

than from independence. I make the sufferers' case my own, and I protest, that were I driven from house and home, my property destroyed, and my circumstances ruined, that as a man sensible of injuries, I could never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or consider myself bound thereby. . . .

### Our Natural Right

A government of our own is our natural right: and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a constitution of our own, in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. . . .

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the Continent forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the Guardians of his Image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a casual existence were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber and the murderer would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice.

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is over-run with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the Globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

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## VIEWPOINT 13B

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### America Must Seek Reconciliation with Great Britain (1776)

Charles Inglis (1734–1816)

Thomas Paine's famous 1776 work *Common Sense* advocating independence for America inspired sever-

From *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated, in Certain Strictures on a Pamphlet Intituled Common Sense*, by Charles Inglis (Philadelphia, 1776).

al pamphlets rebutting its arguments. The following viewpoint is taken from one such pamphlet, written by Charles Inglis. Inglis, born in Ireland, first arrived in Pennsylvania in 1755 as a missionary to the Mohawk Indians. Ordained an Anglican clergyman in 1758 and assigned to Trinity Church in New York City in 1764, Inglis was a prolific writer of essays who consistently opposed American independence. Inglis's 1776 pamphlet, *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated, in Certain Strictures on a Pamphlet Intituled Common Sense*, begins by listing the advantages Inglis believes the colonies would derive from reconciling with Great Britain. He goes on to list the disadvantages and calamities he believes would result from declaring independence. Inglis was banished to England in 1783 because of his Loyalist views; he later moved to Nova Scotia, Canada, to become its Anglican bishop.

What are the advantages America would gain by remaining under British colonial rule, according to Inglis? What problems does he predict would befall an independent America? How would you summarize the main differences between the beliefs of Inglis and Thomas Paine, author of the opposing viewpoint?

I think it no difficult matter to point out many advantages which will certainly attend our reconciliation and connection with Great Britain on a firm, constitutional plan. I shall select a few of these; and, that their importance may be more clearly discerned, I shall afterward point out some of the evils which inevitably must attend our separating from Britain and declaring for independency. On each article I shall study brevity.

### Preventing War

1. By a reconciliation with Britain, a period would be put to the present calamitous war, by which so many lives have been lost, and so many more must be lost if it continues. This alone is an advantage devoutly to be wished for. This author [Paine] says: "The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'Tis time to part." I think they cry just the reverse. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries: It is time to be reconciled; it is time to lay aside those animosities which have pushed on Britons to shed the blood of Britons; it is high time that those who are connected by the endearing ties of religion, kindred, and country should resume their former friendship and be united in the bond of mutual affection, as their interests are inseparably united.

2. By a reconciliation with Great Britain, peace—that fairest offspring and gift of heaven—will be restored. In one respect peace is like health—we do

not sufficiently know its value but by its absence. What uneasiness and anxiety, what evils has this short interruption of peace with the parent state brought on the whole British Empire! Let every man only consult his feelings—I except my antagonist—and it will require no great force of rhetoric to convince him that a removal of those evils and a restoration of peace would be a singular advantage and blessing.

3. Agriculture, commerce, and industry would resume their wonted vigor. At present, they languish and droop, both here and in Britain; and must continue to do so while this unhappy contest remains unsettled.

### America's Trade

4. By a connection with Great Britain, our trade would still have the protection of the greatest naval power in the world. England has the advantage, in this respect, of every other state, whether of ancient or modern times. Her insular situation, her nurseries for seamen, the superiority of those seamen above others—these circumstances, to mention no other, combine to make her the first maritime power in the universe—such exactly is the power whose protection we want for our commerce. To suppose, with our author, that we should have no war were we to revolt from England is too absurd to deserve a confutation. I could just as soon set about refuting the reveries of some brainsick enthusiast. Past experience shows that Britain is able to defend our commerce and our coasts; and we have no reason to doubt of her being able to do so for the future.

5. The protection of our trade, while connected with Britain, will not cost us a *fiftieth* part of what it must cost were we ourselves to raise a naval force sufficient for the purpose.

6. While connected with Great Britain, we have a bounty on almost every article of exportation; and we may be better supplied with goods by her than we could elsewhere. What our author says is true, "that our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will"; but we may buy them dearer, and of worse quality, in one place than another. The manufactures of Great Britain confessedly surpass any in the world, particularly those in every kind of metal, which we want most; and no country can afford linens and woolens of equal quality cheaper.

