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Alonso, G (2015) 'A Great People Struggling for Their Liberties': Spain and the Mediterranean in the Eyes of the Benthamites. History of European Ideas, 41 (2). pp. 194-204. ISSN 0191-6599

https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2014.914308

'A great people struggling for their liberties': Spain and the Mediterranean in the eyes of the Benthamites.

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SUMMARY: This article examines the relationship of Jeremy Bentham and some of his disciples within Romantic Liberalism in the Mediterranean in the early 1820s. By studying the content of Bentham's correspondence with his collaborators and some Spanish political leaders, the text sheds light on Bentham's ideas on constitutional rule, the independence of Latin America and religious tolerance.

KEY WORDS: Jeremy Bentham, Edward Blaquiere, John Bowring, Spanish Liberal Triennium, Early Liberalism, Representative Democracy.

Jeremy Bentham developed a keen interest in Spanish affairs in 1820, immediately after the successful liberal uprising and revolution led by General Rafael de Riego. More broadly, the founding father of the Utilitarian School and two of his closest collaborators from this period, Edward Blaquiere (1779-1832) and John Bowring (1792-1872), aimed to have political and juridical influence in the rapidly changing political scene of the Mediterranean during the 1820s. Blaquiere recommended Bowring to Bentham as an expert on Spain, as he was well connected with the Peninsula through his own network of commercial agents.[1] It was through this means that the link with Romantic Liberalism in the Mediterranean of one of the greatest English political writers commenced.

In this article some factual information will be first provided in order to, on the one hand, frame the nature of the Benthamite contribution to the development of Mediterranean Liberalism and, on the other, to assess its ideological ascendancy and relevance. Key topics in that relationship, such as American independence, religious tolerance, representative democracy and constitutional rule, crucial for both Bentham and Southern European liberals, will receive due attention. They paved the way for a fertile and meaningful, although incomplete, political conversation that set the Utilitarian ground upon which the foundations of Romantic liberalism in the Mediterranean rested.

After the restoration in early 1820 of Constitutional rule via *pronunciamiento*, i.e. military coup plus popular insurgency, Spain became the renewed ideological and political

[1] G. F. Bartle, 'Jeremy Bentham and John Bowring: a study of the relationship between Bentham and the editor of his *Collected Works*', *Historical Research,* 36, 93 (1963), 27-35.

battleground between liberalism and absolutism in the Western Mediterranean. One hundred and fifty years after, three of those countries still shared public attention in world politics for similar reasons: "What Spain, Greece and Portugal have in common in the twentieth century is the manner in which their internal processes of change –rural to urban, agrarian to industrial- were intervened and inflected at crucial moments and with enduring effect by the force of international political agendas". This quotation, from a chapter by Helen Graham and Alejandro Quiroga in the *Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, edited by Dan Stone, was fully applicable to the situation of the previous century with, perhaps, two important qualifications. Firstly, in the early nineteenth century, the Portuguese and the Spanish imperial crisis dictated to a large extent those international political agendas to which the quote refers. However, that was no longer the case for Spain in the late twentieth century. Secondly, what Graham and Quiroga state about the transition from agrarian to industrial when defining the changes they cover in their text would be replaced here by 'from absolutist to constitutional regimes'.

Observed from London, the Mediterranean in the 1820s hosted several and exotic versions of Romantic liberalism and ensuing constitutional regimes with the 1812 Spanish constitution as a leading model for the revolutions in Spain and the Two Sicilies alike. At the same time, the receiving end of orientalism blurred the observers' sight and informed the cultural construction and propagation of an image in which competing canons of English liberalism spread. This perception was also informed by the fresh news daily provided by all sorts of British businessmen, writers, journalist and political agents who worked and travelled across the region.[2] Among them, there were Utilitarian disciples of Bentham who have a clear mission, i.e. to gather and deliver information about the speedy changes taking place in old and decadent Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. The nations that spearheaded the Grand Tour constituted by then a set of rapidly nationalizing kingdoms and experimental lands of promise for an Empire that had recently intervened with the use of force fighting its French predecessor in European power struggles.[3] Spain was a clear example of this process. Since late 1808, and due to its operative and strategic alliance with local armies and guerrillas, it fought with success against the invading troops commanded by Napoleon, ultimately facilitating the drafting and approval of the second European written constitution in 1812.

