

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

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## Forum 3 The Revolution



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### The Revolution

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

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IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

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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### An Unintentionally Liberal Movement

by [Donald Laskey](#) - Friday, November 9, 2018, 10:54 PM

After reading the assigned texts, I have come to the personal conclusion that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement. One definition of liberal is to be open to new behavior and changes. The American Revolution brought on huge changes, so therefore was a liberal movement. While speaking against the idea of a conservative movement, historian Gordon S. Wood said "In our eyes the American revolutionaries appear to be absorbed in changing only their governments, not their society. But in

destroying monarchy and establishing republics they were changing their society as well as their governments, and they knew it," (Gordon). This means that they unintentionally created a liberal movement by changing all the things that they would have inherited from Britain's government. Some may say that the American Revolution was a conservative movement because of economic and social factors, but it was also a time of great change when people chased after happiness in addition to money.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2



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**Re: Conservative or Radical: Good question!**

by [Scott Carpenter](#) - Saturday, November 10, 2018, 4:17 PM

Carl N Degler say:

Page 6: More over. 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.

SO:

In one respect I think: They were trying to conserve the rights that previously had as colonials. The British for the most part left the American colonies alone, until the French and Indian (7 Years War) when they tried to recoup their expenses by levying additional taxes on the colonists, then punishing them when they resisted. So, in that sense it was a conservative movement. They just wanted to go back to the way things were.

BUT:

Gordon S Wood says:

Page:9 If we measure the radicalism of revolutions by the degree by social misery or economic deprivation suffered, or by the number of people killed or manor houses burned, then this conventional emphasis on the conservatism of the American Revolution becomes true enough, But is we measure the radicalism by the amount of social change that actually took place by transformations in relationships that bond 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. Of course, the American Revolution was very different from any other revolution. But it was no less radical and no less social for being different

SO:

In one respect I think: They were trying to overthrow the King and British government, so in that respect it was a radical one at that.

SO:

At this point in my understanding of the readings and what I have concluded at this point I am still undecided on what I think and who I agree with more. To be continued.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**The Conservative Movement**by [Erik Westfall](#) - Saturday, November 10, 2018, 5:44 PM

After reading both articles I would have to say both Authors make really good point on both sides. Although I take the side of Mr.Degler about the Revolution being a conservative movement, I also agree with Wood on how ordinary people good purse a happier life and make a good amount of money. The main reasons that I agreed with Degler was his views on the economy and how even though there were economic grievances the war did set the path for the expansion of the American economy. The English mercantilistic restrictions provided adventuresome American merchants and they found new markets and new sources of profit. Another reason I took his side was because no new social class arose from the American Revolution, the men who engineered the revolution were the men who were largely members of the colonial ruling class. Lastly even though in Georgia and Pennsylvania (which were largely Democratically ran) new men seemed to acquire positions of power the rest of the Colonies men in power stayed the same. To end this I'd like to quote the line from the article by Federalist Fisher Ames , "all cannot be rich, but all have the right to make the attempt." To me this forum has been the best so far, if anyone else agrees please let me know!

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The Conservative Movement**by [Donald Laskey](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 11:34 PM

Hi Erik,

I agree with you on how both of the authors make really good points on the argument, but I would have to go with Gordon Wood and say the American Revolution was more of liberal movement. Don't get me wrong, I do like some of the points Carl Degler brings up, for example, his views on the economy, but I believe that Gordon wood made better points. I believe that it was a liberal movement because usually conservatives want to stay the same and don't like to change power. I also want to say that I think this forum may be the best one. It is easy to understand and relate to, which I appreciate.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Conservative / but there are radical points as well to be discussed**by [Scott Carpenter](#) - Sunday, November 11, 2018, 7:21 PM

Chapter six in the text on page 219 second paragraph states: "In March 1783, many Continental officers threatened a coup d'état unless Congress granted them generous pensions, Washington, confronting them at their encampment at Newburgh, New York,

fum-bled for his glasses and remarked, "I have grown gray in your service, and know find myself growing blind." Tears filled their eyes of his comrades in arms, and the threat of a coup vanished."

