Chapter 5: American Revolution

Study Guide

I. Defining American War Aims

* Three weeks after battle at L. & C.: 2nd continental congress convened:

-Separated into two groups: group led by Adam cousins who favored complete autonomy from G.B. and moderates led by Dickinson who hoped for modest reforms in the relationship that would permit an early reconciliation w. G.B.

-Approved “Olive Branch petition” which British gov’t rejected & on July 6, 1775, they adopted “Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms.” (Proclaimed that the British gov’t had left the American people with only 2 alternatives, “unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers or resistance by force.”

* Prohibitory Act: closed the colonies to all overseas trade and made no concessions to American demands except an offer to pardon repentant rebels
* Common Sense by Thomas Paine: it was common sense to break completely from parliament and the king that had George III as a monarch, dragged Americans into war in which they had no interest, and inflict such brutality on its people.

II. Decision for Independence:

* July 2, 1776 continental congress adopted a resolution when they appointed a committee to draft a formal declaration of independence; two days later, Congress approved the Declaration of Independence

-Two parts: 1) restated Locke and said “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” 2) Listed the alleged crimes of the king that had violated his contract

-“All men are created equal” borrowed from George Mason

III. Responses to Independence:

-Those who supported independence knew loyalists as Tories

-Americans began to do something they would continue for two centuries: balance the commitment to state and local autonomy against the need for centralized authority

* Articles of Confederation: 1777 (ratified till 1781): did not make it clear that the Congress was to be a real gov’t

IV. Mobilizing For War:

-Challenges: raising and organizing armies, providing them w/ supplies and equipment, and finding a way to pay for it all

-Got most of their supplies from France b/c Congress had no authority to levy taxes directly on the people; it had to requisition funds from the state gov’t.

* Congress couldn’t sell bonds so they issued paper money

-Resulted in: inflation and many American farmers and merchants began doing business with British who could pay for goods in gold or silver coin and many faded patriots did not join militia

-Congress paid bounties to attract new recruits and to draft them

* Congress created a Continental army with George Washington as commander in chief in 1775.

-Got aid from military experts such as marquis de Lafayette from France and Baron von Steuben from Prussia (army of 10,000 men)

V. War for Independence:

-G.B. had many advantages: greatest navy & well-equipped army

-American advantages: fighting on their own ground and patriots were deeply committed to the conflict (British only half-heartedly), substantial aid from abroad (France)

**First Phase of the War:**

-Britain were unsure about war, but made almost entire territory of colonies a battleground

* American forces besieged the army of Thomas Gage in Boston.

-Patriots had casualties in Battle of Bunker Hill (Breed’s Hill) and were driven from position; British suffered their heaviest casualties of the entire war

* Evacuation Day: March 17, 1776: when the British realized that Boston was not best place to wage war, they departed for Halifax in Nova Scotia with hundreds of Loyalist refugees (MA drove out British from American soil less than a year after)
* To the south: Moore’s Creek Bridge (NC): Patriots crushed Loyalist uprising and stopped British plan to invade southern states (lost much of Tories support)
* To the north: Americans launched invasion of Canada; Benedict Arnold threatened Quebec and partnered with Montgomery

-Montgomery died, but Arnold kept the siege up till Quebec ended in frustration; Congress sent civilian commission headed by Franklin but he failed to win allegiance so Canada is not part of nation

-British departed Boston (started beginning of the war)

**Second Phase of the War:**

* Britain sent army of 32,000 to New York under command of William Howe; he hoped to send them into submission from awe (offered Congress royal pardon but America continued the war even with army of poor 19,000)
* British pushed defenders off Long Island, compelled them to abandon Manhattan and drove them to New Jersey and into Penn.
* Washington on Chris. Night occupied Trenton and then went to Princeton and drove British force from their base there (unable to hold Princeton or Trenton)
  + British devised plan to divide U.S.: Howe would have north from NYC up to Albany, while another force would come south from Canada to meet him (Burgoyne took control of north)
* 1. Howe abandoned plan and launched assault on Philadelphia (hoped to discourage Patriots); removed forces from NY and went to Chesapeake Bay and proceeded north to Philadelphia (able to occupy)

-At this time, Washington went into winter quarters at Valley Forge and Continental Congress reassembled at York, Pennsylvania.

