

Summary: Early Conflicts with Britain

Britain Needs Money

Britain spent a lot of money to defeat the French. The British government said that the colonies should pay for the War. The government raised money by taxing goods brought into the colonies. The Sugar Act of 1764 taxed goods like sugar, coffee, and cloth. When a colonist bought cloth, part of the money went to the government as a tax. Some merchants avoided the tax by smuggling goods into the country.

In 1765, Britain passed the Stamp Act. This act taxed anything printed on paper. Many colonists said the new taxes were unfair. Colonists had no say in making tax laws because they did not have representatives in Parliament. Men like Samuel Adams in Boston formed groups to protest the Stamp Act. Adams was the leader of a group called the Sons of Liberty. Sometimes this group and others used violence to resist new taxes.

Conflict over Taxes

In 1765, the nine colonies met to discuss the taxes at the Stamp Act Congress. They decided that only colonial governments should tax the colonies. Merchants in ports like New York and Philadelphia held a boycott of British goods. The protests and boycott worked. Britain repealed the Stamp Act.

In 1767, Britain needed money to pay for the services of colonial governors and soldiers. Parliament created the Townshend Act. This Act made colonists pay taxes on tea, glass, paper, and other items. Colonists boycotted British goods again. They threatened to use violence against tax officials. British troops were sent to protect the officials. A group of women called the Daughters of Liberty made their own cloth instead of buying British cloth.

By 1770, the protests worked. The British repealed most of the taxes, but left the tax on tea. They wanted to show that they still had the power to tax the colonies. Anger grew toward the British government.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

tax *noun*, money people pay their government in return for services

smuggling *noun*, to import goods illegally

liberty *noun*, freedom from being controlled by another government

protest *noun*, an event at which people complain about an issue

boycott *noun*, a refusal to buy, sell, or use goods

repeal *verb*, to cancel a law

After You Read

REVIEW What was the goal of Samuel Adams and other Sons of Liberty?

Underline the sentence that explains why Samuel Adams formed the Sons of Liberty.

REVIEW Why did the British Parliament pass the Townshend Acts? Circle two services the government needed to pay for.