

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution

****Gordon Wood and The Radicalism of the American Revolution****

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution is more than just a phrase; it encapsulates a profound reinterpretation of one of history's most pivotal events. Gordon S. Wood, a renowned historian and Pulitzer Prize winner, reshaped how we understand the American Revolution by emphasizing its radical nature—not merely as a war of independence but as a transformative social and political upheaval. His work has invited readers and scholars alike to reconsider the revolution's impact on society, governance, and the very fabric of American identity.

Who is Gordon Wood?

Before diving into the core ideas of **The Radicalism of the American Revolution**, it helps to know a bit about Gordon Wood himself. He is a distinguished professor of history at Brown University and has authored numerous acclaimed books on early American history. Wood's expertise lies in the Revolutionary era, where he explores how the colonies transitioned from British subjects to citizens of a new republic. His scholarship is celebrated for its depth, clarity, and ability to connect historical events to broader themes in political and social thought.

Understanding The Radicalism of the American Revolution

At its heart, **The Radicalism of the American Revolution** challenges the traditional narrative that views the revolution as a conservative effort to preserve colonial rights against British tyranny. Instead, Wood argues that the revolution was fundamentally radical—it dismantled old hierarchies and introduced new ideas about equality, citizenship, and governance.

The Revolution as a Social Transformation

One of the most striking aspects of Wood's analysis is how he frames the revolution as a social revolution. The American colonies in the 18th century had a rigid social hierarchy influenced by British aristocratic traditions. Yet, the revolution disrupted this order:

- ****Erosion of aristocratic privilege:**** Titles and hereditary power lost their legitimacy.
- ****Rise of meritocracy:**** Leadership and influence became tied more to individual ability and virtue than birthright.
- ****Greater social mobility:**** Ordinary men and, to some extent, women and marginalized groups began to have a voice in society.

Wood highlights that this wasn't just about political independence but about creating a new social

order where equality of opportunity was a guiding principle.

Political Radicalism and Republicanism

Wood's book also explores how the revolution introduced radical political ideas that shaped modern democracy. The colonies moved away from monarchy and aristocracy toward republicanism, which emphasized:

- **Popular sovereignty:** The idea that political power originates from the people, not a king.
- **Checks and balances:** To prevent tyranny, new governments incorporated mechanisms to limit power.
- **Civic virtue:** Citizens were expected to participate actively and selflessly in governance.

These principles were revolutionary for the time and laid the groundwork for the U.S. Constitution and democratic governance worldwide.

Impact of The Radicalism of the American Revolution on Historical Scholarship

Gordon Wood's work has had a lasting influence on how historians and educators approach the American Revolution. By focusing on its radical consequences, Wood encourages a more nuanced understanding that goes beyond battles and declarations.

Shifting Perspectives on the Revolution

Before Wood's analysis, many textbooks portrayed the revolution as primarily a conservative struggle to protect established rights. Wood's insights prompted a re-evaluation, bringing to light the revolution's role in:

- **Democratizing American society:** Expanding political participation beyond elites.
- **Changing social norms:** Questioning traditional gender roles and class distinctions.
- **Inspiring future movements:** The ideas born out of this period influenced abolitionists, women's rights activists, and civil rights advocates.

Relevance to Modern Discussions on Equality and Citizenship

The themes Wood explores are not confined to the past. They resonate deeply with ongoing debates about equality, liberty, and the nature of American democracy. His work serves as a reminder that the revolution set a precedent for continual social progress and political reform.

Key Themes Explored in Gordon Wood's Work

To better appreciate the depth of *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, it's helpful to break down some of the central themes Wood addresses:

From Subjects to Citizens

One of the most profound changes was the transformation of people's identities. Colonists moved from being subjects under a monarch to citizens of a republic, with rights and responsibilities. This shift altered how people saw themselves and their role in society.

Equality and Its Limits

While the revolution promoted ideas of equality, Wood also acknowledges its complexities. For example:

- **Slavery persisted:** Despite revolutionary ideals, slavery remained entrenched in many states.
- **Women's roles:** Women gained some new freedoms but remained excluded from full political rights.
- **Native Americans:** Often marginalized and displaced during this period.

This nuanced perspective highlights that the revolution's radicalism was groundbreaking but incomplete, setting the stage for future struggles.

