

Letter From an American Farmer, 1774

Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one; no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury....The next wish of this traveller will be to know whence came all these people? they are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race now called Americans have arisen...He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds...The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labour, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence.--This is an American...Thus all sects are mixed as well as all nations; thus religious indifference is imperceptibly disseminated from one end of the continent to the other; which is at present one of the strongest characteristics of the Americans...It is no wonder that the European who has lived here a few years, is desirous to remain; Europe with all its pomp, is not to be compared to this continent, for men of middle stations, or labourers.

Boston Non-Importation Agreement, August 1, 1768

The merchants and traders in the town of Boston, having taken into consideration the deplorable situation of the trade [...]; the heavy taxes levied to discharge the debts contracted by the government in the late war; together with the bad success of our cod fishery this season [...], by which our principal sources of remittances are like to be greatly diminished, and we thereby rendered unable to pay the debts we owe the merchants in Great Britain, and to continue the importation of goods from thence:

We, the subscribers, in order to relieve the trade under those discouragements, to promote industry, frugality, and economy, and to discourage luxury and every kind of extravagance, do promise and engage to and with each other as follows:

That we will not send or import from Great Britain this fall, either on our own account, or on commission, any other goods than what are already ordered for the fall supply [...] from January 1, 1769, to January 1, 1770, except salt, coals, fish-hooks and lines, hemp duck, bar lead and shot, wool-cards, and card-wire. [...] That we will not import on our own account, or on commission, or Purchase from any Who shall import from any other colony in America, from January 1, 1769, to January 1, 1770, any tea, glass, paper, or other goods commonly imported from Great Britain [...] until the Acts imposing duties on these articles have been repealed.

Connecticut Resolutions on the Stamp Act

every form of government rightfully founded, originates from the consent of the people.

whenever those bounds are exceeded, the people have a right to reassume the exercise of that authority.

every tax imposed upon English subjects without consent is against the natural rights and the bounds prescribed by the English constitution.

the Stamp Act in special, is a tax imposed on the colonies without their consent.

it is the duty of every person in the colonies to oppose by every lawful means the execution of those acts imposed on them.

every officer in this colony duly execute the trust reposed in him, agreeable to the true spirit of the English constitution and the laws of this colony.

William Pitt

“I have been charged with giving birth to sedition in America. Sorry I am to hear the liberty of speech in this House, imputed as a crime. It is a misfortune that more are not equally represented: but they are all inhabitants, and as such, are they not virtually represented? . . . The gentleman boasts of his bounties to America. Are not those bounties intended finally for the benefit of this kingdom? If they are not, he has misapplied the national treasures. The gentleman asks, when were the colonies emancipated? But I desire to know, when were they made slaves. We may bind their trade, confine their manufactures, and exercise every power whatsoever

- except that of taking money out of their pockets without their consent.”

Massachusetts Circular Letter to the Colonial Legislatures; February 11, 1768

The House have humbly represented to the ministry their own sentiments, that his Majesty's high court of Parliament is the supreme legislative power over the whole empire; that in all free states the constitution is fixed, and as the supreme legislative derives its power and authority from the constitution, it cannot overleap the bounds of it without destroying its own foundation; . . . his Majesty's American subjects, who acknowledge themselves bound by the ties of allegiance, have an equitable claim to the full enjoyment of the fundamental rules of the British constitution; that it is an essential, unalterable right in nature, engrafted into the British constitution, as a fundamental law, and ever held sacred and irrevocable by the subjects within the realm, that what a man has honestly acquired is absolutely his own, which he may freely give, but cannot be taken from him without his consent; . . . That his Majesty's royal predecessors, for this (inconvenience of representation in Parliament) reason, were graciously pleased to form a subordinate legislature here, that their subjects might enjoy the unalienable right of a representation; also, that considering the utter impracticability of their ever being fully and equally represented in Parliament, and the great expense that must unavoidably attend even a partial representation there, this House think that a taxation of their constituents, even without their consent, grievous as it is, would be preferable to any representation that could be admitted for them there.

