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tant exegetical tradition, viewed David as the scriptural precedent for wilderness individuals prepared for—and longing for—the Supper, those who publicly declared their readiness and, moreover, worked to drive out of God's house others who were not ready. David's Christological role thus grew in the writings of seventeenth-century Puritan New Englanders from exemplary Christian and model for devotional poets to original defender of the old New England way.

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GEORGE BANCROFT ON THE CANADIAN REBELLIONS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

EDITED BY PETER MARSHALL

EARLY in December 1837, after the failure of the rebellion in Lower Canada, Louis-Joseph Papineau fled to the United States. A lengthy period of political conflict between imperial representatives and local politicians had led to armed clashes. Papineau, a member of the Assembly since 1810 and its speaker after 1815, had acted as leader of a party whose national ambitions had derived from American example. After 1830 British constitutional precedents had given way to Jeffersonian and Jacksonian arguments, liberty under the crown to freedom in a republic. In March 1837 the prolonged dispute reached a climax after Lord John Russell, leader of the House in the somewhat languid administration of Lord Melbourne, presented ten resolutions to Parliament. These, though mild in nature and designed to resolve the financial consequences of political deadlock, were greeted with outrage in Lower Canada.

Between May and November 1837 a series of popular gatherings issued lists of grievances and proclaimed defiance. The *patriotes* adopted as their model the form of resistance to imperial authority that had led to the American Revolution. Papineau and E. B. O'Callaghan, his Irish-born lieutenant, directed the civil ac-

tivities of *l'Association des Fils de la Liberté*. Founded in September by the young reformers of Montreal and named by Papineau's eighteen-year-old son, Amédée, the society also boasted a military agenda.¹ In both Lower and Upper Canada, where under the leadership of William Lyon Mackenzie a similar situation was developing, the rebels looked for inspiration to the precedents and events of 1776: Canadians would, belatedly, complete the Revolution in North America. The military actions of November rapidly destroyed this belief. If an inconclusive encounter at Saint-Denis allowed Amédée Papineau to proclaim "la glorieuse victoire" as "ce *Bunker-Hill* du Canada,"² the outcome of skirmishes at nearby Saint-Charles and further north at Saint-Eustache demonstrated the futility of drawing further comparisons. The elder Papineau, a leader entirely without military ambition and lacking confidence that Canadians could by themselves achieve independence, took refuge in Albany, where he sought external, particularly American, assistance.³

In pursuit of aid, on 18 December 1837 Papineau wrote a "very private and confidential" letter to George Bancroft, whom he had met the previous summer in Montreal. After the death of his wife, Bancroft had visited Canada to inspect some of the scenes described in his *History of the United States*.⁴ His growing prominence both as a historian and as a politician obviously attracted Papineau's appeal.

Papineau's letter was published in French in 1957; in 1968 *The New England Quarterly* carried a translation of it accompanied by Bancroft's brief, sympathetic, but negative response to the search for funds with which arms and provisions might be purchased to resume the struggle.⁵ Excusing his immediate inability to leave Albany, Papineau had remarked that "A friend sets out from this city, I am assured, at the same time as this letter, to go

¹Amédée Papineau, *Journal d'un Fils de la Liberté* (Montréal: Réédition-Québec, 1972), p. 49.

²Papineau, *Journal d'un Fils*, p. 83.

³Fernand Ouellet, "Papineau dans la Révolution de 1837-1838," *Canadian Historical Association Report* (1958): 25-28.

⁴David Levin, *History as Romantic Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 17, and Lillian Handlin, *George Bancroft: The Intellectual as Democrat* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), p. 164.

⁵Ronald F. Howell, "The Political Testament of Papineau in Exile, 1837," *Canadian Historical Review* 38 (1957): 295-99; Lillian F. Gates, "A Canadian Rebel's Appeal to George Bancroft," *New England Quarterly* 41 (1968): 96-104.

to see you and to give you some intelligence that letters never fully encompass, and to tell you what efforts will be made simultaneously here and at New York to obtain gifts and loans." In his reply two days later from Springfield, Massachusetts, Bancroft urged a "position of legal, constitutional opposition" and declared that "From a present & immediate resort to force, I can foresee nothing but loss & danger," which would diminish Papineau's personal influence and lead to national misery. "On this subject," Bancroft added, "I have conversed very largely with a common friend, who will communicate my views."⁶

