What was Howar Zinn's intention in writing «Unsung Heroes»?

The central point of the «Unsung Heroes» article by Howard Zinn is the doubt on the moral authority of several established personalities in the American history and the necessity of their replacement by less popular persons with clear moral status. According to Mr. Zinn, historical figures, who are seen as national idols in America today, are presented to the public opinion in over-simplified form without inconvenient details. Some of these, revealed by the American historian, political scientist, social critic and activist Zinn, cause doubts on the status of many national heroes at least in some situations.

Because of good experience with having great national figures in the country’s history, Howard Zinn doesn’t claim to remove any authorities at all. Acknowledged national heroes often had a high social position and influence, they are popular until present. Due to this they are usually presented too simple without any negative part to them. In this case, according to Zinn's proposal, they should be replaced by less popular human rights activists and early protesters against racism and social disbalance. Due to his activity in the Civil Rights and anti-war movements in the United States, Zinn's point of view can be considered to be based on his own experience of being in opposition to the widely spread opinion.

Another important point of «Unsung Heroes» is the black and white representation of history and its important figures. An another, more differentiated approach should be used for complex historical processes and their participants. Important and acknowledged personalities should not be seen as ideals, which appeared once and cannot appear today. According to Zinn, America has many unknown heroes acting every day also in the present but losing their hero status to nonheroic but popular personalities like senators or presidents.

The «Unsung Heroes» article has good potential to raise a public discussion about moral principles and statements based on them. From my point of view, this was Zinn's intention in writing this article. The author displays his viewpoint rather simple to get attention of wide circle of readers. However, his theses are disputable. Several established heroes could be protected with arguments of another moral principles in the society they lived in. There also are many differences between the historical periods, which are very important for any statement or judgement. However, there should also be a critical point of view on the role of any person in the history. At the other side, «unsung» heroes proposed by Zinn are presented in the article as heroes in several situations, but not for the summary of their lifes. The criteria used while making evaluations of established heroes should also be applied here. According to their lower status, proposed heroes were often not representing the majority and so they did not have to manage a more difficult social role. The article invites to avoid over-simplified popular view points in American history and to use the approach based on facts. This could be proposed as it’s greatest achievement.