Chapter 5

Imperial Breakdown
1763-1774
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• The Crisis of Imperial Authority
• Republican Ideology and Colonial Protest
• The Stamp Act Crisis
• The Townshend Crisis
• Domestic Divisions
• The Final Imperial Crisis
• Conclusion
Liberty poles were particularly characteristic of New York City, where citizens of all social classes supported their erection (as in the picture).
Learning Objectives

• What new challenges did the British government face in North America after 1763?
• How did Republican ideology inform the colonists’ view of their relationship to Britain?
• Why did the Stamp Act spark widespread unrest in the colonies?
Learning Objectives (cont'd)

• How did the colonists respond to Townshend’s colonial policies?
• What issues and interests divided the colonists?
• What pushed the colonists from protest to rebellion?
The Crisis of Imperial Authority
Challenges of Control and Finance

• Britain’s empire in 1763 was immense, and its problems correspondingly large. It faced threats from traditional European enemies France and Spain, as well as from new subjects in acquired lands.

• Concerns about imperial authority extended to the inhabitants of the existing colonies themselves.
Challenges of Control and Finance (cont'd)

- Wartime expenses caused British debt to balloon, and Americans would be asked to shoulder more of the financial burden.
Native Americans and Frontier Conflict

- The British government kept a large body of troops in America in peacetime in order to maintain peace with the Indians.
- Tensions between the colonists and Indians led to fierce conflict in the Cherokee War and Pontiac’s War.
Native Americans and Frontier Conflict (cont'd)

- Ongoing troubles included the Paxton Boys crisis.
  - Cherokee War
    - Conflict (1759–1761) on the southern frontier between the Cherokee Indians and colonists from Virginia southward. It caused South Carolina to request the aid of British troops and resulted in the surrender of more Indian land to white colonists.
Native Americans and Frontier Conflict (cont'd)

- **Pontiac's War**
  - Indian uprising (1763–1766) led by Pontiac of the Ottawas and Neolin of the Delawares. Fearful of their fate at the hands of the British after the French had been driven out of North America, the Indian nations of the Ohio River Valley and the Great Lakes area united to oust the British from the Ohio-Mississippi Valley. They failed and were forced to make peace in 1766.
Cherokee chief Cunne Shote visited London in 1762 and had his portrait painted by Francis Parsons.
Dealing with the New Territories

• The issues raised by Pontiac’s War moved Britain to assert imperial control over the territories it had acquired from France.
  - Proclamation of 1763
    - Royal proclamation setting the boundary known as the Proclamation Line.
Quartering Acts
- Acts of Parliament requiring colonial legislatures to provide supplies and quarters for the troops stationed in America. Americans considered this taxation in disguise and objected. None of these acts passed during the pre-Revolutionary controversy required that soldiers be quartered in an occupied house without the owner’s consent.
The Search for Revenue: The Sugar Act

- Compounding Britain’s problem of soaring national debt was a postwar recession that struck both it and the colonies.
- The Sugar Act was passed to help defray the costs of empire, while also taking aim at smugglers.
The Search for Revenue: The Sugar Act

- New Englanders predominated those colonists actively opposed to the Sugar Act.
  - **Sugar Act**
    - Law passed in 1764 to raise revenue in the American colonies. It lowered the duty from 6 pence to 3 pence per gallon on foreign molasses imported into the colonies and increased the restrictions on colonial commerce.
Republican Ideology and Colonial Protest
Power versus Liberty

• The limited government concepts of republicanism and Country (or “Real Whig”) ideology informed the colonists’ understanding of politics.

• Civil liberty, participation in government, and vigilance against corruption and excessive power were hallmarks of republican ideology.
Colonists sought a balance between the exercise of power and the protection of liberty, and saw a successful model in Great Britain’s government, based on the British Constitution.

- **British Constitution**
  - The principles, procedures, and precedents that governed the operation of the British government. These could be found in no single written document.
Colonists who had absorbed republican ideas were especially concerned about the implications of taxation on their independence and liberty.
Taxation and Sovereignty (cont’d)

• There were differences between British and colonial understandings of representation and taxation, which were connected to the more fundamental issue of sovereignty.

