

# Placing Loyalist Political Arguments in the American Revolutionary Tradition: The Case of Anglican Loyalists in New York

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During the American Revolution, Loyalists constituted about one-fifth to one-fourth of the white population in the mainland North American colonies, and the Patriots, or Revolutionaries constituted about one-third of the white population. The rest of the population either vacillated between these two political alignments or remained neutral. Even though the Loyalists constituted a considerable portion of the population on the eve of the Revolution, most scholars interested in the political ideas and political discourses of the American Revolution have placed their focus on the Patriots.<sup>1</sup> While the term “Loyalists” has been used to label all those who supported the British Empire during the American Revolution, Loyalists were not a homogenous group, but contained people from all walks of life, with diverse reasons to maintain their loyalty to the British crown. Such diversity led to various political ideologies. These ideologies should be better incorporated into the grand tradition of the American Revolution.

Beginning with the transformational work of Bernard Bailyn, historians have focused on the relationship between revolutionary ideology and previous intellectual traditions and argued that their predecessors at least intellectually, highly influenced the Revolutionaries.<sup>2</sup> As these discussions tend to explain how the Revolutionaries developed their ideas and to justify the Revolution, Loyalist political ideologies were usually either omitted or treated as peripheral and

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Larkin, “Loyalism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, ed. Edward G. Gray and Jane Kamensky (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 291.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Bernard Bailyn argued that the radical tradition of English dissenters provided a force to harmonize the “discordant elements in the political and social thought,” and brought together Enlightenment theories, common law precedents, covenant theology, and classical traditions into a comprehensive political theory. See Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 53–54. J. G. A. Pocock, on the other hand, stated that “the Whig canon and the neo-Harringtonians, Milton, Harrington, and Sidney, Trenchard, Gordon and Bolingbroke, together with the Greek, Roman, and Renaissance masters of the tradition as far as Montesquieu, formed the authoritative literature of this culture.” See J. G. A. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 506-507. Lee Ward claimed that the Lockean liberal, modern republican, and moderate Whig strains of thought each played a role in establishing the philosophical foundation in the Revolutionary era. See Lee Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 427.

secondary.

While the standard narrative of the American Revolution centers on the Patriots, many eighteenth-century North Americans did not identify with Patriots' political values. For example, Revolutionaries sought to enforce their political values by imprisoning Loyalists and confiscating their estates, thus forcing their political values, including their concepts of liberty, upon others. Revolutionaries forged those values as their political weapons, and eventually made them part of the propaganda effort to fuel support for independence. In time, such values were established as the founding values of the newly created nation. This grand narrative of the American Revolution ignores Loyalists' role in the whole political culture and creates a myth of a unified revolution. While the Patriots created their Revolutionary myth, the Loyalists also developed their own cultural justification against the Patriots' during the Revolution.

This paper focuses on the political arguments of the Anglican Loyalists in revolutionary New York among all the Loyalist political ideologies. Their political writings, such as pamphlets and newspaper essays, demonstrated a set of political arguments and as media transmitted those arguments to the reading public for persuasion. Through analyzing those writings, this paper delves into the ways these Anglican Loyalists in New York defended and defined their liberty and explains what those ideas meant to them.

### **New York Loyalists' Conservative Application of Liberty**

The Loyalist political ideology in New York has to be understood within the larger framework of eighteenth-century British political ideology. The political discourse within the British Atlantic World in the eighteenth century was filled with the language of liberty. Liberty and rights served as the shared conceptual tools that people from different political camps utilized in contesting one another for justification of their political stands. People from respective political camps utilized the concepts of liberty and rights in different ways to fit their political agendas. Historians have argued that republicanism pervaded the eighteenth-century Anglo-American world.<sup>3</sup> However, in the American Revolutionary era, not only the Patriots but also the Loyalists held republican ideas and made their arguments accordingly. Ironically, many elements that historian Bernard Bailyn argued as the "ideological origins" of the American Revolution, therefore, also served as the roots of American Loyalism. Each camp interpreted the principles of republicanism differently and thus applied their interpretations in distinct political claims.