7. When a reconciliation is effected, and things return into the old channel, a few years of peace will restore everything to its pristine state. Emigrants will flow in as usual from the different parts of Europe. Population will advance with the same rapid progress as formerly, and our lands will rise in value.

These advantages are not imaginary but real. They are such as we have already experienced; and such as we may derive from a connection with Great Britain

for ages to come. Each of these might easily be enlarged on, and others added to them; but I only mean to suggest a few hints. . . .

### Consequences of Independence

Let us now, if you please, take a view of the other side of the question. Suppose we were to revolt from Great Britain, declare ourselves independent, and set up a republic of our own—what would be the consequence? I stand aghast at the prospect; my blood runs chill when I think of the calamities, the complicated evils that must ensue, and may be clearly foreseen—it is impossible for any man to foresee them all.

Our author cautiously avoids saying anything of the inconveniences that would attend a separation. He does not even suppose that any inconvenience would attend it. Let us only declare ourselves independent, break loose from Great Britain, and, according to him, a paradisiacal state will follow! But a prudent man will consider and weigh matters well before he consents to such a measure—when on the brink of such a dreadful precipice, he must necessarily recoil and think of the consequences before he advances a step forward. Supposing then we declared for independence, what would follow? I answer:

1. All our property throughout the continent would be unhinged; the greatest confusion and most violent convulsions would take place. It would not be here as it was in England at the Revolution in 1688. That Revolution was not brought about by a defeasance or disannulling the right of succession. James II, by abdicating the throne, left it vacant for the next in succession; accordingly, his eldest daughter and her husband stepped in. Every other matter went on in the usual, regular way; and the constitution, instead of being dissolved, was strengthened. But in case of our revolt, the old constitution would be totally subverted. The common bond that tied us together, and by which our property was secured, would be snapped asunder. It is not to be doubted but our Congress would endeavor to apply some remedy for those evils; but, with all deference to that respectable body, I do not apprehend that any remedy in their power would be adequate, at least for some time. I do not choose to be more explicit; but I am able to support my opinion.

2. What a horrid situation would thousands be reduced to who have taken the oath of allegiance to the King; yet, contrary to their oath as well as inclination, must be compelled to renounce that allegiance or abandon all their property in America! How many thousands more would be reduced to a similar situation, who, although they took not that oath, yet would think it inconsistent with their duty and a good conscience to renounce their sovereign. I

dare say these will appear trifling difficulties to our author; but, whatever he may think, there are thousands and thousands who would sooner lose all they had in the world, nay, life itself, than thus wound their conscience. A declaration of independency would infallibly disunite and divide the colonists.

### War Will Lead to Ruin

3. By a declaration for independency, every avenue to an accommodation with Great Britain would be closed; the sword only could then decide the quarrel; and the sword would not be sheathed till one had conquered the other.

The importance of these colonies to Britain need not be enlarged on—it is a thing so universally known. The greater their importance is to her, so much the more obstinate will her struggle be not to lose them. The independency of America would, in the end, deprive her of the West Indies, shake her empire to the foundation, and reduce her to a state of the most mortifying insignificance. Great Britain, therefore, must, for her own preservation, risk everything, and exert her whole strength to prevent such an event from taking place. This being the case,

4. Devastation and ruin must mark the progress of this war along the seacoast of America. Hitherto, Britain has not exerted her power. Her number of troops and ships of war here at present is very little more than she judged expedient in time of peace—the former does not amount to 12,000 men—nor the latter to 40 ships, including frigates. Both she and the colonies hoped for and expected an accommodation; neither of them has lost sight of that desirable object. The seas have been open to our ships; and, although some skirmishes have unfortunately happened, yet a ray of hope still cheered both sides that peace was not distant. But, as soon as we declare for independency, every prospect of this kind must vanish. Ruthless war, with all its aggravated horrors, will ravage our once happy land; our seacoasts and ports will be ruined, and our ships taken. Torrents of blood will be spilled, and thousands reduced to beggary and wretchedness.

This melancholy contest would last till one side conquered. Supposing Britain to be victorious; however high my opinion is of British generosity, I should be exceedingly sorry to receive terms from her in the haughty tone of a conqueror. Or supposing such a failure of her manufactures, commerce, and strength, that victory should incline to the side of America; yet, who can say, in that case, what extremities her sense of resentment and self-preservation will drive Great Britain to? For my part, I should not in the least be surprised if, on such a prospect as the independency of America, she would parcel out this continent to the different European powers. Canada

might be restored to France, Florida to Spain, with additions to each; other states also might come in for a portion. Let no man think this chimerical or improbable. The independency of America would be so fatal to Britain that she would leave nothing in her power undone to prevent it. I believe as firmly as I do my own existence that, if every other method failed, she would try some such expedient as this to disconcert our scheme of independency; and let any man figure to himself the situation of these British colonies, if only Canada were restored to France!

