

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

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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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BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which side of the issue, YES or NO, you have chosen to support or write about. Do NOT simply leave it RE: The Revolution

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YES, it was a Conservative Movement

by Coty Ferguson - Saturday, November 11, 2017, 12:59 PM

While both historians made strong arguments for their sides, I will say that I agree more with Carl N. Degler that the American Revolution didn't have one of the most characteristic factors of a revolution; the social upheaval and elevation of a new social class to replace the old. He gives numerous examples of the fact that the culture and mindset of the colonists before the revolution stayed relatively unchanged after the war. The battle for equality and a dismantling of hierarchies was already a major factor in the colonies before the revolution and they had achieved this equality of station already while still under the rule of the British. This was evident in many mindsets, such as the Federalist Fisher Ames from the reading on page 125,

where he states "all cannot be rich, but all have a right to make the attempt." Another important fact is that the architects of the revolution, men such as Washington, Ben Franklin, John Hancock, and others were all well positioned members of the colonial ruling class that didn't need something like a revolution to gain acclaim. The fact of the matter is that the leaders of the revolution were already well off before the war and could have remained complacent without any major side effects. What the people of the colonies wanted wasn't some new and independent country where they had freedom that was denied them before. What they wanted was to be treated as Englishmen of equal standing to those in Britain. They didn't seek out to become Americans, they sought out to be given equality to their fellow Englishmen. The culture and traditions of post revolutionary Americans were still quite similar to their British counterparts. The difference was that they had shifted their mindsets from the hierarchical design that mainland British people held as vital. This was due to the fact that America was land rich. This abundance of land allowed even the most unlikely of people to become well off landowners. America was a place of social and economic mobility that just wasn't possible for an island country. This caused the difference in mindset, not unfair taxes or injustice done to the colonists. This wasn't a war between the rich, unjust British and the poor, persecuted Americans. It was a war spearheaded by rich colonists who cherished and exemplified the social mobility present in the colonies and the hierarchical and strict British social configuration. The rich and powerful Americans from before the war were still rich and powerful after the war. There was no replacement of old groups with new ones like in the French Revolution.

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3

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Re: YES, it was a Conservative Movement

by Brogan Cornish - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 10:20 PM

I totally agree about how Carl does a great job of giving great examples of how the culture and mindsets stayed the same before and after the revolution. One thing Carl also explains and which I would add is the religion and how it wasn't really affected. I mentioned some of the quotes in my second post. I totally agree with all the arguments that you made toward the Revolution being a conservative movement.

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The American Revolution and Social Change

by Rhyen Moncrief - Saturday, November 11, 2017, 7:40 PM

The American Revolution was not conservative in my opinion because the revolution produced major social changes. As Gordon S. Wood writes in his article, "The Radicalism of the American Revolution," "We have tended to think of the American Revolution as having no social character, as having nothing to do with society, as having no social causes and no social consequences." "It has therefore been considered to be essentially an intellectual event, a constitutional defense of American rights against British encroachments." (p.131) I think that if we measure the radicalism of the Revolution by the amount of social change that took place, and by the transformations in the relationships that bounded people to each other, then the American Revolution was not conservative. However; I do see it as being radical as it was different than other revolutions. "In the early nineteenth century, American society had been radically and thoroughly transformed. One class didn't overthrow another; the poor didn't

supplant the rich, but social relationships were changed." (p.132) The revolution did more than legally create the United States; it transformed American society. Racial issues did play a huge role in the American Revolution. Crude stereotypes were contrary to claims of the universal rights and human equality in the Declaration of Independence. The American Revolution did fail to abolish slavery and to change fundamentally the lot of women. As Wood writes, "The revolution destroyed aristocracy, but also bought respectability and even dominance to ordinary people to a degree not equaled else where in the world." (p.133)

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Re: The American Revolution and Social Change

by Jack Swisher - Thursday, November 16, 2017, 4:49 PM

After reading the historians views, I have decided that I still believe that the revolution was a conservative movement. The opposing historians had some good information, but the views from Daniel Boorstin and Clinton Rossiter kept my opinion. They did a good job of explaining that the colonists didn't see much change throughout the revolution. Daniel Boorstin says "Americans weren't fighting to establish new rights, but to preserve old ones. Some of the examples he gave were Right to free speech, Trial by jury, and representation before taxation. This makes total sense, these are some things that the colonists wanted before, and still wanted after the revolution.

Another historian was Clinton Rossiter, had some great quotes that really should give everyone an idea of why this was conservative. He states that "However the radical the principles of the revolution were seen to the rest of the world, in the minds of the colonists they were thoroughly preservative and respectful of the past. He also states which is my favorite, "Americans thought that the world had been made up as thorough as a man could imagine." Clinton Rossiter is trying to say that the colonists really didn't want any change, just wanted to expand liberty.

