Chapter 3: Making a Patriot Government

The Patriot triumph was short lived. While North Americans and Britons were celebrating the repeal of the Stamp Act and a return to Patriot imperial economic policies, George III dismissed the Rockingham ministry. Although the Patriot hero William Pitt, now earl of Chatham, became the new leading minister, he was compelled by the king to create a politically heterogeneous government. In imperial affairs this meant that the new government reinstated George Grenville’s policies. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend, immediately put in place new taxes on the American colonies with the intent of generating revenue to pay down the British national debt. These new duties, collectively known as the Townshend Acts, forced the Americans to pay a duty on paper, paint, lead, glass and tea. “The spirit of despotism and avarice, always blind and restless” had broken “forth again,” commented the British Patriot Richard Price in response. British Americans responded to the new levies with a storm of protest, eventually adopting a coordinated set of non-importation agreements. While the new British Prime Minister, Frederick North 2nd earl of Guilford, who hailed from an old Tory family, repealed most of Townshend’s duties after taking office in January 1770, he retained a lowered tea duty. His goal was to bolster the financially failing East India Company. Colonial Americans were furious at the lowered tax on tea, reasoning that the repeal of the other duties was a temporary palliative. They were well aware that the East India Company’s policies in Bengal were destroying the once booming economy in Britain’s new colonies in South Asia. When news reached Britain that a band of Bostonians dressed as Indians had, in December 1773, tossed over three hundred chests of tea into Boston harbor, North and his government responded with vindictive fury. In March 1774 the ministry passed a series of measures known as the Coercive Acts. The Acts shut Boston Harbor, transformed and limited the Massachusetts government, compelled Americans to house and quarter British troops, and offered colonial administrators immunity from prosecution in Massachusetts. North’s government had demonstrated its deep commitment to defending British economic measures. And it was just as deeply committed to a political-economic model that prioritized colonial production over colonial consumption, much in the mold of George Grenville’s policies.[[1]](#footnote-1)

British Americans responded to the Coercive Acts with fury and disbelief. “The Ministry may rely on it,” wrote George Washington speaking for a growing segment of North American opinion in June 1774, “that Americans will never be taxed without their own consent, that the cause of Boston … now is and ever will be considered as the cause of America (not that we approve their conduct in destroying the tea) and that we shall not suffer ourselves to be sacrificed by piecemeal.” Washington, like so many other Americans from Boston to Savannah, believed that the British “government is pursuing a regular plan” and that the principle of that plan was “that America must be taxed in aid of the British funds.” To secure redress, and in order to procure imperial reform and the repeal of the Coercive Acts, a group of North Americans agreed to convene the first Continental Congress. That Congress, with representatives from twelve colonies, met in Carpenters Hall in Philadelphia in September 1774. Because of “the present unhappy system of affairs” that was caused “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,” the delegates adopted the Association. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and John Jay were among those who signed the 1774 Association, modeled no doubt on the Association adopted by the English in 1696 designed to protect the principles of the Revolution of 1688-89. The delegates pledged a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement in order “to obtain redress of these grievances which threaten destruction to the lives, liberties and properties” of British North Americans. British North Americans were determined to put a temporary halt to the most important British export trade in order to force political change in Westminster.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Once again Lord North and his ministers aggressively defended their economic system. Instead of repealing the offensive acts and returning to the Patriot imperial system, North chose to enforce the post-1763 plan. To enforce these measures more directly, in early 1774, North had employed General Thomas Gage as the new Governor of Massachusetts Bay. Patriots in Massachusetts, along with those in the other North American colonies meanwhile had called into being Provincial Congresses, or shadow governments that existed outside British authority. This prompted both Houses of Parliament to declare, in February 1775, that the province of Massachusetts was in “rebellion” and was “countenanced and encouraged by unlawful combinations and engagements” in the other provinces.[[3]](#footnote-3) In Massachusetts, and elsewhere, ministerial forces and Patriots prepared for inevitable confrontation. Neither side would back down from their entrenched ideological commitments. On 19 April 1775 the first shots of an imperial civil war were fired at Lexington and Concord, just outside of Boston.

The contours of the deepening North American crisis are well known by students of the period. Scholars, authors of school textbooks, and politicians have told and retold the story of the actions of an increasingly oppressive British imperial state that prompted the reaction of Patriotic North Americans in defense of their liberty and against that government. America Patriots founded their new nation, we are told, in defense of small government and of local American culture against foreign imposition. By recovering the transatlantic and imperial contexts of Patriot political argument, it is possible to tell a radically different story. Instead of a local reaction against a distant oppressive regime, the *Declaration of Independence* needs to be understood as the ultimate statement of the eighteenth-century Patriot program in favor of a government that would aim to promote prosperity for the largest number of people.

In the 1770s, the British ministry was faced with the quintessential problem of modern statecraft: how to address a large national debt while still steering the polity towards future prosperity. The crisis was an increasingly acute one. The expected massive injection of revenue from British India had failed to materialize. Many believed that the massive debt was doing significant damage to the British economy. Alexander Hamilton agreed with many British observers that “the continual emigrations from Great Britain to the continent are a glaring symptom that those islands are impoverished.” North and his fellow ministers responded as have many governments in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: they sought to curtail government spending, lower taxes on the wealthiest members of the electorate, and shift the burden offshore and onto the humbler and less electorally significant. “The money expended by this nation upon America,” argued James Macpherson, the government apologist and celebrated collator of the ancient Scottish poet Ossian, was an unnecessary and frivolous waste of resources.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Patriots, by contrast, while acknowledging the extent and urgency of the problem, offered a very different solution. Instead of relieving the wealthy, they wanted the state to encourage the development and expansion of the consumer base, the buying power of the middle classes. These new and more prosperous consumers, Patriots thought, would purchase ever-larger amounts of British manufactured goods. They believed that by further stimulating growth in the colonies, the government would generate revenues indirectly, thereby trimming the debt. When it became clear that no amount of pressure would bring down the North government in Britain, American delegates to the First and Second Continental Congress moved towards declaring independence in response to the imperial austerity measures adopted by the British imperial government.

I

Both ministerial forces and Patriots agreed by April 1775 that the British Empire in America no longer existed. British North America was independent. The only question that remained was whether North America would be re-conquered by British redcoats or would be able to maintain its independence by force of arms. In October, George III himself declared the colonies to be in “general revolt” with the “purpose of establishing an independent empire.” The renowned Tory literary figure, Samuel Johnson, agreed in 1775 that after the passage of the Congressional Association, the Americans were “no longer subjects.” British Americans, many of whom longed for imperial reform rather than imperial dissolution, reluctantly agreed. As early as September 1774, Patrick Henry claimed that “government is dissolved” by the military preparations of the North ministry. “The bands of civil society are broken,” agreed the New York Episcopalian and future American bishop Samuel Seabury.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Most, if not quite everyone, in the British Empire believed that a civil war had begun in North America. Patriots believed that British actions had made America independent and justified their taking up arms in their own defense. Defenders of the Ministry, by contrast, believed that America was in rebellion and only a reconquest would put an end to American independence. In Virginia, the Frederick County committee declared in no uncertain terms that enforcing the Coercive Acts “by a military power will have a necessary tendency to raise a civil war, thereby dissolving the union which has so happily subsisted between the Mother Country and her colonies.” The 19 British Lords who refused to support George III’s October 1775 speech knew well that “a cruel civil war” was already taking place in America. The London Patriot leader John Wilkes feared the dreadful consequences of “a civil war of this magnitude and extent.” “A Civil War is begun,” bemoaned the Patriot Bishop of St. Asaph Jonathan Shipley in June 1775. From Newport, Ezra Stiles was deeply saddened by “the most unnatural civil war” that had already begun. The only options in play in 1775, Samuel Johnson averred uncontroversially, were “to allow their claim to independence, or to reduce them by force to submission and allegiance.” The Battle of Lexington, Thomas Jefferson agreed, “has cut off our last hopes of reconciliation.” America, George Washington wrote, explaining the significance of the April battle fought in Massachusetts, must “either be drenched with blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative!”[[6]](#footnote-6)

By the autumn of 1775, no one on either side of the Atlantic doubted that America was in practice independent. Royal governors had virtually no authority over their provinces. The colonies themselves had by then established shadow governments. Anarchy and civil war prevailed throughout North America. The British imperial state had ceased to function on the continent. Independence, many members of Congress claimed in June 1776, was “a fact which already exists.” Why, then, did the Second Continental Congress feel compelled to issue a Declaration of Independence? Why did the influential Pennsylvanian John Dickinson think the debate over the *Declaration* “of such magnitude” that he claimed to “tremble” while “sharing in its determination”? Why did the Massachusetts lawyer John Adams, who often thought very deeply indeed about history, deem the question of declaring independence “the greatest question” that “ever was debated in America, and a greater perhaps, never was or will be decided among men”? The answer, Adams himself made clear in his eloquent Thoughts on Government, published in the early spring, was precisely because the Americans had been “discharged” from their “allegiance” and it had become necessary “to assume government for our immediate security.” The *Declaration*, the president of the Second Continental Congress, John Hancock, knew, was “the ground and foundation of a future government.”[[7]](#footnote-7) The Americans declared independence in July 1776 not because they loathed the oppression of British government, but because they desperately needed a state. The *Declaration of Independence* was a call to state formation.

What kind of government did the American Founders want to create? America’s Founders developed their answers to this question in the context of the century-long debate about the best form of imperial governance. British North Americans in the 1770s drew heavily on the Patriot tradition that had so influenced Lawrence Washington and the thousands who volunteered to serve with Edward Vernon in the 1730s. They rehearsed the arguments that Patriots on both sides of the Atlantic had honed in the bitter debates of the 1760s. The framers of the *Declaration of Independence* advanced the arguments for an energetic and activist government in the Patriot tradition. Like previous generations of Patriots, they insisted that consumers provided the key to a growing economy, and that government activity was essential to create a dynamic consumer-driven economy. American Patriots announced their commitment to promote the very goals they had desperately wished the Mother Country had continued to embrace after the accession of George III.

Patriots and their antagonists framed their arguments in the 1770s, as they had throughout the eighteenth century, in the context of the burgeoning British national debt. Patriots, like their opponents, acknowledged the gravity of the imperial fiscal crisis. And they, like their opponents, knew that Britain’s finances needed to improve if the Empire was to survive. “It is notorious,” stated the young Alexander Hamilton, that Britain “is oppressed with a heavy national debt.” “There never was before in the world such a debt contracted or subsisting as the British,” agreed the British Patriot MP Matthew Robinson-Morris. The influential Nonconformist preacher, actuarial expert, and leading public intellectual Richard Price carefully traced the growth of the debt “from 17 millions” in 1699 “to 140 millions” in 1774. On this point the supporters of the ministry agreed. William Knox, who shared none of Price’s politics, arrived at a similar figure for the later 1760s. Britain, averred James Stewart a Scottish defender of the North ministry, reeled under “an immense load of debt, hanging so heavy upon our shoulders.”[[8]](#footnote-8) The point of contention was what mode of imperial governance could best pay down the debt while at the same time promoting prosperity.

Supporters of the North ministry in the 1770s began their analysis, as had their predecessors, by claiming that the chief value of the colonies lay in the raw materials they produced. “It required no great sagacity to discover,” observed William Knox, under secretary of state for the American department and himself a former Georgia resident, that “there were many commodities which America could supply on better terms than they could be raised in England,” including tobacco, timber, pitch, tar, rice, indigo, flax, and hemp.[[9]](#footnote-9) It was these raw materials, many of them produced with significant support from British merchants, which made possible the prodigious prosperity of British America.

