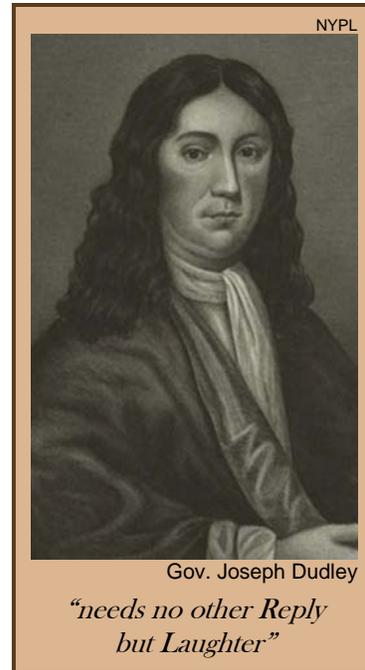


# Is the Governor Corrupt?

A Pamphlet War in Boston  
 1707

A long-lived and bitter power struggle between the old-guard Puritan leaders of the Massachusetts Bay colony — including the reverends Increase and Cotton Mather — and the royal governor Joseph Dudley, an American-born Tory appointed to impose more stringent control over the colony, exploded during the harsh years of Queen Anne's War (1703-1713). Accusing Dudley of profiting from illegal trade with the French and Indian enemies, and of failing to negotiate the return of captives or provide adequately for the colony's defense, Dudley's opponents sent a recall petition (*A Memorial*) to the Queen. Dudley soon published his confident self-defense (*A Modest Enquiry*). Dudley was not recalled and remained in power in 1715, when he was replaced after Queen Anne's death.



## REV. COTTON MATHER

*A Memorial of the Present  
 Deplorable State of New-England,*

*With the many Disdvantages it lies under,  
 by the Mal-Administration of their Present Governour,  
 Joseph Dudley, Esq. and his Son Paul, &c.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 1707 [excerpts] \_\_\_\_\_

The Inhabitants of *New-England* had for many Years before the Late Happy *Revolution*<sup>1</sup> Enjoy'd the Liberty and Property of as Free and Easy a Charter as a People could Desire; and this too, with as much Satisfaction and Loyalty on their part, as Malice and Envy on that of their Enemies; who, from a Persecuting Spirit, looking upon this their Charter with an evil Eye, took up an Implacable Resolution of Robbing them of it. . . .

*"Enjoy'd the Liberty and Property of as Free and Easy a Charter as a People could Desire"*

The Behaviour of this Man, so soon as he arriv'd, struck in with the first Opportunity to discover him of a Mercenary Interest. Indeed, the People were

## GOV. JOSEPH DUDLEY

*A Modest Enquiry into the Grounds  
 and Occasions of a Late Pamphlet*

*entitled, A Memorial of the Present  
 Deplorable State of New-England*

\_\_\_\_\_ 1707 [excerpts] \_\_\_\_\_

A Pamphlet called *The Memorial of the Present Deplorable State of NEW England*, having been received in Town with various Opinions, according to the different Interests or capacities of its Readers, Curiosity led me to look into it . . . I begin with his first Page, extolling the former happy state of the *Province* in the *Charter* they enjoy'd before the Revolution, which sufficiently shows how they regard the *Charter* they now have, and consequently what an Opinion they retain not only of that Power that took from them their *Old Charter*, but also of *K[ing]. William*, who was too wise to return them their *Idol* [the old charter] which he knew had been

*"their Old Charter . . . which he [the king] knew had been often affrontingly used"*

National Humanities Center, 2008: [nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds](http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds). For clarity, some spelling and punctuation have been modernized. Bracketed phrases and sidebars added by NHC. Engravings of Mather and Dudley reproduced by permission of the New York Public Library. Complete image credits at [nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/imagecredits.htm](http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/imagecredits.htm).

<sup>1</sup> Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 in which King James II of England was deposed and replaced by King William III, leading to the replacement of several authoritarian colonial governors. Mather and Dudley refer to the first Massachusetts Bay charter which had granted more liberties than allowed under the later tightening of imperial control.

something Surpris'd to see the publick Offices and Places of Trust snatch'd from them, and Conferr'd on Strangers on one hand, and the Avarice and Beggary of a Crew of Mercenary Fellows, Supported by Extortion on t'other. But, when the President [of the Council, i.e., Dudley] was pleased, out of an Active and Passive Principle, to tell our Countrymen, in open Council, *That the People in New-England were all Slaves, and that the only Difference between Them and Slaves was their not being Bought and Sold; And that they must not think the Privileges of Englishmen would follow them to the end of the World.*<sup>2</sup> I say, when the People heard this, they looked upon themselves in a manner Lost. On one Hand they saw their Enemies invested with a full Power in the Government; on t'other they saw themselves not only turn'd out of the Publick Ministry, but under a Necessitous Fear of being Quiet, lest their Estates should be Seized and themselves Imprisoned. . . .