As the Loyalists claimed to protect their rights and liberties as British subjects, their political ideology could be closely linked to the conservative ideology in eighteenth-century Britain. Historian Harry Dickinson asserted that conservatives believed that the radical claim which stressed liberty of men above all else would end up threatening all established order. Although conservatives did not go so far as to claim that people could never resist an arbitrary tyrant, they worried that the general and universalized claim to the inalienable right of resistance would

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<sup>3</sup> See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*. For the historiography of republicanism, see Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (January 1972): 49-80; Robert E. Shalhope, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (April 1982): 334-356; Isaac Kramnick, "Republican Revisionism Revisited," *American Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (June 1982): 629-664; Joyce Appleby, "Republicanism in Old and New Contexts," *William and Mary Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (January 1986): 20-34; Richard R. Beeman, "Deference, Republicanism, and the Emergence of Popular Politics in Eighteenth-Century America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (July 1992): 401-430.

eventually subvert all authority. If every man could justly believe he had the right to resist everything, which did not accord with his, own will and could act upon such belief, it would bring down all governments. Therefore, conservatives claimed, “the only rights a man possessed in civil society were those given to him by the law of the land.” Such an idea of limited liberty was not only popular among conservatives in eighteenth-century Britain, but also among the Loyalists during the American Revolution. Facing the radicals and Revolutionaries who made universal claims on the right of resistance, both conservatives in Britain and Loyalists in North America picked up the conservative elements in their political traditions to argue that authority and order were crucial to the civil society. They reasoned that the exercise of liberty should therefore be limited within the rule of laws in order to maintain a stable social order.<sup>4</sup>

Anglican clergymen, such as Samuel Seabury, Thomas Bradbury Chandler, Charles Inglis, and John Vardill, wrote most of the pamphlets and newspaper essays supporting the Loyalist cause in New York. They wrote to refute the radical and revolutionary designs of men like John Dickinson, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine. After the passing of the Tea Act in May 1773, many protestors opposed to this legislation threatened to return or destroy the tea that was shipped to the American colonies. Some eventually made good on those threats, including in Boston Harbor on December 16, 1773. One month before the Boston “Tea Party,” however, an Anglican clergyman in New York, John Vardill, used a pseudonym “Poplicola” to publish an essay entitled “To the Worthy Inhabitants of the City of New-York” in *Rivington’s New York Gazetteer*. In this essay, Vardill claimed that a good citizen “will be inclined from duty as well as interest, to love his country, and to be zealous in advancing its welfare.” Such emphasis on loving one’s own country was a typical expression of classical republicanism. He began his argument with loving his country, and then deduced from this argument to the “pursuit of common good.” For him, true liberty was not enjoyed at an individual level, but looking for the common good at a community, colony, or even an imperial level. He claimed that a person should “feel himself under an obligation of contributing his share to the promotion of public happiness.” He further explained, “When men unite in civil society, a common interest of the whole is formed, and each member obliges himself to act jointly with the rest for this common interest.”<sup>5</sup>

Vardill considered politics from an imperial perspective, rather than arguing about individual’s political rights. He emphasized the value of authority and loyalty. Although the protestors believed that they aimed to pursue common interests and public happiness, Vardill reminded his readers “not this, or any other province, is your country, but the whole British Empire.” He suggested that the common interests and public happiness that they should pursue was not merely within their own colonies, or even among all the North American British colonies, but for the whole empire. For him, loving their country overshadowed other considerations in terms of how to maintain their British rights. He asserted, “No human institution whatsoever is totally free from imperfection and abuse; but none but weak or fraudulent minds would conclude from accidental perversions, that the general and natural tendency of any constitution was prejudicial.” He implied that the measures of Parliament might not be perfect, and Parliament

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<sup>4</sup> H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Methuen, 1977), 306-307. Dickinson used the term “the conservatives” to categorize those political actors and writers who were alarmed by radical arguments in late eighteenth-century Great Britain. The concept of “conservatives” here served as the opposite of radicals, who urged a more radical reform in the British constitutional system.