Economic Changes and Social Mobility

The revolution also transformed economic structures, breaking down old mercantilist restrictions and opening pathways for entrepreneurship and land ownership. This contributed to a fluid social structure where individuals could rise based on merit and effort.

Why Gordon Wood's Analysis Matters Today

Understanding the radicalism of the American Revolution through Gordon Wood's lens offers valuable lessons for contemporary readers and policymakers. It reminds us that:

- **Democracy is an ongoing project:** The ideals of equality and participation require constant nurturing.
- **Social change is interconnected:** Political revolutions often lead to broader social transformations.
- **History informs identity:** Knowing the revolutionary roots helps Americans appreciate the complexities of their heritage.

For students, educators, and history enthusiasts, Wood's scholarship provides a rich framework to explore the American Revolution beyond dates and battles—into the ideas and values that continue to shape the nation.

Exploring Further: Related Works and Resources

For those interested in diving deeper into the themes Gordon Wood addresses, several complementary resources are worth exploring:

- *The American Revolution: A History* by Gordon S. Wood – A broader overview of the revolution's events and significance.
- *Revolutionary Characters* – Wood's engaging profiles of key figures who shaped the revolutionary era.
- Primary documents like the Declaration of Independence and Federalist Papers – To see the revolutionary ideas firsthand.
- Lectures and interviews with Gordon Wood – Available online, providing accessible explanations of his viewpoints.

These resources can enhance one's understanding of the radical shifts during the American Revolution and their enduring impact.

Gordon Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* invites us to rethink a familiar story. It reveals a complex and transformative period that reshaped society and governance in profound ways. By appreciating the revolution's radical character, we gain a richer, more dynamic view of America's founding and the ideals that continue to inspire change today.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Gordon Wood and why is he significant in the study of the American Revolution?

Gordon Wood is a renowned American historian known for his extensive research and writings on the American Revolution. He is significant because his work, particularly *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, offers a profound analysis of how the Revolution fundamentally transformed American society and politics.

What is the main thesis of Gordon Wood's book 'The Radicalism of the American Revolution'?

The main thesis of Wood's book is that the American Revolution was not just a political event but a radical social transformation that dismantled the traditional hierarchical structures of colonial society and created a new, more egalitarian American republic.

How does Gordon Wood describe the social changes brought about by the American Revolution?

Wood describes the social changes as revolutionary, emphasizing that the Revolution abolished aristocratic privileges, reduced the gap between rich and poor, and promoted ideas of equality and democracy that reshaped American society.

What role does Gordon Wood attribute to ideology in the American Revolution?

Wood argues that ideology played a crucial role, with revolutionary leaders embracing Enlightenment principles such as liberty, equality, and republicanism, which motivated the radical restructuring of government and society.

How does 'The Radicalism of the American Revolution' challenge traditional views of the Revolution?

The book challenges traditional views by arguing that the Revolution was more than a conservative effort to preserve rights; it was a profound social upheaval that radically changed the political and social order of America.

What impact did Gordon Wood's work have on historical interpretations of the American Revolution?

Wood's work has significantly influenced historians by shifting the focus from solely political and military aspects to the broader social and cultural transformations, highlighting the Revolution's radical impact on American identity and democracy.

Can you summarize the legacy of Gordon Wood's 'The Radicalism of the American Revolution'?

The legacy of Wood's book lies in its comprehensive reinterpretation of the American Revolution as a transformative event that not only achieved independence but also fundamentally reshaped American society, inspiring ongoing debates about the meaning and consequences of the Revolution.

Additional Resources

****Gordon Wood and The Radicalism of the American Revolution: A Transformative Historical Insight****

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution stands as a pivotal work in the field of American history, offering a profound reinterpretation of the American Revolution's impact. Wood's analysis transcends traditional narratives that frame the Revolution merely as a political upheaval; instead, he portrays it as a sweeping social transformation that fundamentally reshaped American society. His scholarship provides an essential lens to understand how the Revolution catalyzed radical changes in the political, social, and cultural fabric of the nascent United States.

Understanding the Core Thesis of Gordon Wood's Work

Gordon Wood's seminal book, **The Radicalism of the American Revolution**, published in 1992, challenges the conventional view that the Revolution was primarily about independence from British rule or the establishment of a new government. Wood argues that the Revolution was radical not just because it replaced a monarchy with a republic but because it dismantled the entrenched hierarchical structures of colonial society. This transformation introduced a new social order grounded in egalitarian principles and republican ideals.

