THE CAUSES FOR THE DISAFFECTION
OF THE LOYALISTS IN NEW YORK CITY

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by

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INTRODUCTION

When the Declaration of Independence transformed the revolt in the American colonies from a conflict over grievances that the provincials held towards the mother country into a war for independence, the British ministry had good reason to believe that the fight would be brief. Great Britain was a tremendous land and sea power of much greater strength than the colonies. Furthermore, the British were well aware that the colonies were not at all united on the issue of independence. The British ministry held that when sufficient military force was demonstrated by the parent state, the rebellious minority in the colonies would soon be crushed.

For several years preceding the revolution, New York had been considered by the British ministry to be the least rebellious of all the American colonies. Indeed, New York was the home of a great many of the King's most loyal supporters. However, in the summer of 1776 when a powerful British army landed at New York City and drove the Continental Army from the town, the rebellion did not collapse and the King's army was not greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm. During the Revolutionary War the Loyalists in New York never flocked to the British standards in the
numbers expected, and before the war was ended those who
did come over to the British side were more of a hindrance
than a help to His Majesty's armies.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the nature
of New York loyalty and causes for the disaffection of
the Loyalists in New York City during the Revolutionary
War. This paper attempts to offer some insights into the
factors that resulted in the failure of the Loyalists to
emerge as an important military asset to the British.
PART I

At the time of the American Revolution the city of New York had a population of about 22,000.¹ It was the second largest city in the North American colonies—exceeded only by Philadelphia and almost equalled by Boston. The colony of New York was the seventh largest of the thirteen in population, and was considered to be among the most conservative in its political make-up, with proportionately the highest number of citizens loyal to the King.²

Basically, these Loyalists were Americans who held that the interests of the colonies would be best served by remaining part of the British Empire. Although colonists who remained loyal to the crown could be found in all social and religious groups, the loyalist "party" in New York was composed for the most part of royal officials, large landholding proprietors, professional people, wealthy merchants, and colonial politicians.³ They sincerely

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believed that England's sense of social justice would soon lead to the removal of the grievances that the colonies maintained towards the mother country.\(^4\)

Besides having a wide social, economic, and political basis, loyalty in New York was greatly enhanced by the leadership of the Anglican Church. By 1775, the Episcopalians were the most powerful and influential religious element in New York; and with but few exceptions the Anglican ministers were the leading Loyalists in their communities.\(^5\) The fundamental teachings of Anglicanism made loyalty to the ruler and obedience to the law religious duties. In New York "loyalism and Anglicanism were largely united in practice and creed."\(^6\) In New York the division of political loyalty along religious lines could be clearly seen, with the Republican Sons of Liberty identified as Presbyterians and the Loyalists as Episcopalians.\(^7\)


\(^5\)"State of the Anglo American Church, Oct 31, 1776,"


\(^6\)Flick, p. 10.

Although maintaining the common belief that the colonies should remain subject to the King, the Loyalists of New York were by no means united in their political ideology. Fundamentally, they were divided into two camps. The extreme conservative wing, led by Lieutenant Governor Colden, stood for the "rigid execution of imperial law." The more numerous Loyalists of moderate persuasion insisted on "recognition of the American interpretation of the British Constitution," and wished to maintain their rights by means of legal protest and petition. When the Stamp Act proved to be unpopular to all but a few conservatives, the Governor found himself supported only by the royal officials, the Episcopal clergy and a few friends. Nevertheless, Colden confidently reported in the spring of 1775 that, except for their support of the Non-Importation Association, the people of New York seemed to have "no inclination to copy the extravagant Schemes of their Neighbors."

When the Continental Congress met at Philadelphia in September of 1774, New York sent five "compromise" delegates. These men were Philip Livingston, Isaac Law, James Duane,

8Flick, p. 20.


10Colden to Dartmouth, March 1, 1775, New York Historical Society Collections, X, p. 390.
John Jay, and John Alsop. The Loyalists had hoped that the delegates would work towards reconciliation, but the Congress seemed to them to have diverted from its original purpose and become an instrument for the promotion of disunion.\textsuperscript{11} Loyalists, both liberal and conservative, were greatly upset when their delegates returned from Philadelphia seemingly "converted into fixed Republicans."\textsuperscript{12}

The Loyalists firmly believed that they were in the majority everywhere in the colonies, and in New York the Whigs were actually far less numerous than their opponents.\textsuperscript{13} When Philip Schuyler made a motion before the General Assembly of New York to adopt and approve the proceedings of the Continental Congress, the Loyalists responded with violent debates. At a public meeting in New York City the Loyalists decided to oppose the sending of any future delegates to the Congress. Since the great mass of New York's Loyalists had nothing to do with the Continental Congress after March 1775, the members of Congress from that colony were


\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pp. 37-38.

\textsuperscript{13}Lorenzo Sabine, Loyalist of the American Revolution (Springfield, Mass., 1957), p. 65.
no longer popularly elected.\textsuperscript{14}

While disorder and confusion spread through the colonies in the early months of 1775, Colden happily reported to Governor Tryon that "the loyal disposition of this government will every day become more evident—we are at this time extremely quiet. . . ." Even after an anti-British disturbance occurred in his jurisdiction, in Cumberland County, Colden believed that a small force of about three hundred men would be sufficient to suppress any further riots.\textsuperscript{15} However, the Lieutenant Governor's optimism soon proved to be based on false information. On April 13, two weeks after the initial outbreak, Colden confessed that the trouble was "getting out of controll" in Cumberland. He also informed General Gage, in Boston, that he might need more troops to restore order.\textsuperscript{16}

Gage was at this time in no position to be able to assist Colden. The battle of Lexington and Concord was fought on April 19, and the siege of Boston followed. Before this time the moderates in New York had held great

\textsuperscript{14}Jones, I, pp. 37-38.

\textsuperscript{15}Colden to General Gage, April 2, 1775, \textit{N.Y.H.S. Colll.}, X, p. 408.

\textsuperscript{16}Colden to Gage, April 13, 1775, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 410-411.
power.\textsuperscript{17} Influential loyalist spokesman, Peter Van Schaak, represented the views of a great many New Yorkers, who felt that the provincial grievances were just, but refused to take up arms. Like most moderates, Van Schaak cautioned against extremism and hoped for some compromise solution.\textsuperscript{18} After Lexington, the time for moderation was ended. Those who had hoped for a peaceful settlement through the assembly were now forced to choose sides in a civil war.\textsuperscript{19}

Although the rebels did not represent the sentiments of the majority of New Yorkers, the radical elements did possess the initiative and the power to engage in open acts of rebellion without opposition. During the summer of 1775, Governor Tyron was greatly upset when few people demonstrated not even the "smallest inclination to draw the sword in support of Great Britain," while a rebel army was being organized within forty miles of the city.\textsuperscript{20} In September, a mob of "rabble" held a boisterous outdoor meeting in downtown New York. At this wild assembly the principle speaker

\textsuperscript{17}Van Tyne, pp. 118-119.

