

Representative Government

Ever since the House of Burgesses was established in Jamestown in 1619, colonists had the right to raise their own taxes. See *Chapter 3, page 64*.

Anger Over the Townshend Acts News of the Townshend Acts sparked immediate protest throughout the colonies. People were furious that Parliament had once again passed a tax without their consent. Colonists felt that only locally elected officials—rather than Parliament—should have the right to create laws and taxes in the colonies. Many people, such as Pennsylvania lawyer John Dickinson, thought the acts were illegal. Dickinson explained his beliefs in a famous pamphlet:

PRIMARY SOURCE

“We cannot be happy without being free . . . we cannot be free without being secure in our property . . . we cannot be secure in our property, if [taxed] without our consent.”

—John Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*

The colonists were also angry about the writs of assistance. Many believed that the writs went against their natural rights, as defined by English philosopher John Locke. The law of nature, wrote Locke, teaches that “no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.”

 **CAUSES AND EFFECTS** Explain why the Townshend Acts angered the colonists.

Colonists Protest

 **KEY QUESTION** In what ways did colonists protest British laws?

In response to the Townshend Acts, merchants in Boston organized another boycott of British goods. By October 1767, other colonies had joined the Massachusetts protests. The colonists were uniting for a common cause.

Political Activism Spreads As the boycott spread throughout the colonies, more people became politically active. Many colonists who had not previously participated in politics now had a way of making their voices heard. For example, some women formed their own protest organization called the **Daughters of Liberty**. They urged colonists to weave their own cloth and to use American products instead of British goods.

Meanwhile, colonial leaders urged the people to remain calm and not to protest violently. “No mobs,” the *Boston Gazette* suggested, “Constitutional methods are best.” Regardless, some colonists continued to protest with anger and threatened to form a mob.

Fearing disorder in the colonies, British officials called for more troops. This angered the colonists—even those who wanted peace. **Samuel Adams**, a leader of the Boston Sons of Liberty, stated, “We will destroy every soldier that dare put his foot on shore. . . . I look upon them as foreign enemies!”

The Boston Massacre In the fall of 1768, more than 1,000 additional British soldiers (known as redcoats for their bright red jackets) arrived in Boston under the command of General Thomas Gage. With their arrival, tensions erupted into violence.