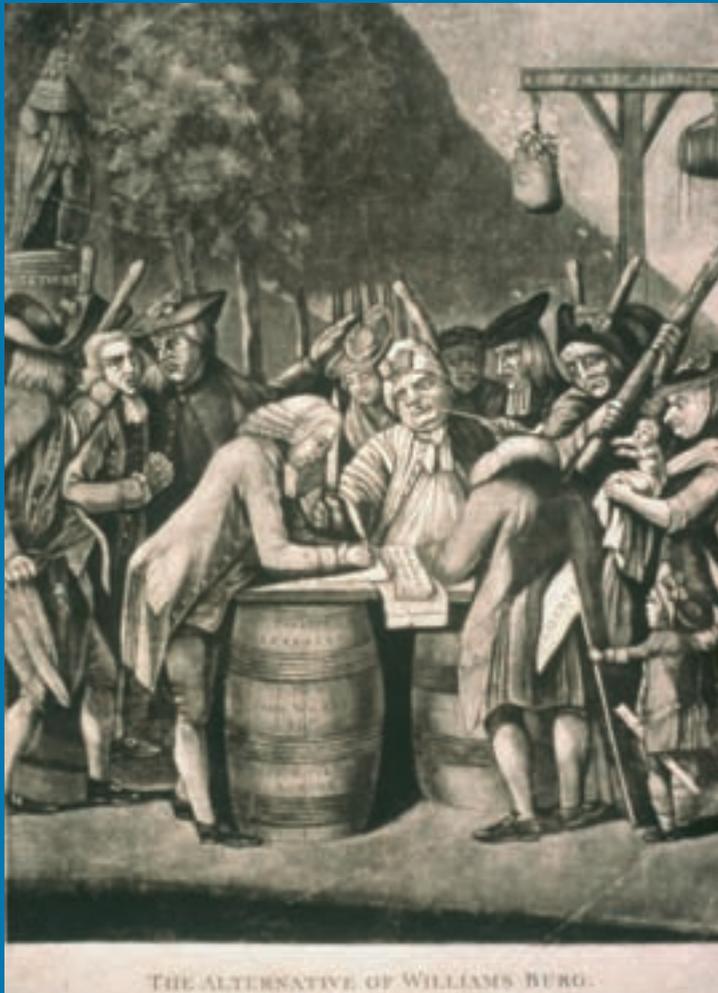


Hermann Wellenreuther (ed.)

The Revolution of the People

Thoughts and Documents
on the Revolutionary Process
in North America
1774 – 1776



Universitätsverlag Göttingen

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Thoughts and Documents on the
Revolutionary Process in North America
1774-1776

with contributions

by

Maria Gehrke

Marion Stange

Hermann Wellenreuther



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Picture: "The Alternative of Williams Burg" 1775, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The title of the engraving is „The Alternative of Williamsburg“. It was produced by Philip Dawe and published in London on February 16, 1775 by Robert Sayer. The engraving represents the first satirical reaction in England to the association of the Continental Congress and its adoption by many of the colonists – in this case those at Williamsburg. The texts on the engraving read: 1 on the barrel: „Tobacco / A Present / For / John Wilkes Sq^r / Lord Mayor of / London“; 2nd on the two sheets of the barrel: “The Resolves of the Congress” and below “Non-Importation”. The flag carried by the child has the inscription “Liberty”. On the crossbeam in the background the text reads: „A cure for the refractory“. Under the statue the text is “Botetour” representing Narbonne Berkeley, 4th Baron of Botetourt, Governour of Virginia from 1768 to 1770. The statue was erected in 1773 in Williamsburg. The engraving is reproduced with the kind permission of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

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Maria Gehrke
Marion Stange
Hermann Wellenreuther

1. Introduction

What is Revolutionary in the American Revolution?

I.

Probably with the exception of the Civil War no other period in US-American history has received so much attention as the American Revolution. It seems that not only all heroes and anti-heroes but also all sniffles have found their chroniclers. A bibliography of the historiography of this truly vital epoch published at the time of the bicentennial covered two thick volumes;¹ and in the period since then no year has passed by that did not experience the publication of a number of substantial monographs and a plethora of articles that dealt with particular events of the American Revolution.

A number of battles have been fought. Back in the 1960s I grew up with the battle about the borderlines of the revolutionary era. Did it, as Lawrence Henry Gipson maintained, begin at the time of the Peace of Aix-La-Chapelle or, as others opined, with the Peace of Paris in 1763 – a view shared at least in retrospect by a significant number of Revolutionaries?² The argument for 1748 had some interesting implications. It linked the revolutionary process to the reform plans hatched by British politicians like the new president of the Board of Trade, George, earl Dunk-Halifax. The reforms were designed to create a new British Empire in which the imperial government controlled colonial politics much more tightly. The thesis about the beginning of the revolutionary period in 1748 shifted the emphasis from the Stamp Act as a meas-

¹ Cf. Ronald M. GEPHART (comp.), *Revolutionary America, 1763-1789: A Bibliography*, 2 vols., Washington, DC 1984. I will refrain from annotating my statements in this short essay. Readers interested in particulars are invited to consult any of the numerous general histories of the American Revolution or, should they read German, my *Ausbildung und Neubildung. Die Geschichte Nordamerikas vom Ausgang des 17. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ausbruch der Amerikanischen Revolution 1775 (= Geschichte Nordamerikas in atlantischer Perspektive von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Eine Darstellung in sieben Bänden*, ed. N. FINZSCH, U. LEHMKUHL, H. WELLENREUTHER, vol. 2). Münster and Hamburg 2001.

² Lawrence Henry GIPSON, *The British Empire Before the American Revolution*, 15 vols. New York 1939-1970.

ure that arbitrarily taxed the American colonies and the efforts to enforce the Acts of Trade and Navigation with the help of the British Navy to a reform package that had found at least the support of a substantial number of colonial politicians. This shift directed attention to a period where many colonial politicians felt that colonial egotism coupled with the weak position of the English Crown in America endangered the British Empire's chances in the inevitable showdown with the arch-rival France that all were convinced would soon be staged.

From Lawrence Henry Gipson's perspective the English government and monarch did not plan to enslave the North Americans but reform the Empire and make it stronger. In its process the North Americans would be freed from the French threat. That colonists would contribute to such an achievement was but fair considering the profits they would reap from the strengthened empire. For Gipson, American reactions to the Stamp Act and the Townshend duties were unreasonable as well as motivated by selfish concerns. For Gipson as well as for Massachusetts' Governor Thomas Hutchinson, colonies and Britain were united in a relationship in which the mother country provided protection for which the grateful colonies would make adequate contributions to the wellbeing of the mother country.

The imperialists' school prompted others to subject colonial political behaviour and thoughts to a closer analysis and seek the "ideological origins of the American Revolution" as well as the "the origins of Colonial politics".³ Their inquiries resulted in another important shift: Historians now argued that the colonists' political concepts and behaviour were propelled by the wholesale rejection of executive corruption of Royal governors that was primarily fuelled by Commonwealth ideology and Republican thought derived from Florentine political theories transmitted via James Harrington to North America and by increased political consciousness in the colonies.⁴ Feeble efforts by a handful of historians who pointed out that elitist political thought and behaviour represented but one root for revolutionary behaviour, while material interests of workers, craftsmen, and mechanics in the colonial towns represented another powerful cause for revolutionary behaviour were brushed aside.⁵ Increasingly republican

³ Bernard BAILYN, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, MA 1967; THE SAME, *The Origins of American Politics*. New York 1968; Caroline ROBBINS, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealth Man. Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstance of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II Until the War with the Thirteen Colonies*. Cambridge, MA 1959.

⁴ BAILYN, *Ideological Origins*; ROBBINS, *Eighteenth-Century Commonwealth Man*; J. G. A. POCOCK, *The Machiavellian Moment. Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton, NJ 1975.

⁵ Cf. Gary B. NASH, *The Urban Crucible. Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, MA 1979; Stoughton LYND, *The Tenant Rising at Livingston Manor*. In: *The New York Historical Society Quarterly* 48, 1964, p. 163-177. Edward COUNTRYMAN, *A People in Revolution. The American Revolution and Political Society in New York*. Baltimore, MD 1981, and the highly influential collection of essays by Alfred F. YOUNG (ed.), *The American Revolution. Explorations*

concepts, be they derived from Machiavelli in Florence, from James Harrington or John Locke, as well as revolutionary ideas were identified as the engines that drove the revolutionary processes after 1765. With the publication of Gordon S. Wood's *The Creation of the American Republic*⁶ that perception of the revolutionary process became the received orthodox wisdom.

This concept of the American Revolution has strengths as well as weaknesses. To its strengths belong first that they offer an intellectual framework within which the revolutionary documents from the writings of John Dickinson and Thomas Jefferson to the Declaration of Independence can be embedded and interpreted within a European intellectual tradition. Second, linking American Revolutionary thought to British and European intellectual traditions helped to balance earlier nationalist interpretations of the American Revolution, that dated back to George Bancroft's writings. The weaknesses of seeking the origins of the American Revolution exclusively in European and British intellectual traditions are equally obvious, although only few historians have hitherto focused on them. First, joining European intellectual concepts to North American reality tended to ignore the fact that both were dependent on very specific social contexts. To name but one problem: The term "freeholder" has dramatically different meanings within seventeenth-century political thought and mid-eighteenth-century American political concepts, simply because land was very expensive in England and Europe but cheap and available for most in North America.⁷ Second, this intellectual approach to the revolutionary process has sidestepped the issue of how colonists, intellectuals as well as craftsmen, clergy as well as farmers, became revolutionaries. The assumption that they miraculously all had read the key pamphlets against British policy, imbibed its implications, and then had spontaneously turned out to support the measures against the British legislation has been made by implication but no scholar has seriously argued that this represents the essence of the revolutionary process. While at least for parts of the urban population such a case could be made, accomplishing it for the rural freemen and freeholders has not even been attempted.

in the History of American Radicalism. De Kalb, IL 1976; I have discussed some of these concepts in Hermann WELLENREUTHER, *Labor in the Era of the American Revolution: A Discussion of Recent Concepts and Theories*. In: *Labor History* 22, 1981, p. 573-600, which was answered by, Gary B. NASH, Billy G. SMITH, , Dirk HOERDER, *Laboring Americans and the American Revolution*. In: *Labor History*, 24, 1983, p. 414-439.

⁶ Gordon S. WOOD, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*. Chapel Hill, NC 1969.

⁷ I have discussed these differences at some length in Hermann WELLENREUTHER, *A View of the Socio-Economic Structures of England and the British Colonies on the Eve of the American Revolution*. In: Erich ANGERMANN, Marie-Luise FRINGS, Hermann WELLENREUTHER (eds.), *New Wine in Old Skins. A Comparative View of Socio-Political Structures and Values Affecting the American Revolution*. Stuttgart 1976, p. 14 – 40.

In order to lend elitist revolutionary thought the force to sway the colonial population and turn good guys into rabid revolutionaries, it would be necessary to show that key pamphlets reached the farms as well as the plantations and were read by and to those who shaped rural political opinion. Aside from simple problems posed by the infrastructure, the distributive systems for print media, the literacy level at least in the middle and Southern colonies would probably have seriously limited the effects these writings had outside colonial urban centres. In short: The “intellectual origins of the American Revolution” certainly help us to understand the concepts that guided elite Revolutionary politicians and authors, but they utterly fail to explain the behaviour of the common man.

It could be argued that the Revolution was an inevitable process regardless of whether the common man would have shared its aims. Such an argument suggests that colonial political structures were totally divested from its larger populist basis and were able to function without the cooperation of freemen and freeholders. The many studies of colonial political rhetoric as well as of elections and patterns of communication between electors, elected, and legislative institutions clearly speak against such an assumption. Nor is it possible to distill the debate between England and the colonies into an elitist intellectual framework as the intellectual-origins-concept suggests. From the beginning of the acrimonious debate between England and North America political strategies in the colonies consciously employed mass demonstrations to force concessions. Of equal importance were trade boycotts whose economic effects could only be achieved with the wholesale cooperation of the craftsmen, the farmer, the day labourer, and their wives. There is precious little intellectual debate in these vital processes between 1765 and 1771.

If there was little intellectual debate that propelled urban mechanics and workers to action what did propel them? Some historians have suggested that poor working conditions, exploitation, and poverty were the agents that lured the common man into the street. Conscious of their own interests and prescient of what decades later Karl Marx would declare to the world they fought their own socialist battle within the American Revolution. I have elsewhere voiced serious doubts about this interpretation partially because at times of boycotts the profiteers were the same groups these historians described as the impoverished crowds of urban societies.⁸

Recently, Timothy Hall Breen has suggested an alternative solution that steers clear of imagined social needs but is solidly grounded in contemporary consumption culture. Breen argued in his *Marketplace of Revolution* that the common folks of North America were mobilized and radicalized in the trade boycott movements. For these, so he argued, not only touched the life of the elite, but more narrowly affected that of

⁸ cf. n. 5.

the urban and rural freemen and freeholders, their wives, and their families. Mobilized and united in a new politicised consumption culture they became vital agents in a reshaped political world that transcended elitist politics and linked its essence with the material interests of all colonists.

Breen's results change the framework for much of the work that has been written on revolutionary activities in colonial cities.⁹ For now the crowds are not only the result of the skilful manipulation and manoeuvres of a handful of Revolutionary politicians like Gadsden in Charlestown and McDougall or Sears in New York. Instead those who marched in Boston's, New York's, Philadelphia's, and Charleston's streets, who tarred and feathered defenders of English politics and ostracised breakers of the boycott acted on their own convictions as consumers of homemade goods. Not only "tea" or "stamped paper" became political arguments but homemade furniture or homespun garments, too, became pre-national political symbols that expressed pride and a new self-consciousness. Such an argument has dramatic consequences for our understanding of the nature of the American Revolution: If this new work holds up to further scrutiny as I believe it will it will substitute a rather simple explanatory model of what is revolutionary in the American Revolution with a rather complex one.

Before I continue this line of argument I have to explain what I mean with the term "revolutionary". To me the term implies first and foremost a set of intellectual constructs as well as simple straightforward slogans and terms. Imagine a crowd that carried on large banners Thomas Jefferson's *Summary Rights of the British Colonies* down Philadelphia's Market Street. In March or April 1776 they more likely shouted "down with the crowned ruffian", a phrase Tom Paine had coined in his *Common Sense*.¹⁰ Equally unlikely is that demonstrators would chant passages from John Dickinson's disquisitions as "Pennsylvania Farmer", when they could more convincingly shout the sterling phrase "Britons never, never, never will be slaves" from the song *Rule Britannia*.¹¹ Revolutionary political culture, in other words, rests on the longwinded complex argument but derives its revolutionary force, its denunciatory vehemence, and its fo-

⁹ Richard Alan RYERSON, *The Revolution is Now Begun. The Radical Committees of Philadelphia, 1765-1776*. Philadelphia, PA 1978; Charles G. STEFFEN, *The Mechanics of Baltimore. Workers and Politics in the Age of Revolution 1763 – 1812*. Urbana, IL 1984; Roger J. CHAMPAGNE, *Alexander McDougall and the American Revolution in New York*. Schenectady, NY 1975; Dirk HOERDER, *Crowd Action in Revolutionary Massachusetts, 1765-1780*. New York 1977; THE SAME, *Boston Leaders and Boston Crowds 1765-1776*. In: Alfred F. YOUNG (ed.) *The American Revolution. Explorations in the History of American Radicalism*. De Kalb, IL 1976, p. 235-271; E. Stanley GODBOLD, Jr., Robert H. WOODY, *Christopher Gadsden and the American Revolution*. Knoxville, TN 1982.

¹⁰ Thomas PAINE, *Common Sense; Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, Philadelphia 1776*: In: Philip S. FONER (ed.), *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*. 2 Bde., New York 1945, vol. 1, p. 3-46, here p. 16.

¹¹ The song *Rule Britannia* had been composed on the occasion of George II anniversary in 1740. The text had been composed by James Thomson, the melody by Thomas Arne, Claudia SCHNURMANN, *Vom Inselreich zur Weltmacht. Die Entwicklung des englischen Weltreiches vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart, 2001, p. 153.

cus from the simple, rhetorically catchy slogans that were easy to remember. It is, if this simple definition holds, simply not sufficient to define the intellectual underpinnings. Of equal importance is isolating those factors that produced denunciatory vehemence, focused issues as well as people's perspectives, and energized them into efforts necessary to sustain a revolutionary movement.

II.

The three essays in this little collection as well as the documents are the results of our dissatisfaction with the explanatory models of the revolutionary process between the passing of the intolerable acts and the first meeting of the Continental Congress and the Declaration of Independence. While I tried to understand the activities of the Committees of Inspection and Observation and its larger implications, Marion Stange concentrated all her energy on the texts of the Associations, their meanings and their significance for the revolutionary process, and Maria Gehrke systematically collected and analyzed the advertisements inserted into New England newspapers by Committees of Inspections and Observations. Some time early this year it occurred to the editor that it would not make much sense to just publish the essays without the supporting evidence. We had, however, by then collected more material than could have been conveniently included in one handy volume. I collected fifteen protocols of Committees of Inspection and Observation – only two of which have thus far been printed. They alone would fill a fat volume. Maria Gehrke on the other hand had by then diligently searched all the New England newspapers that had survived the ravages of the times and were available in Germany. Again, reprinting the adds in all of them would have taken up more space than we thought sensible. Marion Stange had put together additional material designed to buttress her thesis. In the end we agreed on the compromise published here. It will provide what we hope will be accepted as sound analysis together with enough supporting evidence to enable the readers to form their own judgments.

The general thesis of what follows is simple: We believe that the revolutionary movement in the years between 1774 and 1776 was the work of the Committees of Inspection and Observation; each township and each county had one; they all were watchdogs not only over the Association agreed to by the Continental Congress in October 1774, but quickly expanded their concerns to most other moral, political and ideological fields relevant in the struggle with the mother country. Our analysis runs on two levels: In examining the semantics of the texts we will suggest the contents of what we believe is the essence of revolutionary thought watered down from the high scriptures to the man in the street. No one was allowed to ignore the meanings of what these Committees held to be the essence of the struggle with England and the

essence of what they termed “the liberties of America”. All had to sign, to abide by and live by the Association and if they broke the rules they were declared “enemy of American liberty”. Focusing on the texts of the associations themselves Marion Stange searches and finds in them “the language of patriotism”. On a second level my contribution describes the decisions of the Committees and their implications for the spreading of revolutionary thought and rhetoric on the one hand and dividing American society into supporters of and enemies to what they called American liberties. This not only shaped revolutionary culture but, equally important, infringed on key concepts of American culture of rights. The third essay approaches the same topic from the perspective of the sermons delivered between 1774 and 1776 and beyond that in the year 1783. Comparing the protocols of the Committees of Inspection and Observation, their advertisements in the papers and their other activities with these sermons reveal the supplementary nature of both. The committees and the clergy share key concepts; at the same time the clergy support the revolutionary process with a vision not only of English politics but, more importantly, with the future of the America as the great nation to be.

The essays suggest a new understanding of the American Revolution. The focus on the Committee of Inspection and Observation reveals that the revolutionary process was not only carried on by the colonial elite and the urban mechanics and labourers but was essentially in town and country the concern of *all* colonists. No one could escape the attention of these committees, no one could sidestep the question whether he should sign the association or declare himself loyal to his king. No one was outside the supervision of the Committee; and if she or he bought, sold or drank tea, denounced the revolutionary cause, defended the King’s government he or she was hailed before the committee and made either sign a recantation or declared “an enemy”. The committees enforced the decisions of the Continental and Provincial Congresses, bent the rights to allow them to persecute Tories or Loyalists, enforce the new morality and virtue as part of revolutionary ideology and kept an eye on all other practical concerns that had been the focus of the collapsed colonial governments. They as well as the clergy provided guidelines as well as the hope so necessary for people living in a world where old values crumbled before the onslaught of new visions. Both, the texts of the associations, the activities of the Committees of Inspection and Observation and the sermons provide us with a richer understanding of the nature and quality of the revolutionary process.

Part I The Revolutionary Process, 1774 - 1776

2. Associations, The People, Committee of Observation and Inspection and the Culture of Rights, 1774 – 1776

1. *Prolegomena*

The 1770s were extraordinary times in British North America and historians have grappled ever since to understand them. Brilliant studies of the intellectual underpinnings of the times, of the ideological origins in particular, have enriched our knowledge.¹ In depth analyses of committees of correspondence and other groups and committees in towns all over America have helped us to understand the nature of “revolutionary politics” both on the local,² colonial³ and trans-colonial⁴ level. At the same time this excellent scholarship has enhanced our awareness of the deficiencies of our understanding and knowledge.

The most fundamental problem that keeps intriguing scholars is the nature of the involvement of “the people” in the Revolutionary process. Is it, as current scholarship still suggests, really true that “the people” are only visible through their representatives in the Provincial Congresses and the Continental Congress? That they participated only through electing delegates to these congresses? Or that they spoke only through the mouthpiece of a few brilliant authors like John Dickinson, John Adams, and

¹ cf. notes 3 and 6, and Paul A. RAHE, *Republics Ancient and Modern. Classical Republicanism and The American Revolution*. Chapel Hill, NC 1992; Richard M. GUNMERE, *The American Colonial Mind & the Classical Tradition. Essays in Comparative Culture*. Cambridge, MA 1963; Morton WHITE, *The Philosophy of the American Revolution*. New York 1978; Frank KELLETER, *Amerikanische Aufklärung. Sprachen der Rationalität im Zeitalter der Revolution*. Paderborn 2002.

² Richard D. BROWN, *Revolutionary Politics in Massachusetts. The Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Towns, 1772 – 1774*. New York 1976; Richard A. RYERSON, *The Revolution is Now Begun. The Radical Committees of Philadelphia, 1765-1776*. Philadelphia, PA 1978.

³ Stephen E. PATTERSON, *Political Parties in Revolutionary Massachusetts*. Madison, WI 1973; Larry R. GERLACH, *Prologue to Independence. New Jersey in the Coming of the Revolution*. New Brunswick, NJ 1976; Edward COUNTRYMAN, *A People in Revolution. The American Revolution and Political Society in New York 1760-1790*. Baltimore, MD 1981; Woody HOLTON, *Forced Founders. Indians, Debtors, Slaves & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*. Chapel Hill, NC 1999.

⁴ Merrill JENSEN, *The Founding of a Nation. A History of the American Revolution, 1763-1776*. New York 1968; Robert MIDDLEKAUFF, *The Glorious Cause. The American Revolution, 1763-1789*. Oxford 1982.

Thomas Jefferson and that what we consider “revolutionary” was essentially an “intellectual” process? What did “the people” know – beyond what we read in newspapers and pamphlets? Timothy Hall Breen has brilliantly suggested that goods carried political meanings to the women and men in the streets, townships, villages, and frontier huts.⁵ Breen’s study stops in 1774; only one other study deals with the role of the “people” in the crucial period from May 1774 until the first military clashes in April 1775 at Lexington and Concord. The author argues forcefully for the crucial impact of the “coercive Acts” on quickening the revolutionary process;⁶ he at the same time focuses on the important role of local committees as enforcing agencies of not only the boycott of trade but also law and order in the colonies.⁷ But even in this study “the people” are visible only through their committees; what “the people” thought remained a mystery; next to nothing is known about “the people” as actors in the exciting time between April 1775 and July 1776.

In recent years scholars have asked what people read and how they read and coped with it. Fascinating theories about the meaning of signs, of pauses in texts abound.⁸ A simpler question that precedes these theories will inform the argument of this paper: Did texts exist that related to the revolutionary process that all colonists had to read, cope with, and understand? And if so, which messages did these texts transport, what meanings did they have and what were the consequences of their existence? How did these texts affect the revolutionary process and how did it affect the lives of the people? My discussion of these problems will be exclusively based on sources composed or at least approved of by inhabitants of towns, counties or colonies or their elected representatives. In discussing these problems I will suggest new approaches to the age old problem of the role of “the people” in the revolutionary process; I will conclude that the years 1774 – 1776 are meaningful because in these years a new people and a new nation were born.

2. The collapse of colonial governments

In 1774 and 1775 all the colonies were faced with the same problems: The politics of the English government and the collapse of the colonial governments. On 24 December 1774 Virginia’s governor curtly noted in his letter to Lord Dartmouth: “I can as-

⁵ Timothy H. BREEN, *The Marketplace of Revolution. How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*. Princeton, NJ 2004.

⁶ David AMMERMAN, *In the Common Cause. American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774*. Charlottesville, VA 1974.

⁷ AMMERMAN, *In the Common Cause*, chapter 8.

⁸ Jay FLIEGELMAN, *Declaring Independence. Jefferson, Natural Language, & the Culture of Performance*. Stanford, CA 1993; Pauline MAIER, *American Scripture. Making the Declaration of Independence*. New York 1997.

sure your Lordship, that it [i.e. government] is entirely disregarded, if not wholly overturned.”⁹ In early June 1775 Dunmore for his own security retired to a British navy vessel; Virginia was without an established executive from then on.¹⁰ Other colonies shared similar experiences: In mid-November 1774 New Hampshire’s governor wrote Lord Dartmouth: “I cannot flatter myself with any reasonable hopes of the legal establishment of powers of Government in this Province, until they are effectually restored in the Massachusetts Bay;“ governments both in New Hampshire and in Massachusetts were by then non-existent.¹¹ Even Georgia’s Governor Sir James Wright joined the chorus. In early June 1775 he complained to Thomas Gage that “... Governors had much better be in England than remain in America, and have the mortification to see their powers executed by Committees and mobs.”¹² Table 1 summarizes the data on the time sequence of the *formal* retreat of governors from the colonies. These dates should not be misunderstood as those on which the individual colonial governor lost all his power and influence. That had happened months earlier. It took the governors considerable time to accept defeat and retire to their private residences (John Penn, William Franklin) or take refuge in British navy ships anchored in Portsmouth, Boston, New York, or Charleston.

The collapse of colonial governments reflected the intention of colonists; certainly in Massachusetts the Whigs left no stone unturned to prevent the establishment of the government by Thomas Gage under the new acts passed by the English Parliament in the spring of 1774.¹³ In almost every colony courts were stopped: According to Dunmore by September 1774 “Courts of justice [are] expiring one after another; and where there is no other reason for not suffering them, it is, that the Judges of the Inferiour Courts, as well as the Justices, are under the Governour’s influence by the new Acts, though the said Acts don’t take place, as no juries till next month”.¹⁴ On the other hand colonists were afraid that the collapse of government and the closure of courts would cause chaos and disorder. In December 1774 the Provincial Congress of Maryland admonished its constituents to maintain “peace and good order”.¹⁵ At

⁹ Peter FORCE (ed.), *American Archives: Consisting Of a collection Of Authentick Records, State Papers, Debates, And Letters And Other Notices Of Publick Affairs ...*, 4th ser., 6 vols., Washington D.C., 1837-1853, vol. 1, p. 1061-1063 (cited henceforth as AA 4th Ser. vol. 1, p. 1061-1063)

¹⁰ AA 4th Ser. vol. 2, p. 1197.

¹¹ AA 4th Ser. vol. 1, p. 981-982.

¹² AA 4th Ser. vol. 2, p. 1110.

¹³ BROWN, *Revolutionary Politics in Massachusetts*, p. 199-210.

¹⁴ AA 4th Ser. vol. 1, p. 767-768 Dunmore to Dartmouth 2 September 1774, *ibid.*, p. 775, Report from Virginia Provincial Congress; resolves by the Provincial Congress of Virginia 25 March 1775, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 168-169; by the Provincial Congress of Maryland, 8-12 December 1774, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 1031-1032; by the Provincial Congress of South Carolina 11-17 January 1775, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 1113; by the Provincial Congress of New Hampshire 30 June 1775, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 1180

¹⁵ AA 4th Ser. vol. 1, p. 1031-1032.

Darien, Georgia, in early January 1775 the inhabitants appointed a Committee whose duty it was to seek the “preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals and private property”.¹⁶ For many other Provincial Congresses that of New Hampshire in January 1775 advised the inhabitants to “avoid all unnecessary law suits, and endeavour to settle disputes between you in the most amicable and least expensive manner.”¹⁷

Table 1

Formal retreat of Governors from the Colonies, 1775-1776

Colony	Type of colony	Governor	Date
Massachusetts	Charter	Thomas Gage	16 May '75
Virginia	Crown colony	Earl of Dunmore	8 June '75
North Carolina	Crown colony	Josiah Martin	10 July '75
New Hampshire	Crown colony	John Wentworth	24 August '75
Pennsylvania	Proprietor	John Penn	5 September '75
Delaware	Proprietor	John Penn	5 September '75
South Carolina	Crown colony	Lord William Campbell	15 September '75
New York	Crown colony	William Tryon	1. October '75
New Jersey	Crown colony	William Franklin	7 January '76
Georgia	Crown colony	Sir James Wright	11 February '76
Maryland	Proprietor	Robert Eden	16 April 76

The collapse of government and the stoppage of courts particularly for civil cases affected most colonists.¹⁸ Deprived of the usual administrative machinery while faced with the formidable demands and power of the home government, colonists began to resort to those pre-parliamentary institutions designed to recapture delegated powers and reform what they thought corruption had deformed: the association of the people. With the beginning of the parliamentary reform movement, forming “associations” had become the popular cry in England.¹⁹ Associations in both England and in Revolutionary North America represented compacts for a particular cause or political program. Signing the compact or, as it was usually called, “association”, implied, that the signer was bound to observe all stipulations of the “association”. The Continental

¹⁶ AA 4th Ser. vol. 1, p. 1136-1137. (12 January 1775)

¹⁷ AA 4th Ser. vol. 1, p. 1180-1182.

¹⁸ At least in some colonies criminal cases continued to be dealt with by courts at least as long as a Governor was signing writs for constituting courts of Oyer and Terminer. Such courts tried cases in New Jersey as late as September 22, 1775, when the Salem County Court of Oyer and Terminer sat, see “Minutes of the Salem County Court of Oyer and Terminer, September 22, 1775,” New Jersey State Archives, Court of Oyer and Terminer, Minutes, Salem County.

¹⁹ Eugene C. BLACK, *The Association: British Extraparliamentary Political Organization, 1769 – 1793*. Cambridge, MA 1963; Edmund S. MORGAN, *Inventing the People. The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America*. New York 1988, chaps. 9-10.

Congress agreed in late October 1774 on just such an “Association” to enforce the trade boycott against England as well as a new economic policy designed to foster the production and consumption of American-made products and enforce price discipline.²⁰ Usually this “Continental Association” is considered the only compact discussed in the revolutionary context. Only occasionally other associations are mentioned.

3. Forming Associations of the People, 1774-1776

Beginning with the formation of an Association by members of the Virginia House of Burgesses in late May 1774, between 1774 and late 1775 Associations were formed in every colony of British North America, except for Rhode Island:

Table 2

Associations May 1774 – July 1775

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	Apr.	May	June	July
VA	1			1					1						
MA		1													
NC						1						1		1	
PA						1							3		
CT									1	1					
GA									1						1
NH									1						
NY									1			1	1	1	
NJ													3		
DE													1	1	
SC														1	
MD															1
Total	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	5	1	0	2	8	4	2

These twenty-six associations fall into three distinct categories: Associations that were binding on the whole colony – that of the Virginia Convention from early August 1774²¹, of the North Carolina Provincial Congress of 3 April 1775²², that of the Provincial Congress of New York of 4 May 1775²³, that of the Provincial Congress of New Jersey of 31 May 1775²⁴, that of the Provincial Congress of South Carolina of 3 June 1775²⁵ and that of the Provincial Congress of Georgia of 13 July 1775²⁶ – those

²⁰Worthington Chauncey FORD (ed.), *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*. 34 vols., Washington, DC 1904-1937, vol. 1, p. 63-73, p. 115-121 (henceforth cited as JCC, vol. 1, p. 63-73, p. 115-121).

²¹ AA 4th Ser. vol. 1, p. 686-688.

²² AA 4th Ser., vol. 2 , p. 266-270

²³ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2 , p. 471

²⁴ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2 , p. 690.

²⁵ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2 , p. 897

that bound the inhabitants of a particular township or county and finally associations of particular social groups – a fine example is the “Association signed by Ladies of Edenton, North Carolina, October 25, 1775” or that of the butchers of Philadelphia of October 1774 who vowed until May 1775 not to purchase or butcher any “Ewe Mutton or Lamb”.²⁷

Of special interest are those Associations that claimed the attention of all the inhabitants of a colony. The Provincial congresses were quite clear: The text of the Association had to be distributed to all the townships, counties, and villages and submitted in various forms to all the people in the colony. The names of all colonists who refused to sign were to be returned by the Committees of Observation and Inspection to the Provincial Congresses.²⁸ These conditions suggest that the texts of these associations were most likely the only documents all male inhabitants of a colony had been familiar with. If nothing else, these documents informed them about the nature of the conflict, the issues at stake, the goals to be achieved and the future envisioned. These are the key texts of the revolutionary process. Enforcing them represents, so I will argue, the essence of what the revolutionary process and the creation of a revolutionary people is all about.

4. The arguments of the Associations

The arguments of the Associations reflect the developments between June 1774 and early autumn 1775: The first Association of more than local significance, that of the Boston Town Meeting of June 8, 1774, mirrors the preoccupation with the economic consequences of the “coercive acts”; the text binds the signers to economic measures designed to cut off trade with England until the coercive acts are repealed.²⁹ The Boston Committee distributed the text throughout the colony, asked that it be signed in all townships and that committees be elected to supervise the enforcement of the Association. On August 1, 1774, the Virginia Provincial Convention suggested a much more elaborate economic compact. In its Association the Convention recommended that local committees be elected to enforce the stipulations of the Association; merchants who refused to sign or who broke the Association were to be considered “persons as inimical to this country, and break off any connection and all dealings with them”.³⁰ It is this Association of the Virginia Provincial Convention that probably served as the model for the Continental Association passed by the Continental Con-

²⁶ AA 4th Ser., vol.2, p. 1551-1552.

²⁷ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 891-892, p. 1050-1051.

²⁸ See below n. XXX

²⁹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 397-398.

³⁰ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-688.

gress on October 20, 1774.³¹ This Association proved such a success that it inspired Loyalists in New York to copy the measure.³²

The success, at the same time, broadened and changed the focus of the Associations formed in 1775: They now became purely political compacts: Associators vowed to “defend the liberties and privileges of America, as well natural as constitutional”³³, they swore to “support and carry into execution whatever measures may be recommended by the Continental and our Provincial Congresses, for defending our Constitution and preserving the same inviolate”, and promised to “support the Magistrates and other civil officers in the execution of their duty, agreeable to the laws of this Colony; and to observe the directions of our Committee, acting according to the Resolutions of the aforesaid Continental and Provincial Congresses”³⁴. In early June 1775 the “good citizens” of South Carolina simply “solemnly engag[ed], that whenever our Continental or Provincial Councils shall decree it necessary, we will go forth and be ready to sacrifice our lives and fortunes to secure her freedom and safety”;³⁵ Cumberland County, New York, promised to defend “the Bill of Rights and a fundamental principle of the British Constitution which is ‘that no person shall have his property taken from him without his consent’”³⁶; and finally, an assembly of citizens at Broad Creek, Delaware swore “to preserve and strictly enforce and carry into execution whatever measures have or may be recommended by them for the relief of our said brethren, and for the preservation of the liberties of America.”³⁷

Many texts of Associations mention “rights and liberties” as well as “the Bill of Rights” and the fundamental principles of the “Constitution” be it British or otherwise, that needed to be maintained and defended. The terms and phrases they used were obviously household words which everyone understood. But what is most striking in these Associations is something else: the paucity of political theory, concepts, or simply political statements on the one hand and the stress on the other hand most Associations put on accepting and following the suggestions and demands of the Continental and Provincial Congresses and on maintaining a “firm union”. Throughout

³¹ For a careful comparison of the Virginia Association with the Continental Association see Robert L. SCRIBNER (ed.) *Revolutionary Virginia. The Road to Independence*. 7 vols., Charlottesville, VA 1773-1783, vol. 2, p. 104-105.

³² Cf. the Proposal for an Association by Brigadier General Timothy Ruggles, that was published in the Boston papers on December 22, 1774, AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1057-1058; and Association of the inhabitants of the township of Reading in County Fairfield, Connecticut, that was published in Rivington’s paper in January 1775, AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1259.

³³ Association of the militia officers of Kent County in Delaware, May 25, 1775, AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 704.

³⁴ Association of the Provincial Congress of New Jersey, May 31, 1775, AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690.

³⁵ Association of the Provincial Congress of South Carolina, June 3, 1775, AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897.

³⁶ Cumberland County (New York) Committee, Sitzung vom 6. Juni 1775, AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 918-919.

³⁷ Association concluded by an Assembly of citizens at Broad Creek, Delaware, 20 June 1775, AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1032-1033.

the land Associators expressed a fundamental trust in institutions as either directly or indirectly elected bodies of the people that would define the right measures and paths to be followed.

These Associations were the result of negotiations between inhabitants of towns, freemen and freeholders of counties or members of Provincial congresses. In all cases the documents reflect compromises between people whose conflicting views had to be trimmed down to statements that could be shared and defended by all concerned. The Associations represented efforts to garner maximum support; they often reflect the mean between widely varying political attitudes. There is considerable evidence that these negotiations resulted in serious conflicts in townships as well as counties. At Newtown in Fairfield County, Connecticut, for example one faction of the town had rejected the Continental Association and published that rejection in James Rivington's paper; on 13 February 1775 the other faction of the Town responded with the publication of an Association that decried the "several Acts passed by the late British Parliament relative to North-America" as "very unconstitutional and oppressive nature in their tendency, directly subversive of those precious rights and privileges to which the Colonies have an indubitable claim."³⁸ In other regions the Associations reflected the tensions between ethnic groups of the population. Four days after the Georgia Provincial Congress had accepted the Association for the whole colony originally passed by Gentlemen from Savannah, that Congress expressly resolved: "That it be strongly recommended to the friends of America in this Province, that they use their utmost endeavours to preserve peace and good order, and to cultivate harmony with one another, and always to avoid national reflections, which can only tend to produce divisions and jealousies among the inhabitants".³⁹

The need to formulate texts that met with the approbation of the largest possible number of inhabitants had another consequence: it served to tone down the critique of the English government to a few standard formulas. Thus in early January 1775 the inhabitants of Darien in Georgia confessed to be "greatly alarmed at the avowed design of the Ministry to raise a Revenue in America, and shocked by the bloody scene now acting in the Massachusetts Bay"; in their Association they vowed to oppose "the execution of the several arbitrary and oppressive Acts of the British Parliament".⁴⁰ The inhabitants of Portsmouth in New Hampshire omitted any critique of the mother country; they simply confessed to be motivated by a "sense of the inestimable value of constitutional liberty". Association for them served primarily the purpose of maintain-

³⁸ Resolution of an Assembly of Inhabitants of Newtown in Fairfield County, Connecticut, 13 February 1775, AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1135.

³⁹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1554.

⁴⁰ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137.

ing law and order in the town.⁴¹ On the same day the Gentlemen of Fairfax County, Virginia, were satisfied with the very unspecific and general reasons that they felt „[T]hreatened with the destruction of our ancient Laws and Liberty, and the loss of all that is dear to British subjects and freemen, justly alarmed with the prospect of impending ruin.”⁴² Similarly, in early May 1775 the Provincial Convention of New York basically just copied the text of the Darien Association.⁴³

In order to ensure maximum support, the texts of the Associations had to be kept in simple terms that spoke to the hearts and pockets of the people: “Raise a Revenue,“ “subjecting them to the payment of taxes imposed without the consent of the people or their Representatives”, “their claim to tax us”⁴⁴ were such arguments, that were used in a significant number of texts. A number of Associations stressed the need to maintain order and prevent chaos – a concern that spoke to all property-holders. The Darien Association, which New York copied, proclaimed as its aim “the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals and private property”; at Portsmouth the Associators agreed to “defend and protect each other from mobs, riots, or any other unlawful attack whatsoever” and similar concerns informed the Associators of New York, of Newark in New Jersey, of Cumberland County, New York, of the District of Wilmington in North Carolina and of Georgia.⁴⁵ The Associators of New Jersey were determined “to guard against those disorders and confusions to which the peculiar circumstances of the times may expose us.”⁴⁶

The texts of these Associations defined the personal characteristics of those who were good or bad and in doing so described the characteristics of the future republican nation: Already the Boston Association of June 8, 1774 differentiated between inhabitants who had but the public interest at heart and those “miscreants” “preferring their own private interest to the salvation of their own perishing country” who “evidence a disposition inimical to, or criminally negligent of, the common safety”⁴⁷. The Delegates to the Virginia Convention of early August 1774 modestly claimed to be motivated by “those sacred ties of honour and love to our country”. Those who they believed would obey the demands of the Associations were in their mind inhabitants who would “cheerfully and cordially accede thereto”; these were “well-wishers of the Colony” in contrast to “those who may attempt, through motives of self-interest,

⁴¹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 251

⁴² AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1145-1146.

⁴³ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 471.

⁴⁴ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 471, vol. 1, p. 350-351, vol. 2, p. 615-616.

⁴⁵ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1137; vol. 2, p. 251, p. 471, p. 505, p. 918-919, p. 1030, p. 1551-1552.

⁴⁶ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690.

⁴⁷ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 397-398. Those who refuse to accept the Association are described as “miscreants in the Association signed by inhabitants at Broad Creek, Delaware on June 20, 1775, AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1032-1033.

to obstruct our views” and such were to be published to the world as “such person or persons as inimical to this country”.⁴⁸ The Associators of Darien, Georgia, of New York County, New York and of Georgia “associate under all the Ties of Religion, Honour, and Love to our Country”⁴⁹. About the same time the Associators confessed themselves to be deeply “impressed with a sense of the inestimable value of constitutional liberty”⁵⁰, while the Gentlemen of Fairfax County pictured themselves as “firmly determined at the hazard of our lives, to transmit to our children and posterity those sacred rights to which ourselves were born”⁵¹. The people of Newark and of Acquackanonk, Essex County, both in New Jersey, associated “with hearts perfectly abhorrent of slavery”⁵². Not to be outdone the people of Chester County, Pennsylvania, confessed that they “have the virtue to refuse obedience to laws and measures destructive to the best rights and liberties of America” who “cannot be so far negligent of our own happiness as totally to neglect providing for our common safety” and therefore associated to fight to the last.⁵³ Nobly the inhabitants of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania claimed they felt “the indispensable duty of every American, of every man who has any publick virtue or love for his Country, or any bowels for posterity, by every means which God has put in his power” to associate.⁵⁴ The inhabitants at Broad Creek, Delaware, finally associated “for the preservation of the liberties of America” and promised that “any artful or designing person or persons whatsoever, that shall attempt to defeat the purpose of this Association, shall be faithfully painted in their proper colours, and be hung up in the publick prints or be otherwise stigmatized and bear the load of odium that such miscreants justly merit.”⁵⁵

The American people are, so these texts suggest, virtuous, hardy, conscious of their rights, love privileges, rights and constitutions, for which they fight to the last, disobey tyrants, pursue only the publick interest, and unselfishly think not only about themselves but care for the welfare of their posterity too. Those who do not subscribe to these values are “inimical to the liberties”, are to be driven out of the country, will be, so the Delawarians promise, “hung up in the publick prints or ... stigmatized and bear the odium ... such miscreants justly merit”. These are the contours of the self-image of those rebellious colonists that were about to cut their ties to England and

⁴⁸ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-688.

⁴⁹ New-York, April 29, 1775, A general association, agreed to, and subscribed by the freeholders, freemen, and inhabitants of the city and county of New-York. Published: [New York: Printed by John Holt, 1775] [New York, N.Y.] Evans 14339; AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137.; vol. 2, p. 471.

⁵⁰ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 251.

⁵¹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1145-1146.

⁵² AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505.

⁵³ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 588-589.

⁵⁴ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616, and report in in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* Nr. 2433, 9 August 1775.

⁵⁵ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1032-1033.

declare themselves to be a nation of their own. The texts of these Associations define not only the value system of this new nation but how that nation was to perceive itself in contrast to the enemy. That these self-perceptions are couched in simple, noble terms of common political and moral parlance strikes me as natural and further proof that these texts were written for the acceptance and consumption of all colonists and not just for the few. Everyone could identify with these values and this self-perceived image.

These Associations were the blue-prints designed to bridge the time from the collapse of the old colonial governments to the institution of the new governments by and of the people. Their enforcement was as much a matter of life and death as the maintenance and support of a constitution would be for a nation.

5. Getting the Association signed by all

Enforcement starts with getting people acquainted and involved with the measure to be enforced. Thus the Association sent out by the Boston Committee on June 8, 1774, explicitly stated “that after this covenant has been offered to any person, and they refuse to sign it, we will consider them in the same light as contumacious importers, and withdraw all commercial connection with them forever, and publish their names to the world”⁵⁶. A month later the Virginia Convention resolved with respect to her Association that “it is recommended to the Deputies of the several counties, that Committees be chosen in each County by such persons as accede to this Association, to take effectual care that these Resolves be properly observed, and for corresponding occasionally with the general Committee of Correspondence in the City of Williamsburg.” In case merchants and traders refused to abide by the rules of the Association the respective “Committee is required to publish the truth of the Case in the Gazettes, and in the county where he or she resides; and we will hereafter consider such person or persons as inimical to this country, and break off any connection and all dealings with them.”⁵⁷ On April 29, 1775, according to a newspaper report the Association of the city and county of New-York was immediately “transmitted for signing to all the Counties in the Province, and signed by most of the men in the City.”⁵⁸ On May first the Committee of the City resolved “[T]hat a Sub-Committee of four members for each Ward be appointed to offer the Association without delay to the inhabitants of this City and County, and that they take down the names of such as shall not sign the Association and report their name to this Committee.”⁵⁹ A few days later the Associa-

⁵⁶ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 397-398.

⁵⁷ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 688.

⁵⁸ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 471.

⁵⁹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 470-471.

tion arrived at Westchester County where a “Committee then signed an Association, similar to that which was signed in the City of New-York; and appointed Sub-Committees to superintend the signing of the same throughout the County.”⁶⁰ A broadside published and dated May 15, 1775 informed the inhabitants of New York city and county “that copies of the Association be lodged at the following places in the respective wards of this city” and urged inhabitants “to make their Subscriptions as speedily as possible, as Returns of all such as decline it, are to be made to the Committee.”⁶¹ The Associations agreed upon by the Provincial Conventions of New Jersey⁶², South Carolina⁶³ and Georgia⁶⁴ contained similar provisions.

Minute Books of Committees of Inspection and Observation on the county and local level suggest that these bodies went to surprising lengths in order to get everyone to sign the Association: The case of John Saunders, a young man of at least some means, is an early and particularly impressive example: John Saunders had been present at the meeting of a “respectable number of Freeholders for Princess Ann County, Virginia,” in July 1774 which chose delegates to the first Virginia Provincial Convention and agreed on the text of an Association which had been signed by all present except John Saunders, although some “principal Gentlemen” of the county had urged him to sign. The freeholders of the county were again called together on August 16, in order to discuss and sign the Association approved of by the Provincial Convention in early August. Again Saunders attended, “yet he constantly persisted in his refusal to accede thereto.” When the Continental Association was presented to him for his signature, he “likewise refused, alleging that the way of proceeding was illegal”. This was reported to the Committee of Observation of the County on January 5, 1775. The Committee dispatched a sub-committee of three to visit Saunders “at his house”, asked him to retract his words that the proceeding of the Continental Congress “was illegal” and get him to sign the two Associations. The sub-committee reported back that Saunders had refused to talk to them as members of the Committee; had they come as “private gentlemen”, he had added, he would have willingly given them his reasons for his refusals. The implication was that he considered the Committee illegal, too, to which he therefore owed no obligations. Not easily discouraged the Committee now asked a “Mr. Hunter, one of his most intimate acquaintances” to press Mr. Saunders one more time to join the ranks of the Gentlemen of the County. He

⁶⁰ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 529.

⁶¹ Broadside: New-York, Committee-chamber, May 15, 1775. Resolved, that copies of the Association be lodged at the following places in the respective wards of this city ... Published: [New York : Printed by John Holt, 1775] Evans 14329.

⁶² AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690.

⁶³ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897.

⁶⁴ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552.

seemed to be successful. Saunders signed: “but behold! at the end of his name he added the negative *no*, with a capital **N!**“ Enraged by this “contempt” Saunders was asked to appear before the Committee to justify and explain his behaviour – which he refused to do. On March 7, 1775, the Committee condemned Saunders as an enemy to the liberties of America.⁶⁵ One last example: The Committee of Observation for Wilmington, North Carolina, resolved that its Committee members carry the text of the Association agreed upon on March 6, 1775, personally into each house of the town and solicit the signature of the householder.⁶⁶ Should any refuse, and eleven of them did, then the Committee resolved to publish the following notice in the colonial newspaper: “Resolved and agreed, That we will have no trade, commerce, dealings, or intercourse whatsoever with the above mentioned persons or any others connected with them, or with any other person or persons who shall hereafter violate the said association, or refuse to subscribe hereto; but will hold them as unworthy of the rights of freemen and as inimical to the liberties of their country, and we recommend it to the people of this colony in particular, and to the Americans in general, to pursue the same conduct.”⁶⁷

This was more than just the standard declaration recommended by the Continental Congress. Not only was that person declared to be “inimical to the liberties of their country” but more seriously was declared “unworthy of the rights of freemen” – in effect thus at least threatened to be stripped of all his political rights.⁶⁸ This is in line with developments since the Continental Congress had published the Continental Association in late October 1774. In the eleventh article of the Association the Congress had recommended that those who broke the Association were to be declared “enemies of America” with whom all commercial and social contacts were to be severed until the condemned had admitted his or her guilt. But this intended punishment the Congress had applied *only* to breaches of the boycott and other economic measures spelt out in the text of the Continental Association. The Wilmington declaration went far beyond the Continental Association. Most towns, counties or Provincial Congresses did not go so far but simply declared that non-signers’ names were to be reported (as in the case of New Jersey) or be declared enemy of the country. In both

⁶⁵ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 76-77.

⁶⁶ William L. SAUNDERS (ed.), *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*. 30 vols., Raleigh, NC 1886-1914, vol. 9, Pt. 2, p. 1096-1097.

⁶⁷ SAUNDERS (ed.) *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 9, Pt. 2, p. 1152; the Committee of Observation of Newburgh, NY, on May 15, 1775, passed a very similar resolve but without the suggestion that the person be stripped of its rights as a citizen. But non-signers were to be declared enemies of American liberties with which all connections were to be cut, AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 606-607.

⁶⁸ The General Committee of Charleston on June 28, 1775 declared John Doran, who had exported goods to St. Augustine contrary to the Continental Association, not only “an Enemy to the Liberties of America” but too as “unworthy of the Rights of Freemen”, *The South Carolina Gazette & Country Journal*, No. 502, 11 July 1775, p. 3.

cases these stipulations exercised tremendous pressures on those who felt ill at ease with the political development. Not signing implied the risk of losing all business and having eventually to leave the country. It is therefore not surprising that in some colonies a high percentage of the men signed the associations. Thus in New Hampshire only 9,5% of all men refused to sign the Association; in some New York Counties the percentage of the non-signers was even lower. In Frederick County, Maryland, on the other hand, 19% of the men between 16 and 50 years were reported as non-signers, and over half the men in Dutchess County and all the inhabitants in Hempstead Town in Queens County refused to sign the association.⁶⁹ The figures nevertheless demonstrate the extremely wide circulation of the texts of these Associations. Signers as well as non-signers could not avoid becoming intimately acquainted with these texts and their contents.

6. The creation of Committees of Inspection and Observation

The Continental Congress had secondly recommended that the colonies elect on the local, regional, and colonial level committees whose duty it was to supervise the enforcement of the Association. That recommendation was taken up by the colonies. By the summer of 1775 it is safe to say that these committees were functioning in all British colonies. Provincial Conventions or Congresses had met in all of them. On all three levels these newly elected institutions had pushed the revolutionary process a decisive step *beyond* what the Continental Congress had resolved and recommended: As the analysis of the text of the Associations agreed to and entered into in all colonies (except Rhode Island and New Hampshire⁷⁰) plainly shows the Committees ex-

⁶⁹ The lists of signers and non-signers in New Hampshire are published in Nathaniel BOUTON et al. (ed.), *Provincial and State Papers*. 40 vols, Concord, NH 1867- 1943, vol. 8, p. 204-296; for the data on New York cf. Hermann WELLENREUTHER, *Von Chaos und Krieg zu Ordnung und Frieden. Die Amerikanische Revolution 1775-1783*, appendix, in print; for the data for Frederick County, Maryland, see *Journal of the Committee of Observation of the Middle District of Frederick County* in: *Maryland Historical Magazine* 11, 1916, p. 50-66, p. 157-175, p. 237-260, p. 304-321, vol. 12, p. 1917, 10-21, here vol. 11, p.248-260.

⁷⁰ It is not quite correct to say that New Hampshire did not pass an Association. The Provincial Convention of that colony on January 25, 1775 agreed to write a letter to all the inhabitants in which it informed them that the Convention had adopted the Association of the Continental Congress. In addition the Convention formulated eleven principles that added features to the Continental Association that were either related to the particular economic and social concerns of the colony or of a political nature. The most important were: "1st That you discountenance and discourage all trespasses and injuries against individuals and their property, and all disorders of every kind; and that you cultivate and maintain peace and harmony among yourselves. 2nd That you yield due obedience to the Magistrates within this Government, and carefully endeavour to support the laws thereof....4th That you endeavour particularly to enforce the laws of the Province against Hawkers, Pedlars and Petty Chapmen....10th That, as your enemies are using every art to impoverish and distress you, in order to induce submission to their arbitrary mandates, you carefully shun those measures which may have a tendency to distress your brethren and fellow-sufferers, and avoid all unnecessary law suits, and endeavour to settle disputes between you in the most amicable and least expensive manner. That all debtors exert themselves in discharging their just

tended the system of covenants and associations into the political realm proper and through both linked the two spheres.

The freemen and freeholders had no doubt that their delegates in the Committees of Observation as well as in the Provincial Congresses enjoyed the privilege to make their resolves binding and enforce them.⁷¹ There existed a division of labour between the two institutions that resulted from the simple fact, that the Committees of Observation were practically permanent institutions while the Congresses met only from time to time. The Continental and the Provincial Congresses defined the guidelines and framework within which the local and regional committees were to function. Since these committees, however, were much closer to the “people” and thus much more subject to its scrutiny, dependence on the Provincial and Continental Congresses was often rather loose. More than the congresses the Committees expressed and mirrored the concerns of “the people”.⁷²

Judging from the advertisements in colonial newspapers and from other evidence, between November 1774 and spring 1775 Committees of Observation were founded in many counties, townships, and villages. Thirty Seven Committees from different Massachusetts Townships advertised either individually or together with another Committee in the *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*,⁷³ and twenty-eight Connecticut Committees inserted advertisements in the *Connecticut Courant*.⁷⁴ A look at the *Pennsylvania Gazette* yields similar figures for Pennsylvania and New Jersey. By the end of 1775 in Virginia “at least forty-six counties and three towns had committees.”⁷⁵ In North Carolina six counties and two towns founded committees.⁷⁶ These are very preliminary figures. There are indications that only in regions dominated by Tories like parts of New York and parts of the backcountries of South and North Carolina such committees were not founded.

debts, and all creditors exercise such lenity as their circumstances will admit of.” AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1180-1182.

⁷¹ See section V below for documentation.

⁷² See below the decision of the Lancaster County Committee of Observation, note 189.

⁷³ In the succession as they appear they are: Shrewsbury, Marshfield, Sudbury, Plymouth, Boston, Marblehead, Eastham, Sturbridge, Charlestown, Cambridge, Weston, Concord, Easton, Ashburnham, Barnstable, Wrentham, Petersham, Rehoboth, Swanzey, Rochester, Pownallborough, Abington, Waltham, Newtown, Cumberland, Medway, Bellingham, Hopkinton, Holliston, Mendon, Uxbridge, Upton, Granby, Hatfield, Stockbridge, Chatham, and Watertown.

⁷⁴ In the succession as they appear they are: Hartford, East Windsor, Hebron, Farmington, New Britain, Goshen, New Haven, Mansfield, Litchfield, Wethersfield, Killingworth, Hartland, Fairfield, New Milford, Harwinton, Norwich, Waterbury, Simsbury, Windsor, Sharon, New Fairfield, Hanover, Lebanon, Plainfield, Cornish, Kent, Danbury, and Westfield.

⁷⁵ Larry BOWMAN, *The Virginia County Committees of Safety, 1774-1776*. In: VMHB 79, 1971, p. 322-337, quotation from p. 323.

⁷⁶ Rowan County, Wilmington, New Bern, Halifax County, Chowan County, Cumberland County, Pitt County, Tryon County.

7. *The “invisible” activities of the Committees of Observation*

There are two ways to look at the functions of these Committees: The one is to analyze their activities as they are reported in their minutes. The other is by looking at the Committees from the point of view of their visibility. Let me briefly deal with those activities that remained invisible because they were not made public. Most of the time of Committees of Inspection and Observation in larger port towns like New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore was taken up with controlling incoming ships and making sure that their loads conformed to the Continental Association.⁷⁷ The Committees of Observation outside port towns had different concerns. The Committee of Observation for Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, in its first session on December 6, 1774, established some procedural rules gleaned from those of the New Jersey Assembly and defined some areas of concern – enforcing the Continental Association, investigating those who spoke “reproachfully of the Grand Congress of America, or of the Rights and Liberties of the Americans” and dealing with “any Offence against the Liberties of America”. At the instigation of Jonathan J. Dayton Esq. they immediately resolved to investigate the charge that a “certain Mr. Gummersall ... did lately ... very contemptuously and disrespectfully” speak of “the Grand Congress of America, and of the Rights and Liberties of the Americans in General”.⁷⁸ The Committee concluded that the charge was justified but decided that Gummersall’s remarks were more the “effect of Ignorance and Inexperience than any settled plan of Opposition”; it admonished Gummersall to be in future more circumspect.⁷⁹ In the same session the Committee decided to deal with the moral issue of “horse racing and cock-fighting” raised by the Continental Association, and with people who “should rise the Price of Bricks in Consequence of the Non Importation Agreement”. The committee decided, too, to “discountenance all disorderly or tumultuous Meetings of the Populace”; in the same meeting it recommended to the inhabitants not to purchase any product of the New York printer James Rivington, whom they styled “a vile Ministerial Hireling Employ’d to disunite the Colonies and Calumniate all their measures entered into for the Public

⁷⁷ New York City Committee of Observation Minutes, 26 April 1775 – 16 February 1776, Peter FORCE Collection, Series VIII D, Reel 53, Library of Congress; Philadelphia (Pa.) Common Council. Committee of Inspection and Observation Minutes, 1774, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Am. 3079; Baltimore County Committee of Observation and Inspection, 1774 – 1776. microfilm M 11723, Special Collections, Peter FORCE Collection, MSA SC 4391. Some of the problems relating to political attitudes in these large port towns were taken up by other committees, see for Philadelphia RYERSON, *The Revolution is Now Begun*; for Baltimore Ronald HOFFMAN, *A Spirit of Dissension. Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland*. Baltimore, MD 1973, pass., and for New York Joseph S. TIEADEMANN, *Reluctant Revolutionaries. New York City and the Road to Independence, 1763-1776*. Ithaca, NY 1997, pass..

⁷⁸ Minutes of the Proceedings of the Committee of Observation in Elizabeth-Town, Dec. 6th 1774 – April 17th 1775, Call # 10720, Revolutionary War Manuscripts, New Jersey State Archives, entry sub 6 Dec. 1774.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, entry sub 19 Dec. 1774.

Good.”⁸⁰ The most important other problem the committee had to deal with resulted from the consequences of its decision of February 13, 1775, “to break off all Trade Commerce Dealings and Intercourse whatsoever with the Inhabitants of State Island until they shall join the general Association”⁸¹. Merchants pressured the Committee repeatedly to revise this resolution in response to Staten Island merchants’ insistence on having contracts concluded prior to February 13 fulfilled.

The minutes of the Elizabeth-Town Committee break off in April 1775, before the news of the armed clashes at Lexington and Concord had arrived. This news resulted in another rush to found committees of observation, among them the Committees of Observation for the Middle District and Elizabeth Town District of Frederick County, Maryland. The one for the Middle District resolved in its first meeting on 12 September 1775 to ask George Stricker, a member of the Committee, and two Gentlemen of the District, to “raise a Minute Company” and appointed thirty five Gentlemen “to hand about the Association in the different districts, and to take an account of such as refuse to sign it.” The committee concluded too, to summon two inhabitants who, so they were informed, had “reflected upon, and upraided in the most indecent Language, such as have enrolled themselves and mustered.” Two other inhabitants were likewise summoned “to show what foundation they had for saying that Messrs. Booth, Cary & Edelen had attempted to blow up the Magazine.”⁸² The two who had used foul language apologized at a later meeting and were discharged; those who had accused Booth, Cary, and Edelen were found to spread unfounded rumours and forced to apologize to the three gentlemen.⁸³ In this as in almost all other cases the committee tried to avoid publicly branding those accused of misdeeds. While the committee continued to investigate “suspicions of being unfriendly to America”, it continued its policy of either admonishing the accused person or of requesting them to post bond for future good behaviour.⁸⁴ In general this as well as its sister committee for Elizabeth-Town spent, however, much more time on organizing militia companies, ensuring that those who had signed the Association would sign the muster rolls and those who had refused to sign the Association be fined sums between £ 2 and 10 Maryland currency.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., entry sub 13 February 1775. That resolution was, too, published in the Connecticut Courant, 20 February 1775, p. 3.

⁸² Journal of the Committee of Observation of the Middle District of Frederick County, Maryland, in: Maryland Historical Magazine 10, 1915, p. 305-306.

⁸³ Ibid., vol. 10, 1915, p. 307, p. 307-308 (16 October 1775).

⁸⁴ Ibid., vol. 11, 1916, p. 320-321.

⁸⁵ The Minutes of the Committee of Observation for Elizabeth-Town District are published in: Maryland Historical Magazine, vol. 12, 1917, p. 142-163, p. 261-275, p. 324-347, vol. 13, 1918, p. 28-53, p. 227-243.

8. *The “visible” activities of the Committees of Observation*

The policy of these two Maryland Committees of Observation not to expose publicly those accused of Toryism contrasts sharply with that of North Carolina Committees of Observation. In this colony committees were founded much earlier than in Maryland – most of them began to function by late 1774. On 2 November 1774 the Rowan County Committee for example branded a Mr. Spurgin “an enemy of the country”⁸⁶; on 21 December 1774 the Halifax County Committee “ostracized” the Scottish merchant Andrew Miller for refusing to sign the Continental Association.⁸⁷ These resolutions as well as those to be reported were all published in the colonial newspapers or printed as broadsides and distributed throughout the region. On March 6, the Wilmington Committee of Observation agreed on its own “Association” and ordered its committee members to visit each house and solicit subscriptions to the Association. Those who refused, the committee resolved to “hold forth ... to public contempt.”⁸⁸ On the whole North Carolina Committees pursued a much harsher and energetic course against those whom they suspected of Tory principles. The same is true for Virginia Committees of Inspection and Observation. Between October 1774 and July 1775 they published some twenty condemnations, twelve recantations and four declarations clearing mostly merchants from the suspicion of having violated the Association; but more time was taken up with procuring arms or much needed goods like salt. By late spring or early summer as a result of Governor Dunmore’s efforts to regain the initiative in the colonies the focus of these committees changed. The committees responded to his proclamation of May 3, 1775, his seizure of the powder at Williamsburg, and his resorting to arms with organizing the militia; enforcing the Association became a secondary concern.⁸⁹

Judging from the newspaper advertisements between spring 1775 and summer 1776 the Committees’ of Observation most important concerns were less the enforcement of the economic aspects of the Continental Association than what I have called the creation of a “new nation”. From late spring 1775 onwards two concerns in particular dominate the deliberations in the Committees: Preserving union and harmony and suppressing pro-British propaganda and promoting the concept of “American Rights and Liberties”, concerns that had already played an important role in the

⁸⁶ SAUNDERS (ed.): *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 9, Pt. 2, p.1073-1074.

⁸⁷ SAUNDERS (ed.): *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 9, Pt. 2, p.1101-1102.

⁸⁸ SAUNDERS (ed.): *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 9, Pt. 2, p., 1149-1150; On March 7, 1775 the Committee extended the time until the inhabitants could sign the Association.

⁸⁹ These observations are based on SCRIBNER (ed.) *Revolutionary Virginia. The Road to Independence*, esp. vols. 1-3.

texts of the Associations. The first concern informs the letter of Maryland's Delegates to the Continental Congress to the Baltimore Committee of Correspondence. On 26 March 1775 they reminded the Committee, that "at this critical juncture a firm union of the Colonies, and a rigid adherence to the continental association we deem under God, the most effectual means of preserving our liberties, every measure therefore tending to disunite the Colonies and to sow groundless jealousies between them, ought to be strictly guarded against. Invidious calumnies have been diligently propagated by the Enemies of American Liberty to create distrust to blind the people and to seduce them from a steady pursuit of their true interests; happily such execrable designs have hitherto failed"⁹⁰.

The shift from economic to political and ideological concerns drastically accelerated in most regions after news about Lexington and Concord had spread.⁹¹ In some regions, however, the shift came earlier. In December 1774 in its first session the Committee of Observation of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, upon the motion: "Whether any Person or Persons Writing or Speaking Reproachfully of the Grand Congress of America, or of the Rights and Liberties of the Americas" resolved that this "is a proper Subject of Enquiry by this Board".⁹² The South Carolina Provincial Congress, concluded in June 1775, "that any person having violated or refused obedience to the authority of the Provincial Congress, shall, by the Committee of the District or Parish in which such offender resides, be questioned relative thereto; and upon due conviction of either of the offences aforesaid, and continuing contumacious, such person shall, by such Committee, be declared and advertised an enemy to the liberties of America, and an object of the resentment of the publick; and that the said Committee shall be supported in doing so."⁹³ So obvious had it become to all that what had been a fight over taxes, customs, and economic relationships had turned by late April 1775 into a fight for fundamental political principles that the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts ordered the townships to inquire into the political principles of people suspected of being inimical to American liberties⁹⁴, and a Committee of Observation could, as that from Waterbury in Connecticut actually on July 17, 1775, did, publish the following resolution: „That it is the duty of this committee to inform their constituents, the inhabitants of this town, that in the opinion of this committee the Association of the honourable Continental Congress may be violated by reproachful, con-

⁹⁰ Charles Carroll, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, J. Hall, Thomas Johnson Jr. Samuel Chase to the Committee of Correspondence of Baltimore County, Maryland, Annapolis, 26 March 1775, Gilmore Papers, vol. IV, fol. 1, Maryland Historical Society.

⁹¹ The exceptions were represented by the Committees in the back country of Pennsylvania, see below.

⁹² "Minutes of the Proceedings of the Committee of Observation in Elizabeth-Town, New Jersey, Dec. 6th 1774 – April 17th 1775, Call # 10720, Revolutionary War Manuscripts, New Jersey State Archives.

⁹³ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 962.

⁹⁴ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 793.

tumelious language as well as by actions. And to the intent that peace, good order and friendship may be promoted and continued amongst us, we earnestly desire all persons to take notice of this resolve, and carefully to avoid all in words and actions whatever may tend to augment the calamities of our distressed and afflicted country”⁹⁵.

The analysis of the advertisements of Committees of Observation published in four colonial newspapers documents the shift from economic to political concerns in the first half of 1775:

Table 3

Advertisements of Committees of Observation in three Colonial Newspapers,

1 January 1774 – July 1776

	1774	1774	1774	1775	1775	1775	1775	1775	1775	1776	1776	1776	Total
Name of Newspaper	2nd Half Econ.	2nd Half Pro-Brit.	2nd Half Anti-Rev.	1st Half Econ.	1st Half Pro-Brit.	1st Half Anti-Rev.	2nd Half Econ.	2nd Half Pro-Brit.	2nd Half Anti-Rev.	1st Half Econ.	1st Half Pro-Brit.	1st Half Anti-Rev.	1774 - 1776
Boston Gazette	4	0	2	1	4	1	5	1	5	0	1	3	27
Connecticut Courant	1	4	0	6	2	4	3	2	17	3	2	13	57
Pennsylvania Gazette	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	10	2	1	23	41
Virginia Gazette	2	0	4	10	4	6	3	2	0	-	-	-	31
Total	7	4	6	17	11	14	11	6	32	5	4	39	156

Explanations: Only advertisements of Committees of Observation have been included. Data for the second half of the year 1774 and for the period before May 1775 for the *Pennsylvania*

⁹⁵ The Connecticut Courant, July 17, 1775. See also the resolution of the New Hampshire Provincial Convention of May 19, 1775: “6th That whereas many persons, through inadvertency, wilful malice, or immoderate heat, have thrown out many opprobrious expressions respecting the several Congresses, and the methods of security they have thought proper to adopt, and thereby have made themselves obnoxious to the inhabitants of this province, it is therefore recommended that the Committees of the several Towns have a watchful eye over all such persons; and they shall be the only persons proper to take cognizance thereof, and that their result be final; and that proper complaint being made to either of the Committee, they make the most speedy and critical inquiry thereof, in order to prevent riots and mobs, and that they discountenance the same.” AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 651-652.

Gazette were unavailable; the advertisements for Virginia were taken as reprinted in Scribner, ed., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vols. 2-3.

Econ.: Advertisements relating to recognizable economic breaches of Continental Association;

Pro.-Brit.: Advertisements relating to recognizable pro-British activities of accused;

Anti-Rev.: Advertisements relating to recognizable activities defined by Committee as “against American liberties” including the refusal to accept Continental Congress Bills of Credit.

The four newspapers published between summer 1774 and summer 1776 carried 156 advertisements in which colonists were declared enemies of their country. This is not a very impressive figure; it bears, however, to analyze the nature, function and meaning as well as the wording of these advertisements in order to understand their impact.

9. Reasons of Committees of Observation to publicly “ostracize” persons

A surprising number of reasons and behaviours led to public exposure: In early September 1774 the inhabitants of Farmington, Connecticut, accused the Rev. James Nichols „of sentiments and principles contrary to the current opinion of British Americans tending to subvert the rights of Mankind in general.“ The Anglican Reverend had refused to offer a service at the Fast Day proclaimed by the Governor.⁹⁶ In early November 1774 Nicholas Austin of Middletown in New Hampshire was forced by the Committee of Correspondence of Rochester to publicly confess on his knees in front of a large crowd, that he had “been aiding and assisting in sending Men to Boston to build Barracks for the Soldiers to live in”⁹⁷. In Maryland in mid-January 1775 the Ann Arundel County Committee of Observation and the Baltimore Committee resolved that “every inhabitant of this County, who ... shall refuse to contribute, before the 1st day of February next, to the purchase of Arms and Ammunition, for the use of this County, is, and ought to be, esteemed an enemy to America; and ... be published by the said Committee in the Maryland Gazette.”⁹⁸ In the same month fourteen inhabitants of Petersham, Massachusetts, were accused of having entered “into a Combination, That we will not acknowledge or Submit to the pretended Authority of any Congresses, Committees of Correspondence or other unconstitutional Assemblies of Men, but will at the Risque of our Lives, and if need be, oppose the forceable Exercise of such Authority”, for which they were declared “traitorous Parricides to the Cause of Freedom in general & the united Provinces of N. America in particular.”⁹⁹ Thomas Gilbert of Freetown in the colony of Massachusetts was treated with similar

⁹⁶ The Connecticut Courant, 19 September 1774, p. 2.

⁹⁷ The Boston Evening Post, No. 2042, 14 November 1774, p. 2.

⁹⁸ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1140-1141, 1143.

⁹⁹ The Boston Gazette, 16 January 1775, p. 2.

severity by the local Committee of Observation for claiming that he had survived a shooting at Berkeley with damaged cloths. The committee declared the story a lie “to be ranked with other malicious and libellous Stories” and declared Gilbert “a rank Tory, and a professed Enemy to his Country.”¹⁰⁰ In February 1775, two inhabitants from Ridgefield, Connecticut, were accused to have “supported Court doctrines of Passive-obedience to Parliament”; the people of Wethersfield, Connecticut, considered this, so the *Connecticut Courant* reported, “a direct Breach of the Association of said Congress.”¹⁰¹ In May of the same year Mark Pringle was blamed for having “advanced sentiments contrary to the general opinion of the colonies in America, respecting proper methods of obtaining relief of our grievances” – for which he was summoned before the Committee of Observation of Harwington in Connecticut. Around the same time John and Job Westover were hauled before the Committee of Observation of Sheffield in Massachusetts for having “affirmed that the late Continental Congress, in their doing, were guilty of rebellion against the King; and that the said Job hath affirmed that the Parliament of Great Britain had a right to tax the Americans; and that each of them had said many things disrespectful of the said Congress”¹⁰². On 22 July 1775 Richard Gayford was charged by the Committee of Observation of County Cumberland, New Jersey, of speaking disrespectfully of American generals and calling inhabitants who exercised with their arms “rebels and rascal”¹⁰³. In early February 1776 the merchant Nathaniel Blinko was declared an enemy to American liberties for selling goods at too advanced prices and for his opinion “that he would ask what he pleased, in spite of the Committee”¹⁰⁴. The Pennsylvania Chester County Committee of Observation in early April 1776 summoned Abel Green for having “expressed himself in terms inimical to America, and against the measures adopted for the protection of the Liberties of these Colonies”¹⁰⁵.

These examples suggest the wide range of issues, behavioural patterns and opinions that prompted Committees of Observation to become active. These range from the serious charge of aiding the British army, over defending British policies, rejecting the authority of the Continental Congress, and violating the trade boycott, to just speaking “in terms inimical to America”. In each case the committees exposed such behaviour by publishing it in the newspapers from where it was often copied by other papers of the region. If the person had claim to some intercolonial prominence, the story might be reprinted far and wide. With the publication the deeds of the “culprit”

¹⁰⁰ Boston Evening Post, No. 2062, 3 April 1775.

¹⁰¹ The Connecticut Courant, 20 February 1775, p. 3.

¹⁰² AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 545.

¹⁰³ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2433, 9 August 1775.

¹⁰⁴ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2460, 14 February 1776.

¹⁰⁵ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2468, 10 April 1776.

became visible. He, rarely she, was held “up to public view”. On 19 September 1774 a convention of Committees of Observation in the counties Hartford and Litchfield already recommended the strict examination of those who broke the anticipated trade boycott with the intention „that their Names may be published, their conduct exposed, and their Persons avoided.”¹⁰⁶ The Pownalborough Committee of Inspection prefaced its condemnation of Abdiel Wood with the following words: “To deprive a Man of the benefits of Society by holding him up to the World as an enemy to his country, is a task that must be disagreeable to humanity.”¹⁰⁷ In the case of Captain John Bancroft the Committee of Observation in Westfield, Connecticut, on 16 July 1776 declared that “the said John ought to be held up to public view as an *enemy to American liberty*”¹⁰⁸.

10. Values and principles propagated by the Committees of Observation

Publishing a sentence passed by a Committee of Observation served the purpose of exposing behaviour to public view with the intention to demonstrate that this behaviour was unacceptable and outside the bounds set by the Provincial and Continental Congresses as perceived by the local and regional Committees of Observation. The publication had a symbolic value – it was not only a measure to marginalize unacceptable and dangerous behaviour but teach the local and regional inhabitants the new values that had been violated. All these new values were derivatives of the global phrase “American liberty”: the Provincial and Continental Congresses were the guardians of American Liberty, the Committees were the enforcers of what these higher institutions decreed and decided, and everything that belittled these institutions, smacked of criticism, indicated a lack of support, smelled of opposition to and support for the arch-enemy had to be publicly exposed.

Yet this is not the whole story. The Committees of Inspection and Observation were not only watchdogs and public correctors of misdeeds. Their most important function was to preach the values of a new nation. This intention is particularly obvious in the many recantations published by those who had been condemned as “enemies” and who now begged to be readmitted to civil society. These recantations or confessions were either directly drawn up by the Committees or had to be submitted to it for its approval. They were printed in the papers together with the explicit statement that the recantation had been approved by the Committee.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ The Connecticut Courant, 19 September 1774, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ The Boston Gazette, 11 September 1775, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ The Connecticut Courant, 16 July 1776, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ The “recantations” were certainly not “similar to loyalty oaths because they are public declarations of positions taken in the context of several alternative extremes”, as the editors Mason I. LOWANCE, Jr., and

My first examples are taken from the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Robert Holliday had been accused of writing a letter defending British policy which had been published in *Humphrey's Ledger*.¹¹⁰ Holliday was identified as the author; he submitted a letter acknowledging his authorship and regretted what he had written; this letter was rejected. The committee then drafted a new letter of confession which Holliday signed. The letter clearly marked what was unacceptable and pointed out the areas of positive behaviour: It was a sign “of the deepest infatuation” to say that “if the King’s standard were now erected, nine out of ten would repair to it”, and that the “political principles” he had expressed were based on “the grossest errors”. The “measures” on the other hand that had been “adopted by my countrymen for the preservation of American freedom” were “laudable” as was his promise to “co-operate with them in the utmost of my abilities, in their virtuous struggle for liberty.” He appealed to “those principles of humanity, which may induce them to consider the frailty of human nature” by which he meant his own and hoped that they would on that basis forgive his faults.¹¹¹ Unacceptable were the principles and talk about the King’s standards; “the virtuous struggle for the preservation of American freedom”, “the virtuous struggle for liberty” and acting on “principles of humanity” were the positive messages broadcasted in this newspaper text. Another positive message was sent out in the recantation of William Moore, approved by the Chester County Committee of Observation on June 6, 1775: Moore had poked fun of the Militia that was exercising. He now proclaimed “that I have no interest but what is in America”; he prayed “that its Liberties may be preserved” and declared “that I have of late encouraged and will continue to encourage, learning the military art, apprehending the time is not far distant when there may be occasion for it.” Again the messages were clear: Poking fun of American military was wrong, fighting for “liberties” was right and “learning the military art” timely and necessary because Americans had “no interest but what is in America.”¹¹² In his recantation Amos Wickersham from Philadelphia offered the correct phrase for what America was engaged in: It was a “noble and patriotic struggle against the arbitrary measures of the British ministry.”¹¹³ Mordecai Levy pushed the positive lessons further: After confessing his sins – essentially wrong concepts of British policy – he

Georgia B. BUMGARDNER (eds.), *Massachusetts Broadside of the American Revolution*. Amherst, MA 1976, p. 54, suggest. They exposed the admission of guilt and the exposition of political principles to the widest possible number of people. This is the reason why they, too, were published as broadsides, cf. for such a broadside “The Recantations of Robert Hooper and Others”, *ibid.*, p. 55.

¹¹⁰ The Committee spoke of “Humphrey’s Ledger”. The correct title of the paper was “The Pennsylvania Ledger or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania & New Jersey Weekly Advertiser.” It was published under that title in 1775-1776 by James Humphrey.

¹¹¹ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2421, 17 May 1775.

¹¹² The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2425, 14 June 1775.

¹¹³ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2430, 19 July 1775.

pictured his new creed in the following flourishing terms: “I now believe all Assemblies to be legal and constitutional, which are formed by the united suffrages of a free people; and am convinced that no soldiers are so respectable, as those citizens who take up arms in defence of liberty. I believe that Kings are no longer to be feared or obeyed, than while they execute just laws; I most sincerely wish that the counsels of the Congress may always be directed with wisdom, and that the arms of America may always be crowned with success.” These images are powerful: “Assemblies” are “legal” if formed “by the suffrages of a free people”, “soldiers” are “respectable” who “take up arms in defence of liberty”, “counsels of Congress” may be directed with “wisdom” and “American arms crowned with success.”¹¹⁴

In Pennsylvania, the County Committees of Observation faced a problem that spoke directly to the question of their authority. By spring 1776 the movement toward independence had stiffened resistance and more and more men who had not signed the association refused to give up their arms to the Committees. Judging from the minutes of the Northampton County Committee of Observation and Inspection, all was quiet in that county until May 1776; then the committee suddenly faced a plethora of complaints about people who criticised the military efforts, the Continental Congress, and other revolutionary institutions and persons who refused to give up their arms.¹¹⁵ The Committee’s reactions were forceful: It forced “the inhabitants of Chestnut-hill and Hamilton townships” to agree to the publication of their “misdemeanor and accumulated guilt, as well in entering into a written agreement and unlawful combination, to bid defiance to the laws of our country, and to resist the authority of the civil Magistrates, as also in wickedly and maliciously defaming and slandering the Honourable Continental Congress.” At the same time they solemnly promised to “deliver up into the hands and custody of the Committee-men of the said respective townships, within ten days from this date, all our arms, to be by them kept and detained until both by our words and actions it shall evidently appear, that we merit the favour and confidence of our fellow citizens.”¹¹⁶ “Unlawful combinations,” “defiance to the laws” and “resist the authority of the civil Magistrates” were unadmissible, obeying the commands of the Committee of Observation – which in this text equated itself with “civil Magistrates” – was absolutely necessary for retaining the “favour and confidence of our fellow citizens”. In early May the Berks County Committee had Nicholas Hermany publicly admit that it was bad “to discourage the good people of

¹¹⁴ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2430, 19 July 1775.

¹¹⁵ Robert TRAILL, Minutes of the Committee of Observation and Inspection of Northampton County, PA, 1774-1777, ed. ed. C. A. WALTMAN. In: Northampton County Bicentennial Commission (ed.), Two Hundred Years of Life in Northampton County, Pa.: a Bicentennial review. 11 vols. [Easton, Pa. c1976], vol. 4, p. 33-77, esp. p. 45-52.

