

HST 201: History of United States F18 (Escobar Meta 20749 22611)

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Continuing the Discussion

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Thursday, November 15, 2018, 9:20 AM

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Quotes from Historians

by [Elias Brouse](#) - Thursday, November 15, 2018, 2:10 PM

After reading the quotes of numerous Historians on their take of the Revolutionary War, I can only seem to agree with the points of one specific Historian. Most of them seemed to give some valid points for why the revolution may have been more radical, but one Historian managed to still prove my point that the revolution was actually less radical then people realize. Historian Daniel Boorstin states that "The Americans were fighting not so much to establish new rights as to preserve old ones... The Revolution itself had been a

kind of affirmation of faith in ancient British institutions... trial by jury, due process of law, representation before taxation, habeas corpus, freedom from attainder, independence of the judiciary, and the rights of free speech, free petition, and free assembly." (Document #3) These are all very great examples of how America was simply reaffirming the practices that America wanted to follow before Britain had imposed such strict measures in the colonies.

After re-analyzing some of the other quotes from the Historians, I am convinced that there are a few social and political changes that came from the Revolutionary War, as any war of that magnitude would cause. J. Franklin Jameson mentions Document #6 that "The status in which the electoral franchise was left at the end of the Revolutionary period fell far short of complete democracy. Yet during the years, we are the considering, the right to suffrage (vote) was much extended." Gordon Wood also states in a separate paper that "For a century or more the colonists had taken slavery more or less for granted... Rarely had they felt the need either to criticize black slavery or to defend it. 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..." (Document #8) Both of these social and political changes were clear results of a new mindset created after the war, and I do respect that those changes were less conservative.

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Re: I still agree W/Degler Conservative

by [Scott Carpenter](#) - Thursday, November 15, 2018, 5:32 PM

I still agree with Carl Degler in Document #5 he say's towards the end that "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... Eighty-nine percent of those who filled an office before the Revolution also occupied an office under one of the new state governments." ____This is so different from a Revolution that would be considered a radical one in my opinion.

Just so you know I view a radical revolution in which, it seeks to fundamentally uproot the old society and institute a new one in its place. Compare the American Revolution to the French or Russian Revolutions and that's why the American Revolution I consider conservative. The French Revolution led to a complete alteration on the nature of the French state, a destruction of many social institutions, a complete change in the laws and of the government, similar with the Russian Revolution, when I think of these examples, they were radical ones.

Unlike most revolutions> the American Revolution wasn't an attempt to make fundamental changes to the society. Most of the laws and social institutions remained virtually unchanged. I still like how Degler explains it.

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**Re: I still agree W/Degler Conservative**by [Morgan Graham](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 1:52 PM

Hey Scott, these were interesting points that you made but I would have to disagree. I think that the whole political system that they knew changed once the revolution happened. And people tend to forget that a revolution can also be social. Their social norms changed and that is pretty radical in my opinion. Wood makes an interesting point in the packet from class. He says, "The American Revolution was integral to the changes occurring in American society, politics, and culture at the end of the eighteenth century." This points out that there were many radical changes happening that occurred during the American Revolution that can be linked to it.

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: I still agree W/Degler Conservative**by [Lauren Rogers](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 2:57 PM

I agree with you Morgan. The American Revolution had many types of changes that made it revolutionary as Gordon Wood states, "... it infused into our culture all of our noblest ideals, our highest aspirations, our belief in happiness of ordinary people, our belief in constitutionalism. All of these things came out of the Revolution"(0:25 Video #2).

It is not surprising that the people who held office before the Revolution, held office after it because as John Adams once said, "The Revolution was in the minds of the people"(2:25 Video #2). These people who held office before the Revolution had revolutionary minds. These officials helped carry out the ideals that the Americans were fighting for. I would elect a person again if they fought for what I believed in and successfully made my wishes a reality.

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: I still agree W/Degler Conservative**by [Scott Carpenter](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 4:59 PM

Hey Morgan, thanks for your response. Stated in a previous posted I agreed with Degler and consider it to be A conservative one and Yes, you are correct in your view and I view it the same. To be honest I said this to get someone to response and to give someone an opportunity to correct my statement. Their political system did change as a result of the revolution. Degler Page 6 says It is true that social and political changes accompanied the Revolution, some of which were destined to work great influence upon American institutions in the future, but these had been implicit in the pre-Revolutionary society. Moreover, important social institutions were left untouched by the Revolution: the class structure, the distribution of property, the capitalistic economy, the ideas of the people concerning government.

