

HST 201: History of United States F17 (Escobar Meta 20887 23004)

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The Revolution



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The Revolution

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The Revolution

by Joe Escobar - Friday, November 10, 2017, 7:33 PM

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No The American Revolution was not a Revolution

by Kerianne Guza - Sunday, November 12, 2017, 3:18 PM

If we go based off of the definition that a revolution “[produces] significant and deep social change”, then I’d have to say that the American Revolution wasn’t a revolution at all (Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement? pg.120). When the United States declared their independence there most definitely were a few notable changes within society such as the fall of the Anglican Church within the colonies, the firm introduction of religious freedom, and the lowered acceptance of slavery. However, as Degler mentions, the “social consequences of the Revolution were meager” and “were not equated with the massive social changes” during future revolutions such as the French Revolution and the Revolution in Russia

(pg.125). Most societal changes happened leading up to the American Revolution, during the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening. The social changes that occurred post-American Revolution, by no means are significant enough to consider them as a revolution, but it would be a mistake to discount them entirely.

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Re: No The American Revolution was not a Revolution

by Kamron Low - Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 12:49 PM

While I disagree with you on certain areas, I can see where you're coming from. It may be true that the Revolution was less socially challenged than other revolutions, and Wood has pointed out that "the social conditions that generically are supposed to lie behind all revolutions-poverty and economic deprivation-were not present in colonial America." (Was the Revolution a Conservative Movement? pg.12/131)

However, I'd like to point out that the goal of an independent country lead by a federal government was an extremely significant social change as "some European monarchies were 1,000 years old. No republic had ever lasted that long," and that "once America broke with Britain, they warmly embraced republicanism and never looked back." (Liberty, Equality, Power pg. 198) This change to republicanism from a monarchical link is what I would constitute as revolutionary.

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Revolution

by Jesus Narvaez Santiago - Thursday, November 16, 2017, 9:48 PM

Kamron I also agree with what you stated. European monarchies had been around for so long. When the colonies broke away from a monarch rule they did what any other country would do; a revolution. They broke away from a ruling country that they didn't agree with. And just because they did their own government later, and establish a new way of deciding things it does not make it conservative revolution. Just like Gordon mentioned on page 132 paragraph 3 "That revolution did more than legally create the United States; it transformed American society". And it did. This country has been changing since then and it still is.

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Perspective

by Hee Jin Seo - Monday, November 13, 2017, 10:06 AM

I have only a vague notion of the American Revolution which was a culmination of evolutionary changes in American life. At the first paragraph, the writer points out that evaluating American Revolution is highly depend on how to make definition of revolution. It is very impressive that history can be interpreted in many ways than one.

It reminded of me Yun Bong-gil who I learned as independence fighter at school. He threw a bomb at Japanese dignitaries attending a ceremony in Shanghai to against Japanese illegal occupation of Korea. Few years ago, I was so surprised that he is a merely terrorist at Japanese school.

It is true that American Revolution has historical importance in American history. Because by the American Revolution, the colonists brought down of their British rulers, moreover, they set up the own government. On the other hands, some historians take notice of the amount of social and economic changes of the American Revolution.

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2



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Re: No

by Kinsey Alexander - Monday, November 13, 2017, 6:09 PM

Gordon S. Wood suggests that the radicalism of the American Revolution is really a matter of perspective. For instance, Carl N. Degler believes that the revolutionaries “wanted nothing more than to be undisturbed in their accustomed ways” and this should “in no wise be compared with the disgruntled lawyers, the frustrated bourgeois, the tyrannized workers, and the land-hungry peasants of the anciens regimes of France and Russia” (128). That is to say, colonial America did not deal with the same social and economic extremes that plagued these nations and others alike. Wood even points out that prior to the revolution, Americans were already fairly free and equal relative to the rest of the world. Hence, the American Revolution should be classified as a conservative movement.

I disagree with this interpretation; I do not believe that America’s post-revolutionary transformations should be minimized by the magnitude of their pre-war afflictions. Wood believes that the American Revolution was radical in its own unique, “eighteenth-century” way. Namely, the way in which it altered social relationships. As a response to hereditary or artificial rank favored by the crown, post-revolutionary America saw a push against dependency. This, according to Wood, “destroyed all the earlier talk of paternal or maternal government, filial allegiance, and mutual contractual obligations between rulers and ruled” (138). In other words, the new American government was uniquely forged by individual merit rather than by primogeniture and class. I believe this change should be enough to discredit the American Revolution from being a conservative movement.

