

Coercive acts



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Coercive Acts The Coercive Acts were issued at the behest of Lord North following the infamous destruction of the Tea in Massachusetts. The Tea Act of 1773 had the vision of levying taxes on Tea from the British East India Company. However the fact was that it was “ a painful reminder of Parliament’s claim to the power to tax and legislate for the colonies (198). Governor Hutchinson was unwilling to let the resistance against the act go unchecked. He stopped three ships at Boston that carried tea but refused to unload them or pay the taxes in November 1773. The captains could not go back without his clearance and they had a deadline of twenty days in which they could not act against the pressure building up against the people. A meeting followed regarding the course of action, in which no resolution could be made. However, at the end of the meeting 100 to 150 men thinly disguised as Indians boarded the ships and dumps incredibly large amounts of tea into the water while a large crowd watched. The Patriots celebrated this as a victory against the crown. However, the Coercive Acts were issued immediately afterwards, which, along with the fifth Quebec Act, was considered the Intolerable Acts in America.

The first act was the Boston Port Act, which closed the Boston harbor until the destroyed tea was compensated. Britain aimed to halt the commercial life of the city by this. The second was the Massachusetts Government Act, which “ altered the colony’s charter, underscoring Parliament’s claim to supremacy over Massachusetts” (199). The royal governor assumed supreme power under this. The third act was the Imperial Administration of Justice Act, which “ stipulated that royal official accused of a capital crime would be tried in a court in Britain” (199). The fourth act “ amended the 1765 Quartering Act and permitted military commanders to lodge soldiers

wherever necessary, even in private households” (199). Military rule was thus reestablished in Boston. The Quebec Act was “ ill timed” though it was in no way related to the four acts, and “ fed American fears” (200).

The Acts in general spread alarm in all colonies. People from all spheres of life were in doubt of their basic liberties. While the British saw these acts as a reinforcement of the power of the Crown over mutinous crowds, the patriots found them intolerable and were finding all possible ways to revolt against them. The Crown’s governors were forced to resign and new meetings of a democratic nature were taking place all over Massachusetts. Even rural Massachusetts had its way of taking local control away from the crown with a rebellion of farmers and artisans. Though there was no bloodshed in general, the incident of Powder Alarm showed the extent of violence the New England farmers would have been capable of. Thus the hegemonic power structure that the Crown aimed to retain through the acts was in fact further questioned and uprooted because of them. The history of American Revolution could not be considered complete without the Coercive Acts that led to a whirlpool of reactionary force.