

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

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The Revolution

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, November 9, 2018, 6:28 PM

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IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

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yes it was conservative:

by [Annie Taylor](#) - Saturday, November 10, 2018, 11:46 PM

I would have to agree with Degler that the revolution was conservative. From what I can tell is that the colonists had already set up a way of life in the Americas and it was being threatened by the crown, the Colonist had to fight against the crown's army who was completely trying to take over and control the colonist. The revolution itself was fought in order to conserve the colonist life's through their views of political and/or other social

views, However even though the colonist didn't overthrow the British crown and its society completely and start from new the colonist still had fought to let a selected present society grow.

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0



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The American Revolution was not a conservative movement

by [Ben Crawford](#) - Sunday, November 11, 2018, 4:06 PM

After reading the documents containing the approaches of Degler and Wood, I have been able to come to the conclusion that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement. While I do not fully disagree with Carl N. Degler's findings, I just happen to agree with those of Gordon S. Wood more. To understand where Wood is coming from in his statement that the "American Revolution was a far reaching, radical event that produced a unique democratic society in which ordinary people could make money, pursue happiness, and be self governing", you first have to understand the type of people that came to America to begin with. These were optimistic people who were opting for a new start. They were not like those of pre-Marxian eighteenth century society which were described on page nine of the handout as "people in that very different distant world could not as yet conceive of society apart from government". With that being said, you have realize how much more open minded and mentally mature the citizens of the colonies actually were. Page eight of the handout describes the situation of the American Revolution almost perfectly in my opinion by saying "The American Revolution does not seem to have the same kinds of causes—the soda! wrongs, the class conflict, the impoverishment, the grossly inequitable distributions of wealth—that presumably lie behind other revolutions. There were no peasant uprisings, no jacqueries, no burning of châteaux, no storming of prisons". The colonists were fighting for "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". These people (colonists) were fighting for their nation to be to others what is was for them, and that was a safe haven, where people of all identities can live together and freely pursue their dreams. In opposition, Carl N. Degler's writings do make a good point on page five by saying "These conservative, upper class leaders who 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". However, it is very naive to think that the leaders such as Washington, Jefferson, and Adams were the only ones playing important roles in the revolution. Degler fails to mention all those of less social stature who died in the fight for freedom such as Crispus Attucks. Attucks is widely regarded as the first person to die in the Revolutionary War when he was shot during the Boston Massacre. Merely a dock worker, Crispus Attucks paid the ultimate price in the war for freedom and is a perfect example that the revolution was not solely made up of upper class leaders.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2



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Re: The American Revolution was not a conservative movement



by [Annie Taylor](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 10:22 PM

I couldn't have agreed more with this post. Woods brings into prospective like you stated that the "American Revolution was a far reaching, radical event that produced a unique democratic society in which ordinary people could make money, pursue happiness, and be self governing" there is a lager aspect then just right when the revolutions ended or even before it ended, the message was for change and later the change was brought through its self governing and how there social orders and laws can effect even a newly made up economic system that brings the new American to peace with there self's and how they could create a country so vast with its ways early on through order and how the people wanted there society to look like.

Sum of ratings: [1 \(1\)](#)

1



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No, it was Radical

by [Lisa Schnabel](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 6:00 PM

The historian Gordon S. Wood asserts that in the eighteenth-century the American Revolution was radical and social in a special manner. Wood states the Americans were "destroying monarchy and establishing republics they were changing their society as well as their governments" (p. 9). Our chapter five lecture in class, at one point focused on Thomas Paine, and printing of the "Common Sense" pamphlets. It is in these pamphlets where Paine describes how ridiculous it was for an island to be governing a continent. Paine also urges Americans to "unite under a simple republican government of their own" (text 194). Professor Maier reiterates by saying "the change Paine celebrated consisted in the founding of republics...which all power came from the people" (00:44 video). The encouragement Paine gave Americans, of the eighteenth-century, was to not only be governed by the people, but to be united as a people. It is in that declaration by him and others like John Adams, whose correspondence carried news to all existing states about the British movements during the war. Adams, by that action, affirmed that America was to see itself a as united society. Wood mentions "social relationships---the way people were connected to one another---were changed" (p.10). Wood continues to say "it was in fact a new society unlike any that had ever existed anywhere in the world" (p.10) during the early nineteenth-century, due to the Revolution. I agree with Wood that the American Revolution transformed "the relationships that bound people to each other" (p. 9) and that is why it is seen as radical.

