

CRISIS OF CONFEDERATION



1776 – 1787

Characteristics of a successful rebellion



- A TREATY GUARANTEEING INDEPENDENCE
- ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUCCESSFUL POST-REBELLION REGIME
- THE BRITISH SETTLERS IN THE THIRTEEN FORMER BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES HAVE FULFILLED CRITERIA

What form should post – rebellion government take?



- **MONARCHY?**
- **POWER SHOULD BE VESTED IN THE “PEOPLE”**
- **GOVERNMENTS IN THEORY EXIST TO SERVE PEOPLE**
- **A REPUBLICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT:**
 - **THEORETICALLY SHOULD ALLOW:**
 - **1. POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY**
 - **2. RULE OF LAW**
 - **3. LEGISLATION BY ELECTED OFFICIALS**

How republican should the new regime be? Who are the “People”?



- **CONCEPT OF *PUBLIC VIRTUE*: ARE THE “PEOPLE” ABLE TO PUT ASIDE *SELF – INTEREST* IN FAVOR OF THE COMMON GOOD?**

➤ **“RADICALS” BELIEVE SO**

- **“MODERATE/CONSERVATIVES” DO NOT THINK THAT THERE IS ANY *PUBLIC VIRTUE* IN THE PEOPLE**

THEY ARE INTENT ON RESTRICTING THE POWER OF “THE PEOPLE” BY CENTRALIZING THE NEW REGIME

- **STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS WILL DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCESS**

Governance during 1775 - 1783



- **THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS AUTHORIZES INDIVIDUAL COLONIES TO IMPLEMENT CONSTITUTIONS**
- **MASSACHUSETTS RATIFIES NEW CONSTITUTION IN 1780**
- **RHODE ISLAND, CONNECTICUT RETAIN THEIR LIBERAL CHARTERS BUT DELETE REFERENCE TO BRITISH CROWN**
- **PENNSYLVANIA: MOST LIBERAL CONSTITUTION**
 - **MARYLAND: MOST CONSERVATIVE CONSTITUTION**
 - **NEW JERSEY: ONLY CONSTITUTION WITH PROVISIONS FOR WOMEN**
 - **OTHER STATES FALL IN BETWEEN PENNSYLVANIA AND MARYLAND**

Articles of Confederation



- **JOHN DICKINSON'S DRAFT: "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA"**
 - **VERY LITTLE POWER FOR THE STATES**
 - **ANGERS THE RADICALS IN CONGRESS**
 - **REVISED PLAN: NOVEMBER 1777, MOST POWERS VESTED IN THE STATES *NOT* CENTRAL GOVERNMENT**
- **CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CAN DIRECT WAR BUT *CANNOT* AUTHORIZE TAXATION**
- **STATES WILL GIVE TAXES TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD IT WANT TO**

Struggle for ratification



- **12 STATES MUST RATIFY ARTICLES FOR GOVERNMENT TO BECOME OPERATIONAL**
- **MARYLAND LAND SPECULATORS BLOCK RATIFICATION**
- **WANT ALL LAND CHARTERS OF WESTERN LANDS TO BE VESTED IN CONGRESS**
 - **RATIFICATION IN JANUARY 1781**

Financing the War



- **CONGRESS CANNOT TAX FOR WAR**
- **1775-1780: \$200 MILLION IN PAPER MONEY OR “CONTINENTALS” ISSUED BY CONGRESS BUT WORTHLESS**
 - **INTEREST BEARING CERTIFICATES ALSO ISSUED**
 - **BUT CANNOT RAISE MONEY FOR INTEREST**
 - **ALSO BECOMES WORTHLESS**
- **FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM ROYALIST FRANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE VICTORY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES**

Financing the War



- **ROBERT MORRIS, “FINANCIER OF THE REVOLUTION.”**
- **IMPOST PLAN OF 1781: 5% DUTIES ON FOREIGN GOODS ENTERING THE COUNTRY TO GO TO THE CONGRESS.**
- **RHODE ISLAND REFUSES TO RATIFY**
- **DUTIES ARE ITS SOURCE OF REVENUE**
- **ONCE AGAIN 1 STATE HAS BLOCKED THE WILL OF THE 12**
- **DECEMBER 1782: CONTINENTAL ARMY OFFICERS SEND WARNING TO CONGRESS OVER PAY**
- **NEWBURGH CRISIS OF 1783**

Economic depression & Shays's Rebellion



- **1784-1785: CROP FAILURES**
- **1783: ORDERS IN COUNCIL**
- **NEW ENGLAND MARKETS SUFFER**
- **COMMERCIAL ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE DOES NOT DEVELOP AS EXPECTED**
- **MASSACHUSETTS: SEIZURE OF FARMS BY GOVERNMENT WHEN FARMERS CANNOT PAY TAXES**
- **DANIEL SHAYS: VETERAN OF THE REVOLUTION**
- **FEBRUARY 1787: REBELLION PUT DOWN BUT NOW MODERATES/CONSERVATIVES ARE NOW MORE THAN EVER LOOKING FOR NEW FORM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL BE HIGHLY CENTRALIZED**