¹¹⁶ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2465, 20 March 1776.

this and the neighbouring county (of Northampton) from taking up arms against Great Britain” but laudable to “support the present opposition as much as in my power against all the enemies of America”¹¹⁷. And for the few, who still had not yet understood what authority the Northampton Committee of Observation could command, the admission of guilt of John and Joseph Romich contained the illuminating information that the Committee was “obliged to send a party of Associators to compel us to answer for our misconduct; and that we did then resist their authority by loaded fire arms, to the endangering of their lives”¹¹⁸. For the reader the message was clear: Not even armed resistance shielded from the authority of the Committee of Observation.

The public pronouncements of the Committees in Massachusetts differ from those of the middle Atlantic colonies as well as from those from Connecticut in one important aspect: In 1774 and until spring 1775 Massachusetts newspapers are filled with reports that denounced those who had signed an address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson or who had accepted appointments under the “intolerable acts”. Most of those brandished as enemies of liberty in that early period soon publicly apologized and promised that they would henceforth be more careful or, more to the point, “maintain the Charter Rights and Liberties of this Province”¹¹⁹. Those, however, who after spring 1775 were declared “enemy of American liberties”, rarely tried to revert that condemnation.¹²⁰ That in itself suggests that by late spring 1775 Massachusetts

¹¹⁷ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2474, 22 May 1776.

¹¹⁸ The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2481, 10 July 1776.

¹¹⁹ The Boston Gazette, 5 September 1774, p.3, declaration of Abijam Willard from Sturbridge, MA, announcing his resignation as Councillor. Other declarations announcing regrets for signing addresses or for accepting appointments, are published in the same paper under the following dates: 5 September 1774 (John White, William Baldwin) 12 September 1774 (Ebenezer Brandish, Antill Gallop, Elisha Harrington, Charles Prescott, Daniel Heald, E. Pond, John Fowle, Elisha Jones) 3 October (John Webb) 12 December (John Demaresq); the Committee of Observation in Wrentham on 21 December 1774 condemned Nathan Alldis “and some of his adherents” for trying to enlist soldiers for the British Army. The same day Alldis and four others signed a public apology. This differed from all the others in its explicit political argument: They “asked the forgiveness of Heaven” for “exasperating speeches which have justly inflamed the minds of all friends of American liberty,” for paying “no regard to any convention or congress.” They promise for the future “to conform to the resolves of the people on all occasions” and to “regulate our conduct and strictly conform to the Grand American Congress”, The Boston Gazette, 2 January 1775; the resolve of the Committee and the public apology were reprinted in the New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, No. 1215, 23 January 1775, p. 1.

¹²⁰ The exceptions are Simon Tuffts, who admitted on 3 April 1775 of having sold tea to Thomas Lillie of Marblehead; in his public apology he explained that the tea had been bought before the boycott of tea went into effect. Nevertheless, he apologized for his behaviour, assured the readers that he supported the American cause and hoped “for a Restoration of their Favour and Confidence,” The Boston Gazette 3 April 1775, p. 3; Thomas Lillie was hauled before Committee of Inspection and Observation at Marblehead, was declared an enemy of liberty and had to publicly apologize for his deed: He assured the public that he had “voluntarily committed [the tea] to the Flames,” The Boston Evening Post, No. 2062, 3 April 1775, p. 2; the third is Asa Dunbar, who was condemned for not observing a public fast day. In his apology he explained that he had done so for religious reasons but that he supported America’s cause, a declaration the Committee in Weston, Massachusetts, accepted, The Boston Gazette 18 September 1775, p. 3. Those whose names as enemies of liberty were published in this paper and who did not apologize

was sharply divided into two camps. Since the readers knew that the Whigs were rebels and the Tories defenders of tyranny and despotism, the Committees with few exceptions spared themselves the trouble to preach the merits or demerits of either to the public or propagate values all Whigs subscribed to already.¹²¹ The one exception is the declaration of the Committee in Granby. In late January 1776 it condemned Captain William Eastman as an “enemy of the country” for his refusal to “to comply with the declaration of the continental Congress in taking up arms in Defence of the Colonies, he also refuses to join the town in transacting any affairs relative to the public cause And who justified the late tyrannical and oppressive proceedings of the British parliament, all of which are aggravated by his holding a captaincy in the militia, under the power and authority of the administration”.¹²²

In neighbouring Connecticut things were different. The *Connecticut Courant* published forty-eight resolves of Connecticut Committees of Observation; in twenty of these the resolutions to declare a person an enemy of liberty were followed by a public apology or a recantation of political opinions expressed in public. Taken together with the recantations that were published at a later time, most people in this colony sooner or later gave up their earlier convictions. Both condemnations and recantations project a set of positive and negative values some of which are distinct for this colony: Unacceptable opinions are “Court doctrines of Passive obedience to Parliament”¹²³, that “Americans owed ... Obedience to all the King’s commands”¹²⁴ or “of wishing that two hundred thousand regulars were here to decide the dispute between Great Britain and the colonies, and that the acts of parliament might take place”¹²⁵, a

were: Abiel Wood (11 September 1775) Thomas Mansfield, Capt. William Tirrill, David Porter, Israel Levet, David Ellis from Abington (25 September 1775) Captain Edward Clark (16 October 1775) Eleazar Bradshaw (16 October 1775) William Eastman (22 January 1776) Richard Burton (18 March 1776). David Townsend represents a somewhat peculiar case, that demonstrates how the Committees worked: He came to the attention of the Committee of Waltham in connection with the examination of the behaviour of Eleazar Bradshaw. Townsend had bought tea from Bradshaw which represented a clear breach of the Continental Association. He apologized and explained, that he had bought the tea at the special request of Dr. John Clark for the use of the doctor’s wife. He added that he hoped the “Public will forgive me, for I did it without Consideration, and I promise to have no more to do with Tea,” *The Boston Gazette*, 16 October 1775, p. 1.

¹²¹ This interpretation corresponds with other observations: No other colony boasted of such a long tradition in public political debate and in the permanent searching inquisition into the constitutional and political principles of the commonwealth. Both sermons and essays published as separate texts or in newspapers since the seventeenth century reinforced a political value system that in many features closely corresponded to that of the Whigs. With the formal adoption of the Charter of 1691 at the recommendation of the Continental Congress of 9 June 1775 (JCC, vol. 2, p. 83-84) in late June of that year the dye was cast in favour of that venerable political tradition.

¹²² *The Boston Gazette*, 22 January 1776, p. 4.

¹²³ *The Connecticut Courant*, 20 February 1775, p. 3.

¹²⁴ *The Connecticut Courant*, 11 December 1775 (Litchfield).

¹²⁵ *The Connecticut Courant*, 18 September 1775 (Waterbury); another wished that “ten hundred thousand British troops were now landed on our sea coasts and that he would join with them (if he possibly could) to subdue the country”, *ibid.*, 11 December 1775 (Litchfield); and somewhat mysterious “being in

“breach of the Association”¹²⁶, holding “sentiments contrary to the general opinion of the colonies in America”¹²⁷ or “to counteract the major part of my brethren in this and the neighbouring colonies”¹²⁸, or worse “counteract the advice of the Hon. Continental Congress, or the minds of the major part of my brethren”¹²⁹, being “unfriendly to Liberties of America”,¹³⁰ and uttering “expressions having a tendency to disunite the inhabitants of this colony”¹³¹, being “obstinately fixed, in their inimical opposition to the doings of the [Continental] congress”¹³², of speaking “disrespectfully of the Congress”¹³³ or even to characterize the acts of the Continental Congress as “more tyrannical and oppressive than any act of parliament”¹³⁴ and thus “to invite the sword of civil discord, tyranny and oppression into the bowels of our native country”¹³⁵, or “to discourage and oppose the measures adopted by America in general and this Colony in particular”¹³⁶, especially by treating a Committee of Observation “in a contemptuous manner”¹³⁷.

Three projections stand out: First, the views about English politics and motives are crude and undifferentiated; second, condemnation of everything that threatened the internal peace of the colony or the union of the colonies and third rejection of all critique of the Continental Congress and the governing institutions that worked for the “good cause” in the colony. Again and again in the recantations and public apologies these values are repeated and cited for condemnations or acknowledged as wrongful behaviour.

favour of the taxation [and?] of the Canada bill”, *ibid.*, 8 April 1776 (Jericho). The names in parenthesis in this and the following notes refer to the townships to which the newspaper article referred.

¹²⁶ The Connecticut Courant, 3 April 1775 (Farmington, Fairfield). This was mentioned in almost all condemnations.

¹²⁷ The Connecticut Courant, 15 May 1775 (Harwinton).

¹²⁸ The Connecticut Courant, 4 September 1775 (Waterbury); the phrase both appears in the recantation of Thomas Nichols and of Samuel Peck, both of Waterbury.

¹²⁹ The Connecticut Courant, 4 September 1775 (Waterbury).

¹³⁰ The Connecticut Courant, 5 June 1775 (Killingworth).

¹³¹ The Connecticut Courant, 5 June 1775 (Killingworth).

¹³² The Connecticut Courant, 12 June 1775 (New Milford); 3 July 1775 (New Milford) “to depreciate the authority of the continental congress”, *ibid.*, 15 August 1775 (Simsbury); not “treated the continental congress and their resolutions with that respect their merits justly deserve”, *ibid.*, 28 August 1775 (Windsor).

¹³³ The Connecticut Courant, 16 October 1775 (Dutchess County, New York); “contumelious and reproachful speeches of the Hon. Continental Congress”, *ibid.*, 31 October 1775 (New Milford); “speaking diminutive of the hon. Continental congress”, *ibid.*, 8 April 1776 (Jericho); to declare “that the doing of the congress were wishee wash, or words to that effect or purport”, *ibid.*, 13 May 1776 (Sharon).

¹³⁴ The Connecticut Courant, 11 December 1775 (Litchfield).

¹³⁵ The Connecticut Courant, 3 July 1775 (New Milford).

¹³⁶ The Connecticut Courant, 3 July 1775 (Litchfield).

¹³⁷ The Connecticut Courant, 15 August 1775 (Waterbury); attempting to “injure and destroy the influence and authority of said Committee, by saying all that comforted him was, that such men on the Committee would receive their punishment in hell and that the Committee, for what they had done to his father would lift up their eyes in torment”, *ibid.*, 17 June 1776 (New Fairfield).

These negative values were reinforced by positive values: From the Rev. Nichols declaration the reader learned that it was good to do nothing “contrary to the inclinations and pursuit of the body of the people”¹³⁸. Three weeks later, the Rev. John Smally put this into a larger and more sophisticated context: “I believe that the good of the people is the end of civil government, and that all laws ought to be regulated by and adopted to this end. I believe that the right of government in civil society originates from mutual compact between the governor, and governed, and is limited by the same.”¹³⁹ Closer home the Committees repeated the message that it was important “heartily and fully [to] adopt the doings of the continental congress”¹⁴⁰ and “strictly comply with the measures proposed by said congress, and pursued by the Americans in general”¹⁴¹. And given the dramatic shortage of arms it was most laudable “to deliver my arms at a reasonable apriement to the Committee of the Precinct where I live to the use of the Continental forces”¹⁴². By May 1776, the Committees had been so successful, that one penitent sinner could now even publicly proclaim that “I do revere the doings of the congress, and heartily approve of the measures adopted for the defence of our just rights; and as I early offered to hazard my life for the defence of my country, so I am willing to do it, whenever my assistance is wanted.”¹⁴³

The Connecticut Committees stressed slightly different values than their sister committees in Massachusetts: Leaving political theory aside, they were particularly concerned with establishing the fact that the majority of the people and the institutions to which they had delegated power were the key features of the present and future: To act with the majority and thus support the institutions that derived its legitimacy from that authority was true revolutionary behaviour. Thus positive and negative values closely corresponded with and reinforced each other.

My last examples are taken from the condemnations and recantations published in the Virginia papers between November 1774 and August 1775. Both in tone as well as in substance the publications of Committees in this colony differ in three aspects from those of the middle Atlantic and New England committees. First, in over two thirds of the publications the committees do not give any reasons beyond stating that the association had been violated. Second, five of the thirty six resolves the Committees’ reasons focus on personal qualities rather than on political reasons; an equal number give personal as well as political reasons. Third, in the Virginia resolves, be they recan-

¹³⁸ The Connecticut Courant, 19 September 1774 (Farmington); „not to counteract the major part of my brethren in this and the neighbouring colonies,” *ibid.*, 4 September 1775 (Waterbury).

¹³⁹ The Connecticut Courant, 10 October 1774 (New Britain).

¹⁴⁰ The Connecticut Courant, 3 July 1775 (New Milford).

¹⁴¹ The Connecticut Courant, 3 July 1775 (Litchfield); “adhere to the advice of said Congress as being the only means to defend those rights”, *ibid.*, 4 September 1775 (Waterbury).

¹⁴² The Connecticut Courant, 16 October 1775 (Dutchess County, New York).

¹⁴³ The Connecticut Courant, 13 May 1776 (Sharon).

tations or condemnations, the didactic aspect is absent that dominates the publications of the Committees to the north.

On 1 December 1774 Malcolm Hart had been condemned by the Hanover County Committee for “saying that my Opinion of American Virtue was, that a little Gold, properly distributed, would soon induce the People to espouse the Cause of the Enemies to this Country”; this was primarily a reflection on the moral integrity of Virginians rather than a defence of British politics. Almost in passing the Committee added “that I did utter sundry Things in Contempt of the Cause of American Liberty”. He recanted and promised “that in future I shall observe a different Conduct”.¹⁴⁴ The same curious mix characterises the declaration of the Brunswick County Committee on behalf of Alan Love. Love had been charged with having “uttered several injurious and reproachful expressions against the Americans, and the association”. In the hearing before the Committee Love said that he had signed the Association and “mentioned it as his opinion that the British Parliament has no right to tax the Americans” – remarks that lack the didactic touch. The resolve then continues, that Love was “apprehensive that the reports above referred to may prejudice him with many whose favourable opinions he flatters himself he has enjoyed, and wishes to retain, desires the proceedings of this committee may be laid before the public.”¹⁴⁵ The Committee obliged. Again, the image of the person is more important; in this case it is even the reason for publishing the report. The reasoning behind the condemnation of the Anglican Reverend John Agnew by the Nansemond County Committee is especially telling: First the Committee recounted in considerable detail the political views of the Reverend – which were those of a well-informed Tory. The long text of the resolve then concludes with the following summary: „Upon the whole, the public will plainly discover the principles this Rev. Gentleman entertains and in what light he views the general resolutions, adopted and entered into for our relief from the oppressive hand of power. Had this zealous advocate for despotic rule been as assiduous in the discharge of the several duties of his function, as he has been industrious in propagating false and erroneous principles, not only in private discourse, but in blending detestable tenets in his angry orations from the pulpit, in order to gain a party in opposition to the common cause, and thereby lending his little aid to reduce the very people that gave him bread to a state of wretchedness, this committee had not been at the trouble to examine the 11th article of association and opening his conduct to the censure of the world.”¹⁴⁶ The summary makes clear that Agnew’s real crime was that he misused the pulpit for propagating his Tory principles “to reduce the very people that gave him

¹⁴⁴ SCRIBNER (ed.), *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 2, p. 180-181.

¹⁴⁵ SCRIBNER (ed.), *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 2, p. 274-275.

¹⁴⁶ SCRIBNER (ed.), *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 2, p. 311-315, for the whole text. The resolve is dated 6 March 1775.

bread to a state of wretchedness” and not the Tory principles as such.¹⁴⁷ In a different context this tendency colours the condemnation of Mitchell Phillipps. He was condemned for “being always averse to the measures adopted by the Americans to preserve their just rights and privileges inviolate.” But the Committee made it clear that the real problem was that Phillipps was a “Captain of a Company of Militia, over whom he has great influence.” In that function Phillipps had stepped out of his role and “has exerted every effort to deter the men under his command from acceding to the Association, and represented all the American proceedings in the light of absolute rebellion, which, it is feared, may have a bad tendency.”¹⁴⁸

In these as well as in other resolves of Virginia Committees the intention seems to be less to propagate, preach and hold forth particular political values of a future nation but rather to brand and maintain the image of a society in which the gentlemen in public faithfully fulfil the roles assigned to them. In such a society the gentlemen occupied the top layers of society which imbued them with special obligations for the lower ranks. If they misused these obligations they would “reduce” those “to a state of wretchedness” who depended on their integrity and leadership and that of course would “have a bad tendency”. Virginia was a society of orders; Gentlemen respected each other; disrespect ruled a person out of bounds as John Sherlock found out in late June 1775. He was condemned by the Accomack County Committee for declaring “that such people as oppose the ministerial measures with America are rebels; that he shall be employed hereafter in hanging them; and that if no hemp can be got, he has plenty of flax growing”. These were severe political charges. But Sherlock’s apology makes it clear that something else was much more serious: He had called “the Independent Company of this County an unlawful mob, and many other idle and foolish words”. How serious the charges were, his apology demonstrates: “I do, hereby, in the most solemn and serious manner, declare that at those time, when I have held such language, I did not mean as much as I said, and I do hereby declare my most unfeigned sorrow for what I have done or said, and in the most humble manner ask the pardon of the said Independent Company (which was accordingly done by application being made to each member of the said Company respectively) and I declare I look upon the said Company as a very respectable body of men, and, upon the most calm reflection, I declare my opinion to be altered. I most heartily wish success to this my

¹⁴⁷ This interpretation is supported by the decision of the Baltimore County Committee of Observation. On 17 January 1775 it discussed the Tory views of the Anglican Reverend William Edmiston. The Reverend had been charged with having said “that all persons who mustered were guilty of treason; and that such of them as had taken the oath of allegiance, and took up Arms, were guilty of perjury.” After a lengthy discussion the Committee accepted that the Reverend subscribed do Tory views but refrained from declaring him an enemy of the country because the Reverend promised to refrain in public from expressing views „opposite to the decisions of the Continental Congress, or Provincial Congress,“ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1147.

¹⁴⁸ SCRIBNER (ed.): Revolutionary Virginia, vol. 2, p. 308-309.

native country in her present honest struggle for liberty with the mother country, and do here promise to do all in my power to retrieve my character with my countrymen.”¹⁴⁹ In neighbouring Maryland gentlemen were dealt with in similar fashion: Robert Gassaway on April 1, 1776, was accused of “an Offence ... of a high and dangerous Nature.”¹⁵⁰ Rather than condemning Gassaway the Committee resolved to hand him over to the Maryland Committee of Safety; that Committee sentenced Gassaway that he “should ask Pardon for his offence at the Head of Captain Smith’s Company and that then upon Payment of the Expences of the Guard he should be discharged.”¹⁵¹ The committee stuck to this policy until early July 1776, when it suddenly started to bind people accused of “anti-American” sentiments, words, and actions with high bonds to their good behaviour: On July 2, 1776, Dr. John Stevenson, Captain Hugh Scott, and John Ashburner were asked to post bond for £ 3000 – five others had to post bonds between £ 50 and £ 1000.¹⁵² In all these cases the sentences were not published.

The examples show that the publications of Virginia’s committees, too, projected values; yet these reflected to a lesser extent than the pronouncements of the Committees of the colonies to the north the values of the “new nation” or of the new political and social order, nor did they constantly reiterate the political principles that were acceptable and denounce those that were unacceptable. The publications of the Committees to the north, the examples set, the lessons preached, and the negative and positive images conveyed were addressed to all. Their purpose was to unite them all, to bring them all into the new nation conceived of virtue and harmony, a nation ruled by the majority. Those who did not subscribe to this new nation were to be ostracised from society. They were not to be part of the new order. The publications of the Virginia committees tell a different story. Their purpose was the reinforcement of a society that consisted of gentlemen and others; the publications spoke to the gentlemen only and not to the society at large. Their implications were that as long as the gentlemen fulfilled their proper functions – which in this case could of course only be the maintenance of the just American rights – harmony would rule the society; wrong principles could only creep into the society if gentlemen seduced the lower orders. For gentlemen represented already the new values of the revolutionary society; there was no need to reiterate what was already accepted wisdom. After all it had been the Virginia gentlemen who consistently had led the revolutionary process. One just had to compare the Virginia resolutions of early August 1774 with the text of the Continental

¹⁴⁹ SCRIBNER (ed.): *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 236-237.

¹⁵⁰ *Journal of the Committee of Observation of the Middle District of Frederick County* in: *Maryland Historical Magazine*, vol. 11, 1916, p. 247.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 11, 1916, p. 304 (12 April 1776).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. 11, 1916, p. 319 (2 July 1776).

Association of late October of the same year. That is not to say that there was no need in Virginia for a public political dialogue. The many “letters to” exchanged between members of the social and political elite in this colony clearly prove the opposite. But the titles of these letters make it clear that they were part of a dialogue within the political elite¹⁵³; they were not really addressed to all the colonists. The pronouncements of the committees, too, were particularly addressed to Virginia’s gentlemen, and not, as was the case with the pronouncements further north, to all the freemen and freeholders of the colony. They spoke to the Virginia’s gentlemen’s images, concepts, ideas, and obligations and not to those of the lower social orders. In short, in this as in many other features Virginia did not fit the general picture.

11. After the collapse: Terminological problems and the emergence of “The people”

Theoretically at least, at the beginning there was nothing: Colonial governments had collapsed by the middle of 1775, courts ceased to function, colonial assemblies one way or another were either not called into session or were at loggerheads with the crown’s governors; they were unable to pass any legislation. In the decade before the first Continental Congress the colonists had increasingly turned to institutions outside colonial constitutions that claimed responsibility for particular political problems: Committees of Correspondence covered British North America with a network geared towards achieving joint political actions to ward off dangers to their liberties and privileges. “Sons of Liberty” in many of the larger cities and towns agitated for measures designed to enforce compliance with trade boycott resolutions. If nothing else the “Sons of Liberty” were certainly extralegal agents for enforcing a particular set of beliefs. While their legitimacy left something to be desired – although they always claimed to be legitimised by their advocacy of the right values – in a sense they represented attempts at solving an increasingly intolerable solution. They voiced attitudes and demands as well as programs that colonial assemblies were denied to voice; they voiced solutions that colonial representatives could think but not publicly express and pursue. They voiced, in short, what people thought or at least that is what they claimed to do.

In township after township and in county after county the same procedure repeated itself in 1774: Freemen and freeholders followed the call of some, met, elected delegates for provincial Conventions and members of local Committees of Inspection and Observation: Most minute books began alike: “Agreeable to Notice for that pur-

¹⁵³ E. g. John Fowler to John Pinkney: An Open Letter, in: SCRIBNER (ed.), *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 45, 48; A True Patriot to John Pinkney: An Open Letter, *ibid.*, p. 117; Captian James Miller to Alexander Purdie: An Open Letter, *ibid.*, p. 122-123.

pose given to the Freeholders and Freemen of the County of Northampton qualified to Vote for Representatives in the Legislature, a very respectable Number of them met at the Court House in Easton in the Said county on the 21st Day of December Anno 1774 When George Taylor, Peter Kachlein & Henry Kookon Esqurs. were nominated Judges for the Election, for a Committee of Observation and Inspection conformable to the Eleventh Article of the Association of the Continental Congress and recommended by the General Assembly of this Province”. Thus reads the first entry of the Minutes of the Northampton County Committee of Inspection and Observation.¹⁵⁴

There are subtle shifts in the terminology of these protocols as well as in the texts of the associations passed: First there is the ambiguous use of the term “subject”: In June 26, 1774, the Bergen County (New Jersey) Association text speaks of the “late Acts of Parliament, declarative of their right to impose internal taxes on the *subjects* of America, as manifest encroachments on our national rights and privileges as British *subjects*” – a usage that mixes the classical meaning with an innovative meaning that combines “national rights and privileges as British subjects.”¹⁵⁵ Four weeks later, the people of Hunterdon County in the same colony spoke in the second resolve of “the undoubted hereditary right of an English subject” and in the third resolve of the “rights and liberties of the free subjects of this Colony”¹⁵⁶, a usage that separates the term “subject” from its subjection to the crown. In most of the texts of Associations the authors do not style themselves as “subjects”, but as “Freeholders and Inhabitants” as did those “of the Township of Lower Freehold, in the County of Monmouth”¹⁵⁷ On 29 April 1775 the authors of the Association text of New York describe themselves as “freeholders, freemen, and inhabitants of the city and county of New-York”¹⁵⁸; and the authors of the Association drafted in the County and town of Cra-

¹⁵⁴ Robert TRAILL, Minutes of the Committee of Observation and Inspection of Northampton County, p. 35. Similar: Minutes of the Lancaster County Committee of Inspection and Observation, 1774-1776, in: The Peter FORCE Collection, Series 7 E, MSS 19.061, folders 60-70, reel 16, fol. 2, Lancaster Historical Society. The history of the Minutes of the Lancaster County Committee is now described by Francis S. FOX, The Minutes and Papers of the Revolutionary Committees in Lancaster County, 1774-1777, in: Pennsylvania History 71, 2004, p. 213-225. In this county the freemen and freeholders were called together in response to a letter from the Philadelphia Committee; in the case of New York City, the Committee of Inspection and Observation that functioned between 22 November 1775 and January 9, 1776, was called together “In pursuance of a Request of the Committee of Observation of the 26 April 1775, Polls were opened in the Several Wards of the City for the Election of One Hundred Persons as a General Committee of Association for the City and County of New York and of twenty-one Deputies to serve in Provincial Congress. . .,” New York City Committee of Observation Minutes, fol. 2, Peter FORCE Collection, Series VIII D, Reel 53, Library of Congress.

¹⁵⁵ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 9-10.

¹⁵⁶ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 13-15.

¹⁵⁷ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 4-5. Same formula in the Association text of the ‘Essex County, New Jersey, *ibid.*, p.6-8.

¹⁵⁸ Title of Broadside New York : Printed by John Holt, 1775], Evans 14339.

ven called themselves “subscribers, freeholders and inhabitants”¹⁵⁹. These self-descriptions are matched by an increasingly frequent use of the term “people” as a collective term for all Euroamericans: In late May 1774 the Burgesses of Virginia called themselves “the late Representatives of the good people of this country.”¹⁶⁰ Two weeks later the Boston Committee of Correspondence addressed a circular letter “to the People of every Town in the Province”¹⁶¹. In December 1774 the Delegates of the Provincial Congress of Maryland addressed an important resolve “to the People of this Province”¹⁶². Eleven months later the freemen and freeholders of Westmoreland County in Pennsylvania wished that George III “may long be the beloved Sovereign of a free and happy people throughout the British Empire”¹⁶³, while a little later the Provincial Congress of South Carolina bemoaned “an oppressed People” that was driven “to the use of arms”¹⁶⁴, a formula repeated by the Wilmington Associators in North Carolina.¹⁶⁵

These terminological usages indicate a gradual, yet accelerating process in which the colonists see themselves as distinct entities imbued with powers and abilities to act on their own. Whether they style themselves as “free subjects”, “inhabitants”, as “Freeholders and Freemen”, or as “people”, they acquire in all these usages a distinct self, become a unit not dependant on any other institution or higher being like a king. By early summer 1775 this process had reached a point, where formulas are used that suggest that the term “people” had acquired traits of sovereignty. The first usage I find dates from early January 1775: In that month the Freemen and Freeholders at Woodbridge in New Jersey agree on instructions to their just elected Committee of Observation and Inspection: “Resolved That it is the desire of the people now met, that the said Committee do execute the trust reposed in them with firmness and fidelity.”¹⁶⁶ The Provincial Congress of New York quite naturally in May 1775 called itself “representatives of the people.”¹⁶⁷ But more significant is the formula for an oath agreed to by the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts in early May 1775: The officer is to “swear that I will truly and faithfully serve in the Massachusetts Army, to which I belong, for the defence and security of the estates, lives, and liberties *of the good people of*

¹⁵⁹ The South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal, No. 499, 20 June 1775, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351.

¹⁶¹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 397-398.

¹⁶² AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1031-1032.

¹⁶³ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

¹⁶⁴ South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal, Nr. 497, 6. Juni 1775, p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1030.

¹⁶⁶ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 45-46. The formula is repeated two days later in the instruction of the assembly of freeholders of Morris County, *ibid.*, p. 47-49.

¹⁶⁷ Printed in the Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2423, 31 May 1775.

this and the sister Colonies in America, in opposition to Ministerial tyranny”¹⁶⁸. Four weeks later the New Hampshire Provincial Congress adopted the same formula for its officers.¹⁶⁹ Let me finally cite from the recantation of Mordecai Levy, that was published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of 19 July 1775: “I now believe all Assemblies to be legal and constitutional, which are formed by the united suffrages of a free people.”¹⁷⁰

By early 1775 many in British North America used the term “people” or its synonyms in the sense political writers and political philosophers had used it in their discussions of natural law. Daniel Leonard, in 1773 still a Whig, on November 18, 1773, summarized the case: “That both legislative and executive powers in this province being corrupted, the partisans of our oppressive plunderers and murderers are screened from public justice. That this corruption of public justice with regard to these internal enemies, and the deprivation of the people from the application of it for their own safety, naturally throws us back into a state of nature...”¹⁷¹ The consequence was spelled out in 1772 by “the Preceptor” in the newspaper *Massachusetts Spy* under the heading “Political Duties of the People”: “As the People are the fountain of power and authority, the original seat of Majesty, the authors of laws, and the creators of officers to execute them; if they shall find the power they have conferred abused by their trustees ... then it is their right and what is their right is their duty, to resume that delegated power...”¹⁷² Armed with these insights the colonists opted for those two parts of political theory and experience through which they had already safeguarded their rights and interests in the preceding periods: representative institutions on the local level (committees) and on the colonial level (provincial congresses). On May 1, 1775, a Meeting of the Inhabitants of Morris County in New Jersey bluntly resolved that their delegates to the Provincial Congress “be vested with the power of legislation, and that they raise men, Money, and Arms for the common Defence”¹⁷³. The people were now increasingly considered the source of political power. Elections of the people thus became creative acts in which “the people” delegated for a limited time to a set of men (never women) particular powers. Whoever started the proceedings, the decisive element was the election. Either the town meeting, or as in the case of New York the opening of the polls, or as in most other colonies the Freeholders and Freemen or simply the Gentlemen of the County assembled and elected members

¹⁶⁸ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 791 (italics are mine).

¹⁶⁹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 658.

¹⁷⁰ The *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 2430, 19 July 1775.

¹⁷¹ *Massachusettensis* [Daniel LEONARD], “To All Nations of men”, in: *Massachusetts Spy*, 18 Nov. 1773, reprinted in: Charles S. HYNEMAN, Donald S. LUTZ (eds.), *American Political Writing during the Founding Era, 1760-1805*. 2 vols., Indianapolis, IN 1983, vol. 1, p. 215.

¹⁷² The essay is reprinted in HYNEMAN, LUTZ (eds.), *American Political Writing*, vol. 1, p. 181.

¹⁷³ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 104.

for a committee. After the election they often defined the scope of responsibility for the committees. Fairly typical is the instruction of the Town Meeting of Woodbridge in New Jersey to its Committee of Inspection and Observation, that “the said Committee ... in every respect follow the directions of the Association, as much as if it was a law of this Province; and they be upon oath for the conscientious discharge of their duty.”¹⁷⁴ Implicitly or explicitly all Associations asked their Committees to “follow the directions of the Association”, or, to use the words of the Darien Committee in Georgia, that were later copied by New York: “to adopt and endeavour to carry into execution, whatever may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention, that shall be appointed for the purpose of preserving our Constitution”¹⁷⁵.

12. Procedures and judicial process and the Committees of Observation

At first the Committees of Inspection and Observation immediately after their election by the people defined their task as enforcing the Continental Association as an economic measure. But the real problems arose as soon as the Committees decided that they were responsible, too, for the enforcement of particular political principles. Trouble started for example on 27 June 1774 when the freemen and freeholders of Morris County, New Jersey, unanimously agreed that all those who approved of “the intolerable Acts” of the British Parliament were “calculated to disturb the minds and alienate the affections of the colonies from the mother country” as were those who subscribed to the “doctrines of the right of taxing America”. Those people “should”, so the meeting unanimously concluded and said in the text of the Association, “be deemed enemies of our King and happy Constitution”.¹⁷⁶ It was clear that a committee would examine those who propagated obnoxious political principles. It was unclear, on what principles or standards they would be measured and decided upon.

We are used to associate the phrase “culture of rights” with institutions like “courts”, with particular concepts of law, and with procedures that guarantee the accused a fair hearing and a fair trial. None of these existed in the two years prior to the Declaration of Independence. The courts were not open except for criminal offences and the law available was the law of the discredited English colonial government. The Committees of Inspection and Observation were no courts; they were elected bodies, responsible to their electors as “the people”. This was the basis of their legitimacy. On

¹⁷⁴ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 45-46.

¹⁷⁵ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137.

¹⁷⁶ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 11-13.

that basis the committees proceeded to regain some of the other features we associate with the phrase “culture of rights”. Many of the committees quickly moved to agree on “procedures” to be followed in hearing and determining a case: Important aspects of these rules were that the accused had to be notified of the charge ahead of the hearing, that the case was to be discussed in the presence of the accuser and the accused, and that both had the right to submit proofs of their allegations and defence. Landon Carter in an open letter to the printer of the *Virginia Gazette* described how a particular case had been dealt with that had created some public controversy: “The complaint against the apprentice selling his goods from his vessel, against the ninth article of the association, was made by one of the members of the committee; and as the evidences were present, the committee immediately went into the inquiry, and finding cause to examine further, sent their messenger to summon this apprentice, and the skipper of the vessel (rendered before obnoxious to the committee of Gloucester for the same proceedings within their precinct) to appear before the committee the next day. Accordingly they did appear; and the chairman, only out of duty, acquainted them with the charge. Upon examination of the evidences before them, the whole committee (pretty numerous), came to those resolutions sent to your press under the hand of Richard Parker *clerk pro tempore*... .”¹⁷⁷ In many cases the Committee after the hearing would postpone the judgment to another day. By adopting clear procedural rules the Committee members attempted to introduce at least something akin to a judicial procedure with which the accuser and the accused were familiar and which would allow the outsider the possibility to judge the merits of the case on the basis of the evidence.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ SCRIBNER (ed.), *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 174-175.

¹⁷⁸ The New York City Committee of Inspection and Observation on May 1, 1775, agreed on a set of 15 rules „for the „Government of this Committee in their Debates and Proceedings,“ New York City Committee of Observation Minutes, 26 April 1775 – 16 February 1776, fol. 3, Peter FORCE Collection, Series VIII D, Reel 53, Library of Congress. On 22 May 1775 the Committee of Observation and Inspection of Northampton County agreed, too, to a set of rules; in this case they stressed only the fact that “this Committee will abide by & carry into Execution all such measures as the Continental Congress shall ... adopt.“ The other four rules dealt with military matters, TRAILL, *Minutes of the Committee of Observation and Inspection of Northampton County, PA, 1774-1777*, in: *Two hundred years of life in Northampton County, Pa.*, vol. 4, p. 36-37. In a similar way the Lancaster County Committee of Inspection and Observation on 9 July 1774 passed; in this case they laid down no procedural rules but rather defined the tasks of the commission and were more texts akin to Associations, *Minutes of the Lancaster County Committee of Inspection and Observation, 1774-1776*, sub date 9 July 1774, The Peter FORCE Collection, Series 7 E, MSS 19.061, folders 60-70, microfilm reel 16, Lancaster Historical Society.

13. *Committees of Observation and their electorate*

Particularly in the Southern colonies the committees, as far as it is possible to say, published their proceedings often almost immediately after the meeting.¹⁷⁹ In the middle and especially in the New England colonies, on the other hand, committees usually published only condemnations of particular persons or their recantations but refrained from making their other dealings public. Important resolves by the Pennsylvania Committees of Inspection and Observation were, judging from the minutes of those of Northampton and Lancaster County, published both in English and in German.¹⁸⁰ These publication activities are the result of an essential quality of these committees that led to the heart of the problem: The Committees were elected and felt accountable to their electors. Their ability to function was largely dependent on the support the committee enjoyed. Thus the culture of rights between late 1774 and 1776 was a matter of what the majority of the electors approved of. As a rule the committees usually resigned after a year, when new ones were elected.

The committees' decisions often were criticised, although such criticism became increasingly dangerous. The New England newspapers report fierce criticism and infights for at least two Committees of Inspection and Observation: Swanzey and Pownalborough, both in Massachusetts, and for New Fairfield in Connecticut. The controversies in Swanzey and in New Fairfield are of particular interest: On 7 August 1775 the Committees of Swanzey and Rehoboth in a joint publication accused among others Jerathmeel Bowers, Charles Slead, and Gideon Shearman as "Persons that have acted contrary to the rules and directions of the congress, though not in matters of trade, and make no retractions thereof."¹⁸¹ The following week Bowers, an influential member of the township and delegate to the General Court, demanded proofs for the allegations of the Committee; these were published a month later in a lengthy series of depositions of witnesses that accused Bowers of having hindered the sending of Militia to Lexington and of trying to prevent the organization of a Company of Minute Men and storing gunpowder in the town.¹⁸² Two weeks after the publication of the depositions the *Boston Gazette* reported that the Town Meeting of Swanzey under the chairmanship of Jerathmeel Bowers had voted the Committee of Observation of the town out of office, and elected a new one. The new members were: "Jerathmeel Bowers, William Brown, Capt. Luther Thurber, Charles Slead, Capt. Levi Wheaton." The

¹⁷⁹ See the many reports on particular meetings of Virginia Committees of Inspection and Observation published in SCRIBNER (ed.), *Revolutionary Virginia*, vols. 2-6; and for the publication of the Baltimore Committee of Observation of March 6, 1775 see *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* No. 1225, 3 April 1775, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ See the rules cited in note 177 which were resolved to be published both in German and in English.

¹⁸¹ *The Boston Gazette*, 7 August 1775, p. 2.

¹⁸² *The Boston Gazette*, 14 August 1775, p. 3, p. 11 September 1775, p. 4.

report added, that Bowers was well known for having “warmly contended for the rights and liberties of America”, and that his condemnation by the Committee of Observation had been the result of “envy, malice and revenge.”¹⁸³ That, however, was not the end of the story. Bowers opponents carried the case to the General Court where a special committee shifted through the mountains of charges and countercharges. In a report published in the *Boston Gazette* on 25 November 1775, this Committee declared Bowers innocent of all the charges. This seemed to be a resounding victory; the General Court, however, thought otherwise and voted, as the *Boston Gazette* reported, the report and its recommendations down.¹⁸⁴ In the end Bowers, the chairman of the Swanzey Committee of Observation, stood condemned as someone who had hampered the efforts to defend the people of Massachusetts against the British army.

The reports show that in the case of Swanzey the Committee of Observation had been the battleground for two factions that seem to have split the town and the region so deeply that the General Court felt obliged to interfere. The case demonstrates first, that there was the possibility of appeal against sentences of Committees of Observation in those colonies, where the legislature was still functioning; it points secondly to the ramifications institutions like Committees of Observation faced as elective bodies. This is of course not to argue, that in earlier decades courts of law in North America were immune to outside pressures. But it certainly is safe to say that Committees of Observation as elected bodies were much more vulnerable to these influences and machinations than colonial courts had ever been. The right and reputation of a person seemed more to depend on the majority of the committee and possibly of the electorate than in earlier times.

The case of Pownalborough was different. Ephraim Hubbel of New Fairfield in Connecticut was like Bowers a respected member of the community and a member of the local Committee of Observation. According to a lengthy report published by the majority of the Committee, proceedings against Hubbel had led to his condemnation for concealing documents and for sabotaging in other ways the work of the Committee.¹⁸⁵ Hubbel accepted the verdict and wrote and signed a recantation which was published by the Committee. That seemed to be the end. But the controversy in the

¹⁸³ The Boston Gazette, 25 September 1775, p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ The Boston Gazette, 4 December 1775, p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ The charge was: “secreting and suppressing for several months an association paper came into by said committee, which paper was to be offered to the inhabitants of the town as a criterion of their political principles. Secondly, for strenuously opposing the measures came into and voted by a majority part of said committee in order to subject the enemies of American freedom. Thirdly, for supporting and encouraging the enemies of America in their opposition. Fourthly, for accusing the complainant of speaking false, when relating to said committee matters of fact relative to the grand American cause. Fifthly, for leaving the committee when together for the purpose of dealing with some of the enemies to America, who were then prisoners under guard, and acquainting the said prisoners with the designs of the committee.” The Connecticut Courant 26 February 1776, p. 4.

township did not die down. On 17 June 1776 the Committee of Observation published the condemnation of Capt. William Gaylord Hubbel for “having at sundry times and places, inimically endeavoured to injure and destroy the influence and authority of said Committee, by saying all that comforted him was, that such men on the Committee would receive their punishment in hell and that the Committee, for what they had done to his father would lift up their eyes in torment, and that the committee, in their proceedings, with his father, were governed by prejudice and party spirit.”¹⁸⁶ Hubbel refused to accept the verdict or sign a recantation for his supposed misdeeds. Instead he succeeded in getting the condemnation of his father on the agenda of a joint meeting of the Committees of Observation of New Fairfield, Kent, New Milford, and Danbury. On 1 July 1776 the *Connecticut Courant* reported that after a difficult and involved debate the members reversed the decision of the New Fairfield Committee of February 1776 and by implication justified the critique of Hubbel’s son: The lengthy report published read: “that the operation of said publication has had an injurious effect on the character of said Hubbel, as he is thereby viewed as being inimical to the freedom and rights of the United Colonies, which not being intended by the said New Fairfield committee, and as those difficulties in said committee have arisen rather from certain differences of opinion between a majority of the members of said committee and said squire Hubbel, respecting the method of proceeding in their business, as committee, etc. Than from any want of friendship to the cause of liberty in any member of said committee, each of whom have given abundant proof of their zeal in the defence of the just rights of the country; and which difficulties and said Squire Hubbell having made due satisfaction by a confession of this date on file, to said Committee, of which he is a member, for certain inadvertencies of his, which have been the cause of some uneasiness which have taken place in said New Fairfield committee, and misunderstandings being now reconciled, this publication is made, that not only the effects of the former publication cease, but that the public may be assured of the united endeavours of said committee steadfastly to pursue, as they have ever done, the best good of the country.”¹⁸⁷

Not only the Committees of Observation of New England towns were subjected to pressures from their electorates. Decisions of Virginia committees, too, were, as the reaction of Landon Carter demonstrated, frequently criticized. Committees in Pennsylvania were subjected, too, to pressures. After the news of the clashes at Lexington and Concord in Lancaster County pressures were mounting. While in Paxton Township people were heeding the call to arms, in other parts of the county conscientious objectors were alarmed at the turn of events. In late May the Committee was informed

¹⁸⁶ The Connecticut Courant, 17 June 1776, p. 3.

¹⁸⁷ The Connecticut Courant, 1 July 1776, p. 1.

that “divers Persons whose religious Tenets forbid them forming themselves into Military Associations have been maltreated and threatened by some violent & ill disposed People notwithstanding their willingness to contribute cheerfully to the Common Cause otherwise than by taking up Arms”. The committee appealed to “the good Inhabitants of the County that they use every possible means to discourage and prevent such licentious proceedings & assiduously cultivate that Harmony and Union so absolutely necessary”. At the same time the Committee “intimated to the Publick their entire disapprobation of any abusive opprobrious or insulting expressions that may be made use of by any Persons whatever against such of the Respectable Inhabitants who may think proper to association for the defence and support of their inestimable Rights and Privileges.” The Committee’s stance pleased no one. Faced with widespread criticism for what probably all felt was equivocating rather than forcefully leading, the Committee on June 2, 1775, resolved that since “their well meant endeavours to serve the Public Interest have not proved Satisfactory to divers People resident in the said Borough and that should they continue to act longer as a Committee their proceedings may be productive of disunion and destroy that peace and good order which they ardently wish to cultivate and maintain do unanimously resign the Trust formerly reposed in them”.¹⁸⁸ The new Committee immediately intensified its efforts to arm the county. Agreeing with most other committees in the other colonies “peace and good order” once again were considered supreme values.¹⁸⁹

14. The problem of rights I: liberty of conscience

Arming the people touched on sensitive issues not only in Pennsylvania but in other colonies too: After all, Pennsylvania and at least West New Jersey had a tradition of not only respecting the wishes of conscientious objectors; William Penn had guaranteed liberty of conscience; in a number of public declarations the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends pointed out that they considered this their fundamental right; they considered efforts to force them to do military service or to fund military activities as violations of the Pennsylvania constitution.¹⁹⁰ The opposite position was equally clear: From a religious point of view the argument was that “we shall be justified before God and man in resisting force by force, do unite ourselves under every tie

¹⁸⁸ Minutes of the Lancaster County Committee of Inspection and Observation, 1774-1776, sub date end of May - 2 June 1775, The Peter FORCE Collection, Series 7 E, MSS 19.061, folders 60-70, microfilm reel 16, Lancaster Historical Society.

¹⁸⁹On the importance of maintaining unity in Pennsylvania for Quaker politicians see Hermann WELLENREUTHER, *The Quest for Harmony in a Turbulent World: The Principle of "Love and Unity" in Colonial Pennsylvania Politics*. In: *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, 1983, p. 537 – 576.

¹⁹⁰ Hermann WELLENREUTHER, *Glaube und Politik in Pennsylvania 1681-1776. Die Wandlungen der Obrigkeitstheorie und des Peace Testimony der Quäker*. Cologne 1972, chap. 12.

of religion and honour, and associate as a band in the defence, against every foe”, as the South Carolina Provincial Congress maintained in the text of its Association of June 3, 1775.¹⁹¹ In 1775 a number of protestant pastors had enlarged on this problem in sermons designed to prove that resistance to tyranny was lawful and did not violate tender consciences.¹⁹² From a secular point of view it was argued that “Our cruel enemies have forced us to cross the Rubicon, we have begun the noble work, and there is no retreating; the King of Britain has proclaimed us rebels. The sword is drawn, and the scabbard must be thrown away; there is no medium between a glorious defence and the most abject slavery; if we fail in our endeavours to repel the assaults of tyranny.”¹⁹³

The need for self-defence overrode individual conscientious scruples. In the light of brute force, so the argument, tender consciences had to be silenced in order to survive. The whole issue, however, had a larger implication and that touched the problem of the relationship between the individual and society. In Connecticut “recantations” had repeatedly stressed the willingness to abide and accept the decision of the majority. In these cases, however, liberty of conscience was not involved. Philosophically the problem involved the question whether a person could delegate the decision over its life to the majority or for that matter to anyone else. Most philosophers of the time thought that such delegation was impossible. Yet philosophers were, too, agreed that everybody had not only the right but the duty to preserve his own life.¹⁹⁴ From that insight it could be deduced that if the individual refused to do anything for the preservation of his life the larger society had the duty to preserve *his* life, too. In Pennsylvania the majority accepted this duty but insisted that it had the right to make the conscientious objectors pay for this service.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897; similar the declaration of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, William LINCOLN (ed.), *The Journals of Each Provincial Congress of Massachusetts in 1774 and 1775, and of the Committee of Safety, with an Appendix.* Boston, MA 1838, p. 91-93.

¹⁹² John CARMICHAEL, A. M., *A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross’s Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, Now published at the Request of the Author, and corrected by himself from the Copy printed at Lancaster; Humbly offered to the Persusal of the Military Associators of the City, Liberties and County of Philadelphia.* Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by John Dean, Bookbinder, in Laetitia Court, 1775, p. 9-12, Evans 13862; David JONES, M. A., *Defensive War in a just Cause sinless. A Sermon Preached on the Day of the Continental Fast at Tredyffryn in Chester County, by ...*, Published by Request. Philadelphia, Printed by Henry Miller, 1775, p.16-18, Evans 14133; Samuel WEST, *A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Council, and the Honorable House of Representatives, of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, May 29th, 1776. Being the Anniversary for the Election of the Honorable Council for the Colony, by S. W., A. M., Pastor of a Church in Dartmouth.* Boston, Printed by John Gill, in Queen Street, 1776, p. 58-59, Evans 15217.

¹⁹³ *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 2449, 29 November 1775, reprint of an article in *The Essex Gazette*, entitled “To the American Soldierry” and signed by “A Soldier”, dated 4 November 1775,.

¹⁹⁴ WHITE, *The Philosophy of the American Revolution*, p. 203-205.

¹⁹⁵ In general RYERSON, *The Revolution is Now Begun*, 160-166.

15. *The problem of rights II: freedom of the press and of opinion*

The problem was discussed with more urgency in the context of the Committees' efforts to control political opinions and contain criticism of revolutionary institutions. In late 1774 and early 1775 a number of Committees went on record with declarations that did more than just to deplore the publication of Tory pamphlets. Already in mid-December 1774 the Committee of Observation of Elizabethtown in New Jersey resolved that "they will take no more of ... Rivington's Gazettes, nor send any advertisements to be inserted therein ... we will recommend it to our constituents, to observe the same conduct towards said Rivington, or any other printer who shall publish ... pamphlets tending to break the happy union now subsisting throughout the American colonies"¹⁹⁶. Three weeks later the Newark Committee in the same colony published the following queries in the newspapers: "*Query 1*: Whether a Press, which weekly throws out pamphlets and other publick pieces, replete with the most bitter invectives, scandalous and criminal reflections upon that reputable body, the Continental Congress, and their constituents; and all, with a manifest design to blind the eyes of the less judicious; sow the seeds of faction and discord, and thus gratify the perfidious authors of prejudicing the honest, unthinking, against their real interest; whether such a press is not inimical to the country, where it is, and does not forfeit its support? *Query 2*: Whether such a printer, and the authors of such pieces ... are not, according to the strict sense of the Grand Congress, those very persons who ... are considered ... enemies to their country ... ? *Query 3*: Whether a printer in New York in the space of three or four years, by the profits of his press ... can from a low ebb of fortune, if not bankruptcy, acquire such independence, that he dare publicly ... proclaim himself independent of the country, and that he could live without their custom. *Query 4*: Whether such a Man is not a Ministerial hireling, who is endeavouring to sacrifice his country to his own private interest?"¹⁹⁷ Between December 1774 and March 1775 Committees of Observation of Woodbridge and Hanover in Morris County, both in New Jersey,¹⁹⁸ of the precinct of Shawangunk and of Hanover, both in Ulster County in New York,¹⁹⁹ of Newport, Rhode Island,²⁰⁰ and of Orange County, Virginia,²⁰¹ published resolutions that voiced similar concerns about Rivington's newspaper and pamphlets. Some went further. The Orange County Committee

¹⁹⁶ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1051-1052.

¹⁹⁷ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 39-40.

¹⁹⁸ Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ 1879, p. 46-47, p. 52-54.

¹⁹⁹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1183.

²⁰⁰ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 11.

²⁰¹ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 234-235, SCRIBNER (ed.), Revolutionary Virginia, vol. 2; p. 377-378, p. 386.

described Rivington's pamphlets as a "collection of the most audacious insults of that august body (the grand Continental Congress) and their proceedings, and also on the several Colonies from which they were deputed, particularly New England and Virginia, of the most slavish doctrines of provincial government, the most impudent falsehoods and malicious artifices to excite divisions among the friends of America, they deserved to be publicly burnt as a testimony to the Committee's detestation and abhorrence of the writers and their principles"; the newspaper added that the verdict of the Committee was "speedily executed in the presence of the Independent Company and other respectable inhabitants of the said County."²⁰²

The majority of the people in these counties and townships shared the feelings expressed by their Committees of Observation. For them condemning pamphlets was obviously compatible with *their* concept of the right to free speech and the liberty of the press in England and in the colonies. In strictly legal terms these rights were at best tenuous; they existed not because the English government cherished free speech and freedom of the press but because Parliament had been unable to agree on legislation "regulating" the press.²⁰³ Not of right but de facto freedom of speech and press existed in North America. Nevertheless, some claimed otherwise and objected to the Committees' of Observation efforts to suppress opposition views.²⁰⁴

On May 20, 1775, James Rivington complained in a letter to the Continental Congress that the attacks against him represented violations of the freedom of the press that existed in the British Empire. He claimed that he served with his publications the public as did all other printers.²⁰⁵ In his letter Rivington essentially formulated the arguments a lawyer would have put forward in defense of a client. Many colonists agreed with Rivington, that the "freedom of the press" belonged to the cherished liberties colonists enjoyed. Indeed, two weeks later, a Whig in Virginia insisted in his letter to the *Virginia Gazette* that "The rights and privileges we contend for are common to all. Freedom of sentiment, and liberty of speech, surely are most essential parts of our GRAND CHARTER."²⁰⁶ Indeed, as early as March 1775 the Committee of Observation of Newport, Rhode Island, had published a remarkably pointed defence of the freedom of the press: "Resolved, That the freedom of the Press is of the

²⁰² AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 234-235.

²⁰³ On the press in England and the problem of free speech and the freedom of the press see Karl Tilmann WINKLER, *Wörterkrieg. Politische Debattenkultur in England 1689-1750*. Stuttgart 1998; Eckhart HELLMUTH, "The palladium of all other English liberties": Reflections on the Liberty of the Press in England during the 1760s and 1770s, in: Eckhart HELLMUTH (ed.), *The Transformation of Political Culture. England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*. Oxford 1990, p. 467-501.

²⁰⁴ Leonard W. LEVY, *Freedom of Speech and Press in Early American History. Legacy of Suppression*. New York 1963.

²⁰⁵ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 836-837.

²⁰⁶ SCRIBNER (ed.), *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 199-200, published in Purdie's *Virginia Gazette*, 9. Juni 1775.

utmost importance to civil society; and that its importance consists “besides the advancement of truth, science, morality, and arts in general, in its diffusion of liberal sentiments on the administration of Government, its ready communication of thoughts between subjects, and its consequential promotion of union among them, where, by oppressive Officers, are shamed or intimidated into more honourable and just modes of conducting affairs”; and therefore it is the duty of every friend of Civil Government to protect and preserve from violation, that invaluable right that noble pillar, and great support of Public Liberty; and to countenance and encourage the Press.”²⁰⁷

Clearly, the Committees of Observation which had condemned Tory pamphlets and James Rivington’s newspaper had not lightly thrown overboard what they considered basic rights. In their decision they faced the problem of where to draw the borderline between right and wrong usage of freedom of the press. The Newport Committee of Observation was one of the first committees that squarely faced this problem. It suggested the following solution: “But when ... a press is incessantly employed and prostituted to the vilest uses, in publishing the most infamous falsehoods, in ... exiting discord and disunion among the people; in supporting and applauding the worst of men ... and in vilifying and calumniating the best of characters, and the best of causes; it then behooves every citizen ... to discountenance every such licentious, illiberal, prostituted Press.”²⁰⁸ Constant falsification and slander endangered union, harmony, and thus the public peace and, therefore, represented a misuse of the freedom of the press; to suppress such misuse was rightful and not a violation of a fundamental right.

Not all writers agreed. “R. A.” in Virginia, a Whig, insisted “that every subject, especially of great importance, should be open to a decent, candid, and free discussion. From a collision of opinions, truths, and the most essential interests of the community, are in the fairest track of promotion.” But he added that there were limits. “When, indeed, the public voice has fixed the decision, the acquiescence of individuals, and a proper exertion in the common cause, becomes a duty.”²⁰⁹ This opinion reflected the widespread conviction, that any critique of Continental or Provincial Congresses was inadmissible. A gentleman from Brookfield, Joshua Upham, suggested a broader concept that, however, included key features of the understanding of the Newport Committee and the anonymous letter writer from Virginia. In a letter to the Brookfield Committee of Observation he admitted that he had not approved all measures adopted by the Continental Congress. Yet he insisted: “But to inquire freely into the propriety of every publick measure (provided the same, when established, be

²⁰⁷ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 11.

²⁰⁸ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 11.

²⁰⁹ cf. note 217.

not resisted) I have ever held as an inalienable right, and what, in a great measure, constitutes the freedom of an Englishman.” Nevertheless he added that “I have ever deemed it the duty, as well as the wisdom of the individuals of every community, to submit and conform to the sense and opinion of the majority of members of that community; always reserving to themselves, and saving entire and inviolate, the rights of conscience, private judgment, and freedom of speech. Therefore, I have not resisted such measures as have been approved of by the majority of the people, whether agreeable to my private judgment or not.” Everybody was entitled to his own private opinion. But once the majority had decided an issue, all had to accept and abide by that decision –without, however, giving up his “private judgment and freedom of speech”. Upham went still further. He expressly declared himself willing “to bear an equal share and proportion of such publick charge and expense as shall be deemed by such majority necessary to extricate this country out of its present alarming and critical situation.” But, since to him “allegiance and protection, are reciprocal duties and obligations” he expected, despite his private disagreements about public policy, “that I am to be protected and secured in my person, family, and property, from all violent attacks upon either; which protection and security, so far as it is within your power to afford me, I now ask, and doubt not but I shall obtain the same.”²¹⁰ Upham formulated a compromise that obviously was acceptable to the Brookfield Committee of Observation but not to most other Committees in the colony. He was willing to accept with all their consequences decisions of revolutionary institutions although he disapproved of them. But he insisted that this did not imply that he had given up his right to say or think what he wanted.²¹¹ To most Committees such a compromise would have endangered the peace, union, and harmony they considered so important that it justified their silencing any public critique of revolutionary institutions. Most Committees adopted variations of the resolution of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress of 8 May 1775, that the Committees of Observation search and identify all persons considered “open and avowed enemies of America”. The Committees were asked “to inquire into the principles and conduct of such suspected persons; and that they cause all such to be disarmed, who do not give them full and ample assurances, in which they can with safety confide, of their readiness to join their countrymen on all occasions in defence of the rights and liberties of America”.²¹² Resolutions such as these left no room for colonists to voice dissenting opinions on the most important political issues.

²¹⁰ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 852-853.

²¹¹ See above note 158 for a similar suggestion of the Rev. William Edmiston.

²¹² AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 793.

16. The problem of rights III. The right to property and “necessity” as an argument

Freedom of the press and freedom of speech were intimately tied to a third fundamental right, that to one’s own property; after all “allegiance and protection, are reciprocal duties and obligations”. When did, so a gentleman of Maryland asked the readers of the *Maryland Gazette*, “majorities” violate that principle? What was, so the gentleman asked, a “majority”? Was a numerical majority a real majority? Did a numerical majority not violate its duty to maintain peace and order and respect the fundamental rights of the freeholders, if it resolved that all freeholders had to contribute to the expenditures for arming the colony? “Ought we to exert an arbitrary authority, arbitrary in the highest degree, by compelling each other, under the severest penalties, to adopt the same violent extremes, and to run before every other province in the fanatical career of military opposition?”²¹³ Although the last remark identifies the letter writer as a Tory, the questions he raised were important. “Majority” was, as later the Founding Fathers in debating the Constitution were to find out, a ticklish thing. No one in the British Empire would have openly denied that gentlemen counted more than a little poor freeholder. His stake in the society was larger – or so the gentlemen claimed. Their opinion counted more, their weight was not to be ignored, so the writer demanded. If they dissented, peace and public order were endangered and that truly meant “committing violences”. The culture of rights was not only a matter of abstract concepts and laws; these concepts and laws had to be considered within their social contexts.

The gentleman of Maryland was not the only one who felt burdened by the determination of the Committees of Observation to let everyone partake in the military efforts considered unavoidable after Lexington and Concord. The beginning of the Revolutionary War created the final and decisive argument for curbing some fundamental rights: In guarded and carefully worded language “Brutus” said as much on 15 July 1775 in his open letter addressed to “Friends and Countrymen”, but more especially to the readers of Purdie’s *Virginia Gazette*: “The principles of the ever-glorious *revolution* will always justify a suspension of the laws under like circumstances, but we should never enforce those principles unless compelled thereto by *extreme necessity*. Prudence and moderation will give great weight to our measures, whilst a contrary conduct will only serve to disunite us, and consequently to involve us in confusion.”²¹⁴ According to him, and to most Committees of Observation sharing the burden and maintaining peace, unity and public order were at this particular time the most important values to be upheld. “Brutus” reasoning anticipated the arguments of the Conti-

²¹³ AA 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1140-1141.

²¹⁴ SCRIBNER (ED.), *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 131-132.

mental Congress in his “Declaration ... setting forth the Causes and necessity of their taking up Arms.”²¹⁵

The suspension of rights and liberties that the gentleman of Maryland lamented produced in some colonies a further deterioration of the culture of rights. To a certain extent this was the result of mounting military pressures of the British Army. It prompted the Committees of Observation in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to sharply increase its pressures on the gunsmiths of the colony, to give up their resistance against producing the arms stands demanded by the Pennsylvania Council of Safety since summer 1775.²¹⁶ As news spread of possible British incursions into Pennsylvania and Maryland demands on the Committees of Observation mounted to get their militia regiments organized, armed and ready for action. On 14 November 1775 the Maryland Committee of Observation for the Middle District of Frederick County resolved that all freemen eligible for militia duty had to enrol or have their names reported to the next Provincial Congress.²¹⁷ That Congress resolved to fine “non-associators”; until late summer 1776 hundreds of them were fined sums between two and ten pounds Maryland currency.²¹⁸ Resistance in Elizabeth Town, Maryland, against militia duty was stiffer – largely due to the many Quakers and Mennonites living in the region. 342 men were fined on the average five pounds for the first year – a sum that the poorer farmers in this region found difficult to come up with. In April 1776 the Committee increased its pressure. 68 non-signers of the Association were ordered to appear before the Committee in early May and explain, why they refused signing the Association. The resolve added that those who appeared were not to be

²¹⁵ The Declaration in: JCC, vol. 2, 128-157.

²¹⁶ The Lancaster County Committee of Inspection and Observation resolved on 10 November 1775: „Resolved that unless they [i.e. gunsmiths] agree to enter upon that work on or before the 11th Day of November instant and continue at the said work until their proportion of the said Arms be fully complete the Tools of the said Gun Smiths so refusing be taken from them, and that they be not permitted to carry on their trade until they shall engage to go to work and make Firelocks and Bayonets according to the pattern shown to them, and that they be not permitted to leave their place of Residence until the Arms are completed. And in case any of the Gun Smiths in the County upon application made to them by the members of the Committee of the respective Townships to which they belong shall refuse to go to work and make their proportion of the firelocks and Bayonets required within two weeks from such application agreeable to the Pattern at the Philadelphia prices, Resolved, that such Gunsmiths in the County have their names inserted in the minutes of this Committee as enemies to this Country and published as such and be treated in every respect in the same manner as those of the Borough who shall refuse to enter upon the work aforesaid.” Minutes of the Lancaster County Committee of Inspection and Observation, 1774-1776, The Peter FORCE Collection, Series 7 E, MSS 19.061, folders 60-70, reel 16, sub 10 November 1775, Lancaster Historical Society. The Committee of Observation and Inspection of Northampton County in June and July 1775 met with very little resistance in raising a Company of Rifle Men in the County, TRAILL, Minutes of the Committee of Observation and Inspection of Northampton County, PA, 1774-1777, p. 38-41.

²¹⁷ Maryland, in: Maryland Historical Magazine 10, 1915, p. 301-321, here p. 311.

²¹⁸ Maryland, in: Maryland Historical Magazine vol. 11, 1916, p. 237-260, here p. 248.

fined or stripped of their arms.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, those who did appear where fined and forced to deliver up their arms.²²⁰ As the needs to refill depleted ranks of Militia regiments increased measures of Committees of Observation got rougher. As it now turned out, many had signed the Association in the hope that they would never be called up for duty. In January 1777 the Committee finally decided to imprison the fathers of sons in order to force the latter to join their militia units.²²¹ At least in the districts of these two Committees of Observation the pressures to keep militia units filled led to a collapse of even a semblance of legality.

17. The problem of rights IV: The Massachusetts Court of Inquiry

The culture of rights did not deteriorate in all colonies. Massachusetts represents the large exception. In that colony in 1775 the Council of Safety was frequently asked to deal with persons suspected of being “enemies to American liberties” – which obviously took up much of that Committee’s precious time particularly when its energies were supposed to be focused on the doings of the British Army at Boston. Shortly after the first clashes between militiamen and British soldiers at Lexington and Concord that body resolved “that if the Provincial Congress of this Colony would erect a Court of Inquiry, to hear and determine all such cases as relate to persons apprehended and brought before them as enemies of American liberty, and other cases which concern the public good, it would be of great publick advantage”²²². A few days later the Provincial Congress took up the challenge. On 15 May it passed a resolution: “Whereas it appears to this Congress that a want of a due and regular execution of Justice in this Colony has encouraged divers wicked and disorderly persons not only to commit outrages and trespasses upon private property and private persons, but also to make the most daring attacks upon the Constitution, and to unite in their endeavours to disturb the peace and destroy the happiness and security of their Country: and whereas, this Congress conceive it to be their indispensable duty to take effectual measures to restrain all disorders and promote the peace and happiness of this Colony, by the execution of Justice in criminal matters”. Therefore the Congress concluded to erect a Court of Inquiry “whose duty it shall be to hear all complaints against any person or persons for treason against the Constitution of their Country, or

²¹⁹ Maryland Committee of Observation for Elizabeth Town District, 14. Sept. 1775 – März 1777, in: Maryland Historical Magazine 12, 1917, p. 159-160.

²²⁰ Maryland Committee of Observation for Elizabeth Town District, 14. Sept. 1775 – März 1777, in: Maryland Historical Magazine 12, 1917, p. 142-163, p. 261-265.

²²¹ Proceedings of the Committee of Observation for Elizabeth Town District [Washington County], in: Maryland Historical Magazine 13, 1918, p. 43, p. 46, p. 49.

²²² AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 754.

other breaches of the public peace and security, and to determine and make up judgment thereon, according to the laws of this Province, and those of reason and equity”.²²³ This court represents the first determined effort in any of the colonies to establish a new judicial system designed to cope with the deterioration of the culture of rights in British North America.

18. The People, the Revolutionary process, and the culture of rights: A summary view

The crucial years between the arrival of the Intolerable Acts and the Declaration of Independence were marked by a collapse of the royal and proprietary governments. In order to fight off what colonists perceived of as British attempts to enslave them, colonists everywhere came together, debated the situation formulated and agreed on texts that embodied their perception of the political crisis and how they hoped to survive it. These “Associations” were the colonists’ answers to the collapse of government. All colonists were confronted with these texts, all had to read them, all had to make up their mind whether they wanted to associate with their fellow freemen or stand aside and run the risk of being branded first a Tory and later an “enemy to American liberties”. With the publication of the Continental Congress’ Continental Association all colonies founded either on the township and borough or on the county level agencies designed not only to enforce the Continental Association but the local or colonial Associations, too. These committees soon acquired a number of functions: They enforced the economic resolutions of the Continental Congress; they dealt with all perceived to be “enemies to American liberties”, they organized on the local and county level military efforts and the collections of “quasi-taxes” to fund these efforts. In general their efforts were guided by three principles: First, strictly shield the Continental and Provincial Congresses from all critique and enforce their resolutions; second to canvass all within their purview for pro-British sentiments; this effort included a strict control of publications that circulated within the township, county or colony; third, to enforce principles of economic morality as outlined by the Continental Association. Fifth, the most important weapon these committees had was declaring those considered to harbour the wrong political principles “enemies to American liberties”. With these highly visible declarations the committees essentially cleansed the body politic from those elements considered poisonous as well as infectious. The instrument implied the revival of the European medieval practice of “Äch-

²²³ AA 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 805.

tung”, a kind of banishment of a person declared outside the bounds of civilization and community of rights.²²⁴

The texts of the Associations as well as the activities of the Committees of Inspection and Observation reflected in a very direct and fundamental sense attitudes, convictions, principles, and beliefs of inhabitants in towns and counties. Both indicate how the colonists believed they ought and must function in a state of nature in which all political power, rights and liberties once delegated to the king and parliament had reverted to the people. If revolutionary process meant recreating and inventing a new political order the texts of the Associations and the doings of the Committees offer concrete evidence of this revolutionary process on the local and regional level.

Following the example set by the texts of the Associations, on a more lofty level the Committees at the same time propagated their political philosophy both in negative as well as positive terms: in negative terms in their explanations why a particular person was declared “inimical to American liberties”, in positive terms in the “recantations” of the condemned. Both declarations and proclamations were highly successful because they usually were linked to a person of some standing in the township or in the county. The negative images projected were: British tyranny; British efforts at enslaving the good colonists; British conspiracy and British corruption – values hammered home at the same time by pastors in their sermons.²²⁵ These were the counter-images of the republican values projected in the positive declarations: Virtue, liberties, union and harmony, acceptance and obedience to the resolutions of the elected representatives of the people assembled in Provincial and Continental Congresses, and to fight for these values to preserve liberties for the present and for the future. No one cited Locke, Rousseau, Burlamaqui, Harrington or Algernon Sidney. These values represented the fruits of the experiences as well as the reading absorbed in earlier decades. The people in the townships and counties left the learned footnotes to the learned authors of learned pamphlets.

The texts of the Associations and more importantly the activities of the Committees of Inspection and Observation reflect a culture of rights that mirrored the chaos, the insecurity, the sometimes feeble, but often impressively strong sense for retaining due processes of law under the most difficult circumstances. Colonists were aware of the contradictions involved: Protecting the unsuspecting colonists from the poison of British propaganda implied serious incursions into the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and press. They were aware that these incursions damaged their cause and

²²⁴ Cf. Friedrich BATTENBERG, *Reichsacht und Anleite im Spätmittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der höchsten königlichen Gerichtsbarkeit im alten Reich, besonders im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert.* Cologne 1986.

²²⁵ cf. below p. 87-120, the article *From the Past to the future of the “American Israel”: Sermons in the American Revolution.*

their credibility. Ironically the most important defence formulated had recourse to principles most forcefully formulated by European political theorists of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: “ratio di stato” and “necessity” were arguments formulated by among others Machiavelli and used with great effectiveness by Charles I of England. Yet reduced to the alternative of either being enslaved or fight, the freemen and freeholders had no choice. Emergency and necessity forced them to ignore the fundamental liberty of conscience and force people either to join the militia or pay up and thus fund the military effort. It was more than folksy rationality to say that liberty of conscience was little worth for those enslaved or dead.

Associations and the activities of the Committees reflected the will of the Euroamerican inhabitants of the townships and counties. It decidedly did not mirror the wills and attitudes of the enslaved Africans or Native Americans. The committees were subject to the constant scrutiny and control of Euroamericans. Regular yearly elections ensured that the inhabitants could ensure that their feelings and principles were adequately represented on these Committees. Pressures to reflect the majority’s attitudes in their decisions were high on the Committee members. At least in one instance this pressure lead to the wholesale resignation of a committee. Decisions thus reflected majority opinion and that in itself raised the large issue about the protection of minority rights. During the period these problems were recognized but at the same time the gist of the public discussion clearly favoured principles of “union” and “harmony” over respect for minority rights. Yet the fact that already in 1776 the Constitutions of Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina contained Bills of Rights that formulated and protected fundamental rights against majority decisions of legislatures documents the lively concern about these earlier infractions of fundamental rights between 1774 and 1776. In these years a new people and a new nation was born.

3. Defining a Nation: Patriotic Associations, 1774-1776

The majority of historians dealing with the American Revolutionary era are convinced that a common American identity did not evolve until after the founding of the United States of America.¹ But does this judgment hold true? Do not the joint efforts of the North American colonists during the American Revolution prove that there already existed a strong feeling of belonging together, a feeling of common identity? Or was this union merely a means to an end propagated by the colonial elite in order to secure its interests, but lacking any kind of foundation within the colonial population? The patriotic associations formed between 1774 and 1776 provide important information regarding these questions. So far, they have not been objects of great interest among American historians. This neglect is astonishing considering the vital role the associations played in organizing the patriots' resistance against Great Britain. They not only absorbed the opinions and sentiments prevalent in the colonies between 1774 and 1776, but also served as mainsprings of the revolutionary movement by mobilizing as many colonists as possible for the Common Cause.

Like no other documents, the associations² reflect the development of the colonists' political positions in the crucial time period between 1774 and 1776. By analyzing the language used in the different associations in the course of these two years it is possible to reconstruct the very beginnings of the revolutionary process that eventually led to the founding of the United States of America. The main point of interest in this context is in which way the colonists' self-perception as well as the perception and presentation of their adversaries changed between 1774 and 1776.

¹ See for instance Jack P. GREENE, *Understanding the American Revolution. Issues and Actors*. Charlottesville/London 1995, p. 139; Elise MARIENSTRAS, *Nationality and Citizenship*. In: Jack P. GREENE and Jack R. POLE (eds.), *The Blackwell's Companion to the American Revolution*. Oxford/Malden, MA 2000, p. 680-685, p. 680; Michael ZUCKERMAN, *Identity in British America : Unease in Eden*. In: Nicholas CANNY and Anthony PAGDEN (eds.), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*. Princeton, NJ/Guildford 1987, p. 115-157.

² Subsequently, the word "association" will be used as a synonym not only for the group of people who associated, but also for the document the associators subscribed to.

1. Definition

The term “association” has not changed significantly in the course of the last centuries. Modern as well as eighteenth-century dictionaries and encyclopedias describe associations as unions of one or more persons who pursue a common goal and attempt to achieve it by joint efforts.³ However, twentieth-century reference works distinguish between the association as a group of people with similar interests and the association as a document that fixed the common objectives in writing and was signed by the associators.⁴ In contrast, the contemporary understanding of the word during the time of the American Revolution implied a natural connection of the two meanings, and put a particular stress on the contract character of such agreements:

*“Association is properly a contract or treaty of partnership, whereby two or more persons unite together, either for their mutual assistance, or for the joint carrying of an affair...”*⁵

This definition implies that there are two important factors that characterize associations: First, there have to be at least two persons who subscribe to the association, and second, these persons have to agree on a common course of action. Although the associations varied considerably regarding their structure and wording, all of them contained the formulation “we...associate [also: engage; covenant; promise; agree; entered into the following Resolution and Association...]” as well as the signatures of the associators. It is important to underline these features in order to be able to distinguish associations from similar documents like addresses to the king or governor, oaths of allegiance or tests.⁶

2. Distributing the Associations

In order to ensure the effectiveness of associations as a means of putting pressure on Great Britain, the patriots tried to win as many colonists as possible to their side. They

³ Thomas DOBSON (ed.): *Encyclopædia; or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Miscellaneous Literature*. Bd. 2. Philadelphia 1798, S. 406, “Association”; E. CHAMBERS (ed.), *Cyclopedia: Or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 1. London 1786, “Association”; James A. H. MURRAY et al. (eds.), *OED – The Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 1. Oxford 1933, p. 513-514.

⁴ MURRAY et al. (eds.), *OED – The Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 513-514.

⁵ CHAMBERS (ed.), *Cyclopedia*, vol. 1, „Association”.

⁶ In their addresses to the king or the respective colony’s governor, the colonists usually just stated their opinions and points of view. With their signature the authors of such documents did not commit themselves to any course of action as it was the case with the associations. Tests and oaths of allegiance were of a similarly obliging nature as the associations. Tests were pledges of loyalty which the patriotic legislative organs demanded of their members. The signatories usually agreed to accept the regulations of the Provincial and Continental Congresses. Oaths of allegiance gained importance only after the escalation of the military struggle with Great Britain, especially after the Declaration of Independence. The commitment contained in these documents did not refer to a group of people who had united for the purpose of achieving one common goal, as it was the case in the associations, but was limited to just one person who pledged his or her loyalty either to the British or the new government of the United States of America.

had to provide for a system of distribution that would enable every colonist in every little town even in the rural counties to sign the associations and participate in the resistance movement. Since there was no central authority that could do this effectively, the distribution was delegated to local institutions. Copies of the associations were produced to provide delegates and institutions with them. Apart from these official samples, the documents were also printed as broadsides and published in the colonial newspapers. In order to address as many colonists as possible, broadsides were produced in relatively large numbers, often amounting to several thousand copies.⁷ In some colonies, the documents were even translated into other languages. This way, the patriots made sure that the resistance movement also covered the non-English-speaking parts of the colonial population.⁸

The committee-system that was established by the Continental Association played a vital role regarding the distribution of the associations. After the eleventh article of the Continental Association had determined the colonists' obligation to choose committees of inspection and observation in every county, city, and town to enforce the articles of the Continental Congress,⁹ other associations also used these committees for the distribution of their documents. For instance, after the New York Provincial Congress had entered into an association in April 1775, it sent copies of the document to all of the eleven counties of the colony which in turn forwarded the association to all the local committees. It was the committees' duty to publish the measures in their respective jurisdictions and to give the inhabitants a chance to subscribe to the agreement. Subsequently, the committees listed associators and non-associators and sent the names to the Provincial Congress.¹⁰

The group of persons that was allowed to subscribe to the patriotic agreements varied largely from association to association. In most cases it comprised all white males that were 21 years and older.¹¹ Thus, apart from freeholders and freemen who, because of their property, were qualified to vote in regular elections as well, it also included the simple inhabitants who did not own any real estate or other property. There were exceptions, however. The Boston Covenant, founded in June 1774, ad-

⁷ See Robert L. SCRIBNER (ed.), *Revolutionary Virginia. The Road to Independence*, vol. 1: *Forming Thunderclouds and the first Convention, 1763-1774. A Documentary Record*. Ser. I. 1973, p. 231.

⁸ For instance, the Pennsylvania committee of safety published its Articles of Association also in Dutch language. See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 859-862.

⁹ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916.

¹⁰ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620. Further illustrations of this practice of distributing the association documents can be found in the following documents: AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 4, p. 755-757.

¹¹ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1145-1146; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 681-620; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897; William L. SAUNDERS (ed.): *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 10. New York 1968 (Repr. of the ed. Raleigh, N.C. 1886-1890), p. 61-62; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1026-1027; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 4, p. 858; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 873-912.

dressed all “adult persons of both sexes”¹². There are no other examples of such an explicit inclusion of female colonists into the group of associators, but in some cases associations allowed women who owned real estate to sign the document.¹³ There also were associations that allowed male inhabitants sixteen years and older to subscribe to the measures.¹⁴

Usually, the different measures and rules of the associations were published during town meetings that were held for this very purpose. After these meetings the colonists had the opportunity to sign the document. Persons who could not attend the town meeting or who did not want to sign immediately were able to sign the document later on, although they had to do so within a certain time-span. To this end, the document was deposited at a central point in town to which the inhabitants had access. For instance, the New York City committee of inspection and observation announced in May 1775 that the New York Association was displayed in a particular house in every single ward where the citizens could go and sign the document.¹⁵

3. The Language of Patriotism: Keywords

Even though the association texts vary in their wording there are certain terms that are used in virtually every document: “liberty” and “property” on the one hand and “honour”, “religion” and “virtue” on the other. These concepts formed the basis of the American self-understanding during the American Revolution and have remained key values of American society ever since. By analyzing the associations drafted between 1774 and 1776 one can clearly detect a change in the way these keywords are applied. While, at first, colonists viewed the terms as concepts based on British legal tradition and the British culture, they gradually became explicitly “American” rights and values as the dispute with the mother country intensified.

During the American Revolution the term “liberty” was a keyword in the rhetoric of the American patriots. The patriotic group Sons of Liberty carried the word in their name. The colonists planted “liberty trees” and put up “liberty poles”. An indefinite number of poems, ballads and sermons from the 1760s and 1770s dealt with the concept of liberty.¹⁶

¹² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 397-398.

¹³ See David AMMERMAN, *In the Common Cause, American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774*. Charlottesville, VA 1974, p. 118.

¹⁴ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143. Another town that also required male inhabitants sixteen years and older to sign up to the association was Acton, Mass. See AMMERMAN, *In the Common Cause*, p. 118.

¹⁵ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 605.

¹⁶ See Elise MARIENSTRAS, *Liberty*. In: GREENE, POLE (eds.), *Companion to the American Revolution*, p. 627-632, p. 627.

In the associations, this American meaning of liberty was at first of secondary importance. By demanding the protection of their right to liberty, the colonists were simply claiming their rights as subjects of the British crown. “We claim no more than the rights of Englishmen without diminution and abridgment”¹⁷, it says in the Association of the North Carolina Convention. The duties and taxes that were raised by Great Britain meant a serious threat to these rights, because the colonists were not represented in the British Parliament. A taxation without representation, the colonists argued, was illegal and “a gross violation of the Grand Charter of our liberties”¹⁸. In this context, “liberty” was used as a general term that referred not only to the right to liberty itself, but also included other civil rights like the right to personal safety or the right to property. At this stage, there can hardly be found any trace of a revolutionary, explicitly American meaning of liberty in the associations. In most of the documents written in 1774 and early 1775 the colonists demanded their “constitutional liberty and rights”¹⁹. Some associations also used the adjectives “ancient”²⁰ and “essential”²¹ in this context. This diction shows the colonists’ conviction that their demands were founded on a clear legal basis.

When it became obvious that Great Britain would not repeal the acts of Parliament, the tone of voice applied in the associations changed. The patriots no longer used “liberty” as a synonym for the civil rights that all British subjects were entitled to. Especially after the outbreak of hostilities between colonists and British soldiers near Lexington and Concord in April 1775, an explicitly American connotation of the term “liberty” could be found in the documents. Instead of demanding their “constitutional liberties” as they had done before, the colonists used phrases like “rights and liberties of America”²², “preservation of American freedom”²³ or “defence of American liberty”²⁴ more frequently in their later texts.

“American Liberty” became the most important slogan of the patriotic associations. Persons who refused to associate or who violated the rules of the association were considered “Enemies of American Liberty”²⁵. With their attitude, the patriots

¹⁷ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, Sp. 734-737.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1026-1027.

²⁰ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351 (“our just, ancient, and constitutional rights”); AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1145-1146 (“ancient Laws and Liberty”).

²¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737 (“our most essential rights”); AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 131-132 (“essential securities for the lives, liberties and properties of the subjects”).

²² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; SAUNDERS (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 10, p. 61; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-142; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1026-1027.

²³ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690.

²⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 502.