Ministerial supporters believed that the time had come to stop subsidizing American growth and instead to get the Americans to pay their fair share. They advocated austerity on the part of the imperial government and responsibility on the part of the North Americans. “It is now high time to adopt if we can, some useful scheme of frugality and economy in regard to America,” argued the deeply influential Dean of Gloucester Cathedral, Josiah Tucker. Not only should the government spend less on North America, ministry men were also convinced that Americans needed to do much more to pay down the debt. Knox, along with many other ministerial observers, pointed out that Britons were already suffering from very high taxes. They could not be taxed any more. Inessential government spending had already been trimmed. “Financial regulations” and greater “diligence in collecting the taxes” in Britain could generate no great financial boon. In these circumstances, Knox and his fellow supporters of ministerial policies argued, the colonies should “contribute to the utmost of their ability to put Great Britain in a position, not only to maintain her public credit, by a regular payment of the interest of her debt, and a gradual reduction of the capital, but to have funds un-appropriated, and a revenue exceeding her expenses sufficient to mortgage for new loans.” In short, the government needed to raise “a revenue” in America to help pay down the national debt.[[10]](#footnote-10)

William Knox and Josiah Tucker established the framework. Other ministerial supporters echoed their sentiments. James Stewart argued for “taxing the Americans, and that lustily too” to pay down the debt that “had been incurred solely in defending and protecting these Americans.” The Americans, agreed the Scottish philosopher Adam Ferguson, were now “able to support heavier burdens.” The Americans must “contribute towards the expense of the state for the general protection,” asserted James Macpherson.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Ministerial supporters were at one in believing that the chief value of the colonies lay in their production, and that therefore taxing American consumers would have limited economic consequences. While admitting that American consumers purchased large quantities of British manufactured goods, ministerial supporters pointed out that British producers had other, equally profitable outlets. Tucker claimed that the records of the customs office demonstrated that “more English goods are sent up the two rivers of Germany, the Weser and the Elbe, than up any two rivers in North America.” Sir James Steuart of Coltness, who was the most important Scottish political economist before Adam Smith, similarly argued that British manufacturers could just as easily vend their wares in Europe as in North America. Britain “would soon find a vent for all her manufactures in spite of all we could do,” agreed Samuel Seabury in the guise of a Westchester farmer. Therefore the supporters of the North ministry believed the American non-importation and non-importation agreements would be of little economic consequence. “Notwithstanding their shutting their ports against our manufactures, permanent and profitable sources of commerce have been opened in other quarters,” Macpherson chimed in, “our merchants find themselves capable of fulfilling their commissions from other states.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

Patriots on both sides of the Atlantic advanced a very different economic analysis. Patriots gave voice to and elaborated the same political economic arguments they had been advancing since the 1730s. Where the ministerialists insisted that the value of colonies lay in production, Patriots emphasized the centrality of colonial consumption. They readily accepted responsibility for paying down a share of the British debt. “The question is not whether the Americans shall contribute, but how they shall contribute,” was how the Virginian Arthur Lee put it in 1776. The Patriots argued that Americans made significant and growing contributions to British state revenue, but that they did so indirectly. “The advantages derived from America in the circle of commerce are not so evident to a vulgar understanding, as so much palpable cash paid into the exchequer,” the Patriot former Governor of West Florida George Johnstone condescended to explain to his fellows in the House of Commons the previous year.[[13]](#footnote-13)

As late as the mid-1770s, the Patriots maintained that the massive and growing demand of colonial Americans for British manufactured goods contributed significantly to the British economy and to state revenue. It was American trade, they insisted, that kept the Empire running. “With the population of the colonies has increased their trade; but much faster, on account of the gradual increase in luxury among them,” argued Richard Price in a pamphlet that was mass marketed on both sides of the Atlantic in 1776. There was an “immense trade” between Britain and her colonies, agreed Alexander Hamilton. “It is a plain and incontestable fact,” thundered the Patriot and future Prime Minister William Petty, 2nd earl of Shelburne, in the House of Lords in October 1775, “that the commerce of America is the vital stream of this great empire.” British American markets, Patriots maintained, were not ephemeral like European markets in which British manufacturers faced continental competition and were at the mercy of the vagaries of continental politics. Whereas European markets were likely to be severed at any moment, British manufacturers could count on steady and increasing American demand. Trade with North America “was not only thus an increasing trade,” explained Price, “but it was a trade in which we had no rivals; a trade certain, constant and uninterrupted.” The colonial trade represented “a complete system in the exchange of all commodities” that “was established within your own dominion” and thus immune from “the fleeting principles” of international commerce,” averred George Johnstone.[[14]](#footnote-14)

In Britain and in North America, Patriots emphasized that the remarkable growth of North American consumption of British manufactures – growth that had resumed after the crisis of the 1760s -- created thousands of new jobs and raised the value of British landed property. The “almost unlimited demand” of North Americans for British manufactures, reasoned the Virginian Richard Henry Lee in 1774, “produced employment for several hundred sail of ships and many thousand seamen,” increased the value of lands in Britain” and “entirely supported” the employment of “multitudes of people.” “The consumption of [British] manufactures in these colonies supplies the means of subsistence to a vast number of her most useful inhabitants,” agreed Alexander Hamilton that same year.[[15]](#footnote-15) This American view mirrored the sentiments of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London, who petitioned Parliament in October 1775 with the claim that the American trade was “the most valuable branch of our commerce, on which the existence of an infinite number of industrious manufacturers and mechanics entirely depends.”[[16]](#footnote-16)

Throughout the 1770s, Patriots continued to believe that their preferred imperial system would do far more to pay down the British debt than the extractive taxation demanded by the North ministry and its defenders. “Every man the least acquainted with the state and extent of our trade,” Hamilton stated bluntly, “must be convinced, it is the source of immense revenues to the parent state.” The Americans “spend the whole produce of all their land, and the profits of all their labor in a valuable commerce by which our manufactures are consumed, our laborers maintained, and our taxes are paid,” argued Benjamin Franklin. Indeed, Franklin maintained, “but for the Grenvillian taxation scheme” the revenues generated by American consumption of British manufactures “would soon have come to be equal alone to the whole of our necessary annual expenses of government in time of peace.” Had the Grenville ministry and its successors not abandoned Patriot attempts to stimulate colonial growth, Franklin and many other Patriots were sure, the British treasury would have already paid down the bulk of the enormous national debt. “By purchasing our goods,” the British Patriot Richard Price noted, the Americans “paid our taxes” and thereby “helped us to bear our growing burdens.” Had the Patriot imperial strategy continued after the Seven Years War, Price opined, “a growing surplus in the revenue might have been gained, which invariably, applied to the gradual discharge of the national debt, would have delivered us from the ruin with which it threatens us.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

The Patriots insisted, correctly, that prior to the accession of George III the British imperial government had done a great deal to stimulate colonial economic development. Financial support and physical protection, not salutary neglect, characterized the British Empire prior to the fall of William Pitt’s ministry in October 1761. This was “the beautiful system of empire our ancestors have been raising with so much pains and glory,” described by former colonial governor George Johnstone, that was being destroyed in “a mad career” by misguided statesmen. “The principle of commercial monopoly” – rather than seizing a “a parliamentary revenue” – “runs through no less than twenty-nine acts of Parliament, from the year 1660 to the unfortunate period of 1764,” averred Edmund Burke in his celebrated 1774 speech on American taxation. Colonists had accepted the trade restrictions, Burke explained, in part because they had received “pecuniary compensation” in the form of “immense capital” that enabled them “to proceed with their fisheries, their agriculture, their ship-building, and their trade.” Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Dickinson and the members of the Second Continental Congress recalled wistfully “the mutual benefits” of the British imperial union in July 1775. Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph – in an essay that the Delaware delegate to Congress Caesar Rodney deemed “one of the best pieces I ever read” – recalled that under the Patriot imperial system prior to the 1760s it was the policy to impart “liberality” to the British Americans including “bounties to encourage their industry.” It was this policy of state support for the Americans, rather than the new policy of extracting revenue, that the Patriots thought should be expanded.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Patriots, always thinking on an imperial as well as on a local scale, believed that India provided a terrifying example of the consequences of the post-1760 imperial system. It was the specter of India that convinced North Americans that whatever the level of taxation that the North ministry currently demanded from them, their future aspirations for extraction were virtually limitless. In British India seizing revenue, rather than subsidizing commercial expansion, had transformed the most prosperous provinces in Asia into an economic wasteland. By taxing arbitrarily the newly conquered provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, Jonathan Shipley observed Britons had “in the space of five or six years … destroyed and driven away, more inhabitants from Bengal, than are to be found at present in all our American colonies.” It was, agreed Edmund Burke, “the same folly that has lost you at once the benefit of the West and the East.” “Turn your eyes to India,” Price advised, “there Englishmen actuated by a love of plunder and the spirit of conquest, have depopulated whole kingdoms, and ruined millions of innocent people by the most infamous oppression and rapacity.” Colonial Patriots join their British colleagues in perceiving an intimate connection between ministerial policy in India and North American. No wonder Americans, like the committee from Dunmore County Virginia thought the East India Company men to be “servile tools of arbitrary power.” No wonder the American tobacco merchant John Norton remarked that Parliament had taken “such strides towards despotism for some time past with respect to the East India Company as well as America.” “The measure of British crimes is running over,” Richard Henry Lee warned, “the barbarous spoliation of the East is crying to heaven for vengeance against the destroyers of the human race.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

The obvious conclusion for Patriots was that the North ministry had pursued misguided economic policies. The best way to pay down the massive British debt was to stimulate increases in colonial consumption that would indirectly generate large sums for the British revenue. The taxation policies adopted by the Grenville and North ministries had the effect of suppressing American consumption. “If the minister seizes the money with which the American should pay his debts and come to market,” the Virginian Arthur Lee explained, “the merchant and trader cannot expect him as a customer; nor can the debates already contracted be paid.” The consequences were dire indeed. This was “cutting up commerce by the roots.” “In order to gain a pepper-corn” through an “authoritative seizure,” Richard Price lamented, the British administration “have chosen to hazard millions acquired by the peaceable intercourse of trade.”[[20]](#footnote-20)

For the Patriots, then, the emerging anarchy of the 1770s created a new problem. They were pleased to witness the diminishing power of the Grenville/North extractive and tyrannical state. But they knew all too well that the old British imperial state had done a great deal to support the infrastructure and provide the capital that made possible British America’s remarkable and dynamic prosperity. North American Patriots, often comparing themselves with the successful Dutch independence struggle against the Spanish in the sixteenth century, understood they had to replace the British imperial state with a new state structure.

As British Americans discussed the adoption of resolutions endorsing non-importation and non-consumption of British manufactured goods in 1774, they began at the same time to discuss the necessity for state support for the North American economy. The Committee of Fairfax County, Virginia, chaired by George Washington, called for “subscriptions and premiums to the improvements of arts and manufactures in America.” The Committee from Prince George County agreed “that manufactures ought to be encouraged.” John Adams proposed a resolution to the First Continental Congress recommending that all colonies “encourage arts, manufactures, and agriculture by all means in their power.” The Association ultimately adopted by Congress called on Americans to do all in their power to “promote agriculture, the arts, and the manufactures of this country, especially that of wool.”[[21]](#footnote-21) As early as 1774 American Patriots realized that economic reorientation required energetic government support.

By the time the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia in May 1775, state support of American economic development had gone from a desideratum to a necessity. The outbreak of the war meant both that British Americans needed to produce weapons and ammunition for fighting and that they could no longer rely on British exports to provide necessities for everyday life. The time had come for “an entirely new colony police,” Ezra Stiles explained to Dr. Richard Price. British Americans needed state support for their survival. In February 1776 John Adams jotted down an urgent list of state building measures to be pursued by Congress, ranging from concluding foreign alliances and treaties of commerce, to regulating currency, to manufacturing duck, gunpowder and saltpeter. “America can never support her freedom till we have a sufficient source of arms and ammunition,” explained Robert Treat Paine, so he eagerly acted on a Congressional committee “who are laboring to push saltpeter and gunpowder making through all the colonies, and are also devising methods to establish a regular and extensive manufacture of muskets.”[[22]](#footnote-22)

But Congress wanted to do much more than create a war-fighting machine. The provincial delegates were convinced they needed state support –at the Congressional and at the provincial level – to jump-start the American economy. The delegates knew well that the British Empire had been prosperous and powerful before1760 precisely because the British state had devoted substantial resources to economic development. The American delegates sought urgently to replace that state support. John Adams proposed that local governments be urged “to promote the culture of flax, hemp, and cotton and the growth of wool.” These particular activities, he hoped would be supplemented by state supported societies “for the encouragement of agriculture, arts, manufactures and commerce.” Congress needed to invest in the prosperity of future generations by providing them with the tools for development. “No expense” should be spared by the state in support of “the liberal education of youth, especially of the lower class of people,” Adams advised in his widely circulated Thoughts on Government of 1776. Others realized Congress needed to establish “different departments” of state, such as “a War Office, a Treasury Board,” that would both satisfy immediate military needs and create the infrastructure for state borrowing for future developmental projects.[[23]](#footnote-23)

American Patriots in the late 1770s continued the transatlantic Patriot tradition of insisting that states could play a constructive role in initiating development. But Patriots were relatively indifferent to where sovereignty lay within the state. They dismissed sixteenth and seventeenth century political theorists, like Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, who had insisted on unitary and clearly defined sovereign powers. Instead, Patriots, along with the former Governor of West Florida, George Johnstone, believed that “a free government necessarily involves many clashing jurisdictions when pushed to the extreme.” Johnstone, like so many Patriots, referred his British auditors to the examples of the overlapping sovereignties of Athenian committees and of the confused sovereignty in the Dutch confederation. Properly understood, “sovereignty” meant no more than “that just mixture of power and authority which is necessary to carry on the common interest, and on great occasions to exert the strength of the whole,” explained that most enthusiastic Patriot, Jonathan Shipley Bishop of St. Asaph. Many North American Patriots similarly advocated notions of coordinated sovereignty. “We are dependent on each other – not totally independent states,” Benjamin Rush insisted in debate. “Every man in America stands related to two legislative bodies,” he elaborated, “ he deposits his property, liberty, and life with his own state, but his trade and arms, the means of enriching and defending himself and his honor, he deposits with Congress.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Patriots were more concerned to construct a state that could promote the common good than they were to delineate exact sovereign boundaries.