Sum of ratings: [3 \(1\)](#)

3



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Defining Radical and Conservative

by [Nathan Edwards](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 6:42 PM

After reading both articles showing different perspectives, I don't believe the American Revolution was a conservative movement. It was a hard decision to make because I found both articles holding some truth to them. But in the end I realized the American Revolution held to some traditional values but overall produced a huge change that is even demonstrated in America today. As far as being radical though, America did not show many casualties or a massive upheaval like most revolutions are thought of. But America went through many political and governmental changes to make it a revolution. America wanted to give rid of the monarchistic society they were living in and instead give the power to the people. Most of the choices that were made were about their new government and less about the social changes. "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; on the contrary: it was as radical and as revolutionary as any in history" (Wood, 9). They formed a completely new society that never existed before so in that sense, the American revolution could not be defined as conservative. But looking at Degler's argument, I agree that the state had always revolved around how a man worshipped God (Degler, 1). Madison and Jefferson had much to do with the doctrine of separation of church and state, a move which I believe shouldn't have happened. To conclude, the American Revolution could only be described as radical in the sense that the Revolution involved a lot of change to our society and affects us to this day.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2


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**+1 for Carl N. Degler**by [Jakob Ramirez](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 7:43 PM

I found myself siding with Carl N. Degler after reading both arguments, and that is because he provided some solid evidence which was very convincing that the American Revolution was indeed a conservative movement. He states that those who lead the revolution were men that had already been members of the colonial ruling class, meaning that they were already very powerful under the British rule and remained powerful after the revolution had come to an end. The revolution was more of a reform because there was no economical inequality that caused a lower class to revolt for more power, it simply was an act of colonial leaders that wanted more for their country.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1


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**Re: +1 for Carl N. Degler**by [Ben Crawford](#) - Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 5:03 PM

While I agree with your statement that the revolution was an act of colonial leaders wanting more for their country, I find it hard to believe that they were the only ones motivated for the change. A lot of other colonial people supported the war and played vital roles in securing independence. Acts of defiance such as the Boston Tea Party, the Stamp Act riots, and the Boston Massacre were made up of people from all different

socioeconomic backgrounds. When the time for battle and war came around, it was the upper class men who rose into positions of power, but that was due to their leadership. In the early stages of the revolution, a diverse collection of colonial people took part in revolting against England.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2



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Re: +1 for Carl N. Degler

by [Jakob Ramirez](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 7:57 PM

Ben, I appreciate your insight and I couldn't agree more with you. I had worded my initial post wrong by stating, "...the revolution was an act of colonial leaders that wanted more for their country". When I should have said, " the revolution was and act of colonial leaders and colonists that wanted more for their country".

Sum of ratings: 0 (1)

0



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Re: +1 for Carl N. Degler

by [Jakob Ramirez](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 8:48 PM

In the text it was stated, "Congress saw these outbursts as a call for national reforms. While armed partisans were making the war more radical, politics became more conservative..." (text, p212). The outbursts that are being referred to were those of member of The First Confederate Army retaliating the harsh conditions that they faced during war. These outbursts reached the attention of the congress, which then brought the creation of executive departments and a national bank. This supports the idea that the revolution was a conservative movement because congress made efforts to suppress the radical behavior with more forms of the national government to suppress the radical acts.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1



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The American Revolution was Conservative

by [Jeffrey South](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 9:40 PM

Before I take my side I want to point out the difference between a conservative revolution and a radical revolution:

- In a conservative movement, there is a great social upheaval, often accompanied by armed conflict, but the resulting society is not very different from the old society. It's not

an attempt to make fundamental changes to the society it occurred in. Most of the laws and social institutions would remain unchanged.

