The Sons of Liberty — Patriots or Terrorists?

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the Sons of Liberty a difficult group to describe?
   We have a limited amount of information about them, and some of the information conflicts. We do not know exactly when and where the group started, who the members were, or even what groups they represented. They kept limited records of their operations. In addition, since we are sympathetic to the cause of the American Revolution, we tend to look at them in a positive way, even though they may have used some questionable tactics.

2. Since the Sons of Liberty supposedly did not kill anyone, does that mean they were not terrorists?
   Not necessarily, terrorism can be as much about the fear of what the terrorist might do as what he actually does.

3. What tactics did the Sons of Liberty use to resist British taxes before the American Revolution?
   They organized resistance to British tax laws, enforced boycotts of British trade, and intimidated people selected to collect British taxes. Sometimes they used verbal threats, destruction of property, physical injury, and other political and non-violent ways to protest, including publishing newspaper articles arguing against British policies.

4. Based on the definitions of patriotism and terrorism in the reading and the information presented on the Sons of Liberty, explain whether you think they were terrorists, or not.
   Answers will vary, but must include reasons to support the opinion.