



Intolerable Acts

The word intolerable means too much to handle. In your opinion, what do you think is intolerable? Maybe you think your brother or sister is intolerable. In 1774, the British passed the Coercive Acts, but the Americans had their own name for these laws. They called them the Intolerable Acts because the colonists thought these laws were too much to handle. The acts that were passed included:

- **The Boston Port Act**, which closed all ports. Ports would only be opened again after the Americans paid back the money they wasted during the Boston Tea Party.
- **Massachusetts Government Act**, which stated that townspeople were not allowed to meet without the governor's permission. This kept colonists from joining together to fight back against the British. It also ruled that all government officials had to be British.
- **Administration of Justice Act**, which ruled that British officials who committed crimes could be sent to England for trial. The colonists felt that the British would probably be able to "get away with murder" since they were being tried in their home country.
- **The Quartering Act**, which forced colonists to let British soldiers stay in their homes.
- **The Quebec Act**, which added British land. It also gave more freedom to Canada.

The Cause

The Intolerable Acts weren't the initial cause of the fight between the British and the colonists. The fight had been brewing for a long time. Years earlier, the British had begun taxing the colonists unfairly. They had also passed controlling acts like the Tea Act and the Townshend Acts. Additionally, the British felt that the colonists owed them money for the French and Indian War, so they demanded repayment. Over time, the colonists had begun rebelling against the laws that the British tried to enforce. As a result, the British wanted to punish the colonists for not following orders.

The British passed the Intolerable Acts in order to punish the colonists. The British also hoped that the acts would cut the Boston colonists off from the other colonies. They wanted to prevent the colonists from joining together. The British did not think that any other American colonies would help the Bostonians. Before the Intolerable Acts were passed, the colonists from different areas didn't work together. They all functioned separately.

Colonists' Response

The British were wrong about how the other colonists would respond to the Coercive Acts in Boston. The acts ended up bringing all of the colonists together. Other colonists near Massachusetts felt sorry for the Bostonians. Leaders in Virginia called a meeting of all colonies. They wanted to help the Massachusetts Colony.

The meeting of colonists became known as the First Continental Congress. In September 1774, twelve colonies formed the Committees of Correspondence. They came up with ideas to solve the British problem. During the first meeting, Congress decided to boycott all trade with the British and send a petition to the king. To get ready for the king's response, Congress warned the colonists to arm themselves. They began organizing an army. The Continental Congress agreed to meet again in May of the next year.