\textsuperscript{18}Henry C. Van Schaack, \textit{The Life of Peter Van Schaack} (New York: 1842), pp. 54-58.

\textsuperscript{19}Flick, p. 44. Also, Callahan, p. 36.

openly abused Parliament, cursed the Ministry, and damned the King as a "Roman Catholic tyrant" who had established the popish religion in Canada and was about to do the same thing in other colonies. 21

So great was the rebels' belligerence that Governor Tryon fled from the city in December, taking the government records, and was forced to remain in exile on a British warship anchored in New York Harbor. 22 The same month a Loyalist, less fortunate than the Governor, a New Jersey resident named Thomas Randolph, fell into the clutches of an angry mob of rebels. A witness described what took place:

[Text]

James Rivington, a printer and publisher of Rivington's Gazzette, was put out of business when rebels destroyed his press. The reason given for this action against Mr. Rivington was that the publisher had

21 Jones, I, p. 44.


become "obnoxious to the favors of Congress." Two Anglican ministers, Dr. Thomas Chandler and Dr. Myles Cooper, were compelled to flee from New York in the spring of 1776 for preaching anti-Whig sermons. In the early months of 1776, it was becoming increasingly clear that the radicals controlled the city.

As the population of the colonies divided into opposing camps, there were still those in the British ministry who believed that war could be avoided. For several years the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the Colonies, had been exploring every possible avenue that might lead to a peaceful settlement of the American grievances. He believed that his step-brother, Lord North, shared his desire to make concessions to the Americans in order to avoid war. Others in the Ministry, notably Lord Barrington, were cautioning Lord North against attempting to defeat the colonists in a land war. However, when the Boston Port Bill and Regulatory Act stimulated rather than ended American

24Sabine, Biographical Sketches, I, p. 218; and Jones, I, pp. 65-66.
27Ibid., p. 312.
28Ibid., pp. 377, 382.
resistance, Lord North refused to back down from his position.\(^{29}\)

Lord North did not understand the real situation in America. He believed that only the radicals in New England would make any forceful resistance, and he wished to confine punitive action to Boston. This, he thought, would discourage radicals in the other colonies.\(^{30}\) He also hoped that such action would induce colonists outside New England to condemn Boston.\(^{31}\) Long years of war and revolution were about to prove Lord North's optimism was unjustified.

In the early months of 1775, North abandoned his reconciliation policies, moving that the existing bill restraining the trade of the New England colonies be extended to include New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina. New York was not included because that colony had been less rebellious than the others. North hoped that by special favoritism he would be able to hold the loyalty of the New Yorkers and keep them from making a common cause with the Bostonians.\(^{32}\)


\(^{31}\) Valentine, I, p. 314.

PART II

In the early months of 1776, while the New York Loyalists waited idly for the forces of the British government to put down the growing rebellion, the rebels were taking positive action. In January General Hurd, acting on orders from the Continental Congress, invaded Queens County, Long Island, and disarmed the inhabitants because the majority of the people in that area refused to cooperate with congressional measures. Four British men of war sat quietly in New York Harbor as the King's loyal subjects were robbed of their arms and ammunition. In another bold action General Schuyler was sent to disarm the Loyalist on the New York frontier. These decisive moves to disarm those not sympathetic to the rebellion were important factors in eliminating the Loyalists as a significant threat to rebel military activities in the first year of the war.  

During the spring, Congress continued to call for the disarmament of all "notoriously disaffected to the cause of America."  

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1Jones, I, pp. 68-70.
2Montross, p. 110.
3American Archives, 5th Series, III, p. 10.
The New York Provincial Congress formed a Committee of Safety to deal with the Loyalists who might prove dangerous. John Jay was the chairman of the committee which included such prominent citizens as Philip Livingston, Governor Morris, and Peter Van Schaack. Later, a second committee for "hearing and trying disaffected persons and those of equivocal [sic] characters" was formed with Philip Livingston acting as chairman. The first task of this committee was to draw up a list of almost one hundred suspected persons who were to be kept under surveillance or brought before it for investigation. This list included David Mathews, the mayor of New York, Oliver de Lancey, and Judge Thomas Jones. Loyalists were believed to be passing information to British officials, and soon after the formation of the Committee of Safety, Loyalists were being arrested, tried, and sent to jail in Connecticut.

Loyalists, as far as the rebels were concerned, included all those who would not take up arms against the British. For example, the moderate Peter Van Schaack,

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4 Callahan, pp. 70-71. Also, Van Schaack, p. 58.

5 American Archives, 4th Series, VI, p. 1152.

6 Ibid., p. 569.

7 Ibid., p. 794. Also, Minutes of the Albany Committee of Correspondence, ed. by James Sullivan, I (Albany, 1923), pp. 445, 457.
himself a member of the Committee of Safety, was accused of being a Loyalist when he refused to take up arms against the parent state. 8 For a time he was allowed to remain in New York conditionally, but when he refused to take an oath of loyalty to the colonial government he was arrested and exiled to Boston. 9 There seemed to be no middle position as the rebellion gained momentum.

The situation for Loyalists and those who wished to remain neutral worsened, when General Lee entered New York during February to prepare the city's fortifications, and General Washington arrived in April with the main body of the rebel army from Boston. Preparing for the anticipated invasion of Howe, the rebel army converted New York City into a garrison. According to the loyalist's historian, Judge Thomas Jones, the rebels "pulled down houses, dug up the streets, built fortifications, and threatened, robbed, confined, imprisoned, and banished his Majesty's loyal subjects without mercy." 10 Soon the city was under the complete control of the Continental Army, and any organized loyalist resistance would have been impossible. Governor Tryon informed the British that until the rebel's

6Ibid., p. 655. Also, Ibid., p. 76.
10Jones, I, p. 83.
hold on New York was broken "no provisions of assistance can be depended on for his Majesties [sic] fleets and armies from this Country, the whole continent being at this time so absolutely under their control."\(^\text{11}\)

Although the Loyalists were unable to mount any organized opposition against the rebels after Washington set up his headquarters in their city, a number of the King's more zealous supporters were instigators in several plots aimed at disrupting the rebel war efforts. Governor Tryon was usually behind these schemes.\(^\text{12}\) One of the most treacherous activities the governor promoted was an attempt on the life of Washington. For this plan Tryon enlisted the services of Thomas Hickey, a member of Washington's guard. Fortunately for the cause of the rebellion, Hickey was discovered before he could carry out his intentions.\(^\text{13}\)

After a trial he was hanged near New York's Bowery Lane before a crowd of twenty thousand spectators.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{\text{11}}\) Governor Tyron to Lord Germain, April 17, 1776, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, Ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan (Albany, 1857), VIII, p. 670.