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3



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No Huge Change, But Enough

by Banyan Ryan - Monday, November 13, 2017, 7:09 PM

If we are talking about whether the Revolution created social and economic changes since its happening in the seventeenth century, the answer is unquestionably yes. The question of whether it created IMMEDIATE change is the issue that historians seem to disagree on. The initial cause of the Revolution was because the thirteen colonies didn't want Britain to tax them without representation. Therefore, once the war with Britain was won, the Founding Fathers created new laws with the intent that ordinary people wouldn't have to fear their new

ruling government. When writing the Declaration of Independence, they made it their best effort to distance themselves from British rule as much as possible. What I DON'T think they intended, however, was to create this huge shift that completely changed the country into something entirely different. Different enough, but not 'completely'.

Degler, in his argument of the Revolution having no massive change in the social or economic state of the country, mentions how "no new social class came to power through the door of the revolution. The men who engineered the revolt were largely members of the colonial ruling class." (125). This is to say there were no drastic leadership changes because of the Revolution and the people who were in power previously in America were still in power afterwards. But the Revolution was to separate ourselves from BRITAIN. Once that was accomplished, the shift in power HAD shifted from the crown to the colonists. It wasn't a MASSIVE change, but it did shift the status of power.

Gordon Wood makes it clear that the Revolution changed the ideals of people because of the newly written Declaration of Independence. The proclamation that "All men are created equal" was designed to make it clear that American rule would be different from Britain. Suddenly, this meant that services such as slavery were considered differently than they had been during British rule. "Now, however, the republican attack on dependency compelled Americans to see the deviant character of slavery and to confront the institution as they never had to before" (138). This sudden change in ideals didn't transform the entire country, as we would continue to have slavery over the next many decades, but this shift in ideals definitely helped separate us from Britain.

So I would have to agree with Gordon that yes, the Revolution was not a conservative movement, but Delger isn't wrong in saying that the change was minimal. It wasn't a huge change, but I don't think it was supposed to be. It was supposed to be us separating ourselves from Britain and becoming an independent nation. That's it. And I have to say, I think it was quite successful.

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3



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non conservative radicalism

by Maayan Kirtner - Monday, November 13, 2017, 8:16 PM

I see the American War for Independence as a Progressive-conflict war. A progressive view of the war means that I believe the war has a huge amount to do with the internal struggles of the country during the war. It also asks the question as to who in the country will take control of the politics and control the country, without becoming a monarch ruled society. I suppose I agree with Gordon S. Wood the most. Wood supposes that the war had more of an effect on the internal political and economic situations. The war was, as Wood puts it, extremely radical when looking at it from a non-conservative angle. There were many transformations between people which in turn changes the way a country in run. If there were only changes economics then nothing would have changed because the rich would get richer and the pour and middle class would stay the same. But as people change their views on their country the place changes with it, becoming the ideal in citizens minds.

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1



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by Jesus Narvaez Santiago - Thursday, November 16, 2017, 9:27 PM

I agree with you that it was a war to try to stay away from a monarch ruled society. They wanted to be independent but needed land to be able to speak for themselves and have a say on things.

Wood mentions on page 136 second paragraph that "Jefferson was so keen on this equation of property with citizenship that he proposed 1776 that the new state of Virginia grant fifty acres of land to every man that did not have many".

To break away from that monarchy rule Jefferson wanted to make every man independent, a citizen, and give them a vote. By doing that they give the voice to the people and not let government control everything.

With this it would create an internal conflict with the people already in power as well.

Especially with the whole war going why would the leaders of the revolution take into consideration poor, farmers, or tradesman voices? Like you mentioned the rich get richer and the poor/ middle class stay the same if the voices of laborers were not listened to is what I believe.

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Re: The Revolution

by Isabel Aguilera-Muro - Monday, November 13, 2017, 8:55 PM

After reading both essays, I am mostly influenced by the Whigs, and imperialists interpretation of the Revolutionary War. I agree that the revolutionary war was an external war that began due to political differences between the colonists and their British rulers. As Explained in Carl N. Deglers essay, the revolutionary was begun for select political and constitutional purposes which assisted in molding American traditions. The ratification of the constitution in 1788 was the beginning of the acceptance of separation of church and state, which was a side affect of the revolution. Throughout the 18th century, the doctrine was not only able to keep politics free of religion, but it also provided freedom of religious development which was the over all intention of the Founding Fathers.

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Re: The Revolution

by Carly Kleefeld - Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 7:38 PM

I was also most influenced by Whigs interpretation of the Revolutionary War. George Bancroft actually was the first to advance the Whig or pro-American, interpretation of the war, stated on page 120. Bancroft said that America won because God was on our side. Although I like how you included religion development into your post, the Anglican Church was disestablished and the state supported religion in all of the colonies south of the Mason Dixon Line. In Virginia 1786, a law was passed guaranteeing religious freedom.

