

Conflict Resolution and United States History:

Could the American Revolution have been Avoided?

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A ROYAL PROCLAMATION

October 7, 1763

WHEREAS we have taken into Our Royal Consideration the extensive and valuable Acquisitions in America, secured to our Crown by the late Definitive Treaty of Peace, concluded at Paris the 10th Day of February last; and being desirous that all Our loving Subjects, as well of our Kingdom as of our Colonies in America, may avail themselves with all convenient Speed, of the great Benefits and Advantages which must accrue therefrom to their Commerce, Manufactures, and Navigation, We have thought fit, with the Advice of our Privy Council, to issue this our Royal Proclamation, hereby to publish and declare to all our loving Subjects, that we have, with the Advice of our Said Privy Council, granted our Letters Patent, under our Great Seal of Great Britain, to erect, within the Countries and Islands ceded and confirmed to Us by the said Treaty, Four distinct and separate Governments, styled and called by the names of Quebec, East Florida, West Florida and Grenada, and limited and bounded as follows, viz.

First — The Government of Quebec bounded on the Labrador Coast by the River St. John, and from thence by a Line drawn from the Head of that River through the Lake St. John, to the South end of the Lake Nipissing; from whence the said Line, crossing the River St. Lawrence, and the Lake Champlain, in 45 Degrees of North Latitude, passes along the High Lands which divide the Rivers that empty themselves into the said River St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Sea; and also along the North Coast of the Baye des Châteaus, and the Coast of the Gulph of St. Lawrence to Cape Rosières, and from thence crossing the Mouth of the River St. Lawrence by the West End of the Island of Anticosti, terminates at the aforesaid River of St. John.

Secondly — The Government of East Florida, bounded to the Westward by the Gulph of Mexico and the Apalachicola River; to the Northward by a Line drawn from that part of the said River where the Chatahouchee and Flint Rivers meet, to the source of St. Mary's River, and by the course of the said River to the Atlantic Ocean; and to the Eastward and Southward by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulph of Florida, including all Islands within Six Leagues of the Sea Coast.

Thirdly — The Government of West Florida, bounded to the Southward by the Gulph of Mexico, including all Islands within Six Leagues of the Coast; from the River Apalachicola to Lake Pontchartrain; to the Westward by the said Lake, the Lake Maurepas, and the River Mississippi; to the Northward by a Line drawn due East from that part of the River Mississippi which lies in 31 Degrees North Latitude, to the River Apalachicola or Chatahouchee; and to the Eastward by the said River.

Fourthly — The Government of Grenada, comprehending the Island of that name, together with the Grenadines, and the Islands of Dominico, St. Vincent's and Tobago. And to the end that the open and free Fishery of our Subjects may be extended to and carried on upon the Coast of Labrador, and the adjacent Islands. We have thought fit, with the advice of our said Privy Council to put all that Coast, from the River St. John's to Hudson's Streights, together with the Islands of Anticosti and Madelaine, and all other smaller Islands lying upon the said Coast, under the care and Inspection of our Governor of Newfoundland.

We have also, with the advice of our Privy Council, thought fit to annex the Islands of St. John's [now known as Prince Edward Island] and Cape Breton, or Isle Royale, with the lesser Islands adjacent thereto, to our Government of Nova Scotia. We have also, with the advice of our Privy Council aforesaid, annexed to our Province of Georgia all the Lands lying between the Rivers Altamaha and St. Mary's.

And whereas it will greatly contribute to the speedy settling of our said new Governments, that our loving Subjects should be informed of our Paternal care, for the security of the Liberties and Properties of those who are and shall become Inhabitants thereof, We have thought fit to publish and declare, by this Our Proclamation, that We have, in the Letters Patent under our Great Seal of Great Britain, by which the said Governments are constituted, given express Power and Direction to our Governors of our Said Colonies respectively, that so soon as the state and circumstances of the said Colonies will admit thereof, they shall, with the Advice and Consent of the Members of our Council, summon and call General Assemblies within the said Governments respectively, in such Manner and Form as is used and directed in those Colonies and Provinces in America which are under our immediate Government: And We have also given Power to the said Governors, with the consent of our Said Councils, and the Representatives of the People so to be summoned as aforesaid, to make, constitute, and ordain Laws, Statutes, and Ordinances for the Public Peace, Welfare, and good Government of our said Colonies, and of the People and Inhabitants thereof, as near as may be agreeable to the Laws of England, and under such Regulations and Restrictions as are used in other Colonies; and in the mean Time, and until such Assemblies can be called as aforesaid, all Persons Inhabiting in or resorting to our Said Colonies may confide in our Royal Protection for the Enjoyment of the Benefit of the Laws of our Realm of England; for which Purpose We have given Power under our Great Seal to the Governors of our said Colonies respectively to erect and constitute, with the Advice of our said Councils respectively, Courts of Judicature and public Justice within our Said Colonies for hearing and determining all Causes, as well Criminal as Civil, according to Law and Equity, and as near as may be agreeable to the Laws of England, with Liberty to all Persons who may think themselves aggrieved by the Sentences of such Courts, in all Civil Cases, to appeal, under the usual Limitations and Restrictions, to Us in our Privy Council.

We have also thought fit, with the advice of our Privy Council as aforesaid, to give unto the Governors and Councils of our said Three new Colonies upon the Continent, full Power and Authority to settle and agree with the Inhabitants of our said new Colonies or with any other Persons who shall resort thereto, for such Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments, as are now or hereafter shall be in our Power to dispose of; and them to grant to any such Person or Persons upon such Terms, and under such moderate Quit-Rents, Services and Acknowledgments, as have been appointed and settled in our other Colonies, and under such other Conditions as shall appear to us to be necessary and expedient for the Advantage of the Grantees, and the Improvement and settlement of our said Colonies.

And Whereas, We are desirous, upon all occasions, to testify our Royal Sense and Approbation of the Conduct and bravery of the Officers and Soldiers of our Armies, and to reward the same, We do hereby command and empower our Governors of our said Three new Colonies, and all other our Governors of our several Provinces on the Continent of North America, to grant without Fee or Reward, to such reduced Officers as have served in North America during the late War, and to such Private Soldiers as have been or shall be disbanded in America, and are actually residing there, and shall personally apply for the same, the following Quantities of Lands, subject, at the Expiration of Ten Years, to the same Quit-Rents as other Lands are subject to in the Province within which they are granted, as also subject to the same Conditions of Cultivation and Improvement; viz.

To every Person having the Rank of a Field Officer—5,000 Acres.

To every Captain—3,000 Acres.
To every Subaltern or Staff Officer—2,000 Acres.
To every Non-Commission Officer—200 Acres.
To every Private Man—50 Acres.

We do likewise authorize and require the Governors and Commanders in Chief of all our said Colonies upon the Continent of North America to grant the like Quantities of Land, and upon the same conditions, to such reduced Officers of our Navy of like Rank as served on board our Ships of War in North America at the times of the Reduction of Louisbourg and Quebec in the late War, and who shall personally apply to our respective Governors for such Grants.

And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds —We do therefore, with the Advice of our Privy Council, declare it to be our Royal Will and Pleasure, that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of our Colonies of Quebec, East Florida, or West Florida, do presume, upon any Pretence whatever, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass any Patents for Lands beyond the Bounds of their respective Governments, as described in their Commissions: as also that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of our other Colonies or Plantations in America do presume for the present, and until our further Pleasure be known, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass Patents for any Lands beyond the Heads or Sources of any of the Rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the West and North West, or upon any Lands whatever, which, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us as aforesaid, are reserved to the said Indians, or any of them.

And We do further declare it to be Our Royal Will and Pleasure, for the present as aforesaid, to reserve under our Sovereignty, Protection, and Dominion, for the use of the said Indians, all the Lands and Territories not included within the Limits of Our said Three new Governments, or within the Limits of the Territory granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, as also all the Lands and Territories lying to the Westward of the Sources of the Rivers which fall into the Sea from the West and North West as aforesaid.

And We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our Displeasure, all our loving Subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands above reserved, without our especial leave and Licence for that Purpose first obtained.

And We do further strictly enjoin and require all Persons whatever who have either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any Lands within the Countries above described or upon any other Lands which, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are still reserved to the said Indians as aforesaid, forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements.

And whereas great Frauds and Abuses have been committed in purchasing Lands of the Indians, to the great Prejudice of our Interests, and to the great Dissatisfaction of the said Indians: In order, therefore, to prevent such Irregularities for the future, and to the end that the Indians may be convinced of our Justice and determined Resolution to remove all reasonable Cause of Discontent, We do, with the Advice of our Privy Council strictly enjoin and require, that no private Person do presume to make any purchase from the said Indians of any Lands reserved to the said Indians, within those parts of our Colonies where We have thought proper to allow Settlement: but that, if at any Time any of the Said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be Purchased only for Us, in our Name, at some public Meeting

or Assembly of the said Indians, to be held for that Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief of our Colony respectively within which they shall lie: and in case they shall lie within the limits of any Proprietary Government, they shall be purchased only for the Use and in the name of such Proprietaries, conformable to such Directions and Instructions as We or they shall think proper to give for that Purpose: And we do, by the Advice of our Privy Council, declare and enjoin, that the Trade with the said Indians shall be free and open to all our Subjects whatever, provided that every Person who may incline to Trade with the said Indians do take out a Licence for carrying on such Trade from the Governor or Commander in Chief of any of our Colonies respectively where such Person shall reside, and also give Security to observe such Regulations as We shall at any Time think fit, by ourselves or by our Commissaries to be appointed for this Purpose, to direct and appoint for the Benefit of the said Trade:

And we do hereby authorize, enjoin, and require the Governors and Commanders in Chief of all our Colonies respectively, as well those under Our immediate Government as those under the Government and Direction of Proprietaries, to grant such Licences without Fee or Reward, taking especial Care to insert therein a Condition, that such Licence shall be void, and the Security forfeited in case the Person to whom the same is granted shall refuse or neglect to observe such Regulations as We shall think proper to prescribe as aforesaid.

And we do further expressly conjoin and require all Officers whatever, as well Military as those Employed in the Management and Direction of Indian Affairs, within the Territories reserved as aforesaid for the use of the said Indians, to seize and apprehend all Persons whatever, who standing charged with Treason, Misprisions of Treason, Murders, or other Felonies or Misdemeanors, shall fly from Justice and take Refuge in the said Territory, and to send them under a proper guard to the Colony where the Crime was committed, of which they stand accused, in order to take their Trial for the same.

Given at our Court at St. James's the 7th Day of October 1763, in the Third Year of our Reign.

God Save the King

Source: The Avalon Project, Yale Law School

The Declaration of Rights of the Stamp Act Congress

OCTOBER 19, 1765

Saturday, Oct. 19th, 1765, A.M. -- The congress met according to adjournment, and resumed, etc., as yesterday; and upon mature deliberation, agreed to the following declaration of the rights and grievances of the colonists in America, which were ordered to be inserted.

Declaration of Rights

The members of this congress, sincerely devoted, with the warmest sentiments of affection and duty to His Majesty's person and government, inviolably attached to the present happy establishment of the Protestant succession, and with minds deeply impressed by a sense of the present and impending misfortunes of the British colonies on this continent; having considered as maturely as time would permit, the circumstances of said colonies, esteem it our indispensable duty to make the following declarations, of our humble opinions, respecting the most essential rights and liberties of the colonists, and of the grievances under which they labor, by reason of several late acts of Parliament.

1st. That His Majesty's subjects in these colonies owe the same allegiance to the crown of Great Britain that is owing from his subjects born within the realm, and all due subordination to that august body, the Parliament of Great Britain.

2d. That His Majesty's liege subjects in these colonies are entitled to all the inherent rights and privileges of his natural born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain.

3d. That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted rights of Englishmen, that no taxes should be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives.

4th. That the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot be, represented in the House of Commons in Great Britain.

5th. That the only representatives of the people of these colonies are persons chosen therein, by themselves; and that no taxes ever have been or can be constitutionally imposed on them but by their respective legislatures.

6th. That all supplies to the crown, being free gifts of the people, it is unreasonable and inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the British constitution for the people of Great Britain to grant to His Majesty the property of the colonists.

7th. That trial by jury is the inherent and invaluable right of every British subject in these colonies.

8th. That the late act of Parliament entitled, "An act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, etc.," by imposing

taxes on the inhabitants of these colonies, and the said act, and several other acts, by extending the jurisdiction of the courts of admiralty beyond its ancient limits, have a manifest tendency to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonists.

9th. That the duties imposed by several late acts of Parliament, from the peculiar circumstances of these colonies, will be extremely burthensome and grievous, and, from the scarcity of specie, the payment of them absolutely impracticable.

10th. That as the profits of the trade of these colonies ultimately center in Great Britain, to pay for the manufactures which they are obliged to take from thence, they eventually contribute very largely to all supplies granted there to the crown.

11th. That the restrictions imposed by several late acts of Parliament on the trade of these colonies will render them unable to purchase the manufactures of Great Britain.

12th. That the increase, prosperity, and happiness of these colonies depend on the full and free enjoyment of their rights and liberties, and an intercourse, with Great Britain, mutually affectionate and advantageous.

13th. That it is the right of the British subjects in these colonies to petition the king or either house of Parliament.

Lastly, That it is the indispensable duty of these colonies to the best of sovereigns, to the mother-country, and to themselves, to endeavor, by a loyal and dutiful address to His Majesty, and humble application to both houses of Parliament, to procure the repeal of the act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, of all clauses of any other acts of Parliament whereby the jurisdiction of the admiralty is extended as aforesaid, and of the other late acts for the restriction of the American commerce.

Source: Journal of the First Congress of the American Colonies, in Opposition to the Tyrannical Acts of the British Parliament. Held at New York, October 7, 1765 (New York, 1845), pp. 27-29.