- A radical movement seeks to fundamentally uproot the old society and institute a new one in its place.

Since everyone read from the same handout, we should all agree that the American Revolution was definitely a conservative movement. As Degler mentioned in page 6 of the handout, "These Americans, for all their talk, had been a contented and prosperous people under the British Crown and they were, therefore, contented revolutionaries who wanted nothing more than to undisturbed in their accustomed ways." In layman's terms, that means that the colonists had already set up a way of life there that was suddenly being threatened by the British; they fought against this tightening of control. The revolution itself was fought in order to conserve their political and social views.

Another comment that Degler made on page 6 to solidify my opinion was, "Important social institutions were left untouched by the Revolution: the class structure, the distribution of property, the capitalistic economy, (and) the ideas of the people concerning government."

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3



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Re: The American Revolution was Conservative

by [Nathan Edwards](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 10:47 AM

I agree that some things didn't change very much when the revolution took place but I can't agree that the revolution was completely conservative. In order to break away from the crown, America needed to leave some traditional values behind and start a completely new system. As Wood stated, "By the time the revolution had run its course in the early nineteenth century, American society had been radically and thoroughly transformed." Fundamentally, the institutions and general welfare hadn't changed but social relationships did change. As you stated, the Americans were happy under the British crown but once they took it too far, changes had to be made so it could never happen again.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1



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Re: The American Revolution was Conservative

by [Jeffrey South](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 2:58 PM

I do agree with you, Nathan. In perspective I can see how the American Revolution could be leaning towards certain aspects of a conservative *and* radical movement; it's a tough choice. But reading through the document a second time, my opinion is unchanged. On p.190 in our textbooks, under "The First Continental Congress," the authors of the book state that the colonies had already begun to challenge the Crown with social and political petitions one year before the American Revolution started. In my opinion that means that the colonies had already grown accustomed

to their own way of living, and the American Revolution was more about defending that rather than implementing new changes. Thus, making the American Revolution conservative.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2



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Re: The Revolution

by [Dylan Mecchi](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 10:19 PM

The American Revolution was an event that broke the colonies away from Britain and became their own nation. This was indeed a conservative movement in the sense that the way of life as a colonist/american did not change much, but, the big factor that shows how the American Revolution was not a conservative movement, that it brought up the idea that the citizens had the right to govern themselves instead of listening to a ruling single power. This idea of governing oneself brought out a whole new way of living where one had a say in how the government was run and they had a say in what laws are created for the nation. "There was no reign of terror in the American Revolution and no resultant dictator—no Cromwell, no Bonaparte. The American Revolution does not seem to have the same kinds of causes—the soda! wrongs, the class conflict, the impoverishment, the grossly inequitable distributions of wealth—that presumably lie behind other revolutions. There were no peasant uprisings, no jacqueries, no burning of châteaux, no storming of prisons." said in page 8 of the article "Was the American Revolution a Conservative movement?". The big reason behind the American Revolution was breaking away from Britain's rule and creating a new form of government and it happened. Yes there were many things that stayed the same like slavery, the woman's right to vote, indians were seen as savages, but the main point was that they broke away from royal government. This was a huge factor into shaping the United States into what it is today.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1



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Re: The Revolution

by [Maggie Larson](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 11:15 PM

I disagree with author Carl N. Degler - I do not believe that the Revolutionary war was a conservative movement. At the most basic level the simple answer comes from the definition of what a conservative was back in time leading up to the war. In the 1700's conservatism meant favoring the order and the authority of traditional power. The American Revolution separated the Americans from British control and conservatives at the time wouldn't of had an interest in such a movement aside from trying to stop any competitors.