SO:

Long after Yorktown, the Continental Army officers plotted to march on Congress and seize control of the government. This plot was devised without General Washington's knowledge, and when the general learned of it, he pleaded with the officers not to do this, that marching on congress was contrary to the ideals for which they had fought.

It would have been so easy for Washington to have made himself king, emperor or a lord protector, etc.

I think George Washington character contributes largely in making the American Revolution different from other revolutions. The rebelling faction sought to remove a government that was abusive of the rights of the people. They were successful and No civil war or rise of a dictator came after. So, this illustrates a difference between the American Revolution and most others.

American revolutionaries such as Washington, John Adams and Patrick Henry were conservative, they were just defending their rights that had been guaranteed to them under the English constitution.

In this regard, the American Revolution is a conservative one.

BUT:

There are some radical viewpoints to be talked about as well.

SO:

I think there are points to be talked about that can be looked at that Degler and Wood have some good points. I am still undecided on who I agree with more.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2



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### Was the Revolutionary War a Revolution?

by [Elias Brouse](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 6:08 PM

When you learn about the Revolutionary war in elementary school, you are described imagery of a country coming together to fight for major change and the birth of a nation, but was the fight for independence really that radical? Or was it even a revolution? Merriam-Webster defines it as a "sudden, radical, or complete change" or "a fundamental change in political organization." (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/revolution>) Under these guidelines, the American people would have to have undergone a major social or political change as a result of the revolution. After reading both articles analyzing whether the American Revolution was a conservative movement, I would say it is, due to a lack of more radical results. Prize-winning historian Gordon Wood states that "If we measure the radicalism or revolutions by the degree of social misery or economic

deprivation suffered...then this conventional emphasis on the conservatism of the American Revolution becomes true enough." (Page 9) In this, he is describing the fact that the revolution was merely a "fight against the apparent growth of prerogative power," meaning it was not a big enough reason to call it a revolution, and I agree. Great Britain did not oppress the American Colonists to the point where we had poverty and economic deprivation. Although Gordon Wood does not support the revolution as a conservative movement, these points stress that without major change or effect, the war would be considered more conservative.

I agree more with the points made by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Carl N. Degler, who claims that the revolution left the social and political structure untouched. He claims that "there is a lack of widespread social and economic change" and that "they were contented revolutionaries who wanted nothing more than to be undisturbed in their accustomed ways." (Page 6) These ideas came from before the revolutionary war, and many even expected the war to happen. The result of America after the war was not one would associate with "revolution", and "the continuity brought a degree of social and political stability to the nation." (Page 5) One would not expect this to be the result, but this does show the conservative nature of the American Revolution. Overall, the revolution did not insight a major change but was merely a change to the existing structure as a result of British encroachment, such as taxation, meaning it was not radical, but actually very conservative.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3



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### Re: Consider the "Tories"

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

In the text book, page 208 second paragraph: "After 1783 Loyalist refugees helped to reinvigorate the British Empire. In Canada, low taxes and a generous land policy, which required an oath of allegiance to George III, attracted thousands of loyalist immigrants from the United States (Known as "late loyalist" because they fled after the Revolutionary War.) By the War of 1812, four-fifths of Upper Canada's 100,000 people were American-born.

So:

The American Revolution undoubtedly turned society in half. The Revolution was not a peaceful result of an American people in agreement but possibly, just the opposite and could possibly be viewed as civil war resulting in the removal of 100,000 Tories from the United States. During the Revolution and after the War had ended, for sure Tories were track down, their property confiscated, persecuted, and sometimes killed; in my opinion this would be considered radical.

From my 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> post and this one, I have concluded that the American Revolution has radical points to be made about the Revolution, but I feel there are more conservative points about it. And would have to agree with Degler.

