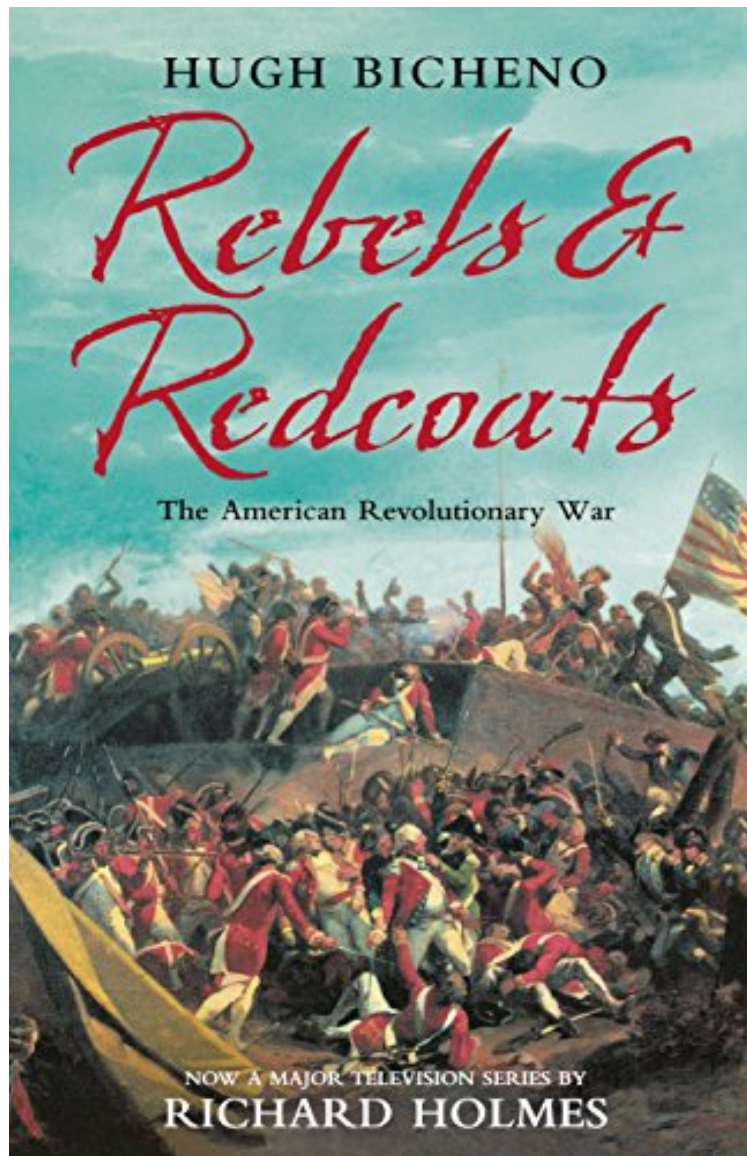


[FREE] Rebels and Redcoats: The American Revolutionary War

Rebels and Redcoats: The American Revolutionary War

Hugh Bicheno

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Hugh Bicheno : Rebels and Redcoats: The American Revolutionary War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rebels and Redcoats: The American Revolutionary War:

23 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Deliciously vicious--or consistently mean-spirited? By James J. Horning I recently read David McCollough's popular "1776" and Don Cook's less popular, but more thorough, "The Long Fuse: How England Lost the American Colonies, 1760-1785." They both left me with the question, "What were the British thinking?" I.e., what did the British decision-makers believe, know, intend, plan, and expect? Via a British

