

Bacon's Declaration in the Name of the People 30 July 1676

Introduction

Like many men who challenge authorized government, Bacon quickly took the position that he truly represented the people. His signature, "*General by Consent of the People,*" is an interesting commentary, and his Declaration in the Name of the People lays the blame for Virginia's failures directly upon the Governor, "*who hath traiterously . . . inlured his Majesties interest here. . . .*"

Historians have debated whether Bacon did, in fact, have the backing of the rank and file in Virginia. Those who argue that he did note the 600 men who rallied to his cause, of whom some seventy were black. Those who argue against Bacon note that he issued the Declaration without consulting others, and that he assumed the title of "*General by Consent of the People.*"

The Declaracon of the People.

1. For haveing upon specious pretences of publiqe works raised greate unjust taxes upon the Comonality for the advancement of private favorites and other sinister ends, but noe visible effects in any measure adequate, For not haveing dureing this long time of his Gouvernement in any measure advanced this hopefull Colony either by fortificacons Townes or Trade.
2. For haveing abused and rendred contemptable the Magistrates of Justice, by advanceing to places of Judicature, scandalous and Ignorant favorites.
3. For haveing wronged his Majesties prerogative and interest, by assumeing Monopoly of the Beaver trade, and for haveing in that unjust gaine betrayed and sold his Majesties Country and the lives of his loyall subjects, to the barbarous heathen.
4. For haveing, protected, favoured, and Imboldned the Indians against his Majesties loyall subjects, never contriveing, requireing, or appointing any due or proper meanes of sattisfaction for their many Invasions, robbories, and murthers comitted upon us.
5. For haveing when the Army of English, was just upon the track of those Indians, who now in all places burne, spoyle, murder and when we might with ease have destroyed them: who then were in open hostility, for then haveing expressly countermanded, and sent back our Army, by passing his word for the peaceable demeanour of the said Indians, who imediately prosecuted their evill intentions, comitting horred murthers and robberies in all places, being protected by the said ingagement and word

past of him the said Sir William Berkeley, haveing ruined and laid desolate a greate part of his Majesties Country, and have now drawne themselves into such obscure and remote places, and are by their success soe imboldned and confirmed, by their confederacy soe strengthened that the cryes of blood are in all places, and the terror, and constimation of the peOple soe greate, are now become, not onely a difficult, but a very formidable enemy, who might att first with ease have beene destroyed.

6. And lately when upon the loud outcryes of blood the Assembly had with all care raised and framed an Army for the preventing of further mischeife and safeguard of this his Majesties Colony.
7. For haveing with onely the privacy of some few favorites, without acquainting the people, onely by the alteracon of a figure, forged a Comission, by we know not what hand, not onely without, but even against the consent of the people, for the raiseing and effecting civill warr and distruction, which being happily and without blood shed prevented, for haveing the second time attempted the same, thereby calling downe our forces from the defence of the fronteeres and most weekely expoased places.
8. For the prevencon of civill mischeife and ruin amongst ourselves, whilst the barbarous enemy in all places did invade, murther and spoyle us, his majesties most faithfull subjects.

Of this and the aforesaid Articles we accuse Sir William Berkeley as guilty of each and every one of the same, and as one who hath traiterously attempted, violated and Injured his Majesties interest here, by a loss of a greate part of this his Colony and many of his faithfull loyall subjects, by him betrayed and in a barbarous and shamefull manner expoased to the Incursions and murther of the heathen, And we doe further declare these the ensueing persons in this list, to have beene his wicked and pernicious councillours Confederates, aiders, and assisters against the Comonality in these our Civill comotions.

Sir Henry Chichley

William Claiburne Junior

Lieut. Coll. Christopher

Thomas Hawkins

Wormeley

William Sherwood

Phillip Ludwell

John Page Clerke

Robert Beverley

John Cluffe Clerke

Richard Lee

John West

Thomas Ballard

Hubert Farrell

William Cole

Thomas Reade

Richard Whitacre

Matthew Kempe

Nicholas Spencer

Joseph Bridger

And we doe further demand that the said Sir William Berkeley with all the persons in this list be forthwith delivered up or surrender themselves within fower days after the notice hereof, Or otherwise we declare as followeth.

That in whatsoever place, howse, or ship, any of the said persons shall reside, be hidd, or protected, we declaire the owners, Masters or Inhabitants of the said places, to be confederates and trayters to the people and the estates of them is alsoe of all the aforesaid persons to be confiscated, and this we the Comons of Virginia doe declare, desiering a firme union amongst our selves that we may joyntly and with one accord defend our selves against the common Enimy, and lett not the faults of the guilty be the reproach of the inocent, or the faults or crimes of the oppressours devide and separate us who have suffered by their oppressions.

These are therefore in his majesties name to command you forthwith to seize the persons above mentioned as Trayters to the King and Country and them to bring to Midle plantacon, and there to secure them untill further order, and in case of opposition, if you want any further assistance you are forthwith to demand itt in the name of the people in all the Counties of Virginia.

Nathaniel Bacon

Generall by Consent of the people.