

XI GOVERNMENT AT WAR

question have, at different times, rendered themselves suspected, & thereby made it my duty to pursue the directions of the law in such cases, & by that means furnished those unacquainted with my real sentiments with plausible occasion, tho not with any real cause, to represent me as acting against them from prejudice considered in their religious capacity. But as I abhor persecution on the one hand, & think myself as remote from bigotry as I am from Popery; so I can assure you, that the imputation of it, while my own heart acquits me of the charge, shall never divert me on the other hand, from the line of my duty. So far from being an enemy to that Society, I have always had a great respect for it; & I heartily wish that all other denominations, were as distinguished for their moral conduct, their oeconomy, their industry, their Ch[urch] discipline, & the order & regularity of their publick affairs. And, with respect to their Religious reformation in many instances, by wh[ich] they have retrench'd innumerable badges of Popery still unhappily retained by protest [an]t Christendom; & their nobly break[in]g the shackles of a thous[an]d cumbersome, if not sinful, forms & ceremonies, *I am more than half a Quaker myself*. Nor is it to be denied that they have been *really persecuted*, both in Old & New Eng[lan]d, the acc[oun]ts of wh[ich] I have always read with the greatest indignation ag[ain]st their oppressors, & the highest admiration of their Christian patience, their Magnanimity, & their inflexibility & persever[en]ce in what they believed to be their duty. . . .

. . . May the Father of Light lead us into all truth, & over-rule all the commotions of this W[or]ld to his own Glory, & the introduction of that kingdom of peace & righteousness which will endure forever.

Believe me to be, yr sincere friend
WILLIAM LIVINGSTON

1. See Doc. 10.
2. Reference to the political parties in England.
3. The Quaker position was undermined in the minds of many citizens by the not inconsiderable number of Friends who in a variety of ways (including taking up arms) actively participated in the war on behalf of either the British or the Americans. It was thus difficult in many cases to separate scruples from self-interest.

12 General George Washington to Governor William Livingston

[Fitzpatrick, ed., *Writings of George Washington*, 14:185-86.]

Conflict between soldiers and civilians was a constant, potentially

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

dangerous, annoyance to government and military officials alike during the war. Perhaps inevitable under the best of circumstances, civilian-military discord was especially worrisome in wartime because of its implications for public and martial morale. The problem was almost exclusively with the Continental army since the militia was activated for only brief tours of duty and was in reality the community. The presence of a large number of troops—leading to confiscation and quartering practices (see Doc. 8) as well as private quarrels and the destruction of property—placed a variety of strains on a community. The details of the altercation mentioned below are unknown because Governor Livingston's letter outlining the dispute and the accompanying affidavits of the civilians involved have been lost. Nonetheless, it was probably representative of the countless contentions between camp and community. Despite their very real concern over such matters, military and civilian leaders were unable to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents throughout the war.

Head Quarters, Middle Brook March 3, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I was a few days ago honored with yours of the 18th ulto. inclosing the depositions of several inhabitants and civil Officers respecting ill treatment received from sundry Officers of the Army and a refusal in some of them to submit to the civil process. Major Call¹ and Mr. Heath two of the Officers are at Winchester in Virginia, in Winter Quarters a very considerable distance from hence, but if you are of opinion, that there is an immediate necessity for their appearance, to answer the charges against them I will order them down. Capt. Von Heer² and Mr. Skinner³ are in Camp. From the conclusion of your letter, you seem willing to suffer the matter to be compromised by the parties to prevent further trouble. I rather wish that the several charges may be fully investigated, that the Officers may, if they are found guilty, be dealt with according to law civil or military, in which ever Court they may be tried, or, if innocent, honorably acquitted. I therefore propose that the parties accusing Von Heer and Skinner should institute Civil suits against them, to which I will engage they shall submit, or if they will leave it to a military determination, I will order a Court Martial which will be the speediest method of bringing it to an issue.

I am every now and then embarrassed by disputes between the Officers and Inhabitants, which generally originate from the latter coming into Camp with liquor, selling it to the Soldiers, and, as the Officers alledge, taking Cloathing Provision or Accoutrements in pay; there being no civil redress, that I know of, for a grievance of this nature, the Officers undertake to punish those suspected of such practices, some times with reason, and probably sometimes without foundation. If there is no law of the State to prevent this kind of commerce between the people and the Soldiery, it would have a very good effect, to procure one, prohibiting an inhabitant from selling liquor to the Soldiers, within the limits of the Camp, without leave obtained from the commanding Officer of the quarter into which it may be brought, and imposing a penalty recoverable by a summary process before a Magistrate, upon any person receiving Arms, Accoutrements, Cloathing or provisions from a soldier by way of purchase, or in exchange for any commodity brought into Camp for sale.

XI GOVERNMENT AT WAR

An act of this kind would relieve the considerate Officer from the disagreeable necessity in which he is often involved, of submitting to a grievance destructive of every military principle, or undertaking to punish a Citizen by virtue of his own authority, and it will point out a mode of redress to others too willing perhaps to exercise military power when they have an opportunity or excuse for so doing. I congratulate you upon your late escape from Elizabeth Town,⁴ as I am very sincerely, Dear Sir Your etc. . . .

GO. WASHINGTON

1. Major Richard Call, First Continental Dragoons.
2. Captain Bartholomew von Heer, Continental army.
3. James Skinner, acting assistant quartermaster to the Seventh Maryland Regiment, Continental army.
4. On February 4, a British raiding party seized Livingston's home near Elizabethtown.

13 Colonel John Taylor to Governor William Livingston

[*Executive Correspondence*, pp. 177-81.]

If for all its bureaucratic organization the Congress was unable adequately to equip and provision the Continental army, then how much more difficult it was for the government of New Jersey to maintain its state troops. Since the state militia, comprised of volunteers drawn on a proportional basis from the various county units, was organized at irregular intervals, there was no ongoing administrative hierarchy to superintend the needs of the troops. Each soldier was to provide at his own expense such basic equipment as a musket and bayonet, cartridge box, blanket, canteen, knapsack, and, of course, a "uniform." Although the state troops performed well at times, the ad hoc mode of organization made the Jersey militia an inefficient, fragile fighting force. The problems confronting Colonel John Taylor of the Hunterdon County Militia when the legislature on June 2, 1779, issued a call for the muster of 1,000 men to serve until December 15, are typical of the difficulties faced repeatedly by the officers of the state militia.