

A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY THE LOYALISTS, 1781

<http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/facts/ofrdecl.htm>

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for men, in order to preserve their lives, liberties and properties, and to secure to themselves, and to their posterity, that peace, liberty and safety, to which by the laws of nature and of nature's God they are entitled, to throw off and renounce all allegiance to a government, which under the insidious pretences of securing those inestimable blessings to them, has wholly deprived them of any security of either life, liberty, property, peace, or safety; a decent respect to the opinions of mankind, requires that they should declare, the injuries and oppressions, the arbitrary and dangerous proceedings, which impel them to transfer their allegiance from such their oppressors, to those who have offered to become their protectors.

We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain rights, that among these, are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;

that to secure those rights, governments are instituted; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive to those ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, or to renounce all allegiance to it, and to put themselves under such other government, as to them shall appear best calculated and most likely to effect their safety and happiness;

it is not indeed prudent to change for light and transient causes, and experience hath ever shewn, that men are disposed to suffer much before they can bring themselves to make a change of government; but when a long train of the most licentious and despotic abuses, pursuing invariably the same objects, evinces a design to reduce them under anarchy, and the distractions of democracy, and finally to force them to submit to absolute despotism, it is their right, it becomes their duty, to disclaim and renounce all allegiance to such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Such have been our patient sufferings, and such is now the necessity which constrains us to renounce all allegiance to Congress, or to the governments lately established by their direction.

The history of Congress, is a history of continued weakness, inconsistency, violation of the most sacred obligations of all public faith and honour, and of usurpations, all having in direct object the producing of anarchy, civil feuds, and violent injustice, which have rendered us miserable, and must soon establish tyranny over us, and our country.

To prove this let facts be submitted to the candid world.

They have recommended and caused laws to be passed, the most destructive of the public good, and ruinous to individuals.

Availing themselves of our zeal and unanimity to oppose the claims of the British Parliament, and of our unsuspecting confidence in their solemn professions and declarations, they have forbidden us to listen to, or to accept any terms of peace, until their assent should be obtained.

They have refused to accept of, or even to receive proposals and terms of accommodation and peace, though they know the terms offered exceeded what the Colonies in America had unanimously declared would be satisfactory, unless the Crown would relinquish a right inestimable to it and to the whole empire, and formidable to Congress only.

They have excited and directed the people to alter or annul their ancient constitutions, under which, they and their ancestors, had been happy for many ages, for the sole purpose of promoting their measures.

They have by mobs and riots awed Representative Houses, repeatedly into a compliance with their resolutions, though destructive of the peace, liberty, and safety of the people.

They have by their misconduct, reduced us to all the dangers and distress of actual invasion from without, and to all the horrors of a cruel war within.

They have not only prevented the increase of the population of these states, but by fines, imprisoning, and banishments, with the losses by war, they have caused a rapid depopulation.

They have corrupted all the sources of justice and equity by their Tender Law, by which they destroyed the legal force of all civil contracts, wronged the honest creditor, and deserving salary man of his just dues, stripped the helpless orphan of his patrimony, and the disconsolate widow of her dower.

They have erected a multitude of new offices, and have filled them with men from their own body, or with their creatures and dependants, to eat out the substance of the people; they have made their officers dependant on their will for the tenure of their offices, and the payment of their salaries.

They have raised a standing army and sent it into the field, without any act of the legislature, and have actually rendered it independent of the civil power, by making it solely dependant on them.

They have combined with France, the natural and hereditary enemy of our civil constitution, and religious faith, to render us dependant on and subservient to the views, of that foreign, ambitious, and despotic monarchy.

They have suffered their troops to live repeatedly on free quarters on the inhabitants, and to strip them by force of the necessaries of life, and have protected them from either trial or punishment under the plea of necessity, which necessity if real, was caused by their treacherous views, or unpardonable negligence.

They have ruined our trade, and destroyed our credit with all parts of the world.

They have forced us to receive their paper, for goods, merchandise, and for money due to us, equal to silver and gold, and then by a breach of public faith in not redeeming the same, and by the most infamous bankruptcy, have left it on our hands, to the total ruin of multitudes, and to the injury of all.

They have driven many of our people beyond the sea, into exile, and have confiscated their estates, and the estates of others who were beyond sea before the war, or the existence of Congress, on pretence of offences, and under the sanction of a mock trial, to which the person condemned was neither cited or present.

They have abolished the true system of the English constitution and laws, in thirteen of the American Provinces, and established therein a weak and factious democracy, and have attempted to use them as introducing the same misrule and disorder into all the Colonies on the continent.

They have recommended the annihilating of our charters, abolishing many of our most valuable laws, and the altering fundamentally the form of our government.

They have destroyed all good order and government, by plunging us into the factions of democracy, and the ravages of civil war.

They have left our seas unprotected, suffered our coasts to be ravaged, our towns to be burnt, some of them by their own troops, and the lives of our people to be destroyed.

They have without the consent or knowledge of the legislatures, invited over an army of foreign mercenaries to support them and their faction, and to prevent the dreadful scenes of death and desolation from being closed by an honorable peace and accommodation with our ancient friend and parent.

They have fined, imprisoned, banished, and put to death some of our fellow citizens, for no other cause but their attachment to the English laws and constitution.

