

IV THE DIE IS CAST

the different provinces; all of which, but especially the last, did enter into many resolves, (in our opinion) highly derogatory to the honour and dignity of our most gracious Sovereign, the supreme legislative authority of Great Britain, and subversive of the legal constitution, good order and government of this country; and which, if adhered to, will in the end probably be productive of the most dreadful calamities, and "*mournful events*," to this country in general, and to those people in particular, who shall obstinately persist in carrying the resolves and associations of the late congress in execution.

Therefore we think it a duty we owe to ourselves, our King, and our country, to declare our disapprobation of the resolves, association, and proceedings of the said late congress, and also of the committees since attempting to carry the same into execution: SUCH resolves and association, with many their concordant circumstances, being, in our opinion, highly illegal, and of ruinous tendency to this country. And, as we never voted or assented to the resolves or proceedings of any town or county meetings, "*except such as by law established*," we do not hold ourselves bound by, or pay any regard or obedience to any resolutions or regulations of any congress or committee whatever; that are inconsistent with our acknowledged allegiance to our most gracious Sovereign, the laws of Great-Britain, or those of the province in which we live: but to these the known laws of the land, we not only know and will cheerfully pay just obedience; but if necessary, will expend our lives and fortunes in defence and support of the same; in opposition to all innovators and disturbers of the public peace and good order of government. NOTHING DOUBTING, but that whatever grievances we labour under, when constitutionally represented by our lawful *Assemblies*, to his Majesty and the British Parliament, they will carefully listened to, and readily removed, if compatible with the general interest of the whole EMPIRE.

1. James Rivington, New York City bookseller and printer, who in April 1773 commenced publication of the *New-York Gazetteer*. Given his conservative temperament and willingness to open the newspaper to writers of all political persuasions at a time when the popular press was dominated by Whigs, Rivington soon came to be regarded as the chief oracle of Tory sentiment. The target of much verbal abuse and a commercial boycott, Rivington fled to Britain after a band of Connecticut radicals destroyed his press in November 1775. He later returned to New York, publishing a paper during the British occupation of the city.

6 The Nottingham Petition to the Legislature

[Manuscript Collection, 70, New Jersey State Library.]

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Despite their firm convictions and deep-seated fears, opponents of the resistance movement were generally unwilling to incur the wrath of the popular front by publicly stating their position. An exception was the petition sent to the legislature by residents of Nottingham Township in Burlington County urging the assemblymen to disavow extralegal proceedings and work for a reconciliation with Great Britain. The remonstrance, signed by members of the Society of Friends, is undoubtedly an accurate reflection of the pacifistic sentiment of the overwhelmingly Quaker community (see Doc. 3).

Jany. 30, 1775

The Petition of the Freeholders Electors of the Township of Nottingham in the County of Burlington Sheweth

That your Petitioners are greatly alarmed at the Unhappy dispute, between Great Britain and her American Colonies, which is now brought to the most Alarming crisis, and in all Probability will Involve this once Happy Country in all the Horrors of a *Civil War*, Unless timely Prevented by the Immediate Interposition of the Legislatures of the Colonies. Happy in our Connection with our parent State, we are Sorry that any Circumstances Should have Interrupted that harmony, and mutual Confidence, which have been productive of Such beneficial Effects to both Countries. We are convinced, that the *Real Interests* of both are Inseperable, and Earnestly wish, that Such Measures may be Adopted, as may tirminate the present Unnatural Di[s]putes, and Reestablish Tranquillity and Union, on a Solid and Constitutional foundation. It is with Pleasure we find Assurances given by his Excellency, of our Sovereign's Disposition to Receive our Representations, and doubt not, but the Representatives of this Province, will embrace so favourable an Oppertunity, of Exerting themselves in Endeavouring to remove the Cause of the Present Distractions, by making to Government, Such Equitable proposals, as may be Honourable for Great Britain to Receive, and Just and Safe for us to Offer. As we Desire Equal securaty and Advantage, from our Connection with Great Britain, with his Majesties Subjects within the Realm, we think it Reasonable to bear (Independent of the Expences of our Internal Government) Some part of the Public Expences necessary for the defence of the Empire, in proportion to our Circumstances and Situation. We could wish that Such a proposal was made, as the basis of a Lasting Reconciliation, and we would Chearfully acqui[e]sce in Such Regulations, as our Representatives may think proper to adopt for that purpose. Such Regulations as have Already been taken, for the Securaty of our Liberties, we will for the Sake of internal quiet faithfully observe, but we Disavow all *Violent Proceedings*, and will Indeavour at all times to Approve our Selves, Loyal Subjects of our Gracious Sovereign, friends to the Liberties of our Country and promoters of peace and good Order. We therefore pray that the Honourable House would please to take the Primisses into their Consideration, and persue Such Measures as they may think proper, and your Petitioners as in duty bound will pray.

[Twenty-one signatures affixed.]