The Declaratory Act 1766

An act for the better securing the dependency of his majesty's dominions in America upon the crown and parliament of Great Britain.

Whereas several of the houses of representatives in his Majesty's colonies and plantations in America, have of late against law, claimed to themselves, or to the general assemblies of the same, the sole and exclusive right of imposing duties and taxes upon his majesty's subjects in the said colonies and plantations; and have in pursuance of such claim, passed certain votes, resolutions, and orders derogatory to the legislative authority of parliament, and inconsistent with the dependency Of the said colonies and plantations upon the crown of Great Britain: may it therefore please your most excellent Majesty, that it may be declared ; and be it declared by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That the said colonies and plantations in America have been, are, and of right ought to be, subordinate unto, and dependent upon the imperial crown and parliament of Great Britain; and that the King's majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled, had, hath, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and people of America, subjects of the crown of Great Britain, in all cases whatsoever,

II. And be it further declared and enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all resolutions, votes, orders, and proceedings, in any of the said colonies or plantations, whereby the power and authority of the parliament of Great Britain, to make laws and statutes as aforesaid, is denied, or drawn into question, and are hereby declared to be, utterly null and void to all in purposes whatsoever.

Source: The Avalon Project, Yale Law School

Document 4:

The Coercive Acts

The Boston Port Act

June 1, 1774

An act to discontinue, in such manner, and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading or shipping, of goods, wares, and merchandise, at the town, and within the harbour, of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in North America.

I. WHEREAS dangerous commotions and insurrections have been fomented and raised in the town of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England, by divers ill-affected persons, to the subversion of his Majesty's government, and to the utter destruction of the publick peace, and good order of the said town; in which commotions and insurrections certain valuable cargoes of teas, being the property of the East India Company, and on board certain vessels lying within the bay or harbour of Boston, were seized and destroyed: And whereas, in the present condition of the said town and harbour, the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot be safely carried on there, nor the customs payable to his Majesty duly collected; and it is therefore expedient that the officers of his Majesty's customs should be forthwith removed from the said town: May it please your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, it shall not be lawful for any person or persons whatsoever to lade put, or cause or procure to be laden or put, off or from any quay, wharf, or other place, within the said town of Boston, or in or upon any part of the shore of the bay, commonly called The Harbour of Boston, between a certain headland or point called Nahant Point, on the eastern side of the entrance into the said bay, and a certain other headland or point called Alderton Point, on the western side of the entrance into the said bay, or in or upon any island, creek, landing place, bank, or other place, within the said bay or headlands, into any ship, vessel, lighter, boat, or bottom, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, to be transported or carried into any other country, province or place whatsoever, or into any other part of the said province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England; or to take up, discharge, or lay on land, or cause or procure to be taken up, discharged, or laid on land, within the said town, or in or upon any of the places aforesaid, out of any boat, lighter, ship, vessel, or bottom, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, to be brought from any other country, province, or place, or any other part of the said province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, upon pain of the forfeiture of the said goods, wares, and merchandise, and of the said boat, lighter, ship, or vessel or other bottom into which the same shall be taken, and of the guns, ammunition, tackle, furniture, and stores, in or belonging to the same: And if any such goods, wares, or merchandise, shall, within the said town, or in any the places aforesaid, be laden or taken in from the shore into any barge, hoy, lighter, wherry, or boat, to be carried on board any ship or vessel coming in and arriving from any other country or province, or other part of the said province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, such barge, hoy, lighter, wherry, or boat, shall be forfeited and lost.

The Quartering Act

June 2, 1774

An act for the better providing suitable quarters for officers and soldiers in his Majesty's service in North America.

WHEREAS doubts have been entertained, whether troops can be quartered otherwise than in barracks, in case barracks have been provided sufficient for the quartering of all officers and soldiers within any town, township, city, district, or place, within his Majesty's dominions in North America: And whereas it may frequently happen, from the situation of such barracks, that, if troops should be quartered therein, they would not be stationed where their presence may be necessary and required: be it therefore enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That, in such cases, it shall and may be lawful for the persons who now are, or may be hereafter, authorised by law, in any of the provinces within his Majesty's dominions in North America, and they are hereby respectively authorised, empowered, and directed, on the requisition of the officer who, for the time being, has the command of his Majesty's forces in North America, to cause any officers or soldiers in his Majesty's service to be quartered and billeted in such manner as is now directed by law, where no barracks are provided by the colonies.

II. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if it shall happen at any time that any officers or soldiers in his Majesty's service shall remain within any of the said colonies without quarters, for the space of twenty-four hours after such quarters shall have been demanded, it shall and may be lawful for the governor of the province to order and direct such and so many uninhabited houses, out-houses, barns, or other buildings, as he shall think necessary to be taken, (making a reasonable allowance for the same), and make fit for the reception of such officers and soldiers, and to put and quarter such officers and soldiers therein, for such time as he shall think proper.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That this act, and every thing herein contained, shall continue and be in force, in all his Majesty's dominions in North America, until the twenty-fourth day of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

The Administration of Justice Act

May 20, 1774

CAP. XXXIX.

An act for the impartial administration of justice in the cases of persons questioned for any acts done by them in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults, in the province of the Massachusetts's Bay, in New England.

WHEREAS in his Majesty's province of Massachusetts's Bay, in New England, an attempt hath lately been made to throw off the authority of the parliament of Great Britain over the said province, and an actual and avowed resistance, by open force, to the execution of certain acts of parliament, hath been suffered to take place, uncontrolled and unpunished, in defiance of his Majesty's authority, and to the subversion of all lawful government whereas, in the present disordered state of the said province, it is of the utmost importance to the general welfare thereof, and to the re-establishment of lawful authority throughout the same, that neither the magistrates acting in support of the laws, nor any of his Majesty's subjects aiding and assisting them therein, or in the suppression of riots and tumults, raised in opposition to the execution of the laws and statutes of this realm, should be discouraged from the proper discharge of their duty, by an apprehension, that in case of their being questioned for any acts done therein, they may be liable to be brought to trial for the same before persons who do not acknowledge the validity of the laws, in the execution thereof, or the authority of the magistrate in the support of whom, such acts had been done: in

order therefore to remove every such discouragement from the minds of his Majesty's subjects, and to induce them, upon all proper occasions, to exert themselves in support of the public peace of the provinces, and of the authority of the King and parliament of Great Britain over the same; be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That if any inquisition or indictment shall be found, or if any appeal shall be sued or preferred against any person, for murder, or other capital offence, in the province Of the Massachusetts's Bay, and it shall appear, by information given upon oath to the governor, or, in his absence, to the lieutenant-governor of the said province, that the fact was committed by the person against whom such inquisition or indictment shall be found, or against whom such appeal shall be sued or preferred, as aforesaid, either in the execution of his duty as a magistrate, for the suppression of riots, or in the support of the laws of revenue, or in acting in his duty as an officer of revenue, or in acting under the direction and order of any magistrate, for the suppression of riots, or for the carrying into effect the laws of revenue, or in aiding and assisting in any of the cases aforesaid: and if it shall also appear, to the satisfaction of the said governor, or lieutenant-governor respectively, that an indifferent trial cannot be had within the said province, in that case, it shall and may be lawful for the governor, or lieutenant-governor, to direct, with the advice and consent of the council, that the inquisition, indictment, or appeal, shall be tried in some other of his Majesty's colonies, or in Great Britain; and for that purpose, to order. the person against whom such inquisition or indictment shall be found, or against whom such appeal shall be sued or preferred, as aforesaid, to be sent, under sufficient custody, to the place appointed for his trial, or to admit such person to bail, taking a recognizance, (which the said governor, or, in his absence, the lieutenant-governor, is hereby authorized to take), from such person, with sufficient sureries, to be approved of by the said governor, or, in his absence, the lieutenant-governor, in such sums of money as the said governor or, in his absence, the lieutenant-governor, shall deem reasonable for the personal appearance of such person, if the trial shall be appointed to be had in any other colony, before the governor, or lieutenant-governor, or commander in chief of such colony; and if the trial shall be appointed to be had in Great Britain, then before his Majesty's court of King's Bench, at a time to be mentioned in such recognizances; and the governor, or lieutenant-governor, or commander in chief of the colony where such trial shall be appointed to be had, or court of King's Bench, where the trial is appointed to be had in Great Britain, upon the appearance of such person, according to such recognizance, or in custody, shall either commit such person, or admit him to bail, until such trial; and which the said governor, or lieutenant-governor, or commander in chief, and court of King's Bench, are hereby authorized and empowered to do.

II. And, to prevent a failure of justice, from the want of evidence on the trial of any such inquisition, indictment or appeal, be it further enacted, That the governor, or, in his absence, the lieutenant-governor, shall, and he is hereby authorized and required, to bind in recognizances to his Majesty all such witnesses as the prosecutor or person against whom such inquisition or indictment shall be found, or appeal sued or preferred, shall desire to attend the trial of the said inquisition, indictment, or appeal, for their personal appearance , at the time and place of such trial, to give evidence: and the said governor, or in his absence, the lieutenant-governor, shall thereupon appoint a reasonable sum to be allowed for the expenses of every such witness, and shall thereupon give to each witness a certificate, in writing, under his hand and seal, that such witness has entered into a recognizance to give evidence, and specifying the sum allowed for his expenses and the collector and collectors of the customs, or one of them, within the said province, upon the delivery of such certificate, are, and is hereby authorized and required, forthwith to pay to such witness the sum specified therein for his expenses.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all prosecutors and witnesses, who shall be under recognizances to appear in any of his Majesty's colonies in America, or in Great Britain, in pursuance

of this art, shall be free from all arrests and restraints, in any action or suit to be commenced against them during their going to such colony, or coming to Great Britain, and their necessary stay and abiding there, on occasion of such prosecution, and returning again to the said province of the Massachusetts's Bay.

IV. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all and every his Majesty's, justices of the peace, and other justices and coroners, before whom any person shall be brought, charged with murder, or other capital crime, where it shall appear by proof, on oath, to such justices or coroners, that the fact was committed by such person, either in the execution of his duty as a magistrate, for the suppression of riots, or in the support of the laws of revenue, or in acting in his duty as an officer of revenue, or in acting under the direction and order of any magistrate, for the suppression of riots, or for the carrying into effect the laws of revenue, or in aiding and assisting in any of the cases aforesaid, are hereby authorized and required to admit every such person to brought before him or them, as aforesaid, to bail; any law, custom, or usage, to the contrary thereof in any-wise notwithstanding.

V. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That where it shall be made appear to the judges or justices of any court, within the said province of Massachusetts's Bay, by any person, against whom any inquisition or indictment shall be found, or appeal sued or preferred for murder, or other capital crime, that the fact was committed by such person, either in the execution of his duty as a magistrate, for the suppression of riots, or in the support of the laws of revenue, or in acting in his duty as an officer of revenue, or in acting under the direction and order of any magistrate, for the suppression of riots, or for the carrying into effect the laws of revenue, or in aiding and assisting in any of the cases aforesaid, and that he intends to make application to the governor, or lieutenant-governor of the said province, that such inquisition, indictment, or appeal, may be tried in some other of his Majesty's colonies, or in Great Britain, the said judges or justices are hereby authorized and required to adjourn or postpone the trial of such inquisition, indictment, or appeal, for a reasonable time, and admit the person to bail, in order that he may make application to the governor, or lieutenant-governor, for the purpose aforesaid.

The Massachusetts Government Act

May 20, 1774

An act for the better regulating the government of the province of the Massachusetts's Bay, in New England.

WHEREAS by letters patent under the great seal of England, made in the third year of the reign of their late majesties King William and Queen Mary, for uniting, erecting, and incorporating, the several colonies, territories, and tracts of land therein mentioned, into one real province, by the name of Their Majesties Province of the Massachusetts's Bay, in New England; whereby it was, amongst other things, ordained and established, That the governor of the said province should, from thenceforth, be appointed and commissioned by their Majesties, their heirs and successors: It was, however, granted and ordained, That, from the expiration of the term for and during which the eight and twenty persons named in the said letters patent were appointed to be the first counselors or assistants to the governor of the said province for the time being, the aforesaid number of eight and twenty counselors or assistants should yearly, once in every year, for ever thereafter, be, by the general court or assembly, newly chosen: And whereas the said method of electing such counselors or assistants, to be vested with the several powers, authorities, and privileges, therein mentioned, although conformable to the practice theretofore used in such of the colonies thereby united, in which the appointment of the respective governors had been vested in the general courts

or assemblies of the said colonies, hath, by repeated experience, been found to be extremely ill adapted to the plan of government established in the province of the Massachusetts's Bay, by the said letters patent herein-before mentioned, and hath been so far from contributing to the attainment of the good ends and purposes thereby intended, and to the promoting of the internal welfare, peace, and good government of the said province, or to the maintenance of the just subordination to, and conformity with, the laws of Great Britain, that the manner of exercising the powers, authorities, and privileges aforesaid, by the persons so annually elected, hath, for some time past, been such as had the most manifest tendency to obstruct, and, in great measure, defeat, the execution of the laws; to weaken and, in great measure, defeat, the execution of the laws; to weaken the attachment of his Majesty's well-disposed subjects in the said province to his Majesty's government, and to encourage the ill-disposed among them to proceed even to acts of direct resistance to, and defiance of, his Majesty's authority; And it hath accordingly happened that an open resistance to the execution of the laws hath actually taken place in the town of Boston, and the neighborhood thereof, within the said province: And whereas it is, under these circumstances, become absolutely necessary, in order to the preservation of the peace and good order of the said province, the protection of his Majesty's well-disposed subjects therein resident, the continuance of the mutual benefits arising from the commerce and correspondence between this kingdom and the said province, and the maintaining of the just dependence of the said province upon the crown and parliament of Great Britain, that the said method of annually electing the counselors or assistants of the said province should no longer be suffered to continue but that the appointment of the said counselors or assistants should henceforth be put upon the like footing as is established in such other of his Majesty's colonies or plantations in America, the governors whereof are appointed by his Majesty's commission, under the great seal of Great Britain: Be it therefore enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of August, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, so much of the charter, granted by their majesties King William and Queen Mary to the inhabitants of the said province of the Massachusetts's Bay, in New England, and all and every clause, matter, and thing, therein contained, which relates to the time and manner of electing the assistants or counselors for the said province, be revoked, and is hereby revoked and made void and of none effect; and that the offices of all counselors and assistants, elected and appointed in pursuance thereof, shall from thenceforth cease and determine: And that, from and after the said first day of August, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, the council, or court of assistants of the said province for the time being, shall be composed of such of the inhabitants or proprietors of lands within the same as shall be thereunto nominated and appointed by his Majesty, his heirs and successors, from time to time, by warrant under his or their signet or sign manual, and with the advice of the privy council, agreeable to the practice now used in respect to the appointment of counselors in such of his Majesty's other colonies in America, the governors whereof are appointed by commission under the great seal of Great Britain: provided, that the number of the said assistants or counselors shall not, at any one time, exceed thirty-six, nor be less than twelve.