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Re: The Revolution

by Isabel Aguilera-Muro - Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 2:15 PM

In our current age, I am more neoconservative in my approach of the American war of Independence. The reason behind my approach is because I believe, like John Butler argues, "that American colonial society-politically, socially, and economically- was dramatically transformed between 1680 and 1700" (Butler. pg.121). The revolutionary war was an external war that focused on the political differences between the colonists and their British rulers. In Carl N. Deglers article, he argues that the upper middle class colonists led a conservative revolution, and I agree with that because the restrictions imposed onto the colonists were too limited under the Articles of Confederation, and the colonists wanted a "loose constructionist" form of government.

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I disagree

by Jesus Narvaez Santiago - Thursday, November 16, 2017, 9:38 PM

The reason I disagree is because like Gordon S. Wood states on page 131 paragraph 3, "If we measure the radicalism by the amount of social change that took place - by transformations in the relationships that bound people to each other - then the American revolution was not conservative at all". A lot of things change after this revolution. And I don't think it was to conserve their own way of being. I think it was to be independent and their own people, and to start to realize their internal and external problems. Like any other revolution they would want to start their own changes without the crown bossing them around. The people of thirteen colonies before were not in agreement for one nation they were split. When this war began they united, even though between colonies they still had their differences they were able to win against the crown. If it was a conservative move then they would have made everyone think the same and be the same, but they didn't. They ended up with a constitution and things people can and can't do. It diversified the politics and the way things worked in a new country.

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Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?

by Kyle Shrope - Monday, November 13, 2017, 9:52 PM

I side with Historian Carl N. Degler on saying that the American Revolution was a conservative movement. When we look at Revolutions in France and Russia compared to the United States, they come across as more extreme. The American Revolution was never lead by oppressed citizens of the colonies, but instead was lead by high powered upper class leaders. Compared to other revolutions where the oppressed citizens took a stand against the high class officials. Historian Carl N. Degler states "They are in no wise to be compared with the disgruntled lawyers, the frustrated bourgeois, the tyrannized workers, and the land-hungry peasants of the anciens regimes of France and Russia" (Pg. 128 packet reading). He is clearly stating that France's and Russia's revolutions were more radical because the persecuted citizens of those nations took a stand. The high powered leaders and officials who lead the American Revolution had more to gain than the average working class colonist, making the American Revolution a conservative movement.

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Re: Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?

by Carly Kleefeld - Friday, November 17, 2017, 11:09 AM

As I also side with Degler on saying that the Revolution was a conservative movement. When comparing the American Revolution with other Revolutions such as France, they were both the product of Enlightenment ideals that emphasized the idea on natural rights and equality. I like how you included that the persecuted citizens in France and Russia took a stand rather than in America it was the high powered leaders who led the Revolution.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

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Re: Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?

by Kinsey Alexander - Friday, November 17, 2017, 12:31 PM

Kyle,

Even if the American Revolution was mostly influenced by the upper class, it can be argued that the average working colonist had a lot to lose under British rule and these well-to-do leaders were simply protecting everyone's right to personal economic growth. Wood pointed out that the patriots were "free of dependent connections and influence; their position or rank came naturally from their talent... and from recognition by the people" (135). However, courtiers and British mercantilism threatened to uproot this convention. So, although the situation in America was not as volatile as it was in France and Russia, perhaps the leaders of the Revolution saw that it had the potential to become that way.

Additionally, I believe the shift from a monarchy to a republic encouraged a broader acceptance of radical ideas like universal equality, inherent rights, checks and balances, and religious freedom. These ideas subsequently inspired Americans to question institutions like slavery, indentured servitude, primogeniture, etc. Therefore, I think the American Revolution is more radical than conservative.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Yes, I Agree with Degler.

by Robert Taylor III - Monday, November 13, 2017, 9:58 PM

The American Revolution, in my opinion, was very much conservative in nature. The laws and regulations imposed onto the colonies under pre-revolution imperial sanction had become unideal and sort of run its course. This, in turn, caused the revolution as we know but, the infrastructure of the colonies didn't change drastically. While it did very much so mark the beginning of America as a citizen-driven Democratic society, it didn't, for the most part, change the happenings of day to day life.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Yes, I Agree with Degler.**

by Kamron Low - Thursday, November 16, 2017, 1:25 PM

Wouldn't those laws/regulations becoming unideal to the pre-war colonists be technically progressive? I can see the stance you're taking but it's difficult to correlate how the colonists wanting to evolve to a Democratic society as conservative.