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Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

**The American Revolution was a radical movement**by [Morgan Graham](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 6:43 PM

I am going to have to agree with Gordon S. Wood and say that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement. When I first thought about this question I initially thought I was going to agree with the side of yes, and say it was conservative. But once I read this quote in particular by Wood, I changed my mind. he says in the packet from class, "They made speeches, not bombs; they wrote learned pamphlets, not manifestos. They were not abstract theorists and they were not social levelers. They did not kill one another; they did not devour themselves. There was no reign of terror in the American Revolution and no resultant dictator." I thought very good points were made in that argument. There was no one person leading this revolution like a dictator or king, as they were used to in England. This movement was actually pretty radical. I also appreciate how Wood takes arguments from the other side and argues that it was radical with facts. In one quote he says, "But 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." I really agree with this statement because there was much social change between England and America and they were very rebellious against England.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**The American Revolution was a conservative movement**by [Fallon King](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 6:50 PM

After reviewing the packet 'Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?' I agree that the American Revolution was a conservative movement. Events leading up to the Revolution kind of aim towards this. The definition of conservatism is "a political and social philosophy promoting traditional social institutions in the context of culture and civilization. The central tenets of conservatism include tradition, human imperfection, organic society, hierarchy, authority, and property right. The colonists were trying to protect their social and political ways without having to deal with the threats of interference from the British. I would also consider this revolution conservative because unlike most other revolutions throughout history, this revolution wasn't to make large fundamental changes to its society. " It is significant, for example, that no new social class came to power through the door of the American Revolution.... A convenient gauge of the essential continuity of governing class in America before and after the Revolution is to be found in an examination of the careers of the signers of the Declaration of Independence." Most of the changes were in government, to shift the position of power and modify it to restrict powers (the constitution).

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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**Re: The American Revolution was a conservative movement**by [Erik Westfall](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 11:08 PM

I also have to agree with you, there's so much evidence supporting that it was a conservative movement. Basically these men who stood up wanted to break away from the British to increase their own wealth. Even though there were a couple of new people that rose to power, for the most part all the men who had power and wealth remained at the top of the pyramid. You are also right about how no social class rose to power through the American Revolution. I believe strongly that the American Revolution was a conservative moment, and your post just made me believe in even more! This post was very well done!

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The Revolution**by [Bryce Moore](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 7:38 PM

I have decided to try something else in this forum. Instead of immediately taking a side on one of the opinions, I will take about why I would side with one on one post. And why I would side with the other on a later post. I feel as if this would give me the best knowledge and can really give me a idea on who's side I really agree with the most. I will side today with Carl N. Degler who said that the revolution was indeed a conservative movement. A very conservative topic he brought up was slavery. He brings up the term "all men are created equal". Which is stated in the Declaration of Independence. He says "these five words have been sneered at as idealistic, refuted as manifestly inaccurate, and denied as preposterous, but they have, nonetheless, always been capable of calling forth deep emotional response from Americans... In 1781 the supreme judicial court of Massachusetts declared slavery at an end in that state because it "is inconsistent with our own conduct and Constitution" which "set out with declaring that all men are born free and equal...". This problem it's self is huge, and to let everyone know that they are now equal to everyone in the United States is a huge deal. Especially for the conservative side of things. This brings in many more blacks, who now can build up trust in the leaders that they will soon feel free and equal instead of being told they are.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**The Revolution was Revolutionary, Not Conservative.**by [Lauren Rogers](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 7:41 PM

I most agree with Gordon S. Wood's view in "The Radicalism of the American Revolution". I agree that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement.

Many great changes came from the American Revolution including the separation of church and state. This change in government was a huge difference from what the colonists had experienced before.

Religion of the Crown was of major importance to the people, as we were able to see with the rulings of King Henry VIII and his family. The different religions they all believed while in power had devastating roles on the people, ending in many deaths and the beginnings of new religions(class discussions from week 2). Although these occurrences happened over a century before, the importance of religion never truly faded.

Religion was not the only major difference, power was as well. The president has nowhere near the power the Crown held, and with the government split into three branches, it doesn't have as much power either(class discussions from week 7). With the new system, the people were no longer being blindly ruled. The people gained their voice, and elected a person to voice their concerns which is another major change. Instead of being ruled by a person pre-chosen by genetics, the people were able to vote for who they wanted to lead them. With the American Revolution and the change in government came a large change in the people.

