

consists of outside consultants who get up to a thousand dollars a day with the taxpayers footing the bill. Reagan considered this scandalous. But instead of getting angry, all Jimmy Carter and Reagan had to do was to sign an executive order outlawing all consulting contracts. "Just a stroke of the pen," says Gross, who adds, "We're still waiting."

The General Services Administration has allowed one Congressional leader to pay more than \$3,000 for a single desk. So how much is spent on furniture and decorating each office? "No one in the government really knows," says Gross.

There have been 11,000 members of Congress, with some 800 still alive. About 600 belong to the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, which makes them "super lobbyists." They are privileged to walk on to the House floor at all times. Armed with status and access to former buddies "even in the House or Senate cloakroom, dining room, gym, or swimming pool," the super-lobbyist can accomplish miracles.

Gross says we are in terrible shape with a federal debt that has passed the four trillion dollar mark. In 1993, it will cost us \$315 billion just in interest. We do crazy things, such as spending nearly one billion dollars for unwanted honey just to keep beekeepers happy. In one year we gave away the total honey crop while the American people bought the same amount of honey from overseas. We have stored a billion dollars worth of helium underground, enough to last to the twenty-second century. And the junkets go on, with no real demand for travel to distant places. One hundred people went to the Paris Air Show for \$200,000.

The \$4 trillion debt looms like Mount Everest until we come upon Gross's item about land purchases. The government, he tells us, owns thirty percent of all land in the United States. At this point, one is inclined to say, "Wow!" If we were to sell the land to tax-paying people we'd be out of debt, wouldn't we? Yes, but it isn't going to happen. Congress has just paid \$1.9 billion, or \$50,000 an acre, for raw forest land.

Pork takes up considerable space in Gross's book. Do we really need to spend \$107,000 to study the sex life of the Japanese quail? Or \$60,000 for Belgian endive research? Or \$84,000 to find out why people fall in love? Gross quotes Senator Proxmire as saying, "I have spent my career trying to get Congressmen to spend money as if it were their own, but I have failed."

Gross's own cure for the whole business of waste is to suggest the creation of two executives to run the government in the president's name. One would be Chief Operating Officer; the other would be Chief Financial Officer. Their big function would be to by-pass the cabinet. With "ZBB," or Zero Based Budgeting that pays no attention to last year's appropriations, and with the president having a line-item veto, we might have real reform. On the other hand, only a limitation of the terms of office for Senators and Representatives (twelve years for Senators, eight for Representatives) could spread the fear of God through Capitol Hill. □

The Radicalism of the American Revolution

by Gordon S. Wood

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Reviewed by Doug Bandow

The American Revolution is traditionally thought of as a rather conservative affair, a bourgeois revolt against imperious royal rule that kept public affairs out of the hands of the masses. And "if we measure the radicalism of revolutions by the degree of social misery or economic deprivation suffered, or by the number of people killed or manor houses burned, then this conventional emphasis" is warranted, writes Gordon Wood in *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. But Wood, a professor of history at Brown University, contends that however tame the actual rebellion against Great Britain, the ultimate social results were far more dramatic than could have ever

been imagined. In just a few years the events of the 1770s had dramatically transformed American society, turning it into one "unlike any that had ever existed anywhere in the world," writes Wood.

Wood begins by sketching colonial life, focusing on the political, economic, and social hierarchy that stemmed from the monarchical system. His summary of a society that seems almost as archaic as Medieval Europe makes for a delightful read.

The fount of authority in America before the Revolution was the British king. Because of the tendency to emphasize the differences between life in Britain and the colonies, observes Wood, "we have often overlooked how dominantly British and traditional the colonists' culture still was; indeed, in some respects colonial society was more traditional than that of the mother country." Around the monarchy was arrayed the aristocracy, the patrician class thought destined to rule the plebeians.

It is true that Americans were considered uncouth, unruly, and often defiant. But this neither distinguished them from their British counterparts nor meant the monarchy was irrelevant. True, the crown worn by George III was different from that worn by James I. "Yet, however superficial and hollow, it was still a monarchical society the colonists lived in, and it was still a king to whom they paid allegiance," explains Wood.