<sup>5</sup> Poplicola, “To the Worthy Inhabitants of the City of New-York,” *Rivington’s New York Gazetteer*, November 18, 1773. This essay was published both as a newspaper article and a broadside.

might abuse its supreme power, but British subjects should still observe their constitution.<sup>6</sup>

Other than claiming the common good within the whole British Empire, Vardill also used the language of liberty to criticize the protestors as being tyrannical. He condemned the protestors for depriving people of their freedom of expression: “Every step they have hitherto taken has been introductive of the most fatal tyranny, a tyranny of so high a nature as not to permit a fellow citizen even to think differently from them without danger.” He argued that colonial Americans should value “the blessings of social life,” and make sure that “no members of the community usurp a tyrannical power of transgressing the laws.” For him, being protected by laws was a significant sign of liberty, and therefore he asserted, “No man can be in a more abject state of bondage, than he whose reputation, property and life, are not under the security of law; but exposed to the discretionary violence of any part of the community.” Only laws would protect reputation, property and life, and violence would not. Any exercise of force contrary to or not authorized by law was opposite to “every idea of civil government,” and would lead to “the most dangerous and cruel species of slavery.” He argued that law was the protection for liberty, so any action that subverted civil law would become the enemy to liberty. Vardill warned his fellow New Yorkers that this protest might result in the destruction of property, and “your house is in danger when your neighbours’ is in flame.” He used this metaphor to imply that New Yorkers needed to prioritize protecting their property, which could only happen under the condition of social stability and security.<sup>7</sup>

Vardill published another article in *Rivington’s New York Gazetteer* on December 2, 1773 to explain his ideas about civil liberty. He separated civil liberty from natural liberty. Natural liberty only existed in a state of nature, in which people were subject to no limitations but those, which arose from the laws of God. For Vardill, civil liberty existed in civil society which adjusted “the rights of individuals by a common wisdom,” and protected “the exercise of them by a common power” to restrict “every man from acting in such a manner as to injure others.” He claimed that a true civil society was “the Empire of Laws,” which meant a country ruled by laws. People within the society should obey the laws, and the rulers of the society should rule by the laws, not by their own personal will. The laws of the society will protect people’s liberty from being infringed by others’ free will and action.<sup>8</sup> On other words, the laws of the society offered an order that would maintain the existent social relations.

Historian Michal Rozbicki once pointed out that the meaning of liberty was “one of privilege” “over those who did not possess it.” The concept of liberty was rooted in the distinction between those who could exercise the full privileges of freedom and those who could only exercise a few, or even none.<sup>9</sup> Vardill’s perception of liberty also rooted in such distinction. For him, civil liberty was nothing else but “natural liberty so far restrained by human laws, as is necessary an expedient for the general benefit of the publick.” Without the binding power of laws, social order would fall apart, and people in civil society would fall back into a state of nature. He warned, “if every man could act as he pleased, no one would be secure.” He wrote that “the same violence which one part of the community employed to vindicate what they had determined to be their privileges, would be on equal ground employed by another.” He affirmed that human rights could not be maintained

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<sup>6</sup> Poplicola, “To the Worthy Inhabitants of the City of New-York.”

<sup>7</sup> Poplicola, “To the Worthy Inhabitants of the City of New-York.”

<sup>8</sup> Poplicola, “To the Worthy Inhabitants of the City of New-York,” *Rivington’s New York Gazetteer*, December 2, 1773.

