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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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The Revolution: Consensus Interpretation

by Kenzie Slocum - Saturday, November 12, 2016, 9:34 PM

How someone analyzes the American War for Independence is indeed influenced by how they define the term and subject “revolution”, how they measure change, and also what stance they take on the War. I actually find myself disagreeing with all three “schools of historical interpretation” and greatly agree with a fourth, unmentioned, consensus interpretation that points to consensus and common agreement among the colonists. Although there was division among the soon-to-be Americans (as we heard in class that quite a large portion of the colonists were loyalists and many tried to remain undecided), I believe the patriots banded together during the War against Britain for their freedom. I agree with focusing and studying this unity because without it, how would the colonists have been able to win? This unity is evident in the results of the war because it was the force that joined the individual states to form a new nation.

This view impacts my neoconservative approach to the study of the American War for Independence and its aftermath because this connection of the colonists supports how the War did not alter or revolutionize social and political changes that took place in America as much as Neo-Progressives may argue. The other three schools of historical interpretation, Whig, imperialist, or progressive-conflict all seem slightly askew to me. I am not completely convinced that America won the war just because God was on their side, because Britain was facing other economic and political difficulties during the same time, or because the colonists were each trying to further their own agendas and interests as various groups were, as the Forum 3 introduction states on page 121, “struggling for political power.”

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True and Complete Political and Social Change?

by Kenzie Slocum - Saturday, November 12, 2016, 9:37 PM

From my consensus interpretation and neoconservative point of view, I see this War as conservative mainly because the social and political structures of America were not as dramatically changed as other nations were as a result of their revolutions and because most of the reforms that took place as a result of the War were merely begun or furthered and not completed by the War. I agree most with Degler’s stance on this subject.

One example of my reasoning is that there was not a change in the social class of the colonial leadership before and after the War as Carl Degler gives concrete examples of in the third complete paragraph on page 125 in our forum material.

This was clearly not a change. Carl states on page 126, “Most striking about the careers of these men is the fact that so many of them held office before and after the dividing line of the Revolution.”

Another example emerges from the analysis of the idea that banning slavery stemmed from the American War for Independence. I currently disagree with Gordon Wood's statement on page 138 as he claims, "The Revolution in effect set in motion ideological and social forces that doomed the institution of slavery in the North and led inexorably to the Civil War." England was already freeing slaves.

Our textbook *Liberty, Equality, Power*, explains on page 191 that the Englishman Granville Sharp caused many black slaves in England to claim their freedom. Our textbook says on page 220, "When given the choice, most slaves south of New England sided with Britain." Other than in New England, most slaves "realized that their best chance of emancipation lay with the British army." If slaves were being freed by the British, how truly revolutionary was it when the colonies won the War and copied the British in this respect? Decades later, the majority was freed which may or may not be a direct result of the War. In fact, Wood even admits on page 131 that "only a political, not a social radicalism" took place because of the War. Yet, in the introduction to our forum, the last paragraph on page 121 shares that Wood "argues the strict constructionist view that the Revolution produced major social changes." Which is it? Do Neo-Progressives admit that a social radicalism did not take place or do they argue it still did? It would appear that Neo-Progressives are divided amongst themselves over this issue.

The absence of a political reform is much more difficult to argue in my opinion because of the clear difference in political organization that America underwent.

Switching from a monarchy to a democracy and republic after the war is a giant leap, but in comparison to other countries' "revolutions," America experienced a much less radical series of changes. I take the view of Degler, on page 126, which is, "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." Wood said on page 131, "in comparison with the social radicalism of the other great revolutions of history, hardly a revolution at all." While Wood makes the valid point that new political change stemmed from the War, I am skeptical of the proof he chose to use. He provides the example on pages 134-135 of a man who "feared what Britain's mercantile restrictions might mean for his lumber sales to the West Indies." This implies, though, that he was already rich and was trying to remain rich instead of making a radical transition from being poor to becoming rich.

Instead of proving Wood's point, this example appears to be a perfect demonstration of conservative measures. Colonists were trying to preserve what they had, including their livelihood, during the War.

What other points of view do you have that contradict these thoughts and my perspective?

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Re: True and Complete Political and Social Change?

by Alec Ebert - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 7:04 PM

Kenzie, I feel that I have to disagree with you on the first portion of this post. I do think that the American revolution from a social aspect was incredibly radical. Just not in the traditional way we would define radical. One of the things that I found most fascinating about Woods' argument against the conservative ideology, is how he explains that Americans changed their social ideologies very quickly to a much more modern democratic society without the things most social and political revolutions need to conduct change. "This astonishing transformation took place without industrialization, without urbanization, without railroads, without the aid of any great forces we usually invoke to explain "modernization" It was the Revolution that was crucial to this transformation. It was the Revolution, more than any other single event, that made America into the most liberal, democratic, and modern nation in the world." Woods Pg 133. I think this is something that really should be thought about more when we talk about the uniqueness of the American revolution. It was more the frame of thought of the American people that pushed them towards liberalism and a democratic society. I'm not saying that the revolution was all around completely radical however. I really liked how you brought up that most of the men who were in office before the war were the ones who wanted to institute change, the already favored wealthy men of our nation who had plans for the land they had grown to love, were the ones who ended up deciding how we were going to run ourselves as a country. I suppose one could ask themselves though is that really a traditional conservative revolution? Don't traditional revolutions involve economic turmoil and an uprising from the lower classes rather than the wealthy who want more power?

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Re: True and Complete Political and Social Change?

by Kenzie Slocum - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 9:45 PM

Alec, which portion of my post are you disagreeing with me on- the part about how I do not see a progressive-conflict school of thought driving the American War for Independence or the part about how I do not see much of a social change taking place? I do agree that you bring an interesting view to this discussion by noting that the American War for Independence was radical in an untraditional way. Again, it all comes down to what our definition of "revolution" is, but I see how it was extraordinary that our founding fathers used a previously unlasting republic system, and with some changes, actually implemented a government and political framework that has survived to this day. As you pointed out from Wood's article, it was all done without the tools that we would turn to if we were to start a revolution today.

However, I was not trying to simply point out the constant of the same “favored, wealthy men” being greatly involved in our country before as well as after the War. If that was the only point I could come up with, I would not consider it a beneficial conservative move. Would that be something we would want to conserve? That piece of information seems to mirror the King of England except with a group of people (oligarchy) instead of one person (anarchy) ruling. Yes, some wealthier and well-known colonists governed America, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, who we have been learning extensively about in class, but our founding fathers also created the constitution and the Bill of Rights which institute the states having major powers and the people getting to have a say (in class and also on pages 241, 242 in our textbook.) From my perspective, I disagree, to an extent, with our textbook’s claim on page 241 that “the result was a federal Constitution that was, in its own way, revolutionary.” I see why they make this claim, but the whole idea of people getting to vote and have a say in their government brought more order than turmoil. The War was turmoil, and that came from the people not having a say- taxation without representation (page 173 of our textbook.) I am simply supporting my original thought that this “revolution” supported stability and peaceful change, not a wild overthrow. This, in fact, is yet another reason why I consider the War a conservative movement.