  - **Sovereignty**
    - The supreme authority of the state, including both the right to take life and to tax.
The Stamp Act Crisis
The Stamp Act Crisis

- **Stamp Act**
  - Law passed by Parliament in 1765 to raise revenue in America by requiring taxed, stamped paper for legal documents, publications, and playing cards. Americans opposed it as “taxation without representation” and prevented its enforcement. Parliament repealed it a year after its enactment.
Colonial Assemblies React to the Stamp Tax

• Colonial protests arose months before the Stamp Act was to go into effect, and the measure was condemned and opposed through various legislative, social, and economic means.
Colonial Assemblies React to the Stamp Tax (cont’d)

- Some of the opposition went beyond the Stamp Act itself to address broader issues.
  - **Stamp Act Congress**
    - October 1765 meeting of delegates sent by nine colonies, held in New York City, that adopted the Declaration of Rights and Grievances and petitioned against the Stamp Act.
Colonial Assemblies React to the Stamp Tax (cont’d)

- **Declaration of Rights and Grievances**
  - Resolves, adopted by the Stamp Act Congress at New York in 1765, asserting that the Stamp Act and other taxes imposed on the colonists without their consent, given through their colonial legislatures, were unconstitutional.
Colonists Take to the Streets

- In Boston, a group called the Sons of Liberty organize, launching a series of violent protests that quickly spread to other locations.
- Colonial elites were appalled at the violent tactics, while suffering British merchants petitioned Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act.
Colonists Take to the Streets (cont’d)

- **Sons of Liberty**
  - Secret organizations in the colonies formed to oppose the Stamp Act. From 1765 until independence, they spoke, wrote, and demonstrated against British measures. Their actions often intimidated stamp distributors and British supporters in the colonies.
Repeal and the Declaratory Act

- A three-part solution was devised that linked repeal of the Stamp Act to an unequivocal assertion of parliamentary sovereignty.
- The Stamp Act was repealed, the Declaratory Act was passed, and the Revenue Act of 1766 was also passed.
Repeal and the Declaratory Act (cont'd)

- Parliament had saved face and calmed the merchant community, while the colonies rejoiced.
  - **Declaratory Act**
    - Law passed in 1766 to accompany repeal of the Stamp Act that stated that Parliament had the authority to legislate for the colonies “in all cases whatsoever.” Whether “legislate” meant tax was not clear to Americans.
Samuel Adams, the leader of the Boston radicals, as he appeared to John Singleton Copley in the early 1770s.
The Townshend Crisis
Townshend’s Plan

• The goal of the Townshend Duty Act was to help pay the costs of government by imposing new duties, or external taxes, in the colonies that Townshend believed the colonists would accept.

• The duties were on regular colonial imports such as tea, paper, paint, lead, and glass.
Townshend’s Plan (cont'd)

- A new board of customs commissioners headquartered in Boston was to ensure collection of the duties.
- Colonists feared the Townshend Act was the first step toward greater British interference in colonial affairs.
A satirical British engraving from 1766 showing English politicians burying the Stamp Act, "born 1765 died 1766."
Townshend’s Plan (cont’d)

- **Townshend Duty Act of 1967**
  - Act of Parliament, passed in 1767, imposing duties on colonial tea, lead, paint, paper, and glass. Designed to take advantage of the supposed American distinction between internal and external taxes, the Townshend duties were to help support government in America. The act prompted a successful colonial nonimportation movement.
Renewed Resistance

- The Townshend duties provoked resistance throughout the colonies. John Dickinson stated a tax was a tax and other colonists complained the Act threatened to undermine the authority of the colonial authority.
Renewed Resistance (cont’d)

- Americans organized an effective nonimportation movement that forged a sense of common purpose among colonists that created a sense of belonging to a larger community.
Renewed Resistance (cont’d)

- Nonimportation movement
  - A tactical means of putting economic pressure on Britain by refusing to buy its exports to the colonies. Initiated in response to the taxes imposed by the **Sugar** and **Stamp** Acts, it was used again against the **Townshend duties** and the **Coercive Acts**. The nonimportation movement popularized resistance to British measures and deepened the commitment of many ordinary people to a larger American community.
FIGURE 5–1 Value of American Exports to and Imports from England, 1763–1776

- Stamp Act
- Townshend Duty Act
- Townshend Duty Act repealed
- Tea Act
- Intolerable Acts
The Boston Massacre

• Growing tensions between British soldiers and Boston townspeople erupted into violence that resulted in five deaths.
  - Boston Massacre
    - After months of increasing friction between townspeople and the British troops stationed in the city, on March 5, 1770, British troops fired on American civilians in Boston.
Partial Repeal and Its Consequences

• For the colonists, the partial repeal of the Townshend duties was an incomplete victory, and recent events, especially the Boston Massacre, seriously undermined their trust in British authority.

