AMERICAN REVOLUTION: HYPOCRISY OR SOCIAL REVOLUTION?

AMERICAN REVOLUTION AS A SOCIAL REVOLUTION?

- American Rev. truly a Social Rev?
  - major break with old order
  - destroys institutional foundations of old order
  - transfers power from ruling elite to new social groups
- True Social Revs in history:
  - French Rev (1789)
  - Russian Rev (1917)
  - Chinese Communist Rev (1949)
- special identity/mission
- glorification of the state/people
- common lang., culture, ethnicity
- all people equal, share equal rights

COLONIAL AMERICA

- Conditions in American Colonial Society/Class
  - “Pasty rich white boiz” — Rule by assembly, little voter participation, property qualifications
  - few societal roles, no political roles
  - govt by the propertied classes, legal equality, freedom, inalienable rights
The year is 1776, and you are a supporter of the revolution. What do you hope to gain from the revolution, or what do you hope will change because of the revolution? Choose one of the following perspectives:
- Rich white male
- Poor white male
- Married white female
- Slave (male or female)
- Native American (male or female)

PARADOX OF SLAVERY

Principles of Liberty & Equality
- April 1772, House of Burgesses petitions king to end slave trade
- Debt, moral qualms
- British insistence upon the slave trade was “one of the great causes of our separation from Great Britain”
- Laws relaxed — owners can free slaves on individual basis

What did the war and the Declaration of Independence do for slavery?
Washington on Slavery:
"We must use Negroes or run the risk of losing the war... Success will depend on which side can arm the Negroes faster."
STATUS OF WOMEN

- Revolution = new opportunities
- Women on the Front Lines
  - artillery
  - joined army
    as “Robert Shurtleff”
- Voices for Change:
  - “I won’t have it thought that because we are the weaker sex as to bodily strength we are capable of nothing more than domestic concerns. They won’t even allow us liberty of thought, and that is all I want.”
  - Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes” (1779)

SOCIAL REVOLUTION?

So what was revolutionary?
- IDEAS -- equality, inalienable rights
- Religious Freedom --
- Change in Economy
- Social system =
- Inspiration

"WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE"