

Chapter 5 Outline - Severing the Bonds of Empire, 1754–1774

- I. Introduction

An ever-widening split developed between America and England. The Seven Years War played an important role in events, because the absence of the French altered relations between colonials and the English. Also, Britain levied taxes to pay for the war, and resistance to those taxes brought on the movement for independence.

- II. Renewed Warfare Among Europeans and Indians

- A. Iroquois Neutrality

During Queen Anne's War and King George's War, the Iroquois skillfully maintained their neutrality. Conflict over the region west of the Iroquois, however, touched off a war that spread from the colonies to Europe.

- B. Albany Congress

In response to the French threat to the west, delegates from seven colonies met in Albany, New York, in 1754. They failed to convince the Iroquois to abandon their traditional neutrality towards the French. The delegates adopted a Plan of Union; the Plan was rejected by the delegates' colonial governments.

- C. Seven Years' War

William Pitt enacted policies that brought about a British victory. As a result of the Treaty of Paris, England gained Canada and Florida, and French holdings west of the Mississippi went to Spain.

- III. 1763: A Turning Point

- A. Neolin and Pontiac

Angered over British policy, an Ottawa war chief named Pontiac

accepted ideas expressed by the shaman Neolin and led a violent uprising against western forts and settlements. The Indians, defeated in battle at Bushy Run, Pennsylvania, negotiated a treaty in 1766.

- B. Proclamation of 1763

Pontiac's war showed the English the difficulties they faced in governing their new territories, and Parliament outlawed any settlement beyond the Appalachians.

- C. George III

King George III, a man of mediocre intelligence and mediocre education, was an erratic judge of character. He chose George Grenville as prime minister in 1763, and assigned him the task of finding a way to pay the huge debt incurred by the British government in the Seven Years War. Grenville believed the Americans should bear more of the cost of running the empire.

- D. Theories of Representation

The English believed that Parliament collectively represented the people (virtual representation), while Americans advocated individual representation. Americans also preferred limited government, but many Englishmen insisted on tighter controls.

- E. Real Whigs

Americans identified themselves with theorists opposing centralized governments. Many Americans began to use the ideas of the Real Whigs to interpret British actions, and they began to see oppressive designs behind those actions.

- F. Sugar and Currency Acts

Many Americans believed that the Sugar and Currency Acts revealed the potential threat from the British government. Still, the laws met

with feeble resistance in the colonies.

• IV. The Stamp Act Crisis

- A. James Otis's *Rights of the British Colonies*

James Otis Jr. cogently argued that Americans had to obey laws passed by Parliament even though they believed those laws to be unconstitutional. Otis contended that Parliament was the sole, supreme authority in the empire.

Many colonists reluctantly prepared to accept the Stamp Act.

- B. Patrick Henry and the Virginia Stamp Act Resolves

Patrick Henry proposed a series of resolutions protesting Parliament's policy toward the colonies. Passed in a limited form, they revealed the difficulty Americans faced in working out their relationship to Parliament.

- C. Continuing Loyalty to Britain

Though willing to argue for their rights, most colonists remained loyal British subjects.

Daniel Dulany argued in his 1765 pamphlet, *Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes on the British Colonies*, that, though the colonies may be dependent on Great Britain, Great Britain did not have the right to take their property without their consent.

- D. Anti-Stamp Act Demonstrations

In 1765, a Boston social club organized a demonstration against the Stamp Act that succeeded in getting Andrew Oliver to promise not to collect the tax. This victory encouraged a more violent demonstration against Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson, which met with general disapproval.

- E. Americans' Divergent Interests

The colonial elite wanted effective, but controlled, protest against unpopular laws. Many ordinary people, however, felt empowered as they demonstrated in street protests, and they expressed themselves in ways that often threatened local leaders.

- F. Sons of Liberty

In an effort to channel the resistance of the masses into an acceptable form, merchants and artisans created the Sons of Liberty to protest the Stamp Act. Although the Sons of Liberty could influence events, it could not always control them.

- G. Opposition and Repeal

Lord Rockingham oversaw the repeal of the Stamp Act because he thought it was unwise and divisive, but to ensure the power of Parliament he also gained passage of the Declaratory Act.

- V. Resistance to the Townshend Acts

- A. John Dickinson's *Farmer's Letters*

In these widely published essays, Dickinson contended that Parliament could regulate trade but could not do so for the purpose of raising a revenue.

The Massachusetts assembly responded to the Townshend Acts with the passage of the Massachusetts Circular Letter. When representatives refused to follow Governor Francis Bernard's order to recall the Circular Letter, he dissolved the assembly.

- B. Rituals of Resistance

Resistance leaders relied heavily on public rituals to gain the support of illiterate Americans and to involve ordinary folks in the protests.

- C. Daughters of Liberty

Women took an active role in the resistance by creating the Daughters of Liberty. They also performed public rituals, such as spinning cloth and denouncing tea, as expressions of their support for the American cause.

- D. Divided Opinion over Boycotts

Differing economic interests led to a split in the alliance of groups that had reacted to the Stamp Act.

In response to the Townshend Duties, artisans mounted successful boycotts, but they were not fully supported by merchants.

The use of coercion and violence by supporters of the boycott to force others to join the movement angered and frightened many Americans. Many among the dominant elite felt that their power was being threatened by ordinary colonists.

A new prime minister, Lord North, persuaded Parliament to revoke duties on trade within the empire. The tea tax and the other Townshend Acts remained in force, but the repeal of taxes appeared to make the laws less offensive.

- VI. Confrontations in Boston

- A. Boston Massacre

Unrest in Boston resulting from the *Liberty* riot in June 1768 led to the stationing of British troops in Boston.

On March 5, 1770, a group of soldiers facing an unruly crowd opened fire and killed five Bostonians. Patriot leaders used this “massacre” as effective propaganda, but they also worked to ensure a fair trial to keep the soldiers from becoming martyrs for the loyalist cause.

- B. A British Plot?

Patriot writers editorialized that Britain planned the political enslavement of America.

When the North ministry took steps to enforce the Townshend Act, which provided for governors and judges to be paid from customs revenues, Boston patriots created a Committee of Correspondence to publicize the move.

- C. Samuel Adams and the Committees of Correspondence

This outspoken patriot worked to build anti-British consensus in Massachusetts.

Committees of Correspondence were established throughout the colonies.

The Boston Committee of Correspondence sought to establish a consensus that recognized the need to protect American liberties. The *Boston Statement of Rights and Grievances* was published as a pamphlet and distributed to Massachusetts towns. The document placed American rights first, loyalty to Great Britain second.

- VII. Tea and Turmoil

- A. Reactions to the Tea Act

In May of 1773, Parliament approved the Tea Act, which was designed to save the East India Company from bankruptcy.

The Tea Act gave the British East India Company a monopoly on the distribution and sale of tea in the American colonies. The tax on tea, left over from the Townshend Duties, would apply to the sale of this tea.

Patriots feared the subtle implications of the law.

As tea ships arrived, different things happened at different ports.

In Boston, protesters “disguised” as Indians dumped 342 chests of tea into the harbor.

- B. Coercive and Quebec Acts

Parliament responded to the Tea Party by passing four Coercive, or Intolerable, Acts to punish Boston and Massachusetts. At the same time, Parliament approved a bill that allowed the Catholic Church and French civil law in Quebec, while also increasing the size of that territory.

Americans became convinced that the British had embarked on a deliberate plan to oppress them.

The colonies agreed to send delegates to Philadelphia to attend the First Continental Congress.