An Act Repealing The Stamp Act, 1765

An Act was passed in the last session of Parliament defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same [colonies]; the continuance of the said Act would be attended with many inconveniencies, and may be greatly detrimental to the commercial interests of these kingdoms; may it therefore please your most excellent Majesty that it may be enacted; from and after the first day of May, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six, the above-mentioned Act is repealed and made void to all intents and purposes whatsoever

The Sugar Act

An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, for continuing, amending, and making perpetual, an act passed in the sixth year of the reign of his late majesty King George the Second, (intituled, An act for the better securing and encouraging the trade of his Majesty's sugar colonies in America;) for applying the produce of such duties, and of the duties to arise by virtue of the said act, towards defraying the expences of defending, protecting, and securing the said colonies and plantations;[...] we, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled, being desirous to make some provision, in this present session of parliament, towards raising the said revenue in America, have resolved to give and grant unto your Majesty the several rates and duties herein after-mentioned; and do most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the twenty ninth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and sixty four, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto his Majesty, his heirs and successors, for and upon all white or clayed sugars of the produce or manufacture of any colony or plantation in America, not under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors; for and upon indigo, and coffee of foreign produce or manufacture; for and upon wines (except French wine;) [...] Which shall be imported or brought into any colony or plantation in America, which now is, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, the several rates and duties following; that is to say,

Petition from the Massachusetts House of Representatives to the House of Commons (November 3, 1764)

- 1) An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, etc., must necessarily bring many burdens.
- 2) Your petitioners conceive would not have been imposed if a full representation of the state of the colonies had been made to your honourable House.
- 3) Importation of foreign molasses is of the greatest importance, and a prohibition will lessen the consumption of the manufactures of Great Britain.
- 4) Restraints laid upon the exportation of timber, boards, staves, and other lumber from the colonies to other parts of Europe, except Great Britain, must greatly affect the trade of this province and discourage the clearing and improving of the lands which are yet uncultivated.
- 5) Goods seized for illicit importation in any one of the colonies may not be removed, in order to trial, to any other colony where the judge may reside; deprived the colonies of one of the' most valuable of English liberties, trials by juries.
- 6) Drawing sums of money from the colonies from time to time must distress the trade to that degree that eventually Great Britain may lose more by the diminution of the consumption of her manufactures than all the sums.
- 7) Subjects of this province are as fully burdened as their fellow subjects in Britain, whilst in America.

Charleston Non-Importation Agreement; July 22, 1769

We, his Majesty's dutiful and loving subjects, the inhabitants of South Carolina, being sensibly affected with the great prejudice done to Great Britain, and the abject and wretched condition to which the British colonies are reduced by several Acts of Parliament lately passed; by some of which the moneys that the colonists usually and cheerfully spent in the purchase of all sorts of goods imported from Great Britain, are now, to their great grievance, wrung from them, without their consent, or even their being represented, and applied by the ministry, in prejudice of, and without regard to, the real interest of Great Britain, or the manufactures thereof, almost totally, to the support of new-created commissioners of customs, placemen, parasitical and novel ministerial officers; and by others of which Acts we are not only deprived of those invaluable rights, trial by our peers and the common law, but are also made subject to the arbitrary and oppressive proceedings of the civil law, justly abhorred and rejected by our ancestors, the freemen of England; and finding that the most dutiful and loyal petitions from the colonies alone, for redress of those grievances, have been rejected with contempt so that no relief can be expected from that method of proceedings; and being fully convinced of the absolute necessity of stimulating our fellow subjects and sufferers in Great Britain to aid us in this our distress, and of joining the rest of the colonies in some other loyal and vigorous methods that may most probably procure such relief, which we believe may be most effectually promoted by strict economy, and by encouraging the manufactures of America in general, and of this province in particular: we therefore, whose names are underwritten, do solemnly promise, and agree to and with each other, that, until the colonies be restored to their former freedom by the repeal of the said Acts...

Great Britain : Parliament The Currency Act; April 19, 1764

WHEREAS great quantities of paper bills of credit have been created and issued in his Majesty's colonies or plantations in America, by virtue of acts, orders, resolutions, or votes of assembly, making and declaring such bills of credit to be legal tender in payment of money: and whereas such bills of credit have greatly depreciated in their value, by means whereof debts have been discharged with a much less value than was contracted for, to the great discouragement and prejudice of the trade and commerce of his Majesty's subjects, by occasioning confusion in dealings, and lessening credit in the said colonies or plantations: for remedy whereof, may it please your most excellent Majesty, that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of September, one thousand seven hundred and sixty four, no act, order, resolution, or vote of assembly, in any of his Majesty's colonies or plantations in America, shall be made, for creating or issuing any paper bills, or bills of credit of any kind or denomination whatsoever, declaring such paper bills, or bills of credit, to be legal tender in payment of any bargains, contracts, debts, dues, or demands whatsoever; and every clause or provision which shall hereafter be inserted in any act, order, resolution, or vote of assembly, contrary to this act, shall be null and void.