Wood states on page 9 that it was as radical and social as any revolution in history, but it was radical and social in a very special eighteenth-century sense.

Yes, there were many radical changes that took place during the American Revolution. But I believe this Revolution to be a conservative movement. A new America was born, one by which no dictator came from it.

Iv'e been thinking maybe this was just a war for liberation.

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The American Revolution is Still Not Conservative

by [Lauren Rogers](#) - Thursday, November 15, 2018, 8:22 PM

After reading these excerpts, I still believe that the American Revolution was revolutionary. The American Revolution brought the Constitution which changed the whole political system. By splitting off from England, they gained a leader that had their interests at heart, unlike the Crown who imposed taxes specifically on the colonists. The new, limited government liberated the people. John Richard Alden stated "The successful rebellion of the patriots profoundly affected the course of the future, not only for the Americans, but for all other peoples... The example of republicanism successful over the vast territory of the United States constituted a threat to monarchism everywhere, and stimulated revolt against kings and emperors"(The American Revolution, 1954). This movement empowered people, and paved the mindset of freedom from oppression in many forms. Eventually this "egalitarian" way of thinking that Gordon Wood describes, leads to the ending of slavery, and the beginning of women's' rights(The Radicalism of the American Revolution). This does not sound like the "conservative movement" as Carl Degler described in "A New Kind of Revolution Conservatives Can Be Innovators".

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The American Revolution changed society forever

by [Morgan Graham](#) - Friday, November 16, 2018, 1:11 PM

Hey Lauren, I completely agree with you. I think that the just as it says in the name the American Revolution was revolutionary. The whole political system that these colonists new was changed forever and that sounds like a pretty radical thing to do. I really like how you described it as empowering people and paving the mindset of oppression in many forms. In the packet from class "Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?" Gordon S. Wood says, "But in destroying monarchy and establishing republics they were changing their society as well as their governments, and they knew it." Not only was the change in their government a huge change, but in doing that their society changed as well and I would consider the revolution as also a social movement. Wood describes it saying that people were more connected to each other. I think that is the part that people forget about the revolution, society and their ideals were forever changed which I agree with you, does not sound like a conservative movement.

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The American Revolution changed society forever**by [Lauren Rogers](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 4:10 PM

Thank you for your input Morgan. As Gordon Wood wrote "There was no reign of terror in the American Revolution and no resultant dictator-no Cromwell, no Bonaparte", but it "was as radical and social as any revolution in history" (The Radicalism of the American Revolution). It is thought that for something to be radical or revolutionary, something horrible must happen, but for the Americans, the opposite happened. The American Revolution didn't need all the devastating things that Wood mentions to happen in order for it to be revolutionary.

I agree that the Revolution had a major change in society. John Butler stated, "This was a revolutionary society... Revolutionary in social contact, revolutionary in its economy, revolutionary in its politics"(3:04 Video #1). Just because the war was similar to every other war, doesn't mean the outcome was any ordinary or "conservative" outcome. The change the Americans faced was expressed in several ways, and was truly quite radical.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**the american revolution was radical**by [Morgan Graham](#) - Thursday, November 15, 2018, 11:42 PM

After watching the two videos, I am still agreeing with Gordon S. Wood in that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement. They did the most radical thing by breaking away from Britain. They had a huge fundamental change in society. In Video two, the narrator says, "the colonists saw themselves as the freeist people in the world living in the kind of society envisioned by 18th century philosophers." A lot of people take this and think that the revolution was purely an intellectual event but they don't take in to account what Wood has to say. In the handout from class he says, "eighteenth century radicals concerned, like the eighteenth century British radicals, not with the need to recast the social order nor with the problems of the economic inequality and the injustices of stratified societies but with the need to purify a corrupt constitution and fight off the apparent growth of prerogative power." That was very much a politically radical thing that happened but people tend to forget the social change and how that revolutionized America. The social change that happened was completely and totally radical

