

Introduction to Committees of Safety

Mayflower Compact

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are under-written, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine our selves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the eleventh of November [New Style, November 21], in the year of the reign of our sovereign lord, King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Dom. 1620. [41 signatories]

Committees of Safety, or like elements, existed throughout the history of colonial America. Though known by various names (Committees of Protection, Associations, or, as the case in Plymouth Colony, an unnamed civil body politic, and, in Jamestown, simply governing council), they had the characteristic of being a civil government absent a government established by the sovereign.

In the early eighteenth century, Committees of Safety were quite common, especially on the frontiers, where the possibility of Indian attacks were likely. The Committee would appoint watchmen, hog reeves, fence reeves, and, militia officers. These are functions that were taken on by more organized governments, in some towns, though were common through most of the colonies, leading up to the War of Independence.

Committees served, primarily, to fill in gaps that were left by existing colonial and county governments, providing services that were otherwise unavailable.

As tensions grew between the colonists and the Crown government in England, the need for Committees increased, especially in western Massachusetts and South Carolina. After the Massachusetts Government Act (May 20, 1774), which revoked the Massachusetts Charter and replace the locally elected governments with appointments by the King, the farmers in western Massachusetts began forming Committee to assure a continuity of government and to take charge in expelling courts and judges who were not abiding by the original charter, and replacing them with their owns courts, though primarily only for criminal matters.

There were sufficient numbers of Committees in most of the colonies to call for the First Continental Congress, in 1774. These Committees were not subject to Royal governance,

because, quite simply, to call for such a Congress would have been a contradiction of their authority granted by the various charters. Subsequently, the Second and Third Continental Congress were called by the Committees, which by this time, had evolved to the point where sufficient numbers of participating Committees established a Provincial Committee of Safety.

Committees of Safety continued to operate as functions of local government throughout the War of Independence, until each state adopted a Constitution, or otherwise revised their form of government, absent any Royal control. Once the Article of Confederation were instituted (1781), the need for the Committees, except, once again, in the frontiers, diminished, as did the Committees.

Their next occurrence was in 1835, when President Santa Anna abolished the Constitution of 1824, granting himself enormous powers over the government. Colonists in Texas began forming Committees of Correspondence and Safety. A central Committee in San Felipe de Austin coordinated their activities. This de facto government waged the revolution against Mexico, directing and supplying the militia, until independence was won.

A Brief History of Committees of Safety in America

Cambridge April 29, 1775

This may certify that the bearer, Mr. Paul Revere is messenger to the Committee of Safety and that all dispatch and assistance be given him in Instances that the business of the Colony may be facilitated. - Jos. Warren, Chair.

Committees of Safety existed prior to 1692 and were called by various names. The Committee which was created, in that year, in New York is significant in that it was created by the militia. The colonists were dissatisfied with the government of the Crown. headed by Governor Sir Edmund Andros. Recognizing that the military (militia) authority must always be subordinate to the civil authority, and having serious concern over the abusive authority imposed by Andros, the militia of New York created their own civil authority in the form of the Committee of Safety.

Representation on the Committee was based upon two delegates being selected by the citizenry to represent each community. The delegates gathered and exercised their authority by, eventually, imprisoning Governor Andros for a period of one year.

On and off, many communities, colonies and provinces exercised their right of "self government" by establishing Committees as the need arose. The practice became even more common after the French and Indian Wars of 1756-1758. The Crown had imposed a number of new taxes on the colonies. It was felt that since the French and Indian Wars were in defense of the colonies, the burden of the enormous expense should be borne by the colonists. Of course, few colonists agreed.

As the taxes were increased (even though the colonies would never be able to pay the costs and interest), the demand by the colonists for the "rights of Englishmen" were raised. The Parliament had virtually no direct representation from the colonies, although there were some members of the House of Commons who were sympathetic with the colonies.

Each effort by the Crown to raise taxes resulted in the colonies refusing to purchase the goods taxed to raise the revenue. This caused the Crown to impose even more taxes, or replace those that had failed to return the revenue.

Finally, the Coercive Acts¹ of 1774 caused sufficient concern in the colonies to prompt action. Those communities that had formed Committees sent delegates to the colony or province level in order to respond to the call from the Boston Committee for a Continental Congress. In September, 1774, nine colonies responded to the call and met in Philadelphia to join in actions to counter the increasing imposition of arbitrary control by Britain.