The people were able to have a voice, have different opinions, and live free to change the way they lived. Gordon S. Wood's stated "There was no reign of terror in the American Revolution and no resultant dictator" which is consistent of a truly radical revolution, but the American revolution did not need a dictator for it to be radical("The Radicalism of the American Revolution" page 8). The American Revolution brought the government power down instead of up, which is on the opposite side of the spectrum, but that, in itself, was truly radical. The colonists had never experienced such a freedom, and that is what made the American Revolution so revolutionary.

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### **The American Revolution was not conservative**

by [Logan Habib](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 7:53 PM

I would say that the American Revolution was, like the *strict constructionist* definition, an event that produced significant and deep societal and economic change. I view the American Revolution as a radical event that has had as profound effect on world affairs. It revolutionized social relations and generated the more egalitarian view of human society that we all share today. This profound change was demonstrated through a desire to have leadership based on protection of natural rights and a system of laws governed by the people.

I agree fully with Gordon S. Wood and his view that the Revolution was a radical event that produced a unique, democratic society. His whole article made a lot of sense to me and got me thinking about the importance of the Revolution. The changes made during the Revolution were comprehensive and wide-ranging. The end of the Revolution sparked an organized abolitionist attitude in the colonies. The role of women became a more appreciated role in households sparking the name, "Angel of the household" (notes). The abolition of slavery was also becoming an idea because of the abolitionist ideals that followed the Revolution. The formation of state government and the democratization of the American political process produced a major change in how the government worked. As stated in chapter 6 notes from the class, three governmental branches; judicial, executive,

and legislative were created to provide separation of powers, an idea very new to Congress. The Necessary and Proper Clause was also established to allow Congress to uphold any laws that were deemed as lawful to protect its powers. Overall, many changes in government were produced due to this revolution. Massive economic change was produced as well such as an increase in manufacturing in the colonies(stated in article) and opportunities in the west to mine, hunt and trade. Another huge change was the separation of church and state that was produced after the Revolution. The First Amendment ratified in the Constitution made it so the government must maintain an attitude of neutrality towards religion. It made it so citizens could pursue whatever religious path they liked and refrains the government from specifically favoring any religion. This was a big deal due to the various forms of religious persecution that colonists had to endure such as the consistent persecution between Catholics and Protestants(notes).

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The Revolution was a Conservative Movement**by [Gehrig Van Tol](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 10:38 PM

Despite deriving from a bloody war for independence, after reading both articles by Carl Diegler and Gordon Wood respectively, it becomes evident that the rather than a radical movement, the American revolution was actually a conservative one. Immediately I was impressed by Degler's writing, the way he provided counterpoints and then proved why his point was indeed correct, was persuasive, but I read Wood's writing before I let myself form an opinion. And yet, Wood failed to overcome the points the points that Diegler had made. Essentially, I've come to agree that "the society of post Revolutionary America was but the working out of social forces which were already evident in the colonial period", as stated on the fourth page of Diegler's article. Focusing specifically on one of Wood's points of rejection to this idea (I will focus on other ideas and points in later posts), where Woods attempts to assert that essentially the Revolution was essential to the modernization and establishment of the capitalistic society that has evolved within America that "transformed the economic landscape of the country", additionally citing at one point the specific example of Moses Cooper, who was able to rise to wealth pre-Revolution and feared the British mercantile restrictions and how they could result in the loss of his wealth and thus he became a patriot. The very fact that he was able to achieve such economic success actually goes against some of the points Woods makes, specifically an earlier point where he states "America was only a collection of disparate colonies huddled along a narrow strip of Atlantic coast--economically underdeveloped outposts existing on the very edges of the civilized world". While perhaps industrially underdeveloped as compared to the mother country of England, the colonies certainly had several, varied, and significant economies both in the North and South. The fact that this upward movement is shown to be possible pre-Revolution, and as I recall from class, was possible as far back as the indentured servants of the 17th century Virginia colony, shows that the modern principle of the "American Dream" was not at all a Revolutionary concept, but instead has been one of the ideals already present since the days of the colonies, as Diegler argues.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**A Conservatively Lead Radical Revolution**by [Tyler Anthony-Travers](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 11:52 PM