• Propaganda? How was it used to the colonists advantage after the Boston Massacre?
Various incidents led colonial leaders to resolve to keep one another informed about British actions and to try and anticipate what Parliament’s next move might be.

- **Committees of Correspondence**
  - Committees formed in Massachusetts and other colonies in the pre-Revolutionary period to keep Americans informed about British measures that would affect the colonies.
Domestic Divisions
Regulator Movements

• In response to marauding gangs of outlaws roaming backcountry South Carolina, aggrieved farmers organized vigilante companies.

• The outlaws’ threat to property and order was symptomatic of the larger problem of political representation.
Regulator Movements (cont'd)

- Regulators
  - Vigilante groups active in the 1760s and 1770s in the western parts of North and South Carolina. The South Carolina Regulators attempted to rid the area of outlaws; the North Carolina Regulators sought to protect themselves against excessively high taxes and court costs. In both cases, westerners lacked sufficient representation in the legislature to obtain immediate redress of their grievances. The South Carolina government eventually made concessions; the North Carolina government suppressed its Regulator movement by force.
This depiction of Governor William Tryon’s confrontation with the North Carolina Regulators during May 1771.
The Beginnings of Antislavery

- Slavery was legal in all thirteen colonies, but amid a time of protests and fervent speeches on behalf of liberty, some colonists began to question the legitimacy of slavery.
- The first significant attacks on slavery were generated by religious concerns.
The Final Imperial Crisis
The Boston Tea Party

• The possible bankruptcy of the British East India Company prompted Lord North to issue the Tea Act of 1773.

• In most cities, the Sons of Liberty threatened violence and convinced captains to return their ships and cargoes to England.
The Boston Tea Party (cont'd)

- The Boston Sons of Liberty incited the Boston Tea Party.
  - **Tea Act of 1773**
    - Act of Parliament that permitted the East India Company to sell tea through agents in America without paying the duty customarily collected in Britain, thus reducing the retail price. Americans, who saw the act as an attempt to induce them to pay the Townshend duty still imposed in the colonies, resisted this act through the Boston Tea Party and other measures.
The Boston Tea Party (cont'd)

- **Boston Tea Party**
  - Incident that occurred on December 16, 1773, in which Bostonians, disguised as Indians, destroyed £9,000 worth of tea belonging to the British East India Company in order to prevent payment of the duty on it.
The Intolerable Acts

- The British responded to the Boston Tea Party by passing the Coercive Acts, known as the Intolerable Acts in the colonies.
The Intolerable Acts (cont'd)

- The Coercive Acts closed the port of Boston (Boston Port Act), offered lenient treatment to government officials who killed a colonist while performing their duties (Administration of Justice Act), drastically changed the Massachusetts colonial charter (Massachusetts Government Act), and allowed British troops to be lodged in any uninhabited building (Quartering Act of 1774).
The Intolerable Acts (cont'd)

- The Quebec Act changed the administration and boundaries of that colony, enlarged the privileges of the Catholic Church, and also provided for the trial of civil cases without a jury.

  - Coercive Acts
    - Legislation passed by Parliament in 1774; included the Boston Port Act, the Massachusetts Government Act, the Administration of Justice Act, and the Quartering Act of 1774.
The Intolerable Acts (cont'd)

- **Quebec Act**
  - Law passed by Parliament in 1774 that provided an appointed government for Canada, enlarged the boundaries of Quebec southward to the Ohio River, and confirmed the privileges of the Catholic Church. Alarmed Americans termed this act and the Coercive Acts the Intolerable Acts.

- **Intolerable Acts**
  - American term for the Coercive Acts and the Quebec Act.
MAP 5 – The Quebec Act of 1774

- British Colonies, Possessions, and claims
- Quebec
- Quebec boundary, 1763
- Quebec boundary, 1774, as later defined
- Hudson Bay
- Hudson’s Bay Company
- Quebec
- Massachusetts Bay
- Lake Superior
- Lake Michigan
- Lake Erie
- Lake Huron
- Lake Ontario
- Lake Ontario
- Obo River
- Ohio River
- St. Lawrence River
- Atlantic Ocean
- The Thirteen Colonies
- Louisiana
- West Florida
- East Florida
- 300 Miles
- 300 Kilometers
The Americans’ Reaction

- Americans saw the Intolerable Acts as threatening their expansion, the status of some religions, and the power and authority of colonial legislatures.
The Americans’ Reaction (cont'd)

