revolution's goal was to "change it's constitution,rulers or policies" (Forum 3 Intro handout). Like Carl Degler insisted, the colonists were already "upwardly mobile" and I think the obstructions caused by the British taxes and regulations only halted that upward mobility briefly. After the revolution ended, the colonists were right back on track, and many social "side effects" occurred such as the introduction to separation of church and state.

Despite my belief that the Revolution was conservative, I can absolutely understand why people may think it was radical. In class last Thursday we watched a clip of historian Pauline Maier, who talked about how different and "out there" the idea of a successful federal republic was for the time period of the Revolution. The notions of having a balanced government and written constitution made the Revolution truly revolutionary in her eyes.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Why the Revolution was more Conservative than Radical

by Eric Land - Friday, November 18, 2016, 12:39 PM

I agree with you and I believe the separation of church and state was a huge thing during that time. Mainly because the Colonists didn't want to be like it was in Britain because they wanted to get away from that stuff. I don't think I agree with you about the "massive social/economic change" mainly because Hamilton wanted to create a National Bank for all of the money. I could be wrong but I think that may have been a huge economic change. I do agree with that you could see both sides of the argument.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Neoconservative

by Vanessa Chenoweth - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 1:05 PM

I would have to say that I am neoconservative in my approach to my studies of the American War for Independence and its aftermath. In the article "Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?" It says in the first sentence, "Was the American Revolution a true revolution?" I would have to say yes it was because the American colonists were revolting against the British Crown who had been in charge of pretty much their every move for many years and were now wanting their independence and to get out from under the British Crown's thumb. In the article it goes on to saying that Strict Constructionists saw the revolution as achieving significant and deep societal change, while the Loose Constructionists saw it as a way to resort to violence within a political order. I think this wording describes the action of both the Sons of Liberty and the members of the First and Second Continental Congress and how one saw to achieve independence through words and actions while the other sought to take action in their own way to get their independence.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Neoconservative

by Eric Land - Friday, November 18, 2016, 12:27 PM

I agree with you that it was a Revolution and the fact that Britain was in charge of everything, it was because we were the only developed country known at that point and they did have settlers move to the colonies and followed the same rules as the mother country. I agree that they had some that wanted to take land by words and then some with violence. It's just how everyone shows people "who's boss" and prove they will kill to get what they want. So I do agree with you.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Neoconservative

by John Casares - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 11:49 PM

I would agree that they wanted separation from the British crown who had been controlling them for literally their entire existence so a radical approach with conservative ideals was what had to happen. The British had an extremely tight grip on the soon to be United States of America and they needed an extreme reaction and that is why this movement is called a revolution. Yes it is a revolution but it does not mean it is inherently radical, just the name is.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Signing



by John Casares - Friday, November 18, 2016, 4:39 PM

In my opinion the signing of the Declaration of Independence and later the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are the actual American revolution not the war itself. I mean these things go hand in hand and they directly effect the American War for Independence, but that does not mean they are the exact same thing. When talking about the American Revolution people are almost always referring the battles and the warring aspect, but I think this title better fits all the documentation and signing of the items that made us a country.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Two Sides

by John Casares - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 2:26 AM

I also think that this question relies very heavily on the perspective and the alliances of the people being asked it. If you are looking at it from the perspective of an American of the time (or even present day) it was a pretty conservative movement. If this question was posed to a British person it would of course seem incredibly radical. The large increases in the Taxes was a huge turning point and to Americans it was just us fighting for our rights and hard earned money, while to the British it was huge break of trust and an attack on our long standing relationship.

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Neoconservative

by Judith Pohl - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 12:15 PM

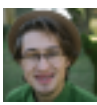
Having a 200+ year window to look back through a completely different lense, it's really difficult to say I'm completely one way or the other in respect to being neoconservative or neoprogressive. It's impossible to know how they felt or lived with so many challenges they faced .

I lean more towards neoconservative because of my beliefs in individual rights, freedom of religion, not wanting to have the government rule every area of your life and being against taxation without representation.