Why, then, did the members of the Second Continental Congress feel the necessity to declare independence in 1776? Until they formally declared independence, the delegates knew, they could not raise the money necessary to pursue their essential state building projects. The American army retreated ignominiously from Canada in the winter of 1775-1776 in large part because Congress lacked the “hard money” necessary to support them and to secure Canadian and Indian allies. “Can we hope to carry on a war without having trade or commerce somewhere? Can we ever pay any taxes without it?” asked the North Carolinian John Penn. “The consequence of making alliances is perhaps total separation with Britain,” he explained, “and without something of that sort we may not be able to procure what is necessary for our defense.” To secure trade with France, Benjamin Harrison concurred, “we must declare ourselves a free people.” France would only “lend her aid,” Samuel Adams thought, “if America would declare herself free and independent.” No European power would be prepared to trade or treat with rebels both because such actions might encourage uprisings within their own states and for fear that the rebels would negotiate a treaty with Britain to end the conflict. Without foreign alliances and treaties of commerce the American war effort would collapse. “The war cannot long be prosecuted without trade, nor can taxes be paid until we are enabled to sell our produce,” Richard Lee averred, “which cannot be the case without the help of foreign ships, whilst our enemy’s navy is so superior to ours.” The Americans needed much more than recognition -- they needed commerce to support the war effort and to create a diversified American economy. It was precisely for this reason that immediately upon signing the *Declaration*, the Continental Congress ordered that copies be sent to the courts of Europe, translated into French, and “published” in European newspapers.[[25]](#footnote-25)

American Patriots knew that like all modern statesmen and women that they could not hope to achieve all they aimed for with only the revenues immediately to hand. They knew they had to borrow money. The American state, they agreed, was never intended to be debt-free. Even Thomas Paine who was perhaps the century’s fiercest critic of national debts admitted “no nation ought to be without debt” because “a national debt is a national bond.” But without declaring independence it would be impossible for the North American Congress to borrow money to support its urgent state building needs. Robert Morris floated the idea of borrowing money from European states, including the Dutch Republic, but with no possibility of offering “security” absent independence, he very much doubted “any power in Europe will trust us.” Others knew that a new American state needed to be created in order for Congress to issue stable paper currency secured against future revenues. This was why, when a declaration of independence appeared to be immediately forthcoming in mid-June 1776, the future Vice-President Elbridge Gerry expected that “loan offices will be established.”[[26]](#footnote-26) Independence, Gerry knew, would require the new republic to borrow money against the credit of the United States.

II

The *Declaration of Independence* was, then, less about unmaking the British Empire in North America than it was about announcing to the world the creation of a new American government.[[27]](#footnote-27) From the first, the Founders sought to create a government that would have all of the virtues but none of the vices of the British imperial state. In short, they wanted to create an American version of the Patriot state that had existed in Britain before the accession of George III.

Unmaking the Empire and creating an American government were two very different enterprises. Perhaps no single piece of writing did more to articulate the importance of unmaking the British Empire than Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*. Paine’s book, published in January 1776, was an immediate hit. In 1776, alone, Paine claimed the book sold over 100,000 copies. Many thought the book did “immense service” in the cause of independence, particularly persuading those in the Middle and Southern colonies that the time had come to sever ties with the British Empire. Paine, with the help of Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, had deftly and powerfully summarized the arguments against reconciliation with Britain that had been voiced in the Second Continental Congress. He had done so with panache, in “a clear, simple, concise and nervous style.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

Paine’s tract was popular because it condemned George III and his ministry using Patriot arguments. The government Paine described in *Common Sense*, however, was a far cry from that envisioned by most Patriots. Whereas the Patriots had admiringly described the pre-1760 British imperial government as one that had positively promoted the development of the colonies, Paine denied that it could have had any such effect. Instead he thought government could only act as a restraint on human vices. “Society is produced by our wants, government by our wickedness,” he proclaimed. The whole purpose of government was merely to provide “security,” he wrote, “even in its best state [it] is but a necessary evil.” In his analysis of the state, Paine was far closer to the views of the ministerial writer and critic of the *Declaration* John Lind, than he was to those of the Patriots. “His notions and plans of continental government” were perhaps unsurprisingly at the time “not much applauded.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

The more he mulled over Paine’s principles, the more John Adams came to detest his views of government. In April 1776, Adams described Paine’s notions as “poor and despicable”; by May they were “crude, ignorant.” When he contemplated those notions later in life, he thought they “flowed from simple ignorance.” While Adams pointedly took issue with Paine’s institutional design, his defense of a single legislative house, his differences with Paine ran deeper. Whereas Paine understood government to be a necessary evil, and could only imagine a government that would prevent humans from harming one another, Adams believed government could and should play a more constructive role. Adams therefore wrote his own Thoughts on Government, published in April, in order “to counteract the effect” of Common Sense.[[30]](#footnote-30)

It was Adams and not Paine who served on the Committee of Five appointed to draft the Declaration of Independence in June 1776. That Committee included John Adams, Roger Sherman from New Haven, Robert R. Livingston of New York City, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. Together they crafted a document that was “an expression of the American mind.” They set forth no “new principles or new arguments, never before thought of,” intending instead to express “the common sense of the subject.” That sense derived from “the whole people,” who had been “discussing it in newspapers and pamphlets, and debating it in Assemblies, Conventions, Committees of Safety and Inspection, in town and county meetings, as well as in private conversations.” After the full committee “examined” the draft, they presented it to Congress as a whole, where it was subjected to “severe criticism” leading to some final modifications. It was only then that the *Declaration of Independence* was “published to the world.” It was precisely because it represented the “common sense” of the people, rather than the *Common Sense* of Thomas Paine, that the Americans “in every colony of the 13 have now adopted it as their own act.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

The *Declaration* was in many ways less the work of the Committee of Five than the collaborative effort of generations of Patriots in Britain and in North America. Since the English Revolution of 1688-89, Patriots had called for a strong state that would intervene to promote prosperity. They refined and honed their arguments in light of new developments. But, throughout, they insisted that only a consumer-driven economy would generate lasting economic gains. Patriots believed the state needed to do all it could to augment the numbers and increase the economic wherewithal of these consumers. These were the principles that Lawrence Washington and thousands of American Patriots had imbibed from the Patriot Admiral Edward Vernon. These were the principles enunciated by the Patriot heroes of the mid-century: William Pitt, Isaac Barré, Henry Seymour Conway, John Wilkes, and the Earl of Shelburne. These were the views still held by friends of the Americans in Britain, such as Richard Price, Edmund Burke, and Matthew Robinson. These were also the views espoused, elaborated, and developed by North American Patriots Alexander Hamilton, James Otis Jr., Christopher Gadsden, and Benjamin Franklin. Only by reading the *Declaration* whole, and in the context of the Patriot tradition from which it emerged, is it possible to grasp its full meaning and its relevance today.

Contemporaries highlighted the importance of the *Declaration* as a state-forming document. When John Adams, one of the Committee of Five, wrote to his wife, triumphantly reporting on the adoption of the *Declaration*, he called attention not to the philosophical prologue, but to the conclusion that emphasized the document’s state-making function. To Abigail he quoted the language “that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states, and as such, they have, and of right ought to have full power to make war, conclude peace, establish commerce, and to do all the other acts and things, which other states may rightfully do.” The ministerial enemies of the Patriots understood the *Declaration* as a state-making document as well. John Lind, for example, took “little or no notice” of the famous preamble to the *Declaration*, preferring instead to devote over one hundred pages analyzing and rejecting the policy complaints of the American Patriots. The American loyalist Thomas Hutchinson likewise paid no attention to the philosophical preamble. He, similarly, trained his sights on the Continental Congress’s grievances. For Hutchinson, as for many contemporary readers, the point of the *Declaration* was to create a new and energetic government. That is why Hutchinson pointed out that the Americans adopted the English state-builder Oliver Cromwell as “their favorite.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

The authors of the *Declaration* dated the origins of their misery to a very specific historical moment. Their difficulties began, they announced, with “the history of the present King of Great Britain,” the history of George III who came to the throne only in October 1760, that began “the history of repeated injuries and usurpations” that now clearly constituted “the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states.” The Congressional delegates framed their policy complaints in terms not only of very recent events, but “a long train of usurpations and abuses, pursuing the same object.” They complained, in other words, not only of individual misguided policies, but of a long series of actions that constituted a dangerous and pernicious ideology. The Founders dated the design and implementation of this system not to the seventeenth century, not to the beginning of the British Empire in America, but to the period immediately following the Seven Years War.

In claiming that British imperial “tyranny” commenced only with the reversal of policies associated with the accession of George III, the Founders were rehearsing a key Patriot argument. They insisted that the British imperial constitution had worked well before 1760. The Virginian Arthur Lee referred nostalgically to “the good days of George the Second.”[[33]](#footnote-33) Until George III and his ministers began reversing three quarters of a century of imperial practices, British America had been a flourishing place. Before Lord Bute, George Grenville and Lord North decided to replace state support for colonial development with illegitimate and unnecessary taxes, North Americans had lived happily under imperial rule. The problem was not imperial sovereignty; the solution was not the end of empire. The authors of the *Declaration* maintained that the problem was recent imperial governance. When it became clear that no action on the part of the American Patriots or their British allies could bring down the North ministry and produce imperial reform, the Patriots decided to initiate the policies they desired themselves. Frustrated in their hopes for imperial reform, the Patriots believed the solution was to create a new kind of state.

In advancing this specific historical claim, the authors of the *Declaration* were simply crystallizing deeply held Patriot beliefs. Patriots on both sides of the Atlantic dated the rise of discontent to the reversal of imperial economic policy in the 1760s. “No act avowedly for the purpose of a revenue” predated 1764, argued Edmund Burke, “the scheme of a colony revenue by British authority appeared therefore to the Americans in the light of a great innovation.” The “rapid and bold succession of injuries” that began only with the accession of George III “is likely to distinguish the present from all other periods of American story,” wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1774. It was only then that “a deliberate and systematical plan” was adopted for “reducing us to slavery.” The earl of Shelburne “condemned in very severe terms the measures administration had pursued for ten years past.” As late as July 1774 John Adams blamed “the political innovations of the last 10 years” for almost all the problems that Americans faced. “The present unhappy system of affairs,” agreed the delegates to the First Continental Congress, “is occasioned by a ruinous system of colony administration adopted by the British ministry about the year 1763.”[[34]](#footnote-34) Patriots perceived the 1760s as a turning point not because it was their first contact with the British imperial state after two centuries of neglect. Rather they perceived that before the accession of George III the imperial state had helped stimulate colonial development whereas afterwards it had sought merely to extract contributions to pay down the national debt.

The Committee of Five drew up a list of grievances against George III and Lord North’s ministry that relied heavily on the economic principles Patriots had been defending at least since the 1730s. Having traced the emergence and development of those principles, it is now possible to unlock the ideological premises of the *Declaration of Independence*.

The Committee of Five made clear their belief that a broad-based consumer society was the key to future prosperity. They enunciated these views most clearly in their discussion of the older grievances. While the Committee of Five did catalogue the rising crescendo of oppressive acts of the 1770s – the Quebec Act, the Boston Port Act, quartering troops on North Americans – the political economic thrust of the *Declaration* lies in the complaints dating from the reversal of ministerial policy in the 1760s.[[35]](#footnote-35) The Committee returned to three recurring Patriot concerns: (1) the British suppression of trade with Spanish America; (2) the British refusal to support immigration to North America; and (3) British ministerial support for chattel slavery. All three of these grievances, the Patriots felt, had threatened American prosperity. By outlining these grievances the Congressional delegates made clear that they expected a new American state would pursue entirely different policies. Finally, Congress felt compelled to explain why it was that their “British brethren,” the inhabitants of the British Isles, were “deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity.” Unsurprisingly the Committee ascribed that failure to a political economic omission in the design of the imperial constitution that became increasingly manifest as North American populations grew in the later eighteenth century.

First, the Committee of Five, writing in the Patriot tradition, accused George III and his Parliament of “cutting off our trade with all parts of the world.” While Lord North, and more recent commentators, thought the colonists were complaining against Britain’s Coercive Acts of 1774, this was a concern of far longer duration, becoming especially acute in the 1760s. This had been the Patriot complaint against the South Sea Company in the 1730s. Patriots on both sides of the Atlantic had complained vociferously against George Grenville’s executive orders that had effectively shut down the vital illicit trade with Spanish America in the 1760s. By shutting down this trade the British ministry had effectively deprived the colonies of their only source of hard currency. Spanish coin had long lubricated the wheels of American commerce. Benjamin Franklin was one of many Patriots who lamented the “bad results” of that policy. Patriots had enthusiastically embraced the Rockingham administrations plan to invigorate North American trade and inject “hard money” into the economy by establishing free ports in the mid-1760s.[[36]](#footnote-36) Without trade with the Spanish territories British Americans had little or no means of exchange.

Opening markets in Spanish America remained a central tenet of the Patriot economic model. Matthew Robinson proposed that the British ministry should “do almost directly the contrary of what we are about, that is to give a greater liberty and latitude of trade both to Ireland and to America including our West India islands.” Benjamin Franklin, one of the Committee of Five, had called in 1775 for Britain to “give us the same privileges of trade as Scotland received at the union, and allow us a free commerce with all the rest of the world.” Should the imperial government agree to that, Franklin averred as a member of Congress that “we shall willingly agree (and we doubt not it will be ratified by our constituents) to give and pay into the Sinking Fund £100,000 sterling per annum for the term of one hundred years,” a sum “more than sufficient to extinguish all her present national debt.” Jefferson, too, had called on the British imperial government not “to exclude us from going to other markets.”[[37]](#footnote-37) While nether Franklin nor Jefferson specified which foreign markets they meant, Patriots on both sides of the Atlantic knew full well about the immense riches that could be gained by supplying the 15 million people of Spanish America with their consumer needs.

