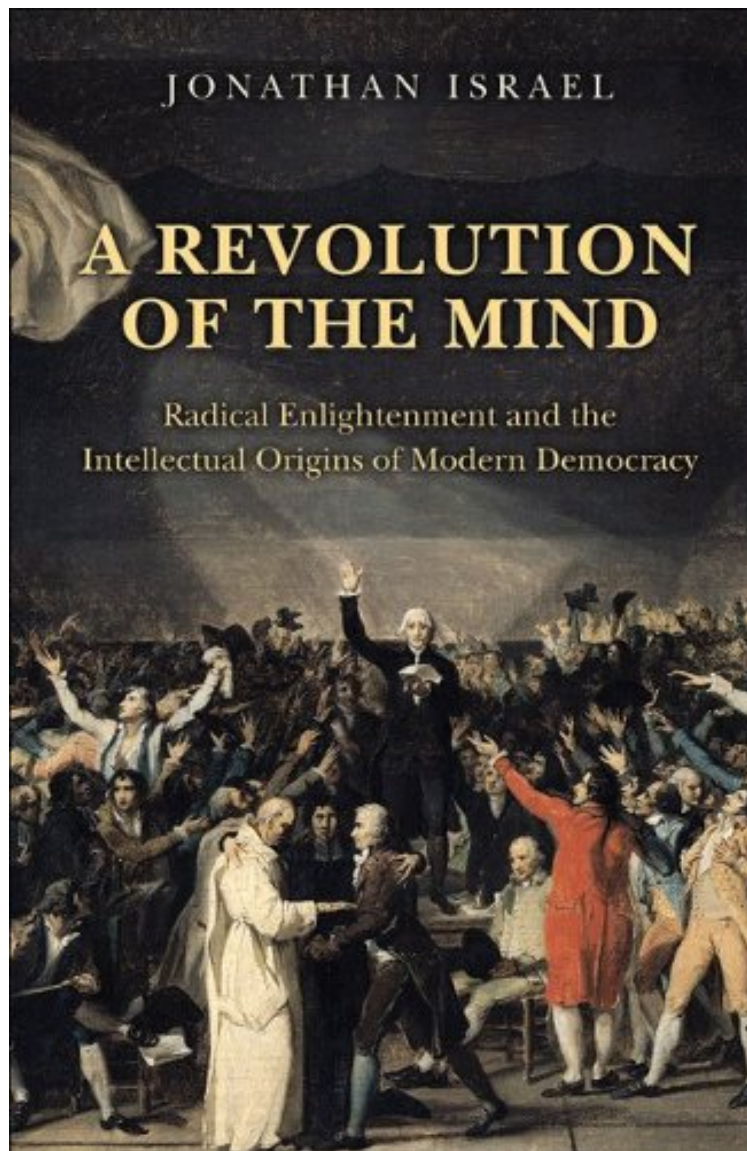


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A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy

Jonathan Israel

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Jonathan Israel : A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy:

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This is a short hand introduction to the state of mind of the European radical reformers of the late 18th century. Besides well known authors, ignored writings such as those of the Dutch politician Pieter Paulus are presented here. In this problem oriented form, in search of the essence of the radical mind, this type of introduction to 18th century radical political thinking was not available up to now. Earlier research reflects too often the general cultural mistrust surrounding thinkers who in their mind dared too turn their factual, hierarchical structured 18th century world upside down. This in contrast to the thinkers of the so called Moderate Enlightenment, who while reformers, remained obliged to King, Gentry and the existing religious establishment. This book displays a fresh appreciation of the revolutionary mentality, with due respect to more conservative strands of thinking. This collection of essays is lively written and accessible not just to experts, but to any intellectual interested in the roots of our modernity. I can advise it to students and to a more general public. There are also some surprises in these texts, that should appeal to the specialists in the field.
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By Jim
Having read several of Jonathan Israel's huge Enlightenment histories, I found this publication an excellent summation of how quickly the Enlightenment Philosophes changed traditional political and social thinking ...and how much our minds today are a result of this rapid and radical change of orthodoxy 1740-1800.. The battle is not ended...still going on...back and forth...conservative vs liberal, religion vs secular freedom; women vs patriarchy etc etc. fast read for me.
8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Best Book on the Subject Available!
By Craig Doner
This seminal historical work is by far the best book I have read thus far on the subject. By distinguishing the "moderate" from the "radical" enlightenment, Israel makes it much easier to see the actual sources of the long lasting effects of the enlightenment. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the subject!

