

weak, timid, and irresolute, dismiss them with silence, as unfit to advise or govern in the present state of your affairs, which demands wisdom to plan and firmness to execute. If only an error in judgment can be imputed to them, correct it by your advice and instructions.

The *December Convention* appointed a Committee* to prepare a draft of Instructions for the Deputies in Congress, who reported the following, as unanimously agreed to by them:

"IN CONVENTION.

"To the Honourable M. TILGHMAN, Esq., T. JOHNSON, Jun., S. CHASE, ROBERT GOLDSBOROUGH, W. PACA, T. STONE, ROBERT ALEXANDER, and JOHN ROGERS, Esquires:

"The Convention, taking into their most serious consideration the present state of the unhappy dispute between *Great Britain* and the United Colonies, think it proper to deliver you their sentiments, and to instruct you in certain points relative to your conduct in Congress as Representatives of this Province.

"The experience we and our ancestors have had of the mildness and equity of the *English Government*, under which we have grown up to, and enjoyed a state of felicity not exceeded by any people we know of, until the grounds of the present controversy were laid by the Ministry and Parliament of *Great Britain*, it has most strongly endeared to us that Constitution from whence these blessings have been derived, and makes us ardently wish for a reconciliation with the mother country, upon terms that may ensure to these Colonies an equal and permanent freedom. To this Constitution we are attached, not only by habit but by principle, being, in our judgments, persuaded it is, of all known systems, best calculated to secure the liberty of the subject, to guard against despotism on the one hand, and licentiousness on the other.

"Impressed with these sentiments, we warmly recommend to you to keep constantly in your view the avowed end and purpose for which these Colonies originally associated—the redress of *American* grievances and securing the rights of the Colonists.

"The remarkable success which has attended the *American* arms afford so happy an opportunity of evincing to our Sovereign, to our brethren of *Great Britain*, and to the world, the sincerity of our frequent declarations of our strong desire of reconciliation, that, as Representatives of this Province, we think it our duty to instruct you to take the first opportunity to move for in Congress, and use your utmost endeavours to have prepared and transmitted, an humble Petition to the Throne, disavowing, in the most solemn manner, all design in these Colonies of independence, and declaring, in explicit terms, that they have nothing more in view than the establishment of their just rights, expressing their ardent desire to be restored to the confidence of their Sovereign, and to that happy connection which subsisted between them and the parent State before their present troubles began, and praying the Royal interposition with Parliament for the speedy restoration of peace and tranquillity to the divided empire. As upon the obtention of these great objects we shall think it our greatest happiness to be firmly united to *Great Britain*, in a constitutional dependence upon the imperial Crown and Parliament thereof, we think proper to instruct you, that should any proposition be happily made by the Crown or Parliament that may lead to, or lay a rational and probable ground for, reconciliation, you use your utmost endeavours to cultivate and improve it into a happy settlement and lasting amity; taking care to secure the United Colonies against the exercise of the right assumed by Parliament to tax *America*, and to alter and change the Charters and Constitutions of the said Colonies; which cannot be admitted without destroying the essential security of the lives, liberties, and properties of the Colonists.

"We further instruct you, that you do not, without the previous knowledge and approbation of the Convention of this Province, assent to any proposition to declare these Colonies independent of the Crown of *Great Britain*; nor to any proposition for making or entering into alliance with any foreign power; nor to any union or confederation of these Colonies which may necessarily lead to a separation from the mother country. Desirous as we are of peace with *Great Britain*

* James Hollyday, Charles Carroll, Barrister, James Tilghman, Gustavus Scott, and Benjamin Rumery, Esquires.

upon safe and honourable terms, we wish you, nevertheless, and instruct you, to join with the other Colonies in such military operations as you shall judge proper and necessary for the common defence, until such a peace can be happily obtained. At the same time that we assure you we have an entire confidence in your abilities and integrity in the discharge of the great trust reposed in you, we must observe to you, as our opinion, that in the relation of constituent and Representative, one principal security of the former is, the right he holds to be fully informed of the conduct of the latter. We can conceive no case to exist in which it would be of more importance to exercise this right than the present, nor any in which we can suppose the Representative would more willingly acquiesce in the exercise of it; we therefore instruct you, that you, from time to time, as occasions may offer, lay before the Convention of this Province the proceedings, and the part you take in the general deliberations of the Congress, except such military operations as may be judged necessary to be kept secret."

To determine the propriety of this Province urging the Congress to petition the King of *Great Britain* in *January* last, it may be proper to observe, that the Petition proposed was, in substance, and almost in words, the same with the one sent by the Congress and then lying before the Throne. The Proclamation declaring all the Colonies in rebellion, was issued a few days after the arrival and knowledge of our Petition, and was published in all the newspapers. It was also well known that the Parliament was called and expected to meet in *October*. The Petition proposed would not probably arrive in *England* before the month of *March*, before which time the measures of Parliament must have been taken,* and would not be in the least influenced by the Petition. To send a second Petition of the same nature, before a knowledge of the fate of the first, could answer no other purpose but to discover an unreasonable fondness for peace, and encourage a wicked and implacable tyrant in the pursuit of his diabolical schemes. This part of the instructions was agreed to by the Convention, and struck out on the next day, after the receipt of the King's speech.

The instruction not to assent to any proposition of independency, for a foreign alliance, nor to any union of the Colonies which might necessarily lead to a separation, without the previous knowledge and approbation of the Convention, might have produced the most fatal consequences to all *America*. Cases might have happened in which it would have been expedient to form foreign alliances without any delay; if they could not be entered into without the consent of *Maryland*, though a very great majority of the Colonies should esteem such measure wise and absolutely necessary, the opportunity of saving *America* might have been lost. The Congress alone could have the best intelligence and comprehensive view of our affairs, and would be the most capable judges when this step ought to be taken. Interest, policy, and necessity would induce this Province not to separate from her sister Colonies. Why, then, discover a distrust and want of confidence in the Congress, that is a majority of the Colonies? Why disclose to the world that this Province would not be bound to unite with a majority of them?

AN AMERICAN.

NEW-YORK DELEGATES TO PROVINCIAL CONGRESS.

Philadelphia, June 27, 1776.

GENTLEMEN: We doubt not but before this you have received our President's letter, informing you that this Congress have appointed the officers for the regiment directed to be raised in our Colony by the resolve passed on *Friday* last, and then transmitted you. But as we conceive the appointment of officers by this Congress for new levies to be raised in a particular Colony, is contrary to the ordinary practice, and may therefore be considered as in some measure infringing on the rights of the Colony, we beg leave, as far as we are able, to explain the reasons of Congress for taking this step, and our conduct thereon.

On receiving the late intelligence from *Canada* respecting the repulse of the detachment of our Army commanded by General *Thompson*, at *Three Rivers*, &c., the despatches containing this account, with the state of our Army in *Canada*, were referred to the Board of War, who, the same

* The Treaty for foreign troops was signed in *February*.