Maggie Larson

Sum of ratings: 0 (1)

0



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**No Significant Social Change After the Revolutionary War**by [Tyler Antich](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 11:45 PM

In Woods' article, he states that the revolution had "no social causes and no social consequences" (page 9) and that it was more of a "constitutional defense of American rights against British encroachments" (page 9). To further prove this point, in Degler's article, the author says "even when one has added together the new constitutions, the enlightened religious innovations, and the stimulus to equality, it is quickly apparent that the social consequences of the Revolution were meager" (pages 3/4). Degler even goes on to say that the social changes were nowhere near the ones of France and Russia in later years. My interpretation of the evidence I've provided, is that they somehow corroborate and show that since there was no real social consequences or changes, it may have been a conservative movement.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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Yes, it is true that there was a worldwide revolution taking place during the time of the American revolution. The enlightenment and even more so the religious movement of the great awakening that came as a response to the enlightenment were the movements that lead to the American revolution. These movements created new waves of independence and free thought that would have a ripple effect worldwide. However relevant these intellectual revolutions were they are not the topic of the argument. Wood states "broader social revolution should not be confused with the American Revolution. America, it is said, would have emerged into the modern world as a liberal, democratic, and capitalistic society even without the revolution." He goes on to say that the other revolutions in this time period, say the french revolution for example would also not have been possible if not for the intellectual movements in Europe. The french revolution very closely mirrors the American despite the class struggle. They both involved an overthrow of a government that was replaced by a new liberal, largely democratic and capitalistic society. I personally don't think it's fair to compare revolutions each has its own unique causes, and pre existing structures or lack there of in the American revolution. That said when compared these two revolutions are near identical if we ignore the class struggle of the upper and lower class in the french revolution. My point is I don't think it's fair to say that the American revolution brought about less change than others in the same time period. Because each rebellion has its own unique circumstances, the changes in the colonies were radical and in some cases quite similar to others. Especially when considering that America was founded as a republic while democratic, this was still unheard of since the Roman republic.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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by [Annie Taylor](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 10:15 PM

when you stated "I personally don't think it's fair to compare revolutions each has its own unique causes, and pre existing structures or lack there of in the American revolution." I thought yes , each revolution has had its one unique causes but if you look at the American revolution it was surely the first of its kind, there was no model before it and no one had seen anything like it happened before. All other revolutions grasp the ideas that the American revolutions had and was a guild for its own revolutions with some separate changes based on the solutions.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1



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Re: Yes traditional conservative links to revolution

by [Alivia Garcia-Irwin](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 11:57 PM

Was the Revolution a Conservative Movement?

After reading and getting to consider both sides of the arguments by the authors on this topic I decided to side with Yes it was a conservative movement but with that I also had to consider what exactly conservative meant and would mean back then, conservative by today's standards we have certain things we associate it with that we may morally agree or not agree with. But the basis of conservatism is to have a "traditional" outlook on values, religion and politics of course. This back then would be a good religious wholesome man but as (Degler,1) writes in the first page "a mans religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of laws nor deprive of the right of attaining and holding the highest offices that are known in the united states" meaning of course for this new wave of thinking a man's religion alone does not give him more rights or more power. Another interesting point that was made was that as the author states on page 2 that the doctrine let religious freedom be an important part of the doctrine but also to "keep politics free of religion" (Degler,2) which might be seen as a non conservative argument but this is an underlying basis of the traditional outlooks to later come. The representation of the people in the house were mainly people who had been privileged for most of their life the author states that at least 40 percent of them attended college and it was extremely rare to be college educated at that time. These men would of course have traditional views as many of the, did even come from important men and leaders from colonies. He also mentions how important issues were kept out of the way during the revolution " class structure, distribution of property, capitalistic economy.." (Degler,6) there was a lack of true social and economic change that remained to be fixed. Overall there was too much from a "conservative" traditional outlook that I could see wrong with most of the issues presented"

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3



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**Re: Yes traditional conservative links to revolution**by [Kyle Schmidt](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 8:12 PM

While it's true the revolution did not fix all of the colonies problems, it did bring about a great amount of change. The american revolution made possible all of the social change that would follow it in the following decades. The denial of the right to vote of women and african americans was because of a bill from essex saying only those who owned property could vote. Emma goldman said change is always violent. This is true in the american revolution as well. A war was necessary to the colonists for the freedom they were seeking. To me being willing to fight and die for your beliefs is very radical. The social movement of equal rights following the war and the shoot for the moon mindset that is still in america today is a result of the enlightenment and the american revolution.