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Yes, but a very weak yes.

by Isaac Anderson - Sunday, November 12, 2017, 3:47 PM

If I have to pick a side, I will say yes the American Revolution was a conservative movement, but after reading the forum materials on the American Revolution I have found that both the neo-conservative and neo-progressive interpretations have elements that I agree with. "The strict *constructionists* perceive revolution as producing significant and deep societal change, while *loose constructionist* say that any resort to violence within a political order to change its constitution, rulers or policies defines a Revolution (page 120, forum handout)."

The part that I agree with most in Carl Deglers argument is when he talks about the "Conservative, upper-class leaders who actually proclaimed the Revolution suffered no repudiation in the course of the struggle; no mass from the bottom rose and seized control of the revolutionary situation to direct the struggle into new channels (page 126, forum handout)." I think Mr. Escobar mentioned something along those lines in class also saying that the people who were in charge in America before the revolution were also in charge after the revolution

and that the “American War for Independence” would be a more appropriate name for the war. There wasn’t a violent overthrow of the American government. the British government wasn't really overthrown and replaced either, they just lost a ton of land and were forced back to their island.

But, there was deep societal change. Gordon S. Wood states that the “American Revolution was as radical and revolutionary as any in history because of the transformations in the relationships that bound people to eachother (page 130, forum handout).”

It seems like the Revolution had both radical and conservative elements to it and neither really outweigh the other based on my limited knowledge. Any thoughts?

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Re: Yes

by Jack Swisher - Sunday, November 12, 2017, 8:06 PM

After the reading, I think the American revolution was a conservative movement. The country according to Carl Degler, was built by the middle class. I think that The Americans wanted freedom and they would do anything to achieve it. This is why I think I agree with loose constructionists. Not only because America went to war to earn freedom, but because in class, the federalists were defined as loose in class. I fall along the lines of the Whig and and imperialists. This is because according to Degler, the external events of the revolution “whose primary cause was the political differences between the colonists and the British rulers.” Some of the colonists had different views on life and liberty then the British had. The Whig and imperialist historians also give an internal revolution saying that there was a struggle for home rule, and for who should rule at home. The colonists had trouble determining who should rule governments and how they should be elected, whether it be by votes or how much land one owns just to name a few. I would also agree with the neoconservative because of what I stated earlier, the middle class colonists led a conservative revolution. I believe this, because in my opinion the revolution came from hard working people that wanted the new free life that they came to America for.

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An Unchanged Nation

by Casandra Fountain - Monday, November 13, 2017, 5:42 PM

I would say I’m mostly siding with the Whig schooling. The introduction piece didn’t explain it quite well enough for me so I looked on Wikipedia and found this definition, “Whig historians emphasized the rise of constitutional government, personal freedoms and scientific progress.” If I’m wrong please correct me. When I read the two essays, I could understand Carl Degler’s point of view more clearly. I don’t feel much social and economic change took place. Degler states, “no new social class came to power through the door of the American Revolution.” (p.125) He goes on to point out many of the well-to-do members of each colony, men who engineered the revolt were part of the ruling class. Degler provides us with several percentages of the men who held office before and after the Revolution, “Eighty-nine percent of those who filled an office before the Revolution also occupied an office under one of the new state governments. And if federal office after 1789 is included, then the proportion rises to 95 percent... the conclusion that the Revolution was a thoroughly upper-middle-class affair in

leadership and aim is inescapable.” (p.126) One example is George Washington. He went from presumably the richest man in America and officer of the Virginia militia to the first President of the United States.

We even continued to trade with Britain well after the Revolution. In 1793 when Britain and France went to war with each other, President Washington declared American neutrality therefore voiding the 1778 treaties with France and America. “They wanted to stay on good term with Britain. Ninety percent of American imports came from Britain, and 90 percent of the federal revenue came from customs duties on those imports. Thus both the nation’s commerce and the financial health of the government depended on the good relations with Britain.” (textbook, p.246) I believe those numbers speak for themselves. Degler summarize nicely the institutions unchanged by the Revolution, “the class structure, the distribution of property, the capitalistic economy, the ideas of the people concerning government.” (p.127) What do you think, did Americans drastically change the nation they created or not?

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Re: An Unchanged Nation

by Jack Swisher - Monday, November 13, 2017, 6:48 PM

The definition for Conservative from dictionary.com states that: “one holding traditional values about change or innovation.” To answer your question, the minds of the colonists never really changed after the revolution as they stayed the same from the beginning. Degler does a great job of giving many examples of how these colonists minds didn’t change. The biggest thing that leads me to believe that this was conservative, is the religious aspect. A big reason the colonists came to the new world was to seek religious freedom whether that be individually, or because they were tired of the catholics ruling a country. Yes, they broke away from the Catholics, but a big thing was politics and religion. The government kept working toward religious freedom after the war was over. On page 122, the ratification of the constitution in 1788, “the principle that a man’s religion was irrelevant to government, for the Constitution forbade all religious tests for office holding. Also on 122, it says that a man’s religion had been either a passport or a barrier to his freedom. This was a mentality that colonists wanted to change throughout the revolution, and when they won, it stayed. Just another example of how the colonist minds stayed the same throughout. It was so big in their lives that even the popular interest in religion carried over to 1962 and 1963 when the supreme court invoked the principle of separation of church and state. (123) Carl N. Degler gives a great example to answer Cassandra's question. Page 123 again states that the doctrine had provided freedom for religious development while keeping politics out of it. This had been the intentions of the founding father.

