

# Revolutionary Tea Parties

## Why Was Everyone So Angry?

There may be no single explanation as to why protests about tea were so intense in the months leading to the American Revolution. Even the scholars disagree. Here are some examples:

▲ They [Boston radicals] took this step because they feared that if the tea were landed, colonists would actually comply with the tax and purchase the tea. Adams and his band of radicals doubted their countrymen's commitment to principle.

—United States Information Agency's Outline of American History  
([http://odur.let.rug.nl/usanew/H/1994/ch3\\_p6.htm](http://odur.let.rug.nl/usanew/H/1994/ch3_p6.htm))

▲ By reducing the tax on imported British tea, this act gave British merchants an unfair advantage in selling their tea in America. American colonists condemned the act, and many planned to boycott tea.

—American Memory (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/bdsds/timeline.html>)

▲ Particularly important to the movement were the activities of colonial women, who were one of the principal consumers of tea and now became the leaders of the effort to boycott.

—From Revolution to Reconstruction (<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/E/teaparty/bostonxx.htm>)

▲ The Tea Act, passed by the House of Commons on April 27, 1773, was regarded in America as a strategy to induce the colonists, by lowering the price of tea, to consume more of it and therefore acknowledge the principle of British taxation.

—Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/british/brit-2.html>)

Below, find these and some other possible reasons why many colonists protested so strongly against the importation of British tea. Rate the hypotheses from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most important motivation for protestors, in your opinion.

\_\_\_\_\_ To support American merchants threatened by the East India Tea Company's monopoly.

\_\_\_\_\_ To object to the hidden tax remaining within the reduced price of tea.

- \_\_\_\_\_ To stand with colonial women who strongly supported the boycott of tea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To protest taxation without representation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To voice strong objections to what they saw as a scheme to get colonists to consume more tea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To foment revolution among average colonists, who might otherwise never rebel, along with radical politicians, against Britain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To avoid paying taxes to a British Empire already benefiting greatly from American importation of British imported goods.

Would you add any other reasons? How would you formulate an explanation about why some people were so angry about tea?