

Continental Congress, Tory acts (1775-1776).

Continental Congress, October 6, 1775

Resolved, That it be recommended to the several provincial **Assemblies or Conventions, and councils or committees of safety**, to arrest and secure every person in their respective colonies, whose going at large may, in their opinion, endanger the safety of the colony, or the liberties of America.

Continental Congress, January 2, 1776

Whereas it has been represented to this Congress, that divers honest and well-meaning, but uninformed people in these colonies, have by the art and address of ministerial agents, been deceived and drawn into erroneous opinions, respecting the American cause, and the probable issue of the present contest:

Resolved, That it be recommended to **the different committees**, and other friends to American liberty, in the said colonies, 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; to explain to them the origin, nature and extent of the present controversy; to acquaint them with the fate of the numerous petitions presented to his Majesty, as well by assemblies as by Congresses, for reconciliation and redress of grievances: and that the last from this Congress, humbly requesting the single favour of being heard, like all the others has proved unsuccessful; to unfold to them the various arts of administration to ensnare and enslave us, and the manner in which we have been cruelly driven to defend, by arms, those very rights, liberties and estates, which we and our forefathers had so long enjoyed unmolested in the reigns of his present Majesty's predecessors. And it is hereby recommended to all **conventions and assemblies** in these colonies, liberally to distribute among the people, the proceedings of this and the former Congress, the late speeches of the great patriots in both houses of parliament relative to American grievances, and such other pamphlets and papers as tend to elucidate the merits of the American cause, the Congress being fully persuaded that the more our right to the enjoyment of our ancient liberties and privileges is examined, the more just and necessary our present opposition to ministerial tyranny will appear.

And, with respect to all such unworthy Americans, as, regardless of their duty to their Creator, their country and their posterity, have taken part with our oppressors, and, influenced by the hope or possession of ignominious rewards, strive to recommend themselves to the bounty of administration, by misrepresenting and traducing the conduct and principles of the friends of American liberty, and opposing every measure formed for its preservation and security,

Resolved, That it be recommended to the different **Assemblies, conventions and committees or councils of safety** in the United Colonies, by the most speedy and effectual measures, to frustrate the mischievous machinations, and restrain the wicked practices of these men: And it is the opinion of this

Congress, that they ought to be disarmed, and the more dangerous among them either kept in safe custody, or bound with sufficient sureties to their good behaviour.

And, in order that the said **assemblies, conventions, committees or councils of safety**, may be enabled, with greater ease and facility to carry this resolution into execution,

Resolved, That they be authorised to call to their aid, whatever continental troops stationed in or near their respective colonies, may be conveniently spared from their more immediate duty; and the commanding officers of such troops are hereby directed to afford the said **Assemblies, conventions, committees or councils of safety**, all such assistance in executing this resolution, as they may require, and which, consistent with the good of the service, may be supplied.

Resolved, That all detachments of continental troops, which may be ordered on the business in the foregoing resolution mentioned, be, while so employed, under the direction and controul of the **assemblies, conventions, committees or councils of safety** aforesaid.

Resolved, That it be recommended to all the United Colonies, to aid each other (on request from their respective **Assemblies, conventions, committees, or councils of safety and county committees**) on every emergency, and to cultivate, cherish and increase the present happy and necessary union, by a continual interchange of mutual good offices.

And whereas the execrable barbarity with which this unhappy war has been conducted on the part of our enemies, such as burning our defenseless towns and villages, exposing their inhabitants, without regard to sex or age, to all the miseries which loss of property, the rigour of the season, and inhuman devastation can inflict, exciting domestic insurrections and murders, bribing the savages to desolate our frontiers, and casting such of us as the fortune of war has put into their power, into gaols there to languish in irons and want, compelling the inhabitants of Boston, in violation of the treaty, to remain confined within the town, exposed to the insolence of the soldiery, and other enormities, as the mention of which decency and humanity will forever blush, may justly provoke the inhabitants of these colonies to retaliation.

Resolved, That it be recommended to them to continue mindful that humanity ought to distinguish the brave, that cruelty should find no admission among a free people, and to take care that no page in the annals of America be stained by a recital of any action which justice or Christianity may condemn, and to rest assured that whenever retaliation may be necessary or tend to their security, this Congress will undertake the disagreeable task.

Resolved, That the **Assemblies, conventions, or committees, or councils of safety** be requested forthwith to transmit to this Congress copies of all the petitions, memorials, and remonstrances, which have been, by their respective Colonies, presented to the throne, or either house of parliament, since the year 1762, and that they also inform this Congress, whether any and what answers were given to them.

Continental 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 shall refuse to associate, to defend, by arms, these United Colonies, against the hostile attempts of the British fleets and armies; and to apply the arms taken from such persons in each respective colony, in the first place to the arming the continental troops raised in said colony; in the next, to the arming such troops as are raised by the colony for its own defence, and the residue to be applied to the arming the associators; that the arms when taken be appraised by indifferent persons, and such as are applied to the arming the continental troops, be paid for by Congress, and the residue by the respective **assemblies, conventions, or councils, or committees of safety**.

Continental Congress, June 18, 1776

Resolved, That no man in these Colonies, charged with being a tory, or unfriendly to the cause of American liberty, be injured in his person or property, or in any manner whatever disturbed, unless the proceeding against him be founded on an order of this Congress, or the **Assembly, convention, council or committee of safety of the colony, or committee** of inspection and observation, of the district, wherein he resides; provided, that this resolution shall not prevent the apprehending any person found in the commission of some act destructive of American liberty, or justly suspected of a design to commit such act, and intending to escape, and bringing such person before proper authority for examination and trial.

Continental Congress, June 24, 1776

Resolved, That all persons abiding within any of the United Colonies, and deriving protection from the laws of the same, owe allegiance to the said laws, and are members of such colony; and that all persons passing through, visiting, or make a temporary stay in any of the said colonies, being entitled to the protection of the laws during the time of such passage, visitation or temporary stay, owe, during the same time, allegiance thereto:

That all persons, members of, or owing allegiance to any of the United Colonies, as before described, who shall levy war against any of the said colonies within the same, or be adherent to the king of Great Britain, or others the enemies of the said colonies, or any of them, within the same, giving to him or them aid and comfort, are guilty of treason against such colony:

That it be recommended to the legislatures of the several United Colonies, to pass laws for punishing, in such manner as to them shall seem fit, such persons before described, as shall be proveably attainted of open deed, by people of their condition, of any of the treasons before described.

<https://konstantindierks.indiana.edu/H105-documents-web/week06/Toryacts1775.html>