In many ways, of course, the authors of the *Declaration*’s call for free trade was, indeed, a call for limits on government regulation. But, it was at the same time a plea for *more* government involvement. Free trade in the eighteenth century had very different implications than a similar statement would today. Benjamin Franklin, for one, argued as Adam Smith would the following year that “perhaps, in general, it would be better if government meddled no further with trade than to protect it, and let it take its course.” But in the context of the 1770s to “protect” trade required significant state investment to allow commerce in the face of hostile governments. In other words the Patriots very much wanted unfettered *access* to markets, but they had no interest in *unregulated* or *unprotected* markets. Trading with the Spanish and French American colonies, as Josiah Tucker was all too happy to point out, was “in disobedience to the injunctions of their Mother Countries.”[[38]](#footnote-38) The French and Spanish Empires forbade their subjects from trading directly with foreigners. British Americans knew well, after years of fighting off Spanish attempts to patrol the Caribbean, that they could only trade “with all parts of the world” with state gunboats protecting their commerce. At they very least they needed to create safe havens in North America where French and Spanish merchants could trade freely without fear of interference from either their home governments or the British navy. In foreign trade the post-1760 British imperial regime had both done too much to suppress American smuggling and too little to create the facilities and provide the protection necessary for a profitable commerce.

The American Founders’ second complaint was about British immigration policy. Patriots believed that well designed states should promote immigration. This was the reason the authors of the *Declaration of Independence* denounced George III for endeavoring “to prevent the population of these States.” Since 1760 the British monarch had made emigration to America more difficult and less lucrative by “obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners” and “raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.” And George III had reversed generations of imperial policy by “refusing to pass” laws “to encourage … migrations hither.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

Immigration had become a contentious issue again in the 1760s and 1770s. It had become “of late years a common idea that the population of England is declining very fast,” noted the famous British agricultural writer Arthur Young. Those holding this widespread view, a view “not only found in political pamphlets, but which often occurs in Parliament,” blamed Britain’s plight in large part “on emigrations to the colonies.” Richard Price, for example, spoke of “depopulation so great as to have reduced the inhabitants in England and Wales near a quarter in eighty years.” On this, if little else, Josiah Tucker agreed, lamenting “the late prodigious swarms of emigrants” to America. Britons were right to sense a tremendous surge of emigration: over 125,000 people left the British Isles for North America between 1760 and 1775. From the 1760s, Grenvillians and their supporters had fretted about the economic consequences of this out-migration. Because they were obsessed with the size of the national debt and the role economic production would play in paying down that debt, Grenville and his supporters were desperate to keep workers within the British Isles. In this they were reviving concerns about migration and British population from the seventeenth century. As early as February 1763 a government memorandum advised that “an immediate and effective check” be placed “on the migration of our common people by confining our settlements in America within common limits.”[[40]](#footnote-40) No doubt it was sentiments such as these that were, in part, responsible for the Proclamation of 1763, which placed strict limits on the western extension of British American settlements.

As concerns of British emigration escalated, along with the development of various North American plans for expanding into and settling in western lands, the British ministry reversed decades of immigration policy. Not only had the imperial state ceased to subsidize immigration, as it had done in the 1730s for Georgia, but it increasingly vetoed colonial legislation that offered assistance to new immigrants. The press overflowed with comments on the local and national consequences of migration to America. “What South America has been to Spain, North America has been to us,” proclaimed one ministerial spokesman: “a downright depopulation of our country.” In 1773 the government leaked a proposed bill to the press that would have severely restricted British emigration.[[41]](#footnote-41)

The British ministry’s recent efforts to limit migration to the colonies, reversing decades of state support for immigration, infuriated the members of the Second Continental Congress. From their perspective, efforts to limit migration to North America were not only unjust – they also made little economic sense. Migrants left Britain in search of greater prosperity. With their new wealth they would become more prolific consumers, purchasing more British manufactured goods, and thereby strengthen the empire. High wages, the very reason migrants came to the new world, proved that North America still desperately needed labor to continue to develop. It was “madness in the extreme” to attempt to “diminish” the population of North America, argued Arthur Lee, “were these men, these plantations, these cities trebled, the profits would center in Great Britain, and add so much more to her strength and opulence.” The ministry, complained Thomas Jefferson, referring no doubt to Hillsborough’s long and successful opposition to colonial westward expansion, had adopted new land policies by which “the population of our country is likely to be checked.” The local Committee of Darien, Georgia made a similar point. Restrictive land policies formed “a principal part of the unjust system of politics adopted by the present Ministry,” they said, with the aim “to prevent as much as possible the population of America and the relief of the poor and distressed of Britain and elsewhere.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

Immigration, Patriots were convinced, should receive government support, not restrictions or prohibitions. New immigrants provided necessary labor and skills. Opening up new lands “on easy terms” would “invite emigrants to settle,” argued the members of the Mississippi Land Company, including George Washington, “and the inhabitants of the infant settlement, finding their labor most profitably bestowed on agriculture” will inevitably generate “a large and never falling demand” for British manufactured goods, thereby enlarging the British “revenue.” Benjamin Franklin, the self-proclaimed “friend of the poor,” made clear his commitment to the same Patriot political economic principles in his more pointed attack on the proposed legislation to limit emigration from Britain. “New settlers to America,” he argued, reproduce far more quickly than they would had they remained in Britain because land was cheaper and prosperity more easily attained. As a result “new farms are daily everywhere forming in those immense forests, new towns and villages rising; hence a growing demand for our merchandise to the greater employment of our manufacturers and the enriching of our merchants.” Far from weakening Britain, immigration was a positive boon: “by this natural increase of people, the strength of the Empire is increased.” Increasing the population of the colonies necessarily augmented Britain’s trade, agreed the authors of The Crisis, so it was in Britain’s “interest to encourage their increase.”[[43]](#footnote-43) America’s founders made clear that they expected the new republic to pursue its interest and support new immigrants who would soon become consumers in a vibrant economy.

Third, America’s founders signaled their commitment to a political economy of consumption in their treatment of chattel slavery. In the draft of the *Declaration* initially presented to Congress the Committee of Five accused George III of having “waged war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in a another hemisphere or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither.” To keep the slave trade open, the Committee insisted, George III “prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce.”[[44]](#footnote-44) This intended clause of the *Declaration of Independence*, with its powerful language, neatly captured the spirit of the Patriot anti-slavery movement.

Loyalists and Tories at the time berated the Patriots for their hypocritical acceptance of chattel slavery. “I would wish to ask the delegates of Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas, how their constituents justify their depriving more than an hundred thousand Africans of their right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and in some degree to their lives, if these rights are so absolutely inalienable,” sneered Thomas Hutchinson. “Slaves there are in America, and where there are slaves, there liberty is alienated,” pointed out another commentator on the *Declaration*. “How is that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?” asked the great Tory literary figure Samuel Johnson.[[45]](#footnote-45) In fact, far from being insensitive to the miserable plight of hundreds of thousands of slaves in North America, the Patriots took a strong stance against the cruel and inhumane institution.

Patriots had long opposed the institution of slavery as being inconsistent with the aims and values of a modern commercial society. In the 1730s, many Patriots on both sides of the Atlantic had denounced the pernicious economic and moral consequences of slavery. Some, like William Byrd of Virginia, himself a slaveholder, had called for a parliamentary statute banning slavery. The Patriot Trustees of Georgia had outlawed slavery in their new province. While many continued to voice concerns about chattel slavery in British America, and others objected to the inhumanity of the slave trade, it was in the 1760s and 1770s that a broad and powerful anti-slavery movement re-emerged.

A variety of interventions on both sides of the Atlantic framed a lively public debate on the merits and demerits of chattel slavery. The Massachusetts Patriot James Otis Jr., perhaps drawing on the marquis de Mirabeau’s denunciation of slavery, declared the slave trade to be “the most shocking violation of the law of nature, has a direct tendency to diminish the idea of the inestimable value of liberty and makes every dealer in it a tyrant.” In 1769 the prolific Granville Sharp launched his career as an abolitionist. Sharp, whose work was quickly circulated in abridged form in America, soon befriended the Americans Benjamin Rush and Benjamin Franklin, and was throughout the crisis of the 1770s a firm ally of the American cause. Rush himself penned two widely circulated pamphlets condemning slavery, inspired by the writings of the Quaker abolitionist Anthony Benezet. These were followed in quick succession with a slew of other tracts and sermons on the subject.[[46]](#footnote-46) William Murray, 1st earl of Mansfield’s celebrated, though narrow, June 1772 judgment in the case of Somerset v. Stewart that slavery was illegal in England, further animated discussions.

Pro-slavery advocates, though less prolific, were not silent in defense of the institution. Most in the “Southern provinces” and the West Indies, John Laurens told his father, did “obstinately recur to the most absurd arguments in support of slavery” but ultimately fell back on economic claims: “without slaves how is it possible for us to be rich.” Only African slaves were capable of the hard labor in difficult climates required “in the southern continental province[s], and in the sugar islands,” maintained the West Indian Long. In this context Harvard College staged a public dispute on the legality of chattel slavery in July 1773.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The widespread Patriot belief that British America was in the process of an epochal transition gave urgency to the anti-slavery movement as it gathered steam. Patriots, like most in the eighteenth century, divided human history in stages of socio-cultural development. British America, Patriots believed, was poised on the transition from a primitive agrarian stage to a modern civilized society. Patriots argued that further commercial development required the elimination of slavery. Patriots thought that slave societies tended to be ones in which wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few rich oligarchs who squeezed all the wealth they could through the exploitive harvesting of single crops like tobacco, rice, or sugar. Because of this extreme concentration of wealth, slave societies could never develop into broad-based consumer societies. Such societies were less likely to develop quickly, more likely to remain at primitive stages of development, and were also far more dependent on an increasingly intransigent Mother Country. Many in North America agreed with the influential Scottish Enlightenment writer John Millar that when “a people became civilized” they came to appreciate the economic inefficiencies of slavery. They learned that a slave who had no incentive either to consume or “to exert much vigor or activity in the exercise of any employment,” that “the work of a slave who receives nothing but a bare subsistence, is really dearer than that of a freeman to whom constant wages are given in a proportion to his industry.” Millar determined that “it is a matter of regret that any species of slavery should still remain in the dominions of Great Britain.” Edward Wigglesworth, holder of the prestigious Hollis Chair of Divinity at Harvard College, was one among many American readers of Millar who concluded that it was “to the disgrace of America [that] slavery still prevails here.” In this Wigglesworth was echoing the views of the prominent British legal thinker Francis Hargrave, who had been retained as James Somerset’s lawyer by Granville Sharp. Hargrave, whose brief in the Somerset case was reprinted in North America, denounced slavery as a “pernicious institution” typical of the “early and barbarous state of society.”[[48]](#footnote-48)

Beginning in the late 1760s an increasing number of Patriots, not a few of them slaveholders, began to voice their belief that the abolition of the slave trade, at a minimum, and possibly the abolition of slavery itself, was necessary for British America to become fully civilized. Slaveholders reasoned that only government legislation prohibiting the slave trade, or outlawing slavery, would allow them to do what they believed was right without simultaneously destroying their economic livelihoods. The wealthy South Carolina merchant Christopher Gadsden, soon to be owner of the largest wharf in America, thought slavery a “crime” which weakened his home province. It was under Gadsden’s leadership that the South Carolina Sons of Liberty, radicals to be sure but radicals in a rice-producing province, proposed to outlaw the slave trade. Gadsden’s fellow South Carolinian and future president of the Second Continental Congress, Henry Laurens had come to “abhor slavery,” declaring that “the day I hope is approaching when from principles of gratitude as well as justice every man will strive to be foremost in showing his readiness to comply with the Golden Rule” and abolish slavery. Laurens’s son John, who would later propose to create a black regiment in the Continental army, argued in March 1776 that “the Southern colonies cannot contend with a good grace for liberty until we shall have enfranchised our slaves.” William Whipple of New Hampshire, a signer of the *Declaration*, enthusiastically endorsed John Laurens’s plans for a black regiment hoping it would lead to “emancipation” and “the means of dispensing the blessings of freedom to all the human race in America.” Benjamin Franklin, though a slave owner, had long been skeptical about slavery. After the *Somerset* case he publicly declared his wish that the freedom accorded James Somerset be made general. In the short term he pleaded for “a law for abolishing the African commerce in slaves and declaring the children of present slaves free after they become of age.” The celebrated President of the College of New Jersey, and a signer of the *Declaration*, John Witherspoon, also warned that slaves had been historically “grievously oppressed” in free states, urging that measures be taken to prevent this in the future. Rush was one among many who perceived a tidal wave of sentiment “in favor of the poor negroes” in North America. The editors of the New York Journal opined in December 1774 “that a spirit of opposition to the enslaving of others prevails among the British colonists.”[[49]](#footnote-49)

North American Patriots did not merely speak out against slavery and the slave trade. They took decisive action. The Pennsylvania Assembly in 1773 passed such a stiff duty on imported slaves that its effect amounted “to an almost total prohibition.” The Rhode Island Assembly in 1774, despite the huge profits reaped by many Rhode Island slave traders, “prohibited the importation of negro slaves under a large penalty, and have enacted that such slaves shall be free as soon as they set foot on the shore within the colony.” Connecticut soon followed suit, leading one American journalist to claim that this action entirely refuted “the argument of those who say, that while they are struggling, and willing to brave every difficulty and hardship for their own freedom, they encourage the violation of other men’s liberty.” In 1772 the Virginia House of Burgesses, with many slaveholders among them, had addressed George III arguing against the “great inhumanity” of the slave trade and insisting that the institution of slavery “greatly retards the settlement of the colonies.” Two years later county after county in Virginia – eight in all – passed resolves against the slave trade. Most, like George Washington’s home county of Fairfax, linked their pleas for a permanent end to this “wicked, cruel and unnatural trade” to their desire to diversify and modernize the Virginia economy. For Virginians the end of slavery would necessarily create a broader and more equal consumer base, and play a large role in promoting the province’s transition from a more primitive to a more advanced stage of development. The Committee of Darien, Georgia, drew on their region’s long tradition of opposition to slavery and indicated their “disapprobation and abhorrence of the unnatural practice of slavery in America” and pledged to work for “the manumission of our slaves in this colony.” The Provincial Congress of Georgia pledged to end the importation of slaves in January 1775.[[50]](#footnote-50)