II. And it is hereby further enacted, That the said assistants or counselors, so to be appointed as aforesaid, shall hold their offices respectively, for and during the pleasure of his Majesty, his heirs or successors; and shall have and enjoy all the powers, privileges, and immunities, at present held, exercised, and enjoyed, by the assistants or counselors of the said province, constituted and elected, from time to time, under the said charter, (except as herein-after excepted); and shall also, upon their admission into the said council, and before they enter upon the execution of their offices respectively, take the oaths, and make, repeat, and subscribe, the declarations required, as well by the said charter as by any law or laws of the said province now in force, to be taken by the assistants or counselors who have been so elected and constituted as aforesaid.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That from and after the first day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, it shall and may be lawful for his Majesty's governor for the time being of the said province, or, in his absence, for the lieutenant-governor, to nominate and appoint, under the seal of the province, from time to time, and also to remove, without the consent of the council, all judges of the inferior courts of common pleas, commissioners of Oyer and Terminer, the attorney general, provosts, marshals, justices of the peace, and other officers to the council or courts of justice belonging; and that all judges of the inferior courts of common pleas, commissioners of Oyer and Terminer, the attorney general, provosts, marshals, justices, and other officers so appointed by the governor, or, in his absence, by the lieutenant-governor alone, shall and may have, hold, and exercise, their said offices, powers, and authorities, as fully and completely, to all intents and purposes, as any judges of the inferior courts of common pleas, commissioners of Oyer and Terminer, attorney general, provosts, marshals, or other officers, have or might have done heretofore under the said letters patent, in the third year of the reign of their late majesties King William and Queen Mary; any law, statute, or usage, to the contrary notwithstanding.

IV. Provided always, and be it enacted, That nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to annul or make void the commission granted before the said first day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, to any judges of the inferior courts of common pleas, commissioners of Oyer and Terminer, the attorney general, provosts, marshals, justices of the peace, or other officers; but that they may hold and exercise the same, as if this act had never been made, until the same shall be determined by death, removal by the governor, or other avoidance, as the case may happen.

V. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That, from and after the said first day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, it shall and may be lawful for his Majesty's governor, or, in his absence, for the lieutenant-governor for the time being of the said province, from time to time, to nominate and appoint the sheriffs without the consent of the council, and to remove such sheriffs with such consent, and not otherwise.

VI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That, upon every vacancy of the officers of chief justice and judges of the superior court of the said province, from and after the said first day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, the governor for the time being, or, in his absence, the lieutenant-governor, without the consent of the council, shall have full power and authority to nominate and appoint the persons to succeed to the said offices; who shall hold their commissions during the pleasure of his Majesty, his heirs and successors; and that neither the chief justice or judges appointed before the said first day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, nor those who shall hereafter be appointed pursuant to this act, shall be removed, unless by the order of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, under his or their sign manual.

VII. And whereas, by several acts of the general court, which have been from time to time enacted and passed within the said province, the freeholders and inhabitants of the several townships, districts, and precincts, qualified, as is therein expressed, are authorized to assemble together, annually, or occasionally, upon notice given, in such manner as the said acts direct, for the choice of select men, constables, and other officers, and for the making and agreeing upon such necessary rules, orders, and bye laws, for the directing, managing, and ordering, the prudential affairs of such townships, districts, and precincts, and for other purposes: and whereas a great abuse has been made of the power of calling such meetings, and the inhabitants have, contrary to the design of their institution, been misled to treat upon matters of the most general concern, and to pass many dangerous and unwarrantable resolves: for remedy whereof, be it enacted, That from and after the said first day of August, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four,

no meeting shall be called by the select men, or at the request of any number of freeholders of any township, district, or precinct, without the leave of the governor, or, in his absence, of the lieutenant-governor, in writing, expressing the special business of the said meeting, first had and obtained, except the annual meeting in the months of March or May, for the choice of select men, constables, and other officers, or except for the choice of persons to fill up the offices aforesaid, on the death or removal of any of the persons first elected to such offices, and also, except any meeting for the election of a representative or representatives in the general court; and that no other matter shall be treated of at such meetings, except the election of their aforesaid officers or representatives, nor at any other meeting, except the business expressed in the leave given by the governor, or, in his absence, by the lieutenant-governor.

VIII. And whereas the method at present used in the province of Massachusetts's Bay in America, of electing persons to serve on grand juries, and other juries, by the freeholders and inhabitants of the several towns, affords occasion for many evil practices, and tends to pervert the free and impartial administration of justice: for remedy whereof, be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That, from and after the respective times appointed for the holding of the general sessions of the peace in the several counties within the said province, next after the month of September, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, the jurors to serve at the superior courts of judicature, courts of assize, general goal delivery, general sessions of the peace, and inferior court of common pleas, in the several counties within the said province, shall not be elected, nominated, or appointed, by the freeholders and inhabitants of the several towns within the said respective counties nor summoned or returned by the constables of the said towns; but that, from thenceforth, the jurors to serve at the superior courts of judicature, courts of assize, general goal delivery, general sessions of the peace, and inferior court of common pleas within the said province, shall be summoned and returned by the sheriffs of the respective counties within the said province; and all writs of Venire Facias, or other process or warrants to be issued for the return of jurors to serve at the said courts, shall be directed to the sheriffs of the said counties respectively, any law, custom, or usage, to the contrary notwithstanding.

IX. Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That wherever the sheriff of any country shall happen to be a party, or interested or related to any party of person interested in any prosecution or suit depending in any of the said courts; that then in such case, the writ of Venire Facias, or other process or warrant for the summoning and return of a jury, for the trial of such prosecution or suit, shall be directed to, and executed by, the coroner of such county; and in case such coroner shall be also a party, or interested in, or related to, the Venire Facias, or other process or warrant, for the summoning and return of a jury for the trial of such prosecution or suit shall be directed to, and executed by, a proper and indifferent person, to be appointed for that purpose by the court wherein such prosecution or suit shall be depending.

X. And that all sheriffs may be the better informed of persons qualified to serve on juries at the superior courts of judicature, courts of assize, general goal delivery, general sessions of the peace, and inferior court of common pleas, within the said province, be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the constables of the respective towns, within the several counties of the said province, shall, at the general sessions of the peace to be holden for each county, next after the month of September in every year, upon the first day of the said sessions, return and deliver to the justices of the peace, in open court, a true list, in writing, of the names and places of abode of all persons within the respective towns for which they serve, or the districts thereof, qualified to serve upon juries, with their titles and additions, between the age of one and twenty years and the age of seventy years; which said justices or any two of them, at the said sessions in the respective counties, shall cause to be delivered a duplicate of the aforesaid lists, by the clerk of the peace of every country, to the sheriffs, or their deputies, within ten days after such session; and cause each

of the said lists to be fairly entered into a book by the clerk of the peace, to be by him provided, and kept for that purpose amongst the records of the said court; and no sheriff shall impanel or return any person or persons to serve upon any grand jury, petit jury, whatsoever, in any of the said courts that shall not be named or mentioned in such list: and, to prevent a failure of justice, through the neglect of constables to make such returns of persons qualified to serve on juries, as in and by this act is directed, the clerks of the peace of the said several counties are hereby required and commanded, twenty days at least next before the month of September, yearly, and every year, to issue forth precepts or warrants, under their respective hands and seals, to the respective constables of the several towns within the said respective counties, requiring them, and every of them, to make such return of persons qualified to serve upon juries as hereby respectively directed; and every constable failing at any time to make and deliver such return to the justices in open court, as aforesaid, shall forfeit and incur the penalty of five pounds sterling to his Majesty, and his successors: to be recovered by bill, plaint, or information, to be prosecuted in any of the courts aforesaid; and, in order that the constables may be the better enabled to make complete lists of all persons qualified to serve on juries, the constables of the several towns shall have free liberty, at all seasonable times, upon request by them made to any officer or officers, who shall have in his or their custody any book or account of rates or taxes on the freeholder or inhabitants within such respective towns, to inspect the same, and take from thence the names of such persons qualified to serve on juries, dwelling within the respective, towns for which such lists are to be given in and returned pursuant to this act; and shall, in the month of September, yearly, and every year, upon two or more Sundays, fix upon the door of the church, chapel, and every other public place of religious worship within their respective precincts, a true and exact list of all such persons intended to be returned to the said general sessions of the peace, as qualified to serve on juries, pursuant to the directions of this act; and leave at the same time a duplicate of such list with the town clerk of the said place, perused by the freeholder and inhabitants thereof, to the end that notice may be given of persons duly qualified who are omitted, or of persons inserted by mistake who ought to be omitted out of such lists; and it shall and may be lawful to and for the justices, at the general sessions of the peace to which the said lists shall be so returned, upon due proof made before them of any person or persons duly qualified to serve on juries being omitted in such lists, or of any person or persons being inserted therein who ought to have been omitted, to order his or their name or names to be inserted or struck out, as the case may require: and in case any constable shall willfully omit, out of such list, any person or persons, whose name or names ought to be inserted, or shall willfully insert any person or persons who ought to be omitted, every constable so offending, shall, for every person so omitted or inserted in such list, contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act, be fined by the said justices, in the said general sessions of the peace, in the sum of forty shillings sterling.

XI. Provided always, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in case default shall at any time hereafter be made, by any constable or constables, to return lists of persons qualified to serve on juries within any of the said towns to the said court of general sessions of the peace; then, and in such case, it shall be lawful for the sheriff of the county, in which such default shall be made, to summon and return to the several courts aforesaid, or any of them, such and so many persons dwelling in such towns, or the districts thereof, qualified to serve on juries, as he shall think fit to serve on juries at such respective courts; any thing herein contained to the contrary thereof in any-wise notwithstanding.

XII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every summons of any person, to serve upon any of the juries at the said courts, or any of them, shall be made by the sheriff, or other person, ten days at the least before the holding of every such court; and in case any jurors, so to be summoned, be absent from the usual place of his habitation at the time of such summons, notice of such summons shall be given, by leaving a note, in writing, under the hand of such sheriff, or person, containing the contents thereof, at the dwelling-house of such juror, with some person inhabiting in the same

XIII. Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in case a sufficient number of persons qualified to serve on juries shall not appear at the said courts, or any of them, to perform the service of grand or petit jurors; that then, and in such case, it shall be lawful for the said court to issue a writ or precept to the sheriff, requiring him to summon a sufficient number of other persons qualified to serve on juries, immediately to appear at such court, to fill up and complete the number of jurors to serve at such court; and such persons are hereby required to appear and serve as jurors at the said courts accordingly.

XIV. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no person who shall serve as a juror, at any of the said courts, shall be liable to serve again as a juror at the same court, or any other of the courts aforesaid, for the space of three years then next following; except upon special juries.

XV. And, in order that sheriffs may be informed of the persons who have served as jurors, it is hereby further enacted by the authority, aforesaid, that every sheriff shall prepare and keep a book, or register, wherein. the names of all such persons who have served as jurors, with their additions and places of abode, and the times when, and the courts in which they served, shall be alphabetically entered and registered; which books or registers shall, from time to time, be delivered over to the succeeding sheriff of the said county; within ten days after he shall enter upon his office; and every juror, who shall attend and serve at any of the courts aforesaid, may at the expiration of the time of holding every such court, upon, application to the sheriff, or his deputy, have a certificate immediately, gratis, from the sheriff, or his deputy, testifying such his attendance and service; which said certificate the said sheriff, or his deputy, is required to give to every such juror.

Source: The Avalon Project, Yale Law School

Document 5:

**Instructions by the Virginia Convention to Their
Delegates in Congress**

August ,1774

It cannot admit of a Doubt but that British Subjects in America are entitled to the same Rights and Privileges as their Fellow Subjects possess in Britain; and therefore, that the Power assumed by the British Parliament to bind America by their Statutes, in all Cases whatsoever, is unconstitutional, and the Source of these unhappy Differences.

The End of Government would be defeated by the British Parliament exercising a Power over the Lives, the Property, and the Liberty of the American Subject; who are not, and, from their local Circumstances, cannot, be there represented. Of this Nature we consider the several Acts of Parliament for raising a Revenue in American, for extending the Jurisdiction of the Courts of Admiralty, for seizing American Subjects and transporting them to Britain to be tried for Crimes committed in America, and the several late oppressive Acts respecting the Town of Boston and Province of the Massachusetts Bay.