I can point out, however, that some of the post-war ideals for American society such as individualism and religious freedom did take conservative approaches for their encouragement of individual traditions.

I would also like to note that there were post-war social changes in the early to mid-19th century because of it that helped benefit an economic society, perhaps not drastically, but significantly. "The struggle to maintain household independence involved most farm families in elaborate networks of neighborly cooperation, and long-term, give-and-take relationships were essential economic and social assets." (Liberty, Equality, Power pg. 280)

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Yes, I Agree with Degler.**

by Robert Taylor III - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 11:33 PM

Essentially, I'm saying its conservative primarily due to the fact that all other social class structures and economic institutions, which were arguably the most important structural requirement for a society to even exist at the time was largely left intact.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

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**My eyes of the American Revolution**

by Lindsay Schnell - Monday, November 13, 2017, 10:23 PM

After reading the two sides of the argument whether or not the American revolution was or wasn't a Conservative Movement and I have come to the conclusion that I'm going to have to side with what Gordon Wood article. How I came to this conclusion was very difficult to make and both sides put up a good argument. As stated in the first paragraph of his argument, "We American's like to think of our revolution as not being radical; indeed, most of the time we consider it downright conservative" (p.130, handout). He also goes on to state that there have been many historians-progressive or neo-progressive historians, as they have been called-you have sought, as Hannah Arendt put it, "To interpret the American Revolution in the light of the French Revolution" (p.130, handout). Also as Mr. Escobar has stated in class that you can't believe everything everyone tells you or writes. I don't believe that Whig, imperialist, or progressive conflict really helped me out in decided what my decision was. Wood also goes onto sate that "The American Revolution was integral to the changes occurring in American Society, politics, and culture at the end of the eighteenth century" (p.133, handout). I feel that I may be more like neoconservative rather than neoprogressive. My reasoning behind this would have to come from that I am the type of person who wants my voice to be heard and not silenced but I am also not willing to break the law of doing so. There is a time and a place for some things and some people just don't pick those. My final thought if you are still deciding which side to choose I leave you with this quote taken from Woods' article "If we measure

radicalism of revolutions by degree of social misery or economic deprivation suffered, or by the number of people killed or manor houses burned, then this conventional emphasis on the conservatism of the American Revolution becomes true enough" (p.131, handout).

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Yes, the Revolution was a Conservative Movement (edited)

by Carly Kleefeld - Monday, November 13, 2017, 10:27 PM

In today's age, I would consider myself a progressive looking at the American War and its result. My reasoning is simply that the progressive-conflict school of historical interpretation approach was more focused on the internal struggles of the country during the war. I would side with Whig because I agree that the Revolutionary war was an external event caused by political differences between the British rulers and the colonists (aka no taxation without representation).

To answer the question, "Was the American Revolution a Conservative Revolution?" my answer is yes. After reading both Degler and Wood's reasonings, I agree with Degler's argument. I believe that it was a Conservative Revolution because in one respect, they were attempting to conserve the rights they previously had as colonials. For example, the British never bothered the American colonies until after the Seven Years War. They gave the colonists unreasonable taxes, when the colonists fought back.. they resisted, hence why it was a conservative movement. Also, it is said that the economic grievances have played a role in bringing on the Revolution. In the words of Degler, "The economic stimulus afforded by the war demands and the freedom from English mercantilistic restrictions which victory made permanent provided adventuresome American merchants and entrepreneurs with wide opportunities for gaining new markets and new sources of profit." With this comes the expansion of the American economy throughout the 19th century. Degler's approach as to why he believed that this was a Conservative Movement took a huge toll on my decision to side with him on this topic. When he stated "Whether Americans would retain their independence and become a truly united people was to be determined only by time and the people themselves." This really spoke out to me. My reasoning being that it is true, time will tell. I interpret this as Degler saying that it wasn't just the radicalism of the revolution.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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NO

by Micah Phillips - Monday, November 13, 2017, 10:35 PM

My stance on the revolution being a conservative movement is No. to me this would have been a more political and paper written fight rather than a Blood thirsty battle driven with pride for freedom. in the article "Was the American Revolution a conservative Movement," it talks about having a this type of warfare and giving their everything versus sitting at a tea table and discussing the differences. it was an all out gorilla warfare. And it was reasonable. it was the only way that their voices were being heard and that they had to make these radical actions to have history making radical changes. if these did not happen we would be British.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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conservative

by Zongyuan Shi - Monday, November 13, 2017, 10:47 PM

In the beginning, it should be mentioned that in terms of the outlook of the study of the American War for Independence and its aftermath, I determine myself as a conservative. The American revolution was a crucial step on the country's way to democracy as well as acquiring a substantial position of Americans interest in the international affair arena. The means, however, used to obtaining such outcomes, were conservative rather than radical.