Some of the affectations of monarchy seem particularly ironic today. The consumer is now "king," but before the Revolution the king's servants scorned commerce. True gentlemen might dabble in economic affairs, but they "were not defined or identified by what they did, but by who they were," observes Wood. To work—as a doctor, lawyer, merchant, printer, or whatever—in order to live indicated a low social station. Once one's reputation as a gentleman had been established, however, one could engage in a commercial activity so long as it was seen as an avocation rather than a vocation.

Colonial America was also noteworthy for the role of patriarchy, which, argues

Wood, "may even have been stronger in America than in England precisely because of the weakness in the colonies of other institutions, such as guilds." Although primogeniture was not uniformly followed in colonial inheritance law, the first-born male was usually the favored heir. Hierarchy was also strengthened in early America by the institutions of slavery and indentured servitude.

A society like this operated naturally through the practice of patronage. Personal relationships dominated both economic and political relations. "The world still seemed small and intimate enough that the mutual relationships that began with the family could be extended outward into the society to describe nearly all other relationships as well," writes Wood.

Yet as pervasive as were both monarchy and hierarchy in colonial America, challenges began to emerge before the formal rebellion against London. Republican principles were gaining adherents, eroding not only support for the king but also the many institutions, such as an established church, that buttressed his rule in a monarchical society. The colonies were "therefore a society in tension, torn between contradictory monarchical and republican tendencies," observes Wood. As a result, "the connectedness of colonial society—its capacity to bind one person to another—was exceedingly fragile and vulnerable to change."

And change it did when the Revolution shattered the traditional bonds between people. There was none of the conditions typically thought to give rise to revolution—the oppression, poverty, and war that characterized Czarist Russia, for instance. To the contrary, the colonists were, in the main, relatively prosperous and free. But they seemed to see their success as terribly precarious, especially as what had been a well-ordered, hierarchical society began to break down. "Men who had quickly risen to the top were confident and aggressive but also vulnerable to challenge, especially sensitive over their liberty and independence, and unwilling to brook any interference with

their status or their prospects," writes Wood.

Because monarchical ties were as important economically and socially as they were politically, the Revolution's assault on those relationships had far-reaching effects on colonial society. But, Wood emphasizes, "this social assault was not the sort we are used to today in describing revolutions." Rather than proletarians versus bourgeoisie, for instance, they were "patriots versus courtiers," the latter being the primary beneficiaries of the patronage of a hierarchical society.

To replace patronage the leading revolutionaries hoped to establish new bonds, principally what Wood calls the notion of "benevolence," the natural ties that all men should have to one another. But what was envisioned as a form of republican virtue was itself doomed, if not by human nature, then by the other social forces, such as demands for equality, loosed by the Revolution. In fact, argues Wood, "the Revolution resembled the breaking of a dam, releasing thousands upon thousands of pent-up pressures," which the classical political theories of the revolutionary leaders were unable to contain. To the horror of those who wanted the government to be "based on virtue and disinterested public leadership," in Wood's words, the system instead quickly focused on factions and interests, primarily commercial. Artisans organized slates for city council elections; representatives of other professions as well as ethnic and religious groups quickly followed suit. Farmers and creditors were no different.

The perceived lack of public-spiritedness had important political implications. "By the 1780s many of the younger revolutionary leaders like James Madison were willing to confront the reality of interests in America with a very cold eye," writes Wood. The federal Constitution was crafted to both limit the power of factions and enhance the role of the disinterested in serving in government. Yet it didn't take long for interest-group politics to dominate national as well as local politics. As the theory of a disin-

terested elite governing the nation became increasingly illusory, pressure rose to expand the suffrage and destroy, at least in the North, what remained of American aristocracy.