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*“Suppose we were to revolt from Great Britain, declare ourselves independent, and set up a republic of our own. . . .  
I stand aghast at the prospect; my blood runs chill when I think of . . .  
the complicated evils that must ensue.”*

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5. But supposing once more that we were able to cut off every regiment that Britain can spare or hire, and to destroy every ship she can send, that we could beat off any other European power that would presume to intrude upon this continent; yet, a republican form of government would neither suit the genius of the people nor the extent of America.

In nothing is the wisdom of a legislator more conspicuous than in adapting his government to the genius, manners, disposition, and other circumstances of the people with whom he is concerned. If this important point is overlooked, confusion will ensue; his system will sink into neglect and ruin. Whatever check or barriers may be interposed, nature will always surmount them and finally prevail. . . .

### We Are Britons

The Americans are properly Britons. They have the manners, habits, and ideas of Britons; and have been accustomed to a similar form of government. But Britons never could bear the extremes, either of monarchy or republicanism. Some of their kings have aimed at despotism, but always failed. Repeated efforts have been made toward democracy, and they equally failed. Once, indeed, republicanism triumphed over the constitution; the despotism of one person ensued; both were finally expelled. The inhabitants of Great Britain were quite anxious for the restoration of royalty in 1660, as they were for its expulsion in 1642, and for some succeeding years. If we may judge of future events by past transactions, in similar circumstances, this would most probably

be the case of America were a republican form of government adopted in our present ferment. After much blood was shed, those confusions would terminate in the despotism of some one successful adventurer; and should the Americans be so fortunate as to emancipate themselves from that thralldom, perhaps the whole would end in a limited monarchy, after shedding as much more blood. Limited monarchy is the form of government which is most favorable to liberty, which is best adapted to the genius and temper of Britons; although here and there among us a crack-brained zealot for democracy or absolute monarchy may be sometimes found.

Besides the unsuitableness of the republican form to the genius of the people, America is too extensive for it. That form may do well enough for a single city or small territory, but would be utterly improper for such a continent as this. America is too unwieldy for the feeble, dilatory administration of democracy. . . .

It is well known that wages and the price of labor, in general, are much higher in America than in England. Labor must necessarily be dear in every country where land is cheap and large tracts of it unsettled, as is the case here. Hence an American regiment costs us *double* what a British regiment, of equal number, costs Britain. Were it proper to be explicit and descend to particulars, I could evince this past all possibility of doubt; and I appeal for the truth of it to those gentlemen among us who are acquainted with these matters.

### The Costs of Revolution

Where the money is to come from which will defray this enormous annual expense of *three millions* sterling, and all those other debts, I know not; unless the author of *Common Sense*, or some other ingenious projector, can discover the Philosopher's Stone, by which iron and other base metals may be transmuted into gold. Certain I am that our commerce and agriculture, the two principal sources of our wealth, will not support such an expense. The whole of our exports from the Thirteen United Colonies, in the year 1769, amounted only to £2,887,898 sterling; which is not so much, by near half a million, as our annual expense would be were we independent of Great Britain. Those exports, with no inconsiderable part of the profits arising from them, it is well known, centered finally in Britain to pay the merchants and manufacturers there for goods we had imported thence—and yet left us still in debt! What then must our situation be, or what the state of our trade, when oppressed with such a burden of annual expense! When every article of commerce, every necessary of life, together with our lands, must be heavily taxed to defray that expense! . . .

But here it may be said that *all the evils above specified are more tolerable than slavery*. With this sentiment I sincerely agree—any hardships, however great, are preferable to slavery. But then I ask—Is there no other alternative in the present case? Is there no choice left us but slavery, or those evils? I am confident there is; and that both may be equally avoided. Let us only show a disposition to treat or negotiate in earnest—let us fall upon some method to set a treaty or negotiation with Great Britain on foot; and, if once properly begun, there is moral certainty that this unhappy dispute will be settled to the mutual satisfaction and interest of both countries. For my part, I have not the least doubt about it.