Sum of ratings: **1 (1)**

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**No, it was Radical**by [Lisa Schnabel](#) - Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 9:23 PM

Let me continue to show how the American Revolution was radical from the strict constructionist view. Wood elaborates that "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" (p. 11). He asserts that the individual ordinary person was given the opportunity to pursue happiness. This right was pronounced through the writing of the Declaration of Independence saying that all men had "certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (textbook A-1). In the first and fourth amendments of the Bill of Rights, as mentioned in our class lecture on Tuesday, the new Americans were given the freedom of speech, freedom to assemble, and freedom to print without the government's intrusion. And the new Americans now had the right to "secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures" (textbook A-10). The personal rights of each individual of the late eighteenth-century was radically changed in America, as shared by Wood.

Sum of ratings: **2 (1)**

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The Revolution**by [Kyle Schmidt](#) - Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 11:12 PM

Revolution comes in many shapes and sizes. The american revolution was less violent than others and involved no overthrow of the class system. That said it does not discredit it or the actions of the founding fathers. The revolution was unique in its situation, the colonies were still quite young relatively speaking. "Social classes based on occupation or wealth did not set themselves against one another, for no classes in this modern sense yet

eisted.” (pg 12. Was the American Revolution a conservative movement?) The state of the colonies was still unorganized and in discord. This resulted in revolutionaries being not of one class but any discontented radical colonist. The revolution was still a violent war in which neighbor was more likely to fight neighbor than in the civil war. A war that freed the colonists of monarchical rule established a republic unlike any ever created before. The sons of liberty openly opposed the monarchy and fought for rapid change, equality and reform before the overthrow of the king. These are the traits of rebels whether they wore powdered wigs or what class they were in is irrelevant. The founding fathers as well wanted equal treatment and representation for the colonists. While the colonies were not oppressed they were not free by any means. We spent weeks going over the many tariffs and acts that only affected the colonies showing that they were not equals. Take the molasses act for example that attempted to limit the trade of the colonists. This act and others were designed to keep the colonies reliant on the monarchy. The colonists attempts at peaceful reform were only met with more controlling acts by the British. These intolerable acts placed Boston under martial law and devastated the colonies. Relations between colonists and troops were bad enough because of British troops preventing westward expansion in the appalachians and the quartering of troops in taverns. Forcing colonists to feed and house the troops that were limiting their freedoms and sometimes hurting colonists in drunken outbursts as alcoholism was rampant in this time period. Is what ultimately caused the revolution, it was not unprovoked and without purpose. In fact it was a long time coming and caused by internal tensions as well as external that had been building for years. The war for independence freed the colonies from a monarchy that would only allow them to exist as subjects and outlawed self government. As well as created an entirely new form of republic the world had never seen before that would persist to this day.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2


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Evidence Supporting the Lack of Change in Social Classes

 by [Tyler Antich](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 11:49 PM

I believe you picked a very good quote here, however, I don't think you picked the best evidence to back it up. Your quote somewhat ties into the first post I made in this forum where I also explain the absence of change in the social classes. I believe it would have been best to back your statement up with comparisons to other revolutions of their time period and how their social classes changed. For example, you could have talked about "the massive social changes which shook France and Russia in later years" as talked about by Degler on page four. Another thing you could have brought up, is how people from the same social classes could even be against each other. Like when we learned in class that the revolution could even break apart families.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1


