

O THE GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS.

[MS., Samuel Adams Papers, Lenox Library; a text is in Massachusetts Archives, and also in W. V. Wells, Life of Samuel Adams, vol. iii., pp. 98, 99]

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY Jany 5th 1780

SIR

The General Assembly of this State, conceiving that great Evil may arise to the United States, from permitting Persons inimical to our Common Cause, to reside within them; And having Reason to apprehend, that certain Persons who by an Act of Government have been excluded from this State, are meditating a Design to obtain a Residence in the State of Rhode Island, have thought it necessary to address you on the Subject, and to request that you would be pleas'd to communicate their Sentiments to your General Assembly.

It is, in the Opinion of this Assembly, highly criminal for a Citizen to be an indifferent Spectator of the Miseries of his Country -- much more so, to desert her while struggling for her Liberty -- and still more, to seek Refuge in the very Time of her Conflict in the Arms of her cruel & inveterate Enemies. It cannot then be thought strange, that those who love and reverence their Country, feel an Indignation against the Men, who have held her Safety, her Liberty & her Honor at so cheap a Rate.

The Injury which this State unavoidably sustain'd from the Arts of too many internal Enemies, hath been a sufficient Caution against receiving into her own Bosom, those who have withdrawn their Persons and their Aid in the Time of Danger & Distress; & there is less Reason for others to expect Favor and Forgiveness, who having basely betrayed such a Diffidence in the Wisdom and Fortitude of their Country and the righteous Cause she is contending for, have imagin'd themselves more secure, under the Power of its Invaders, and fled to them for Protection.

It is indeed much to be regretted, that the greatest Vigilance is insufficient to detect the most virulent Enemies of the publick Liberty in every Instance, and bring them to condign Punishment. This Government, however, hath taken every Measure which Prudence dictated, to effect so necessary a Purpose. Notorious offenders have been proscribed by the Laws, and forbidden to return from their voluntary and shameful Exile. Mutual Interest as well as mutual Friendship most strongly remonstrate against such Persons being permitted to reside within any of the Sister States. While we are embark'd in the same Cause; While we are actuated by the same Principles and Views; While we partake of the same publick Feeling, and are confederated for the same great Purpose of mutual Safety and Defence; Honor and Justice forbid us to entertain a Suspicion, that the State of Rhode Island would afford Shelter & Protection to those, who have forfeited the Rights of Citizens in the United States.

In the Name & Behalf of the General Assembly

I am &c,

Source: <http://www.fullbooks.com/The-Original-Writings-of-Samuel-Adams-Volume4.html>