To summarize here, I don’t think that America was changed after the revolution. Obviously some things changed because the war was won, but the colonists mindset didn’t. The colonists wanted religious freedom from day 1 and they were determined to achieve that. They achieved that early on before the revolution especially during the Great Awakening, but carried the want on to a government standpoint.

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Re: An Unchanged Nation

by John Steil - Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 3:02 PM

I just wanted to add to your ideas. You are right, that many people came to the New World for religious freedom. The state supported Church in America in 1776 was the Anglican church, not the Catholic Church. The Anglican Church was also called the Church of England. The King of England was the Head of this Church. Carl Degler states on page 122, "One such unforeseen result was the rapid and final disestablishment of the Anglican Church, heretofore the state-supported religion in all of the colonies south of Mason and Dixon's Line and in parts of New York and New Jersey". Virginia in 1786 disestablished the Anglican Church as the state church. They also passed a law guaranteeing religious freedom. This was before the Federal Constitution. Degler also says, "at the time of the Revolution many states had demanded Christian and often Protestant affiliations for officeholding"(123). The separation of Church and State was a radical idea in the 18th century. It hadn't been done before. A person's religion had been an important requirement for the past 1000 years before.

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Re: An Unchanged Nation

by Jack Swisher - Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 5:22 PM

Americans really didn't see much change during the revolution. I am going to talk about two big things that stand out to me the most. The fact that the leaders pretty much stayed the same throughout the revolution, and the relationship of trade with Britain. On page (125) it says that no new social class came to power through the doors of the revolution. The men who engineered the revolt were large members of the colonial ruling class. On 126 it says that many of the men held office in the colonies before and after the dividing line of the revolution. 75 percent had occupied office before 1774. This shows a great example of how things didn't radically change, especially on such a high level like government.

We all know that Britain and America traded with each other before the revolution began. Weird enough they continued to trade even though the two countries just killed each other. The Americans didn't want to join the war with Britain and France because they were not in good shape number one, and number two is they didn't want to be on bad terms with Britain because they needed to keep trading. 90% of trade was with Britain according to Chapter 7 page 246 in the book.

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Re: To add on

by Jack Swisher - Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 4:20 PM

To add on, some examples of no change through religion. The Anglican church called themselves Anglicans up until they changed their names to the Episcopal church. There was no crazy changes here, nobody changed beliefs or prayed differently, it was just a simple change in name.

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Re: An Unchanged Nation

by Casandra Fountain - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 10:12 PM

I agree with you things changed but I do not think that it meant a radical movement was present during this time. In the additional reading we were given, Clinton Rossiter states, "Americans had never known or had long since begun to abandon feudal tenures, religious intolerance, and hereditary stratification. 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." (Document #2) The ways of life were well established before 1776 and they continued as such afterwards. They implemented the Constitution obviously and governing body changed its ways but it was not much different than what they had been doing. The third document Daniel Boorstin iterates that Americans didn't so much establish new rights but as to preserve the old ones they had in place under British institutions. I had found an additional article written by Bruce Frohnen. He goes on to state, "The American Revolution does not mark an abrupt break with the politics of Britain or with an "old world" of superstition and oppression... it rather marked the successful conservation of inherited rights by the American people." (firstprinciplesjournal.com) The article goes on to say, "The founders led the colonies to independence without overthrowing their basic, pre-existing institutions, including common law rights, the court systems themselves, social and political hierarchies, and church establishments protect the role of religion in public and private life." They were able to continue their local life of what they knew from before the war and not have to behead the King and Parliament to be able to obtain independence. We could say maybe over time radicalism then could be considered as a theory for the American War for Independence but I see it as a single event and that event should be considered conservative.

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American Revolution-Conservative or Not?

by Isabella Amaral - Monday, November 13, 2017, 6:24 PM

A conservative moment is a term that portrays the procedure through which control of the Republican Party has brought by individuals with solid sentiments for a powerful national protection, low charges and minimum government regulations. Based on this, I agree with Gordon's view on why the American Revolution was not a conservative moment.

In Gordon paper he states, "The American Revolution doesn't seem to have these causes-the social wrongs, the class conflict, the impoverishment...There were no peasant uprisings, no jacqueries, no burning of chateaux, no storming of prisons." (P1) While the colonist did utilize

conventional protests, they also armed themselves before the revolution and arranged for arms shipments and stocked up guns and ammo. So these are not actions of male colonist that "tweaked" the the system, but rather those who wanted a radical change.

For right now, I believe I'm more neoprogressive because looking at the evidence, I can see why the American Revolution was a radical event and not viewed as a conservative one, however this may change if I am presented more evidence to why I should be more neoconservative.