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No, it was Radical

 by [Lisa Schnabel](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 9:24 PM

Wood also states that the American Revolution “released powerful popular entrepreneurial and commercial energies that few realized existed and transformed the economic landscape” (p. 11) of America. It was the Virginia declaration of rights where it says “equally free and independent” (p. 13) were the men in the new America. They were free to pursue economic independence in lands west of the Appalachian-mountains and also beyond the Mississippi River. However, the most important aspect was the recognition of an individual’s “attributes...that defined him and protected him from outside pressure” as property. For example, “a carpenter’s skill...was his property” to be used as he sees fit. And it was stated in the Tenth Amendment that “powers not assigned to the national government by the Constitution remained with the states and the citizenry” (textbook 240) limiting the federal government and promoting the voice of those with “property” [as stated earlier]. The citizens were no longer seen as “courtiers” (p.12) bound to pleasing the monarchical powers. However, the men were now seen as “patriots” (p. 12) who were “free of dependent connections and influence; their position or rank came naturally from their talent and from below, from recognition by the people” (p. 12). This radical economic change came about due to the American Revolution, as Jefferson mentions “dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambitions” (p.13). Wood continues by saying of man “without having property and a will of his own...a man could have no public spirit; and there could be no republic” (p. 13).

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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No, it was Radical

by [Lisa Schnabel](#) - Thursday, November 15, 2018, 7:32 PM

Wood proceeds with his argument saying “the revolutionaries wanted to create a new republican world in which ‘all offices lie open to men of merit, of whatever rank or condition’” (p.14). It is here where Wood’s quotes David Ramsay, a physician, historian and whose patriot speech was given in 1778, he says “even the reins of state may be held by the son of the poorest men, if possessed of abilities equal to the important station” (p.14). Wood is asserting that the American Revolution unraveled the dependency on the nobles to fill the principle positions of leadership in the government. In the document #4, Wood writes “Men of more-humble and more rural origins and less educated than those who had sat in the colonial assemblies now became representatives” this was clearly revolutionary. Jon Butler, from Yale University, states that America had “a society that look utterly unlike old world society, this was a revolutionary society...it was a modern society” (video #1, 3:02). Americans still have the same spirit as was ignited in the Revolutionary War. General John Galvin sums it up best by saying “we qualify everything we do and all the relationships that we have, domestically and in terms of our foreign policy on those ideals that came out so very clearly as we started into the war of independence” (video #2, 0:58). Essentially, the American Revolution radically changed the face of politics and the people of America.

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**Re: No, it was Radical**by [Annie Taylor](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 10:11 PM

"the revolutionaries wanted to create a new republican world in which 'all offices lie open to men of merit, of whatever rank or condition'" this texts caught my attention, I never realized that woods stated this until I read your post. I think this bring into the change of social order within the colony's, it brings in a larger aspect of the revolutions changings even after it was over =.

Sum of ratings:0 (1) 0

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The Revolution**by [Dylan Mecchi](#) - Thursday, November 15, 2018, 8:48 PM

As I stated early this week about how the American Revolution was in fact not a conservative movement. Today after reading a little more about this topic I have decided to counter my argument and I do believe that the American Revolution was a conservative movement. The reason being is that the men who began the revolution were not actually looking to create an entirely new set of laws and a way of life, but were attempting to solidify these rules and laws into their society on their own and not based off of British rule. "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." said by Daniel Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, 1953. This sets in stone about how the American Revolution was a conservative movement because he talks about how it tried to preserve old ways of living and not create new ones.

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[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**No, the American Revolution was not a Conservative movement.**by [Karsten Brevik](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 6:43 PM

Karsten Brevik

201 Escobar

Forum 3

November 12, 2018

Was the American Revolution a Conservative movement?

Which of the two essay author's stances (Degler or Wood) do you most agree with and why?

Conservative: holding to traditional attitudes and values and cautious about change or innovation, typically in relation to politics or religion.

I have inserted the definition above not only for my own personal reference when writing this, but also because I think it is imperative that when answering this question we are familiar with the concrete meaning of this term; conservative. In 2018 when our country seems to be increasingly polarized it becomes easy for all of us to place labels on one another to not only find people who align with us socially and politically, but to also generalize those who don't in an attempt to associate them with someone or something they might not want to be. Today some of these labels are Democrat or Republican, Left-wing or Right-wing, Progressive or Conservative. While these terms do have clear cut meanings in our culture today they are subject to being redefined to fit various narratives, so when answering the question posed today it is important to keep the official definitions in mind.

