Unit 05 The End of Colonialism

Note: If you do 5.1 you don't have to do 5.2!!

5.1.1

Self-Determination: the free choice of a people to choose their own political future.

Colonialism: the economic, political and cultural domination by one country over another country or group of people.

Indian Independence Act: 1947 Act that divided India and Pakistan and also gave them independence.

Apartheid: 1948 South African racial policy that divided South Africans into white and non-white. The policy resulted in racial segregation, restrictions on marriages, residences, and education.

African National Congress: nationalist group that used non-violent resistance to attack racial discrimination in South Africa. They used boycotts, strikes, demonstrations, and openly defied segregation laws by entering “whites” only areas and facilities.

5.1.2: Identify on a map the major colonial powers in the immediate years after World War II. (k)
5.1.3: Suez Crisis

Background to the Suez Crisis: Gamal Nasser emerged as the leader of Egypt following the Arab-Israeli of 1948. His two main goals were to:

1. create an independent Egypt free from colonial rule
2. destroy the newly formed nation of Israel.

Nasser who held no preference for either communism or democracy and was willing to accept American or Soviet aid. To achieve his goals Nasser was willing let the superpowers bid for his allegiance. Nasser needed a modern army to destroy Israel and in 1955 he signed an arms deal with Czechoslovakia, a Soviet bloc nation.

To develop Egypt economically and end colonial power he needed electricity. In 1956 he signed a deal with the U.S. to help build the Aswan Dam power project. Nasser’s balancing act of getting aid from both sides was about to crumble.

The Suez Crisis 1956: Nasser began to lose Western support due to America’s concern over Nasser’s non-aligned nationalism and Egypt’s continuing conflict with Israel which had close ties to the U.S. Contrary to international and UN agreements Egypt stopped all Israeli ships and all ships bound for Israel from using the Suez Canal. The U.S. then refused financial aid for the Aswan Dam. Nasser reacted immediately by seizing control of the Suez Canal and turned to the Soviets for help in building the Dam. Egypt’s takeover of the Canal was peaceful; Britain and France the owners were offered market value and full use of the Canal, but nevertheless this event increased global tensions.

Britain and France devised a scheme to regain control of the Canal. Israel was to attack Egypt as part of the ongoing Arab-Israeli dispute. Britain and France would land troops at the canal zone on the pretence to protect international shipping. Once there they would take control of the canal, Israel would expand its territory and Nasser would be overthrown. The conspirators miscalculated world reaction.

Results of the Suez Crisis: The Soviets threatened to launch missiles on Paris and London. The United States was outraged with France and Britain. The U.S. introduced a motion at the UN calling for Israel to withdraw its troops and for all members to refrain from the use of force. France and Britain vetoed this motion as well as a Soviet motion the that the Soviets and Americans jointly intervene. The Security Council finally suggested that the matter go before the General Assembly which could not be vetoed. On Nov. 2 an American resolution called for a cease fire and international action to ensure the passage through the Suez Canal. On Nov.4 Canada’s UN representative, Lester Person, proposed the British & French force in the Canal zone be replaced by a peacekeeping force. The lasting significance of the Suez Crisis was the creation of UN peackeeping forces. The Britis PN Antony Eden was forced to resign and this event marked the beginning of British decolonization in Africa.
5.1.4 Analyze how the following factors led to the decline of colonialism in the post-WW II period:
- premises of the Atlantic Charter
- colonial nationalist movements
- cost of maintaining colonies
- views towards colonialism by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

The collapse of colonialism after WW II was spurred on by a variety of factors. Certainly the European colonial powers (with the exception of France, Portugal and the Netherlands) were arriving at the realization that self-government must be granted to their colonial possessions. The pace at which independence was granted was slow at best and varied between the various colonial powers. Europeans continued to deal with their colonies in a paternalistic manner and believed that independence should only be granted slowly and only when the European powers felt their colonies were ready. This led to two different roads to independence – through peaceful negotiation or through violent resistance and confrontation.

Notwithstanding, most colonial powers were committed to giving their colonies self-government - but why the change of heart?

The premise of the Atlantic Charter

The Atlantic Charter was signed in 1941 by the United States and Great Britain. The agreement promoted and called for the self-determination of all peoples at the conclusion of WW II. The Atlantic Charter was also the blueprint for the new United Nations in their approach to the post-war world. It is ironic that this agreement was signed by Sir Winston Churchill who was a British imperialist to the core, but philosophically and morally, imperialism was no longer acceptable to most Britain’s and Europeans who were becoming more open-minded and liberal. Colonial troops were fighting and dying for their colonial powers and there was an argument to be made that they deserved their independence in exchange for this service.

