

Documents from the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, 1774-1789
(Library of Congress)

Denunciation of American Loyalists by the Continental Congress

IN CONGRESS, APRIL 23, 1778.

WHEREAS Persuasion and Influence, the Example of the Deluded or Wicked, the Fear of Danger, or the Calamities of War, may have induced some of the Subjects of these States to join, aid or abet the *British Forces in America*, and who, tho' now desirous of returning to their Duty, and anxiously wishing to be received and reunited to their Country, may be deterred by the Fear of Punishment: And whereas the People of these States are ever more ready to reclaim than to abandon, to mitigate than to increase the Horrors of War, to pardon than to punish Offenders:

RESOLVED, That it be recommended to the Legislatures of the several States to pass Laws, or to the Executive Authority of each State, if invested with sufficient Power, to issue Proclamations, offering Pardon, with such Exceptions, and under such Limitations and Restrictions as they shall think expedient, to such of their Inhabitants or Subjects, as have levied War against any of these States, or adhered to, aided or abetted the Enemy, and shall surrender themselves to any Civil or Military Officer of any of these States, and shall return to the State to which they may belong before the 10th Day of *June* next. And it is recommended to the good and faithful Citizens of these States to receive such returning Penitents with Compassion and Mercy, and to forgive and bury in Oblivion their past Failings and Transgressions.

Extract from the Minutes,
Charles Thomson, Secretary.

YORK-TOWN: PRINTED BY HALL AND SELLERS.

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Evans 16119