\(^{\text{12}}\) Flick, p. 100.


Another of Tryon's unsuccessful plots involved the mayor of New York, David Mathews. At a meeting between Mathews and Tryon which took place in June on board the Duchess of Gordon, the governor's headquarters while in exile, Tryon gave Mathews a sum of money to deliver to a man in New York named Gilbert Forbes. Forbes was to use the money to buy rifles for Loyalists.¹⁵ Whether or not Mathews knew of Forbes intentions remains unproved;¹⁶ however, when Forbes' plot was uncovered and he was brought before Philip Livingston's committee for questioning, he confessed under threats and pressure by his examiners and named David Mathews as a fellow conspirator. In all, thirteen men including Mathews and Forbes were sent to prison in Connecticut for their involvement in the plot.¹⁷

During June and July numerous Tory plots, both real and imaginary were uncovered. These schemes included plans to assassinate Washington, blow up the rebels' magazine and spike the cannon when the British arrived from Halifax.¹⁸

¹⁵Callahan, pp. 73-74. Also, Van Doren, pp. 14-15.
¹⁶Callahan, p. 75.
Governor Tryon was believed to be the brains behind all of these unsuccessful adventures. Because of the activities of the few militant Loyalists, all Loyalists became suspects, and the stories of intrigue and treachery, as magnified and falsified, blackened the reputation of Loyalists throughout the country. The schemes also led to a stiffening of Washington's policy towards Loyalists.

Tryon's plots caused Washington to remark that "this country abounds in disaffected persons of the most diabolical dispositions and intentions . . . with designs of destroying this Army by treachery and bribery, which were providentially discovered." On July 6, Washington ordered Livingston and General Hurd to arrest "all persons of known enmity or doubtful character," and remove them from "places where they might enter into correspondence with the enemy and aid them in their schemes." Washington cautioned against leniency for the Loyalists, stating: "my tenderness has been often abused, and I have had reason to repent the indulgence shown them." In spite of their great numbers the Loyalists remained unorganized and without supplies because of the close watch

21 Van Doren, p. 21.
that the rebels kept on their movements. Upon receiving intelligence reports of Loyalists escaping from the city and joining General Howe's forces, security measures were tightened. Immediately after General William Howe landed his army on Staten Island, Washington had troops sent to keep the Loyalists in Queens County from joining Howe. These troops also destroyed many small boats to make it impossible for Loyalists to reach the British. The surveillance was effective, and General Greene was able to report the capture of several Loyalists who attempted to reach the enemy.

While the Loyalists support for the British was insignificant during Washington's occupation of the city, most Loyalists held that "on a formidable appearance of the King's troops, the Congress will not find so many friends here as they imagined." Governor Tryon believed that the inhabitants of New York were kept by the "tyranny and misrule of their leaders in the blindest ignorance of the true state of their situation." He optimistically predicted to Lord Germain that loyalty to the King would be reaffirmed

24Ibid., p. 509.
25Ibid., p. 453.
27American Archives, 4th Series, I, p. 621.
29Documents Relative to the History of New York, VIII, p. 673.
gladly when the British authority was again restored. 30

The British army was also confident about the cooperation they would receive from the people of New York once Washington's hold on the city could be broken. A few days after landing on Staten Island a British soldier wrote: "This Rebellion will not last long when we begin, for the friends of government are very numerous." 31

30 Ibid., p. 684.
31 Letter of the American Revolution, p. 327.
PART III

New York City was chosen as the site for the launching of the British offensive for several reasons. The Hudson River played much the same role in the American Revolution that the Mississippi River did in the Civil War. By capturing the Hudson the British could cut off New England from the other colonies. New York also had an excellent harbor, and the Hudson River was navigable for ships of the British navy almost as far upstream as Albany. Furthermore, after the unhappy experience of being cooped up in Boston, Howe and Burgoyne were anxious to transfer the seat of the war to New York where they believed they could seize and hold the Hudson.¹

When Howe's forces arrived at Staten Island on June 30, the troops landed and the ships were unloaded without opposition from the rebel army.² It all seemed too easy. In the opinion of one British military expert the world had never witnessed so vast a force being sent such a great distance to be resisted by a power apparently so unequal to the contest. Few of the invaders realized at the time

that they were about to enter into "the most extensive, difficult and burdensome war in which Great Britain was ever engaged." 3

General Howe's force consisted of more than four hundred transports carrying in excess of 32,000 soldiers, the largest expedition that England had ever sent abroad. The British armada also included ten battle ships, twenty frigates, and ten thousand seamen. 4 The combined land and sea forces were commanded by Admiral Richard Howe and his brother General William Howe, "men who stood high in the opinion and confidence of the nation, as well as from their own merit and services, as from the Military character and bravery of the family." 5

Counted among Howe's troops were 13,000 Hessian soldiers who had been hired by King George III to aid in the quick suppression of the American revolt. 6 Even before Bunker Hill, the British ministry had been talking of hiring mercenaries largely because the "Yoemen and artisans of Britain had as a whole shown singular reluctance to fight their fellow yeomen and artisans in America." 7 But there were other reasons. These were: economy, efficiency, and expediency. The use of Hessian troops proved to be an

3 Charles Stedman, History of the American War, II (Dublin, 1794), p. 249.
4 F. Greene, p. 33.
5 Annual Register (1776), p. 166.
6 Ibid., p. 166.
7 Valentine, I, p. 374.
extremely important factor in the British war effort, especially as far as the New York Loyalists were concerned, and therefore their part will be examined carefully.

As early as July 1775, Lord North was warning the King that the rebellion in America had grown to the scale of a foreign war and should be treated as such.\(^8\) Lord North maintained that the American revolt would require a large number of men, and believed that it might soon become necessary to "have recourse to extraordinary methods of recruiting the Army." According to Lord North, the most promising means of recruiting the soldiers required for America would be to raise an army from among the loyal provincials. Judging from his reports, Lord North was confident that recruiters already working in America would be able to raise at least six hundred "excellent men" before Christmas of 1775.\(^9\)

George III was in complete disagreement with Lord North's plan for the recruiting of colonials. Writing a quick reply to his chief minister's proposals, the King reminded North of the sad failure of Charles Townshend's

\(^8\)Lord North to George III, July 26, 1775, Correspondence of King George the Third, ed. by Sir John Fortesque, III (London, 1928), No. 1682, p. 234.