The Cádiz Constitution, discussed and passed by an elected Parliament amidst the Napoleonic occupation, civil war and revolution between 1810 and 1813, added an extra factor to the aforementioned intersection of world empires: it was conceived of and should apply as a global constitution to rule over lands located on both hemispheres, stretching from the

[2] Paul Stock, 'The real-and-imagined spaces of philhellenic travel', *European Review of History: Revue europeenne d'histoire*, 20, 4 (2013) 523-537.

[3] Robert Holland, *Blue-Water Empire. The British in the Mediterranean since 1800*. (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

Mediterranean to the Pacific and covering the Atlantic and the Caribbean, too.[4] The 1812 Constitution was to be implemented against the rising independence movements that shattered the unity of the territories under the Catholic Monarchy of Spain across the Atlantic. However, the restoration of absolutism after the May 1814 Valencia coup by Ferdinand VII, with the support of General Francisco Javier Elío (1767-1822), and the repudiation of the *Magna Charta* did not put an end to the ongoing process of imperial disintegration. On the contrary, in most cases, it even accelerated the decomposition of the already badly undermined rule of the Spanish elites over the American territories.[5]

Liberalism was indeed far from a spent force in the Hispanic world. The victory of the constitutionalist party led by Riego in January 1820 opened the window of political opportunity for a second try to implement it in the Peninsula. In the American ex-colonies, in fact, it had never stopped spreading since 1808.[6] This new political experiment would chronologically coincide with further political revolutions and change in the colonies as the disgruntled pro-independence elites successfully and victoriously launched the final attack on Spanish forces. The 1824 battle of Ayacucho (current Peru) will put an end of the colonial fight in most continental America. Back in European Spain, the so called Liberal Triennium (1820-1823) caught the eye of most international liberal and absolutist observers alike. It certainly did not go unattended by Jeremy Bentham's and his circle that, by 1820, was kept informed by a group of political agents with personal links with leaders in the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic. It will be that very year that Bentham would personally meet John Bowring, the businessman and translator who would be become the editor of his *Collected Works* in 1832 and who would shortly put him in touch with Peninsular leaders.[7]

By then London had for decades been an international hub where political and cultural leaders mingled with a host of all kinds of international refugees in search of liberty and security, as shown by the works of Maurizio Isabella, Vicente Llorens and Juan Luis Simal[8],

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[4] Cf. Marta Lorente y José María Portillo (dirs.), *El momento gaditano. La constitución de 1812 y el orbe hispánico (1808-1826)*, (Madrid: Congreso de los Diputados, 2012).

[5] With the possible exception of New Spain, current Mexico, as shown by Roberto Breña. "La consumación de la independencia de México: ¿dónde quedó el liberalismo?", *Revista Internacional de Filosofía Política* 16, (2000), 59-93.

[6] Jaime E. Rodriguez O., *The independence of Latin America*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Antonio Annino y Marcela Ternavasio*, El laboratorio constitucional latinoamericano 1808/1808-1830* (Madrid-Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2012).

[7] G F Bartle, 'Jeremy Bentham'. See also David Todd, 'John Bowring and the global dissemination of free trade', *The Historical Journal*, 51, 2 (2008), 373-397. Some critical voices about the role of John Bowring and British, and European, nineteenth-century liberal colonialism have been raised. See for instance Erik Ringmar *Liberal Barbarism. The European Destruction of the Palace of the Emperor of China*, (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2013) and Q. S. Tong "The Aesthetic of Imperial Ruins: the Elgins and John Bowring", *Boundary 2*, 33, 1 (2006), 123-150.