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Re: American Revolution-Conservative or Not?

by Kate Weiss - Friday, November 17, 2017, 8:00 PM

I agree that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement, but I want to warn against tying the "Republican Party" to this definition because they didn't come into view for about another century. It's easy to see the term conservative and think of current conservative politics, but what the historians in these essays are arguing is if the Revolution was a "conservative affair concerned almost exclusively with politics and constitutional rights, and not the social radicalism of the other great revolutions" (Handout 131). Gordon S. Wood mentioned the bloody revolutions of other nations to show both sides of the argument, and confuse the reader a little, but he wanted to prove that there are more than bloody aspects to a Revolution that can't get forgotten about, just because there wasn't a great uprising. He argues that by measuring the radicalism of the American Revolution by the amount of social change, and not just on the social misery, then it wasn't conservative at all (Handout 131). I agree that the American Revolution was not conservative because many American lives were socially transformed.

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The Revolution Changed Society In America

by John Steil - Monday, November 13, 2017, 6:34 PM

After reading both sides of the argument, I think I agree more with the neoprogressive thoughts as it relates to the Revolutionary war. The strict definition of revolution is producing significant and deep societal change. I agree with Gordon Wood when he states, "Americans had become almost overnight, the most liberal, the most democratic, the most commercially minded, and the most modern people in the world". When we left behind the rule of a Monarchy, and put power in the people's hands. The signers of the Declaration of Independence wanted opportunities for all Americans. Obviously, it took a while for African Americans to be free but it started during this time. Social change was happening. Wood states on page 138, "the Revolution suddenly and effectively ended the cultural climate that had allowed black slavery". The new republic gave men opportunities for better jobs by merit not family ties or blood lines like the monarchy did. You could be poor but work hard and get ahead. The American Revolution altered the character of American society and the course of history

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Radical American Revolution

by Gaige Parry - Monday, November 13, 2017, 8:27 PM

Gaige Parry

Nov 13th

Forum 3

Radical American Revolution

(No)

Many view the American Revolution as the most important historical event for the united states, as well as it being what legally created the united states. But where those who agree of its importance may have split opinions on whether or not they viewed the american revolution from the conservative side or agreed to the radicalism of the american revolution. I my self agree with Gordon S wood on not only its significance of the american revolution but also his views on the radicalism of it and the opportunity it created. Gordon s Wood believes that its not only the most important thing in our history but also that because of the american revolution we were molded with shared views on equality, ideals, liberty, constitutionalism and has written books on this topic as well. With a split society before the american revolution it was transformed by the revolutionary war being able to relate to each other in a different way. Standards of time the most democratic society in the world following the american revolution.

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Not Conservative

by Kelsey Lane - Monday, November 13, 2017, 8:42 PM

After reading the two articles given to us in class, I'm going to side with Gordon S. Wood and agree that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement. Some key points that helped bring me to this conclusion when reading Woods article were, 1) Woods adds in a way to measure radicalism when it comes to revolutions. IF we look at the American Revolution by the amount of social change that took place. He talks about how much of this social change was done through a sense of politics and government. By getting rid of monarchy and establishing republics they changed their society and governments. 2) Woods talks about the change of relationships. Saying how relationships in the nineteenth century were very different from relationships of the colonial society of the eighteenth century. 3) Woods explains how in 1770 America was made up of a few colonies that were economically underdeveloped and on the edge of the world. But 50 years later they transformed themselves into an "almost continent wide republic" of nearly ten million citizens. Woods states how America had become one of the most liberal, most democratic, and commercially minded modern people in the world.

The social change that woods talks about is first and for most the form of government and how it became a democracy. The second was personal relationships and positions including position of women. And also how America had destroyed aristocracy. The revolution brought

dominance to ordinary people and brought about a new kind of popular politics and new kind of democratic officeholder. New government was not only concerned with economic expansion but also with the happiness of its people.

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The Revolution was indeed radical

by Christopher Zuercher - Monday, November 13, 2017, 9:22 PM

Though Carl Degler states, "that no new social class came to power through the door of the American Revolution. The men who engineered the revolt were largely members of a colonial ruling class," I don't think that is enough to characterize the American Revolution as a Conservative movement. Because the revolution brought about a change in the values and relationships people had with their government. I believe Gordon S. Hayward is correct when he states, "The Revolution brought respectability and even dominance to ordinary people." The Revolution was about breaking away from the way government had traditionally been run and it altered the power dynamic between the people and the government, putting the power in the hands of the people in the form of democracy. Gordon Hayward explains the Revolution well,"it made the interests and prosperity of ordinary people-their pursuits of happiness-the goal of society and government."

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Re: The Revolution was indeed radical

by Nallely Martinez - Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 8:14 PM

I definitely agree with your notion of putting power in the hands of the people in a form of democracy, Christopher. Although the American Revolution involved many educated, wealthy men discussing new laws and rights to establish in the new found country, many of those laws and rights served to protect all people. As John Richard Alden noted, as "the patriots won independence; they also made a good start on the long road toward establishing and securing 'the rights of mankind'" (The Revolution-Historians). That sense of rights to mankind would be a cry every slave, woman or any person of limited power and freedom would use to fight for their own freedom and prosperity in America. Even if the upper-middle class colonists had only intended to help themselves, the ideas that came about helped everyone. Another important factor to put in was that if the fight towards independence had been lost by these colonists, they would be the ones to lose the most out of it. Why then would they risk losing everything they had already achieved under a British society through possessions and positions in office? I think it was to fight for rights they thought everyone deserved.