The war was primarily for liberty, but it didn't go far enough, fast enough in my opinion. So it makes me appreciate the neoprogressive side because of the women's rights and slavery. Although the outcome may have came up short initially, it did plant the seed for changes to remedy years down the road. .

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**Re: Neoconservative**

by Taylor Freeman - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 5:21 PM

I really appreciate that you called out the lens that we are using. Too often that is not something that we take into account in our analysis. We do have 200 years of hindsight to our benefit and that paints the subject in a much different light than what it was like for the people who lived it. I often wonder about how our "founding fathers" would interact with today's political landscape.

I am curious about your assertion that "the war for liberty didn't go far enough [or] fast enough". In your mind, what would have been far enough or fast enough? I am inclined to agree with you but I'm curious about your stance.

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by Judith Pohl - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 6:40 PM

Thanks for the response, Taylor. And thanks for correcting my mis-spelling. 😊 Too much homework in one day. I guess I speak from a modern day prospective as wanting more of an "instant gratification" type of result in respect to the emancipation of slavery. I believe that's what our society has become today and maybe it wasn't 200 years ago. Trying to put myself in the shoes of a colonist 200 years ago if I felt strongly against slavery (which I hope I would back then-but again the lenses come into play) I would want more rapid results. Text book page 220 "revolution freed tens of thousands but also gave new vitality to slavery in "the South." Within a generation slavery was abolished in the emerging "North." It goes on in that same page to say "Pennsylvania led the way in 1780 with the modern world's first gradual emancipation statute.

Rather than emancipate, or free, slaves immediately, it declared that children born to slaves after a given date would become free at age 28." Given a life expectancy average of 40 (page 104) that's not fast enough for me, what a terrible life to live. I would also be willing to bet that most of those children didn't make it to 28. Page 221 goes on to list other states such as Maryland and Virginia in their efforts to free slaves.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical**

by Joseph Hemrick - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 4:05 PM

I had an extremely hard time with this forum so here is a partial stab at it. I was also having a hard time trying to figure out which side of Strict vs. Loose constructionists I agreed with. I felt as if there were elements of both. In the example of Strict constructionist 'producing significant and deep societal change,' there was deep

societal change all around. I would agree with Gordon Woods statement, "By the early years of the nineteenth century the Revolution had created a society fundamentally different from the colonial society of the eighteenth century. It was in fact a new society unlike any that had ever existed anywhere in the world." You can not get anymore significant than that.

In terms of loose constructionist, we have obvious violence, as being a war. I can't wrap my head around choosing one side or the other. I feel like trying to define the Revolutionary War as loose or strict, as trying to argue against a coin having two sides.

The two essays I must say, kicked my butt. A lot of it made sense, but a lot went over my head when it came to answering the forum question. It was information overload and I just could not side with one or the other. Both I felt, told truths, but from very different perspectives (which I assume was the point.) After reading both essays (multiple times) I just can not formulate a cohesive answer to the question.

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

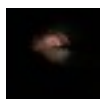
by Mariah Doyle - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 6:01 PM

Joseph,

I'm glad I'm not the only one who had a difficult time with this forum question! I think the issue for me was that the question itself was so broad. "Was the American Revolution conservative or radical?" The revolution was such an important even that it's hard to sum it up as a whole in this way. If it were broken up into different parts of the Revolution it would have been easier for me to answer. For example, as for the colonists' motives at the beginning of the Revolution- I'd have to say they were conservative. The end results and side effects of the Revolution- like you said there was significant social change with the new form of government so I'd say radical. But the Revolution as whole? There's no way for me to wholeheartedly decide one way or another! I like your comparison to a two-sided coin.

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Matt Oordt - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 11:30 PM

This is exactly how I have been feeling. I feel as though The revolution was conservative as a whole, where several radical events took place. As to be expected from a growing nation. Social was bound to happen after such a huge change in government.

