

# The National Intelligencer,

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### ON NEUTRAL RIGHTS.

Extracted from "De L'Etat de la France a la fin de l'an VIII."

(Concluded.)

"The whole system is comprehended in two regulations, which ought to compose the maritime code of the nineteenth century.—They are as follow :

"1st. The abolition of all cruising trading vessels. In time of war the right of sovereignty, as exercised and acknowledged ashore, shall be extended, with all its attributes, to the flags of such States as take no part in the existing hostilities.

"2dly. The navigation of every country, in time of peace, shall be secure from any kind of prohibition, with the single exception of the coasting trade between different ports of the same nation, and of the intercourse between distant colonies and the mother country.

"I am aware of the obstacles which may be opposed to these judicious regulations; but I do not present them as an object to be discussed and settled between England and certain Neutral Powers: they ought to be the object of discussion and treaty between France and the Belligerent Powers, England excepted; and between France and all Neutral Nations; and after that, shall one solitary Government pretend to say, that these laws are contrary to its interests; and shall a single publicist dare to assert, that they are impolitic or unjust?"

"But this is not the main difficulty, so much as that of inducing all governments to give their sanction to laws, in default of which they must be for ever subject to the tyranny of a single state, a tyranny which has already produced among them (whether arising from the dread of its power, or from that system of corruption which has crept into every court, and which has every where gained powerful advocates for the support of naval tyranny,) a degradation of sentiment but little compatible with the efforts required in the execution of a combined and general system of resistance. Upon this point France can only excite the energy of oppressed states by her example, she can only assist them by pointing out the line they ought to follow, and by being the first to pursue it.

"France has already modified the system of cruising against trading vessels; she will never cease to express her wishes for its entire abolition; she will most willingly unite all her forces to those of other states who are ready to insist (and to support their demands with arms in their hands,) that this moment of ignorance and barbarity shall be expunged from the maritime system of this enlightened age. She will make an exception from the application of the laws of cruising against trading vessels, to which she is still obliged to assent, in favor of every government which, after having declared that its flag shall be respected, and its navigation protected from insult, from capture, and the outrage of search at sea, shall take up arms for the purpose of procuring a proper respect to this declaration. She will moreover declare, that the moment England shall be disposed or resigned to consent to the abolition of the system of cruising against trading vessels, all the laws of France shall afford their sanction to this abolition, and all the forces of the Republic shall be employed to enforce it.

"This is all that can be expected from France in pursuance of the first of the two regulations which I have announced. The second can only be, as I have already said, the joint result of an agreement between all the maritime powers, but in which they may receive the assistance from the continental states, who are not less interested in the general freedom of naval commerce.

"Whatever may be the naval superiority of England, and should it even arise to such a height that she alone were to monopolize the navigation of the ocean, the interest which connects her power, and her commerce, would always find itself placed between the two final objects of all commercial speculation; the necessity of buying and selling. For with a view to these two objects, the forces which have assisted

in acquiring the empire of the sea, are nothing more than a vain and expensive display of power, it becomes, therefore, necessary that free access to rivers and harbours, with freedom of trade, both afloat and ashore, should be granted to the paramount nation, in order that its commerce may be rendered productive, and that the protection ensured by its naval power, may be repaired by the benefits derived from its trade. The commerce of England, therefore, and its power, if we consider the origin of the one, and the duration of the other, are always and immediately subordinate to the will of the continental nations, who are impoverished by this power and commerce, and to that of other states connected by their possessions with the sea, who have been enslaved by their consent to this system.

"Under this present point of view, commerce, which exercises so great an influence over all governments, appears to be subjected, in its turn, to the empire of their laws; means may be discovered to encourage or repress the industry of certain countries, to raise or depress the value of commodities, to enlarge or curtail the channels of communication, either for the transfer of merchandize, or for operations of exchange; each separate state may, moreover, throw an effectual obstacle in the way of those who enjoy the trade of the whole, by shutting out the latter from dealing with it in any of the objects which form the specific trade of the former. This obstacle cannot be surmounted, and, therefore, in this respect, general trade is subservient to the local authority of each state.

