**I. The Road to Revolution**

**THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR**

The desire for territory produced by mercantilism also meant that nations ended up fighting over land and resources. As British colonists moved west, they found themselves fighting French settlers and Native Americans.

In 1754, this tension between French and British colonials resulted in the French and Indian War. It was so named because Britain fought the war against France and its Native American allies (some Native Americans helped the British). After nine years of fighting, France, Great Britain, and Spain (a French ally) signed the Treaty of Paris in 1763. France gave up its claims in Canada and all lands east of the Mississippi River. In addition, Spain ceded Florida to the British as well. Great Britain now stood alone as the one, true colonial power in eastern North America. In addition, the French and Indian War soon became part of a much larger conflict. Two years after fighting broke out in North America, war engulfed Europe as well. It involved all the major European powers and extended to colonies around the globe.

**ENGLAND’S ATTITUDE TOWARD COLONIES**

Like the other colonial powers of Europe, England viewed its American possessions as *1/ a source of food and raw materials that were in short supply at home; and 2/market for its finished products.*England sought to*1/ curb colonial manufacturing that might complete with its own industries and 2/ keep other European countries from sharing in the colonial trade.* The policy of regulating colonial commerce in the interest of the mother country was an outgrowth of the economic theory known as *mercantilism.*

**ENGLAND IMPOSES TRADE AND MANUFACTURING REGULATIONS**

**The Navigation Acts 1650:**

Starting in 1650, England passed a series of trade regulations called the Navigation Acts. *1/No goods could be shipped to or from any colony except in English ships .2/certain articles produced in the colonies could be sold only to England. 3/European goods destined for the colonies must first be sent to England (where duties could be collected) and reshipped from there on English ships.* Laws were also enacted to restrict colonial manufacturing. (1)*The Woolen Act* (1699) forbade the export of woolen goods either overseas or from one colony to another. (2)*The Hat Act* (1732) banned the export of beaver hates. (3)*The Iron Act* (1750) prohibited the manufacture of iron products (tools, utensils, and hardware).

**ENGLAND’S COLONIAL POLICY CHANGES**

With the close of the French and Indian War, England’s policy toward its American colonies changed. It felt that the colonists benefited by the defeat of the French in North America and should help pay the cost of the war. England was faced with a large debt and heavy taxes at home. Furthermore, it had to bear the expense of maintaining an army in America to protect colonists against Indian attacks. To raise additional revenue, England decided not only to enforce the existing trade laws but to introduce new taxes as well.

**ENGLAND’ S NEW POLICY IN ACTION**

***1- Proclamation of 1763***

Britain issued the proclamation of 1763.This act *1/ordered all settlers in the Ohio Valley to move back east, 2/Forbade the establishment of new settlements west of the Appalachians and 3/ prohibited traders from entering the region without government approval.*

***Reaction:***

The colonists, especially those on the frontier, resented the proclamation. They regarded it as an attempt by England to keep them from developing the new, fertile lands. Many pioneers ignored the proclamation and migrated westward into the forbidden area.

**2- *Sugar Act (1764):***

*George Grenville*, British Prime Minister from 1763 to 1765. He persuaded Parliament to pass the *Sugar Act.* This Law raised duties on refined sugar, textiles, and other goods imported from any place other that Britain or a British Colony. To discourage smuggling, the new law lowered the duty on molasses. The act also added more products to the list of enumerated articles that could be sold only to England.

***Reaction:***

The merchants continued to smuggle goods into the country and to carry on trade with foreign nations.

**3- *Quartering Act 1765:***

This act of parliament required the colonial legislatures to provide funds, living quarters, and supplies to help meet the expense of maintaining British troops in America.

***Reaction:***

The colonists objected to England’s policy of keeping a large army in America in time of peace and opposed paying for its support.

***4- Stamp Tax 1765:***

Parliament passed the *Stamp Act*. This law placed a tax on newspapers, almanacs, pamphlets, playing cards, and legal documents (wills, licenses…etc.). The act required that stamps be purchased from the government and be affixed to these articles.

***Reaction*:**

Because it affected all the people, not just a special group as did the trade regulations. Patriotic societies, known as the *Sons of Liberty*, were formed to organize resistance to the tax. People vowed to boycott (stop buying) English products until the tax was repealed. At the urging of Patrick Henry, the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a resolution asserting that it had the sole power to tax Virginians. « *No taxation without representation* » was the slogan of the day.