By examining the ideological shifts and societal changes during and after the Revolution, Wood reveals how the American people moved from a society dominated by aristocracy and inherited privilege toward one valuing merit, equality, and individual rights. This shift, Wood suggests, was revolutionary in its scope and consequences, influencing the trajectory of American democracy and identity.

The Political Revolution: From Monarchy to Republicanism

One of Wood's critical insights relates to the political dimensions of the Revolution. Unlike many contemporary revolutions that sought to install new forms of authoritarian rule, the American Revolution introduced republicanism as a radical alternative. This system rejected monarchy and aristocracy, emphasizing the sovereignty of the people and the rule of law.

Wood highlights how the new political structures reflected Enlightenment ideals, promoting a government based on popular consent and checks on power. The emergence of written constitutions, separation of powers, and increased political participation marked a profound departure from colonial governance. This political revolution was not merely about independence but about redefining authority and citizenship in fundamentally democratic terms.

Social Transformation: Eroding Hierarchies and Promoting Equality

Beyond politics, Wood's analysis delves into the social upheaval triggered by the Revolution. Colonial America had been characterized by rigid social hierarchies, with elites controlling land, wealth, and political influence. The Revolution disrupted these established orders by promoting ideas of social equality and meritocracy.

Wood points out that the Revolution encouraged the rise of a new middle class and expanded opportunities for social mobility. Traditional deference to aristocratic titles and inherited privilege

declined, replaced by a culture that valued individual achievement. This social leveling was evident in changes to property ownership, education, and civic participation, which increasingly became accessible to broader segments of society.

Cultural and Ideological Shifts: Republican Virtue and Civic Responsibility

Gordon Wood's exploration also extends to the cultural and ideological consequences of the Revolution. He stresses the emergence of a republican ethos that emphasized civic virtue, public service, and the common good. This ideological transformation was vital in shaping American identity and political culture.

The Revolution instilled the belief that citizens had a duty to participate actively in governance and to resist corruption and tyranny. Schools, churches, and political institutions began promoting these values, reinforcing a collective commitment to liberty and equality. Wood's work illustrates how this cultural shift laid the foundation for the development of American civil society and political activism.

Comparative Perspectives: The American Revolution's Radicalism in Context

Gordon Wood's interpretation encourages comparison with other revolutions of the era, such as the French and Haitian revolutions. While these also sought to overturn established orders, Wood argues that the American Revolution was unique in its relatively peaceful transition and the establishment of a stable, lasting republic.

Unlike the French Revolution, which descended into violent upheaval and radical social restructuring, the American Revolution managed to institutionalize its egalitarian principles through legal frameworks and political compromise. This relative moderation, however, did not diminish its radical impact on American society but rather ensured its endurance.

Pros and Cons of Wood's Interpretation

- **Pros:** Wood's analysis provides a nuanced understanding of the Revolution's far-reaching effects, emphasizing social and cultural dimensions often overlooked. His integration of political theory and social history offers a comprehensive picture of the era's transformations.
- **Cons:** Some critics argue that Wood may overstate the egalitarian nature of the Revolution, pointing out that significant inequalities persisted, especially regarding race, gender, and class. The Revolution did not abolish slavery or fully include women in the new political order.

The Legacy of Gordon Wood's Scholarship

The influence of **The Radicalism of the American Revolution** extends beyond academic circles. It has reshaped how educators, historians, and the public understand the founding era of the United States. By highlighting the Revolution's complexity and depth, Wood's work invites ongoing discussion about the nature of American democracy and the unfinished promises of equality and liberty.

His scholarship also encourages reflection on contemporary political and social issues, reminding readers that the American Revolution was not just a historical event but a radical experiment in redefining governance and society—an experiment that continues to evolve.

Ultimately, Gordon Wood's **The Radicalism of the American Revolution** remains a cornerstone in the study of American history, offering an essential framework for interpreting one of the most transformative periods in the nation's past.