"I am perfectly aware that this advantage, possessed by each state, within its local authority, can only be made effectual by means of restrictions, and that restrictions are inconsistent with general principles. I am not ignorant that the latter proscribe all commercial restraints, privileges and prohibitions. Nobody has a greater aversion than myself to these fatal chains, imposed by the avaricious genius of finance on the channels of general industry; and I will, once for all, detail my sentiments on this subject, and dismiss it for ever.

"Prohibitory laws are taxes which foreigners are only required to pay in advance, and which must be repaid at a very high interest, by the country which imposes them.

"Prohibitory laws have a very temporary effect on general commerce, but the evil of their recoil is permanently felt by internal trade and local consumption.

"Prohibitory laws are the means of rendering the most numerous class which consumes, dependent on the less numerous class, which produces; and in this point of view they may be reckoned in the odious list of privileges.

"Prohibitory laws sacrifice the public rights of all, to the interest of a few individuals; and the interests of the latter to those of the revenue; by this inverse scale they totally pervert those principles of political economy by which the prosperity of the revenue is made to depend on the prosperity of property; and the interest of the latter is closely connected with that of the industrious classes who consume.

"Prohibitory laws render public power universally odious, and this sentiment extends from the power itself to those who possess it. Hence arise occasions of animosity between individuals and the agents of the state; distinctions and jealousies in society: from the same source proceed the shame attached to poverty, and the intolerance attendant on riches.

"Prohibitory laws give to power an exaggerated idea of its strength, and a high opinion of its ability; hence the spirit of enterprise and arrogance, which, when every thing contributes to favor its views, leads to an unjust and odious tyranny, and whenever any obstacle prevents their execution, never fails to create poverty in the midst of wealth and weakness under the parade of omnipotence.

"Such is my creed with respect to prohibitory laws; I thought it my duty to state it at some length, because feeling my-

self called upon to admit their temporary adoption, I did not wish to be accused of having overlooked the objections to them.

"I advise the measure of prohibitory laws, because it is the only means of procuring a general assent to the two regulations already mentioned; and these being once adopted, prohibitory restrictions might be abolished for ever.

"I advise this measure, because the system of prohibitory laws in England is so intimately connected with the influence of her power over her commerce, and with that of her trade, over commerce in general, that it affords to the fiscal genius of her government the fatal means of throwing upon other nations; all the inconveniences of these laws; so that the prohibitory laws of England fall as heavy upon every other nation, as if they had actually been imposed by themselves. To advise the introduction of new restraints, and to extend them to every country, is less a plan of imitation than a system of attack and defence against those already in existence; this is not proposed for the purpose of giving them a sanction, but to oppose the one to the other, in order that they may be destroyed, and that general industry may, in a short time, be delivered from their tyranny.

"I advise these measures, because it is necessary, in extreme danger, to have recourse to extreme remedies, and because in diseases which do not yield to common means, courage recommends to us the use of poison, and an able practitioner sometimes employs them with success.

"But in advising prohibitory laws, I am far from inviting maritime nations to establish them rashly, to render them universal without qualification, or to give them that character of stability and uniformity, due only to such regulations as are sanctioned by sound principles. This measure is in opposition to true political wisdom, as much as the state of war is to the true principles of society, and as much judgment will be wanted to give it complete effect, and as much energy to maintain it, whilst necessary, as an able general exerts to prepare and ensure the execution of the plans which his genius has conceived.

"The first prohibitory law to be adopted by every maritime state, is what is called, in England, an Act of Navigation. It is strange that, for more than a century, England should have been the only nation to promulgate an act of this nature, which may very well be defined, an imperious order, addressed to every government, and to all nations; and it is still more strange that not a single nation, except the United States of America, should have opposed to this declaration of perpetual war, a measure of reprisals.