The essential features of American conservatism are its response against particular unrealistic and unnatural ideas existing in the society and the intention to leave those behind. In contrast, radical movements target "the root" so the change would affect the foundation on which particular society stands. The American revolution's goal was not to establish a society principally different from the colonial society but rather diminish the influence of such and obtain in the independence of the country from Great Britain and its idea of classes

The idea of classes was brought by eighteenth-century British radicals. Moreover, it was one the most descriptive characteristic of the society existing under the British Crown. It may be considered as a cause that led to the inequality developed and spread throughout the US. The core idea of Americans was that "all men are created equal" and equality was considered as a natural right. Degler provides a statement made by Charles Pinckney according to which "there is more equality of the rank and fortune in America than in any other country under the sun" Thus, the intention to regain their legitimate freedom resulted in the Church and state separation, independence from English merchantilist restrictions, and the slavery declared but not vice versa.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3



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Re: conservative

by Robert Taylor III - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 9:39 PM

Agree completely, there always seems to be this stigma associated with the happenings of the American Revolution that suggest that there were no favorable foundational entities in colonial society previous to the revolution when in fact there were. Not only were there but it was the acceptance of these preexisting customs that colonial society sought to liberate and independently expand on that lead to the revolution itself.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1



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No. Not a Conservative Movement.

by Jesus Narvaez Santiago - Monday, November 13, 2017, 10:49 PM

I agree with Gordon S. Wood, I believe it was not a conservative moment.

In this posting I am thinking this way because of two things.

One: after the Revolution America became closer and more united.

On page 132 second paragraph:

Gordon states, "By the time the Revolution had run its course in the early nineteenth century, American society had been radically and thoroughly transformed. One class did not overthrow the other; the poor did not supplant the rich. But social relationships - the way people were connected one to another changed." The country became more united after this, and like we talked in class before colonies did not want to unite because some were loyal to the crown. This revolution was not conservative, but a change to the entire country.

And Two: the key people in this movement one of them for example being George Washington did not have anything to win out of this.

Washington did not need the money, or power to succeed he was already wealthy. Even Carl N. Degler wrote on page 125 paragraph 3, "Washington, reputed to be the richest man in America." So even if it was a movement for conservatives win or loose people like George Washington being involved wouldn't win anything to conserve their religion or views against the crown. I feel he was more about uniting the country and their fellow Americans just like Gordon has stated.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: The Revolution YES

by Katie Ohlsen - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:19 PM

I agree with Carl N Deglar.

The american Revolution was a conservative war that led to upward mobility for the social class.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

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No: Gordon S. Wood

by April Frost - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:27 PM

Based on the essays, I am inclined to agree with Gordon S. Wood. His essay immediately relates to the viewer by recognizing common themes and tradition that modern-day Americans feel obligated to follow, and reverting that idea in relation to our history. He mentions that the Revolution was initiated as "the need to purify a corrupt constitution and fight off the apparent growth of prerogative power.", a conservative affair, that subsequently led to change with injustices in the social order. (pg 131). So while the American Revolution may have started as a conservative movement, it inevitably became much more than that. Wood begins to conclude with outcomes of the Revolution. "The Revolution did not merely create a political and legal environment conducive to economic expansion; it also released powerful popular entrepreneurial and commercial energies that few realized existed and transformed the economic landscape of the country." (pg 134). Wood also expresses how far the Revolution reached, including the attack on the patriarchal monarchy that helped reexamine all other dependencies, leading to freedom of slaves.

I also appreciate the mention of Carl N. Degler's point, regarding the inevitable "freedom" acts of the colonists before the Revolution took place. Degler's argument revolves around the idea that the colonists would have made their "revolution" or changes over some time, possibly in a different setting, without powerful and wealthy white men at the center. Wood states that

“Perhaps the social transformation would have happened “in any case,” but we will never know. It was in fact linked to the Revolution; they occurred together.” (pg 133). I think that in the end, whether or not changes were being made, they absolutely received a push with the American Revolution.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Relative Revolutionary

by Jack Westphal - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:38 PM

The text that I most agree with belongs to Carl N. Degler, who writes that the American Revolution was a conservative movement. As I read through both articles, one quote caught my attention from the author Gordon S. Wood, stating “the American revolutionary leaders do not fit our conventional images of revolutionaries” (Wood 130), which discredited much of the rest of his work for me. George Washington was a general in the army of colonial American underdogs that fought for independence against the elite British navy and won; calling into the question about the character of our founding fathers seems misguided in his work. The newly independent country was described as having “more equality of rank and fortune in America than in any other country under the sun” (Degler 124), providing insight into the American lifestyle and attitude that incited the revolution to the colonists. They fought to separate themselves from the British government and culture through the revolutionary war. I’m most influenced by the progressive-conflict school of historical interpretation, as I believe that an internal revolution took place that involved social and economic conflicts.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Freedom of Ambition and Movement

by Andrew Erkert - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:49 PM

I am currently more convinced by Gordon S. Wood's stance in that it was not a conservative movement.