\(^9\)Lord North to King, August 25, 1775, ibid., No. 1699, p. 249.
plans to enlist colonials to fight in the French and Indian War. The King also pointed out that it would take at least a year before new recruits could be properly trained.\textsuperscript{10} The solution to his manpower problems, the King believed, lay in the hiring of foreigners. In the King's opinion these troops would provide a far more efficient and economical means for ending the American rebellion than could possibly be achieved by recruiting and training men in America.\textsuperscript{11} Besides, the economy-minded King could not overlook the fact that foreigners would not require half pay and pensions when their services were no longer required.\textsuperscript{12}

In his search for soldiers that could be hired quickly and economically, the King turned to Russia.\textsuperscript{13} However, the Empress Catherine was not at all interested in the British monarch's proposed deal. Her sharp refusal was in George III's words "not in so genteel a manner as I should have expected of her." The King complained that Catherine

\textsuperscript{10} King to Lord North, August 25, 1775, \textit{ibid.}, No. 1699, pp. 250-251.

\textsuperscript{11} King to Lord North, July 26, 1775, \textit{ibid.}, No. 1683, p. 236. Also King to Lord North, August 4, 1775, No. 1689, p. 239.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Correspondence of King George the Third with Lord North}, ed. by William B. Donne, I (London, 1867), No. 378, p. 45.

employed "some expressions that may be civil to a Russian ear, but certainly not to more civilized ones." \(^{14}\) Having failed to secure troops from Russia, the King turned to the German princes.

Through treaties with the Duke of Brunswick and other German rulers, George III was able to hire the services of nearly 30,000 soldiers during the course of the war. \(^{15}\) More than 18,000 sailed to America in 1776, and the average number of German troops in the colonies was about 20,000. Before the war ended the Hessians suffered 1,200 killed or wounded, and 6,254 died of other causes. Over 5,000 are believed to have deserted. Of the 30,000 sent to America, only 17,313 ever returned home. \(^{16}\)

The King's decision to hire mercenaries immediately touched off debates in Parliament. \(^{17}\) The Duke of Manchester

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\(^{14}\) Correspondence of George III with Lord North, I, No. 322, p. 282.

\(^{15}\) The treaties between George III and the Duke of Brunswick and other German rulers can be found in the American Archives, 4th Series, VI, pp. 271-278.

\(^{16}\) F. Greene, p. 29. Also, Lowell, pp. 20-21, 300. The Continental Congress attempted to get the Hessian soldiers to desert when they landed at Staten Island by offering deserters American citizenship (Journals of the Continental Congress, V, pp. 653-655). However, the number of Hessians to desert before the battle of Long Island was not significant (Lowell, pp. 286-287).

\(^{17}\) Valentine, I, p. 381. Also, Hansard's Parliamentary History, XVIII, pp. 1167, 1188.
arose to deliver a powerful attack against the ministry's hiring of Hessian troops without consulting Parliament. He termed the King's actions a violation of the Bill of Rights. However, the opposition came only from a small minority, and following Lord North's defense of the King's actions, Parliament voted overwhelmingly to support the ministry.

After the British forces successfully landed at Staten Island, Howe disregarded the pleas of the Loyalists for an immediate attack on Washington's army. General Howe delayed his offensive until August 22 under the pretense that he was waiting for reinforcements. Meanwhile the British general, who had been appointed a peace commissioner by Parliament, was seeking a non-military settlement by offering pardons to all those who would ask for royal mercy. Of course Washington's army paid no attention to Howe's proclamations. Instead they prepared themselves for the British attack. As the long awaited battle drew near, Washington ordered the Committee of Safety to apprehend suspicious persons and have them removed to places where they could not hurt the rebel cause. For some, this meant prison in Connecticut.

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18 Annual Register (1776), pp. 75-78. Also, American Archives, 4th Series, VI, pp. 88-89.
19 American Archives, 4th Series, VI, p. 277.
20 Lowell, p. 27.
21 Jones, I, pp. 110-111.
22 Annual Register (1776), p. 166.
24 Ibid., p. 896.
On the night of August 26, General Howe finally launched his attack against the rebel lines on Long Island. Fierce fighting raged throughout the following day, and when darkness ended the battle the superior British forces emerged victorious over Washington's "halfclothed, undisciplined fellows, a third of whom were nothing more than common militia men." For the Americans it was a bitter defeat. They had lost 1,400 in killed, wounded and captured, while the enemy had lost less than 400. The rebel army was forced to retreat to Brooklyn. Here, the defeated and disorganized Continental Army might have easily been destroyed if Howe had followed up his initial victory; however, the British leader halted to regroup his forces. Possibly he was not aware of the confusion and panic within the American lines, or maybe he held back because the memory of the slaughter at Bunker Hill was still fresh in his mind.

Hopelessly outnumbered and with his back to the East River, Washington had no choice but retreat. The withdrawal across the river took place at night and was carried off with fantastic daring and skill. Howe was shocked to awaken on the day following the victory to find that his enemy had vanished. For two weeks Howe delayed crossing into Manhattan. During this time he made further peace overtures and met with Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and

25 Jones, I, p. 112.
27 Ibid., p. 43.
Edward Rutledge to discuss terms for stopping the war. Since Howe had no power to negotiate, but only to accept submission, the meeting was a failure.\textsuperscript{29} On the night of September 13, the British guns began shelling New York City.\textsuperscript{30} Combat resumed on September 15, and in a couple of days the British were in control of the city. Howe had reason to feel optimistic about the prospects for an early settlement. One of his Loyalist intelligence sources reported that the rebels had lost 6,000 men since August 27.\textsuperscript{31} How could any army survive after receiving such a staggering blow? At this critical moment in the Revolution, the British allowed themselves to be drawn into diversions and neglected their original plans. Instead of continuing towards the objective of crushing Washington's army, the British concentrated on restoring their authority in certain locations. They seemed content merely to be occupying territory.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{29}Feckham, pp. 43-44.

\textsuperscript{30}The Diary of Fredrick Mackenzie, I (Cambridge, 1930), p. 44.

\textsuperscript{31}American Archives, 5th Series, II, p. 1030.

\textsuperscript{32}F. Greene, pp. 30-31.
At least one British officer seemed to sense that the war was not going to be the brief and easy route that had been predicted before the Long Island campaign. After several weeks of bloody fighting, Fredrick Mackenzie recorded his thoughts on the death of General Grant, a British veteran who had been shot through the brain by rebel rifle fire.