<sup>9</sup> Michal Jan Rozbicki, *Culture and Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 2-3.

by violence, and “if our rights are endangered, let us employ those methods of redress, which the constitution admits, or has directed.” Vardill was a stern believer in the British constitution and the order brought by this constitution. He insisted that colonial leaders should seek to solve their current problem only through the constitutional solution.<sup>10</sup>

John Vardill wrote in the middle of growing colonial opposition to the Tea Act. The British Parliament, angered by the colonists’ violent resistance, in 1774 passed the Coercive Acts to punish the colonies. In response, the colonies organized the Continental Congress and passed the Continental Association calling for a boycott of British goods. They also sanctioned committees of safety in every colony to enforce the boycott. These actions became the next targets of Loyalists’ critiques.

In the midst of this turmoil, Thomas Bradbury Chandler, another Anglican clergyman, published a pamphlet, *A Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans*, in New York to respond to the situation. In the 1774 publication, he denounced the protestors’ “common cause of American liberty.” He called their behavior licentious. He claimed, “we are under no obligations to abet the destructive violence of the people in Boston, or to endeavor to screen it from public justice.” He insisted that the threat coming from the changes made by the parliamentary acts was more imaginary than real. He claimed that the acts that brought up such revolts were not nearly so alarming as radicals depicted them. He criticized the protestors for exaggerating the malice of these acts and took advantage of such emotions to promote violence.<sup>11</sup>

Chandler aimed to lead people away from the revolts and to pursue reconciliation with Great Britain. He rebuked the Continental Congress for being tyrannical. He believed that the original purpose of the Congress was to “find out some way consistent with our claims for obtaining the restoration of our common tranquility, and a happy reconciliation of Great-Britain to her Colonies.” The Congress, however, betrayed the “moderate and considerate persons” and entered into “a league offensive and defensive, with its worst enemies the New-England and other Presbyterian Republicans.” He blamed the Congress for supporting the rebellious revolts, and attributed such disposition to the spirit of New England and the radical ideas of the Presbyterians. In this manner, he turned the internal oppositions among the Americans into the war of religions.<sup>12</sup>

Chandler linked radicalism, or in his own term, republicanism, to the Presbyterianism, and hinted that the radicals in the Continental Congress were guided by such New England-Presbyterian influence. Many members of the Church of England were persecuted and misrepresented by those radicals because they held different positions. He exclaimed that, “But, Good God! Is there to be no liberty of the press, no liberty of speaking, no liberty even of thinking, on political subjects, where those republicans have the ascendant? This is despotism with a vengeance; and such as we must be all fools if we voluntarily submit to.” He proposed that people should be at their liberty to care for their own safety and should not owe the Continental Congress more respect and obedience than the Congress paid to the British Parliament. Even though he built up his arguments here with the concept of the war of religions, he adopted the concept and language of liberty to attack the Continental Congress.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Poplicola, “To the Worthy Inhabitants of the City of New-York,” December 2, 1773.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Bradbury Chandler, *A Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans, on the Subject of Our Political Confusions: In which the Necessary Consequences of Violently Opposing the King’s Troops, and of a General Non-Importation Are Fairly Stated* in Gordon Wood ed., *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate*, vol. 2, 1773-1776 (New York: Library of America, 2015), 284-285.

<sup>12</sup> Chandler, *A Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans*, 293-94.

<sup>13</sup> Chandler, *A Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans*, 308.

Chandler linked his argument with his Anglican religious worldview. He pointed out that, “The principles of submission and obedience to lawful authority, are as inseparable from a sound, genuine member of the Church of England, as any religious principles whatever.” He stressed that the Anglican Church had always been respected for “its loyalty, and its regard to order and government.” He regarded such order and government as the foundation of liberty. The target readers of his pamphlet were not only the Anglicans but also other religious groups. Chandler specifically addressed Quakers in his pamphlet, recalling their history of being persecuted in New England, and claiming that they were “indebted to the King and his royal ancestors, for the continued favour of enjoying your religious liberties.” Chandler did not believe that people were freer under the Continental Congress than the British Empire and therefore kept reminding his readers that they would enjoy more liberty under the British government because the king and members of Parliament were more prudent and would be able to protect their liberty. Chandler held higher respect for the British Parliament and the British ruling class than to the Continental Congress. Chandler rejected the idea that common people should subvert the governing authority.<sup>14</sup>

