



The Battle for New York: The City at the Heart of the American Revolution

Barnet Schechter

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On 15 September 1776 the British army under General William Howe invaded Manhattan Island, with the largest expeditionary force in their history. George Washington's Continental Army, still in disarray after the disastrous Battle of Brooklyn some two weeks earlier, retreated north to Harlem Heights, leaving New York in British hands. Control of the city was Howe's primary objective. Located at the mouth of the strategically vital Hudson river, it had become the centrepiece of England's strategy for putting down the American rebellion. However, as Barnet Schechter reveals in his stirring narrative, far from furnishing a key to the colonies, New York proved to be the fatal chalice that poisoned the British war effort. The Battle for New York tells the story of how the city became the pivot on which the American Revolution turned - from the political and religious struggles of the 1760s and early 1770s that polarised its citizens and increasingly made New York a hotbed of radical thought and action; to the campaign of 1776 that turned New York into a series of battlefields; to the seven years of British occupation, during which time Washington and Congress were as determined to regain the city as the British were to hold it. The extraordinary campaign in the autumn of 1776, which forms the dramatic heart of the book, was by far the largest military venture of the Revolutionary War; it involved almost every significant participant in the war on both sides; and there can be little doubt that during it the fate of America hung in the balance. Moreover, the outcome had a direct impact on the major turning points of the rest of the war.

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