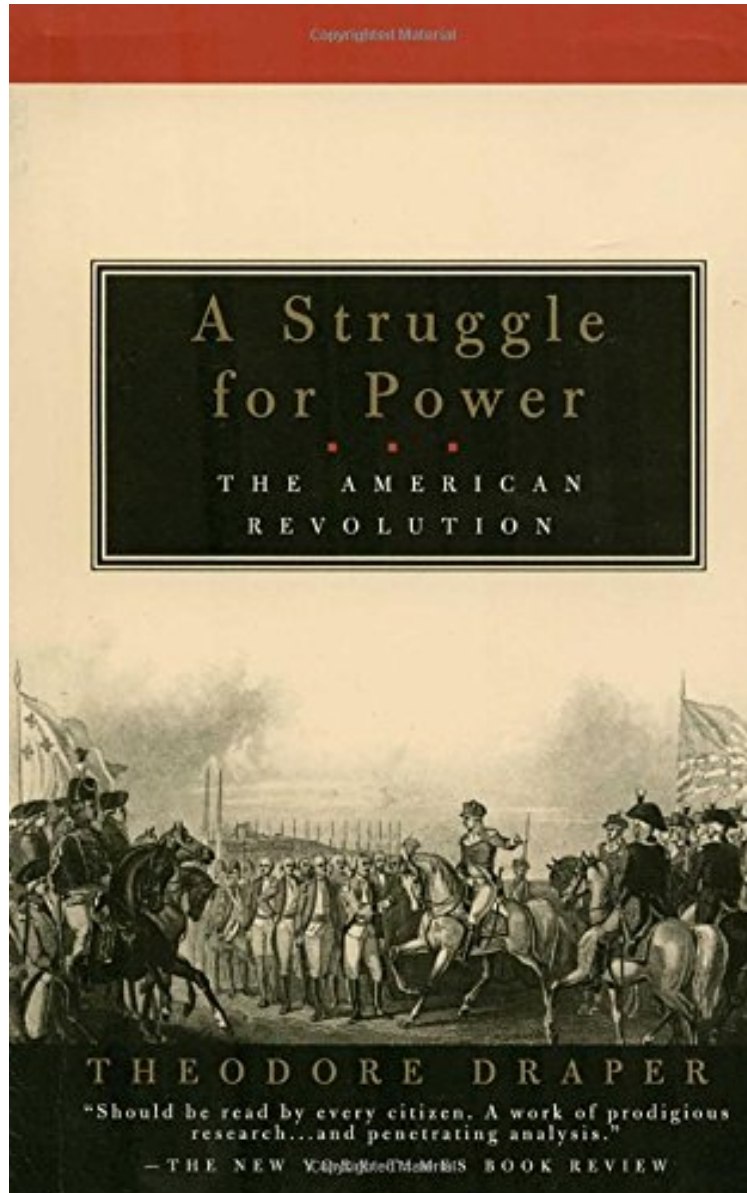


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A Struggle for Power: The American Revolution

Theodore Draper

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From one of the great political journalists of our time comes a boldly argued reinterpretation of the central event in our collective past a book that portrays the American Revolution not as a clash of ideologies but as a Machiavellian struggle for power.

From Publishers Weekly Draper's elegantly written, masterful study overturns many preconceptions about the causes of the American Revolution. Before 1763, he observes, the status quo worked largely in favor of the 13 colonies. The Americans dominated the governors sent to rule over them. British customs agents winked at New England smugglers' flourishing trade, and farmers and merchants prospered. But in 1764-1765, the British imposed unpopular taxes and trade restrictions that, combined with Mother England's attempt to reduce the power of the colonial assemblies, brought separatist fervor to the boiling point. To justify the ensuing power struggle, America's ruling elite developed a revolutionary ideology, couching their self-interest in terms of liberty and inalienable rights. Distinguished historian Draper (*A Very Thin Line: The Iran-Contra Affair*) further argues that the British, having allowed themselves to become economically dependent on the colonies, desperately sought to control colonial trade and manufacture. Drawing freely on period pamphlets, letters, petitions, travelogues and assembly minutes, he vividly evokes the populist discontent, intellectual gymnastics and mob violence that led to revolution. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* The American Revolution is commonly believed to have been caused by the colonists' desire for independence and liberty. Draper (*A Very Thin Line: The Iran-Contra Affair*, LJ 6/1/91) maintains that the Revolution was really a power struggle spawned by the British system of chartering colonies, which placed fiscal control of public funds with the colonial assemblies. British dependence on American trade and the Colonies' phenomenal population growth only intensified Americans' desire to control their own destiny. Draper quotes heavily from primary sources and sometimes relies totally on colonial writers to make his point without further explanation; this is unfortunate because his style is fairly readable. In the preface, the author notes his intended audience is not the specialist but the interested general reader. However, his revisionist history won't appeal to the public and belongs in academic libraries only. Grant Alan Fredericksen, *Illinois Prairie Dist. P.L.*, Metamora Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Scientific American* Draper . . . has given the historical kaleidoscope a vigorous shake. . . . Fresh and stimulating.