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Re: True and Complete Political and Social Change?

by Alec Ebert - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 2:14 PM

I suppose that I was disagreeing with the choice of calling the revolution conservative. I just don't see the word as fitting to explain a country's decision to overhaul its political and social structure. Going to war over something that you believe in doesn't strike me as a move that's conservative. If the founding fathers and the citizens of the colonies had reached an agreement with Parliament and the Crown that didn't involve succeeding from Britain then I believe that would have been a conservative change in power. I suppose what I'm trying to say is that the colonists recognized the potential that America had to create a society in which any man could achieve the dream they wanted. Sure other democratic societies such as the Greeks and Romans existed before and proved that democracy works and it's not a new entity, however the Americans knew they could flourish more under their own written constitution following this playbook. "for here was a living example of a liberal revolution that had taken its daring chance, against all odds and against the mightiest state in the world, and had actually succeeded. Here, indeed, was a beacon light to all the oppressed peoples of the world!" Ryan McMaken. Mises Wire. Mises Institute Austrian Economics,

Freedom, and Peace. I think this quote defines what we could consider to be the radical part of the revolution. The colonies had defied the British. They had achieved what others would have thought impossible and we did it by fighting a war with a nation that was only 33% in favor of the idea in the beginning. The American spirit is the unique driving force behind us that made us the most powerful country in the world in only 200 years. It's the tenacity of our people and our politics that achieve greatness.

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Re: True and Complete Political and Social Change?

by Kenzie Slocum - Friday, November 18, 2016, 6:23 PM

I certainly can not disprove that the American colonists had tenacity as well as great perseverance and determination. Those qualities contributed to their success against England, and I also concede that going to war against the ruling power of the day and facing incredibly unfavorable odds is quite radical. Still, though, I see other aspects of this movement to be conservative. For instance, in the second forum video provided, John Adams is quoted to have said, "What do we mean by the revolution? The war? That was no part of the revolution. It was only an effect and consequence of it. The revolution was in the minds of the people. And this was effected from 1760-1775 in the course of fifteen years before a drop of blood was drawn at Lexington." (2:15) I interpret this as meaning that the "revolutionary" mindset was formed not instantly, but gradually, being built up over the course of several years through the events leading up to the War. Could this not be another sign that the War was a conservative measure and an action they finally relented to because they felt their rights had been violated and England was not willing to adequately address and resolve their grievances? The War was not a quick uprising of radical ideas.

Also, I found more proof for my conservative standpoint in the very last section of the second forum video when a historian discusses the continuing presence of a social ladder in America after the war. While others may argue that the "Shortness and shakiness" of the social ladder indicated a breaking away from England's systems to further equality and destroying of social classes, I continue to point out that the very presence of one is a conservation of the old order from Europe.

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Natural progression to a conservative movement

by Eric Brackett - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 8:04 PM

If pushed to declare if the "Revolution" was a conservative or a radical movement, I am forced to concede that it was a conservative movement, however later actions can easily be deemed radical in nature i.e. the idea of self governance. For me the actions in question were nothing more than a predominantly Anglo Saxon peoples, who for centuries had been raised with Anglo Saxon ideals of law and justice, trying desperately to restore that which they felt was their rights as Englishmen as laid forth by previous documents such as the Magna Carta. This document was well in mind of our founding fathers when the Constitution was drafted by the time of the Magna Carta the rebelling Barons felt that prior to the Conquest by the Normans in year 1066, Anglo Saxons had already had established liberties and inalienable rights under the law.

After the Norman conquest the native Anglo Saxons felt those rights were being stripped away. It should come as no surprise that only one hundred forty nine years after William's conquest, that the people would rebel to restore their previously received rights. However over the years, those rights granted by this document were slowly diminished with British Parliament gaining more and more power. By the time of the "Glorious Revolution" in the late seventeenth century, there was a call by the common man in England to restore the Magna Carta to the standard by which Englishmen were ruled. Thomas Paine urged Americans to write their own Magna Carta stating in his book "Common Sense"

"the charter which secures this freedom in England, was formed, not in the senate, but in the field; and insisted on by the people, not granted by the crown."

While some would argue that this unto itself is radical, in reality this is Paine's attempt to reason with the every man and convince to him to take back what has already been granted to him.

As support of my view on this, I offer you this from Carl N Degler "It is significant, for example, that no new social class came to power through the door of the American Revolution" The simple fact that even after the revolution there was a proxy ruling class still in this country, that there was only equality offered to those who prior to the revolution already had it. Furthermore Degler goes on to say "Farther down the social scale, in the backwoods of Massachusetts, it has been shown that the chief revolutionists in the western countries were the old leaders, so that no major shift in leadership to place there either, as a result of the Revolution."

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Re: Natural progression to a conservative movement

by Sonja Fritz - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 11:47 PM

I agree that the notion of a democracy was not alien to people of north america especially of those living in the Northeast. Since 1620, they had contact with the nations of Iroquois Confederacy which some scholar argues is the oldest democracy in north america. As example in 1744, Canasatego, an Iroquois leader said to British colonists ". . . We heartily recommend Union and a Good Agreement between you our Brethren. Our wise Forefathers established Union and Amity between the Five Nations; this has made us formidable, this has given us great weight and Authority with our Neighboring Nations. We are a Powerful confederacy, and by your observing the same Methods our wise Forefathers have taken, you will acquire fresh Strength and Power." This was only 22 years prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence itself. Furthermore, Ben Franklin is quoted as having said "It would be a strange thing if Six Nations of ignorant savages should be capable of forming a scheme for such an union, and be able to execute it in such a manner as that it has subsisted ages and appears indissoluble; and yet that a like union should be impracticable for ten or a dozen English colonies."

I also have to agree that the idea of free men having rights had to have been in the minds of our founding fathers because as you said they were fully away of the Magna Carta which was in place for hundreds of years. As an example of the influence I am including a link to a government page that talks about the influence the Magna Carta had on the us constitution.

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Re: Natural progression to a conservative movement

by Sonja Fritz - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 12:09 PM

Effect the Magna Carta had on the US constitution. (Forgot to link that one my last post)

<https://loc.gov/exhibits/magna-carta-muse-and-mentor/>

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Progressive-Conflict

by Morganne Roy - Monday, November 14, 2016, 12:45 PM

The question is whether or not the American War for Independence was a conservative movement. Carl Degler and Gordon Wood both argue from the strict constructionist perspective, yet come to different conclusions. Degler provides his case that American society was largely unchanged and experienced a returning to

traditionally held freedoms. On the other side, Wood concludes that there has never been a more lasting and fundamental upheaval in our nation's history, and that this Revolution was the catalyst for all other subsequent large scale social changes. As it stands now, I think I would agree more with Wood and the progressive-conflict perspective. I tend to believe anyway that all actions begin in the heart, and Wood makes an excellent case that the Revolution was an outpouring of new ideology based on then radical notions of freedom; such as John Toland's idea that one is either a free man or a servant (Forum 3, pg 136). Thomas Paine claiming that virtue is not hereditary (Forum 3, pg 137) is another idea that, while seeming commonplace and obvious now, probably would have been quite astounding in an age of divinely appointed monarchies.