Samuel Seabury was another Anglican clergyman who published a series of political pamphlets from 1774 to 1775 to rebuke the measures of the Continental Congress. His pamphlets were highly popular among Loyalists and excited bitter antipathy among Patriots. The Sons of Liberty seized him in 1775 and accused him of writing pamphlets “against the liberties of America.” Their animosity against him showed the power and influence of his writings. This series of pamphlets were parts of a pamphlet war between Seabury and Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton’s responses to Seabury were among his first revolutionary writings. Seabury and Hamilton’s debates demonstrated that their differences derived from their diverse cultural presuppositions. While they both agreed on the value of rights and authority and used similar political theories in their arguments, Seabury prioritized authority over rights, and Hamilton disagreed. Such prioritization did not derive from political theories, but from the embedded dispositions in their minds.<sup>15</sup>

Seabury believed that liberty could only survive within a stable social order. He also believed in the rights secured through the British constitution; however, he valued order and peace more than theoretical arguments on rights. Using the language of liberty, Seabury attacked the Continental Congress as tyrannical. He argued that true liberty would not invade the rights of people with different opinions. Seabury pointed out that the committees and courts established by the Continental Association were built upon “the same principle with the papish Inquisition” because “no proofs, no evidences are called for. The committee may judge from appearances if they please — for when it shall be made appear to a majority of any committee that the Association is violated, they may proceed to punishment.” He viewed those measures as absolutely imperious. Therefore, he accused the Congress of establishing “a court of Inquisition, to decide, in the most arbitrary, tyrannical and unheard-of manner, upon the liberties and properties of your fellow-subjects, over whom you have no just or legal power.” While the Patriots claimed to protest for their liberty and rights, he pointed out that they ironically denied others’ liberty and rights and established arbitrary institutions to execute their will.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Chandler, *A Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans*, 309-310.

<sup>15</sup> William Jones Seabury, *Memoir of Bishop Seabury* (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1908), 132; Ruma Chopra, *Unnatural Rebellion: Loyalists in New York City during the Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 42.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Seabury, *The Congress Canvassed* (New York, 1774), 14, 23.

Seabury insisted that liberty had to be secured through the British constitution. He did not trust the Continental Congress. He wrote, “I must think that liberty under a King, Lords and Commons is as good as liberty under a republican Congress: And that slavery under a republican Congress is as bad, at least, as slavery under a King, Lords and Commons: And upon the whole, that liberty under the supreme authority and protection of Great-Britain, is infinitely preferable to slavery under an American Congress.” His comments reflected his belief that the British were more trustworthy than the American Revolutionaries and their extralegal Continental Congress. Through such arguments, he showed that he viewed order and peace as necessary conditions for the enjoyment of rights. He argued that “all men, of all countries and degrees, of all sizes and complexions, have a right to as much freedom as is consistent with the security of civil society.” The key point for his concept of liberty was that liberty should be “consistent with the security of civil society.” Therefore, he asserted that “violent and illegal measures, even in the most necessary struggles for liberty, can never be justified, till all legal and moderate ones have failed.” He believed that liberty could only endure in a society with stability and order, and hence he asserted that the traditional balanced constitution of the British Empire was the best political system for people to enjoy liberty.<sup>17</sup>