²⁵ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1158-1159; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100.

argued, non-associators paved the way for tyranny. The patriots were convinced that tyranny was the logical result of the limitation of their liberty. In various associations the colonists stressed their determination not to be suppressed by the mother country. The fear of becoming completely dependent on Great Britain was kindled by members of the colonial elite. In order to further fuel the anti-British sentiment within the population, they claimed that the acts of the British parliament were part of a greater scheme aimed at enslaving the colonies. Such conspiracy theories were dispersed also by the associations. A document from Darien, Georgia, written in January 1775 refers to the British acts as a “system [...] calculated for enslaving the Colonies”²⁶. An association in Pennsylvania called the policy of the British government “a system of tyranny and oppression”²⁷. After the beginning of hostilities between the colonies and the mother country, the patriots felt confirmed in their judgment that Great Britain intended to subjugate the colonists. Associations that were written after the incidents at Lexington and Concord often contained the assurance that the associators were “resolved never to become slaves”²⁸. Some texts used even stronger formulations. The association of the Fairfield Committee in Connecticut mentioned the “Ministerial Troops sent into this Country to dragoon us into slavery”²⁹. The patriots associated “to exert ourselves in every manly, prudent, and effectual measure in concert with our brethren throughout this Continent, in opposition to every lawless attempt that may be made by our unnatural enemies to deprive us of our liberties, and subject us to a state of slavery, choosing rather to die freemen than live in a state of servile subjection to any man or body of people on the face of the earth.”³⁰

Closely linked to the term “liberty” was the right of the British subjects to the protection of their personal property. The connection of the two concepts was rooted in eighteenth-century English political thought and can be found particularly in the works of John Locke. According to contemporary understanding property was the prerequisite for the individual’s personal liberty, the *civil liberty*. Only persons who had property of their own were independent in their decisions. Consequently, only freeholders were entitled to vote. If the protection of liberty and property was not guaranteed by law, the subjects were prone to fall victim to the monarch’s arbitrary use of power and, as a result, were in danger of losing their political liberty as well. Many of the colonists’ ancestors had experienced such a limitation of their rights during the Stuart era, when it had been attempted to erect an absolute monarchy in England.

²⁶AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137.

²⁷AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

²⁸AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 681-620; SAUNDERS (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 10, p. 61-62; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552.

²⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143.

³⁰ Ibid.

Quite a few had left the mother country precisely because of this threat to their personal and political liberty. For the inhabitants of the British colonies in North America the close connection between liberty and property was as natural as the relation between tyranny and poverty. It was not by coincidence that the patriotic resistance movement Sons of Liberty used “Liberty and Property” as their slogan.³¹

The colonists’ harsh reaction to the duties and taxes raised by Great Britain can only be understood in this context. The laws passed by the British Parliament were strong infringements of the American subjects’ right to property and thus resulted in a limitation of the colonists’ liberty. Various associations stressed the illegal character of the British duties. In order to justify their demands the authors of the North Carolina Association explicitly referred to the property rights granted by the Magna Charta to every subject of the English crown.³²

Often the associations mentioned the right to personal property in connection with other civil rights. Several documents stated that the purpose of the association was “the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals, and private property”³³. The authors of the Maryland Association founded in July 1775 accused the British Parliament of destroying “the essential securities for the lives, liberties, and properties of the subjects in the United Colonies”³⁴. Associations that were written after August 1775 only rarely used the term property in the context of the British civil rights. In fact, in various documents the word “property” was replaced by the term “fortunes”. By using this diction the colonists apparently attempted to dissociate themselves to some extent terminologically from British legal tradition. For instance, the associators of the South Carolina Association founded in June 1775 declared that they were ready “to sacrifice [their] lives and fortunes to secure her [the Country’s] freedom and safety”³⁵. The concept of property thus was used to emphasize the colonists’ determination to put at stake all their possessions, and even their lives, in order to defend the liberty of America. In the course of the intensifying conflict with the mother country, the concept of property thus changed from a term

³¹ See Michael KAMMEN, *Spheres of Liberty. Changing Perceptions of Liberty in American Culture*. Madison, WI 1986, p. 27.

³² See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

³³ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1030; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552; SAUNDERS (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 10, p. 61-62.

³⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 131-132.

³⁵ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897. Similar formulations can be found in the following documents: AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100 (“...do solemnly engage to...risk our lives and fortunes, in maintaining the freedom of our Country...”); AA, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 1410 (“We...engage...at the risk of our lives and fortunes, to defend ...the United American Colonies...”); AA, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 873-912 (“...we will...at the risk of our lives and fortunes...oppose the hostile proceedings of the British Fleets and Armies...”).

originally embedded in British law to a word symbolizing the colonists' reason to fight the mother country.

Other keywords the patriots frequently used in their association documents were "virtue", "honor" and "religion". These terms represented values that had always played a vital role in the self-image of the North American colonists. The emigrants' notion of having left the decadent and ungodly "old world" to found a new and pious society in the "new world" was quite common. Judging from the British attitude towards the colonies in the 1760s and 1770s, the Americans felt confirmed in their conviction that they morally prevailed over the "old world," since they led virtuous, honorable and godly lives, while the British completely disregarded these values.

This justification of their resistance based on moral considerations the colonists expressed also in their associations. The members of the Georgia Association founded in January 1775 declared, for instance, that they associated "under the sacred ties of virtue, honour, and love of our country"³⁶. Similar formulations can be found in various other documents.³⁷ In some cases the word "virtue" was either replaced by "religion"³⁸, or was completely omitted.³⁹ The members of an association in Bute County, North Carolina, promise each other support and help "under all the Tyes of Virtue and humanity"⁴⁰. Especially the term "virtue" gained more and more importance in the course of the conflict with the mother country. "Virtue" became the touchstone of the right conduct and the correct attitude. In the Westmoreland County Association it says, for instance:

"...it is therefore become the indispensable duty of every American, of every man who has any publick virtue or love for his Country ... to resist and oppose the execution of [the system of tyranny and oppression]"⁴¹

Virtue also served as a means of differentiation from the British. John Murrin correctly notes in this context:

"To [the patriots] centralization meant a severe challenge to liberty, a threat to the Revolution itself. Yet all patriots understood that, unless they could unite and fight together effectively,

³⁶ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1158-1160.

³⁷ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 859-861; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1030.

³⁸ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897; SAUNDERS (ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 10, p. 61-62; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100.

³⁹ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137.

⁴⁰ SAUNDERS (ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 9, p. 1104-1105.

⁴¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

they would lose the war. Their early answer to this dilemma was virtue. Americans had it; the British had lost it."⁴²

4. "His Majesty's loyal subjects" or "friends of American Liberty": The Patriots' Self-Conception

When the First Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia in September 1774, probably none of the delegates present could imagine that, only two years later, the colonies would unanimously declare their independence from Great Britain. Although a majority of the delegates considered the adoption of a strict boycott of British goods necessary for putting pressure on the British Government and Parliament, these measures were clearly not directed against the English people or the king. The colonists continued to consider themselves subjects of the English crown. The notion of being part of an empire that was thought to have the most liberal system of government in the entire western world filled the inhabitants of the North American colonies with pride and to some extent led to a feeling of common identity. "[I]t is the duty, and will be the endeavour of us as British American, to transmit this happy Constitution to posterity"⁴³, it says in the association of the North Carolina Convention of August 1774. Well into the year 1775 the majority of Americans, no matter if they were patriots or loyalists, did not question the fact that the colonies were part of the British Empire. Until then, the seeds of conflict between revolutionaries and Tories were confined to questions of constitutional reform and the validity as well as importance of the constitutional rights. It was not before midyear 1775, when it became obvious to the colonists that their boycott measures did not have the intended effect and that the mother country was not resolved to give in, that the patriots altered their attitude. From then on they did not only turn against the British Parliament and Government, but also dissociated themselves from their British roots and the traditional bonds linking them to Great Britain. Instead, the American component of their self-perception gained importance.

This change can clearly be traced by looking at the association documents written during that particular time period. In the early associations the patriots took great care to prove the legitimacy of their demands. They used formulations like "just rights"⁴⁴ or "rights of Englishmen"⁴⁵. The measures of resistance were agreed upon, as the

⁴² John M. MURRIN, *A Roof Without Walls. The Dilemma of American National Identity*. In: Richard BEEMAN, Stephen BOTEIN, Edward C. CARTER (eds.), *Beyond Confederation. Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity*. Chapel Hill, NC/London 1987, p. 333-348, p. 342-343.

⁴³ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

⁴⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1145-1146; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

⁴⁵ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

authors of one association put it, “for the purpose of preserving [the British] Constitution”⁴⁶. The authors of the North Carolina Association argued on a similar line, when they referred to the Magna Charta in order to state the legitimacy of their demand for the procedure of trial by jury.⁴⁷ In many of these early documents the colonists stressed that they intended to continue the boycott of the British commerce only until reconciliation with the mother country on the basis of constitutional principles had been accomplished.⁴⁸ The colonists wanted to make it clear that their demands did not leave the frame of British legal tradition and that they did not in any way intend to question the authority of King George III. In various associations written in 1774 the colonists called themselves “his Majesty’s dutiful and loyal subjects”⁴⁹ or “his Majesty’s American Subjects”⁵⁰. Although these phrases do not identically appear in later documents, yet similar expressions of loyalty towards the British crown in associations that were written in the first half of the year 1775 can be found. “[W]e sincerely profess ourselves to be liege subjects of King George the Third”⁵¹, it says in an association founded in Connecticut in April 1775. The associators of Westmoreland County in Pennsylvania assure the king of their loyalty to the crown:

*“Possessed with the most unshaken loyalty and fidelity to His Majesty, King George the Third, whom we acknowledge to be our lawful and rightful King, and who we wish may long be the beloved Sovereign of a free and happy people throughout the whole British Empire; we declare to the world, that we do not mean by this Association to deviate from that loyalty which we hold it our bounden duty to observe...”*⁵²

The members of an association in Pitt County, North Carolina, declare their devotion not only to the king, but to the whole house of Hanover:

*“...we will pay all due allegiance to his Majesty King George the Third and endeavour to continue the succession of his crown in the Illustrious House of Hanover as by law established...”*⁵³

⁴⁶ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620. Similar formulations can be found in the following documents: AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505 (“...for the purposes of preserving and fixing our Constitution on a permanent basis”); AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690 (“...for defending our Constitution and preserving the same inviolate”); AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552 (“...for the purpose of preserving our Constitution”).

⁴⁷ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

⁴⁸ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100.

⁴⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916.

⁵⁰ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916.

⁵¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1135.

⁵² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

⁵³ SAUNDERS (ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 10, p. 61-62.

After July 1775 the associations no longer contained such pledges of allegiance to the king and only rarely made any references to the British constitution. In contrast, the word “American” gradually became a cornerstone of the colonists’ self-conception. This development of an American conscience, of a feeling of belonging together, was a slow process. It is not possible to determine a precise point of time at which the colonists primarily felt as Americans and not as Virginians, Pennsylvanians, or as subjects of the British crown. The words “America” and “American” were frequently used, already in the early associations. At this stage they were geographical terms, however. “America” meant the continent America, and “Americans” simply were the inhabitants of this continent. Consequently, when referring to themselves the colonists used expressions like “inhabitants of British America”⁵⁴ or “his Majesty’s Subjects in North America”⁵⁵. However, already at this early stage, there were formulations hinting at a meaning that went beyond the simple geographical connotation. In various associations the colonists demanded “redress of American grievances”⁵⁶. The North Carolina Association of August 1774 already mentioned particular “rights of Americans”⁵⁷, even though the authors expressed their “most sacred respect for the British constitution”⁵⁸. In the associations that were written after spring 1775, the colonists no longer demanded their “constitutional rights”, but mentioned the “rights of the American Colonies”⁵⁹, “the rights and liberties of America”⁶⁰, or “the rights and privileges of America”⁶¹. There is no increase in the frequency of such phrases in the course of the year 1775. If, nevertheless, there is a strong impression that the American component in the colonists’ consciousness and self-perception gradually became more significant, it is because the expressions of loyalty toward the king as well as the references to the British constitution became increasingly rare and eventually ceased to appear.

A clearer sign of a growing American self-conception can be detected when looking at the colonists’ feeling of community and their sense of solidarity for each other beyond colony borders. While at first the inhabitants’ close bondage to their respective colony was prevalent, the colonists’ primary reference point gradually moved to a feeling of togetherness and a sense of community that did not stop at colony borders and finally culminated in the political union of all thirteen colonies in 1776. In the

⁵⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351.

⁵⁵ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916.

⁵⁶ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737; I, 1158-1160.

⁵⁷ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1238-1239.

⁶⁰ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552.

⁶¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690; SAUNDERS (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 10, p. 61-62.

association passed by the delegates of Virginia in August 1774, for instance, the single colony still is the superior identification unit for the representatives. Although there already are phrases like “his Majesty’s American subjects”⁶² or “redress of American grievances”⁶³, the references to Virginia clearly prevail. When the authors call Virginia “his [Majesty’s] ancient Colony”⁶⁴, such a wording expresses their pride to live not just in any colony but in this most ancient of all the British colonies in North America. In the eighth article “well-wishers of this Colony”⁶⁵ are differentiated from “persons [...] inimical to this country”⁶⁶. This limitation of loyalty to “colony” or “country” was replaced by the term “American Liberty” in later association documents. In the Maryland Association written in July 1775, “America” already was the primary reference unit for the colonists:

*“...[we] solemnly engage and pledge ourselves to each other, and America, that we will, to the utmost of our power, promote and support the present opposition...”*⁶⁷

While this increase in importance of the colonists’ consciousness of being Americans rather than British appeared implicitly in most cases, there are examples where an American identity was explicitly promoted. In this respect, the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety provides us with a vivid example with its list of rules formulated for putting into action the Military Association of the colony:

*“All national distinctions in dress or name to be avoided, it being proper that we should now be united, in this General Association for defending our liberties and properties, under the sole denomination of American.”*⁶⁸

A similar process can be found in connection with the declarations of solidarity contained in the associations, regarding the inhabitants of Boston and Massachusetts Bay whose liberties had been restricted by the Coercive Acts. While the patriots of other colonies in the beginning usually only mentioned their “fellow-subjects in the town of Boston”⁶⁹ or simply the “inhabitants of the Massachusetts Province”⁷⁰, an association of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, used the expression “our brethren”⁷¹ for the in-

⁶² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 131-132.

⁶⁸ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1802-1810.

⁶⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690.

⁷⁰ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

⁷¹ John Russell BARTLETT (ed.), *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, vol. 7: 1770-1776. New York 1968 (Repr. ed. New York 1856-1865), p. 303.

habitants of Massachusetts Bay. This term which expressed the strong connection that the colonists felt with the Bostonians was also used by associations founded in North Carolina.⁷²

More and more colonists were convinced that they could only be successful in their struggle against Great Britain, if they formed an inter-colonial union. The demand for a stronger cooperation of the colonists had been articulated already in the summer of 1774. It had led to the convocation of the First Continental Congress and to the passing of the Continental Association. Although this convention primarily focused on a political cooperation, the Congress definitely had an identity-building effect also in social respects which the patriots clearly acknowledged in their associations. In virtually all the documents written between October 1774 and the spring of 1776 the authors referred to the congress in Philadelphia. In various associations the subscribers not only agreed to abide by the regulations of the Continental Association but also to observe all following directions of the Continental Congress.⁷³ While most documents simply spoke of the “General Congress” or the “Continental Congress”, the authors of the Darien Association in Georgia referred to it as the “Grand American Congress”⁷⁴ and expressed their gratitude and their respect for the work of the Congress in an effusive manner:

*“We thank [the delegates] for their sage counsel and advice, and most heartily and cheerfully accede to the Association entered into by them, as the wisest and most moderate measure that could be adopted in our present circumstances...”*⁷⁵

In addition, the Congress was termed “august Assembly”⁷⁶ as well as “wise, patriotick, and truly honourable”⁷⁷. Since Georgia had declined to participate in the Philadelphia convention, the Darien associators apparently considered it necessary to express their sympathy for the inter-colonial meeting in a particularly emphatic form. By using such expressions the authors not only tried to elucidate the importance of the Continental Congress to other inhabitants of Georgia, but also wanted to demonstrate to the rest of the colonies that there did exist a patriotic movement also in Georgia which was resolved to join into the resistance measures against the mother country.

⁷² See SAUNDERS (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 9, p. 1104-1105; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100.

⁷³ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690; SAUNDERS (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 10, p. 61-62; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1659; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 4, p. 858.

⁷⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

The idea that a permanent securing of the Americans' rights and liberties could only be obtained by forming an association that explicitly included members of all classes in all colonies and was not limited to the elites of the respective colonies, was not propagated in the association documents until the spring of 1775. The inhabitants of Newark, New Jersey, expressed their opinion "that the very existence of the rights and liberties of America can, under God, subsist on no other basis than the most animated and perfect union of its inhabitants"⁷⁸. Similar phrases can also be found in other associations formed in the summer of 1775. The idea of constituting a union with the other colonies gained more and more importance. In the Maryland Association dating from July 1775 the colonies were for the first time called "United Colonies"⁷⁹ – an expression that was used more frequently in later documents, often in connection with the adjective "American".⁸⁰ With the exception of an association in Fairfield, Connecticut, where the authors spoke of the "United English Colonies",⁸¹ other associations written after July 1775 usually used the terms "United Colonies"⁸² or "United American Colonies"⁸³ for the thirteen colonies. An association founded in Connecticut in October 1775 showed that the "United Colonies" to some extent were already viewed as a fixed entity:

*"[W]e...will to the utmost of our power, in our several places, assist in carrying into execution every measures of the said United Colonies, that have or shall be formed and come into for their common safety..."*⁸⁴

The mainspring of the union of the colonies and their inhabitants was the Common Cause, the joint effort of the Americans to secure their rights and liberties. This awareness of a common aim first appeared in connection with the Coercive Acts in Boston. "[T]he cause in which they [the inhabitants of Boston] now suffer is the cause of every honest American"⁸⁵, it said in the North Carolina Association founded in August 1774. Besides the expression "common cause"⁸⁶ the authors of later associa-

⁷⁸ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505.

⁷⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 131-132.

⁸⁰ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690 ("...the preservation of the rights and privileges of America depends, under God, on the firm union of its inhabitants"); SAUNDERS (ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 10, p. 61-62 ("...the preservation of [the most valuable Liberties and privileges of America] Depends on a firm union of the Inhabitants"); AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552 ("...the salvation of the rights and liberties of America depend, under God, on the firm union of the inhabitants...").

⁸¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143.

⁸² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1026-1027.

⁸³ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1026-1027; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 1410; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 873-912.

⁸⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1026-1027.

⁸⁵ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

⁸⁶ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1238-1239; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 4, p. 858.

tions also used phrases like “cause of American freedom”⁸⁷, “cause of America”⁸⁸, or simply “the cause”⁸⁹. For the sake of this common aim the patriots were resolved to set aside personal needs and, if necessary, to shoulder any difficulties that might arise. The members of an association of Philadelphia butchers, for instance, were willing “cheerfully to sacrifice every inferiour consideration of private interest or convenience.”⁹⁰ In a document from Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, the associators declared that they were inclined “cheerfully to submit to military discipline”⁹¹ in order to offer resistance to the British troops.

5. *“Wicked ministers” and “beloved sovereign”*: How the Patriots Presented Their Adversaries

Great Britain

As has already been presented above, the colonists took great care to prevent their resistance against the laws passed by the British Parliament from being interpreted as a general revolt against the mother country. The fact that the American patriots vehemently turned against the British course of action did not mean that they questioned the legitimacy of the British authority over the North American colonies.

This attitude is clearly reflected in the association documents written between the fall of 1774 and the summer of 1775. In various cases the authors explicitly distinguished between the king and the English population on the one hand and the British parliament and government on the other. Time and again the texts show the colonists’ eagerness not to be suspected of rebellion against monarchy. The authors of the North Carolina Association of August 1774, for instance, stressed that “his Majesty King George the Third is lawful and rightful King of Great Britain”⁹² and that the associators were “resolved to maintain the succession of the House of Hanover”⁹³. In other documents the colonists assured the monarch of their “loyalty”⁹⁴ or “allegiance”⁹⁵. The members of an association in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, expressed their hope that George the Third “may long be the beloved sovereign of a

⁸⁷ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1210.

⁸⁸ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 873-912.

⁸⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-132.

⁹⁰ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1050-1051.

⁹¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

⁹² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ BARTLETT (ed.), Records of the Colony of Rhode Island, vol. 7, p. 303.

⁹⁵ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916.

free and happy people throughout the whole British Empire”⁹⁶. In order to be able to offer resistance to the British policy regarding the colonies without being automatically labeled enemies of the British crown, the colonists proved to be quite resourceful: They declared that the monarch was falsely or insufficiently informed by his “wicked ministers”⁹⁷ and that therefore he was not responsible for the doings of government and parliament. In an association from East Greenwich, Rhode Island, the British Prime Minister is called “the most determined foe to royalty”⁹⁸.

In a similarly positive manner the colonists tried to present their relationship to the British subjects in England who were the ones that suffered most from the American boycott measures. Especially the English merchants and manufacturers strongly felt the effects of the limitations of commerce and consumption fixed in the Continental Association and had to sustain significant losses. In various associations, the patriots courted their fellow-subjects’ understanding. The authors of the Virginia Association of August 1774, for instance, stressed their “regard and affection for all our friends and fellow-subjects in Great Britain and elsewhere”⁹⁹. Furthermore, they expressed their hope that the English people would recognize the necessity of the Americans’ way of proceeding and that they would not blame the colonists for the consequences caused by the boycott:

*“If, by the measures adopted, some unhappy consequences and inconveniences should be derived to our fellow-subjects, whom we wish not to injure in the smallest degree, we hope, and flatter ourselves, that they will impute them to their real cause, the hard necessity to which we are driven.”*¹⁰⁰

As careful and friendly as the patriots showed themselves towards the king and the British population as irreconcilable was their rhetoric regarding parliament and cabinet. In this context one can clearly detect a growing aggravation in the diction used in the associations between May 1774 and August 1775. The documents from Virginia and North Carolina written in May and August 1774 merely called the laws passed by the British Parliament “illegal”¹⁰¹ and “unconstitutional”¹⁰². Although the colonists accused the legislative of “arbitrary rule”¹⁰³, they presented their protests in a relatively

⁹⁶AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

⁹⁷ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897; SAUNDERS (ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 10, p. 61-62; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143.

⁹⁸ BARTLETT (ed.), Records of the Colony of Rhode Island, vol. 7, p. 303.

⁹⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690. Similar formulations can be found in the following documents: AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137.

¹⁰⁰ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690.

¹⁰¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

¹⁰² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690.

¹⁰³ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351.

objective manner. This rhetoric clearly shows their eagerness, on the one hand to demand their legitimate rights in an emphatic manner, while on the other to be cautious enough in their choice of words so that a friendly reconciliation with the mother country would easily be possible in case Great Britain gave in. The authors of the North Carolina Association, for instance, referred to the taxation by the mother country as “highly derogatory to the rights of a subject”¹⁰⁴ and called the laws “a gross violation of the Grand Charter of our liberties”¹⁰⁵. The colonists merely spoke of the taxes and duties levied by Great Britain, while the Intolerable Acts were not mentioned. Unlike later documents the North Carolina Association stated the reasons for the patriots’ resistance not just on a general basis, but presented their chain of arguments in detail. “It is of the very essence of the British Constitution, that no subject should be taxed, but by his own consent, freely given by himself in person, or by his legal Representatives...”¹⁰⁶, the authors explained at the beginning. “[A]s the British subjects resident in North America, have not, nor can have, any representation in the Parliament of Great Britain”, it said in the following paragraph, “therefore any Act of Parliament imposing a tax upon them, is illegal and unconstitutional.”¹⁰⁷ From these observations the colonists concluded the necessity of the agreed measures which were comprehensively listed afterwards.

Such a justification of the Americans’ way of proceeding cannot be found in later documents. Often enough the colonists had presented their position in addresses and pamphlets – without success. The British government was not amenable to their arguments. The patriots’ resistance grew and at the same time the tone of the associations became more aggravated. From then on the texts primarily focused on the British actions in Massachusetts Bay, while the discussion on the British taxes and duties abated. Whereas the colonists’ criticism in the early texts had been confined to the observation that the laws impeded the rights of British subjects and were therefore illegal, this attitude changed from the late summer of 1775 onwards. The choice of words in these later texts leads to the conclusion that the colonists now assumed that the Parliament acted with malicious intent. A document from East Greenwich, Rhode Island, written on August 29, 1774 described the Intolerable Acts as “cruel, malignant and worse than savage”¹⁰⁸. In other associations the authors used adjectives like “op-

¹⁰⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 734-737.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ BARTLETT (ed.), *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island*, vol. 7, p. 303.

pressive”¹⁰⁹, “despotick”¹¹⁰ and “vindictive”¹¹¹ in this context. A document written in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, even referred to the laws as “obnoxious”¹¹².

Even more negative was the patriots’ attitude toward the British government. Behind the British policy regarding the North American colonies the colonists suspected a greater scheme designed to subjugate and to enslave them. In the Continental Association it says, for instance:

*“...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 the Colonies, and with them, the British Empire...”*¹¹³

In like manner, the associators in Darien, Georgia, spoke of an “unjust system of politics adopted by the present Ministry, to subject and enslave us...”¹¹⁴. An even more graphic language was used by the authors of an association in Tryon County, North Carolina. They mentioned the “hostile operations and treacherous designs now carrying on by the tools of Ministerial vengeance and despotism, for the subjugating all British America”¹¹⁵. In various documents the government was described as “wicked”¹¹⁶, “corrupt”¹¹⁷ or “despotick”¹¹⁸.

The mother country’s uncompromising attitude confirmed the colonists in their assumption that the tax laws were only the beginning of a new, more restrictive colonial policy. The Americans were convinced that the government’s actual aim was to force the colonies into a complete dependency on Great Britain. The incidents at Lexington and Concord in April 1775 as well as the subsequent acts of violence seemed to corroborate this theory. The colonists imagined a continuity that stretched from the beginning of the British attempts to introduce new taxes and duties to the military clashes in Massachusetts. The members of the New York Association formed on April 29, 1775, declared, for instance, that they were “greatly alarmed at the avowed design of the Ministry to raise a revenue in America, and shocked by the bloody scene

¹⁰⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1135; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143.

¹¹⁰ SAUNDERS (ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 9, p. 1104-1105; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505.

¹¹¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 131-132.

¹¹² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

¹¹³ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916.

¹¹⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1136-1137.

¹¹⁵ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100.

¹¹⁶ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897; SAUNDERS (ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 10, p. 61sq; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143.

¹¹⁷ SAUNDERS (ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 9, p. 1104-1105.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.; also in: AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897.

now acting in the Massachusetts-Bay”¹¹⁹. The Fairfield Association in Connecticut referred to the soldiers sent by the mother country not as “British troops” but as “Ministerial Troops sent into this Country to dragoon us into slavery”¹²⁰.

In the documents written after August 1775 similar formulations did not occur anymore. The testimonies of loyalty and affection toward the king and the English population also vanished. Instead, the colonists used more general phrases like “Great Britain” or “British Fleets and Armies”¹²¹. They ceased to distinguish between “good” and “bad” Britons. The king no longer was the “misinformed Sovereign”¹²², the British soldiers were not called “Ministerial Troops”¹²³ any longer, but were referred to as “his Majesty’s Troops”¹²⁴.

The reasons for this sudden change in the wording of the associations are complex. One explanation is obvious, of course: On August 23, 1775, in his Proclamation of Rebellion, George the Third had officially declared the colonists to be rebels. By this proclamation he had once more turned down the Olive Branch Petition sent to him by the Continental Congress.¹²⁵ At the same time he had signaled that he approved the British military actions in the colonies. Thus, to the patriots, the distinction between king and government/parliament did not make sense anymore.

Apart from stating the colonists’ point of view towards Great Britain, the associations were also meant to influence the public opinion within the colonies. The testimonies of loyalty that so often appeared in the early associations were not only directed to the king, but also to the inhabitants of the North American colonies themselves. Many colonists were afraid of being suspected of participating in a revolt against monarchy. In order to set their apprehensions at rest and, nevertheless, win them over to their cause, the authors of the associations repeatedly stressed their loyalty towards the king. The more support the resistance measures against Great Britain gained in the course of the conflict with the mother country, the less important became such avowals of allegiance. After the conflict had entered the stage of military confrontations, even patriots who until then had been moderate in their views were now convinced of the necessity to defend their rights not only against the British government and parliament, but also against the British crown.

¹¹⁹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620.

¹²⁰ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143.

¹²¹ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 1410; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 873-912.

¹²² AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 4, p. 858.

¹²⁵ In its Olive Branch Petition from July 8, 1775, the Continental Congress again had assured the king of the colonists’ loyalty and had requested of him to end the measures of suppression against the colonies.

Another aspect explaining the change in the colonists' choice of words is that a peaceful reconciliation between the mother country and the colonies had become impossible after the escalation of the conflict in the early summer of 1775. From then on the Americans were at war with Great Britain. The diligence with which the colonists had avoided such formulations in their early association documents and which had been functional then in order not to complicate matters in case of a reconciliation, had now become obsolete.

Loyalists

In the course of the escalating crisis with the mother country, the colonists did not constitute a homogeneous mass. Instead, they were deeply split into patriots and loyalists. This division gained more and more importance as the conflict with the mother country wore on. From the point of view of those Americans who were fighting for "American Liberty", the loyalists were traitors in their own ranks who did not care about the defense of the colonists' freedom. Such a cleavage based on the foundation of different political positions had never before existed in the North American colonies. Although a certain degree of segmentation had always been a characteristic feature of the colonial society, these differentiations were usually based on distinct national origins, varying religious beliefs or feelings of affiliation to different colonies. In some cases the contrast between urban and rural population was significant as well. But usually, these differences did not lead to ostracism. The division along the cleavage patriots/loyalists gave the fragmentation of the colonial society an entirely new quality. By making the political position the touchstone for the evaluation of the individual, the colonists accepted the fact that the society was divided into two parts which were not able to live together peacefully. Nuances no longer existed, when it came to judging fellow citizens: There only were supporters and disapprovers of the Common Cause and the revolution.

The associations strongly contributed to deepening this cleavage in the colonial society. The patriots soon understood that their resistance against Great Britain could only be successful, if they were supported by as many colonists as possible. For this reason not only persons who publicly ignored the boycott measures were viewed as enemies, but also colonists who refused to take sides and remained neutral. Inactivity and indifference were as inconsistent with the objectives of the anti-British associations as willful violations of the regulations by avowed loyalists. Therefore various texts contained regulations determining how patriots were supposed to deal with colonists who refused to join the associations or who did not abide by the rules of the Continental Association. The Virginia Association composed in August 1774, for

instance, laid down that the names of such persons were to be published in the newspapers.¹²⁶ As to persons who violated the non-exportation agreement, it says in the document:

*“...we shall hold ourselves obliged to consider such person or persons inimical to the community, and as an approver of American grievances...”*¹²⁷

The Continental Association used an even harsher wording. In the eleventh article the authors called persons who disregarded the regulations of the association “foes to the rights of British America”¹²⁸ and “Enemies of American Liberty”¹²⁹. Especially the second expression became the current term among patriots when referring to loyalists. Some documents, for example the Georgia Association written in January 1775, literally adopted the formulations used in the Continental Association.¹³⁰ In later texts the authors no longer meant by “enemies of American liberty” colonists who violated the boycott measures, but only applied this term to persons who refused to subscribe to the association. The authors of the South Carolina Association formed in June 1775 unequivocally stressed their disapprobation of non-associators:

*“And we will hold all those persons inimical to the liberty of the Colonies, who shall refuse to subscribe to this Association.”*¹³¹

This shifting focus on non-subscribers was caused by the fact that later associations did not list their own boycott measures. By signing the documents the associators committed themselves to accepting the Continental Association and in some cases even all regulations of the Continental Congress. Since a regulation regarding violations of the boycott measures was included in the Continental Association, the documents of associations formed on local or regional levels could omit such a rule. It is quite remarkable in this context that the expression “Enemy of American Liberty” was only used in the formal association documents and in public notices printed in newspapers. In the minutes of the Committees of Inspection and Observation or in other documents that were not meant for the public, the authors usually used the more objective term “non-associators”.

Apart from the phrases mentioned above there were no further references to loyalists in the associations. Not a single document addressed them directly. Unlike the British parliament and government that were characterized by negative traits in virtu-

¹²⁶ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 913-916.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ See AA, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1158-1160.

¹³¹ Ibid.; Identical formulations can be found in the following documents: AA, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1030; AA, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 99-100.

ally every single association, the loyalist colonists were spared a similar rhetoric. There certainly are various reasons for this fact: First, essential differences between the “external” enemy Great Britain and the “internal” adversaries of the patriots come to light in this context. Parliament and government were abstract entities that could not be attacked with other than rhetorical means. The loyalists, on the other hand, were individual persons who lived in close neighborhood of the patriotic colonists. Often they were personally acquainted with each other. Consequently, the patriots’ uncompromising and disapproving attitude towards the loyalists became manifest rather in actions than in words. Secondly, the primary purpose of the associations was the formation of resistance against the British taxes and duties and, later on, against the British troops. By writing the associations, the patriots consequently intended to achieve two goals: One purpose was to foment the colonists’ resentments against Great Britain, the other was the attempt to present the colonial population as an entity firmly united in the Common Cause. It could therefore certainly not lie in the interest of the authors of associations to further underline the division of the colonies’ inhabitants into patriots and loyalists. A third aspect is that the innumerable pamphlets circulating in the colonies as well as the colonial newspapers already provided for a great deal of agitation against the enemies inside the colonies. The authors of the associations could therefore abstain from any additional campaigning against the loyalists.

6. Associations: Mirrors and Instruments of Revolutionary Mobilization

This analysis has shown that the association documents indeed clearly reflect the evolvment of a common American identity. The development of the language used in the associations between 1774 and 1776 vividly demonstrates the colonists’ growing detachment from Great Britain. At the same time the texts depict the gradual emergence of a powerful sense of belonging together of the Americans. The bonds that had so strongly tied the inhabitants of British America to their respective colonies and to the British crown lost importance in the Americans’ self-conception as they gradually became more aware of themselves and of being different from the British subjects living in England. The increasing frequency in the use of the term “American” in the associations delineates this growing self-consciousness of the colonists. The semantic change of some of the keywords, especially the word “liberty”, gives proof of this development. It is not by chance that the protection of freedom and property have remained key values of US-American society up until today and are regarded as genuinely American achievements by many Americans.

The gap that had evolved – and that was gradually widening – between the colonies and their mother country formed the counterpart to the growing American self-consciousness. Only the colonists’ growing dissociation from Great Britain made it

possible for a common American identity to gain importance. This process is clearly exhibited in the change the language used in the association documents underwent in the course of the two years. At the beginning of the conflict with the mother country the patriots were careful not to turn against Great Britain as a whole, but clearly distinguished between the actions of the government and parliament on the one hand and the king and British people on the other. As the struggle with Britain was intensifying in the summer of 1775 this distinction vanished from the associations and gave way to a more uncompromising American-centered attitude.

However, the patriotic associations not merely reflected the colonists' frame of mind, but also influenced the revolutionary movement quite actively. Associations were one of the most effective instruments of mobilization the patriots disposed of during the early years of the American Revolution. Due to their extremely high degree of inclusiveness and their wide propagation throughout the thirteen colonies the colonists' unions served as mainsprings of the American resistance against the mother country. Their mode of operation was, to a large extent, self-intensifying: The greater the number of colonists who openly declared themselves for the common cause and signed the associations – no matter if voluntarily or because of the pressure the committees of inspection and observation put upon them – the higher was the degree of legitimacy the patriotic alliances disposed of. This larger base of support, in turn, provided the patriots with the means to increase the pressure on those colonists who had not yet agreed to join an association. This aspect has to be taken into account when looking at the change of language depicted in the documents. There can be no doubt that the authors of the associations were convinced patriots and zealous defenders of the common cause. It is not surprising that the rhetoric used in the texts reflects this attitude. To assume, however, that the “regular” associators – that is the persons who merely signed the documents – also were all fervent advocates of the revolutionary movement would certainly go too far. A great number of Americans simply bowed to the pressure of the committees and thus outwardly acted as patriots by signing the documents and abiding by the rules of the associations while at the same time they did not actually identify themselves with the common cause.

In spite of this consideration, however, the original conclusion remains valid: The patriotic associations document a substantial change in the Americans' self-perception. Even if these alterations were not deeply rooted in the colonists' consciousness right from the beginning, they certainly triggered off a process of re-orientation that was consolidated after the Declaration of Independence and paved the way for the development of an American national identity.

4. From the Past to the Future of the “American Israel”: Sermons in the American Revolution¹

1. *Sermons as Agents*

Historians of the American Revolution have offered us fine analyses of revolutionary thought, excellent discussions of the origins of constitutional concepts, and impressive disquisitions on the function and role of theology, religious beliefs and mentalities. We are told that political theories and religious beliefs shaped the intellectual contents of the American Revolution as well as the behavior of the revolutionary generation. Rarely, however, have historians addressed the problem how theories and beliefs reached those whom the English termed “revolutionaries”. Until 1774 English leaders assumed that the term revolutionaries was synonymous with “Massachusetts”. Later that year it suddenly seemed as if the Lord had moved American hearts transforming all into radicals of the sort found in “Massachusetts”. In a gigantic outpouring the Holy Spirit seemed to have infused colonists with revolutionary thoughts. Modern historians of a secular bias have trouble with such claims insisting that all colonists were readers who spent their time inbibing revolutionary pamphlets.

Many find the idea unconvincing that the Holy Spirit or American reading skills transmitted revolutionary thought. Yet until now historians have failed to inform us, what magic convinced ordinary Americans of tenets that people from Portsmouth in New Hampshire shared with those of Edenton in North Carolina. I will offer three hypothetical answers and then concentrate on the last of the three: First, reading minutes of Committees of Inspection and Obervation for 1774 – 1776 suggests that face-to-face encounters of these committees with people in villages and towns coupled with gentle and sometimes not so gentle pressures made many familiar with revolutionary thoughts and resolves, recommendations, and explanations of the Continental Congress. Secondly, I am impressed by the argument in Professor Breen’s study on the politization of British consumer goods as agents of trust in binding Americans to

¹ Revised version of the opening address delivered to the symposion on “The Impact of Halle Pietism on Colonial North America and the Young United States” held at Wittenberg, October 4 – 6, 2002.

revolutionary concepts²; thirdly, and now I come to my subject, I argue in this paper, that revolutionary sermons played an important role in spreading, legitimizing, conceptualizing, and rationalizing revolutionary thought within a wider concept of civil millenarianism that contemporaries called “American Israel”.

Analyzing sermons of the American Revolution has not been a major trend in American historiography.³ If at all they are usually lumped together with pamphlets. Yet there are important differences between both. Pamphlets are published for an anonymous literary audience that has the means to purchase the texts.⁴ Sermons are spoken to people whose anxieties, hopes, and expectations are known to the preacher. They reflect the concerns of a particular community; at the same time, the special authority of the minister in his parish puts him into a unique position to interpret these times to his flock. Knowing that parishioners have a choice of churches and ministers to whom they can go,⁵ his sensitivity to their concerns suggests a closeness to them that makes his argument more than just an expression of his private thought. Rather, the sermon reflects attitudes and revolutionary thoughts of groups. Sermons blend local concerns with larger theoretical issues and in that respect differ from pamphlets. At the same time, the sermon’s message is carried and explained before its publication by its listeners into families, villages and other communities – the circula-

² T. H. BREEN, *The Marketplace of Revolution. How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*. Oxford 2004.

³ Robert P. HAY, *George Washington: American Moses*, in: *American Quarterly* 21, 1969, p. 780-791; Nathan O. HATCH, *The Origins of Civil Millenialism in America: New England Clergymen, War with France, and the Revolution*, in: *WMQ* 3rd Ser. 31, 1974, p. 407-430; Jon T. ALEXANDER, *Colonial New England Preaching on War as Illustrated in Massachusetts Artillery Election Sermons*, in: *Journal of Church and State*, 17, 1975, p. 423-442; Harry S. STOUT, *Religion, Communications, and the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, in: *WMQ* 3rd Ser. 34, 1977, p. 519-541; Emory ELLIOT, *The Dove and the Serpent: The Clergy in the American Revolution*, in: *American Quarterly* 31, 1979, p. 187-203; Reginald C. STUART, *‘For the Lord Is a Man of Warr’: The Colonial New England View of War and the American Revolution*, in: *Journal of Church and State* 23, 1981, p. 519-532; Melvin ENDY, *Just War, Holy War, and Millenialism in Revolutionary America*, *WMQ* 3rd Ser. 42, 1985, p. 3-25; Mark VALERI, *The New Divinity and the American Revolution*, in: *WMQ* 3rd Ser. 46, 1989, p. 741-769; Mark NOLL, *The American Revolution and Protestant Evangelicalism*, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, 1993, p. 615-638; Sarah J. PURCELL, *‘Spread this martial fire’: The New England Patriot Clergy and Civil Military Inspiration*, in: *Journal of Church and State* 38, 1996, p. 621-639.

⁴ The relevant pamphlets are conveniently listed and described by Thomas R. ADAMS, *American Independence. The Growth of an Idea. A Bibliographical Study of the American Political Pamphlets Printed Between 1764 and 1776 Dealing with the Dispute Between Great Britain and Her Colonies*. Austin, TX 1980. *The SAME The American Controversy. A Bibliographical Study of the American Pamphlets about the American Disputes, 1764-1783*. 2 vols., Providence, RI 1980. Best overall analyses are offered by Bernard BAILYN, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Cambridge, MA 1967, and Gordon S. WOOD, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*, Chapel Hill, NC 1969.

⁵ On the Problem of choice within the context of multiconfessionality in eighteenth-century North America cf. Hermann WELLENREUTHER, *Genese der Multikonfessionalität in Nordamerika, 1607-1830*. In: Hartmut LEHMANN (ed.), *Multireligiosität im vereinten Europa. Historische und juristische Aspekte*. Göttingen 2003, p. 163-182; Frank LAMBERT, *Evangelical Revivals as Communicative Spheres in the Colonial Era*. In: Norbert FINZSCH, Ursula LEHMKUHL (eds.), *Atlantic Communications. The Media in American and German History from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*. Oxford 2004, p. 15-44.

tion of sermons is most likely wider than that of pamphlets. Status within social groups, orality, and distribution in print designate the ministers as powerful transmitters of revolutionary thought.

These are truisms of the revolutionary times. Thus the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts on December 5, 1774, resolved an address to the clergy “desiring them to exhort their people to carry into execution the resolves of the Continental Congress”⁶. Half a year later the North Carolina delegate to the Continental Congress, John Hewes, wrote Samuel Johnston, that he and his colleagues had asked the leading Presbyterian, Lutheran and Dutch Reformed clergy in Philadelphia to ask their brethren in North Carolina to warn their parishioners of the snags of loyalism and the temptations held out by royal governor Josiah Martin.⁷ The Lutheran and Dutch-Reformed ministers obliged with a somewhat lengthy pamphlet entitled *Schreiben des Evangelisch-Lutherisch und Reformirten Kirchen-Raths, wie auch der Beamten der Teutschen Gesellschaft in der Stadt Philadelphia, an die Teutschen Einwohner der Provintzen von Newyork und Nord-Carolina*.⁸ The Presbyterian Synod of New York, on June 29, 1775, circulated *A Pastoral Letter from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, to the Congregations under their Care; to Be Read from the Pulpits*, an initiative John Adams hoped would “produce wonderful Effects”.⁹ Similarly, the Committee of Safety of South Carolina “engaged one Dutch Clergyman to perform Service at one place on Friday next, & another, at a

⁶ William LINCOLN (ed.), *The Journals of each Provincial Congress of Massachusetts in 1774 and 1775 and of the Committee of Safety, with an Appendix*. Boston, MA 1838, p. 56.

⁷ Joseph Hewes to Samuel Johnston, Philadelphia July 8, 1775, William L. SAUNDERS (ed.), *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 30 vols., Raleigh, NC 1886-1914, vol. 10, p. 85-86. This initiative obviously did not produce the desired results. In early January, 1776, the North Carolina Delegates with the blessing of the Continental Congress, asked the Presbyterian ministers Elihu Spencer and Alexander McWhorter, to go in person to North Carolina and “explain to the Highlanders and regulators the nature of the dispute between Great Britain and the Colonies”, Paul H. SMITH, et al. (eds.), *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*. 26 vols., Washington, DC 1976-2000, vol. 2, p. 460-461 (North Carolina Delegates to Elihu Spencer, Philadelphia 8, 1775), and vol. 3, p. 28-29 (Joseph Hewes to Samuel Johnston, Philadelphia, Jan. 4, 1776).

⁸ Philadelphia: Gedruckt bey Henrich Miller, in der Rees-Strasse, 1775, Evans 14394. This German treatise reprinted the most important texts of the Continental Congress and recommended that they be strictly adhered to.

⁹ The epistle of the Synod was printed New York: Shober and Loudon, 1775; I have quoted the Adams’ Diary from SMITH et al. (eds.), *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, vol.1, p. 478-479. While Adams welcomed the clergies’ activities within their parishes he disapproved of their turning active politicians. When the Swiss pastor from Georgia, John J. Zubly, arrived as Delegate for Georgia in Philadelphia, Adams wrote to his wife Abigail: “...he is the first Gentleman of the Cloth who has appeared in Congress, I can not but wish he may be the last. Mixing the sacred Character, with that of the Statesman, as it is quite unnecessary at this Time of day, in these Colonies, is not attended with any good Effects. The Clergy are universally too little acquainted with the World, and the Modes of Business, to engage in civil affairs with any Advantage. Besides those of them, who are really Men of Learning, have conversed with Books so much more than Men, as to be too much loaded with Vanity, to be good Politicians”, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 23.

second place on Sunday next.”¹⁰ On the basis of an analysis of sermons published in 1775 and 1776 and between 1781 and 1783 in North America¹¹ I argue that, despite John Adams’s conviction that they were “too little acquainted with the World”, the clergy functioned as important transmitters of political concepts, rationalizations of revolutionary behavior, and constitutional critique of English policy to ordinary Americans.

The communicative qualities of pamphlets and sermons suggest the elements of an explanatory model for the transmission of revolutionary thought: The political elite absorbed and shaped concepts, conceptualized the mother country’s policies and squeezed them into resolves, epistles, pamphlets, newspaper articles, institutional actions, and recommendations. These in turn shaped the thinking of local and regional authority figures, defined the political meaning of the material world, and structured activities of local, regional, and colonial committees. Local and regional authority figures adapted the elite’s conceptualizations to modes of thoughts familiar to colonists, be they parishioners, householders, or neighbours. In this process of adaption the sermons played an important role. But as the model makes clear, sermons were *but one of a number of agents* that linked the individual to the larger revolutionary ideology. How important sermons were, future research into the communicative structure of the American Revolution will have to show.

Turning to a Company of Militia, the Rev. Zabdiel Adams of Lunenburg, Massachusetts, on January 2, 1775, thundered: “May we take to ourselves the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wilds of the devil, and quench all his fiery darts.” His listeners, militia soldiers, officers and members of the congregation in Lunenburg’s meeting house understood: The devils were the British soldiers who were throwing “fiery darts” at those whose “liberty and virtue they ... invade.”¹² This was not the only sermon preached to militia companies about to take the field or to companies raised for the continental army. Between 1775 and 1783 the clergy everywhere was busy encouraging, interpreting, advising, admonishing and comforting their parishioners, soldiers, and others to do what was righteous in their and the Lord’s eyes.

More of those sermons were published in New England than in the middle and southern colonies. For a number of reasons this is not really surprising. First, New

¹⁰ William Henry Drayton and William Tennent to [South Carolina] Council of Safety, Congaree Store, August 7, 1775, Philip M. HAMER et al. (eds.), *The Papers of Henry Laurens*. Vols.1-[16], Columbia, SC 1968-[2003], vol.10, p. 277-286, here p. 279.

¹¹ I have excluded two types of sermons from the analysis: Funeral sermons and ordination sermons because both offer no argument beyond their immediate purposes.

¹² Zabdiel ADAMS, *The Grounds of Confidence and Success in War*, represented. A Sermon Preached at a Lecture in Lunenburg, New England, on Monday, January 2d, 1775, To a Detached Company of Militia there, By Z. A., Pastor of the Church in that Place. Published at the Request of said Company. Boston: Mills & Hicks, 1775, p. 7-8, Evans 13789.

England had a tradition in printing sermons and religious tracts and more printers were available there than further south.¹³ Second, publishing sermons delivered on fast-days, election days, or in ordination services had a tradition in Massachusetts and Connecticut but not in other colonies. Fewer published sermons in the middle and southern colonies certainly did not mean that ministers there were less active. On the contrary, as John Adams on July 7, 1775, wrote his wife from Philadelphia: “Clergy here, of every Denomination, not excepting the Episcopalian, thunder and lighten every sabbath. They pray for Boston and the Massachusetts – they thank God most explicitly and fervently for our remarkable Successes – they pray for the American Army. They seem to feel as if they were among you.”¹⁴

An analysis of sermons published during the Revolution has to take account of this regional bias; but enough sermons were published south of New England to allow for broader views. Although we know little about how many prints were sold outside a colony, some most likely were. In addition, some like the North Carolinian Joseph Hewes sent a “few Copies of a Sermon of William Smith, the provost of the College” to his close political ally in North Carolina with the remark “that it is much liked here”.¹⁵ More importantly, all the sermons discussed subjects of more than local or regional interest;¹⁶ this suggests that such a broad analysis will offer insights into what Americans were thinking in those crucial years.

¹³ During the time of the British occupation of Boston, most sermons published in that colony were printed elsewhere; obviously the same applied to Philadelphia and to Charleston after their occupation by British forces.

¹⁴ John Adams to his wife Abigail, Philadelphia July 7, 1775, SMITH et al. (eds.), *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, vol.1, p. 602; on the clergy’s activities in South Carolina on behalf of the Revolution cf. William Henry Drayton and William Tennent to [South Carolina] Council of Safety, Congaree Store, August 7, 1775, in: HAMER et al. (eds.), *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, vol.10, p. 277-286, here p. 280.

¹⁵ Joseph Hewes to Samuel Johnston, Philadelphia July 8, 1775, SAUNDERS, (ed.), *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol.10, p. 86. Hewes no doubt sent the following sermon: William SMITH, *A Sermon on the Present Situation of American Affairs*. Preached in Christ-Church, June 23, 1775, At the Request of the Officers of the Third Battallion of the City of Philadelphia and District of Southwark, by W. S., D. D., Provost of the College of that City. Philadelphia, Printed and Sold by James Humphreys, Jr., the Corner of Blackhorse Alley, Front Street, 1775, Evans 14459. Benjamin Franklin sent that sermon to Joseph Priestley who mentioned in his acknowledgment that he intended “to get it printed,” Benjamin FRANKLIN, *Papers*, ed. L. W. LABAREE et al., vol.1-[37], New Haven, CT 1959-[2003], vol. 22, p. 190 and *ibid.*, note 2. Cf. the enthusiastic comment on Smith’s sermon by Silas Deane to his wife Elizabeth, Philadelphia June 23, 1775, SMITH et al. (eds.), *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, vol. 1, p. 537-538.

¹⁶ The following sermons were of local or regional interest only: Samuel BALDWIN, *A Sermon Preached at Plymouth, December 22, 1775, Being the Anniversary Thanksgiving, in commemoration of the first landing of the Fathers of New England, there; anno domini 1620*. By S. B. A.M., Pastor of the Church in Hanover. AMERICA, Massachusetts-Bay: Boston, Printed by Powars and Willis, in Queen-Street, 1776, Pp 39, Evans 14657; Samuel STILLMAN, *Death the last Enemy, destroyed by Christ*. A Sermon Preached, March 27, 1776, Before the Honourable Continental Congress, on the Death of The Honorable Samuel Ward, Esq. One of the Delegates from the Colony of Rhode Island, who died of the small-pox, in this City [Philadelphia] March 26, Aet. 52, Published at the Desire of Many who heard it. By S. S., M. A.. Philadelphia, Printed by Joseph Crukshank, in Market-Street. 1776, Pp 28, Evans 15097; Samuel SEABURY, *A Sermon, Preached before the Grand Lodge, and the Other Lodges of Ancient Freemasons, in*

Table 1

Sermons published in North America 1775-1776, 1781-1783¹⁷

Colony/State	1775	1776	1781	1782	1783	All
NH	1	0	0	0	0	1
MA	11	4	0	2	5	22
CT	5	4	0	0	1	10
NY	1	1	0	1	0	3
NJ	0	1	0	0	0	1
DE	1	0	0	0	0	1
PA	8	2	1	1	0	12
MD	0	1	0	0	0	1
VA	1	0	1	0	0	2
SC	0	0	0	1	0	1
GA	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	1	0	1
All	29	13	2	6	6	56

Table 2

Subjects of Sermons, 1775-1776, 1781-1783¹⁸

Themes	1775	1776	1781	1782	1783	All
Fast-Day Sermons	8	0	0	0	1	9
Militia/Soldiers	6	2	1	0	0	9
Election Sermons	3	2	0	1	2	8
Special Themes	1	4	0	1	1	7
Thanksgiving Sermons	5	1	0	0	0	6
Commemorating Battles	0	3	0	2	0	5
Unspecified	1	1	1	1	1	5
Anniversaries	1			1	1	3
Commemorating Events	2	0	0	0	0	2

New-York, at St. Paul’s Chapel, on the Anniversary of St. John the Evangelist, 1782. New York, Printed by Robertson, Mills, and Hicks, 1783, Pp 23, Evans 18180.

¹⁷ Source: Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue, Databank, based on Charles EVANS, *American Bibliography: A Chronological Dictionary of All Books, Pamphlets, and Periodical Publications Printed in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1639 down to and including the Year 1820*. 13 vols., Chicago IL, 1903-1934; Roger P. BRISTOL, *Supplement to Charles Evans’ American Bibliography*. Charlottesville, VA 1970.

¹⁸ Source: s. note 377.

Sermons Opening Conventions	2	0	0	0	0	2
All	29	13	2	6	6	54

Yet there are some differences between New England sermons and those composed further south. New England sermons follow a pattern: They interpret a biblical text so as to suggest parallels to the dire times, then discuss the conflict with England usually in fairly emotional terms and end with assurances that under certain conditions God might help the cause of America as long as it is a good cause. Sermons preached in Pennsylvania, a colony with numerous pacifists, on the other hand focused more on the legitimacy of war, on the need for tolerance and unity while they tended to spend less time in denouncing England –but denounce they did;¹⁹ some sermons had an

¹⁹ John CARMICHAEL, A. M., *A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross's Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, Now published at the Request of the Author, and corrected by himself from the Copy printed at Lancaster; Humbly offered to the Persusal of the Military Associators of the City, Liberties and County of Philadelphia.* Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by John Dean, Bookbinder, in Laetitia Court, 1775, Pp. 34, Evans 13862; Jacob DUCHÉ, *The Duty of standing fast in our spiritual and temporal liberties, A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church, July 7th, 1775, Before the First Battalion of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia; and now published at their Request.* Philadelphia, Printed and Sold by James Humphreys, Jr., 1775, Pp 25, Evans 14013; David JONES, *Defensive War in a just Cause sinless. A Sermon Preached on the Day of the Continental Fast at Tredyffryn in Chester County, by ...*, Published by Request. Philadelphia, Printed by Henry Miller, 1775, Pp 27, Evans 14133; Jacob DUCHÉ, *The American Vine, A Sermon, Preached in Christ-Church, Philadelphia, Before the Honourable Continental Congress, July 20th, 1775. Being the Day Recommended by them for a General Fast Throughout the United English Colonies of America.* Philadelphia, Printed by James Humphreys, Jr., 1775, Pp 34, Evans 14012; Joseph MONTGOMERY, *A Sermon Preached at Christiana Bridge and Newcastle, The 20th of July, 1775 Being the Day Appointed by the Continental Congress, as a Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer,* Published by Request Philadelphia, Printed by James Humphreys Jr., The Corner of Black Horse-Alley, Front-Street, 1775, Pp. 30, Evans 14261; Thomas COOMBE, *A Sermon, Preached before the Congregations of Christ Church and St. Peter's, Philadelphia, on Thursday, July 20, 1775. Being the Day Recommended by the Honourable Continental Congress for A General Fast Throughout the Twelve United Colonies of North America.* By T. C., M. A., Chaplain to the Most Noble the Marquis of Rockingham. Published by Request. Philadelphia: Printed for John Dunlap, in Market Street, 1775, Evans 13892. Robert ROSS, *A Sermon in which the Union of the Colonies is considered and recommended; and the Bad Consequences of Divisions are Represented; Delivered on the Public Thanksgiving, November Sixteenth 1775.* By R. R., A. M., Pastor of the Church of Christ in Stratfield. New York Printed by John Holt, in Water-Street, near the Coffee House, 1776, Pp 28, Evans 15070; David GRIFFITH, *Passive Obedience Considered. In a Sermon Preached at Williamsburg, December 31th, 1775 .* By the Rev. D. G., Rector of Shelburne Parish, Virginia. Published at the Request of the General Convention [of Virginia]. Williamsburg, Printed by Alexander Purdie [1776], Pp 26, Evans 14793; William FOSTER, A. M., *A Sermon Preached at Fag's Manor, To Captain Taylor's Company of Recruits on the Lord's Day, February 18, 1776 (and now Published by Request) by the Rev. W. F.* Philadelphia, Printed by John Dunlap, in Market-Street, 1776, Pp. 24, Evans 14758; William LINN, *A Military Discourse Delivered in Carlisle, March the 17th, 1776, to Colonel Irvine's Battalion of Regulars, and a very respectable number of the Inhabitants.* Published at the Request of the Officers, by W. L., A. M., Chaplain. Philadelphia, Printed in the Year 1776, Pp 23, Evans 14828; John WITHERSPOON, *The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men. A Sermon Preached at Princeton, On the 17th of May, 1776, Being The General Fast appointed by the Congress through the United Colonies. To Which is added, An Address to the Natives of Scotland residing in America,* by J. W., D. D., President of the College of New Jersey. Philadelphia: Printed and sold by R. Aitken, Printer and Bookseller, opposite the London Coffee-House, Front-Street, 1776, Pp 78, Evans 15224.

almost ironic tendency.²⁰ And finally, while New England sermons followed a structural and rhetorical pattern long established, sermons preached in the middle and southern colony displayed a greater variety in form, language and structure.

Sermons were inevitably, so the titles announce, published "at the request" of those that had attended the service or who had invited the pastor to preach a sermon on a particular occasion. One sermon was published because the author had no church at all but felt he had something to share with the public.²¹ Two black preachers with close ties to South Carolina published sermons in Philadelphia, in which they energetically focused on the war with England and the glorious cause of the confederated states but very incidentally mixed this general message with pleas to end slavery and extend the blessings of liberty to their brethren.²² Occasionally a preacher stated explicitly why he felt it important to share his sermon with the wider public. In June 1775 the Rev. Nathan Perkins prefaced his sermon to soldiers from West Hartford, Connecticut, with the remark, that ordinarily preachers abstained from commenting on secular affairs; yet he added: "when necessity calls, it [the church] may with propriety, address us on civil liberty; and at once instruct and warn those who are willing to hazard their lives, in the defence of the privileges of their country."²³ Two days later,

²⁰ SMITH, A Sermon on the Present Situation of American Affairs. Preached in Christ-Church, June 23, 1775, Evans 14459. This sermon was reprinted in Wilmington, Delaware by James Adams, Evans 14460, cf. too note 380 above; Daniel BATWELL, M. A., A Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan's and Captain Price's Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1775. Being the Day recommended by the Honorable Continental Congress for A General Fast Throughout the Twelve United Colonies of North America. Published by Request. Philadelphia: Printed by John Dunlap, in Market-Street, 1775. Pp 20, Evans 13828; John J. ZUBLY, A Sermon on American Affairs, Preached At the Opening of the Provincial Congress of Georgia, Addressed to the Right Honourable the Earl of Dartmouth. With an Appendix, Giving a Concise Account of the Struggles of Swisserland to Recover their Liberty. Philadelphia, Printed by Henry Miller, 1775, Pp xx+41, Evans 14635; Samuel MAGAW, M. A., A Discourse Preached in Christ-Church, Philadelphia, On Sunday, October 8, 1775, by ... of Kent County, in Delaware. Philadelphia, Printed and Sold by Story and Humphreys in Norris's Alley, near Front-Street, 1775, Pp 14, Evans 14176.

²¹ Abner BROWNELL, The Worship of God According to True Christian Divinity; Considered and Improved in a Discourse upon that Subject, Offered to all who have Ears to hear of every Denomination, By A. B., A Member of the (spiritual) Church of Christ, Printed for the Author, in the Year 1782, Pp 24, Evans 17484.

²² „And now my virtuous fellow citizens, let me intreat you, that, after you have rid yourselves of the British yoke, that you will also emancipate those who have been all their life time subject to bondage," BLACK WHIG, Sermon, On the Present Situation of the Affairs of America and Great-Britain. Written by a Black, And Printed at the Request of several Persons of distinguished Characters. Philadelphia: Printed by T. Bradford and P. Hall, 1782, p.9, Evans 17717. „May we be thankful, and make our states independent states indeed, by gradually abolishing slavery, and making the Aethiopian race comfortable amongst us," AETHIOPIAN, A Sermon on the Evacuation of Charlestown. Philadelphia: Printed for the Author, and Sold by William Woodhouse, in Front-Street, next Door to the Old Coffee-House, 1783, p.10, Evans 18182. Only one other sermon argued for the abolition of slavery, Samuel ANDREWS, A. M., A Discourse, Shewing the Necessity of Joining Internal Repentance, With the External Profession of it. Delivered upon the General Fast, July 20, 1775. By S. A., Rector of St. Paul's Church, in Wallingford, and Missionary from the Society, for propagating the Gospel. New Haven; Printed by Thomas and Samuel Greene, 1775, p.14, Evans 13812.

²³ Nathan PERKINS, Sermon Preached to the Soldiers who went from West Hartford, in Defence of their Country. Delivered the 2d of June, 1775. Being the Day before they marched from that Place. Published

the Rev. John Carmichael added that in times of danger it was but proper that “even the Minister of the *Prince of Peace* ... in such a situation ... would improve the times.”²⁴ In early July 1775 the Reverend John Duché at the beginning of his sermon to a company of soldiers ingeniously confessed that he had selected a text for his sermon about which he could talk both as a preacher as well as a citizen.²⁵ And in the year of the Peace of Paris in 1783 Ezra Stiles at the beginning of a sermon that lasted at least four hours similarly confided that he had selected his text only “as introductory to a discourse upon the political welfare of God’s American Israel; and as allusively prophetic of the future prosperity and splendor of the United States.”²⁶ Finally, the Reverend Daniel Batwell fell back on an old rethorical trick: He prefaced his comments on the controversy between England and the colonies with the remark that he really could not comment on this crisis because Christ’s empire was not of this world, and then cheerfully said all he wanted to say about bad English and good Americans.²⁷

The *first* part of the following analysis will – paying due regard to the chronology of the sermons – analyze the political terminology of the sermons, describe their function and link them to the argument developed in the sermons. The *second* part will focus on the religious reasoning. The discussion will show how God’s role and atti-

at the Desire of the Hearers. By N. P., Pastor of the fourth Church in Hartford. Hartford, Printed by Eben. Watson, near the Great Bridge, n. D., p.3, Evans 14382.

²⁴ The whole sentence conveys the bluntness clearer: “At a time when the unjust storm of ministerial wrath is discharging itself, in a cruel and ignominious manner, on the noble, patriotic, brave people of the ancient, loyal, important colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, --- at a time when all the other colonies in North-America, like the true children of a *free-born family*, are roused to some just resentment of such onslaughts, on their natural and legal rights, taking each other as by the hand and uniting by the invincible chains of love, friendship, and interest, are determined to support ... it is but reasonable to suppose, that even the Minister of the *Prince of Peace* ... in such a situation ... would improve the times...”, CARMICHAEL, A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross’s Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, p. 5-6, Evans 13862; in his New Year’s eve sermon the Rev. David GRIFFITH stated the same even more forcefully. In ordinary times the preacher would not comment on worldly affairs. But these were times of the highest importance and thus he thought it high time to pronounce the truth: He considered it necessary, “to remove every impediment from the progress of truth and justice to espouse the cause of humanity and the common rights of mankind. ...the cause of truth, immutable and eternal, should engage their warmest and unremitting attention. The cause of an innocent and helpless posterity; of millions, yet unborn, plead strongly for the utmost exertion of our care and vigilance, in defence of their rights”, GRIFFITH, Passive Obedience Considered. In a Sermon Preached at Williamsburg, December 31th, 1775, p. 24-25, Evans 14793; this sermon is discussed and edited by G. MacLaren BRYDEN (ed.), „Passive Obedience Considered“: A Sermon by the Rev. David Griffith before the Virginia Convention, December 1775, in: Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 44, 1975, p. 77-93.

²⁵ DUCHÉ, The Duty of standing fast in our spiritual and temporal liberties, A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church, July 7th, 1775, p. 2, Evans 14013.

²⁶ EZRA STILES, D. D., The United States elevated to Glory and Honor. A Sermon, Preached before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. L.L.D., Governor and Commander in Chief, and the Honorable, the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783, By E. S., D. D., President of Yale College. New Haven, Printed by Thomas & Samuel Greene, 1783, p.7, Evans, 18198. This sermon was 99 pages long.

²⁷ BATWELL, M.A., A Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan’s and Captain Price’s Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1775, p. 17, Evans 13828.

tude is explained and linked to the political arguments of the texts. Between 1775 and 1776 ministers used America’s past as a backdrop to an increasingly negative image of England; as this demonized image emerged, ministers began to decode the secular order of the colonies and states as expressions of God’s “American Israel”, the subject of my *third* part. This process enabled the preachers especially after November 1775 to sketch visions of a future “American Israel”. These visions culminated, so I will argue in my *fourth* part, in an utopia about America in the year 2000. Two different functions of these visions emerged: The first is initially linked to the discourse about “independence”. Before May 1776 preachers talked about “independence” in a negative sense but sketched America’s future in positively glowing terms – they spoke of an *independent* America’s greatness. After 1776, these visions of the future projected the utopia of a mighty nation – greatness, nationhood, national memory, and identity are blended in the image of greatness.

2. *Demonizing the Mother Country, 1775-1776*

Most sermons delivered in 1775 and 1776 focused in rather long secular parts on three themes: The legitimacy of the colonial cause, oppressive politics of England and the need to preserve colonial rights and liberties. In justifying the colonial cause, most sermons evoked the history of the settlements in North America: William Stearns reminded listeners in June 1775 that “part of these lands by them first settled they purchased by fair bargain of the natives. The rest was obtained by conquest, in a war entered into by them for their own just defence – and they defended their acquisitions by themselves alone for a long time with inconceivable expence of blood and treasure!”²⁸ To his listeners the implication was obvious: “This, I think, makes our land God’s possession, by way of eminence.”²⁹ They had, so the preacher continued, obtained a royal charter; but that did not imply that the crown had at that time a legal title to the land: “for they were not seized of them, and consequently had no property in them --- for tho’ we should admit (as we may with safety) that the discovery of an uninhabited country may give the discoverers a right to such lands, yet this rule could not operate in this case, because this country was actually inhabited by the aboriginal Indians, of whom our forefathers purchased.”³⁰ Stearns’ foray into the history of Massachusetts established in his and his parishioners’ minds a crucial point that he re-

²⁸ William STEARNS, A. M., A View of the Controversy subsisting between Great-Britain and the American Colonies. A Sermon Preached at a Fast, in Marlborough in Massachusetts-Bay, on Thursday, May 11, 1775, Agreeable to a Recommendation of the Provincial Congress, By W. S., Published at the Desire of the Hearers. Watertown, Printed by Benjamin Edes, 1775, p.13, Evans, Nr. 14474.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.14.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.14.

peated once more: “... these lands are thus clearly ours... What any man acquires by his own labour and toil, he has an exclusive right to.”³¹ And everybody accepted this as an undisputable truth.

More preachers evoked the history of their colony for other purposes: They painted their past as happiness in paradise. For the Rev. Joseph Montgomery of New-castle, Delaware, past times “were our halcyon days”³²; and the Rev. Nathan Perkins in the same month, June 1775, preached in West Hartford that “America was particularly happy under the shadow of the wings, and in the enjoyment of the friendship of Britain. Indeed no people more happy, more free, more virtuous could be found wherever the circling sun performs its destined course” – until but lately England’s new oppression had cruelly destroyed this happiness.³³ Argumentatively evoking the past stressed the unheard off newness of England’s policy; emotionally, history suggested the happiness that was to be regained; and, as the Rev. Henry Cumings in Billerica, Massachusetts, added, recalling history meant recalling past happiness, things that cheered up at a time that offered little to cheer the mind.³⁴

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.15. STEARNS was not the only pastor who sought to establish a title to the colony independent of the crown –and, I might add, in blatant disregard of the rights of native Americans. In July 1775, Daniel BATWELL assured his listeners in York-Town, Pennsylvania, that „[F]rom the poor untutored Indian it [the colony] has uniformly disdained to borrow, and abhorred to steal: Fair and open purchases have preceded every settlement“ – the implication is of course the same, BATWELL, A Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan’s and Captain Price’s Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1775, p.15, Evans 13828. By December 1775 this view was obviously widespread. Without going into details Samuel BALDWIN stated: „All possessions, rights and privileges, being the immediate grant of heaven, or honestly acquired, or rightfully descended, as an inheritance, are to be guarded with care against all encroachments,“ BALDWIN, A Sermon Preached at Plymouth, December 22, 1775, p.14, Evans 14657. Similarly on New Year’s eve Nathan FISKE, Remarkable Providences to be gratefully recollected, religiously improved, and carefully transmitted to Posterity. A Sermon Preached at Brookfield On the last Day of the Year 1775. Together with Some Marginal Notes etc. Giving an Account of the first Settling of the town in the Year 1660; its Desolation by the Indians in Philip’s War, in 1675; its Distresses in Queen Anne’s War; and its Increase and Improvements to the present time. By N. F., A. M., Pastor of the third Church in Broookefield. Boston, New England, Printed by Thomas and John Fleet, 1776, p.28, Evans 14754; on the European roots of these concepts and their importance for Spanish and English concepts in the early modern period cf. Claudia SCHNURMANN, Europa trifft Amerika. Atlantische Wirtschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit, 1492-1783 (= Europäische Geschichte, Fischer TB Nr. 2490), Frankfurt a. M., 1998.

³² MONTGOMERY, A Sermon Preached at Christiana Bridge and Newcastle, The 20th of July, 1775, p.26, Evans 14261.

³³ PERKINS, Sermon Preached to the Soldiers who went from West Hartford, in Defence of their Country. Delivered the 2d of June, 1775, , p. 5, Evans 14382; similarly SMITH, A Sermon on the Present Situation of American Affairs. Preached in Christ-Church, June 23, 1775, p. 11, Evans 14459; DUCHÉ, The American Vine, A Sermon, Preached in Christ-Church, Philadelphia, Before the Honourable Continental Congress, July 20th, 1775, p. 17-20, Evans 14012; Jonas CLARKE, The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors, and Gode’s tender Care of his distressed People. A Sermon, Preached at Lexington, April 19, 1776, To commemorate the Murder, Bloodshed, and Commencement of Hostilities between Great-Britain and America, in that town, by a Brigade of Troops of George III, under Command of Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, on the Nineteenth of April, 1775. To which is added A Brief Narrative of the principal Transactions of that Day. By J. C., A. M., Pastor of the Church in Lexington, Massachusetts State. Boston, Printed by Powars and Willis, 1776, p. 22, Evans 14679.

³⁴ HENRY CUMINGS, A Sermon Preached in Billerica, On the 23d of November, 1775. Being the Day appointed by Civil Authority, for a Public Thanksgiving Throughout the Province of Massachusetts-Bay.

The contrasts were stark. For America was, so the clergy preached in Massachusetts’ and Connecticut’s churches, in the clutches of evil ministers who had conspired to enslave England *and* America: “Can it be any longer a secret”, the Rev. Oliver Noble cried at Newburyport on March 8, 1775,

*“that a Plan has been systematically laid, and persued by the British ministry, near twelve years, for enslaving America; as the STIRRUP by which they design to mount the RED HORSE of TYRANNY and Despotism at home? Well did despots at home know, that if charming FREEDOM spread her olive branches in America, emigrations from them to us, would soon go near to depopulate their own country; weakening them and strengthening us, until America became invincible; and therefore open strides of arbitrary power, were first to appear in the Colonies, while the mines were having at home; but when we were subdued they would open their batteries with safety against British liberty and Britons be made to feel the same oppressive hand of despotic Power.”*³⁵

Two months later the Rev. Joseph Perry informed the Members of the Connecticut Assembly that the British ministry pursued a “determined plan” to establish “*absolute despotism, and as the certain consequence, cruel tyranny, and the total slavery of all America*”³⁶ The Rev. Nathan Perkins added in early June, that this “despotic plan” was the result of the “influence of bribery”³⁷, supplemented, so the Rev. Enoch Huntington lamented six weeks later, by “unjustifiable methods, of secret intrigue and open violence.”³⁸ By December this conviction had lost its novelty. The Rev. Baldwin of Ply-

By H. C., A. M., Pastor of the Church there. Massachusetts-Bay: Worcester, Printed by I. Thomas, near the Court House, p.11, Evans 14723.

³⁵ Oliver NOBLE, Some Strictures upon the Sacred Story Recorded in the Book of Esther, shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God’s People: -- And the remarkable Interpositions of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed, in a Discourse Delivered at Newbury-Port, North Meeting House, March 8, 1775, In Commemoration of the Massacre at Boston, March the Fifth, 1770, by O. N., A. M., Pastor of a Church in Newbury, Preached at the Request of a Number of Respectable Gentlemen of said Town, and Now Published at the General Desire of the Hearers. Newbury-Port, New England, Printed by R. Lunt and H. W. Tinges [?], 1775, p. 26, Evans 14352.

³⁶ Joseph PERRY, A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the Day of their Anniversary Election, May 11, 1775. By J. P., Pastor of the first Church of Christ, in East Windsor. Hartford, Printed by Eben. Watson, Near the Great Bridge, 1775, p. 7, Evans. 14383.

³⁷ PERKINS, Sermon Preached to the Soldiers who went from West Hartford, in Defence of their Country. Delivered the 2d of June, 1775, p. 6, Evans 14382.

³⁸ Enoch HUNTINGTON, A Sermon Delivered at Middletown, July 20th, A. D. 1775, The Day appointed by the Continental Congress, to be observed by the Inhabitants of all the English Colonies, on the Continent, As a Day of public Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer. By E. H., A. M. and pastor of the first Church in Middletown, Published at the Request of the Auditors. Hartford, Printed by Eben. Watson, near the Great Bridge, 1775, p. 17, Evans 14124.

mouth matter of factly referred to the “preconcerted plan” and Elijah Fitch to the “deep laid plot”³⁹.

This conspiracy was, at least in 1775, not the work of the King, who was still good, but of his ministers, who told “sordid slanders and infamous lies” about Americans.⁴⁰ These “designing, mischief-making ministers”⁴¹ were “gratify[ing] their own licentious desires at the expence of the blood and treasure of his [i.e. King’s] subjects.”⁴² In England they had already succeeded in destroying the glorious constitution. Indeed, the president of Harvard College, Samuel Langdon, thought that “the general prevalence of vice has changed the whole face of things in the British government.”⁴³ And Enoch Huntington agreed: “The *British* constitution ... at length, under the hands of bribery and corruption, ... seems *rotten* to the very core.”⁴⁴

These sermons held few surprises for people who had read pamphlets and tracts published in London after 1763; in the wake of the controversy about John Wilkes writings on corruption authored by Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, were revived and enriched with a wealth of information on supposedly corrupt election practices in rotten or money-greedy English boroughs; in 1775 key tracts like that of James

³⁹ BALDWIN, A Sermon Preached at Plymouth, December 22, 1775, p. 27, Evans 14657; ELIJAH FITCH, A Discourse, the Substance of which was delivered at Hopkington, on the Lord’s Day, March, 24, 1776, being the next Sabbath following the Precipitate Flight of the British Troops from Boston. By E. F., A. M., Published at the Request of the Hearers. Boston, Printed by John Boyle in Marlborough Square, 1776, p. 3, Evans 14755; the Massachusetts Governor and Commander-in-Chief of British troops in North America, Thomas Gage was convinced, that “the designs of the leaders of the rebellion are plain, and every day confirms the truth of what was asserted years ago by many intelligent people, that a plan was laid in this province and adjusted with some of the same stamp of others for a total independence whilst they amused people in England called the friends of America, as well as many in this country, with feigned professions of affection and attachment to the parent state and pretended to be aggrieved and discontented only on account of taxation, that they have designedly irritated government by every insult whilst they artfully poison the minds of the people and ripened them for insurrections,” Thomas Gage to the Earl of Dartmouth, 20 August 1775, Boston, in: K. G. DAVIES (ed.), Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783, 21 vols, Shannon, Ireland, 1972-1981, vol. 11, p. 81-82, quotation on p. 81.

⁴⁰ NOBLE, Some Strictures upon the Sacred Story Recorded in the Book of Esther, shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God’s People; -- And the remarkable Interpositions of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed, in a Discourse Delivered at Newbury-Port, North Meeting House, March 8, 1775, p. 24, Evans 14352; SAMUEL LANGDON, Government Corrupted by Vice and recovered by Righteousness. A Sermon preached before the Honorable Congress of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, Assembled in Watertown, on Wednesday, the 31st Day of May, 1775. Being the Anniversary fixed by Charter for the Election of Counsellors. By ... President of Harvard College in Cambridge. Watertown, MA, Printed and Sold by Benjamin Edes 1775, p. 10, Evans 14145; PERKINS, Sermon Preached to the Soldiers who went from West Hartford, in Defence of their Country. Delivered the 2d of June, 1775, p. 6, Evans 14382.

⁴¹ CARMICHAEL, A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross’s Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, p. 30, Evans 13862.

⁴² DUCHÉ, The Duty of standing fast in our spiritual and temporal liberties, A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church, July 7th, 1775, p. ii, Evans 14013.

⁴³ LANGDON, Government Corrupted by Vice and recovered by Righteousness. A Sermon preached before the Honorable Congress of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, Assembled in Watertown, on Wednesday, the 31st Day of May, 1775, p. 15, Evans 14145.

⁴⁴ HUNTINGTON, A Sermon Delivered at Middletown, July 20th, A. D. 1775, p. 18, Evans 14124.

Burgh were reprinted in America.⁴⁵ It is, however, less likely that the parishioners who listened to these sermons were familiar with this scathing critiques of English politics. I suspect that they were first introduced to these views by the preachers, and this may account for the preachers' dwelling on this aspect with somewhat more relish than one would otherwise expect. In a larger sense the general description of conspiracies, evil ministers, and corrupt English politics provided the explanatory context for English colonial politics.

Three words dominate preachers' descriptions of English colonial politics: "oppression", "despotism" and "tyranny". The Rev. Oliver Noble evoked the "oppressive hand of despotic Power"⁴⁶; the President of Harvard, Samuel Langdon, saw "America ... threatened with cruel oppression."⁴⁷ Even the mild-mannered president of Prince-

⁴⁵James BURGH, *Political Disquisitions; or, An enquiry into public errors, defects, and abuses. Illustrated by, and established upon facts and remarks, extracted from a variety of authors, ancient and modern.* Calculated to draw the timely attention of government and people, to a due consideration of the necessity, and the means, of reforming those errors, defects, and abuses; of restoring the constitution, and saving the state. Philadelphia: Printed and sold by Robert Bell, in Third-Street; and William Woodhouse, in Front-Street., 1774, Evans 13851; Henry St. John, Viscount BOLINGBROKE, *The freeholder's political catechism.* Very necessary to be studied by every freeman in America, [New London, Conn.]: re-printed and sold by T. Green., 1769, Evans 11450; on BOLINGBROKE and his influence on North American political thought in the 1760s and 1770s cf. Isaac KRAMNICK, *Bolingbroke and his Circle. The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole*, Cambridge, MA 1968, and *The SAME, Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism. Political Ideology in late Eighteenth-Century England and America*, Ithaca, NY 1990; on Catherine MACAULAY and her influence in America cf. Vera NÜNNING, "A Revolution in Sentiments, Manners, and Moral Opinions." Catherine Macaulay und die politische Kultur des englischen Radikalismus, 1760-1790 (= *Anglistische Forschungen*, Bd. 255), Heidelberg 1998; in his election sermon of 1763 to the Connecticut Assembly Ezra STILES quoted from „the celebrated historian Mrs.Catharine Macaulay, that ornament of the republic of letters, and the female Livy of the age," STILES, *The United States elevated to Glory and Honor. A Sermon, Preached before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. L.L.D., Governor and Commander in Chief, and the Honorable The General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783*, p. 20, Evans 18198; on the discourse on corruption cf. Hermann WELLENREUTHER, *Korruption und das Wesen der englischen Verfassung im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 234, 1982, p. 33-62.

