

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for ^{one} people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to ~~assume a new and separate station~~ ^{assume a new and equal} station among the powers of the earth, the ~~separate and equal~~ station to which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to ~~that~~ ^{the} separation.

We hold these truths to be ^{self-evident}, that all men are created equal & independent; that ^{they are endowed by their creator with} certain ~~unalienable~~ ^{unalienable} rights; that among ^{these} are ~~life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness~~ ^{life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness}; that to secure these ^{rights}, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government ~~shall~~ becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles & organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light & transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. but when a long train of abuses & usurpations [begun at a distinguished period, & pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to ~~reduce~~ ^{bring them under absolute Despotism} reduce them ~~to~~ ^{under absolute Despotism} it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such ~~government~~ ^{government} & to provide new guards for their future security. such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; & such is now the necessity which constrains them to ~~expunge~~ ^{alter} their former systems of government. the history of ^{the} present ^{King of Great Britain} ~~is~~ ^{repeated} is a history of unremitting injuries and usurpations, [among which, ~~appears no solitary fact~~ ^{appears no solitary fact} to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, ~~all of which~~ ^{but all} have] in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. to prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world, [for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unswerving by falsehood]

he has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the pub-

-lic good:

he has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate & pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has ^{utterly} neglected ~~to~~ to attend to them.

he has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people unless those people would relinquish the right of representation ^{in the legislature}, a right inestimable to them & formidable to tyrants alike: he has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, ^{uncon-}venient, and distant, and kept them for the sole purpose of fatiguing them with measures ^{of}

~~he has~~ ^{time after time} he has refused for a long ~~space of time~~ to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, & convulsions within: he has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither; & raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands:

he has suffered the administration of justice totally to cease in some of these states, ^{refusing} his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers:

he has made ^{the} judges dependant on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, ^{& payment} and amount of their salaries:

he has erected a multitude of new offices [by a self-assumed power,] & sent his

other swarms of officers to harass our people & eat out their substance:

he has kept among us in times of peace, ^{without the consent of our} standing armies [ships of war:]

he has affected to render the military independent of & superior to the civil power:

he has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our

rights and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their ^{acts of} pretended

legislation, for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

for protecting them by a mock-trial from punishment for any murders

^{which} they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

for imposing taxes on us without our consent;

for depriving us ^{in many cases} of the benefits of trial by jury;

for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences:

for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and separating it from the empire, so as to render it at once an example & fit instrument for introducing the same into the rest of the colonies.

† abolishing our most ^{valuable} important laws
for taking away our charters, & altering fundamentally the forms of our governments,
for suspending our own legislatures & declaring themselves invested with power to
legislate for us in all cases whatsoever:
he has abdicated government here, ^{by declaring us out of his protection & waging war against us.} [withdrawing his governors, & declaring us out
of his allegiance & protection.]

he has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns & destroyed the
lives of our people:

he is at this time transporting large armies of ^{Scotch and other} foreign mercenaries to complete

the work of ^{destruction & tyranny already begun with circumlocution}
^{scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages} of cruelty & perfidy, unworthy the head of a civilized nation:

× he has ^{excited domestic insurrections amongst us and has} endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian
savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of
all ages, sexes, & conditions [of existence].

[he has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens, with the

× he has ^{allurements of forfeiture & confiscation of our property} constrained others ^{to take up arms against their countrymen}
to take up arms against human nature itself, violating it's most sa-

-cred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never of-
fended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemi-

-sphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This

piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the

Christian king of Great Britain, determined to keep open a market

where MEN should be bought & sold. he has prostituted his negative

for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this

determining to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold:
execrable commerce; and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact

of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms

among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them,

by ^{inciting} ~~exciting~~ the people upon whom he also abused them: thus joining

off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes

which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.]

in every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble

terms; our repeated petitions have been answered ^{only} by repeated injuries. a prince

whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit

to be the ruler of a ^{free} people [who mean to be free]. future ages will scarce believe

that the hardiness of one man, adventured within the short compass of twelve years

to lay a foundation so broad & unguessed, for tyranny

only, ^{to lay a foundation so broad & unguessed, for tyranny} over a people fostered & fixed in principles
of liberty & freedom.]

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. we have ^{an unwearied} warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend a jurisdiction over ^{us} [these our states]. we have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration & settlement here, [no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expence of our own blood & treasure, assisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league & amity with them: but that submission to their

credited: and ^{have} we appealed to their native justice & magnanimity, [as well as to] the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which ^{were} likely to interrupt our ^{connection &} correspondence & amicitia. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice &

connection & our correspondence ~~connection~~. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice & of consanguinity, [When occasions have been given them, by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have by their free election re-established them in power. at this very time too they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch & foreign mercenaries to invade & ^{destroy us.} ~~deluge~~ ^{these facts}

restrain the heart to agonizing affection and manly spirit bid us to re-
nounce: for as these unfeeling brethren, we must endeavor to forget our former

love for them, and to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war,
in peace friends. we might have been a free & a great people together; but a commu-
nication of grandeur & of freedom it seems is below their dignity. be it so, since they

will have it: the road to ~~happiness~~ ^{the glory} happiness, is open to us too; we will ~~share~~ ^{share} it ~~apart from them~~, and acquiesce in the necessity which ^{de-} ~~pronounces~~ ^{denies} our ~~own~~ ^{own} ~~existence~~ ^{existence} ~~advised~~ ^{advised} [eternal] separation!

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, ^{appearing to the rejoicing people of the world for the rectitude of our intentions} do, in the name & by authority of the good people of these ^{colonies} [states]

reject. I renounce all allegiance & subjection to the kings of Great Britain
& all others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; as a utterly
unlawful & unjust.