Thus fell the hero who boasted in the British House of Commons, he would march through America with 5,000 men, having only marched five miles on Long Island with an Army of four times the number.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Diary of Fredrick Mackenzie}, I, p. 53.
PART IV

The success of the British at Long Island and Howe's occupation of New York emboldened the Loyalists and increased their conviction that the rebellion would soon be ended.\(^1\) Weaker rebels flocked by the hundreds to the British standards. Many residents of Long Island welcomed the arrival of their "deliverers" and afforded the British army "every accomodation within their power."\(^2\) A large majority of the citizens of Queens County, Long Island "urgently petitioned that their county be declared at peace with the crown."\(^3\) Four-fifths of the militia in Queens County also took an oath of allegiance to the King of England.\(^4\) In Brookhaven about eight hundred men took an oath of allegiance in the presence of Governor Tryon who had recently returned from exile, and on another occasion the Governor issued three hundred certificates of Loyalty in one day.\(^5\)

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\(^1\)Flick, p. 96.

\(^2\)Documents Relative to the History of New York, VIII, p. 681.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 692.

\(^4\)Jones, I, p. 108.

\(^5\)Documents Relative to the History of New York, VIII, pp. 693, 694.
Before the British had gained control of New York, efforts to enlist and arm the Loyalists had been ineffective because the Whig activities to halt these weak attempts had been vigorous. Even on the day of the battle of Long Island only about fifty Loyalists made their way into the British camp. Thousands had been expected, When Howe took over the city some Loyalists immediately joined the British. Many of the more dedicated Loyalists were anxious to join in military operations against the rebels. But the majority merely settled contentedly under the British protection and contemplated the prospect of an early peace and reunification. The Loyalists never came to the aid of the British in the numbers promised.

Nevertheless the recruiting of Loyalist troops in New York continued throughout the war. In May of 1776 a group of Loyal gentlemen from Boston and New York had presented General Howe with a written agreement for assisting him in raising men in New York for the support of the royal government. The contract was signed by "500 principal inhabitants of New York."

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6Van Tyne, p. 165.
7Diary of Fredrick Mackenzie, pp. 37-38.
9Van Tyne, p. 146.
10Van Doren, p. 416.
11Flick, p. 112.
Within weeks of Howe's victory, Oliver DeLancey, a leading Loyalist, was endeavoring to raise a brigade of fifteen hundred men for the defense of Long Island; and another corps of provincials was being recruited to fight with the British regulars. Governor Tryon was also recruiting. The ambitious Governor planned to have a battalion of 500 ready to march within a month's time. During the first months of Howe's occupation of the city there seemed to be good reason to expect a great deal of Loyalist support. By the end of September, Major Baurmeister, Adjutant General of the Hessian army, was reporting that Americans were coming into the British camp at night in small boats and joining the army. These Loyalists were being assigned to Colonel DeLancey's brigade which now had over 2,000 men.

More Loyalist regiments were raised in New York than in any other colony. Washington was well aware of this fact and used every means at his command to keep the Loyalists from swelling the ranks of the enemy. On October 2, Wash-

13 Documents Relative to the History of New York, VIII, p. 687.

14 Ibid., p. 694


16 Van Doren, p. 13.
ington wrote: "I will use every precaution in my power to prevent these provincials from accomplishing their designs, but I have little hope of success, as it will be no diffi-
cult matter for them to procure a passage over some part or
other of the Sound." Washington ordered that the East River
be patrolled, and that a strict lookout be placed on the
North River to keep Loyalists from crossing into the Brit-
ish lines.\textsuperscript{17} The vigilance paid off, and Washington soon
received reports of Loyalists being captured while attempting
to reach Howe.\textsuperscript{18}

Washington believed that one of the principal reasons
for the quick success of the British in raising recruits
was that the British were offering a ten pound bounty to
each man. While the Continental Congress was offering
twenty dollars and one hundred acres of land, Washington
did not believe that this was enough of an incentive. He
urgently asked Congress to increase its payments.\textsuperscript{19} But
while the rebel general worried about the increasing strength
of his opponent, the relations between the Loyalists and the
British were not as cordial as they seemed on the surface.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17}American Archives, 5th Series, III, p. 841. Also,
Washington, VI, p. 149.

\textsuperscript{18}Washington, VI, p. 153.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 153.

\textsuperscript{20}Montross, p. 384.
One cause of this friction was that no workable relationship between colonial volunteers and British regulars had ever been developed. Many provincials balked at serving with the British because the Americans were given inferior and degrading positions within the regular army. In June 1776, Lord Germain had informed Governor Tryon that provincial officers would be allowed to command the companies they recruited, but these officers were to be "on the same footing in respect to rank as the provincial troops in the last war, and . . . are neither to expect rank in the army after their reduction . . . or be entitled to half pay." Officially, provincials ranked junior to regular officers and were socially assigned a lower position. Naturally galled at his assumed inferiority, the provincials in time became bitterly opposed to serving in the regular army on such terms.

The most abused of the provincials were those in the loyal militia. These troops were shown even less respect than the men in the established loyalist regiments, and were

21 Paul H. Smith, Loyalists and Red Coats (Chapel Hill, 1964), pp. 33, 35.
22 Documents Relative to the History of New York, VIII, p. 680.
23 Smith, p. 34.
often assigned to the most dangerous and degrading tasks. On more than one occasion the militiamen were forced to work as horses. While pulling heavy wagons they were often kicked, beaten and "mal-treated by abusive language." After taking more of this punishment than they could bear, many Loyalists abruptly left the British service forever.

In a weak attempt to improve the spirits of at least one loyal supporter, Lord Barrington ordered that Governor Tryon, already commissioned a major general, "should not serve under officers in America to whom he would be senior in the line at large." However, this move, taken to elevate a man who was now unpopular even in the Loyalist’s camp, had little effect on the attitudes of the provincials. Not until it was too late did the British recognize that Americans could best fight against Americans, and as a result the military utilization of the Loyalists was never significant or effective.

24 Montross, p. 385.
26 Barrington to Howe, May 4, 1778, Report on American
MMS. I, p. 250.
27 Jones, I, pp. 303-304.
28 Callahan, p. 36.
Foremost among the few Loyalists who rendered genuine service to the British was Oliver DeLancey. He had actively aided the British at the battle of Long Island, and was extremely helpful in Flatbush and Brooklyn Heights because of his knowledge of the land and the people.  

Later in the war he organized a British secret service. As the senior Loyalist brigadier general in the British forces and chief source of British intelligence, DeLancey questioned deserters, sent out spies, detected rebel spies, and maintained correspondence with disaffected Americans outside the British lines.  

This type of harmonious cooperation with the British military was rare among New York's Loyalists.

After capturing New York City, General Howe considered using the provincial forces to hold and control the recaptured areas while he used his regular troops to defeat the rebel army. Howe soon abandoned this plan, however, when he found it was impossible to organize a Loyalist force strong enough to hold the districts taken in the campaigns of 1776 and 1777.  