⁴⁶ NOBLE, M. A., *Some Strictures upon the Sacred Story Recorded in the Book of Esther, shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God's People: -- And the remarkable Interpositions of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed, in a Discourse Delivered at Newbury-Port, North Meeting House, March 8, 1775*, p. 26, Evans 14352

⁴⁷ LANGDON, *Government Corrupted by Vice and recovered by Righteousness. A Sermon preached before the Honorable Congress of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, Assembled in Watertown, on Wednesday, the 31st Day of May, 1775*, p. 6, Evans 14145; cf. Rev. Nathan PERKINS' remark, that England „over these oppressions longs to stretch her iron rod," PERKINS, *Sermon Preached to the Soldiers who went from West Hartford, in Defence of their Country. Delivered the 2d of June, 1775*, p. 5, Evans 14382; the Rev. Jacob DUCHÉ prayed that the King would remove his evil ministers who sought to „seek to change his government into oppression," DUCHÉ, *The Duty of standing fast in our spiritual and temporal liberties, A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church, July 7th, 1775*, p. ii, Evans 14013; the Rev. Daniel BATWELL was sure that evil rulers „made laws on purpose to oppress, or corrupt the people," BATWELL, *A Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan's and Captain Price's Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1775*, p. 14, Evans 13828; the Rev. Enoch HUNTINGTON devoted the whole application of his interpretation of the text to „that designs to enslave and oppress us, and bring us into absolute subjection to arbitrary power," HUNTINGTON, *A Sermon Delivered at Middletown, July 20th, A. D. 1775*, p. 17, Evans 14124; the Rev. Ezra SAMSON was sure Americans had „great reason to complain of oppression and tyranny," Ezra SAMSON, *A Sermon Preached at Roxbury-Camp, before Col. Cotton's Regiment; on the 20th of July P.M. 1775. Being A Day set apart for Fasting and*

ton College, the learned Dr. John Witherspoon, could not but focus a long section of his sermon in mid-May 1776 on “*The ambition of mistaken princes, the cunning and cruelty of oppressive and corrupt ministers*”⁴⁸; six weeks before the Declaration of Independence the Rev. Samuel West assured the General Court of Massachusetts, that only “intolerable oppression” absolved the subject from absolute obedience to rulers, and this of course was, so he explained, the case of the good people of Massachusetts, who “find themselves cruelly oppressed by the parent state.”⁴⁹

Even more colorful were the uses of the word “tyranny”: The Rev. Oliver Noble saw England mounted on the “RED HORSE of TYRANNY and Despotism”⁵⁰; determined, so the Rev. Joseph Perry added, to establish “*cruel tyranny, and the total slavery of all America*.”⁵¹ Yet not long thereafter the Rev. Daniel Batwell assured his parishioners, that “with domination founded in tyranny the allwise and alljust ruler has no connections.”⁵² The Baptist minister David Jones, in discussing the problem of non-resistance, broadened the meaning of “tyranny”: “Is there any essential difference between being robbed by a *protestant* or a *papist*? Is it not the very same thing? Tyranny is Tyranny, slavery is slavery, by whomsoever it is imposed.”⁵³ In 1776 the ex-

Prayer, throughout all the United Colonies of America. By E. S., Colleague Pastor of the First Church in Plympton [Published at the Request of the Officers of said Regiment]. Watertown, Printed and Sold by Benjamin Edes, 1775, p. 17, Evans 14450; even the Rev. David GRIFFITH in his address to the Provincial Congress of Virginia on New Year’s Eve 1775 felt sure that the House of Commons’ claim was „unnatural, unjust and oppressive,“ GRIFFITH, *Passive Obedience Considered*. In a Sermon Preached at Williamsburg, December 31th, 1775, p. 21, Evans 14793; In spring 1776 the Rev. Elijah FITCH saw the „cords of oppression“ in the hands of the authors of „deep laid plots,“ FITCH, *A Discourse, the Substance of which was delivered at Hopkington, on the Lord’s Day, March, 24, 1776*, p. 3, Evans 14755; while the Rev. Jonas CLARKE dedicated his whole anniversary sermon in Lexington to „The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors,“ CLARKE, *The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors, and Gode’s tender Care of his distressed People. A Sermon, Preached at Lexington, April 19, 1776*.

⁴⁸ WITHERSPOON, *The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men. A Sermon Preached at Princeton, On the 17th of May, 1776*, p. 5-6, Evans 15224.

⁴⁹ SAMUEL WEST, *A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Council, and the Honorable House of Representatives, of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, May 29th, 1776. Being the Anniversary for the Election of the Honorable Council for the Colony, by S. W. , A. M., Pastor of a Church in Dartmouth. Boston, Printed by John Gill, in Queen Street, 1776*, p. 19, p. 21, Evans 15217.

⁵⁰ NOBLE, *Some Strictures upon the Sacred Story Recorded in the Book of Esther, shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God’s People: -- And the remarkable Interpositions of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed, in a Discourse Delivered at Newbury-Port, North Meeting House, March 8, 1775*, p. 26, Evans 14352.

⁵¹ PERRY, *A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the Day of their Anniversary Election, May 11, 1775*, p. 7, Evans 14383.

⁵² BATWELL, M. A., *A Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan’s and Captain Price’s Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1775*, p. 14, Evans 13828.

⁵³ JONES, *Defensive War in a just Cause sinless. A Sermon Preached on the Day of the Continental Fast at Treddyffryn in Chester County, by ...*, p. 16, Evans 14133. In November 1775 the Rev. Ebenezer BALDWIN took a wider view: „The European Kingdoms are already groaning,“ so he informed his listeners, “under the Weight of Tyranny, Corruption and Luxury: They will doubtless e’er that Time be much in the State of the present Eastern Empires. But when ever this glorious State of the Church takes Place, civil Liberty must be enjoyed, for Religion cannot subsist, in this flourishing State, under Tyranny and Despotism,“ Ebenezer BALDWIN, *The Duty of Rejoicing under Calamities and Afflictions, Considered and Improved, in a Sermon Preached at Danbury, November 16, 1775. A Day set Apart for Thanksgiv-*

cited talk about tyranny began to calm down. John Witherspoon quietly pointed out, that if there existed between the colonies "a certain distance from the seat of government, ... an attempt to rule will either produce tyranny and helpless subjection, or provoke resistance and effect a separation."⁵⁴ And less than two weeks later, the Rev. Samuel West assured the General Court of Massachusetts, that „The servants of sin and corruption are subjected to the worst kind of tyranny in the universe“ and that therefore „The authority of a tyrant is of itself null and void.“⁵⁵ Six weeks later Thomas Jefferson and with him the Delegates to the Continental Congress reached the same conclusions and signed the Declaration of Independence.

Why would the „evil ministers“ of George III want to oppress the colonists and establish despotism and tyranny in North America? The American clergy had no doubts: According to the Rev. Oliver Noble the English government and „designing, and detestable patriots have in every age, nation, and country in the world, at one time or other, led their blind confiding country-men, into the very jaws of slavery, vassalage, and ruin.“ At the root of the trouble with England was, so Noble added, nothing but that „we WILL NOT BE SLAVES.“⁵⁶ Yet the aim of the English government was, as the Rev. Nathan Perkins pointed out, that „we must be scourged into vassalage like slaves.“⁵⁷ But the Rev. John Carmichael was sure that no patriotic American would „submit tamely to the galling yoke of *perpetual slavery* ... for as we are the descendants of Briton, *we scorn to be slaves*.“⁵⁸ The Rev. Enoch Huntington of Middletown, Connecticut, neatly put the problem: „Are not patriots of distinction, friends of their country and patrons of liberty, proscribed for slaughter, and whole fleets and armies, the ultima ratio, instead of sound reason, and the principles of the British constitution, and of right and religion, made use of to convert us as a people, to a state of the most abject slavery to the crown, court-parasites, minions, and placemen of Great

ing in the Colony of Connecticut. By E. B., A. M., Pastor of the First Church of Christ in Danbury. New York: Printed by Hugh Gaine, Bookseller and Stationer, at the Bible and Crown, in Hanover-Square, 1776, p. 40, Evans 14656; a similar view is expressed by CUMINGS, A Sermon Preached in Billerica, On the 23d of November, 1775, p. 9, Evans 14723.

⁵⁴ WITHERSPOON, The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men. A Sermon Preached at Princeton, On the 17th of May, 1776, p. 44, Evans 15224.

⁵⁵ WEST, A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Council, and the Honorable House of Representatives, of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, May 29th, 1776, p. 13, p. 14, Evans 15217.

⁵⁶ NOBLE, Some Strictures upon the Sacred Story Recorded in the Book of Esther, shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God's People: -- And the remarkable Interpositions of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed, in a Discourse Delivered at Newbury-Port, North Meeting House, March 8, 1775, p. 5, 23, Evans 14352.

⁵⁷ PERKINS, A. M., Sermon Preached to the Soldiers who went from West Hartford, in Defence of their Country. Delivered the 2d of June, 1775, p. 9, Evans 14382.

⁵⁸ CARMICHAEL, A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross's Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, p. 6, p. 32, Evans 13862.

Britain?”⁵⁹ And that meant nothing else, so the Rev. Joseph Montgomery from Newcastle, Delaware, maintained, than „ to reduce us from the glorious character of free-men to that of slaves.“ With a nice sense for the concrete meanings of slavery the Rev. Ezra Samson summed it all up: „In a word, we must be slaves, learn to grovel in the dust, and from thence look up to our imperious masters, in order to receive from their griping hands, the scanty pittance which they might please to afford us.“⁶⁰ Americans faced a stark alternative in this fight: „THE LIBERTY or SLAVERY of the AMERICAN WORLD,“ so the Rev. Jonas Clarke on April 19, 1776, in Lexington reminded his listeners in his anniversary sermon.⁶¹ Yet slavery was not only the antipode to liberty. It changed human beings in a fundamental way, as the Rev. Judah Champion suggested in his election sermon to the General Court of Connecticut in May 1776: „Slavery ... debases the mind – clogs the finest movements of the soul; discourages industry, frugality, and every thing praise-worthy; introduces ignorance and poverty, with the most sordid vices, and universal misery.“⁶² Slavery would thus undercut all efforts to establish a republic of virtuous citizens.

Again, once independence was declared, the term „slavery“ gradually disappeared from the vocabulary of preachers; yet there are three exceptions: The Rev. Andrews asked, what even two African preachers did not dare do so directly: „whether our detaining in captivity, a part of our fellow creatures, can be reconciled with our own principles of liberty, and if not, to examine, whether it is not necessary, either to change our principles, or let the *oppressed go free*, for how can we expect, God will work that deliverance for us, which we refuse to give to others?“ He got of course no answer; the fact that Black Whig and Aethiopian –they thought it wiser to publish under pseudonyms -- aside no one dared to raise this issue speaks loud enough.⁶³

⁵⁹ HUNTINGTON, A Sermon Delivered at Middletown, July 20th, A. D. 1775, p. 19, Evans 14124.

⁶⁰ SAMSON, A Sermon Preached at Roxbury-Camp, before Col. Cotton’s Regiment; on the 20th of July P.M. 1775, p. 18, Evans 14450; The Rev. Ebenezer BALDWIN added for good measure „Chains of Slavery“ to the description. In order to avoid this gruesome fate, Americans had no alternative, but to fight. For „If conquered in this War the worst of Deaths awaits great Numbers, and the worst of Slavery the Survivors ... *to live*, must be Slaves to the Conquerors,“ Ebenezer BALDWIN, The Duty of Rejoicing under Calamities and Afflictions, Considered and Improved, in a Sermon Preached at Danbury, November 16, 1775, p. 22, p. 26-27, Evans 14656.

⁶¹ CLARKE, The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors, and Gode’s tender Care of his distressed People. A Sermon, Preached at Lexington, April 19, 1776, p. 29-30, Evans 14679.

⁶² Judah CHAMPION, Christian and Civil Liberty and Freedom considered and Recommended: A Sermon, Delivered Before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the day of their Anniversary Election, May 9th, 1776. By J. C., A. M., Pastor of the first Church of christ in Litchfield. Hartford, Printed by E. Watson, near the Great Bridge, 1776, p. 14, Evans 14675.

⁶³ ANDREWS, A. M., A Discourse, Shewing the Necessity of Joining Internal Repentance, With the External Profession of it. Delivered upon the General Fast, July 20, 1775, p. 14; BLACK WHIG, Sermon, On the Present Situation of the Affairs of America and Great –Britain, p. 9, Evans 13812; AETHIOPIAN, A Sermon on the Evacuation of Charlestown, p. 10, Evans 18182.

The conceptual framework ministers sketched was familiar to colonists who knew about corrupt governors who endangered their rights: There was a conspiracy by evil ministers who were determined to establish a despotic and oppressive tyranny by enslaving North Americans, propagating vices and by indulging in widespread corruption. In the widest sense this aimed at subverting the „British constitution, which for ages has stood the guardian of the means of her subject’s happiness, the envy of foreign nations, and the administration of the whole world,“ as the Rev. Joseph Perry informed his listeners.⁶⁴ The object of that perversion was Parliament: The Rev. Enoch Huntington put it into the following query: „Is it not acknowledged that a venal corrupt majority in the British Parliament, voting altogether at the nod of the minister, govern all the public acts and conduct of that body ... And is not this corrupt and venal body, sometimes with equal pomp and impiety held up to our view by themselves and others, as *omnipotent*.“⁶⁵ In their sermons the preachers did not focus on the individual parliamentary acts the colonies objected to, but instead concentrated on the Declaratory Act’s claim „that the parliament has a right to make laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever.“⁶⁶ This claim was heinous, in particular because first, no one knew what the Parliament’s claim would cover next⁶⁷ and second, because the colonists had „never swore allegiance to the Parliament of Great Britain,“ as the Rev. Carmichael pointed out.⁶⁸ Why should they then “lye prostrate at the feet of any British minister or British parliament”, the Rev. Huntington asked?⁶⁹

The sermons did not bother with the details of British measures or the fine points of colonial reasoning; they focused on the key issues and these were so hermetically and coherently joined together that the colonial listener got the impression that he was

⁶⁴ PERRY, A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the Day of their Anniversary Election, May 11, 1775, p. 7, Evans 14383. Similar LANGDON, Government Corrupted by Vice and recovered by Righteousness. A Sermon preached before the Honorable Congress of the Colony of the Massachusets-Bay, in New England, Assembled in Watertown, on Wednesday, the 31st Day of May, 1775, p. 6, Evans 14145.

⁶⁵ HUNTINGTON, A Sermon Delivered at Middletown, July 20th, A. D. 1775, p. 18-19, Evans 14124.

⁶⁶ JONES, M.-A., Defensive War in a just Cause sinless. A Sermon Preached on the Day of the Continental Fast at Tredyffryn in Chester County, p. 19, Evans 14133. Indeed, the little word “*whatsoever*” acquired an ominous prominence in these sermons: “invaluable inheritance ... too dearly bought to be given up on any terms whatsoever”, (PERRY, A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the Day of their Anniversary Election, May 11, 1775, p. 17, Evans 14383), “laws are not good, except they ... defend the subject against ... arbitrary power ... or any body of men whatsoever” (JONES, M.-A., Defensive War in a just Cause sinless. A Sermon Preached on the Day of the Continental Fast at Tredyffryn in Chester County, p. 13-14, Evans 14133).

⁶⁷ “I am clearly convinced, that if we submit in the present dispute, liberty of conscience will be next invaded by that lordly Court and corrupt Parliament This renders our dispute with Great Britain of the utmost importance to all of every denomination”, FOSTER, A Sermon Preached at Fag’s Manor, To Captain Taylor’s Company of Recruits on the Lord’s Day, February 18, 1776, p. 12, Evans 14758.

⁶⁸ CARMICHAEL, A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross’s Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, p. 31, Evans 13862.

⁶⁹ HUNTINGTON, A Sermon Delivered at Middletown, July 20th, A. D. 1775, p. 25, Evans 14124.

caught in a trap. All hope seemed in vain; those who had, like the Delegates to the Continental Congress in their “Address to the People of England” of July 1775 hoped, that the people of England would stand up for the rights of their American Brethren, admitted by early 1776, that this was an illusion.⁷⁰ The way ministers described the English position demonstrated the evil logic of people bent on destroying the good. Gradually England, her king, and her people lost all positive qualities: In his sermon on March 24, 1776, the Rev. Elijah Fitch described England as the “kingdom of darkness”⁷¹. By the end of May 1776 England became identified with evil itself; it was the whore of Babylon, the apocalyptic “tyrannical monster” itself: “can words more strongly point out”, so the Rev. Samuel West on May 29, 1776 queried his listeners in his election sermon, “or exhibit in more lively colours, the exceeding rage, fury and impetuosity of tyrants in their destroying and making havock of mankind. To this beast we find the dragon gave his power, seat and great authority, i. e. the devil constituted him to be his viceregent on earth; this is to denote that tyrants are the ministers of satan, ordained by him for the destruction of mankind.”⁷² Five weeks later independence was declared.

3. *“The Cause of AMERICA ... is the cause of GOD”*

America was, and the preachers left their parishioners in no doubt about it, engaged in a desperate struggle against what in 1775 could still be called with some affection

⁷⁰ NOBLE, *Some Strictures upon the Sacred Story Recorded in the Book of Esther, shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God’s People: -- And the remarkable Interpositions of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed, in a Discourse Delivered at Newbury-Port, North Meeting House, March 8, 1775*, p. 23, Evans 14352.

⁷¹ FITCH, *A Discourse, the Substance of which was delivered at Hopkington, on the Lord’s Day, March, 24, 1776*, p. 7, Evans 14755; on April 9, 1776, the Rev. CLARKE was sure, that Egypt’s fate as oppressor of Israel would be England’s fate, too, CLARKE, *The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors, and God’s tender Care of his distressed People. A Sermon, Preached at Lexington, April 19, 1776*, p. 7, p. 29-30, Evans 14679. Exactly one month later the Rev. Judah CHAMPION decried that Massachusetts was defiled „by worse than savage hands,“ CHAMPION, *Christian and Civil Liberty and Freedom considered and Recommended: A Sermon, Delivered Before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the day of their Anniversary Election, May 9th, 1776*, p. 31, Evans 14675.

⁷² WEST, *A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Council, and the Honorable House of Representatives, of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, May 29th, 1776*, p. 54, p. 65, Evans 15217; ZUBLY, *A Sermon on American Affairs, Preached At the Opening of the Provincial Congress of Georgia, p. 24*, Evans 14635; FOSTER, *A Sermon Preached at Fag’s Manor, To Captain Taylor’s Company of Recruits on the Lord’s Day, February 18, 1776*, p. 14, Evans 14758, all thought that the colonial position was supported by significant parts of the English population. John WITHERSPOON was, as far as I can see, the first preacher, who declared this belief erroneous. In his address to the Scottish settlers in North America, that was annexed to his sermon of May 29, 1776, he pointed out: „As to Great-Britain itself, time has now fully discovered that the real friends of America in any part of that kingdom were very few, and those whose friendship was disinterested, and in no degree owing to their own political factions, still fewer. The wise and valuable part of the nation were, and as yet are, in a great measure ignorant of the state of things in this country,“ WITHERSPOON, *The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men. A Sermon Preached at Princeton, On the 17th of May, 1776*, p. 62, Evans 15224.

“parent”⁷³, but which by May 1776 at least in the eyes of the New England clergy had lost all traces of humanity: “If”, so the Rev. Jonas Clarke cried in mid-April 1776, “she [i. e. England] be a mother, she is an unnatural, monstrous one, who if she does not forget, yet shews she hath no compassion upon her children, but rather delights in their blood.”⁷⁴ Confronted and threatened by such a merciless, brutal, and tyrannical devilish monster, the colonists needed all the help they could get – above all that of God. Without God they would be lost. Yet the God of Congregationalists and Presbyterians was all-knowing but unscrutinable. Everything was predetermined; but what was determined was only known to God.⁷⁵ Only God knew the “great and infinitely wise Plan” and no American had knowledge of his “over-ruling Providence”. Yet there were indications and preconditions that might reveal a bit of both and tilt the scale in the Americans’ favor. One such indication was to be found in the relationship between God and his people, and that again was predicated on whether the people lived according to God’s commandments.

There was hope. The Rev. Zabdiel Adams assured his listeners, that God “loveth righteousness, and is particularly concerned for the happiness of his great family of mankind.”⁷⁶ But that offered little assurance, as the Rev. Nathan Perkins reminded his parishioners: “Whether we realize it or not, it is true, God could with infinite ease cut us down and send us to endless misery.” Reassurance was not even attainable by acknowledging “our constant dependance on God the great creator and moral governor and supreme lawgiver of the universe.”⁷⁷ Sure, God was generally inclined to help those who turned to him, but he made his help contingent on the goodness of his people; the problem really was whether in God’s eyes the Americans were good

⁷³ SMITH, A Sermon on the Present Situation of American Affairs. Preached in Christ-Church, June 23, 1775, p.12, Evans 14459. DUCHÉ, The Duty of standing fast in our spiritual and temporal liberties, A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church, July 7th, 1775, p. 15, Evans 14013; BATWELL, A Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan’s and Captain Price’s Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1775, p. 17, Evans 13828; MONTGOMERY, A Sermon Preached at Christiana Bridge and Newcastle, The 20th of July, 1775, p. 9, Evans 14261. Already in 1775 the term “parent” seems to disappear from sermons. On the importance of kinship-terminology in Revolutionary discourse cf. Melvin YAZAWA, *From Colonies to Commonwealth. Familial Ideology and the Beginnings of the American Republic*. Baltimore, MD 1985, chap. 3.

⁷⁴ CLARKE, The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors, and Gode’s tender Care of his distressed People. A Sermon, Preached at Lexington, April 19, 1776, p. 20, Evans 14679.

⁷⁵ The congregational minister of Danbury on November 16, 1775, offered the following formula: „All Calamities and Afflictions brought upon Individuals or Communities are calculated to subserve the Purposes of divine Wisdom, are necessary Parts of God’s great and infinitely wise Plan. God governs the World: Nothing takes Place but according to his over-ruling Providence,“ Ebenezer BALDWIN, The Duty of Rejoicing under Calamities and Afflictions, Considered and Improved, in a Sermon Preached at Danbury, November 16, 1775, p. 11, Evans 14656.

⁷⁶ ADAMS, The Grounds of Confidence and Success in War, represented. A Sermon Preached at a Lecture in Lunenburg, New England, on Monday, January 2d, 1775, p. 8, Evans 13789.

⁷⁷ PERKINS, Sermon Preached to the Soldiers who went from West Hartford, in Defence of their Country. Delivered the 2d of June, 1775, p. 10, Evans 14382.

enough for him to side with them. A few preachers were sceptical. The Rev. Samuel Andrews of Wallingford in Connecticut fumed on July 20, 1775: “To make public, solemn professions of repentance, while we go on still, and persist obstinately in our wickedness, is the greatest prevarication with God, and a most solemn and public way of affronting him, and cannot fail of exciting his indignation and heavy displeasure.”⁷⁸ Andrews’ God was unrelenting, hard, demanding, a God that expected without mercy that both sides fulfill their contract obligations: Help was to be had but only for the really true sinner.

Most other preachers were more responsive to the need of their parishioners for reassurance. For clearly, people did not come into the church or get ready to march to war and be told that there was no chance for God to help them; these expectations exerted pressures and these pressures shaped the clergy’s theology. But they did not offer God’s help for nothing. Two conditions had to be fulfilled: The Americans’ cause had to be just – and this is the reason, why in 1775 all preachers discuss the political conflict in such detail –, and Americans had to turn to God. Repenting their sins, would help, but most preachers did not overly stress this aspect.⁷⁹ If these conditions were met, then, so Zabdiel Adams in January 1775, “God will favor and succeed them in it; *that the Captain of the Lord’s host will be for them, and fight their battles.*”⁸⁰ Oliver Noble admonished his listeners “not to dispond or despair, but commit our cause to God, and stand FAST ... The Cause of AMERICA (now in controversy) is the cause of GOD, never did Man struggle in a greater, or more righteous CAUSE.”⁸¹ The

⁷⁸ ANDREWS added for good measure: “We have already fasted and cryed repeatedly unto God for deliverance since the commencement of our troubles; but as yet, God does not appear to regard our cries; -- the cloude grows still blacker and heavier, and now seems to be just ready to burst with irresistible fury upon our heads.” The only hope ANDREWS held out for his parishioners in these desparate times was true and sincere repentance. Then “he [God] will *probably*, save our land from ruin .. but certainly our souls from perdition”, ANDREWS, A. M., A Discourse, Shewing the Necessity of Joining Internal Repentance, With the External Profession of it. Delivered upon the General Fast, July 20, 1775, p. 10-11, Evans 13812 (italics mine).

⁷⁹ Typical was the following statement: “My Brethren let us repent and implore the divine mercy. Let us amend our ways, and our doings; reform every thing which has been provoking to the most high, and thus endeavor to obtain the gracious interpositions of providence for our deliverance”, LANGDON, Government Corrupted by Vice and recovered by Righteousness. A Sermon preached before the Honorable Congress of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, Assembled in Watertown, on Wednesday, the 31st Day of May, 1775, p. 22, Evans 14145. The Rev. William GORDON in his election sermon thought that after the conflict with England had been resolved it was time, that „we should certainly repent and reform”, William GORDON, M. A., A Sermon preached before the Honourable House of Representatives, On the Day intended for the Choice of Counsellors, Agreeable to the Advice of the Continental Congress. Watertown, Printed and Sold by Benjamin Edes, 1775, p. 21, Evans 14073.

⁸⁰ ADAMS, The Grounds of Confidence and Success in War, represented. A Sermon Preached at a Lecture in Lunenburg, New England, on Monday, January 2d, 1775, p. 9, Evans 13789.

⁸¹ NOBLE, Some Strictures upon the Sacred Story Recorded in the Book of Esther, shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God’s People: -- And the remarkable Interpositions of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed, in a Discourse Delivered at Newbury-Port, North Meeting House, March 8, 1775, p. 20, Evans 14352. On May 11, 1775, the Rev. Joseph PERRY came to the same conclusion: „Our cause is a good one, it is the cause of religion, of lib-

Presbyterian minister John Carmichael on June 4, 1775 was even more direct: After proving that England was in the wrong and America right, he cheerfully told Captain Ross's Company of Militia in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, "I am happy, that I can with a good conscience, congratulate you and myself this day, on the certainty we have, for the justice and goodness of our cause ... he [God] is on our side, we hope, and if God is on our side, we need not fear what man can do unto us."⁸² By the end of the year the problem was settled: God is with his "American Israel". On December 22, 1775, Samuel Baldwin cried: "Then America and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and

erty, of our country, and consequently the cause of God! If we place a humble and a penitent trust in the Almighty, we need not fear, *though the seas roar and the waves toss themselves*, for with Him are infinite power, wisdom, goodness, justice, and faithfulness. He hath said, and he will make it good, *If ye be with me I will be with you, and If God be for us who can be against us*," PERRY, A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the Day of their Anniversary Election, May 11, 1775, p. 16, Evans 14383.

⁸² CARMICHAEL, A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross's Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, p. 31-32, Evans 13862. Similarly GORDON, A Sermon preached before the Honourable House of Representatives, On the Day intended for the Choice of Counsellors, p. 20-21, Evans 14073. Six weeks later the Rev. Daniel BATWELL's message to York Town's rifle men was "That good time will come; let us not doubt it for we have a gracious master in heaven." For "there is no reason to think that any state legitimately constituted, will be destroyed by his supreme fiat." BATWELL, A Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan's and Captain Price's Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1775, p. 13, p. 14, Evans 13828. For the Baptist Minister David JONES the problem was even simpler: Since God had ordered, so he declared on the same day, the "higher powers" to "secure the property and promote the happiness of the whole community", doing the opposite meant that such a government "resisteth the ordinance of God, and receiveth finally condemnation, and that justly." God was bound to be on America's side, although JONES was not that blunt; nevertheless he asserted that "when our dependance is on the almighty God, we may hope for success." That hope was already well founded, "for a martial spirit from God has spread throughout the land," JONES, Defensive War in a just Cause sinless. A Sermon Preached on the Day of the Continental Fast at Tredyffryn in Chester County, by ..., p. 12, p. 22, p. 24, Evans 14133. The Rev. Ezra SAMSON on July 20, 1775 prayed for God's assistance and concluded his sermon with the assurance: "Kind Heaven hath heard our cries, owned the JUSTICE OF OUR CAUSE, and appeared for us in numerous ways almost miraculous. The holy and mighty arm of God hath lately gotten us repeated and most surprising victories", SAMSON, A Sermon Preached at Roxbury-Camp, before Col. Cotton's Regiment; on the 20th of July P.M. 1775, p. 20, Evans 14450. Toward the end of the year preachers more and more simply affirmed, that God had made America's plight his cause. Thus in mid-November the Rev. Ebenezer BALDWIN proclaimed, "that we can with Confidence commit our Cause to him who judgeth righteously", Ebenezer BALDWIN, The Duty of Rejoicing under Calamities and Afflictions, Considered and Improved, in a Sermon Preached at Danbury, November 16, 1775, p. 30, Evans 14656; With somewhat less assurance the Rev. Henry CUMINGS a week later reminded his listeners of "the wonders, which God hath wrought for this *American Israel* in times past", CUMINGS, A Sermon Preached in Billerica, On the 23d of November, 1775, p.18, Evans 14723; equally reluctant is Thaddeus MACCARTY, Praise to God, a Duty of continual Obligation. A Sermon, Preached at Worcester, Thursday, November 23d, 1775. Being a Day of Public Thanksgiving, by the Appointment of the General Assembly, by T. M. A. M., Pastor of the church in Worcester. Published by Desire of many of the Hearers. Massachusetts-Bay: Worcester, Printed and sold by I. Thomas at the Printing Office near the Court House, p. 27-28, Evans 14830. On the other hand, the Rev. Isaac MANSFIELD, Jr. simply stated on the same day, that "God's providence" had lately been visible everywhere, Isaac MANSFIELD, Jr., A Sermon Preached in the Camp at Roxbury, November 23, 1775; Being the Day appointed by Authority for Thanksgiving Through the Province, By I. M., jun., A. M. Chaplin to General Thomas' s Regiment, in the Continental Army. Published at the Request of the Officers in the said Regiment. Boston: Printed by S. Hall, at his Office in School-Street, 1776, p. 23, Evans 14831.

everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”⁸³ And the Rev. William Foster in mid-February 1776 remarked: “...nothing can afford such ... comfort ... as a firm and unshaken confidence that the Lord Jehovah is on our side, and the cause we engage in, is the cause of God.” In his conclusion he summarized the case under the heading “Things proposed, namely to offer some grounds of security arising from God’s being on our side. ... 1st His most perfect knowledge of all possible events, lays a foundation of encouragement ... 2d God has not only the most perfect knowledge of all persons and things, but has the secret management of all in his own hand. ... 3rd. He is bound by his faithfulness to stand by and support a righteous cause ... Lastly, Omnipotence is engaged on our Side.”⁸⁴

The question on which side God would stand, that so much occupied preachers in 1775, is after February 1776 for two reasons a non-issue: First, everyone was convinced that England was in the wrong and America’s cause just and therefore right in the eyes of God; secondly and more importantly, preachers declared the constitutional order of the colonies sanctioned by God. This argument is based on two premises: First, “The law of nature gives men no right to do any thing that is immoral, or contrary to the will of God, and injurious to their fellow creatures; for a state of nature is properly a state of law and government, even a government founded upon the unchangeable nature of the Deity”, so the Rev. Samuel West suggested; “secondly, Though magistrates are to consider themselves as the servants of the people, seeing from them it is, that they derive their power and authority; yet they may also be considered as the ministers of God ordain’d by him for the good of mankind ... whatever right reason requires as necessary to be done, is as much the will and law of God, as tho’ it were enjoined us by an immediate revelation from heaven, or commanded in the sacred scriptures.” Violating a constitution sanctioned by God of course invites God’s wrath on the violator. The consequence was obvious: For West the English king was a tyrant and “tyrants are the ministers of satan.”⁸⁵

4. The Future before May 1776: Independence

With God on America’s side and indeed not only responsible for the success of the war but also for decent constitutional arrangements and orderly government, accom-

⁸³ Samuel BALDWIN, A Sermon Preached at Plymouth, December 22, 1775, p. 39, Evans 14657.

⁸⁴ FOSTER, A Sermon Preached at Fag’s Manor, To Captain Taylor’s Company of Recruits on the Lord’s Day, February 18, 1776, p. 3, p. 18-19, Evans 14758; similarly FITCH, A Discourse, the Substance of which was delivered at Hopkington, on the Lord’s Day, March, 24, 1776, p. 28, Evans 14755.

⁸⁵ WEST, A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Council, and the Honorable House of Representatives, of the Colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, May 29th, 1776, p. 11, p. 16, p. 65, Evans 15217.

plishments, that were completed just as the Delegates to the Continental Congress got ready to sign the Declaration of Independence, the road was clear for turning from the past to the future. Yet surprisingly, this only partially reflects the sequence of arguments in the sermons. Before April 1776, sermons mentioned “independence” as the most radical version of “future” only negatively. The Rev. John Carmichael said first, what others that year stressed too: the accusation that they were “‘rebels’, who would throw off all government, – would be ‘independent and what not’”, was false. “We desire no such things – we desire to be as we were in the beginning of the present unhappy reign ... we declare ourselves the subjects of King George the third.”⁸⁶ Only in April 1776 did the tone change: The Rev. Jonas Clarke confessed in his sermon commemorating the Battle at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1776, that none had ever dreamt of independence “had they not been urged, and even forced upon such an expedient, by measures of oppression and violence, and the *shedding of innocent blood*.”⁸⁷ Four weeks later, the learned president of the college of Princeton John Witherspoon offered the first well reasoned argument for independence. Pointing out that the distance between England and America made communication difficult and knowledge of the other tenuous he concluded, when “there is a certain distance from the seat of government, there an attempt to rule will either produce tyranny and helpless subjection, or provoke resistance and effect a separation.”⁸⁸

In contrast to this rather reluctant talk about the *immediate* future, preachers more enthusiastically enlarged on the future “American Empire”: On June 23, 1775, the Anglican Rev. William Smith recalled his thoughts on America’s future that he had published in the 1750s;⁸⁹ yet in his sermon he changed the perspective: Now not the colonies as such had their future praise sung but he now rejoiced in devising “such a plan, and to behold British Colonies spreading over this immense Continent, rejoicing in the common rights of Freemen, and imitating the Parent State in every excellence – is more glory [for the mother country] than to hold lawless dominion over all the na-

⁸⁶ CARMICHAEL, A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross’s Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, p. 31, Evans 13862; similarly ROSS, A Sermon in which the Union of the Colonies is considered and recommended; and the Bad Consequences of Divisions are Represented; Delivered on the Public Thanksgiving, November Sixteenth 1775, p. 10, Evans 15070; CUMINGS, A Sermon Preached in Billerica, On the 23d of November, 1775, p. 17, Evans 14723.

⁸⁷ CLARKE, The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors, and Gode’s tender Care of his distressed People. A Sermon, Preached at Lexington, April 19, 1776, p. 22, Evans 14679.

⁸⁸ WITHERSPOON, The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men. A Sermon Preached at Princeton, On the 17th of May, 1776, p. 44, Evans 15224.

⁸⁹ William SMITH’S poem on America’s rising glory is part of his pamphlet: Some Thoughts on Education. New York 1752, p. 19-36, re-printed in Kenneth SILVERMAN (ed.), Colonial American Poetry. New York 1968, p. 380-386; cf. William D. ANDREWS, William Smith and the Rising Glory of America. In: Early American Literature 8, 1973, p. 33-43.

tions on the face of the earth!”⁹⁰ Smith carefully tied future greatness to the status of the colonies; he saw the “British Colonies spreading”, not “states”. This precisely marks the difference to the vision of America’s future outlined by the pastor of Danbury in New York. In his sermon on November 6, 1775, Ebenezer Baldwin “hazard[s] ... a Conjecture ..., I would suppose these Colonies to be the Foundation of a great and mighty Empire; the largest the World ever saw, to be founded on such Principles of Liberty and Freedom, both civil and religious, as never before took place in the World; which shall be the principal Seat of that glorious Kingdom, which Christ shall erect upon Earth in the latter Days.”⁹¹ The difference is obvious: Where William Smith saw the colonies “imitating the Parent State”, Baldwin envisaged “these Colonies to be the Foundation of a great and mighty Empire”. In a long annotation he fleshed out these general and millennial thoughts: He conjectured that a century later America’s population would have increased to 48 Million people, and around the year 2000 it could have reached 192 Million inhabitants:

*“About this time the American Empire will probably be in its Glory. This Empire will differ in its Origin from any that have ever been in the World. All other great Empires have been formed by uniting different Nations under one Government by Conquest: This, by the natural Growth of one People. Conquest is ever followed by arbitrary and despotic Government ... The Empire forming in British America, having a different Origin, rising from the Growth of a single People used to the Enjoyment of both Civil and religious Liberty from its infant State, it is highly probable, may grow up to its Heights under the friendly Auspices of Liberty.”*⁹²

Not all preachers were as concise in their description of future greatness; but some shared Ebenezer Baldwin’s excited expectations.⁹³ The Rev. William Forster in February 1776 marvelled “to what prodigious pitch of wealth and greatness ... the Conti-

⁹⁰ SMITH, A Sermon on the Present Situation of American Affairs. Preached in Christ-Church, June 23, 1775, p. 19, Evans 14459.

⁹¹ Ebenezer BALDWIN, The Duty of Rejoicing under Calamities and Afflictions, Considered and Improved, in a Sermon Preached at Danbury, November 16, 1775, p. 38, Evans 14656.

⁹² It could be argued that the formula “empire forming in British America” tied America’s greatness to its remaining within the British Empire. Yet that was not what BALDWIN had in mind. For his argument is clearly based on the theory of “empires moving west” (*translatio imperii*). While America experienced greatness, empires in Europe were declining, then rotting: “The European Kingdoms are already groaning under the Weight of Tyranny, Corruption and Luxury: They will doubtless e’er that Time be much in the State of the present Eastern Empires.” Then he went a step further. He linked this concept to the coming of Christ’s kingdom: “Since it is in the last Ages of the World that America is to enjoy this prosperous State, and as this is the time, in which Christ’s Kingdom is to be thus gloriously set up in the World, I cannot think it chimerical to suppose, America will largely share in the Happiness of this glorious Day, and that the present Scenes are remotely preparing the Way for it”, Ebenezer BALDWIN, The Duty of Rejoicing under Calamities and Afflictions, Considered and Improved, in a Sermon Preached at Danbury, November 16, 1775, p. 38-40, Evans 14656.

⁹³ E. g. Samuel BALDWIN, A Sermon Preached at Plymouth, December 22, 1775, p. 39, Evans 14657.

ment of North-America [will] have arrived! I am firmly of the sentiment that its future growth will be much more rapid than the past What countless millions of land yet uncultivated! What a bondless extent of country traversed only by savages and wild beasts ... we may believe that God designs the settlement of its remotest boundaries for the enlargement of his son’s kingdom.”⁹⁴ In early April 1776 Enoch Huntington offered yet another proof that talking about the future implied talking about independence:

*“Providence hath blessed us on this continent with all the resources which we could ever desire, in a united, virtuous improvement of which, to be a free and happy people. Not exposed to the disadvantages of a little island, surrounded on all sides with ocean, and under the immediate eye of jealous arbitrary power, we inhabit a vast continent, which, in itself, yields to the diligent and virtuous industry and invention of the inhabitants, all things necessary for their subsistence, comfort, protection and defence.”*⁹⁵

It is one thing to ponder the potential of the near future; it is another, to sketch out visions of greatness at a time when independence was not yet gained, the war more likely lost than won and people torn between two radically different alternatives: Slavery or liberty. Historians are used to metaphors about America’s greatness and the bookshelves are filled with tracts discussing the many who belaboured America’s “Manifest Destiny”. But these visions were developed at times, when things looked less desperate, when territorial expansion was not a distant possibility but in full swing, and millions from Europe landed on America’s shores. Why then did ministers sketch such visions of greatness in 1775 and early 1776, visions, that were obviously not principally advanced as a means to sketch millennial expectations? The answer, I think, is to be sought in the key elements of these visions: These are first the *translatio-imperii*-concept that implied the decay of eastern empires, second the fascination with the growth of populations as a sign that the new world offered radically different living conditions from the old, a fascination that can be traced back to at least Benjamin Franklin’s essay *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.* (1751)⁹⁶, and third, the American infatuation with the vast territory of the continent as space to be cultivated. I know of no missionary – except the Moravian ones – who travelled west after 1763 who did not repeatedly comment on the fertility of the soil,

⁹⁴ FOSTER, A Sermon Preached at Fag’s Manor, To Captain Taylor’s Company of Recruits on the Lord’s Day, February 18, 1776, p. 16, Evans 14758.

⁹⁵ Enoch HUNTINGTON, The Happy Effects of Union, and the Fatal Tendency of Divisions. Shewn in a Sermon, Preached before the Freemen of the Town of Middletown, At their Annual Meeting, April 8, 1776, By E. H. A., M., Pastor of the first Church of Christ in Middletown. Hartford, Printed by Eben Watson, at the Sign of the Connecticut Arms, Near the Great Bridge, 1776, p. 24, Evans 14805.

⁹⁶ Benjamin FRANKLIN, Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc. (1751), in: Benjamin FRANKLIN, Benjamin, Papers, ed. LABAREE et al., vol. 4, p. 227-234; for a discussion of the demographics of Franklin cf. WELLENREUTHER, Ausbildung und Neubildung, p. 389-391.

the exciting prospects of settling this beautiful land, and the wasteful use Indians made of this wonderful gift of God.⁹⁷

5. *The Future as a Vision of the American Israel*

These elements characterize the sermons that in the early 1780s enlarge once more on the future greatness of America. By now it is a commonplace that America can but be great: In September 1781 the anonymous Black Whig exclaimed “America! A name which I hope will be remembered while sun and moon endured: An Empire which, in my opinion, in spite of all opposition, will be one of the greatest in the world!”⁹⁸ In April 1782 the Rev. Philip Payson devoted the major part of his anniversary sermon on the Battle of Lexington and Concord not to the justice of the American Cause and the cruelty of the British soldiers but explicitly to the future of America:

“The time ... was come, when a new Empire should arise in the world, and a nation be born in a day; that wisdom which governs the world ... prepared the causes in the natural, the moral, and political world.... Hence a spirit of liberty must stimulate this large people, and like a spreading torrent flow over the land: the passions of men must be aroused: the sword ... must be drawn; and ... scenes of blood and carnage must ensue ... that the foundation of the new Empire ... might be laid in blood; -- a foundation sadly ominous of its future overthrow and ruin, which, in their turn and order, will be the fate of all the kingdoms and empires of the world.”⁹⁹ Love of liberty, so Payson, had “conspired, under Providence, to cement this people in a band of union ... Thus united and bound, these American States ... form a large empire, which ... in the course of nature, to exceed all the empires of the world; they spread over an amazing extent of country, that by rapid population is daily filling with inhabitants. It is not improbable but the extensive countries of Canada and Nova Scotia will ere long be joined in the union: nor is it impossible but the West-India islands, from their local situation, may, in some future period, become the property of these American States. Alas! What surprising productions, what extensive prospects, has this great spirit of liberty, under Providence produced?”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ David JONES, A Journal of two visits made to some nations of the Indians on the west side of the river Ohio, in the years 1772 and 1773, Philadelphia 1774, reprinted for Joseph Sabin with a Biographical Notice of the Author, by Horatio Gates JONES. [New York 1865], passim; Franklin B. DEXTER (ed.), Diary of David McClure, Doctor of Divinity, 1748-1820. New York 1899, passim.

⁹⁸ BLACK WHIG, Sermon, On the Present Situation of the Affairs of America and Great-Britain, p. 8, Evans 17717.

⁹⁹ Philipp PAYSON, A Memorial of Lexington Battle, and of some signal Interpositions of Providence in the American Revolution. A Sermon preached at Lexington, On the Nineteenth of April 1782. The Anniversary of the Commencement of the War Between Great-Britain and America, which Opened in a most Tragical Scene, in that Town on the Nineteenth of April, 1775, By P. P., A. M., Pastor of the Church in Chelsea. Boston. Printed by Benjamin Edes & Sons, in Cornhill, 1782, p. 10, Evans 17655.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

Payson’s future empire contained all the classical visions, yet at the same time encompassed more than the North American continent. I refer, of course, to Payson’s remarks about the “West-India islands”, but equally to the increasing tendency of preachers, to contrast America’s positive values with those of degenerate Europe. Thus the second anonymous black preacher bemoaned the decline of England, then added: “North America, this new world, far excels you in humanity, generosity, and valour; they have caught the genial flame from your ancient fires, and it is cheerfully distended through these magnificent United States.”¹⁰¹ Not only did America “excel ... in humanity”, its Revolution was already having wonderful effects on the miserable conditions in the old world, as the Rev. Zabdiel Adams in April 1783 carefully pointed out. Fired by the wonderful example of America, the spirit of liberty was “aroused ... in Ireland”, gave “free toleration” to French Protestants, and induced the king of Spain “to put an end to the *Inquisition*.”¹⁰² The Rev. David Tappan on May 1, 1783, in his lecture that marked the ratification of the Peace of Paris, agreed: America’s success has kindled the desire for liberty throughout the world. Then he firmly set this development into the context of the christian history of salvation: „these and other similar events form a grand chain of Providence, in which the American Revolution is a principal link – a chain, which is gradually drawing after it the most glorious consequence to mankind; which is hastening on the accomplishment of the scripture-prophecies relative to the *Millennial State*, the golden age of the church and world in the latter days. – How magnificently great do the works of Jehovah towards America appear, when viewed in this light!”¹⁰³ All these elements were united in the election sermon of Ezra Stiles of May 8, 1783, a sermon that sketched the future of America in grandiose detail into the history of humanity.

Stiles’s teleological utopia rested on three biblical pillars: On the biblical concept of land, on Japhet, son of Moses and brother of Sem and Ham, whose offspring settled Europe and from Europe America, and on Josua, whose descendants (Canaaites) reached either with Phoenician ships or more likely as the lost tribes of Israel via Asia and the Bering Street North America; the first represented God’s chosen people in

¹⁰¹ AETHIOPIAN, A Sermon on the Evacuation of Charlestown, Philadelphia: Printed for the Author, and Sold by William Woodhouse, in Front-Street, next Door to the Old Coffee-House, 1783, p. 8, Evans 18182.

¹⁰² Zabdiel ADAMS, The evil designs of men made subservient by God to the public good; particularly illustrated in the *rise, progress* and *conclusion* of the American war. A Sermon preached at Lexington, on the Nineteenth of April, 1783; Being the Anniversary of the Commencement of the War between Britain and America, which broke out in that Town on the 19th of April, 1775. By Z. A., A. M., Pastor of the Church in Lunenburg. Boston, Printed by Benjamin Edes and Sons, in Cornhill, 1783, p. 24-25, Evans 17807.

¹⁰³ David TAPPAN, A Discourse Delivered at the Third Parish in Newbury, on the First of May, 1783, Occasioned by the Ratification of a Treaty of Peace between Great-Britain, and the United States of America, by D. T., A. M., Pastor of the Church in said Parish, Salem: Printed by Samuel Hall, near the Court-House, 1783, p. 12, Evans 18203.

America, the latter, Stiles meant native Americans, those who had forsaken God. This configuration prompted Stiles’ first four predictions: first, the descendants of Japhet “are increasing with great rapidity; and the *Indians* as well as the million *Africans* in America, are decreasing *as rapidly*”, and second, “thus an unrighteous Slavery may at length, in God’s good providence, be abolished and cease in this land of LIBERTY.” The fast increase of the European population in North America thirdly suggested to Stiles that they will soon surpass Europe’s population and equal that of the “oriental empires”; fourth, people of English stock “will ultimately produce the general population of America.”¹⁰⁴ This adoption of theories on the origins of humankind, widely discussed in Europe since the sixteenth century,¹⁰⁵ served three purposes: It established a hierarchy between populations that were chosen (Japhet) or rejected (Canaanites) by God and projected the decline of those who had adored Baal and the dominance of God’s chosen people. The latter would, Stiles predicted, finally surpass Europe’s population – a prediction that implied a general decline of Europe as well as the inevitable rise of America to “high and distinguished honor among the nations of the earth.”¹⁰⁶

Stiles’ second section focused on the “grand question”: “What is the happiest form of government?”¹⁰⁷ His discussion drew on the thoughts of two authorities: the “capital ideas of Harrington’s *Oceana*”, which, so he explained, have “been singularly verified in new England”, and by “the celebrated historian Mrs. Catharine Macaulay, that ornament of the republic of letters, and the female Livy of the age”, whose discussion of ancient constitutional models he extensively quoted.¹⁰⁸ Taking New England as his Harringtonian model – a free people “amply charged with property”¹⁰⁹ – he characterized the American constitution as “democratical Aristocracy, standing upon the annual elections of the people, and revocable at pleasure.” This “is the polity which combines the United States; and from the nature of man, and the comparison of ages, I believe it will approve itself the most equitable, liberal, and perfect.”¹¹⁰ Stiles’s constitutional thoughts reflected John Adams’ scepticism of “pure democracy”, integrated

¹⁰⁴ STILES, *The United States elevated to Glory and Honor. A Sermon, Preached before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. L.L.D., Governor and Commander in Chief, and the Honorable The General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783*, p. 7-14, quotation p. 14, Evans 18198.

¹⁰⁵ For a summary of these theories and their importance for defining Europe’s greatness in the eighteenth century cf. WELLENREUTHER, *Ausbildung und Neubildung*, p. 632-635.

¹⁰⁶ STILES, *The United States elevated to Glory and Honor. A Sermon, Preached before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. L.L.D., Governor and Commander in Chief, and the Honorable The General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783*, p. 7, Evans 18198.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.

the American constitutional model into the concept of Polybios “mixed constitution”, and associated America with the “progressive” discourse of contemporary England.¹¹¹ After extolling the growth of population, the extension of the settlements over the continent, the proliferation of trade with all European nations, and the emergence of manufactures in North America as well as the rise of science and education, Stiles summarized his vision: “before the millenium, the English settlements in America, may become more numerous millions, than that greatest dominion on earth the chinese empire.” And he continued: “Posterity ... will ... acknowledge, that this american Joshua was raised up by God, and *divinely formed* by a peculiar influence of the Sovereign of the Universe, for the great work of leading the armies of this american Joseph (now separated from his brethren), and conducting his people through the severe, the arduous conflict, to liberty and independence.”¹¹² America would become the haven for Europe’s craftsmen – who, becoming Americans, would “doubtless produce something very new, singular, and glorious.”¹¹³ Arts would, he believed, “be transplanted from Europe and Asia, and flourish in America with an augmented lustre”.¹¹⁴ Not even the English language would remain untouched by America’s graces: “The rough sonorous diction of the english language may here take its athenian polish and receive its attic urbanity; as it will probably become the vernacular tongue of more numerous millions, than ever yet spoke one language on earth”, he assured his listeners. And he added for good measure that this “athenian polish” would never be defiled by “provincial dialects” or “foreign dialects of foreign conquests.”¹¹⁵ Above all Stiles proclaimed America the present and future example for Europe and the World; even in his own time the beneficent effects of America as the land of liberty were showing in Europe.¹¹⁶ Indeed, Stiles was sure that America was predestined to be the land of liberty and the refuge for all of Europe’s persecuted: For, so he concluded, it is

¹¹¹ John ADAMS, *Thoughts on Government: Applicable to the Present State of the American Colonies*. In a Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend. Philadelphia 1776, reprinted with the earlier versions in Robert J. TAYLOR (ed.), *Papers of John Adams*, vol.1 – [8], Cambridge, MA 1977 – [1989], vol. 4, p. 65-93, and generally Peter SHAW, *The Character of John Adams*, Chapel Hill, NC 1976, p. 94-97; on the reception of Harrington’s thought cf. J. G. A. POCOCK, *Machiavelli, Harrington, and English political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century*. In: *WMQ* 3rd Ser. 22, 1965, p. 547-583; on Macaulay cf. NÜNNING, “A Revolution in Sentiments, Manners, and Moral Opinions.”

¹¹² STILES, *The United States elevated to Glory and Honor. A Sermon, Preached before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. L.L.D., Governor and Commander in Chief, and the Honorable The General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783*, p. 35-36, p. 37, Evans 18198.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.50-51.

“the will of heaven, and especially after the recent salvations of the Most High, that we should be *a holy people unto the Lord our God*.”¹¹⁷

Stiles’s vision is more than just a vision of America’s future greatness: It is the fullest description of the United States as a separate, distinct nation within a hegemonically structured world. He defined the elements of this nation in four spheres: In terms of growth (territorial expansion, population growth, economic growth), in terms of happiness due to a constitution defined as “democratic aristocracy”, in terms of the emergence of specific American arts, sciences and inventions as well as language; and finally this America would not only be an example to the world but “*a holy people unto the Lord our God*”, led by “this American Joseph” as the “American Israel”. Settled by Japhet’s people it would or probably had already outgrown its old world origins. America had become a world of its own with its own history, as Stiles as well as other preachers had stressed. And this historicity, which included by 1783 already the “American Revolution”,¹¹⁸ had, too, its own heroes as well as its own memories.

The construction of national memories began early: Already in January 1775 the Rev. Zabdiel Adams had marvelled at the “unbroken courage” and “invincible heroism” of God’s people.¹¹⁹ And in November 1775 the Rev. Henry Cummings was sure that “unborn millions will rise up and call ...noble patriots and sons of freedom ... blessed”; they would, he felt, “more deservedly receive the honours and praises of future generations, than the memories of many renowned heroes of antiquity.”¹²⁰ George Washington was, of course, the greatest of the heroes. Even Ezra Stiles rhapsodized lyrically: “But thou, O Washington, forgottest thyself, when thou lovedst thy bleeding country.”¹²¹ Yet most importantly, Stiles as well as most other preachers extolled the virtues of patriotism. Already in June 1775 the Rev. John Carmichael spoke of the “noble, patriotic, brave people of the ancient, loyal, important colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New England”¹²²; a month later the Rev. Enoch Hunting-

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.74.

¹¹⁸ TAPPAN, A Discourse Delivered at the Third Parish in Newbury, on the First of May, 1783, p. 12, Evans 18203.

¹¹⁹ ADAMS, The Grounds of Confidence and Success in War, represented. A Sermon Preached at a Lecture in Lunenburg, New England, on Monday, January 2d, 1775, p. 9, Evans 13789.

¹²⁰ I have inverted the quotation. The correct version reads: “Should this be the effect of the vigorous exertions of the noble patriots and sons of freedom, who, at the risk of their lives and estates, are now engaged in the defence of their country, against the violent assaults of arbitrary power, unborn millions will rise up and call them blessed...” CUMINGS, A Sermon Preached in Billerica, On the 23d of November, 1775, p. 10, Evans 14723.

¹²¹ STILES, The United States elevated to Glory and Honor. A Sermon, Preached before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. L.L.D., Governor and Commander in Chief, and the Honorable The General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783, p. 42, Evans 18198.

¹²² CARMICHAEL, A Self-Defensive War Lawful, Proved in a Sermon, Preached at Lancaster, Before Captain Ross’s Company of Militia, in the Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath Morning, June 4, 1775, p. 5, Evans 13862.

ton bemoaned the fate of “patriots of distinction, friends of their country and patrons of liberty”;¹²³ the Rev. Samuel Magaw in October 1775 believed that the “same pure flame which raises the soul to God” animated the “the real Patriot”, thus linking more clearly than his predecessors “patriotism” to the notion of the “American Israel.”¹²⁴ In the same month the Rev. Samuel Baldwin felt confident that “the unwearied exertions of the patriots, friends and benefactors of this country will bring about a happy termination of all our troubles.”¹²⁵ And in late March 1776 the Rev. Samuel Stillman in his funeral sermon on Rhode Island’s Delegate to the Continental Congress, Samuel Ward, described the deceased as a “thorough patriot; a real, steady friend to the rights of mankind; he could neither be *awed*, nor *bribed* to sell his country, or sacrifice her freedom.”¹²⁶ By 1782 the Rev. Payson Philipp stated that public memory had already “[recorded] a large number of names ... for Patriots and heroes.”¹²⁷ Ezra Stiles finally extended the meaning of “patriot” to include “patriotic politicians” on whom he showered fullsome praise.¹²⁸ Only two weeks later the Rev. Cumings offered the most comprehensive definition of “patriotism”:

“Virtuous patriotism, far from implying any ill-will to the rest of mankind, is nothing else, but the principle of universal benevolence, exercised as far as a man’s power extends, upon the objects that claim his first regards... his first obligation is to those, with whom he is more immediately connected, and where providence has assigned him his station and sphere of usefulness... True it is, patriotism is but a blind affection, and essentially defective as to any virtuous excellence, if it prompts a man to defend the cause of his country when his country forms

¹²³ HUNTINGTON, A Sermon Delivered at Middletown, July 20th, A. D. 1775, p. 19, Evans 14124; cf. too COOMBE, A Sermon, Preached before the Congregations of Christ Church and St. Peter’s, Philadelphia, on Thursday, July 20, 1775, p. 11, Evans 13892.

¹²⁴ MAGAW, A discourse Preached in Christ-Church, Philadelphia, On Sunday, October 8, 1775, p. 13, Evans 14176.

¹²⁵ Samuel BALDWIN, A Sermon Preached at Plymouth, December 22, 1775, p. 38, Evans 14657.

¹²⁶ Samuel STILLMAN, Death the last Enemy, destroyed by Christ. A Sermon Preached, March 27, 1776, Before the Honourable Continental Congress, on the Death of The Honorable Samuel Ward, Esq. One of the Delegates from the Colony of Rhode Island, who died of the small-pox, in this City (Philadelphia) March 26, Aet. 52, Published at the Desire of Many who heard it. By S. S., M. A.. Philadelphia, Printed by Joseph Crukshank, in Market-Street. 1776, p. 27, Evans 15097. Similar in early April HUNTINGTON, The Happy Effects of Union, and the Fatal Tendency of Divisions. Shewn in a Sermon, Preached before the Freemen of the Town of Middletown, at their Annual Meeting, April 8, 1776, p. 27.

¹²⁷ PAYSON, A Memorial of Lexington Battle, and of some signal Interpositions of Providence in the *American Revolution*. A Sermon preached at Lexington, On the Nineteenth of April 1782, p. 6, Evans 17655.

¹²⁸ STILES, The United States elevated to Glory and Honor. A Sermon, Preached before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. L.L.D., Governor and Commander in Chief, and the Honorable The General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783, p. 46, Evans 18198.

itself into a faction against the rights of mankind, and is wickedly endeavouring to bring other states and nations under it's arbitrary jurisdiction and government.”¹²⁹

Virtue and patriotism were inseparably united; while “virtue” denoted the moral attitude that defined the citizen within a republican commonwealth, “patriotism” described the special obligation a person had assigned to him by providence toward that same republican commonwealth.

In one sense, this definition of patriotism describes the sermons I have analyzed. They, too, signalled the special obligation preachers felt not only to their parishioners but, on a larger scale, to their colonies and later states and confederation. In doing so they provided their listeners with interpretations of current events, with explanatory models as interpretations of England’s policy as well as America’s justified and legitimate reactions. As the year 1775 drew to a close they increasingly began to talk about future greatness as an indirect discourse about a future independent America, then by late spring they openly talked about that momentous event itself: independence. By that time their parishioners knew that God was on their side, were comforted with the thought that God would not let them down if they would not neglect their duty and turn away from God. As independence became reality, the future became the new focus; it was a grandiose vision that Ezra Stiles, president of Yale, and other preachers developed. At the same time that vision was embedded not only in the history of Christian salvation, talked not only of God’s chosen people, but linked that new future to the history of America, to national values, and the memory of glorious accomplishments: In the late eighteenth century preachers were important masons working on the building of a new nation. Secular and religious visions and orders were inseparably blended into one; providence had shaped the past and would, if the American Israel would stay faithful, guide its future. This future was not only visionary but drew concretely on features America had to offer: Land, agricultural products, natural resources, an obligingly declining Native American population, an expansive view, in short, features the listeners could identify with. Europe was already profiting from America’s accomplishments, others would follow until God himself would come and erect in America his kingdom. As things were, this was to be an American kingdom where English most likely was spoken undefiled by foreign influences. These sermons

¹²⁹ Henry CUMINGS, A Sermon Preached before his Honor Thomas Cushing, Esq; Lieutenant- Governor, the Honorable the Council, and the Two Branches of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, May 28, 1783. Being the Anniversary of General Election. By H. C., A. M., Pastor of the Church of Billerica. Boston, Printed by T. J. Fleet, 1783, p. 21-22, Evans 17899.

translated complex theories and concepts into thoughts familiar to the parishioners. The listeners would leave the church comforted, refreshed and full of joy and hope.

And, of course, they would spread the good word: the reason for opposition to the British tyrant, the joys of the past to be regained in the future, the good news of God accepting his “American Israel” and the glorious future ahead of them with Christ’s coming in the year two thousand. These sermons effected thus more than pamphlets and treatises: They linked complex analyses of the behaviour of the mother country to political experiences and constitutional positions of the colonists, supplied legitimating concepts couched in secular *and* religious terms to ordinary people that wanted to know why they would want to sacrifice their all, and finally, they made the parishioners transmitters, agents and advocates of the spoken word to wider audiences. In contextualising civil events within broader religious contexts these sermons opened religious spaces to secular concepts like “happiness“; in doing so ministers linked secular “happiness” to their vision of an eschatological future.

As so often, John Adams found the right words: writing to the Rev. Zabdiel Adams, whose views I have discussed earlier, he assured the minister that he was convinced that “it is Religion and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand ... [People] may change their Rulers ... but they will not obtain a lasting liberty. They will only exchange Tyrants and Tyrannies. You cannot therefore be more pleasantly, or usefully employed than in the Way of your Profession, pulling down the Strong Holds of Satan.” And he added: “This is not Cant, but the real sentiment of my Heart.”¹³⁰

¹³⁰ SMITH, et al. (ed.), *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, vol. 4, 278-279, here p. 279.

Part II Sources and Documents

The source material from the newspapers was transcribed literally with all the printing errors and typographical idiosyncrasies. In copying the texts of the protocols of meetings that passed associations we left out those parts that were not directly related to the association itself.

5. Texts of Associations, 1774-1776

transcribed by Marion Stange and Hermann Wellenreuther

[Williamsburg, Va., May 27, 1774]

Friday, May 27. At ten o'clock this day, the honourable Members of the late House of Burgesses, met by agreement, at the long room of the *Raleigh* tavern, in *Williamsburg*, called the *Apollo*; when, having formed themselves into a Committee, and appointed the Honourable *Peyton Randolph*, Moderator, the following Association was unanimously entered into by the patriotic Assembly, in support of the constitutional liberties of *America*, against the oppressive Acts of the *British* Parliament, respecting the town of *Boston*, which, in the end, must affect all the other Colonies.

AN ASSOCIATION, BY THE MEMBERS OF THE LATE HOUSE OF BURGESSES

We his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the late Representatives of the good people of this country, having been deprived by the sudden interposition of the Executive part of this Government from giving our countrymen the advice we wished to convey to them in a legislative capacity, find ourselves under the hard necessity of adopting this, the only method we have left, of pointing out to our countrymen such measures as in our opinion are best fitted to secure our dearest rights and liberty from destruction, by the heavy hand of power now lifted against *North America*. With much grief we find that our dutiful applications to *Great Britain*, for security of our just, ancient, and constitutional rights, have been not only disregarded, but that a determined system is formed and pressed for reducing the inhabitants of *British America* to slavery, by subjecting them to the payment of taxes, imposed without the consent of the people on their Representatives; and that in pursuit of this system, we find an Act of the

British Parliament, lately passed, for stopping the harbour and commerce of the town of *Boston*, in our sister Colony of Massachusetts Bay, until the people there submit to the payment of such unconstitutional taxes, and which Act most violently and arbitrarily deprives them of their property in wharfs erected by private persons, at their own great and proper expense, which Act is, in our opinion, a most dangerous attempt to destroy the constitutional liberty and rights of all *America*.

It is further our opinion, that as tea, on its importation into *America*, is charged with a duty, imposed by Parliament for the purpose of raising a revenue, without the consent of the people, it ought not to be used by any person who wishes well to the constitutional rights and liberty of *British America*. And whereas the *India* Company have ungenerously attempted the ruin of *America*, by sending many ships loaded with tea into the Colonies, thereby intending to fix a precedent in favour of arbitrary taxation, we deem it highly proper and do accordingly recommend it strongly to our countrymen, not to purchase or use any kind of *East India* commodity whatsoever, except saltpetre and spices, until the grievances of *America* are redressed.

We are further clearly of opinion, that an attack, made on one of our sister Colonies, to compel submission to arbitrary taxes is an attack made on all *British America*, and threatens ruin to the rights of all, unless the united wisdom of the whole be applied. And for this purpose it is recommended to the Committee of Correspondence, that they communicate, with their several Corresponding Committees, on the expediency of appointing Deputies from the several Colonies of *British America*, to meet in general Congress, at such place annually as shall be thought most convenient: there to deliberate on those general measures which the united interests of *America* may from time to time require.

A tender regard for the interest of our fellow-subjects, the merchants and manufacturers of *Great Britain*, prevents us from going further at this time; most earnestly hoping, that the unconstitutional principle of taxing the Colonies without their consent will not be persisted in, thereby to compel us against our will, to avoid all commercial intercourse with Britain. Wishing them and our people free and happy, we are their affectionate friends the late Representatives of *Virginia*.

Signed by eighty-nine Members of the late House of Burgesses.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 350-351.

[Boston Committee, June 8, 1774]

EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS SENT BY THE BOSTON COMMITTEE, TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS PROVINCE, WITH A PAPER WHICH THEY ARE TO SIGN.

Boston, June 8, 1774.

There is but one way that we can conceive of to prevent what is to be deprecated by all good men, and ought by all possible means to be prevented, viz: the horrors that must follow an open rupture between *Great Britain* and her Colonies; or on our part, a subjection to absolute slavery; and that is by affecting the trade and interest of *Great Britain* so deeply as shall induce her to withdraw her oppressive hand. There can be no doubt of our succeeding to the utmost of our wishes, if we universally come into a solemn league not to import goods from *Great Britain*, and not to buy any goods that shall hereafter be imported from thence, until our grievances shall be redressed. To these, or even to the least of these shameful impositions, we trust in *God* our countrymen never will submit.

We have received such assurances from our brethren in every part of the Province, of their readiness to adopt such measures as may be likely to save our country, and that we have not the least doubt of an almost universal agreement for this purpose; in confidence of this, we have drawn up a form of covenant to be subscribed by all adult persons of both sexes; which we have sent to every town in the Province, and that we might not give our enemies time to counteract us, we have endeavoured that every town should be furnished with such a copy on or before the fourteenth day of this month, and we earnestly desire that you would use your utmost endeavours that the subscription paper may be filled up as soon as possible, so that they who are in expectation of overthrowing our liberties, may be discouraged from prosecuting their wicked designs; as we look upon this, the last and only method of preserving our land from slavery without drenching it with blood; may *God* prosper every undertaking which tends to the salvation of this people. We are, &c.

Signed by order and in behalf of the Committee of Correspondence for *Boston*.

WILLIAM COOPER, *Clerk*.

FORM OF COVENANT SENT TO EVERY TOWN IN MASSACHUSETTS

We the subscribers, inhabitants of the town of ***** having taken into our serious consideration the precarious state of the liberties of *North America*, and more especially the present distressed condition of this insulted Province, embarrassed as it is by several Acts of the British Parliament, tending to the entire subversion of our natural and

charter rights; among which is the Act for blocking up the harbour of *Boston*. And being fully sensible of our indispensable duty to lay hold on every means in our power to preserve and recover the much injured Constitution of our country; and conscious at the same time of no alternative between the horrors of slavery, or the carnage and desolation of a civil war, but a suspension of all commercial intercourse with the Island of *Great Britain*, do, in the presence of *God*, solemnly and in good faith, covenant and engage with each other:

1st. That from henceforth we will suspend all commercial intercourse with the said Island of *Great Britain*, until the said Act for blocking up the said harbour be repealed, and a full restoration of our charter rights be obtained. And

2d. That there may be the less temptation to others to continue in the said, now dangerous commerce, we do in like manner solemnly covenant, that we will not buy, purchase, or consume, or suffer any person, by, for, or under us, to purchase or consume, in any manner whatever, any goods, wares, or merchandise, which shall arrive in *America* from *Great Britain* aforesaid, from and after the last day of *August* next ensuing. And in order as much as in us lies, to prevent our being interrupted and defeated in this only peaceable measure entered into for the preservation and recovery of our rights, we agree to break off all trade, commerce, and dealings whatever with all persons, who, preferring their own private interest to the salvation of their own perishing country, shall still continue to import goods from *Great Britain*, or shall purchase of those who do import, and never to renew any commerce or trade with them.

And, whereas the promoting of industry, economy, arts and manufactures among ourselves is of the last importance to the civil and religious welfare of a community: we engage,

3d. That from and after the first day of *October* next ensuing, we will not by ourselves, or any for, by or under us, purchase or use any goods, wares, manufactures, or merchandise, whensoever or howsoever imported from *Great Britain*, until the harbour of *Boston* shall be opened, and our charter rights restored.

And last. As a refusal to come into any agreement which promises the deliverance of our country from the calamities it now feels, and which like a torrent are rushing upon it with increasing violence, must evidence a disposition inimical to, or criminally negligent of, the common safety, we agree, that after this covenant has been offered to any person, and they refuse to sign it, we will consider them in the same light as contumacious importers, and withdraw all commercial connections with them forever, and publish their names to the world.

Witness our hands, *June* ----, 1774

[Williamsburg, Va., August 1774]
 VIRGINIA CONVENTION

At a very full Meeting of Delegates from the different Counties in the Colony and Dominion of *Virginia*, begun in *Williamsburg* the first day of *August*, in the year of our Lord 1774, and continued by several adjournments to *Saturday*, the 6th of the same month, the following Association was unanimously resolved upon, and agreed to:

We, his Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Delegates of the freeholders of *Virginia*, deputed to represent them at a general meeting in the City of *Williamsburg*, avowing our inviolable and unshaken fidelity and attachment to our most gracious Sovereign; our regard and affection for all our friends and fellow-subjects in *Great Britain* and elsewhere; protesting against every act or thing which may have the most distant tendency to interrupt or in any wise disturb his Majesty's peace, and the good order of Government within this his ancient Colony, which we are resolved to maintain and defend at the risk of our lives and fortunes; but, at the same time, affected with the deepest anxiety and most alarming apprehensions of those grievances and distresses by 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 chiefly occasioned by certain ill advised regulations, as well of our trade, as internal polity, introduced by several unconstitutional Acts of the *British* Parliament, and, at length, attempted to be enforced by the hand of power.

Solely influenced by these important and weighty considerations, we think it an indispensable duty which we owe to our country, ourselves, and latest posterity, to guard against such dangerous and extensive mischiefs, by every just and proper means.

If, by the measures adopted, some unhappy consequences and inconveniences should be derived to our fellow-subjects, whom we wish not to injure in the smallest degree, we hope, and flatter ourselves, that they will impute them to their real cause, the hard necessity to which we are driven.

That the good people of this Colony may on so trying an occasion continue steadfastly directed to their most essential interests, in hopes that they will be influenced and stimulated by our example, to the greatest industry, the strictest economy and frugality, and the exertion of every publick virtue; persuaded that the merchants, manufacturers, and other inhabitants of *Great Britain*, and above all, that the *British* Parliament will be convinced how much the true interest of the Kingdom must depend on the restoration and continuance of that mutual friendship and cordiality which so happily subsisted between us, we have, unanimously, and with one voice, entered into the following Resolutions and Association, which we do oblige ourselves by those sacred ties of honour and love to our country, strictly to observe; and farther

declare, before *God* and the world, that we will religiously adhere to and keep the same inviolate in every particular, until redress of all such *American* grievances as may be defined and settled at the general Congress of Delegates from the different Colonies shall be fully obtained, or until this Association shall be abrogated or altered by a general meeting of the Deputies of this Colony to be convened as is herein after directed. And we do, with the greatest earnestness, recommend this our Association to all gentlemen, merchants, traders, and other inhabitants of this Colony, hoping that they will cheerfully and cordially accede thereto:

1st. We do hereby resolve, and declare, that we will not, either directly or indirectly, after the first day of *November* next, import from *Great Britain* any goods, wares, or merchandises whatever, medicines excepted; nor will we, after that day, import any *British* manufactures, either from the *West Indies* or any other place; nor any article whatever which we shall know, or have reason to believe, was brought into such countries from *Great Britain*; nor will we purchase any such articles so imported of any person or persons whatsoever, except such as are now in the country, or such as may arrive on or before the first day of *November*, in consequence of orders already given, and which cannot now be countermanded in time.

2d. We will neither ourselves import, nor purchase any slave or slaves imported by any other person, after the first day of *November* next, either from *Africa*, the *West Indies*, or any other place.

3d. Considering the article of tea as the detestable instrument which laid the foundation of the present sufferings of our distressed friends in the town of *Boston*, we view it with horror; and therefore resolve, that we will not from this day, either import tea of any kind whatever; nor will we use, or suffer even such of it as is now on hand to be used in any of our families.

4th. If the inhabitants of the town of *Boston*, or any other Colony, should by violence or dire necessity be compelled to pay the *East India* Company for destroying any tea which they have lately by their agents unjustly attempted to force into the Colonies, we will not directly or indirectly import or purchase any *British East India* commodity whatever, till the Company, or some other person on their behalf, shall refund and fully restore to the owners all such sum or sums of money as may be so extorted.

5th. We do resolve, that unless *American* grievances are redressed before the 10th day of *August*, 1775, we will not after that day, directly or indirectly, export tobacco, or any other article whatever to *Great Britain*; nor will we sell any such articles as we think can be exported to *Great Britain* with a prospect of gain to any person or persons whatever, with a design of putting it into his or their power to export the same to *Great Britain*, either on our own, his, or their account. And that this resolution may be the more effectually carried into execution, we do hereby recommend it to the inhabitants of this Colony to refrain from the cultivation of tobacco as much as conven-

iently may be; and in lieu thereof, that they will, as we resolve to do, apply their attention and industry to the cultivation of all such articles as may form a proper basis for manufactures of all sorts, which we will endeavour to encourage throughout this Colony, to the utmost of our abilities.

6th. We will endeavour to improve our breed of sheep, and increase their number to the utmost extent; and to this end we will be as sparing as we conveniently can, in killing of sheep, especially those of the most profitable kind; and if we should at any time be overstocked, or can conveniently spare any, we will dispose of them to our neighbours, especially the poorer sort of people, upon moderate terms.

7th. *Resolved*, That the merchants and other venders of goods and merchandises within this Colony ought not to take advantage of the scarcity of goods that may be occasioned by this Association, but that they ought to sell the same at the rates they have been accustomed to for twelve months last past; and if they should sell any such goods on higher terms, or shall in any manner, or by any devise whatever, violate or depart from this resolution, we will not, and are of opinion that no inhabitant of this Colony ought, at any time thereafter, to deal with any such person, their factors or agents, for any commodity whatever; and it is recommended to the Deputies of the several counties, that Committees be chosen in each county by such persons as accede to this Association, to take effectual care that these Resolves be properly observed, and for corresponding occasionally with the general Committee of Correspondence in the City of *Williamsburg*, provided, that if exchange should rise, such advance may be made in the prices of goods as shall be approved by the Committee of each county.

8th. In order the better to distinguish such worthy merchants and traders who are well-wishers of this Colony, from those who may attempt, through motives of self-interest, to obstruct our views, we do hereby resolve that we will not, after the first day of *November* next, deal with any merchant or trader who will not sign this Association; nor until he hath obtained a certificate of his having done so from the County Committee, or any three members thereof. And if any merchant, trader, or other person, shall import any goods or merchandise after the first day of *November*, contrary to this Association, we give it as our opinion that such goods and merchandise should be either forthwith reshipped, or delivered up to the County Committee, to be stored at the risk of the importer, unless such importer shall give a proper assurance to the said Committee, that such goods or merchandises shall not be sold within this Colony during the continuance of this Association; and if such importer shall refuse to comply with one or the other of these terms, upon application and due caution given to him or her by the said Committee, or any three members thereof, such Committee is required to publish the truth of the case in the *Gazettes*, and in the county where he or she resides; and we will thereafter consider such person or persons as inimical to this country, and break off every connection and all dealings with them.

9th. *Resolved*, That if any person or persons shall export tobacco, or any other commodity, to *Great Britain*, after the 10th day of *August*, 1775, contrary to this Association, we shall hold ourselves obliged to consider such person or persons inimical to the community, and as an approver of *American* grievances; and give it as our opinion that the publick should be advised of his or their conduct, as in the eighth article is desired.

10th. Being fully persuaded that the united wisdom of the general Congress may improve these our endeavours to preserve the rights and liberties of *British America*, we decline enlarging at present; but do hereby resolve that we will conform to and strictly observe, all such alterations or additions assented to by the Delegates for this Colony, as they may judge it necessary to adopt, after the same shall be published and made known to us.

11th. *Resolved*, That we think ourselves called upon, by every principle of humanity and brotherly affection, to extend the utmost and speediest relief to our distressed fellow-subjects in the town of *Boston*; and, therefore, most earnestly recommend it to all the inhabitants of this Colony to make such liberal contributions as they can afford, to be collected and remitted to *Boston*, in such manner as may best answer so desirable a purpose.

12th. And lastly, *Resolved*, That the Moderator of this meeting, and, in case of his death, *Robert Carter Nicholas*, Esquire, be empowered, on any future occasion that may, in his opinion, require it, convene the several Delegates of this Colony, at such time and place as he may judge proper; and in case of the death or absence of any Delegate, it is recommended that another be chosen in his place.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 686-690.

[Anson County, N.C., August 18, 1774]

Proceedings of Freeholders in Anson County, 18th August 1774.

At a meeting of the Freeholders of the County of Anson, in the Province of North Carolina, held at the Court House of the said County, on the 15th tiny of August 1771, Thomas Wade Esqre Chairman,

Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Meeting; that the late arbitrary and cruel Acts of the British Parliament, and other unconstitutional and oppressive measures of the British Ministry, against the Town and Port of Boston, and province of Massachusetts Bay, are no other than the most alarming prelude to that yoke of slavery already manufactured by the said Ministry, and by them intended to be laid on all the Inhabitants of British America, and their Posterity for ever.

Resolved, That in order to disappoint the machinations of the said Ministry, and to secure the Rights of British Subjects in America, the Members of this Meeting are fully sensible of the expediency of sending Deputies to represent them at a General Convention of Deputies from the several Counties of this Colony to be held at Johnston Court House on the 23th inst., and likewise of sending Delegates from thence to act for and represent the Inhabitants of this Colony at a General Congress of Delegates from all the Colonies on this Continent to be held at Philadelphia on the 20th of September next, or at such time and place as shall be generally agreed upon.

Resolved, That Samuel Spencer & William Thomas Esqres be and are hereby appointed Deputies on behalf of this County, to act for and represent the Inhabitants thereof at the said General Convention of Deputies, from the several Counties of this Colony to be held at Johnston Court House aforesaid, on the 20th of this instant August or at such other time and place as shall be generally agreed upon, then and there to consult on the great and important Subject of American Freedom, and thence to appoint Delegates to act on behalf of this Colony at the said general Congress, to be held as aforesaid, and to pursue such measures, in union with the rest of the Colonies, as may be thought most conducive to the preservation of the Rights and Liberties of this Colony and those of America in general. And that the conduct of the Deputies hereby appointed on behalf of this County, in conjunction with that of the Deputies appointed to represent the several Counties of this Colony in full convention, as aforesaid, shall be taken and deemed to be obligatory on us the Freeholders and Inhabitants of this County.

Resolved, That Thomas Dockery, Thomas Wade, Samuel Spencer, William Thomas, Charles Robinson, Charles Medlock, William Pickett and James Auld be, and they are hereby appointed a Committee for this County to correspond with any Committee of Correspondence in this Colony, and to appoint meetings of the Freeholders in this County as often as they, or a majority of them, shall conceive the exigency of the times may require.

Resolved, That as in the opinion of this meeting the cause wherein the Inhabitants of Boston and Massachusetts Bay are now suffering, in consequence of the aforesaid arbitrary and cruel Acts, is the common cause of all North America, the Committee hereby appointed be instructed to open and promote a subscription for contributing towards the relief of those indigent Inhabitants of the Town of Boston, whom the operation of one of the aforesaid Acts has deprived of the means of subsisting themselves, and that the money or other Articles collected by such subscription be transmitted by the above Committee to the said Committee of Correspondence appointed for this Colony, to be laid out and disposed of in such manner as the said last mentioned Committee shall conceive to be best adapted to answer the design thereof.

Resolved, That it be an Instruction to the Deputies above appointed on behalf of this County, that it is the opinion of this meeting, that the speediest, most constitutional and effectual way to obtain redress of the grievances above mentioned will be for the several American Colonies on this Continent to stop all trade and commerce with Great Britain, and every part of America that shall continue any trade or commerce with the same (except in some necessary articles such as salt) until the above said Acts be repealed, and other unconstitutional measures of the British Ministry be discarded, and that it is the opinion of this meeting that such stoppage of commerce will indispensably involve the necessity of stopping the commencement and prosecution of suits for the recovery of the greatest part of such debts as are now due from persons residing in the said Colonies, and that it is the desire of this Meeting, that a line may be properly drawn and ascertained between such suits as ought and such as ought not to be commenced and prosecuted for the recovery of debts in said Colonies, upon the Principles of such stoppage of commerce, as aforesaid.

Saunders, William L. (ed.): Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 9, p. 1032-1049.

[North Carolina Convention, August 27, 1774]

NORTH CAROLINA CONVENTION

[...]

Saturday, August 27, 1774.

The Meeting met according to adjournment; and came to the following Resolutions, to wit:

We, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Deputies from the several Counties and Towns of the Province of *North Carolina*, impressed with the most sacred respect for the *British* Constitution, and resolved to maintain the succession of the House of *Hanover*, as by law established, and avowing our inviolable and unshaken fidelity to our Sovereign, and entertaining a sincere regard for our fellow-subjects in *Great Britain*, viewing with the utmost abhorrence every attempt which may tend to disturb the peace and good order of this Colony, or to shake the fidelity of his Majesty's subjects resident here; but, at the same time conceiving it a duty which we owe to ourselves and posterity, in the present alarming state of *British America*, when our most essential rights are invaded by powers unwarrantably assumed by the Parliament of *Great Britain*, to declare our sentiments in the most publick manner, least silence

should be construed as acquiescence, and that we patiently submit to the burthen which they have thought fit to impose upon us:

Resolved, That his Majesty *George* the Third is lawful and rightful King of *Great Britain*, and the Dominions thereunto belonging, and of this Province, as part thereof, and that we do bear faithful and true allegiance unto him as our lawful Sovereign; that we will to the utmost of our power maintain and defend the succession of the House of *Hanover*, as by law established, against the open or private attempts of any person or persons whatsoever.