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Re: The Revolution was indeed radical

by Daniel Game - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 5:34 PM

I do agree your point. I do believe that all human being should be lived equally.

The American Revolution began in 1775 and ended in 1781. The war was between England and the American colonies. The colonies started rioting against England because of the unfair taxes that England was enforcing on the colonies. After the French and Indian War, England ended up in major debt. England decided to tax the colonies to help pay the debt that they accumulated. England believed in mercantilism, which is the idea that the colonies exist to benefit the mother country. With this idea, it justified the taxes that England started to enforce on the colonies. These taxes were known as the Sugar Act, Townshend Act, Stamp Act, Tea Act, and so on. The colonies took radical actions to get what they wanted. The biggest radical action was when they wrote the Declaration of Independence and sent it to England. The colonies were sick of the taxes and laws that England was enforcing on them. The colonies were willing to take drastic measures if it meant to stop England treating them unfair. The colonists made radical decisions to achieve what they truly desired, their own government.

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Re: Was a Conservative Movement

by Jesse Elizondo - Monday, November 13, 2017, 9:24 PM

The intro to the argument has an interesting contrast to what historians believe defines the term: revolution. The strict After reading them both I agree that a revolution should have significant societal change, and I'm sure that everyone can agree that the American Revolution did involve violence to lead to political change. I agree with Degler's argument, the American Revolution was a conservative movement due to the fact that after the revolution a significant societal change failed to take place. One example that helped me come to my conclusion was the fact that there wasn't really much motivation for societal change. An example of this is during the Russian and French revolutions, there were redistributions of wealth and land. But after the American Revolution there was no large distribution of land, in fact most of the land that was confiscated from the British was given to other land owners. The class structure for most people mainly stayed the same as it was before the war, which is an important reason for why the American Revolution was a conservative movement.

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Re: Counterargument

by Jesse Elizondo - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 10:27 PM

After watching the first video linked in moodle about the Revolutionary War I thought about what the historians said about our political system. Even though the historians gave a general overview on the topic, it still made me think about the significance and impact that our new political system had. After the war the newly seperated America tried to created a new government with the articles of confederation. This new government proved to be too weak with and inability to pay debts or to stop rebellion. So after the weaknesses of the confederation were shown, many ideas for a new government were thought up one that would have more centralized power. Some of the unique features of the new government would be checks and balances of power, political parties, federal and state power and more. One of the key features that separated our political system from other countries was

the amount of participation it had, which was very high compared to many other systems such as Britain's parliament system. So in conclusion, the Revolutionary War did cause significant societal change in the form of our political system.

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No

by Nallely Martinez - Monday, November 13, 2017, 9:48 PM

The American Revolution, as argued by Gordon S. Wood, and in my opinion, was not a conservative movement. The social change that occurred after the revolution became so radical that it would be incorrect to say it only affected the elite few. As noted by the textbook, independence transformed many groups in America, "many slaves won freedom, and women struggled for greater dignity" (p 219). Although it was primarily fought by the elite men in office, which were usually white land-owning men, many of the ideals that came forth completely radicalized all classes. For example, during the fight for independence, the men left their homes to fight, leaving the women as a new head of the household while they were gone. Although they did not demand for more rights at the time, they directly affected how they were seen within their self-authority and how they affected the merchant world. Not only in that aspect, even directly in the governing office did it revolutionize the classes. Before the revolution, faith was a major factor in deciding whether one would hold a position in office. Afterwards, a tolerant atmosphere came about, having many people question the morality of only allowing office positions to Christians (textbook p 220). As Gordon Wood noted, American revolutionaries only spoke and thought about changing the government of American society it directly affected society as a whole.

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Re: No

by Kelsey Lane - Friday, November 17, 2017, 3:16 PM

I just want to add onto what you said about the social change that came out of the revolution and how it affected more than just a few. Woods comes back to time and time again how American society changed for all of the people in America. This happened not only because of the political change but also the changes in relationships throughout the society after the revolution. When I talk about the relationships that would have changed I'm talking about the relationships that normal everyday people had with their new government and its members, as well as the relationships changed between neighbors. As we talked about in class, people who supported opposite sides of the revolution will now be living next to each other. This causes significant change throughout society and how it works and functions.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: I greee

by Daniel Game - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 6:21 PM

As Wood effectively pointed out, in the aftermath of the Revolution, the situation changed radically. The Revolution fundamentally altered citizens' relationships with one another by undermining the old concepts of kinship that held the old society together. Once the American colonists began to question the nature of their government and whom they owed allegiance to, they began to question what held society together and what their relationships amongst each other should be. Once the Revolution had come, the old monarchical ties that held society together had been severely altered in a very fundamental way.

