

The U.N. in 1776

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PEOPLE SAY MY NAME will live in history for my book called *The Social Contract*. Maybe, but the achievement which has given me the greatest satisfaction in my life was my expedition to North America in 1776 as Chief Delegate of the United Nations.

It will be recalled that this was the year when the smouldering quarrel between Britain and her American colonies broke out into open hostilities. Here surely was an opportunity for intervention by the newly-formed organization called the United Nations. At this moment Frederick the Great of Prussia was Chairman of the Security Council and as soon as reports confirmed that shots from America were being heard round the world, he instructed M. Voltaire, the Secretary-General, to call an urgent meeting in Geneva. I myself attended this historic gathering as alternate delegate for Switzerland, my native country.

From the outset, the Council was locked in violent dispute. The matter was naturally brought before the Council as a 'threat to peace' under Article 39 of the Charter. The British, as might have been expected, argued that the troubles in America were no concern of the United Nations, being quite clearly a domestic dispute as envisaged in Article 2, Section 7 of the Charter. This argument made the position of the French decidedly difficult, for though they were anxious to injure the British, they were themselves a colonial power and must think

of the future. They therefore kept quiet. Eventually, however, the intervention of Russia, personally represented by Catherine the Great, proved decisive: the greatest despot in the world spoke in favour of freedom (for America), and Britain was outvoted—and condemned.

But this proved ineffective. The British had the audacity to resort to a tiresome provision of the Charter and used the veto. Everything was at a standstill. Was Britain to get away with this?

No. There was at that time in Geneva an American called Benjamin Franklin, a man whose chief title to fame up to that moment was that he had discovered a method for frustrating the purposes of Almighty God by sticking up little iron poles on top of houses. We soon found that Mr. Franklin was an expert on more than lightning. In consultation with Voltaire, he brought off a brilliant stroke of policy and had the whole Anglo-American dispute referred to the General Assembly, where the veto no longer applied. Even better, Voltaire succeeded in taking a 'procedural' vote which authorised Mr. Franklin to speak before the United Nations. It was a noble speech that Mr. Franklin made, and I shall never forget the great moment when he pointed dramatically to where I sat and quoted from my book the famous words "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." Loud cheers broke out from all parts of the Assembly, except of course from Lord

North and the British delegation; and when I stood up to acknowledge the applause, warm tears were flowing down my cheeks and I could not utter a word.

It was at this moment that Voltaire sprang his great surprise. At his instigation the Prussian delegate proposed that a United Nations mission should be despatched to North America to restore order and effect a political settlement—and the leader of this mission was to be Jean-Jacques Rousseau!

Such was the prevailing enthusiasm that this proposal was voted unanimously, not even the British daring to cast a vote against it.

[Here we omit ten pages dealing with preparations for the voyage and the difficulties encountered by Rousseau in trying to arrange that his “house-keeper” should make the trip along with him and be given a cabin adjoining his own.]

At last Boston came in sight. As we warped our way into the harbor we were dazzled by the red glare of a large number of rockets. A fellow-passenger, an Irishman named Kennedy, told me there was no danger and that the rockets were sent up to guide ships into harbor. He added that they also served to light the way to the new frontier.

As we came alongside, I stood by the rail considering in my mind once again how best to carry out my task. A truce had been arranged pending my arrival, but all my information led me to believe that it could not last, and I had taken my precautions by arranging with the United Nations secretariat to supply me with an adequate force to ensure that my recommendations should prove effective. Those troops were composed of various Hessian regiments which happened to be available at that time, and they were placed under the command of a gentleman called Lafayette. This

force was already at sea on its way to join me. With such support, I felt confident that I could bring about a speedy settlement of the Anglo-American dispute. As regards the terms of the settlement, it was obvious that I must seek to give effect to the wishes of the brave men who were struggling for freedom against the tyranny of the British; indeed, I must confess that I felt so little concern over the handling of this aspect of my task that I devoted most of my thoughts to quite another subject, namely, the drafting of a new constitution for the free Americans. I had been informed that the rebellious colonists had produced some sort of declaration or constitution for themselves, in which they apparently dedicated themselves to the pursuit of happiness—of all things! Obviously such men, such hedonists I must call them, were not fit for the task of preparing a document of such importance, and I felt a great urge to bring the advantages of European knowledge to their aid.

With such thoughts I landed in Boston. How great then was my surprise to find that I had totally misjudged my task! I had not been in America for three days before I realised that the whole basis of my planning was at fault, simply through lack of accurate information. I do not mean to say that I found the British in the right, though the evidence for their oppression of the colonists was hard to find:—no, the trouble was that I found the Americans were in the wrong! In fact I could find little to choose between the British and the Americans. There was great talk of liberty and striking off of chains, but it was all talk: I soon found that the so-called President of the colonists was a well-known slave-owner. What had happened to the Indians who had welcomed Captain Smith and the original voyagers? Where were the descendants of Pocahontas, the princess who offered to lay down her life to save a white

man? Where were they indeed! The answer lay before my eyes, and it appalled me. Quickly I came to realise what it really was that the British and the Americans were quarrelling about. They were fighting each other for the right to slaughter the remaining Indians and take over their country.

Readers of my book will understand my feelings. Had I not derived the whole basis of civilization and peaceful co-existence from my great conception of the Noble Savage? Here was the Red Indian, the noblest savage of them all, and he was being treated as if Anglo-Saxon civilization, as represented by British brutality and American greed, was the ultimate perfection and destiny of the human race.

Destiny did I say? When I discussed with the colonists the future of North America, all they could say or rather mumble was some phrase about 'manifest destiny.' As if a phrase were an argument! And I met a man in New York, who was not even an Englishman but a descendent of the Dutch colonists, a man by the name of Roosevelt, and I obtained *his* opinion of the way to deal with the American continent. "Sir," he said "the settler and the pioneer have justice on their side: this great continent cannot be kept as nothing but a game preserve for squalid savages."

"Squalid savages!" This made my blood boil.

As I was walking home that evening I was accosted by a poor Indian beggar. I asked him who he was and he replied:

"Wah! I Indian brave!"

Moved by a violent emotion, I cried out:

"An Indian brave! Listen! I intend to make America the Home of the Brave!"

I knew then what I had to do, and the world will be grateful to me for doing it. As soon as my Hessians landed, I des-

patched them to the Mississippi to garrison the line of the great river and so prevent any Westward encroachment by *either* the British *or* the Americans. If the British and the Americans wished to fight it out among themselves in New England, well and good: but my duty was done. A United Nations task force had been established to keep the greatest part of America free from the embrace of a greedy and uncultured political system. I have only one regret, that in the extreme North, in the region of the Great Lakes, a shortfall in troop arrivals compelled me to leave certain regions unprotected, notably those in the area of Michigan and Chicka-Go; but I am informed that the climate of those provinces is in any case so extreme and insalubrious that no white man can live there.

Numerous and sincere have been the congratulations extended to me by the civilized world for my work in America. Nevertheless I do not regard that work as complete. So far I have only put a limit to the expansion of evil; the next step is to eradicate the evil which already exists and to eject the colonial tyrants, whether they call themselves British or American, from the territory of the *real* Americans, the original proprietors of the soil. May God grant that I live to see that day!

And let what has been done in America be a guide to us elsewhere. Already in Africa there are signs that colonialism is endangering the noble savages of that continent as well. Already the Dutch are establishing themselves in the Transvaal in much the same way as the Americans are threatening Mi-Chigan. The British are also on the move, and perhaps the Belgians will follow. But just as the United Nations is saving America for the Americans, so let our new slogan ring out: "Africa for the Africans!" In this sign we shall conquer.