

*Harsh British actions aimed at controlling the colonies united them instead.*

## Trouble in Massachusetts

SS.8.A.3.1, SS.8.A.3.2, SS.8.A.3.4, SS.8.A.3.8

### *How did the American colonists react to the Boston Massacre?*

Protests continued to flare in the colonies, making British officials nervous. In 1768 they sent word to Britain that the colonies were on the brink of **rebellion**—a rejection of British authority. Parliament sent troops to Boston. As angry colonists jeered, the "redcoats" set up camp in the center of the city.

For many colonists, this British act went too far. First the colonists were convinced that the British had passed laws that violated colonial rights. Now Britain had sent an army to **occupy**, or take control of, colonial cities.

To make matters worse, the soldiers in Boston acted rudely. The redcoats, who were mostly poor men, earned little pay. Some stole from local shops and got into fights with colonists. Also, in their off-hours, the soldiers competed for jobs that Bostonians wanted.

### Tension in the Streets

On March 5, 1770, violence erupted. A fight broke out between some Bostonians and soldiers. As British officers tried to calm the crowd, a man shouted, "We did not send for you. We will not have you here. We'll get rid of you, we'll drive you away!"

The angry townspeople surged forward. They began throwing sticks and stones at the soldiers. "Come on, you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire, if you dare," someone in the crowd shouted.

After one soldier was knocked down, the nervous redcoats did fire. They killed five colonists. Among the dead was Crispus Attucks, a dockworker who was part African, part Native American. One Bostonian cried: "Are the inhabitants to be knocked down in the streets? Are they to be murdered . . . ?" The colonists called the tragic **encounter** "the Boston Massacre."

### Spreading the News

Colonial leaders used the killings as **propaganda**—information designed to influence opinion. Samuel Adams put up posters that described the Boston Massacre as a slaughter of innocent Americans by bloodthirsty redcoats. Paul Revere made an engraving that showed a British officer giving the order to open fire on an orderly crowd.

The Boston Massacre led colonists to call for stronger boycotts of British goods. Troubled by the growing opposition in the colonies, Parliament repealed all the Townshend Acts taxes on British imported goods, except the one on tea. In response, the colonists ended their boycotts, except on tea. Trade with Britain resumed.

Still, some colonists continued to call for resistance to British rule. In 1772 Samuel Adams revived the Boston committee of correspondence, a group used in earlier protests. The group circulated calls for action against Britain. Soon committees of correspondence sprang up throughout the colonies, bringing together protesters opposed to British measures.

**Explaining** How did the Boston Massacre affect the relations between the colonists and Britain?

## Crisis in Boston

SS.8.A.3.1, SS.8.A.3.2, SS.8.A.3.5, LA.8.1.6.1

### *How did the British government react to the actions of the colonists?*

The British East India Company was vital to the British economy. Colonial refusal to import British East India tea had nearly driven the company out of business. To help save the company and protect the British economy, Parliament passed the Tea Act. It gave the company nearly total control of the market for tea in the colonies. The Tea Act also removed some—but not all—of the taxes on tea, making it less expensive for colonists. Yet the colonists remained angry. They did not want to pay any tax, and they did not want to be told what tea they could buy.

Colonial merchants called for a new boycott. Colonists vowed to stop East India Company ships from unloading. The Daughters of Liberty issued a pamphlet declaring that rather than part with freedom, "We'll part with our tea."

### A Tea Party

Despite warnings of trouble, the East India Company continued shipping tea to the colonies. Colonists in New York and Philadelphia forced the tea ships to turn back. In 1773, three ships loaded with tea arrived in Boston Harbor. The royal governor ordered that they be unloaded. The Boston Sons of Liberty acted swiftly. At midnight on December 16, colonists dressed as Native Americans boarded the

ships and threw 342 chests of tea overboard. As word of the "Boston Tea Party" spread, colonists gathered to celebrate the bold act. Yet no one spoke out against British rule itself. Most colonists still saw themselves as loyal British citizens.

## The Intolerable Acts

When news of the Boston Tea Party reached London, King George III realized that Britain was losing control of the colonies. He declared, "We must either master them or totally leave them to themselves."

In 1774 Parliament responded by passing a series of laws called the Coercive Acts. *Coercive* (co • UHR • sihv) means to force someone to do something. These laws were meant to punish the colonists for resisting British authority. One Coercive Act applied to all the colonies. It forced the colonies to let British soldiers live among the colonists. Massachusetts, though, received the harshest treatment.

One of the Coercive Acts banned town meetings in Massachusetts. Another closed Boston Harbor until the colonists paid for the ruined tea. This stopped most shipments of food and other supplies to the colony. Parliament was trying to cut Massachusetts off from the other colonies. Instead, the Coercive Acts drew the colonies together. Other colonies sent food and clothing to support Boston.

Following the Coercive Acts, Parliament also passed the Quebec Act. This law created a government for Canada and extended its territory south all the way to the Ohio River. This action ignored the colonies' claims to that region.

The colonists believed all of these new laws violated their rights as English citizens. They expressed their feelings about the laws by calling them the Intolerable Acts. *Intolerable* means painful and unbearable.

**Summarizing** List the effects of the Coercive Acts on the citizens of Boston.

## LESSON 2 REVIEW

### Review Vocabulary

1. Explain the significance of the following terms:

a. rebellion b. propaganda c. committee of correspondence

LA.8.1.6.1

### Answer the Guiding Questions

2. **Sequencing** List the events leading up to and following the Boston Massacre in the order that they occurred.

SS.8.A.3.1

3. **Analyzing** How did Samuel Adams and Paul Revere use propaganda to rally colonists after the Boston Massacre?

SS.8.A.3.5

4. **Explaining** How did the British punish the colonists for the Boston Tea Party?

SS.8.A.3.1

5. **NARRATIVE WRITING** Write an account of the Boston Massacre from the point of view of a British soldier involved in the event.

SS.8.A.3.1, SS.8.A.3.5, SS.8.A.3.8