Colonial nationalist movements

Nationalism in Europe’s colonies was present ever since the Europeans had arrived but it had only led to sporadic revolts and resistance. Ironically it was the Europeans who provided the training for the nationalist leaders in their colonies. Most post-war nationalist leaders had received a formal education in European Universities and it was here that they developed their ideas and their abilities to challenge their colonial rulers. Some nationalist leaders also served in the military or police of their colonial rulers and turned what they had learned against the colonial system. Throughout the 1940’s and 50’s leaders emerged in both Asia and Africa who
united and directed opposition against their colonial masters, peacefully or violently, until independence was granted.

Cost of maintaining colonies

The promotion of colonial self-determination by Europeans was not without self-interest. The war had virtually bankrupted many European powers and the few resources that they had available to them at the wars conclusion, were to be directed to their own reconstruction and not towards supporting costly colonies. Most colonies had become financial sinkholes and this certainly fueled the drive towards self-government.

Views towards colonialism by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R

The United States supported independence movements for several reasons:

- Having won their on independence from their British colonial masters it was natural for Americans to support a colonial nation that was under the thumb of a colonial master. It also coincided with America’s desire to spread democracy and self-determination.
- The desire to spread democracy and self-determination also coincided with America’s desire to win the hearts and minds of newly independent nations during the Cold War. If the United States was seen as the champion of colonial self-government, these nations would be sympathetic to democracy as a political system and capitalism as the economic system of choice.
- The United States believed that the adoption of a free market economic system by newly independent nations would benefit America in two ways. First it would provide American industry with access to cheap raw materials and it would gain access to new export markets. Second, the adoption of a free market economic system would preclude the ex-colonies from becoming adherents of communism.

The Soviet Union supported independence movements for these reasons:

- Communism is based on the idea of oppression of the working individual. Marxist-Leninist doctrine advocated revolution of the oppressed in all societies and certainly colonial citizens fit this description.
- It saw support for colonial independence movements as a way of weakening European powers.
- It attempted to associate any economic association with the United States as simply colonialism in another form, in other words, economic colonialism, as practiced by the western democracies was no different than the political colonialism practiced by the Europeans.

One thing is certain, without the support of the US and the USSR it would have been more difficult for African states to break free from European domination.
5.1.5

Gandhi

Gandhi Leads India to Independence: For 200 years Britain ruled India and did not want to give up this valuable colony. Gandhi, trained as a lawyer in Britain, returned to India in 1915 to lead India’s struggle to independence. The methods Gandhi used to achieve independence were non-violence and civil disobedience. Gandhi believed that Indian people had the right to freedom and self rule. Because Britain deprived India of its independence, Gandhi felt they should resist or break British law. Gandhi thus encouraged Indian people to refuse to obey morally intolerable laws (Salt Tax). This is civil disobedience.

Some examples of civil disobedience were:

- resign from government jobs
- stop buying British goods
- refuse to pay taxes
- purposely break unfair laws

Gandhi insisted that his followers not respond to the British with violence. If Indians were protesting and police clubbed them, Gandhi insisted that they not only not hit back, but not even shield themselves from the attack. This was non-violence in action. Gandhi believed that the British would be defeated not by strength of arms, but when they had no heart to fight against a moral, non-violent people. Gandhi’s methods were eventually successful and India won its independence in 1947.

Nasser

Nasser Creates An Independent Egypt: Egyptian nationalism increased the growing criticism of Egypt’s monarchy as corrupt. Egypt’s defeat by Israel in the war of 1948 caused humiliation among Egyptian soldiers. Pledging to restore Arab pride, Nasser and others formed the Free Officers movement aimed at driving out foreign powers. In 1952 army officers forced the Egyptian King Farouk to abdicate. The monarchy was abolished and a new republic, with Nasser as president, was established in 1956. Nasser was celebrated in Egypt for standing up to Europeans, redistributing wealth to improve the lives of citizens and pledging to restore Palestine to Palestinians.
Mandela

Mandella Fights Against Apartheid in South Africa: In 1948 apartheid was introduced to South Africa. This racial policy separated South Africa into classes - a privileged white ruling class and an exploited subservient class of Blacks and Asians. Whites controlled the political, educational and economic institutions for their advantage. Nationalist groups such as the African National Congress (ANC) began using boycotts, strikes, and demonstrations to attack racial discrimination in South Africa. The South African government responded by arresting ANC leaders such as Nelson Mandela. Mandela joined the ANC in 1944 and in the 1950's he organized non-violent resistance against apartheid. Following the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 Mandela and others abandoned non-violent protest in favour of violent acts. As a result Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1963. While in prison from 1963 - 90 Mandela became an international figure with a worldwide following of supporters. He repeatedly refused offers of freedom in exchange for keeping quiet about apartheid. This elevated him to mythical status among black South Africans. Eventually his fame grew so that world leaders and the UN applied political and economic pressure for Mandela’s release. Musicians, artists and writers championed Mandela’s cause. Finally in 1990, the South African government facing civil unrest and world pressure, released Mandela. The government pledged reforms to create an equal and democratic South Africa. In 1994 Nelson Mandela was elected the first black president of South Africa.