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CANADA.

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EMANCIPATE

YOUR

COLONIES!

AN UNPUBLISHED ARGUMENT,

BY

JEREMY BENTHAM.

LONDON:

EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1838.

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*One Shilling.*



"The expectation of a rupture with the Colonies has struck the people of Great Britain with more terror than they ever felt for a Spanish Armada, or a French invasion. Under the present system of management Great Britain derives nothing but loss from the dominion which she assumes over her Colonies."—SMITH. *Wealth of Nations*, chap. vii. *Colonial Policy*, A.D. 1776.

"That England has benefited immensely by the loss of her North American Colonies, is a fact no one has attempted to deny. Yet she spent the incredible sum of £75,000,000 in attempting to retain possession; a monstrous error in policy indeed; for she might have enjoyed the same benefits, that is to say, emancipated her Colonies, without expending a sixpence; besides saving a profusion of blood, and gaining credit for generosity, in the eyes of Europe and posterity."—SAY. *Political Economy*, chap. xix. *Of Colonies and their Products*, M.D. 1820, Paris.

"Colonies are the offspring of Monopoly. They add nothing to the wealth, and nothing to the strength of an empire. They are WAR-BREEDERS!"—DR. THOMAS COOPER. *Elements of Political Economy*, chap. xii. *On Colonies*. Columbia, U.S. 1829.

"The state of the Trade with CANADA may be referred to in proof of what has now been stated. It employs a large number of ships and seamen: and seems to a superficial observer highly valuable. In truth and reality, however, it is very much the reverse. Two-thirds and more of the trade with CANADA is forced and factitious; originating in the oppressive discriminating duty of forty shillings a load imposed on timber from the north of Europe, over and above what is imposed on that brought from a British Settlement in North America. This obliges us to resort to CANADA, whence we import *an inferior article at a higher price!* The disadvantages of this impolitic system are numerous and glaring."—MACULLOCH. *Statistical Account of the British Empire*, 1837, chap. iii. *Colonies and Dependencies*.



# EMANCIPATE YOUR COLONIES!

JEREMY BENTHAM

TO THE

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF FRANCE.\*

JANUARY 1793.

YOUR predecessors made me a French citizen : hear me speak like one. War thickens round you : I will shew you a vast resource :—EMANCIPATE YOUR COLONIES. You start : Hear and you will be reconciled. I say again, *emancipate your Colonies*. Justice, consistency, policy, economy, honour, generosity, all demand it of you : all this you shall see. Conquer,—you are still but running the race of vulgar ambition :—*Emancipate*,—you strike out a new path to glory. Conquer, it is by your armies : Emancipate, the conquest is your own, and made over yourselves. To give freedom at the expense of others, is but conquest in disguise : to rise superior to conquerors, the sacrifice must be your own.—Reasons you will not find wanting, if you will hear them ; some, more pressing than you might wish. What is least pleasant among them, may pay you best for hearing it. Were it ever so unpleasant, better hear it while it is yet time, than when it is too late ; and from one friend, than from a host of enemies. If you are kings, you will hear nothing but flattery ; if you are republicans, you will bear rugged truths.

I begin with *justice* : it stands foremost in your thoughts.—And are you yet to learn, that on this ground the question is already judged ? That you at least have judged it, and given judgment against yourselves ?—You abhor tyranny : You abhor it in the lump not less than in detail : You abhor the subjection of one nation to another : You call it slavery. You gave sentence in the case of Britain against her colonies : Have you so soon forgot that sentence ? Have you so soon forgot the school in which you served your apprenticeship to freedom ?

You choose your own government : why are not other people to choose theirs ? Do you seriously mean to govern the world ; and do you call that *liberty* ? What is become of the rights of men ? Are you the only men who have rights ? Alas ! my fellow citizens, have you two measures ?

\* Written just before the departure of M. TALLEYRAND at the period of the Rupture with Great Britain. A copy given to M. TALLEYRAND's Secretary, GALLOIS, who talked of translating it. B.



*Oh! but they are but a part of the empire, and a part must be governed by the whole.*—Part of the empire, say you? Yes, in point of fact, they certainly are, or at least were. Yes: so was New-York a part of the British empire, while the British army garrisoned it: so were Longwy and Verdun parts of the Prussian or the Austrian empire t'other day. That you have, or at least had *possession* of them is out of dispute: the question is, whether you now ought to have it?

Yes, you have, or had it: but whence came it to you? Whence, but from the hand of despotism. Think how you have dealt by them. One common Bastille inclosed them and you. You knock down the jailor, you let yourselves out, you keep them in, and put yourselves into his place. You destroy the criminal, and you reap the profit, I mean always what seems to you profit, of the crime.

*Oh, but they will send deputies: and those deputies will govern us, as much as we govern them.* Illusion!—What is that but doubling the mischief instead of lessening it? To give yourselves a pretence for governing a million or two of strangers, you admit half a dozen. To govern a million or two of people you don't care about, you admit half a dozen people who don't care about you. To govern a set of people whose business you know nothing about, you encumber yourselves with half a dozen starers who know nothing about your's. Is this fraternity? Is this liberty and equality? Open domination would be a less grievance. Were I an American, I had rather not be represented at all, than represented thus. If tyranny must come, let it come without a mask. *Oh, but information*—True, it must be had; but to give information, must a man possess a vote?

Frenchmen, how would you like a Parliament of ours to govern you, you sending six members to it? London is not a third part so far from Paris, as London from the Orkneys, or Paris from Perpignan. You start:—think then, what may be the feelings of the colonists. Are they Frenchmen?—they will feel like Frenchmen? Are they not Frenchmen?—then where is your right to govern them?