But to come down to our Memorial and inform the World of the modern Mismanagements of this unhappy Gentleman, we humbly Declare, That

THE Trade with the *French* and *Indians*, being so countenanced [approved] by the Governour, that without speedy Remedy, the Country is in great Danger of being Ruined, which will plainly Appear as follows:

*First*, In the Year 1705, The Governour sent his Son *William Dudley* with Captain *Vetch* to *Canada*, under a pretense of Redeeming [Indian] Captives; but brought very few back to *Boston* of those that were there, and them of the Meanest sort, leaving the Principal of the said Captives behind, to give them occasion of going again, that they might have a Pretense to Colour their Treacherous Design of Trading . . . .

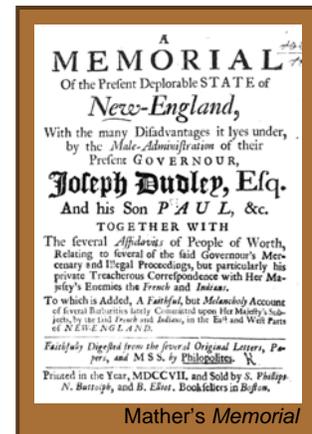
*Secondly*, For Settling a Correspondency with the *French* Governour at *Port-Royal* [*Acadia, Canada*] for Exchange of Prisoners; Whereas it was, indeed, only a Cover for an Illegal Trade . . . because our

often affrontingly used in preceding Reigns. . . .

The Legend of Accusations that make up almost two Pages and are laid down with so much Acrimony against the *present Governour's* proceedings when *President* of the Council of *New England*, shall not be taken notice of, that having been disallow'd when *Urged* before Her Majesty in Council; I shall only make this remark: that *K. William*, the Restorer of our Liberties, would never have distinguish'd this Gentleman [Dudley] by his Favours, had not his *Innocency* been clearly prov'd. . . .<sup>3</sup>

THUS have I done with the Preamble, and am now come to the *Memorial* itself, drawn up in Nine Articles, each of which I intend to speak to separately . . . .

The *First* and *Second Articles* are mostly concerning the affair of the private Trade, which shall not be meddled with by me, it lying at present before *Her Majesty* [Queen Anne, who was crowned in 1702 after the death of King William, her father] undetermin'd . . . .<sup>4</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Spoken in 1687 by Dudley, then Council president, referring to the resistance of the town leaders of Ipswich to the imposition of a tax without representation in the colonial council.

<sup>3</sup> During the Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts, Dudley and other royal officials were charged by leading colonists with abuse of power. All charges were dismissed by King William, and Dudley returned to the colonies, becoming governor of Massachusetts Bay in 1702.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., since the issue of illegal trade with the French and Indians is still before the royal courts, he would not address the accusation.

Governour had been false in his Promise to the *French* Governour, who had restrained the *Indians* from disturbing our Fishery, and indeed would not allow them any Ammunition for a considerable time, till our Governour taking that opportunity of the *Indians*' great Want [need] countenanced a Trade with them and supply'd them by the Vessels that were sent as Transports (as aforesaid) to fetch Prisoners . . . .

*Thirdly*, The Country are at a vast Charge [Expense] in maintaining an Army Yearly, to March several Hundred Miles up into the Country to destroy the *Indians*' Corn, the better to disenable them to Subsist; for they have been so Reduced [in numbers] (as by Information of the Captives) that a great part of them would Perish for Want, were it not for the Supply they had from the said *Indian* Traders . . . which Trade has been all along countenanced by the Governour which sufficiently Appears, by his being always Unwilling the Prisoners taken in that Trade should be Fined or Punished . . .

*Fourthly*, the Country was at a great Expense in Erecting a Fortification at *Casco Bay* [Maine] and maintaining a number of Soldiers for securing the same, thereby to suppress the Enemy and keep sure Footing in that part of the Country; and the Governour, through some Design or Neglect, did suffer [allow] those Soldiers to remain there without any Commission Officer . . . .

*Fifthly*, And further, as to the Governour's countenancing this Private and Illegal Trade, the Country has been at vast Expense . . . that at one Sessions the last Summer, the Assembly were forc'd to raise 33,000 Pounds for Supporting and Maintaining the Charge they were put to by the Enemies' Invasions . . . whereas, if things were rightly Managed, and the Enemy kept back for want of those Supplies, one Third Part of the said Sum might have answer'd the End. . . .

*Sixthly*, The Governour, with his Son *Paul*, not being Content with what Money they come fairly by, and overgreedy of Gain, are very Screwing and Exacting upon the People, particularly upon sundry [various] Inhabitants, taking away their Privilege

The Third Article Deplores the miserable state of the Country in that vast Charge they are at by defending themselves against the *Indians*. Much can't be said upon this occasion, for as War in all Countries is attended with Expense, it is not be to expected *New England* can be wholly exempted from it, but whoever will consider the largeness of the Country to be defended (the Frontier being more than 200 Miles) and the number of the Enemies to encounter with, must admire the Excellency of the Governour's Administration, that so much is done with so little Expense, either of Blood or Treasure.

