

Overall main idea: *American resentment and resistance increased as the British government passed new laws to pay for, protect and control the colonies after the French and Indian War.*

The effects of the Seven Years' War brought on changes that led to the American Revolution

Americans were reluctant revolutionaries; they only wanted to claim the “rights of Englishmen,” not separate, but arguments over economics exposed deep divisions in political ideas that led to the Revolution

The Deep Roots of Revolution

Main idea: *Because Americans started fresh without traditions and far from Britain's authority, they developed strong ties to ideas of republicanism and the Whigs.*

Americans did not have the thousands of years of traditions holding them back from new ideas like Europe did

Republicanism – the idea of a country and society where citizens govern themselves by subordinating their own selfish desires and looking out for the common good of the whole society; citizens must be virtuous, selfless, independent, courageous and involved

Whig ideology – Whigs were a group of British political critics who believed that citizens must be vigilant and suspicious of government's corruption, aggression and attempts to take away their civil rights

America started anew, far from Europe, without any traditions of aristocracy or authority; property ownership and political participation were more common; these ideas developed more easily than in Europe and were held more dearly

Mercantilism and Colonial Grievances

Main idea: *Britain controlled its colonies as mere tenants in the system of mercantilism, leading to American resentment.*

Mercantilism – the economic theory that wealth is power and there is a limited amount of wealth in the world; a country's goal, then, is to acquire as much wealth as possible and thus leave little to its competitors; countries can do this by exporting (thereby bringing in money/wealth) more than they import (thereby paying money for goods); colonies help in mercantilism because they provide products without importing them from other countries and they provide a market for exports

The British thought of the American colonists as tenants in the mercantilist system; they did not intend for them to be self-sufficient or independent; they expected them to only contribute to the mother country through mercantilism

Trade and Navigation Acts of the late 1600s – laws passed by Britain intended to control American trade to better benefit Britain and mercantilism; American trade could only be conducted in British ships; all trade intended for foreign countries must pass first through Britain; certain “enumerated” products could only be sold to Britain

British policies also caused a money shortage in the colonies

British crown also reserved the right to nullify any laws passed by the colonial

assemblies if they interfered with the mercantilist and colonial system of Britain

The Merits and Menace of Mercantilism

Main idea: *While mercantilism also benefited the colonies, it burdened them and caused resentment in America.*

The Trade and Navigation Acts were not that oppressive to most Americans as they were only loosely enforced; Americans avoided or ignored the laws and their enforcers; John Hancock made a fortune smuggling goods through the laws

Also, Americans **benefited in some ways from mercantilism** – they had a monopoly on many products that British companies or other countries could not compete with; they were protected by the strongest army and navy in the world

Yet **mercantilism stifled normal economic activity** within the colonies, made the colonies dependent on the British, made them feel subordinate and unequal, and made them feel like they were being taken advantage of

The Stamp Tax Uproar

Main idea: *British taxes on the colonists to pay for debt and defense led to uproar over “taxation without representation.”*

After the Seven Years War, the British had the largest empire in the world, but also the largest debt; plus that large empire had to be controlled and protected; therefore the Prime Minister of Britain decided that the colonies should help provide for that debt, control and protection, since they were the cause and beneficiaries of much of it:

1763 – **Proclamation of 1763** – prohibited colonial settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains; intended to prevent conflict between Indians and colonists and control the colonists easier

1763 – Stricter enforcement of the **Trade and Navigation Acts** by the British Navy; intended to collect revenue and control the colonists

1764 – **Sugar Act** – intended to raise revenue by increasing tax on imported sugar; reduced substantially after colonist protests

1765 – **Quartering Act** – intended to support the military (and cut costs) by requiring the colonies to provide food and quarters (shelter) for British troops

1765 – **Stamp Act** – intended to raise revenue by requiring the use of stamps on certain items, like bills of sale, commercial and legal documents, playing cards, pamphlets, newspapers, diplomas, and marriage licenses

Admiralty courts – naval courts without juries, guilty until proven innocent, and could be tried anywhere in the British Empire, rather than in the local community

These laws not only affected American economy but also their local self-government by mandating laws without their local government’s input in the matter

Americans suspected these laws were to “whip them into shape” and merely control them rather than raise revenue and protect them

“**No taxation without representation!**” – rallying cry for much of the protests over the Stamp Act; colonists said that Parliament had no right to tax the colonists without the colonists having representatives in the Parliament who could argue and legislate on their behalf (known as “actual representation”); only local assemblies should be allowed to tax the colonies

The British claimed that the Americans had “**virtual representation**”; that is, the British

representatives in Parliament were representing the entire empire, including the colonies, and had everyone's interests at heart, even if the Parliament did not have any actual American colonists as representatives

Some (very few) Americans began to deny the authority of Parliament on the colonies altogether, to consider political independence

Forced Repeal of the Stamp Act

Main idea: *The British Parliament was forced to repeal the Stamp Act after the Americans unified, made non-importation agreements and harassed officials.*