There could be no doubting the broad-based anti-slavery movement in North America in the 1770s. Many in North Carolina were lobbying the Assembly there to address the King against the slave trade, reported one essayist in 1774. “The chief justices of both North and South Carolina are interesting themselves against the traffic;” this essayist continued, “the people of Maryland also are roused on this matter; the Assemblies of Pennsylvania and New Jersey are applied to by petition from a great number of the inhabitants of those provinces; the Assembly of New York passed an act laying a duty on any further importation, but it was refused by the Governor; Connecticut hath prohibited any further importation, and ordered all that may be born in the colony to be free; and the Massachusetts Assembly passed an act at their last session, prohibiting any further importation and ordered that none should be bought or sold in the colony and all born after to be free, but it was negatived by the Governor.” In April 1776, the Continental Congress itself – in a step that has received scant notice from most historians -- no doubt responding to this wave of sentiment from New Hampshire to Georgia, resolved to ban the slave trade.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Despite this widespread desire to put an end to the slave trade and in some instances to abolish slavery itself, the Committee of Five’s anti-slavery clause was omitted in the final draft of the *Declaration*. Seeking to maintain “unanimity” in the Congress, Jefferson recalled, the Committee “struck out” the clause “reprobating the enslaving the inhabitants of Africa.” This was done, he said, “in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who on the contrary still wished to continue it.” In fact, Georgia had sought to limit the slave trade and was anyway too small to represent a threat. Wealthy and powerful South Carolina was another matter. With the fiery critic of slavery Christopher Gadsden back in Charleston, Edward Rutledge attempted to organize opposition to the *Declaration* and the proposed *Articles of Confederation* on the grounds that they advanced “leveling principles.” Rutledge and his supporters, in essence, believed that British America had not yet reached the level of refinement achieved in Europe. In its current state, American commerce required hierarchy and slavery. Rutledge understood well that his political opponents intended to create a strong state that would be inimical to oligarchical slave societies. His fellow delegate from South Carolina Thomas Lynch warned in late July that any attempt to threaten slavery would constitute “an end of the confederation.” South Carolina successfully postponed the vote on the *Declaration* to secure amendments that Josiah Bartlett worried might spoil an already “pretty good” document.[[52]](#footnote-52) The *Declaration* that the Carolinians finally agreed to no longer included the explicit condemnation of slavery and the slave trade.

The Committee of Five and the majority in the Continental Congress did not, however, fully concede the point. The first complaint against George III in the restructured *Declaration* was that he had “refused to assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.” Taken out of historical context this phrase is vague and enigmatic. But it was an argument frequently deployed by Patriot critics of slavery and the slave trade. In his widely circulated and oft-reprinted Observations, Richard Price had pointed out that “it is not the fault of the colonies that they have among them so many of these unhappy people.” The colonists had “made laws to prohibit the importation of them” he insisted “but these laws have always had a negative put upon them here, because of their tendency to hurt our negro trade.” Benjamin Franklin, a member of the drafting committee, had previously called attention to the “several laws heretofore made in our colonies to discourage the importation of slaves” that were “disapproved and repealed by your government here as being prejudicial forsooth to the interest of the African Company.” This was Thomas Jefferson’s view as well. In 1774 he had blamed George III for rejecting colonial anti-slavery laws “of the most salutary tendency.” “The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those colonies,” Jefferson insisted. They had made “repeated attempts” to put an end to the slave trade. All of these were “defeated by his Majesty’s negative.” George III had, Jefferson fumed, preferred “the immediate advantage of a few African corsairs to the lasting interests of the American states, and to the rights of human nature deeply wounded by this infamous practice.”[[53]](#footnote-53) Patriots had long believed that George III had put a stop to colonial efforts to end the slave trade even though those efforts manifestly aimed to promote “the pubic good.”

So deeply did American Patriots believe that they could now be counted among the most civilized societies that they denounced George III and his minions for conducting war in an uncivilized manner. The Founders blamed George III and his ministers for “transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages and totally unworthy of the head of a civilized nation.” As part of this barbarous strategy of warfare, a strategy that violated the accepted laws of war, George III was also exciting “domestic insurrections amongst us” and endeavoring “to bring on the inhabitant of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.” In these powerful clauses the Founders were not, at base, commenting on the Indians. Rather they were denouncing George III for having eschewed the rules of civilization in favor of a return to a more primitive means of conducting foreign affairs. Indeed members of Congress held a bewildering array of sentiments towards the Indians. Some hoped for Indian neutrality in the conflict with George III. They treated the Indians as civilized non-combatants. Others wanted to employ Indians among the regular troops of the army. Still others sought to strengthen and expand Indian alliances. All, however, condemned the barbarous ways in which they perceived the British to be deploying Indians. Most members of Congress knew from their reading the great theorist of international conflict, Emerrich de Vattel that “the common laws of war, those maxims of humanity, moderation and probity, which we have before enumerated and recommended, are in civil wars to be observed by both sides.” In particular Vattel insisted, and the Founders agreed, women, children, the sick and the aged “are enemies who make no resistance, and consequently give us no right to treat their persons ill, or use any violence against them, much less to take away their lives.”[[54]](#footnote-54) In the view of the Founders, the British were encouraging the Indians to employ just these barbarous military tactics. Just as the Founders insisted that their own transition into a higher state of civilization made the use of chattel slaves inappropriate, so they denounced George III for dragging Britain into a state of barbarism through his military tactics.

In the *Declaration of Independence*,Patriots made clear their intentions to create a government that would promote a dynamic consumer economy in their treatment of the hot button issues of foreign trade, immigration and slavery. They believed that by preventing the colonies from gaining hard currency and new and skilled workers, and by preventing them from diversifying their economies by eliminating slave societies devoted to the production of a single crop, such as rice, George III and his ministerial allies had done all they could to prevent colonial prosperity. They intended the *Declaration* to lay the foundation for a new state that would remedy these deficiencies. American Patriots wanted to create a state that would guarantee the rights and provide the support that the Patriot imperial state had delivered prior to the accession of George III.

The authors of the *Declaration* did of course denounce George III for “imposing taxes on us without our consent.” Patriots were not averse to paying taxes. They were already willingly paying large sums to support the war effort. Why, then, did they find taxation without representation to be such a heinous breach of their privileges? Over and over again, we are often reminded, the American Patriots pointed out that the right to tax themselves was a right long guaranteed by the British constitution.[[55]](#footnote-55) But Patriots on both sides of the Atlantic had also emphasized that taxation *without representation* – not taxation in general --generated bad economic policies. It was the lack of representation, rather than their antipathy to taxation, that propelled the Patriots to action.

An unrepresented population was, Patriots argued, a population that could not provide needed economic information nor press the government to remove grievous exactions. Lord John Cavendish was typical of many Patriots in believing that the origins of the “injurious and inefficacious” ministerial policies lay in the “want of full and proper information being laid before Parliament.” As long as Americans were not represented in an imperial Parliament, the English and Scots would have every incentive to remove the tax burden from themselves and their electors and extract revenue from those who could not vote them out of office. The “British Parliament with a view to the ease and advantage of itself and its constituents,” thought Alexander Hamilton, “would oppress and grind the Americans as much as possible.” “The people of England would pull down the Parliament house if their present heavy burdens were not transferred from them to you,” he explained. This was also the conclusion of the County Committee for Fairfax Virginia, chaired by George Washington. It concluded that Britain was adopting a “species of tyranny and oppression” precisely because with no American representation Parliament was acting on “information” that “must be always defective, and often false.” With no American representation the imperial Parliament “may have a separate, and in some [instances] an opposite interest to ours.” At the heart of the famous call for no taxation without representation was an analysis of what went so terribly wrong in the British Empire after 1760. A sovereign imperial legislature with imperfect information and accountable only to English and a few Scottish voters was badly designed to promote the prosperity of the whole. “Equal interests among the people, should have equal interests in the representative people” was the principle pithily expressed by John Adams.[[56]](#footnote-56) A future American state, they implied, needed to represent all Americans; informed by, and accountable to, the broadest swath of the population.

Knowing that the *Declaration of Independence* was a call to state formation in the Patriot mode, it becomes possible to re-examine the most cited and well known lines of the document: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men.” That governments were “instituted among men” to protect not only life and liberty, but “the pursuit of happiness” as well, had become a commonplace in eighteenth century political argument. For precisely this reason “the pursuit of happiness” had many potential meanings. Patriots, by and large, however, had a more specific meaning in mind. They interpreted the phrase to mean the promotion of the public good or welfare. States, they believed, were instituted to do much more than merely provide security: they were much more than a necessary evil.

Patriots believed passionately that states had a responsibility positively to promote the happiness of their populations. This had long been the view of those revered by the American Patriots. Statesmen, argued John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon in *Cato’s Letters*, were responsible for the “wealth, security and happiness of kingdoms.” Joseph Priestley was certain “that the happiness of the whole community is the ultimate end of government can never be doubted.” “All civil government, as far as it can be denominated free, is the creature of the people,” agreed Priestley’s great friend Richard Price, it therefore “has in view nothing but their happiness.” “The true end of civil regimen is the happiness and prosperity of the governed,” asserted the Patriot Charles Lennox 3rd duke of Richmond in the House of Lords. “A state ought to have but one object in view,” insisted the great French philosophe the Abbé Raynal in 1776, “and that is, public felicity.” The rulers of a state should do “everything necessary” to promote “the felicity” of the people, agreed the Swiss theorist Vattel, by which he meant providing “the necessities, conveniencies, and even accommodations of life.”[[57]](#footnote-57)

American Patriots shared this conviction. Because “every individual is to seek and find his happiness in the welfare of the whole,” peached the Connecticut Patriot Levi Watson, all governments “must tend to promote the general welfare, this is the test by which they must be tried.” The most powerful evidence that the framers of the *Declaration* understood “the pursuit of happiness” in this way comes from the members of the Continental Congress themselves. They had a very broad view of the positive obligations of government. “All speculative politicians will agree that the happiness of society is the end of government,” posited John Adams. “The form of government which communicates ease, comfort, security, or in one word happiness to the greatest number of persons and in the greatest degree,” Adams concluded simply, “is the best.” Almost a year before they promulgated the *Declaration of Independence*, the Second Continental Congress issued a much less famous declaration, “The Declaration of the Causes and Necessity for Taking up Arms.” The Committee that penned this earlier declaration included Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. “Government,” they said baldly, “was instituted to promote the welfare of mankind and ought to be administered for the attainment of that end.”[[58]](#footnote-58) Read this way, back to front, there can be no doubt that the *Declaration of Independence* was a call for the creation of a powerful state that would actively promote the welfare of the people.

The *Declaration*, John Adams proudly proclaimed, “completes a Revolution which will make as good a figure in the history of mankind as any that has preceded it.” Benjamin Rush thought it inaugurated “a new era.”[[59]](#footnote-59) Both men understood that because no means had been found to resurrect the British Patriot state, it was time to create a Patriot state in the Western Hemisphere. Both men knew that the *Declaration* had inaugurated a new era of state making in North America. Independence from Britain had existed for over a year in July 1776. America’s founders issued their *Declaration* to kick-start the creation of a Patriot state. They made their intentions clear by drawing on almost a century of Patriot economic thinking. Like the British Patriots who had governed the Empire prior to 1760, America’s Patriots believed in government-supported trade with Spanish America, they believed in state-supported immigration, and they believed in state-supported efforts to diversify the economy. This last position would almost certainly begin with an assault on the slave trade. The American Patriots began and ended their manifesto with paeans to the state.

