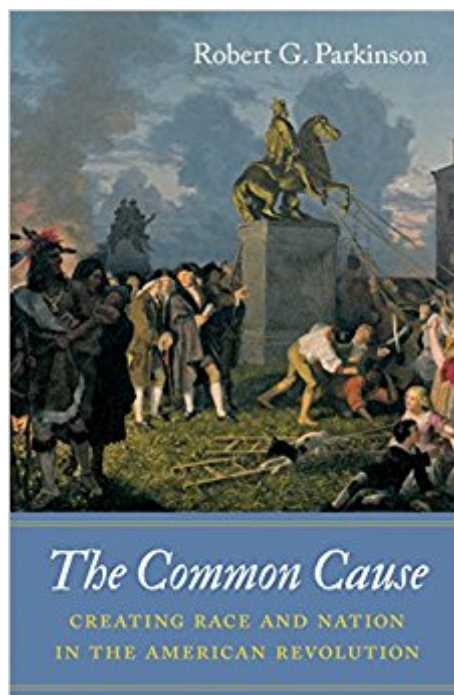


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The Common Cause: Creating Race And Nation In The American Revolution (Published By The Omohundro Institute Of Early American History And Culture And The University Of North Carolina Press)



Synopsis

When the Revolutionary War began, the odds of a united, continental effort to resist the British seemed nearly impossible. Few on either side of the Atlantic expected thirteen colonies to stick together in a war against their cultural cousins. In this pathbreaking book, Robert Parkinson argues that to unify the patriot side, political and communications leaders linked British tyranny to colonial prejudices, stereotypes, and fears about insurrectionary slaves and violent Indians. Manipulating newspaper networks, Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, and their fellow agitators broadcast stories of British agents inciting African Americans and Indians to take up arms against the American rebellion. Using rhetoric like "domestic insurrectionists" and "merciless savages," the founding fathers rallied the people around a common enemy and made racial prejudice a cornerstone of the new Republic. In a fresh reading of the founding moment, Parkinson demonstrates the dual projection of the "common cause." Patriots through both an ideological appeal to popular rights and a wartime movement against a host of British-recruited slaves and Indians forged a racialized, exclusionary model of American citizenship.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Brilliant, timely, and indispensable. . . . Parkinson writes with authority on military, political, social, and cultural history, reconstructing the story of this critical period as it actually unfolded, with

everything happening at once.--Annette Gordon-Reed, New York Review of Books
Wonderfully written and deeply researched. . . . Reveals a very different and much darker picture of the revolution. . . . Full of illuminating insights about familiar events.--William and Mary Quarterly
Clear prose and logical structure make it a joy to read. . . . Parkinson's impressive analysis . . . will force future scholars to engage with his uncomfortable argument that American independence rested on racism and ethnocentrism.--Common-Place
Persuasively explains the intensely racialized nature of citizenship in the newly independent U.S. and the long-standing problems posed by the exclusion of Americans of indigenous or African heritage from the 'common cause' of the Revolution.--Publishers Weekly
Engrossing. . . . A must-read for anyone interested in the American Revolution and issues of race.--Library Journal, starred review
One of the most significant studies in of the Revolution in years. It sweeps the entire war; connects cultural, military, and political concerns; contains the best survey of American newspapers during this period; and argues persuasively that fear of blacks and Indians formed the psychic center of the new nation. Highly recommended.--CHOICE
Even as he builds on the existing scholarship about the Revolution, Parkinson recasts our understanding of the Revolutionary War and its lasting impact.--Virginia Magazine of History and Biography

Robert Parkinson's extraordinary book persuasively makes the case that 'propagation,' not 'propaganda,' created unity in America during the Revolutionary War. Newspapers throughout the continent propagated 'war stories' that stressed the threat from internal enemies. Parkinson offers an innovative interpretation of the Revolution and its aftermath that not only explains much about the disconnect between the revolutionaries' rhetoric and their attitudes toward non-Anglo peoples, but that also reveals the origins of a bifurcation evident in historical scholarship to this day.--Mary Beth Norton, Cornell University
The field of the American Revolution has not seen many game-changing books in the twenty-first century, but this is one. Political history meets military history meets cultural history here in *Þ* an argument about both the nature of the Revolutionary War and the emerging U.S. political culture. The narrative integrates white fears of native Americans and African Americans into the story, explaining what happened between 1775 and 1783 with tremendous implications for the future of the nation.--David Waldstreicher, The Graduate Center, City University of New York
In a brilliant reexamination of the American Revolution, Robert Parkinson shows how American patriots deployed newspapers to unite the colonies in common cause against the British. Through these 'founding stories,' white Americans marginalized, demonized, and excluded enslaved people and native Americans, shaping the Revolutionary

narrative down to the present day.--Rosemarie Zagarri, George Mason University
What did it mean to belong to the American People in the Revolutionary era? Robert Parkinson presents a new origin story based on the centrality of matters of exclusion, especially race, to the Revolution. Bringing colonists into 'the common cause' meant excluding native and black people, whether they supported it or not. They would have no place among 'the People of the United States' as that People gave itself identity and form.--Edward Countryman, Southern Methodist University

Truly a scholarly, well-researched and documented, important addition to USA Revolution literature. Eschews the ordinary dwelling on George Washington's nexus to broaden the scope and depth of the influence of the rise of the Common Cause printers on a broad spectrum of emphases on the shaping of our democracy. Supremely readable and refreshingly informative.

Read at the New York Society Library, a paid subscription library.
Parkinson has written a very detailed history of the creation of a common cause devised by the founding fathers to tie the thirteen colonies together in their efforts to break away from England, at the time the most powerful nation in the world. Parkinson argues based on his analysis of the history of the pre-war period that "men like Jefferson, Adams, Franklin and Washington developed a myth about who was and was not a part of the Revolutionary movement; about who had an interest and who did not." Others like Paine and Lafayette accepted the myth, a myth which put racial prejudice at the heart of creating unity across the colonies. The "myth" or "narrative" created for "political expediency" a core belief that continued after the war -- Blacks and Native Americans were not "citizens", only "whites" were, and this belief "lived at the heart of the Republic it helped create for decades to come." According to Parkinson, the result of this myth or narrative -- Parkinson uses both words apparently for the same concept -- was clear. "This refusal to extend to African Americans and Indians the benefits of emerging concepts of liberal subjectivity in the form of citizenship had ghastly consequences, for it legitimated and excused the destruction of vast numbers of human beings." Harsh conclusions, but for a general reader like myself, Parkinson provides an impressive amount of factual information to support his conclusions. I found the information fascinating and deeply troubling.
Robert C. Ross
January 2017

Parkinson's is a magnificently researched and compellingly argued reinterpretation of the direction and tone of the American Revolution.

Parkinson's deep volume on slavery and the American Revolution is a must for colonial historians.

At 600 pages it is too in-depth for many readers, but the writing is accessible, the research of the highest quality, and the story absolutely important to understand.

Great service and price! Thank you.

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