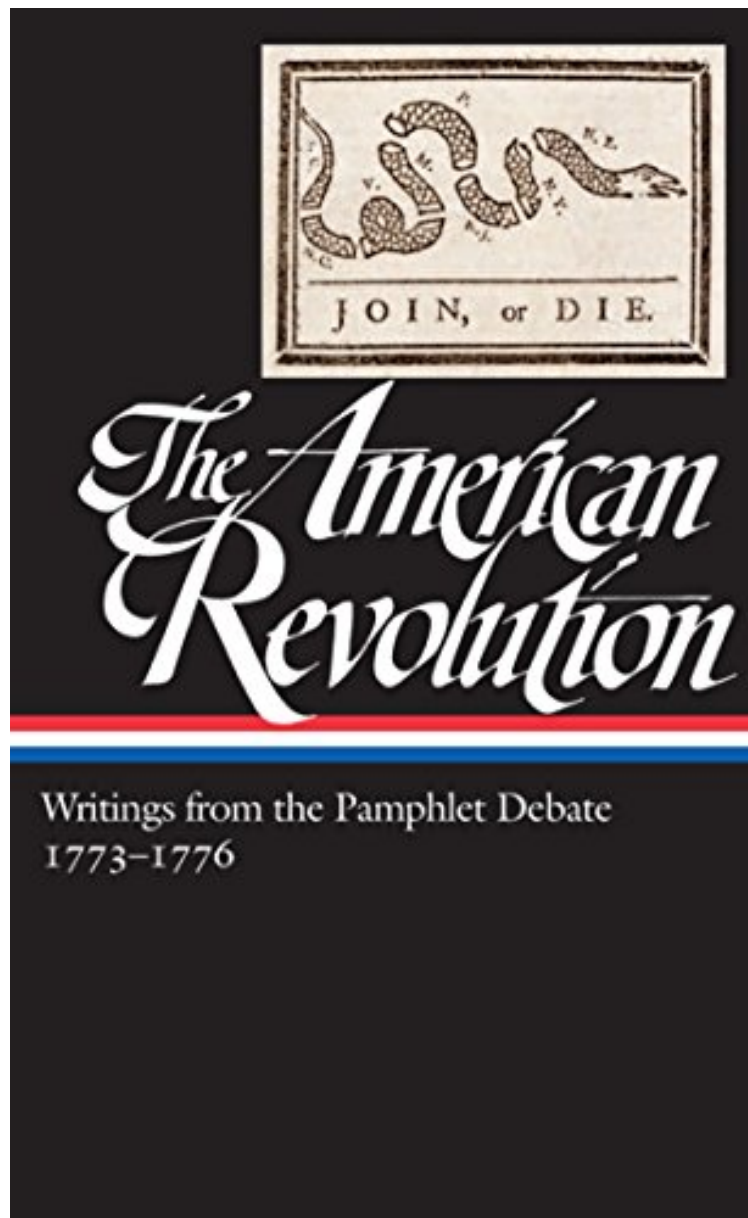


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Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1773-1776: (Library of America #266):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy P MarshallI cannot give this series a better 5 star recommendation.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy John BurnsLoved the book4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The American Revolution Pamphlet Debate -- 2By Robin FriedmanThe Library of America has published a two-volume box set of writings from the pamphlet debate on the American Revolution from the years 1764 -- 1776. The volumes were prepared and edited by Gordon Wood, a highly regarded historian of the American Revolution. I have reviewed the box set here on The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1764-1776; but I wanted to follow-up with reviews of the individual volumes. This review is of the second volume which includes 20 pamphlets written between 1773 -- 1776 from a variety of perspectives on the relationship of the Thirteen Colonies to Great Britain. The first volume of the set includes 19 pamphlets covering the years 1764 -- 1772. The pamphlets begin after the conclusion of the French-Indian War. Tensions between Britain and the colonies rose as Britain tried to tax and regulate the lives of Americans without American representation in Parliament. The division of the set into two volumes is somewhat arbitrary (the final pamphlet of volume 1 leads directly into the opening pamphlet of volume 2); but on the whole the pamphlets in this second volume present the issues between the colonies and Britain more sharply and are easier to read than the pamphlets in the first volume. The history of the three year period 1773 -- 1776 will be more familiar to most readers as will be more of the authors of the pamphlets. This volume begins with the records of a debate between the Loyalist governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, and the members of the Council and the House of Representatives of Massachusetts. The candid exchange of views in this pamphlet is valuable for understanding the division between Britain and America. The volume concludes with a second pamphlet by Hutchinson. By August 1776, Hutchinson had moved to London. The Declaration of Independence had just become available in Britain, and Hutchinson wrote an extensive section-by-section critique. This pamphlet is also valuable in showing the response of a Loyalist long-term resident, historian and official of the colonies to the momentous events of the American Revolution. This volume includes the most famous of the pamphlets and a revered document of American independence. Thomas Paine ignited the population's desire for independence with his 1776 pamphlet, "Common Sense" which went through at least 25 editions and proclaimed: "The birthday of a new world is at hand, and a race of men, perhaps as numerous as all Europe contains, are to receive their freedom from the events of a few months." Much less familiar than "Common Sense" is a reply to Paine written by Charles Inglis and also included in this collection. One of the valuable features of this collection is that it includes many instances of pamphlets written in response to each other. Other famous pamphlets in this volume include Edmund Burke's 1775 speech urging conciliation with the colonies. This speech was for many years taught as a model of rhetoric and argumentation and it still deserves to be studied. An early and highly radical work by Thomas Jefferson, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America" written in 1774 is included. This short, sharply written pamphlet helped establish Jefferson's reputation. Another famous writer, Samuel Johnson, wrote a pamphlet at the behest of the Crown, "Taxation no Tyranny" written in Johnson's inimitable style and highly critical of the Americans. A reply to Johnson by an anonymous author follows Johnson's pamphlet. Some of the best writing in the volume is by writers who are less well-known. These include pamphlets taking various positions written by James Wilson, Samuel Seabury, Thomas Chandler, Philip Livingston, and Charles Lee, which effectively form a set. Taken together, they offer an overview of the debate between Patriots and Loyalists. I also enjoyed reading the pamphlet by Moses Mather, the descendant of a long line of Puritans, in fervent support of American independence. Although not a main theme in the volume, several authors, both Patriot and Loyalist, notice the irony involved in the American quest for independence and freedom while keeping their slaves in chains. The Patriot writer and minister Ebenezer Baldwin, was highly troubled by this aspect of the American position. Baldwin wrote: "The present alarming situation of things therefore loudly calls upon us to examine what sins in particular have provoked heaven thus to come out in judgment against us; and perhaps there cannot be a better rule of determining than to enquire what sins these calamities are properly