Bancroft's more extended comments were, in fact, committed to paper and can be found as two documents among Papineau's papers in the National Archives in Ottawa.⁷ One provides reasons for rejecting a frequently offered contemporary argument: that the Canadian rebellions could be considered in the context of the American Revolution. The other addresses the question: "What shall Mr P. do?" The historical assessment is marked "Décembre 1837," "Georges [*sic*] Bancroft au Dr O'Callaghan." E. B. O'Callaghan, who had accompanied Papineau in his escape, was obviously the bearer of his appeal. Once back in Albany, the anglo-phone Irish rebel would assume a central role in future political planning.

Bancroft's doubt that Canadian independence could be secured by resorting to force may well have confirmed Papineau and O'Callaghan in their belief that neither internal uprising nor external forces would achieve their goals. Other *patriotes* were less ready to reach this conclusion: a second armed rebellion in November 1838, directed from the United States and without any backing from Papineau, failed with equal rapidity. His departure for Paris in February 1839 served to reduce the ferocity of exile-inspired conflicts. In 1845, taking advantage of an amnesty extended the previous year, Papineau returned to Montreal. Although elected in 1848 to the Assembly of the new Union of Upper and Lower Canada, his political predominance was at an end. O'Callaghan, a doctor and a newspaper editor in Montreal, took up residence in Albany, where he practiced medicine and grew interested in the history of colonial New York. After some years he was able to earn his living as a scholar, and at his

⁶Gates, "A Canadian Rebel's Appeal," pp. 102, 103.

⁷Papineau Papers, MG 24 B2, vol. 2, 2336–2341, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa. I am grateful to the National Archives for assenting to publication.

death in 1880 he was the state's most distinguished historian. As for Bancroft, his comments clearly set out his positions on the nature and significance of the American Revolution as well as subsequent changes in the conduct of foreign affairs. His commitment to the writing of history certainly had not obscured his appreciation of contemporary events: in his view, Canada in 1837 could not be proclaimed to resemble the United States in 1776, a judgment which, though then far from popular, has stood the test of time.



The case of Canada & our United States at this outset are very different.

The yankees committed rebellion strictly according to law, & up to the last upheld the courts: the Canadians have at once arrived at a conflict—before they are prepared for it.

The yankees had one heart; it is evident there is a division among the Canadians; & in Upper Canada, there is no evidence of any extreme discontent. To sustain a “revolution” requires the highest excitement; passion of an infinite force.

The yankees had guns in their houses; the Canadians have not.

The yankees held the country at once; no sooner had British troops marched to Concord, than the country rose as one man, & cooped the British up in Boston; have the Canadians cooped the British up in Quebec? Or in Toronto?

Bunker Hill Battle was fought, the army with Washington at its head had entrenched itself before Boston, before succor came from France. Burgoyne surrendered to Americans, before France became our ally.

It is agreed, that the [Canadian] patriots did not intend an armed insurrection; & among other reasons, because they had no sufficient strength for it. Is their strength increased by their disasters? Can they in exile plan successful resistance better than before? Ought they not now doubly discard a plan, which they in their best strength had resolved not to follow?

The state of the world now & in 1776 are widely different. Those were days of force & war, these of peace.

Then Spain & France & Holland were ready to unite against England; & Portugal & the Northern powers stood ready to assert an armed neutrality, favorable to America. Now the world is tired

of warfare: the U.S., the most friendly to the patriots, are resolved on not interfering, & other powers wish for no new revolutions, except by moral opinion.

The colonial dependence of Canada is the result of the old mercantile system. It is fast yielding to the progress of civilization. The civilized world has decreed its doom. It has already encountered wars enough to accomplish it. But now the widespread conviction prevails, that moral power will accomplish the rest.

When Upper Canada gets full of inhabitants, the force of gravity will of itself either detach the Canadas from England, or effect essential changes in the relations between the States.

The colonial & mercantile system is a chronic disease, near its change. To treat it like an acute disease is to mistake the nature of the case.

Is it possible to raise \$100,000 for the purpose? It may be doubted, whether it could be done; certainly not of a sudden; certainly not in season.

If raised could it be employed offensively? The government is bound to interfere, & by treaty owes all the prevention in its power. Arms & ammunition cannot go in quantities from the U.S.