The original Constitution of the American Colonies possessing their Assemblies with the sole right of directing their internal Polity, it is absolutely destructive of the End of their Institution that their Legislatures should be suspended, or prevented, by hasty Dissolutions, from exercising their legislative Powers.

To obtain Redress of Grievances, without which the People of America can neither be safe, free, nor happy, they are willing to undergo the great Inconvenience that will be derived to them from stopping all Imports whatsoever from Great Britain after the first Day of November next, and also to cease exporting any Commodity whatsoever to the same Place after the tenth Day of August 1775.... [I]t is our Desire that you cordially co-operate with our Sister Colonies in General Congress in such other just and proper Methods as they, or the Majority, shall deem necessary for the Accomplishment of these valuable Ends.

Source: The Library of Congress

The Suffolk Resolves

1774

At a meeting of the delegates of every town & district in the county of Suffolk, on Tuesday the 6th of September, at the house of Mr. Richard Woodward, of Deadham, & by adjournment, at the house of Mr. [Daniel] Vose, of Milton, on Friday the 9th instant, Joseph Palmer, esq. being chosen moderator, and William Thompson, esq. clerk, a committee was chosen to bring in a report to the convention, and the following being several times read, and put paragraph by paragraph, was unanimously voted, viz.

Whereas the power but not the justice, the vengeance but not the wisdom of Great-Britain, which of old persecuted, scourged, and exiled our fugitive parents from their native shores, now pursues us, their guiltless children, with unrelenting severity: And whereas, this, then savage and uncultivated desert, was purchased by the toil and treasure, or acquired by the blood and valor of those our venerable progenitors; to us they bequeathed the dearbought inheritance, to our care and protection they consigned it, and the most sacred obligations are upon us to transmit the glorious purchase, unfettered by power, unclogged with shackles, to our innocent and beloved offspring. On the fortitude, on the wisdom and on the exertions of this important day, is suspended the fate of this new world, and of unborn millions. If a boundless extent of continent, swarming with millions, will tamely submit to live, move and have their being at the arbitrary will of a licentious minister, they basely yield to voluntary slavery, and future generations shall load their memories with incessant execrations.--On the other hand, if we arrest the hand which would ransack our pockets, if we disarm the parricide which points the dagger to our bosoms, if we nobly defeat that fatal edict which proclaims a power to frame laws for us in all cases whatsoever, thereby entailing the endless and numberless curses of slavery upon us, our heirs and their heirs forever; if we successfully resist that unparalleled usurpation of unconstitutional power, whereby our capital is robbed of the means of life; whereby the streets of Boston are thronged with military executioners; whereby our coasts are lined and harbours crowded with ships of war; whereby the charter of the colony, that sacred barrier against the encroachments of tyranny, is mutilated and, in effect, annihilated; whereby a murderous law is framed to shelter villains from the hands of justice; whereby the unalienable and inestimable inheritance, which we derived from nature, the constitution of Britain, and the privileges warranted to us in the charter of the province, is totally wrecked, annulled, and vacated, posterity will acknowledge that virtue which preserved them free and happy; and while we enjoy the rewards and blessings of the faithful, the torrent of panegyrists will roll our reputations to that latest period, when the streams of time shall be absorbed in the abyss of eternity.--Therefore, we have resolved, and do resolve,

1. That whereas his majesty, George the Third, is the rightful successor to the throne of Great-Britain, and justly entitled to the allegiance of the British realm, and agreeable to compact, of the English colonies in America--therefore, we, the heirs and successors of the first planters of this colony, do cheerfully acknowledge the said George the Third to be our rightful sovereign, and that said covenant is the tenure and claim on which are founded our allegiance and submission.

2. That it is an indispensable duty which we owe to God, our country, ourselves and posterity, by all lawful ways and means in our power to maintain, defend and preserve those civil and religious rights and liberties, for which many of our fathers fought, bled and died, and to hand them down entire to future generations.

3. That the late acts of the British parliament for blocking up the harbour of Boston, for altering the established form of government in this colony, and for screening the most flagitious violators of the laws of the province from a legal trial, are gross infractions of those rights to which we are justly entitled by the laws of nature, the British constitution, and the charter of the province.

4. That no obedience is due from this province to either or any part of the acts above-mentioned, but that they be rejected as the attempts of a wicked administration to enslave America.

5. That so long as the justices of our superior court of judicature, court of assize, &c. and inferior court

of common pleas in this county are appointed, or hold their places, by any other tenure than that which the charter and the laws of the province direct, they must be considered as under undue influence, and are therefore unconstitutional officers, and, as such, no regard ought to be paid to them by the people of this county.

6. That if the justices of the superior court of judicature, assize, &c. justices of the court of common pleas, or of the general sessions of the peace, shall sit and act during their present disqualified state, this county will support, and bear harmless, all sheriffs and their deputies, constables, jurors and other officers who shall refuse to carry into execution the orders of said courts; and, as far as possible, to prevent the many inconveniencies which must be occasioned by a suspension of the courts of justice, we do most earnestly recommend it to all creditors, that they show all reasonable and even generous forbearance to their debtors; and to all debtors, to pay their just debts with all possible speed, and if any disputes relative to debts or trespasses shall arise, which cannot be settled by the parties, we recommend it to them to submit all such causes to arbitration; and it is our opinion that the contending parties or either of them, who shall refuse so to do, ought to be considered as co-operating with the enemies of this country.

7. That it be recommended to the collectors of taxes, constables and all other officers, who have public monies in their hands, to retain the same, and not to make any payment thereof to the provincial county treasurer until the civil government of the province is placed upon a constitutional foundation, or until it shall otherwise be ordered by the proposed provincial Congress.

8. That the persons who have accepted seats at the council board, by virtue of a mandamus from the King, in conformity to the late act of the British parliament, entitled, an act for the regulating the government of the Massachusetts-Bay, have acted in direct violation of the duty they owe to their country, and have thereby given great and just offence to this people; therefore, resolved, that this county do recommend it to all persons, who have so highly offended by accepting said departments, and have not already publicly resigned their seats at the council board, to make public resignations of their places at said board, on or before the 20th day of this instant, September; and that all persons refusing so to do, shall, from and after said day, be considered by this county as obstinate and incorrigible enemies to this country.

9. That the fortifications begun and now carrying on upon Boston Neck, are justly alarming to this county, and gives us reason to apprehend some hostile intention against that town, more especially as the commander in chief has, in a very extraordinary manner, removed the powder from the magazine at Charlestown, and has also forbidden the keeper of the magazine at Boston, to deliver out to the owners, the powder, which they had lodged in said magazine.

10. That the late act of parliament for establishing the Roman Catholic religion and the French laws in that extensive country, now called Canada, is dangerous in an extreme degree to the Protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America; and, therefore, as men and Protestant Christians, we are indispensably obliged to take all proper measures for our security.

11. That whereas our enemies have flattered themselves that they shall make an easy prey of this numerous, brave and hardy people, from an apprehension that they are unacquainted with military discipline; we, therefore, for the honour, defence and security of this county and province, advise, as it has been recommended to take away all commissions from the officers of the militia, that those who now hold commissions, or such other persons, be elected in each town as officers in the militia, as shall be judged of sufficient capacity for that purpose, and who have evidenced themselves the inflexible friends to the rights of the people; and that the inhabitants of those towns and districts, who are qualified, do use their utmost diligence to acquaint themselves with the art of war as soon as possible, and do, for that purpose, appear under arms at least once every week.

12. That during the present hostile appearances on the part of Great-Britain, notwithstanding the many insults and oppressions which we most sensibly resent, yet, nevertheless, from our affection to his majesty, which we have at all times evidenced, we are determined to act merely upon the defensive, so long as such conduct may be vindicated by reason and the principles of self-preservation, but no longer.

13. That, as we understand it has been in contemplation to apprehend sundry persons of this county, who have rendered themselves conspicuous in contending for the violated rights and liberties of their countrymen; we do recommend, should such an audacious measure be put in practice, to seize and keep in safe custody, every servant of the present tyrannical and unconstitutional government throughout the county and province, until the persons so apprehended be liberated from the bands of our adversaries, and restored safe and uninjured to their respective friends and families.

14. That until our rights are fully restored to us, we will, to the utmost of our power, and we recommend the same to the other counties, to withhold all commercial intercourse with Great-Britain, Ireland, and the West-Indies, and abstain from the consumption of British merchandise and manufactures, and especially of East-Indies, and piece goods, with such additions, alterations, and exceptions only, as the General Congress of the colonies may agree to.

15. That under our present circumstances, it is incumbent on us to encourage arts and manufactures amongst us, by all means in our power, and that be and are hereby appointed a committee, to consider of the best ways and means to promote and establish the same, and to report to this convention as soon as may be.

16. That the exigencies of our public affairs, demand that a provincial Congress be called to consult such measures as may be adopted, and vigorously executed by the whole people; and we do recommend it to the several towns in this county, to chase members for such a provincial Congress, to be holden at Concord, on the second Tuesday of October, next ensuing.

17. That this county, confiding in the wisdom and integrity of the continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, pay all due respect and submission to such measures as may be recommended by them to the colonies, for the restoration and establishment of our just rights, civil and religious, and for renewing that harmony and union between Great-Britain and the colonies, so earnestly wished for by all good men.

18. That whereas the universal uneasiness which prevails among all orders of men, arising from the wicked and oppressive measures of the present administration, may influence some unthinking persons to commit outrage upon private property; we would heartily recommend to all persons of this community, not to engage in any routs, riots, or licentious attacks upon the properties of any person whatsoever, as being subversive of all order and government; but, by a steady, manly, uniform, and persevering opposition, to convince our enemies, that in a contest so important, in a cause so solemn, our conduct shall be such as to merit the approbation of the wise, and the admiration of the brave and free of every age and of every country.

19. That should our enemies, by any sudden maneuvers, render it necessary to ask the aid and assistance of our brethren in the country, some one of the committee of correspondence, or a select man of such town, or the town adjoining, where such hostilities shall commence, or shall be expected to commence, shall dispatch couriers with written messages to the select men, or committees of correspondence, of the several towns in the vicinity, with a written account of such matter, who shall dispatch others to committees more remote, until proper and sufficient assistance be obtained, and that the expense of said couriers be defrayed by the county, until it shall be otherwise ordered by the provincial Congress.

Source: Library of Congress

Document 7:

Joseph Galloway, Plan of Union
September 28, 1774

Resolution submitted by Joseph Galloway:

Resolved, That the Congress will apply to his Majesty for a redress of grievances under which his faithful subjects in America labour; and assure him, that the Colonies hold in abhorrence the idea of being considered independent communities on the British government, and most ardently desire the establishment of a Political Union, not only among themselves, but with the Mother State, upon those principles of safety and freedom which are essential in the constitution of all free governments, and particularly that of the British Legislature; and as the Colonies from their local circumstances, cannot be represented in the Parliament of Great-Britain, they will humbly propose to his Majesty and his two Houses of Parliament, the following plan, under which the strength of the whole Empire may be drawn together on any emergency, the interest of both countries advanced, and the rights and liberties of America secured.

A Plan of a proposed Union between Great Britain and the Colonies.

That a British and American legislature, for regulating the administration of the general affairs of America, be proposed and established in America, including all the said colonies; within, and under which government, each colony shall retain its present constitution, and powers of regulating and governing its own internal police, in all cases whatsoever.

That the said government be administered by a President General, to be appointed by the King, and a grand Council, to be chosen by the Representatives of the people of the several colonies, in their respective assemblies, once in every three years.

That the several assemblies shall choose members for the grand council in the following proportions, viz.
New Hampshire.

Massachusetts-Bay.

Rhode Island.

Connecticut.

New-York.

New-Jersey.

Pennsylvania.

Delaware Counties.

Maryland.

Virginia.

North Carolina.

South-Carolina.

Georgia.

Who shall meet at the city of for the first time, being called by the President-General, as soon as conveniently may be after his appointment.

That there shall be a new election of members for the Grand Council every three years; and on the death, removal or resignation of any member, his place shall be supplied by a new choice, at the next sitting of Assembly of the Colony he represented.

That the Grand Council shall meet once in every year, if they shall think it necessary, and oftener, if occasions shall require, at such time and place as they shall adjourn to, at the last preceding meeting, or as they shall be called to meet at, by the President-General, on any emergency.

That the grand Council shall have power to choose their Speaker, and shall hold and exercise all the like rights, liberties and privileges, as are held and exercised by and in the House of Commons of Great-Britain.

That the President-General shall hold his office during the pleasure of the King, and his assent shall be requisite to all acts of the Grand Council, and it shall be his office and duty to cause them to be carried into execution.

That the President-General, by and with the advice and consent of the Grand-Council, hold and exercise all the legislative rights, powers, and authorities, necessary for regulating and administering all the general police and affairs of the colonies, in which Great-Britain and the colonies, or any of them, the colonies in general, or more than one colony, are in any manner concerned, as well civil and criminal as commercial.

That the said President-General and the Grand Council, be an inferior and distinct branch of the British legislature, united and incorporated with it, for the aforesaid general purposes; and that any of the said general regulations may originate and be formed and digested, either in the Parliament of Great Britain, or in the said Grand Council, and being prepared, transmitted to the other for their approbation or dissent; and that the assent of both shall be requisite to the validity of all such general acts or statutes.

That in time of war, all bills for granting aid to the crown, prepared by the Grand Council, and approved by the President General, shall be valid and passed into a law, without the assent of the British Parliament.