Degler puts forth the idea that the American revolution was a conservative movement, as it was primarily lead by conservatives in the government. And that is true, the American Revolution relies very heavily on the decisions that Washington and Schuyler and others made. He argues that these men were the driving force that lead to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. However, I would like to argue that while their political beliefs laid right at the time, their actions, and the revolution they started were radical. Conservatism, by definition, is the opposition to change and the upholding of traditional political and economic values, therefore a conservatist action would have been to not act, or uphold the traditional values of the current system of government. These men held conservative political and economic values, and wished for those ideas to become American policy; they had to start a radical movement to put their conservative ideas in place. They were conservatives leading people in a radical revolution. The American Revolution was a radical revolution that started because of conservative ideas.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**The Revolution was not Conservative: Social Shifts and Framework for Change**by [Jedaiah Falone](#) - Monday, November 12, 2018, 11:58 PM

I agree most that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement, but rather a significant shift in the social structure and ideals throughout the colonies and what would become the United States. One of the key changes that Wood discusses was the sense of dependency vs. independency, and "...anyone tied to someone else, who was someone's client or dependent, was servile" (Wood p.13). Dependency and the hierarchy/favoritism of monarchical societies came to be viewed negatively by an increasing number of colonists leading up to the Revolution, and by the time it had happened this new wave of logic had lasting effects on American society. One specific example is that of slavery. Just like the relative slave experience discussed in class, there was a relative movement towards the abolition of slavery. Wood states, "...it is important to realize that the Revolution suddenly and effectively ended the cultural climate that had allowed black slavery, as well as other forms of bondage and unfreedom, to exist throughout the colonial period without serious challenge...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" (Wood p.15). Although it is easy to criticize the revolutionaries for failing to abolish slavery moving into the new republic, these new ideals of independency made institutions such as slavery seem "anomalous and anachronistic" (Wood p.15). Without the major societal changes brought about during and as a result of the Revolution, the framework for immense social changes like the eventual abolition of slavery may not have been established, and many hierarchical practices and ideals may have remained.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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**A Hesitant No**by [Zane Hiam](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 1:01 PM

I realize that I'm coming to this conversation very late. This is because I wanted to read and consider both sides carefully before making a point.

With that being said, I have come to the conclusion that no, the American Revolution was not a conservative movement. What ultimately convinced me of this was the emphasis the Revolution placed on individualism, an ideology that paved the way for modern capitalism and democracy. The idea that anyone could rise to any station regardless of his birth was a truly radical idea for the time.

That doesn't mean that I can't see both sides of this one. The impacts the Revolution had on American society seems small when you compare it to other historic revolutions. The founding fathers themselves, of course, were mostly wealthy, powerful men both before and after the Revolution. I still think that the American Revolution was not a conservative movement, but I'd like to hear other people's thoughts on the matter.

Sum of ratings: [1 \(1\)](#) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Individualism**by [Logan Habib](#) - Saturday, November 17, 2018, 5:19 PM

I fully agree with you Zane when you discussed the importance of individualism being a more prominent idea as a result of the Revolution. Even from the earliest days of colonial settlement, colonists were consistently trying to improve the institutions of American life. Under the either traditional or "enlightened" ethics of this time, it was considered immoral for an individual to pursue their own self interests even when pursuing their interests did not affect the freedom of others. However, the Revolution paved the way for colonists to have their own personal ethics and identity, rather than those of the British. This is evident because of the many changes regarding how the colonists perceived the habit or principal of being self-reliant. I also like what you said about the Revolution paving the way for modern capitalism and democracy. The Revolution called for "no taxation without representation" at home and denounced certain titles such as, "your excellency" so all people felt equal in representation (information from class notes). It also paved the way to soldiers receiving payment for their services in the war. Many changes were made that supported the egalitarian view.