Seabury wrote these pamphlets in a time of dramatic change that historian Mary Beth Norton has called it “the long 1774.” During this time, American people gradually crystalized their dispositions regarding the issue of independence. It was during this time that many Americans shifted their positions from resistance to revolution. The Battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775 pressed Americans, politicians or not, to make their own decisions. When Thomas Paine published his influential political pamphlet *Common Sense* in January 1776, Charles Inglis, an Anglican clergyman, responded with his own pamphlet: *The Deceiver Unmasked* in March 1776. However, this pamphlet was delayed in getting to readers because a group of Sons of Liberty attacked a printing house and ruined all the copies. Inglis later published his pamphlet under the title *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated, in Certain Strictures on a Pamphlet intituled Common Sense* in Philadelphia in June 1776. Inglis rebuked Paine as an “avowed, violent Republican, utterly averse and unfriendly to the English constitution.” He asked his readers to distinguish between the republican cause and the American cause and reminded them that from a closer union with Great Britain, on proper principles, they would derive more benefits in future.<sup>18</sup>

Inglis attacked Paine’s political theory as “Utopian systems” and emphasized the significance of a stable society. He warned that Paine’s vision for America, if realized, would “loose the bands of society, and overturn governments that have been formed by the wisdom of ages” and would “entail misery and ruin upon millions.” While Paine stated that “Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness,” Inglis argued that people’s wants did not produce society. He reminded readers that people were born into the society. Therefore, “A state of society is the natural state of man.” While Paine traced his theory back to the original state of nature in social contract theory, Inglis highlighted the real human experiences in society. He further claimed that “[a]s nature has thus made us members of society, without any choice or will of ours; so, whatever

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<sup>17</sup> Seabury, *A View of the Controversy between Great-Britain and her Colonies* (New York, 1774), 8; Seabury, *The Congress Canvassed*, 23.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *1774: The Long Year of Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 2020), 12. Russ Castronovo, *Propaganda 1776: Secrets, Leaks, and Revolutionary Communications in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 9; Charles Inglis, *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated, in Certain Strictures on a Pamphlet intituled Common Sense* (Philadelphia, 1776), vi-viii.

happiness or perfection we are capable of, can only be attained in society.”<sup>19</sup> As Inglis refuted Paine’s arguments, he established an argument of liberty without appealing to the imaginative theory of natural state. In his discourse of liberty, people’s right of freedom did not rest in the natural state, and therefore could not be achieved in the process of dissolving the unsatisfied society back to the natural state and then organizing a new society along with a new social order.

In this way, Inglis did not regard liberty as some abstract right to individual freedom but viewed it as a status in which people could enjoy peace and benefits within the society. He wished to see “Liberties, Properties and Trade settled on a firm, generous and constitutional plan, so that neither of the former should be invaded, nor the latter impolitically or unjustly restrained.” He firmly believed that the British government was the best protector for colonists’ liberties, property, and financial well-being. He warned his readers about the consequence of independence: they would lose their property if the British constitution was subverted. Protecting property, and maintaining trade and prosperity, were among his core concerns. For Inglis, people would enjoy liberty as long as their property and prosperity were protected. To that end he trusted the British government more than the extralegal and revolutionary Continental Congress.<sup>20</sup>

Inglis asserted that the British liberty was the best liberty that the Americans could enjoy. Inglis reminded his readers that the Americans were Britons. “They have the manners, habits, and ideas of Britons; and have been accustomed to a similar form of government.” He preferred mixed form of government, so he reminded his readers that Britons could not bear the extremes of either absolute monarchy or republicanism. He warned the Americans that even if they succeeded in subverting the authority of the King and Parliament, their successes “would terminate in the despotism of some one successful adventurer.” Staying in the union with Great Britain would be best for Americans’ benefit. Creating an independent American republic would be dangerous to liberty and financially costly. The Americans, he warned, would incur huge expenses. They would be taxed far more than under any of the hated acts of Parliament. Inglis concluded that staying with the British Empire would protect Americans’ liberty, property, and prosperity.<sup>21</sup>