His point (p.131 bottom paragraph) about how it is viewed, whether looking at the social and economic distress or death versus the social change experienced, the Revolution could be determined either way. However, the massive social change that took place led to new philosophies and freedoms that average people never had under Britain or most nations. The abolition of the 'aristocracy' was crucial to this, along with the abolition of courtiers, freed up the unfair system of government and social castes. People could now work their way up to success as opposed to only being able to be born into it.

Wood mentions a case of a man named Moses Cooper (p.135) that drove a significant point in. His story conveyed the idea of the British oppression of ambition. If Cooper were under the strict policies of mercantilism, he would not find the same profound success that he had found with just his business acumen.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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The Revolution dispute: radical by definition

by Kamron Low - Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 2:01 PM

I write this looking at the technicality of the situations regarding the Revolution. Gordon S. Wood points out that "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" (Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement? article pg. 12 or 131) which I agree with.

However he points out that "the white American colonists were not an oppressed people; they had no crushing imperial chains to throw off" (also pg. 12/131 of the article) which I have to somewhat disagree with. I'd like to argue that there was some social dispute rooted from expansion of the colonies versus anglical traditions as "the population of British North America doubled 25 years. Each generation required as many new colleges, ministers, lawyers, physicians, craftsmen, printers, sailors, and unskilled laborers as all the preceding generations combined. Without them, standards of "civility" would decline. Colonial institutions had to grow to meet these needs. As the 18th century progressed, colonies became the scene of a contest between the unrelenting pace of raw expansion and these newer anglicizing tendencies." (Liberty, Equality, Power pg. 118)

The Anglicization dispute and the later Parliament enforcements (taxation) were two ingredients that stirred the Revolution which, by definition, was indeed radical for it's fight for freedom of British control.

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Re: The Revolution

by Kerianne Guza - Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 5:00 PM

Looking back at the American revolution, you may not realize just how radical it was. The ideas that the patriots held don't seem crazy to us now, however, if you measure them by the eighteenth century's standards, they most definitely were. Gordon Wood makes a great point by mentioning that "for most white Americans there was greater prosperity" in America "than anywhere else in the world", which makes the fact that they started a revolution even more of an extreme idea (pg. 134). It was because of their radical way of thinking, that they had come to such a far-reaching action.

By pursuing the American Revolution, they had created a "new society unlike any that had ever existed anywhere in the world" before (pg.132). Monarchies had been ruling countries for so long and they worked fairly well. Yet the colonist decided to stray away from this trend and take a major risk by creating one of the first successful democracies. This has undoubtedly paid off, given how powerful of a country the United States has become and how many other countries have followed suit.

The influence that the American people have had is undeniable. They "had become almost overnight, the most liberal, the most democratic, the most commercially minded, and most modern people in the world", paving the way for everybody else (pg. 133). Seeing, in their minds, the county that they wanted America to be, led them to go to any lengths to achieve it. That meant turning against their monarch, their mother country, and many that system of government altogether. They achieved this through respectful politics and even violence, when necessary. The American Revolution may be different than any other, but it still was sparked by the same kind of radical ideas.

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My "technical" progressive-conflict stance

by Kamron Low - Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 4:09 PM

I must mention (as I have forgotten to) that I'm only conservative or progressive depending on the political subject matter, which I think allows me to view the argument from both sides and come up with an opinion with a technical perspective. And I do believe that the Revolution was internal through the progressive-conflict interpretation, as I do believe social hierarchies were altered with the success of the Revolution which, by definition, were radical and progressive.

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Re: The Revolution and the people

by Carly Kleefeld - Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 8:24 PM

After referring back the two videos provided, I became more clear on the idea of the revolution. A particular quote in the video stuck out to me, John Adams 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." I found that Adams was correct. The Revolution, although a conservative movement in my eyes, was absolutely in the minds of the people. Many aspects of the people in today's age came from the Revolution, it became a part of our culture and even our current politics. Conservatives believe in personal responsibility and a limited government. Their policies emphasize and encourage the individual to solve problems. The Revolution started with the people.