I like Wood's point that our perspective of radicalism is influenced by our understanding of other revolutions. I understand events like the Chinese Communist Revolution and Russia's Soviet Revolution to be fundamentally violent events that completely tore down the old orders and established new, totalitarian regimes. Therefore, although the American Revolution was most certainly a war, there were no 'mad men' running around attempting to accrue ultimate power it's easy to think that ours was more 'conservative' and not radical like those other ones. Yet those revolutions didn't happen until much later in history, and the ideology that inspired all of them-- while not being the same-- are all quite different from the ideology from which they were rebelling. So, while I'm definitely still open to debate about this, I think that Wood made a far more compelling argument as to why the American War for Independence was a non-conservative revolution.

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Re: Progressive-Conflict

by Kenzie Slocum - Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 9:11 AM

Morganne Roy and Gordon Wood are justified in their point that the American War for Independence was revolutionary when it is considered in the light that all nations' revolutions reject the current ruling and attempt to bring about a new governing system. However, if one considers other aspects of the War such as comparing it to widespread unorganized violence or even how the colonists brought in their new form of government, America's War can easily be removed from the category of "revolution".

Although I agree with most of Pauline Maier's revolutionist talk in Thursday's video and appreciated her point that America's government was revolutionary, I want to bring the colonists' perspective to our basic forum question, "What defines a revolution?" This may seem like a redundant query, but I believe that the colonists' perspective plays a vital role in the answer to this debate. Were the people intending to construct a brand new, revolutionary government or were they

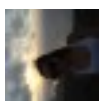
simply trying to maintain their previous rights and way of life? Obviously, either way, I concede that the American government that was formed was quite unlike the previous English institutions.

However, right before the War, the American colonies tried to make peace with Britain and King George III by extending the Olive Branch Petition (page 200 in Liberty, Equality, Power) which strongly suggests that they were not originally trying to bring about a radical change but a conservation of peace and order and a revival of the past relationship the colonies had with the King. Not so revolutionary, "Americans," as put by Degler on page 128, "for all their talk, 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." This statement is supported by the repetitive political suggestions of basing U.S. government on the British political structure. Thomas Paine advocated a unicameral legislature (page 214 of our textbooks), the Philadelphia convention proposed "an almost sovereign Parliament for the United States" (page 240), and many Federalists wanted a strong central national government.

British ideas in political as well as social areas were supported among the colonists after the War for Independence, and although new reforms certainly happened over time, it would appear that the intent of the people (with room for discussion) was for a conservative movement.

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Re: Progressive-Conflict

by Shelby Say - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 8:17 PM

I really like the point of view that you are coming from. I definitely agree with "actions begin with the heart" and I feel that a lot of the time, people disregard or overlook this point and automatically go straight to politics or economics. Although, I did find it interesting on how you brought up the Chinese Communist Revolution and Russia's Soviet Revolution because, as you did mention, they did occur later. Therefore, I believe that we, students learning about world history now, shape our opinions on the American Revolution when we compare it to those very deadly and tragic revolutions such as the Chinese Communist Revolution. And in comparison to those, yes, it may not seem as bad in death tolls, but it did do as much of a social change for America as did the communist of China. So, I agree that historical events, like the American Revolution, shouldn't be only based on the political, economical, and the number values associated with it, but the impact it made that later changed and shaped the people of the country as a whole.

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Re: Progressive-Conflict

by Morganne Roy - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 8:20 PM

I think to a certain extent it's impossible for us to completely distance ourselves from viewing history in the context of 'later history'. Try as we might, as long as we know what happens down the line, we as humans we'll always be comparing the knowledge we already have with the knowledge we're taking in. I think a good historian is one who's aware of that inclination and attempts to work against it by not casting preconceived notions onto the people of that period. I'm sure that I could do better in working towards that goal. My point in bringing up the Chinese and Russian revolutions is that we consider them so radical and chaotic, which isn't how we consider the American War for Independence; yet both are called Revolutions. I think our Revolution was just that-- A revolution-- but that it stands apart from those other two in my eyes because of the society it produced afterwards, which wasn't radically different from the way it was before.

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Revolution Vs. REVOLUTION : word vomit

by Tyra Potter - Monday, November 14, 2016, 8:04 PM

Reading through the essays on if the American War for Independence was a revolution or not really has me stumped. I believe that the largest speed bump for me right now is how I want to look at the term revolution itself. I feel that I want to use revolution in a loose sense because it opens up many more options as opposed to just viewing a revolution as a body count. The patriots wanted to maintain the laws that were in place and to obtain the power to be the governing party to change those laws, not to have an outside ruler make those decisions for them. When they did not realise that they were forcing unjust laws onto the public. This can happen because the way in which we go about getting things is often blurred by the obsession with the end result we crave. For all of this time the only people who could vote were upper middle class, white, landowning, men. It took quite some time for that requirement list to be changed to just landowning men. I love that Delger brought up that certain phrases draw out strong emotional reactions from people. He talks about "all men are created equal" and how it was soon changed to "all men are born free and equal" because slavery did not follow the patriots conduct and constitution. My gut reaction to the phrase "all men are created equal" is that it such a specific group to be created equally. Why just men, oh yeah because that is the dominant voice in most historic documents. Why equal, everyone is different and has a variety of strengths to bring to the table.

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Re: Revolution Vs. REVOLUTION : second thoughts

by Tyra Potter - Friday, November 18, 2016, 1:41 PM

I am still having a challenging time trying to decide what box I fit into on this subject. I want to say that I am leaning more toward the idea that the American War for independence was a conservative war. Morganne brought up a great view from other revolutions that happened later on in history and how small the American War for Independence is in comparison. Though I am the person who does not want the American War for Independence to be looked over because it is not soaked in blood. The War for Independence brought America many new learning opportunities on how they truly wanted to run their soon to be country. The government needed to impose taxes to make sure that their debts would be paid, though they were angered at taxes imposed on them from the King. It truly reminds me of the growing pains that people go through when they move out on their own. We so badly crave the freedom to do as we please, and then are hit with the realization that with that freedom we have to be responsible for staying afloat and in working order.