## **Conclusion: Anglican Loyalists and the Language of Liberty of the American Revolution**

This paper demonstrates the ways that Anglican Loyalists utilized the language of liberty and rights in their political persuasion. While the Patriots used the language of liberty they inherited from Enlightenment philosophers and other British thinkers to justify their resistance, and later their rebellion, Loyalist writers used the same language and ideas to criticize the Patriots. While the Patriots interpreted and used the concept of liberty to fit their radical agenda, the Loyalists used the concept of liberty to strengthen their conservative claim. They desired a world of order and believed that rights and liberties could only exist—and had to be limited within—this ordered world. In this world of order, rulers should protect the governed, and the governed should respect the rulers’ authority. With such mindset, they feared that society would degenerate into anarchy if they submitted to the appeals of the Revolutionaries. For them, what the Revolutionaries asked for was the right to resist the governing authority, and their actions would unleash anarchy. Throughout their pamphlets and newspaper essays, the fear of anarchy was like a ghost wandering

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<sup>19</sup> Inglis, *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated*, 10-11; Paine, *Common Sense*, in *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate*, 2: 653.

<sup>20</sup> Inglis, *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated*, 34-35, 50-52.

<sup>21</sup> Inglis, *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated*, 52-53.



in their texts, continuously reminding their readers the probable consequences of their decisions.

For these Anglican Loyalists, liberty did not culturally mean absolute human rights, but rather it meant the limited right that British subjects enjoyed under the protection of the British constitution. They culturally presumed and took it for granted that social order was at least as crucial as civil rights in terms of building an ideal society. They denounced violence and other attempts to subvert social order. Even when they admitted that the British Parliament mistreated the American colonies, they chose to act within the British constitutional system and felt unsafe resorting to extralegal recourse. This reflected Loyalists' cultural training and their worldview regarding British constitutional traditions.

We should also place Loyalist political arguments in larger historical and ideological contexts. First, we should place their arguments within the context of the conservative ideology in eighteenth-century Anglo-American world. As the Revolutionaries advocated for their perception of liberty in their writings, Loyalists sought to consider liberty, authority, loyalty, and social harmony all together in their writings. They shared a common mindset of defending the established order. The established order in their culture was the British constitutional system. While Patriots eventually gave up defending the British constitution and followed Thomas Paine's call to "begin the world over again," Loyalists championed this order that they had taken for granted and argued that abandoning it would destroy civil society along with citizens' liberty.

We should also place these Anglican Loyalists' political argument within the context of classical republicanism. Historian Robert E. Shalhope suggested that we should consider republicanism as a cultural system.<sup>22</sup> Republicanism was not only a set of ideologies, but also a cultural tradition that was broadly shared by the Americans in eighteenth century, at least among the educated elites. Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, and J. G. A. Pocock has depicted a classical republican world in the eighteenth-century North America.<sup>23</sup> While Bailyn, Wood, and Pocock have long argued that the American Revolution and the founding of the American republic was a product of classical republicanism, Vardill, Chandler, Seabury, and Inglis' works show that Anglican Loyalists also based their arguments on similar values. They argued that claiming independence would not bring the common welfare to the American colonies. They believed that people of virtue should pursue the public good, which should bring peace, order, and social tranquility, not war and confusion. Like the political writers of classical antiquity, they also distrusted democratic government and believed in the mixed or balanced constitution of government embodied in the British political system, and therefore they argued that the English constitution had a better chance to bring true liberty to American people than the democratic government advocated and practiced by the Revolutionaries. While the Revolutionaries' concept of liberty was influenced by classical republicanism, Loyalists also provided another classical perception of liberty.

As scholars explore the political ideas of the American Revolution, Loyalists' writings should have an important role in such exploration. They demonstrate an ideological perspective divergent from the Patriots' but also derived from the intellectual and cultural tradition of eighteenth-century North America.

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<sup>22</sup> Robert E. Shalhope, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39:2 (April 1982), 356.

<sup>23</sup> See Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American*; Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998 [originally published in 1969]); J. G. A. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*.