Sum of ratings: [2 \(1\)](#) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: guerrilla tactics= Radical**by [Scott Carpenter](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 4:32 PM

I got to thinking about how we watch a video in class about how guerrilla tactics were used:

Valley Forge marked a milestone in the army's military experience. Friedrich von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge, where Washington appointed him inspector General of the camp to teach Washington continental army. He developed a system of drill and discipline and taught the men combat maneuvers that equipped them to contend with the well-trained British army. The army had undergone a significant transformation, from an unorganized rangy looking army to a well ordered, and disciplined fighting force. So, this new kind of army learned guerrilla strategies and were utilized against a far more heavily armed and better trained British army. The tactics of harassment, mobility, surprise, ambushing, sabotage, raids instead of direct contact, the wearing down and cutting off supplies. By altering their fighting styles, they were successful in these types of maneuvers. It is my understanding that guerrilla is not used for defeating the enemy but rather making a battle or war drag out and become so expensive that your adversary will eventually give up. Considering this type of war had not been used in the beginning of the war and then to employ it is masterful in my opinion.

They had many victories using this type of warfare, considering the American Revolution was a conflict between a group of volunteers and a massive professional army. Maybe the continental army didn't think it could defeat Britain, but it was the colonial army who learned how to fight and possibly change the tides in their favor. I due wonder if Washington who was used to be having more like a traditional military and was above using guerrilla tactics. But obviously he did appoint Friedrich von Steuben and knew what he could teach his army.

This in my opinion must have been a pretty radical thing that was a part of the American Revolution

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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### **Separation between church and state**

by [Morgan Graham](#) - Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 11:15 PM

After first coming to my own conclusion and now reading everyone elses opinion, I would still have to agree with Wood and say that no it was not a conservative movement. One of the big key factors that jumped out to me was the separation between church and state. That was something that the settlers have never experienced before in government. That sounds pretty radical to me. Another thing that jumped out to me was when Wood said, "It was as radical and social as any revolution in history, but it was radical and social in a very special eighteenth-century sense." Sure, the American Revolution might not seem that radical by today's standards, but back then, everything they were doing would be completely radical to them.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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### **Re: The Revolution was a Conservative movement**

by [Gehrig Van Tol](#) - Thursday, November 15, 2018, 12:53 PM

While Gordon Wood makes a compelling and intelligently articulated argument about the Revolution being a non-conservative, and instead radical movement, I cannot help but disagree. Not even particularly because of what Carl Degler argues in his article, but simply because Wood seems to bring forth evidence that does in fact, not support his argument. I am inclined to agree with Degler's point that "the social consequences of the Revolution were meager indeed", despite the claims that Wood makes, particularly regarding slavery and indentured servitude. The last few pages of Wood's article is devoted to the idea of dependence, as well as slavery, both as a more theoretical concept, or in the case of the last several paragraphs, the literal institution that was in place in the United States. While I have issues with his take on dependency and its relative importance in the radical societal changes, that in Wood's opinion occurred as a result of the revolution, I have a larger issue with his take on the Revolution's effect on slavery in America. Woods writes as if post Revolution, the social climate became wildly different, with the countries newfound independence, and slavery was widely condemned "with a vehemence that was inconceivable earlier". He goes on to support this notion with the first anti-slavery society in the world that was formed in Philadelphia in 1775, and while I can not deny that this was great progress for the time, to say, as Woods does that "The Revolution in effect set in motion ideological and social forces that doomed the institution of slavery in the North and led inexorably to the Civil War", is an exaggeration as well as actually supportive of the conservative idea of the Revolution. Because even given the slight change in the social climate, slavery was not actually abolished until 1865, almost 100 years after that first anti-slavery society. There was a massive chunk of the country where slavery was still legal, and if one has any historical knowledge it is well known that even where slavery was outlawed, racism was still very prevalent This was not a radical movement, but rather a slow, conservative, movement that took a lot of time. Additionally, as we noted several times in class today, many historians actually have traced the root cause of the Civil War back to Thomas Jefferson and John Adams conflict, more specifically, the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, direct responses to then President John Adams Alien and Sedition Acts. The resulting declaration of the States that they could "nullify" federal laws on the basis that they are unconstitutional is not only a much more radical reaction, but also a more natural and direct seaway to the Civil War.

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