[8] Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile. Italian Emigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Vicente Llorens, *Liberales y románticos, Una emigración española en Inglaterra*, (Mexico DF: Colegio de México, 1954) Juan Luis Simal, *Emigrados. España y el exilio internacional, 1814-1834*,(Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2013); and Daniel Muñoz Sempere y Gregorio Alonso, *Londres y el Liberalismo Hispánico*, (Madrid-Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2011).

among others. Based in the City, Bentham and his UCL disciples played a leading role in the propagation of ideas in both directions of the Atlantic that can hardly be exaggerated. Therefore, borrowing the concepts from Alison Sinclair, it seems proven that London was an all-important locus of cultural production with multiple centres of cultural exchange; and that Bentham and his circle became agents of exchange during the first decades of the nineteenth century.[9]

Bentham's life has been and still is widely and deeply studied.[10] Firstly, his own pupils, who propagated and edited his many works, and, secondly, successive generations of distinguished British and international scholars have reproduced, brought to life and discussed a wide range of his texts and ideas. Although his own work, still being compiled, amounts to more than 60.000 pages it can be argued that some new points may be raised regarding his views on and their interaction with the Mediterranean during the early 1820s. [11], In this text the aim to achieve to provide a framed reading of the works and accounts produced by intrepid travellers and prolific writers such as Edward Blaquiere and Bentham's personal editor John Bowring, who visited cities and villages throughout Southern Europe, East to West.

To begin with, some background on Edward Blaquiere and John Bowring is required to place their ideas in proper context. Both Blaquiere and Bowring were enthusiastic advocates of Bentham's political thought and constitutional theory. Blaquiere had known Bentham since 1813 and had introduced Bowring to him in 1820. Blaquiere was born in 1779 in Ireland within a family of French Huguenot descent. His uncle John was His Majesty's General Representative there from 1772 until 1776. Edward died in 1832 after having visited and lived for some years most of the northern and southern Mediterranean countries serving first as a lieutenant of the Royal Navy and as a prolific and proactive Liberal agent then. His published first book appeared in 1813 and it was tellingly entitled *Letters from the Mediterranean*. John Bowring, a traveller, political economist, writer, polymath, translator, editor of Bentham's works and the 4th Governor of Hong Kong would join forces with Blaquiere informing Bentham about Spanish affairs and then in the London Greek Committee. Bowring himself acquired public relevance in 1822 when he was detained in France due to his illegal political activities there. He wrote a report of his sufferings in France that he published as a book entitled *Details of the arrest, imprisonment and liberation of an Englishman by the Bourbon Government of France.* In it, he gave readers full account of the support he received from very significant members of the British establishment during his period in jail such as the Foreign Secretary George Canning or

[9] Alison Sinclair, *Traficking Knowledge in Early Twentieth-Century Spain: centres of exchange and cultural imaginaries,* (Woodbridge, Tamesis, 2009).
[10] See, for instance, two articles published by *History of European Ideas*: Filimon Peonidis, 'Jeremy Bentham´s 'unusually liberal' representative democracy', *History of European Ideas*, 37, 4, (2011), 446-453 and Emmanuelle Dechamps, 'Bentham and Benthamism', *History of European Ideas*, 35, 3, 391-394.
[11] G F Bartle, 'Jeremy Bentham', 28.

the diplomat Joseph Planta.[12] Later in his life, Bowring would devote his efforts to compile the complete works of Jeremy Bentham. They filled 11 volumes that saw the light between in Edinburgh between 1838 and 1843.

In 1820, Bentham provided Edward Blaquiere with funding to travel to Spain to attend and report on the ongoing discussions and private meetings where the country's political and constitutional future was to be defined. More specifically, Blaquiere should make sure that his instructions and recommendations to leading political figures regarding codification and law-making would be rightly implemented.[13] Bentham's work was well known in Spain since at least 1810, when the Cadiz Cortes first met in the town of San Fernando (Cádiz).[14] According to John Bowring, the Cortes followed the advice of the judge Jacobo Villanova y Jordán who in 1811 recommended its Prisons Committee to follow Mr Bentham's Panopticon plan when reforming Spanish penitentiary system and to get rid of the 'unhealthy and subterranean gaols'. [15] In 1834 Villanova, writing from Valencia, where he also served as a criminal prosecutor after the death of Ferdinand VII, published *Aplicación de la Panoptica de Jeremias Bentham* where he developed his ideas in full length.[16] In 1820 it seemed clear that the Spanish liberals would try and run the country according to the text and spirit of the 1812 Constitution that has been ruthlessly declared null and void six years before by Ferdinand VII. In his life, Blaquiere also visited, travelled and wrote on Algiers, Greece, the Ionic Islands, Italy and Portugal, before running a successful diplomatic career in the Far East. He knew well Paris, too. His lengthy and detailed reports provided Bentham with a clear background picture. It proved useful to frame the content of Blaquiere's letters to Bentham to which we have access today thanks to a host of specialist on his writing working at University College of London.

