**PBS, Revolutionary War, Episode 1, Notes**

**1. What were the two points of view of the Stamp Act?**

The British thought that the tax was really mild, and it compensated the English tax payers who had paid for the French and Indian War, a war that won territory from the French in order to benefit the English colonists. The colonial protests and mob violence were seen as childish and ungrateful.

Prior to the Stamp Act, the colonists were usually only taxed by their local government, a local government in which they had representation. This Stamp Act was a mandate from the British Parliament in which the colonists had no representation (No colonialists served on Parliament.). Furthermore, the aristocrats of England did not pay taxes; so, the colonial elite saw their status as judged below the English aristocrats. They did not like that. Hence, the Stamp Act was insulting to the pride of the colonists who considered paying taxes to Parliament a form of servitude comparable to the servitude of African slaves to the colonists.

**2. What was the social hierarchy of the colonies and Britain like?**

The British elite and aristocracy were the highest in the social scale. (Within each of these levels, women and children are lower in the hierarchy.)

Next in the hierarchy was the elite of the colonies.

Next was the merchant and educated classes of England and then the colonies.

Common people, the laborers, the poor.

Indentured Servants.

Slaves.

**3. Who was Thomas Hutchinson?**

He was the Chief Justice of Massachusetts when the Stamp Act passed. The colonial reaction to the tax was intense. Hutchinson was against the Stamp Act, but he believed in upholding the law. Because he was a government official in charge of upholding the collection of taxes, a mob attacked his house and all of his belongings.

**4. What happened after the Stamp Act?**

The Stamp Act was repealed in 1766. However, England then passed the Declaratory Acts stating that Britain had a right to pass laws on the colonies. As a result, they issued new taxes on manufactured goods from England. This led to a boycott of goods manufactured in England (paint, window panes, tea).

Committees of Correspondence were groups in the colonial towns that spread petitions and letters supporting the boycotts. Committees gathered in town meetings to express their points of view. The British elite thought that these meetings of free expression and dissent were dangerous, not to mention shocking.

One Massachusetts colonialist, Samuel Adams, became a leader of the boycotts and of the protests (mobs) (Bill O’Riley’s *Patriots and Lies*). He even became a smuggler of manufactured goods from Holland and France. He was part of the Sons of Liberty. He stated that colonists should “fight for liberties.”

Protests, or mobs of men, were organized to protest the taxes. They would harass and intimidate people who did not support the boycotts. They might tar and feather a person or burn an effigy (a life-size doll of a person) of a person.

Thomas Hutchinson was so alarmed that the colonies would be reduced to anarchy, lack of government, that he wrote a member of Parliament a letter stating that an “external power” was needed to enforce “firm measures” that may limit the liberties of the colonies.

**5. What drove Benjamin Franklin to leave England?**

Franklin got hold of Hutchinson’s letter in 1772 (By this time, Hutchinson is the Royal Governor of Massachusetts.). This was after the Boston Massacre of 1770 when 5 Bostonian men were killed by English soldiers in front of the state house. Tensions were high. Franklin decided to send Hutchinson’s letter to the Sons of Liberty. He hoped that the colonists would vent their anger out on Hutchinson, thereby lessening their anger toward Parliament. However, the letter infuriated the colonists. They sent a letter to Parliament demanding Hutchinson step down. Parliament did not act immediately.

In the meantime in 1773, England was trying to help the East India Tea Company. The company was in debt, and many of the shareholders were aristocrats who had influence with Parliament. One way to help the company make money was to allow only the East India Tea Company the ability to sell the tea directly to the customers. Before this, colonial stores bought tea from British sellers and from smugglers. They were no longer allowed to do this. This gave the East India Tea Company a monopoly on the market. England didn’t think this was a bad thing. They reduced the price of the tea so as to encourage the colonists to buy it. However, the colonists were upset with this.

Alongside this, there was a small tax on the tea, 3 pennies a pound. This was the only tax that Parliament kept in action after repealing most of the other taxes that followed the Declaratory Act. The Tea Tax was kept in order to make sure the colonialists knew who was really in charge: Parliament (*The Tea Act*. Boston Tea Party Ship.).

When the East India Tea ships came to town, towns like Philadelphia and New York decided to send the tea back to England; they did not pay the tax. The Sons of Liberty wanted to do the same thing. Thomas Hutchinson decided to not do anything; he left the tea on the ships until the colonists changed their mind. Samuel Adams led the Sons of Liberty aboard to dump the tea. This symbolic act infuriated London.

Finally, on 1/29/1774, Parliament met to decide on the petition for Thomas Hutchinson to step down. Rather than agreeing to this, Parliament derided Benjamin Franklin as being the real “incendiary” force, the real trouble-maker. Franklin was lectured for steeling the letters of an honorable man (Hutchinson); Hutchinson, after all, was confiding his worries to Parliament. Hutchinson did nothing wrote. Franklin, on the other hand, was wrong for sending the letters to the Sons of Liberty. Franklin was humiliated by this denouncement of his character. He wrote, “I am too much an American.” After that event, Franklin was in danger of being jailed for having supposedly stolen the letter. So, Franklin decided to leave England, a moment of great sorrow for him.

**6. Why did Parliament sent warships to the port of Boston and instill martial, or military, law, a suspension or stoppage of local governing?**

The Sons of Liberty had gone too far with the Boston Tea Party. Their behavior was becoming dangerous and treasonous. Thomas Hutchinson as Royal Governor asked for support, and now the Parliament was responding to that call.