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Both sides had compelling points**by [Fallon King](#) - Friday, November 16, 2018, 11:45 PM

Although I never really had thought about whether if the American Revolution was a conservative movement or not, I do believe that both sides had interesting points of views on the matter. As I did more research, I recognized that the definition of the term “conservative” can come across differently to other people. However, I do still believe that the American Revolution was a conservative movement. Gordon S. Wood did make quite a few compelling points, but I believe that Carl N. Degler make just a few more relevant and persuasive points. With ideas such as it being “A radical and social as any revolution in history, but it was radical and social in a very special eighteenth-century sense” (Handout pg. 9) raised a few questions for me. One of them being what were they comparing it to? I would like to point out that no new social class came out of the American Revolution, as one usually would in a politically radical revolution. The American Revolution didn't seem to have any reasonings to take place such as impoverishment, class conflicts, or even social wrongs that have caused other revolutions to be considered throughout history. With evidence that society still had the most of the same beliefs post-revolution, I raise the question of just how radical could it have been?

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Both sides had compelling points**by [Elias Brouse](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 1:57 PM

I have also seen some interesting points from both sides of the argument, but I would also have to agree that Carl Degler made points that made much more sense than some of the back and forth thoughts of Gordon S. Wood. The Revolutionary War was in almost no ways comparable to a lot of the revolutions that occurred in the era of the 18th century. Carl Degler states in the handout that "...the American Revolution was not conservative at all; on the contrary: it was as radical and as revolutionary as any in history." (Page 9 of handout) Even earlier on the same page, he also states "...we have generally described the Revolution as an unusually conservative affair, concerned almost exclusively with politics and constitutional rights, and, in comparison with the social radicalism of the other great revolutions of history, hardly a revolution at all." (Page 9 of handout) Although he is building this point up to prove there was actually social change, and it is, in fact, radical, I think this idea correctly analyzes the idea behind the American Revolution. This war was more of a colonial rebellion or a war for independence, and because of the limited change in colonial fundamentals, cannot be compared to other revolutions.

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Both sides had compelling points**by [Lauren Rogers](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 3:48 PM

I must agree in the sense that the American Revolution cannot be easily compared to other revolutions, but I disagree with the idea that it had “limited change in colonial fundamentals.” The American Revolution had many changes and John Butler makes several major points to this effect. He states, “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 the different nationalities, you had a society that looked utterly unlike old-world society”(2:41 Video #1). Colonial life became much different than the “old-world” or British society that they had once lived as.

Without being ruled by a king, they were able to find their voices, and notice their voices actually being heard. We talked in class about the Declaratory Act, and how the colonists thought their voices were being heard. The colonists thought that they would no longer be taxed, but the British thought they could still tax, so they continued to do so. With this new form of government, each word in the Constitution was carefully chosen and deciphered to try to limit the power of the government, and limit the chances of their voices being ignored. These ideals were protected by the Democratic Republicans like Thomas Jefferson.

These changes are seen in social, political, and economic ways. Each were radical in their own way, and prove that the Revolution was truly revolutionary.

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Re: Both sides had compelling points

by [Fallon King](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 10:43 PM

After this past week of class and rereading the forum handout several times, I still had reservations about both accounts as to if the American Revolution was conservative or not. Life in the colonies were developing yes, but it was not drastic enough to be considered radial in my opinion. And I do respectfully disagree with the comparison of an “old world” society. Nobody else really immigrated in mass quantities enough to impact the social structure after the constitution’s creation, in fact there were mass deportations. Society was almost identical to pre-constitutional america/colonies. No new social class was created, no new slaves were being brought in- in fact with the emergence of new states, brought us the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery. And if you were to argue that it was several years later, you would be correct. However, there was the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves which was enacted March of 1807 which states its purpose in its name. The only state to reopen slavery was South Carolina. So if someone were to justify the argument of whether society was completely reformed and did not have the same values of other societies such as the “old world” society, I would ask them to please do further research on this matter. When it comes to american materialism, it has existed since we first came to America. Of course it was in other forms such as land, crops, clothes, etc. I would say that one could even argue that it was normal part of life and still is up to this day. Also, I do believe that they knew their voices would be heard, even under a monarchy. Examples of this could even be as big as the declaration of independence. Of course, after that as well as other smaller quarrels over things such as tea their voices were sure to be heard. However, I don't think it would be fair to categorize their concerns being voiced to strictly pen and paper

either. The Boston Tea Party, for example, was a way to make sure they were seen and taken serious, and that's even with British interference attempting to overtaking their ways of life.