In my personal opinion, no, the American Revolution was not a Conservative movement. While I believe both authors made some very strong points the deciding factor in my decision was the idea that the Revolutionaries knew that corruption in positions of power was so common that they created a democratic republic built around the idea of individual freedom. Tired of being governed by a corrupt and unstable parliament halfway around the world these "radicals" created a government system far different from the mercantilist monarchy that had been in control of them for years. Although they did not create an entirely new culture overnight, they built a foundation for a society whose citizens can each claim their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. A great example of this is a quote Mr. Wood included in his essay "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." He then continued to point out that a unique characteristic of the American Revolution is the lack of despair in the colonies prior to the war. In almost every revolution throughout the globe has come from the manifestation of an extremely oppressed society usually overthrowing a tyrannical regime to put a more fair one in its place. This usually results in drastic changes in a government's social and economic practices. In these cases revolution is just a natural result of the instability, this was not the case with the American Revolution. Although fed up with the taxes and guidelines imposed upon them from their royal superiors across the Atlantic, and their lack of control over them, the colonists had things relatively alright for a pre-revolutionary society. They were not starving or being executed for speaking out of turn, which meant there was no need for any extreme change in the social or economic structure of their society. So does this mean its

less of a revolution? Because the entire fabric of colonists lives wasn't rewoven does that make the American Revolution a Conservative movement? Of course not. Personally I think it is quite the contrary. These eighteenth-century radicals were put in an extremely unique position. With the recent religious enlightenments the idea of rebelling against authority was not uncommon, and without the right to be represented in parliament the intolerable acts showed colonist the system they were living under was not looking out for their interests. Because of this the Revolutionaries were able to see the need for change before too much turmoil set in. This is good for two reasons. First, colonists didn't have to suffer any more than they had to. Second, nothing stable comes from extreme circumstances. Without the massive social and emotional burden that comes with most revolutions the eighteenth-century revolutionaries were able to be much more objective when constructing their new government, resulting in a system that takes no political stances other than the fact that each person has individual liberties.

Although there was no restructuring of social classes or drastic change in economic practices, eighteenth-century radicals were far from cautious about change. In fact they saw the need for change on the horizon before it was essential to their survival. Because of this they were able to create a timeless, well structured government which not only could they benefit from, but control themselves. All without forcing its citizens to change the way they lived their lives. Stating that the American Revolution was a Conservative movement implies that the Revolutionaries were concerned about preserving the political system they were living under, which is far from the reality. The American Revolution's objective was to create a new form of government, just because the system they created shares characteristics Britain's does that the whole movement Conservative? I don't personally think so.

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"Revolutionaries knew that corruption in positions of power was so common that they created a democratic republic built around the idea of individual freedom" this line caught my eye. it was a nice tie into your writing. I do agree that revolutions are based kind of on the corruption of power that positions are give and that's how a revolution can be won. The American revolution was very corrupt within its self and lead to some unwanted damage to the crown and to the colonies one they became independent even though the war was to keep the its freedoms and rights but power can lead to locking down the freedoms of the people which is corruption in positions.

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I talked with my tutor about the subject and honestly the American revolution can be conservative or not depending how you choose to look at the situation. If you agree with Carl Degler then the American revolution is in more of a close shot term view were no social, property, or economic changes really happened to make a big impact after the war. The people just wanted to have a say in what was being done and the Crown didn't respect that, but once they were independent there was still very much so the crown influences on the people. If you picked no (which I now have picked) you would see that Gordon Wood agrees with Degler but only for its short term look upon it, he rather go more in-depth and into the events that lead after the war such as the war (being the first of it s kind) leading example for other revolutions to come, and the peoples powered of changing there social ways like laws and order to see fit for them and how the economic structure changed once taxing was brought into place and exporting was a much larger priority and the laws towards property have changed too.

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