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The Revolution Was A Progressive Movement

by Nicholas LaMonica - Monday, November 13, 2017, 9:54 PM

I agree with a progressive stance on the revolution because most of the social upheaval of the American Revolutionary War revolved around reforming an outdated, autocratic, English system of government and turning it into a government envisioned in the Constitution; much can be learned when taking note of who lost power, kept power or gained power during this period. The Revolution was very much an internal revolution, and sparked religious innovation, raised the question of equality between blacks and whites, and gave women more basic freedoms.

According to Gordon S. Wood: "...Americans had become almost overnight, the most liberal, the most democratic, the most commercially minded, and the most modern people in the world." While there were issues still reminiscent from the Great Awakening, and political anti-British sentiment was undeniable pre-Revolution, the war propelled these issues into creating the identity we have today as Americans.

In our current age, I am more neo progressive in my approach to studying the Revolutionary War and its aftermath because the amount of social change, and the change of relationships between people(men/women, black/white) is indicative of the state of both economics and politics.

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Degler's article is biased

by Joel Pedroza - Monday, November 13, 2017, 10:14 PM

Is it crazy to think that our opinion if the American Revolution was a conservative movement, can be based of our opinions of today? For example, as a liberal today, reading Carl Degler's opinion that it was conservative, angered me. I do believe that the American Revolution was a movement so we could escape the monarchy of the English so we can have our own base of laws, government, etc. Even though Degler brought many interest opinions, I could not side with his argument at any time reading this. For example, he mentions "40 percent of them attended college... 21 percent came from important families...69 percent of them held office under the colonial regimes..." when informing that the men holding office were already people of power. Even if it is true, I believe these men still held their power after the Revolution because they were the most prepared and experienced in office before. What it is the point of

getting a new person in office when we already had the most experienced people in office? Yes, their positions in office improved after the Revolution because we free from the English! We kept the accustomed ways that were used under English rule, solely because it was working. Why fix whats not broken? After Degler mentioned some of his statements, he tried to downplay many of his statements for example, “they are in no wise to be compared with the disgruntled lawyers, the frustrated bourgeois...”. He did this multiple times in the article, which makes his side of the argument weak. My opinion could be changed during the week so please argue with my opinion.

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Re: The Revolution was concervative

by Kamrin Dodson - Monday, November 13, 2017, 10:41 PM

After reading the handouts that were given out in class as well as the information that was presented in class, I have come to the conclusion that the Revolution was a conservative movement. The colonists had grown tired of being ruled by a king and during the war when the Massachussetts constitution was written, the colonists did not enjoy the idea of a president because they had been ruled by a king for so many years and they the colonists believed in limited power in the Government and more self government with the people.

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Re: The Revolution was concervative

by Rhyan Moncrief - Thursday, November 16, 2017, 2:52 PM

I can definatley agree with your stance on this, even after siding with Gordon S. Wood. During the Revolution the main ruling in power of England was a king; and because the Revolution was a move away from that and towards the creation of two modern parties, I believe that the Revolution was therefore created by both conservative and liberal ideologies.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

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Not a Conservative Movement

by Kate Weiss - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:04 PM

The American Revolution was, in its own way, a radical event because of the democratic values it preserved and the social change that resulted from destroying the monarchy rule. In agreeance to the strict-constructionist view of “revolution producing significant and deep societal change” (Handout 120), I agree with Gordon S. Wood who argues that American society and relationships between the colonists were radically transformed in the eighteenth century and that “Americans had become almost overnight, the most liberal, the most democratic, the most commercially minded, and the most modern people in the world” (Handout 133). As a result, America was the first nation with true democratic values which allowed its citizens to make decent money, apply for office, pursue happiness, and rule themselves. When mirroring the American Revolution with those of other countries where people were beheaded, property was destroyed, and many lives were turned upside down, it’s

easy to see it as mere conservative. In it's own context, by destroying monarchy rule and reconstituting what is meant by public and state power, it created a government that was interested in the prosperity of citizens and their pursuit of happiness. Gordon states that in 1760 the American colonies were home to around two million people, and just fifty years later were expanded to a republic of almost ten million citizens (Handout 132). This dramatic population growth and new legal government created an environment ripe for economic expansion.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: The Revolution

by Daniel Game - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:20 PM

I would say NO.

In the book by Gordon Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution, three types of governance are spoken of in the American colonies; monarchy, which took place during the 1740s, republicanism, which began after the Revolutionary war, and democracy, which took place during the 1800s. Each of these different political systems governed how the people of the Americas lived. A monarchy is very patriarchal, and hierarchy is important to the community. Republicanism was the beginning of the monetary movement and start of equality of the people. Lastly, democracy took over some republicanism ideals such as unity and more freedom of the people.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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America's Conservative Revolution

by Benjamin Hawley-Gamer - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:25 PM

I do believe this event was an external revolution, I feel that the whig and imperial view of the revolution makes most sense, as the colonists disliked the political state of the empire. The colonists wanted to be self governed and they wanted a change in their political power. This is what I got from the reading of the views and how people see the war for independence. The war itself was waged because of the British laws and the colonists' dislike of such laws, I believe that this was a conservative revolution fought for a political change in the colonies.