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REVOLUTION

by Sonja Fritz - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 2:46 PM

I feel the need to make an argument with your statement that you used ...“i want to look at the term revolution itself” We cannot force a term or word to conform to our needs. We must conform to it’s standard. Oxford dictionary states:

1. A forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favour of a new system:

1.1 (in Marxism) the class struggle which is expected to lead to political change and the triumph of communism:

1.2 A dramatic and wide-reaching change in conditions, attitudes, or operation:

The moment we try to redefine a word, or an action in history we automatically bias it through our own experiences and all too often with presentism. Therefore we have to accept that the American Revolution was just that, a Revolution. When talking about conservative or radicalism, I do agree with your 2nd post that says that it was conservative. However, you take a dangerous path by learning history with presentism when you fault our Forefathers for placing the words “All men are created equal” in our founding documents yet only inscribing that equality, to free land owning white males.

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Re: REVOLUTION

by Tyra Potter - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 4:14 PM

I understand your concern with my first post and the statements I had made in it. Though my first post was exactly what I titled it, a place for me to just get all of what was buzzing in my mind down onto a form post. I should have also taken time to clarify what I meant by saying that I wanted to focus on the term revolution itself. I was wanting to learn more about what really pushes a revolution farther. I understand that revolution is defined by liberating a society from a perceived oppressive system. Though does overthrowing a government or social order have to include physical violence? I don't believe it should.

I have been traveling this entire term down "a dangerous path" because I am learning a lot of this information for the first time. I have struggled with learning from a presentist perspective because the high school that I went to colored its history lessons to the grand moral of the term. I feel that I was robbed of a proper history education in that fact. I tried to do as much studying on my own to supplement what I was not getting in the classroom, but at this moment in my life I do not have the perk of free time outside of class. And jumping from the middle school view of americans are great and the british were awful, to a class that turns all of that upside down is a bit of a culture shock.

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Re: REVOLUTION

by Morganne Roy - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 7:10 PM

Having gone to the same high school, I completely understand where you're coming from. I remember spending an entire term on Gandhi and the Indian Revolution from Britain. The "moral of the story" being that Gandhi was-- as Joe might put it-- our teacher's secular God-King. At the same time our teacher suggested personal reading. From that, I learned that there was plenty violence after their liberation, even an entire civil war, that our teacher failed to bring up because he wanted to impress upon us the importance of non-violent protests.

I was homeschooled before public school however, and in tandem those experiences taught me to try to see things from a more holistic perspective.

That's why my conclusion is that considering the American Revolution in a strict one-or-the-other view of progressive/conservative isn't beneficial to my ultimate understanding of the actual events.

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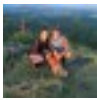
Re: REVOLUTION

by Tyra Potter - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 7:56 PM

Thank you for being able to articulate what I have been thinking and not knowing how to fully state.

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Re: Revolution Vs. REVOLUTION : word vomit

by Peter Iten - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 11:27 PM

Tyra,

I thought your perspective was interesting. I especially liked how you quoted the ideas that "all men are born free and equal" which was condescending to the thoughts of the time. Degler quoted Fisher Aimes in his text, "all cannot be rich, but all have the right to make the attempt." I found this statement similar and almost humorous since there wasn't major redistribution of wealth in the time, and while all men have the right to make an attempt to be rich. There's a reason people in the masses tend to not jump classes economically.

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Wood's and the Radical Approach

by Shelby Say - Monday, November 14, 2016, 8:36 PM

I am influenced by the progressive-conflict school of historical interpretation. I never really agreed that American history was mostly successful, therefore, not much of a conservative. I believe that there were many road blocks that occurred and never really overcame. Such as, the issues surrounding the minorities in our country has not really improved since the revolution. There are a lot more that our country needs to do politically, socially, and economically in order for people to say that America is a great success story.

I stand by the neoprogressive view on the American Revolution. I have always found interest in the people and society and I strongly believe that, during my education of the American Revolution, there was never a huge emphasis on the social change of the people. I really enjoyed Wood's article on the revolution. It brings out a perspective of the revolution that I truly believe that a lot of Americans miss. He states in his article, "If we measure the radicalism of revolutions by the degree of social misery or economic deprivation suffered... then this conventional emphasis on the conservatism is the American Revolution becomes true enough. But if we measure the radicalism by the amount of social change that actually took place... then the American Revolution was not conservative at all." (*Wood, 131*). I couldn't agree more with this statement and really liked how he worded it. He respect the conservative viewpoint, but there definitely was more to the revolution than politics.

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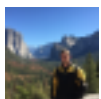
Re: Wood's and the Radical Approach

by Reed Hueter - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 8:54 AM

Shelby, I disagree with you that American history is not successful. Americans built a new nation on completely different radical ideas and freedoms. When America was made by our founding fathers, many of them were slave holders and we have come a long way since then. Although, I do agree with you that there is some issues that have never been solved, like immigrants, we have many instances based around human rights and equality that have changed a lot since the revolution. As a country we have not solved all of these inequalities, but I believe we are working towards that. I also like the quote by Gordon wood that you provided as I also found this intriguing. The Revolution was based around a desire to change as a whole and be free, meaning that a new social class may not spark, but radical ideas give us the opportunity to change who we are personally and financially.

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Re: Wood's and the Radical Approach

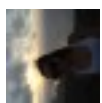
by Mitchell Olive - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 5:10 PM

I have to respectfully disagree with your post. In your first paragraph, you stated that you believe that American history was never mostly successful, that we never really overcame our road blocks and that the issues surrounding minorities in our country has never really improved. I believe that the revolution that led to our constitution was very impactful. What has been done in the United States is something that hasn't been attempted else where in the world as far as the degree to which we have tried to assimilate and give freedom and opportunity to all people, and the degree to which we are mixed ethnicities. The United States has

one of the highest GDPs in the world, so to say that there is a lot more to do economically and politically in order for people to say that America was a great success story seems uninspired, also considering that we are arguably the most powerful country in the world. I would agree that we have had a lot of road blocks, especially socially which you mention a few times. But I disagree that they haven't improved. We have undergone something that no other country has had to do to the extent that we have, and the American dream seems to be mostly intact. Whether you are a minority or not, if you look into it and find stories instead of seeing the biased media solely. The opportunity is still there and there are many things in place to attempt to make it racially equal in our capitalist representative republic. The civil rights movement, pushed by republicans, was a huge step in the right direction. And I think that the degree to which we are all free and socially mobile is something that hasn't been practiced anywhere else in the world. Women are paid 99.7 percent as much as men, all things being equal, and we have a black president. The quote that you stated from Wood, page 131, being "But if we measure the radicalism by the amount of social change that actually took place, then the American revolution was not conservative at all." Meaning it was radical. Yes there is more improvement to do, but I think we have come along way in the last 200 years and, more importantly, are not ruled by the English king or Queen, like Canada still is, which would be us without the revolution. And that King or Queen that still rules Canada is not allowed to be Catholic, which is something that the revolution and constitution made non-existent, separating church and state and freedom to practice religion for everyone. If you look at the improvement that we have had in the past 200 years, and the freedom of every citizen for social and economic mobility, restricted by nothing, it seems that the American experiment has been mostly successful and that the revolution that catapulted it was unique and radical in its own way, as it can't be compared to a communist revolution or something of that nature, but has integrated a mindset of independence and freedom that even the colonists had to some degree. Gordon Wood, on page 131, states that "In fact, the colonists knew they were freer, more equal, more prosperous, and less burdened than any other part of mankind in the eighteenth century. Such a situation, however, does not mean that colonial society was not susceptible to revolution."