friend, I got a recommendation from a university Reader in American History (Associate Professor) for this book as "the best general history ... of a far higher standard than McCullough, but still lively and accessible to a general audience." "Rebels Redcoats" was certainly eye-opening in some respects, including its view of the Founding Fathers as a reprehensible bunch who dragged their mostly-unwilling countrymen into an unnecessary war. It is incessant in its attacks on "the Foundation Myth" (on which I was raised). Depending on taste, this is either the most deliciously vicious, or the most consistently mean-spirited, book of historical non-fiction that I can recall. The only major figure (American or British) to emerge relatively unscathed is Benedict Arnold--possibly because his reputation has already been ruined. On topics where Bicheno agrees with the conventional view, he says little or nothing, and he presents little concrete evidence for many of his most sweeping character judgments. To my mind, much of the book reeks of what I call "Simon Schama-ism": The use of a book ostensibly directed to the general reader to attack other historians' positions, without the encumbering impedimenta of scholarly publication. Bicheno often assumes that the reader already knows the history he is commenting on, rather than troubling to present it himself. Had I not already read the other books, I would have been mystified by a number of Bicheno's discursions, and would have lacked the background to connect many of the book's parts to its whole. Three allegations in the book have the potential to significantly alter my view of important aspects of the Revolution: 1) The supply of arms and military stores cached in Concord in April 1775 included three 24-pounder cannon. "These were 5600-pound monsters requiring eight to ten men to serve them and a team of six horses to pull them... They were siege guns, not field artillery pieces, and how they came to be buried in the courtyard of the Concord jail is a mystery... The conspirators were desperate to provoke some bloody event to polarize opinion, and the French would have regarded a brace and a half of 24-pounders as seed corn... The existence of such powerful weapons at such a place and time of itself is one of those ugly facts so harmful to beautiful theories, in this case the myth of peace-loving farmers spontaneously rising up against unprovoked aggression." 2) "Myth has it these were either personal weapons or stocks siezed from poorly guarded depots, but even if we are to suppose that every colony gave up every weapon it captured in 1775-76, more cannon were lost by the Rebels during the New York campaign than the British Army had ever felt it necessary to store in the colonies. It is impossible to reconcile the spontaneous uprising thesis with this proof of serious long-term planning and preparation." 3) Jefferson's first manuscript draft of the Declaration of Independence contained the following passage accusing George III of foisting the slave trade on the colonies: "He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold he has prostituted his negative for supressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce: and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them by murdering the people upon whom he also obruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another." Since Bicheno does not specify the sources on which he bases these allegations, it is difficult for me to decide how much credence to give them. Bicheno is not overly concerned with consistency, being willing to assert a proposition to skewer one character, and then a contradictory proposition to eviscerate another. I'm not talking about minor points, but major ones, like whether or not the Tea Act precipitated the conflict, or whether the terms on which the war was settled in 1782 were significantly different from the ones offered by Britain in 1778. A few sample quotes: "It often crossed my mind that the standard accounts of the Anglo-American civil war of 1775-83 are the most outstanding example of propaganda not merely triumphing over historical substance, but virtually obliterating it." "The 1776 Declaration of Independence ... denounced measures taken for the common defence, the preservation of public order and the value of the currency, which most would regard as minimum obligations of any government." "Only the most devoted hagiographers have been able to stomach the personalities of Samuel Adams and John Hancock, the partnership that made the war happen." "Franklin was a pot-stirrer quite on a par with Samuel Adams, like him carefully tailoring his message to whatever audience he was addressing... Franklin's ... apparent moderation was simply a smokescreen." "But as all politicians know, the executive truth is what people can be persuaded to believe long enough to commit them to a course from which there is no easy retreat." "The Scots slaver and pirate John Paul alias Jones ... defeated the frigate HMS Serapis... His later career included service in the navy of the freedom-loving Catherine the Great of Russia, finally fleeing St Petersburg to evade an allegedly fabricated accusation of rape. What may have been his remains were exhumed from a built-over Paris cemetery in 1905 and escorted across the Atlantic by the US fleet for deposit in a magnificent crypt at the Annapolis Naval Academy. Not many other career criminals have been similarly honored." "After centuries in which the House of Lords, on occasion alone, resisted relentless centralization, the British are now to find out whether it will be an improvement to have an upper house packed with government placepersons possessing all the attributes of petty criminals save the minimum courage required to rob the helpless openly." "Despite a political history of almost unparalleled corruption and judicial malfeasance, Massachusetts remains the preferred domicile of the tiresomely self-righteous... Philadelphia treasures

the cracked Liberty Bell, which perfectly symbolizes Pennsylvania's commitment to the cause of independence." This book did not satisfy my particular curiosity about what the British decision-makers believed, knew, intended, planned and expected. In fact, it gave remarkably little space to either decisions in Britain or by the British command in America. But it was a very interesting and thought-provoking read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Swindled By Charles G McLellan This is NOT the Rebels and Redcoats of Scheer and Rankin, 1957. Can I return this Kindle book? I was swindled! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. you may like this book By Customer Disappointing Propaganda. Not the book I thought it was. Relegates the Declaration of Independence to a piece of propaganda that no one really wanted to sign but were forced to because they backed themselves into a corner with their own rhetoric. Really? Americans portrayed as greedy trouble makers illegitimately starting a war with the ever benevolent Mother country. This book does not reflect actual history as much as it does the author's own opinion. If you're interested in the American Revolution from a British opinionated viewpoint that is not historical, you may like this book.

Controversial and revisionist history of Americas first civil war. Published with hugely successful accompanying four-part BBC TV series written and presented by star military historian, Richard Holmes. Most people view the American Revolutionary War of the 1775-83 (also known as the War of Independence) as a popular struggle for liberty against an oppressive colonial power. *REBELS REDCOATS* by historian Hugh Bicheno, written to accompany a four-part BBC television series presented by Richard Holmes, demonstrates that it was in fact America's first civil war. Employing the latest scholarship and vivid eyewitness accounts, Bicheno argues that the war was the product of a broad French imperial design, and greed of many prominent colonials. As many Americans remained loyal to the Crown as rebelled against it, and the reasons for adopting or changing sides were as varied as the men and women who had to make the unenviable decision. Native and African Americans overwhelmingly favoured the British cause. We hear not only the voices of Rebels and Redcoats, but also of German mercenaries and aristocratic French adventurers, as well as Indian warriors and Black slaves fighting for their independence, which together shed new light on events that forged a nation. The main loser was the French monarchy, which ruined itself to gain no lasting influence over the United States, while unable to exploit the distraction the war created either to invade Britain or gain control of the West Indies, which at the time were considered a far bigger prize than all of North America.

'Redcoat is a wonderful book, full of anecdote and good sense. Anyone who has enjoyed a Sharpe story will love it, anyone who likes history will want to own it and anyone who cherishes good writing will read it with pleasure.' BERNARD CORNWELL, Daily Mail 'It would be hard to exaggerate the excellence of this book. It is vivid, comprehensive, well-written, pacy, colourful, and above all, highly informative. The author has a command of his subject of Wellingtonian proportions, and his enthusiasm communicates itself to the reader on every page.' Simon Heffer, Literary 'This is an army from another, and Redcoat is a splendidly entertaining, moving and informative description of its strengths and foibles.' Hew Strachan, Daily Telegraph About the Author Richard Holmes was one of Britain's most distinguished and eminent military historians and broadcasters. For many years Professor of Military and Security Studies at Cranfield University and the Royal Military College of Science, he also taught military history at Sandhurst. He was the author of many best-selling and widely acclaimed books including *Redcoat*, *Tommy*, *Marlborough* and *Wellington*, and famous for his BBC series such as *War Walks*, *In the Footsteps of Churchill* and *Wellington*. He served in the Territorial Army, retiring as a brigadier and Britain's most senior reservist, and was Colonel of the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment from 1999 to 2007. Richard Holmes died suddenly in April 2011 from pneumonia. He had been suffering from non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.