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LESSON 2

Lesson Summary

CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

MODIFIED CORNELL NOTES

Colonial governments were supposed to be miniature versions of the British government. However, the British constitution was not a formal document but a collection of laws and traditions. In contrast, the colonists' rights were spelled out in written contracts such as the Mayflower Compact or royal charters. Still, members of Parliament saw themselves as "virtual representatives" of all British citizens, including the colonists.

After the Seven Years' War, Parliament decided that the colonists should pay more to help the British Empire. The Stamp Act, passed in March 1765, required the colonists to pay a tax on almost all printed materials. This was the first time that Parliament had imposed a direct tax on the colonies. The colonists protested angrily. Patrick Henry of Virginia argued that only the colonial assemblies had the right to tax the colonists. Those who opposed the British taxes began to call themselves "Patriots." To lead the protests, some men joined together as the Sons of Liberty.

In 1767, Parliament passed the Townshend Acts, which levied new import duties on items such as glass and tea. When riots broke out in Boston, the Crown sent in 4,000 troops. In March 1770, soldiers fired into a crowd, killing five colonists. Patriots called the killings the Boston Massacre. They formed **committees of correspondence** to provide leadership and promote cooperation. The British withdrew their troops from Boston but kept the tax on tea. On December 16, 1773, the Boston Sons of Liberty dressed as Indians and boarded three British ships laden with tea, which they dumped into the harbor. The event became known as the Boston Tea Party.

To punish Boston, Parliament passed the Coercive Acts, which became known as the Intolerable Acts. These acts closed the port of Boston and forced colonists to house British troops. Leaders from other colonies watched the situation in Boston closely. In the fall of 1774, delegates from every colony except Georgia met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the First Continental Congress. They announced a boycott of all British imports and established new governments that bypassed the Parliament and the Crown.

Lesson Vocabulary

virtual being such in practice or effect, though not in actual fact;
implied

committees of correspondence network of local groups that informed colonists of British measures and the opposition to them in the years before the Revolutionary War