The Stamp Act really sets into motion the foundations of resentment and rebellion that would lead up to the American Revolution

Protests against the Stamp Act:

Stamp Act Congress – in 1765, delegates from nine colonies met in New York City, debated, and wrote a statement of their rights and grievances to the British government to repeal the Stamp Act; one of the very first attempts to unify the colonies against the British government

Non-importation agreements – adopted by colonists to not import British goods until the Stamp Act was repealed; basically a boycott; “homespun” (American homemade) goods became fashionable; united Americans more than the Congress did

Sons of Liberty and Daughters of Liberty – secret protest groups (basically terrorist groups) that harassed colonists to comply with non-importation, tarred and feathered tax collectors and British officials, attacked their homes, confiscated property, hanged effigies of them

As a result of these protests, it was almost impossible to collect the local stamp taxes once it was in effect; also, the British economy was hard hit by non-importation

1766 – **Stamp Act** was repealed by Parliament after demands from British people and businesses, but not happily; at the same time they also passed the Declaratory Act

Declaratory Act – declared that despite the repeal of the Stamp Act, Parliament still had the right to govern and make laws over the colonies if and when it wanted

The Townshend Tea Tax and the Boston “Massacre”

Main idea: *American colonial protest against the Townshend Acts led to the landing of British troops and the Boston “Massacre.”*

1767 – **The Townshend Acts** were passed by Parliament as a light, “indirect” tax on the American colonies; included items like glass, lead, paper, paint and tea

Indirect vs. direct tax – the Stamp Act was considered by the British to be a “direct tax” since it directly affected almost all of the colonists, whereas the Townshend Acts were an “indirect tax” since they were more like an import duty and did not affect all, but only those who were importing those particular goods

Still, riled up after the Stamp Act, colonists were in no mood for any tax without representation; plus, the tea tax affected almost all colonists since the drink was so popular

Non-importation agreements were reinstated but were less powerful; colonists were not as angered and they could still get tea through smuggling

British troops were landed in Boston in 1768 to enforce law and order over the taxes;

protests and resentment broke out

1770 – Boston Massacre – British troops in Boston were being harassed by local colonists; the troops fired on the crowd, killing or wounding eleven people, **including Crispus Attucks**, a mulatto (part-African); John Adams defended the troops in the following trial and only two were found guilty of manslaughter

The Seditious Committees of Correspondence

Main idea: *After the Boston Massacre and the repeal of most of the Townshend Acts, committees of correspondence were organized to keep colonies in touch with each other about opposition to British policy.*

King George III – King of Great Britain, only 32 years old in 1770; German background
Townshend Acts were repealed in 1770 as a result of their ineffectiveness and non-importation agreements; the tea tax stayed in effect, which affected the most people and acted as a re-Declaratory Act

The “Quiet Period” – period between 1770-1774, between the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party, when little tumult or rebellion happened despite earlier and later events

Samuel Adams – a leader of rebellion against British policies in the Revolution; master of propaganda, member of the Sons of Liberty, passionate about politics

Committees of Correspondence – first organized by Samuel Adams; organizations that exchanged letters and communication about British policies and opposition against them; helped to keep opposition alive during the “Quiet Period”; second major act of unification of colonies; would later evolve into the Continental Congresses

Tea Brewing in Boston

Main idea: *Colonists seized and dumped British tea into the Boston harbor in response to British attempts to tax and monopolize tea, leading to more aggressive actions by the British government.*

1773 – The British East India Company was granted a monopoly over the American tea supply, which actually lowered tea prices, but Americans interpreted this as a trick to get them to pay the detested tea tax

Across the colonies, Americans refused to receive the tea and sent it back to Britain

Boston Tea Party - in Boston, Americans boarded the ships in the harbor, smashed the tea boxes and dumped them into the ocean; they were partially dressed as Indians and included Sons of Liberty

Instead of relenting to the colonists and granting them home rule and concessions, the British were determined to punish the colonists and “whip them into shape”

Parliament Passes the “Intolerable Acts”

Main idea: *To punish the rebellious colonists, Britain issued the Intolerable Acts.*

1774 – Coercive Acts passed, including:

Boston Port Act – closed the port of Boston until damages were repaid and order was restored

Restrictions were placed on town meetings and colonial assemblies

Administration of Justice Act (a.k.a. “The Murder Act”) – British officials who killed Americans in the line of duty could be tried in Britain rather than the colonies, where they were more likely to be acquitted

Quartering Act – stronger version that required colonists to quarter troops in local buildings, including private homes

1774 – Quebec Act also passed, which extended the territory of Quebec into the Ohio River region, in order to satisfy French Canadians; Americans interpreted to be an assault on their self-government, land and Protestant religion

The Coercive Acts and the Quebec Act together were known as the “Intolerable Acts” to Americans because they were viewed to be unbearable

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