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29 Callahan, p. 80.
30 Van Doren, p. 70.
32 Ibid., p. 311.
Chamber of Commerce cooperated with the British successfully throughout the war, and Howe relied on this group to help rule the city. 33

There were several Loyalist military adventures which met with limited success. In February, 1779, Loyalist refugees quartered at Hempstead, Long Island were organized into companies and sent to take the place of four companies of light infantry at Prudence Island. 34 Homeless Loyalists were also working as raiders and privateers. The raiders were allowed to keep all their booty, and this greatly encouraged their enterprise because many of the refugees had lost everything when they fled to New York City. 35 The Loyalist raids on rebel communities led to retaliation and counter-retaliation. The continued brutality almost caused the complete destruction of whole communities. 36 Sometimes the raiding backfired on the British. Major Baurmeister reported that great care had to be taken in the

33 Flick, pp. 99-100.

34 The Baurmeister Journal, p. 253. The plan was originally suggested by Governor Tryon in December, 1778 (Documents Relative to the History of New York, VIII), p. 756.

35 Tryon to Germain, March 1, 1779, Documents Relative to the History of New York, VIII, p. 759. Also The Baurmeister Journal, p. 253.

recruiting of Loyalist raiders because in one case some forty supposed Loyalists went over to the rebels.\textsuperscript{37}

In February, 1780, General Pattison, the Commandant of New York, asked the captains of the city's militia to help him organize "a regular and permanent establishment of the Militia." After speaking with the captains, General Pattison initiated by proclamation what amounted to an actual drafting into the militia of all males between the ages of seventeen and sixty.\textsuperscript{38} A week after issuing his proclamation, General Pattison had enrolled four companies from the wards of the city, totalling 2,660 men, and including "many of the most respectable inhabitants."\textsuperscript{39} These new recruits added to the existing companies of Loyal Volunteers made a total of 4,312 men "to cooperate upon any occasion with the King's troops in defense of this City."\textsuperscript{40} Pattison also believed that this new force would be helpful in supplying Commodore Drake and "preserve the peace of the town and prevent irregularities."\textsuperscript{41}

The Loyalists who enlisted in the City Militia and Loyal Volunteers by no means represented a significant

\textsuperscript{37} The Baumeister Journal, p. 353.

\textsuperscript{38} New York Historical Society Collections, VIII, p. 160.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., Pattison to Clinton, Feb. 21, 1780, p. 147.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 161.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 390.
force when compared to the population of the colony.\textsuperscript{42} General Henry Clinton was one of the few British officers who realistically appraised the Loyalists position. He realized that most of the refugees who had left their homes and sought safety in New York "seemed not much inclined to add to their other sufferings those of military life." Since these poverty-stricken people were not disposed to fighting, General Clinton reorganized their nominal battalions, assigned them menial tasks and put their officers on half pay "principally with the view of affording a maintenance for the most needy."\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{42}George Clinton estimated the population of New York to be 200,000 at the time of the Revolution (\textit{The Public Papers of George Clinton}, I, p. 210).

\textsuperscript{43}Henry Clinton, p. 110.
PART V

In the process of capturing New York City and over-running New Jersey, Howe aroused a great deal of hatred and "created more rebels than his proffer of pardons won to the King." His troops demonstrated to the innocent New Yorkers what a military invasion meant in European style.\(^1\) The Loyalist, Thomas Jones described Howe's invasion in the following terms:

Public libraries were robbed, colleges ruined, and churches of all denominations burned and destroyed; while plunder, robberies, peculation, whoring, gaming, and all kinds of dissipation, were cherished, nursed, encouraged, and openly countenanced.\(^2\)

British soldiers also broke open the City Hall upon their entry into the city and plundered the College Library, taking books, mathematical apparatus and many valuable pictures. Later, the books were publicly hawked about the town for sale by the soldiers who took them. Even a firm Loyalist had to admit that although the rebel army had been

\(^1\)Peckham, p. 46.

\(^2\)Jones, I, p. 140.
in full possession of the city for nearly seven months, "neither of these libraries were ever meddled with." ³

On the night of September 16, a terrible fire spread through the city. Almost every house on the west side of town between Broadway and the North River was destroyed. Along with six hundred houses (about one fourth of the city's total) the blaze also ruined a number of churches, including Trinity Church. An eye witness exclaimed that it would be "almost impossible to conceive of a Scene of more horror and distress." ⁴ This was the first night that the British troops were quartered in the city, and naturally the new arrivals were the first to be suspected of this evil deed. The British immediately became defensive and tried to put the blame on the rebels. Several Americans, believed by the British to be responsible for the fire, were caught "in the act" by British soldiers, and at least two of the suspected arsonists were killed on the spot. ⁵

Before Washington was forced to abandon New York, General Nathanael Greene had suggested that the city be

³Ibid., pp. 136-137.
⁴Diary of Fredrick Mackenzie, I, pp. 58-59, 60.
⁵Ibid., p. 59.
laid to waste because most of its residents were Loyalists and the town would only offer shelter for the British. But Washington rejected Greene's plan to destroy the city and left New York unharmed. Although the true cause of the fire remains a mystery, the guilt probably lies with the British looters who sacked the city. Certainly a great number of New Yorkers must have held the undisciplined foreigners responsible.

A further cause for despising the British came from the "train of loose women" that accompanied the royal army. Many of these women were from Europe, but a large number were "recruited from the least reputable streets of certain American seaports." These harpies quickly helped to sour the Loyalists' enthusiasm for their British liberators. Besides the physical damage these women inflicted on the New York towns and villages, "the losses endured by a decent housewife were aggravated by a sense of altogether intolerable insult."

While the British were rapidly losing friends because of their poor manners, Washington was careful to check the


8 Montross, pp. 143-144.

conduct of his troops. On December 31, 1776, Washington stated that all stores and supplies taken in battle were to be divided equally among the troops. The administration of these goods was to be handled by the quartermaster, and plunder for personal gain was not allowed. Washington also wanted private property left untouched. He stated: "The Order about plunder and Stores does not extend to any but that belonging to the Enemy and not to Tory property; had that been allowed the Effects of many good, staunch, Worthy persons would have fallen a sacrifice."\textsuperscript{10}

The following day General Washington issued general orders concerning the conduct of officers and soldiers of the Continental Army with regard to the civilian population. In part, the order read:

\begin{quote}
His Excellency General Washington strictly forbids . . . plundering any person whatsoever, whether Tories or others . . . [and] it is expected that humanity and tenderness to women and children will distinguish brave Americans, contending for liberty, from infamous mercenary ravers, whether British or Hessians."\textsuperscript{11}
\end{quote}

Washington's order was published in all newspapers in rebel occupied territory. Coming from the commander of the Continental Army at a time when the people of New York were

\textsuperscript{10}Washington, VI, p. 460.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., VI, p. 466.
suffering from the atrocities of the British and their Hessian allies, it must have been a great propaganda coup for the General. Furthermore, Washington meant to enforce his order, and promised that those caught in "the infamous practice of plundering . . . may expect to be punished in the severest manner."\(^{12}\) He was firmly resolved that inhumanity and thievery would not alienate the populace from his cause, and he was not afraid to discipline his men.\(^ {13}\)

Both the British and Hessians were active plunderers, but it was the Germans who aroused the most bitter hatred. At the battle of Long Island the Hessians gained a bestial reputation for putchering their prisoners. The rebels complained that the Hessians would not give quarter when it was asked, and in one instance in the battle for Manhattan the Hessians slaughtered about sixty colonists who tried to surrender. The Hessians seldom took prisoners.\(^ {14}\) As the news of the Hessians' brutality spread throughout the colonies it hardened the rebels in their resolve.\(^ {15}\) The Hessians' inability to distinguish between rebel and Loyalist caused many of the King's friends to re-examine their position.\(^ {16}\)


\(^{13}\) *Trevelyan*, II, p. 344.