Perhaps no one understood the implications of the *Declaration* better than John Adams. “The advantages” that the *Declaration* will bring are “very numerous and very great,” he told John Winthrop. The various colonies will hasten to complete their own governments and the newly created states “will exert themselves to manufacture saltpeter, sulfur, powder, arms, cannon, mortars, clothing and everything necessary for the support of life.” A state with such a broad remit would not be cheap. Adams knew that a government that sought to promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number would require substantial contributions from the people. This is why he admitted to William Gordon that post-independence Americans could look forward to “taxes, heavy taxes for many years.”[[60]](#footnote-60)

1. Richard Price, Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America. Ninth Edition. (London: Edward and Charles Dilly and Thomas Cadell, 1776), p. 25; Edmund Burke, The Speech of E. Burke on American Taxation. 19 April 1774. Third Edition. (Philadelphia: Benjamin Towne, 1775, p. 5. North had a more conciliatory style than some of his predecessors. He shared their economic principles. Andrew O’Shaughnessy, The Men Who Lost America. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 50-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. George Washington (Williamsburg) to George William Fairfax, 10-15 June 1774, Crackel, Papers of George Washington Digital Edition, Vol. 10, pp. 96-97; George Washington (Mount Vernon) to Bryan Fairfax, 4 July 1774, Crackel, Papers of George Washington Digital Edition, Vol. 10, pp. 109-110; George Washington (Mount Vernon) to Bryan Fairfax, 20 July 1774, Crackel, Papers of George Washington Digital Edition, Vol. 10, pp. 129-130; The Association, 20 October 1774, Barbara Oberg and J. Jefferson Looney (editors), The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008-2015), Main Series, Vol. I, pp. 149-150; Richard Henry Lee’s Draft Address to the People of Great Britain and Ireland, 11-18 October 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 178. Numerous local calls for Association prior to and after that of the First Continental Congress made the same point: Delaware Committee (George Read, Thomas McKean, John McKinley) to Virginia Committee, 26 May 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. II, p. 83; New York Committee of Correspondence to Committee for Correspondence for Connecticut, 24 June 1774, Peter Force and M. St. Clair Clarke (editors), American Archives. Fourth Series. (Washington, 1837), Vol. I, p. 306 North Carolina Committee to Committee of Correspondence for Virginia, 21 June 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. II, p. 125; Address of Fincastle County Committee, 20 January 1775, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. II, p. 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Humble Address of the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in Parliament Assembled. 7 February 1775. (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1775). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Hamilton, A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress, 1774, p. 15; Richard Price, An Appeal to the Public. New Edition. (London: T. Cadell, 1774), p. 45; Burke, Speech of E. Burke, 19 April 1774, 1775, p. 12; James Macpherson, The Rights of Great Britain Asserted. (London: T. Cadell, 1776), pp. 74-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. His Majesty’s Most Gracious Speech. 26 October 1775. [London, 1775]; Samuel Johnson, Taxation no Tyranny. Third Edition. (London: T. Cadell, 1775), pp.56-57; John Dyke Acland, 26 October 1775, R. C. Simmons and P. D. G. Thomas (editors), Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting North America. Vol. VI. (White Plains: Kraus International Publications, 1987), p. 94; John Adams, Notes of Debates, 6 September 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, pp. 27-28; Samuel Seabury, Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress. ([New York], 1774), p. [3] 16 November 1774 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Resolves of Frederick County, 8 June 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 136; Daniel Hulsebosch, Constituting Empire. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 200), p. 145; Lords Dissenting to Address on the King’s Speech, 26 October 1776, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting North America. Vol. VI, p. 73; John Wilkes, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting America. Vol. VI, p. 97; James Duane (Philadelphia) to Peter Van Schaak, 2 October 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 136. The radical Whig historian Catherine Macaulay shared this fear: Catherine Macaulay, An Address to the People of England, Scotland and Ireland. Third Edition. (New York: John Holt, 1775), p. 14; Jonathan Shipley to Benjamin Franklin, June 1775, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online; Ezra Stiles (Newport) to Isaac Karigal, 7 July 1775, Beinecke, MS Vault Stiles, Correspondence Box 12; The Crisis, No. LI, 6 January 1776; Temple Luttrell, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 112; Johnson, Taxation no Tyranny, 1775, pp. 68-69; Richard Rigby, 27 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting America. Vol. VI, p. 139; Thomas Jefferson (Virginia) to William Small, 7 May 1775, Oberg and Looney, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition, Main Series, Vol. I, p. 165; Thomas Paine, Common Sense. Third Edition. (London: J. Almon, 1776), pp. 15-16, 23; George Washington (Philadelphia) to George William Fairfax, 31 May 1775, Crackel, The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, Vol. 10, p. 368; Samuel Adams (Philadelphia) to James Warren, 16 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 530; Richard Henry Lee (Philadelphia) to Landon Carter, 2 June 1776, Paul H. Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1979), Vol. 4, p. 117; Abraham Clark (Philadelphia) to Elias Dayton, 4 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 376. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Thomas Jefferson’s Notes of Proceedings in Congress, 8 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 161; Francis Lightfoot Lee (Philadelphia) to Landon Carter, 19 March 1776, Smith, Letters to Delegates of Congress, Vol. III, p. 407; Richard Henry Lee (Philadelphia) to Landon Carter, 1 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 470; Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant (Princeton) to John Adams, 11 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 508; John Dickinson’s Notes for a Speech in Congress, 1 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates of Congress, Vol. 4, p. 351; John Adams (Philadelphia) to Abigail Adams, 3 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 374; John Adams, Thoughts on Government. (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1776), pp. 16-17; John Hancock (Philadelphia) to New Jersey Convention, 5 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 392. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Alexander Hamilton, A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress. (New York: James Rivington, 1774), p. 15; Matthew Robinson-Morris, Considerations on the Measures Carrying on with Respect to the British Colonies. (London: R. Baldwin, 1774), p. 80; Richard Price, An Appeal to the Public. New Edition. (London: T. Cadell, 1774), p. iv; William Knox, Present State of the Nation. (London: J. Almon, 1768), p. 53; James Stewart, A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Price. (London: J. Bew, 1776), pp. 45-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. William Knox, The Interest of the Merchants and Manufacturers of Great Britain. (London: T. Cadell, 1774), pp. 10-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Josiah Tucker, An Humble Address and Earnest Appeal. Second Edition. (Gloucester: R. Raikes, 1775), p. 26. Tucker was unusual among the ministry’s supporters in calling for the abandonment of America. But internal evidence makes it clear that he was receiving valuable statistical information from inside the ministry; Knox, Present State of the Nation, 1768, pp. 35, 40, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Stewart, A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Price, 1776, pp. 45-46; Adam Ferguson, Remarks on Dr. Price’s Observations. Dedicated to Lord North. (London: G. Kearsley, 1776), p. 46; James Macpherson, The Rights of Great Britain Asserted. (London: T. Cadell, 1776), p. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Josiah Tucker, Four Tracts on Political and Commercial Subjects. Second Edition. (Gloucester: R. Raikes, 1774), p. 207; James Steuart (Coltness) to Archibald Hamilton, 25 January 1775, in David Raynor and Andrew Skinner (editor), “Sir James Steuart: Nine Letters on the American Conflict, 1775-1778,” William and Mary Quarterly. Vol. 51, No. 4, (October 1994), p. 762. Steuart’s An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy. (London: A. Millar and T. Cadell, 1767) led the North government to consult him on political economic issues. Adam Smith aimed to confute his principles. Samuel Seabury, Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress. ([New York], 1774), p. 10; Tucker, Humble Address and Earnest Appeal, 1775, pp. 71-72; Macpherson, The Rights of Great Britain Asserted, 1776, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Arthur Lee, An Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain, 1776, p. 33; George Johnstone, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 106. On Johnstone and his remarkable family, see Emma Rothschild, The Inner Life of Empires. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Richard Price, Observations, 1776, p. 28. On the pamphlet’s popularity, see John Lind, Three Letters to Dr. Price. (London: T. Payne, J. Sewell and T. Emsly, 1776), pp. ii-iv. Many newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic summarized Price’s arguments: New England Chronicle, 4 July 1776; New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, 22 July 1776; Connecticut Courant, 29 July 1776; Dunlap’s Maryland Gazette, 13 August 1776; Caesar Rodney (Philadelphia) to Thomas Rodney, 10 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 433; Hamilton, A Full Vindication, 1774, p. 12; John Adams, Notes of Debates, 26-27 September 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 103; William Petty 2nd earl of Shelburne, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 85; America Vindicated. (Devizes: T. Burrough, 1774), p. 9; Jonathan Shipley (Bishop of St. Asaph), The Whole of the Celebrated Speech. (Newport: R. Southwick, Sept. 1774), p. 5; George Johnstone, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, pp. 108-109; Lords Dissenting to Address on the King’s Speech, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Hamilton, A Full Vindication, 1774, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Richard Henry Lee, Draft Address to the People of Great Britain and Ireland, 11-18 October 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 175; Hamilton, A Full Vindication, 1774, p. 12; Arthur Lee, An Appeal to the Justice and Interests, 1776, p. 30; Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London, 27 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Hamilton, Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress, 1774, p. 14; Richard Henry Lee, Draft Address to the People of Great Britain and Ireland, 11-18 October 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 177; Arthur Lee, An Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain, 1776, p. 39; Benjamin Franklin, in The Public Advertiser, 9 March 1774; Benjamin Franklin, in The Public Advertiser, 29 January 1770. “Our” in this sentence refers to the British. Price Observations, 1776, pp. 17, 27-29; Rokeby, Considerations on the Measures, 1774, p. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. George Johnstone, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 106; Emma Rothschild, The Inner Life of Empires. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 72; Mercy Otis Warren (Plimouth) to Abigail Adams, 19 January 1774, Butterfield, Adams Family Correspondence, Vol. I, p. 91; Edmund Burke, The Speech of E. Burke Esq. on American Taxation. 19 April 1774. Third Edition. (Philadelphia: Benjamin Towne, 1775), pp. 29-30. American Patriots did in fact explicitly accept the restrictions of the Navigation Acts: Arthur Lee, An Appeal to the Justice and Interests, 1776, p. 39; John Adams, Diary, 2 September 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 8; Thomas Jefferson, A Summary View of the Rights of British America. (Williamsburg: Clementina Rind, 1774), p. 7; Resolves of Fairfax County, 18 July 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 128; Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms, 6 July 1775, Oberg and Looney, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition, Main Series, Vol. I, p.214; Jonathan Shipley (Bishop of St. Asaph), The Whole of the Celebrated Speech. (Newport: R. Southwick, Sept. 1774), p. 4-5; Caesar Rodney (Philadelphia) to Thomas Rodney, 12 September 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 66; John Adams (Philadelphia) to Abigail Adams, 18 September 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 80; Resolves of Princess Anne County, 27 July 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 155; Toasts of Westmoreland County, 22 June 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 165. Shipley was a friend of Benjamin Franklin’s: Benjamin Franklin (London) to Jonathan Shipley, 24 June 1771, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online; Jonathan Shipley (Twyford) to Benjamin Franklin, 9 December 1773, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online. Franklin relayed to Shipley that the speech was thought a “master-piece of eloquence and wisdom.” Benjamin Franklin (London) to Jonathan Shipley, 28 September 1774, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online; Price, Observations, 1776, p. 24; Samuel Adams (Boston) to John Wilkes, 28 December 1770, BL, Add 30871, f. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Shipley, Jonathan Shipley (Bishop of St. Asaph), The Whole of the Celebrated Speech. (Newport: R. Southwick, Sept. 1774), p. 4; Burke, The Speech of E. Burke, 19 April 1774, 1775, p. 12; Price, Observations, 1776, p. 39; George Dempster, 27 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 140; Resolves of Dunmore County, 16 June 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 123; John Norton (London) to Peyton Randolph, Robert Carter, Nicholas and Dudley Digges, 6 July 1773, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. II, p. 37; Richard Henry Lee (Philadelphia) to Landon Carter, 1 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 470. The importance of India and the East India Company in North American thinking has been highlighted by Benjamin L. Carp, Defiance of the Patriots. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 7-24; Carla J. Mulford, Benjamin Franklin and the Ends of Empire. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 254-256. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Lee, An Appeal to the Justice and Interests, 1776, p. 32. Christopher Gadsden and his friends in the South Carolina Association had advanced this argument in 1769: Letters of Freeman. (London, 1771), pp. 1-2 reprinting an advertisement from the South Carolina Gazette, 29 June 1769; Price, Observations, 1776, p. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Resolves of Fairfax County, 18 July 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, pp. 130-131; Resolves of Prince George County, [June 1774], Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 151; John Adams, Proposed Resolutions, 30 September 1774, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. I, p. 132; The Association, 20 October 1774, Oberg and Looney, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition, Main Series, Vol. I, p. 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ezra Stiles (Newport) to Dr. Richard Price, 10 April 1775, Beinecke, MS Vault Stiles, Correspondence Box 12; John Adams, Memorandum of Measures to be Pursued in Congress, 9-23 February 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 218; Robert Treat Paine (Philadelphia) to Joseph Palmer, 6 March 1776, Smith, Letters to Delegates of Congress, Vol. III, p. 344. For their activities, see Committee of Congress (Philadelphia) to the Maryland Convention, 28 March 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 455; John Adams to William Tudor, 24 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 578. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. John Adams, Draft Resolutions for Encouraging Agriculture and Manufactures, 21 March 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 420; Elbridge Gerry (Philadelphia) to Benjamin Lincoln, 28 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 89; Richard Henry Lee (Philadelphia) to Thomas Ludwell Lee, 28 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 91; Elbridge Gerry (Philadelphia) to Joseph Palmer, 31 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 107; John Adams (Philadelphia) to Henry Knox, 2 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 115. Adams also proposed, but Congress rejected, a plan that all such improvements be coordinated by a Congressional Committee. Adams, Thoughts on Government, 1776, p. 23. Adams was here following Vattel: Emer de Vattel, The Law of Nations. (London: J. Coote, 1759), Vol. I, p. 48. At least one early reader of the *Declaration* thought creating public schools part of the agenda: Samuel Miller, A Sermon Delivered in the New Presbyterian Church in New York July Fourth 1795. (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1795), p. 29; Samuel Chase (Montreal) to Richard Henry Lee, 17 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 22; John Hancock (Philadelphia) to George Washington, 14 June 1776, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 217 (creation of the War Office). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. I owe this point to Don Herzog of Michigan Law School. Herzog himself makes the point with respect to the Federalist Papers: Happy Slaves. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 117. This highlights the continuity of Patriot thought.