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Re: The Revolution of Conservation

by Brogan Cornish - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:56 PM

I think the American Revolution was very conservative. This is because they were trying to preserve rights such as when they were colonials. Carl N Degler says that,"respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. These legalistic and now commonplace phrases." Without the american revolution we wouldn't have these aspects. I can also see the radical movement of this war of trying to overthrow the British. I believe that the Revolution was about upholding timeless ideals of Americans. I also think this war was about how we were telling the world about who we are as Americans.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1



Re: The Revolution of Conservation

by Isabella Amaral - Thursday, November 16, 2017, 11:55 AM

I have to respectfully disagree with your statement, because “a very conservative” movement would not involve a “revolutionary attack on patriarchal monarchy.” Like Wood states on the bottom of page 137.

This specific revolutionary change led to the collapse of all different dependencies of a monarchical society.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Yes

by Joshua Sims - Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:58 PM

I do believe that the american revolution was a conservative movement, because as the author say it was a expected and natural event. Also because the fact that the social and economical change wasnt surprising shows that it wasn't. And those people have always been very self intiuitive and not radical.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Re: I would say NO

by Daniel Game - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 6:02 PM

According to Gordon Wood, 's The Radicalism of the American Revolution provided an interesting and insightful view into the changes that were wrought by the struggle to create a republic on North American soil. Wood's central thesis was that the political reform movement ushered in by the Revolution caused a deep social revolution, which changed the nature of American society and had a powerful impact on everything that the United States has undertaken throughout its entire existence. According to Wood, the Revolution caused America to run through several different phases of development, moving from the social organization of a monarchical society to that of a republican society and finally ending up as a democratic society that ultimately distressed many of the Revolution's leaders. Wood claimed that the political reorganization in America changed how citizens viewed one another and had a subtle, but deep and profound change in their social relationships. Further, the American Revolution was a radical movement that changed the world in a way that shook it to its foundations by challenging the concept of aristocracy in the Western World that had existed for two thousand years and completely changed the political and social landscape in the United States and the world forever.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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On Agreeing With Wood

by Nicholas LaMonica - Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 6:54 PM

I agree with Wood's stance in that the American Revolution wasn't a conservative movement, but a radical event in that it allowed ordinary people to make money, pursue happiness, and rule themselves.

One fact that had the most influence on my decision was when Wood mentions how after the war, Thomas Jefferson: "...proposed in 1776 that the new state of Virginia grant fifty acres of land to every man that did not have that many." (Wood 136), in order to make every 'man' independent, property owning and politically involved. The distribution of property to poorer peoples is a radical socioeconomic change and gave many a voice in politics who previously had little or none, and is worth noting when discussing the effects of the Revolutionary War.

I personally think that the Revolutionary War had drastic changes on the creation of the United States, and birthed much of what our identity is today, such as the writing of our constitution, the further strengthening of religious freedoms which stemmed from the Great Awakening, and developed the idea of a natural aristocracy, or the 'ordinary person'.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Yes, it was a conservative movement

by Coty Ferguson - Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 9:27 PM

A major factor that practically nips the argument on whether the revolution was a true revolution in the bud is the fact that "no new social class came to power through the door of the American Revolution" as stated on page 125 of the reading. This is one of the defining characteristics of a revolution and it is absent in the aftermath of the American Revolution. It is true that during the exodus of the Loyalists, a large number of the wealthy and powerful left as well due to the fact that many people of high standing had sided with the British, it does not mean that all of them left. Besides Georgia and Pennsylvania, where many of the radical democrats had been during the early years of the war as stated on page 125-6 of the reading, and thus new men occupied the vacant positions of power, there were still many wealthy members who had been at the top before the war and remained there after. Social and political changes did take place after the war, but these had been present before the war as well, just implicitly. Factors like class distribution, distribution of property, the capitalistic economy, even the ideas of the people concerning the government were left untouched by the war, as stated on page 127.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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religion in conservatism

by Joel Pedroza - Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 7:36 PM

My first post was more of a first reaction post, expressing how I felt about the subject. I want to get into more detail on Degler's article. At first, my bias ended up with the conclusion that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement. After a couple more reads, Degler did have some interest points on his position. As we know Church was heavily influenced in many other countries like Western Europe and the protestants of England. "The ratification of the federal Constitution in 1788 constituted the first step in the acceptance of the principle that a man's religion was irrelevant to government..." stated Degler about religion not being as

important as before after the Constitution. Now this makes me believe that the writers of the Constitution wanted to make their own laws and rules, without any correlation to any religion. Even is Christianity was still the popular religion, getting the country to not rely on religion was a way to show that they weren't under English rule. Shows the conservatism of the Constitution.

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Both Videos Support Wood's Stance

by Nicholas LaMonica - Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 10:06 PM

Judging from the videos, they both support Wood's idea that the Revolution was a dramatic and radical social change in post-war America. The Revolution wasn't just a war with bloodshed. In John Adams' mind, he felt that: "The Revolution was in the minds of the people"(2:27, Video 2), and was more of a paradigm shift that grew into the democratic, commercially minded and modernized nation we live in today.