Although during the course of colonial history many Committees of Safety were formed and operated under British government, frequently their actions were outside of the authority granted. They frequently co-existed alongside the "authorized" government of the Crown, creating a parallel government which was the direct representation of the people as opposed to the legitimate government of the Crown.

These "parallel" governments formed the nexus that would come together again in June, 1776, comprised of representatives of all thirteen colonies, to form the Second Continental Congress. The outcome of this second congress was the Declaration of Independence.

The Coercive Acts were a number of enactments passed by the British Parliament which closed Boston's Harbor, placed Massachusetts under close British rule and extended Canada's boundaries South into lands which the American colonists believed to be their western extension.

The Committee of Safety Concept

"Resolved unanimously, As our opposition to the settled plan of the British administration to enslave America will be strengthened by a union of all ranks of men in this province, we do most earnestly recommend that all former differences about religion or politics, and all private animosities and quarrels of every kind, from henceforth cease and be forever buried in oblivion; and we entreat, we conjure every man by his duty to God, his country, and his posterity, cordially to unite in defense of our common rights and liberties."

- Resolution of the Maryland Deputies, December 12, 1774

The concept of committees of safety was the forerunner of that principle of government implemented by the states and the federal government. Each committee would delegate its representatives to go to the next higher level, and carry with it the will of the people. Within each group there were chairmen selected to act as conciliator to the delegation. His purpose was not to rule, dictate or control the meetings, with the exception of providing order and purpose. Most often, he may have been denied the right to vote to compensate for what additional power he might have as chairman. In Boston, for example, a rather meek and mild Doctor John Warren was chairman of the Boston Committee of Safety. He provided order at the meetings, and otherwise carried out his duties as the administrator of the will of the people.

Since those times, we have subordinated our individual thought process to one which might be best described as "corporate mentality", where the chairman is usually chief executive officer

(CEO) and wields an unnatural (but, then, what is a corporation?) authority. His word is assumed "law", and until he is replaced, he is the power.

"The fabric of American empire ought to rest on the solid basis of THE CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE. The stream of national power ought to flow immediately from that pure, original fountain of all legitimate authority."

- Alexander Hamilton, Federalist Papers #22

What has to be understood if the concept of Committee of Safety becomes a tool in our efforts to return to constitutional government, is that the authority of the people be recognized above all else. All "enactments" should come from that source, and finally be approved by that source. Any executive committee actions should be for their ministerial nature, only. The corporate pyramid must be turned over and recognized in its proper light, that the people are at the top, just under God. Next comes the committee of safety, and its various sub-committees, which function as the source defined by interest, to generate "enactments". Finally come the delegates, chairmen, and executive committee whose only purpose is to facilitate the orderly determination of the will of the people, and provide the means to implement that will.

The Committee of Safety concept, in order to operate in a manner which is suggested by history, must operate as committees and the Committee of the Whole. It must never operate as a "star chamber" or an executive authority under the current concept. It must never operate as a corporation, for a corporate interest might not be the same as the employees or the owners, except if its goal is strictly profit. This is not the goal of the Committee of Safety. The goal that is sought to be achieved is that the will of the people be carried out by those who have sought to assist in that administration, not by those who seek to control that will.

Are Committees of Safety A Historical Answer to Today's Problems?

The Right to speech and assembly also includes the right to associate, freely, with those of like mind. Guilt by association, although sometimes evident in today's judicial system, is an inherent right without the authority of any government, but guaranteed to be protected by the government, by order of the Constitution; in the First Amendment, which prohibits federal enactments that would limit that Right; and, Article I, Section 8, clause 17, which is outside the jurisdiction of federal authority; Article I, Section 10, clause 1, which prohibits any state from passing any "Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts", which is the nature of any association; Articles IX, Bill of Rights, "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people;" and, Article X, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Although nearly every community, circa 1760-1780, had an association, the wording of the Albany Association is still available to us. The Albany Committee was established prior to the First Continental Congress. This General Association was executed in 1775. It was signed by all members of the association at the time. It might provide us an understanding of the necessity for establishing an association of like minded people for the purpose of furthering the discussion of solutions to the problem. The original Albany version:

GENERAL ASSOCIATION

A General Association agreed to and subscribed by the Members of the several Committees of the City and County of Albany.