* Howe’s move to Philadelphia left 2. Burgoyne alone in campaign in north (sent Colonel Barry up St. Lawrence River to Lake Ontario)

-He seized Fort Ticonderoga and caused dismay b/c Congress removed Schuyler from command of American forces in the north and replaced him with Gates.

-Burgoyne had two defeats: one of them Oriskany: patriot band led by Herskimer held off a force of Tories commanded by St. Leger and gave Arnold time to go to St. Leger’s advance; 2nd was at Bennington when Stark mauled detachment that he sent out to seek supplies

-Burgoyne surrendered in Saratoga and became a major turning point in the war b/c it led to U.S. alliance with France

VI. Iroquois and the British:

-Confederacy declared neutral and Joseph and Mary Brant persuaded their tribe to contribute to the British cause and attracted support from Seneca and Cayuga

-Only 3 of 6 nations of confederacy supported the British; Oneida and Tuscararo backed Americans

* After Oriskany, Iroquois allied with British in New York but Patriot forces under John Sullivan retaliated and large groups fled into Canada and never returned.

VI. Securing Aid from Abroad:

* America needed new trade partners so Congress sent “militia diplomats” to negotiate commercial treaties and require European gov’ts to recognize U.S. as independent nation

-Louis XVI: France began supplying Americans with large quantities but did not give it diplomatic recognition so Franklin went to France and gained popularity and news of American victory at Saratoga so France recognized it as independent.

**Final Phase: The South:**

* Britain tried to gain Loyalist support but underestimated Patriot population
* Sir Clinton replaced owe and moved what had been Howe’s army from Philadelphia back to New York.

-Americans did little fighting that Washington sent some troops to fight hostile Indians in the west

* George Rogers Clark (not from Congress or Washington) under Virginia led expedition to capture settlements from the British and Indian allies
* Arnold became a traitor and conspired w/ British agents to betray the Patriot Stronghold at West Point on the Hudson river (Arnold fled to hide)
* British successes: captured Savannah and took port of Charleston, SC

-Harassed by patriots led by Thomas Sumter, Pickens, Francis Marion “swamp fox”

* Lord Cornwallis (Clinton’s choice as British commander): crushed force under Gates and Congress replaced Gates with Nathanael Greene

-Patriots killed entire force of 1,100 NY Tories that Cornwallis was using

* Greene diving Americans into showdown in open battle at Cowpens; Cornwallis retreated to Wilmington and he retreated to Yorktown to build forts.
* George Washington went to trap Cornwallis at Yorktown; marched a French-American army and Cornwallis surrendered the British army of more than 7,000 men.
* British still had Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, and NY.

VII. Winning the Peace:

-Lord Shelbourne emerged as PM and British emissaries went to France to talk to Franklin, Adams, and Jay

* Vergennes insisted that France could not agree to any settlement of the war until its ally Spain had achieved its principal war aim: winning back Gibraltar from the British (Americans feared that this would continue war w. British)
* Resulted in: Treaty of Paris in 1783: when both Spain and France agreed to end hostilities and gave southern boundary of Canada to northern boundary of Florida and from Atlantic to Mississippi to Spain

VIII. War and Society:

Loyalists and Minorities:

* Some Loyalists were office holders in imperial government (lose positions) or merchants engaged in trade closely tied to imperial system
* Cultural and ethnic minorities who feared that independence would not offer them protection

-These people were hounded by patriots or harassed by legis. and judic. Actions (up to 100,000 fled) ex. Thomas Hutchinson (Tory governor)

* Many Anglican parishes no longer had clergymen and weakened the Quakers in Penn. b/c of widespread of pacifism
* Strengthened Roman Catholic Church b/c of French alliance that brought Catholic troops and chaplains (Father John Carroll = head)