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Re: Wood's and the Radical Approach

by Shelby Say - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 7:34 PM

I should have clarified a bit more by saying that America wasn't "successful". I respect that our country did come very far since colonization, but I don't think that we are the most successful country. As far as the American Revolution, our founding fathers and the laws and documents they created are the basis for our country till this day and it definitely has a huge impact on our world today. But, there are issues surrounding our history during that period join time that are still

around today. I feel that given all that has happened in our country's history, we should have learned from our previous mistakes and corrected them to prevent bloodshed and tragedy from striking again. That is why I say that America wasn't as successful as other make it seem. I do agree that the revolution made freedom of religion and such, but in our world today, people are still being attacked for their "freedom to practice" their own religion, therefore, in my eyes, I don't feel that the revolution took care of all our conflicts regarding freedom as it should be, according to our legal documents. Yes, the Constitution paved the way for all of these great rights we have, but as Joe mentioned in class, there are ways to get around the written documents to help benefit or destroy certain individuals.

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Re: Wood's and the Radical Approach

by Kevin Smolek - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 11:24 PM

When you look at how far America has come, and what it has brought to to world in terms of innovation, I can't help but think how things would have changed if our war for independence had failed. We can't look at the problems they had, and say that nothings changed about a few issues, so what they accomplished didn't matter. The problems that they had, and that are still here today will never be solved in a satisfactory way. What was undertaken was a truly radical step, to go from a collection of colonies, that didn't have a lot in common, to a unified republic that stood against the strongest military in the world. And won. There were missteps and errors made, but we can't ignore that what they did had never been tried before. The fact is that as a country we're still here, and the great empires that fought against us, and beside us, are but a shadow of what they were at the time. I agree that we have not learned from past mistakes, and problems that were around then, are still here to this day. However, when you look at what was done, and how radically the world would be changed if we had failed, I don't believe we can understate what an important struggle the war was.

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Sonja Fritz - Monday, November 14, 2016, 8:42 PM

I find myself agreeing with Carl N. Degler this subject. On page 125, he states; "But even when one has added together the new constitution, the enlightened religious innovations and the stimulus to equality, it is quickly apparent that the social consequences of the revolution were meager indeed. In both purpose and implementation, they were not equated with the massive social changes which shook

France and Russia in later years. For the most part, the society of post revolutionary was but the working out of social forces which were already evident in the colonial period.” I link this to Oliver Cromwell. Nothing really came out of this idea, and Cromwell showed us that legislative could rule the way without a centralized authoritative figure such as a monarch. For me, it’s easy to link all these events together to show a natural progression toward self rule. That it couldn’t have been that alien of a notion to people in 1776.

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Perception is Reality

by Miranda Marshall - Monday, November 14, 2016, 8:46 PM

Although the opposition states that the American Revolution wasn’t a conservative movement, I believe it was. As stated in the article *A New Kind of Revolution* written by Carl N. Degler, “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”. The opposition believes the Revolution was a radical movement because although “colonists knew they were freer, more equal, more prosperous, and less burdened with cumbersome feudal and monarchical restraints than any other part of mankind in the eighteenth century, does mean that colonial society was not susceptible to revolution” (*The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, Gordon S. Wood). In Wood’s article, he begins by stating that it is perceived as a conservative movement because it is not as violent or as big of an uproar as other conventional images of revolutionaries, but in this case, I believe that perception is reality.

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Re: Perception is Reality

by Eric Brackett - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 9:37 PM

I agree with your statement here. The real issue at hand with the progressive mind set is that it is drenched in presentism. This I feel is extremely dangerous. Once we try to interpret, we change the very nature of the beast with our own bias. History I feel should be examined, but not interpreted to meet our need to understand. While every generation is built on the backs of the previous, our own experiences askew our ability to relate to those who came before us. We can try to put ourselves in the shoes of our ancestors, but we will never truly understand their motives, their desires. This is one of the reason I am a strict constitutionalist. I believe it is very slippery slope trying to re-interpret a 200 year old document. Once we do so we undermine the original intent.

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Personal Influences of the American Revolution

by Reed Hueter - Monday, November 14, 2016, 9:37 PM

I am most influenced by the Whig and Imperialist point of view. I believe these interpretations represent the ideal that America was built on. Our economic and political differences vastly effected the two sides that were in disagreement. The north which was built on industry and the south being built on agriculture and slave work caused conflicts of power. These conflicts lead to the internal revolution of two dominant industries struggling for power. In today's world I m more neoprogressive in my point of view with the revolution because it was about a fight for equality of all people and human rights being satisfied. If it weren't for slaves I don't think the revolution would of occurred as it did. Neoprogressive is based off ideals to continually build and improve upon one's well being and social justice with the law, and our founding fathers gave birth to this idea. With this being said I also see the flip side of this argument and can understand the ideals of a neoconservative viewpoint of the revolution. The middle class people were successful in fighting for a better economic class structure however I don't think this was as crucial as human rights and equality.

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Quan Cheng - Monday, November 14, 2016, 9:54 PM

I agree with Carl N. Degler that American Revolution was a conservative movement since after American revolution they run their own government without changed the society. "Historian agree that American Revolutionaries fulfilled the second definition because they successfully fought a war that resulted in the overthrow of their British rulers and establish a government run by themselves." (Was American Revolution a Conservative Movement? p120) Gordon S. Wood gave thought that American Revolution was a radical revolution because "That revolution did more than legally create the United States; it transformed American society." (The Radicalism of the American Revolution p133) But professor Robert E. Brown mentioned in his study, "Argued that American had become a middle-class democracy before the America Revolution." (Was American Revolution a Conservative Movement? p121)

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Rights for Radicals?



by Kevin Smolek - Monday, November 14, 2016, 10:07 PM

After reading the articles I find myself siding with Gordon Wood. The American revolution changed the people of the United States and shaped the American identity in a profound way. Mr. Wood, on page 131, says "In fact, it was one of the greatest revolutions the world has known, a momentous upheaval that not only fundamentally altered the character of American society but decisively affected the course of subsequent history". He goes on to talk about how the colonists may have seemed to be focused on only changing the government, and leaving social structures untouched. However at that time it was all one and the same. They saw class distinctions and social problems as being attributed to government, and as such putting limits and affecting change on the government level, was intended to have an impact on the social level. He talks about how the society that existed after our war of independence was the most modern, democratic, and commercially minded people in the world. Of course we can't ignore that many of the ideas were taken from the British, as they had ample time to figure out what works in their long history. Despite this, these early Americans had done something new, and the country that they created has thrived like none other, and the government they set up is still the model for democratically elected governments to this day.