It would be improper and needless for me to enlarge on the particulars that should be adjusted at such a treaty. The maturest deliberation will be necessary on the occasion, as well as a generous regard to every part of the Empire. I shall just beg leave to suggest my opinion on a few points—I think America should insist that the claim of parliamentary taxation be either explicitly relinquished, or else such security given as the case will admit, and may be equivalent to a formal relinquishment, that this claim shall not be exerted. When this most important point is gained, America should consider that there is a great difference between having her money wrested from her by others and not giving any of it herself when it is proper to give. While she is protected and shares in the advantages resulting from being a part of the British Empire, she should contribute something for that protection and those advantages; and I never heard a sensible American deny this. Moreover, she should stipulate for such a freedom of trade as is consistent with the general welfare of the State; and that this interesting object be settled in such a manner as to preclude, as much as possible, any impolitic or injurious infringements hereafter. All this may be easily done if both sides are only disposed for peace; and there are many other particulars which would be exceedingly beneficial to America, and might be obtained, as they could not interfere with the interest of Great Britain or any other part of the Empire. We have abundant proof of this, as well as several good hints to proceed on, in the late concessions to Nova Scotia from government. . . .

But a declaration for independency on the part of America would preclude treaty entirely and could answer no good purpose. We actually have already every advantage of independency, without its inconveniences. By a declaration of independency, we should instantly lose all assistance from our friends in England. It would stop their mouths; for, were they to say anything in our favor, they would be deemed rebels and treated accordingly.

Our author is much elated with the prospect of

foreign succor, if we once declare ourselves independent, and from thence promises us mighty matters. This, no doubt, is intended to spirit up the desponding—all who might shrink at the thought of America encountering, singly and unsupported, the whole strength of Great Britain. I believe, in my conscience, that he is as much mistaken in this as in anything else; and that this expectation is delusive, vain, and fallacious. My reasons are these, and I submit them to the reader's judgement:

The only European power from which we can possibly receive assistance is France. But France is now at peace with Great Britain; and is it probable that France would interrupt that peace and hazard a war with the power which lately reduced her so low, from a disinterested motive of aiding and protecting these colonies? . . .

It is well known that some of the French and Spanish colonists, not long since, offered to put themselves under the protection of England and declare themselves independent of France and Spain; but England rejected both offers. The example would be rather dangerous to states that have colonies—to none could it be more so than to France and Spain, who have so many and such extensive colonies. "The practice of courts are as much against us" in this as in the instance our author mentions. Can anyone imagine that, because we declared ourselves independent of England, France would *therefore* consider us as really independent! And before England had acquiesced, or made any effort worth mentioning to reduce us? Or can anyone be so weak as to think that France would run the risk of a war with England, unless she (France) were sure of some extraordinary advantage by it, in having the colonies under her *immediate jurisdiction*? If England will not protect us for our trade, surely France will not. . . .

### A Blessed Country

America is far from being yet in a desperate situation. I am confident she may obtain honorable and advantageous terms from Great Britain. A few years of peace will soon retrieve all her losses. She will rapidly advance to a state of maturity whereby she may not only repay the parent state amply for all past benefits but also lay under the greatest obligations.

America, till very lately, has been the happiest country in the universe. Blessed with all that nature could bestow with the profusest bounty, she enjoyed, besides, more liberty, greater privileges than any other land. How painful is it to reflect on these things, and to look forward to the gloomy prospects now before us! But it is not too late to hope that matters may mend. By prudent management her former happiness may again return; and continue to increase

for ages to come, in a union with the parent state.

However distant humanity may wish the period, yet, in the rotation of human affairs, a period may arrive when (both countries being prepared for it) some terrible disaster, some dreadful convulsion in Great Britain may transfer the seat of empire to this Western Hemisphere—where the British constitution, like the Phoenix from its parent's ashes, shall rise with youthful vigor and shine with redoubled splendor.

But if America should now mistake her real interest—if her sons, infatuated with romantic notions of conquest and empire, ere things are ripe, should adopt this republican's scheme—they will infallibly destroy this smiling prospect. They will dismember this happy country, make it a scene of blood and slaughter, and entail wretchedness and misery on millions yet unborn.

### For Further Reading

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## Creating a New Government

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### VIEWPOINT 14A

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### A Republican Form of Government Is Best (1776)

John Adams (1735–1826)

When the United States declared independence from Great Britain in 1776, the former British colonies faced the task of creating new constitutional governments at the state and national levels. One of the most important figures in this process was John Adams, a lawyer from Massachusetts. Adams, first identified with the revolutionary cause when he wrote a series of resolutions condemning the Stamp Act in 1765, became a forceful advocate for indepen-

*From Thoughts on Government, In a Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend by John Adams (Boston, 1776). Reprinted in The Works of John Adams, vol. 4, edited by Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Little, Brown, 1854).*