One positive development of the breakdown of traditional patronage was the rise of voluntary associations, something noted by Alexis de Tocqueville, among others. Observes Wood: "In the three or four decades following the Revolution newly independent American men and women came together to form hundreds and thousands of new voluntary associations expressive of a wide array of benevolent goals." The result of the Revolution was not much-maligned atomistic individualism, but rather new, voluntary forms of social cooperation. Nevertheless, Wood argues that the chief ties between Americans became commercial—that even the "Great Awakening" revivals early in the nineteenth century did not bring people together so much as did financial interest. Wood is surely right that business played a much more important role in the U.S. than in most European nations at the time. Still, in an age when families were thriving, associations were forming, and churches were reviving, he seems to overemphasize the importance "of interest and money as the best connecting links in society."

The fact that government was not the organizing agent in society was something of which the revolutionaries could be proud. Perhaps Wood's most important observation is that while "no one was really in charge of this gigantic, enterprising, restless nation" in the early 1800s, there was no disarray. To the contrary, "the harmony emerging out of such chaos was awesome to behold." It is, in fact, a testament to the sort of spontaneous order that Friedrich Hayek wrote about earlier this century, the natural result of a free society.

Yet Wood is probably right to conclude that the founders of the American Republic were less than pleased with their handiwork; many of those who lived on into the next century, he writes, "expressed anxiety over what they had wrought." Even Thomas Jefferson, no defender of aristocratic privi-

lege, “hated the new democratic world he saw emerging in America—a world of speculation, banks, paper money, and evangelical Christianity.”

The irony is that the disillusionment felt by America’s revolutionaries over the course of America’s revolution was quite different from that felt by English (and American) liberals over the course of the French Revolution. There was no murder, oppression, and tyranny in the new United States. Rather, the classical republican ideal gave way to what the original revolutionaries perceived to be crass, commercial, and interest-bound democracy. Wood admits that there was a price to be paid for the sort of political system that developed, but he still celebrates the “real earthly benefits it brought to the hitherto neglected and despised masses of common laboring people.” And it surely has done so for many years.

Alas, those benefits began to shrink as the constitutional design created by the revolutionaries to contain the power of faction started breaking down by the middle of the nineteenth century. Today we are seeing the deleterious consequences of a government that, despite the best efforts of the founders, has become a captive of clamorous interest groups. □

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Liberalism in Contemporary America

by Dwight D. Murphey

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Reviewed by William H. Peterson

Liberalism, that cover word for the American Left, the powerful intellectual movement that has swept over this country through most of this century, takes a most optimistic regard of government interventionism from federal bank deposit

insurance and Social Security in the New Deal days to the Environmental Protection Agency and national health insurance today. These liberals peddle—plainly but softly—a Planned Society.

Today their demigod Karl Marx has been put into the closet with the demise of Eurocommunism, but their more recent demigod John Maynard Keynes has been resurrected so as to repeal the cycle of boom and bust once and for all. And for all their talk of “Democracy,” they elevate centralization and reduce the individual to a pawn on the chessboard of a New World Order.

Dwight Murphey, professor, lawyer, author of *Understanding the Modern Predicament*, does a splendid job dissecting liberalism. He does so mainly through reporting the stands and slants, including flip-flops, on current events of the flagship liberal journal, *The New Republic*, from its inception in 1914 to early 1985.

The Murphey strategy is sound. Events such as the Sixteenth Income Tax Amendment, World War I, Prohibition, the Great Depression, the New Deal, World War II, McCarthyism, the Eisenhower Administration, Vietnam, the new Left, Reaganism, and so on have to be liberally interpreted, even perhaps orchestrated, for the broader media. *The New Republic* and *The Nation* (also treated by Murphey) seemed to have given marching orders to such bigger circulation opinion makers as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, CBS, ABC, NBC, and so on. This is liberal revisionism on the march, telling America what to think.

Dwight Murphey gives us quite an intellectual journey through the years as liberalism reveals relativism and dissimulation in the thoughts of such movement liberals as Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Croly, Thorstein Veblen, John Dewey, Stuart Chase, John Kenneth Galbraith, Robert Heilbroner, and Michael Harrington. Right along through the decades these thinkers have consistently departed from the role model of limited government set forth by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. The