

## The Tory Act

**THE TORY ACT Published by Order of the Continental Congress, Philadelphia, Jan. 2, 1776.**

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

*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the several Committees, and other friends to American liberty in the said colonies, to treat all such persons with kindness and attention, to consider them as the inhabitants of a country determined to be free, and to view their errors as proceeding rather from want of information, than want of virtue or public spirit, to explain to them the origin, nature and extent of the present controversy, to acquaint them with the fate of the numerous petitions presented to his Majesty, as well by Assemblies as by Congresses for reconciliation and redress of grievances, and that the last from this Congress, humbly requesting the single favour of being heard, like all the others has proved unsuccessful; to unfold to them the various arts of administration to ensnare and enslave us, and the manner in which we have been cruelly driven to defend by arms those very rights, liberties and estates which we and our forefathers had so long enjoyed unmolested in the reigns of his present Majesty's predecessors. And it is hereby recommended to all Conventions and Assemblies in these colonies liberally to distribute among the people the Proceedings of this and the former Congress, the late speeches of the great patriots in both houses of parliament relative to American grievances, and such other pamphlets and papers as tend to elucidate the merits of the American cause. The Congress being fully persuaded that the more our right to the enjoyment of our antient

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liberties and privileges is examined, the more just and necessary our present opposition to ministerial tyranny will appear.

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

*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the different Assemblies, Conventions, and Committees or Councils of Safety in the United Colonies, by the most speedy and effectual measures to frustrate the mischievous machinations, and restrain the wicked practices of these men. And it is the opinion of this Congress that they ought to be disarmed, and the more dangerous among them either kept in safe custody, or bound with sufficient sureties to their good behaviour.

And in order that the said Assemblies, Conventions, Committees or Councils of Safety may be enabled with greater ease and facility to carry this Resolution into execution,

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

*Resolved*, That all detachments of Continental troops which may be ordered on the business in the foregoing resolution mentioned, be, while so employed, under the direction and controul of the Assemblies Conventions, Committees, or Councils of Safety aforesaid.

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

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

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

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

Extracts from the minutes, **CHARLES THOMPSON**, Secretary.