Great Britain : Parliament
The Quartering Act; May 15, 1765

An act to amend and render more effectual, in his Majesty's dominions in America, an act passed in this present session of parliament, intituled, An act for punishing mutiny and desertion, and for the better payment of the army and their quarters.

WHEREAS in and by an act made in the present session of parliament, intituled, An act for punishing mutiny and desertion, and for the better payment of the army and their quarters; several regulations are made and enacted for the better government of the army, and their observing strict discipline, and for providing quarters for the army, and carriages on marches and other necessary occasions, and inflicting penalties on offenders against the same act, and for many other good purposes therein mentioned; but the same may not be sufficient for the forces that may be employed in his Majesty's dominions in America: and whereas, during the continuance of the said act, there may be occasion for marching and quartering of regiments and companies of his Majesty's forces in several parts of his Majesty's dominions in America: and whereas the publick houses and barracks, in his Majesty's dominions in America, may not be sufficient to supply quarters for such forces: and whereas it is expedient and necessary that carriages and other conveniences, upon the march of troops in his Majesty's dominions in America, should be supplied for that purpose: be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That for and during the continuance of this act, and no longer, it shall and may be lawful to and for the constables, tithingmen, magistrates, and other civil officers of villages, towns, townships, cities, districts, and other places, within his Majesty's dominions in America, and in their default or absence, for any one justice of the peace inhabiting in or near any such village, township, city, district or other place, and for no others; and such constables, tithingmen, magistrates, and other civil officers as aforesaid, are hereby required to quarter and billet the officers and soldiers, in his Majesty's service, in the barracks provided by the colonies; and if there shall not be sufficient room in the said barracks for the officers and soldiers, then and in such case only, to quarter and billet the residue of such officers and soldiers, for whom there shall not be room in such barracks, in inns, livery stables, ale-houses, victualling-houses, and the houses of sellers of wine by retail to be drank in their own houses or places thereunto belonging, and all houses of persons selling of rum, brandy, strong water, cyder or metheglin, by retail, to be drank in houses; and in case there shall not be sufficient room for the officers and soldiers in such barracks, inns, victualling and other publick alehouses, that in such and no other case, and upon no other account, it shall and may be lawful for the governor and council of each respective province in his Majesty's dominions in America, to authorize and appoint, and they are hereby directed and impowered to authorize and appoint, such proper person or persons as they shall think fit, to take, hire and make fit, and, in default of the said governor and council appointing and authorizing such person or persons, or in default of such person or persons so appointed neglecting or refusing to do their duty, in that case it shall and may be lawful for any two or more of his Majesty's justices of the peace in or near the said villages, town, townships, cities, districts, and other places, and they are hereby required to take, hire, and make fit for the reception of his Majesty's forces, such and so many uninhabited houses, outhouses, barns or other buildings, as shall be necessary, to quarter therein the residue of such officers and soldiers for whom there should not be rooms in such barracks and publick houses as aforesaid, and to put and quarter the residue of such officer and soldiers therein.

Great Britain : Parliament The Townshend Act, November 20, 1767

An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America; for allowing a drawback of the duties of customs upon the exportation, from this kingdom, of coffee and cocoa nuts of the produce of the said colonies or plantations; for discontinuing the drawbacks payable on china earthen ware exported to America; and for more effectually preventing the clandestine running of goods in the colonies and plantations.

WHEREAS it is expedient that a revenue should be raised in your Majesty's dominions in America, for making a more certain and adequate provision for defraying the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government, in such provinces where it shall be found necessary; and towards further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing, the said dominions; we, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled, have therefore resolved to give and grant unto your Majesty the several rates and duties herein after mentioned; and do most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the twentieth day of November, one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, for and upon the respective goods herein after mentioned, which shall be imported from Great Britain into any colony or plantation in America which now is, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs, or successors, the several rates and duties following; that is to say,

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of crown, plate, flint, and white glass, four shillings and eight pence.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of green glass, one shilling and two pence.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of red lead, two shillings.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of white lead, two shillings.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of painters colours, two shillings.

For every pound weight avoirdupois of tea, three pence.