Source: Worthington C. Ford et al., eds. Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904-37): 1:49-51

Document 8: Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress

October 14, 1774

Whereas, since the close of the last war, the British parliament, claiming a power, of right, to bind the people of America by statutes in all cases whatsoever, hath, in some acts, expressly imposed taxes on them, and in others, under various presences, but in fact for the purpose of raising a revenue, hath imposed rates and duties payable in these colonies, established a board of commissioners, with unconstitutional powers, and extended the jurisdiction of courts of admiralty, not only for collecting the said duties, but for the trial of causes merely arising within the body of a county:

And whereas, in consequence of other statutes, judges, who before held only estates at will in their offices, have been made dependant on the crown alone for their salaries, and standing armies kept in times of peace: And whereas it has lately been resolved in parliament, that by force of a statute, made in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth, colonists may be transported to England, and tried there upon accusations for treasons and misprisions, or concealments of treasons committed in the colonies, and by a late statute, such trials have been directed in cases therein mentioned:

And whereas, in the last session of parliament, three statutes were made; one entitled, "An act to discontinue, in such manner and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading, or shipping of goods, wares and merchandise, at the town, and within the harbour of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts-Bay in New England;" another entitled, "An act for the better regulating the government of the province of Massachusetts-Bay in New England;" and another entitled, "An act for the impartial administration of justice, in the cases of persons questioned for any act done by them in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults, in the province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New England;" and another statute was then made, "for making more effectual provision for the government of the province of Quebec, etc." All which statutes are impolitic, unjust, and cruel, as well as unconstitutional, and most dangerous and destructive of American rights:

And whereas, assemblies have been frequently dissolved, contrary to the rights of the people, when they attempted to deliberate on grievances; and their dutiful, humble, loyal, and reasonable petitions to the crown for redress, have been repeatedly treated with contempt, by his Majesty's ministers of state:

The good people of the several colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North- Carolina and South-Carolina, justly alarmed at these arbitrary proceedings of parliament and administration, have severally elected, constituted, and appointed deputies to meet, and sit in general Congress, in the city of Philadelphia, in order to obtain such establishment, as that their religion, laws, and liberties, may not be subverted: Whereupon the deputies so appointed being now assembled, in a full and free representation of these colonies, taking into their most serious consideration, the best means of attaining the ends aforesaid, do, in the first place, as Englishmen, their ancestors in like cases have usually done, for asserting and vindicating their rights and liberties, DECLARE,

That the inhabitants of the English colonies in North-America, by the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters or compacts, have the following RIGHTS:

Resolved, N.C.D. 1. That they are entitled to life, liberty and property: and they have never ceded to any foreign power whatever, a right to dispose of either without their consent.

Resolved, N.C.D. 2. That our ancestors, who first settled these colonies, were at the time of their emigration from the mother country, entitled to all the rights, liberties, and immunities of free and natural-born subjects, within the realm of England.

Resolved, N.C.D. 3. That by such emigration they by no means forfeited, surrendered, or lost any of those rights, but that they were, and their descendants now are, entitled to the exercise and enjoyment of all such of them, as their local and other circumstances enable them to exercise and enjoy.

Resolved, 4. That the foundation of English liberty, and of all free government, is a right in the people to participate in their legislative council: and as the English colonists are not represented, and from their local and other circumstances, cannot properly be represented in the British parliament, they are entitled to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several provincial legislatures, where their right of representation can alone be preserved, in all cases of taxation and internal polity, subject only to the negative of their sovereign, in such manner as has been heretofore used and accustomed: But, from the necessity of the case, and a regard to the mutual interest of both countries, we cheerfully consent to the operation of such acts of the British parliament, as are bonfide, restrained to the regulation of our external commerce, for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire to the mother country, and the commercial benefits of its respective members; excluding every idea of taxation internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects, in America, without their consent.

Resolved, N.C.D. 5. That the respective colonies are entitled to the common law of England, and more especially to the great and inestimable privilege of being tried by their peers of the vicinage, according to the course of that law.

Resolved, N.C.D. 6. That they are entitled to the benefit of such of the English statutes, as existed at the time of their colonization; and which they have, by experience, respectively found to be applicable to their several local and other circumstances.

Resolved, N.C.D. 7. That these, his Majesty's colonies, are likewise entitled to all the immunities and privileges granted and confirmed to them by royal charters, or secured by their several codes of provincial laws.

Resolved, N.C.D. 8. That they have a right peaceably to assemble, consider of their grievances, and petition the king; and that all prosecutions, prohibitory proclamations, and commitments for the same, are illegal.

Resolved, N.C.D. 9. That the keeping a standing army in these colonies, in times of peace, without the consent of the legislature of that colony, in which such army is kept, is against law.

Resolved, N.C.D. 10. It is indispensably necessary to good government, and rendered essential by the English constitution, that the constituent branches of the legislature be independent of each other; that, therefore, the exercise of legislative power in several colonies, by a council appointed, during pleasure, by the crown, is unconstitutional, dangerous and destructive to the freedom of American legislation.

All and each of which the aforesaid deputies, in behalf of themselves, and their constituents, do claim, demand, and insist on, as their indubitable rights and liberties, which cannot be legally taken from them,

altered or abridged by any power whatever, without their own consent, by their representatives in their several provincial legislature.

In the course of our inquiry, we find many infringements and violations of the foregoing rights, which, from an ardent desire, that harmony and mutual intercourse of affection and interest may be restored, we pass over for the present, and proceed to state such acts and measures as have been adopted since the last war, which demonstrate a system formed to enslave America.

Resolved, N.C.D. That the following acts of parliament are infringements and violations of the rights of the colonists; and that the repeal of them is essentially necessary, in order to restore harmony between Great Britain and the American colonies, viz.

The several acts of Geo. III. ch. 15, and ch. 34.-5 Geo. III. ch.25.-6 Geo. ch. 52.-7 Geo.III. ch. 41 and ch. 46.-8 Geo. III. ch. 22. which impose duties for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, extend the power of the admiralty courts beyond their ancient limits, deprive the American subject of trial by jury, authorize the judges certificate to indemnify the prosecutor from damages, that he might otherwise be liable to, requiring oppressive security from a claimant of ships and goods seized, before he shall be allowed to defend his property, and are subversive of American rights.

Also 12 Geo. III. ch. 24, entitled, "An act for the better securing his majesty's dockyards, magazines, ships, ammunition, and stores," which declares a new offence in America, and deprives the American subject of a constitutional trial by jury of the vicinage, by authorizing the trial of any person, charged with the committing any offence described in the said act, out of the realm, to be indicted and tried for the same in any shire or county within the realm.

Also the three acts passed in the last session of parliament, for stopping the port and blocking up the harbour of Boston, for altering the charter and government of Massachusetts-Bay, and that which is entitled, "An act for the better administration of justice, etc."

Also the act passed in the same session for establishing the Roman Catholic religion, in the province of Quebec, abolishing the equitable system of English laws, and erecting a tyranny there, to the great danger (from so total a dissimilarity of religion, law and government) of the neighboring British colonies, by the assistance of whose blood and treasure the said country was conquered from France.

Also the act passed in the same session, for the better providing suitable quarters for officers and soldiers in his majesty's service, in North-America.

Also, that the keeping a standing army in several of these colonies, in time of peace, without the consent of the legislature of that colony, in which such army is kept, is against law.

To these grievous acts and measures, Americans cannot submit, but in hopes their fellow subjects in Great Britain will, on a revision of them, restore us to that state, in which both countries found happiness and prosperity, we have for the present, only resolved to pursue the following peaceable measures: 1. To enter into a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement or association. 2. To prepare an address to the people of Great-Britain, and a memorial to the inhabitants of British America: and 3. To prepare a loyal address to his majesty, agreeable to resolutions already entered into.

Source: Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the Union of the American States Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1927): House Document No. 398.

The Articles of Association
October 20, 1774

We, his majesty's most loyal subjects, the delegates of the several colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the three lower counties of Newcastle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, and South-Carolina, deputed to represent them in a continental Congress, held in the city of Philadelphia, on the 5th day of September, 1774, avowing our allegiance to his majesty, our affection and regard for our fellow-subjects in Great-Britain and elsewhere, affected with the deepest anxiety, and most alarming apprehensions, at those grievances and distresses, with which his Majesty's American subjects are oppressed; and having taken under our most serious deliberation, the state of the whole continent, find, that the present unhappy situation of our affairs is occasioned by a ruinous system of colony administration, adopted by the British ministry about the year 1763, evidently calculated for enslaving these colonies, and, with them, the British Empire. In prosecution of which system, various acts of parliament have been passed, for raising a revenue in America, for depriving the American subjects, in many instances, of the constitutional trial by jury, exposing their lives to danger, by directing a new and illegal trial beyond the seas, for crimes alleged to have been committed in America: And in prosecution of the same system, several late, cruel, and oppressive acts have been passed, respecting the town of Boston and the Massachusetts-Bay, and also an act for extending the province of Quebec, so as to border on the western frontiers of these colonies, establishing an arbitrary government therein, and discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide extended country; thus, by the influence of civil principles and ancient prejudices, to dispose the inhabitants to act with hostility against the free Protestant colonies, whenever a wicked ministry shall choose so to direct them.

To obtain redress of these grievances, which threaten destruction to the lives liberty, and property of his majesty's subjects, in North-America, we are of opinion, that a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure: And, therefore, we do, for ourselves, and the inhabitants of the several colonies, whom we represent, firmly agree and associate, under the sacred ties of virtue, honour and love of our country, as follows:

1. That from and after the first day of December next, we will not import, into British America, from Great-Britain or Ireland, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, or from any other place, any such goods, wares, or merchandise, as shall have been exported from Great-Britain or Ireland; nor will we, after that day, import any East-India tea from any part of the world; nor any molasses, syrups, paneles, coffee, or pimento, from the British plantations or from Dominica; nor wines from Madeira, or the Western Islands; nor foreign indigo.
2. We will neither import nor purchase, any slave imported after the first day of December next; after which time, we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it.
3. As a non-consumption agreement, strictly adhered to, will be an effectual security for the observation of the non-importation, we, as above, solemnly agree and associate, that from this day, we will not purchase or use any tea, imported on account of the East-India company, or any on which a duty hath been or shall be paid; and from and after the first day of March next, we will not purchase or use any East-India tea whatever; nor will we, nor shall any person for or under us, purchase or use any of those goods, wares, or merchandise, we have agreed not to import, which we shall know, or have cause to suspect, were imported

after the first day of December, except such as come under the rules and directions of the tenth article hereafter mentioned.

4. The earnest desire we have not to injure our fellow-subjects in Great-Britain, Ireland, or the West-Indies, induces us to suspend a non-exportation, until the tenth day of September, 1775; at which time, if the said acts and parts of acts of the British parliament herein after mentioned, are not repealed, we will not directly or indirectly, export any merchandise or commodity whatsoever to Great-Britain, Ireland, or the West-Indies, except rice to Europe.

5. Such as are merchants, and use the British and Irish trade, will give orders, as soon as possible, to their factors, agents and correspondents, in Great-Britain and Ireland, not to ship any goods to them, on any pretence whatsoever, as they cannot be received in America; and if any merchant, residing in Great-Britain or Ireland, shall directly or indirectly ship any goods, wares or merchandize, for America, in order to break the said non-importation agreement, or in any manner contravene the same, on such unworthy conduct being well attested, it ought to be made public; and, on the same being so done, we will not, from thenceforth, have any commercial connexion with such merchant.

6. That such as are owners of vessels will give positive orders to their captains, or masters, not to receive on board their vessels any goods prohibited by the said non-importation agreement, on pain of immediate dismissal from their service.

7. We will use our utmost endeavours to improve the breed of sheep, and increase their number to the greatest extent; and to that end, we will kill them as seldom as may be, especially those of the most profitable kind; nor will we export any to the West-Indies or elsewhere; and those of us, who are or may become overstocked with, or can conveniently spare any sheep, will dispose of them to our neighbours, especially to the poorer sort, on moderate terms.

8. We will, in our several stations, encourage frugality, economy, and industry, and promote agriculture, arts and the manufactures of this country, especially that of wool; and will discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially all horse-racing, and all kinds of games, cock fighting, exhibitions of shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments; and on the death of any relation or friend, none of us, or any of our families will go into any further mourning-dress, than a black crepe or ribbon on the arm or hat, for gentlemen, and a black ribbon and necklace for ladies, and we will discontinue the giving of gloves and scarves at funerals.

9. Such as are venders of goods or merchandize will not take advantage of the scarcity of goods, that may be occasioned by this association, but will sell the same at the rates we have been respectively accustomed to do, for twelve months last past. -And if any vender of goods or merchandise shall sell such goods on higher terms, or shall, in any manner, or by any device whatsoever, violate or depart from this agreement, no person ought, nor will any of us deal with any such person, or his or her factor or agent, at any time thereafter, for any commodity whatever.

10. In case any merchant, trader, or other person, shall import any goods or merchandize, after the first day of December, and before the first day of February next, the same ought forthwith, at the election of the owner, to be either re-shipped or delivered up to the committee of the country or town, wherein they shall be imported, to be stored at the risk of the importer, until the non-importation agreement shall cease, or be sold under the direction of the committee aforesaid; and in the last-mentioned case, the owner or owners of such goods shall be reimbursed out of the sales, the first cost and charges, the profit, if any, to be applied

towards relieving and employing such poor inhabitants of the town of Boston, as are immediate sufferers by the Boston port-bill; and a particular account of all goods so returned, stored, or sold, to be inserted in the public papers; and if any goods or merchandizes shall be imported after the said first day of February, the same ought forthwith to be sent back again, without breaking any of the packages thereof.

11. That a committee be chosen in every county, city, and town, by those who are qualified to vote for representatives in the legislature, whose business it shall be attentively to observe the conduct of all persons touching this association; and when it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of a majority of any such committee, that any person within the limits of their appointment has violated this association, that such majority do forthwith cause the truth of the case to be published in the gazette; to the end, that all such foes to the rights of British-America may be publicly known, and universally contemned as the enemies of American liberty; and thenceforth we respectively will break off all dealings with him or her.