\(^{14}\) *Diary of Fredrick Mackenzie*, I, p. 48. Also, Montross, p. 131. Also, *Lowell*, p. 68.

\(^{15}\) *Lowell*, p. 68.

\(^{16}\) *Thayer*, p. 110.
The invaders were also guilty of rape. An enraged rebel from Staten Island complained that the British and German soldiers "play the very devil with the girls and even the old women . . . There is scarcely a virgin [sic] to be found in the part of the country they have pass'd thro." The British Lord Francis Rawdon commented that "A girl cannot step into the bushes to pluck a rose without running the risk of being ravished, . . . and as a consequence we have the most entertaining court-martials every day."\(^{17}\) While at least the British court-martialed, and in some cases executed those guilty of this crime,\(^{18}\) the Hessian troops were never punished for such offenses.\(^{19}\)

From the time of Howe's occupation, New York had grown as a center for Loyalist refugees. These desperate people, forced from their homes in the countryside by the Whigs' persecutions, often brought with them only the clothes they were wearing and perhaps a little money. A lucky few found employment within the British military system, but most of them remained in the "direst need." As the war dragged on this inactive mass continued to grow in numbers and in hopeless dependence upon the British.\(^{20}\) After the

\(^{17}\) Quotations found in Peckham, p. 47.

\(^{18}\) Diary of Fredrick Mackenzie, I, p. 44.

\(^{19}\) Peckham, p. 47.

\(^{20}\) Van Tyne, pp. 146-147.
battle of Long Island when refugees returned to their homes in Gravesend, New Utrecht, Flatbush, and Brooklyn, they found their houses empty or destroyed. They had also lost their cattle which they would never recover.21 Those living too far from the center of the city were consistently the targets of harassment from rebels. To these Loyalists it seemed that the British were not offering much protection. They had been plundered first by the Americans, then by the Hessians, and then by the Americans again.22

The refugee problem in New York increased uncontrollably as Loyalists from all quarters streamed into the city seeking protection behind the British lines. The tremendous overcrowding that resulted after the fire in September, 1776 had an undesirable effect on the morale of everyone within the city. At one time forty thousand troops and refugees were squeezed into a town that had never had more than 22,000 inhabitants.23 The British soldiers were anything but welcome guests during this crisis. The empty homes in New York were almost all occupied by soldiers who the provincials believed must have been the "dirtiest people on

21 Baurmeister, p. 50.
23 Montross, p. 144.
the continent."

When the rebellion started the Loyalists had been led to believe that the power of Great Britain would crush the Whigs in less than a year. However, after several years of hard fighting it was apparent to many Loyalists that the British would never be able to win a complete military victory in America. By 1778, many of the Loyalists were sick of war and wanted to make a compromise peace settlement with the rebels. It appeared to many that the British war effort had stalled. The Loyalists complained that punishments were never imposed on plunderers, and the British commanders made few attempts to restore stolen goods or pay for confiscated cattle. Corruption became commonplace, and the British quartermasters and barrackmasters enriched themselves at public expense. It seemed that the suppression of the rebellion was but a secondary consideration for the British. Instead of concentrating on defeating the rebels, Howe's army levied its attacks against "his Majesties loyal subjects within the lines; [and] indiscriminately against all persons wherever the army moved."  

After July 1781, Sir Henry Clinton was in constant expectation of an attack on New York by the combined forces of

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25 Flick, pp. 96-97. Also, Van Tyne, p. 147.
26 Henry Clinton, pp. 88-89.
27 Jones, I, pp. 116, 119, 139-140.
Washington and Lafayette, with the French fleet blockading the harbor. Clinton based this belief on captured correspondence that his intelligence sources supplied. In spite of the fact that he believed the city to be in serious danger of attack, General Clinton painted a brighter picture of the situation than was actually the case, and tried to bolster the sagging morale of the discouraged Loyalists. He told them Britain would honor her commitments in America, and the King would never abandon his loyal subjects. The General also attempted to encourage the Loyalists by pointing to the recent military setbacks suffered by the rebel army. Nevertheless, by 1781 it was apparent that the refugees were going to support whichever side seemed to be winning.

General Clinton seemed to have understood that the British were not winning the war in America as early as 1778. In that year a Royal Commission of high ranking British officials journeyed to America to study the war effort. The Commission included Governor Johnstone, Mr. William Eden, and the Earl of Carlisle.

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30 Baurmeister, p. 342.
31 The King's instructions to the Commission regarding possible peace talks and conditions for negotiations can be found in Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution, ed. by Samuel Elliot Morison, Second Edition (New York, 1965), pp. 186-203.
General Clinton felt that the commissioners, ever influenced by the "too sanguine reports of overzealous Loyalists," took back to England more optimistic ideas about the ending of the revolt in the colonies than the true situation warranted.\textsuperscript{32} In General Clinton's opinion Great Britain had miscalculated the true feelings of the Americans, the military strength of the colonies, and the numerous difficulties and immense expense which would be caused by recruiting, transporting and feeding a large army 3000 miles from the seat of the government.\textsuperscript{33}

The numerical and moral strength of the Loyalists in New York had deteriorated to such a low state in the third year of the rebellion that there was no way the Loyalists could have been used as an effective force against the rebels. Instead, the New York Loyalists, now cornered in the city, were a liability working against the British. The early failure of the British to utilize the Loyalists did not result from the want of Loyalist enthusiasm.\textsuperscript{34} However, the British anticipated a short war and the government was reluctant to organize, train and equip a provincial army that would soon be disbanded.\textsuperscript{35} It took the British

\textsuperscript{32}Henry Clinton, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{34}Smith, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 35.
several years to recognize the value of the Loyalists as a potential military force.\textsuperscript{36} By this time most Loyalists seemed to have lost any enthusiasm they might have had for taking up arms.