Democracy, free thought and expression, religious tolerance, individual liberty, political self-determination of peoples, sexual and racial equality--these values have firmly entered the mainstream in the decades since they were enshrined in the 1948 U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. But if these ideals no longer seem radical today, their origin was very radical indeed--far more so than most historians have been willing to recognize. In *A Revolution of the Mind*, Jonathan Israel, one of the world's leading historians of the Enlightenment, traces the philosophical roots of these ideas to what were the least respectable strata of Enlightenment thought--what he calls the Radical Enlightenment. Originating as a clandestine movement of ideas that was almost entirely hidden from public view during its earliest phase, the Radical Enlightenment matured in opposition to the moderate mainstream Enlightenment dominant in Europe and America in the eighteenth century. During the revolutionary decades of the 1770s, 1780s, and 1790s, the Radical Enlightenment burst into the open, only to provoke a long and bitter backlash. *A Revolution of the Mind* shows that this vigorous opposition was mainly due to the powerful impulses in society to defend the principles of monarchy, aristocracy, empire, and racial hierarchy--principles linked to the upholding of censorship, church authority, social inequality, racial segregation, religious discrimination, and far-reaching privilege for ruling groups. In telling this fascinating history, *A Revolution of the Mind* reveals the surprising origin of our most cherished values--and helps explain why in certain circles they are frequently disapproved of and attacked even today.

"Spinoza's radicalism was certainly frightening in its time, and Israel has valuably if aggressively opened the question of its influence on the Enlightenment and the era of revolution."--Samuel Moyn, *Nation*
"Israel is right to emphasize the importance of this intellectual movement, but since his is such a sweeping revision of so many generations of received ideas, his work raises the question of why the radical Enlightenment has been misunderstood or obscured for so long in favor of such colorful figures as Voltaire (in Israel's telling, a witty, snobbish sycophant). . . . We are lucky that a historian of Israel's caliber has taken these subjects on and lucky, too, that he has now produced a readable introduction to them."--Benjamin Moser, *Harper's Magazine*
"Israel's reasoned assertion for the influence of the Radical Enlightenment on democratic thought is certainly compelling, making this essential reading for students of the Enlightenment era as well as anyone interested in the foundations of modern democracy."--*Library Journal*
"Israel's new book is a breathtaking rethinking of the Enlightenment and its impact in the modern world."--*Choice*
"Perhaps no active scholar has shaped the conversation about the sources and meaning of the Enlightenment more than Jonathan Israel. . . . Almost miraculously, Israel manages to embody the greatest intellectual virtues and vices."--*Christian Century*
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"Israel's book is itself a demonstration of just

how alive Enlightenment values and ideals still are."--Alan Apperley, *European Legacy*From the Back Cover"This book succeeds beautifully. Written with confidence and concision, it lays out Jonathan Israel's central ideas about the Radical Enlightenment and its fundamental importance in shaping the values of democratic modernity. Those who already know his work will find a clear and bold statement of his principal arguments, as well as important elaborations and expansions. Those unfamiliar with his scholarship will get a masterful introduction to the work of one of the leading Enlightenment scholars in the world today."--Darrin M. McMahon, Florida State University"Interesting, erudite, and provocative, this book provides readers with a succinct and clear introduction to Jonathan Israel's wide-ranging work on the Radical Enlightenment. It should command a broad readership."--James Schmidt, Boston University

About the AuthorJonathan Israel is professor of modern history at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. He is in the process of finishing a monumental three-volume history of the Radical Enlightenment, the first two volumes of which, *Radical Enlightenment* and *Enlightenment Contested*, have already been published.