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Cause vs. Effect

by Banyan Ryan - Thursday, November 16, 2017, 12:51 PM

Looking over everyone's arguments on whether the Revolution was conservative or not, I've noticed a pattern in what evidence people use to defend either side; the original intent of the Founding Fathers vs. the actual change that happened because of the Revolution. The ordinary colonists did not start the Revolution; Washington, Adams, Jefferson and the rest of the Founding Fathers did. People who already had power among the colonies. This helps separate the American Revolution from the French Revolution, and is used commonly as evidence to say that it was a conservative movement. But once the Revolution had run its course and Britain had lost, the ordinary colonists DID gain power themselves through the Declaration of Independence. As Gordon Wood puts it, "The Revolution brought respectability and even dominance to ordinary people long held in contempt and gave dignity to their menial labor in a manner unprecedented in history and to a degree not equaled elsewhere in the world." (page 133). This is mostly what leads people to say that the Revolution was NOT conservative. So the Revolution was not initially caused by the colonists in pursuit of power, but they achieved it through the Revolution regardless. But which is more important when discussing whether the Revolution was a conservative movement; the cause or the effect?

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Re: The Historians



by Carly Kleefeld - Friday, November 17, 2017, 10:34 AM

Looking over the Historians document provided, and looking at all the opinions on the significance of the Revolution. In document #5, on page two the quote provided by Degler states, "Over 69 percent of them held office under the colonial regimes...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..." Now, this sticks out to me because most of these men came from important families of wealth. The ones who held office AFTER the revolution proved that service BEFORE the revolution in the colonial governments was no obstacle to political preferment for a patriot afterwards (Degler 126). Another interesting percentage that stood out to me was that only a mere 40% of them actually attended college.

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Re: The Historians

by Carly Kleefeld - Friday, November 17, 2017, 10:57 AM

A particular historian that makes me more sure of my original opinion is Clinton Rossiter. In Document #2 he states, "However radical the principles of the Revolution may have seemed to the rest of the world, in the minds of the colonists they were thoroughly preservative and respectful of the past" This pushes me more toward my original opinion because as he refers to the people, I think of how John Adams believed that the Revolution began with the people, the Revolution had occurred before the war even began. Rossiter then states, "Their goal therefore was simply to consolidate, then expand by cautious stages, the large measure of liberty and prosperity that was part of their established way of life." As a conservative movement, it is understandable that the colonists' goal was to preserve their rights and ways of life. At this point, my opinion on the Revolution as a conservative movement does not change.

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no

by Daniel Brockett - Friday, November 17, 2017, 12:57 PM

In order to delve into this we must first define the term "revolution" the dictionary defines as it as follows; "A. a fundamental change in political organization; *especially*:the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler and the substitution of another by the governed. B. activity or movement designed to effect fundamental changes in the socioeconomic situation

Ca fundamental change in the way of thinking about or visualizing something :a change of paradigm.

By this definition it can hardly be called a revolution. true there was paradigm shift, but As Gordon sates “it was as radical as and social as any revolution in history, but it was radical in a very special 18th century sense.”(woods 133) The whole world was going thew upheaval at that time on how they thought and acted. I agree with Gordon S. Wood it was not a revolution But rather an “colonial rebellion and a war for Independence”(woods 131) if it where a true revolution why was the British homeland left unscathed? There where no riots no looting. No one in Britain was hauled into the street and shot. Therefore how can you call it a revolution?

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Re: no

by Kamron Low - Friday, November 17, 2017, 5:29 PM

Perhaps it's true that this Revolution was not much like others. But going by those definitions, wouldn't the colonists parting with British rule in favor of their own self-led government match the first definition? And furthermore, there were no acts of violence in Britain itself, but in the colonies were such events like the Boston Tea Party/Massacre that helped stir the way of thinking during the Revolution.

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Re: no

by Daniel Brockett - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 10:01 AM

yes, except for the fact there was no overthrowing of a leader. in order for A to be true it must fit all the criteria. Therefore I postulate that since the brits remained in power simply lost a few colony's(woods inferred this), to me it feel's like more an annex of British empires tributaries and less of a revolution. If America would have then gone and beheaded the king. Or if Africa took up the call to independence then maybe it would be considered a revolution. But to me it's more like if Guam made a violent bid for independence with a large foreign power backing it. So we said fine you can be independent. Sure they are free but our government would be still intact and functioning exactly the same way. Can you really call it a revolution when the people and system in government remains in power and unscathed? I say no. The Political process remained the same in the empire.

