

D. LOYALISTS VERSUS PATRIOTS

I. Daniel Leonard Deplores Rebellion (1775)

Daniel Leonard, of an aristocratic Massachusetts family, was the cleverest Tory pamphleteer in America. His writings, declared his pen adversary John Adams, "shone like the moon among the lesser stars." Forced to flee from Boston when the British troops withdrew in 1776, he subsequently became Chief Justice of Bermuda and dean of the English bar. He is best known in America for a series of seventeen newspaper articles, published in 1774-1775 over the signature "Massachusettensis." He warned his readers that rebellion was "the most atrocious offense," and that it would open the doors to anarchy. Legal punishment for the rebel was that he be dragged to the gallows; "that he be hanged by the neck, and then cut down alive; that his entrails be taken out and burned while he is yet alive; that his head be cut off; that his body be divided into four parts; that his head and quarters be at the king's disposal." As the clash neared between the American patriots (Whigs) and the British troops in Massachusetts, Leonard issued this final appeal to his countrymen two weeks before the bloodshed at Lexington. Evaluate his most convincing and his least convincing arguments in support of the view that the colonials could not win.

Do you expect to conquer in war? War is no longer a simple, but an intricate science, not to be learned from books or two or three campaigns, but from long experience. You need not be told that His Majesty's generals, Gage and Haldimand, are possessed of every talent requisite to great commanders, matured by long experience in many parts of the world, and stand high in military fame; that many of the officers have been bred to arms from their infancy, and a large proportion of the army now here have already reaped immortal honors in the iron harvest of the field.

Alas! My friends, you have nothing to oppose to this force but a militia unused to service, impatient of command, and destitute of resources. Can your officers depend upon the privates, or the privates upon the officers? Your war can be but little more than mere tumultuary rage. And besides, there is an awful disparity between troops that fight the battles of their sovereign and those that follow the standard of rebellion.

These reflections may arrest you in an hour that you think not of, and come too late to serve you. Nothing short of a miracle could gain you one battle; but could you destroy all the British troops that are now here, and burn the men-of-war that command our coast, it would be but the beginning of sorrow. And yet without a decisive battle, one campaign would ruin you. This province [Massachusetts] does not produce its necessary provision when the husbandman can pursue his calling without molestation. What then must be your condition when the demand shall be increased and the resource in a manner cut off? Figure to yourselves what must be your distress should your wives and children be driven from such places as the King's troops shall occupy, into the interior parts of the province, and they, as well as you, be destitute of support.

I take no pleasure in painting these scenes of distress. The Whigs [rebels] affect to divert you from them by ridicule; but should war com-

1. Daniel Leonard, *Massachusettensis* (1810), pp. 187-88.

mence, you can expect nothing but its severities. Might I hazard an opinion, but few of your leaders ever intended to engage in hostilities, but they may have rendered inevitable what they intended for intimidation. Those that unsheathe the sword of rebellion may throw away the scabbard; they cannot be treated with while in arms; and if they lay them down, they are in no other predicament than conquered rebels. The conquered in other wars do not forfeit the rights of men, nor all the rights of citizens. Even their bravery is rewarded by a generous victor. Far different is the case of a routed rebel host.

My dear countrymen, you have before you, at your election, peace or war, happiness or misery. May the God of our forefathers direct you in the way that leads to peace and happiness, before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, before the evil days come, wherein you shall say, we have no pleasure in them.

2. Patrick Henry Demands Boldness (1775)

Daniel Leonard's well-justified lack of confidence in the ill-trained colonial militia was more than shared by the Earl of Sandwich. In the House of Lords he scorned the colonials as "raw, undisciplined, cowardly men," and hoped that they would assemble 200,000 "brave fellows" rather than 50,000, for they would thus starve themselves out and then run at the first "sound of cannon." But the great William Pitt (now Lord Chatham), also speaking in Parliament, warned against "an impious war with a people contending in the great cause of public liberty." "All attempts to enforce servitude upon such men must be vain, must be futile." A few weeks later Patrick Henry, the flaming young lawyer-orator, urging warlike preparations before the Virginia Assembly, spelled out the reasons for action in his famous speech ending with the immortal words, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Analyze his several arguments and determine which is the strongest.

They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?

Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave.

Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable—and let it come! I repeat, sir, let it come!