    George Johnstone, 26 October 1775, R. C. Simmons and P. D. G. Thomas (editors), Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting North America.  Vol. VI.  (White Plains: Kraus International Publications, 1987), p. 105; see also Price, Observations, 9th edition, 1776, p. 15; Jonathan Shipley to Benjamin Franklin, June 1775, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online, Vol. 22; John Adams, Notes of Debates, 1 August 1776, Paul H. Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1979), Vol. 4, p. 592; Benjamin Rush’s Notes for a Speech in Congress, 1 August 1776, Paul H. Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1979), Vol. 4, p. 599. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Robert Morris (Philadelphia) to Horatio Gates, 6 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 495; John Adams to James Warren, 18 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, pp. 32-33; Josiah Bartlett (Philadelphia) to John Langdon, 19 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 38; John Adams (Philadelphia) to Samuel Cooper, 9 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 176; John Penn (Philadelphia) to Thomas Person, 14 February 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 255; John Adams, Notes of Debates, 16 February 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 261; John Adams, Notes on Foreign Alliances, 1 March 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 312; John Adams to John Winthrop, 12 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 662; Samuel Adams (Philadelphia) to Samuel Cooper, 3 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p.481; Richard Henry Lee (Philadelphia) to Patrick Henry, 20 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 564; Richard Henry Lee (Philadelphia) to Edmund Pendleton, 12 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 667. This same argument was advance by George Wythe and John Adams: Thomas Jefferson, Notes of Proceedings in Congress, 8 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 163; John Adams (Philadelphia) to William Cushing, 9 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 178; Eliga H. Gould, Among the Powers of the Earth. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 113-115; David M. Golove and Daniel J. Hulsebosch, “A Civilized Nation: The Early American Constitution, the Law of Nations, and the Pursuit of International Recognition,” New York University Law Review. Vol. 85. No. 4 (October 2010), pp. 942-943; Peter S. Onuf, “A Declaration of Independence for Diplomatic Historians,” Diplomatic History. Vol. 22 No. 71 (1998), pp. 82-83; Committee of Secret Correspondence (Philadelphia) to Silas Deane, 8 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 405. This was how Ethan Allen understood the significance of the *Declaration*: Ethan Allen (Halifax Jail) to Connecticut Assembly, 12 August 1776, in John J. Duffy (editor), Ethan Allen and His Kin. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998), Vol. I, p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Thomas Paine, Common Sense. Third Edition. (London: J. Almon, 1776), pp. 31-32. Bailyn has called attention to this remarkable passage: Faces of Revolution, p. 75; Robert Morris (Philadelphia) to Silas Deane, 5 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 148; Elbridge Gerry (Philadelphia) to James Warren, 15 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 220; John Adams to William Gordon, 23 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 295. The Loan Office was created in October 1776. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. This view is in tension with that advanced in Jeremy Black, Crisis of Empire. (London: Continuum Books, 2008), p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Josiah Bartlett (Philadelphia) to John Landon, 13 January 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 88; John Hancock (Philadelphia) to Thomas Cushing, 17 January 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, pp. 105-106; John Adams to Abigail Adams, 18 February 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 271; Trish Loughran, The Republic in Print. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 40-49; Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Update Edition, p. 79; Bailyn, Faces of Revolution, pp. 67-71; Gordon S. Wood, The American Revolution: A History. p. 55; Josiah Bartlett (Philadelphia) to John Langdon, 19 February 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 280; Benjamin Franklin (Philadelphia) to Charles Lee, 19 February 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 281; Samuel Ward (Philadelphia) to Henry Ward, 19 February 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 285; Samuel Ward (Philadelphia) to Henry Ward, 4 March 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, pp. 329-330; William Whipple (Philadelphia) to John Langdon, 2 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 479; John Adams, Autobiography, C. James Taylor (editor), The Adams Papers Digital Edition. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008-2015), Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, Vol. 3, p. 331; John Adams (Philadelphia) to Abigail Adams, 19 March 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, pp. 398-399. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Paine, Common Sense. Third Edition, 1776, p. 1; Lind, Three Letters to Dr. Price, 1776, p. 16. Lind coined the phrase negative liberty which he saw as the only proper function of government. The term has had a long and significant afterlife: see Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” Four Essays on Liberty. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); John Adams (Philadelphia) to Abigail Adams, 19 March 1776, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, pp. 398-399. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. John Adams to William Tudor, 12 April 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 513; John Adams to James Warren, 12 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 661; Adams, Autobiography, Taylor, Adams Papers Digital Edition, Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, Vol. 3, p. 331; John Adams was not unusual: John Witherspoon, the president of New Jersey College in Princeton denounced Paine as a man who flowed “with the tide of popularity” only recently abandoning his ministerial views: Adams, Autobiography, Taylor, Adams Papers Digital Edition, Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, Vol. 3, pp. 331, 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Thomas Jefferson (Monticello) to Henry Lee, 8 May 1825, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series, Founders Online, National Archives; Thomas Jefferson, Notes on Proceedings in Congress, 8 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, pp. 163-164; Francis Lightfoot Lee (Philadelphia) to Richard Henry Lee, 1 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, pp. 342-343; John Adams (Philadelphia) to Archibald Bulloch, 1 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 345; John Adams (Philadelphia) to Samuel Chase, 1 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 347; Josiah Bartlett (Philadelphia) to John Langdon, 1 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 351; John Adams (Philadelphia) to Abigail Adams, 3 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 376; John Adams, Autobiography, Taylor, Adams Papers Digital Edition, Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, Vol. 3, pp. 336-337; Benjamin Rush, Autobiography. George W. Corner (editor), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), pp. 145-146, 151-152. My reading of the crafting of the document is similar to that of Pauline Maier, American Scripture, pp. 97-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. John Adams (Philadelphia) to Abigail Adams, 3 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 374. In this the *Declaration* sounded a great deal like the concluding sections of John Adams’s Thoughts on Government, 1776, p. 26. This was also the passage that Alexander Hamilton later highlighted as providing the key to the document: Alexander Hamilton, “Remarks on an Act Granting to Congress Certain Imposts and Duties,” 15 February 1787, Harold C. Syrett (editor), The Papers of Alexander Hamilton Digital Edition. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), Vol. IV, p. 77; John Lind, An Answer to the Declaration of the American Congress. Fourth Edition. (London: T. Cadell, J. Walter, and T. Sewell, 1776), p. 119; Thomas Hutchinson, Strictures on the Declaration of Independence. (London, 1776), p. 20. On Hutchinson’s remarkable career see Bernard Bailyn, The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1976). Lind likened Congress’s activities to the state making actions, of the Long Parliament of the 1640s: Lind, An Answer, 1776, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Lee, An Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain, 1776, p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Edmund Burke, The Speech of E. Burke, 19 April 1774, 1775, pp. 28-29; Arthur Lee, An Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain, 1776, p. 42; Jefferson, A Summary View, 1774, p. 11; William Petty 2nd Shelburne, 17 May 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 53; Shelburne, 26 October 1765, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, pp. 86-87. Many voiced similar views: Charles James Fox voiced similar views: Charles James Fox, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 118; George Dempster (Dunnichen) to Sir Adam Ferguson, 26 January 1775, in James Fergusson (editor), Letters to George Dempster to Sir Adam Fergusson. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1934), p. 85; Augustus Fitzroy, 3rd Duke of Grafton, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 78; Thomas Lyttelton, 2nd Baron Lyttelton, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 80; John Adams (Falmouth) to Abigail Adams, 6 July 1774, Butterfield, Adams Family Correspondence, Vol. I, p. 125; The Association, 20 October 1774, Oberg and Looney, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition, Main Series, Vol. I, pp. 149-150; Pennsylvania Instruction to Delegates, 21 July 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. II, p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Maier has also noted the inclusion of longer term complaints, and also pointed out that this document was therefore not about “the Americans’ change of heart,” not about why they plumped for independence: Maier, American Scripture, p. 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Frederick North, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 118. The British naval commander Richard Howe in fact claimed that disagreement over whether Americans should be allowed to trade with foreign countries was “the great ground” of the revolutionary war: Benjamin Franklin (Philadelphia) to Lord Howe, 20 July 1776, Smith (Editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1979), Vol. 4, p. 500; Gottfried Achenwall, “Some Observations on North America from Oral Information by Dr. Franklin,” 1767, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online; John Dickinson (Philadelphia) to William Pitt, 21 December 1765, NA, PRO 30/8/97/I, ff. 38-39; Petition of the Merchants of the City of New York, 28 November 1766, NA, PRO 30/8/97/I, f. 83r. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Robinson-Morris, Considerations on the Measures, 1774, p. 118; Benjamin Franklin, before 21 July 1775, printed in Public Advertiser, 18 July 1777, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online; Jefferson, A Summary View, 1774, p. 23. John Wilkes expressed similar sentiments in the House of Commons: John Wilkes, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Benjamin Franklin, contribution to pamphlet by George Whatley, March 1774, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online George Whatley, Principles of Trade. (London: Brotherton and Sewell, 1774); this principle was central to the Model Commercial Treaty, “Plan of Treaties,” 18 July 1776, in Chauncey Ford Worthington (editor), Journals of the Continental Congress. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), Vol. V, pp. 576-577; A similar point has been made in the French imperial context as well: Jean-Pierre Hirsch, Deux Rêves du Commerce. (Paris: Editions de l’Ecole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, 1991); Jean-Pierre Hirsch and Philippe Minard, “’ Laissez-nous faire et protégez-nous beaucoup,’” in Louis Bergeron and Patrice Bordelais (editors), La France, n’est-elle pas douée pour l’industrie. (Paris: Belin, 1998), pp. 135-158; Tucker, Four Tracts, 1774, pp. 163-164. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. One of the bitterest critics of the *Declaration*, Thomas Hutchinson, admitted that on immigration policy George III had reversed the course of imperial policy: Hutchinson, Strictures upon the Declaration, 1776, p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Arthur Young, Observations on the Present State of the Waste Lands of Great Britain. (London: W. Nicoll, 1773), pp. 5-6; Arthur Young, Proposals to the Legislature for Numbering the People. (London: W. Nicoll, 1771), p. 5; Price, Appeal to the Public, 1774, p. 45; Tucker, Four Tracts, 1774, p. 201; Bernard Bailyn, Voyagers to the West. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), p. 26; Swingen, Competing Visions of Empire, pp. 28-31; Bailyn, Voyagers to the West, p. 52; Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery. (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964), pp. 16-17; Richard Grosvenor, Lord Grosvenor, Hints Respecting the Settlement of our American Provinces, 25 February 1763, BL, Add 38335, f. 14v. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Stewart, A letter to the Rev. Dr. Price, 1776, p. 47; Bailyn, Voyagers to the West, pp. 55-56, 63-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Lee, An Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain, 1776, p. 32; Jefferson, A Summary View, 1774, p. 23; Peter Marshall, “Lord Hillsborough, Samuel Wharton and the Ohio Grant, 1769-1775,” English Historical Review. Vol. 80. No. 317 (October 1965), pp. 738-739; Resolutions of the Darien Committee, 12 January 1775, in Allen D. Candler (editor), The Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia. (Atlanta: Franklin-Turner Company, 1908), Vol. I, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Mississippi Land Company’s Petition to the King, December 1768, Crackel, The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition, Colonial Series, Vol. 8, p. 150; A List of the Mississippi Company, NA, PRO 30/8/97/II, f. 2r; Benjamin Franklin, On a proposed act to prevent emigration, December 1773, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online; The Crisis, No. LXXXI, 3 August 1776, p. 510. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Thomas Jefferson, Notes of Proceedings in Congress, 1-4 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 362. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Hutchinson, Strictures upon the Declaration, 1776, pp. 9-10; “Thoughts on the Late Declaration of the American Congress,” Gentleman’s Magazine, Vol. 46, September 1776, p. 404;John Lind, Three Letters to Dr. Price, 1776, II, p. 46; Lind, An Answer to the Declaration, 1776, p. 107; Johnson, Taxation no Tyranny, 1775, p. 89; Christopher Leslie Brown, Moral Capital. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), pp. 127-130. This interpretative tradition has modern followers: Eric Slauter, “The Declaration of Independence and the New Nation,” in Frank Shuffleton (editor), The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 12-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. James Otis Jr., The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved. Third Edition. (London: J. Williams, 1766), pp. 43-44; Pernille Roge, “The question of slavery in physiocratic political economy,” in Manuela Albertone (editor), Governare Il Mondo. (Feltrinelli, 2009); T. H. Breen, “Subjecthood and Citizenship: The Context of James Otis’s Radical Critique of John Locke,” New England Quarterly. Vol. 71 No. 3 (September 1998), pp. 390-392. Granville Sharp, A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery. (London: Benjamin White and Robert Horsfield, 1769); Benjamin Franklin (London) to Anthony Benezet, 10 February 1773, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online; Memoirs of Granville Sharp. Prince Hoare (editor), (London: Henry Colburn, 1820), pp. 81, 215. Sharp though friendly with Quakers was the grandson of the Anglican Archbishop of York, John Sharp. Benjamin Rush (Philadelphia) to Barbeu Dubourg, 29 April 1773, L. H. Butterfield (editor), Letters of Benjamin Rush. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), Vol. I, pp. 76-77; Rush to Benjamin Franklin, 1 May 1773, Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, Vol. I, p. 79; Rush, Autobiography, Corner, pp. 82-83; Benjamin Rush, An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements in America upon Slave-Keeping. (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1773); Rush, A Vindication of the Address. (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1773); Anthony Benezet, Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies: in a short representation of the calamitous state of the enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions. (Philadelphia: Henry Miller, 1766); Anthony Benezet, Potent Enemies of America Laid Open. (Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank, 1774). For example: Samuel Copper, A Mite cast into the Treasury. (Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank, 1772); Levi Watson, Liberty Described and Recommended in a Sermon Preached to the Corporation and Freemen in Farmington. 20 September 1774. (Hartford: Eben Watson, 1775); Ruth Bogin (editor), “’Liberty further Extended’”: a 1776 Antislavery Manuscript by Lemuel Haynes,” William and Mary Quarterly. Vol. 40 No. 1(January 1983), pp. 85-105; Samuel Hopkins, A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans. (Norwich: Judah P. Spooner , 1776). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Edward Long, Candid Reflections upon the Judgment Lately Awarded by the Court of King’s Bench. (London: T. Lowndes, 1772); Richard Nisbet, Slavery not Forbidden by Scripture. (Philadelphia: John Sparhawk, 1773); William Knox, Three Tracts. [1768]. These anticipated the pro-slavery sentiments that emerged in Virginia in the 1780s: Fredrika Teute Schmidt and Barbara Ripel Wilhelm, “Early Pro-Slavery Petitions in Virginia,” William and Mary Quarterly. Vol. 30 No. 1 (January 1973), pp. 133-146; John Laurens (London) to Henry Laurens, 26 October 1776, David Cheshunt and C. James Taylor (editors), The Papers of Henry Laurens, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), Vol. 11, pp.276-277; Francis Kinloch (Geneva) to John Laurens, 28 April 1776, NYPL. Miscellaneous MSS (Francis Kinloch); Edward Long, Candid Reflections, 1772, p. 18; A Forensic Dispute On the Legality of Enslaving the Africans Held at the Public Commencement in Cambridge, New England. 21 July 1773. (Boston: John Boyle, 1773). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. John Millar, Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society. (London: W and J Richardson, 1771), pp. 200-205, 237. Victor de Riquetti, marquis de Mirabeau had earlier made similar arguments: The Oeconomical Table. (London: W. Owen, 1766), p. 7; Wigglesworth, Calculations on American Population, 1775, p. 12; Francis Hargrave, An Argument in the Case of James Somersett. (Boston: E. Russell, 1774), pp. 11-12, 42-43; Sharp, Memoirs, pp. 71-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Christopher Gadsden (Charlestown) to William Samuel Johnson, 16 April 1766, in Richard Walsh (editor), The Writings of Christopher Gadsden. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966), p. 72; Christopher Gadsden (Charlestown) to Samuel Adams, 23 May 1774, Walsh, Writings of Christopher Gadsden, pp. 92-93. The wharf was in Charleston. Letters of Freeman, 1771, pp. 13-14 (reporting on an August 1769 resolution); Henry Laurens (Charles Town) to John Laurens, 14 August 1776, David Cheshunt and C. James Taylor (editors), The Papers of Henry Laurens, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), Vol. 11, pp. 224-225; Jack Rakove, Revolutionaries. (New York: Mariner Books, 2010), pp. 198-241; John Laurens to Francis Kinloch, March 1776, NYPL, Miscellaneous MSS (John Laurens). While I agree with Robert Olwell that South Carolinians, like most North Americans were very reluctant to break with the British Empire, the actions and statements of John and Henry Laurens as well as Christopher Gadsden, politically prominent South Carolinians, makes it difficult for me to accept his suggestion that South Carolinians in general joined the revolutionary cause because of their fear of “a British-slave conspiracy.” “’Domestick Enemies’: Slavery and Political Independence in South Carolina, May 1775-March 1776,” Journal of Southern History. Vol. 55 No. 1 (February 1989), pp. 21-48; William Whipple (Philadelphia) to Josiah Bartlett, 28 March 1779, Frank C. Mevers (editor), The Papers of Josiah Bartlett. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1979), p. 250; Benjamin Franklin, London Chronicle, 18-20 June 1772, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online; Benjamin Franklin, The Public Advertiser, 30 January 1770; Alan Houston, Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Improvement. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 200-216; John Witherspoon, Speech in Congress, 30 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 585; Rush (Philadelphia) to Granville Sharp, 1 May 1773, Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, Vol. I, p. 81; New York Journal, Supplement, 29 December 1774, No. 1669; Benjamin Franklin (London) to Richard Woodward, 10 April 1773, Benjamin Franklin Papers Online [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Rush (Philadelphia) to Barbeu Dubourg, 29 April1773, Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, Vol. I, p. 76; Watson, Liberty Described, 1775, p. 20; Newport Mercury, Supplement, 13 June 1774, No. 823; Charles Rappleye, Sons of Providence. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), pp. 145-146; New York Journal, Supplement, 29 December 1774, No. 1669; Address of the House of Burgesses, 1 April 1772, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 87; This represented a little under 20% of the counties of Virginia, and covered a wide geographic range of the colony. Resolves of Caroline County, 14 July 1774; Resolves of Culpeper County, 7 July 1774; Resolves of Fairfax County, 18 July 1774; Resolves of Hanover County, 20 July 1774; Resolves of Nansemond County, 11 July 1774; Resolves of Prince George County, June 1774; Resolves of Princess Anne County, 27 July 1774; Resolves of Surry County, 16 July 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, pp. 116, 119, 130-132, 140, 146, 151, 154, 162; Woody Holton, Forced Founders. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp. 88-89. It is no coincidence that Benjamin Rush was also a strong advocate of diversifying the American economic base: Rush (Edinburgh) to Thomas Bradford, 15 April 1768, Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, Vol. I, p. 54; Benjamin Rush (London) to ?Jacob Rush, 26 January 1769, Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, Vol. I, p. 74; Resolutions of the Darien Committee, 12 January 1775, in Allen D. Candler (editor), The Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia. (Atlanta: Franklin-Turner Company, 1908), Vol. I, pp. 41-42; Resolutions of the Provincial Congress of Georgia, 23 January 1775, Candler, Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 44; Kenneth Coleman, The American Revolution in Georgia 1763-1789. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1958), pp. 45-46. I have found no textual evidence to support Holton’s hypothesis that for wealthy gentlemen in the tidewater region of Virginia “raising the price of domestic slaves was one more reason to ban the Atlantic [slave] trade”: Forced Founders, pp. 90-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Brown, Moral Capital, pp. 135-143; Newport Mercury, 13 June 1774, No. 823; Resolution of the Continental Congress, 6 April 1776, Worthington Chauncey Ford (editor), Journals of the Continental Congress. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), Vol. IV, p. 258. I thus have a slightly different take than Brown, Moral Capital, p. 113. I disagree with Christopher Tomlins account of the seamless continuity of “Anglo-American slave regimes” from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries: Freedom Bound. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). In a brilliant dissertation John Blanton has demonstrated that there was significant legal contestation over slavery in Britain, Massachusetts, and Virginia: This Species of Property: Slavery and Subjecthood in Anglo-American Law, 1619-1783. (CUNY Dissertation, December 2015). Tomlins’ legal narrative ends before the explosion of anti-slavery agitation that I have described. The growth of slavery in North America after the Revolution represents not continuity but the significant effects of the onset of cotton: Beckert, Empire of Cotton, pp. 84-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Thomas Jefferson, Notes of Proceedings in Congress, 2 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 359. On unanimity: John Adams (Philadelphia) to Benjamin Hinchborn, 29 May 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 96; Samuel Adams (Philadelphia) to James Warren, 6 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 150. Here I dissent somewhat from David Brion Davis’s brilliant and authoritative account. The clause was not the product of the mind of one man, however brilliant and ambiguous. Nor was it removed because he deferred to “older and more cautious men” but because of the political power of South Carolina: David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 173; Edward Rutledge (Philadelphia) to John Jay, 29 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 337. Rutledge had earlier seen the Georgia delegation as opposed to his views on independence: Rutledge to John Jay, 8 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 175; I thus agree with those who argue that defenders of commercialization could, at times, defend slavery. Capitalists equally criticized slavery. The debate was over what stage of cultural development British America had achieved. See Seth Rockman, “Liberty is Land and Slaves: The Great Contradiction,” OAH Magazine of History. Vol. 19. No. 3 (May 2005), p. 8; Sven Beckert, Empire of Cotton: A Global History. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), pp. 37-38; John Adams’ Notes of Debate, 30 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, pp. 568-569; Francis Lightfoot Lee (Philadelphia) to Richard Henry Lee, 1 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, pp. 342-342; Josiah Bartlett (Philadelphia) to John Landon, 1 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 351. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Price, Observations, 9th edition, 1776, p. 28; Benjamin Franklin, The Public Advertiser, 30 January 1770; Thomas Jefferson, A Summary View of the Rights of British America. (Williamsburg: Clementina Rind, 1774), pp. 16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. John Fabian Witt, Lincoln’s Code: The Laws of War in American History. (New York: Free Press, 2012), pp. 15-19, 28-35; James Q. Whitman, Verdict of Battle: The Law of Victory and the Making of Modern War. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 174; Emer de Vattel, The Law of Nations. (London: J. Coote, 1759), Vol. II, pp. 51-52, 110. This was the language used among officers in the Continental Army, see Philip Schuyler (Albany) to Committee of the City and Country of Albany, 27 June 1776, NYPL, Philip Schuyler Papers, Box 18, pp. 218-219. I thus see these clauses less about defining who counted as Americans, and more about announcing the Patriots as the true civilized combatants as against the barbarous George III. The sentiments of members of the Second Congressmen with respect to Indians were varied. Some called for their employment in the war as regular troops: Philip Schuyler (Albany) to Timothy Edward, 22 February 1776, NYPL, Philip Schuyler Papers, Box 17, p. 372; John Hancock (Philadelphia) to George Washington, 10 June 1776, Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 183; John Hancock (Philadelphia) to George Washington, 18 June 1776, Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 266; John Hancock (Philadelphia) to George Washington, 2 August 1776, Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 606. Others wanted neutrality: Josiah Bartlett’s and John Dickinson’s Draft Articles of Confederation, 17 June-1 July 1776, Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 239; Many insisted on strictly regulating the Indian trade to prevent colonists from abusing the Indians: John Adams’ Notes of Debate, 26 July 1776, Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, pp. 545-546. Still otgers sought to cultivate closer ties with Indians: Philip Schuyler (New York) to Colonel Benjamin Hinman, 28 June 1775, NYPL, Philip Schuyler Papers, Box 17, p. 4; Philip Schuyler (New York) to Committee of Albany, 28 June 1775, NYPL, Philip Schuyler Papers, Box 17, p. 5; Richard Henry Lee (Philadelphia) to Charles Lee, 27 May 1776, Paul H. Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1979), Vol. 4, p. 87; Robert Morris (Philadelphia) to Silas Deane, 5 June 1776, Paul H. Smith (editor), Letters of Delegates to Congress. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1979), Vol. 4, p. 148. For a different view, see Robert Parkinson, “The Declaration of Independence,” in Francis D. Cogliano (editor) A Companion to Thomas Jefferson. Second Edition. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 54-56; Robert G. Parkinson, “Twenty-Seven Reasons for Independence,” in Denver Brunsman and David J. Silverman (editors), The American Revolution Reader. (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 116-118; Peter Silver, Our Savage Neighbors. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008), pp. 287-288. Silver’s concern is much more, in this section, with anti-Indian sentiments after the war. Unlike Parkinson, he sees that the Declaration could be read in terms more friendly to the Indians. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. John Wilkes, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 97; George Johnstone, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 101; William Bollan (Covent Garden) to john Erving, William Brattle, James Bowdoin, and James Pitts, 15 March 1774, Force and Clarke, American Archives, Fourth Series, Vol. I, p. 228 (referring to views of Lord Camden); Resolves of Caroline County, 14 Julyb1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 115; Resolves of York County, 18 July 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Lord John Cavendish, 26 October 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliament, Vol. VI, pp.96-97; John Adams (Falmouth) to Abigail Adams, 6 July 1774, Butterfield, Adams Family Correspondence, Vol. I, p. 127; “To the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants of the Towns and Districts of Massachusetts Bay,” 10 December 1774, New York Journal, Supplement, 29 December 1774, No. 1669; Hamilton, A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress, 1774, pp. 12, 25; The Crisis, No. LXXXI, 3 August 1776, p. 509; Resolves of Fairfax County, 18 July 1774, Scribner, Revolutionary Virginia, Vol. I, p. 129; John Adams (Philadelphia) to John Penn, 19-27 March 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 402. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ronald Hamowy (editor), Cato’s Letters, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995) Vol. I, No. 12, p. 67; Joseph Priestley, An Essay on the First Principles of Government. (Dublin: James Williams, 1768), p. 64; Price, Observations, 9th edition, 1776, p. 7; Charles Lennox 3rd duke of Richmond, 17 May 1775, Simmons and Thomas, Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments, Vol. VI, p. 44; Guillaume Thomas François Raynal, A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies. (London: T. Cadell, 1776), Vol. IV, p. 432. Raynal was at the time deeply influenced by the Patriots and a friend of the American cause whatever his later views; Emer de Vattel, The Law of Nations. (London: J. Coote, 1759), Vol. I, p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Watson, Liberty Described, 1775, p. 11; John Adams, Thoughts on Government, 1776, pp. 4-5; John Adams (Philadelphia) to John Penn, 19-27 March 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. III, p. 400; Declaration of the Causes and Necessity for Taking up Arms, 6 July 1775, Oberg and Looney, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition, Main Series, Vol. I, p. 213 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. John Adams (Philadelphia) to Mary Palmer, 5 July 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 389; Benjamin Rush (Philadelphia) to General Charles Lee, 23 July 1776, Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, Vol. I, p. 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. John Adams (Philadelphia) to John Winthrop, 23 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 299; John Adams (Philadelphia) to William Gordon, 23 June 1776, Smith, Letters of Delegates to Congress, Vol. 4, p. 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)