The *Fortifications* at *Casco Bay* mentioned in the Fourth Article was repair'd and made Tenable by the present Governour, who took care to keep a *good Garrison* in it for the Defense of the Country on that side . . . How it came to be without a Commission Officer, or whether it was so (as this Gentleman complains) I can't find upon the strictest enquiry, neither am I obliged to believe it . . .

The *Fifth* Article tells you the Sum that was given last Year for supporting the Expenses of the War &c, which the *Third* Article makes very heavy . . . Any man that considers the pay of the *Army* which consists of 1900 Men, Maintaining the Garrisons, providing *Magazines* [storehouses for arms and ammunition], The constant Charge of the *Province Galley* [small warship], the accidental occasions of hiring *Transport Ships*, together with the other *Incidentals* that must necessarily accrue, will rather admire how so small a Sum could answer such large and expensive Occasions. . . .

The *Sixth* Article contains a very Grievous Accusation against the Governour and his Son, and if the Facts were true, might demand Justic, but as it is, it serves only to demonstrate the Innocence of the Governour, and the *Malice* of the *Accusers*.

in catching of Whales, a Privilege they have Enjoyed many Years before; that is (under Pretense of Drift Fish) what Whales are taken by her Majesty's Subjects, he takes from them by Force, not giving them the Liberty of a Trial at *Common-Law*, but for his own Ends, decides the matter in the Admiralty, where his Son *Paul* is the Queen's Attorney and Advocate . . .

*Seventhly*, As to the Address the Governour Obtained, pretended to come over from the General Assembly at *Boston*, in his favour, for his Continuance, it was no more than what he Clandestinely procured by sending to his particular Friends; such, who being either Related to him or bore Commissions under him, dare not deny his Request . . .

*Eighthly*, White the Great and General Assembly at *Boston* were Sitting, there arrived a Flag of Truce from *Canada*, with a haughty Demand of the Governour for all the *French* Prisoners, charging of him with breach of Promise, which was the occasion of the *French* Governour's not sending several of the Prisoners, particularly a Minister that was taken Captive at *Deerfield*, detained by the *French* . . .

*Ninthly*, The Lower House, mistrusting the *French* Flag of Truce coming upon a Trading Design, as well as for Prisoners, ordered the Flag of Truce to be diligently Searched, who found on Board their Vessel sundry new Arms and Ammunition hid in Private Places, particularly new Bullets hid among Peas, and yet denied by the Commander, who was an *English* Renegade, whereupon, the Governour interposing, the Matter was hushed up and Conniv'd at, to the great Dissatisfaction of the Assembly, and Country in general.

This being really the State of *New-England*, and its Provinces, it may very well be called Deplorable, when it is render'd the very Scene of Arbitrary Power, with all that's Miserable . . .

[Mather concludes by presenting several letters and affidavits, including narratives of colonists held captive by the Indians fighting with the French during Queen Anne's War.]

They say *he Decides the Privilege of Whale Fishing, claim'd by the People*, and yet that it is Decided in the Admiralty; when all the World must know that the Governour, if he has any Interest in any of the Courts of Justice, it must be in the Common Law Courts and not in the Admiralty where the Judge has an *Independent Commission* from England and no manner dependency upon the Governour. . . .

. . . 'Tis wonderful that this Honourable Body are full of *Resentments* and *Dissatisfactions* in the Administration of *Col. Dudley* and yet not write one word of Complaint against him, and the Reason that is given is yet more remarkable, *Viz.* [namely] *They expected Her Majesty would send another*. If the Governour's Administration is or has been oppressive, the Assembly are Deficient in their Duty to her Majesty in not making their Complaints, as on the contrary to the Governour, in not giving him his due praise if merited.

As to the *Eighth Article*; upon the coming of the Flag of Truce, there was a general Exchange of Prisoners . . . the Minister taken at *Deerfield* was the Reverend Mr [John] *Williams*, who also was exchang'd at the same time with the other Prisoners, but by a Particular Agreement . . . .

. . . Upon a Suspicion that some Clandestine Trade was managed by this Truce Ship, the Assembly Deputed some of their *Own Body* to search the Ship, who found in it Five *Fuzees*, which they brought with them, and fifteen Pounds of Small-shot, enough to shoot a few Sea Fowl in their return [voyage] . . . but not to annoy an Enemy or defend themselves. *The Governour's interposing and getting the matter hush'd up to the dissatisfaction of the Assembly, and Country in general*, as this Memorialist says, is trifling and needs no other Reply but Laughter.

[Dudley concludes by presenting several letters and affidavits, praising his performance and behavior as governor.]