In the fall of 1765 delegates from nine colonies convened the *Stamp Act Congress* in New York City demanding the repeal of the stamp tax; the delegates drew up a declaration in which they stated the main arguments of the colonists: *(1)The colonists were entitled to the “rights of Englishmen”. (2)Taxation without the consent of the people’s own elected representatives was a violation of these rights. (2)Since the colonists were not represented in the English Parliament, that body could not impose taxes on them.*

Parliament in 1766 repealed the stamp tax but, at the same time, issued its right to tax the colonies by the *Declaratory Act*. It stated that Parliament had full authority over the colonies « in all cases whatsoever. »

***5- Townshend Acts (1767):***

Charles Townshend, the new English Chancellor was responsible for Parliament’s passage of a series of revenue measures known as *Townshend Acts*.Underthis legislation: (a) Duties were levied on colonial imports of glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea (b) The revenue from these duties to be used to pay the salaries of such colonial officials as governors and judges.(previously their salaries had been controlled by the colonial legislatures.)

***Reaction:***

The Massachusetts legislature, under the leadership of *Samuel Adams*, urged the colonies to cooperate in resisting British taxation. The colonists responded with another boycott of English goods.

The effectiveness of the boycott led to the repeal of all Townshend taxes except the one on tea (1770). This duty was kept to show that Parliament retained its right to tax the colonies. American patriots took steps to organize themselves to oppose English policies. In 1772 *Samuel Adams* issued a call to the towns of Massachusetts to form *Committees of Correspondence* to keep each other informed of new developments.

**6- Boston Massacre (1770):**

Shortly before the repeal of the Townshend Acts, a crowd of Bostonians shouted insults and threw snowballs at a detachment of British soldiers (*the redcoats*). The redcoats fired into the crowd, killing 05 townspeople and wounding 06 others.

***Reaction:***

The angry citizens of Boston, led by *Samuel Adams,* demanded the removal of the British troops. To prevent uprising, the governor withdrew the soldiers from the city. News of the Boston Massacre spread throughout the colonies and aroused indignation everywhere.

**7-Tea Act (1773):**

To save the British East India Company from ruin, Parliament passed the Tea Act, which allowed the company to ship tea to America without paying the existing heavy duty in England. This exemption enabled the company to undersell the colonial imports of English tea as well as smugglers of foreign tea.

***Reaction:***

Colonial merchants denounced the Tea Act because :( a) It gave the East India Company exclusive control of the tea trade in America and would ruin many American tea merchants. (b)Parliament could grand similar rights to other English firms and put all colonial merchants out of business. During the night of December 16, 1773, the *Boston Tea Party* took place. Bostonians disguised as Indians boarded the ships and dumped 342 chests of tea (worth $75,000) into the harbor.

**8- Intolerable Acts (1774):**

Parliament moved quickly to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. It passed four coercive laws that the colonists called the *Intolerable Acts*.They included the following measures: a- The port of Boston was closed to all commerce until the colonists paid for the destroyed tea. b- The people of Massachusetts were deprived of the right to elect officials, to select jurors, and to hold town meetings. Thomas Gage, British commander-in-chief in America, was appointed military.governor.of.the.colony. c- British soldiers and officials accused of crimes in Massachusetts were to be tried in England, not.in.the.colony. d- A new Quartering Act required the people in all the colonies to feed and house British soldiers.

***Reaction:***

With Boston Harbor closed to commerce, the people of the city faced economic ruin. The other colonies rallied to support Boston by sending food supplies to the city. Some Colonial leaders warned that the measures adopted by the British government to punish Massachusetts endangered the liberties of all colonies. Others declared that Massachusetts was “suffering in the common cause of America.” There was widespread agreement that united action was necessary, and a call went out to convene an intercolonial congress.

**A REVOLUTION BEGINS**

To deal with the crisis, representatives from nearly every colony (only Georgia did not attend) gathered for the First Continental Congress in September 1774. In a statement to the king, the Congress wrote that the colonists had a right to be represented in their government. Since the colonies were not represented in Parliament, they were entitled to govern themselves. Then, in April 1775, all hope of a peaceful resolution was lost when fighting broke out at Lexington and Concord. As British troops were on their way to seize arms and ammunition stored by colonists at Concord, Massachusetts, they were met at Lexington by colonial militia (voluntary, local military units consisting of private citizens rather than full-time soldiers). It was there that someone (to this day no one is sure who) fired the "shot heard 'round the world" that started the American Revolution. Less than a month later, following January, in 1776, Thomas Paine (1737-1809) published his famous pamphlet, Common Sense. In it, he made a compelling case for independence that won many to the cause. Due to the influence of Paine and others, the Second Continental Congress eventually stopped seeking resolution with England and chose, instead, to declare independence.