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Continuing the Discussion**by [Gehrig Van Tol](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 7:02 PM

Document number one, by Richard John Allan was one of the more compelling documents that actually went against my position of support for Diegler in my original posts. The document was compelling in that it expanded the lens at which I was looking at the radical or conservative nature of the revolution. After reading the original two articles by Diegler and Wood, I formed my opinion simply by looking at the Revolution in how it affected America and Americans, post Revolution as compared to Pre-Revolution, in order to come to my conclusion, which was, to quote Diegler with a sentence I used in my first post, “the society of post Revolutionary America was but the working out of social forces which were already evident in the colonial period”. While this may be true, and I believe it to be based on my readings and knowledge gathered from this history class as well as previous history classes, Allan pointed out the fact that “The proclamation in the Declaration of Independence of the equality of men in the sight of the Creator continues to serve as a battle cry for social and political justice. The patriots won independence; they also made a good start on the long road toward establishing and securing 'the rights of mankind.’” If viewed with this context, with the American Revolution being the catalyst for democratic revolution and democracy in general around the world, including the decidedly radical French Revolution, then the American Revolution would indeed be an extremely radical *inspiration* for revolution and democracy. Yet, I still hold to my decision that the American Revolution itself was conservative, at least in the stricter confines that it applies to the American people.

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However, the most significant document I read of the group was document number seven by Linda Grant DePauw, not simply because she held the same position as me about the Revolution being a conservative movement, but because unlike all of the other authors that I have referenced so far in my posts she is a women, and because of this can offer a somewhat unique and important perspective on the matter. She points out that, contrary to what Wood’s tries to imply in his article, “Four groups – Negroes, servants, women, and minors together comprised approximately 80 percent of the two and a half million Americans in the year 1776”, were not included in the entirety of the “freedoms” that this new nation and the “inalienable rights” that were so important and so often referenced, among those and perhaps most important, the right to vote. I had

touched on this idea as it applied to slavery and African American rights in a previous post, how even if there was some additional emphasis on human rights and the issue of slavery post-revolution, no change was actually enacted for almost 100 years. However, pointing out the other flaws that still remained in the states even after the Revolution is significant, especially coming from a woman, for whom the lack of social change post revolution, and the amount of time it took for these changes to take place (almost 150 years as it relates to women's suffrage) are most likely even more significant. Her input makes the opinions of those males who attest to the radical results of the Revolution seem hypocritical, as if they are only considering social change for males, even though this is not the case. And speaking on the subject, there were still issues of rights for males as well, with only those who owned land being able to vote and therefore have a say in this new "free" republic.

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The Revolution did not exist in a bubble

by [Jedaiah Falone](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 7:52 PM

After reading through the informed opinions of the given historians I am more convinced of my original stance, that the Revolution was not a conservative movement. Documents #2 and #3 in particular, although Rossiter and Boorstin argue that it was indeed conservative, help to reinforce my own opinion with what I felt was more narrow scope. Although I agree with Boorstin that the Americans were fighting to preserve rights they felt they already had, I disagree that that means the revolution was any less radical. Rossiter I feel also focuses solely on the degree of change that Americans experienced in his statement, ignoring not only the potential for impact abroad but the unique circumstance and society that had grown in the colonies compared to the rest of the world. Analyzing its motives and impact relative to American colonists does paint things as more conservative, but the fact remains that the Revolution had far reaching impacts both abroad and into the future of the United States. John Richard Alden in Document #1, although his tone sounds a bit biased both to the US and 'the Creator', outlines how "the American Revolution brought the first break in the European colonial system..." as well as contributing to the increasing number of nations moving away from monarchic governing systems. Had the Revolution never occurred a lot of these same changes probably would have still come about eventually in some other way, but it did happen and the resulting overall changes it brought about are too many and too far reaching (both in scope and time) to focus exclusively on the colonists immediately before and after the war.

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