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Re: Rights for Radicals?

by Eric Brackett - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 9:56 PM

I have to humbly disagree with your statement "The American revolution changed the people of the United States and shaped the American identity in a profound way.". My main reasoning behind this is simply that prior to the "Revolution" the vast majority of people were British subjects, we acted like Brits, shared a common culture and language. Even after the revolution we did not suddenly begin acting like "Americans", that was a slow process. Even during the war of 1812 it would have been very difficult to distinguish the common Englishman from the Common American Gentleman. However what truly began to change us was two fold, the longer we were out of influence by the British the more self formed Identity we began to garner, but more importantly the more non Anglo immigrants that came to this country, the more complex our national identity became.

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Re: Rights for Radicals?



by Kevin Smolek - Friday, November 18, 2016, 10:15 AM

I see where you are coming from, but its not like we distanced ourselves from the British after the war. 90% of our trade still went to the British, and we still were still exposed to the culture and people. If Americans had wanted, they could have kept all the social structures intact, but they wanted their own identity. We also can not forget the religion aspect. Separation of church and state was a big deal, when you consider that the British king was also the head of the national church. We definitely took notes from the British, and why not? They were the world power at the time, and I'm sure many countries took ideas from them. In my opinion we went our own way and made many changes that were "radical" for the time.

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Quan Cheng - Monday, November 14, 2016, 10:32 PM

American Revolution was a conservative revolution because it wasn't like revolution back to French Revolution and Russian Revolution, killing people. "Similarly, in the redistribution of land, which played such a crucial role in France and Russia,the American Revolution set no example of social motivation or consequence. The Crown's lands, it is true were confiscated, and—of greater important—so were the lands of the proprietors and those of the literally thousands of Tories. But the disposition of these lands hardly constitutes a social revolution of major proportions." (A New Kind of Revolution p127) The redistribute land using more rational way. "To be sure, much Tory land which first fell under the auctioneer's hammer to a speculator ultimately found its way into the hands of a yeoman, but such a procedure is a rather slow and orderly process of social revolution." (A New Kind of Revolution p127)

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Sonja Fritz - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 1:58 PM

I believe that the American Revolution was a conservative movement as well. On the other hand I do find a lot of key points Wood makes interesting. Especially regarding the subject of violence and leader roles in the American Revolution.

He states "American Revolutionary leaders do not fit our conventional part of revolutionaries-angry, passionate, reckless and even bloodthirsty for a cause"

This is interesting because not all means of radical change have to be violent and aggressive (even though it certainly helps) The deeds behind it weren't necessarily radical but it's been argued that the Revolution itself was.

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Quan Cheng - Monday, November 14, 2016, 11:13 PM

I am influenced by the whig of historical interpretation. The situation during that time in America was complicated since all the colonists were controlled by King. Also they were treated unfair than the citizens in England which was bad because they thought the still belong to England, they were citizens of England. After Stamp Act and Tea Act, they decided to against England for Freedom. Like what Patrick Henry said, "I'm no longer Virginian. I am now an American." They fight for their rights without too many people died. I'm more whig side on this history Revolution.

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Neoconservative

by Quan Cheng - Monday, November 14, 2016, 11:28 PM

I personally more neoconservative in my way to the study of the American War for Independence and its aftermath. I think the policy were more reliable. "The Americans were not fighting so much to establish new rights as to preserve old ones." Which was a good thing. "Back to 18 century, England policy was the most advanced policy all over the world." (Professor Yuan Teng Fei American History on Youtube) "The revolution itself had been a kind of affirmation of faith in ancient British institutions ... trial by jury, due process of law, representation before taxation, habeas corpus, freedom from attainder, independence of the judiciary, and the right of free speech, free petition, and free assembly." (Daniel Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, 1953)

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interpreting the most influencial reasons for why America needed its independance

by Alec Ebert - Monday, November 14, 2016, 11:48 PM

For me, I really agree with the progressive side of the argument. After learning about all of the acts that the British imposed upon the American colonies it seems to me that the reason why we wanted our independance was to gain the ablility to move forward economically and socially, away from Britain so we could no longer be under

their thumb. The monarchy that the British were being ruled under seemed old and out dated. I feel our founding fathers were not oppressed or impoverished, they just had a different vision for colonial America than the British had. "They have not been fulfilled because the social conditions that generally are supposed to lie behind all revolutions -poverty and economic deprivation -were not present in colonial America. There should no longer be any doubt about it: the white American colonists were not an oppressed people; they knew they were freer, more equal, more prosperous, and less burdened with cumbersome feudal and monarchical restraints than any other part of mankind in the eighteenth century. Such a situation however, does not mean that colonial society was not susceptible to revolution" Gordon S. Wood. The Radicalism of the American Revolution. I believe this quote is a good example of what historians at this time were trying to understand and display their thoughts about. The facts are that the American revolution was not a typical one because, other than slaves, most people prospered and thrived away from the motherland. Therefore there was no need to further associate themselves with this country. It is however arguable that war was the only way to achieve true independence. Britain saw the potential in the colonies and knew they could exploit it even if they were a few thousand miles away and the colonists no longer wanted to have to deal with these problems.

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Re: interpreting the most influential reasons for why America needed its independence

by Peter Iten - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 10:47 PM

Alec,

Great post, I like your thoughts on the mindset of the colonies, and the idea that revolution was more of a progressive movement because it was that exactly. Gordon states in his essay, "By the early years of the nineteenth century the Revolution had created a society fundamentally different from colonial society ... it was in fact a new society unlike any that had ever existed in the world." This text highlights the idea that the revolution was progressive. An idea which has recently become popular in modern politics because aren't we all just trying to progress.

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American Revolution: Conservative or Conservative

by Peter Iten - Monday, November 14, 2016, 11:54 PM

Yes, the American Revolution was a conservative movement. After reading the articles I felt like this was a reasonable presumption. Unlike most revolutions of the time, the colonists weren't living in poverty. The Revolution didn't result in new

leadership. The first article states, "over 69 percent of them held office under the colonial regime." Then referring to the 55 men who signed the declaration of Independence. These founding fathers seemed to share more similarities with modern day conservatives than one would think. The article then continues by addressing the disbursement of loyalist and British crown lands. The seized lands were not redistributed to the average American, but rather the larger planters and families possessing substantial acreage. Not the people.

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Re: American Revolution: Conservative or Conservative

by Reed Hueter - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 8:23 AM

Peter, not all colonists were living in poverty but they didn't have to just to revolutionize. The American Revolution was very different than other revolutions in the sense that it created the greatest country ever. Breaking off from the British monarchy and aristocracy was radical because no one had ever done it like we did. The United States created a new government and had ideals of equality and freedom for all. We did not have to have complete change in leadership as many of our leaders believed in the movement we were pursuing. Seized lands being given to the rich is no surprise either because they can farm they land and help our economy grow. They are still people of the revolution with the same radical ideas that all of America believed in, to overthrow, at the time, the strongest nation in the world.