In the first video, Jon Butler agrees that the revolution completely transformed the nature of the old 17th century colonies. With the additions of new legislatures and a new political system, many changes are bound to seep into the social facet of citizens' lives. Butler describes this better than I can: "When you add together a new kind of political order and American materialism, and the development of a widely broadcast new world economy, and when you add to that then different nationalities, you had a society that looked utterly unlike old world. This was a revolutionary society... it was a modern society."(2:40, Video 1). While our Revolutionary War was not as bloody as the French Revolution, it still changed life completely for any American, regardless of stature.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The Religious Revolution

by Brogan Cornish - Friday, November 17, 2017, 12:21 AM

Also I wanted to add to my first post. I think this movement was conservative more from the religious aspect. I agree with the whigs. Colonists came to America in order to protect and express their religious rights. Mentally thats why a lot of peoples mindsets in the war. They wanted to keep the fact the could choose their religion. Carl N Degler says on page 122,"a mans religion was irrelevant to government, for the Constitution forbade all religious tests for officeholding." Carl is saying that religion before and after the Revolution was irrelevant. Also on page 123,"Divorce of state and church was emulated by the individual states. At the time of the Revolution many states had demanded Christian and often Protestant affiliations for officeholding, and some have even retained a state-supported Church." So again before and after the Revolution the separation of Church and State was upheld and kept. I'm more of a neoconservative in approaching this subject, because I'm more of a person who thinks that we should refine to a modified form like this.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The Revolution



by Isabella Amaral - Friday, November 17, 2017, 12:29 PM

The explanations, quotes by Gordon Woods and John Alden, and what I've read separately helped me come to the conclusion that I will be keeping my position the same.

Alden states, "It inspired and continues to inspire colonials of all color to seek freedom European gain."

The idea of breaking away from someone or something (England), wanting to gain freedom, and make new rules is not the definition of conservative. Instead, it is the definition of radical, "Used to define a movement that wishes to alter drastically any existing practice, institution, or social system."

Breaking away from England led to so much more than they thought it would when they first took action. It was a domino effect for women's rights and the anti slavery movements, "These changes were radical, and they were extensive." Wood states in his article, "The Revolution not only radically changed the personal and social relationships of people, including the position of women, but also destroyed aristocracy as it had been understood in the Western world for at least two millennia."

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Still conservative

by Jack Swisher - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 1:57 PM

After the videos, my view is still conservative. There were a few things from video two that reassured my stance. It was said that colonists enjoyed being Englishmen. To me this says that the colonists didn't want a huge change because they were content with being Englishmen. Another thing I liked was in the video it was said by Wood that most views on liberty, constitutionalism today(just to name a few) were from the revolution. This shows that not much has changed even since the 18th century going back to the fact that the revolution truly was conservative.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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I would say NO

by Daniel Game - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 6:03 PM

I do understand your view. However, not all colonies were enjoyed being Englishmen. In short, the British treated their colonies in vastly different ways, both across different regions and within the same colonies over time. The British Empire was never a consistent empire. Across various colonies, there were different reasons and methods of organization for each one. Even within America, different Colonies were founded for entirely different reasons. Virginia started out as a mercantile colony run by a company; Massachusetts was originally a Puritan theocracy; New York was a crown colony taken

over from the Dutch; and Maryland and Pennsylvania were religiously tolerant colonies governed by (relatively) benign hereditary feudal rulers (called proprietors), the Barons Calvert and the Penn family. South Carolina, with its rice and indigo plantations, was more akin to a Caribbean colony than its continental neighbors. None of them were uniformly governed or similar in character; the British government occasionally took notice but generally was not involved in their governance.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Re: The Revolution

by Daniel Game - Saturday, November 18, 2017, 5:56 PM

I agree with your comment.

Gordon Wood and Gary Nash would both agree that the American Revolution ignited "radical" changes resulting in the upheaval of known society. These changes would forever alter America and the world for the betterment of all social groups. Wood viewed the revolution as the by-product of a driven group of gentry, the founding fathers, who wholeheartedly strove for equal opportunity for all men. Nash, on the other hand, contended that the revolution began with common and oppressed inhabitants of the colonies pushing for righteousness. In Radical Possibilities of the American Revolution Wood sheds light on the monarchical rule and society that spilled over from Britain into America. This entails the seemingly unbreakable cycle of being "born" into power or appointed through close relations. Therefore, to the founding fathers "radicalism" meant abolishing these traditions of corruption, in which individuals promoted their private interests. Gaining positions through popular politics, the founding fathers began attacking "those clusters of personal and familial influence" (Wood) The fathers strove to ensure that everyone had equal opportunity to make themselves gentlemen and become eligible for high political power.

Wood sums up the Revolution with "The familial image of government now lost all its previous relevance, and the state in America emerged as something very different from what it had been." (Wood) Coupled with the downfall of the monarchical society the way was paved for women, slaves, and servants to achieve their dreams of equality. That they would one day stand face to face with white males and share a mutual respect.

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◀ The Revolution

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