12. That the committee of correspondence, in the respective colonies, do frequently inspect the entries of their customhouses, and inform each other, from time to time, of the true state thereof, and of every other material circumstance that may occur relative to this association.

13. That all manufactures of this country be sold at reasonable prices, so- that no undue advantage be taken of a future scarcity of goods.

14. And we do further agree and resolve that we will have no trade, commerce, dealings or intercourse whatsoever, with any colony or province, in North-America, which shall not accede to, or which shall hereafter violate this association, but will hold them as unworthy of the rights of freemen, and as inimical to the liberties of their country.

And we do solemnly bind ourselves and our constituents, under the ties aforesaid, to adhere to this association, until such parts of the several acts of parliament passed since the close of the last war, as impose or continue duties on tea, wine, molasses, syrups paneles, coffee, sugar, pimento, indigo, foreign paper, glass, and painters' colours, imported into America, and extend the powers of the admiralty courts beyond their ancient limits, deprive the American subject of trial by jury, authorize the judge's certificate to indemnify the prosecutor from damages, that he might otherwise be liable to from a trial by his peers, require oppressive security from a claimant of ships or goods seized, before he shall be allowed to defend his property, are repealed.-And until that part of the act of the 12 G. 3. ch. 24, entitled "An act for the better securing his majesty's dock-yards magazines, ships, ammunition, and stores," by which any persons charged with committing any of the offenses therein described, in America, may be tried in any shire or county within the realm, is repealed-and until the four acts, passed the last session of parliament, viz. that for stopping the port and blocking up the harbour of Boston-that for altering the charter and government of the Massachusetts-Bay-and that which is entitled "An act for the better administration of justice, &c."-and that "for extending the limits of Quebec, &c." are repealed. And we recommend it to the provincial conventions, and to the committees in the respective colonies, to establish such farther regulations as they may think proper, for carrying into execution this association.

The foregoing association being determined upon by the Congress, was ordered to be subscribed by the several members thereof; and thereupon, we have hereunto set our respective names accordingly.

IN CONGRESS, PHILADELPHIA, October 20, 1774.

Signed, PEYTON RANDOLPH, President.

Source: Worthington C. Ford et al., eds. *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904-37).

Document 10: **Petition of London Merchants for Reconciliation with America**

January 23, 1775

Exports from England to the American colonies dropped from some two and one half million pounds in 1774 to about one-tenth that sum in 1775. Not only did the success of the Association thus threaten English merchants with ruin, but the imminent danger of hostilities with the colonies raised serious doubts as to the ability of English merchants to collect the large debts owed them by American planters. On trade, see, D. M. Clark, *British Opinion and the American Revolution*, ch. iii; on debts, see, L. Harrell, *Loyalism in Virginia*.

Mr. Alderman Hayley said he had a petition from the merchants of the city of London concerned in the commerce to North America, to that honourable House, and desired leave to present the same, which being given, it was brought up and read, setting forth;

"That the petitioners are all essentially interested in the trade to North America, either as exporters and importers, or as venders of British and foreign goods for exportation to that country; and that the petitioners have exported, or sold for exportation, to the British colonies in North America, very large quantities of the manufacture of Great Britain and Ireland, and in particular the staple articles of woollen, iron, and linen, also those of cotton, silk, leather, pewter, tin, copper, and brass, with almost every British manufacture; . . . and that the petitioners have likewise exported, or sold for exportation, great quantities of the various species of goods imported into this kingdom from the East-Indies, part of which receive additional manufacture in Great Britain; and that the petitioners receive returns from North America to this kingdom directly, viz. pig and bar iron, timber, staves, naval stores, tobacco, rice, indigo, deer, and other skins, beaver and furs, train oil, whalebone, bees wax, pot and pearl ashes, drugs and dyeing woods, with some bullion, and also wheat flour, Indian corn and salted provisions, when, on account of scarcity in Great Britain, those articles are permitted to be imported; . . . and that the petitioners have great reason to believe, from the best informations they can obtain, that on the balance of this extensive commerce, there is now due from the colonies in North America, to the said city only, 2,000,000^l. sterling, and upwards; and that, by the direct commerce with the colonies, and the circuitous trade thereon depending, some thousands of ships and vessels are employed, and many thousands of seamen are bred and maintained, thereby increasing the naval strength and power of Great Britain; and that, in the year 1765, there was a great stagnation of the commerce between Great Britain and her colonies, in consequence of an Act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties, in the British colonies and plantations in America, by which the merchants trading to North America, and the artificers employed in the various manufactures consumed in those countries, were subjected to many hardships; and that, in the following year, the said Act was repealed, under an express declaration of the legislature, that the continuance of the said Act would be attended with many inconveniences, and might be productive of consequences greatly detrimental to the commercial interests of these kingdoms; upon which repeal, the trade to the British colonies immediately resumed its former flourishing state; and that in the year 1767 an Act passed for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, which impose certain duties, to be paid in America, on tea, glass, red and white lead, painters' colours, paper, paste-board, mill-board, and scale-board, when the commerce with the colonies was again interrupted; and that in the year 1770, such parts of the said Act as imposed duties on glass, red and white lead, painters' colours, paper, paste-board, mill-board and scale-board, were repealed, when the trade to America soon revived, except in the article of tea, on which a duty was continued, to be demanded on its importation into America, whereby that branch of our commerce was nearly lost; and that, in the year 1773, an Act passed, to allow a drawback of the duties of customs on the exportation of tea to his Majesty's colonies or plantations in America, and to empower the commissioners of the Treasury to grant licenses to the East India Company, to export tea, duty free; and by the operation of those and other laws, the minds of his Majesty's subjects in the British colonies have been greatly disquieted, a total stop is now put to the export trade with the greatest and most

important part of North America, the public revenue is threatened with a large and fatal diminution, the petitioners with grievous distress, and thousands of industrious artificers and manufacturers with utter ruin; under these alarming circumstances, the petitioners receive no small comfort, from a persuasion that the representatives of the people, newly delegated to the most important of all trusts, will take the whole of these weighty matters into their most serious consideration; and therefore praying the House, that they will enter into a full and immediate examination of that system of commercial policy, which was formerly adopted, and uniformly maintained to the happiness and advantage of both countries, and will apply such healing remedies as can alone restore and establish the commerce between Great Britain and her colonies on a permanent foundation; and that the petitioners may be heard by themselves, or agents, in support of the said petition. "

Source: The Parliamentary History of England, Vol. XVIII, 1774-1777, p. 168 ff.)

Document 11: Lord North's Proposal for Conciliation with America

Feb. 20, 1775

(Debate in the Commons on Lord North's Propositions. The House being in a committee of the whole House on the Papers respecting the Disturbances in North America. This followed a Joint Address of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons to the King on the Disturbances in North America, an Address to which Lord North referred in his opening remarks.)

1. Joint Address of both Houses to the King of the Disturbances in North America:

....We find that a part of your Majesty's subjects in the province of the Massachuset's [sic] Bay have proceeded so far to resist the authority of the supreme legislature, that rebellion at this time actually exists within the said province; and we see, with the utmost concern, that they have been countenanced and encouraged by unlawful combinations and engagements, entered into by your Majesty's subjects in several of the other colonies, to the injury and oppression of many of their innocent fellow-subjects [merchants and creditors] resident within the kingdom of Great Britain, and the rest of your Majesty's dominions. This conduct on their part appears to us the most inexcusable, when we consider with how much temper [forbearance] your Majesty and the two House s of Parliament have acted in support of the laws and constitution of Great Britain. We can never so far desert the trust reposed in us as to relinquish any part of the sovereign authority over all your Majesty's dominions, which by law is vested in our Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament; and the conduct of many persons in several of the colonies during the late disturbances is alone sufficient to convince us how necessary this power is for the protection of the lives and fortunes of all your Majesty's subjects.

We have ever been, and always shall be, ready to pay attention and regard to any real grievances of any of your Majesty's subjects, which shall, in a dutiful and constitutional manner, be laid before us; and whenever any of the colonies shall make a proper application to us, we shall be ready to afford them every just and reasonable indulgences. At the same time, we consider it as our indispensable duty, humbly to beseech your Majesty, that you will take the most effectual measures to enforce due obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme legislature; and we beg leave, in the most solemn manner, to assure your Majesty, that it is our fixed resolution, at the hazard of our lives and properties, to stand by your Majesty against all rebellious attempts in the maintenance of the just rights of your Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament.

2. The King's Answer:

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

I thank you for this very dutiful and loyal Address, and for the affectionate and solemn assurances you give me of your support in maintaining the just rights of my crown, and of the two Houses of Parliament. And you may depend on my taking the most speedy and effectual measures for enforcing due obedience to the laws, and the authority of the supreme legislature.

Whenever any of my colonies shall make a proper and dutiful application I shall be ready to concur with you in affording them ever just and reasonable indulgence; and it is my ardent wish that this disposition may have a happy effect on the temper and conduct of my subjects in America

3. Lord North's Propositions for Conciliating the Differences with America, Feb.20, 1775:

Lord North: I mean to offer to the consideration of the Committee [of the whole House of Commons] some propositions which may be the ground of a Resolution, and which I conceive to be founded on the Address [above] which the House has presented to his Majesty. [The Address was read accordingly.]

His lordship [Lord North] remarked, that the Address, both as it was proposed, and in the sense in which it was understood when agreed to, meant to hold out to the Americans, that on the matter of taxation, although the parliament of Great Britain could never give up the rights, although it must always maintain the doctrine that every part of the empire was bound to bear its share of service and burden in the common defence; yet as to the matter of that right, and with respect to the mode of the contribution, if the end could be obtained, and if the Americans would propose any means and give assurance of the prosecution of those means by which they should contribute their share to the common defence—he had said, he did not apprehend parliament would hesitate a moment to suspend the exercise of that right; but would concede to the Americans, raising their share of the contribution by themselves.

This was the direct and avowed sense, in which the resolution for the Address was moved. I publicly, said his lordship, gave my opinion, and very explicitly said, that if the Americans would propose to parliament, any mode by which they would engage themselves to raise, in their own way, and by their own grants, their share of contribution to their common defence, the quarrel on the subject was at an end....

To be explicit, then as to my own opinion, I must say, that if the dispute in which the Americans have engaged goes to the whole of our [parliament's] authority, we can enter into no negotiation, we can meet no compromise. If it be only as to the suspension of the exercise of our right, or as to the mode of laying and raising taxes for a contribution towards the common defence, I think it would be just, it would be wise to meet any fair proposition, which may come in an authentic way from any province or colony; and on this ground it is that I shall propose to the committee the following Resolution:

“That it is the opinion of this Committee [of the whole of the House of Commons], that when the governor, council, and assembly, or general court, of any of his Majesty's provinces or colonies in America, shall propose to make provision, according to the condition, circumstances, and situation, of such province or colony, for contributing their proportion to the common defence (such proportion to be raised under the authority of the general court, or general assembly, of such province or colony, and disposable by parliament) and shall engage to make provision also for the support of the civil government, and the administration of justice, in such province or colony, it will be proper, if such proposal shall be approved by his Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament, and for so long as such provision shall be made accordingly, to forbear, in respect of such province or colony, to levy any duty, tax, or assessment, or to impose any farther duty, tax, or assessment, except only such duties as it may be expedient to continue to levy or to impose for the regulation of commerce; the net produce of the duties last mention to be carried to the account of such province or colony respectively.”

This resolution, added his lordship, marks the ground on which negotiation may take place. It is explicit, and defines the terms, and specifies the persons from whom the proposal must come, and to whom they must be made. It points out the end and purpose for which the contributions are to be given, and the persons from whom the grant of them is to originate. It takes away every ground of suspicion as to the appropriation of the revenue when raised, to purposes for which the Americans never would grant it. And from the nature of it is seen, that it must be conclusive so long as the Americans observe the agreement.

But many objections from various quarters, and on different grounds, will be made to it. If there be any persons who think we ought to make no advances towards accommodation, because they understand such to be concessions which we ought not to make—if there be any who may think the terms which this Resolution holds out are disadvantageous, I would not wish them to agree to it. But they will give me leave...to propose it now, before any blood is shed. Some gentlemen may ask the question—will you treat with rebels? I am not treating with rebels. It has never been yet said, that all the Americans are rebels, or that all the colonies are in rebellion. It cannot, I hope, be said. There is certainly in the province of Massachuset [sic] a rebellion. But, Sir, could I open the door even to rebels to return to their duty, I should be happy. The specific rebellion of the Massachusets [sic] is, that the people of the province reject and oppose with force of arms, the government, as established by the King and parliament. The moment that they acknowledge that government, and meet in assembly to act under it, the rebellion is at an end. The propositions contained in the Resolution, form an express declaration, and do not begin a negotiation.

Others perhaps will say, is it proper that parliament should bind itself? I answer that whenever parliament confirms an agreement, it always does bind itself. Others will look to the effect; and ask what consequences do you expect from this? Will you in the meantime suspend your operations of force? Certainly not. The putting ourselves off our guard, is certainly not the way to treat on safe grounds or with effect. The ground on which we stand at present, is in all human probably such as will enable us to enforce, what we have a right to demand; and it therefore the most likely to claim attention, and to produce that effect by peace, which we are otherwise in a situation to procure by force of arms.

Whether the Americans will accede to this or not, must depend on various circumstances that cannot be foreseen. If their outward pretensions be the real principles of the opposition which they have made, they must, consistently with those principles, agree to this proposition. If they do not meet us on this ground it will evince that they have other views, and are actuated by other motives. It will have been wise, it will have been just, it will have been humane, that we have held out the terms of peace. If they reject it, their blood must be upon their own hearts. But I have better hopes: there are people, and I hope whole colonies that wish for peace; and by these means, I hope they will find their way to it.