PERSUADED that the salvation of the Rights and Liberties of America depends under God on the firm Union of it's Inhabitants, in a Vigorous prosecution of the Measures necessary for it's Safety; and convinced of the necessity of preventing the Anarchy and Confusion, which attend a Dissolution of the Powers of Government

WE the Freemen, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the City and County of Albany being greatly Alarmed at the avowed Design of the Ministry, to raise a Revenue in America; and shocked by the Bloody Scene now acting in the Massachusetts Bay Do in the most Solemn Manner resolve never to become Slaves; and do associate under all the Ties of Religion, Honour, and Love to our Country, to adopt and endeavour to carry into Execution whatever Measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention for the purpose of preserving our Constitution, and opposing the Execution of the several Arbitrary and oppressive Acts of the British Parliament until a Reconciliation between Great Britain and America on Constitutional Principles (which we most ardently desire) can be obtained; And that we will in all things follow the Advice of our General Committee respecting the purpose aforesaid, the preservation of Peace and good Order and the safety if Individuals and private Property.

What role could Committees of Safety play in today's world?

Events such as Katrina, as well as the possibility of man caused disasters, are potential threats to the security, safety, and well-being of our families.

If a Committee existed in your community, and you were a member, then your family is also a member. Suppose there was some sort of event that affected food supply, utilities, water, or otherwise threatened your safety. You have in place, through the Committee, a cooperative with which to share needed resources. Though short lived in Plymouth Colony and Jamestown, this "cooperative" served quite well for survival in a hostile land, for the first few years. It also allowed the sharing of crops in the frontier towns and agricultural communities, in later colonial times, when Indian raids, or weather, destroyed crops, which would leave those affected short of food, had their neighbors (fellow Committee members) not shared with them what food was available.

In the aftermath of Katrina, if a Committee existed in a consolidated area (a community), and sent a representative to the local law enforcement with the message, "we will provide our own protection in our area", describing the limits of the area protected by the Committee, it would make sense the law enforcement would be relieved that their job was made easier based upon the Committee relieving them of a substantial area that might otherwise require their patrolling.

The Committee would be a resource for such eventualities, and would be an ideal place from which to gain recognition by launching programs to help those in need. Roof repairs, painting, yard maintenance, etc., for those unable to care for their own property. This would encourage

friendship, appeal to potential members, improve the quality of the neighborhood, and set the Committee out as supportive of the neighborly attitude that prevailed in this country, many decades ago. This would result in reduced crime, safer streets and communities, and, a reaffirmation of our rights, freedoms, and liberty.

Committees of Safety are quite able to fill in where government fails to provide, at least for those who see the need, join, and, participate in, Committees of Safety.

A Thought on Leadership

One of the most important tools utilized by those who have sought to take our freedoms and our country from us is the control of public education. By these means they have been able to remove aspects of our history which would have enabled us to both perceive and deal with the problems of today long before now.

We have a group of leaders in the Patriot Community, many whom have proclaimed their position by methods of public relations which are founded on promulgation of sensationalism. Perhaps their positions are merited, yet if we look at history, we will find that these are not the means by which leaders were selected two hundred years ago.

Jefferson, Adams, Washington, Henry and the rest of those who gave us the nation we seek to restore today were well established in their respective communities, and recognized by their efforts to be men of sincerity. Their efforts extended, in most cases, over many years of guidance to their neighbors. The respect that was earned by these efforts, and their willingness to represent the will of the people, propelled them into the delegations which formulated the course that the colonies would pursue.

Would it be possible for the government to anticipate the desire of the Patriot Community to return to Constitutional government, and send agents into the community to infiltrate, say what patriots want to hear and acquire a position of leadership?

By what we know, the One World Government people have achieved this very goal in our Congress, Courts and even in the Presidency.

Are we foolish enough to allow the same to happen to us?

The War of 1812 was first declared by the British. The President sent to the Congress a Declaration of War which gave six reasons for which he requested the Congress to agree that a state of war existed. The Declaration was approved by the House on June 4, 1812 and the Senate on June 18. Of the six causes for war, probably the most significant is the fifth, which reads:

"Fifthly. Employing secret agents within the United States, with a view to subvert our government, and dismember our union."

