IN CLEVELAND, JULY 4, 2011

The unanimous declaration of the first-place Indians and their devoted fans.

When in the course of a baseball season it becomes necessary for a small-market team to dissolve the financial bands which have made it subservient to a large-market team and to assume its rightful place among the powers of the American League to which the laws of nature, cunning trades, and a good farm system entitle it, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that it should declare the causes which impel it to the separation.

To wit: Indians 6, Yankees 3. On the Fourth of July.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that the New York Yankees are not only but pure, unbridled evil and represent all that is wrong with this country, and that all professional sports teams in North America not located near an ocean are created equal. That they are endowed by Abner Doubleday with certain unalienable rights, that among these are good pitching, timely hitting, and the pursuit of a playoff spot taken for granted by the ungrateful bastards and fans who live in New York.

That to secure these rights, the Yankees will, on occasion, need to be bitch-slapped around a baseball field by a group of superior athletes getting paid a quarter for each dollar the bloated pinstriped crotch pheasants earn simply for being citizens of New York.

That the Yankees will, on occasion, need to be defeated by sub-.200-hitter Austin Kearns, who drove in more runs with one clutch swing of the bat on Monday night than he did in the previous three months.

That Shelley Duncan will, on occasion, collect more hits and RBI than Derek Jeter and Alex Rodriguez combined.

That whenever any large-market-team becomes destructive of the game of baseball itself, turning it into simply a money-making enterprise for its own greed-drunken racketeers, it is the right of the small-market teams to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new form of baseball, based not upon the $3.7 million Alex Rodriguez earns for covering his mouth each time he sneezes, but by the uncanny ability of Josh Tomlin to retire overpaid batter after overpaid batter, taking a no-hitter into the seventh.

By laying a foundation on such principles as good pitching and solid defense, a small-market team such as the Cleveland Indians can find within itself the devotion of an entire nation of battered fans, beaten into submission by the belief that New York simply deserves to win each and every game it plays.

But when a long train of abuses, usurpations, and preposterous free-agent signings threatens the existence of the small-market teams and the game as a whole, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such gluttons as the Yankees and to provide new guards for the future of the American League.

Such has been the patient sufferance of these American League teams, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former wealth-based systems of pennant races.

The history of the present Yankees is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over this game. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

- They have refused to allow baseball to install a salary cap, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

- They have forbidden baseball to grow a fan base outside of the East Coast, allowing professional wrestling, kickboxing, and Uno to become more popular in the heartland than any of them ever deserved to be.

- They have refused to respect the rich history of the game in places outside of their own odiferous boroughs, knowingly leading the rest of the nation in turning idyllic sports towns such as Milwaukee, Kansas City, and yes, Cleveland, into perennial punch lines.

- And yet while mocking the rest of the league as inferior, they do not hesitate to hijack the talent these teams carefully and gradually develop without any due reward, then take credit for the talent as their own when it eventually blossoms.

- They have refused for a long time to allow other cities to represent the game in the World Series, instead hogging the spotlight for themselves, only to usually choke under the pressure and allow a ragtag bunch of neophytes from the National League like the Florida Marlins or Arizona Diamondbacks to win a world title only hours after forming a franchise.

- They have made game-by-game attendance totals utterly feckless, teaching the world that all that matters is broadcasting rights and money spent by advertising firms that honestly believe people drink Pepsi because Britney Spears sings a song wearing a bikini with the logo on it.

- By building a ballpark the size of an island in the South Pacific, they have set a standard for bloated, completely unnecessary stadium frills that will permit soulless owners to use this as leverage to hold smaller cities hostage financially for the next quarter-century.

- For imposing Derek Jeter on us without our consent.

- They have plundered our rosters, ravaged our farm systems, burnt our scouting departments, and destroyed the faith of our fans.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humbled terms - our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. And shampoo commercials

featuring Jason Giambi.

A franchise, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the flagship of a successful professional sports league.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to Major League Baseball itself. We have warned it from time to time of attempts by the Yankees to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, but they too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity.

We, therefore, the representatives of the Cleveland Indians Baseball Club, in general congress, assembled, appealing to the supreme judge of the game for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by authority of the good people of this league and this city, solemnly publish and declare, that by soundly beating the Yankees on this day of American independence, we are a free and independent state, absolved from all allegiance to the New York crown and the expectations and predilections of the “experts” contained within its borders.

All connection between ourselves and what has been expected of us in 2011 ought to be totally dissolved, and that as a free and independent pennant contender, we have the full power to win our division, qualify for the postseason, and beat the shit out of large-market teams whenever we see fit, as well as all other acts and things which independent pennant contenders may of right do.

And for the support of this Declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Signed,

The Cleveland Indians

July 4, 2011

P.S.

Yankees suck.