Source: *The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803...The Parliamentary Debates* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1813), Vol. 18, 1774-1777, pp. 297-298, 319-322.

The Olive Branch Petition
July 8, 1775

To the King's most excellent Majesty:

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

We, your Majesty's faithful subjects of the colonies new Hampshire, Massachusetts bay, Rhode island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, in behalf of ourselves, and the inhabitants of these colonies, who have deputed us to represent them in general Congress, entreat your Majesty's gracious attention to this our humble petition.

The union between our Mother country and these colonies, and the energy of mild and just government, produced benefits so remarkably important, and afforded such an assurance of their permanency and increase, that the wonder and envy of other Nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain riseing to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known.

Her rivals, observing that there was no probability of this happy connexion being broken by civil dissensions, and apprehending its future effects, if left any longer undisturbed, resolved to prevent her receiving such continual and formidable accessions of wealth and strength, by checking the growth of these settlements from which they were to be derived.

In the prosecution of this attempt, events so unfavourable to the design took place, that every friend to the interests of Great Britain and these colonies, entertained pleasing and reasonable expectations of seeing an additional force and extension immediately given to the operations of the union hitherto experienced, by an enlargement of the dominions of the Crown, and the removal of ancient and warlike enemies to a greater distance.

At the conclusion, therefore, of the late war, the most glorious and advantageous that ever had been carried on by British arms, your loyal colonists having contributed to its success, by such repeated and strenuous exertions, as frequently procured them the distinguished approbation of your Majesty, of the late king, and of parliament, doubted not but that they should be permitted, with the rest of the empire, to share in the blessings of peace, and the emoluments of victory and conquest. While these recent and honorable acknowledgments of their merits remained on record in the journals and acts of that august legislature, the Parliament, undefaced by the imputation or even the suspicion of any offense, they were alarmed by a new system of statutes and regulations adopted for the administration of the colonies, that filled their minds with the most painful fears and jealousies; and, to their inexpressible astonishment, perceived the dangers of a foreign quarrel quickly succeeded by domestic dangers, in their judgment, of a more dreadful kind.

Nor were their anxieties alleviated by any tendency in this system to promote the welfare of the Mother country. For tho' its effects were more immediately felt by them, yet its influence appeared to be injurious to the commerce and prosperity of Great Britain.

We shall decline the ungrateful task of describing the irksome variety of artifices, practiced by many of your Majesty's Ministers, the delusive presences, fruitless terrors, and unavailing severities, that have, from time to time, been dealt out by them, in their attempts to execute this impolitic plan, or of tracing, thro'a series

of years past, the progress of the unhappy differences between Great Britain and these colonies, which have flowed from this fatal source.

Your Majesty's Ministers, persevering in their measures, and proceeding to open hostilities for enforcing them, have compelled us to arm in our own defence, and have engaged us in a controversy so peculiarly abhorrent to the affections of your still faithful colonists, that when we consider whom we must oppose in this contest, and if it continues, what may be the consequences, our own particular misfortunes are accounted by us only as parts of our distress.

Knowing to what violent resentments and incurable animosities, civil discords are apt to exasperate and inflame the contending parties, we think ourselves required by indispensable obligations to Almighty God, to your Majesty, to our fellow subjects, and to ourselves, immediately to use all the means in our power, not incompatible with our safety, for stopping the further effusion of blood, and for averting the impending calamities that threaten the British Empire.

Thus called upon to address your Majesty on affairs of such moment to America, and probably to all your dominions, we are earnestly desirous of performing this office, with the utmost deference for your Majesty; and we therefore pray, that your royal magnanimity and benevolence may make the most favourable construction of our expressions on so uncommon an occasion. Could represent in their full force, the sentiments that agitate the minds of us your dutiful subjects, we are persuaded your Majesty would ascribe any seeming deviation from reverence in our language, and even in our conduct, not to any reprehensible intention, but to the impossibility of reconciling the usual appearances of respect, with a just attention to our own preservation against those artful and cruel enemies, who abuse your royal confidence and authority, for the purpose of effecting our destruction.

Attached to your Majesty's person, family, and government, with all devotion that principle and affection can inspire, connected with Great Britain by the strongest ties that can unite societies, and deploring every event that tends in any degree to weaken them, we solemnly assure your Majesty, that we not only most ardently desire the former harmony between her and these colonies may be restored, but that a concord may be established between them upon so firm a basis as to perpetuate its blessings, uninterrupted by any future dissensions, to succeeding generations in both countries, and to transmit your Majesty's Name to posterity, adorned with that signal and lasting glory, that has attended the memory of those illustrious personages, whose virtues and abilities have extricated states from dangerous convulsions, and, by securing happiness to others, have erected the most noble and durable monuments to their own fame.

We beg leave further to assure your Majesty, that notwithstanding the sufferings of your loyal colonists, during the course of the present controversy, our breasts retain too tender a regard for the kingdom from which we derive our origin, to request such a reconciliation as might in any manner be inconsistent with her dignity or her welfare. These, related as we are to her, honor and duty, as well as inclination, induce us to support and advance; and the apprehensions that now oppress our hearts with unspeakable grief, being once removed, your Majesty will find your faithful subjects on this continent ready and willing at all times, as they ever have been, with their lives and fortunes, to assert and maintain the rights and interests of your Majesty, and of our Mother country.

We, therefore, beseech your Majesty, that your royal authority and influence may be graciously interposed to procure us relief from our afflicting fears and jealousies, occasioned by the system before mentioned, and to settle peace through every part of your dominions, with all humility submitting to your Majesty's wise consideration whether it may not be expedient for facilitating those important purposes, that your Majesty

be pleased to direct some mode, by which the united applications of your faithful colonists to the throne, in pursuance of their common councils, may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation; and that, in the mean time, measures may be taken for preventing the further destruction of the lives of your Majesty's subjects; and that such statutes as more immediately distress any of your Majesty's colonies may be repealed.

For by such arrangements as your Majesty's wisdom can form, for collecting the united sense of your American people, we are convinced your Majesty would receive such satisfactory proofs of the disposition of the colonists towards their sovereign and parent state, that the wished for opportunity would soon be restored to them, of evincing the sincerity of their professions, by every testimony of devotion becoming the most dutiful subjects, and the most affectionate colonists.

That your Majesty may enjoy a long and prosperous reign, and that your descendants may govern your dominions with honor to themselves and happiness to their subjects, is our sincere and fervent prayer.

JOHN HANCOCK
colony of New hampshire
John Langdon

colony of Massachusetts bay
Thomas Chushing
Saml Adams
John Adams
Robt Treat Paine

colony of Rhode island and providence plantations
Step Hopkins
Sam: Ward

colony of Connecticut
Elipht Dyer
Roger Sherman
Silas Deane

colony of New York
Phil. Livingston
Jas Duane
John Alsop
Frans Lewis
John Jay
Robt R Livingston junr
Lewis Morris
Wm Floyd
Henry Wisner

New Jersey
Wil: Livingston
John De Hart

Richd Smith

Pennsylvania
John Dickinson
B Franklin
Geo: Ross
James Wilson
Chas Humphreys
Edwd Diddle

counties of New Castle Kent and Sussex on delawar
Caesar Rodney
Thos M^e Kean
Geo: Read

Maryland
Mat. Tilghman
Ths Johnson Junr
W Paca
Samuel Chase
Thos Stone

colony of Virginia
P. Henry Jr
Richard Henry Lee
Edmund Pendleton
Bend Harrison
Th: Jefferson

North Carolina
Will Hooper
Joseph Hewes

South Carolina
Henry Middleton
Tho Lynch
Christ Gadsden
J. Rutledge
Edward Rutledge.

The committee appoint[ed] to prepare a Letter to the Lord Mayor, reported the same, which was read.

On motion, Resolved, That the above Committee prepare a letter to Mr. Bollan, Mr. Lee and Mr. R[ichard] Penn, Esqr and the colony Agents by name in England.

The Congress resumed the Consideration of the address to the Inhabitants of Gt Britain, which being read and debated by paragraphs, was approved and ordered to be printed is as follows:

The Twelve United Colonies, by their Delegates in Congress, to the Inhabitants of Great Britain.

FRIENDS, COUNTRYMEN, AND BRETHREN!

By these, and by every other Appellation that may designate the Ties, which bind us to each other, we entreat your serious Attention to this our second Attempt to prevent their Dissolution. Remembrance of former Friendships, Pride in the glorious Atchievements of our common Ancestors, and Affection for the Heirs of their Virtues, have hitherto preserved our mutual Connexion; but when that Friendship is violated by the grossest Injuries; when the Pride of Ancestry becomes our Reproach, and we are no otherwise allied than as Tyrants and Slaves; when reduced to the melancholy Alternative of renouncing your Favour or our Freedom; can we hesitate about the Choices Let the Spirit of Britons determine.

In a former Address we asserted our Rights, and stated the Injuries we had then received. We hoped, that the mention of our Wrongs would have roused that honest Indignation which has slept too long for your Honor, or the Welfare of the Empire. But we have not been permitted to entertain this pleasing expectation. Every Day brought an accumulation of Injuries, and the Invention of the Ministry has been constantly exercised, in adding to the Calamities of your American Brethren.

After the most valuable Right of Legislation was infringed; when the Powers assumed by your Parliament, in which we are not represented, and from our local and other Circumstances cannot properly be represented, rendered our Property precarious; after being denied that mode of Trial, to which we have long been indebted for the safety of our Persons, and the preservation of our Liberties; after being in many instances divested of those Laws, which were transmitted to us by our common Ancestors, and subjected to an arbitrary Code, compiled under the auspices of Roman Tyrants; after those Charters, which encouraged our Predecessors to brave Death and Danger in every Shape, on unknown Seas, in Deserts unexplored, amidst barbarous and inhospitable Nations, were annulled; when, without the form of Trial, without a public Accusation, whole Colonies were condemned, their Trade destroyed, their inhabitants impoverished; when Soldiers were encouraged to embrue their Hands in the Blood of Americans, by offers of Impunity; when new modes of Trial were instituted for the ruin of the accused, where the charge carried with it the horrors of conviction; when a despotic Government was established in a neighbouring Province, and its Limits extended to every of our Frontiers; we little imagined that any thing could be added to this black Catalogue of unprovoked Injuries: but we have unhappily been deceived, and the late Measures of the Brash Ministry fully convince us, that their object is the reduction of these Colonies to Slavery and Ruin.

To confirm this Assertion, let us recal your attention to the Affairs of America, since our last Address. Let us combat the Calumnies of our Enemies; and let us warn you of the hangers that threaten you in our destruction. Many of your Fellow-Subjects, whose situation deprived them of other Support, drew their Maintenance from the Sea; but the deprivation of our Liberty being insufficient to satisfy the resentment of our Enemies, the horrors of Famine were super-added, and a British Parliament, who, in better times, were the Protectors of Innocence and the Patrons of Humanity, have, without distinction of Age or Sex, robbed thousands of the Food which they were accustomed to draw from that inexhaustible Source, placed in their neighbourhood by the benevolent Creator.

Another Act of your Legislature shuts our Ports, and prohibits our Trade with any but those States from whom the great Law of self-preservation renders it absolutely necessary we should at present withhold our Commerce. But this Act (whatever may have been its design) we consider rather as injurious to your Opulence than our Interest. All our Commerce terminates with you; and the Wealth we procure from other Nations, is soon exchanged for your Superfluities. Our remittances must then cease with our trade; and our

refinements with our Affluence. We trust, however, that Laws which deprive us of every Blessing but a Soil that teems with the necessities of Life, and that Liberty which renders the enjoyment of them secure, will not relax our Vigour in their Defence.

We might here observe on the Cruelty and Inconsistency of those, who, while they publicly Brand us with reproachful and unworthy Epithets, endeavour to deprive us of the means of defence, by their Interposition with foreign Powers, and to deliver us to the lawless Ravages of a merciless Soldiery. But happily we are not without Resources; and though the timid and humiliating Applications of a Brash Ministry should prevail with foreign Nations, yet Industry, prompted by necessity, will not leave us without the necessary Supplies.

We could wish to go no further, and, not to wound the Ear of Humanity, leave untold those rigorous Acts of Oppression, which are daily exercised in the Town of Boston, did we not hope, that by disclaiming their Deeds and punishing the Perpetrators, you would shortly vindicate the Honour of the British Name, and re-establish the violated Laws of Justice.

That once populous, nourishing and commercial Town is now garrisoned by an Army sent not to protect, but to enslave its Inhabitants. The civil (government is overturned, and a military Despotism erected upon its Ruins. Without Law, without Right, Powers are assumed unknown to the Constitution. Private Property is unjustly invaded. The Inhabitants, daily subjected to the Licentiousness of the Soldiery, are forbid to remove in Defiance of their natural Rights, in Violation of the most solemn Compacts. Or if, after long and wearisome Solicitation, a Pass is procured, their Edicts are detained, and even those who are most favoured, have no Alternative but Poverty or Slavery. The Distress of many thousand People, wantonly deprived of the Necessaries of Life, is a Subject, on which we would not wish to enlarge.

Yet, we cannot but observe, that a British Fleet (unjustified even by Acts of your Legislature) are daily employed in ruining our Commerce, seizing our Ships, and depriving whole Communities of their daily Bread. Nor will a Regard for your Honour permit us to be silent, while British Troops sully your Glory, by Actions, which the most inveterate Enmity will not palliate among civilized Nations, the wanton and unnecessary Destruction of Charlestown, a large, ancient, and once populous Town, just before deserted by its Inhabitants, who had fled to avoid the Fury of your Soldiery.