Resolved, That we claim no more than the rights of *Englishmen* without diminution or abridgment; that it is our indispensable duty and will be our constant endeavour, to maintain those rights to the utmost of our power consistently with the loyalty which we owe Sovereign, and a sacred regard for the *British* Constitution.

Resolved, It is of the very essence of the *British* Constitution, that no subject should be taxed, but by his own consent, freely given by himself in person, or by his legal Representatives, and that any other than such a taxation is highly derogatory to the rights of a subject, and a gross violation of the Grand Charter of our liberties.

Resolved, That as the *British* subjects resident in *North America*, have not, nor can have, any representation in the Parliament of *Great Britain*, therefore any Act of Parliament imposing a tax upon them, is illegal and unconstitutional; that our Provincial Assemblies, the King by his Governours constituting one branch thereof, solely and exclusively possess that right.

Resolved, That the duties imposed by several Acts of the *British* Parliament upon tea and other articles, consumed in *America*, for the purpose of raising a revenue, are highly illegal and oppressive, and that the late exportation of tea by the *East India* Company, to different parts of *America*, was intended to give effect to one of the said Acts, and thereby establish a precedent highly dishonourable to *America*, and to obtain an implied assent to the powers which *Great Britain* had unwarrantably assumed, of levying a tax upon us without our consent.

Resolved, That the inhabitants of the *Massachusetts* Province have distinguished themselves in a manly support of the rights of *America* in general, and that the cause in which they now suffer is the cause of every honest *American* who deserves the blessings which the Constitution holds forth to them. That the grievances under which the town of *Boston* labours at present are the effect of a resentment levelled at them for having stood foremost in an opposition to measures which must eventually have involved all *British America* in a state of abject dependence and servitude.

The Act of Parliament, commonly called the *Boston* Port Act, as it tends to shut up the port of *Boston*, and thereby effectually destroy its trade, and deprive the merchants and manufacturers of a subsistence which they have hitherto procured by an honest industry; as it takes away the wharves, quays, and other property of many individuals

by rendering it useless to them; and as the duration of this Act depends upon circumstances founded merely in opinion, and in their nature indeterminate, and thereby may make the miseries it carries with it even perpetual,

Resolved, Therefore, that it is the most cruel infringement of the rights and privileges of the people of *Boston*, both as men and members of the *British* Government.

Resolved, That the late Act of Parliament, for regulating the Police of that Province, is and infringement of the Charter right granted them by their Majesties King *William* and Queen *Mary*, and tends to lessen that sacred confidence, which ought to be placed in the acts of Kings.

Resolved, That trial by Juries of the vicinity is the only lawful inquest that can pass upon the life of a *British* subject, and that it is a right handed down to us from the earliest ages; confirmed and sanctified by Magna Charta itself, that no freeman shall be taken and imprisoned, or dispossessed of his free tenement and liberties, or outlawed, or banished, on any wise hurt or injured, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land, and therefore all who suffer otherwise are not victims to publick justice, but fall a sacrifice to the powers of tyranny and high-handed oppression.

Resolved, That the Bill for altering the administration of justice, in certain criminal cases within the Province of *Massachusetts Bay*, as it empowers the Governours thereof to send to *Great Britain* for trial all persons who, in aid of his Majesty's officers, shall commit any capital offence, is fraught with the highest injustice and partiality, and will tend to produce frequent bloodshed of the inhabitants, as this Act furnishes an opportunity to commit the most atrocious crimes with the greatest probability of impunity.

Resolved, That we will not directly or indirectly after the first day of *January* 1775, import from *Great Britain* any *East India* goods, or any merchandise whatever, medicines excepted, nor will we after that day import from the *West Indies*, or elsewhere, any *East India* or *British* goods or manufactures, nor will we purchase any such articles so imported of any person or persons whatsoever, except such as are now in the country, or may arrive on or before the first day of *January*, 1775.

Resolved, That unless *American* grievances are redressed before the first day of *October*, 1775, we will not after that day, directly or indirectly, export tobacco, pitch, tar, turpentine, or any other article whatever to *Great Britain*, nor will we sell any such articles as we think can be exported to *Great Britain* with a prospect of gain, to any person or persons whatever, with a design of putting it in his or their power to export the same to *Great Britain*, either on our own, his or their account.

Resolved, That we will not import any slave or slaves, or purchase any slave or slaves, imported or brought into this Province by others, from any part of the world, after the first day of *November* next.

Resolved, That we will not, nor suffer *East India* tea to be used in our families, after the tenth day of *September* next, and that we will consider all persons in this Province, not complying with this resolve, to be enemies to their country.

Resolved, That the venders of merchandise within this Province ought not take advantage of the resolves relating to non-importation in this Province, or elsewhere, but ought to sell their goods and merchandise, which they have, or may hereafter import, at the same rates they have been accustomed to sell them within three months last past.

Resolved, That the people of this Province, will break off all trade, commerce and dealing, and will not maintain any the least trade, dealing or commercial intercourse with any Colony on this Continent, or with any city or town, or with any individual in such Colony, city, or town, which shall refuse, decline, or neglect to adopt and carry into execution such general plan as shall be agreed to in the Continental Congress.

Resolved, That we approve of the proposal of a general Congress, to be held in the City of Philadelphia, on the 20th of *September* next, then and there to deliberate upon the present state of *British America*, and to take such measures as they may deem prudent to effect the purpose of describing with certainty the rights of *Americans*; repairing the breaches made in those rights; and for guarding them for the future from any such violations done under sanction publick authority.

Resolved, That *William Hooper*, *Joseph Hewes*, and *Richard Caswell*, Esquires, and every of them be Deputies to attend such Congress; and they are hereby invested with such powers as may make any act done by them, or consent given in behalf of this Province, obligatory in honour upon every inhabitant thereof, who is not alien to his country's good, and an apostate to the liberties of *America*.

Resolved, That they view the attempts made by the Minister upon the town of *Boston*, as a prelude to a general attack upon the rights of the other Colonies; and that upon the success of this depends in a great measure, the happiness of *America*, in its present race, and in posterity; and that therefore it becomes our duty to contribute in proportion to our abilities to ease the burthen imposed upon that town for their virtuous opposition to the Revenue Acts, that they may be enabled to persist in a prudent and manly opposition to the schemes of Parliament, and render its dangerous designs abortive.

Resolved, That liberty is the spirit of the *British* Constitution, and that it is the duty, and will be the endeavour of us as *British Americans*, to transmit this happy Constitution to our posterity in a state, if possible, better than we found it; and that to suffer it to undergo a change which may impair that invaluable blessing, would be to disgrace those ancestors, who, at the expense of their blood, purchased those privileges which their degenerate posterity are too weak or too wicked to maintain inviolate.

Resolved, That at every future Provincial Meeting, when any division shall happen, the method to be observed, shall be to vote by the counties and towns (having a right to send Members to Assembly) that shall be represented at every such meeting; and it is recommended to the Deputies of the several counties that a Committee of five persons be chosen in each county, by such persons as accede to this Association, to take effectual care that these resolves be properly observed, and to correspond occasionally with the Provincial Committee of Correspondence of this Province.

Resolved, That each and every county in this Province raise, as speedily as possible, the sum of twenty pounds, Proclamation money, and pay the same into the hands of *Richard Caswell*, Esquire, to be by him equally divided among the Deputies appointed to attend the general Congress at *Philadelphia*, as a recompense for their trouble and expense in attending the said Congress.

Resolved, That the Moderator of this meeting, and in case of his death, *Samuel Johnson*, Esquire, be empowered, on any future occasion that may in his opinion require it, to convene the several Deputies of this Province, which now are or hereafter shall be chosen, at such time and place as he shall think proper; and in case of the death or absence of any Deputy, it is recommended that another be chosen in his stead.

Resolved, That the following be Instructions for the Deputies appointed to meet in general Congress on the part of this Colony, to wit:

That they express our sincere attachment to our most gracious Sovereign King *George* the Third, and our determined resolution to support his lawful authority in the Province; at the same time, that we cannot depart from a steady adherence to the first law of nature: a firm and resolute defence of our persons and properties against all unconstitutional encroachments whatsoever.

That they assert our right to all the privileges of *British* subjects, particularly that of paying no taxes or duties but with our own consent; and that the Legislature of this Province have the exclusive power of making laws to regulate our internal polity, subject to his Majesty's disallowance.

That should the *British* Parliament continue to exercise the power of levying taxes and duties on the Colonies, and making laws to bind them in all cases whatsoever; such laws must be highly unconstitutional and oppressive to the inhabitants of *British America*, who have not, and from their local circumstances cannot have, a fair and equal representation in the *British* Parliament, and that these disadvantages must be greatly enhanced by the misrepresentation of designing men, inimical to the Colonies, the influence of whose reports cannot be guarded against, by reason of the distance of *America* from them, or as has been unhappily experienced in the case of the town of *Boston*, when the ears of Administration have been shut against every attempt to vindicate a people who claimed only the right of being heard in their own defence.

That therefore until we obtain an explicit declaration and acknowledgment of our rights, we agree to stop all imports from *Great Britain* after the first day of *January*, 1775; and that we will not export any of our commodities to *Great Britain* after the first day of *October*, 1775.

That they concur with the Deputies or Delegates from the other Colonies, in such Regulations, Addresses, or Remonstrances, as may be deemed most probable to restore a lasting harmony and good understanding with *Great Britain*, a circumstance we most sincerely and ardently desire; and that they agree with the majority of them in all necessary measures for promoting a redress of such grievances as may come under their consideration.

Resolved, That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Honourable *John Harvey*, Esquire, Moderator, for his faithful exercise of that office, and the services he has thereby rendered to this Province, and the friends of *America* in general.

JOHN HARVEY, *Moderator*.

[Signed by 80 persons]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 733-737.

[East Greenwich, R.I., August 29, 1774]

Subscription for the Relief of the Inhabitants of Boston and Charlestown, in the town of East Greenwich, Rhode Island

East Greenwich, August 29, 1774.

We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the town of East Greenwich, in the colony of Rhode Island, taking into the most serious consideration the present alarming situation of our brethren in the towns of Boston and Charlestown, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, occasioned by the late cruel, malignant and worse than savage acts of the British Parliament; and whereas, a tame submission to the first approaches of lawless power, will undoubtedly involve this extensive continent in one scene of misery and servitude, than which, a glorious death, in defence of our unquestionable rights, is far more eligible; convinced likewise, that the only true glory and unfading grandeur of the British monarch consists in governing his extensive empire with equal and impartial laws, founded in reason, and rendered sacred by the wisdom of ages; and that every attempt to impair that noble constitution, which hath ever been the envy and terror of Europe, constitutes the blackest treason—from the most unfeigned loyalty to our sovereign—from the most settled abhorrence to the deep laid schemes

of his prime minister, whom we esteem the most determined foe to royalty; and from an ardent love to our country, which nothing but death can abate, we do promise and engage to pay, by the 1st day of October next, the respective sums to our names annexed, to James Mitchell Varnum, Esq.; Messrs. Preserved Pearce, A. Mumford and William Pearce, to be laid out and expended in such articles of provisions, for our said distressed brethren, as the majority of us shall agree upon, to be sent to the committee of ways and means for employing the poor in Boston, by the first conveyance.—*Providence Gazette*.

Bartlett, John Russell: Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, vol. 7: 1770-1776. New York 1862, p. 303.

[The Association of the First Continental Congress, Philadelphia, Pa., 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 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 hereinafter mentioned are not repealed, we will not, directly or indirectly, export any merchandise or commodity whatsoever to 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 merchandise 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 connection 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 gaming, 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 vendors of goods or merchandise 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 vendor of goods or merchandise shall sell any 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 merchandise 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 reshipped or delivered up to the committee of the county 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 merchandises 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 condemned 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 custom houses, 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 Geo. III, c. 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 offences 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,

etc.”-and that “for extending the limits of Quebec, etc.” 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.

Jensen, Merrill (ed.): American Colonial Documents to 1776. Reprint London 1969 (First ed. 1955) [English Historical Documents vol. 9].

[Frances Town, N.H., October 21,1774]

Province of New-Hampshire, County of Hillsborough, Oct. 21, 1774.

FRANCES TOWN RESOLVES

We the subscribers, being Inhabitants of Frances Town, having taken into our most serious consideration the alarming affairs of this Country at the present day, do most firmly enter into the following Resolutions, viz:

1st. That we will at all times defend our liberties and privileges, both civil and religious, even to the risk of our fortunes; and will not only disapprove of, but wholly despise, such persons as we have just and solid reason to think wish us deprived of the same.

2d. *Resolved*, That we do abhor and abominate all oppressive acts of persons in power, whether Magistrate or Officer, whereby the poor are distressed and unlawfully robbed of their properties in any unjust manner whatever; and we will always endeavour to treat them with such neglect and contempt as they justly deserve.

3d. *Resolved*, That we will at all times be ready to assist the Civil Magistrates in the due execution of their offices at the risk of our lives; and will at all times show our disapprobation of all unlawful proceedings of unjust men congregating together, as they pretend to maintain their liberties, and even trample under foot the very law of liberty, and wholly destroy that law our whole land firmly wish, and desire to maintain. And we,

4thly. *Resolved*, They are bold despisers of law, and that their proceedings directly tend to the utter subversion of all regularity and good order among his Majesty's good subjects in this land.

Unterschrieben von 23 Personen

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 888.

[Edenton, N.C., October 25, 1774]

ASSOCIATION SIGNED BY LADIES OF EDENTON, NORTH CAROLINA,
OCTOBER 25, 1774.

As we cannot be indifferent on any occasion that appears to affect the peace and happiness of our country; and as it has been thought necessary for the publick good to enter into several particular Resolves by a meeting of Members of Deputies from the whole Province, it is a duty that we owe not only to our near and dear relations and connexions, but to ourselves, who are essentially interested in their welfare, to do every thing as far as lies in our power to testify our sincere adherence to the same; and we do therefore accordingly subscribe this paper as a witness of our fixed intention and solemn determination to do so.

Signed by fifty-one Ladies.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 891-892.

[Philadelphia, Pa., December 19, 1774]

PHILADELPHIA COMMITTEE

Committee Chamber, December 19, 1774.

An Association of the Butchers of this City, &c., was delivered in at the Chair, and read.

Ordered, That the same be printed, as an instance of the spirited determination of all orders among us to do their utmost towards carrying into execution the Resolves of the Continental Congress.

Philadelphia, December 5th, 1774.

We whose names are underwritten, Butchers in the City and Suburbs of *Philadelphia*, being fully convinced that every thing we hold dear depends on the faithful execution of the Resolves of the Congress; and being desirous of supporting them as far as lies in our power, and of contributing our utmost endeavours in the present important struggle; and being glad of having an opportunity to show our zeal and attachment to the liberties of our country, we hope on this and every other occasion, when our greatest temporal blessings are in danger of being torn from us, to be able, in

order to preserve them, cheerfully to sacrifice every inferiour consideration of private interest or convenience. The recommendation of the Committee appearing to us the best method of carrying into execution the Resolves of the Congress for improving the breed of Sheep, and increasing their number, we do solemnly agree and pledge ourselves to the publick, that we will not hereafter purchase any Ewe Mutton or Lamb, until the first day of *May* next; nor any Ewe Lamb from the said first day of *May* until the first day of *October* following; nor will we after the first day of *January*, kill any Ewe Mutton or Lamb, on any account or pretence whatever, until the first day of *May* following; nor any Ewe Lamb whatever, from the said first day of *May* until the first of *October* following; and will at any time in future, during our struggle for our rights and liberties, be ready to comply with such further regulations as the Committee may think necessary for the preservation of the stock of Sheep, as witness our hands.

Signed by Sixty-six.

Extract for the Minutes of the Committee for the City and Liberties of *Philadelphia*.

Secretaries

Jonathan Smith

John Benezet

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1050-51.

[Bute County, N.C., probably December 1774]

The Bute County Association

We therefore the Trusty and well beloved Brothers, and friends, to each other, of Bute County North Carolina, being deeply impressed with the sense of our distressed brethren in the Northern provinces, who are now defending the General rights of mankind, against the arbitrary, and dispotick power of a Corrupt Ministry, by enforcing Laws on us, where we are not represented, depriving us of the Constitution, which we were born and bred under, as free Subjects, Privileges highly worthy the spiling the hearts blood of every American, doe most seriously, Religiously, Join our hearts and hands in embodying ourselves in to an Independent Company of free Men to be in readiness to defend ourselves against any violence that may be exerted against our persons and properties to stand by and Support to the utmost of our Power the Salvation of America. An do most humbly beseech our Lord Jesus Christ of his great Goodness that he will be pleased to govern and guide us to his glory, and to the good of our distressed Country & with full dependence thereof, we the subscribers do con-

stitute an agree, that this company consist of ninety rank and file, two Drummers, eight serjeants, one Ensign, two Lieutenants and a Captain to Command with full power, to our glory, and our Country's Good. And as the present distressed situation of this province in general, for arms, ammunition &c. we cannot think it prudent to embark ourselves beyond Potomack River in Virg^a, as the provinces northward are much more populous and in all proberbity better supplied with arms & ammunition &c. than this. But we will coincide with the majority of the Comp^y (sh^{ld} we be ever called for by the Commanding officer of the American army) being now Cheerfully Inlisted in this Independent Comp^y of Brothers, neighbors and friends, do engage to stand by Each other with life and fortune, and through whatever fate should befall either, to cherish each other in sickness and in Health. And doe furthermore most cordially promise to each other, under all the Tyes of Virtue and humanity, that should either of us survive the dreadful Calamities of War, that we will Religiously Cherish and support to the utmost of our power each other's desolate and loving wife, and tender affectionate Children, being poor orphans, form poverty and want, and for the faithful proformance, of this our Brotherly and friendly Covenant, which we mean to proforme So help us God.

Saunders, William L. (ed.): Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 9, p. 1104-05.

[Boston, December 22, 1774]

Boston, December 22, 1774.

TO THE PRINTERS OF THE BOSTON NEWSPAPERS.

As Messrs. *Edes* and *Gill*, in their paper of *Monday*, the 12th instant, were pleased to acquaint the publick, "that the Association sent by Brigadier *Ruggles*, &c., to the Town of *Hardwick*, &c., together with his son's certificate thereof, and the Resolves of the Provincial Congress thereon, must be referred till their next," I was so credulous as to expect then to have seen their next paper adorned with the form of an Association, which would have done honour to it, and, if attended to and complied with by the good people of the Province, might have put it in the power of any one very easily to have distinguished such loyal subjects to the King, as dare to assert their rights to freedom, in all respects consistent with the laws of the land, from such rebellious ones, under the pretext of being friends to liberty, are frequently committing the most enormous outrages upon the persons and properties of such of his Majesty's peaceable subjects, who, for want of knowing who to call upon (in these distracted times)

for assistance, fall into the hands of a banditti, whose cruelties surpass those of savages; but finding my mistake, now take the liberty to send copies to your several offices to be published in your next papers, that so the publick may be made more acquainted therewith than at present, and be induced to associate for the above purposes; and as many of the people, for some time past, have been arming themselves, it may not be amiss to inform them that their numbers will not appear so large in the field as was imagined, before it was known that independency was the object in contemplation; since which many have associated in different parts of the Province to preserve their freedom and support Government; and as it may become necessary in a very short time to give convincing proofs of our attachment to Government, we shall be much wanting to ourselves if we longer trample upon that patience which has already endured to long-suffering, and may, if this opportunity be neglected, have a tendency to ripen many for destruction who have not been guilty of overt act of rebellion, which would be an event diametrically opposite to the humane and benevolent intention of him whose abused patience cannot endure for ever, and who hath already, by his prudent conduct, evinced the most tender regard for a deluded people.

Tim. Ruggles.

THE ASSOCIATION

We, the subscribers, being fully sensible of the blessings of good Government, on the one hand, and convinced, on the other hand, of the evils and calamities attending on tyranny in all shapes, whether exercised by one or many, and having of late seen, with great grief and concern, the distressing efforts of a dissolution of all Government, whereby our lives, liberties, and properties are rendered precarious, and no longer under the protection of the law; and apprehending it to be our indispensable duty to use all lawful means in our power for the defence of our persons and property against all riotous and lawless violence, and to recover and secure the advantages which we are entitled to from the good and wholesome laws of the Government, do hereby associate and mutually covenant and engage to and with each other as follows, namely:

1st. That we will, upon all occasions, with our lives and fortunes, stand by and assist each other in the defence of his life, liberty, and property, whenever the same shall be attacked or endangered by any bodies of men, riotously assembled, upon any pretence, or under any authority not warranted by the laws of the land.

2d. That we will, upon all occasions, mutually support each other in the free exercise and enjoyment of our undoubted right to liberty, in eating, drinking, buying, sell-

ing, communing, and acting what, with whom, and as we please, consistent with the laws of *God* and the King.

3d. That we will not acknowledge or submit to the pretended authority of any Congress, Committees of Correspondence, or any other unconstitutional assemblies of men; but will, at the risk of our lives, if need be, oppose the forcible exercise of all such authority.

4thly. That we will, to the utmost of our power, promote, encourage, and when called to it, enforce obedience to the rightful authority of our most gracious Sovereign, King *George* the Third, and of his laws.

5thly. That when the person or property of any of us shall be invaded or threatened by any Committees, mobs, or unlawful assemblies, the others of us will, upon notice received, forthwith repair, properly armed, to the person on whom, or the place where such invasion or threatening shall be, and will, to the utmost of our power, defend such person and his property, and, if need be, will oppose and repel force with force.

6thly. That if any one of us shall unjustly and unlawfully be injured, in his person or property, by any such assemblies as before mentioned, the others of us will unitedly demand, and, if in our power, compel the offenders, if known, to make full reparation and satisfaction for such injury; and if all our means of security fail, we will have recourse to the natural law of retaliation.

In witness of all which we hereto subscribe our names this ***** day of *****

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1057-1058.

[Darien, Ga., January 12, 1775]

Darien (Georgia) Resolutions

In the Darien Committee, Thursday, January 12, 1775.

When the most valuable privileges of a people are invaded, not only by open violence, but by every kind of fraud, sophistry, and cunning, it behoves every individual to be upon his guard, and every member of society, like beacons in a country surrounded by enemies, to give the alarm, not only when their liberties in general are attacked, but separately, least a precedent in one may affect the whole; and to enable the collective wisdom of such people to judge of its consequence, and how far their respective grievances concerns all, or should be opposed to preserve their necessary union. Every laudable attempt of this kind by the good people of this Colony, in a constitutional manner, hath been hitherto frustrated, by the influence and authority of

men in office, and their numerous dependants, and in every other natural and just way, by the various arts they have put in practice. We, therefore, the Representatives of the extensive District of *Darien*, in the Colony of *Georgia*, being now assembled in Congress, by the authority and free choice of the inhabitants of the said District, now freed from their fetters, do Resolve,

1st. That the unparalleled moderation, the decent, but firm and manly conduct of the loyal and brave people of *Boston* and *Massachusetts Bay*, to preserve their liberty, deserves not only the applause and thanks of all *America*, but also, the imitation of all mankind. But, to avoid needless repetitions, we acquiesce and join in all the Resolutions passed by the Grand *American* Congress in *Philadelphia* last *October*. We thank them for their sage counsel and advice, and most heartily and cheerfully accede to the Association entered into by them, as the wisest and most moderate measure that could be adopted in our present circumstances to reconcile and firmly unite *Great Britain* and the Colonies, so indispensably necessary to each other, by the surest and best basis – mutual interest. But, as the wisest Councils upon earth are liable to the errors of humanity, and notwithstanding our reverence and partiality for that august Assembly, we beg leave to differ in opinion from them, in charging the unjust measures of the present and preceding Ministry, to a person qualified rather for a private than a publick station; and as the resentment of his countrymen, on a former occasion, was raised by the illiberal and unjust abuse of them, indiscriminately, for the faults of that man, we humbly resume the renewing it at this time, on so little foundation, at least impolitick; being confident that every Member of that late, wise, patriotick, and truly honourable Congress, from a principle of candour and justice, will rather commend than blame our honest and well meant freedom.

2d. That in shutting up the Land Offices, with the intention of raising our quit-rents, and setting up our Lands at publick sale, representations of the Crown tract have not been truly considered (and attended to) in all its consequences to this vast Continent: That it is a principal part of the unjust system of politicks adopted by the present Ministry, to subject and enslave us, and evidently proceeds from an ungenerous jealousy of the Colonies, to prevent as much as possible the population of *America*, and the relief of the poor and distressed in *Britain* and elsewhere, for whom a kind Providence has opened a new world from their merciless oppressor, when the old is overrun with such monsters: That monopolizing our Lands into few hands, is forming and encouraging petty tyrants to lord it over us, or reside in any other part of the world in extravagance, luxury, and folly, by the fruit of our labour and industry – such oppressions, neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, and it drove us to the wil-

derness: And that all encouragement should be given to the poor of every Nation by every generous *American*.

3d. That Ministerial Mandates, under the name of Instructions, preventing the legal Representatives of the people to enact laws suiting their own respective situation and circumstances, are a general grievance, and more especially in this young Colony, where our internal police is not yet well settled; and as a proof of the intention of these restrictions, when time and opportunity offers, we point out particularly, amongst many others of like nature, the not suffering us to limit the term of our Assembly, or passing a quit-rent law, to ascertain and fix the most valuable part of our property.

4th. That an over proportion of Officers, for the number of inhabitants, and paying their salaries from *Britain*, so much cast up to us by Court parasites, and for which we are so often charged with ingratitude, are in truth real and great grievances, rendering them insolent and regardless of their conduct, being independent of the people who should support them according to their usefulness and behaviour, and for whose benefit and conveniency alone they were originally intended. That besides these exorbitant salaries, which enables them all to act by Deputies, whilst they wallow in luxury themselves, their combining to raise their exorbitant and illegal fees and perquisites, by various arts upon the subject, to an alarming height, are more dangerous to our liberties than a regular Army; having the means of corruption so much in their power, the danger of which is imminently exemplified in the present unhappy state of our brethren and fellow-subjects in *Britain*, and even in the late conduct of this Colony. To prevent therefore as much as in us lies these direful effects, we do resolve never to choose any person in publick office, his Deputy, Deputy's Deputy, or any expectant, to represent us in Assembly, or any other publick place, in our election, hoping the example will be followed throughout this Colony, and all *America*.

5th. To show the world that we are not influenced by any contracted or interested motives, but a general philanthropy for all mankind, of whatever climate, language, or complexion, we hereby declare our disapprobation and abhorrence of the unnatural practice of Slavery in *America*, (however the uncultivated state of our country, or other specious arguments may plead for it,) a practice founded in injustice and cruelty, and highly dangerous to our liberties, (as well as lives,) debasing part of our fellow-creatures below men, and corrupting the virtue and morals of the rest; and is laying the basis of that liberty we contend for (and which we pray the Almighty to continue to the latest posterity) upon a very wrong foundation. We therefore resolve, at all

times to use our utmost endeavours for the manumission of our Slaves in this Colony, upon the most safe and equitable footing for the masters and themselves.

6th. That we do hereby choose Messrs. ***** to represent us for this District, in the Provincial Congress at *Savannah*, the 18th instant, or at any other time and place appointed hereafter, for the space of one year from this day, and that a copy of these our Resolutions be given them expressing the sense of this District of publick grievances, which will serve for their direction and instructions; and it is further our desire, that our said Deputies shall use their endeavours to send two Delegates from this Colony to the General Continental Congress, to be held at *Philadelphia* next *May*.

ASSOCIATION

Being persuaded that the salvation of the Rights and Liberties of *America* depend, under *God*, on the firm union of the inhabitants, in its vigorous prosecution of the measures necessary for its safety, and convinced of the necessity of preventing the anarchy and confusion which attend the dissolution of the powers of Government, we, the Freemen, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the Province of *Georgia*, being greatly alarmed at the avowed design of the Ministry to raise a Revenue in *America*, and shocked by the bloody scene now acting in the *Massachusetts Bay*, do, in the most solemn manner, resolve never to become slaves, and do associate under all the ties of religion, honour, and love of Country, to adopt and endeavor to carry into execution, whatever may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention, that shall be appointed for the purpose of preserving our Constitution, and opposing the execution of the several arbitrary and oppressive Acts of the *British* Parliament, until a reconciliation between *Great Britain* and *America*, on constitutional principles, which we most ardently desire can be obtained; and that we will in all things follow the advice of our General Committee, to be appointed, respecting the purposes aforesaid, the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals and private property. Signed,

[...]

[Signed by 31 persons]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1135-1137.

[Fairfax County, Va., January 17, 1775]

Fairfax County (Virginia) Association

Threatened with the destruction of our ancient Laws and Liberty, and the loss of all that is dear to British subjects and freemen, justly alarmed with the prospect of impending ruin, - firmly determined at the hazard of our lives, to transmit to our children and posterity those sacred rights to which ourselves were born; and thoroughly convinced that a well regulated Militia, composed of the gentlemen, freeholders, and other freeman [sic!], is the natural strength, and only safe and stable security of a free Government, and that such Militia will relieve our mother country from any expense in our protection and defence, will obviate the pretence of a necessity for taxing us on that account, and render it unnecessary to keep any Standing Army (ever dangerous to liberty) in this Colony, we the subscribers, inhabitants of *Fairfax* County, have freely and voluntarily agreed, and hereby do agree and solemnly promise, to enroll and embody ourselves into a Militia for this County, intended to consist of all the able-bodied freemen from eighteen to fifty years of age, under Officers of their own choice, and for that purpose to form ourselves into distinct Companies of sixty-eight men each; and so soon as the said Companies or any of them in convenient neighbourhoods and Districts are completed, to choose from among our friends and acquaintance, upon whose justice, humanity and bravery, we can rely, a Captain, two Lieutenants, an Ensign, and four Sergeants, for each Company; every Captain respectively to appoint four Corporals and a Drummer for his Company, which election of Officers is to be annual in any Company, if the majority of the Company think fit; and whenever a sufficient number of Companies shall be made up, all the said Companies are to be formed into a Regiment, under the command of a Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, and Major, to be chosen by the Captains, Lieutenants, and Ensigns of the said Companies; which election of Field Officers is to be annual also, if the majority of the Officers think fit. And such of us as have, or can procure Rifle-Guns, and understand the use of them, will be ready to form a Company of Marksmen of Light-Infantry for the said Regiment, choosing our own Officers as aforesaid, and distinguishing our dress, when we are upon duty, from that of the other Companies, by painted hunting-shirts and Indian boots, or caps, as shall be found most convenient; which regulation and establishment is to be preserved and continued until a regular and proper Militia Law for the defence of the country, shall be enacted by the Legislature of this Colony. And we do each of us for ourselves respectively, promise and engage to keep a good Firelock, in proper order, and to furnish ourselves as soon as possible with, and always keep by us, one pound of Gunpowder, four pounds of Lead, one dozen Gun-Flints, and a pair of Bullet-Moulds, with a Cartouch-Box, or Powder-Horn, and Bag for Balls. That we will use our best endeavours to perfect ourselves in the Military Exercise and Disci-

pline, and therefore will pay due obedience to our Officers, and regularly attend such private and general musters as they shall appoint. And that we will always hold ourselves in readiness, in case of necessity, hostile invasion, or real danger, to defend and preserve to the utmost of our power, our religion, the laws of our country, and the just rights and privileges of our fellow-subjects, our posterity, and ourselves, upon the principles of the *English* Constitution.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1145-1146.

[Provincial Congress at Savannah, Ga., January 1775]

Association entered into by forty-five of the Deputies assembled in Provincial Congress, at SAVANNAH, in GEORGIA, on the 18th of JANUARY, 1775, and by them subscribed on the 23d, when they chose Noble WIMBERLY JONES, ARCHIBALD BULLOCK, and JOHN HOUSTON, Esquires, Delegates to represent that Colony in the Continental Congress, to be held in MAY next.

Whereas a Non-Importation, Non-Consumption, and Non-Exportation Agreement, faithfully adhered to, will probably prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure to obtain redress of *American* Grievances: We do, therefore, for ourselves and our constituents, firmly agree and associate, under the sacred ties of virtue, honour, and love of our country, as follows:

First. That we will not receive into this Province any Goods, Wares, or Merchandises that shall be shipped from *Great Britain* or *Ireland*, after the 15th day of *March* next; or from any other place any such Goods, Wares, or Merchandises as shall be shipped from those Kingdoms after that time, except such as come under the rules and directions of the ninth Article herein mentioned; and except such Goods, Wares, or Merchandises as are absolutely necessary for carrying on the *Indian* trade, subject, nevertheless, to the control of the Continental Congress, intended to be held at *Philadelphia*, on the 10th day of *May* next. Nor will we from this day import or purchase any Tea from any part of the world, nor import 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.

Second. That we will neither import or purchase any Slaves imported from *Africa*, or elsewhere, after the 15th day of *March* next.

Third. That we will not export any Merchandise, or commodity whatsoever, to *Great Britain* or *Ireland*, or to the *West Indies*, after the first day of *December* next, except Rice to *Europe*.

Fourth. 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 *Georgia*; and if any Merchants, residing in *Great Britain* or *Ireland*, shall, directly or indirectly, ship any Goods, Wares, or Merchandises for this Province, in order to break such Non-Importation Agreement, or in any manner contravene the same, on such unworthy conduct being well attested, it ought to be made publick; and on the same being so done, we will not, from thenceforth, have any commercial connection with such Merchant.

Fifth. 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.

Sixth. We will use our utmost endeavours to improve the breed of Sheep, and increase their number to the greatest extent, and to that end will kill them as sparingly 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.

Seventh. That we will, in our several stations, encourage frugality, economy, and industry, and promote Agriculture, Arts, and the Manufactures of *America*, especially that of Wool; and will discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially Horse-Racing, and all kinds of gaming, Cock-Fighting, exhibitions of Shew, Plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments; and on the death of any relation or friend, none of us, or our families, will go into any further mourning dress than a Black Crape or Ribbon on the arm or hat, for gentlemen; and Black Ribbon and Necklace, for ladies; and we will discontinue the giving of Scarfs and Gloves at Funerals.

Eighth. That such as are venders of Goods or Merchandise, will not take advantage of the scarcity of Goods that may be occasioned by this Association, but will sell the same at the rates they have been accustomed to do for twelve months last past; and if any vender of Goods or Merchandise shall sell any 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.

Ninth. In case any Merchant, Trader, or other person, shall receive any Goods or Merchandises which shall be shipped after the 15th day of *March*, and before the 15th day of *May* next, the same ought, forthwith, at the election of the owner, to be either re-shipped or delivered to the Committee of the Town, Parish, or District 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 costs and charges; the profit, if any, to be applied

towards relieving such poor inhabitants of the Town of *Boston* as are immediate sufferers by the Port Bill; and a particular account of all Goods so returned, stored, or sold, to be inserted in the publick Papers: and if any Goods or Merchandises shall be shipped after the said 15th day of *May* next, the same ought, forthwith, to be sent back again, without breaking any of the packages thereof.

Tenth. That a Committee be chosen in every Parish, Town, and District, by those who contribute towards the general tax, 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 publickly known, and universally contemned as the enemies of *American Liberty*, and thenceforth we will respectively break off all dealings with him or her.

Eleventh. That the Committee of Correspondence do frequently inspect the entries of the Custom House, and inform the Committees of the other Provinces, from time to time, of the true state thereof, and of every other material circumstance that may occur relative to this Association.

Twelfth. That all Manufactures of this Province be sold at reasonable prices, so that no undue advantages be taken of a future scarcity of Goods.

And we do solemnly bind ourselves, and our constituents, under the ties aforesaid, to adhere to this Association, until *American Grievances* are redressed.

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, *Savannah, Georgia*, January 23, 1775.

[Signed by 45 persons]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1158-1160.

[Dutchess County, N.Y., January 18, 1775]

Dutchess County (New-York) Association

We, the subscribers, being desirous to convince mankind that we are firmly attached to our most happy Constitution, and are disposed to support and maintain peace and good order under his Majesty's Government, do therefore declare, that our Sovereign Lord King *George* the Third, is the only Sovereign to whom *British America*

can, or ought to owe and bear true and faithful allegiance, and that there is no legal power or authority therein but what is only derived from them; that our Representatives, in General Assembly convened, are the only guardians of our Rights and Liberties; that without them no laws here can be made to bind us, and that they only are the channel through which our grievances can properly be represented for redress; and that, to support their right and authority, we do hereby associate and mutually covenant and engage to and with each other as follows, namely:

First. That we will upon all occasions stand by and assist each other in the defence of his life, liberty, and property, whenever the same shall be attacked or endangered by any bodies of men riotously assembled, upon any pretence, or under any authority whatsoever, not warranted by the laws of the land.

Second. That we will upon all occasions mutually support each other in the free exercise and enjoyment of our undoubted right to liberty in eating, drinking, buying, selling, communing, and acting what, with whom, and as we please, consistent with the laws of *God*, and the laws of the land, notwithstanding the Association entered into by the Continental Congress to the contrary.

Lastly. That we will endeavour to promote, encourage, and, when called upon, enforce obedience to the rightful authority of our most gracious Sovereign King *George* the Third, and the laws which can, do, or may constitutionally extend to, or in the *British Colonies in America*.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands, this eighteenth day of *January*, in the fifteenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord *George* the Third, by the grace of *God* of *Great Britain, France, and Ireland*, King, Defender of the Faith &c., and in the year of our Lord Christ one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.

Signed by a number of Inhabitants of DUTCHESS County.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1164.

[Ridgefield, Conn., January 30, 1775]

Ridgefield (Connecticut) Resolutions.

Whereas, application hath been made to the Selectmen of the Town of *Ridgefield*, in *Connecticut* Colony, by several of the Inhabitants of said Town, to call a special Town Meeting, in order to take into consideration the Resolutions entered into by the Continental Congress; and the Inhabitants being accordingly met on the 30th day of *January*, 1775,

NATHAN OLMSTEAD was chosen *Moderator*.

The meeting then proceeded to take into consideration the said Resolutions; and, after mature deliberation, the question was put, “whether this Town will adopt and conform to the Resolves contained in the Association of the Continental Congress or not?”

Resolved in the negative (nine dissenters only).

2d. *Resolved nem. con.*, That we do acknowledge his most sacred Majesty, King *George* the Third, to be our rightful Sovereign; and do hereby publicly avow our allegiance to him and his legal successors; and that we will, to the utmost of our power, support his throne and dignity against every combination in the universe.

3d. *Resolved, nem. con.*, That we acknowledge that the three branches of Legislation, to wit: the King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, concurring and acting together, have a constitutional right of government over the whole and every part of the *British* Empire.

4th *Resolved, nem. con.*, That the Governour, Council, and representatives of this Colony, being indulged with, and having an established right of legislation (though restricted) in and over this Colony, and do hereby acknowledge and avow their right of Government and legislation in and over this Colony, and are confident that they are the rightful and constitutional rulers, directors, and guardians of our persons, properties, rights, liberties, and privileges; and we desire no other political guides or guardians than said Assembly, and the Officers constitutionally appointed by them to keep the peace and order of the Colony, and to superintend the execution of the Colony Laws.

5th. *Resolved, nem. con.*, That it would be dangerous and hurtful to the inhabitants of this Town to adopt said Congress’s measures; and we hereby publicly disapprove of, and protest against said Congress, and the measures by them directed, as unconstitutional, as subversive of our real liberties, and as countenancing licentiousness.

6th. *Resolved, nem. con.*, That the Town Clerk be desired to make out a true copy of the aforesaid Resolves, and transmit them to one or more of the Printers in *New-York*, that they may be published to the world.

STEPHEN SMITH, *Town Clerk*.

P.S. There were present in said meeting about two hundred voters; and the said Resolutions are entered on the Town Records.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1202-1203.

[Ridgefield, Conn., February 2, 1775]

Ridgefield, Connecticut, February 2, 1775.

Whereas, in a Meeting of the Town of *Ridgefield*, held on the 30th of *January* last, the question was put, whether the Town would adopt and conform to the Resolves contained in the Association of the Continental Congress, or not; which Question was resolved in the negative. We, subscribers, inhabitants of the society of *Ridgebury*, within the said Town, do hereby declare, that we were not on the negative side of the above question, and are very sorry that the Town did not adopt the abovesaid Association, as we think it of importance to the cause of *American* freedom that it should be faithfully observed, and do accordingly purpose to observe it ourselves, as far as we can, under our present circumstances, and stand ready to concur with the Town, if a majority could be obtained for that purpose in appointing a Committee of Observation.

[Signed by 29 persons]

A considerable number of other subscribers to the above paper are expected to be sent in.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1210.

[Ridgebury, Conn., February 1775]

RIDGEBURY LIBERTY-MEN

Whereas the Delegates from all the Towns in this County (except two) met in Congress, at *Fairfield*, on the 14th day of *February* last, being deeply affected to hear of the defection of the Towns of *Ridgefield* and *Newtown* from the Association of the Continental Congress, yet finding some who heartily adopt the peaceable measures recommended by the Congress, did strongly recommend it to the inhabitants of each of the aforesaid Towns who are warmly attached to the rights of their country, to notify a meeting of said inhabitants, and proceed to choose a Chairman and Clerk, and fully adopt the doings of the Continental Congress, and publish and transmit the same, with their names thereunto affixed, to the several Towns in this County: We the subscribers, inhabitants of the Town of *Ridgefield*, being, in consequence of publick notification, assembled for the purposes aforesaid, at the Meeting-House in the Parish of *Ridgebury*, within the said Town, on the 20th of *March*, A. D. 1775, and having chosen Captain *Jonah Foster*, our Chairman, and Mr. *William Forrester* our Clerk, do hereby declare,

First, That we approve of the Association of the late Continental Congress, and should rejoice to have an opportunity of adopting it fully in union with the Town as a body; and that, even under our present circumstances, we will pay all due regard to it,

and observe the articles of it, as far we can, without involving ourselves in such peculiar difficulties as our brethren of other Towns are not exposed to, when the Town as a body adopt it.

Secondly, That we wholly disapprove and protest against every thing contained in the Resolves passed by this Town on the 30th day of *January* last which is contrary, or in anywise repugnant to the rights of the *American* Colonies, as stated by the late Continental Congress, or that is anywise calculated to cast an odium upon that reputable body, or to discountenance the measures by them adopted and recommended; and those of us who were active in passing said Resolves do sincerely retract whatever in them comes within the limits of the above disapprobation and protest.

Thirdly, In case it shall appear to our Chairman and Clerk to be necessary or expedient for us to meet again on any future day, we desire and authorize them to notify a meeting of us, the following Associators, and of all others within this Town who may be disposed to join with us, at such time and place as they shall think proper. And we further authorize them to admit, at any time, all such inhabitants of this Town as may be heartily disposed to join with us, to enter their names with us as subscribers to the forgoing declaration and protest. We also desire the Chairman and Clerk to meet for that purpose in a month, and as many others as may choose to attend with them, at such time and place as they shall appoint.

Fourthly. We gratefully acknowledge the respect shewn us by the worthy Delegates in the late County Congress at *Fairfield*, in taking notice of us under our present unhappy situation , and pointing out the method proper for us to take in order to be known and treated as brethren and friends in the common cause.

Fifthly, We desire the Clerk to make out true copies of the foregoing, and transmit the same, with our names thereunto affixed, to the several Towns in this County, or to their Committees of Inspection.

Jonah Foster, *Chairman*.

[Signed by 54 persons]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1238-1239.

[Reading, Conn., February 1775]

Reading (Connecticut) Association

MR. RIVINGTON: In the present critical situation of publick affairs, we the subscribers, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of *Reading*, and the adjoining parts, in the County of *Fairfield*, and Colony of *Connecticut*, think it necessary (through the channel of your Paper) to assure the publick that we are open enemies to any change

in the present happy Constitution; and highly disapprove of all measures in any degree calculated to promote confusion and disorder; for which purpose, and in order to avoid the general censure incurred by a great part of this Colony from the mode of conduct her adopted for the purpose of opposing the *British* Government, we have entered into the following Resolves and Agreements, viz:

First. *Resolved*, That whilst me [sic!] enjoy the privileges and immunities of the *English* Constitution, we will render all due obedience to his most gracious Majesty King *George* the Third; and that a firm dependence on the mother country is essential to our political safety and happiness.

Second. *Resolved*, That the privileges and immunities of this Constitution are yet (in a good degree) continued to all his Majesty's American subjects, except those who, we conceive, have justly forfeited their title thereto.

Third. *Resolved*, That we suppose the Continental Congress was constituted for the purpose of restoring harmony between *Great Britain* and her Colonies, and removing the displeasure of his Majesty towards his *American* subjects; whereas, on the contrary, some of their Resolutions appear to us immediately calculated to widen the present unhappy breach; counteract the first principles of civil society, and in a great degree abridge the privileges of their constituents.

Fourth. *Resolved*, That notwithstanding we will, in all circumstances, conduct with prudence and moderation, we consider it an indispensable duty we owe to our King, our Constitution, our country, and posterity, to defend, maintain, and preserve, at the risk of our lives and properties, the prerogative of the Crown, and the privileges of the subject from all attacks by any rebellious body of men, any Committees of Inspection, Correspondence, &c.

Signed by one hundred and forty-one Inhabitants, whose names are to be seen at the Printer's.

READING (CONNECTICUT) COMMITTEE

Whereas, there was a certain number of Resolves published in *James Rivington's Gazetteer*, of the 23d of *February*, 1775, and said by said *Rivington* to be signed by one hundred and forty-one Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of *Reading*, and the adjoining parts, in the County of *Fairfield*, and Colony of *Connecticut*; and whereas said Resolves are injurious to the rights of this Colony, and breathe a spirit of enmity and opposition to the rights and liberties of all *America*, and are in direct opposition to the Association of the Continental Congress; and notwithstanding said Resolutions were come into with a (seeming) view to secure to the said signers some extraordinary privi-

leges and immunities, yet either through negligence in the Printer, or upon design of the subscribers, said signers' names are not made publick: And now, if there be any advantage in adopting those principles, we are willing they should be entitled thereto; and for which end, and for the more effectual carrying into execution said Association, we have taken some pains, and by the assistance of him who carried said Resolves to said Printer, we have obtained the whole of said names. But as we mean not to publish the names of any except, those that belong to said *Reading*, their names are as follows, viz:

[74 names]

N. B. There are only forty-two Freeholders in the above number; there are several minors, &c., to make the above number of seventy-four, that belong to said *Reading*; and we hereby hold them up to publick view, as opposers to the Association of said Congress.

Signed by order of the Committee of Observation for said Town of Reading.
Ebenezer Couch, Chairman.

MR. RIVINGTON: You are desired by many staunch friends to the King and the Constitution, in this Colony, to insert the names of the subscribers to the *Reading* Association, as published in the *Gazetteer*, on the 23d of *February*.

John Lyon.

[142 names]

N. B. *Obadiab Platt* having been proscribed in Mr. *Gaine's* Paper, on a suspicion of subscribing the Association, the publick may be assured the above is the very list delivered to the Printer; and that *Obadiab Platt's* name was not inserted in it.

There are no signers of this piece under twenty-one years of age.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1258-1260.

[Eastham, Mass., February 24, 1775]

Eastham, February 24, 1775.

Whereas it appears to us that a number of men in this Town have been, and still are using their influence and power in opposition to the measures adopted by the *Americans* to recover, preserve and maintain those rights and privileges which our illus-

trious ancestors so nobly contended for, and have handed down to us as a fair inheritance: Now, in order to free ourselves as much as possible from the embarrassments of those men, and to convince the world that we are determined to persevere in joining our *American* brethren in their noble efforts to throw off the yoke of tyranny, we think it highly expedient to form ourselves into an Association. Therefore we, the subscribers, mutually agree and associate ourselves under the name and title of Freeholders and Freemen of the Association of the Town of *Eastham*, and do hereby pledge our faith to each other that we will abide by the Association resolves, and recommendations of the Continental, our Provincial and this County Congresses, (so far as they are made publick,) to the utmost of our power; and also, that we will abide by the regulations and regular votes, resolves, and agreements that shall be hereafter made by this Association for the purposes before mentioned, of recovering, securing, and maintaining our just rights and privileges.

Witness our hands:

[approximately 90 names]

A true copy, examined:

ISAAC SPARROW, Association Clerk.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1052.

[New-Milford, Conn., February 27, 1775]

New-Milford (Connecticut) Resolutions.

A great number of Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of *New-Milford*, in *Litchfield* County, being highly sensible of the blessings of good order and government, and much alarmed at the horrible prospect of anarchy and confusion, did, on *Monday*, the 27th instant, unanimously enter into the following Resolutions:

1. That we think it a point of duty, in this day of trouble and confusion, to make it known to the world, that we have signed a Protest against the Town of *New-Milford's* adopting the Resolves of the Continental Congress.

2. That we do acknowledge his most sacred Majesty, King *George* the Third, to be our rightful Sovereign; and do hereby publickly avow our allegiance to him and his legal successors.

3. That we acknowledge that the King and Parliament have a constitutional right of Government over every part of the *British* Empire; and that we look upon ourselves as not bound by any unconstitutional assemblies of men whatever, such as are not warranted by the laws of the land.

The above is signed by one hundred and twenty inhabitants of the Town of *New-Milford* in *Litchfield* County.

February 27, 1775.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 1, p. 1270.

[Portsmouth, N.H., spring 1775]

PORTSMOUTH (NEW-HAMPSHIRE) ASSOCIATION

We, the subscribers, considering the disorderly state of the times, and being deeply impressed with a sense of the inestimable value of constitutional liberty, think ourselves under an absolute necessity of associating together for the support of the wholesome laws of the land, and also for the preservation and protection of our persons and properties, which we find, at least as to many, have been threatened of late, and we do therefore solemnly engage to and with each other:

1st. That we will maintain the laws of the land to the utmost of our power.

2d. That we will also defend and protect each other from mobs, riots, or any other unlawful attack whatsoever, and upon the first notice of any attempt upon either of the subscribers, each and everyone of us will immediately repair to the person attacked, and him defend to the last extremity.

January 17, 1775.

TO THE SUBSCRIBERS OF THE ABOVE ASSOCIATION

Portsmouth, March 31, 1775.

GENTLEMEN: Take this Association under your mature consideration, as I hope some of you to be gentlemen of penetration and knowledge; and after a serious examination of the above Association, you will find, instead of supporting and maintaining the laws of the land, you are acting in direct violation thereof. As you say you will support and maintain the laws of the land, and as you have not made any distinction between the Province Law and the late unconstitutional Acts, established by the King and Parliament, we must suppose you mean to support and maintain both. Permit me, gentlemen, to tell you, that your zeal overbalances your knowledge. Pray examine the Province law throughout, and all other law authorities that ever were held in repute by the *English* Nation, and you will not find one instance wherein they justify a number of men in combining together in any league whatsoever to support the law, but quite the reverse; for the law is supported in another manner; it is maintained by Magistrates and Officers, that are legally appointed as the laws direct, and not by a number of men

combining together. You say you “will also defend and protect each other from mobs, riots, or any unlawful attack whatsoever; and that on the first notice of any attempt upon either of the subscribers, each and every one of you will immediately repair to the person attacked, and him defend to the last extremity.”

Is this law, gentlemen? In what book and page will your find it? or what legislative body ever established such measures to support laws? Was it ever known in the King’s Dominions for a number of men to assemble together in order to suppress any mob without authority; for so doing they are themselves a mob in the eyes of the law; to all intents and purposes; though I am convinced, if you had been prudent enough to have examined into the law of the Province, by which our lives and properties are protected, before you undertook to support it by mobs, as you have solemnly agreed to do, you would have been ashamed ever to have subscribed your names to such unlawful combination.

Gentlemen, I beg leave to ask you what it is you are afraid of? Is it because you have honest hearts and act upon well-grounded principles? Is it because you stand strong for the Colonies and her liberties? Or is it because you strike against *American* freedom, and because you are trying to enforce the late unconstitutional Acts, and to plunge *America* into a state of slavery? Surely it must be guilt and remorse of conscience, and from thence springs fear; ah! fear, indeed, and reason enough for fear, for any person to sell his Country and the liberties thereof, for the sake of false honour and the poor pittance of sordid gain; he will live in fear and die in fear, and will run the greatest risk of being tormented hereafter.

SPECTATOR

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 251-252.

[Connecticut, April 1775]

Agreement subscribed by Captain ARNOLD and his Company of fifty persons, when they set out from CONNECTICUT as Volunteers to assist the Provincials at CAMBRIDGE.

To all Christian people believing in and relying on that GOD, to whom our enemies have at last forced us to appeal:

Be it known that we, the subscribers, having taken up arms for the relief of our brethren, and defence of their as well as our just rights and privileges, declare to the world that we, from the heart, disavow every thought of rebellion to His Majesty as supreme head of the *British* Empire, or opposition to legal authority, and shall, on

every occasion, manifest to the world, by our conduct, this to be our fixed principle. Driven to the last necessity, and obliged to have recourse to arms in defence of our lives and liberties, and, from the suddenness of the occasion, deprived of that legal authority, the dictates of which we ever with pleasure obey, find it necessary, for preventing disorders, irregularities, and misunderstandings in the course of our march and service, solemnly to agree to and with each other on the following regulations and orders, binding ourselves by all that is dear and sacred carefully and constantly to observe and keep them.

In the first place we will conduct ourselves decently and inoffensively as we march, both to our countrymen and one another, paying that regard to the advice, admonition, and reproof of our Officers, which their station justly entitles them to expect, ever considering the dignity of our own character, and that we are not mercenaries, whose views extend no farther than pay and plunder, whose principles are such, that every path that leads to the obtaining these is agreeable, though wading through the blood of their countrymen; but men acquainted with, and feeling the most generous fondness for the liberties and unalienable rights of mankind, and who are, in the course of Divine Providence, called to the honourable service of hazarding our lives in their defence.

Secondly. Drunkenness, gaming, profaneness, and every vice of that nature shall be avoided by ourselves, and discountenanced by us in others.

Thirdly. So long as we continue in our present situation of a voluntary independent Company, we engage to submit on all occasions to such decisions as shall be made and given by the majority of the Officers we have chosen; and when any difference arises between man and man, it shall be laid before the Officers aforesaid, and their decision shall be final. We mean by Officers, the Captain, Lieutenants, Ensign, Sergeants, Clerk, and Corporals; the Captain, or in his absence the Commanding Officer, to be the Moderator, and have a turning or casting voice in all debates, from whom all order shall from time to time issue. Scorning all ignoble motives, and superiour to the low and slavish practice of enforcing on men their duty by blows, it is agreed that when private admonition for any offence by any of our body committed will not reform, publick shall be made; and if that should not have the desired effect, after proper pains taken, and the same repeated, such incorrigible person shall be turned out of the Company, as totally unworthy of serving in so great and glorious a cause, and be delivered over to suffer the contempt of his countrymen.

As to particular orders, it shall from time to time be in the power of the officers to make and vary them as occasion may require, as to delivering our provisions, ammunition, rules, and orders for marching, &c. The annexed order for the present we think pertinent, and agreeable to our mind. To which, with the additions or variations that

may be made by our said Officers, we bind ourselves by the ties above mentioned to submit.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands, this 24th of *April*, 1775.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2 ,p. 383-384.

[Newtown, Fairfield County, Conn., April 12, 1775]

Newtown, Fairfield County, Colony of Connecticut, April 12, 1775.

Whereas, a considerable number of the inhabitants of this Town have, in a publick meeting, passed certain Resolves in opposition to the Resolves of the Continental Congress, (which have since been published in Mr. *Rivington's* Paper,) we have thought it expedient in some suitable way to make known our minds also respecting those matters; and therefore having subscribed the following Resolves, desire they may be printed, with the several names affixed:

We, the subscribers, do sincerely profess ourselves to be liege subjects of King *George* the Third. But from the best acquaintance with publick affairs that we have been able to attain, cannot but be deeply apprehensive that several Acts passed by the late *British* Parliament relative to *North-America* are of a very unconstitutional and oppressive nature in their tendency, directly subversive of those precious rights and privileges to which the Colonies have an indubitable claim, which Acts, therefore, are of a very alarming nature; and not being able to conceive but that the measures come into, and recommended by the late Continental Congress at *Philadelphia*, are very consistent with our sworn loyalty to our King, and in the main wisely calculated to obtain redress of said publick grievances: we do, therefore, hereby signify our willingness and purpose to be compliant in our several stations with the Resolves of said Congress.

Newtown, Fairfield County, *February* 13, 1775.

[Signed by 70 persons]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1135.

[Philadelphia, Pa., April 25, 1775]

PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION

Whereas, it appears from authentick accounts received from *England*, that it is the design of the present Ministry to enforce the late cruel and unjust Acts of Parliament complained of in the most legal and dutiful manner by the Congress: And whereas, an additional number of Troops, with a Fleet, have been ordered for *America*, to assist the Troops now in Boston in the execution of the said Acts: We, the subscribers, agree that we will associate for the purpose of learning the Military Exercise, and for defending our property and lives against all attempts to deprive us of them.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 399-400.

[New York Association, April 29, 1775]

General Association adopted by Freemen, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the City and County of NEW-YORK, on SATURDAY, the 29th of April, 1775, and transmitted for signing to all the Counties in the Province.

Persuaded that the salvation of the rights and liberties of *America* depends, under *God*, on the firm union of its inhabitants in a vigorous prosecution of the measures necessary for its safety, and convinced of the necessity of preventing the anarchy and confusion which attend the dissolution of the powers of Government, we, the Freemen, Freeholders, and Inhabitants [*of the City and County of New-York,*] being greatly alarmed at the avowed design of the Ministry to raise a revenue in *America*, and shocked by the bloody scene now acting in the *Massachusetts-Bay*, do, in the most solemn manner, resolve never to become slaves; and do associate under all the ties of religion, honour, and love to our Country, to adopt and endeavour to carry into execution whatever measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention, for the purpose of preserving our Constitution, and opposing the execution of the several arbitrary and oppressive Acts of the *British* Parliament, until a reconciliation between *Great Britain* and *America*, on constitutional principles, (which we most ardently desire,) can be obtained; and that we will in all things follow the advice of our General Committee, respecting the purposes aforesaid, the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals and private property.

Members of the Provincial Congress who signed the Association.

[...]

Signers of the Association in the Town and neighbourhood of New-Paltz, in Ulster County.

[...]

The following is a list of the names of those who refused or neglected to subscribe the General Association: [...]

Signers in Kingston, Ulster County, May and June, 1775

[...]

In pursuance of a Resolve of the Provincial Congress of the Colony of New-York, dated the 29th day of May, 1775, we, the Committee of the Corporation of Kingston, in the County of Ulster, do hereby certify that the above List or Roll contains all the persons' names who have signed the General Association, within the Corporation of Kingston; also, annexed List, returned to us, containing the names of a Company of Troop of Horse, who reside in different parts of the said County; and, also, a List on the back hereof, of the persons' names who have refused to sign the said Association. All which, with humble submission, we herewith return to the Provincial Congress aforesaid.

Dated at Kingston, this 1st day of July, 1775. By order of the committee:

Johannes Sleght, Chairman

Signers in the Troop of Horse in Ulster County, dated in Kingston, June 9, 1775.

[...]

Names of persons in Kingston who refused to sign

[...]

Signers in Marbletown, Ulster County, June, 1775

[...]

In pursuance of a Resolve of the Provincial Congress of the Colony of *New-York*, dated 29th day of *May*, 1775, we, the Committee of the Township of *Marbletown*, in the County of Ulster, do hereby certify that the above List or Roll contains all the persons' names who have signed the General Association within the Township of *Marbletown*, and also *William Wood*, on the back hereof, who refuses signing the same; all which, with humble submission, we herewith return to the Provincial Congress aforesaid.

Levi Pawling, Chairman.

Signers in Mamacoting, Ulster County.

[...]

Ulster County:

Hurley

Rochester

New-Marlborough

Weathersfield

Orange County:

Goshen

Cornwall

Haverstraw Precinct

Newburgh

Minisink

Newburgh, Orange County:

Whereas we, the subscribers, have refused to sign the Association within the time limited by the Provincial Congress; and whereas our troubles with the Mother Country continue to increase, and we are now convinced that we have no other alternative left but to repel force by force, or submit to be slaves. Sensible that this is our deplorable situation, and in order to continue to link our chain of friendship still more firm, and to convince our friends, and the friends of *American* liberty in general, we do hereby solemnly and sincerely swear, on the Holy Evangelists, that we will from hence heartily agree and consent to whatsoever our Continental and Provincial Congresses have or may do, direct, ordain, and appoint, for the preservation of our constitutional liberties, and that we will, as much as in us lies, discourage the spirit of opposition that has too unhappily prevailed in some parts of this Country; that we will, from time to time, bear and pay our quota of all expenses, with the rest of our brethren in *America*, that have already or hereafter may accrue, in defending our liberties aforesaid. And we do hereby further swear, that we make this declaration and oath of our own free will and voluntary consent; and in testimony whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this 14th day of *July*, A. D. 1775

[...]

Dutchess County:

Beekman's Precinct

Poughkeepsie

Northeast Precinct

Amenia Precinct

Rhinebeck Precinct

Suffolk County:

Huntington

Islip Precinct

Brookhaven

Easthampton

Smithtown

Southold

Shelter-Island

Charlotte County

Cumberland County:

Springfield

Townshend

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 581-620.

[New York, May 4, 1775]

Association of New-York

New York, May 4, 1775.

The following Association was set on foot here last *Saturday, April 29*, and has been transmitted, for signing, to all the Counties in the Province, and signed by most of the men of this City:

“Persuaded that the salvation of the rights and liberties of *America* depend under *God*, on the firm union of its inhabitants, in a vigorous prosecution of the measures necessary for its safety, and convinced of the necessity of preventing the anarchy and confusion which attend a dissolution of the powers of Government: We, the Free-men, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the City and County of *New-York*, being greatly alarmed at the avowed design of the Ministry to raise a revenue in *America*, and shocked by the bloody scene now acting in the *Massachusetts-Bay*, do, in the most solemn manner, resolve never to become slaves; and do associate, under all the ties of religion, honour, and love to our Country, to adopt and endeavour to carry into execution whatever measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention, for the purpose of preserving our Constitution and opposing the execution of the several arbitrary and oppressive Acts of the *British* Parliament, until a reconciliation between *Great Britain* and *America*, on con-

stitutional principles, (which we most ardently desire,) can be obtained; and that we will, in all things, follow the advice of our General Committee respecting the purposes aforesaid, the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals and private property.”

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 471.

[Newark, N.J., May 4, 1775]

Town-Meeting, Newark, New-Jersey

Newark, New-Jersey, May 4, 1775.

At a meeting of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Township of *Newark*, in *New-Jersey*, on *Thursday*, the 4th day of *May*, A. D. 1775:

Doctor WILLIAM BURNETT in the Chair.

An Association having been entered into and subscribed by the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of said Town, a motion was made and agreed to, that the same be read. The same was accordingly read, and is as follows:

“We, the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Township of *Newark*, having deliberately considered the openly avowed design of the Ministry of *Great Britain* to raise a revenue in America; being affected with horror at the bloody scene now acting in the *Massachusetts-Bay* for carrying that arbitrary design into execution; firmly convinced that the very existence of the rights and liberties of *America* can, under *God*, subsist on no other basis than the most animated and perfect union of its inhabitants; and being sensible of the necessity, in the present exigency, of preserving good order, and a due regulation in all publick measures, with hearts perfectly abhorrent of slavery, do solemnly, under all the sacred ties of religion, honour, and love to our Country, associate and resolve, that we will, personally, and as far as our influence can extend, endeavour to support and carry into execution whatever measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or agreed upon by the proposed Convention of Deputies of this Province, for the purposes of preserving and fixing our Constitution on a permanent basis, and opposing the execution of the several despotick and oppressive Acts of the *British* Parliament, until the wished-for reconciliation between *Great Britain* and *America*, on constitutional principles, can be obtained.

“That a General Committee be chosen by this Town for the purposes aforesaid, and that we will be directed by, and support them in all things respecting the “common cause, the preservation of peace, good order, the safety of individuals, and private property.”

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 505.

[Westmoreland, Pa., May 16, 1775]

Meeting of The Inhabitants of Westmoreland, Pennsylvania

At a general meeting of the inhabitants of the County of *Westmoreland*, held at *Hanna's Town* the 16th day of *May*, 1775, for taking into consideration the very alarming situation of this country, occasioned by the dispute with *Great Britain*:

Resolved unanimously, That the Parliament of *Great Britain*, by several late Acts, have declared the inhabitants of the *Massachusetts-Bay* to be in rebellion, and the Ministry, by endeavouring to enforce those Acts, have attempted to reduce the said inhabitants to a more wretched state of slavery than ever before existed in any state or country. Not content with violating their constitutional and chartered privileges, they would strip them of the rights of humanity, exposing lives to the wanton and unpunishable sport of a licentious soldiery, and depriving them of the very means of subsistence.

Resolved unanimously, That there is no reason to doubt but the same system of tyranny and oppression will (should it meet with success in the *Massachusetts-Bay*) be extended to every other part of *America*: it is therefore become the indispensable duty of every *American*, of every man who has any publick virtue or love for his Country, or any bowels for posterity, by every means which *God* has put in his power, to resist and oppose the execution of it; that for us we will be ready to oppose it with our lives and fortunes. And the better to enable us to accomplish it, we will immediately form ourselves into a military body, to consist of Companies to be made up out of the several Townships under the following Association, which is declared to be the Association of *Westmoreland* County:

Possessed with the most unshaken loyalty and fidelity to His Majesty, King *George* the Third, whom we acknowledge to be our lawful and rightful King, and who we wish may long be the beloved Sovereign of a free and happy people throughout the whole *British* Empire; we declare to the world, that we do not mean by this Association to deviate from that loyalty which we hold it our bounden duty to observe; but, animated with the love of liberty, it is no less our duty to maintain and defend our just rights (which, with sorrow, we have seen of late wantonly violated in many instances by a wicked Ministry and a corrupted Parliament) and transmit them entire to our posterity, for which purpose we do agree and associate together:

1st. To arm and form ourselves into a Regiment or Regiments, and choose officers to command us in such proportion as shall be thought necessary.

2d. We will, with alacrity, endeavour to make ourselves masters of the manual exercise, and such evolutions as may be necessary to enable us to act in a body with concert; and to that end we will meet at such times and places as shall be appointed either for the Companies or the Regiment, by the officers commanding each when chosen.

3d. That should our Country be invaded by a foreign enemy, or should Troops be sent from *Great Britain* to enforce the late arbitrary Acts of its Parliament, we will cheerfully submit to military discipline, and to the utmost of our power resist and oppose them, or either of them, and will coincide with any plan that may be formed for the defence of *America* in general, or *Pennsylvania* in particular.

4th. That we do not wish or desire any innovation, but only that things may be restored to, and go on in the same way as before the era of the Stamp Act, when *Boston* grew great, and *America* was happy. As a proof of this disposition, we will quietly submit to the laws by which we have been accustomed to be governed before that period, and will, in our several or associate capacities, be ready when called on to assist the civil magistrate in carrying the same into execution.

5th. That when the *British* Parliament shall have repealed their late obnoxious Statutes, and shall recede from their claim to tax us, and make laws for us in every instance, or when some general plan of union and reconciliation has been formed and accepted by *America*, this our Association shall be dissolved; but till then it shall remain in full force; and to the observation of it, we bind ourselves by every thing dear and sacred amongst men.

No licensed murder! no famine introduced by law!

Resolved, That on *Wednesday*, the twenty-fourth instant, the Township meet to accede to the said Association, and choose their officers.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 615-616.

[New-Jersey Provincial Congress, May 31, 1775]

Afternoon.

The Congress resumed the consideration of the form of an Association, which was reported in the morning; and, after certain amendments, approved the same, and ordered it to be entered, which is in the words following:

“We, the subscribers, freeholders and inhabitants of the Township of ..., in the County of ..., and Province of *New-Jersey*, having long viewed with concern the avowed design of the Ministry of *Great Britain* to raise a revenue in *America*; being deeply affected with the cruel hostilities already commenced in the *Massachusetts-Bay*

for carrying that arbitrary design into execution; convinced that the preservation of the rights and privileges of *America* depends, under *God*, on the firm union of its inhabitants, do, with hearts abhorring slavery, and ardently wishing for a reconciliation with our Parent State, on constitutional principles, solemnly associate and resolve, under the sacred ties of virtue, honour, and love to our Country, that we will personally, and as far as our influence extends, endeavour to support and carry into execution whatever measures may be recommended by the Continental and our Provincial Congresses, for defending our Constitution, and preserving the same inviolate.

“We do also further associate and agree, as far as shall be consistent with the measures adopted for the preservation of *American* freedom, to support the Magistrates and other civil officers in the execution of their duty, agreeable to the laws of this Colony; and to observe the directions of our Committee, acting according to the Resolutions of the aforesaid Continental and Provincial Congresses; firmly determined, by all means in our power, to guard against those disorders and confusions to which the peculiar circumstances of the times may expose us.”

Resolved, That copies of the above Association be immediately sent to the Committees of Observation or Correspondence in the several Counties in this Province, which have not already associated in a similar manner, in order that the same may be signed by the several inhabitants, accompanied with the following Letter, to be signed by the President:

GENTLEMEN: Anxiously desirous to promote, as far as possible, an union among the inhabitants of this Colony, we have thought proper to recommend to them the enclosed Association, which we desire may be immediately signed by the good people of your Township; that at a time when our most valuable privileges are invaded, we may, in a uniform manner, make our defence, and prevent the evils to which our unhappy situation exposes us.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 690.

[Chester County, Pa., May 31, 1775]

Chester County (Pennsylvania) Committee

In Committee, Chester, May 31, 1775.

Whereas it appears very necessary, in order to avert the evils and calamities which threaten our devoted Country, to embody ourselves and make all the military preparations in our power; and it appears absolutely impossible to carry this laudable design

into execution, without observing the greatest order, harmony, and concord, not only under the laws of civil Government, but also while under arms and on actual duty. We, therefore, unanimously recommend the following Association to be entered into by the good people of this County:

“We, the subscribers, do most solemnly resolve, promise, and engage, under the sacred ties of honour, virtue and love to our Country, that we will use our utmost endeavours to learn the military exercise, and promote harmony and unanimity in our respective Companies; that we will strictly adhere to the rules of decency during duty; that we will pay a due regard to our Officers; that we will, when called upon, support with our utmost abilities the civil Magistrate in the execution of the laws for the good of our Country; and that we will at all times be in readiness to defend the lives, liberties, and properties of ourselves and fellow-countrymen against all attempts to deprive us of them.”

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 859-860.

[South Carolina, June 3, 1775]

ASSOCIATION

Unanimously agreed to in the Provincial Congress of SOUTH-CAROLINA, on SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 1775.

The actual commencement of hostilities against this Continent, by the *British* Troops, in the bloody scene on the 19th of *April* last, near *Boston*; the increase of arbitrary impositions from a wicked and despotick Ministry; and the dread of instigated insurrections in the Colonies, are causes sufficient to drive an oppressed people to the use of arms. We, therefore, the subscribers, inhabitants of *South-Carolina*, holding ourselves bound by that most sacred of all obligations – the duty of good citizens towards and injured Country; and thoroughly convinced that, under our present distressed circumstances, we shall be justified before *God* and man in resisting force by force, do unite ourselves under every tie of religion and honour, and associate as a band in her defence, against every foe; hereby solemnly engaging, that whenever our Continental or Provincial Councils shall decree it necessary, we will go forth and be ready to sacrifice our lives and fortunes to secure her freedom and safety. This obligation to continue in full force until a reconciliation shall take place between *Great Britain* and *America*, upon constitutional principles; an event which we most ardently desire. And we will hold all those persons inimical to the liberty of the Colonies, who shall refuse to subscribe to this Association.

Subscribed by every member present, on the fourth day of *June*, 1775.

Certified by

HENRY LAURENS, *President*.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 897.

[New Hanover County, N.C., June 19, 1775]

ASSOCIATION.

Unanimously agreed to, by the inhabitants of New Hanover County, in. North Carolina, 19th June, 1775.

The actual commencement of Hostilities against this Continent by the British Troops, in the bloody scene, on the 19th April last, near Boston: The increase of arbitrary impositions from a wicked and despotic ministry; and the dread of instigated insurrections in the colonies, are causes sufficient to drive an oppressed people to the use of arms. We, therefore, the subscribers, inhabitants of New Hanover County, having ourselves bound by the most sacred of all obligations, the duty of good citizens towards an injured country; and, thoroughly convinced that, under our present distressed circumstances, we shall be justified, before God and Man, in resisting force by force: Do unite ourselves under every tie of religion and honor and associate as a band in her defence against every foe; hereby solemnly engaging that whenever our Continental or Provincial Councils shall decree it necessary we will go forth and be ready to sacrifice our lives and fortunes to secure her freedom and safety. This obligation to continue in full force until a reconciliation shall take place between Great Britain and America, upon constitutional principles, an event we most ardently desire and we will hold all those persons inimical to the liberties of the Colonies, who shall refuse to subscribe this Association. And we will in all things, follow the advice of our Committee, respecting the purposes aforesaid, the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals and private property.

The Committee appointed to answer the Governor's Proclamation, of the 16th inst., returned the following answer, which was read and ordered to be printed in the public papers and in hand bills.

At a General meeting of the several committees of the District of Wilmington, held at the Court-house, in Wilmington, Tuesday, 20th June, 1775.

Whereas, his Excellency, Josiah Martin, Esq., hath by Proclamation, dated at Fort Johnston, the 16th day of June, 1775, and read this day in the committee, endeavoured

to persuade, seduce, and intimidate the good people of the province, from taking measures to preserve those rights, and that liberty, to which, as the subjects of a British King, they have the most undoubted claim, without which, life would be but futile considerations, and which therefore, it is a duty they owe to themselves, their Country, and posterity, by every effort, and at every risk, to maintain, support, and defend against any invasion or encroachment whatsoever.

And whereas, many unconstitutional and oppressive acts of Parliament, invasive of every right and privilege, and dangerous to the freedom of America, have laid the people of this colony under the fatal necessity of appointing committees for the several Districts, Towns, and Counties of this province, who were instructed, carefully to guard against every encroachment upon their invaluable rights, and steadily oppose the operation of those unconstitutional acts, framed by a wicked administration entirely to destroy the freedom of America: and as among other measures, those committees found it absolutely necessary, either by themselves, or by persons appointed under them, to visit the people and fully to explain to them the nature and dangerous tendency of those acts, which the Tools of administration, were by every base art, endeavouring to prevail upon them to submit to: and as his Excellency has endeavored by his Proclamation, to weaken the influence, and prejudice the characters of those Committees, and the persons appointed under them, by wantonly, cruelly, and unjustly, representing them as ill-disposed people, propagating false and scandalous reports, derogatory to the honor and justice of the King: and also, by other illiberal and scandalous imputations expressed in the said Proclamation: We, then, the Committees of the counties of New Hanover, Brunswick, Bladen, Duplin and Onslow, in order to prevent the pernicious influence of the said Proclamation, do, unanimously, resolve, that in our opinion, his Excellency Josiah Martin, Esq, hath by the said Proclamation, and by the whole tenor of his conduct, since the unhappy disputes between Great Britain and the colonies, discovered himself to be an enemy to the happiness of this colony in particular, and to the freedom, rights and privileges of America in general.

Resolved, *nem. con.* That the said proclamation contains many things asserted to be facts, which are entirely without foundation; particularly the methods said to have been made use of, in order to compel the people to sign an Association against any invasion, intestine insurrection, or unjust encroachments upon their rights and privileges; no person having signed such Association but from the fullest conviction that it was essentially necessary to their freedom and safety; and that if his Excellency founded such assertions upon information, it must have been derived from persons too weak or wicked to have any claim to his credit or attention.

Resolved, *nem. con.* That it is the opinion of this Committee, that America owes much of its present sufferings to the information given by Governors and men in

office, to administration, who having themselves adopted belief from improper informants, or, in order to sacrifice to the pleasure of the ministry, have falsely represented, that His Majesty's American subjects were not generally averse from the arbitrary proceedings of a wicked administration, but that the opposition, made to such unconstitutional measures, arose from the influence of a few individuals upon the minds of the people, whom they have not failed to represent as "false, seditious, and abandoned men;" by these means, inducing the ministry to believe, that the Americans would be easily brought to submit to the cruel impositions so wickedly intended for them; that his Excellency's proclamation is evidently calculated for this purpose, and is also replete with the most illiberal abuse and scandalous imputations, tending to defame the characters of many respectable persons, who zealously attached to the liberty of their country, were pursuing every laudable method to support it.

Resolved, *nem. con.* That the resolution respecting America, introduced by Lord North, into the British House of Parliament, which his Excellency in his proclamation, alludes to, is such a glaring affront to the common sense of the Americans, that it added insult to the injury it intended them: That Lord North, himself, when he introduced it, declared to the House, that he did not believe America would accept of it, but that it might possibly tend to divide them, and if it broke one link in their chain of Union, it would render the enforcing his truly detestable acts the more easy; therefore,

Resolved, That this was a low, base, flagitious, wicked attempt to entrap America into Slavery, and which they ought to reject with the contempt it deserves; that the uncandid and insidious manner in which his Excellency has mentioned the said resolution, is a poor artifice to seduce, mislead, and betray the ignorant and incautious into ruin and destruction, by inducing them to forfeit the inestimable blessings of freedom, with which nature and the British Constitution have so happily invested them; and also, indisputably proves, that his Excellency is ready to become an instrument in the hands of administration to rivet those chains so wickedly forged for America.

Resolved, *nem. con.* That at this alarming crisis, when the dearest rights, and privileges of America are at stake, no confidence ought to be reposed in those, whose interest is to carry into execution every measure of administration, however profligate and abandoned; and who though they are conscious those measures will not hear the test of enquiry and examination, will and endeavour to gloss over the most palpable violation of truth with plausibility, hoping, thereby, to blind, mislead and delude the people; that this Committee therefore, earnestly recommend it to the other committees of this province, and likewise to all our Brethren and suffering fellow subjects thereof, cautiously to guard against all those endeavours, which have been, or shall be made to deceive them, and to treat such attempts as wicked efforts of the Tools of Government calculated to throw this Country into confusion, and by dividing to enslave it.

The committee adjourned till a meeting occasionally.

Saunders, William L. (ed.): Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 10, p. 27-29.

[Wilmington District, N.C., June 20, 1775]

Committees of Wilmington District, North-Carolina

At a general meeting of the several Committees of the District of *Wilmington*, held at the Court-House in *Wilmington*, *Tuesday*, the 20th *June*, 1775:

Resolved, That the following Association stand as the Association of this Committee, and that it be recommended to the inhabitants of this District to sign the same as speedily as possible.

THE ASSOCIATION

The actual commencement of hostilities against the Continent by the *British* Troops, in the bloody scene on the nineteenth of *April* last, near *Boston*; the increase of arbitrary impositions, from a wicked and despotick Ministry; and the dread of instigated insurrections in the Colonies, are causes sufficient to drive an oppressed People to the use of arms: We, therefore, the subscribers of *Cumberland* County, holding ourselves bound by that most sacred of all obligations, the duty of good citizens towards an injured Country, and thoroughly convinced that under our distressed circumstances we shall be justified before you in resisting force by force, do unite ourselves under every tie of religion and honour, and associate as a band in her defence against every foe; hereby solemnly engaging, that whenever our Continental or Provincial Councils shall decree it necessary, we will go forth and be ready to sacrifice our lives and fortunes to secure her freedom and safety. This obligation to continue in full force until a reconciliation shall take place between *Great Britain* and *America*, upon constitutional principles, an event we most ardently desire. And we will hold all those persons inimical to the liberty of the Colonies who shall refuse to subscribe to this Association; and we will in all things follow the advice of our General Committee, respecting the purposes aforesaid, the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individual and private property.

[Signed by 54 persons]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1030.

[Pitt County, N.C., July 1, 1775]

Proceedings of the Safely Committee in Pitt County.

MARTINBOROUGH 1st July 1775.

The Committee of the County met according to order as before mentioned and has entered into the following association:

We the freeholders and inhabitants of the county of Pitt and town of Martin, being deeply affected with the present and alarming state of this Province and of all America — .Do Resolve that we will pay all due allegiance to His majesty King George the third and endeavor to continue the succession of his crown in the Illustrious house of Hanover as by law established, against the present or any future wicked ministry, or arbitrary set of men whatsoever, at the same time we are *determined* to assert our rights as men and sensible that by the late acts of Parliament the most valuable Liberties and priviledges of America are invaded and endeavor to be violated and destroyed and that under God the preservation of them Depends on a firm *union* of the Inhabitants and sturdy spirited observation of the Resolutions of the General Congress, being shocked at the cruel scenes now acting in the Massachusetts Bay and determined never to become slaves to any power upon earth, we do hereby agree and associate under all tyes of Religion, Honour, and regard for Posterity that we will adopt and endeavour to execute the measures which the General Congress now sitting at Philadelphia conclude on for preserving our constitution and opposing the execution of the several arbitrary llegal acts of the British Parliament and that we will readily observe The Directions of our General Committee for the purpose aforesaid, the Preservation of Peace and Good Order and .Security of Individuals and private property.

John Simpson, Ch'n.

[Signed by 87 persons]

Saunders, William L. (ed.): Colonial Records of North Carolina, vol. 10, p. 61sq.

[Georgia Provincial Congress, July 13, 1775]

Thursday, July 13, 1775.

