

The tea act essay sample



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The Tea Act, passed in 1773, was the last in the series of acts, including Stamps Act and Townshend Acts, which, combined with lack of representation of American colonists in the British Parliament, forced Americans to armed actions. The Tea Act was “ *to allow a drawback of the duties of customs on the exportation of tea to any of his Majesty’s colonies or plantations in America; to increase the deposit on bohea tea to be sold at the India Company’s sales; and to empower the commissioners of the treasury to grant licences to the East India Company to export tea duty-free* ”.

By 1773 due to boycott of the East India Company’s trade, the Company had huge debts and large supplies of unsold tea. The aim of the act was to better the situation for the Company and let it become a monopolist on American tea market. Reduction of taxes would allow the Company to cut the prices and make tea traders from the Thirteen Colonies non-competitive. Passing of the Act became possible after active effort of Company’s lobby in the Parliament.

The Colonists in America came to understanding, that as soon as the Company becomes a monopolist, it will be able to set any desired prices for tea, creating a new source of money for England at America’s cost. Protest have been immediately raised in Philadelphia, New York and, most remarkably, in Boston. Samuel Adams called upon Company’s officials to resign from their positions and leave America, in several cases the warehouses of the Company have been attacked.

When the first ships of the Company arrived to Boston in November 1773 Adams gathered a series of protest meetings, which became larger and larger. The meeting, which has been held in the Old South Church on December 16 estimated more than 8000 men. A group of the most active protestors calling themselves Sons of Liberty wore clothes of the Mahawk Indians. The crowd moved to the Boston harbor to British ships of Dartmouth, Beaver and Eleanour. As the crowd entered aboard, sacks of tea have been taken and cut, and their contents has been poured out into water. This event later became known as the Boston Tea Party and was only the first one of similar protest actions, such as, for example, the burning of British tea ship Peggy Stewart.

The British government responded by several laws, known as Intolerable Acts. The action has been criticized even by colonists leaders, for example Benjamin Franklin proposed to repay the destroyed tea for his own expense. Colonists tried to find other forms of protest, such as non-drinking tea, however, the Tea Act and it's consequences became a landmark even in the development of American independence movement. It has been clearly demonstrated, that Americans are ready to sacrifice their comfort for freedom, and that the land is full of volunteers, ready for further struggle. Thusly, the Tea Act made rift between Britain and colonists even deeper, and made the American Revolution closer.