

American Revolution

Intolerable Acts

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What were the Intolerable Acts?

The Intolerable Acts were five laws that were passed by the British Parliament against the American Colonies in 1774.

How did they get their name?

They were given the name "Intolerable Acts" by American Patriots who felt they simply could not "tolerate" such unfair laws.

Why did Britain impose these new acts?

The British passed these acts as punishment for the Boston Tea Party.

The Five Acts

1. Boston Port Act

The Boston Port Act was the first Intolerable Act passed. It was direct punishment to the city of Boston for the Boston Tea Party. The act closed the port of Boston to all ships until the colonists paid for the tea they dumped into the harbor.

Many felt that this punishment was unfair because it punished all the citizens of Boston for a crime that only a few committed. Many of the other American colonies sent supplies to Boston.

2. Massachusetts Government Act

This act changed the government of the colony of Massachusetts. It gave more power to the governor (who was appointed by Great Britain) and took away power from the colonists. Many of the government officials that used to be elected by the people would now be appointed by the governor. The act also said that only one town meeting a year could be held.

This act angered the entire colony of Massachusetts and put fear into the other American colonies. If the British government would do this to Boston, they may do it to all the colonies.

3. Administration of Justice Act

This act allowed the governor to move capital trials against government officials to Great Britain.

The colonists felt that this act gave too much protection to government officials. Witnesses would have to travel all the way to Britain to testify against an official, making it nearly impossible to convict. Some colonists called this the "Murder Act" as they thought it would allow officials to get away with murder.

4. Quartering Act

The Quartering Act of 1774 expanded upon the original Quartering Act of 1765. It said that the colonies had to provide barracks for British soldiers. In the case where barracks weren't available, the soldiers could be housed in other buildings such as barns, hotels, and homes.

5. Quebec Act

The Quebec Act expanded the British Canadian territory south into the Ohio Valley. It also made the Quebec Province a Catholic province.

Although this act wasn't in response to the Boston Tea Party, it was passed at the same time as the rest of the acts. It also angered many American colonists. They were not happy about losing land in Ohio or at having a Catholic province to their north.

Results

The Intolerable Acts became a rallying cry for patriots in America. They felt these acts took away some of their basic freedoms. In many ways, these acts helped to unite the colonies and pushed them one step closer to revolution.

Interesting Facts about the Intolerable Acts

- The meeting of the First Continental Congress was called to in response to the Intolerable Acts.
- They were called the Coercive Acts in Great Britain. They are also sometimes referred to as the Punitive Acts.
- The British thought the acts would help to maintain control in America, but they had the opposite effect causing many people to firmly join the side of the rebels.