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Videos on The American Revolution

by Garrett Richards - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 5:08 PM

After reading and participating in group chats I understand how people have different thoughts because of the date that both authors talk about in their essay's. When I think of the two videos that we could watch I saw some differences. The first video (3 minute) had a lot of clips of old things that happened to represent how it effected The American Revolution. In the second video (4.5 minute) it focused more on the history of The American Revolution. It also had Gordon S. Wood, which could lead to some bias info. I am not saying that what Wood has to say in the video is wrong, but without having another source like Carl N. Degler in the video it could lead to biased information. No matter what information that is shared every body will have there own point of view on The American Revolution.

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The Revolution: Conservative

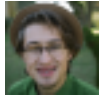
by Alex Costelow - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 5:22 PM

Both Degler and Wood had great drive on their points of view about our revolution, but when picking a side, I side with Degler and agree that American Revolution was a constitutional movement. "As the principle of the separation of Church and State was kind of social side effect of the revolution, so also was the assertion in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal". These five words have been sneered at as idealistic, refuted as manifestly inaccurate, and denied preposterous, but they have, nonetheless, always been capable of calling forth deep emotional response from Americans." (pg. 123) This was a great counter argument for Degler to state and then back up with many quotes and factual evidence that everyone is born free and equal. He states "In 1781 the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts declared slavery at an end in that state because it is inconsistent with our own conduct and constitution" which "set out with declaring that all men are born free and equal..." (Degler pg. 124) And again "in 1782 William Winford of Henrico Country, Virginia, set free twelve slaves because he was "fully persuaded that freedom is the natural right of all mankind." (Degler pg. 124) Degler really made this point clear, that the Americans went by the written rules of the constitution that "all men are created equal"; which to this day Americans still abide by.

Woods' tone at the beginning came off as super biased to me (obviously they're speaking different sides- I mean in a *rude* sort of way). It was hard to sink in at first, but overall I agree with Degler.

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The "benefit" of hindsight?

by Taylor Freeman - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 5:37 PM

As I digest this topic more and more over the week I keep coming back to the idea off our modern sense. I think to us, with 200 years of hindsight, the revolution is likely to look more radical and progressive. We think, because we are taught so in grade school, that the the founding fathers led an uprising against the British crown, and this is partially true but I think there is an inherent bias to the word uprising.

When I try to put myself in the midst of one of the colonists of the time I would imagine that the revolution felt more conservative. I would think that the early Americans saw their revolution as a return to the values that once made them proud to be British.

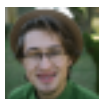
In one of the videos that we watched for this topic they mentioned that both the early Americans and the British were very aware of their rights. I think this is key to understanding the mindset of revolutionary America. They believed that they had specific rights and that if the crown didn't respect those rights than it was not the format of government that they wanted. To me that feels conservative.

At the same time democracy is a modern school of social structure whereas monarchy is a premodern one. The American inclination to make this shift towards the modern era is something that could be considered both progressive and radical.

All of this to say that I am still pretty on the fence with this topic.

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Re: The "benefit" of hindsight?

by Taylor Freeman - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 5:38 PM

I meant to write modern *lens*

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"New Evidence" from Overview Video #2

by Mariah Doyle - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 6:28 PM

I liked how in the second video (the one without Gordon Wood's narration) they actually gave the perspective of a very important founding father on whether the Revolution was conservative or radical. John Adams said "But what do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American war? The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of

the people." This quote included in the video had a very radical tone. I googled the quote to see if I could find a longer version and found that the second half of this quote was "(...) a change in their religious sentiments, of their duties and obligations... This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people was the real American Revolution." Although I was leaning toward Degler's conservative side, the input of John Adams himself had an influence on my opinion and moved me back onto the fence- and closer to the radical side.

Quote source: <http://foundersquotes.com/founding-fathers-quote/but-what-do-we-mean-by-the-american-revolution-do-we-mean-the-american-war/>

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◀ The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

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