IX. War and Slavery:

* British encouraged them to leave the country to disrupt war effort
* African Americans engaged in open resistance to white control and in SC, Jeremiah (free black) was executed after Patriot leaders accused him of conspiring to smuggle British guns
* Eloquent writer: Lemuel Hayes
* Slave-owners opposed British efforts to emancipate their slaves, but feared rebellions
* Americans feared that without slaves, it would be impossible to have a workforce but that inequalities would jeopardize survival of liberty

X. Native Americans:

* For Patriots: wanted to expand into western lands at expense of Indians (complained about Proclamation Line)
* Both sides tried to recruit Indians to help them
* Dragging Canoe attacked white settlements and Patriots forced them to Tennessee River
* Jefferson came to view them as “noble savages” uncivilized in their present state but redeemable if they were willing to adapt to white society
* Lord Dunmore’s War: Shawnee Indians in west. Virginia tried to lead an uprising against white settlers moving into lands in Kentucky and attracted no allies and were defeated
* Most vicious massacre: white militias killed a peaceful band of Delaware Indians in Ohio

XI. Women’s Rights and Women’s Roles:

* Women either stayed home when husbands went to war or went to the camps of Patriot armies to join their male relatives
* Washington and other Patriots called them distracting but they helped with army morale, cooking, laundry, and nursing
* Some women became involved in combat

-Molly Pitcher (carried pitchers to soldiers) took husband’s place at a filed gun and some women disguised themselves as men to fight

-Abigail Adams sent John Adams a letter for equal rights for women after war

-Judith Murray wrote in 1779 that women deserved access to education and Franklin and Rush voiced opinions for education

* Revolution strengthened patriarchal society

XII. War Economy:

* Yankees began to prey on British commerce with privateers and proved to be more profitable than ordinary peacetime trade; Americans opened trade with Asia
* Americans began to make their own cloth “homespun” to replace British fabrics

XIII. Creation of State Governments:

* Republicanism and equality of opportunity
* American society was more open than European but native Americans and slaves were not given same opportunities as whites
* First State Constitutions: written constitution and George and Penn. Had a legislature that consisted of one house but in every other state, there were two houses.
* Revising state governments: MA created constitutional conventions so people would meet only for writing the constitution that would never meet again and to strengthen the executive (governor would be strongest but Penn did not have one at all at first)

M. Toleration and Slavery:

* Virginia enacted Statute of Religious Liberty by Jefferson: separation of church and state
* Every state but SC & GA prohibited slavery

MI. National Government:

* Confederation: Articles of Confederation provided for national government and small states prevailed in wanting equal representation
* Ordinances of 1784 and 1785: divided the western territory into ten self-governing districts, each of which could petition Congress for statehood when its population equaled the number of free inhabitants of the smallest existing state

-Ordinance of 1785: Congress created a system for surveying and selling the western lands (townships each divided into 36 identical sections)

* The Grid: division of land into carefully measured and evenly divided squares/rectangles and became norm for much of land west of Appalachian.
* Northwest Ordinance: abandoned 10 districts and created territory out of the lands north of the Ohio

MII. Indians and the Western Lands:

* Battle of Fallen Timbers: General Anthony Wayne led 4,000 soldiers into Ohio Valley in 1794 and defeated Indians
* Miami signed Treaty of Greenville, ceding new lands to U.S.
* Debts, Taxes: U.S. was in debt and had no power to tax
* Robert Morris called for a “continental impost” a 5 % duty on imported goods to be levied by Congress (failed to approve it and again in 1783)
* Resentment was high in farmers in New England who felt that states were squeezing them to enrich already wealthy bondholders in Boston

MIII. Shay’s Rebellion: dissidents in Connect. Valley and Berkshires in MA followed Daniel Shays who issued a set of demands that included paper money, tax relief, a moratorium on debts, relocation of state capital from Boston to interior, and abolition of imprisonment for debt

* Was a failure; concessions to farmers and MA offered tax relief and a postponement of debt payments