

Unit 4: The Age of Revolutions Notes

The English Civil War

England's government had shared control of the empire between a Monarch (king/queen) and Parliament (house of lords/house of commoners). They shared different powers but focused on establishing themselves as the true leader of England. Caught between their bitter political power struggles were always the subjects of England.

By the early 1600's England's citizens are tired of war with Spain and France, as well as having their religious views mandated to them by a king/queen. In 1642, King Charles tried to force Scotland to become Anglican and told Parliament that they had to raise taxes to create an invading army that would force the Scots to join England. Parliament took offense and told Charles I that he could have the money when he gave up all control of England's court system. In return the king ordered all members who voted against him arrested and put in prison. Those remaining members of Parliament appealed to the common man and raised an army to attack the king's cavaliers. Seeing this as a moment of weakness, Scotland and Ireland both invade England. The common English citizens realize that if they do not remove the king they will not only fight Spain, France but now Scotland and Ireland potentially be conquered. The army for Parliament and the citizens were called Roundheads after the shape of their cheaply built armor. A puritan soldier named Oliver Cromwell becomes the leader of the Roundheads and defeats the king's army. He is placed in control of England.

Under the rule of the Cromwell Insanity England became more oppressed than under King Charles. Oliver ruled with an iron fist and ordered all religious material non-Puritan destroyed, swearing was punishable by imprisonment and those who did not work 6 days a week with Sunday being a mandatory quiet rest day could be flogged and imprisoned, he had more rules than the king and allowed the insanity of his family to cloud his decision making (his two brothers were mentally insane and died very young, one of his sisters married his almost 90 year old grandfather and his other six sisters became seriously ill slowly dying in their early adulthood). In the end, Oliver is removed and England gives power back to the oldest son of King Charles I, Prince Charles II.

In the end, England avoids being conquered by other nations, rule by a non-king is forgotten, Parliament gets new powers to really hold the king in check, and a strong anti-Anglican movement starts to overtake the citizens. Those who supported Parliament in the war became known as "Whigs" and fiercely opposed having a king in the new England or any citizens who were Catholic by faith. Those who supported the king were called "Tories" and were dead against Parliament gaining new powers or anyone except an Anglican ruling the empire. This division will play a major role in how England chooses to handle the soon to occur American Revolution.

The American Revolution

The American Revolution was a political battle that took place between 1765 and 1783 during which colonists in the Thirteen American Colonies rejected the British monarchy and

aristocracy, overthrew the authority of Great Britain, and founded the United States of America.

The American Revolution, also known as the Revolutionary War, began in 1775. British soldiers and American patriots started the war with battles at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. Colonists in America wanted independence from England. The British government attempted to pass some laws, enforce several taxes, and increase more control over the colonies. The colonies strongly objected to these laws and taxes. They wanted England to have no control over them. For ten years before the war actually started, there was a lot of tension between England and the colonies. The colonies had no central government at the beginning of the war, so delegates from all the colonies were sent to form the first Continental Congress. George Washington, a former military officer and wealthy Virginian, was appointed Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. Members of the Continental Congress wrote a letter to King George of England outlining their complaints and declaring their independence from England. On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, in which the colonies declared their independence from England. The war ended in 1783, and the United States of America was born.

The French Revolution

The French Revolution took place from 1789-1799 and was an influential period of social and political upheaval in France. For centuries, the quality of life in Europe had been determined by the status that a person or family held. This status could not be earned, but was determined by the family to which someone was born. If you were born to a poor family, your life would be one of poverty. No matter how hard an individual worked, it was impossible to rise above this fate. 97% of Europe's people struggled to survive while the remaining 3% lived a life of wealth and comfort. This gap between the wealthy and the poor created resentment. Those at the bottom saw the wealthy grow increasingly richer, while the poor got nothing while working the hardest. In 1776, a group of people at the bottom of society rebelled against those who were at the top, and they won. The British Colonies in America declared their independence and then enforced it by beating back the most powerful military on Earth. This gave the French people a great deal of inspiration. The American Revolution sent shockwaves throughout Europe, and gave hope to many poverty stricken peasants, who wanted to see the powerful aristocracies of Europe fall. The lower classes decided to rebel, and create a new, fairer society. The changes for reform were based on the desire for democracy, citizenship, and undeniable rights. During the Reign of Terror, everyone was afraid they would be accused of being a traitor. The penalty for that was being beheaded in the guillotine.

The French Revolution, though it seemed a failure in 1799, and appeared nullified by 1815, had far-reaching results. Feudalism was dead and France was unified. The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars tore down the ancient structure of society and government of Europe.

Resources:

<https://kidskonnnect.com/history/french-revolution/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/Mr.J/english-civil-war-the-very-short-version>

<https://kidskonnnect.com/history/american-revolution/>

1. The American Revolution
2. Benjamin Franklin
3. Coup d'état
4. The Declaration of Independence
5. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen
6. Democracy
7. The First Estate of France
8. The French Revolution
9. King George III
10. King Louis XVI of France
11. Marie Antoinette
12. The Reign of Terror
13. Second Estate of France
14. The Seven Years War
15. The Sons of Liberty
16. The Tennis Court Oath
17. The Third Estate of France
18. Thomas Jefferson