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level where smuggling became unprofitable and legitimate merchants could not compete with East India tea retailers.

2. Printer's insertion.

3. Is "Z" John Lawrence? See Sec. IV, Doc. 1, note 2.

7 The Reverend John Witherspoon, "Thoughts on American Liberty"

[John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* (9 vols., Edinburgh, 1804), 9:73-77. Hereafter *Works of John Witherspoon*.]

The Reverend Dr. John Witherspoon (1723-1794), an ardent Presbyterian and a zealous Whig, maintained discreet public silence on imperial affairs from his appointment to the presidency of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1768 until early 1775. Nonetheless, his personal sentiments were not lost on his associates or students, and the college at Princeton soon became widely recognized as either the paragon of patriotism or the seat of sedition, depending upon one's politics. In 1775 Witherspoon became actively involved in political activities and quickly rose to the forefront of the radical ranks. He unequivocally proclaimed his position to posterity in signing the Declaration of Independence. The undated, unpublished essay that follows was probably written in August—certainly after the New Brunswick meeting of July 21-23 and before the Congress convened on September 5. It succinctly states the position of the more radical Jersey Whigs not only in its uncompromising attitude on the current crisis but also in its decidedly "national" perspective and militancy on the whole matter of Anglo-American relations. Witherspoon is definitely writing here as an American, not as a Jerseyman or a colonial.

[August 1774]

The Congress is, properly speaking, the representative of the great body of the people of North America. Their election is for a particular purpose, and a particular season only; it is quite distinct from the assemblies of the several provinces. What will be before them, is quite different from what was or could be in the view of the electors, when the assemblies are chosen. Therefore those provinces are wrong, who committed it to the assembly as such, to send delegates, though in some provinces, such as Boston and Virginia, and some others, the unanimity of sentiment is such, as to make it the same thing in effect.

It is at least extremely uncertain, whether it could be proper or safe for the Congress to send, either ambassadors, petition or address, directly to king or parliament, or both. They may treat them as a disorderly, unconstitutional meeting

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—they may hold their meeting itself to be criminal—they may find so many objections in point of legal form, that it is plainly in the power of those who wish to be able to do it, to deaden the zeal of the multitude in the colonies, by ambiguous, dilatory, frivolous answers, perhaps severer measures. It is certain that this Congress is different from any regular exertion, in the accustomed forms of a quiet, approved, settled constitution. It is an interruption or suspension of the usual forms, and an appeal to the great law of reason, the first principles of the social union, and the multitude collectively, for whose benefit all the particular laws and customs of a constituted state, are supposed to have been originally established.

There is not the least reason, as yet, to think that either the king, the parliament, or even the people of Great Britain, have been able to enter into the great principles of universal liberty, or are willing to hear the discussion of the point of right, without prejudice. They have not only taken no pains to convince us that submission to their claim is consistent with liberty among us, but it is doubtful whether they expect or desire we should be convinced of it. It seems rather that they mean to force us to be absolute slaves, knowing ourselves to be such by the hard law of necessity. If this is not their meaning, and they wish us to believe that our properties and lives are quite safe in the absolute disposal of the British Parliament, the late acts with respect to Boston, to ruin their capital, destroy their charter, and grant the soldiers a licence to murder them, are certainly arguments of a very singular nature.

Therefore it follows, that the great object of the approaching Congress should be to unite the colonies, and make them as one body, in any measure of self-defence, to assure the people of Great Britain that we will not submit voluntarily, and convince them that it would be either impossible or unprofitable for them to compel us by open violence.

For this purpose, the following resolutions and recommendations are submitted to their consideration:

1. To profess as all the provincial and county rulers have done, our loyalty to the king, and our backwardness to break our connection with Great Britain, if we are not forced by their unjust impositions. Here it may not be improper to compare our past conduct with that of Great Britain itself, and perhaps explicitly to profess our detestation of the virulent and insolent abuse of his majesty's person and family, which so many have been guilty of in that island.

2. To declare, not only that we esteem the claim of the British Parliament to be illegal and unconstitutional, but that we are firmly determined never to submit to it, and do deliberately prefer war with all its horrors, and even extermination itself, to slavery rivetted on us and our posterity.

3. To resolve that we will adhere to the interest of the whole body, and no colony shall make its separate peace, or from the hope of partial distinction, leave others as the victims of ministerial vengeance, but that we will continue united, and pursue the same measures, till American liberty is settled on a solid basis, and in particular, till the now suffering colony of Massachusetts Bay is restored to all the rights of which it has been on this occasion, unjustly deprived.

4. That a non-importation agreement, which has been too long delayed, should be entered into immediately, and at the same time, a general non-consumptive agreement, as to all British goods at least, should be circulated universally through the country, and take place immediately, that those who have retarded the non-importation agreement, may not make a profit to themselves by this injury to their country.

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5. That some of the most effectual measures should be taken to promote, not only industry in general, but manufactures in particular; such as granting premiums in different colonies for manufactures which can be produced in them; appointing public markets for all the materials of manufacture; inviting over and encouraging able manufactures in every branch; and appointing societies in every great city, especially in principal sea-ports, to receive subscriptions for directing and encouraging emigrants who shall come over from Europe, whether manufacturers or labourers, and publishing proposals for this purpose, in the British newspapers.

6. That it be recommended to the legislature of every colony, to put their militia upon the best footing; and to all Americans to provide themselves with arms, in case of a war with the Indians, French or Roman Catholics, or in case they should be reduced to the hard necessity of defending themselves from murder and assassination.

7. That a committee should be appointed to draw up an earnest and affectionate address to the army and navy, putting them in mind of their character as Britons, the reproach which they will bring upon themselves, and the danger to which they will be exposed, if they allow themselves to be in the instruments of enslaving their country.

8. That a plan of union should be laid down for all the colonies, so that, as formerly, they may correspond and ascertain how they shall effectually cooperate in such measures as shall be necessary to their common defence.

8 Samuel Allinson to Patrick Henry

[Letter Book, Allinson Papers, Alexander Library, Rutgers University.]

Predictably the discrepancy between the rhetoric of white colonials who feared enslavement from Britain and the reality of black African slavery in America become increasingly obvious to thinking people. The issue of slavery was not an abstraction to residents of New Jersey. Most of the approximately 8,000 Negroes (12 percent of the population) who lived in the province were slaves, making New Jersey the second largest slave colony (New York was first) north of Maryland. With the increased concern about matters of personal liberty after 1765, New Jersey Quakers, drawing on the tradition established by the famous John Woolman, stepped up their efforts to ameliorate the plight of those in bondage through manumission if not abolition. Formal petitions to the legislature were to no avail, as the assemblymen declined to broach the controversial issue during times of imperial crisis. Undaunted, Friends applied pressure upon men of political influence in the Congress as well as in New Jersey. Representative are the thoughts of Samuel Allinson (see Sec. II, Doc. 3), who in the letter below shrewdly called upon Patrick Henry of Virginia five months before Henry's renowned liberty-or-death speech.