



Paul Revere's etching of the Boston Massacre fueled anger in the colonies. Are the soldiers represented fairly in Revere's etching?

On March 5, 1770, a group of colonists—mostly youths and dockworkers—surrounded some soldiers in front of the State House. Soon, the two groups began trading insults, shouting at each other and even throwing snowballs. As the crowd grew larger, the soldiers began to fear for their safety. Thinking they were about to be attacked, the soldiers fired into the crowd. Five people, including Crispus Attucks, were killed.

The people of Boston were outraged at what came to be known as the Boston Massacre. In the weeks that followed, the colonies were flooded with anti-British propaganda in newspapers, pamphlets, and political posters. Attucks and the four victims were depicted as heroes who had given their lives for the cause

of freedom. The British soldiers, on the other hand, were portrayed as evil and menacing villains.

At the same time, the soldiers who had fired the shots were arrested and charged with murder. **John Adams**, a lawyer and cousin of Samuel Adams, agreed to defend the soldiers in court. Many people criticized Adams and some even threatened to harm the lawyer. But Adams believed that everyone—including the British soldiers—was entitled to a fair trial. Although Adams supported the colonists' cause, he wanted to demonstrate that everyone was subject to the rule of law.

Adams argued that the soldiers had acted in self-defense. The jury agreed and acquitted the soldiers. To many colonists, however, the Boston Massacre would stand as a symbol of British tyranny in the colonies.

▲ **SUMMARIZE** Describe how colonists protested British laws.

Economic Interference

▼ **KEY QUESTION** How did colonists in the port cities react to the Tea Act?

In April 1770, Parliament repealed the Townshend Acts. Once again, the colonial boycott had worked—British trade had been hurt and Parliament had backed down. But Parliament kept the tea tax to show that it still had the right to tax the colonists.

The Tea Act Increases Anger To demonstrate their displeasure with the remaining tax on tea, many colonists chose not to purchase luxuries from British merchants. Instead, they drank tea that was smuggled from Holland. As a result, many British tea companies lost money in America as their tea went unsold and rotted in ports.