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## Continental Congress – The Plans of Counter Demands



The Prayer in the First Congress, A.D. 1774. The Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, Chaplain, U.S. House of Representatives.

### The First Continental Congress: The Patriots React To The Intolerable Acts

#### September to October 1774

As the name suggests, the Intolerable Acts were not received well among the colonies. Before the shots were fired at Lexington and Concord, the colonies made an attempt to settle the concerns and frustrations raised with the Intolerable Acts through debate and discussion. Thus, the **First Continental Congress** was called to order on September 5th, 1774. 55 colonial representatives, including famous Patriots like John Adams, Samuel Adams, George Washington, and Patrick Henry, from twelve colonies met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to formulate a plan of action. Georgia was the only colony that did not send representatives. Virginia's representative, Peyton Randolph, was elected president of the First Continental Congress. It was decided that each colony would be allotted one secret ballot.

“That they are entitled to life, liberty and property: And they have never ceded to any foreign power whatever, a right to dispose of either without their consent” ~ Excerpt from the Declaration of Rights

Negotiations did not necessarily come easily. While many of the delegates were known for their debate and leadership skills, each colony was accustomed to debating in independent environments at home in their individual colonies. Therefore, some degree of distrust and discomfort was present. Furthermore, while each representative believed in the heinous and unjust nature of the Intolerable Acts, they differed with respect to proper solutions. Some preferred more defensive and potentially violent courses of action, such as the Suffolk Resolves, while others believed in peaceful protest like the Declaration of Rights. Despite these difficulties, the delegates overcame such obstacles and produced

several highly significant plans of how to address Britain and its unfair treatment of the colonies. The plans presented at the First Continental Congress were:

### **Plan 1. A Plan of Union of Great Britain and the Colonies**

Initially, Joseph Galloway proposed a plan of union with Britain that offered a form of peaceful agreement. Galloway proposed that the colonies create a form of government similar to Britain's with a colonial parliament and leaders elected by Britain. This would offer the colonists their own representation while remaining loyal to England. This plan was ultimately rejected as soon as the Suffolk Resolves was presented, a much more drastic proposal.

### **Plan 2. The Suffolk Resolves**

Proposed on September 9th, 1774, by Dr. Joseph Warren and accepted by Congress on September 17th, this plan encouraged Massachusetts to protest the Intolerable Acts by stockpiling military supplies, operating an independent government, boycotting British goods, and announcing no allegiance to Britain and a king who failed to consider the wishes of the colonists.

Reaction to these Resolves was mixed. While some supported such a bold proposal and felt it was an appropriate reaction to the British, others feared it would cause war.

### **Plan 3. Declaration of Rights**

For those members of the Congress who were in favor of a more peaceful protest, the Declaration of Rights was developed. These rights included life, liberty, property, and the right to establish their own taxes within the colonies. It also outlined reasons for a rebellion, including the Boston Port Act, Quebec Act, an oppressive presence of royal governors in the colonies, and unjust taxation without representation in government.

The final draft was accepted on October 14th, 1774, and constituted a formal declaration to King George III and the Parliament that the actions of the British must cease or else a revolution would result.



### **Plan 4: Continental Association**

On December 1, 1774, the Continental Association was created to boycott all contact with British goods. While this was quite a sacrifice to make because there were British supplies they had grown accustomed to having, the Patriots were willing to do so in the name of liberty and justice for the colonies.

The First Continental Congress adjourned on October 22nd, 1774 after 51 days of meetings.