

## **Political/Intellectual Document 1: Edmund Burke, Radical Whig, MP, 1776**

“...Their governments are popular in a high degree; some are merely popular; in all, the popular representative is the most weighty; and this share of the people in their ordinary government never fails to inspire them with lofty sentiments, and with a strong aversion from whatever tends to deprive them of their chief importance...”

“...I do not mean to commend either the spirit in this excess, or the moral causes which produce it. Perhaps a more smooth and accommodating spirit of freedom in them would be more acceptable to us. Perhaps ideas of liberty might be desired, more reconcilable with an arbitrary and boundless authority. Perhaps we might wish the colonists to be persuaded, that their liberty is more secure when held in trust for them by us (as their guardians during a perpetual minority) than with any part of it in their own hands...”

“...In order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties, we are every day endeavouring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself; and we never seem to gain a paltry advantage over them in debate, without attacking some of those principles, or deriding some of those feelings, for which our ancestors have shed their blood...”

### **Source:**

#### **The Founders' Constitution**

Volume 1, Chapter 1, Document 2

<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch1s2.html>

The University of Chicago Press

*The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*. 6 vols. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854--56.

## **Political/Intellectual Document 2: Richard Price, Welsh Preacher, Philosopher, and Pamphleteer , 1776**

### Sect. II Whether the War with America is Justified by the Principles of the Constitution

I have proposed, in the next place, to examine the war with the Colonies by the principles of the constitution. I know that it is common to say that we are now maintaining the constitution in America. If this means that we are endeavouring to establish our own constitution of government there, it is by no means true, nor, were it true, would it be right. They have chartered governments of their own, with which they are pleased and which, if any power on earth may change without their consent, that power may likewise, if it thinks proper, deliver them over to the Grand Seignior. Suppose the colonies of France had, by compacts, enjoyed for many years free governments open to all the world, under which they had grown and flourished; what should we think of that kingdom, were it to attempt to destroy their governments and to force upon them its own mode of government? Should we not applaud any zeal they discovered in repelling such an injury? But the truth is, in the present instance, that we are not maintaining but violating our own constitution in America. The essence of our constitution consists in its independency. There is in this case no difference between subjection and annihilation. Did, therefore, the Colonies possess governments perfectly the same with ours, the attempt to subject them to ours would be an attempt to ruin them. A free government loses its nature from the moment it becomes liable to be commanded or altered by any superior power.

In a word, this is a war undertaken not only against the principles of our own constitution, but on purpose to destroy other similar constitutions in America, and to substitute in their room a military force. It is, therefore, a gross and flagrant violation of the constitution.

#### **Source:**

*Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America.*

AVAIL: [http://www.constitution.org/price/price\\_3.htm](http://www.constitution.org/price/price_3.htm)

### **Political/Intellectual Document 3: James Fox, Radical Whig, MP, May 30, 1781**

“...It is not a war with an independent enemy in which you are engaged, but an attempt to quash a rebellion, to subdue an insurrection. By an Act of Parliament, no Massachusetts trader dare come into any of your harbours. Can peace be restored without repealing that Act? And can that Act be repealed without the authority of Parliament? The present hostilities commended in consequence of the Prohibitory Act, as it was called, passed in the year 1776. It was that Act that made the war with America. We were, therefore, very differently situated with America than we were with France and Spain. The Crown had never made war with her, but the war was brought on by an Act of Parliament, which Act of Parliament must necessarily be repealed...”

“...there is not one point in dispute between Great Britain and America that can be settled by the Crown, without the consent of Parliament – not one point... The rebels in America were declared so by an Act of Parliament; and through the whole course of the contest this position had been held, that against the authority of the British legislature they were contending; surely, then, it was not competent in the Crown to decide on the privileges of Parliament...”

“... the American war [will] never end while the present system [continues]; but that the moment that system should be changed, the good of both countries would be consulted. ... the American war [is] as unjust in its principle and as absurd in its prosecution, as it [is] ruinous in its consequences...”

#### **Source:**

*Speeches of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox in the House of Commons.*

A response to Mr. Hartley's Motion for a Bill to restore Peace with America p. 84-92.

[http://books.google.com/books?vid=OCLC12546677&id=4EEJiAHWgk8C&printsec=toc&dq=%22charles+james+fox%22&sig=\\_FA0tp0o4IO7in3jHt\\_GuqGajZY#v=onepage&q=%22charles%20james%20fox%22&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?vid=OCLC12546677&id=4EEJiAHWgk8C&printsec=toc&dq=%22charles+james+fox%22&sig=_FA0tp0o4IO7in3jHt_GuqGajZY#v=onepage&q=%22charles%20james%20fox%22&f=false)