"A broad Act of Navigation may be drawn up in such a manner as to comprehend the whole prohibitory laws of the local commerce of every maritime power, with all the distinctions which the peculiar circumstances and relations of each may require.

"It does not appear useful or politic that this act, like that of England, should at first include all nations in its prohibitions. The chief object of this measure being to procure its final abolition, and that of all other laws of the same nature, it must not be the act of any particular state, but the federative act of all; it is proper also, that the navigation of powers, thus allied in a common cause, should be mutually acknowledged, favored, and equally protected in their respective ports. The only exception from this law of reciprocity, is the navigation between colonies and their mother country, which must remain privileged till better times; but with respect to the coasting trade, and all imports and exports to and from other places, no difference ought to exist between the national and foreign trade of the powers engaged in this cause.

"These ideas of equal participation on the one hand, joined to those of strict prohibition on the other, will lead by degrees to a general system of participation, and by a necessary consequence, to an abolition of all prohibitory regulations.

"I shall not dwell longer on this idea; there are truths which it is not always prudent to unfold to the whole extent of their principles and consequences, least the alarm be given to passions interested to prevent their adoption. These passions do not listen to the voice of calm discussion; they excite violent movements, they agitate, they overturn, they interpose obstacles of seduction and intrigue between the nations who wish to connect themselves for a common object, and who are disposed to keep up a good understanding with each other. If the principles which I have developed should not be productive of any good, it is not because they will not be felt, it is because the irresolute spirit of the men to whom they are addressed, fluctuates between prejudice and a sense of interest; men whose character is enervated by fear, and the habit of giving way to circumstances, who are surrounded by ignorance and corruption. Men who above all find themselves beset with dangers, without the power of comparing their magnitude, or approach with other dangers of a different description, who live from day to day, and dragging out a miserable existence, seek to forget, in the pleasures and monotony of an inactive life, the misfortunes of dependence, the vices of poverty, and the dangers of weakness.

"My sole object in this chapter has been to point out the principles of neutrality adopted by France, and to complete, by an explanation of her system of conduct towards neutral powers, the survey of her political situation with regard to all civilized nations. I had already proved that France has shewn herself faithful and liberal to her allies, and that generosity and justice towards her enemies, were congenial to her principles, to her sentiments, and to her interests, it remained for me to prove that her views in relation to the independence and prosperity of other states, were equally generous and magnanimous, and this I think I have proved beyond all doubts."

### TO BE RENTED,

THE store lately in the tenure of Doctor Galasspy and Co. Its situation for business is preferable to any other in the City, being on the Pennsylvania Avenue, between the President's House and the Capitol, and within a few yards of the spot on which is to be immediately erected the market house.

JOSIAS W. KING.

At the Capitol.

May 29, 1801.

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Take Notice—The gentlemen composing the company of militia formerly commanded by captain Lewis Williamson, are requested to return the arms and accoutrements that have been delivered them, belonging to the state of Maryland, to the subscriber at the Navy Yard.

By order of the brigadier general,  
SAMUEL N. SMALLWOOD.

First Lieutenant

May 29, 1801.

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### FOR SALE,

The complete frames for two buildings, ONE 44 feet by 24 feet, two stories, the other 28 by 16, both of best white oak and prepared in the best manner, being intended for the use of the owner. Poplar feather-edged plank, sufficient to complete, may be had with them. Enquire of the printer.

April 10.

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Port Wine, first quality, just received and for sale at the store of the subscriber near the President's Square, next Mr. Rhodes's Tavern.

ROBERT ELLIS,  
Washington City.

Also a general assortment of Liquors, Teas, Groceries, Spanish and East India Segars, and a trunk of Ladies' Kid morocco and leather Shoes, &c.

LONDON & PHILADELPHIA

Bottled Porter of an excellent quality, for sale by the Subscriber, at the cellar under the house occupied by MRS. SWENEY, and near to MR. RHODES'S City Tavern.

HENRY LEWIS.

May 10.

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