Resolved, That this Congress do approve of, and adopt the Association entered into at *Savannah*, on the fifth day of *June* last past, viz:

Association unanimously entered into by the Provincial Congress, at *SAVANNAH*, in *GEORGIA*, on *THURSDAY*, the thirteenth of *JULY*, 1775.

GEORGIA

Being persuaded that the salvation of the rights and liberties of *America* depend, under *God*, on the firm union of the inhabitants in its vigorous prosecution of the measures necessary for its safety; and convinced of the necessity of preventing the anarchy and confusion which attend the dissolution of the powers of the Government, we, the freemen, freeholders, and inhabitants of the Province of *Georgia*, being greatly alarmed at the avowed design of the Ministry to raise a revenue in *America*, and shocked by the bloody scene now acting in the *Massachusetts-Bay*, do, in the most solemn manner, resolve never to become slaves; and do associate, under all the ties of religion, honour, and love to our Country, to adopt, and endeavour to carry into execution, whatever may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention, appointed for the purpose of preserving our Constitution, and opposing the execution of the several arbitrary and oppressive Acts of the *British* Parliament, until a reconciliation between *Great Britain* and *America*, on constitutional principles, which we most ardently desire, can be obtained; and that we will in all things follow the advice of our General Committee, appointed respecting the purposes aforesaid, the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals and private property.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1551-1552.

[Newburgh, Ulster County, N.Y., July 14, 1775]

Newburgh, Ulster County, New-York, July 14, 1775.

Whereas we, the subscribers, have refused to sign the Association within the time limited by the Provincial Congress; and whereas our troubles with the Mother Country continue to increase, and we are now convinced that we have no other alternative left but to repel force by force, or submit to be slaves: Sensible that this is our deplorable situation, and in order to continue to link our chain of friendship still more firm, and to convince our friends and the friends of *American* liberty in general, we do hereby solemnly and sincerely swear on the holy evangelists, that we will, from henceforth, heartily agree and consent to whatsoever our Continental and Provincial Congresses have, or may do, direct, ordain, and appoint, for the preservation of our con-

stitutional liberties; and that we will, as much as in us lies, discourage the spirit of opposition that has too unhappily prevailed in some parts of this Country. That we will, from time to time, bear and pay our quota of all expenses with the rest of our brethren in *America*, that has already or hereafter may accrue, in defending our liberties aforesaid. And we do hereby further swear, that we make this declaration and oath of our own free will and voluntarily consent; and in testimony whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this 14th day of *July*, *Anno Domini*, 1775.

[21 names]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 2, p. 1659.

[Maryland Convention, July 26, 1775]

Association of the Freemen of MARYLAND, JULY 26, 1775.

The long premeditated, and now avowed design of the *British* Government to raise a revenue from the property of the Colonists, without their consent, on the gift, grant, and disposition of the Commons of *Great Britain*; the arbitrary and vindictive statutes passed under colour of punishing a riot, to subdue by military force and by famine the *Massachusetts-Bay*; the unlimited power assumed by Parliament to alter the Charter of that Province, and the Constitutions of all the Colonies, thereby destroying the essential securities of the lives, liberties and properties of the Colonists; the commencement of hostilities by the Ministerial forces, and the cruel prosecution of the war against the people of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, followed by General *Gage's* Proclamation, declaring almost the whole of the inhabitants of the United Colonies, by name or description, rebels and traitors; are sufficient causes to arm a free People in defence of their liberty, and to justify resistance, no longer dictated by prudence merely, but by necessity, and leave no alternative but base submission, or manly opposition to uncontrollable tyranny. The Congress chose the latter; and for the express purpose of securing and defending the United Colonies, and preserving them in safety against all attempts to carry the above mentioned Acts into execution by force of arms, resolved that the said Colonies be immediately put into a state of defence; and now support, at the joint expense, an Army to restrain the further violence, and repel the future attacks, of a disappointed and exasperated enemy.

We, therefore, inhabitants of the Province of *Maryland*, firmly persuaded that it is necessary and justifiable to repel force by force, do approve of the opposition by arms to the *British* Troops employed to enforce obedience to the late acts and statutes of the *British* Parliament, for raising a revenue in *America*, and altering and changing the Charter and Constitution of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, and for destroying the essential securities for the lives, liberties and properties of the subjects in the United Colonies.

And we do unite and associate as one band, and firmly and solemnly engage and pledge ourselves to each other, and to *America*, that we will, to the utmost of our power, promote and support the present opposition carrying on, as well by arms, as by the Continental Association, restraining our commerce.

And as in these times of publick danger, and until a reconciliation with *Great Britain* on constitutional principles is effected, (an event we most ardently wish may soon take place,) the energy of Government may be greatly impaired, so that even zeal unrestrained may be productive of anarchy and confusion; we do, in like manner, unite, associate and solemnly engage in maintenance of good order and the publick peace, to support the civil power in the due execution of the laws, so far as may be consistent with the present plan of opposition, and to defend with our utmost power all persons from every species of outrage to themselves of their property, and to prevent any punishment from being inflicted on any offenders, other than such as shall be adjudged by the Civil Magistrate, the Continental Congress, our Convention, Council of Safety, or Committees of Observation.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 107-108.

[Tryon County, N.C., August 14, 1775]

Tryon County (North Carolina) Association.
August 14, 1775.

The unprecedented, barbarous, and bloody actions committed by the *British* Troops on our *American* brethren, near *Boston*, on the 19th of *April* and 20th of *May* last, together with the hostile operations and treacherous designs now carrying on by the tools of Ministerial vengeance and despotism, for the subjugating all *British America*, suggest to us the painful necessity of having recourse to arms, for the preservation of those rights and liberties which the principles of our Constitution and the laws of God, nature, and Nations, have made it our duty to defend. We, therefore, the subscribers, freeholders and inhabitants of *Tryon* County, do hereby faithfully unite ourselves under most sacred ties of religion, honour, and love to our Country, firmly to resist force by force, in defence of our natural freedom and constitutional rights, against all invasions; and at the same time do solemnly engage to take up arms, and risk our lives and fortunes, in maintaining the freedom of our Country, whenever the wisdom and counsel of the Continental Congress, or our Provincial Convention, shall declare it necessary; and this engagement we will continue in and hold sacred, till a reconciliation shall take place between *Great Britain* and *America* on constitutional prin-

ciples, which we most ardently desire; and we do firmly agree to hold all such persons inimical to the liberties of *America* who shall refuse to subscribe to this Association.

[Signed by 48 persons]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 3 ,p. 99-100.

[Fairfield, Conn., August 15, 1775]

FAIRFIELD (CONNECTICUT) COMMITTEE.

At a meeting of the Committee of Inspection for the Town of *Fairfield*, held in the Court-House on the 15th day of *August*, A. D. 1775:

It was voted and agreed, that the Committee of Inspection in each Society be desired to notify the inhabitants in each Society in this Town, to meet in Society meeting on *Monday* next, in order to subscribe an Association, to show that they are friends to the liberties and privileges of their Country, and that the enemies of it may be known. And that said Committee do, after said meeting, apply to all such persons as shall not attend, in order to give them an opportunity to subscribe; and that they also take down in writing the names of all those enemies of their Country that are of age, who refuse to subscribe; and that said Committee make report of their doings to this Committee, at their meeting to be held at the Court-House on the last *Monday* of *August*.

The following Association being prepared, was ordered to be sent into the different parts of the Town to be subscribed by the inhabitants, viz:

“Whereas, the *British* Administration have long been plotting against the liberties of *America*, and finally stepped forth and openly avowed their wicked system, and are now pursuing measures, which, if successful, will terminate in the total destruction of *American* liberty: And whereas, the United *English* Colonies, by their honourable Delegates in Congress, have entered into an Association which, if strictly and faithfully observed, will, in our opinion, have a happy tendency to awaken the attention of our fellow-subjects in *Great Britain*, and other parts of the *British* Empire, and convince them of the ill policy and injustice of those measures: And whereas, by a blind infatuation, the *British* Government have been persuaded to lend their aid to our misinformed Sovereign, and his wicked Ministers, to send Troops and Armies into our once happy land, for the purpose of enforcing certain oppressive and unconstitutional acts of Parliament: The United Colonies, firmly persuaded of the justice of their cause, and that resistance is indispensable, committing their cause to Heaven, have opposed force to force, and are determined to die or be free. We, whose names are underwrit-

ten, being alarmed at the present state of publick affairs, and finding no alternative but to resist with force or submit, and are determined to make a bold struggle, and use every manly effort to defend those rights which we claim as men, Christians, and freemen. In the first place, we do hereby declare our hearty approbation of the Continental Association, and our fixed resolution faithfully to observe and comply with the same, according to the true spirit and meaning thereof, without any equivocation or mental reservation. And we do further declare, that we are fully persuaded of the necessity and perfect justice of the forcible resistance that has already been made to the Ministerial Troops sent into this Country to dragoon us into slavery; and do gratefully acknowledge and notice the smiles of Divine Providence on all our means of defence, in crowning all our warlike enterprises with unparalleled success; and being determined to pursue the same line of conduct that has already been pursued, we do now unanimously agree and associate with each other, and with all the friends of liberty throughout this land, to exert ourselves in every manly, prudent, and effectual measure in concert with our brethren throughout this Continent, in opposition to every lawless attempt that may be made by our unnatural enemies to deprive us of our liberties, and subject us to a state of slavery, choosing rather to die freemen than live in a state of servile subjection to any man or body of people on the face of the earth.”

Which, agreeable to order, was offered to the inhabitants of the Town of *Fairfield*, and subscribed by eight hundred and fifty-five male persons of the age of sixteen years and upwards; and there were seventy in number that refused to subscribe the same, whose names are as follow, viz:

[names of the non-associators]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 141-143.

[North Carolina Provincial Congress, August 1775]

Wednesday, August 23, 1775.

The Congress met according to adjournment.

The Association entered into by the General Congress at *Philadelphia*, on the 20th day of *October*, 1774, and signed by the Members thereof, was read:

Resolved, That this Congress do highly approve of the said Association, and do for themselves firmly agree and promise to adhere thereto, and do recommend it to their constituents that they likewise adhere firmly thereto.

The Committee directed to prepare and bring in a Test for the Members of the Congress to sign, reported that they had prepared a Test, which they begged leave to lay before the Congress for approbation.

Ordered, The same to be read; which was accordingly read, approved of, and ordered to be entered on the Journals and signed:

We, the subscribers, professing our allegiance to the King, and acknowledging the constitutional executive power of Government, do solemnly profess, testify and declare, that we do absolutely believe that neither the Parliament of *Great Britain*, nor any member or constituent branch thereof, have a right to impose Taxes upon these Colonies to regulate the internal police thereof; and that all attempts by fraud or force to establish and exercise such claims and powers are violations of the peace and security of the people, and ought to be resisted to the utmost: And that the people of this Province, singly and collectively, are bound by the Acts and Resolutions of the Continental and Provincial Congresses; because in both they are freely represented by persons chosen by themselves; and we do solemnly and sincerely promise and engage, under the sanction of virtue, honour, and the sacred love of liberty and our country, to maintain and support all and every Act, Resolutions and Regulations of the said Continental and Provincial Congresses, to the utmost of our power and abilities. In testimony whereof we have hereto set our hands, this 23d of *August*, 1775:

[Signed by 185 persons]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 186-187.

[Pennsylvania Committee of Safety, August 1775]

Articles of Association in Pennsylvania.

We, the Officers and Soldiers engaged in the present Association for the defence of *American* liberty, being fully sensible that the strength and security of any body of men, acting together, consists in just regularity, due subordination, and exact obedience to command, without which no individual can have that confidence, in the support of those about him, that is so necessary to give firmness and resolution to the whole, do voluntarily and freely, after consideration of the following Articles, adopt the same as the Rules by which we agree and resolve to be governed, in all our military concerns and operations, until the same, or any of them, shall be changed or dissolved by the Assembly or Provincial Convention, or in their recess by the Committee of

Safety, or a happy reconciliation shall take place between *Great Britain* and the Colonies:

ARTICLE I. If any Officer make use of any profane oath or execration, when on duty, he shall forfeit and pay, for each and every such offence, the sum of five Shillings; and if a Non-Commissioned Officer or Soldier be thus guilty of cursing or swearing, he shall forfeit and pay, for each and every such offence, the sum of one shilling.

[...]

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 502-504.

[Connecticut Assembly, October 1775]

Be it enacted by the Governour, Council, and Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, That all the male persons, inhabitants of this Colony, of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, shall have tendered to them the following Association, to wit:

Whereas the *British* Parliament have of late claimed a power and authority to bind the people of *America* in all cases whatsoever, and in pursuance of such claim, have passed divers Acts of Parliament subversive of the natural and constitutional rights and liberties of the *Americans*; and whereas the *British* Ministry have attempted to carry said Acts of Parliament into execution by military force, with an express intention to subjugate the *Americans*, and in a time of peace have wantonly and unprovoked shed the blood of many of their inhabitants, and all reasonable measures for obtaining redress of their said grievances which have been taken proving ineffectual, we are at last reduced to the unhappy necessity of taking up arms in defence of their lives and liberties, in obedience to the first law of nature, self-preservation, and to make their solemn appeal to the Supreme Governour of the Universe and All-Wise Disposer of every event; and that much depends, under *God*, upon the unanimity and joint efforts of a brave and free people for their preservation and defence:

We, the subscribers, do each for ourselves claim, demand, and insist upon our constitutional rights and privileges, and do solemnly covenant, agree, and promise, to and with each other, that we will always maintain and defend the same, to the utmost of our power, against every attempt that shall be made to wrest them from us, and especially against the measures that have been or may be taken by the *British* Ministry and Parliament for that purpose. And we likewise promise and agree that we will not aid, assist, or help the Fleet and Army, or any other person or persons employed by the said Ministry or Parliament, by furnishing them with Provisions, warlike stores, or other necessaries, or by giving or conveying any intelligence to them, or in any other

way whatever, while they shall be thus employed against this or the other Colonies in *America*; but will be faithful and true to the Government, as established by charter in this Colony, and to the United *American* Colonies, and will to the utmost of our power, in our several places, assist in carrying into execution every measure of our General Assembly, and also the measures of the said United Colonies, that have or shall be formed and come into for their common safety, and shall be approved of by the General Assembly of this Colony, and that we will use our utmost influence to discountenance and prevent all riotous assemblies and mobs within this Colony.

Witness our hands, at ----, this ----- day, A. D. -----

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the civil authority and Selectmen, or any or either of them, of every Town within this Colony, do, as soon as may be, offer and tender the aforesaid Association to every male inhabitant of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, in their several Towns, to be by them signed; and the said civil authority or Selectmen are further directed to make return of the names of all and every person or persons, in their respective Towns, who shall neglect or refuse to sign the same, to the General Assembly, at their next session; and that the said civil authority do lodge the said Association, after the said inhabitants shall have signed it, with the Town Clerk of their respective Towns.

In the Lower House, the consideration of the above Bill is referred to the next session of this Assembly.

Test: Richard Law, Clerk.

Concurred in the Upper House.

Test: George Willys, Sec'y.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1026-1027.

[Boston, Mass., October 1775]

An Association proposed to the loyal Citizens, agreeable to the Proclamation issued by his Excellency the Honourable Major-General *WILLIAM HOWE*, Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces, &c., &c., &c.

We, His Majesty's loyal subjects of the Town of Boston, being sensible of the duty incumbent on us, "to do every thing in our power to support order and good government, as well as to contribute our aid to the internal security of the Town," now take this opportunity to profess our firm allegiance to His Majesty, and entire obedience to his Government and laws. From a disposition to continue quiet and obedient subjects, we have generally neglected the use of arms, while those of different characters and sentiments have been diligently endeavouring to improve themselves in that

art. Upon these principles, we have remained in or fled to this Town; neither do we wish or design to leave it.

We consider it as our strongest duty to contribute our aid in promoting the peace, order, and security of the Town, and are willing to be employed to these good purposes, in the ways and means suited to our capacities. To that end, we cheerfully accept the offers of his Excellency, and now voluntarily associate for the purposes mentioned in his Proclamation; hereby promising, that such of us as he shall think proper or able to perform the duties therein required will be formed into Companies, as therein mentioned, and will, to the utmost of our power, faithfully perform those services, and punctually discharge the trust reposed in us; and that such as are not able to go through those duties will freely contribute our proportions, according to our abilities, to raise a sum of money for promoting this salutary purpose, to be applied to the use of those who are able, in such manner as the General, or those he may appoint, may think proper.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 3, p. 1247-1248.

[Pennsylvania Assembly, November 1775]

Rules and Regulations for the better government of the Military Association in PENNSYLVANIA.

First...

[...]

Twenty-First. All national distinctions in dress or name to be avoided, it being proper that we should now be united, in this General Association for defending our liberties and properties, under the sole denomination of Americans.

[...]

Thirty-Eighth...

Lastly. This House having drawn up the following Articles of Agreement for all the Associators in the Province, they do earnestly recommend the same to be adopted, signed and agreed to by all the said Associators, in order that one general system may prevail in Pennsylvania.

Articles of Association in PENNSYLVANIA.

We, the Officers and Soldiers engaged in the present Association for the defence of American liberty, being fully sensible that the strength and security of any body of men acting together consists in just regularity, due subordination, and exact obedience to command, without which no individual can have that confidence in the support of those about him that is so necessary to give firmness and resolution to the whole, do voluntarily and freely, after consideration of the following articles, adopt the same as the rules and regulations by which we agree and resolve to be governed in all our military concerns and operations, until the same, or any of them, shall be changed or dissolved by the Assembly of this Province, or a happy reconciliation shall take place between Great Britain and the Colonies.

[...] (First to Thirty-Second)

Resolutions directing the mode of levying Taxes on Non-Associators in PENNSYLVANIA.

[...]

American Archives, vol. 3, p. 1802-1810.

[Queen's County, N.Y., January 19, 1776]

Whereas, we, the subscribers, inhabitants of *Queen's County*, on *Long-Island*, in the Province of *New-York*, have given great uneasiness to the good people of the neighbouring Provinces and the Continent in general, by our not choosing a Committee agreeable to the orders of the Continental Congress, by our not paying that attention to the directions of our Provincial Congress, which we ought to have done, and by our opposing the General Instructions of the Continental Congress in almost all our conduct and actions. Therefore, (in order to relieve the minds of the virtuous inhabitants of *America*, and those of this County in particular, engaged in the common cause,) we, the subscribers, do most solemnly and sincerely promise, that we will, hereafter, in all cases, implicitly obey all orders and instructions enjoined on us by our Provincial and Continental Congresses, that we will act in conjunction with the inhabitants of this and the neighbouring Provinces, in the defence of *American* liberty, that we never will take up arms against the *Americans*, and that we will not, directly or indirectly, countenance, aid, assist, or by any means join with, any of His Majesty's troops in the present contest between *Great Britain* and *America*. Given under our hands, this 19th day of *January*, 1776.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 4, p. 858-59.

[New-York Committee of Safety, March 1776]

In Committee of Safety, New-York, March 27, 1776.

[refers to the resolution of the Continental Congress of March 14, 1776 (disarming of non-associators)]

Therefore, *Resolved*, That it be recommended to the Committees of the several Cities, Counties, Manors, Townships, Precincts, and Districts in this Colony, forthwith to cause to be disarmed all persons within their respective Districts who are known to be disaffected to the cause of *America*: and, also, all such persons as shall refuse to sign the following Association, to wit:

“We, the subscribers, inhabitants of in the County of and Colony of *New-York*, do voluntarily and solemnly engage and associate, under all the ties held sacred among mankind, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, to defend, by arms, the United *American* Colonies against the hostile attempts of the *British* Fleets and Armies, until the present unhappy controversy between the two countries shall be settled.”

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 1410.

[Colony of New Hampshire, Committee of Safety, April 1776]

Declaration by the Inhabitants of New-Hampshire

Colony of New-Hampshire, in Committee of Safety, April 12, 1776.

To the Selectmen of

In order to carry the underwritten Resolves of the honourable Continental Congress into execution, you are requested to desire all Males, above twenty-one years of age, (Lunaticks, Idiots, and Negroes excepted,) to sign the Declaration on this paper; and when so done, to make return thereof, together with the name, or names, of all who shall refuse to sign the same, to the General Assembly, or Committee of Safety, of this Colony.

M. WEARE, *Chairman*.

“In Congress, March 14, 1776.

“Resolved, That it be recommended to the several Assemblies, Conventions, and Councils, or Committees of Safety, of the United Colonies, immediately to cause all

persons to be disarmed, within their respective Colonies, who are notoriously disaffected to the cause of *America*, or who have not associated, and refuse to associate, to defend, by Arms, the United Colonies, against the hostile attempts of the *British* Fleet and Armies.

Extract from the Minutes:

CHARLES THOMSON, *Secretary.*”

In consequence of the above Resolution of the Continental Congress, and to show our determination in joining our *American* brethren in defending the lives, liberties, and properties of the United Colonies:

We, the subscribers, do hereby solemnly engage, and promise, that we will, to the utmost of our power, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, with arms, oppose the hostile proceedings of the *British* Fleets and Armies against the United American Colonies.

American Archives, 4th Ser., vol. 5, p. 873-912.

6. Advertisements of Committees of Inspection and Observation in New England in Colonial Newspapers

transcribed by Maria Gehrke, Caren Buchmüller and Lasse Hoyer

Maria Gehrke and Hermann Wellenreuther

Introduction

When in the fall of 1774 the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, it agreed to oppose the “Intolerable Acts” and called for sanctions against the British authority unless the acts would be repealed. On October 20, 1774, Congress adopted the Continental Association and decided not to import, export, or consume any British goods. Article 11 of the Association allowed the establishment of extralegal committees for enforcement: Committees of Inspection and Observation were to be elected in each county, city and town to observe the conduct of all colonists. Violators of the Association were to be punished by the committees and public as “enemies of American liberty” and their case was to be published in newspapers.¹

To gain an insight of the various tasks that the Committees of Inspection and Observation executed, the following section presents reports on and advertisements by the Committees of Inspection and Observation in New England which were published in two newspapers between fall 1774 and summer 1776. The papers we have chosen are the Boston Gazette and the Providence Gazette. The Boston Gazette is one of the oldest New England papers with a well established tradition of leaning to and representing the political views of the Whigs. It was founded in 1719 and continued to be published even after the American Revolution. Since 1755 its printers were John Gill and Benjamin Edes, both respectable members of the Boston community with but modest means. They died worth a bit more than \$ 8.000 in 1785 and 1803.² The Providence Gazette was much younger. Founded in 1762 it, too, continued to be published until well after the Revolution. Its printer, John Carter, served as postmaster in Providence.³ While the Boston Gazette had to contend with a number of rivals, the

¹ JCC Bd. 1, p. 63-73, p. 115-121.

² Carol Sue HUMPHREY, “This popular engine”. *New England Newspapers During the American Revolution, 1775 – 1789*. Newark, DE 1992, p. 60. The author converted the contemporary sums to those of 1990. On Edes see Maurice R. CULLEN, Jr., *Benjamin Edes: Scourge of Tories*. In: *Journalism Quarterly* 51, 1974, p. 213-218.

³ HUMPHREY, “This popular engine”, 78-79; Marcus A. MCCORISON, *The Wages of John Carter’s Journeymen Printers, 1771-1779*. In: *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 81, 1971, p. 273-303.

Providence Gazette had the town and its surrounding countryside as potential market for its own.

The texts we print here do not reflect the newspapers' role as opinion leaders. Instead the texts have nothing to do with editorial policies; they are advertisements both newspapers had to print if they did not want to run into trouble with the Committees of Inspection and Observation of the townships of Massachusetts or Rhode Island. Both papers treated these texts consequently as advertisements and printed them usually, but not always in that section. It will become evident from the texts themselves, that the information these texts offer are much more than advertisements.

Maria Gehrke and Hermann Wellenreuther

Boston Gazette, October 20, 1774 – July 4, 1776

[November 21, 1774]

Tho. Town of Marblehead, at a full Meeting on Monday the 7th Instant, unanimously made Choice of a large Committee for executing the Plans of the Continental and Provincial Congresses. It likewise appointed a Day for choosing Militia Officers, and a Committee for each Company to give [personal] Warning to all on the Alarm List for the Purpose mentioned. Directions were given by the Town to the Clerk, for entering on the Records such Persons as should by the province be considered and published as “*Rebels against the State*”; and to the Constables and Collectors to pay to Henry Gardner, Esq; Monies which they then had, or in future might have in their Hands, belonging to the Province; the Advertisements of the late Treasurer Gray being treated with the Contempt due to one on the *Rebel List*. A Company and Train of Artillery will, by private Subscription, be likewise provided in said Town for Defence of American Freedom. – Sureley the Colonies are in Earnest for preserving their Liberties, and a general Attention to the Art Military will in a short Time render them secure, notwithstanding the Designs of oppressive Tyranny. – May Military Discipline, then immediately take Place throughout America.

BG, no. 1023, fol. 2.

[November 21, 1774]

NEW LONDON, November 11.

The Committee of the Town of New London, hereby notify all concerned, That they think it their Duty to inforce the Observance of the 7th Article of the Association against the Exportation of SHEEP, recommended by the General Congress; until another Committee is appointed for that Purpose: And all Vessels sailing from this Port will be strictly inspected, that a due Observance may be paid to every Article of said Association, in such Manner as by the Congress is directed.

BG, no. 1023, fol. 3.

[November 28, 1774]

AT a Meeting of Committees from the several Towns in the County of BARNSTABLE, met and convened at the Court-House in said County, on Wednesday the 16th Day of November, A. D. 1774.

Hon. JAMES OTIS, Esq; being chosen Moderator, and Col. JOSEPH OTIS, Clerk.

AFTER taking into serious Consideration the distress'd and difficult situation of our public Affairs, arising from the repeated unjust Attempts of an arbitrary Administration, to deprive us of our civil Rights and Liberties, and to subject our Lives and Properties to the Will and Controul of the British Parliament; in direct violation of the most solemn Compact between the King and the Inhabitants of this Province, as well as of the British Constitution itself; which cruel Attempts have appeared in various Instances; but more especially on the several Acts passed in the last Session of the British Parliament, respecting the Massachusetts-Bay and Quebec, which are too well known to need a repetition of their Titles. We do therefore think it a Duty incumbent on us to bear our public Testimony against them, and to join in the general Endeavours of this Country to prevent the total extinction of Civil and Religious Liberty. We do therefore RESOLVE,

1st. That we recognize King GEORGE the Third, of Great-Britain as our rightful Sovereign.

2^d. That we apprehend, the Parliament of Great-Britain have no right to dispose of our Properties, alter our Constitution, or make Laws binding upon us, without our Consent.

3^d. That the Acts of Parliament referred to as above, are, in our apprehension, not only Unconstitutional, but a most unparalleled Instance of Injustice, Cruelty and Oppression, which ought never to be submitted to.

4th. That we do hereby approve of, acquiesce in, and solely engage to Conform to the Resolves and Recommendations of the Continental and Provincial Congress, so far as we have been acquainted with their Proceedings; esteeming them the most prudent Method of opposing said Acts, and the most likely Means of obtaining a Redress of our Grievances. And therefore,

5th. We do recommend it to the Inhabitants of this County, to subscribe the Association, agreed upon by the Continental Congress, with the following Addition, viz. "We the Subscribers do solemnly agree and promise, that we will observe and conform to the above Association, and do hereby make it our own particular Act and Covenant, and do further engage, that from and after the Date hereof, we will not Buy, Sell, Transport or Drink or suffer our Families to Buy, Sell, Transport or Drink any kind of India Tea, whether Imported on Account of the East-India Company, or any other, or from any part of the World till we obtain as ample Redress of our Grievances, as is specified in the said Association, as witness our Hands this Seventh Day of November, A.D. 1774," and that each Member of this Congress do immediately Sign said Association with said Addition: And that we Recommend it to every Town in the County, who have not already chosen, to choose Committees, to see that the Inhabitants of their respective Towns Sign as above; and to inspect and inquire if any Person

act contrary to said Association and Addition, and in case they do, or any refuse to Sign said Association, &c. to Publish their Names to the World.

6th. That we will ourselves, and do earnestly Recommend it to the Inhabitants of this County, to use their utmost Endeavours to suppress all Mobs, Riots and Breaches of the Peace.

7th. That in Order to keep Peace and good Regulation in the County, and that the Lives, Liberties and Properties of the People may be safe, we do Recommend it to the several Justices of the Peace in the County, who were in Office before the last Day of June past, to Act in their said Offices, in their single Capacity, except in Judicial Proceedings merely civil: and that they exert themselves, agreeable to the Laws of the Province relative to the suppression of Vice, Immorality, Breaches of the Peace and all high handed Offences; and to use their Endeavours to prevent Mobs, Riots, Routs and unlawful Assemblies; and to preserve the Peace of the County: and we Recommend it to the Sheriffs to retain such Persons as are or shall be Committed, as Criminals, in his Custody, until they have a Trial, any Supersedeas or Proclamation to the contrary notwithstanding; at least, until the Minds of the provincial Congress be expressed, respecting this Matter; and we do hereby recommend it to the Inhabitants of this County, to aid and assist the Justices and Sheriff in the execution of their Offices as above.

8th. That a Committee of this County be chosen by this Congress, to Correspond with the Committees of the other Counties in this Province, as Occasion may require;

Col. *Nathaniel Freeman*, Col. *Joseph Otis*,
Mr. *Thomas Paine*, Daniel *Davis*, Esq; and
Mr. *Job Crocker*, were unanimously chosen.

9th. That it be recommended to every Town in this County who have not chosen Committees of Correspondence, to choose them; and likewise, for every Town in the County to send Members to the Provincial Congress.

10th. That it be recommended to the several Towns in this County to call meetings and vote their Approbation of, and hearty Concurrence with, the Resolves and Recommendations of the Continental, Provincial, and this County Congress.

11th. That it be recommended to the several Towns of this County to raise Subscriptions for the Relief of our suffering Brethren in Boston.

12th. That it be recommended to the Inhabitants of the County to use their Endeavours to suppress common Pedlars of Scotch, English and India Goods; and that the several Inhabitants in the County be desired, in the name of this Congress, to refuse Entertainment to them; and that the Clerk hereof serve the Innholders with a Copy of tis Resolve.

13th. That it be recommended to the several Military Companies in the East Regiment in this County, who have not yet chosen their Officers, to choose them, as soon as may be, agreeable to the Resolves and Recommendations of the Provincial Congress: And we do Recommend it to the several Military Officers, who are liable by Law of the Province, to attend Military Exercises and Obey their Officers; and that the Officers see that all in both Lists be provided with Arms and Ammunition according to Law: And in case any refuse to Obey their Military Officers, we recommend it to the Inhabitants of the County, to assist them in *enforcing* Obedience to their orders, agreeable to the Law of this Province.

14th. That a Committee be chosen to consider further of our public Grievances, and of the State of this County, and report at the adjournment of this meeting.

The Hon. *James Otis*, Esq; Col. *Joseph Otis*,
Col. *N. Freeman*, Capt. *Joseph Doane*,
Mr *Thomas Paine*, *Daniel Davis*, Esq; and

Capt. *Jonathan* [Tintenleck unleserlich] *wes*, were accordingly chosen.

15th. VOTED, that the County's Committee of Correspondence be defined to procure printed Copies of the Proceedings of this Congress, and the above mentioned Association, and that they transmit Two Sets to each Town in the County, to be directed to their respective Committees of Correspondence.

The Congress then, after each Member had Sign'd the said Association with said Addition, and voted their Thanks to the Moderator, Clerk, and Col. Freeman, for their good Services, adjourn'd to the second Tuesday in January next.

A true Copy, JOSEPH OTIS, Clerk.

BG, no. 1024, fol. 1.

[December 12, 1774]

THE Committees of Correspondence for the Towns of *New London* and *Groton*, being informed that Mr. *Philip Dumaresq*, Merchant of *Boston*, who was one of the Addressors to Gov. *Hutchinson*, arrived at New London, last Evening, and put up at Mr. Thomas Allen's Innholder: - Thereupon we waited on said Mr. *Dumaresq*, at 9 o'Clock, A.M. and informed him that it would be disagreeable to the Inhabitants of the abovesaid Towns for him to continue long in said New-London: - and entered into a free Conversation with him relative to said Address. He assured us that he was sorry he ever signed it, and gave us the underwritten Declaration which was well approved of by the said Committees.

New London, Nov. 29. 1774

BG, no. 1026, fol. 1.

[December 12, 1774]

New London, November 29, 1774.

WHEREAS I signed an Address to Governor *Hutchinson*, in which I had no other View than the Welfare of Great-Britain and her Colonies, a Reconciliation between which I imagined would be forwarded thereby, - but being now sensible that it was an Error, am sorry that I signed it, and hope this sincere Declaration will reinstate me in the Favor of all true Friends to Constitution of both Countries.

PH. DUMARESQ

BG, no. 1026, fol.1.

[December 12, 1774]

BOSTON, December 12.

At a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town of Boston, at Faneuil-Hall, on Wednesday the 7th Instant, by adjournment.

THE following Committee of 63 Persons were appointed to carry into Execution in the Town at *Boston*, the *Agreement* and *Association* of the late respectable CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

Hon. Thomas Cushing, Esq; Hon. John Hanenck, Esq; Mr. Samuel Adams, William Phillips, Esq; Col. Marshall, Mess. John Pitts, Oliver Wendell, and Samuel Austin, Benjamin Austein, Esq; Caleb Davis, Esqrs. Mess. William Davis and William Whitwell, Samuel Barrett and Jonathan Mason, Esqs; Capt. John Bradford, Mr. John Brown, Mr. William Powell, Major Boynton, Ezekiel Cheever, Esq; Captain Edward Proctor, Messes. James Ivers, Ebenezer Hancock, William Greenleaf, Samuel Whitwell, Herman Brimmer, Martin Brimmer, and Peter Boyer, Dr. Benjamin Church, Dr. Joseph Warren, Joseph Greenleaf, Esq; Capt. Benjamin Waldo, Capt. John Pulling, Henry Bromfield, Esq; Mess. Paul Revere, John Winthrop and Samuel Pitts, Capt. Abiel Ruddnek, Dr. Charles Jarvis, Thomas Chase, Major Nathaniel Barber, Capt. Fortsque Vernon, Capt. Job Prince, Capt. Hopkins, Mr. Moses Gill, Mr. Thomas Boylton, Capt. John Marston, Major NewmanGreenough, Mess. Moses Grant, J. Foster Cendy, Cyrus Baldwin, Bosinger Foiler, Isaac Pierce, Enoch Brown, Joseph Eayres and Henry Bass, Capt. Samuel Partridge, Mr. Joshua Bracket, Jonathan Williams, Esq; Mr. Edward Davis, Capt. Eleazer Johnson, Mess. Elias Parkman and John Averey, Dr. Nathaniel Noyes.

Seven of whom are to be a Quorum.

BG, no. 1026, fol. 3.

[December 12, 1774]

It is humbly recommended to the several Towns through this Province, as a Matter well worthy their Attention, that each Town publish and distribute as many of the Association Papers, als will serve every Matter of a Family in each Town, who will then have his Duty plainly before him, and enable him to assist the several Committees that may be appointed for executing the noble [sic!] Resolutions adopted by the Grand American Congress, for the Salvation of our Country. The Town of Weymouth have ordered a Number of these Papers to be published and every Man to be supplied therewith. This laudable Example it is to [sic!] hoped, will be follow'd by every Town through this Province and Continent.

BG, no. 1026, fol. 3.

[December 19, 1774]

The Committee of Inspection for the Town of PLYMOUTH, hereby give public Notice that there is to be sold at Plymouth, under their direction, (agreeable to the 10th Article of the Association of the American Continental Congress) on Monday the second Day of January next, at Ten o'Clock in the Forenoon – ONE HUNDRED AND TEN QUARTER CASKS of Malaga WINE, fifty Boxes of LEMMONS, six hundred and ten Casks, and fifty Jarrs of RAISINS, - Imported in the Schooner Dove, Ebenezer Parker, Matter, from Malaga, via Falmouth. Said Sale to be on board said Schooner.

JOHN TORREY, Chairman.

Plymouth, Dec. 12, 1774.

BG, no. 1027, fol. 3.

[December 19, 1774]

The Committee of Inspection for the Town of Plymouth, hereby give Notice, that there are to be Sold at the House of Mr. Howland, Inholder, at said Plymouth, on Tuesday the Third Day of January next, at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon, under the Direction of said Committee (agreeable to the Tenth Article of the Association of the American Continental Congress) the following Artickels imported in the Brig-Esther, Benjamin Smith. Master, from Liverpool, since the First Day of December Instant, viz.

Two Boxes Linnens, two Cafes Woolens, one Barreel Hard Ware, one Barrel Glass, one Case Ververet and Bindings, one Hogshhead Checks and Fustians, one Cask bottles Ale, Twenty Creates Earthen Ware, 160 Tons Salt, 20 Chaldrons Coals. Also a small Quantity of Cheese and unpack'd Beere, and six Boxes of Irish Linnens. The Sale to continue 'till the whole is sold.

JOHN TORREY, Chairman.

Plymouth, December 12, 1774.

BG, no. 1027, fol. 3.

[December 19, 1774]

SALEM, *December 6.*

At a Town Meeting last Friday a Committee of 15 very respectable Inhabitants were chosen for carrying into Execution in this Town the Measures of the Congress.

BG, no. 1027, fol. 4.

[December 26, 1774]

The Committee of Inspection for the Town of PLYMOUTH, hereby give public Notice that there is to be sold at Plymouth, under their direction, (agreeable to the 10th Article of the Association of the American Continental Congress) on Monday the second Day of January next, at Ten o'clock in the Forenoon.—

One Hundred and Ten Quarter Casks of Malaga WINE, fifty Boxes of LEMMONS, six hundred and ten Casks, and fifty Jarrs of RAISINS,—Imported in the Schooner Dove, Ebenezer Parker, Master, from Malaga, via Falmouth. Said Sale to be on board said Schooner.

JOHN TORREY, Chairman.

Plymouth, Dec. 12, 1774.

BG, no. 1028, fol. 4.

[December 26, 1774]

The Committee of Inspection for the Town of Plimouth, hereby give Notice, That there are to be Sold at the House of Mr. Howland, Innholder, at said Plimouth, on Tuesday the Third Day of January next, at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon, under the Direction of said Committee (agreeable to the Tenth Article of the Association of the American Continental Congress) the following Articles imported in the Brig. Esther, Benjamin Smith. Master, from Liverpool, since the First Day of December Instant, viz.

Two Boxes Linnens, two Cafes Woolens, one Barrel Hard Ware, one Barrel Glass, one Cafe Ververet and Bindings, one Hogshead Checks and Fustians, one Cask bottled Ale, Twenty Crates Eathern Ware, 160 Tons Salt, 20 Chaldrons Coals. Also s small Quantity of Cheese and unpack'd Beer, and six Boxes of Irish Linnens. The Sale to continue 'till the whole is sold.

JOHN TORREY, Chairman.

Plymouth, December 12, 1774.

BG, no. 1028, fol. 4.

[January 2, 1775]

Wrentham, Dec. 21, 1774.

Report prevailing in this and the neighbouring towns, that Mr. N Alldis, and some of his adherents, had procured inlisting papers (as they are called) to inlist men, to assist government to enforce the new acts of parliament, &c. these reports, together with their other exceptionable conduct to the liberties of the people, it seems induced a number of people from this & the neighbouring towns (to the amount of 4 or 500) to assemble at the house of Mr. Nathan Alldis in Wrenthan, and after some conferences held between the parties, the obnoxious persons signed the following declaration. Mr. Alldis at the same time promising to the company that he wou'd purchase no more Tea untill the present difficulties in the province were over, the company voted it satisfactory and immediately dispersed, Mr. Alldis had collected several other persons to his assistance, most of which were supposed to be his tools and dependants, and not worthy of the company's notice.

BG, no. 1029, fol.1.

[January 2, 1775]

FRIENDS and neighbours, we the subscribers do now in the open air, with our heads uncovered humbly ask the forgiveness of Heaven and of this respectable multitude now assembled and convened on this occasion, therefore we frankly confess that we have often mad use of exasperating speeches which have justly inflamed the minds of all friends to American liberty, in that we have heretofore paid no regard to any convention or congress, but have boldly opposed them, and also have reported that we had inlistment from GovernorGage to inlist men in government behalf, which was a false report of our own, and for which together with the above we ask your forgiveness, and promise never to be guilty of the like again, and that we severally for the future will conform to the resolves of the people on all occasions, and in particular we promise to regulate our conduct and strictly conform to the Association of the Grand American Congress. To conclude, we admit this resignation to be circulated and made publick at discretion of the multitude, and return you our thanks for your civility, good behaviour and kindness in reclaiming and restraining us in our career,&c.

Subscribing ourselves the publick's hum. servants,

) *Sam Goldsburs,*

Test) *Jonathan Stanley,* *Nathan Alldis,*
) *Wiggelworth Messinger.* *Sam Slocomb.*

BG, no. 1029, fol.1.

[January 2, 1775]

The Committee of Inspection for the Town of PLYMOUTH, hereby give public Notice that there is to be sold at Plymouth, under their direction, (agreeable to the 10th Article of the Association of the American Continental Congress) on Monday the second Day of January next, at Ten o'Clock in the Forenoon.—

One Hundred and Ten Quarter Casks of Malaga WINE, fifty Boxes of LEMMONS, six hundred and ten Casks, and fifty Jarrs of RAISINS,—Imported in the Schooner Dove, Ebenezer Parker, Master, from Malaga, via Falmouth. Said Sale to be on board said Schooner.

JOHN TORREY, Chairman.

Plymouth, Dec. 12, 1774.

BG, no. 1029, fol. 4.

[January 2, 1775]

The Committee of Inspection for the Town of Plimouth, hereby give Notice, That there are to be Sold at the House of Mr. Howland, Innholder, at said Plimouth, on Tuesday the Third Day of January next, at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon , under the Direction of said Committee (agreeable to the Tenth Article of the Association of the American Continental Congress) the following Articles imported in the Brig^t. Esther, Benjamin Smith. Master, from Liverpool, since the First Day of December Instant, viz.

Two Boxes Linnens, two Cafes Woolens, one Barrel Hard Ware, one Barrel Glass, one Cafe Ververet and Bindings, one Hogshead Checks and Fustians, one Cask bottled Ale, Twenty Crates Eathern Ware, 160 Tons Salt, 20 Chaldrons Coals. Also s small Quantity of Cheese and unpack'd Beer, and six Boxes of Irish Linnens. The Sale to continue 'till the whole is sold.

JOHN TORREY, Chairman.

Plimouth, December 12, 1774.

BG, no. 1029, fol. 4.

[January 16, 1775]

Petersham, in Town-Meeting, Jan. 2, 1775.

VOTED, That whereas a Number of Persons, Inhabitants of this Town, (viz.)

Joshua Willard, Wm. Barron, Esqrs. Thomas [Beman], Joseph Stevens, Moses McClellan, Luke Lincoln, Joseph Smith, James Jackson, Samuel Frizzel, David Stone, Robert Goddard, Ebenezer Bragg, Seth [Hapgard], and Dr Ephraim Whitney have lately been discovered and some of them have themselves manifested as they have entered into a Combination as follows:

"That we will not acknow-

"ledge or submit to the pretended Authority of any

"Congresses, Committees of Correspondence or other

"unconstitutional Assemblies of Men, but will at the

"Risque of our Lives, and if need be, oppose the force-

"able Exercise of all such Authority."

And that they will stand by each other and repel Force with Force, on Condition that any of their Persons or Property should be invaded or threatned by any Committees, Mobs, or unlawful Assemblies.*

Whereby it appears to Demonstration, compared with their former Conduct and Assertions that they contumaciously compare the Strenght and Wisdom of the grand Council of America to an insignificant Mob and unlawful Assembly. And whereas some of those Persons have heretofore manifested Principles inimical to the Liberties of America, and we have the greatest Reason to believe that such Combination has flow'd rather from a Desire to assist our Enemy, in destroying our Liberties, than from any Fear that they can be under with Respect to their Person or Property.

And whereas the Committee of Correspondence for this Town have given Intelligence to the Town of such unrighteous Combinations, and the Town at a former Meeting Ordered, that each of such Persons should be served with a Copy of such Intelligence and Complaint, that they might have Opportunity at this present Meeting to clear up their Characters, and they have been accordingly served with such Copy ; nevertheless they have Neglected to appear or Endeavour to the same. (Saving only JOSHUA WILLARD, Esq. and EBENEZER BRAGG, who avow'd said Combination.)

Therefore as it appears that those Persons still remain the Incurable Enemies of America, and have a Disposition to cast their Influence into the Scale against us in Order to Inslave their Brethren and Posterity forever. And after all the friendly Expostulations and Intreaties which we have been able to make Use of, We are with great Reluctance constrained to pronounce those, some of which have heretofore been our agreeable Neighbours, traitorous Parricides to the Cause of Freedom in general & the united Provinces of N. America in particular. And it is the Sense of this

Meeting that the aforesaid Persons have forfeited the Confidence of their Brethren as Friends to Liberty, until such Time as they shall manifest to the Satisfaction of their Brethren, the Inhabitants of this Town, that they have repented of their evil Principles and become Friends to the common Rights of Mankind.

And further it is recommended to every Well-Wisher of American Liberty, to break off all commercial Connections with any and every of such Persons, and with all and every Person who shall not so do, until that they Individuals shall make a public Recantation of their doings aforesaid.

A Copy from the Minutes, JONATHAN GROUT, Moderator.
DAVID SANDERSON, Town-Clerk.
** See the Covenant published by Tim. Ruggles.*

BG, no. 1031, fol. 2.

[January 16, 1775]

The Town of Marblehead were legally convened the 2d and 10th of January Instant, and amongst other Things, Voted Unanimously,

Ist. THAT the Collectors of Taxes for this Town, who have Lists to collect in which are Assessments due to the Province, be engaged to borrow a Sum not exceeding £. 780 L. M. Upon Interest, of such Inhabitants as shall incline to lend the same; and to give their Notes therefor, to be payed out of the first Collections which shall be by them made out of their respective Lists.—And the Town engages to indemnity all *Persons* who shall lend the Sum aforesaid to the said Collectors, namely, Capt. Francis Felson, Capt. John Roads, and Mr. William Haden; and to be Surely to them for the Sums they shall lend respectively. Provided, That such of the Inhabitants as shall lend Monies as aforesaid, do enter their Names with a Committee (to be now appointed for that Purpose) on or before the Ist Day of February next.—And the Collectors aforesaid are desired to charge the Town with the Interest which shall be paid on said Notes by them respectively, and to discharge with the Monies to be borrowed, the Balance due from the Town to the Province, by paying the same to Henry Gardner, Esq: of Stow, or any other Person, who may by Congress or an House of Representatives, be appointed Receiver-General for the Province.—And,

WHEREAS a proportionable Part of the Inhabitants of this Town, may soon be called forth to assist in defending the Charter and Constitution of the Province, as well as the Rights and Liberties of all America ; and in order thereto, it is necessary that they should be properly disciplined and instructed in the Arts of War: And whereas for this Purpose, a greater Proportion of Time must be immediately spent by [t]hose who are first to take the [Field], than by such as shall succeed and join them,

It is both just and reasonable that they should be rewarded for their Services.—
Therefore Voted,

2dly, That in Conformity of the Recommendation of the Provincial Congress, the Sum of EightHundredPounds be, and it hereby is cheerfully granted by this Town, for the necessary Purpose last mentioned ; and the Assessors of the Town are directed to apportion said Sum upon the Inhabitants of the Town as soon as may be, and to issue their Warrants to the Constables, namely, Messieurs Benjamin Ashton, John Griste jun. William Bubier, Nathaniel Lyndsey and John Brown, to the End the same may be forthwith collected ; requiring said Constables to pay said Sum into the Hands of Capt. James Mugford, who is hereby appointed and authorised Receiver and Pay-Master for the detached Militia or Minute-Men, to be provided as aforesaid : and said Pay-Master is hereby directed and empowered, to pay the Monies aforesaid to such Persons of the said detached Militia as shall produce Orders therefor, from a Committee to be now chosen for that Purpose.

Voted, 3dly. That Messieurs Thomas Gerry, Richard Harris and Joshua O]e, be, and they hereby are chosen a Committee for the detached Militia aforesaid, whose Business it shall be to examine the Rolls sent to them by the Captains of the Companies of the said detached Militia or Minute Men, and upon the Captain's certifying in their Rolls as aforesaid, the Number of Days which each Person in their Companies shall have attended Duty in this Town, after having been inlisted. Said Committee is empowered to give Orders on said Paymaster to pay off said Companies as follows, viz. Each Private Two Shillings Lawful per Day, each Serjeant, Clerk, Drummer and Fifer Three Shillings per Day, second Lieutenant Four Shillings per Day, first Lieutenant four Shillings and eight Pence per Day, and Captain Six Shillings per Day, provided, that there be no more Days allowed in the Rolls than three to each Person in a Week for the Time they shall be continued in said Service, and the Captain shall have certified that each Person had attended Discipline four Hours each Day allowed in the Roles aforesaid. And,

Whereas the Foes to American Liberty, by their Minions and Creatures, have been lately exerting themselves in this Province, and endeavoured to amuse the Inhabitants with Forms of Inlistments for establishing in America *Despotism* and *Popery*—to interrupt and oppose them whilst executing the most prudent Plans of the grand Continental and Provincial Congresses—to defer and dissuade them from supporting their Rights and Liberties, by holding up Severities and Cruelties intended against Americans, and by other futile Means have eagerly attempted to ruin and enslave the Country : And whereas in this Town there are a few so lost to Justice, Truth and Humanity as to subserve these iniquitous Designs,

Voted, 4thly. That notwithstanding their [mis] Conduct has been too notorious to admit of their, having much Influence, yet, they ought not to be indulged in their Wickedness, and therefore that a large Committee of Observation be appointed to attend to the Conduct of ministerial *Tools* and *Jacobites* in this Town, and to report their Names to the Town from Time to Time, that it might take effectual Measures for either silencing or *expelling* them from the Community.

After which a Committee of Fifteen respectable Inhabitants were chosen for said [Purpose].

Marblehead, January, 14, 1775.

Capt. [unreadable],[BEN]A BODEN] Town Clerk.

N. B. The Inhabitants are [leaving] the above Sums to the Collectors, one Gentleman having subscribed £. 100 Sterling, and while there was never known [such?] a Meeting in the Place, the Vote for the £. 800 to pay the Minute Men, and all the other Votes passed unanimously.

—It was found on Calculation that the detached Militia can be qualified to take the Field, and the Taxes of the Town not enhanced 50 per Cent. But should they for a Year or two be much more encreased, how trifling is this Difficulty when compared with the Loss of our inestimable Liberties, and so valuable and flourishing a Country?

BG, no. 1031, fol. 2.

[January 23, 1775]

*To the worthy Committee of Correspondence in the
Town of BOSTON.*

GENTLEMAN,

As you have hitherto heard nothing from us in answer to your repeated messages, you may be ready to censure us for want of proper respect to you ; or think we are regardless of our public grievances ; insensible to the sufferings of our neighbors ; and great delinquents in the common glorious cause.

We therefore beg leave to lay before you some general view of our proceedings, and of our excuses for former neglects, as also for not imitating the noble examples of charity in some other towns; and likewise to express the sense we have of our natural and constitutional rights, and our resolutions, under God, to live, or die with them.

We readily own we were not awakened to a sense of the public danger and interest so early as you ; but this serves to impress our minds with a deeper sense of the obligation we are under to you, for your seasonable and vigorous exertions. And it is some comfort to us that the common cause has not suffered by us, and that we have

not one addresser in the town ; hope therefore you have in some degree apply'd that scriptural maxim in our favor, "he that is not against us is on our part."

As the unhappy controversy at first more immediately respected the merchantile part of the community, our ignorance may in part excuse us. As for the late acts of the British parliament, we have done every thing in our power to oppose them : for we were sufficiently alarmed by the Port-Bill of the wicked designs of a despotic ministry, a bill the most cruel and unjust that ever passed the British senate, and has brought the [curses] of millions on the man that framed it.

We have sent members to the country and provincial congresses, and [trust] they have ever acted and voted as steady friends to our injured country. Our jurymen refused taking the oaths under the late oppressive and unconstitutional acts. We cheerfully contributed our mite for our noble patriots on the Grand Congress, where, we hear, they supported the dignity of ancient Roman Senators.

We readily adopt the association of the continental congress, and have appointed a committee to see that the several resolves and directions of the congresses are strictly observed ; and truth that a [sacred] regard will be paid to them by every person and family in town. We have no tea-drinkers among us ; and shall make it our study to observe the rules of prudence and economy, and to promote our own manufactures: Our militia is regulated according to the directions of congress, and from present appearances we promise ourselves great success.

We view the capital of the province as suffering and bleeding in its country's cause ; and feel ourselves oppressed by the same iron hand of tyranny: a sense of our own sufferings is increased from a consideration of our being [disabled] to contribute towards the relief of our suffering neighbors. Being debared from transporting our hay (one of the chief articles of our subsistence) to the market, by a measure base and insulting ; deprived also of the common and almost only method of procuring our fuel ; together with the great sufferings of Point-Shirley, you are sensible, must bring us present, and threaten us with greater future distress. But supported from a good cause we shall cheerfully persevere ; and with the same ardor that we wish deliverance and prosperity to ourselves, we wish them to you.

We are but few in number, and of small ability ; and as we earn our bread by the sweat of our brow; shall ever hold in utter detestation both men and measures that would rob us of the fruit of our toil.

We most heartily rejoice in the general union, and trust that, that, with the justice of our cause, must procure us the friendship of all the virtuous and wise people in England. But we have no doubt at all of the natural right of colonies to form into a government by themselves whenever they think it expedient ; and therefore, if our grievances should not be redressed, impartial reason must justify British America in

seperating from a state, that after many fruitful attempts to enslave its subjects at home, would fain intail bondage on these colonies.

However, we have strong expectations that our country will yet shake off its burdens, and have its rights, liberties and commers established upon a firmer and broader basis than ever ; and doubt not but under the blessing and protection of Heaven (for which we cease not to pray) America, like the rising sun will shine brighter and brighter, till the steady hand of time shall bring her to that happy period, when she may bid defiance to every oppressor throughout the world.

We shall only further add at present, that a consciousness of your arduous labors for your country's good must ever afford you a pleasing sensation ; and while we unfeignedly thank you for former good services, permit us to hope for the continuance of them. Be assur'd we never will desert the cause, nor submit to oppression.

This with what may be offer'd by the gentlemen that present it, we hope will at last place us in a more favorable light with you, than you may have hitherto viewed us in.

With all gratitude and respect, we subscribe ourselves, Gentlemen, your very humble servants.

Samuel Sargeant, }
Samuel Sprague, }
Samuel Watts. } In the name
 } of the Town
 } of Chelsea.

Chelsea, Nov. 30, 1774.

Voted, That the above Gentlemen, viz. Messrs Samuel Sargeant, Samuel Sprague and Samuel Watts, our Committee of Correspondence, present this to the Gentlemen Committee of Correspondence in the Town of Boston.

BG, no. 1032, fol. 4.

[February 27, 1775]

At a meeting of the committees of correspondence and inspection in the county of New London, on the 30th ult. among other votes and resolutions, it was unanimously resolved, that any person that shall have any commercial connection whatever with any of the Addressors to Governor Hutchinson, or with any of the Mandamus Men, so called, is a violator of the true spirit and meaning of the Continental Resolves, and ought to be proceeded with as a violator thereof, and inimical to his country.

BG, no. 1037, fol. 6.

[March 20, 1775]

The Committee of Inspection of this Town appointed to execute the Resolution of the Continental Congress, upon information given them, against such Persons as sell, buy, or use any India Teas, contrary to the 3d Article of the Association, hold themselves obliged to conform to the 11th Article of the said Association in publishing the Names of such Persons as shall violate them.

Third. 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 merchandize, 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.

BG, no. 1040, fol. 3.

[April 3, 1775]

Committee Chamber, Boston, March 31, 1775.

INFORMATION having been given to the Committee of Inspection of this Town, that Mr Simon Tufts of this Town, Merchant, had broke the Continental Association by selling Tea to Thomas Lillie of Marblehead, on the 25th Day of March Current.

The Committee made Enquiry into the Truth of said Report, and after a strict Examination of said Tufts of three credible Persons, could obtain no other Account, but the following, which we have caused to be published under Oath for the Satisfaction of the Publick, agreeable to the Design of our Appointment.

BG, no. 1042, fol. 3.

[April 3, 1775]

WHEREAS an Advertisement appear'd in the Essex Gazette of the 28th Instant, sign'd THOMAS LILLY, informing that he purchas'd a small Quantity of Tea of me the Subscriber.—

For the Justification of my Character and Satisfaction of the Public, I think proper to give the following state of the Affair, and do solemnly declare that the said Lilly had the same without my knowledge or privity of the Person who attends my Store, and which he has since confess'd was no more than a Pound and a Quarter.— I have purchas'd no Tea since the First of March, what I Bought was so immediately connected with an Article absolutely Necessary for the Country to be possess'd of , and

which they are in actual possession of, thought it justifiable to Purchase it with the Incumbrance ; and let my Friends whose Advice I had taken partake with me therein, esteeming the Friendship of my Countrymen of more Consequence than any Benefit that could accrue to me thereby.— I had no Intention from the Beginning of militating with the Association of the Continental Congress, and declare I will not buy or sell any more of said Article till a general Permission therefor takes place : If by the above imprudent Step with Lilly any Offence is given to my Countrymen, am sorry therefor ; and hope for a Restoration to their Favour and Confidence.

Boston, 30th March 1775

SIMON TUFTS.

Suffolk, ff } THEN the above named Mr. *Simon Tufts* made Oath
to the

Boston, April 1, 1775 Truth of the above written Declaration subscribed
by him.

Before me,

BELCHER NOYES, Justice o`Peace.

BG, no. 1042, fol. 3.

[April 17, 1775]

In a Convention held at Sudbury, in the County of Middlesex, January 5, 1775 by a number of Delegates of that and other Counties, the following Resolves (with others) were passed, viz:

WHEREAS a Number of Persons in Weston signed a covenanting Agreement, dated Nov. 14, 1774 to learn the Military Skill to defend his Majesty's Authority, and other Things contained in said Covenant, which has been, and may be construed to be of dangerous Consequences and that they were [engaged] to aid and assist in carrying the late unconstitutional Acts of the British Parliament into Execution, against the British Americans, (and it appearing from [authentic] Evidence, that Col. [..]sha Jones had such a sordid [Desire] having said Persons engage in a Military Company, &c.) and most of that said Persons, viz:

Nathan Hobbs	Joseph Seav[ans]
[..]H[...]	Elisha Sumson
Thadeus Spring	Abraham Je[...]
Daniel Livermore	Ilaiah B[...rd]
Jonas Sanderson,	Lemuel Jones
Isaac Stratton,	Elisha Harrington
Oliver Barber,	Thadeus Fulier
Roger Biglow	Joseph Mastick
Hezekia Wyman	Isaac Harrington, aged 19
Samuel Underwood	Daniel Livermore, jun. 16
Isaac M[...]	Amos Harrington 20

Advertisements of Committees of Inspection and Observation in New England
in Colonial Newspapers

Phinelias Upham	John Baldwin	17
Ephraim Train	Amos [.]nes	15
Ebenezer Bracket	Daniel Twitchell	18
Joshua Headley	William Cary	19
Samuel Sumson	John Sumson	18
Joshua Pierce	R[iu]ben Hobbs	18
Benjamin Sumson	William Hobbs	15
Nathaniel Wheaton	Lemuel Jones, jun.	15

Being 27 Adult or Persons of Age, and 11 Minors, making 38 Persons in all, who have signed a Declaration dated December 23d, 1774, setting forth, that they themselves had no such Design, and that they hold said Acts to be unconstitutional, and sending to enslave the British Americans ; and that they are fully disbanded from said Covenant and Inlistments ; and they having promised in said Declaration, that they are, and will hold themselves in Readiness, and join with their American Brethren in supporting their Lives and Liberties, both civil and sacred, of this and the other united Sister Colonies in British America—And Stephen Mirick aged 17 Years, and S. Livermore, two more of said Military Company having dashed their Names out of said Covenant, which makes 40 Retractors. —It is therefore *Resolved*, That the said Declaration and Retraction of said Persons, their Practice agreeing therewith, is satisfactory to this Body, and will remain so, untill they or either of them prove the Insincerity and Breach of the same — And if they, or either of them, by their future Conduct, prove inimical to the constitutional Rights, of said united Colonies, then, he or they so doing, may expect to be treated as Enemies to their King and Country. And those, viz.

Samuel Train, jun.	Josiah Lawrence, aged	14
James Stimson	Jonas Jones	18
James Stimson, jun.	Peter Cary	18
Asa Travis	Co. James Taylor	15
Thomas Corey	Thomas Williams	18
Samuel Gray, aged 18	Silas C[.]olidge	19
Lemuel Stimson 16	Daniel Upham	16
Josiah Allen, jun. 18		

Being 15, and 10 of them Minors, who signed said covenanting Agreement, and have not signed [...] and are not to be looked upon as friendly, and not as Enemies to their King and Country, and may [...] upon it, that whenever it shall be necessary to make a Sacrifice to the public Liberty, that the [...] of their injured Country will distinguish them among its first Victims.

Signed by Order of said Convention,
JONATHAN WARD, Clerk.

BG, no. 1044, fol. 4.

[April 17, 1775]

In a Convention held at Sudbury, in the County of Middlesex, by a large Number of Delegates, Co., on January 5, 1775, the following Resolve passed, viz:

WHEREAS Isaac Jones of Weston is deemed an Enemy to his Country, and as its not necessary he should keep a public House of Entertainment, there being two others kept near him on the same Road in Weston, by very worthy Persons, well accommodated therefor, who ought to have the Preference to sordid Enemies:— It is therefore *Resolved*, as the Sense of this Body, That said Jones ought not to keep a public House.—And all Persons who will hereafter hold and carry in Connections with him, ought to be treated as Enemies to the Liberties of those British united Colonies in America.

Signed by Order of said Convention,

Attest. JONATHAN WARD, Clerk.

BG, no. 1044, fol. 4.

[June 5, 1775]

The Committee appointed to examine into the Complaint against Lieut. Col. Brown, beg leave to make the following Report, viz:

THAT after a full hearing of the allegation and proofs for and against said Brown on the complaint of some [un]known person, through the Select Men of Wal[s]ham, to this Hon. Congress, we are of sentiment that an unhappy controversy has existed in said town relating to public affairs, in which said Brown had exerted himself very earnestly in favour of the cause of liberty by which means he had disgusted several persons : who have since endeavoured therefor to censure and stigmatize him as being an officious, busy, designing man : And unhappily it appears that Mr Brown has associated in taverns indiscriminately with many persons, in discourse with whom he at some times had inadvertently expressed himself, which he would not strictly justify himself in ; and that its evident those disaffected antagonists of Mr. Brown's, had taken the advantage of his ha[ar]ing purely from revenge. And the Committee adjudge from the whole of the evidence for and against said Brown, that he is injuriously treated by the severe resentment of designing persons ; and that he ought to be reinstated in the esteem and countenance of every friend to the liberties of this country.

Per Order, RICHARD PERKINS, Chairman.
Accepted,
A true Copy from the Minutes,
SAMUEL FREEMAN, Sec'y.

BG, no. 1045, fol. 2.

[August 7, 1775]

AT a Town Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town of Rehoboth, on the 10th Day of July 1775.— Said Town hearing divers reports about the unfriendly conduct of sundry of the inhabitants of the town of Swanzey—The town of Rehoboth ordered the committee of Inspection to go to Swanzey, and join their committee, and inquire into the aforesaid reports ; who accordingly went to Swanzey, and a number of the respectable inhabitants of Rehoboth ; and also a number of the respectable inhabitants from sundry of the towns in the colony of Rhode Island and Swanzey met and attended with them : and the committees of Rehoboth & Swanzey joined and caused a number of the inhabitants of Swanzey to be convened before them, whose conduct was inquired of by witness, and a number of said inhabitants that were called, appeared to be innocent, and a number more owned they had violated against the rules of the congresses, and promised reformation, whose names we spare ; but what gives us pain is, that we ourselves cannot []llow the rules of the congresses, without publishing the names of Jerathmeel Bowers Esq; Charles Slaid, and Gideon Shearman, to be Persons that have acted contrary to the rules and directions of the congresses, though not in matter of trade, and make no retraction thereof.

By order of the committee,

JOSEPH, ALLYN, the chairman of said committee.

BG, no. 1054, fol. 2.

[August 14, 1775]

Mr. EDES,

Please to publish the following in your next paper.

A Piece having appeared in the Providence Gazette, and in your`s Yesterday, under the Signature of Joseph Allen, 2d, publishing the

"Names of Jerathmeel Bowers, Charles Slade and Gideon Sherman, as Persons that have acted contrary to the Rules and Directions of the Congress, though not in Matters of Trade, and made no Retraction thereof."

I now demand of the Committee, who it is said have ordered the abovementioned Published, or the said Joseph Allen, Chairman, if he did it without Order, to shew forth, in any one Instance, wherein I have counteracted the Directions of the Congress.

To accuse a Man of being guilty of Crimes, and not at the same Time to shew what those Crimes are, is contrary to every Principle of Justice and the express Word of God ;

for who can defend himself against Slander when he knows not the Particulars of his Accusation : If that Committee, or Chairman, or any other Person, Friend or Foe, will undertake to inform the Publick in what Instance I have counteracted the Congress, I shall then know my Accusation and be upon even Ground ; and as I know my Innocency in that Behalf will chearfully explain all my Conduct, if it needs Explanation ; but until that is done, I shall consider all such Insinuations, whether Committees or Chairmen, to be under an evil Influence, and treat them and their Publications with the Contempt they deserve.

Swansey, Aug. 8. 1775.

BG, no. 1055, fol. 3.

[August 14, 1775]

Mr PRINTER, *please to publish the following.*

GIDEON EBSTOE, of Rochester hath been guilty of contrave[ne] the Resolve of the Provincial Congress, by exporting the Necessaries of [L]ife to the Island of Nantucket; and with whom all Persons are desired to withdraw all Sorts of Connections, and have no Dealings with him for the future.

By Order of the Committee of Inspection for said Town,

JOHN DOTY, Chairman

Rochester, August, 7. 1775.

BG, no. 1055, fol. 3.

[August 21, 1775]

Mr. EDES,

Please to publish the following in your next Paper.

A Piece having appeared in the Providence Gazette, and in your`s yesterday, under the Signature of Joseph Allen, 2d, publishing the

"Names of Jerathmeel Bowers, Charles Slade and Gideon Sherman, as persons that have acted contrary to the rules and directions of the Congress, though not in matters of Trade, and made no Retraction thereof."

I now demand of the Committee, who it is said have ordered the abovementioned Published, or the said Joseph Allen, Chairman, if he did it without order, to shew forth, in any one instance, wherein I have counteracted the directions of the Congress.

To accuse a man of being guilty of crimes, and not at the same time to shew what those crimes are, is contrary to every principle of justice and the express word of God ;

for who can defend himself against Slander when he knows not the particulars of his accusation : If that committee, or chairman, or any other person, friend or foe, will undertake to inform the Public in what instance I have counteracted the Congress, I shall then know my accusation and be upon even ground ; and as I know my innocence in that behalf will cheerfully explain all my conduct, if it needs explanation ; but until that is done, I shall consider all such insinuations, whether Committees or Chairmen, to be under an evil influence, and treat them and their publications with the contempt they deserve.

JERATHMEEL, BOWERS.

Swanzy, August,8. 1775.

[The Affidavits respecting Jerathmeel Bowers, Esq`rs Conduct, we are oblig`d to omit this Week for want of Room]

BG, no. 1056, fol. 2.

[September 11, 1775]

Mr. EDES,

Please to publish the following, and you will oblige the Committee of Inspection of Pownalborough East Precinct.

TO deprive a man of the benefits of society by holding him up to the world as an enemy to his country, is a task that must be disagreeable to humanity ; but the duty incumbent on every person who is intrusted with power to prevent the violation of the American Association, makes it necessary to publish the following facts.

At a Meeting of the committee of inspection for the East Precinct of Pownalborough, on the 20th day of May last, they sent for Abier Wood against whom some complaints were made, and the following facts were proved against him, viz.

1. That when the result of the Continental Congress was made public, the said Wood declared his disapprobation of the same, in every respect, and reported that the members of said Congress drank thirty bumpers of wine a piece before they passed their resolves, and added, if said resolves were adhered to, the country would be ruined, and said Wood declared he would not abide by said resolves.

2d. That said Wood did order our cordage, sale cloth and salt, after he had read the continental association.

3d. That the said Wood spoke disrespectfully of the method recommended by the Provincial congress for choosing officers, and said the officers were rebels and traitors and discouraged the men in this parish from exercising under said officers, saying they would be hanged if they should learn to exercise.

4th. That the said Wood brought from Boston certain pamphlets, entitled, an address to all reasonable Americans and spread the same and extol'd the pamphlet, saying it contain'd nothing but the truth and was the best book that was ever wrote ; and the said Wood speaking of the pamphlet wrote in England, entitled, Considerations on measures now carrying on in America, said it began with a lie, and ended with the same.

5th . That the said Wood was a selectman in 1774, and being applied to, to call a town-meeting in order to choose a Committee of Inspection, but he would not grant a warrant for so doing, saying it was against the law, and there was an act of parliament against town-meetings.

6th . That said Wood reported for truth, that the province of New York, and twelve towns in this and Connecticut province, had voted not to abide by the result of the Continental Congress, and thereby endeavoured to discourage the people of this parish from approving of the same.

7th . That the said Wood declared the acts of parliament for raising a revenue in America were not grievances, but ought to be submitted to ; and that the act for blocking up the part of Boston is a just punishment ; and said that John Hancock, Esq; Sam Adams and Josiah Quincy were the cause of all the disturbances and difficulties we are involved in.

8th . And the said Wood declared the provincial congress of this province ought not to be minded ; for the greatest part of said congress, were damn'd villains.and that they destroyed the Tea, and acted only to deceive the people, and stir up rebellion ; and that the resolves recommending the choosing the officers in this province was high treason.

9th. That the said Wood commended the coasters for carrying timber to the troops.

10th. That said Wood being asked why he did not carry timber to the troops? said , because he was afraid of the people ; and added, it was time now to throw off fear, for he had lost thousands by fearing to supply the troops ; and on being informed the provincial congress had forbid supplying the regular troops ; said Wood declar'd most of the congress were damn'd villains , saying there were Hancock, Adams and others, acted out of selfish views in destroying the tea, and being inform'd Mr. Hancock did not destroy the tea, the said Wood offer'd to give his oath before any justice of peace, that Mr. Hancock was the first man that went on board the vessel, to destroy the tea,

and that the devil had made them believe, that one of them should be a king, another a governor, and that they should be in some great places of honor and profit and their views were to stir up the people to sedition, in order to accomplish their designs – this was spoke concerning Mr. Hancock, and the provincial congress in April 1775.

The Committee thereupon voted, that Abiel Wood was an enemy to this country.

On the 24th day of May last, the ship Christian, Christopher Williamson, master, arrived here, having on board 198 coils of cordage, 278 bars of flat iron, and 6 anchors, which were shipped by John Hartley of Whitehaven, on the 20th day of February last, on account & risque of Abiel Wood, and to be delivered to him at said Pownalboro', the dangers of the seas only excepted – the committee order'd the cordage, anchors and iron should be sent back forthwith.

The ship sailed the 28th following, and Abiel Wood went in said ship to Nova Scotia – a sloop of said Wood, sail'd about the same time and at sea said Wood had part of the cordage taken out of said ship, and put on board his sloop ; said Wood had all the cordage, anchors and iron above mentioned, carried to Nova Scotia & there landed and dispose of the same ; said Wood has also made another trip to Nova Scotia (since he carried the cordage) with salt ; and on the 8th instant arrived here, having clear'd out from Nova Scotia to New York for provisions. The committee therefore think it their duty to, and they hereby publish the said Abiel Wood as a violator of the American Association, and an enemy to this country, and that he ought to be treated as such, notwithstanding a late publication in Mr. Hall's paper by the committee of correspondence, to the contrary. – By order of the Committee of Inspection for the East Parish in Pownalborough,

T[...] LANGDON, Chairman

P.S. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Hall are desired to publish the above in their papers.

East Precinct Pownalborough,

Aug. 17, 1775.

BG, no. 1059, fol. 2.

[September 11, 1775]

Mr. EDES, – *Please to give the following a place in your next very valuable paper.*

THE sub-committee of the joint committees of Rehoboth and Swansea, being conscious to ourselves, that we with the utmost decency and moderation have acted on the rules of the Congress in the case of Jerathmeel Bowers, Esq; of Swansea ; being willing at our first publication to publish his name only, as an offender against the rules of the Congress, without publishing his crimes, which appeared to us of a very dangerous nature ; humbly hoping that the great end of discipline would be answered thereby, which is to take away the sin and save the sinner. We have procured some

further Depositions to be published herewith, so that the impartial public may be able to judge for themselves in a case of this importance, to the bleeding cause of America ; the said Bowers being by far the most popular man in the town where he lives, and over which he apparently presides, as appears by the tenor of the depositions.

John Wheeler,
John Mason,
Israel Barney,
Pelatiah Mason

} A Quorum of the
said town`s
sub-committee
chosen for this purpose.

BG, no. 1059, fol. 4.

[September 11, 1775]

I Patience Law of Swansey, in the county of Bristol. &c being of lawful age, testifieth and saith, that on Wednesday following the battle at Bunker`s hill, Col. Jerathmeel Bowers asked Mary Slead if her husband was gone to the Congress, she answered him yes ; he asked her if Philip Slead had heard any news that made him go ; he said it tis best for the town to lay still, for there was an army there, and let them fight it out ; and I have known him to use tea since the restrictions of the Continental Congress.

PATIENCE LAW.

Bristol, ff. Swansey, Aug. 18, 1775.

Patience Law, above named, personally appeared, and being cautioned to testify the truth made solemn oath to the truth of the above deposition by her subscribed. –

Before me,

EDWARD LUTHER, Town-Clerk of Swansey

BG, no. 1059, fol. 4.

[September 11, 1775]

Swansey, August 18, 1775.

WE the deponents, of Swanzey, in the county of Bristol, &c, being of lawful age, testi-fieth and saith that on Wednesday following the battle at Bunker`s Hill, Col. Jerathmeel Bowers asked Mary Slead, one of the deponents, if her husband was gone to the Congress, who said yes ; he had no need to have gone there, for it is best for us to lye still here, as we can ; she asked him for what reason, he said there was an army there, and let them fight it out ; and we have known him to use tea since the restrirctions of the Continental Congress.

Mary Slead, Martha Chase,

Bristol ff., Swansey, Aug.18, 1775.

Mary Slead, and Martha Chase, above named, personally appeared, and being cautioned to testify the truth, made solemn oath to the truth of the above deposition by them subscribed –

Before me,
EDWARD, LUTHER, Town Clerk of Swanzey.

BG, no. 1059, fol. 4.

[September 11, 1775]

Swanzey, Sept. 4th, 1775.

I, SAMUEL, LAW of Swanzey, in the county of Bristol, being of lawful age, testifieth and saith, that being in Freetown, about the latter part of last March, when I saw several of the inhabitants of said Freetown receiving the king's arms out of Col Thomas Gilbert's house ; said Gilbert said to me that Col. Bowers and about ten more had occasioned all this difficulty and if Bowers had behaved himself always as he had for three months back, it would have been better for him, the said Bowers, and your town, too. I asked him for what reason, he answered me, and said, because he was your representative and your town must answer for his conduct.

SAMUEL, LAW.

Bristol ff. Warren, Sept. 5, 1775.

THE above named Samuel Law, appeared before me, and being cautioned to depose the whole truth, made oath to the truth of the above deposition, before me.

JOHN KINNICUT, Justice of the Peace.

BG, no. 1059, fol. 4.

[September 11, 1775]

I, The deponent of lawful age, do destify and say, that at a town-meeting called in Swanzey, in order to raise a company of minute men to be ready on the shortest notice to march in defence of our country, soon after the battle at Bunker's Hill Col. Jerathmel Bowers, appeared to be very fierce against raising said company, and said their was no men wanted, for there was more men there than they knew what to do with, and that it was not expected that Swanzey should send any, and after debate with him, it was voted to raise said company, and it was proposed to allow each man three shillings a day, if they went out of the town on alarm, which thing Col. Bowers fiercely opposed, signifying that if they had three shillings a day, and went out of the town, they would not care when they returned ; and we could not get a vote in the town to allow them any thing : I have also heard said Bowers upbraid the people for meeting

together upon alarm ; I have heard said Bowers say he looked upon it a damage their driving off the people of Freetown.

BENJa. MARTIN.

Bristol, ff. Warren, Sept. 5, 1775.

THE above named Benjamin Martin, appeared before me, and being cautioned to depose the whole truth, made oath to the truth of the above deposition.

Before me,

JOHN, KINNICUT, Justice of the Peace:

BG, no. 1059, fol. 4.

[September 11, 1775]

WE, Benjamin Cole 2d, and James Mason, of Swanzey, of lawful age, testify and say, that we was at a town meeting in Swanzey, on Monday following the battle at Bunker's Hill, where a motion was made and seconded to raise a minute company to be ready on the shortest notice, for the defence of our country, which was oppos'd by Col. Jerathmel Bowers, notwithstanding it was voted ; after which the said Bowers said much about no men being wanted and that many would be sent back that was gone, and then it was moved to reconsider the said vote, and it was done ; after which it was mov'd to inlist as many of the militia of the town of Swanzey, in order to be ready on the shortest notice, for the defence of the country, and to allow them eighteen pence a piece for every half day that they should exercise, by order of the Selectmen of the town - and the abovesaid Bowers oppos'd it, saying, he would protest against the meeting, for it was illegal ; and that every man should be tax'd by the rate streets, for his estate should not pay any of the cost, and call'd upon the people to take notice that he was against it, and would always be against it ; and it was said by some, if we did not want men nor money, we did not want a committee ; and it was mov'd and seconded to have the Committee dismiss'd, and it was done accordingly.

September 5, 1775.

Benjamin Cole, 2d,

James Mason

Bristol, ff. Warren, Sept 5, 1775.

THE above named Benjamin Cole and James Mason appeared before me, and being duly cautioned to speak the whole Truth, made Oath to the Truth of the above depositions, before me,

JOHN, KINNICUT, Justice of the Peace.

BG, no. 1059, fol. 4.

[September 11, 1775]

Swansey, Sept. 5, 1775.

I, Simeon Mason, of Swansey, in the county of Bristol, being of lawful age, testifieth and saith, that being at a town-meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Swansey, some time last fall, for the raising of a supply of a stock of powder for said town, that Colonel Jerathmel Bowers being there opposed the stock being raised by them, and prevailed upon the inhabitants of said town not to raise said stock, notwithstanding the agreements of many of the inhabitants of said town to the contrary. Likewise I being at a Meeting of the Inhabitants of said town of Swansey, the Monday after the fight at Bunker's Hill, for raising an alarm company in defence of our lives and liberties, and our country, Colonel Jerathmel Bowers being there, very much opposed it, and said it was contrary to the rules of the Congress to do it ; and likewise said it was contrary to the plan, and very much opposed it, and said there was men enough at our camps at Roxbury, and said it was needless for us to raise any, for many that was there would be sent back again, for they was not wanted.

SIMEON MASON.

Bristol, ff. Warren, Sept. 5, 1775.

THE above named Simeon Mason appeared, and being cautioned to depose the whole truth, made oath to the truth of the above deposition.

Before me,

JOHN, KINNICUT, Justice of the Peace.

BG, no. 1059, fol. 4.

[September 11, 1775]

Swansey, Sept. 5, 1775.

WE the deponents of lawful age do testify and say, that at a town-meeting called in order to raise a company of minute men to be ready on the shortest notice to march in the defence of our country, soon after the battle at Bunker's hill, Col. Jerathmel Bowers appeared to be very fierce against raising said company, and said there was no men wanted, for there was more men there than they know what to do with, and that it was not expected that Swansey should send any ; and after a debate with him, it was voted to raise said company, and it was proposed to allow said company by said town a proper allowance for those learning the military exercise, two half days in a week ; then said Bowers made a speech against the proceedings, telling them how costly it would be, and how hard it would be for the town to pay the cost, and that the learning of the exercise would do them no good ; and also that it would hurt our cause, and earnestly moved to the moderator to call a vote to dismiss said company ; and after a dispute, he prevailed to have a vote called, and the company was dismissed by a majority of one or two ; and said Bowers seemed to be well pleased, and after which, amongst other things, a motion was made, that if there was no need of men, nor of

money for our defence, that there was no need of a committee ; and seconded by Col. Bowers, that the committee be dismiss'd, and they was dismiss'd accordingly : And afterward, when Col. Bowers and his adherents had left the meeting, the town thinking it dangerous to be without a committee, and they chose a new committee, who now say, that we think said Bowers has acted the unfriendly part to his country, in intimidating his townsmen for about a year last past, so that they have done little or nothing for the good of the common cause.

John Mason,

Israel Barney,

Daniel Morton jun`r.

Bristol,ff. *Warren*, Sept. 5, 1775.

THE above named John Mason, Israel Barney, and Daniel Morton, being cautioned to depose the whole truth, made oath to the truth of the above deposition.

Before me,

JOHN, KINNICUT, Justice of the Peace.

BG, no. 1059, fol. 4.

[September 18, 1775]

To the PUBLIC.