[Gordon Wood The Radicalism Of The American Revolution](#)

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* Gordon S. Wood, 2011-08-24 In a grand and immensely readable synthesis of historical, political, cultural, and economic analysis, a prize-winning historian describes the events that made the American Revolution. Gordon S. Wood depicts a revolution that was about much more than a break from England, rather it transformed an almost feudal society into a democratic one, whose emerging realities sometimes baffled and disappointed its founding fathers.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: The Radicalism of the American Revolution Gordon S. Wood, 1993-03-02 In a grand and immensely readable synthesis of historical, political, cultural, and economic analysis, a prize-winning historian describes the events that made the American Revolution. Gordon S. Wood depicts a revolution that was about much more than a break from England, rather it transformed an almost feudal society into a democratic one, whose emerging realities sometimes baffled and disappointed its founding fathers.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1764-1776 Various, 2015-07-28 For the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution, acclaimed historian Gordon S. Wood presents a landmark collection of British and American pamphlets from the political debate that divided an empire and created a nation: In 1764, in the wake of its triumph in the Seven Years War, Great Britain possessed the largest and most powerful empire the world had seen since the fall of Rome and its North American colonists were justly proud of their vital place within this global colossus. Just twelve short years later the empire was in tatters, and the thirteen colonies proclaimed themselves the free and independent United States of America. Now, for the 250th anniversary of the Stamp Act Crisis, the momentous upheaval that marked the beginning of the American Revolution, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Gordon S. Wood presents a landmark two-volume edition of the political debate that led to the Declaration of Independence. This unprecedented collection gathers in two authoritative Library of America volumes the complete texts of thirty-nine of the most fascinating and influential British and American pamphlets of the period: inexpensive, widely circulated works that were the instant media of their day, ideal for the rapid exchange of ideas. In the first volume a controversy about the origin and function of colonies quickly becomes a deeper dispute over the nature of political liberty itself, in which Massachusetts lawyer James Otis boldly asserts the colonists' natural rights; Benjamin Franklin gives dramatic testimony against the Stamp Act before

the House of Commons; John Dickinson calls for collective action in the famous Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania; and the so-called Boston Pamphlet, written by Samuel Adams and others, turns the focus of debate to the question of sovereignty, setting the stage for the final crisis to come. In the second volume Thomas Jefferson advances a vision of a radically new kind of empire in the work that first made him famous; Joseph Galloway presents an ingenious but ill-fated plan for preserving union with Great Britain; Samuel Johnson gives vent to his deep animus for the Americans and their pretensions to liberty; Edmund Burke makes an eloquent case for reconciliation before it's too late; and Thomas Paine, in the truly revolutionary Common Sense, proclaims that the birthday of a new world is at hand. Prepared by the nation's leading historian of the American Revolution, each volume includes an introduction, headnotes, biographical notes about the writers, a chronology charting the rise and fall of the first British empire, a textual essay describing the production, reception, and influence of each work, and detailed explanatory notes. As a special feature, the set also features typographic reproductions of the pamphlets' original title pages. LIBRARY OF AMERICA is an independent nonprofit cultural organization founded in 1979 to preserve our nation's literary heritage by publishing, and keeping permanently in print, America's best and most significant writing. The Library of America series includes more than 300 volumes to date, authoritative editions that average 1,000 pages in length, feature cloth covers, sewn bindings, and ribbon markers, and are printed on premium acid-free paper that will last for centuries.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: The Idea of America Gordon S. Wood, 2011-05-12 The preeminent historian of the American Revolution explains why it remains the most significant event in our history. More than almost any other nation in the world, the United States began as an idea. For this reason, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Gordon S. Wood believes that the American Revolution is the most important event in our history, bar none. Since American identity is so fluid and not based on any universally shared heritage, we have had to continually return to our nation's founding to understand who we are. In *The Idea of America*, Wood reflects on the birth of American nationhood and explains why the revolution remains so essential. In a series of elegant and illuminating essays, Wood explores the ideological origins of the revolution—from ancient Rome to the European Enlightenment—and the founders' attempts to forge an American democracy. As Wood reveals, while the founders hoped to create a virtuous republic of yeoman farmers and uninterested leaders, they instead gave birth to a sprawling, licentious, and materialistic popular democracy. Wood also traces the origins of American exceptionalism to this period, revealing how the revolutionary generation, despite living in a distant, sparsely populated country, believed itself to be the most enlightened people on earth. The revolution gave Americans their messianic sense of purpose—and perhaps our continued propensity to promote democracy around the world—because the founders believed their colonial rebellion had universal significance for oppressed peoples everywhere. Yet what may seem like audacity in retrospect reflected the fact that in the eighteenth century republicanism was a truly radical ideology—as radical as Marxism would be in the nineteenth—and one that indeed inspired revolutionaries the world over. Today there exists what Wood calls a terrifying gap between us and the founders, such that it requires almost an act of imagination to fully recapture their era. Because we now take our democracy for granted, it is nearly impossible for us to appreciate how deeply the founders feared their grand experiment in liberty could evolve into monarchy or dissolve into licentiousness. Gracefully written and filled with insight, *The Idea of America* helps us to recapture the fears and hopes of the revolutionary generation and its attempts to translate those ideals into a working democracy. Lin-Manuel Miranda's smash Broadway musical *Hamilton* has sparked new interest in the Revolutionary War and the Founding Fathers. In addition to Alexander Hamilton, the production also features George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Aaron Burr, Lafayette, and many more. Look for Gordon's new book, *Friends Divided*.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: *The American Revolution* Gordon S. Wood, 2003-08-19 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER “An elegant synthesis done by the leading scholar in the field, which nicely integrates the work on the American Revolution over the last three