The expectation that a British victory was imminent also tended to prevent the early enlistment of Loyalists because few Tories wanted to embitter their relations with the rebels among whom they would soon return to live.\textsuperscript{37} The harshness, brutality and destruction of the British occupation alienated many neutrals and Loyalists, and support for the British declined as the King's army demonstrated a complete inability to control and pacify the countryside or decisively defeat the rebel army. Those who did not actually shift their allegiance during the British occupation, at least became so discouraged with the war as to become apathetic about its outcome.

\textsuperscript{36}Van Tyne, p147.

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p. 147.
PART VI

Along with the disgusting conduct of the British and Hessian troops, the inferior status that the British gave to provincial soldiers, and the miserable conditions that the Loyalists were forced to endure while the King's army seemed incapable of putting down the rebellion, the Loyalist found still a further cause to despise the British. This was the unwise British decision to use Indians against the rebellious colonists. In December 1778, Governor Tryon had urged that the Indian Nations on the colonial frontier from Quebec to Florida be turned against the rebels, "unrestrained, excepting women and children."¹ Of course the Indians were difficult to restrain, and the red men found it extremely hard to distinguish a Loyalist from a Whig. One of the most famous incidents of the Indians indiscriminate killing occurred when a band of Iroquois allies of General Burgoyne murdered Jane McCrea, the beautiful lover of a New York Loyalist in the service of the British. General

¹Tryon to Germain, December 24, 1778, Documents Relative to the History of New York, VIII, p. 756.
Burgoyne refused to punish the Indian killers for scalping Miss McCrea because he was afraid that such an act would cost him his Indian allies. The story of the murder and Burgoyne's condoning it quickly spread throughout the colonies and Loyalists everywhere wondered how safe they and their families were from Burgoyne's savages.  

The misunderstanding and poor judgment of the British did a great deal towards driving away what might have been valuable Loyalist support, but the rebels were not inactive in the matter of dividing the British from their sympathetic provincials. Certainly, a large number of people with loyalist feelings never expressed them because of the alert action taken by the rebels to suppress loyalism. Immediately after losing New York, Washington was informed of the fact that several Loyalist companies were being formed to join General Howe. Washington ordered that a tight security be maintained to keep Loyalists from reaching Howe, and suspected Loyalist ring leaders were rounded up and imprisoned. Over two hundred Loyalist prisoners were sent to prisons in New Hampshire in the first three months after the battle of Long Island.

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2 Jones, I, p. 281. Also, Peckham, pp. 63-64.
4 Ibid., pp. 446, 829, 851.
The Commission for the Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies was also an important rebel factor in keeping the Loyalists of New York from aiding the British or doing damage to the revolution. In June 1778, the Commission required all persons of "neutral or equivocal characters" to take an oath declaring New York to be a free and independent state.\(^5\) Persons who refused to take the oath or absented themselves were banished from the state; and, if ever discovered in any part of New York, they were to be judged guilty of misprision of treason.\(^6\) Later in the war all persons found "adhering to the enemies of this State" were declared guilty of high treason, punishable by death without benefit of clergy or three years service on a ship of the United States Navy.\(^7\) Across the state the Commission had the power to enforce its laws, and the rebels did not hesitate to use terror and violence against the Loyalists.\(^8\) The Loyalists were under rebel jurisdiction throughout the state except in British occupied New York City. Thus they had only two choices: to flee to the city and seek protection from the British, or to remain quietly at home and cooperate with the Whigs. Lieutenant Governor Colden even conceded that in the districts controlled


\(^6\) Ibid., I, pp. 18-19.

\(^7\) Ibid., I, p. 56.

\(^8\) Ibid., I, pp. 72-73. Also, Jones, I, p. 281.
by the rebels, "friends of Government saw no security for their persons or property but in joining with the multitude." 9

Another means by which the rebels actively contributed to the strained relations between the loyal provincials and the British was to infiltrate the Loyalists' ranks. Large numbers of those professing to be Loyalists were actually in complete cooperation with the rebels. That it was impossible to tell a loyal provincial from a rebel caused the British and Hessians to mistrust all colonials. Major Baurmeister recorded in his Journal that "the number of those who are secretly rebels (who are the most dangerous) is, according to the openly professed rebels, greater than Washington's entire army." 10

The greatest problem faced by the Loyalists themselves during the Revolutionary War was the lack of any clearly defined position. A rebel knew his position, but a loyalist remained something of an anomaly. The Loyalist knew that as an American by birth and a loyal supporter of the British monarch in principle "he could never be quite accepted by either, whatever the outcome of the war." 11 The Loyalists, as a group, had no policy of their own and as a result lacked unity and cohesion. Loyalists were conservatives, tied to

9 New York Historical Society Collections, X, p. 423.
10 Baurmeister, p. 419.
11 Montross, p. 384.
a century-old political system that failed to meet the problems and challenges of the rapidly changing colonial society. This conservative reliance on an inactive aristocratic leadership kept the Loyalists from taking decisive action.\textsuperscript{12}

Both the British and the American revolutionaries recognized the potential power of the Loyalists as a massive middle group that could tip the balance of military superiority. Overconfidence caused the British to take the support of the Loyalists for granted. In the early months of the rebellion the British ministry was informed by its military advisors that the Americans had neither the inclination nor ability to make good soldiers. Popular British military opinion also held that provincial troops were notorious in their lack of bravery.\textsuperscript{13}

While the British leaders contemplated the prospect of an easy military solution to the rebellion in America, believing that the great majority of the people were either sincerely loyal to the King or fearful of the British might, the rebels were taking positive action against loyalism.

\textsuperscript{12}Callahan, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{13}Valentine, p. 310.
The rebels imprisoned Loyalists, guarded the roads and rivers to keep the King's friends from reaching the British lines, and exploited every British blunder in their relations with the Loyalists to make propaganda gains. The British failure to crush the rebel army or control and secure any territory outside the city of New York meant that the numerous Loyalists who lived in the countryside were in rebel territory. Here they were forced to accept rebel government troops or become refugees. Most chose the former course.

After the war was ended a large number of the colonists maintained their Loyalist principles. Between 75,000 and 80,000 Loyalists felt so strongly that they left the colonies at the conclusion of the hostilities.\(^\text{14}\) The great number of Loyalists remaining in New York after the climax of the war gave George III reason to hope that the colony, or at least part of it, might be retained.\(^\text{15}\) However, the Loyalists' cause had already been lost, and this dream proved to be just one more British misreading of the real situation in America.

\(^{14}\) This number represents about one out of every thirty white families living in the thirteen colonies. \([\text{Henry Steele Commanger and Richard B. Morris, (eds.), \textit{The Spirit of '76}, (New York, 1958), p. 326}.]\)

\(^{15}\) Valentine, p. 305.
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