They have countenanced domestic tumults and disorders in our capital cities, and have suffered the murder of a number of our fellow citizens perpetrated under their eyes in Philadelphia, to pass unnoticed.

They first attempted to gain the savage and merciless Indians to their side, but failing in making them the presents promised and expected, have occasioned an undistinguished destruction to ages, sexes, and conditions on our frontiers.

They have involved us in an immense debt, foreign as well as internal, and did put the best port and island on our continent, into the hands of foreigners, who are their creditors.

They have wantonly violated our public faith and honor, and destroyed all grounds for private confidence, or the security of private property, have not blushed to act in direct contradiction to their most solemn declaration, and to render the people under their government, a reproach and a bye word among the nations.

In every stage of these proceedings, they have not been wanting to throw out before us, specious excuses for their conduct, as being the result of necessity and tending to the public good. –

In every stage since their public conduct, began to contradict their public declarations, our minds have been overwhelmed with apprehensions; and as our sufferings have increased, our tears have flowed in secret. It has been dangerous and even criminal to lament our situation in public.

The unsuspecting confidence which we with out fellow citizens reposed in the Congress of 1774, the unanimous applause, with which their patriotism and firmness were crowned, for having stood forth, as the champions of our rights, founded on the English constitution; at the same time that it gave to Congress the unanimous support of the whole continent, inspired their successors with very different ideas, and emboldened them by degrees to pursue measures, directly the reverse of those before adopted, and were recommended, as the only just, constitutional and safe. –

Congress in 1774 reprobated every idea of a separation from Great-Britain, and declared that they looked on such an event as the greatest of evils. –

They declared that a repeal of certain acts, complained of, would restore our ancient peace, and harmony. –

That they asked but for peace, liberty, and safety. – That they wished not for a diminution of the royal prerogative, not did they solicit the grant of any new right.

And they pledged themselves in the presence of Almighty God, that they will ever carefully and zealously endeavour to support and maintain the royal authority of Great-Britain over us, and our connection with Great-Britain – and our councils had been influenced only by the dread of impending destruction.

The acts complained of have been repealed, yet how have Congress given the lie, to these their most solemn professions!

In 1774, they declared themselves concerned for the honour of Almighty God, whose pure and holy religion, our enemies were undermining –

They pointed out those enemies, and the danger in which our holy religion was by their complaints of the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Canada; they say, “It is a religion which has deluged the Island of Great Britain with blood, and dispersed impiety, persecution, murder, and rebellion through every part of the world.”

We find the present Congress not only claiming a new right, and hazarding every thing valuable in life, to the present and future generations in support of it, but we also find them, leagued with the eldest son of this bloody, impious, bigoted, and persecuting church, to ruin the nation from whose loins we sprung, and which has ever been the principal bulwark in Europe, against the encroachments and tyranny of that church, and of the kingdoms devoted to her;

we think it not too severe to say, that we find them as intoxicated with ambition of Independent sovereignty, as that execrable Roman Daughter, who drove the wheels of her chariot over the mangled body of her murdered father, in her way to the capitol.

We find that all their fears and apprehensions from the Roman Catholic religion in Canada, have vanished, or sunk to nothing, when put in competition with their political views, and that they have attempted to seduce the Canadian to their side, by promises of still greater religious establishments; and to shew that they were in earnest, have countenanced this impious religion by attending its ceremonies and worship in a body.

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We find them at one time boasting of their patriotic and religious ancestors, who braved every danger of unknown seas, and coasts, to preserve civil and religious freedom, and who chose rather to become exiles, and suffer every misery that must await them, on a savage and unexplored coast, than submit to civil, but above all religious innovations – at another time we find them destroying the British Constitution, the pride of their ancestors, and encouraging a religion which they held in abhorrence, as idolatrous and tyrannical. –

We find them contending for liberty of speech, and at the same time controlling the press, by means of a mob, and persecuting every one who ventures to hint his disapprobation of their proceedings.

We find them declaring in September 1779, that to pay off their paper money, at less than its nominal value, would be an unpardonable sin, an execrable deed. “That a faithless bankrupt Republic would be a novelty in the political world, and appear like a common prostitute among chaste and reputable matrons,” would be “a reproach and a bye-word among the nations, &c.”

We find the same Congress in March following, liquidating their paper debt at 21/2 per cent. or 6d. in the pound.

We should fill volumes, were we to recite at large their inconsistency, usurpations,

weaknesses and violations of the most sacred obligations – We content ourselves with the above brief recital of facts known to the world and attested by their own records.

We have sufficiently shewn that a government thus marked and distinguished from every other, either despotic or democratic, by the enormity of its excesses, injustice and infamy, is unfit to rule a free people.

We therefore, Natives and Citizens of America, appealing to the impartial world to judge of the justice of our cause, but above all to the supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions, do renounce and disclaim all allegiance, duty, or submission to the Congress, or to any government under them, and declare that the United Colonies or States, so called, neither are, nor of right ought to be independent of the crown of Great-Britain, or unconnected with that empire;

but that we do firmly believe and maintain “*That the Royal Authority of the Crown of Great-Britain over us, and our connection with that kingdom ought to be preserved and maintained, and that we will zealously endeavour to support and maintain the same;*” and in the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, and to the crown and empire of Great-Britain, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

The Royal Gazette, (New York), November 17, 1781