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radical revolution

by Mitchell Olive - Monday, November 14, 2016, 11:55 PM

To me, the American revolution was undoubtedly radical. The American Revolution created what is now America and has been the most powerful country. Carl Degler states, on page 125 "when one has added the new constitutions, the enlightened religious innovations, and the stimulus to equality". These are just a few things to mention and this was from a view that it was a conservative movement. It is the idea of independence and mobility that we were after, from freedom of being ruled and taxed. The changes in these things is what brought the revitalized economy in the 1800's. Gordon Wood points out instances of individual people rising in what would have previously been the class system, but the economy alone shows how much was opened up for entrepreneurship and for people to live the American dream. I can relate this to Ronald Reagan decreasing taxes and how there was more revenue to the treasury afterwards shows how lower taxes and restrictions opens up a mindset of people willing to take risks and the feeling of independence. Gordon quotes Jefferson on page 136 saying, dependence "suffocates the germ of virtue, prepares

fit tools for the design of ambition." Being able to own land was also a sign of independence and freedom, whereas in communist/socialist countries you normally don't have that. Gordon wood states, on page 135, that property was viewed "not as a means of personal profit or aggrandizement but rather as a source of personal authority or independence." The mostly same government holding office after the revolution shows that they wanted the same thing, to strive for greatness, and didn't want to be dependent on the British. It means even more that we were all on board. They put things in the constitution and amendments to give power to the people like the second amendment and every other right we have. The class restrictions made us free and the work force was 98 percent free people by 1800 in Philadelphia alone.

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Re: radical revolution

by Eric Brackett - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 10:17 PM

I respectfully disagree with your notion that the revolution was a radical idea. America is by no means the first democracy in history, the Greeks, the Romans even ancient Nordic countries has democracies at some stage in their past. Even ancient Mesopotamia had what is referred to by historian Thorkild Jacobsen as "Primitive Democracy". Keep in mind too that the idea of a Bill of rights was not alien to our founding fathers, as Englishmen, they were fully aware of the Magna Carta, which in 1215 guaranteed rights to freemen of England. Even the idea of rule with out a Monarch was not unheard of to them, Oliver Cromwell had shown that England could be ruled by Parliament. Also considering many early Americans were of Dutch decent, surely they would be familiar with the Dutch Republic, which lasted from 1581 to 1795. Many of our our founding fathers even cited previous republics and democracies as the foundation for which our own republic was based. As example, our legislative branches were adopted to reflect the senate of Rome, I would however concede that there was one revolutionary act after the establishment of the American union that was a bit radical. The Bicameral legislative branch.

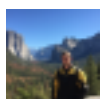
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_democracy

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna_Carta

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Republic

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Re: radical revolution

by Mitchell Olive - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 7:40 PM

I appreciated your post and it was insightful, but I'd like to say that I didn't say in my post that the United States was a democracy. I think that what made the Revolution radical was the constitution that our founding fathers came up with and the fact that they did it themselves. They made a capitalist representative republic that is still in tact today and has stood the test of time and prospered to make us arguably the most prominent country in the world, making an effort to give all the responsibility to the people and limiting their own power. The fact that they were mostly the ones in control throughout the revolution and the fact that the US is such a prominent player in every aspect in the world today and has been the whole time since the constitution shows how the constitution was such a transformative document. The fact that we didn't need a revolt but that our founding fathers created the constitution that granted religious tolerance and is still the most effective and GDP productive way to govern the most powerful country in the world is radical, to me. Our GDP per capita is the highest in the world, beaten only by countries tied directly to oil or that have a population of 1/100th of ours, which is due to the constitution. Just because the Romans and Greeks figured out that the only way to keep their power over the people that they conquered was to let them govern themselves doesn't mean that what has happened in the United States isn't revolutionary and radical in a way. And their intentions were to limit their own power, not increase it, which is radical in and of itself, considering what they created. I realize that I may be inferring things, but I think that the mindset placed among Americans and the trust in the government set a precedent for a place that is relatively incomparable, and I guess that is where we differ. Jefferson said "dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the design of ambition." I do think, and Gordon Wood said it in his own way, that the revolution is the reason that there is a United States today. Gordon Wood also states, on page 131, "In fact, the colonists knew they were freer, more equal, more prosperous, and less burdened than any other part of mankind in the eighteenth century. Such a situation, however, does not mean that colonial society was not susceptible to revolution."

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Sonja Fritz - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 2:31 PM

I believe it is more conservative due to the fact that the English, especially Revolutionaries like Patrick Henry, were trying to re enforce their rights as Englishmen in the Americas. The American revolution was radical in the nature that it wanted to be self governed but conservative in the fact that they wanted to uphold British parliament views. If this was truly a radical event, it would have been completely different style government and have absence of British politics.

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Alec Ebert - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 8:22 PM

I agree with you on the fact that our founding fathers did implement some aspects of British politics, such as the democratic election of parliament members influencing how we elect our own congress, however the colonists did not feel represented in parliament enough and they felt that parliament had the power to disrupt the private lives of citizens even if they were still represented. I think its critical to understand that the focus of the U.S. Constitution was to limit the power of government and be much more honest and upfront with the citizens of America about how basic rights would not be infringed on no matter the momentary desires of a democratic congress. The Bill of Rights or the first ten amendments of the Constitution, is a good example of this. Its designed to frustrate the political powers in play so that no political majority can have absolute control, which parliament often did. The founding fathers wanted to make sure that the political structure of our country would always benefit the people rather than powerful majorities. Most of the information I found for this post was on a website called FEE or Foundation for Economic Education. The article I used was written in 1987 by Dwight R. Lee a renowned economics professor at University of Georgia.

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Eric Brackett - Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 10:25 PM

I can understand where you come from with your statement "however the colonists did not feel represented in parliament enough and they felt that parliament had the power to disrupt the private lives of citizens even if they were still represented" however i do not see this as revolutionary, I see it as restructuring. The simple fact that the original intent of our actions prior to the revolution were to simply get true representation in Parliament. This shows that we were not trying to become a unified solitary nation, it shows that we were doing everything we could to be accepted as true Englishmen. It was only after all attempts at reconciliation failed that we went the path of separation. Granted you did have a small minority of people who wanted to separate from England from the get go, but lets face fact, that was not the vast majority of Americans. Even during the revolution itself, only roughly 33% of Americans supported the effort, that is hardly a majority.

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Reconstruction rather than Revolution

by Alec Ebert - Thursday, November 17, 2016, 1:05 PM

Eric, to build off your points made here I do have to agree with the term "reconstruction" I actually see it as a much more fitting term to describe what our founding fathers were trying to achieve with the revolution. I think the term revolution describes the war effort and the changes in our social and political aspects all together. A simple common trait that's been running around in my head over the last couple chapters is that the British really just saw the colonies as something to take advantage of. Do you really think that Parliament ever had any intent to justly represent the colonies in a way that soothed the colonists' desires while they were still connected to the crown? Or do you think that they just expected the colonists to bow down and accept the acts and laws that the British imposed upon them? I guess I'm trying to play devil's advocate here to try and see it from the British perspective as to better understand how the revolution affected them and how they saw the revolt transform America in their eyes.