decades but never loses contact with the older, classic questions that we have been arguing about for over two hundred years.”—Joseph J. Ellis, author of *Founding Brothers* A magnificent account of the revolution in arms and consciousness that gave birth to the American republic. When Abraham Lincoln sought to define the significance of the United States, he naturally looked back to the American Revolution. He knew that the Revolution not only had legally created the United States, but also had produced all of the great hopes and values of the American people. Our noblest ideals and aspirations—our commitments to freedom, constitutionalism, the well-being of ordinary people, and equality—came out of the Revolutionary era. Lincoln saw as well that the Revolution had convinced Americans that they were a special people with a special destiny to lead the world toward liberty. The Revolution, in short, gave birth to whatever sense of nationhood and national purpose Americans have had. No doubt the story is a dramatic one: Thirteen insignificant colonies three thousand miles from the centers of Western civilization fought off British rule to become, in fewer than three decades, a huge, sprawling, rambunctious republic of nearly four million citizens. But the history of the American Revolution, like the history of the nation as a whole, ought not to be viewed simply as a story of right and wrong from which moral lessons are to be drawn. It is a complicated and at times ironic story that needs to be explained and understood, not blindly celebrated or condemned. How did this great revolution come about? What was its character? What were its consequences? These are the questions this short history seeks to answer. That it succeeds in such a profound and enthralling way is a tribute to Gordon Wood’s mastery of his subject, and of the historian’s craft.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: New Jersey in the American Revolution Barbara J. Mitnick, 2007-03-12 This remarkably comprehensive anthology brings new life to the rich and turbulent late 18th-century period in New Jersey. Originally conceived for the state's 225th Anniversary of the Revolution Celebration Commission.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: The Purpose of the Past Gordon S. Wood, 2008 Wood examines how the historian's craft has changed radically over the past 40 years. This work offers insight into what great historians do, how they can stumble, and what strains of thought have dominated the marketplace of ideas in historical scholarship.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: Revolutionary America, 1763-1815 Francis D. Cogliano, 2000 Covering the experiences of various groups (including women, native Americans and African Americans), this book explains the crucial events in the history of the United States between 1763 and 1815.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement J. Franklin Jameson, 2025-11-04 A centennial edition of the classic work that instilled a liberal spirit into the study of American history J. Franklin Jameson’s *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement* was among the first books to look at American history through the lens of social change. This pioneering work argues that the most salient feature of the American Revolution was not the war for independence itself but rather the struggle between aristocratic values and those of the common people. Jameson shows how American revolutionaries sought to change their government, not their society, but how, in destroying monarchy and establishing a republic, they changed their society profoundly. He examines the transformative effects the American Revolution had on business, intellectual and religious life, slavery, land ownership, and interactions between members of different social classes. Looking beyond the political and probing the social aspects of this pivotal event, Jameson forces a reconsideration of revolution that still resonates today. Commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of America, this edition features an incisive foreword by historians Michael Blaakman and Sarah Barringer Gordon, who explain the book’s enduring relevance to our understanding of the American Revolution.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: The Transformation of the American Democratic Republic Stephen M. Krason, 2017-09-08 In this stimulating volume, Stephen M. Krason considers whether the Founding Fathers' vision of the American democratic