Is equality what you want? I will tell you how to make it. As often as France sends commissaries with fleets and armies to govern the colonies, let the colonies send commissaries with equal fleets and armies to govern France.

What are a thousand such pleas to the purpose? Let us leave imagination, and consult feelings. Is it for their advantage to be governed by you rather than by themselves? Is it for your advantage to govern them, rather than leave them to themselves?

Is it then for their advantage to be governed by a people who never know, nor ever can know either their inclinations or their wants? What is it you ever can know about them? The wishes they entertain?—the wants they labour under? No such thing: but the wishes they entertained, the wants they laboured under two months ago: wishes that may have changed, and for the best reasons; wants that may have been relieved, or become unrelievable.—Do they apply to you for justice? Truth is unattainable for want of evidence: You get not a tenth part perhaps of the witnesses you ought to have, and

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those perhaps only on one side.—Do they ask succours of you? You put yourselves to immense expense: You fit out an armament, and when it arrives, it finds nothing to be done; the party to whom you send it are either conquerors or conquered.—Do they want subsistence? Before your supply reaches them, they are starved. No negligence could put them in a situation so helpless, as that in which, so long as they continue dependent on you, the nature of things has fixed them, in spite of all your solicitude.

Solicitude did I say? How can they expect any such thing? What care you, or what can you care about them? What do you know about them? What picture can you so much as form to yourselves of the country? What conception can you frame to yourselves of manners and modes of life so different from your own? When will you ever see them? When will they ever see you? If they suffer, will their cries ever wound your ears? Will their wretchedness ever meet your eyes? What time have you to think about them? Pressed by so many important objects that are at your door, how uninteresting will be the tale that comes from St. Domingo or Martinique?

WHAT IS IT YOU WANT TO GOVERN THEM FOR? WHAT? BUT TO MONOPOLIZE AND CRAMP THEIR TRADE. WHAT IS IT THEY CAN WANT YOU TO GOVERN THEM FOR?—DEFENCE?—THEIR ONLY DANGER IS FROM YOU.

Do they like to be governed by you? ask them and you will know. Yet why ask them, as if you did not know? They may be better pleased to be governed by you than by any body else; but is it possible they should not be still better pleased to be governed by themselves?—A *minority* among them might choose rather to be governed by you than by their antagonists, the *majority*: but is it for you to protect *minorities*?—A majority, which did not feel itself so strong as it could wish, might wish to borrow a little strength of you:—but for the loan of a moment, would you exact a perpetual annuity of servitude?

Oh, but they are aristocrats—Are they so?—then I am sure you have no right to govern them: then I am sure it is not their interest to be governed by you; then I am sure it is not your interest to govern them. Are they aristocrats? they hate you. Are they aristocrats? you hate them. For what would you wish to govern a people who hate you? Will they hate you the less for governing them? Are a people the happier for being governed by those they hate? If so, send for the Duke of Brunswick, and seat him on your throne. For what can you wish to govern a people whom you hate? Is it for the pleasure of making them miserable? Is not this copying the Fredericks and the Francis's? Is not this being aristocrats, and aristocrats with a vengeance?

But why deal in suppositions and put cases? Two colonies, Martinique and Guadaloupe, have already pronounced the separation. Has that satisfied you? I am afraid rather it has irritated you. They have shaken off the yoke; and you have decreed an armament to fasten it on again. You are playing over again our old game. Demo-



A word of recapitulation, and I have done. — YOU WILL, I SAY, GIVE UP YOUR COLONIES — BECAUSE YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO GOVERN THEM, BECAUSE THEY HAD RATHER NOT BE GOVERNED BY YOU, BECAUSE IT IS AGAINST THEIR INTEREST TO BE GOVERNED BY YOU, BECAUSE YOU GET NOTHING BY GOVERNING THEM, BECAUSE YOU CAN'T KEEP THEM, BECAUSE THE EXPENSE OF TRYING TO KEEP THEM WOULD BE RUINOUS, BECAUSE YOUR CONSTITUTION WOULD SUFFER BY YOUR KEEPING THEM, BECAUSE YOUR PRINCIPLES FORBID YOUR KEEPING THEM, AND BECAUSE YOU WOULD DO GOOD TO ALL THE WORLD BY PARTING WITH THEM. IN ALL THIS IS THERE A SYLLABLE NOT TRUE? — BUT THOUGH THREE-FOURTHS OF IT WERE FALSE, THE CONCLUSION WOULD BE STILL THE SAME. — RISE, THEN, SUPERIOR TO PREJUDICE AND PASSION: THE OBJECT IS WORTH THE LABOUR. SUFFER NOT EVEN YOUR VIRTUES TO PREJUDICE YOU AGAINST EACH OTHER: KEEP HONOUR WITHIN ITS BOUNDS; NOR SPURN THE DECREES OF JUSTICE BECAUSE CONFIRMED BY PRUDENCE.

To conclude. — IF HATRED IS YOUR RULING PASSION, AND THE GRATIFICATION OF IT YOUR FIRST OBJECT, YOU WILL STILL GRASP YOUR COLONIES. IF THE HAPPINESS OF MANKIND IS YOUR OBJECT, AND THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS YOUR GUIDE, YOU WILL SET THEM FREE. — THE SOONER THE BETTER: IT COSTS YOU BUT A WORD: AND BY THAT WORD YOU COVER YOURSELVES WITH THE PUREST GLORY!

JEREMY BENTHAM.

THE END.