- **Suffolk Resolves**
  - Militant resolves adopted in September 1774 in response to the Coercive Acts by representatives from the towns in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, including Boston. They termed the Coercive Acts unconstitutional, advised the people to arm, and called for economic sanctions against Britain. The First Continental Congress endorsed these resolves.
This engraving shows colonists dressed like Indians destroying British tea in December 1773 in protest against the Tea Act.
This participant at the Tea Party convention, held in Nashville in February 2010, donned a Revolutionary-era costume.
The First Continental Congress

- Fifty-five delegates met in Philadelphia where the Suffolk Resolves were passed.
- The Suffolk Resolves denounced the Coercive Acts as unconstitutional, advised the people to arm, and called for economic sanctions against Britain.
First Continental Congress

- Meeting of delegates from most of the colonies held in 1774 in response to the Coercive Acts. The Congress endorsed the Suffolk Resolves, adopted the Declaration of Rights and Grievances, and agreed to establish the Continental Association to put economic pressure on Britain to repeal its objectionable measures. The Congress also wrote addresses to the king, the people of Britain, and the American people.
The Continental Association

• Colonial unity was fragile and Congress needed an enforcement mechanism to ensure its measures were followed. It created the Continental Association.

  ▪ Continental Association
    - Agreement, adopted by the First Continental Congress in 1774 in response to the Coercive Acts, to cut off trade with Britain until the objectionable measures were repealed. Local committees were established to enforce the provisions of the association.
## New Restraints and Burdens on Americans, 1763–1774

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Limits on Legislative Action</th>
<th>Curbs on Territorial Expansion</th>
<th>Burdens on Colonial Trade</th>
<th>Imposition of New Taxes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Currency Act limits the colonial legislatures' ability to issue paper money.</td>
<td>Vice-admiralty courts strengthened for Sugar Act.</td>
<td>Sugar Act imposes taxes for revenue (modified 1766).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quartering Act requires assemblies to provide facilities for royal troops.</td>
<td>Stamp Act imposes internal taxes on various items (repealed 1766).</td>
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### New Restraints and Burdens on Americans, 1763–1774

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<td>1766</td>
<td>Declaratory Act proclaims Parliament’s right to legislate for colonies in all cases whatsoever.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vice-admiralty courts strengthened for Townshend duties.</td>
<td>Townshend duties imposed on some imported goods in order to pay colonial officials. (All but tax on tea repealed 1770.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1767</td>
<td>Royal instructions limit size of colonial assemblies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>American Customs Service established in Boston.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tea Act reduces duty and prompts Boston Tea Party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>Massachusetts Government Act limits town meetings, changes legislature, and violates Massachusetts charter.</td>
<td>Quebec Act enlarges Quebec at expense of colonies with claims in the Ohio River Valley.</td>
<td>Boston Port Act closes harbor until East India Company’s tea is paid for.</td>
<td>Quartering Act of 1774 declares that troops could be lodged in virtually any uninhabited building in Boston.</td>
</tr>
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Political Polarization

- Even well-known radicals were not advocating independence. Most hoped and expected Britain would change its policy toward America.
- Americans were divided over what the extent of Parliament’s authority should be and how far they could legitimately go in challenging Parliament’s power.
Advocates of colonial rights called themselves Whigs and called their opponents Tories.
Political Polarization (cont'd)

- Whigs
  - The name used by advocates of colonial resistance to British measures during the 1760s and 1770s. The Whig party in England unsuccessfully attempted to exclude the Catholic duke of York from succession to the throne as James II; victorious in the Glorious Revolution, the Whigs later stood for religious toleration and the supremacy of Parliament over the crown.
Political Polarization (cont'd)

- **Tories**
  - A derisive term applied to loyalists in America who supported the king and Parliament just before and during the American Revolution. The term derived from late-seventeenth-century English politics when the Tory party supported the duke of York’s succession to the throne as James II. Later the Tory party favored the Church of England and the crown over dissenting denominations and Parliament.
This image shows John Malcolm, an unpopular customs commissioner, being tarred and feathered in Boston.
Conclusion
Conclusion

• British attempts to tighten the bonds of empire went terribly awry, as colonists saw British reforms as infringements on their rights.

• Years of often violent political turmoil inspired colonists to think more systematically about their rights than they had ever done before.
However, while they had surely rebelled, Americans differed on the path of resistance to the British, and had not yet launched a revolution.