republic has been transformed and if so, in what ways. He looks to the basic principles of the Founding Fathers, then discusses the changes that resulted from evolving contemporary expectations about government. Referencing philosophical principles and the work of great Western thinkers, Krason then explores a variety of proposals that could forge a foundation for restoration. Acknowledging that any attempt to revive the Founders' views on a democratic republic must start in the public sphere, Krason focuses on concerned citizens who are aware of the extent to which our current political structures deviate from the Founders' vision and want to take action. Ultimately, a democratic republic can exist, be sustained, and flourish only when there is a deep commitment to it in the minds and norms of its people. Written by a foremost authority in the field of US Constitutional law, this book will appeal to those interested in American history, society, and politics.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: The Idea of Europe and the Origins of the American Revolution D. H. Robinson, 2020 In this path-breaking new history of early America, the imperial crisis, and the American Revolution, D. H. Robinson traces the formative impact of ideas about Europe and Europeanness on British-American politics and identity, touching on everything from international relations and nationalism, to news media and poetry.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: Imagining the British Atlantic after the American Revolution Michael Meranze, Saree Makdisi, 2016-01-28 Between 1750 and 1820, tides of revolution swept the Atlantic world. From the new industrial towns of Great Britain to the plantations of Haiti, they heralded both the rise of democratic nationalism and the subsequent surge of imperial reaction. In *Imagining the British Atlantic after the American Revolution*, nine essays consider these revolutionary transformations from a variety of literary, visual, and historical perspectives. On topics ranging from painting and poetry to prison reform, the essays challenge and complicate our understandings of revolution and reaction within the transatlantic imagination. Drawing on examples from different local and regional contexts, they demonstrate the many remarkably local ways that revolution and empire were experienced in London, Pennsylvania, Pitcairn Island, and points in between. Published by the University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: *The British in the Americas 1480-1815* Anthony McFarlane, 2014-07-15 Of northern European nations, the British had the greatest impact on the Americas. Their history there embraces far more than the colonies that became the United States: England had been in the New World for a century before those colonies were established, and the British presence long outlived their loss. This integrated account of that involvement spans the entire arc of British territories from the Caribbean to Canada, and the entire period from the first appearance of the English to the disintegration of the British and other Euro-American empires. A fascinating story, engrossingly told, it fills a major gap in current historiography.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: Thomas Paine J. C. D. Clark, 2018-03-16 Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was England's greatest revolutionary: no other reformer was as actively involved in events of the scale of the American and French Revolutions, and none wrote such best-selling texts with the impact of *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man*. No one else combined the roles of activist and theorist, or did so in the 'age of revolutions', fundamental as it was to the emergence of the 'modern world'. But his fame meant that he was taken up and reinterpreted for current use by successive later commentators and politicians, so that the 'historic Paine' was too often obscured by the 'usable Paine'. J. C. D. Clark explains Paine against a revised background of early- and mid-eighteenth-century England. He argues that Paine knew and learned less about events in America and France than was once thought. He de-attributes a number of publications, and passages, hitherto assumed to have been Paine's own, and detaches him from a number of causes (including anti-slavery, women's emancipation, and class action) with which he was once associated. Paine's formerly obvious association with the early origin and long-term triumph of