The selection of members of the community who have proven themselves to those they know and live with as local leaders will minimize the possibility of infiltration by those who might otherwise have objectives different than our own. Under the scrutiny of their neighbors, their true self will be much more apparent. Their positions will not have been achieved by expertise in promotion, rather by the efforts they have expended in the cause.

It should be understood that when seeking our "leaders", we should look to those who ask questions, listen to the answers, and seek to understand others rather than to attempt to impose their will on others. The outspoken advocates are suited for private associations which are gathered for specific purposes, but are absolutely unsuitable for the form of government our Founders granted to their posterity.

Some Thoughts about Our Representative Form of Government

After the War of Independence, each state was allowed to maintain, under its Constitution, the method for selection or election of representatives which best suited their respective forms of government. The Constitution was modeled after the most common forms in existence in 1787. Thus, from that great document, we have some insight into what method was utilized most often.

If we look at the Constitution closely, there are provisions whose meanings have been lost. Article IV, Section 4, for example, provides that "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government,..." There was a limitation of thirty thousand people for each representative (Article I, Section 2, clause 3), and two senators were to represent each State (Article I, Section 3, clause 1), and each State's interest. These three concepts have since been obscured by our controlled educational system. When one reads the words of the Founding Fathers, the significance of these matters becomes clear.

The Union was of the states. Each State was a country which had chosen to subordinate only certain aspects of its authority to federal powers. To protect the authority of the state in respect to the Union, the senators were selected by the respective state legislatures to protect the interest of the state (states rights). Although we have been led to believe that a state is merely a geographic entity in the country called the United States, we can see that, within the last decade, the Congress perceived the relationship in another way. In the Laws of the 100th Congress - 2nd Session, Public Law (P.L.) 100-702, 297 (b), it makes quite clear that as recently as 1988 each of the states was recognized by the federal government to be a "country". These countries, however, have been denied their proper representation by the ratification (if valid) of the Seventeenth Amendment in 1913 (the same year we "acquired" the Federal Reserve Act and the "income tax" {Sixteenth} Amendment).

The representation of no than more thirty thousand people by a member of the House of Representatives has been modified by legislative acts, not by way of a Constitutional amendment (as required by the Constitution). At the present time there are over 400,000 people represented by each Representative. This is a result of the imposition of a limitation of 435 representatives, which violates the concept of the Founders. Instead, we have a system in which votes are bought (by entitlement programs and through massive advertising campaigns) without regard to the delegation of the interests of the constituents, as would be true if the thirty thousand limit were recognized.

If we look at these two issues with an insight into some of the concepts understood at the time of the War of Independence, we can find that there was good cause for these restrictions on government. The concept of government, as envisioned then, and which satisfies the primary criteria of "Republican Form", is based upon delegation. Each community would delegate

representatives to the next higher sitting authority. This process is applied in each state, and those delegates became the state legislatures, which, in turn, delegate two senators to represent the interests of the state in the United States Senate.

The representatives were delegated by thirty thousand (small enough to allow personal knowledge of the delegate prior to selection, and not subject to "media" control). Perhaps another level in this process would allow representation at thirty thousand, and subsequent delegation at a state level which would accommodate the 435-member limitation.

Finally comes the Electoral College. This concept has been in place since the Constitution (Article II, Section 1, clause 1) was ratified, and was also based upon delegation. Each state selected delegates equal in number to the number of senators and representatives from that state. These "electors" were the delegates of the states who carried the wishes of their constituents to the process of selecting the President, who, as the executive, was not the leader, or the lawmaker, rather the administrator who would carry out the will of the people as directed by the Congress through their enactments. Now this "electoral college" is controlled by the primary parties (Democrats and Republicans), and has been removed as a part of our Republican Form of Government.

We have, since the time of the Founders, seen a gradual but persistent effort to replace the role of President with that of a monarch, with some limitations on power, which is surprisingly similar to what was then true in England. The arbitrary authority of President was not conceived to exist by the Founders, except in times of national emergency, and this only because of the expediency of timely decision making ability to deal with an emergency.

The leaders of those times were men who had earned their positions, and were appointed by the people. When they achieved that position of leadership, they subordinated themselves to the will of the people. The inherent authority of the people permeated the entire structure of government in those early days. The people spoke, and their delegates, or representatives listened.