If you still retain those Sentiments of Compassion, by which Britons have ever been distinguished, if the Humanity, which tempered the Valour of our common Ancestors, has not degenerated into Cruelty, you will lament the Miseries of their Descendants.

To what are we to attribute this Treatment? If to any secret Principle of the Constitution, let it be mentioned; let us learn, that the Government, we have long revered, is not without its Defects, and that while it gives Freedom to a Part, it necessarily enslaves the Remainder of the Empire. If such a Principle exists, why for Ages has it ceased to operate? Why at this Time is it called into Action? Can no Reason be assigned for this Conducts Or must it be resolved into the wanton Exercise of arbitrary Power? And shall the Descendants of Britons tamely submit to this?—No, Sirs! We never will, while we revere the Memory of our gallant and virtuous Ancestors, we never can surrender those glorious Privileges, for which they fought, bled, and conquered. Admit that your Fleets could destroy our Towns, and ravage our Sea-Coasts; these are inconsiderable Objects, Things of no Moment to Men, whose Bosoms glow with the Ardor of Liberty. We can retire beyond the Reach of your Navy, and, without any sensible Diminution of the Necessaries of Life, enjoy a Luxury, which from that Period you will want—the Luxury of being Free.

We know the Force of your Arms, and was it called forth in the Cause of Justice and your Country, we might dread the Exertion: but will Britons fight under the Banners of Tyranny ? Will they counteract the Labours, and disgrace the Victories of their Ancestors? Will they forge Chains for their Posterity ? If they descend to this unworthy Task, will their Swords retain their Edge, their Arms their accustomed Vigour ? Britons can never become the Instruments of Oppression, till they lose the Spirit of Freedom, by which alone they are invincible.

Our Enemies charge us with Sedition. In what does it consist? In our Refusal to submit to unwarrantable Acts of injustice and Cruelty ? If so, shew us a Period in your History, in which you have not been equally Seditious.

We are accused of aiming at Independence; but how is this Accusation supported? By the Allegations of your Ministers, not by our Actions. Abused, insulted, and contemned, what Steps have we pursued to obtain Redress ? We have carried our dutiful Petitions to the Throne. We have applied to your Justice for Relief. We have retrenched our Luxury, and withheld our Trade.

The Advantages of our Commerce were designed as a Compensation for your Protection: When you ceased to protect, for what were we to compensate ?

What has been the Success of our Endeavours ? The Clemency of our Sovereign is unhappily diverted; our Petitions are treated with Indignity; our Prayers answered by Insults. Our Application to you remains unnoticed, and leaves us the melancholy Apprehension of your wanting either the Will, or the Power, to assist us.

Even under these Circumstances, what Measures have we taken that betray a Desire of Independence ? Have we called in the Aid of those foreign Powers, who are the Rivals of your Grandeur? When your Troops were few and defenseless, did we take Advantage of their Distress and expel them our Towns? Or have we permitted them to fortify, to receive new Aid, and to acquire additional Strength?

Let not your Enemies and ours persuade you, that in this we were influenced by Fear or any other unworthy Motive. The Lives of Britons are still dear to us. They are the Children of our Parents, and an uninterrupted Intercourse of mutual Benefits had knit the Bonds of Friendship. When Hostilities were commenced, when on a late Occasion we were wantonly attacked by your Troops, though we repelled their Assaults and returned their Blows, yet we lamented the Wounds they obliged us to give; nor have we yet learned to rejoice at a Victory over Englishmen.

As we wish not to colour our Actions, or disguise our Thoughts, we shall, in the simple Language of Truth, avow the Measures we have pursued, the Motives upon which we have acted, and our future Designs.

When our late Petition to the Throne produced no other Effect than fresh Injuries, and Votes of your Legislature, calculated to justify every Severity; when your Fleets and your Armies were prepared to wrest from us our Property, to rob us of our Liberties or our Lives; when the hostile Attempts of General Gage evinced his Designs, we levied Armies for our Security and Defence. When the Powers vested in the Governor of Canada, gave us Reason to apprehend Danger from that Quarter; and we had frequent Intimations, that a cruel and savage Enemy was to be let loose upon the defenseless Inhabitants of our Frontiers; we took such Measures as Prudence dictated, as Necessity will justify. We possessed ourselves of Crown Point and Ticonderoga. Yet give us leave most solemnly to assure you, that we have not yet lost

Sight of the Object we have ever had in View, a Reconciliation with you on constitutional Principles, and a Restoration of that friendly Intercourse, which, to the Advantage of both, we till lately maintained.

The Inhabitants of this Country apply themselves chiefly to Agriculture and Commerce. As their Fashions and Manners are similar to yours, your Markets must afford them the Conveniences and Luxuries, for which they exchange the Produce of their Labours. The Wealth of this extended Continent centres with you; and our Trade is so regulated as to be subservient only to your Interest. You are too reasonable to expect, that by Taxes (in Addition to this) we should contribute to your Expence; to believe, after diverting the Fountain, that the Streams can flow with unabated Force.

It has been said, that we refuse to submit to the Restrictions on our Commerce. From whence is this Inference drawn? Not from our Words, we have repeatedly declared the Contrary; and we again profess our Submission to the several Acts of Trade and Navigation, passed before the Year 1763, trusting, nevertheless, in the Equity and Justice of Parliament, that such of them as, upon cool and impartial Consideration, shall appear to have imposed unnecessary or grievous Restrictions, will, at some happier Period, be repealed or altered. And we cheerfully consent to the Operation of such Acts of the British Parliament, as shall be restrained to the Regulation of our external Commerce, for the Purpose of securing the commercial Advantages of the whole Empire to the Mother Country, and the commercial Benefits of its respective Members; excluding every Idea of taxation internal or external, for raising a Revenue on the Subjects in America, without their Consent.

It is alledged that we contribute nothing to the common Defence. To this we answer, that the Advantages which Great Britain receives from the Monopoly of our Trade, far exceed our Proportion of the Expence necessary for that Purpose. But should these Advantages be inadequate thereto, let the Restrictions on our Trade be removed, and we will cheerfully contribute such Proportion when constitutionally required.

It is a fundamental Principle of the British Constitution, that every Man should have at least a Representative Share in the Formation of those Laws, by which he is bound. Were it otherwise, the Regulation of our internal Police by a British Parliament, who are and ever will be unacquainted with our local Circumstances, must be always inconvenient, and frequently oppressive, working our wrong, without yielding any possible Advantage to you.

A Plan of Accommodation (as it has been absurdly called) has been proposed by your Ministers to our respective Assemblies. Were this Proposal free from every other Objection, but that which arises from the Time of the Offer, it would not be unexceptionable. Can Men deliberate with the Bayonet at their Breast, Can they treat with Freedom, while their Towns are sacked; when daily instances of Injustice and Oppression disturb the slower Operations of Reason ?

If this Proposal is really such as you would offer and we accept, why was it delayed till the Nation was put to useless expence, and we were reduced to our present melancholy Situation? If it holds forth nothing, why was it proposed Unless indeed to deceive you into a Belief, that we were unwilling to listen to any Terms of Accommodation. But what is submitted to our Considerations We contend for the Disposal of our Property. We are told that our Demand is unreasonable, that our Assemblies may indeed collect our Money, but that they must at the same Time offer, not what your Exigencies or ours may require, but so much as shall be deemed sufficient to satisfy the Desires of a Minister and enable him to provide for Favourites and Dependants. A Recurrence to your own Treasury will convince you how little of the Money already extorted from us has been applied to the Relief of your Burthens. To suppose that we would thus grasp the Shadow and give up the Substance, is adding Insult to Injuries.

We have nevertheless again presented an humble and dutiful Petition to our Sovereign, and to remove every imputation of Obstinacy, have requested his Majesty to direct some Mode, by which the united Applications of his faithful Colonists may be improved into a happy and permanent Reconciliation. We are willing to treat on such Terms as can alone render an accommodation lasting, and we flatter ourselves that our pacific Endeavours will be attended with a removal of ministerial Troops, and a repeal of those Laws, of the Operation of which we complain, on the one part, and a disbanding of our Army, and a dissolution of our commercial Associations, on the other.

Yet conclude not from this that we propose to surrender our Property into the Hands of your Ministry, or vest your Parliament with a Power which may terminate in our Destruction. The great Bulwarks of our Constitution we have desired to maintain by every temperate, by every peaceable Means; but your Ministers (equal Foes to British and American freedom) have added to their former Oppressions an Attempt to reduce us by the Sword to a base and abject submission. On the Sword, therefore, we are compelled to rely for Protection. Should Victory declare in your Favour, yet Men trained to Arms from their Infancy, and animated by the Love of Liberty, will afford neither a cheap or easy Conquest. Of this at least we are assured, that our Struggle will be glorious, our Success certain; since even in Death we shall find that Freedom which in Life you forbid us to enjoy.

Let us now ask what Advantages are to attend our Reduction? the Trade of a ruined and desolate Country is always inconsiderable, its Revenue trifling; the Expence of subjecting and retaining it in subjection certain and inevitable. What then remains but the gratification of an ill-judged Pride, or the hope of rendering us subservient to designs on your Liberty.

Soldiers who have sheathed their Swords in the Bowels of their American Brethren, will not draw them with more reluctance against you. When too late you may lament the loss of that freedom, which we exhort you, while still in your Power, to preserve.

On the other hand, should you prove unsuccessful; should that Connexion, which we most ardently wish to maintain, be dissolved; should your Ministers exhaust your Treasures and waste the Blood of your Countrymen in vain Attempts on our Liberty; do they not deliver you, weak and defenseless, to your natural Enemies?

Since then your Liberty must be the price of your Victories; your Ruin, of your Defeat: What blind fatality can urge you to a pursuit destructive of all that Britons hold dear?

If you have no regard to the Connexion that has for Ages subsisted between us; if you have forgot the Wounds we have received fighting by your Side for the extension of the Empire; if our Commerce is not an object below your consideration; if Justice and Humanity have lost their influence on your Hearts; still Motives are not wanting to excite your Indignation at the Measures now pursued; Your Wealth, your Honour, your Liberty are at Stake.

Notwithstanding the Distress to which we are reduced, we sometimes forget our own Afflictions, to anticipate and sympathize in yours. We grieve that rash and inconsiderate Councils should precipitate the destruction of an Empire, which has been the envy and admiration of Ages, and call God to witness! that we would part with our Property, endanger our Lives, and sacrifice every thing but Liberty, to redeem you from ruin.

A Cloud hangs over your Heads and ours; 'ere this reaches you, it may probably burst upon us; let us then (before the remembrance of former Kindness is obliterated) once more repeat those Appellations which are ever grateful in our Ears; let us entreat Heaven to avert our Ruin, and the Destruction that threatens our Friends, Brethren and Countrymen, on the other side of the Atlantic.

Ordered, That the Address be published and a number of them sent by Mr Penn to England.

The Letter to the Lord Mayor, &c., being read again and debated, was approved, and is as follows:

MY LORD,

Permitt the Delegates of the people of twelve antient colonies, to pay ye Lordship, and the very respectable body of which you are head, the just tribute of gratitude and thanks, for the virtuous and unsolicited resentment you have strewn to the violated rights of a free people. The city of London, my Lord, having in all ages, approved itself the patron of liberty, and the support of just government, against lawless tyranny and oppression, cannot fail to make us deeply sensible of the powerful aid, our cause must receive from such advocates. A cause, my Lord, worthy the support of the first city in the world, as it involves the fate of a great continent, and threatens to shake the foundations of a nourishing, and, until lately, a happy empire.

North America, my Lord, wishes most ardently for a lasting connection with Great Britain on terms of just and equal liberty; less than which generous minds will not offer, nor brave and free ones be willing to receive.

A cruel war has at length been opened age us, and whilst we prepare to defend ourselves like the descendants of Britons, we still hope that the mediation of wise and good citizens, will at length prevail over despotism, and restore harmony and peace, on permanent principles, to an oppressed and divided empire.

We have the honor to be, my Lord,

With great esteem, yr Lordship's

Faithful friends and fellow-subjects.

Signed by order of the Congress,

JOHN HANCOCK

President.

Ordered, That the above Letter be fairly transcribed, and signed by the president, and sent by Mr Penn.

The Committee appointed to prepare a letter to Mr Penn and the Colony Agents, brot in the same, which being read was approved:

GENTLEMEN,

The perseverance of the British ministry in their unjust and cruel system of colony administration, has occasioned the meeting of another Congress.

We have again appealed to the justice of our sovereign for protection age the destruction which his Ministers meditate for his American subjects. This Petition to his Majesty you will please, Gentlemen, to present to the King with all convenient expedition, after which we desire it may be given to the public. We likewise send you our second application to the equity and interest of our fellow subjects in G B. and also a Declaration setting forth the causes of our taking up arms: Both which we wish may be immediately put to press, and communicated as universally as possible.

The Congress entertain the highest sense of the wise and worthy interposition of the Lord Mayor and Livery of London, in favour of injured America. They have expressed this, their sense, in a letter to his Lordship and the livery, which we desire may be presented in the manner most agreeable to that respectable body.

You will oblige us, Gentlemen, by giving the most early information to the Congress, and to the speakers of our respective assemblies, of your proceeding in this business, and such further intelligence as you may judge to be of importance to America in this great contest.

We are, with great regard, gentlemen, yr most obedient and very humble serve

By order of the Congress,

[JOHN HANCOCK,

Pres.]

Ordered, That the above be fairly transcribed, and to be signed by the press, and then by him sent under cover? with the petition to the lying, and address to the Inhabitants of G B. and letter to the Lo Mayor of London to R[ichard] Penn, Esqr and to request him, in behalf of the Congress, to join with the Colony Agents in presenting the petition to the Kings

Order of the day put off, and adjourned till Monday at 9 o'Clock.

Source: Archive of Historic Documents, Georgia Institute of Technology