Q9 – What founding document said the American colonies were free from Britain?

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:
The Declaration of Independence is the founding document that said the American colonies were free of Britain.

For many years, tension had been building between Great Britain and its thirteen American colonies. The core issue: taxation without representation. American colonists were taxed by the British Parliament – but the colonies had no seats in Parliament. No representation. The colonists saw themselves as Englishmen, but they were being denied the rights of Englishmen.
The colonists rebelled – and in 1776, rebellion became revolution. The Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, in what we now call Independence Hall. Congress assigned the job of writing the Declaration to a committee of five – whose members included Ben Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. The document they produced declared that governments get their authority from the governed: from We the People. If our liberties are trampled by the government, then we have the right to change it – or abolish it. And we did.
But suppose that Britain had let us send representatives to Parliament to tax us then with our consent.

Would the American Revolution still have happened?

That is one of the great what-ifs of history.