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The American Revolution

by Hee Jin Seo - Friday, November 17, 2017, 2:41 PM

As with the French Revolution in the 1790s, it is easy to conclude that American Revolution was not all that revolutionary. Some historian might argue that the French Revolution was ultimately far more revolutionary than its American counterpart. When the historians consider

the amount of social changes that indeed took effect in the American society by the revolution, the American Revolution was radical and historic movement. On the other hands, if historians merely measuring the radicalism of revolution by grade of social suffering or economic lack, or by casualties, the American Revolution would be considered as a conservative movements. The American Revolution changed the social relationship which is the means people were linked each other. Furthermore, the American Revolution transmuted American society significantly including politics and culture. By the revolution, America became politically modernized.

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Re: The American Revolution

by Zongyuan Shi - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 2:42 AM

After reading new materials and other's opinions. I kind of come to a neutral conclusion that in terms of changes in society, economy and culture aftermath may not seems dramatically different than the life in the colonial under British before. But the impact of value that America brought toward the whole world later was significant and radical. For the first time, the rest of the world know it's possible that even the most powerful navy and the nation the world can be defeated. Although, America revolution is not bloodthirsty at all compared to revolution in French and Russia. I'd say it's a successful "revolution" because not much bloodshed in fighting for leadership of the country after defeat British. And the constitution made by founding fathers were so advanced considering the rest of the world are still monarchism. I even believe Xin Hai revolution(led death to 5000years monarchism in China) was somehow connected to the ideas"all man created equal" and spirit which America constitution spread over the world. On the other hand, the ideas such as human right, free speech, free religion, extracted from constitution, form the the most popular value now.

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The revolution is not that simple

by Garrett Caffee - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 3:54 PM

I would have to say that as a whole the American Revolution was conservative in nature with a couple radical elements mixed in. On one hand, not much of the structure of the general populace changed after the American revolution which would denote a more conservative revolution. The radical elements would be the change in government, and how that government ran. Both Carl N. Degler and Gordon S. Wood provide valid points to their arguments, but history is rarely as simple as one thing or another.

At the top of page 128 Carl Degler states that the absence of significant change in society and the economy is due to the fact that American's we generally prosperous and content under the British Crown and just wanted to be left alone. This would signify a reason as to why the Revolution was not such a great upheaval of how things were run and would denote a more moderate revolutionary stance by the Americans.

In the second paragraph of page 132 Gordon Wood mentions that by the early 19th century American social life had radically changed and was "-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.” The changed are explained further in the last paragraph of page 136 where David Ramsay declared in an oration on the fourth of July, 1778, that “All offices lie open to men of merit, of whatever the rank or condition.” We know that while this may be the case now, it was not back then and took some time before all offices were open to men of merit regardless of who they were or whom they were born to (with exception to a few due to National Security reasons).

I would argue that the American Revolution is not such a simple thing as to be generalized as simply conservative or radical but is instead somewhere in between, personally I would say it is a conservative revolution with radical elements, some of which did not appear until later in the life of our nation.

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Re: The Revolution still NO

by Micah Phillips - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 8:33 PM

In the first article given to us on the the very last page in the last paragraph, it talks about how the government shifted from a familial government to a government voted in by the people. It all shifted with this revolutionary movement. If this was to be considered a conservative movement I believe this would look very different. The revolution would have been a more civilized out brake. Nothing would have actually changed and we would still be controlled by a King and/or queen. for things to be heard and the government to be changed a radical movement needed to happen and be done in a way to be noticed. From this Revolution everything took a radical turn and the government was forever change for the states.

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Re: The Revolution still NO

by Robert Taylor III - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 11:20 PM

Fair enough, if you're saying that the desire for democracy and the ways and means in which the colonies went about obtaining that was the sole reasoning for the revolution, and therefore radical in nature then I can see where you are going.

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The American Revolution was Radical

by Jacob Spriggs - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 9:20 PM

After reading the article "Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?" I have to agree with historian Gordon S. Wood in his statement that the Revolution was a radical movement. Just because the American Revolution was more civilized than other revolutions of it's time does not mean it was Conservative. The War was followed by as much, if not more, social change as any revolution in history. Wood stated that "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-the the American Revolution was not conservative at all (Was

the American Revolution a Conservative Movement pg. 131)." By stating this, I believe Wood is saying that if it were a Conservative movement, America would not have grown to become the international power that it has been for decades.

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Re: The American Revolution was Radical

by Daniel Brockett - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 10:09 PM

i concur with your analysis. it's brought home when woods Postulates "with the revolutionary movement, black slavery became became extremely conspicuous in a way that it had not been. That thought alone was a revolutionary cry echoed throughout the world.

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