

TO ARTHUR LEE.

[Ms., Samuel Adams Papers, Lenox Library.]

BOSTON April 19 1771.

SIR

Your Letter of the 31 Dec, which I received, by Cap Scott a few days past affords me great Satisfaction; especially as it promises a Correspondence which I dare say will be carried on with an Openness & Sincerity becoming those who are anxiously concerned for the *publick Liberty* at so alarming a Crisis.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps there never was a time when the political Affairs of America were in a more dangerous State; Such is the Indolence of Men in general, or their Inattention to the real Importance of things, that a steady & animated perseverance in the rugged path of Virtue at the hazard of trifles (*1800's def. – to talk or act frivolously*) is hardly to be expected. The Generality are necessarily engaged in Application to private Business for the Support of their own families (*modern perspective – the majority of the people are engaged in daily life at work and home to provide for their families*) and when at a lucky Season the publick are awakened to a Sense of Danger, & (*then*) a manly resentment is enkindled, it is difficult, for so many separate Communities as there are in all the Colonies (*modern perspective: the United States*), to agree in one consistent plan of Opposition while those who are the appointed Instruments of Oppression (*modern perspective: Those elected that do not follow the Constitution and the Constitutions of the States*), have all the Means put into their hands (*modern perspective: have the financial resources and assumed power*), of applying to the passions of Men (*modern perspective: manipulating the media to work on emotions*) & availing themselves of the Necessities of some, the Vanity of others & the timidity of all (*modern perspective: receiving favors form lobbyist and giving in to special interests, listening to academics and oligarchs that are prideful – not adhering to the Constitution and a lack of confidence and courage of the general population*).

I have long thought that a Design (*modern perspective: a plot or plan*) has been on foot to render ineffectual the Democratical part of this Government, even before the province was cursed with the Appointment of Bernard (*modern perspective: elected progressive/socialist/fascist / oligarchical persons that do not respect the Constitution*), and so unguarded have the people been in former times, so careless in the Choice of their representatives as to send too many who either through Ignorance or Wickedness have favored that Design (*modern perspective: a plot or plan*). Of late the lower house of Assembly have been more sensible of this Danger &

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<sup>1</sup> On January 10, 1771, Lee wrote to Adams: Our friend Mr. Sayre has done me the favour of communicating to me your very obliging invitation to a correspondence."-R. H. Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, vol. I., p. 249.

supported in some Measure their own Weight, which has alarmed the Conspirators and been in my opinion the true Source of Bernard's (*modern perspective: the present Senate and minority Congressional members*) Complaint against them as having set up a faction against the Kings Authority (*modern perspective: the present OB Administration*). The 4 Judges of the Supreme Court, the Secretary & the Kings Attorney who had been Councillors were left out at the annual Election in 1766 (*modern perspective: a new administration can replace four Justices, the Secretary of State and the Attorney General*); this gave great offence to the Governor (*modern perspective: the Democratic Administration & Senate Majority*), and was followed with two Speeches to both Houses perhaps as infamous & irritating as ever came from a Stuart to the English parliament.<sup>2</sup> Happy indeed it was for the Province that such a Man was at the Head of it, for it occasioned such a Jealousy & Watchfulness in the people as prevented their immediate & total Ruin. (*modern perspective: The People came awake to the reality that their Liberties were at stake and desired to retain them above everything else. The People became alert to holding the elected and bureaucrats accountable to the Constitution and the rule of law.*)

The plan (*the plot*) however is still carried on though in a Manner somewhat different; and that is by making the Governor altogether independent of the People for his Support; this is depriving the House of Representatives of the only Check they have upon him & must consequently render them the Objects of the Contempt of a Corrupt Administration. (*modern perspective: giving the president full authority to appoint bureaucratic heads without Senate approval.*) **Thus the peoples Money being first taken from them without their Consent, is appropriated for the Maintenance of a Governor** (*modern perspective: growth of agencies, czars and political appointies*) **and at the Discretion of one in the Kingdom of Great Britain upon whom he absolutely depends for his Support** (*modern perspective: by the president*). **If this be not a Tyranny I am at a Loss to conceive what a Tyranny is.** The House of Representatives did a few days since, grant the Governor (*modern perspective: the presidential administration*) the usual Sum for his Support and it is expected that this Matter will be made certain upon his refusal of it. The Governor of New York was explicit at the late Session of their Assembly, upon the like Occasion: But I confess I should not be surprised if our good Governor, should accept the Grant & discount it out of what he is to receive out of the Kings Chest; thinking it will be conceived by the Minister as highly meritorious in him, in thus artfully concealing his Independency (for the Apprehension of it is alarming to the people) & saving 1000 Pounds sterling of the revenue at the same time. (*modern perspective: This was the issue of double dipping in that the King was responsible for paying and ensuring that the colonial governor was paid and*

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<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I., pages 79, 83.

*received a retirement. The issue became that the people in the colonies were being forced to pay for the Kings responsibility.)*

While the Representative Body of the people is thus rendered a mere Name, it is . . . considered that the other Branch of the Legislative though annually elective, is at the same time subject to the Governors Negative: A Consideration which I doubt not has its full Weight in the minds of some of them at least, whenever any Matter comes before them which they can possibly think will affect the Measures of Administration. You will easily conjecture how far this may tend to annihilate that Branch or produce Effects more fatal. *(modern perspective: This would be exactly what is happening in 20012 with the Democratic Senate being the extended arm of the president while the House is attempting to act somewhat Constitutionally for the proper role of government. The caveat is that many of the Republicans are no different then the socialist Democrats. This was true in Samuel Adams day with the Tories / Loyalist.)*

It seems then that we are in effect to be under the absolute Government of one Man - ostensibly the Governor of the province *(modern perspective: the present 2012, president of the US)* but in Reality some other person residing in Great Britain *(modern perspective: CFR, international bankers, oligarchs and the United Nations)*, whose Instructions the Governor *(modern perspective: the president, progressive/liberal state governors & progressive/liberal politicians)* must punctually observe upon pain of forfeiting his place. So that any little advantage that might now & then arise from his happening to form Connections with wise Men in the province are totally lost. As Matters are now circumstanced he must associate with Pensioners, Commissioners of the Customs Officers of the Army & Navy, Tools Sycophants and who together with him are to make such representations as to them shall seem meet, and jointly if Occasion shall require it, execute such Orders as they shall from time to time receive. Such is to be the happy Government of ~~free British Subjects~~ in America. I will however do Governor Hutchinson the Justice to say that though he may<sup>3</sup> . . yet he has a very natural Connection with some of the principal Gentlemen Inhabitants of the province for his Excellencys own Brother is a Justice of the Superior Court, & also a Judge of the probate of Wills & he has also a Brother by marriage upon the same superior Bench. Moreover the Lt Governor is his Brother by marriage who has an own Brother & a Brother by marriage who are justices of the Superior Court. As these Gentlemen are Natives of the province it is hoped the Channells of Justice will

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<sup>3</sup> At this point the words "mar a State of Absolute Independency in both Houses of Assembly" are erased in the draft.

remain unpolluted notwithstanding his Excellencys other Connections. (*modern perspective: potentials for collusion and surely this is nepotism.*)