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Re: Reconstruction rather than Revolution

by Eric Brackett - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 6:33 PM

To answer your question of "Do you really think that Parliament ever had any intent to justly represent the colonies in a way that soothed the colonists' desires while they were still connected to the crown?" the simple fact is ...I don't know. I think given the growth of the country, plus limited communication due to transportation restrictions of the time, I feel that eventually Parliament would be forced to give more representation to the Colonies. Again though I have no evidence to support this, I feel that with the economic growth brought in from the eventual explosion of both the cotton market and whale oil markets (which would have led to massive population growth) that Parliament would have had to reevaluate the contributions of the Americas. Much as it did eventually with Canada. However I feel this would have also taken at least another generation before it took effect.

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Social Class Perseverance

by Reed Hueter - Friday, November 18, 2016, 11:38 AM

I find Carl N. Degler's side more intriguing to me. It states "no new social class came to power through the door of the revolution" which is important because the revolution didn't spark change, yet it sparked a powerful movement to succeed from the previous standards. Degler says " a gauge of the essential continuity of the governing class in America before and after the revolution is to be found in an examination of the careers of the signers of the declaration of independence. Yet they are by no means a disadvantaged lot." meaning that the poor stayed poor and the rich stayed rich. Another crucial part I find interesting is that many of these political leaders stayed in the exact same position prior to and after the civil war. Not a large percent of the population was very well educated so politicians came from good colleges or important families.

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Ongoing pursuit of equality, liberty, and happiness

by Miranda Marshall - Friday, November 18, 2016, 4:36 PM

Watching the videos provided has slightly changed my perspective on whether the revolution was a conservative movement or not. Although I still stand that it is conservative compared to other countries in relation to violence aspect and the uproar it may have caused, the first link provided about the American Revolution enlightened me on the topic of the change in the social aspect of things and the relationships between people. The video did; however, state that the revolution brought on things such as equality, liberty, and happiness (everything that the United States is supposed to stand for); but, there was and still is a long time fight for all three of those things in this country. So while I feel that I have been swayed slightly to believe it is not as conservative as when this forum first began, I still believe it held a lot of conservatism. I agree with the opposition when recognizing that the colonists or members of the whig political party did risk their lives for change, and they did so because their existing order was simply unfair. In the grand scheme of things it was a noble movement, but still not radical. I believe at the time it may have seemed like more of a radical movement, but as time progresses and we see much more radical movements happening it has slowly been deemed more and more conservative.

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Minds of the People

by Reed Hueter - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 7:52 AM

After watching the overview videos, my opinion on how conservative the revolution is changed. The colonists had a desire to achieve this new political order. They had a revolutionary society, that went hand in hand with a revolutionary economy and politics. As the video stated, this was the "most important even in American History ".

The colonists had beliefs in equality, liberty, happiness, and the constitution. John Adams said "The revolution was in the minds of the people and this was affected from 1760 to 1775, in the course of 15 years before a drop of blood was drawn at Lexington." This shows how radical this revolution truly is. They began believing in the American dream, that wealth is accessible through hard work and perseverance, and wealth is the key to movement up the social ladder. As Gordon S. Wood states "It has often been considered to be essentially an intellectual event, a constitutional defense of American rights against British encroachments". There was clearly a change in thinking and the revolutionary ideals were very different from any other revolution.

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Conservative or Radical? Why not both!

by Morganne Roy - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 5:55 PM

"The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; 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." –John Adams, 1818
This quote from the video solidified my earlier assessment that the American War for Independence was non-conservative. Although it stands alone in stark contrast to the other major revolutions of history, I think it would be a mischaracterization of the events to call it a conservative returning-to of previously held values and freedoms. On the other hand, part of me doesn't want to lump it in with those other progressive revolutions either.

My conclusion is that the war is in a league unto itself. There are excellent points as to why the war was conservative, but to call it only conservative is to ignore the radicalism that was in the hearts of the patriots. However, I can't think of any instances wherein a revolutionary society produced such an event which led to peace and a more stable government and conservative values. In my view, it was a progressive movement for freedom, which later became conservative.

The war began before Lexington and Concord. Before a drop of blood was shed, the hearts of the people was for something so profound that to measure it simply by a progressive/conservative dichotomy is, by my estimation, reductive. To me, the American War for Independence was both.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: The Revolution: Conservative or Radical

by Quan Cheng - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 7:34 PM

After watched the two videos, I stay with my answer Yes, American Revolution was a conservative revolution. Like what historian Sheila Skemp said in 3 mins video, “The American in the 1760s to 1770s were right for revolution so I don’t believe they were knew it. At the time they would have been horrified. They were proud to be English man, And I think what we forget. They loved to being English. But looking back, we can see that the conditions were there if the right things happened. They also were stepped in the English tradition of rights. They knew about the Magna Carta. They knew about John Locke’s notion that we all had certain natural rights life liberty and property that we have the right to revolution.”

Why American Revolution was a conservative revolution again. “What do we mean by the revolution? The war? That was no part of the revolution. It was only an effect consequence of it. The revolution was in the minds of people. And this was effective from 1762-1775, and cost 15 years before a dropped blood was drawn at Lexington.” (4’32 video, John Adams) People were oppressed during 1762-1775, before the date started the American Revolution. “Should we break with Great Britain or stay with Great Britain. And people approach that question from different point of view.”

I get more information about American Revolution. I think during that time American society was just like Britain’s society. And the society was not change after American Revolution.

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Progression Movement

by Miranda Marshall - Saturday, November 19, 2016, 11:41 PM

I liked that the video talked about how to revolution actually changed relationships between people and created this sense of freedom and hope amongst the people. I think it relies on a lot of pathos because of the music playing during the video (a "hopeful" song) and really emphasizing and delving into the positive things that it did and that's what had the most impact on my decision change, the way the revolution was talked about. Also reading the article given *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* written by Gordon S. Wood, he had written a statement which emphasized how radical this movement may have been. “to focus, as we are today apt to do, on what the revolution did not accomplish-highlighting and lamenting its failure to abolish slavery and change fundamentally the lot of women- is to miss the great significance of what it did to accomplish; indeed, the revolution made possible the anti-slavery and women’s rights movements of the nineteenth century and in fact all our current egalitarian thinking.” The statement resonated with me and furthered me into believing the Revolution was in fact, a radical movement. It caused me to think about the importance of all of the things it brought on for our country. It may not have perfected those ideas when they were initially launched, but it got the ball rolling

for what our country continues to fight for. Without the Revolution, I truly believe our country would focus on different things than we do now and we wouldn't have the progress we have made thus far as a country.

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The Revolution: Conservative or Radical ►

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