Background Essay

What Title Will You Take: Loyalist or Patriot?

The British have found victory against the French declaring the Ohio River Valley theirs. The costliness of battle has left British **Parliament** to begin excising taxes against the Colonists stating that the battle was fought for their lands. Previous to this time Colonists have been governing and taxing themselves and the British have paid them no mind.

England’s first serious enforcement of taxes came with the **Stamp Act** which put a tax on legal documents and newspapers. Instead of adding the tax into the total of your purchase you paid the tax directly. This caused great notice among the Colonists and led to the Stamp Act Congress. This group organized a **boycott** of British goods and petitioned King George III leading to a repeal of this tax, but only more problems would follow.



The cry resounded, “No taxation without representation.” In truth the Colonists did not want a representative at Parliament knowing they would still be outvoted in any of these matters. Colonists organized into groups such as the **Sons/Daughters of Liberty** to boycott and protest. But is this not treason? One onlooker thought so and shouted it at Patrick Henry during one of his speeches at an assembly, but Mr. Henry only replied, “If this be treason, make the most of it.”

Recently things have reached a desperate state. The **Tea Act** which was not a tax, but gave the British East India Company a **monopoly**, exclusive rights, to tea sales in our colonies. This further angered many and led to what they are calling the **Boston Tea Party**. Sons of Liberty boarded a ship in Boston and threw the English tea overboard.

Parliament answered this defiance with the **Coercive Acts**, called by colonists the **Intolerable Acts**. Boston harbor was closed. Parliament took away Massachusetts’s self-governance away. British Parliament determined to force, or as they said “coerce,” the colonists into paying for the ruined tea and recognizing that they had the right to make and exercise these taxes as they saw fit.

The colonists continued to organize and plan. **Committees of Correspondence** formed to help communicate what was occurring to others in neighboring areas. Representatives of the colonies met together in what they called a **Continental Congress**. They determined to petition the King and boycotted any trade with Great Britain. Knowing what was stirring they encouraged colonists to be armed and ready.

All around you the beginnings of a battle are readying themselves. Some colonists have pledged their allegiance to England calling themselves **Loyalists**. Others adamant that we must have independence from the mother country are calling themselves **Patriots**. Patrick Henry said, “The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave.” You must decide. Will you call yourself Patriot or will you stay loyal to the crown?