HAVING been acquainted by the gentlemen, of the committee of correspondence in Weston, with some uneasiness arising in the minds of people from the conduct of myself and family upon fast day, the 20th of last July ; and having a desire to live in good fellowship with every friend to American liberty, I beg leave publicly to declare, that the part I bore in those transactions that gave offence was dictated solely by the principles of religion and humanity, with no design of displeasing any one and that I am sorry it was in the eyes of *one* of my fellow-countrymen, attended with any disgusting circumstances. As it has been suspected that I despised the day, and the authority that appointed it, I must in justice to myself, and from the love of truth affirm, that I very highly respect and revere that authority, and, were it not for the appearance of boasting, could add, that I believe no person observed it with greater sincerity than
ASA DUNBAR.

Weston, Sept. 8th, 1775.

THE gentlemen, the committee of correspondence of Weston and Sudbury having taken into consideration the above declaration of the Rev`d Asa Dunbar, and questioned him respecting the transaction he refers to, receive it as satisfactory, and think it ought to release him from any unfavourable suspicions that have arisen to his disadvantage.

BENJ. PEIRCE. Moderator.

BG, no. 1061, fol. 3.

[September 18, 1775]

The Committee of Inspection for the Town of Londonderry, have done themselves great Honour by their Assiduity, in collecting a Quantity of Wearing Apparel, and some Household Furniture, which was taken from the unhappy Sufferers on the Day of the Battle at Charlestown. – Said Goods are in the Keeping of Mr. RICHARD DAVENS, at Watertown, an Inventory of them will be published as soon as the General Court shall direct some Person to deliver them.

It is hoped that other Towns will copy after this laudable Example!

BG, no. 1061, fol. 3.

[September 25, 1775]

At a Town-Meeting, legally warned and met at Swanzey, Sept. 18, 1775.

1st, VOTED and chose Jerathmel Bowers, Esq. Moderator of said Meeting.

2^d, Voted to dismiss the present Committee of Correspondence and Inspection, namely John Mason, Israel Barney, Daniel Brown, Benjamin Martin and Daniel Martin, jun.

3rd, Voted and chose a new Committee of Correspondence and Inspection, viz. Jerathmel Bowers, Esq. William Brown, Capt. Luther Thurber, Charles Slead, and Capt. Levi Wheaton.

WHEREAS the conduct of Col. Bowers respecting the present dispute between Great Britain and America has been of late much call'd in question, and has occasion'd much disturbance amongst us, the town taking the same into consideration think proper to pass the following votes –

Voted, That Col. Bowers has for a number of years back warmly contended for the rights and liberties of America, and has to this day uniformly opposed the measures of a corrupt, wicked and infatuated ministry.

Voted, That Col. Bowers has been always free to give us his advice in what manner to conduct ourselves, and he has invariably urged us to continue our opposition, giving it his opinion that Great Britain was incapable of making any impression upon America by an arm'd force.

Voted, That it is the opinion of this town that those persons (inhabitants of this place) who have endeavour'd to persuade the public that Col. Bowers is unfriendly to

the American cause, were actuated by no other motives but what were suggested by envy, malice and revenge.

Voted, That it is our opinion, that the Committee of *Rehoboth*, by visiting Col. *Bowers*, attended with a number of armed men, and forcing him from his house, and then publishing him as inimical to his country, without hearing what could be said in his behalf, and afterwards refusing to give him an opportunity of producing evidence when they were about taking depositions against him, have shew'd themselves rash, precipitate and not sufficiently tender of mens characters : And we are also of opinion, that the conduct of the committee of inspection for this town, with some other of the inhabitants, in going out of this government in a secret manner, without the knowledge of said *Bowers*, and there making oath to certain matters which materially affected his character, are unprecedented and highly blameable.

The within votes passed *September* 18, 1775 at a town-meeting in *Swanzey*.

Attest per me,

EDWARD, LUTHER, Town-Clerk.

BG, no. 1062, fol. 2.

[September 25, 1775]

Abington, September 16, 1775.

Notice is hereby given, That Thomas Mansfield, Capt. William Tirrill, David Porter, Israel Levet and David Ellis, all of Abington, do each of them refuse to comply with the association of the continental congress, and consequently prove themselves inimical to their country, and it is to be hoped every friend to his country will withdraw all trading, dealing and commerce with them. By order of the Selectmen, Committee of Correspondence, &c.

EBENEZER WITHMARSH.

BG, no. 1062, fol. 3.

[October 2, 1775]

Mr Printer,

Sir, please to insert the following Lines in your next Paper.

THIS may serve to certify the Public That Eleazer Bradshaw of Waltham, in the County of Middlesex, Hatter, has for some Time back employed himself going to Albany, under a pretence of bringing furr ; also purchased the pernicious, detestable herb called TEA, which all good Men and Friends to their Country hold in abhorrence. This Bradshaw has taken in Partnership with him one David Townsend, of

Waltham aforesaid, Baker by Trade, to retail said TEA. We think it our duty and desire that those *Tea Merchants* may be treated as their Merits deserve.

BG, no. 1063, fol.1.

[October 16, 1775]

The Committe of Inspection for the Town of Weston, being applied to by complaint sundry times, and by sundry persons, against Eleazer Bradshaw of Waltham, as being inimical to his country, and who has for some time past employed himself in going to Albany, under pretence of purchasing furr, also purchased a quantity of Tea ;

Whereupon the committee of Waltham, with the committees of Newtown, Watertown, Weston and Sudbury, being met on the second Day of October instant, to examine into the matter, and having sent a messenger for said Bradshaw, he appeared and frankly confessed he had purchased and sold a quantity of Tea, and had signified to one of said committee that he would do as he tho't fit in spite of said committee or any person whatever, and would be the death of any person that should molest him.

Therefore determined by this joint committee, that Eleazer Bradshaw, by his conduct and behaviour, has proved himself inimical to his country ; and that all persons be cautioned to with-hold commerce and dealing with said Bradshaw, until there appears a reformation in said Bradshaw.

The above to be published in the Watertown and Cambridge Papers.

By order,

JONATHAN PARMENTER, Chairman.

BG, no. 1065, fol.1.

[October 16, 1775]

I, David Townsend, by the desire of the Wife of Dr. John Clark, of Newton, to buy some Tea for her, and I applied to Eleazer Bradshaw of Waltham, and had six Pound, whichs [sic!] I sold to said Clark's Wife, and others, which I am heartily sorry for that I had any thing to do with said Tea, and I hope the Public will forgive me, for I did it without consideration, and I promise to have no more to do with Tea till allowed on by the Continental Congress.

This is to the acceptance of the Committee.

DAVID TOWNSEND.

BG, no. 1065, fol.1.

[October 16, 1775]

THE Committee of Inspection for the Towns of *Cumberland, Wrentham, Medway, Bellingham, Hopkinton, Holliston, Mendon, Uxbridge and Upton*, convened at said Bellingham the 18th of September 1775. Said Committees being so convened, received an Information against Capt. *Edward Clark* of *Rutland*, for purchasing and selling TEA, contrary to the Association Agreement, in Article Third. This Body of Committees, viewing it their indispensable Duty to keep said Association Agreement inviolate, taking it upon them to enquire into the Facts charged in said Information ; said *Clark* being required to appear before said Committee, accordingly appeared, and confessed that he had, since the first Day of March last, bought 20lb of Tea ; that he had sold to sundry Persons about 5lb, and an half of the same, had used some, and the Residue thereof, he said was lodged with a certain Man, with Intent to dispose of it to two others, whom he had not Opportunity to deliver it to.

Whereupon we unanimously *Resolve*, That the said *Clark*'s Conduct abovementioned, is in direct Violation of said Association Agreement, and that the said *Clark* is an Enemy to American Liberty, and ought to be treated as such. And that it be recommended to all Persons who are Lovers of their Country, and Friends to the common Rights and Liberties of Mankind, to break off all kind of Dealings with him ; and that this be published in the Gazette.

AARON PHIPS, Chairman.

Attest,
NATHAN TYLER, Clerk.

BG, no. 1065, fol. 3.

[October 30, 1775]

To the printer of the Boston Gazette, &c.

Please to insert the following [lines] you`ll oblige your humble servant.

AT [said] Abiel Wood of Pownalborough, having laid a plan, with the assistance of Thomas Rise and the rest of the committee of correspondence of that town, to supply the inhabitants of Nova Scotia with provisions, contrary to ; and in direct violation of the Resolves of the Continental Congress, I think it my duty to expose them, and every person who shall endeavour to break through the grand rules by which alone we must expect to effect a defeat of our unnatural enemies.

Wood, after he had been to Nova Scotia with a large Quantity of goods, which he imported, in opposition to the Continental Associations. – after he had committed the numerous outrageous crimes mentioned in a publication of the committee of inspection of Pownalborough in Mr. Edes`s paper of the 11th ult. – after, by his finesse and

low-cunning, he had rais'd many and great disturbances in this place, by forging and spreading lies in favour of the British Ministry, and against America ; after, when by his friends he was advis'd to desist from such mal practices, seeing he could not effect his purpose of torifying the whole town, and that his efforts, would only tend to disturb the peace and virtue of the people, (for he had many if not a majority of them dependant upon him) replied, if the town was rul'd by his opinion, that a pepper corn would turn a scale, [and that he was de... unleserlich] the worst the committee could do was to publish him in the papers, which he car'd not for. After all these things, the said committee of correspondence, of which Mr. Rice is the principal, met at Wood's house, notwithstanding they were knowing to the truth of the above : and furthermore, that he had the very goods he imported as mentioned then on sale in Nova Scotia: and having eat dinner with him and drank up all his ale they [compos]'d the piece which appear'd in Mess. Hall's paper, purporting, that he had not violated the association in any respect, &c. and that for the rash words he had spoken, he made an acknowledgement : which acknowledgement has never appear'd to be other than the dinner and ale, And consented that he might go to Nova Scotia with a large quantity of salt, for the support of the British Ministry, in opposition to the Continental resolves to the contrary, which he religiously executed with his sloop ; and on his return he clear'd out for New York ; but he touch'd in here. The committee of inspection alarm'd at so violent an act of opposition, as the supplying our enemies with provisions, or even the violation of the Congress resolves, which is the grand criterion of every friend to his country, in his committee conduct, met and voted, that it was not safe he should proceed, until he had liberty from the General Court of this province. An evidence respecting Wood's design, follows, viz.

I, Siewart Hunt, of lawful age, testify and say, that some time in June or July last, I heard Abiel Wood of Pownalborough say he was determined to carry on Trade to Nova Scotia, and that he could get Corn at the Southward and that he would go a Voyage for Corn and clear it out for Nova Scotia ; and that on his Voyag, he could come into Sheepsent, and leave Part of his Cargo there, and then proceed to Nova Scotia with the Remainder of his Cargo, in order to cancel his Bonds ; and I heard the said Wood say, that he hoped John Hancock and the Adams's would be hanged, for they have made all the Disturbances : and if some of the Leaders was hung, the rest would be easy ; and that there would be no Peace till some was hung ; and at many other Times he seemed disposed to terrify the People, by saying, All that has signed the Covenant would certainly be hang'd &c.

I do now solemnly declare the above to be the Truth.

Pownalboro. Aug. 25, 1775.

SIEWART HUNT.

BG, no. 1067, fol.1.

[October 30, 1775]

The General Court having order'd that the committee of correspondence in the several towns, should be authorized to clear out vessels, the property of well-known friends to this country to go the Southward after provisions : the said *Thomas Rice* with the rest of the committee, clear'd out said *Wood's* sloop, *Zebulan Baker*, master, altho he has been published an open enemy to this country. It is therefore hop'd in justice to the cause of liberty ; as well as to prevent said *Wood* from supplying the people in Nova Scotia, where he has a store, and carries on trade now with provisions contrary to the resolves of the Continental Congress ; that the committee in what port she now is, or may be at, will detain her so as to prevent such abandon'd designs being executed.

The following is an ADDRESS to the Committee of Correspondence .

Question 1st : Did you clear our *Abiel Wood's* sloop, because he has made it his business for nine months past, to curse both Continental and Provincial Congresses ; and tell the most scandalous lies of them which he could invent?

2. Was it because he endeavoured to discourage the good people of this place, from regarding the Continental Associations?

3. Was it because *he* tried to frighten the people of the town from choosing militia officers, and a person for learning them the exercise ; by telling them it was high treason, and they would all be hang'd for it ; and by such actions has got a party of about 40 men in the town to Join with him : [the following two lines are unreadable] apprentices ; and concluded, by saying if they met to exercise they would be hang'd in the same manner with them?

4. Was it because *he* in a most notorious manner broke the Continental association, and in consequence was published in the papers as an enemy to his country?

5. Was it because *he* traded and now continues to trade to Nova Scotia, so open violation of the Continental resolves, and his determination of carrying the provisions there for which his vessel is gone by your recommendation?

6. Was it because the committee of inspection voted it unsafe to let *his* sloop proceed for her voyage, as she was going with supplies to a place prohibited by the Congress?

7. Was it because he, with *Thom. Rice* Esq; one of our committee, granted a warrant for one annual march meeting agreeable to one of the acts of parliament, against which, the present noble resistance is made?

8. Was it because you are determined to avert the just punishment which *he* is liable to for violating the association by assisting him to carry on a trade with the enemy?

9. Was it because you tho't *him* a friend to this country, by endeavouring to establish the mild acts of parliament, lately exported from England : acts which were granted to take our money without our consent ; block up our ports : alter our ancient, valuable constitution ; stop our fisheries which the God of nature had given us in such plenty, for our easy and cheap maintenance ; seize our vessels, and stop our trade?

Such Gentlemen, are the real facts which you know *Wood* has been guilty of ; and if from them you draw the conclusion that he was a friend to this country ; or if it was from other motives, I should be glad to have them in answer to this, through the channel of the news papers : so that *your* conduct, which appears to be that of the town, may appear to the world in its true, proper, or improper light.

I am, Gentlemen, your humble servant,

TIMOTHY PARSONS.

Pownalboro` October 3 1775.

BG, no. 1067, fol.1.

[November 20, 1775]

Mr. EDES, *Sir*, at there was sometime past some depositions, that was taken and published against the subscriber, in your paper : and as I requested the public to suspend their opinion, as there was to be a hearing, and an inquiry by authority, into the matter, by whom the truth could be better known : and as that has been done, please to publish the report of a committee of the House of Representatives, herewith inclosed, and then the world will be able to judge whether I have acted an unfriendly part to my country :

In doing which you will oblige your`s to serve,

JERATHMEAL BOWERS.

THE committee appointed by the house of representatives to make enquiry of the committees of inspection who stigmatiz'd *Jerathmeal Bowers* esq; in the public papers ; and to examine and hear the evidences which they might produce against him ; and also to give the said Bowers a fair hearing in his defence beg leave to report.

That they have attended that service ; having first duly notified all persons concern'd who were present with their evidences, and had a full and a fair hearing.

The charges exhibited by the committee of inspection against *Jerathmeal Bowers*, esq; were as follow ;

That he opposed the town's paying their outstanding provincial rates to *Henry Gardner*, esq; that he was in favor of dismissing the committee of inspection for the town of *Swanzy* ; that he opposed from time to time, the raising of a minute company ; and, after they were raised, continued [the] opposition [till] he finally procured their dismissal : and afterwards he used his influence to prevent the raising of a min-

ute company, when mov`d for by some of the inhabitants, and the urgency of the times demanded [so] : that he express`d a great dislike to our assuming government : that he was much displeas'd at the courts being put down : that he spoke with contempt of a paper currency : that his conversation and conduct have had a tendency to dispirit the inhabitants of the town he lives in, and prevent their properly furnishing themselves for defence, against an invading enemy – xx his saying, that it would never do to fight OldEngland ; that five thousand regulars would drive our army ; that the expence of maintaining thirteen thousand men could not be supported, and that they would use the sword put into their hands against us for their pay : that he had advis'd Capt. Gibbs to lye still and not act in our difficult affairs ; and blamed some of the committee of Swanzey for examining a person whose conduct had been inimical ; and that he was against the town`s augmenting their stock of powder, &c, and oppos'd equipping the militia out of the town`s stock.

In support of these charges the committee brought the depositions which have appeared in the public papers most of the deponents being present, who again made oath to the truth of them.

It appears to your committee, that at the first meeting the town had to determine whether their rates should be paid to *Henry Gardner*, esq; col. *Bowers* warmly urg'd that the taxes should be collected, and be paid into the hands of some suitable person in town ; but as almost all the inhabitants were against paying them to *H. Gardner* esq; he, with the rest, expressed a disinclination to do it. But at the several adjournments he insisted that they should be paid to *H. Gardner*, but could not succeed in obtaining the approbation of the town, till after the Lexington battle ; when he was instrumental in procuring a vote of the town for that purpose. He was even so zealous for collecting the money that it might be ready for *H. Gardner*, when wanted or called for, that he declared in meeting that if any one refused to pay, he himself would aid and assist the constable in compelling him to do it.

It appears to your committee, that the committee of inspection for the town of Swanzey were first chosen in consequence of a motion made by col. *Bowers* for that purpose ; and that their dismissal was owing to those persons who were offended at the town`s refusing to pay three shillings a day to every minute man for exercising in case a company should be raised. And if col. *Bowers* seconded the motion for their dismissal (as is suggest'd by some of the evidences) it did not arise from any dislike he had to so useful an institution : but it remains very uncertain whether the motioy [i.e. motion] was seconded by him. For *Simeon Mason* whose evidence has appear`d in the papers, observ`d further to us that he himself made the motion for their dismissal, and that he was not seconded by col. *Bowers*, but by another person. Others declared that when the motion was made, he shew'd a good deal of dislike and said, "if they would run mad he would have no hand in it." And after they were dismissed, he

observ'd to them, "just so you do your business, you dance backwards and forwards, do and undo."

The captain and lieutenant of the minute company which had been in Swanzey, with others, deposed that col. *Bowers* encouraged them to proceed in raising a minute company ; and that he was so far from opposing, that he always express'd his approbation of the scheme. When an army was established he supposed their usefulness in a great measure ceased ; and as they were entitled to a considerable bounty upon their marching out of town, he thought it best they should be dismiss'd and they were accordingly. And afterwards he opposed the town's agreeing to pay three shillings a day to minute men for exercising, in case a company could be raised.

With respect to the courts, Col. *Bowers* granted, that he had disapproved of the people's conduct, in not permitting them to do business agreeable to the charter of the province.

As to a paper currency, Col. *Bowers* produced evidence, that he had taken it in a considerable quantity, and had given silver in exchange.

In answer to the evidences which were produced, that his conversation and conduct were calculated to dishearten the people, &c, Col. *Bowers* proved, that he used all his influence to induce the town to adopt the Suffolk resolves, but without effect ; that he urged the town to choose a committee for the county convention, and it was accordingly done ; that upon the news of the Lexington battle, he was sent for by a number of the inhabitants to consult what was best to be done, he told them, " he was very much against fighting, but since it was begun, "he was for going a thorough stitch with it," and advised to the calling a town meeting immediately ; that he moved at one of their meetings for doubling the town stock, which would make better than 500 weight of powder above 700 weight of lead &c., and likewise that 40 firearms should be produced, all which were voted ; he also moved that the town of Swanzey should join with Freetown, and erect a battery on each side of the river, and afterwards said in private conversation, that he himself would be at the expence of the cannon, if he knew where to get them ; that he was for the town's stock being divided, and placed in different parts of the town, for the conveniency of the inhabitants in case of an emergency ; or that every man should fill his powder horn and give it to the serjeants to keep : but objected to their having it in their own possession, as they might waste it in shooting at birds, &c, that he solicited the people to enlist into the army, telling them that they had good encouragement so to do ; that he would by all means have their full quota engage in the service ; that he had been heard to say, that Great Britain could never drive this country by any force they could send ; that at the time of the Weymouth alarm, he declared, "he would go in person as far as any man ; that he had been heard to say within a few month back, that he "would spend as much of his

estate in defence of his country, as any person whatever, that he would spend his life and fortune in the cause.”

Moreover Capt. *Robert Gibbs* deposed that Col. *Bowers* never advised him not to act in our difficult affairs, as mentioned in the testimony of *David Pierce* ; but that he informed said *Pierce* that Col. *Bowers* came to him on account of his keeping a pedlar, and sending a sword to one of Col. *Gilbert*’s company, and told him that he had better turn away the pedlar, recall the sword, lye still and not make the people uneasy ; which story said *Pierce* misapprehended.

Silas Clarke, the person referred to in the depositions of *Philip Slead* and *David Pierce*, as being present at the time when Col. *Bowers* expressed his apprehensions about the army, testified, That *Philip Slead*, expressed some concern about paying the army, but he observed him, that he need not trouble himself about that, for us the army had the sword in their hands, they would pay themselves, which seemed to affect said *Slead*, who said, “I never thought of it before, and am a good deal troubled at it,”and then asked Col. *Bowers* what he thought of *Clarke*’s opinion, who asked what it was, and upon being told, he answered in a careless way, “there`’s no knowing which way it would turn.”

As in some of the depositions published to the world, Col. *Bowers* is said to call the meeting illegal, the meaning of which may be mistake [...] we think proper to observe that from the deponents themselves, it appears that Col. *Bowers* mentioned the absence of the town-clerk as the cause of its illegality.

Your committee, after a thorough examining of the several evidences and the most careful enquiry, cannot find that Col. *Bowers* has acted [...] part unfriendly to his country, but quite the reverse ; and are unanimous in the opinion, that he so far from wishing his countrymen to be deprived of their liberty or a single privilege would exert himself to the utmost in support of them.

By order of the committee,
WILLIAM BATLIES, Chairman.

BG, no. 1070, fol.1.

[December 4, 1775]

Mr. EDES,

Be pleased to insert the following in your useful paper.

Observing a very brassy piece in your paper of the 20th of November ; published at the request of Jerathmel Bowers. We the subscribers being concerned as committee men, in gratifying the said Bowers [sanguine] request some time past, by publishing sundry depositions in support of a charge before that time published against the said Bowers, and afterwards being called on by a committee of the honorable house of

representatives : Before whom the committee that had published said Bowers made their defence ; And being informed by the committee of the honorable house : that the matter would have a further hearing before the house : we are chosen by our committees as agents to attend on said affair before the house, we attend accordingly ; and we grant that the committee of the house did report, in manner and form as published by said Bowers ; but now we say to the public (and to the immortal honour of the honorable house of representatives be it spoken) that the house`s committee`s report to them, was by them rejected ; and aforesaid Bower`s complaint against the [said] committees was dismissed, and he allowed to withdraw the same, and thereupon he took his papers back ; and so said Bower`s enterprise against the town`s committee`s proved an abortive ; and in the name of sense can that speak to the public that never had an existence : the report of the committee of the house never had an existence in the honorable house : Good God, how long shall the public be treated in this manner, (to wit) by said Bower`s feebly assaying to inform them by that that never had an existence itself ; but as we would not be too dogmatical, we feel perfectly easy to risk this correction of said Bower`s late publication to the judgement of the impartial public (having only just set the same in its true light) and leave the said Bowers to the correction of that honorable (and impartial) house, whereof he is a member, whose worthy doings he has not published, but endeavoured to [...] present, by asserting in a public paper a report of one of their committees which they themselves in their justice disapproved of and finally rejected.

JOHN WHEELER, ISAAC BARNEY.

BG, no. 1072, fol.1.

[December 4, 1775]

Mr. EDES,

By inserting the following Certificate, you will oblige one of your constant Readers.

These may certify whom to ever it may concern, that we give leave to John Chase to pass to Nantucket, in his small vessel, and to carry with him some apples, & cyder, & cheese and chesnuts. Given under our hands at Swanzey, this 28th day of October, 1775.

By order of the committees of correspondence and inspection of Swanzey.

(Copy), JERATHMEEL BOWERS, Chairman.

BG, no. 1072, fol.1.

[December 4, 1775]

Pownalboro, 6th, 1775.

AS the dismissing a committee of Inspection reflects disgrace on the town that dismisses it, or the committee dismissed, I desire you would publish the following state of facts relative to the dismissing the committee of Inspection for the East-Precinct of Pownalboro`, that the public may judge whether they were dismissed for good reasons or no.

ABIEL Wood of Pownalboro` having been guilty of many misdemeanors, and violated the association the committee thought it their duty to publish him to the world as an enemy to his country. A state of facts, relative to his conduct, was drawn up in May last, and laid on the table of the late Congress. – The committee thought it prudent to suspend the publishing his name in the papers as he had sailed with his family for Nova Scotia.

The town of Pownalboro` having been without a committee of correspondence till the 22d of June last, the inhabitants then assembled, and made choice of Thomas Rice, Esq; Messrs. Michael Sevey, John Decker, jun. Edmond Bridge and Obadiah Call, for that purpose.

Soon after the committee of correspondence was chosen, Mr. Wood returned from Nova Scotia, and made application to the above gentlemen, whereupon they voted him a friend to his country, though they knew that he had violated the association by importing cordage, &c, they also gave him a permit to go to Nova Scotia in direct violation of the resolve of the American congress in May last, they also published a piece in Mess`rs Mall`s paper declaring to the world, that Mr. Wood was a friend to the country.

The committee of inspection thought themselves aggriev`d by the publication of the committee of correspondence, and sent a petition to the general court, with a state of facts, they also sent a state of facts relating to Mr. Wood`s conduct, to the press. – The general court took the petition of the committee of inspection into consideration, and passed the following resolve.

In the House of representatives, Watertown, August 3d 1775.

Resolved that the facts alledged in the petition of Timothy Langdon, and others, committee of inspection for the East parish of the town of Pownalboro` against Mr. Abiel Wood, respecting his conduct, were proper to be considered by the committees of inspection and that from their representation, they had sufficient evidence of the facts to deem him an enemy to his country : and that committee of inspection, are the only bodies recommended by the continental congress to judge and determine respecting infringements of the association of the continental congress ; and that committees of correspondence are not authorised for that end ; and, that from the representation made by the committee of inspection, this court approve of their conduct.

Sent up for concurrence,

JAMES WARREN, Speaker.

August 3d 1775. In council, read and concurr'd Attest. P. MORTON, Sec'y pro. temp.

Consented to, by fifteen of the council.

Between the time of sending the petition to court and the return of the general court's doings, Mr. Wood returned from his second trip to Nova Scotia. He drew a petition, which was signed by a number of the inhabitants, and sent it to the selectmen for a town meeting to be called, to dismiss the committee of inspection. One of the selectmen refused to grant a warrant for that purpose ; two selectmen signed it, and as it is in Mr. Wood's hand writing, and he may think me partial unless I publish it, I shall give the articles to the public.

1st To choose a moderator for said meeting .

2^d To see if the town approve of the proceedings of Ebenezer Whittier, Timothy Langdon, Timothy Persons, or any of the committee of inspection on the East side of said town.

3^d To see if the town will dismiss the old and choose a new committee men of inspection on the East side of said town.

The town accordingly met on the 4th of September, but the selectmen, either conscious they had done wrong in granting the warrant, or for some other reason best known to themselves, did not appear at the meeting ; Mr. Wood's party were at first thrown into confusion, and some of them went to the selectmen who would not sign the warrant and ordered him to meeting, but he refused to go – they then returned to the meeting and after consulting with one, who thinks himself a judge of law, they determined they could hold a meeting without. The selectmen, or either of them, being present. They then (to their immortal honour be it spoken) made choice of a man for their moderator, who, at the last march meeting had the audacity to declare, that he hoped, before six months were at an end, he should see half the continent in fetters.

One of the committee desired leave to read the above resolve of the general court, which being granted and the resolve read, Mr. Moderator and Mr. Wood assured the assembly they did not know the men who sign'd the resolve, that they had nothing to do with them, and that the resolve had nothing to do with the town meeting. – They then passed the following voted, viz.

Voted, That they do not approve of the proceedings of the committee of Inspection on the East side of the town.

Voted, To dismiss the old and choose a new committee for the East side of said town.

One of my brethren and myself moved, that the *assembly* would act consistently and record the reason for dismissing the committee, but Mr. Moderator assured us there was no article in the warrant for that purpose.

After the *assembly* had dismissed the committee of inspection, Mr. Wood applied to the before mentioned committee of correspondence, and they gave him liberty to take his sloop, which the committee of inspection had stopped, for trading to Nova Scotia, they also gave to him (or one Baker who has been in the sloop trading to Nova Scotia) a certificate, of his being a friend to the country, agreeable to the resolve of the general court, that he might go to Philadelphia for provisions, although they knew that, at the time of granting the certificate, Mr. Baker had a clearance for that sloop from Nova Scotia for New York. And it does appear, by a deposition which is ready to be published, that Mr. Wood declared he would get a certificate from the committee, and make use of it to get provisions, and trade to Nova Scotia.

The above being facts, it is incumbent upon the town of Pownalboro` to give some reasons for their conduct, and upon the committee of correspondence, to justify their proceedings to the world.

I am sir your humble servant,
TIMOTHY LANGDON.

BG, no. 1072, fol. 4.

[December 4, 1775]

Mr. EDES,

BY an hint in your paper of this week I learn a piece will be published in your next paper relative to me, signed Timothy Langdon. From his known present disposition towards me, expect it will be very unfriendly, therefore hope the public will suspend their opinion, till they hear what answer can be made to it.

THO. RICE.

Nov. 29, 1775.

BG, no. 1072, fol. 4.

[December 18, 1775]

To THOMAS RICE, Esq;

Sir,

IN the Gazettee of the 4th instant, you desired the publick to suspend their opinion upon a piece with my signature, till they heard what answer could be made ; as it is time an answer was published, you are desired to give one as soon as possible, and while you have pen in hand, answer the following Queries.

From what principle did you act, when as assessor for the town of Pownalborough, for 1774, you wrote a letter to Mr. Treasurer, not directing it to *Harrison Gray*, or *Henry Gardner*, Esq; in which letter you mentioned the names of the constables, and what sums were committed to each to collect?

From what principle was it that you, as one of the committee of correspondence, voted Mr. Wood a friend to the country, when you had taken some depositions (and copies of them were before you at the meeting of the committee) which would have condemned a man of a much better character than Mr. Wood [bore]?

What principle actuated you, when you gave your first permit to Mr. Wood when at the time of granting it he told you he purposed to go to Nova Scotia with his sloop.

What spirit possessed you when you gave Mr. Wood a second permit, as a well known friend to this country, when he made two trips to Nova Scotia, contrary to the Continental resolve in May last, and violated the association by importation and thereby giving him an opportunity to make a third trip to Nova Scotia, which he actually did?

What leaseng Demon possessed yout heart, when you dared to insinuate to the world that my well-known disposition towards you was unfriendly?

What one act of ill will towards you have I been guilty of, unless you call it ill will to expose your politicks, which every friend to America must abhor?

I think I have a right to an answer to the two last, and the publick to the other Queries.

TIMOTHY LANGDON.

Watertown, December 16.

BG, no. 1074, fol. 3.

[January 1, 1776]

The Committee of both houses appointed to consider the petition of the former committee of Inspection of the east-part of the Town of Pownalborough, the petition of a number of the inhabitants of said Town, and the petition of Abiel Wood, have attended that service and fully heard the parties, and beg leave to report by way of resolve.

JOHN TAYLOR, per order.

Resolved, That the former committee of inspection, on the east part of the town of Pownalborough, had sufficient evidence to justify them for publishing *Abiel Wood*, as a violator of the *Continental Association* ; and that in many other instances, he, the said *Wood*, appeared by his conduct to be an enemy to the liberties of this country ; and the said committee deserve to be highly commended for so doing ; and the committee of correspondence of said town, who counteracted the doings of said committee of in-

spection, is very unjustifiable, as it encouraged the said *Abiel Wood*, in his principles and practices, so inimical to *the rights and liberties of America*.

Further Resolved, That *Abiel Wood* shall be confined until he shall give bond, with two good and sufficient sureties to the treasurer of this colony, in the sum of *one thousand pounds*. The condition whereof shall be, that he, the said *Abiel*, will not in any way assist, or correspond with any of the enemies of this country ; and that he will be of good behaviour, and peaceable towards all, and more especially towards the persons of the former committee of inspection for the east part of the town of Pownalborough ; and that he will at any time appear and answer to any complaint, which may hereafter be made against him, when he shall [...] thereinto required, by order of this court, and that he will abide their order thereon.

In Council, Dec. 23. 1775. Read and accepted.

Sent down for concurrence.

Perez Morton, Dep. Secr`y.

In the House of Representatives, Dec. 25, 1775.

Read and concurred,

Sent up,

J. WARREN, Speaker.

Confented to by the major part of the Council.

A true copy,

Attest, *Perez Morton*, Dep. Sec.

BG, no. 1076, fol. 3.

[January 1, 1776]

Watertown, 28th Dec. 1775.

THIS may certify, That Mr. Abiel Wood, of Pownalborough, has complied with the Order of the General Court, upon the Report of the Committee on the Petition of the Committee of Inspection for the East Part of said Town, and others, by giving Bonds agreeable thereto. – He ought therefore to be permitted to pass unmolested through the Province.

(Copy) For HENRY GARDNER, Esq; Treasurer and Receiver General for *Massachusetts-Bay*.

JAMES SWAN, Dep`y.

BG, no. 1076, fol. 3.

[January 22, 1776]

To the Public.

Granby, January 10th, 1776.

WHEREAS many regular complaints have been of late exhibited to us against *William Eastman*, of Granby, for not attending to the recommendations and declarations of the Continental Congress, and also for violating the resolves of the Provincial Congress : and he being duly cited to appear the 31st day of July last before the committee for this town : the evidences adduced were examined by which it was proved to the satisfaction of the committee that said Eastman was inimical to the cause of liberty and the interest of the American colonies.

And after much time hath been spent, by the committee, and others, in labouring to convince him of his error herein ; and much patience and lenity hath been exercised towards him in allowing him proper time of consideration ; yet that he the said Eastman, does wholly refuse to comply with the declarations of the Continental Congress, in taking up arms in the defence of the Colonies, he also refuses to join with the town in transacting any affairs relative to the public cause ; and also that he justified the late tyrannical and oppressive proceedings of the British parliament with the town of Boston : and many other things of like nature, too numerous to be here inserted – All which are aggravated by his holding a Captaincy in the militia, under the power and the authority of administration.

It is therefore the opinion of this committee, that said *William Eastman* is guilty of violating the resolves and declarations of the Congresses, and ought to be held up to public view as an Enemy to his Country. – And as such we do exhibit him, that every person who wishes to support and vindicate the natural and constitutional rights of the American Colonies may treat him accordingly, and withdraw all commercial dealings from him.

Voted, and ordered to be published.

Signed per Order, I [*bin*] *bas Smith*. Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence and Inspection.

Test. *Nathan Smith*, Committee Clerk.

BG, no. 1079, fol. 4.

[March 11, 1776]

Mr. EDES, please to give the following a place in your paper.

THE Committee of Correspondence and Inspection for the Town of Eastham think it their duty as Friends to their Country, to inform the Public, that notwithstanding the Resolve of Court,"That no Man shall Fire a Gun at Bird, Beast or Mark," Joshua Higgins of this Town after hearing said Act read, and being requested by this joint Committee to conform thereto, hath in defiance of said Act

fired away his Powder, and refuseth to give the least Satisfaction to this Committee that he intends to reform.

By order of said joint Committee,

THOMAS PAINE, Chairman.
Eastham, Feb. 19, 1776.

BG, no. 1086, fol. 2.

[March 18, 1776]

Mr EDES, you are desired to give the following Lines a Place in your Gazette.

AGREEABLE to the Resolve of Congress, the eleventh of January A.D.1776, Richard Burton, late Schoolmaster of Chatham hath been duly convicted before the Committee of Correspondence and Inspection of Eastham, of obstructing and discouraging the Currency and Circulation of the Bills of Credit emitted by the Authority of Congress. In order therefore, that the said Richard Burton may be treated as the Congress directs, he is thus published by order of the Committees aforesaid.

THO'S PAINE, Chairman.
Eastham, March 8th 1776.

BG, no. 1087, fol. 3.

[April 22, 1776]

AT a Committee of Inspection held at Boston, the 9th Day of April, 1776. *Voted unanimously*, That Nathaniel Barber, Esq. be appointed to sign-Certificates of Goods landed in this Town & to grant Permission to take on board Merchandize, &c, to be exported, he taking proper Assurances of their not being carried to the Enemies of America : and if at any Time, he should suspect any of inimical Intentions, to inform said Committee.

(A true copy),

The foregoing Vote is published, that all concerned may conform themselves thereto.
Boston, 19. April 1776

NAT. BARBER.

BG, no. 1092, fol. 2.

[April 29, 1776]

At a Committee of Inspection held at Boston the 9th Day of April 1776.

Voted unanimously, That *Nathaniel Barber* Esq; be appointed to sign Certificates of Goods landed in this Town and to grant Permissions to take on board Merchandize, &c, to be exported, he taking proper Assurances of their not being carried to the Enemies of America : And if at any Time, he should suspect any of inimical Intentions, to inform said Committee.

(A true copy)

The foregoing Vote was published, that all concerned may conform themselves thereto.

Boston, 19. April 1776.

NAT BARBER.
BG, no. 1093, fol. 4.

[May 6, 1776]

At a Committee of Inspection held at Boston, the 9th Day of April 1776.

Voted unanimously, That *Nathaniel Barber* Esq; be appointed to sign Certificates of Goods landed in this Town and to grant Permissions to take on board Merchandize, &c, to be exported, he taking proper Assurances of their not being carried to the Enemies of America : And if at any Time, he should suspect any of inimical Intentions, to inform said Committee.

(A true copy)

The foregoing Vote was published, that all concerned may conform themselves thereto.

Boston, 19. April 1776.

NAT BARBER.
BG, no. 1094, fol. 4.

Providence Gazette, October 20, 1774 – July 4, 1776

[November 12, 1774]

On Friday evening last, in pursuing a person who had been guilty of breaking the peace in Charlestown, a barrel and bag of tea were stumbled on, which were immediately carried to the training-field, and committed to the flames; after they were consumed, it was suggested there was more in the same place; upon which a search was made, and enough found to fill a large hogshead, which was conveyed to a place called

the green, before Cape-Breton tavern, and a quantity of faggots laid round it, which were set on fire, and the whole consumed: Every thing was conducted with such stillness and order, that many people there knew nothing of it until the next morning. It is supposed the quantity destroyed was between 3 and 400 weight.

PG, no. 566, fol. 3.

[November 26, 1774]

Beverly, November 1, 1774

At a meeting of the Committee of Correspondence.

WHEREAS many of the good people of this town have signified their dislike that any person or persons, who are supposed to be enemies to the liberties of this country, should be countenanced, by laying his or their vessel to any of the wharves, or storing any of their goods in any of the warehouses in this town:

It is strongly recommended to all wharfingers and owners of wharves and warehouses in this town, that for the future they suffer no vessel to come and lay at any of their wharves, nor receive any goods into their warehouses, which belong to any person who bears the character of an enemy to the liberties of this country. By order of the Committee of Correspondence,
SAMUEL GOODRIDGE, Clerk.

PG, no. 568, fols. 2-3.

[November 26, 1774]

Providence, November 24, 1774.

THE Committee of Correspondence for the Town of Providence, having met together this Day, and taking under Consideration an Article in the Association, made at the late American Continental Congress, relative to improving the Breed of Sheep, encreasing their Number, killing them as sparingly as may be, especially those of the most profitable Kind, and not exporting them to the West-Indies, Do earnestly entreat and exhort all Persons within this Town to conform themselves exactly to this good and wise Regulation, as it will have a manifest Tendency to bring about and secure that Freedom and Happiness which we so greatly contend for. We would observe in particular, that those who shall so far act in Opposition to the united Sentiments of all America, collected in General Congress, as to kill any Lambs or young Sheep, without the most evident Necessity, or export any Sheep at all to the West-Indies, ought to be discountenanced, as Persons who counteract the general Welfare.

Signed by Order, and in Behalf of the Committee,

JAMES ANGELL, Clerk.

PG, no. 568, fol. 3.

[November 26, 1774]

The Committee of Correspondence having Yesterday been advised, that some Merchants of this Town were about to ship a Number of Sheep for the West-Indies, on a Supposition that they might be exported till the first of December, waited on the Gentlemen who being informed that it was contrary to the 7th Article of the Association agreed on in the late Continental Congress, they very readily declared nothing was farther from their Intention than to violate the said Association, and immediately gave Orders that the Sheep should not be shipped, although they were purchased for that Purpose about the first of September last.

PG, no. 568, fol. 3.

[November 26, 1774]

A Merchant at Newport having this Week shipped 50 Sheep on board a Vessel bound for St. Augustine, it was determined, at a Meeting of the Inhabitants, that they should be re-landed, which was accordingly done.

PG, no. 568, fol. 3.

[November 26, 1774]

Rehoboth, November 22, 1774.

THE Town of Rehoboth being legally warned and assembled on the 21st Inst. made Choice of

Mr. Ephraim Starkweather, Mr. Samuel Peck, Capt. Ebenezer Peck, Capt. Philip Wheeler, and

Capt. Thomas Carpenter, a Committee for executing the Plans of the Continental and Provincial Congresses; and also gave Orders to the Constables and Collectors to pay Henry Gardner, of Stow, Esq; Monies which they then had, or in future might have, in their Hands, belonging to the Province, agreeable to a Resolve of the Provincial Congress; who have considered the late Treasurer Gray unworthy of any further Confidence, and an avowed Enemy to the Rights of America.

PG, no. 568, fol. 3.

[December 3, 1774]

We the subscribers hereby certify that we have conversed freely and fully with the aforesaid Gentlemen upon the subject to which their publication above written refers; And have received full satisfaction from them, that they are in no measure combined with, or aiding the Rev Samuel Peters, in any measure or plan he may have concerted, or is pursuing injurious to this colony; But on the contrary we have received strong assurance of their friendly disposition towards the government and people of this colony; Which we persuade ourselves, and believe to be serious and candid; and that they are entitled to every degree not only of personal security and liberty; but of respect and esteem which every colony good subject, and friend to his country has a right to expect and receive.

Erastus Wolcott, Daniel Sherman, Nathaniel Wales jun, William Wolcott,
Thomas Mumford, Benj Huntington, Thomas Seymour, Titus Hosmer, J Chandler,
Thomas Belding, Jedidiah Elderkin, Jonathan Trumbull jun

PG, no. 569, fol.1.

[December 3, 1774]

At a Meeting from the several Towns in the county of Barnstable, met and convened at the Court-House in said county, 16. Nov 1774

Hon James Otis being chosen Moderator, and Col Joseph Otis, Clerk....

We do therefore *resolve*, [...]

5. we recommend it to the inhabitants of this county, to subscribe the Association ... with the following addition:

"We the subscribers do solemnly agree and promise, that we will observe and conform to the above Association, and do hereby make it our own particular act and covenant, and do further engage, that from and after the date hereof, we will not buy, sell, transport or drink, or suffer our families to buy, sell, transport or drink any kind of India tea, wheter imported on account of the East-India company, or any other, or from any part of the world, till we obtain as ample redress of our grievances, as is specified in said Assoc. as witness our hands the 7th day of Nov 1774."

And that each member of this Congress do immediately sign said Association with said addition: and that we recommend it to every town in the county, who have not already chosen, to chuse committees, to see that the inhabitants of their respective towns sign as above. And to inspect and enquire if any person act contrary to said Assoc and addition, and in case they do, or any refuse to sign said Assoc, to publish their names to the world.

[...]

15. *Voted*, that the county's Committee of Correspondence be desired to procure printed copies of the proceedings of this Congress, and the above mentioned Assoc.

and that they transmit two setts to each town in the county, to be directed to the respective Committee of Correspondence.

The Congress then, after each member had signed the said Association with said Addition, and voted their thanks to the moderator, clerk and Col Freeman, for their good services, adjourned to the second Tuesday in January next.

A true copy, James Otis, Clerk

PG, no. 569, fols. 2-3.

[December 24, 1774]

PROVIDENCE, December 24.

At a Town-Meeting held here on Saturday last, the following Gentlemen were appointed a Committee, to see that the Association Agreement, entered into at the late Continental Congress, be faithfully and inviolably adhered to in this Town, viz. William Ea*1 [Earl], Nicholas Co*k* [Cooke], Be*jamin [Benjamin]Ma* [Man], Zephaniah Andrews, Arthur Fenner, jun. Ambrose P**e [Page], Nicholas P**er [Power], George Corli* [Corlis], Paul Alle* [Allen], David Lawrence, Joseph Russell, Job Sweeting, Joseph Buckli* [Bucklin], Jonathan Arnold, Bernard Eddi (?), Aaron Mas*n [Mason], Joseph Brown, and Nathaniel Wheaton. The Committee is to meet on the third Wednesday in every Month, at the Council-Chamber.

A Committee was last Week appointed at Newport for the same Purpose.

PG, no. 572, fol. 3.

[December 24, 1774]

At a Meeting of the Committee of Inspection for the Town of Providence, appointed to observe the Conduct of all Persons, touching the Association entered into by the American Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia, the 5th Day of September, 1774.

WE the Committee of Inspection for the Town of Providence, with a View of preventing, as much as we can, any Violation or Departure from the Agreement and Association of the Continental Congress aforesaid, have agreed to represent to the Inhabitants of this Town in brief such Particulars contained in the said Association as will be incumbent on them all to observe.

1. That they do not import any Goods from Great-Britain or Ireland, or from any other Place, any such Goods a* [as] shall have been exported from Great-Britain or Ireland, nor any India Tea from any Part of the World, nor any Melasse* [Melasses], Syrups, Paneles, Coffee or Pimento, from the British Plantations, or from Dominica; nor W*nes [Wines] from Madeira, or the Western Island* [Islands], nor foreign Indigo.

2. That they do not import or purchase any Slave imported since the 1st of December inst. and that they wholly discontinue the Slave Trade.

3. That they do not purchase or use any Tea, imported on Account of the East India Company, or any on which a Duty has been paid; and that from and after the first Day of March next, they do not purchase or use any East-India Tea whatever.

4. That on the tenth Day of September next they suspend all Exportation to Great-Britain, Ireland, and the West-Indies, except Rice to Europe.

5. That such Merchants as have sent Orders to Great-Britain or Ireland, for Goods, do immediately countermand the same, according to the 5th Article of the Association Agreement.

6. That Owners of Vessels give Orders to their Captains or Masters not to receive on board any Goods prohibited by the Non-Importation Agreement.

7. That they use their utmost Endeavours to improve the Breed of Sheep, and increase their Number to the greatest Extent; that to that End they kill them as sparingly as may be, especially those of the most profitable Kind; that they do not export any to the West-Indies or elsewhere; and that those who are or may be overstocked with, or can conveniently [conveniently] spare any Sheep, do dispose of them to their Neighbours, especially the poorer Sort, on moderate* [moderate] Terms.

8. That they encourage Frugality, Economy, and Industry, and promote Agriculture, Arts, and the Manufactures of this Country, especially that of Wool; discountenance and discourage Horse-racing, Gaming, Cock-fighting, expensive Shews, Plays, and Diversions: That on the Death of a Friend, they do not go into any further Mourning than a black Crape, or Ribbon, on the Arm or Hat, for Gentlemen; and a black Ribbon and Necklace for Ladies, and discontinue the giving of Gloves and Scarfs at Funerals.

9. That such as are Venders of Goods or Merchandize will not take any Advantage of the Scarcity of Goods that may be occasioned by the Association, but that they sell the same at the Rates they have been respectively accustomed to do for twelve Months past; And if any Vender of Goods or Merchandize shall sell any such Goods on higher Terms, or shal in any Manner, or by any Device whatsoever, violate or depart from this Agreement, no Person ought, nor will any of us deal with such Person, or his or her Factor or Agent, at any Time thereafter, for any Commodity whatever.

10. That any Goods or Merchandize, imported af*er [after] the first Day of December, and before the first Day of February, be, at the Election of the Owner, either reshipped, or delivered to the Committee to be stored and sold, agreeable to the 10th Article of the Association.

11. That all Manufactures of this Country be sold at reasonable Rates, so that no undue Advantage be taken of a future Scarcity of Goods.

In all and every of which Matters we request all Persons in this Town to yield the strictest Conformity, and in general a full Observance of every thing at large in the Proceedings of the Congress; as they would avoid such Contempt and Inconvenience, as otherwise they would incur, recommending a frequent Perusal of the said Proceedings, to the End that they may fully know their Duty with respect to said Agreement entered into, as a great Means for ex*tricating [extricating] this Country from impending Ruin and Slavery.-

And we earnestly request all Persons, both in Town and Country, who deal or trade in this Place, and all others, to give us Information of the Names of such as shall violate any Parts of the Association, that they may meet with such Discouragement as the Congress have directed.

Voted, That all Persons who shall in future bring Goods into this Town, either by Land or Water, shall produce a Certificate from the Committee of Inspection, for the Place from whence the Goods may be brought, of their being imported before the first Day of December; or that they were bought at Vendue, according to the Regulation of the American Congress, as contained in the 10th Article.

Voted, That the Chairman of this Committee, or any three of the Members, be empowered to give Certificates to any Person, who shall apply, for Goods imported into this Town, agreeable to the Regulations of the Congress.

NICHOLAS COOKE, *Chairman*.

PG, no. 572, fol. 3.

[December 31, 1774]

PROVIDENCE December 31.

The following is a Copy of the Association which was lately *smuggled* into some Towns in the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, and signed by a few Persons, who have since chiefly fled to the City of Refuge.

We the Subscribers being fully sensible of the Blessings of good Government on the one Hand, and convinced on the other Hand of the Evils and Calamities attending on Tyranny in all Shapes, whether exercised by one or many, and having of late seen, with great Grief and Concern, the distressing Efforts of a dissolution of all Government, whereby our Lives, Liberties and Properties, are rendered precarious, and no longer under the Protection of the Law; and apprehending it to be our indispensable Duty, to use all lawful means in our Power for the Defence of our Persons and Property, against all riotous and lawless Violence, and to recover and secure the Advantages which we are intitled to, from the good and wholesome Laws of the Government; do hereby associate, and mutually covenant and engage to and with each other as follows: Namely,

1. That we will, upon all Occasions, with our Lives and Fortunes, stand by and assist each other, in the Defence of his Life, Liberty and Property, whenever the same shall be attacked, or endangered, by any Bodies of Men, riotously assembled, upon any Pretence, or under any Authority, not warranted by the Laws of the Land.

2. That we will, upon all occasion, mutually support each other in the free Exercise and Enjoyment of our undoubted Right to Liberty, in eating, drinking, buying, selling, communing, and acting, what with whom, and as we please, consistent with the Laws of God and the King.

3. That we will not acknowledge, or submit to, the pretended Authority of any Congresses, Committees of Correspondence, or other unconstitutional Assemblies of Men; but will, at the Risk of our Lives if Need be, oppose the forcible Exercise of all such Authority.

4. That we will, to the utmost of our Power, promote, encourage, and when called to it, enforce Obedience to the rightful Authority of our most gracious Sovereign King George the Third, and to his Laws.

5. That when the Person or Property of any one of us shall be invaded or threatened by any Committee Mobs or unlawful Assemblies, the others of us will, upon Notice received, forthwith repair, properly armed, to the Person on whom, or Place where such Invasion or Threatning shall be, and will, to the utmost of our Power, defend such Person and his Property and, if Need be, will oppose and repel Force with Force.

[...]

8. That if any one of us shall unjustly and unlawfully be injured in his Person or Property, by any such Assemblies as before mentioned, the others of us will unitedly demand, and, if in our Power expel the Offenders, if known, to make full Reparation and Satisfaction for such Injury; and if all other Means of Security fail, we will have Recourse of the natural Law of Retaliation.

In Witness of all which we hereto subscribe our Names:, this ... Day of ...

PG, no. 573, fol. 3.

[January 7, 1775]

Reboboht, January 6, 1775.

William Bullock, Esq; Colonel of the First Regiment of Militia in the County of Bristol, was lately [lately]re-chosen, by the new-elected Officers, to serve as Colonel in said Regiment, and at the Time of his being chosen professed a strict Adherence to the Doings both of the Continental and Provincial Congresses; notwithstanding which Professions, on the 15th of December, the Day recommended by the Provincial Con-

gress to be set apart as a Day of public Thanksgiving throughout the Province, instead of complying with the Advice of the Congress, in observing said Day, by abstaining from servile Labour, and attending on the public Worship of God, he and his Family employed themselves in tending his Grist-Mill and Saw-Mill; which Conduct of his gave such general Uneasiness to the Inhabitants, that he has since been obliged to resign his Command of the Regiment. - Who but an Enemy to his Country would have done this?

PG, no. 574, fol. 3.

[January 7, 1775]

Wrentham, December 21, 1774.

A report prevailing in this and the neighbouring towns, that Mr. Nathan Alldis, and some of his adherents, had procured inlisting-papers (as they are called) to inlist men to assist government in enforcing the new acts of Parliament, &c. - this report, together with their exceptionable conduct, induced a number of people from this and the neighbouring towns (to the amount of four or five hundred) to assemble at the house of said Alldis, and after a conference held between the parties, the obnoxious persons signed the following declaration: Mr. Alldis at the same time promising to the company, that he would purchase no more tea, until the present difficulties were over. - The company voted it satisfactory, and immediately dispersed.

PG, no. 574, fol. 3.

[January 7, 1775]

WE do now, in the open air, with our heads uncovered, humbly ask the forgiveness of heaven, and this respectable assembly, for our misdoings: - We frankly confess that we have often made use of exasperating speeches, which have justly inflamed the minds of all friends to American liberty, and that we have heretofore paid no regard to any Convention or Congress, but have boldly opposed them, and also have reported that we had inlisting-papers from Governor Gage, to inlist men on government's behalf, which was a false report of our own, and for which, together with the above, we ask your forgiveness, and promise never to be guilty of the like again. We severally for the future will conform to the resolves of the people on all occasions, and in particular we promise to regulate our conduct, and strictly conform to the Association of the Grand American Congress; we also admit this resignation to be made public at the discretion of this assembly, and return them our thanks for their civility. SAMUEL GOLDSBURY, NATHAN ALLDIS, SAMUEL SLOCOM.

PG, no. 574, fol. 3.

[January 21, 1775]

TO be Sold; by Order of the Committee of Inspection, at public Vendue, on Monday next, at 2 o'clock P.M. at Mr. John Jenckes's Store, on the Long-Wharff, agreeable to the Association of the Continental Congress, sundry Merchandize, imported from Great-Britain, via New-York; viz. 6 Tierces, 3 Barrels, 5 Bales, Boxes, 1 Hamper, 24 Crates; 1 Bundle, containing 2 Dozen of Frying Pans; 6 Bundles, containing 5 C. Steel; 8 Bundles, containing 4 Dozen of Iron Shovels; which Goods were shipped at Liverpool on board the ship Daniel, Capt. Casey, the 15th of September, and arrived at New-York since the first Day of December last.

Signed by Order,

JAMES ANGELL, *Clerk of the Committee.*

Providence, January 21, 1775.

PG, no. 576, fol. 3.

[January 28, 1775]

WHEREAS at a late Meeting of the Freemen of the Town of Scituate, in the Colony of Rhode-Island, we the Subscribers were chosen a Committee of Inspection for said Town, agreeable to the eleventh Article of the Agreement and Association of the American Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia on the fifth Day of September, A. D. 1774: Being now in Convention, and taking into Consideration the End and Purpose of our Appointment, viz. to prevent, as much as in us lies, any Violation of, or Departure from, the Association aforesaid, think it expedient briefly to represent to the Inhabitants of this Town such Particulars therein contained as they ought inviolably to observe,

1. That they do not, directly nor indirectly, 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: That from and after the first Day of March next they do not purchase or use any East-India tea whatever, and that they do not purchase or use any Goods, Wares, or Merchandize, the Importation of which is prohibited by the Association aforesaid, which they know or have Cause to suspect were imported after the first Day of December, A. D. 1774, except such as come under the Rules and Directions of the tenth Article of the said Association.

2. That from and after the tenth Day of September next, they exert themselves in suspending every Species of Exports to Great-Britain, Ireland and the West-Indies, except Rice to Europe – to that End, that from and after the said tenth Day of September they do not furnish any Person with the Articles usually exported, either ani-

mate or inanimate, such as Cattle, Sheep, &c; or Hoops, Staves, &c. who they know or have Cause to suspect would export the same.

3. That they use their utmost Endeavours to improve the Breed of Sheep, and encrease their Number to the greatest Extent; that to the End they kill them as sparingly as may be, especially those of the most profitable Kind; and that those who are or may become overstocked with, or can conveniently spare any Sheep, do dispose of them to their Neighbours, especially the poorer Sort, on moderate Terms.

4. That they encourage Frugality, Economy and Industry, and promote Agriculture, Arts, and the Manufactures of this country, especially that of Wool, and that they discountenance and discourage Horse-racing, Gaming, Cock-fighting, expensive Shews, Plays and Divertions. 5. That such as are Venders of Goods or Merchandize do not take Advantage of the Scarcity of Goods, that may be occasioned by the Association; but that they sell the same at the Rates they have been respectively accustomed to do for twelve Months past.

6. That they be not hereafter instrumental in the Importation of Slaves, or purchase any Slave imported since the first Day of December last – and that they exert themselves to a final Discontinuation of the Slave-Trade.

7. That they sell all Manufactures of this Country at reasonable Rates, so that no undue Advantage be taken of a future Scarcity of Goods.

To each and every Article aforesaid all Persons in this Town are hereby requested to yield the strictest Conformity, and a full and general Observance of every thing at large contained in the Proceedings of the Congress, frequently perusing the same, to the End that the Knowledge of their Duty being ascertained; they may regulate their Conduct thereby, and avoid such Inconvenience and Contempt as they would otherwise incur.

As our Endeavours to carry into Execution the said Association will be strengthened by an Union of all Ranks of Men; we do therefore most earnestly recommend to the Inhabitants of this Town, that they henceforth lay aside all former Animositities and Quarrels, whether public or private, and cordially unite in a cheerful Observance of the Proceedings of the Congress, as a great and important Bulwark against that Tyranny and Despotism, which threatens Ruin to British America:

And we earnestly solicit all Persons to give us Information of the Names of all such as violate any Part of said Association, that they may reap the Reward of their Demerit, in such Manner as the Congress have directed.

Voted, That every Retailer, who shall hereafter bring any Goods, of British Manufacture, into this Town, shall produce a Certificate from the Committee of Inspection for the Place from whence the Goods may be brought, of their being legally obtained according to the Rules and Directions of the Congress.

Voted, That the Chairman, or any two Members of this Committee, be empowered to give Certificates to any Person who shall apply, for any Goods that may be brought into this Town agreeable to the Regulations of the Congress.

Jeremiah Angell, Chairman,

Charles Harris, James Brown, Philip Mathewson, Christoph Rolph, Thomas Brown, Peleg Fisk, John Colwell, jun., Samuel Derrance: Commit.

PG, no. 577, fol. 3.

[January 28, 1775]

Attleborough, January 23, 1775:

MR. Thomas Sabin hath this Day made full and ample Satisfaction for his Conduct, in taking a Chest of Tea from Capt. Stephen Richardson's, in said Attleborough.

ELISHA MAY,

JONATHAN STANLEY,

STEPHEN RICHARDSON,

(Select Men.)

PG, no. 577, fol. 3.

[January 28, 1775]

Cumberland, January 13, 1775.

WHEREAS we the Subscribers, at Wrentham, on the 21st Day of December last, did make a humble Concession and Engagement to a Number of People then assembled, concerning our Misdoings, wicked Expressions, and evil Conduct, and did ask their Forgiveness, which gave Satisfaction to the said Assembly: But having very wickedly violated our said Engagement, and thereby given just Cause of Resentment to the Friends of Liberty, which has caused them again to assemble, to enquire into the same;

we do therefore acknowledge our wicked Proceedings, and now sincerely beg the public Forgiveness, hereby ratifying and confirming our former Concession, and promising so to amend our Conduct, as in future to behave ourselves unexceptionably. We do likewise acknowledge the Propriety and Necesssity of the Proceedings of our Friends and Neighbours, and heartily return them our Thanks for the Lenity shewn us on this Occasion.

NATHAN ALLDIS,

SAMUEL GOLDSBURY,

SAMUEL SLOCOMB.

PG, no. 577, fol. 3.

[February 4, 1775]

Rehoboth, February 3, 1775.

A Number of the Inhabitants of this Town assembled on Monday last, to enquire into the Conduct of Mr. Caleb Wheaton, who lately came here from the Eastward, and who had rendered himself obnoxious, by openly espousing and vindicating the Plan of Depotism now carrying on against the Colonies. A Committee was appointed to wait on him, and after making an acknowledgment of his Villainy, asking Forgiveness, and promising Amendment, he was ordered to depart the Town in twelve Hours.

PG, no. 578, fol. 3.

[February 11, 1775]

Attleborough, January 23, 1775.

On the 3^d Day of December last Mr. Thomas Sabin, of Providence, sent by a Carter a Chest of Tea, containing about 400 lb. through this Town, destined for Boston.

As soon as the Friends of Liberty here were made acquainted that a Quantity of that obnoxious Herb, which has been so detrimental to the Interest of this Country, was in Town, they assembled together, and took the said Chest of Tea into their Custody;

but in order that no Man's Property might be inconsiderately destroyed, they chose a Committee to determine what was proper to be done, who, upon mature Deliberation, thought it best to store said Tea, until further Advice should be received relative thereto.

On the 6th of December, at a Town-Meeting, it was determined to leave the affair with the Select-Men, who, willing to condescend to any Terms that might not contradict the Sense either of the Continental or Provincial Congress, sent Word to the said Sabin, that if he could make it appear that the Tea was such as had not been subject to any Duty, they would deliver it up to him.

He did not appear, but sent a Letter signed by two Gentlemen in Providence (both of whom were unknown to the Select Men) certifying that the Tea was not dutiable, which was not satisfactory.

On the 6th Day of January the said Sabin, with three Men, went to the House of Capt. Stephen Richardson, where the Tea was deposited, and carried off the same, Captain Richardson being from home. This Conduct gave almost universal Dissatisfaction to the Inhabitants; but on the 23rd of January the said Sabin came in Person, and offered to make Satisfaction, producing two Affidavits, taken before a Justice of

the Peace in Providence, and made further Satisfaction, by signing a Paper to the following Effect:

I THOMAS SABIN, of Providence, acknowledge that I sent a Chest of Tea to Attleborough, which was not subject to a Duty.

I likewise acknowledge that the People of said Town have treated me in a very friendly and decent Manner respecting said Tea, although I gave them great Reason to complain of my Conduct in carrying off the same, without the Consent of the Select Men.

I heartily ask the Forgiveness of the said Select Men, and of all others whom I have offended. I promise for the future to conform to the Association of the Continental Congress, and, so far as I am concerned in the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, I will conform to the Resolves of the Provincial Congress. I also consent that this Confession be made public, for the Satisfaction of all whom I have offended. In Witness whereof I have hereunto voluntarily set my Hand, in Presence of a Number of respectable Gentlemen.

Thomas Sabin.

Attleborough, January 23, 1775.

The above was voted to be satisfactory to the People assembled.

PG, no. 579, fol. 3.

[February 25, 1775]

PROVIDENCE, Feb. 25.

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Providence.

WE the Committee of Inspection for the Town of Providence, besides the Notice we have already given for your exact Conformity to the Association Agreement of the General Congress, think it our Duty at this Time, when the first Day of March is at Hand, to remind you in special, that in the third Article it is solemnly agreed and associated, not to purchase or use any East-India TEA whatever, from and after the first Day of March next.

This Measure, among others, was thought necessary to gain Redress of those Grievances, which threaten Destruction to the Lives, Liberty and Property, of his Majesty's Subjects in North-America. We hope that there will not be found in this Town any Violation of this solemn Agreement, respecting the Purchase and Use of a needless Article, which hath proved so ruinous to the Liberty, Interest, and Health of the People.

The united Sense of the Colonies in this Matter, manifested in a General Congress, approved and ratified by the several Governments, and this in particular, we look

upon to be equally obligatory with any other Regulation entered into for a common Good;

and that no Person can be countenanced in a Departure therefrom, or in acting such Parts in Society, under the Pretence of Liberty, as must by the most evident Consequences be followed with the greatest Mischiefs.

We therefore most earnestly desire of all Persons in this town a most strict Adherence to this important Regulation; that they do not purchase, use, or suffer to be purchased or used, by any Person for or under them, any India Tea after the first of March next; and that they would give Information to us of the Names of all such who shall sell, buy or use, or suffer to be sold, bought or used, any India Tea after the said Time, that they may be published in the Gazette, so as that they may be known, and universally contemned as the Enemies of American Liberty; and that all Dealings with them be broken off.

Signed by Order of the Committee,
James Angell, Clerk.

PG, no. 581, fol. 3.

[February 25, 1775]

At a Town-Meeting, held at Cumberland, in the Colony of Rhode-Island, specially called, and legally assembled, February 13, 1775.

Mr. JAMES DEXTER, MODERATOR.

WE the Freemen of the Town of Cumberland, in said Colony, being well apprized of the illegal, violent and hostile Intentions of the British Parliament, for enslaving America, cannot be silent on such an interesting Occasion.

We have always hitherto, both as Individuals and as a collective Body, acknowledged George the Third to be our rightful Lord and Sovereign, as well as King of Great-Britain, &c. according to the royal Proclamation, transmitted to this Colony for Signature and Solemnization, at his Accession to the Throne, notwithstanding any thing contained in his Messages to the two Houses of Parliament last Session, for securing our Dependence upon them; and we do yet declare him to be King of Great-Britain, &c. agreeable to the Proclamation aforesaid, and that we are his loyal and dutiful Subjects.

When our Ancestors were forced, by Abridgments of that Liberty which none had a Right to invade, to depart and flee without the Realm of England, for a quiet Enjoyment thereof (which they did with the Consent of the King, although he could not have prevented them legally.) they by special Compact and Agreement, after their Arrival in America, put themselves under his Protection and Sovereignty, according to certain Institutions of Government entered into, excluding every Idea of a British

parliamentary Intervention, as utterly inconsistent with, and repugnant to, that Form of Government which the contracting Parties had contrived and agreed upon, and those Rights which were to be enjoyed here.

Since the first Emigration the People of England have gradually encroached upon us, and exercised such pretended Powers, as have greatly diminished our just Freedom; at length, in a most daring Manner, they have declared a Right to bind us by Laws in all Cases, or a Right to take from us our Property at Pleasure, as well as to subject us to their Will in every other Matter, civil and religious; and have actually proceeded to the Exercise of such assumed Power, by framing Revenue Laws, and other Regulations concerning us, and endeavouring to enforce them with the Sword, contrary to the Laws of God, Nature, and our Constitution.

Awakened by these Huntings of Liberty even to the Ends of the Earth, we sought Redress by Petitions, Remonstrances, and humble Supplications; but were answered not only by full Discharges of Threats and Menaces, but by the most vindictive Executions.

A General Congress of the Colonies, by their Delegates, was then proposed, which accordingly was held at Philadelphia on the fifth Day of September last; their Proceedings, declaratory of our Rights, stating our Grievances, and pointing out the Modes of Redress, have been made public, and highly approved by the colonies.

We therefore, as a Part of the said Colony of Rhode-Island, besides the general Approbation given and made by the Governor, Council, and House of Deputies, of this Colony, of the Doings of the Congress, hereby testify to the World our hearty Concurrence therewith.

Voted therefore; That in Compliance with the eleventh Article of the Association, entered into by the Congress, in Behalf of themselves and their Constituents,

JOHN DEXTER, Esq; Mr. EZEKIEL BALLOU, Capt. NEHEMIAH ALLEN, Mr. DANIEL WILCOX, and Mr. ROGER SHELDON, or any three of them, be a Committee for the said Town of Cumberland, attentively to observe the Conduct of all Persons touching the said Association, and to act and to every Matter and Thing appertaining to them as a Committee of Inspection, according to the Directions of said Congress.

And we earnestly desire all Persons to conform themselves strictly to the aforesaid Association, both according to the Letter and Spirit thereof, exhorting them to peruse frequently the Votes and Proceedings of the Congress, to the End that, knowing their Duty, they may more certainly and readily discharge it.

Voted, That JEREMIAH WHIPPLE, Esq; and Mr. RUFUS BARTLET, be a Committee to receive and send Donations from this Town to the Sufferers at Boston by the inhuman and cruel Edict, called the Boston Port-Bill; and all Persons are most

earnestly entreated to act such Part herein, as they would wish others to do unto them in like Circumstances.

Witness, JOHN DEXTER, Town-Clerk.

PG, no. 581, fol. 3.

[March 4, 1775]

At a Town-Meeting held at the House of Mr. Caleb Arnold, in Warwick, in the County of Kent, on the 4th Monday of February, 1775.

VOTED, That there be a Committee appointed to carry into Execution the 11th Article of the Association Agreement of the Grand Continental Congress, lately held at Philadelphia.

The following Gentlemen were accordingly chosen,

viz. Col. John Waterman, Mr. Amos Lockwood, Col. James Arnold, Capt. James Aborn, William Greene, Esq; Capt. Thomas Remington, Mr. Charles Holden, jun. Mr. Gideon Arnold, Mr. Christopher Greene, Thomas Rice, Esq; and Mr. Jacob Greene.

A true copy of Record, Attest.

JEREMIAH LIPPITT, *Town-Clerk.*

PG, no. 582, fol. 3.

[March 4, 1775]

Mr. Carter,

The following is sent you for Publication, being an exact Relation of the Proceedings on Thursday last, relative to the Destruction of a Quantity of T E A in this Town:

On Thursday last, about Twelve o'Clock at Noon, the Town-Cryer gave the following Notice through the Town:

At five of the Clock, this Afternoon, a Quantity of India Tea will be burnt in the Market-Place. All true Friends of their Country, Lovers of Freedom, and Haters of Shackles and Hand-Cuffs, are hereby invited to testify their good Disposition, by bringing in, and casting into the Fire, a needless Herb, which for a long Time hath been highly detrimental to our Liberty, Interest, and Health.

About Five in the Afternoon a great Number of Inhabitants assembled at the Place, when there was brought in about Three Hundred Pounds Weight of Tea, by the firm Contenders for the true Interest of America. – A large Fire was kindled, and the Tea cast into it. – A Tar-Barrel, Lord North's Speech, Rivington's and Mills and Hicks's News-Papers, and divers other Ingredients, entered into the Composition.

There appeared great Chearfulness in committing to Destruction so pernicious an Article. Many worthy Women, from a Conviction of the evil Tendency of continuing the Habit of Tea-drinking, made freewill Offerings of their respective Stocks of the hurtful Trash. On this Occasion the Bells were tolled; but it is referred to the Learned whether tolling or ringing would have been most proper. – Whilst the Tea was burning, a spirited Son of Liberty went along the Streets with his Brush and Lampblack, and obliterated or *unpainted* the Word T E A on the Shop Signs.

Thus the Funeral of Madam SOUCHONG was observed. – She was a Native of China, and after travelling into several Parts of Europe, where she found great Notice among the Great and Luxurious, she took a Trip to America. She came into this Colony about forty Years ago, and hath been greatly caressed by all Ranks. She lived in Reputation for several Years, but at length became a common Prostitute among the lowest Class of People. She became very poor, and her Price was so lowered that any One might have her Company for almost nothing. The Quality deserted her, and by hard Living in Log-Houses and Wigwams her Health was impaired. – Broken Spirits and Hysterics seized her, and she died on the first Day of March, 1775, at Midnight.

PG, no. 582, fol. 3.

[March 11, 1775]

WETHERSFIELD (*Connecticut*) Feb. 14.

This evening, two of the inhabitants of a place, *lately known, and called by the name of Ridgfield*, put up at a public house in this town, and entering into conversation, boldly justified the vote of the *late town of Ridgfield*, in disapproving of the doings of the Continental Congress; and proceeded in supporting court doctrines of passive obedience to Parliament, &c. which being taken notice of, by a number of gentlemen present, they considered it in effect as a direct breach of the association of said Congress, and thereupon voted, that in their opinion it was proper that these persons should be returned, the way from whence they came, under safe conduct, from town to town, *to the said place lately known by the said name of Ridgfield*; and that all honest and true men to this country might know and avoid them, proper persons were appointed by the meeting, instantly to attend them as far as Farmington, on their returns; and there to acquaint the inhabitants of their behaviour, and leave them to their further transportation, as is usual, and as by law is provided, in cases of strolling idiots, lunatics &c - a letter was accordingly wrote to the gentlemen at Farmington, representing their unhappy and desperate situation, which was signed by the principal gentlemen present, - and the unhappy men, properly escorted, set off, at nine o'clock, amid the hisses, groans, &c. of a respectable concourse of people, - the populace following them out of town, beating a dead march, &c. Not the least violence was offered, but the whole

was conducted with the utmost regularity - and the company dispersed fully resolved, that as no one, of those principles, is supposed now to be an inhabitant of this town, it shall be their care and attention, that no such shall be hereafter tolerated within it, no not for a night.

PG, no. 584, fol. 2.

[March 11, 1775]

Providence, March 10.

Last Saturday died at Attleborough Mr. William Atwell, a Member of the Committee of Correspondence and Inspection for that Town.

He was a true Friend to the Liberties of America, and in him the Public have lost a valuable Member of Society.

PG, no. 584, fol. 3.

[April 8, 1775]

I Thomas Clarke, jun. of Freetown, in the province of Massachusetts-Bay, boatman, hereby acknowledge, that I have been so far deluded by Thomas Gilbert, of said Freetown, as to join his party and exercise under him, on Monday the 20th of March, 1775, for which I am very sorry, and am determined not to join said Gilbert any more; and do most heartily despise the tory principles;

and further I declare that I will stand by this country, and do all in my power to carry into execution the advice and directions of the Continental and Massachusetts Congresses. I never took any one of the guns lately sent to Thomas Gilbert by General Gage, and never will take one of them; nor did I ever sign any articles under said Gilbert.

Thomas Clark, jun.

PG, no. 588, fol. 3.

[April 15, 1775]

Smithfield, March 20, 1775.

WE the Subscribers being appointed, by the Freeholders of the Town of Smithfield, a Committee of Inspection for said Town, agreeable to, and in Compliance with, the eleventh Article of the Association of the Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia, September 5, 1774, do earnestly request all Persons in said Town strictly to adhere to every Article of said Association, as they would avoid incurring the Displeasure of their fellow Subjects, by departing therefrom.

Stephen Arnold, jun.

Andrew Waterman,

Elisha Mo.ry jun.

Thomas Aldrich,

Uriah Alverson.

PG, no. 589, fol. 3.

[April 15, 1775]

Taunton, April 8, 1775.

THE Inhabitants of the several Towns in the County of Bristol are informed that it is the earnest Desire of the Provincial Congress, as also of the Committees of Inspection of the several Towns in the said County, assembled at Taunton the 7th of April, 1775, that they withhold all Dealings and Commerce, of what Nature soever, from Col. Thomas Gilbert, of Freetown, and his Adherents, as recommended by the Continental Congress, and from all such Enemies to the Rights of British America.

By Order of the Committee of Inspection for the County of Bristol,

GEORGE GODFREY, Chairman.

PG, no. 589, fol. 3.

[May 20, 1775]

At a Town-Meeting held at Providence, on the last Tuesday of August, 1774

It is *resolved* by this meeting, that this town ought not to be made the Asylum of any person or persons of whatever town, place or city, within the British Dominions, whose principles and practices being inimical to the Liberties of our Country, and its happy constitution, have rendered, or shall render, them obnoxious to the Inhabitants of such place or places from which they may emigrate;

And that such ought to be discouraged, by every prudent and legal measure: and the Honorable Town-Council are hereby requested to exert themselves for the removal and ejection of all such persons, so far as by law they may be warranted; as

their being admitted amongst us may tend greatly to endanger the Peace, Order, and Tranquility of the town, which has been manifested by recent instances.

Voted, that the above resolve be inserted in the Providence Gazette.

A true copy,

James Angell, Town-Clerk

At a Town-Meeting held at Providence,

15. Mai 1775,

Voted, that the foregoing Resolve be again printed in the Providence Gazette.

James Angell, Town-Clerk

PG, no. 594, fol. 3.

[May 27, 1775]

Last week a person brought Mutton to this town for Sale, which being deemed an Infraction of the Continental Association, he was obliged to give a Part of it to the Poor.

PG, no. 595, fol. 3.

[May 27, 1775]

At a Meeting of the Committee of Inspection, held at Providence, on the 24th of May, 1775.

WHEREAS the Honorable the Continental Congress, in the 7th Article of their Association, did agree, as a most essential Matter to promote the Well-being of the British Colonies in America, that

„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 sparingly 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.“

This Committee do therefore most earnestly recommend the strictest Adherence to, and Compliance with the aforesaid Article to all the Inhabitants of this Colony; and they do also recommend to the several Committees of Inspection in each Town to see that the same is complied with.

And whereas the General Assembly of this Colony, at their last Session, did pass an Act, laying an Embargo upon all Provisions from this Colony by Water; this Committee do therefore recommend to the several Merchants, &c. of this Colony, not to

ship, or cause or permit to be shipped, for Exportation, any Provisions, of what Kind soever, more than sufficient for the Use of each Vessel, under any Pretence whatsoever; this Committee being in Duty bound to take Notice of all such who shall attempt to break through or elude any Act or Order made for the public Safety, in this difficult Situation of public Affairs.

Signed by Order and in Behalf of the Committee,
James Angell, Clerk.

PG, no. 595, fol. 3.

[June 3, 1775]

NEWPORT, May 29.

Last Wednesday night the sloop Collector, Capt. Nicholas Webster, sailed from this port for Boston, with a quantity of salt provisions, for the use of the standing army there; and a number of sheep; but for whose use those were is as yet uncertain.

It is reported, that said sloop and salt provisions were taken into the custody of one of the ships of war here, and sent by her to Boston; but how that matter is, by whom these sheep were shipped, and for whose use, *all-discovering TIME* may unfold.

The Committee of Inspection, we hear, have taken the affair of the Sheep into their consideration.

PG, no. 596, fol. 3.

[June 10, 1775]

NEWPORT, June 5.

At a meeting of the Committee of Inspection for the town of Newport, held in the Council-Chamber, June 1, 1775.

THE Committee of Inspection having been informed that a parcel of sheep had been shipped to Boston in the sloop Collector, Nicholas Webster master, appointed a Sub-Committee to enquire into the matter.

They accordingly made due enquiry, and reported, that four persons, of this town, had sent to Boston, in said sloop, some more and some less sheep (the whole number amounting to twelve) to their suffering relations and friends there.

This appearing to be the fact, and that it was not done to contravene the seventh article of the association of the Continental Congress (upon which article the Committee some time since published their sentiments in the Newport Mercury) the Committee, from equal principles of tenderness and humanity, think proper to forbear giving their names to the public.

But, at the same time, they would caution these men, and all others, to avoid, for the future, shipping sheep to any of the colonies; and farmers, butchers and others, not to sell any sheep for exportation, as such conduct will not only be considered as an Infraction of said article, and be treated accordingly, but may involve this town in calamities which every friend to its felicity ought to endeavour to the utmost of his power to prevent.

The Committee, pursuant to the article of the association referred to, do also caution butchers and others to kill sheep as sparingly as may be; especially those of the most profitable kind, and, for the future, not to kill any lambs.

Whereas the intercourse between the colonies hath for some time been, and is now, interrupted by the rides being dismissed by the post-master general; and, as there is no person who acts as post-master in this town:

There are Voted,

That Mr. Nathaniel Otis be appointed to receive and deliver the letters brought to, and to be sent from, this town, under the direction of this Committee, until the General Assembly of this colony, or this Committee, shall order otherwise; and that he shall receive for each letter agreeable to the schedule delivered him by the Committee.

A true copy:

Witness, Thomas Rumriell, Clerk.

PG, no. 597, fol. 3.

[June 12, 1775]

At a Meeting of the Committee of Inspection for the Town of Providence, on the 12th Day of June, 1775.

IT is Voted,

That all Persons, Venders of Goods and Merchandize in this Town, sell the same at the Rates they have been respectively accustomed to do. And if any Vender of Goods or Merchandize shall sell any such Goods or Merchandize on higher Terms than usual, or shall in any Manner, or by any Device whatsoever, depart from the Ninth Resolve of the Continental Congress, relative to Venders of Goods, that then, and in such Case, the Public ought to neglect dealing with such Persons, or his or her Factor or Agent, at any Time thereafter, for any Commodity whatsoever.

And it is further Voted, That if any Person shall sell any Goods or Merchandize at a higher Rate than they were heretofore accustomed to do, the Purchaser is hereby directed to give Notice thereof to this Committee, and to produce the Goods or Merchandize so purchased, in order that such Person's name may be published in the Providence Gazette.

And it is further Voted, That Messieurs JOHN UPDIKE, SAMUEL NIGHTINGALE, jun. PAUL ALLEN, and JAMES BLACK, Merchants, be and are hereby appointed a Committee, to visit the several Shopkeepers in this Town, to examine the several Prices of their Goods, and recommend to them that they sell the same at the usual Prices; and if they find any Goods marked at a higher Rate than usual, they are to make Report thereof to this Committee.

J. ANGELL, *Clerk of the Committee.*

PG, no. 598, fol. 3.

[July 22, 1775]

PROVIDENCE, July 22.

At a Meeting of the COMMITTEE OF INSPECTION, on Monday, July 17, 1775.

The Honorable Nicholas Cooke, Esq; Chairman.

WHEREAS, under divers specious Pretences, and contrary to the evident and well-known Resolutions of the Continental Congress, ratified by this Colony, Sheep and Lambs have been frequently killed, and brought to this Market (although there is a great Surplus of other Provisions) which Practice tends to lessen the Quantity of Wool, a Material, under the present Difficulties, absolutely necessary, and which might otherwise be raised.

Therefore, it is Voted by this Committee, That no Mutton or Lamb be killed, and brought to Market in this Town, after the 22d Day of July inst, until the 1st Day of September next; and that if any Person shall, after this public Notice, bring to Market, or expose to Sale, any Mutton or Lamb, within the said limited Time, the same will be seized, and given to the Poor.

