

1. What type of history is this?
2. “The less than two million monarchical subjects who lived in those colonies still took for granted that society was and ought to be a hierarchy of ranks and degrees of dependency that most people were bound together by personal ties of one sort or another.”

-----What is he talking about? There was still a hierarchy after the revolution. However, instead of foreign exploitation, it was domestic exploitation.

3. “To focus, as we are today apt today, on what the Revolution did not accomplish – highlighting and lamenting its failure to abolish slavery and change fundamentally the lot of women – is to miss the great significance of what it did accomplish; indeed, the Revolution made possible the anti-slavery and women’s rights movements of the nineteenth century and in fact all our current egalitarian thinking (7).”

-----However, if there had been no revolution, slavery would have ended much sooner in the colonies because Great Britain ended slavery before the United States. Then, if the South resisted ending slavery, the North would have partnered with Great Britain, who had tremendously larger resources than the North, and put down the revolt in the South much quicker and with fewer lives lost.

-----As far as the women’s rights movement, women in Great Britain gained the right to vote without a revolution, so that would have happened anyway had the US not separated from Great Britain.

4. “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 and to a degree not equaled elsewhere in the world (8).”

-----Ordinary people gained a voice in spite of the revolution, not as a result of, which was only meant for the elites, who didn’t trust the masses, to have a vote in matters.

-----Does this mean then that we should respect the Bolshevik Revolution that brought dignity to the peasants in the Soviet Union, despite the fact that it went against the capitalist model of the United States?

5. Did the American Revolution eliminate hierarchy?

6. “In the eighteenth century, labor, as it had been for ages, was still associated with toil and trouble, with pain, and manual productivity did not yet have the superior moral value that it would soon acquire.”

-----Did workers have moral value after the revolution? There was no minimum wage and workers continued to be exploited.

7. “War was so exciting and inspiring to eighteenth-century gentlemen precisely because it offered so many more opportunities for achieving honor and fame than did other endeavors.”

-----Does this mean that men like, Samuel and John Adams provoked the revolution in order to gain power?

8. (50-51_ (Interesting) “Paternal authority reached beyond the household to bind large numbers of Americans in various degrees of legal dependency. Indeed, at any one moment as much as one-half of colonial society was legally unfree.”

9. Why do you think the American Revolution occurred?

10. “Since people in this society noticed everything, personal reputations counted a great deal: a man could go a long way just on what others thought of him.”

-----Benjamin Franklin gained wealth and notoriety from poverty, but would not be accepted into the elite, so he considered himself to be American

-----So, it was possible to improve your life and social status.

-----He just couldn't get into the upper echelons of society.

11. “Translating the personal, social, and economic power of the gentry into political authority was essentially what eighteenth-century politics was about. The process was self-intensifying; social power created political authority, which in turn created more social influence (88).”

“Everywhere it was the same: those who had the property and power to exert influence in any way – whether by lending money, doing favors, or supplying employment – created obligations and dependences that could be turned into political authority (89).”

-----Does this mean that the rich elites manufactured the American Revolution for their own benefit and not for enlightenment purposes as they claimed?

12. “So confused and blended did monarchy and republicanism become in the eighteenth century that people, especially in the English-speaking world, had trouble precisely defining them (95).”

“By the early nineteenth century John Adams...concluded in frustration that republicanism ‘may signify anything, every thing, or nothing’ (95).”

-----What do you think that Republicanism means?

13. “For all those who claimed to speak for the interests and the good of the people, the crown and all other rulers with soaring passions were dangerous and the people were always justified in their suspicion and jealousy of power (108).”

-----These are the same people who didn’t trust the masses and wouldn’t allow them to vote.

14. “The Americans did not have to invent republicanism in 1776; they only had to bring it to the surface (109).”

-----Does this mean that if social change would have happened sooner rather than later anyway, then why did the American Revolution occur? The elites wanted to gain power and they took advantage of the opening.

15. “Yet any resemblance between colonial society and that of the mother country remained superficial and partial; the hierarchies and patronage connections of American society were brittle; and little in the society had much chance to solidify.”

-----Did the elite want a revolution to solidify the power they were gaining in society? The rich wanted to make sure that they could gain more wealth and power.

16. Wood explains, “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 (186-87).”

-----What does everybody think about this claim?

17. “With all men now considered to be equally free citizens the way was prepared as well for a radical change in the conception of state power (187).”

-----This is a mistake on his part that he takes Jefferson’s words at face value. He meant that all rich, white men were equal. It only served as patriotic propaganda for the lower classes. Had all men been free citizens there would have been no Civil War.

18. “Thus was begun the myth that has continued into our own time – the myth that the American Revolution was sober and conservative while the French Revolution was chaotic and radical. But only if we measure radicalism by violence and bloodshed can the myth be sustained; by any other measure the American Revolution was radical – and most of the Federalists knew it.”

-----Do you think that the American Revolution was radical?

“Equality was in fact the most radical and most powerful ideological force let loose in the Revolution. Its appeal was far more potent than any of the revolutionaries realized. Its appeal was far more potent than any of the revolutionaries realized. Once invoked, the idea of equality could not be stopped, and it tore through American society and culture with awesome power (232).”

19. “This democratic society was not the society the revolutionary leaders had wanted or expected...all the major revolutionary leaders died less than happy with the results of the Revolution (365).”

-----The Founding Fathers wanted to gain power and status for themselves. They didn't want the common man to be in power – just to work and to feel free.