natural rights, republicanism, and democracy needs to be rethought. As a result, Professor Clark offers a picture of radical and reforming movements as more indebted to the initiatives of large numbers of men and women in fast-evolving situations than to the writings of a few individuals who framed lasting, and eventually triumphant, political discourses.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: Law as Culture and Culture as Law John Phillip Reid, 2000 Law as Culture and Culture as Law presents a spectrum of historical inquiries developing and engaging John Phillip Reid's insights and methodological approaches to legal and constitutional history. The essays gathered in this volume span nearly three centuries and two continents, ranging from the agonizing struggles over law, religion, and governance in late seventeenth-century Ireland to the legal and constitutional regimes of governmental regulation in twentieth-century New York.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: Samuel Adams and the Vagabond Henry Tufts Nathaniel Parry, 2024-05-17 One a revolutionary leader and the other a vagabond who deserted from the Continental Army, Samuel Adams and Henry Tufts appear opposites, yet they were two sides of the same coin. While one devoted his life to overthrowing British colonial rule and the other to rambling, womanizing and stealing horses, Adams and Tufts represented the self-interested capacity for survival as well as the lofty ideals that made the American Revolution possible. When they crossed paths in 1794, with Adams serving as governor of Massachusetts and Tufts a hapless prisoner facing the gallows, it was the serendipitous climax of three decades of revolutionary activity and crime. Recalling the sometimes complementary roles of virtue and vice in the early republic, the story of these two men reflects themes of the American Revolution, including class differences among colonists, the importance of education in fostering republicanism, and the founders' emphasis on improving criminal justice. It is also a story of redemption--both for these two imperfect individuals and for the revolution that they participated in.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: Doubt and the Demands of Democratic Citizenship David R. Hiley, 2006-06-26 The triumph of democracy has been heralded as one of the greatest achievements of the twentieth century, yet it seems to be in a relatively fragile condition in the United States, if one is to judge by the proliferation of editorials, essays, and books that focus on politics and distrust of government. *Doubt and the Demands of Democratic Citizenship* explores the reasons for public discontent and proposes an account of democratic citizenship appropriate for a robust democracy. David Hiley argues that citizenship is more than participating in the electoral process. It requires a capacity to participate in the deliberative process with other citizens who might disagree, a capacity that combines deep convictions with a willingness to subject those convictions. Hiley develops his argument by examining the connection between doubt and democracy generally, as well as through case studies of Socrates, Montaigne, and Rousseau, interpreting them in light of contemporary issues.

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: A People's History of the American Revolution Ray Raphael, 2011-05-24 "The best single-volume history of the Revolution I have read." —Howard Zinn Upon its initial publication, Ray Raphael's magisterial *A People's History of the American Revolution* was hailed by NPR's *Fresh Air* as "relentlessly aggressive and unsentimental." With impeccable skill, Raphael presented a wide array of fascinating scholarship within a single volume, employing a bottom-up approach that has served as a revelation. *A People's History of the American Revolution* draws upon diaries, personal letters, and other Revolutionary-era treasures, weaving a thrilling "you are there" narrative—"a tapestry that uses individual experiences to illustrate the larger stories". Raphael shifts the focus away from George Washington and Thomas Jefferson to the slaves they owned, the Indians they displaced, and the men and boys who did the fighting (*Los Angeles Times Book Review*). This "remarkable perspective on a familiar part of American history" helps us appreciate more fully the incredible diversity of the American Revolution (*Kirkus Reviews*). "Through letters, diaries, and other accounts, Raphael shows these individuals—white women and men of the farming and laboring classes, free and enslaved African Americans, Native Americans, loyalists, and religious pacifists—acting for or against the Revolution

and enduring a war that compounded the difficulties of everyday life.” —Library Journal “A tour de force . . . Ray Raphael has probably altered the way in which future historians will see events.” —The Sunday Times

gordon wood the radicalism of the american revolution: Our American Story: The Search for a Shared National Narrative Joshua A. Claybourn, 2019-06-01 Over the past few decades, the complicated divides of geography, class, religion, and race created deep fractures in the United States, each side fighting to advance its own mythology and political interests. We lack a central story, a common ground we can celebrate and enrich with deeper meaning. Unable to agree on first principles, we cannot agree on what it means to be American. As we dismantle or disregard symbols and themes that previously united us, can we replace them with stories and rites that unite our tribes and maintain meaning in our American identity? Against this backdrop, *Our American Story* features leading thinkers from across the political spectrum—Jim Banks, Pulitzer Prize-winner David W. Blight, Spencer P. Boyer, Eleanor Clift, John C. Danforth, Cody Delistraty, Richard A. Epstein, Nikolas Gvosdev, Cherie Harder, Jason Kuznicki, Gerard N. Magliocca, Markos Moulitsas, Ilya Somin, Cass R. Sunstein, Alan Taylor, James V. Wertsch, Gordon S. Wood, and Ali Wyne. Each draws on expertise within their respective fields of history, law, politics, and public policy to contribute a unique perspective about the American story. This collection explores whether a unifying story can be achieved and, if so, what that story could be. Purchase the audio edition.

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