If the money should be raised & ammunitions purchased, can troops be found in Canada? Men who have not guns in their houses, must for a long time make militia of the worst sort. & how are they to be sustained in the field? Men will not as volunteers leave home long.

Suppose money, arms, & men found, is there not room to believe that the English troops would have the mastery?

Suppose money, arms, men & *present* success certain, in spring an English fleet will enter the river, & easily subject the country as far as Montreal & beyond it.

But under the best circumstances, English ships would be on our coast, before the preparations would be considerably advanced.

Parties are not so equally balanced, Canada does not so nearly balance England, that the sum of \$100,000 thrown into the scale will decide the event of a struggle. Weigh England against Lower Canada? Will \$100,000 turn the scale? Never. Nothing but an infinite, permanent, national passion can do it. Men with souls kindled, can work miracles: that Mr P. is in exile, is proof that that national passion does not exist in any intensity. Otherwise he,

with his heart of flame, never would have been so deserted & left alone, as to have been obliged to fly.

Are the Canadas ripe for revolution? It is said they are. Where is the evidence? That they have the wish, may be most true: have they the wish in that energy, which constitutes power?

Have they money? No. Troops? no. Forts? no. Possession of the country, their own country? No.

Are their chiefs at the head of insurgents? No, they have been compelled to fly.

How then are the Canadas to be revolutionized? It is answered, by help from abroad; by secret loans & gifts from a people, whose government is pledged not to interfere.

The foundation principle of Democracy is self reliance. The attack upon the English in Canada fails, when tried by that Democratic test: for it owns, that aid from without is needed, to inspire the actors to recommence a struggle.

I adore freedom: I revere misfortune: I honor courage. Shall I blind my judgment? Shall I advise counter to my convictions? It would be to lead the noble minded to deeds of rashness, & to involve them in greater misery.



What shall Mr P. do?

1. Publicly & immediately disclaim any intention to decide the contest by force; and invite his fellow-citizens to retire into exile or to their homes.

2. Take measures to encourage his friends at home to do their duty at the polls & in the assembly, & to send to Quebec an assembly which will lend all the moral force of its character & influence to gain right for the patriots. An assembly must be convened: it is all-important that that assembly should be composed of patriots. The cause is lost unless this be secured, & it cannot be secured, if a state of war continues.

3. Send immediately by the earliest packet, (taking only time to prepare measures) a committee directly to England, to represent to the Sovereign, that the Canadians demand only English liberty: to disclaim force; to throw upon the Government in Canada the charge of fomenting & causing the insurrection; & thus

in England to rally for the patriots the public opinion of those who are willing to part from Canada, & those who love freedom.

4. Prepare a calm statement of the case, addressed to the English public. A historic sketch, to be carefully revised by an English lawyer; so that the position of the patriots & their conduct may be seen to have been pacific, constitutional & legal. Great care must be taken in such a paper, not to violate facts: for that would give the enemy an opportunity of triumphant refutation as well as be immoral: & on the other hand, the document ought not compromise any one.

I am bound to say, that I think, the Govt in Canada has gained a great advantage in the struggle, unless the patriots are able to show, that the disturbances are distinctly attributable to the unjustifiable & vindictive course of the English administration.

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COTTON MATHER, ASTROLOGER

MICHAEL P. WINSHIP

NEW England Puritans in the seventeenth century were divided in their opinions of the effects of the heavens on earthly matters. Some writers allowed that the heavens influenced civic events, some that they were of use in medicine, and everyone accepted that they influenced the weather. The craft of astrology was shunned, however, and attempting to tell individual fortunes from the stars was considered entirely blasphemous.¹ The one New England almanac writer rash enough to publish a birth

¹Puritan writers generally made a sharp distinction between the predictive science of astrology, which they mostly considered impious as well as conceptual nonsense, and the reality of astral influence upon earthly affairs. A classic statement of this attitude, by William Perkins, is *A Resolution to the Countrey-Man. Proving it utterly unlawfull to buy or use our yearly Prognostications*, in *Workes*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1613-18), 3:653-67. Perkins, in the course of an intense denunciation of the follies of astrologers and the meaninglessness of much of their terminology, gives spectacular examples of earthly effects of celestial happenings. For example