
Colonists' stance against King George's authority over foreign lands, key role in America's independence

The fight for independence in America began in 1775 with the beginning of the American Revolution and the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Within the colonies, there was a divide among those who wished to remain apart of the British Empire and those who wished for independence. The colonists who remained loyal to the king, the Loyalists, argued that Great Britain had helped them through war and provided manufactured goods when they were in need. If they waged war against Great Britain, that would have cause “devastation to pass through [the] land like a whirlwind” (Leonard, 113). In opposition, the separatists rebelling against Great Britain, also known as the Patriots, argued that King George had mistreated them. Examples included taxing them unnecessarily, waging war against them, and keeping “standing armies [in the colonies] without the Consent of [their] legislatures” (Declaration of Independence, 68).

Two years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, colonists were split over whether to become Patriots or Loyalists. Those who partook in the creation of the Declaration of Independence accused King George of “imposing Taxes on [colonists] without [their] Consent” and “waging war against [them]” (Declaration of Independence, 69). This was the stance that Patriots took as well. With the onset of the Revolutionary War in 1775, the Patriots had been feeling the unjust rulings of King George and felt that he was “unfit to be the ruler of a free people” (Declaration of Independence, 70). At the end of the Revolutionary War while the Treaty of Paris was under negotiation, boredom and restlessness among Continental Army leaders led to plotting and scheming for a new government to be put into effect by “undertak[ing] a coup d’état and establish[ing] a military dictatorship” (Marshall, 71).

Colonists in favor of staying with Great Britain felt that turning against the king was a terrible idea and that after all that the British had done for them, they would not give up their colonies so easily. Loyalists, like Daniel Leonard, felt as though Britain saw all colonists as “nearly unanimous [in supporting colonial independence], but the case [was] far different” (Leonard, 113). There were a considerable number of men who were “firmly attached to the cause of the [British] government” (Leonard, 113). Their view was that if colonists were to wage war with Great Britain, southern colonies would be “unable to furnish any men” and “all supplies from foreign parts [would] be cut off” (Leonard, 112). The Loyalists were those who wished sounds of “long live [the] gracious king and happiness to Britain” would ring among the colonies (Leonard, 114).

Colonists were divided in the mid-1770s when it came to whose side to take in the American Revolution- Patriots or Loyalists.