By Order of the Committee,

David Lawrence, Clerk, pro Temp.

PG, no. 603, fol. 2.

[July 22, 1775]

At a Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town of Rehoboth, on the 10th Day of July, 1775.

THE Town being informed of divers Reports concerning the unfriendly Conduct of sundry Persons, Inhabitants of the Town of Swansea, ordered their Committee of Inspection to repair thither, and join the Committee of that Town, to enquire into the aforesaid Reports, who accordingly proceeded to Swansea, where a Number of the respectable Inhabitants of Rehoboth, Swansea, and of several Towns in the Colony of Rhode-Island, also met the Committees aforesaid, and caused a Number of the Inhabitants of Swansea to be brought before them, and examined, several of whom

appeared to be innocent of the Charges alledged against them, and some others acknowledged they had acted against the Rules of the Congress, whose Names, as they promised Reformation, the Committee forbear to publish.

But they cannot comply with the Rules of the Congress, without publishing the Names of JERATHMEEL BOWERSM, Esq; CHARLES SLADE, and GIDEON SHERMAN, as Persons that have acted contrary to the Rules and Directions of the Congress, though act in Matters of Trade, and make no Retraction thereof.

July 12, 1775. *By order of the Committee,*

JOSEPH ALLEN, 2d Chairman

PG, no. 603, fol. 2.

[August 19, 1775]

At a Meeting of the Committee of Inspection for this Town, on Monday, August 14, 1775.

The Honorable Nicholas Cooke, Esq; Chairman.

Whereas there are Complaints from the Country of sundry Shopkeepers in this Town, that sell their Goods at higher Rates than usual, contrary to the Resolves of the Continental Congress:

This is therefore to request all Persons aggrieved to apply to this Committee, and produce the Goods, together with their Complaints, and the Committee will see them redressed to the utmost of their Power.

N. B. The Committee meet every Monday, at Five o'Clock in the Afternoon, at the Court-House.

By Order of the Congress,

David Lawrence, Clerk.

PG, no. 607, fol. 3.

[September 2, 1775]

At a Meeting of the Committees of Inspection for the Towns of Rehoboth and Swansea, on the 15th of August, 1775.

It is considered, that the exporting of Flaxseed to Ireland may be of evil Consequence: It is therefore earnestly recommended to the Inhabitants of said Towns, that they do not dispose of any Flaxseed to any Persons whom they may suspect are disposed to export the same; as whosoever shall offend herein will be considered as unfriendly to his Country.

By Order of the Committees,
JOSEPH ALLYN, *the 2d, Chairman.*

PG, no. 609, fol. 3.

[September 16, 1775]

Mr. CARTER,

Please to insert the following in your Gazette, and you will oblige a Number of your Customers.

WHEREAS the joint Committees of the towns of Rehoboth and Swansea, on the 11th day of July last, at Swansea, did then carefully examine into the conduct of Col. Jerathmeel Bowers, &c. and caused the said Bowers, &c. to be advertised in the public papers, as being unfriendly to the country; since which it appears by a Cambridge paper of August the 10th, that said Bowers has called upon said Committee to shew why or in what particulars he hath shewn himself unfriendly to his country.

Not having the least inclination to exaggerate the charges against Col. Bowers, we have collected facts well attested, and leave the impartial public to judge whether Col. Bowers has acted as a friend to his country.

By Order of the Committees,
JOSEPH ALLYN, Chairman of the Committees.

PG, no. 611, fol.1.

[September 16, 1775]

Swansey, August 18, 1775.

I Philip Slead, of Swansea, in the county of Bristol, &c. being of lawful age, testify and say, that Col. Jerathmeel Bowers hath publicly and repeatedly opposed our outstanding province taxes to be paid to Henry Gardner, Esq; of Stow, and opposed our militia to be equipt out of our town stock;

and he has appeared against said town's raising of minute-men from time to time, till he with others had accomplished their designs; and he has practised drinking of tea

since the restriction of the Continental Congress; and about the first of June he told me that our men were very fond of offices, and would go to set up governments soon; but that he would have no hand in it.

I asked him who he thought they would set up for Governor; he answered General Ward, but he could not see what should make them so fond of offices, for it was his opinion that 5000 of the regulars would drive our whole army, and the necks of our officers would be subject to the halter; but he did not design his neck should be subject to the halter by his conduct; and they had been making of money, but he would never have any thing to do with it, for it was good for nothing.

I also heard said Bowers say, when enumerating the vast charge that would accrue for the maintaining and support of 13,000 men raised for the defence of our colony, we should not be able to pay the cost, and he believed that his cousin Clark's opinion, who was present, was right; he being asked what it was, he said we should not be able to pay such an army, and that they would make use of the sword put into their hands against us for their pay.

I do not remember I ever knew the said Bowers did any thing to encourage the regulation of our militia in said town, since the unhappy dispute with our mother country; but his conduct ever since has intimidated our inhabitants in general. I also heard said Bowers say it will never do for us to fight against Old-England.

Moreover, at a town-meeting on Monday following the battle at Bunker's Hill, in order to raise a number of minute-men, to be ready for the defence of our country on the shortest notice, which was voted, notwithstanding the violent opposition said Bowers made, he and his adherents were uneasy at the great charge that would accrue for their pay; and said Bowers declared that none of his estate should go to pay them, for the meeting was illegal, for every man should vote according to his interest, and be tried by the rate-streak, whereupon, by his influence, the said minute-men were dismissed;

then a motion being made if there was no need of men nor money for our defence, or of a Committee, it was moved and seconded by Col. Bowers, that the Committee be dismissed, and they were dismissed accordingly.

After Col. Bowers withdrew from the meeting, the town thinking it dangerous, chose another Committee.

And I have often heard said Bowers say, it was a devilish affair, the putting down the courts, for it would be hard to get them set up again.

Philip Slead.

PG, no. 611, fol.1.

[September 16, 1775]

Bristol, ff. Warren, Aug. 18, 1775.

PHILIP SLEAD, the within named, personally appeared, and being cautioned to testify the truth, made solemn oath to the truth of the within and above deposition by him subscribed, - Before me,
JOHN KINNICUT, Just. Peace.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Swansey, August 18 1775.

I DAVID PEIRCE, of Swansey, in the county of Bristol, &c. being of lawful age, testify and say, that I heard Colonel Jerathmeel Bowers publicly oppose the militia of said town to be equipt out of the townstock; and that he has opposed the raising of minute-men in said town.

And I also heard him say, when enumerating the vast charge that would accrue for the support and maintenance of 13,000 men, raised for the defence of our colony, we should not be able to pay the cost, and he believed that his cousin Clark's opinion, who was present, was right;

he being asked what it was, he said, that we should not be able to pay such an army, and that they would make use of the swords put into their hands against us for their pay.

And some time last May I was on the road with said Bowers, and I told him the trouble and disappointments I had met with in settling and regulating the militia of our town; that Capt. Luther Thurber had promised me, that if I could get the soldiers to sign and to choose him, he would serve as Captain, and he has now told me he is not inclined to serve; Bowers answered me, Thurber was not a man fit for Captain; I said to him what shall we do? The greater part of the company had chosen him for their leader, we border on a navigable river, and in danger of the enemy making depredations on us, and if they should, in that case, we should be like a stock of sheep without a shepherd.

He said it was no matter; when that time comes, you and I will choose our officers, and settle the company.

And I have heard said Bowers blame some of the Committee of said town for examining a person, whose conduct had been inimical to the constitution and interest of our country; and Capt. Robert Gibbs told me that said Bowers advised him to lye still, and not to act in our difficult affairs.

Furthermore I don't remember I ever knew the said Bowers did any thing to encourage the regulating the militia in said town, since the unhappy dispute with our

parent country, and it is my candid opinion, that his conduct has intimidated many of our inhabitants.

David Peirce.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Bristol, ff. Warren, Aug. 18, 1775.

DAVID PEIRCE, the above named, personally appeared, and being cautioned to testify the truth, made solemn oath to the truth of the above deposition, - Before me, JOHN KINNICUT, Just. Peace.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Swansey, August 18, 1775.

WE the deponents, of lawful age, do testify and say, that at a town-meeting, called in order to raise a company of minute-men, to be ready to march on any emergency, soon after the battle at Bunker's Hill,

Jerathmeel Bowers, Esq; appeared very fierce against raising said company, and said that there were no men wanted, for there were more men there than they knew what to do with, and that it was not expected that Swansey should raise any;

and after a long debate with him, it was voted to raise said company.

Afterwards said Bowers made a speech to the people against their proceedings, telling them how costly it would be, and how hard it would be on the town to pay the cost; that the learning the exercise would do them no good;

and also that it hurt our cause, and earnestly moved to the Moderator to call a vote to dismiss said Committee, and after a dispute a vote was called, and the Committee was dismissed by one or two majority.

Then a motion being made and seconded to settle the military in said town, and for more cash to be paid for learning the exercise, said Bowers appeared to be very much against doing any thing about it, saying they had better be easy; that money was the sinews of war, and if they voted for money to be paid so, it should be by the rate streak, for his estate should not pay one penny of the cost;

then a motion being made if there was no need of men or money for our defence, or no need of a Committee, it was then moved and seconded by said Bowers, that the Committee be dismissed, and they were accordingly.

The above is according to our best remembrances.
Zephaniah Cole,
Upham Luther.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Bristol, ff. Warren, August 18, 1775.

ZEPHANIAH COLE, and Upham Luther, the within named persons, personally appeared, and being duly cautioned to testify the truth, made solemn oath to the truth of the within deposition, subscribed by them before me,
JOHN KINNICUT, Justice Peace.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Swansey, August 18, 1775.

I JEREMIAH BROWN, of Swansey, in the county of Bristol, &c. being of lawful age, testify and say, that I heard Col. Jerathmeel Bowers publicly oppose the minute-men to be raised, and also opposed the militia of said town to be equipt out of the town stock; and at a town-meeting on Monday following the battle of Bunker's Hill, in order to raise a number of minute-men, to be ready for the defence of our country on the shorted notice, which was voted, notwithstanding the violent opposition of said Bowers made, he and his adherents were uneasy at the great charge that would accrue for their pay; and said Bowers declared none of his estate should go to pay them, for the meeting was illegal, as every man should vote according to his interest, or be tried by the rate streak; whereupon, his influence, the said minute-men were dismissed; and then a motion being made if there was no need of men or money for our defence, or of a Committee, it was moved and seconded by said Bowers, that the Committee be dismissed, which was accordingly done; and I have heard said Bowers opposed several times publicly the paying in our standing province taxes to Henry Gardner, Esq; of Stow.
JERAMIAH BROWN.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Bristol, ff. Warren, August 18, 1775.

JEREMIAH BROWN, the within named, personally appeared, and being duly cautioned to testify to the truth, made solemn oath to the truth of the within deposition, by him subscribed, - Before me,
JOHN KINNICUT, Justice Peace.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Swansey, August 18, 1775.

I DANIEL BROWN, being of lawful age, do testify and say, that Jerathmeel Bowers send me on two notes of hand, at Taunton, last September court, and the courts sell (?), and he indorsed his notes to the Sherburn's at Boston, and sued me to January court last, at Boston:

Further saith, that the said Bowers has always appeared against the country's monies being paid to the Congress Treasurer, and raising men or money to pay them to fight for their liberty.

DANIEL BROWN.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Bristol, ff. Warren, August 18, 1775.

DANIEL BROWN, the above named, personally appeared, and being duly cautioned to testify the truth, made solemn oath to the truth of the above deposition, by him subscribed, - Before me,
JOHN KINNICUT, Just. Peace.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[September 16, 1775]

Rehoboth, September 14, 1775.

WHEREAS Jerathmeel Bowers, Esq; of Swansey, in his attempt to invalidate the depositions taken against him by the joint Committee of Rehoboth and Swansey, hath ventured to say, that the above depositions were taken ex parte:

It is necessary to inform the public how the Committee proceeded in that affair.

The Committee being met together on Tuesday, the 15th of August, 1775, upon other business, they then saw his reply to their publication, and some other persons that had violated the orders of the Congress, in which he challenged them to shew any one particular wherein he had counteracted the orders of the Congress.

They knowing that they had many substantial evidences to prove their charges against him, adjourned to Friday the 18th of August, in order to take depositions, and immediately sent a letter to him, informing him of the time and place to which they had adjourned, desiring his attendance; accordingly he came to the place.

The Committee met, and proceeded to take depositions, desiring him to be present, which he refused, and withdraw himself.

Joseph Allyn, Chairman.

PG, no. 611, fol. 2.

[October 7, 1775]

PROVIDENCE, October 7.

At a Meeting of the Committees of Inspection of the several Towns in the County of Providence, on Friday, the 6th of October, 1775.

WHEREAS there has been great Suspicion among the Inhabitants in this County, as well as in the Towns of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay, that our cruel and unnatural Enemies from Time to Time receive Supplies of Butter, Cheese, and other Provisions, by Reason of the large Quantities carried to the Town of Newport, &c. under Pretence of supplying that Place, Nantucket, &c.

And whereas whilst it is our duty to have our Friends, wherever they may be, reasonably supplied, it is equally our Duty to prevent our Enemies from removing Succours of any Kind:

It is, therefore the Opinion of this Committee that no Butter, Cheese, or any other Articles of Provisions, be hereafter transported, either by Land or Water, to Rhode-Island, except under the following Regulations, viz.

those Persons who may have the before mentioned Articles to dispose of shall, before they proceed to Market, procure a Certificate or Certificates, from the Committees of the respective Places where such Articles are laden, of the Quantities of each Article that they may carry, and that they are Persons friendly to the Cause of American Freedom, which shall serve as a Pass through the respective Towns to the Market:

And provided the said Provisions are destined for Rhode-Island, that they carry the same, together with the Certificate, to John Collins, Esq; Chairman of the Committee of Inspection in the Town of Newport, or to some Person by him to be appointed, whereupon they may dispose of their Butter, or other Articles, to such Persons as the said John Collins, or his substitute, may recommend to be Friends to their Country, and to none other.

And upon their Return from the Market, they shall deliver Certificates, signed by the said John Collins, Esq; or his Substitute, as aforesaid, of the Quantity disposed of, and to whom, unto such Persons from whom they received their Certificates, and the

same shall discharge them from all Cause of Suspicion with their Town and Country-men.

And all Persons travelling with Butter, Cheese, &c. in any considerable Quantities, without such Certificate or Certificates, shall be liable to be detained, and their Goods, &c. kept, until at their Expence such Certificates are procured, or until the Order of the Committee of Inspection of such District where the same may be stopt be taken thereupon.

And whereas the Hon. General Assembly of the Massachusetts-Bay have taken particular Order with Respect to the Transportation of Provisions to Nantucket, and it is altogether unnecessary, and may be very prejudicial, to attempt to supply that Island from any Part of this Colony by Water, therefore it is Resolved,

That no Provision of any Kind be suffered to pass through any Seaport Town in this Colony, under Pretence of sending them to Nantucket; but all such Provisions shall be stopt, until the Matter may be enquired into by the Committee of Inspection of the District where they may be stopt, and such Order taken thereon as they shall see fit.

Resolved,

That all Persons who shall endeavour to elude these Resolutions, or in any wise counteract them, shall, upon Conviction, have their Names published in the News-Papers, in order that they may be avoided as Enemies to their Country.

Voted,

That the above and foregoing Resolutions be immediately published in the Providence Gazette.

Test.

Caleb Harris, Clerk.

PG, no. 614, fol. 3.

[October 7, 1775]

Voted, That Capt. Solomon Owen, Messieurs John Brown, Joseph Russell, Job Manchester, and Noah Mathewson, be a Committee to receive any Complaints that may be exhibited to them, and lay the same before this Committee, at their next Meeting, which stands adjourned to the House of the Widow Waterman, in Smithfield, on the second Tuesday in November next, at Ten o'Clock, A.M.

Test.

CALEB HARRIS, Clerk of the County Committee.

PG, no. 614, fol. 3.

[October 7, 1775]

Whereas there have been many Complaints of such as are Vendors of Goods and Merchandise in this Country, for selling them at a higher price than settled by the Association Agreement of the Continental Congress, under Pretence of buying them at a higher Rate, which we dem a Breach and Violation of said Association:

We do hereby forewarn all Persons from selling any Goods at a higher Price than they were usually sold at before said Association took Place, on any Pretence whatever, as they will thereby incur the just Censure of this Committee, and their Names will be published to the World accordingly.

Published by Order,
CALEB HARRIS, Clerk.

PG, no. 614, fol. 3.

[October 7, 1775]

At a Meeting of the Committee of Inspection on Thursday, October 5, 1775.

WHEREAS we have Reason to suspect, by frequent complaints from the Country, that some Persons in this Town do still continue the detestable Practice of selling India Tea:

The Committee do earnestly request of all persons who are possessed of that Article, that they would deliver the same into their Hands, to be by them stored, until the United Colonies do allow of its being sold.

And all Persons having India Tea in their Possession, and do not deliver it up, agreeable to this Request of the Committee, will be deemed Enemies to their Country, and as such be treated.

By Order of the Committee,
DAVID LAWRENCE, Clerk.

PG, no. 614, fol. 3.

[October 7, 1775]

WHEREAS Complaint has been made to the Committee of Inspection against me and my family, for selling India Tea, contrary to the Association of the Continental Congress, which conduct is very disagreeable to the Public:

I do therefore solemnly engage, that, forbearing to give any further Offence to the Friends of the American Cause, I will forthwith deliver up to the Committee of Inspection all the India Tea I or my Family now have in Possession;

and that for the future I will not, directly or indirectly, violate any part of the Association aforesaid; and as I wish to live in Unity with my Neighbours, I earnestly ask the Forgiveness of the Community.

NATHAN ANOELL.

PG, no. 614, fol. 3.

[October 7, 1775]

THE Committee of Inspection for the Town of Rehoboth being informed that Provisions have been carried through said Town to Newport, and to other towns at the Southward, whereby the ministerial Army has been supplied; the Committee met on the 2nd Instant, and Resolved,

That no Provisions of any Kind shall pass through said Town to Newport, or any Town southward of Rehoboth, without a Certificate from the Chairman of the Committee of Inspection for the Town where the Provisions are conveying, by which it shall appear that the said Provisions are for the Use of the Inhabitants, and not for supplying the Enemies of America.

They therefore made Choice of

Capt. Daniel Hunt, Mr. Nathan Monro, Mr. James Dagget, and Mr. William Cole, to inspect and stop such Provisions.

By Order of the Committee,

JOSEPH BRIDEMAN, Clerk pro temp.

Rehoboth, October 5, 1775.

PG, no. 614, fol. 3.

[October 7, 1775]

THE Public are hereby notified, that the General Committee of Inspection for the County of Providence will meet at the Court-House in said Providence, on Friday the 6th Day of October next, at One o'Clock in the Afternoon.

If any Persons have Complaints to make against any of the Inhabitants of said County, for their not keeping up to the Continental Association, they are desired to attend.

By Order,

CALEB HARRIS, *Clerk.*

Providence, Sept. 26, 1775.

N.B. The several Committees of Inspection for each Town in the County of Kent, are desired to form themselves into a General Committee as soon as may be, as many Advantages to the Public will result from such a Meeting.

PG, no. 614, fol. 4.

[October 21, 1775]

THE Committee of Inspection and Correspondence for the Town of North-Kingston, being convened in said Town on the 7th Day of October, 1775, came into the following Resolves, viz.

Whereas Stephen Boyer, of said Town, being accused of carrying a Quantity of Cheese to some of the declared Enemies to America;
and he being present before this Committee, hath daringly endeavoured to justify himself in so doing, and saith that he further intends to send a Quantity of Barley and Corn to George Rome, one of our said Enemies:

Resolved therefore,

That the said Stephen Boyer is an Enemy to American Liberty, and ought to be hereafter treated as such; and it is recommended to the Public in general, and strictly required of every Person in this Town, that they forthwith break off all Dealings with him, and that a Copy of this Resolve be inserted in the Providence Gazette, and Newport Mercury.

A true Copy.

Witness, GEORGE THOMAS, *Clerk*.

PG, no. 616, fol. 3.

[October 21, 1775]

Whereas in the present Alarms People frequently move from the Town of Newport, and other Places, into this Town, amongst whom are many of the Foes to America; and it is the Opinion of this Committee, that no Person who is an Enemy to his Country, or holding Tory Principles, ought to be suffered to move into this Town;

Resolved therefore, That no Boatman, Ferryman, or other Person whatever, bring any such Persons, their Families or Effects, into this Town, upon any Pretence whatever, as in so doing they will incur the Displeasure of this Committee, and must abide the Consequences.

Resolved, That no Boatman, Ferryman, or other person, do take in any Provisions or Freight to carry to Newport, without the Consent and Approbation of one or more of this Committee, who shall certify the same under his or their Hands;

and any such Provisions so freighted shall be disposed of in the Market of the Town of Newport, for the Use of the Inhabitants of said Town, and a Certificate produced from under the Hand of one of the Committee of Inspection for the Town of Newport, that the same was disposed in the Manner above expressed, and return the same to this Committee;

and that a Copy of the above Resolves be published in the Providence Gazette, and Newport Mercury.

The above Extracts were taken from the Minutes of the Committee of Inspection and Correspondence for the Town of North-Kingston, and published by Order of said Committee.

Per GEORGE THOMAS, *Clerk.*

PG, no. 616, fol. 3.

[November 25, 1775]

PROVIDENCE, November 25.

At a Meeting of the General Committee of Inspection for the County of Providence, especially called this 22nd of November, 1775.

JOB RANDALL, Esq; Chairman.

WHEREAS it is of the utmost Consequence, at this Time of general Danger, to have every Measure calculated to preserve Peace and Unanimity, on which every Thing valuable in Life depends; and whereas uneasiness hath arisen on Account of the Article of Salt, which by the Cruelty and Tyranny of our common Enemies is very likely to become scarce, and without some Inducement to import that real Necessity of Life, the Country must greatly suffer for the Want thereof; and as it is necessary, in order to preserve a mutual Harmony between Town and Country at this Time, that some Price should be affixed to that Article, the most likely to give mutual Satisfaction to both Buyers and Sellers:

Therefore it is VOTED,

That it be most seriously recommended to those Persons now possessed of Salt, more than for their own necessary Uses, that they sell the same, in any Quantities not exceeding five Bushels, to each householder, at a Price not exceeding Three Shillings Lawful Money per Bushel.

And in order to ascertain the Quantity of Salt now in the Town of Providence, which may disposed of, it is further VOTED,

That the following Gentlemen, namely, Jabez Bower, Esq; Mr. Stephen Arnold, Col. Chad Brown, Col. William West, John Dexter, Esq; Col. Christopher Lippitt, Noah Mathewson, Esq; and Capt. Stephen Jenckes, be and they are hereby appointed a Committee to repair to the Town of Providence, and call upon all Persons possessed of Salt, to exhibit under Oath to them all they have, without Reservation, and also what they may respectively want for their own Uses; and that said Committee proceed thereupon to estimate or measure the same,

and take Account of the Quantities that may be for Sale in the Hands of each Person, and recommend to them the Resolutions of this Committee, contained in the foregoing Vote, and make Report to this Committee, at their next Meeting.

And whereas it is essentially necessary to the Inhabitants of the Town of Providence, that they be supplied with Wood, and it is highly injurious to attempt at this Time to raise the Price of that Article, for the most obvious Reasons:

Therefore it is considered by this Committee as a Duty, and strongly recommended to every Friend to his Country, to sell the same at the accustomed Price it hath been sold for the Year past, and thereby prevent that Uneasiness that must ensue from a contrary Conduct.

Voted,

That Mr. Carter be requested to publish the foregoing in his next Gazette.

Test.

ZEBEDER HOPKINS, jun. Clerk pro temp.

N.B. The Meeting of said Committee stands adjourned to the second Tuesday in December next, at the Court-House in Providence.

PG, no. 621, fol. 3.

[December 9, 1775]

Mr. Carter,

Be pleased to insert the following in your useful paper.

OBSERVING a very brassy piece in your paper of the 25th of November published at the request of Jerathmael Bowers;

we the subscribers being concerned as Committee-men, in gratifying the said Bowers's sanguine request some time past, by publishing sundry depositions in support of a charge before that time published against the said Bowers, and afterwards being called on by a Committee of the Honorable House of Representatives, before whom the Committee that had published said Bowers made their defence:

And being informed by the Committee of the Honorable House, that the matter would have a further hearing before the House; we were chosen by our Committee as agents to attend on said affair before the House; we attended accordingly, and we grant that the Committee of the House did report in manner and form as published by said Bowers; but we now declare to the public (and to the immortal honor of the House of Representatives be it spoken) that the Committee's report was by them rejected;

and the said Bowers's complaint against the town's Committees was dismissed; and he allowed to withdraw the same, and thereupon he took his papers back; so that said Bowers's enterprize against the town's Committees proved abortive; and in the name of sense can that speak to the public that never had an existence?

The report of the Committee of the House never had an existence in the Honorable House:

Good God, how long shall the public be treated in this manner (to wit) by said Bowers's feebly essaying to inform them by that which never had an existence itself!

But as we would not be too dogmatical, we feel perfectly easy to risk this correction of said Bowers's late publication to the judgment of the impartial public (having only just set the same in its true light) and leave said Bowers to the correction of that Honorable (and impartial) House, whereof he is a member, whose worthy doings he has not published, but endeavoured to misrepresent, by asserting in a public paper a report of one of their Committees which they themselves in their justice disapproved of, and finally rejected.

John Wheeler,
Israel Barney,
Swanzy, Dec. 1, 1775.

PG, no. 623, fol. 2.

[December 16, 1775]

PROVIDENCE, December 16.

At a Meeting of the General Committee of Inspection for the County of Providence, held at the Court-House in Providence, by Adjournment, on Tuesday, the 12th of December, 1775.

JOB RANDALL, Esq; in the Chair.

WHEREAS it appears, from an Inspection lately made, that there is not more tanned and curried Leather in this County, than a Sufficiency to supply, for the ensuing Winter, the inland Consumption of the Inhabitants of this and the adjacent Colonies, with their usual necessary Quantities:

It is therefore VOTED,

That no tanned or curried Leather, more than for the Family-Use of each Purchaser, be bought up, with Intent to carry out of any Town in this County, unless Permission be first obtained from the Committee of Inspection of such Town where the same shall be to be sold;

and that the Exportation of Leather by Water from this County be and the same is hereby prohibited.

Voted, That this Meeting of the General Committee be and the same is hereby adjourned to the 3^d Monday in January next, at Ten o'Clock in the Forenoon, at the Court-House in Providence, when the punctual Attendance of the Members will be necessary.

Voted, That Mr. Carter be requested to publish the forgoing in his next Gazette.
Signed per Order,
JONATHAN ARNOLD, Clerk pro temp.

PG, no. 624, fol. 3.

[December 16, 1775]

THE General Committee of Inspection for the County of Kent stands adjourned to Wednesday the 27th of December inst. at Twelve o'Clock at Noon, then to meet at the Dwelling-House of Gideon Tripp, Esq; in West-Greenwich; where all Persons, in said County, aggrieved by any Violation of the Association entered into by the Hon. Continental Congress, are requested to apply; and the Committee will see them redressed to the utmost of their Power.

By Order of the Committee,
ADAM COMSTOCK, Clerk.
Warwick, Dec. 11, 1775.

PG, no. 624, fol. 3.

[December 23, 1775]

Rehoboth, December 18, 1775.

On Saturday the 16th Instant Mr. Shubael Burr, of Warren, having loaded a Quantity of Tea into his Waggon, in order to carry it into the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, to vend the same, in passing through Rehoboth it was seized and detained by the Committee of Inspection for said Town; and on examining into the Circumstances, the said Burr owned the Fact, and made an Acknowledgement in the following Words, viz.

"I the Subscriber having, contrary to the Rules of the Honorable Continental Congress, sent a Quantity of Tea into the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, with Intent to vend the same;

I do hereby acknowledge that I am heartily sorry for my Conduct, and humbly ask the Forgiveness of all Persons whom I have offended in so doing; I hereby also promise, upon my Faith and Honor, never to offend in the like Manner for the future.

Witness my Hand this 18th Day of December, 1775.

Shubael Burr."

And after having taken the Tea into Possession, and stored the same (the Quantity being two Barrels), the Committee dismissed the said Burr for the present.

Signed by Order and in Behalf of the Committee of Inspection,
Sylvanus Martin, *Chairman*.

PG, no. 625, fol. 3.

[December 23, 1775]

THE General Committee of Inspection for the County of Kent stands adjourned to Wednesday the 27th of December inst. at Twelve o'Clock at Noon, then to meet at the Dwelling-House of Gideon Tripp, Esq; in West-Greenwich; where all Persons, in said County, aggrieved by any Violation of the Association entered into by the Hon. Continental Congress, are requested to apply; and the Committee will see them redressed to the utmost of their Power.

By Order of the Committee,
By Order of the Committee,
ADAM COMSTOCK, Clerk.
Warwick, Dec. 11, 1775.

PG, no. 625, fol. 4.

[January 6, 1776]

THE General Committee of Inspection for the County of Kent stands adjourned to Wednesday the 15th of January inst. at Twelve o'Clock at Noon, then to meet at the Court-House in East-Greenwich; where all Persons, in said County, aggrieved by any Violation of the Association entered into by the Hon. Continental Congress, are requested to apply; and the Committee will see them redressed to the utmost of their Power.

By Order of the Committee,
By Order of the Committee,
ADAM COMSTOCK, Clerk.
Warwick, Jan. 2, 1776.

PG, no. 627, fol. 3.

[January 13, 1776]

THE General Committee of Inspection for the County of Kent stands adjourned to Wednesday the 15th of January inst. at Twelve o'Clock at Noon, then to meet at the Court-House in East-Greenwich; where all Persons, in said County, aggrieved by any Violation of the Association entered into by the Hon. Continental Congress, are requested to apply; and the Committee will see them redressed to the utmost of their Power.

By Order of the Committee,

ADAM COMSTOCK, Clerk.
Warwick, Jan. 2, 1776.

PG, no. 628, fol. 4.

[February 3, 1776]

AT a Meeting of the Committee of Correspondence at Dighton, on Monday the 22^d of January, 1776,

RESOLVED,

That HEBER CHASE, of Swansea, has proved himself inimical to his Country, by refusing to take the Paper Currency of the Colonies; and to the End that such pernicious Persons may be publicly known, and universally detested, as Foes to the Rights and Liberties of America,

VOTED,

That his Name be published in the Providence Gazette; and from henceforth we will break off all Dealing and Connexion with him.

Attest.

ABIEZER PHILLIPS, *Clerk of the Committee.*

PG, no. 631, fol. 3.

[February 17, 1776]

Mr. Carter,

Please to insert the following in your next, and you will greatly oblige a Number of your Customers.

JERATHMAEL BOWERS, Esq; of Swansea, in order to retrieve his character, having picked up a report of a Committee of the House of Representatives for the colony of the Massachusetts-Bay, under the signature of William Baylter, Chairman, which he published in the Boston Gazette of Nov. 20, as the mind and voice of that honorable House; and Capt. John Wheeler, and Mr. Israel Barney, having judiciously informed the public that the above named report was rejected by the honorable House, and he left under the censure of the Committee of Inspection; it will be needless to say any thing more of that transaction; but it is necessary to consider the report itself, as being justly exceptionable, and calculated to convey an idea foreign to the true spirit of the affair; I shall therefore, in order to set things in their true light, make some remarks on this report; and leave the impartial public to judge for themselves.

The first thing in the report is, that they (the Committee) were sent by the House of Representatives to enquire of the Committee of Inspection why they stigmatized Col. Bowers in the public papers, as they were pleased to call it.

Secondly, they proceed to set forth the charges exhibited against him by the Committee of Inspection, which were as follow, that he opposed the town's paying their outstanding provincial rates to Henry Gardner, Esq; that he was in favour of dismissing the Committee of Inspection; that he opposed the settling the militia, learning the military exercise, and raising a company for the defence of the country, to be ready upon the shortest notice; that he discouraged and disheartened his own town's people, if not others, from a vigorous exertion in defence of their rights, by advising them to lay still, and not act in our difficult affairs, saying, „they have an army, let them fight it out;“ that it would never do for us to fight with Old-England; and that 5000 regulars would drive our whole army. These and many other things were charged against him, as are set forth in the report; all which they proved by the depositions published against him in the Boston Gazette of August 28, and September 11, together with the depositions hereunto annexed; which were made oath to before these reporters. And now perhaps it will be asked, what evidence did Col. Bowers produce, with which they invalidated the positive evidence of so many credible persons? In answer to this question, I reply, he produced a number large enough, such as they were; but what were they? Why, to give their political characters (for their private characters I care not to meddle with) most of them hold that the King hath an unlimited power, that he hath a right to make and vacate charters at will, that what he hath done of that nature in America he hath a good right to do, that the Parliament has a right to tax us without our consent, that the taking up arms in the defence of our just rights they call a rebellion; they refuse to take up arms in the defence of their country, are so dependent upon Col. Bowers, that they are entirely under his influence, and have been his assistants in preventing the resolves of the Congress being put into execution in the town. And what can be expected from persons tainted with tory tenets, and who are so unfriendly as to refuse to assist their country in defence of their rights, but that they will as much as possible favour their landlord? But what do they witness for him? it will be asked; why they tell of good words which he spoke from time to time, without correspondent actions; for the truth is, he is not a man for acting in the case, but when such of the inhabitants of the town as were friends to the cause, endeavoured to execute any of the resolves of the Congress, this unfriendly gentleman strenuously opposed them, and when he had so done, he would speak some good words to appease the people, left they should be too much exasperated against him, and these, good words his deponents have picked up to prove him a friend to his country, as appears by the face of the report and depositions. But some perhaps may say, that there was something more than words; for he moved to have the town stock ammunition doubled. I answer, it doth not appear that he ever intended to use it for any better purpose than Gilbert did the great stock which he had collected. But it will be said, he was for having two batteries built one at Freetown, the other at Swansey;

and that he would be at the cost of the cannon, if he knew where to get them; but the unlucky *if* spoilt his good intentions. It will likewise be said, he strove hard from time to time to have the outstanding provincial taxes collected, and paid to Henry Gardner, Esq; but could not effect it; this is very surprizing, that he could have all the votes in the town except about fifteen, as he boasted before the Court's Committee, and yet was not able to get one resolve of the Congress put into execution in the town! It appears by this that his deponents, as well as himself, are very unfriendly, and proves the truth of the above description given of them. But it is contended, that they proved, after much pains taken by him, that he put the outstanding money raised and granted to Henry Gardner, Esq; I answer, this is in part true; but what do the records of the town say in the case? Why from them it appears it is not done to this day. Thus it is shew, that his deponents, though biassed in his favour, have proved nothing for him but good words, and fair speeches, with which they have deceived the simple. But how the gentlemen of the Committee could be so far imposed on, as to invalidate so many positive and responsible evidences, with such weak and contemptible negatives, is very unaccountable. The mighty cloud of witnesses in Col. Bowers's favour, his extensive influence and majority of votes in the town, and he town's recommendation of him, of which he boasts in such vaunting and supercilious expressions, while the resolves of the Congress were not put into execution in the town, is the strongest evidence against him, and serve to prove that he and his deponents are wholly unfriendly to American liberty; and yet they are so basely hypocritical, as not to be willing to acknowledge the appellation; but what do all their pretences signify, more than it did for Saul to tell Samuel, "*yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and utterly destroyed Amalek,*" while the sheep were bleating and the oxen lowing about the camp, and Agag delicately walking the parade?

PG, no. 633, fol.1.

[February 17, 1776]

WE the deponents, of Swansea, in the county of Bristol, yeomen, being of lawful age, testify and say, that on the day aforesaid, being in company with Capt. Robert Gibbs, David Peirce, and several others, the said Peirce read a paragraph in the Boston Gazette of Nov 20, 1775, inserted by the request of Col. Jerathmael Bowers, under the signature of William Baylies, Chairman, as follows,

"moreover Capt. Robert Gibbs deposed, that Col. Bowers never advised him not to act in our difficult affairs, as mentioned in the testimony of David Peirce; but that he informed said Peirce, that Col. Bowers came to him on account of his keeping a pedler, and lending a sword to one of Col. Gilbert's company, and he had better turn

away the pedler, recal the sword, lie still, and not make the people uneasy; which story said Peirce misapprehended;"

which being read as aforesaid, the said Peirce said to Capt. Gibbs, I am surprized it should be thus inserted; for you told me at my house, when I was not able to go abroad, some time before you lent your sword to one of Col. Gilbert's company, that you was easy now;

for Col. Bowers had advised you to lie still, and not to act in our difficult affairs; and the said Peirce told Capt. Gibbs, that he could prove that he told him so, what he had sworn to.

Capt. Gibbs said it was true, and said he told Col. Bowers, that what David Peirce had sworn was truth, and said, I wish I had wrote down my own evidence myself, as then it would have been right; for they have put it down wrong; then he being asked again by some if what David Peirce had sworn to was true, he answered yes, and his evidence was put down or entered wrong.

Clother Peirce,
Ebenezer Peirce,
Philip Slead.

Warren, in the county of Bristol, in the colony of Rhode-Island, December 20, 1775.

Then the above named Clother Peirce, Ebenezer Peirce, and Philip Slead, made their personal appearance, and each of them made oath to the truth of the above written evidence,

before me,
JOHN KENNICUT, *Justice of Peace.*

PG, no. 633, fol.1.

[February 17, 1776]

I, THE subscriber, of lawful age, do testify and say, that I was at a town-meeting in Swansey, on the 18th of September, A. D.1775, the request being read for said meeting, and the names thereto subscribed:

It was moved that John Chace, one of the subscribers, had said that if General Gage and his army should come here, he would join him against us.

It was answered by Col. Bowers, that John Chace had a right to join General Gage, or any body else that he had a mind to, if it was Old France, and further saith not.

John Round

Warren, in the county of Bristol, in the Colony of Rhode-Island, December 20, 1775.

Then the above named John Round made his personal appearance, and made oath to the truth of the above written evidence, before me,

JOHN KENNICUT, Justice of Peace

Those who are desirous of further satisfaction may examine the depositions published in the papers above referred to.

Filius Libertatis

PG, no. 633, fol.1.

[February 24, 1776]

*At a Meeting of the Committee of Inspection and Safety for the Town of Rehoboth,
Feb. 15, 1776.*

WHEREAS it has been represented to this Committee, that it is suspected some Persons in this Town are buying up the Articles of Corn, Rye and Flax, in order to enhance the Price, or send the same out of the Town:

And whereas it is probable that there will be a Necessary for posting a standing Army on our Shores the ensuing Summer, and in that case those Articles will be much wanted;

it is therefore recommended to the Inhabitants of this Town, that they do not carry the above Articles out of the same into any other Towns for Sale, in large Quantities.

And we further recommend to such Persons as have any of these Articles to share, that they do not refuse selling them to the necessitous Neighbours, at reasonable Prices.

We also recommend to such Persons as may have more Cloth than they want for their own Use, that they dispose of the same to their poor Neighbours at a moderate Price.

And whereas it is probable that the Article of Wool will be scarce the ensuing Season, we recommend that the Inhabitants do not raise the Price thereof exorbitantly, but sell the same on reasonable Terms, to the End that we may not oppress one another, but on the contrary hold forth the Spirit of perfect Union and Concord, and thereby join Hand in Hand the common Cause of America.

Voted, That the foregoing be published in the Providence Gazette.

Signed by Order and in Behalf said Committee,

William Winsor, Clerk.

PG, no. 634, fol. 3.

[March 2, 1776]

THE General Committee of Inspection for the County of Providence stands adjourned to the second Monday in March inst. at Twelve o'Clock at Noon, then to meet at the Court-House in Providence, where it is hoped a general and punctual Attendance will be given.

By Order of the Committee,

CALEB HARRIS, Clerk.

Providence, March 1, 1776.

PG, no. 635, fol. 3.

[March 9, 1776]

THE General Committee of Inspection for the County of Providence stands adjourned to the second Monday in March inst. at Twelve o'Clock at Noon, then to meet at the Court-House in Providence, where it is hoped a general and punctual Attendance will be given.

By Order of the Committee,

CALEB HARRIS, Clerk.

Providence, March 1, 1776.

PG, no. 636, fol. 4.

[March 23, 1776]

In COMMITTEE, Taunton, March 8, 1776.

NATHANIEL Bird, a Shopkeeper in this Town, being convicted this day of refusing Paper Currency in Payment, the Committee resolved to publish him to the World, agreeable to the Order of the Continental Congress; but said Bird soon after applied to the Committee, desiring their Pardon for his Crime, and promising Reformation: They therefore have stopped all Proceedings against him, and recommend him to the future good Opinion of the Continent, on his signing the following Paper.

By Order of the Committee,

James Williams, jun. Clerk.

Whereas I the Subscriber, a Shopkeeper in this Town, have been repeatedly guilty of refusing Paper Currency in Pay for my Goods; and as I find that my Conduct in so doing has essentially interfered with the Resolutions of the Continent, and of the General Court of this Province, I therefore in this humble and public Manner ask the Forgiveness of my Country, and promise for the future to abide by and personally support the Resolutions of the Congress, and General Court of this Province, as far as lies in my Power.

N. Bird.
Taunton, March 18, 1776.
A true Copy.
Attest.
Samuel Williams, jun. Clerk.

PG, no. 638, fol. 3.

[March 30, 1776]

THE General Committee of Inspection for the County of Providence stands adjourned to the second Monday in April next, at One o'Clock in the Afternoon, then to meet at the Court-House in Providence, where it is hoped the Members in general will give their Attendance, as there are Matters of Consequence to be laid before them.

By Order of the Committee,
CALEB HARRIS, Clerk.
Providence, March 29, 1776.

PG, no. 639, fol. 3.

[April 6, 1776]

THE General Committee of Inspection for the County of Providence stands adjourned to the second Monday in April next, at One o'Clock in the Afternoon, then to meet at the Court-House in Providence, where it is hoped the Members in general will give their Attendance, as there are Matters of Consequence to be laid before them.

By Order of the Committee,
CALEB HARRIS, Clerk.
Providence, March 29, 1776.

PG, no. 640, fol. 4.

[May 4, 1776]

At a Meeting of the Committee of Inspection and Correspondence for the Town of North-Kingstown, on the 27th Day of April, 1776.

BERIAH BROWN, Esq; in the Chair.

THIS day Stephen Boyer, of this town, personally came before this Committee, and made his acknowledgement and recantation of his unfriendly principles, in the following words, viz.

North-Kingstown, April 27, 1776.

WHEREAS I the subscriber stand published and enemy to this country, by the Committee of this town, for having sold to my landlord, Mr. George Rome, some cheese, which cheese I suppose was carried to Boston.

Be it known, that I with submission desire and pray that the circumstances of my connexion with my said landlord, at that time, may be taken into consideration, and at the same time I do solemnly declare, that I did not design any injury or prejudice to this country, or the liberties thereof, in what I did, and am really sorry from my heart, that I gave occasion to said Committee to suspect or adjudge me to be an enemy to this country;

and I do solemnly promise, that in my future conduct I will endeavour to prove it is not my inclination so to do, but that it is my disposition and desire to serve and help defend this country against all the enemies to the liberties of America, and am really willing to comply and confirm to all the regulations of the Continental Congress, and heartily desire to be restored to, and live in the same harmony and friendship with my neighbours, and the inhabitants of this country, as I formerly have done.

Voluntarily signed by
Stephen Boyer.

Resolved, That the recantation of the said Boyer is satisfactory to this Committee; that he be restored to his former privileges; and that a copy of this resolve be published in the Providence Gazette, and Newport Mercury.

A true copy,
Attest.

George Thomas, *Clerk*.

PG, no. 644, fol. 3.

[June 15, 1776]

WHEREAS Col. William Bullock, Dracon Stephen Moulton, Major Isaiah Hunt, Lieut. Job Pearce, Kent Bullock, Levi Hunt, and Calven Bullock, have heretofore been considered by the Committee of Inspection and Safety for the Town of Rehoboth as unfriendly to the Constitution of America, and were disarmed and confined to the Limits of the Town:

But on this 3rd Day of June, 1776, they all appeared before the said Committee, and made such Concessions as were satisfactory to said Committee; and thereupon they dismissed them, and set them at their former Liberty.

Signed by Order and in Behalf of said Committee,
EDWARD MARTIN, jun. Clerk.

Rehoboth, June 3, 1776.

PG, no. 650, fol. 3.

7. Appendices

List of Abbreviations

AA	Peter Force (ed.), <i>American Archives: Consisting Of a collection Of Authentick Records, State Papers, Debates, And Letters And Other Notices Of Publick Affairs ...</i> , 4 th ser., 6 vols., Washington D.C., 1837-1853.
BG	The Boston Gazette
JCC	Worthington Chauncey Ford (ed.), <i>Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789</i> . 34 vols., Washington, DC 1904-1937.
PG	The Providence Gazette
VMHB	Virginia Magazine of History and Biography
WMQ 3 rd Ser.	The William & Mary Quarterly, 3 rd Series

I. List of Associators and Non-Associators in the colony of New York, 1775

Towns	County	Date	Signer	Refused to sign	Exempt	Source
Goshen	Orange Co	29 April 1775	61	2		Calendar, I, p. 5
Orange Town	Orange Co	17 July 1775	39	13		Calendar, I, p. 5-6
Minisink Prec.	Orange Co.	24 May 1775	47	0		Calendar, I, p. 6
Haverstraw ¹	Orange Co.	May 1775	443	141		Calendar, I, p. 9-10
Goshen Precinct	Orange Co.	24 May -21 June 1775	248	9	43	Calendar, I, p. 10-12.
Cornwall Precinct	Orange Co	8 July 1775	567	65	-	Calendar, I, p. 14-17
Newburgh ²	Orange Co	6 July 1775	201	52 (13) ³		Calendar, I, p. 17-19
Total	Orange Co	1775	1606	295		
Mamakating	Ulster Co.	26 June 1775	96	0		Calendar, I, p. 24-25.
Rochester	Ulster Co.	6 July 1775	265	?4		Calendar, I, p. 25-27
New Marlborough	Ulster Co.	11 July 1775	230	38		Calendar, I, p. 27-29
Kingston	Ulster Co.	May-June 1775	618	33		Calendar, I, p. 29-33
Marbletown	Ulster Co	June 1775	294	1		Calendar I, p. 33-35
Hurley	Ulster Co.	6 July 1775	126	?5		Calendar I, p. 35-36
New Paltz	Ulster Co.	10 May 1775	233	8		Calendar I, p. 36-38
Total	Ulster Co	1775	1862	80		
Hempstead ⁶	Queens Co	4 April 1775	--	--		Calendar, I, p. 38-39
Brookhaven	Suffolk Co.	Mai-August 1775	325	125		Calendar I, p. 44-49.
Brookhaven	Suffolk Co	17 August 1775	244	?10		Calendar I, p. 62-64.
Huntington	Suffolk	8 May 1775	417	33	6 ⁷	Calendar I, p. 50-53.
Smithtown	Suffolk	May 1775	105	15 ⁸		Calendar I, p. 53-54
Islip	Suffolk	13 May	35	5	9 ⁹	Calendar I, p.

Towns	County	Date	Signer	Refused to sign	Exempt	Source
		1775				54-55
Easthampton	Suffolk	5 May 1775	252	0		Calendar I, p. 55-56
Southampton	Suffolk	19 July 1775	351	5		Calendar I, p. 58-59
Total	Suffolk	1775	1729	183		
Total	Duchess Co.	June-July 1775	1650	835		Calendar I, p. 67-85
Townshend	Cumberland Co.	12 July 1775	58	0		Calendar I, p. 99
Weathersfield	Cumberland Co.	31 July 1775	21	3		Calendar I, p. 99

Source: Calendar of Historical Manuscripts, Relating to the War of the Revolution, In the Office of the Secretary of State. 2 vols., Albany, NY 1868, cited as Calendar I and Calendar II.

Explanations:

1. The following remark has been added to the list of signatures: "July 11, 1775, signed the Association & Published the Same before all the Spectators Calling them to Witness That we would Not Countenance Rebellion, Nor have No Hand in A Royat [Riot], but stand for King, Country, and Liberty, agreeable to the Charter, but at the same time disallowing texsation in any wise Contrary to thed Charfter, and shzall neaver Consent to Texsation without being fully Represented with out Consent." (Calendar, I, p. 9).
2. The following text heads the list: "At a meeting of the Precinct of New-Burgh on thursday the 6th of July, 1775. In compliance with the Resolve of the provincial Congress of New-York Requesting us by the 15th of this Instant to make a Return, of the associators together with those that have Not --- we Lament Gentlemen that it is our unhappiness that there is such a Number of the Latter and a NUMBER AMONG THEM WHO ARE THE MOST DARING Presumptuous Villains often threatning Life, properties and Individuals Damning Congresses and committees Declaring they will Join our Enemies if opportunity Presents and by the general Spirit they Discover we conceive ourselves Exposed to their Bloody Principles unless some method can be fallen upon, for the preventing them in Carrying into Execution, their Wicked design...". (Calendar, I, p. 17-18).
- 3 The numbers in parenthesis give those persons, who "on July 14, 1775 [have] sworn to abide by the measures of the Continental Congress." (Calendar, I, p. 19).
4. The accompanying text mentions only that the lists "contains all the persons Names who have Signed the General Association within the township" (Calendar, I, p. 27). It is not stated whether all men aged between 16 and 50 years have signed the list.
5. Nothing is said about those who refused to sign the list (Calendar I, p. 36).
6. The Town Meeting passed six resolutions in which they affirm their loyalty to the king, praise the House of Representatives for its petition to king and parliament, refuse to elect

delegates for the next Provincial Congress because they reject measures „as shutting up the Courts of Justice levying money on the subjects to enlist men for the purpose of fighting against our Sovereign, diffusing a spirit of sedition among the people, destroying the authority of constitutional assemblies, and otherwise introducing many heavy and oppressive grievances..” Above all they declare themselves “adverse to all mobs, riots, and illegal proceedings” (Calendar, I, p. 38-39).

7. The word “Quakers” is added.

8 The heading contains the term “Recusants”.

9. In the headline: “These are of the People called Quakers”, who did not sign the Association, yet nevertheless declared that they support the aims of the Association as far as “is consistent with our Religious Principles” (Calendar, I, p. 54).

10. The accompanying text mentions that the list of those who refused to sign the list will be sent along; if that was so the list has not been published (Calendar, I, p. 62).

II. Notices to Boycotted Goods and pro-British actions in The Boston Gazette and Country Journal 1 January 1774 – 15 July 1776

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
14 Feb. 74	Shrewsbury	MA	N			“A Pedlar”	“30 lb of Tea”	“a number of Indians seized upon it” and “committed it to the Flames”
14 Feb. 74	Marshfield	MA	V	3	TM	Protesters	Approval of violent behavior in Plymouth by Town Meeting of Marshfield ³	Protest signed by 14 persons
28. Feb. 74	Sudbury	MA	P	4	TM	Tea Act		Resolutions against Tea Act
28 March 74	Plymouth	MA	P	2	TM		Against merchants that publicly offer tea for sale.	Such persons “is and ought to be considered as an Enemy to America; and that they will have no Dealings with such Men”
28 March 74	Plymouth	MA	N	2		Joyce Jr.	Resolution concerning Joyce Jr. in Boston	They intend to pay him soon a visit
4 April 74	Boston	MA	N			Joyce Jr.	Joyce responds to the Plymouth advertisement	He is well prepared for their visit
30 May 74	Providence	RI	P	2	TM	Tea Act	Resolutions of Boston Town meeting	They are approved
30 May 74	Providence	RI	P	2	TM	Slavery	Liberty	Resolution against slavery
30 May 74	Marblehead	MA	P	2	TM	Boston Port Bill	Resolutions of Boston Town Meeting	They are approved; a Committee of Correspondence is nominated
27 June 74	Boston	MA	A	3		British tyranny	A demand for “non-consumption	Those who do not opt for liberty, “must be regarded as an abandoned Wrench”
18 July 74	Eastham	MA	P	2	TM	Col. Williard Knowles	Sold tea of a stranded ship	Defendant apologizes, earlier condemnation revoked and Knowles declared “friend to this Country”.

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
18 July 74	Glassenbury	CT	V	2	CC	Boston Port Bill		Sympathize with Boston's fate
5 Sept. 74	Sturbridge	MA	R	3		Abijam Willard	Resignation from the office of a Councillor	"Will maintain the Charter Rights and Liberties of this Province
5 Sept. 74	Charlestown	MA	R	3		John White	Address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson	"I am sorry that I have signed it" und bitter um Vergebung
5 Sept. 74	Sudbury	MA	R	3		William Baldwin	Address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson	"I am sorry that I have signed it", asks forgiveness, because he only tried to purchase chains for the Britzish Army.
5 Sept. 74	Cambridge	MA	B	3	TM	Francis Dana	Judge Trowbridge	He, Dana, has not said in the Township Meeting that Trowbridge as the author of the Intolerable Acts.
12 Sept. 74	Boston	MA	R	1		Ebenezer Brandish	Address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson	"I am sorry that I have signed it" and asks forgiveness"
12 Sept. 74	Cambridge	MA	R	1	CO	Antill Gallop	As Sheriff authorized "Precepts" accordingt to the Judicature Act	Regrets his erroy and promises never to do it again.
12 Sept. 74	Weston	MA	R	1	CO	Elisha Harrington	As Sheriff authorized "Precepts" accordingt to the Judicature Act	Regrets his erroy and promises never to do it again.
12 Sept. 74	Concord	MA	R	3		Charles Prescott	Address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson	"I am heartily sorry, for I did it in haste"
12 Sept. 74	Concord	MA	R	3	CO	Daniel Heald	Received from Sheriff drawn according to the new laws and distributed them	Promises "not to act as Deputy Sheriff ...under this new Mode of Government"
12 Sept. 74		MA	R	3		E. Pond	Address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson; affirmed the right of British Parliament to tax the colonies.	Regrets to have signed the address and denies that he believes the British Parliament has the right to tax colonies.

Appendices

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
12 Sept. 74	Marblehead	MA	R	3		John Fowle	Address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson	Regrets to have signed address and hopes for “forgiveness and perfect Restoration of Friendship”.
12 Sept. 74	Weston	MA	E	3		Elisha Jones	Commission under new government	Gives assurance that he will refuse commission under new government.
12 Sept. 74	Easton	MA	R	3		5 Personen	Signed “Paper relating to the Difficulties subsisting in this Province”	Regrets of having signed; it was done “without due Consideration”
3 Oct 74	Marblehead	MA	R	3		John Webb	Address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson	Regrets having signed and assures that “non shall be foremost in the Defence of the Liberties”
17 Oct. 74	Ashburnham	MA	R	1		Samuel Wilder	„my conduct in many respects with regard to public affairs“	“acknowledge myself to blame in many respects.” Promises: “I will not in any way make any sport or complaint of the treatment I have met with today”.
31 Oct. 74	Barnstable	MA	N	2	CO	Committee	Demand that courts should be convened according to Charter	Judges accept demand but demand that James Otis clarify the issue
31 Oct. 74	Plymouth	MA	N	4	CO	Committee	Demand that courts should be convened according to Charter	Edward Winslow declares for the Court that they will not convene.
7 Nov. 74	Annapolis	MD	R	3		Committee	Import of tea and paid Tea duty	Acknowledge their guilt; captain and merchants burn tea and ship.
21 Nov 74	Marblehead	MA	P	2	TM	TM	Association – Resolution of Continental Congress and instruction how to implement the Association	Nomination of Committee of Inspection and Observation. Town Clerk is instructed “for entering on the Records such Persons as should by the Province be considered and published as ‘Rebels against the State’”
28 Nov 74	County of Barnstable	MA	P	1	TM	TM	Association and resolve of Continental Congress	Resolved that all should sign “Association” and in addition a “solemn League

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
28 Nov. 74	County of Worcester	MA	P	1		Meeting of Blacksmiths	Meeting of the Delegates of the counties Worcester, Middlesex, and Essex with Committee of Correspondence of Boston	and covenant". All should elect a Committee of Inspection and Observation, suppress mobs, and peddlers of non-American goods, and attend military exercises. Resolve to deal with none, "whom we esteem enemies to this country". All "who shall not have signed the non-consumption agreement... or not conform to the association or covenant" are included in that group. Regrets his action because he risked that soldiers could have shot at people and thus defeated the latter's noble purposes. „I humbly confess my Errors and implore the forgiveness”
28 Nov. 74	Concord	MA	R	1	CIO	Joseph Lee	Has informed judges and court of imminent visit of „the Country.	Instruction how to implement the Continental association
12 Dec. 74	Cambridge	MA	P	1	PR	PR	Association of Continental Congress Address to Governor Thomas Hutchinson	Signed the Address hoping that it would favour a "Reconciliation" with England. Regrets his error and hopes that he thus can regain the confidence of all „true friends to the Constitution of both countries.”
12 Dec. 74	New London	CT	R	1	CIO	Philip Du-maresq	Implementation of Continental Association	Resolution "that each Town publish and distribute as many of the Association Papers as will serve every Master of a Family, who will then have his Duty plainly before him and enable him to

Appendices

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
2 Jan. 75	Preston	CT	P	1	TM	TM	Addressers to Hutchinson and violators of boycott.	They are denounced as “detach’d themselves and set up their sentiments in opposition to the millions of America”; they are “enemies to the common cause”
2 Jan 75	Wrentham	MA	N	1		Nathan Alldis	Accused of recruiting soldiers for the British Army	
2 Jan. 75	Wrentham	MA	R	1	CIO	Nathan Alldis et al.	Accused of recruiting soldiers for the British Army	Hand in their commissions, confess their errors and “promise to strictly ... to conform to the Association of the Grand American Congress.” The complete text of the recantation dated 21 Dec. 1774 ist printed in New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury No. 1215, 23 Jan. 1775, fol. 1.
9 Jan. 75	Boston	MA	N	1		England	On the general elections in England	Biting critique of English electoral system and the ridiculous small number of voters in some small boroughs.
16 Jan. 75	Petersham	MA	P	2	TM	Joshua Willard, William Barron, Thomas Beman, Joseph Stevens,	Entered into a Combination, „That we will not acknowledge or Submit to the pretended Authority of any Congresses, Committees of Correspondence or other unconstitutional Assemblies of Men, but will at the Risque of our Lives,	Town Meeting “is with great reluctance constrained to pronounce those, some of which have heretofore been our agreeable neighbours, traitorous Parricides to the Cause of Freedom in general & the united Provinces of N. America in particular.”

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
						Moses McClellan, Luke Lincoln, Joseph Smith, James Jackson, Samuel Frizzel, David Stone, Robert Goddard, Ebenezer Bragg, Seth Hapgood, Dr. Ephraim Whitney	and if need be, oppose the forcible Exercise of such Authority”, whereby they “contumaciously compare the Strength and Wisdom of the Grand Council of America to an insignificant Mob and an unlawful Assembly”	
16 Jan. 75	Marblehead	MA	P	2	TM	TM	Some persons attempted to recruit soldiers for the British Army “for establishing in America <i>Despotism and Popery</i> ”	In order to defeat these efforts a “large Committee of Inspection and Observation” is elected „to attend to the conduct of ministerial <i>Tools</i> and <i>Jacobites</i> in this town”.
27 Feb. 75	Boston	MA	A	5		Anonym	An officer seems to be the author of the attacks published in the papers on the Rev. Gordon and on General Lee.	“This Debasement of character may doubtless in part be attributed to a certain Contagion” by those “who have been exposed to the pestilential conversation of the same Tory Junto of Parricides”. He should be forgiven.

Appendices

Date	Township or County	Colony	T¹	page	A.²	Name	Incident	Resolution
27 Feb. 75	County of New London	CT	N	5	CCs	CCs	Addressers of Thomas Hutchinson	Resolved, “that any person that shall have any commercial connection whatever with any of the Addressors to Governor Hutchinson, or with any of the Mandamus Men, is a violator of the true spirit and meaning of the Continental Resolves, and ought to be proceeded with as a violator thereof, and inimical to his country.”
27 Feb. 75	Boston, Marblehead, Wrentham	MA	N	5	CO	CO	Sabin Mann, captain of militia, Aldis, and Goldsbury had a man arrested for his role in forcing Aldis and Goldsbury to sign a recantation.	Aldis und Goldsbury accuse the man of having authored the recandation and demand £ 500 in damages; der Erztrory Richter Gridley, a high tory, refuses to admit a prosperous farmer as surety, because he did not reside in Boston; judge Quincy Sr., however, decides otherwise.
3 April 75	Boston	MA	R	3	CIO	Simon Tuffits	Accused of having sold tea to Thomas Lillie from Marblehead	Tuffits declared in a written statement before a justice of the peace that he had bought the tea before the Continental Congress had declared a boycott; he added that he supported the American cause, that he would cease selling tea and hope “for a Restoration of their Favour and Confidence”.
17 April 75	Sudbury, County of Middlesex	MA	P	4	CN	38 young men	On 24 November 1774 the men formed a group in order „to learn the military skills“, which is considered dangerous	The men declared that they considered the English laws unconstitutional. The meeting resolved that as long as the men stuck to their declared views they

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
7 Aug. 75	Rehoboth, Swanzey	MA	P	2	CIO		The meeting had been informed that there were people „unfriendly“ to the American cause in Swanzey. The meeting resolved to ask a committee consisting of persons from Swanzey, Rehoboth and other neighbouring towns to investigate the rumour.	would not be considered as “enemies of the Country”. The committee reports that they had found some “unfriendly” to the American cause “who promised reformation”. The names of these persons were not published.
14 Aug. 75	Swanzey	MA	E	3		Jerathmeel Bowers	Jerathmeel Bowers rejects the protocol of 7 August 1775 which accused him of violating the resolutions of the Continental Congress.	Demands that the Committee prove its allegations.
14 Aug. 75	Rochester	MA	P	3	CIO		Charge unreadable	Committee resolves to have henceforth “no dealing” with the person
11 Sept. 75	Pownalborough	MA	P	2	CIO	Abiel Wood	Is accused of violating the Association, „spoke disrespectfully of the method recommended by the Provincial Congress for choosing Officers and said they were rebels and traitors, distributed Tory pamphlets because „they contained nothing but the truth“, prevented in 1774 the election of a Committee of Inspection	Before the Committee Wood reaffirmed his views, denounced John Hancock as a ringleader. The Committee declared Wood an “enemy to this country”. It prefaced its judgment with the following statement: “To deprive a Man of the benefits of Society by holding him up to the World as an enemy to his country, is a task that must be disagreeable to humanity.”

Appendices

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
							and Observation, considers the English laws constitutional and called the delegates to the Provincial Congress „damned villains“	
11 Sept. 75	Rehoboth, Swanzey	MA	P	4	CIO	Jerathmeel Bowers	In response of Jerathmeel Bowers' demand of 14 August 1775 the Commission publishes sworn statements	Witnesses deposit under oath that Bowers prevented the dispatch of Militia soldiers to Lexington and Concord and tried to block the formation of a Company of Minute Men as well as the storage of gun powder in Swanzey.
18 Sept. 75	Weston	MA	E	3	CIO	Asa Dunbar	Is accused of having behaved improperly on the last Fast Day	Justifies his behaviour with his religious beliefs and declares “that I highly respect and revere that authority”, which proclaimed the Fast Day. The Committee accepts the explanation as satisfactory.
25 Sept. 75	Swanzey	MA	P	2	TM	Jerathmeel Bowers	Town Meeting elects Jerathmeel Bowers as Moderator.	Town Meeting resolves to dismiss the Committee of Inspection and Observation, elects a new Committee consisting of Jerathmeel Bowers, William Brown, Capt. Luther Thurber, Charles Slead, Capt. Levi Wheaton, resolves further that Bowers had for years “warmly contended for the rights and liberties of America”, advocated opposition against England, and that his enemies had prosecuted him out of “envy, malice and revenge” in which they were sup-

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
25 Sept. 75	Abington	MA	P	3	CC	Thomas Mansfield, Capt. William Tirrill, David Porter, Israel Levet, David Ellis	Are accused that "each of them refuse to comply with the Association of the continental congress	ported by a hasty Rehoboth Committee of Inspection and Observation. "And consequently prove themselves inimical to their country, and it is hoped that every friend to his country will withdraw all trading dealing and commerce with them."
2 Oct. 75	Waltham, County of Middlesex	MA	P	1	CIO	Eleazer Bradshaw, David Townsend	Accused of regularly travelling to Albany under the pretense of bringing furs to that town. In reality he bought tea which he and his partner then sold.	"we think it our Duty and desire that those Tea Merchants may be treated as their Merits deserve"
16 Oct. 75	Weston, Waltham, Newtown, Sudbury	MA	P	1	CIO	Eleazer Bradshaw	Accused of having bought tea at Albany and being „inimical to his country“ ... Bradshaw "frankly confessed he had purchased and sold a quantity of Tea ... and he would do as he thought fit in spite of said committee or any person, and would be the death of any person that should molest him".	"Therefore determined by this joint Committee, that Eleazer Bradshaw, by his conduct and behaviour, has proved himself inimical to his country, and that all persons be cautioned to withhold commerce and dealing with said Bradshaw, until there appears a reformation..."
16 Oct. 75	Waltham	MA	R	1		David Townsend	Declares that he bought six pounds of tea from Eleazer Bradshaw at the request of	Townsend declares: "which I am heartily sorry for that I had any thing to do with said Tea, and I hope the Public will

Appendices

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
16 Oct. 75	Cumberland, Wrentham, Medlingham, Hopkinton, Holliston, Mendon, Uxbridge, Upton, versammelt in Bellingham	MA	P	3	CIO	Cap. Edward Clark	Meeting has received "information for purchasing tea, contrary to the Association Agreement, in Article three" by Captain Edward Clark who admitted the charge.	"Resolved That said Clark's Conduct ... is in direct Violation of said Association Agreement, and that the said Clark is an Enemy to American Liberty and ought to be treated as such. And that it be recommended to all Persons who are Lovers of their country, and Friends to the common Rights and Liberties of Mankind, to break off all kind of Dealings with him, and that this be published in the Gazette."
30 Oct. 75	Pownalborough	MA	A	1	CIO	Abiel Wood, Thomas Rice, Timothy Parsons	Abiel Wood is accused of having delivered goods to the British army in Nova Scotia which represents a direct violation of the Continental Association Timothy Parsons accuses the Pownalborough Committee of Inspection and Observation of refusing to condemn Abiel Wood's behavior	Timothy Parsons raises a number of questions whose aim it is to establish Wood's corrupting influence on the Committee of Inspection and Observation of Pownalborough. In addition he charges Wood with attempting to prevent the militia from performing their military exercises
20 Nov. 75	Rehoboth, Swanzey	MA	P	1	GC	Jerathmeal Bowers	Presents the report of a Committee established by the	The House of Representatives Committee concludes: „they cannot find that

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
4 Dec. 75	Rehoboth, Swanzey	MA	E	1	GC	Jerathmeal Bowers, John Wheeler, Isaac Barney	House of Representatives which exculpates Bowers from all charges.	Col. Bowers has acted a part unfriendly to his country, and are unanimous in the opinion that he, so far from wishing his countrymen to be deprived of their liberty or a single privilege, would exert himself to the utmost in the support of them". The Committee therefore concludes that its sentence against Bowers is correct and justified and approved by the General Court. Bowers, who himself is a Delegate, is accused of trying to seduce the public.
4 Dec. 75	Pownalborough	MA	E	4	CIO &CC	Timothy Langdon, Abiel Wood, Thomas Rice	Committee discusses the Report of the House of Representatives. It agrees that the report as such had been presented to the General Court but adds that the General Court refused to approve the report but rejected it.	On the basis of these resolutions Wood demanded that a Town Meeting be called. The Town Meeting then dissolved the Committee of Inspection and Observation; after the dismissal of that Committee the Pownalborough Committee of Correspondence again exculpated Wood.

Appendices

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
1 Jan. 76	Pownalborough	MA	P	3	GC, CIO	Abiel Wood,	correct and second, that the Pownalborough's interference was outside ist competence. The General Court referred the petitions of Abiel Wood and the Pownalborough Committee of Inspection and Observation to a special Committee whose report the General Court has approved	The special Committee found that the Pownalborough Committee of Inspection and Observation' condemnation of Wood as "enemy of the country" was justified and orders the arrest of Wood until he has posted a bond for his good behavior. The Committee expressly commends the Pownalborough Committee of Inspection and Observation for its decision.
22 Jan. 76	Granby	MA	V	4	CIO	William Eastman	Accused of "not attending to the recommendations and declarations of the Continental Congress and also for violating the resolves of the Provincial Congress.	Despite its intense efforts to convince Eastman of his errors the latter insisted on the correctness of his views and behavior, "does wholly refuse to comply with the declaration of the continental Congress in taking up arms in Defence of the Colonies, he also refuses to join the town in transacting any affairs relative to the public cause And who justified the late tyrannical and oppressive proceedings of the British parliament, all of which are aggravated by his holding a captaincy in the militia, under the power and authority of the administration." The Committee finds that he "ought to be held up to public view as

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
29 Jan. 76	Philadelphia	PA	P	2	COC	Association (Explanation of the resolution of 1 January 1776 vom 2.1.76)	“divers honest and well-meaning but uninformed people in these colonies” are seduced by “ministerial agents” and “deceived and drawn into erroneous opinions”	It is recommended “to treat all such persons with kindness and attention, to consider them as the inhabitants of a country determined to be free, and to view their errors as proceeding rather from want of information than want of virtue or public spirit”
4 March 76	Boston, Hatfield, Stockbridge	MA	P	1	GC	Elisha Alliss, Major Gray	The General Court has received a letter from Elisha Alliss to Major Gray in Stockbridge that suggests that people in the western counties plan the large-scale counterfeiting of continental paper money The General Court resolves:	To recommend to the Committees of Inspection and Observation in the western Counties, to arrest all persons implicated in this plot.
11 March 76	Eastham	MA	V	2	CIO	The General Court resolved that shooting birds is forbidden	Joshua Higgins of Eastham is accused of having shot at birds.	“and refuseth to give the least Satisfaction to this Committee that he intends to reform”
18 March 76	Eastham, Chatham	MA	V	3	CIO	According to the resolution of the General Court of 11 January	Richard Burton, late schoolmaster of Chatham is condemned for “obstructing and discouraging the Currency and Circulation of the Bills of Credit emitted by the Author-	“the said Richard Burton may be treated as the Congress directs, he is thus published by order of the Committee aforesaid”

Appendices

Date	Township or County	Colony	T¹	page	A.²	Name	Incident	Resolution
22 April 76	Philadelphia	PA	E	1	COC	1776 Draft of Articles of Confederation	ity of Cognress” Printed in full .	
13 May 76	Boston	MA	V	2	GC	Independence Covenant	Townships are requested to instruct their Delegates, The General Court has agreed to and published the text of a Covenant which is circulated to that everyone can sign it and agree to	Whether they are entitled to vote for a declaration of independence Neither support the English Navy nor Army in whatever way but “on the contrary to defend by arms the United American Colonies and every part thereof...”
3 June 76	Boston	MA	V	2	GC	Publication of resolution	That the General Court should declare independence from England.	
1 July 76	New York	NY	V	1	PR	Resolve	Resolution that the Committees of Inspection and Observation should inspect prisons and hold their wardens responsible if prisoners escape	
8 July 76	Philadelphia	PA	V	3	COC	Beschluß	“All Persons abiding within any of the United Colonies and desiring protection from the laws of the same	Owe allegiance to the said laws” ... and those who nevertheless go to war against the colonies “are guilty of Treason against such Colony”. The colonies are recommended to pass proper legislation.
8 July 76	Barnstable	MA	P	3	TM	Resolve	“Whether if the Continental Congress should judge expedient to declare the United	“It passed in the Negative”. Against this resolution of the Town Meeting fifteen persons issued a public protest in which

Date	Township or County	Colony	T ¹	page	A. ²	Name	Incident	Resolution
							States independent they the Inhabitants of the Town of Barnstable would support the Measure at the Hazard of Life and Estate ²	they argue that the resolution „disunited the Colonies”.

Explanations and notes:

- 1 Type of newspaper article: A = Article that expresses an opinion, N= news, P = publication of the resolution of a Committee or Meeting, R = Recantation; B = correction of report; E = declaration
- 2 Symbols for institutions: TM = Town Meeting; CC = Committee of Correspondence; CO = Court, CIO = Committee of Inspection and Observation, PR = Provincial Congress, CN = Convention, GC = General Court, COC = Continental Congress
3. The complete text: “We whose Names are hereto Subscribed, having been favored with a Copy of the Proceedings of the town of Marshfield, at their late Meeting of the 31st Jan. and having to our great Admiration observed in these proceedings a Clause to this effect – “We do renounce all Methods of Imposition, Violence and Persecution, such as has been most shamefully exercised upon a Number of Inhabitants of the town of Plymouth, by obliging them to Sign a Recantation as called, and in Case of Refusal, to have their Houses pulled down, or they Tarr’d and Feathered, and all this under the specious Mask of Liberty” ---Do in this most public, explicit and solemn Manner Declare that we Signed the Recantation therein referred to, from a Sense of duty, and from a clear Conviction of the great Impropriety of our having Protested against the Proceeding of this Town, as well as those of the town of Boston, and indeed of the whole Continent: When engaged in a Cause, to which we are now, and always have been, hearty Well wishers --And we do further Declare that the Insinuations of the Town of Marshfield in the above cited Clause, are base, unjust, and void of Truth, and deserve in our Opinion, the Resentment of all, who wish well to this Country, and of us in particular. – We do therefore Resent such injurious Treatment, and do expect that the Committee of the town of Marshfield which Draughted the Resolve above refer’d to, do in the most unreserved Manner, favor us with the Name or Names of the Person or Persons who gave them the above unjust and scandalous information.” fol. 3.

III. New Jersey und Pennsylvania 1775-1776: Resolutions of Committees of Inspection and Observation: as reported in the Pennsylvania Gazette

Date	State	County	Name	Self-Denouncement	Reason for Accusation, Acquittal or Ostracism
9. Mai 75	DE	Kent	Robert Holliday		“Political sentiment ..grossest error .. many would flock to King’s standard”
11. Mai 75	NJ	Cumberland	Silas Newcomb		“Misconduct – abuses offered”
15. Mai 75	PA	Philadelphic City	Joseph Gallo-way	Yes	Correspondence with England, „inimical to liberties“
30. Mai 75	NJ	Burlington	Richard Palmer	Yes	“cursed the Presbyterians, Congress, Committee and the Gentlemen”
6. Juni 75	PA	Chester	William Moore		“Unguarded expression”
14. Juli 75	PA	Philadel-phia City	Amos Wickersham	Yes	“rash and imprudent expressions”
17. Juli 75	PA	Philadel-phia City	Mordecai Levy	Yes	“Disrespectfully of General Congress and of Military Gentlemen who defend liberties”
10. Juli 75	PA	Cumberland	Richard Cayford	Yes	“Endeavour to prevent meeting for electing committee of observation, recruit for Gage, correspond with Gage”
22. Juli 75	PA	Cumberland	Richard Cayford		“Declared enemy of the country”
14.Aug. 75	PA	Philadel-phia City	John Bergum		“derogatory to the liberties of this country”
4. Aug. 75	PA	Bucks	Thomas Mere-		“Talked injuriously of the distressed people of Boston ... disrespectful of

							measures against oppression”
20. Sept. 75	PA	Bucks	dith	Thomas Smith			“derogatory to ... Congress, invidious to a particular denomination of Christians” against “opposition of my countrymen to ministerial oppression”
2. Okt. 75	NJ	Hunterdon		Cornelius Williamson			“derogatory to ... Congress, and tending to impede the Opposition ... against Ministerial oppressions”
14. Okt. 75	DE	Newcastle		Alexander Porter			“employing his negroes ... on the day ... to be observed as a day of fasting”
24. Jan. 76	PA	Lancaster		John Mogyey			“Americans as traitors, in an actual state of rebellion, aiming at ... independency”
31. Jan. 75	PA	Philadelphia		William Jarret			“refused Continental Currency”
5. Feb. 76	NJ	Hunterdon		Nathaniel Blinks			“extorted upon his merchandize” ... is “enemy to the glorious struggle”
5. Feb. 76	PA	Philadelphia		Fa. John Drinker, Thos & Saml. Fisher			Refused acceptance of Continental paper money .., enemy to their country“
30. Jan. 76	PA	Berks		Gaius Dickenson			“depreciate the Continental Currency”
30. Jan. 76	PA	Berks		William Gilliland			“depreciate the Continental Currency
20. Feb. 76	PA	Philadelphia		Thomas Rogers			Refused acceptance of Continental Paper Money – “enemies of their country”
20. Feb. 76	PA	Philadelphia		Joseph Sermon			Refused acceptance of Continental Paper Money – “enemies of their country”
1. März 76	PAP	Philadelphia		Henry Juncken			“inimical to the noble struggle for LIBERTY” ... and “the Association in particular”
1. März 76	PA	Northampton		Johannes Ziglin, Sr., Johannes Ziglin, Jr.,			Misdemeanor ... entering into ... agreement ...unlawful combination, .. bid defiance to ...laws ... and .. resist .. civil Magistrates wickedly ..maliciously defaming and slandering ..Congress

			Thomas James, Jacob Hipge, Edward Evans		
26. März 76	PA	Philadelphia	Benjamin Sharpless		Refused acceptance of Continental Paper Money – “enemy of his country”
2. April 76	PA	Chester	Abel Green		“ungenerous reflections upon, or opposition to such measures as are...adopted for .. protection of.. Liberties”
16. März 76	PA	Berks	John Webb		“tearing out and trampling upon .. names of .. field officers of ..battalion of .. county”
4. April 76	PA	Berks	Jacob Rieth		“persuade ...good people in .. neighbourhood to refuse signing ..the association ... and oppose .. payment of ...fines laid on non-associators”
11. April 76	NJ	Gloucester	Lucas Gibbs		Refused acceptance of Continental Paper Money – “enemy of his country”
11. April 76	NJ	Salem	Peter Loudenback		“abusing .. magistrates in civil power, ..calling ...persons fighting in...glorious struggle a sett of rascally rebels, and that ..Congress ...be hung”
9. April 76	PA	Philadelphia	Townsend Speakman		Refused acceptance of Continental Paper Money – “enemy of his country”
	NJ	Hunterdon	John Snook		“speak in favour of ministerial oppressions against America, and wishing destruction to the Americans in opposing such oppressings”
11. Mai 76	PA	Berks	Nicholas Hermany		“discourage .. good people of this and ..neighbouring county (of Northampton) from taking up arms against Great Britain, and ...wrote ..letters for that purpose“
17. Juni 76	PA	Philadelphia	Thomas Lightfoot		“Spoken very disrespectfully of the Congress, ridiculed the Associators, and endeavoured to depreciate the Continental Currency”
15. Juni 76	PA	Berks	Mathias Roth und Jonathan Roth		“spreading a report, that the officers of the militia company of Colebrookdale township in the said county, had sold their men to the Colonel of the battalion to which they belong”
15. Juni 76	PA	Berks	Henry Kettner		“Greatly abused the persons appointed to collect the arms of the non-associators in the township of Bern, in Berks County, for which I was justly confined by the Committee of the said County.”

15. Juni 76	PA	Berks	John Ebeling	“no person who thath taken the oaths of allegiance to the King ought to be permitted to hold any office in the militia, and that Henry Christ, and Baltzer Geehr, Esqrs. Were unfit persons to be Colonels for that reason
13. Juni 76	PA	Northampton	Michael Ohl	spread ...throughout .. county, that ...Major Michael Pobst of ...2d battalion of Associators ... unjustly .. taken at Philadelphia Twenty Shillings per head for every subscriber to ... book of Association ... by which means many ... were deterred from signing or associating
13. Juni 76	PA	Northampton	John Romich und Joseph Romich	imprudently refuse ..deliver [guns] up ... refuse to pay any obedience to .. summons of .. Committee..., who were ... obliged to send .. Associators to compel us ...we did ... resist their authority by loaded fire arms”
28. Juni 76	PA	Cumberland	John Clark	“unfriendly to the liberties of the United Colonies – “enemy of his country”
12. Juli 76	PA	York	James Rankin	“makes suitable concessions (as he proposes) and gives sufficient surety for his good behaviour in future”
9. Juli 76	PA	Northampton	John Musch	“complaint of Peter Kachlein, Esq.... that a certain John Musch, ... falsely ... slandered him, by ... report, that he... was proffered ...2.000 acres of Land, as a bribe ... to keep up and support the Assembly of this province”
19. Aug. 76	PA	Philadelphia	James Thompson	“saying imprudent things inimical to the natural rights and liberties of America, and ...threatened violence ..to ..neighbours properties and families”
31. Okt. 76	PA	Philadelphia	John Baldwin	Refused acceptance of Continental Paper Money – “be committed to Goal, there to remain without bail or mainprize, until he shall be released by order of this Council”

Source: The Pennsylvania Gazette. Containing the Freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic, Philadelphia: Printed by Hall and Sellers, at the New Printing-Office, near the Market, April 26, 1775 – October 31, 1776.

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The three essays and the collection of documents focus on the nature of the revolutionary process in North America between 1774 and 1776. Both suggest that this process was the work of Committees of Inspection and Observation founded in 1774/75 in all colonies and dissolved after the passing of the Declaration of Independence. These committees were founded as a result of associations in which colonists pledged their acceptance of the resolves of the Continental Congress. Associations defined revolutionary values as well as pre-national concepts, the committees supervised the trade boycott as well as the adherence to these revolutionary values. Those who broke the boycott or rejected the values were declared “enemies of liberty” or “enemies of the American cause”. As a result, American colonial society was divided into Revolutionaries and “enemies of liberty”. The documents – texts of associations and resolutions of the committees of inspection and observations all published in colonial newspapers – illustrate this new interpretation of the nature of revolutionary process of the American Revolution.