retributive of, and by this rule will not the enslaving the poor Africans in the colonies stand forth in front of the dreadful catalogue? Are not the colonies guilty of forcibly depriving them of their natural rights? Will not the arguments we use in defense of our own liberties against the claims of the British parliament, equally conclude in their favour? And is it not easy, to see there is something retributive in the present judgment of heaven? We keep our fellow men in slavery -- heaven is suffering others to enslave us." The volume includes an opening essay, valuable introductions to each pamphlet by Wood, a chronology of the First British Empire, notes on the publication history of each pamphlet, and a short biography of each writer. This material is highly useful in helping to understand the pamphlets in their historical context. This book and its companion volume provide a valuable way for readers to think about the nature of the American Revolution and its continued significance. The Library of America kindly provided me with a review copy of the box set. Robin Friedman

For the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution, acclaimed historian Gordon S. Wood presents a landmark collection of British and American pamphlets from the political debate that divided an empire and created a

nation: In 1764, in the wake of its triumph in the Seven Years War, Great Britain possessed the largest and most powerful empire the world had seen since the fall of Rome and its North American colonists were justly proud of their vital place within this global colossus. Just twelve short years later the empire was in tatters, and the thirteen colonies proclaimed themselves the free and independent United States of America. In between, there occurred an extraordinary contest of words between American and Britons, and among Americans themselves, which addressed all of the most fundamental issues of politics: the nature of power, liberty, representation, rights and constitutions, and sovereignty. This debate was carried on largely in pamphlets and from the more than a thousand published on both sides of the Atlantic during the period Gordon S. Wood has selected thirty-nine of the most interesting and important to reveal as never before how this momentous revolution unfolded. This second of two volumes follows the course of the ultimate crisis that led from the Boston Tea Party to the final break, as the focus of debate turns from questions of representation and rights to the crucial issue of sovereignty. Here is a young Thomas Jefferson offering his radical Summary View of the Rights of British America; Samuel Johnson pronouncing Taxation no Tyranny and asking "How is that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?"; Edmund Burke trying to hold the empire together in his famous Speech on Conciliation; and Thomas Paine turning the focus of American animus from Parliament to king in the truly revolutionary pamphlet Common Sense. The volume includes an introduction, headnotes, a chronology of events, biographical notes about the writers, and detailed explanatory notes, all prepared by our leading expert on the American Revolution. As a special feature, each pamphlet is preceded by a typographic reproduction of its original title page.

This collection of pamphlets from the American Revolution is timely, important, and judiciously selected, which is no surprise given that Gordon S. Wood is the most insightful and accomplished scholar of the intellectual origins and consequences of the Revolution. These volumes are a great and fitting addition to the Library of America series. Alan Taylor, winner of the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for History for *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia* Gordon S. Woods grasp of the dynamics of the Imperial debate that culminated in American independence is unsurpassed. By including all sides of the controversy Wood has created the most discriminating and revealing collection of sources we have on the emerging ideology of the Revolution. Richard D. Brown, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus, at the University of Connecticut These volumes make a valuable contribution to the learning and teaching of American history. The men who wrote the script for national independence were strong, daring thinkers and skilled writers, with their lives at stake and their conscience in their pens. Their great gift to us lives on in this splendid collection. Michael McGiffert, Editor Emeritus, *The William and Mary Quarterly* About the Author GORDON S. WOOD is Alva O. Way Professor of History Emeritus at Brown University. His books include the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, the Bancroft Prize-winning *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History*, and *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*, for the *Oxford History of the United States*. He writes frequently for *The New York Times* and other publications. In 2011 Wood was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Barack Obama.