The Iberian Peninsula was the 'Polar Star' that nobody interested in 'the relationship between the progress of knowledge and how things are established here should take their eyes off'. Writing from Southampton on 4 May 1820, right before departing to Spain, the ex-Navy

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[12] See Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature and Art, *Sir John Bowring 1792-1872: aspects of his life and career* (Devon: Devonshire Association, 1993) p.24 and Robert H. Rosen, *Sir John Bowring: An Episodal Biography* (London: Janus, 1994)

[13] For Edward Blaquiere's political ideas see Fred Rosen, *Bentham, Byron and Greece. Constitutionalism, Nationalism and Early Liberal Political Thought* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992), esp. 125-144.

[14] Toribio Núñez, *La Ciencia social según los principios de Bentham* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1835); Antonio-Enrique Pérez Luño, "Jeremy Bentham y la educación jurídica en la Universidad de Salamanca durante el siglo XIX", Revista Iberoamericana de Estudios Utilitaristas, 1, 3, (1992), 69-94; Luis Silvela, *Bentham: sus trabajos sobre asuntos españoles: expositor de su sistema en España,* Discurso de recepción a la Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas, 8 de abril de 1894, Tomo VII, Madrid, 1908, 14-56.

[15] John Bowring, *Some account of the state of prisons in Spain and Portugal*, London: 1824, 4.

[16] In his book, Villanova contradicts Bowring as he argued that it was in 1819 and not 1811 when he proposed the Secretary of State Marquis Casa-Irujo to adopt and adapt Bentham´s panopticon. Cf. Jacopo Vilanova y Jordán, *Cárceles y presidios*: *aplicación de la panóptica de Jeremías Bentham a las cárceles y casas de corrección de España, o medio de mejorarlas, y de suprimir la pena de presidio con el establecimiento de casas construidas bajo el principio de observación general*, Madrid: Imp. Tomás Jordán, 1834, 5.

lieutenant Edward Blaquiere, wrote to Bentham in a desperate attempt to convince his most admired master to develop a more proactive attitude towards the ongoing Iberian political processes. Blaquiere requested from Bentham clear guidelines in legislative matters so his influence could expand and inspire law-makers not only in the ex-colonies but also in the ex-metropolis. What remains beyond doubt is that Bentham's agent and spy in the field would deliver the news to the best of his ability. In fact, as he had informed Bentham in his letter, he was there with the double motivation of 'collecting all the information' he would be 'witnessing a great people struggling for their freedom'. [17]

As Blaquiere reported on 26 June 1820, as soon as he crossed the Pyrenees and entered the Peninsula, he enquired about Bentham's popularity among cultural elites. He allegedly found that the 'literati and legal profession' (sic) knew quite well his *Treatises sophismes politiques* although the *afrancesado* Manuel Maria Cambronero (1765-1834), a writer and law expert who was part of the Privy Council of Joseph I and who declared himself one of the first followers of Bentham in Spain. He would go on exile to France and according to Blaquiere read Bentham in French as probably the *Treatises* would not have been translated 'during the reign of the Inquisition'.[18] That reign had been happily left behind for the time being although Blaquiere some months later still feared that the 'Grandees and Priesthood, whose intolerable tyranny over the mind and prosperity of Spain is happily abrogated by the new institution, should make efforts to regain their long-abused power'.[19] Time unfortunately would prove him right as the new French invasion under the rule of the Holy Alliance in 1823 demonstrated.

Yet Bentham himself was not as interested in Iberia in 1820 as he was in the independence movements stretching across the New World.[20] On 5 June he reported that he was 'hard at work with an almost hopeless attempt: that of persuading the rulers of Spain, whoever they are, to emancipate all of Spanish America". He thought he should be listened to as America for the Spanish people 'was not of any benefit. On the contrary, it was 'an immense expense'. In preparation for Blaquiere's visit to the Peninsula, Bentham found that Townsend's *Journey though Spain 1786-1787* could be of help him understand the country and better grasp the ways in which Spain had had a 'corruptive influence' over its colonies.[21]

Blaquiere wrote the introduction to Count Giussepe Pecchio's *Anecdotes of the Spanish and the Portuguese Revolutions*, published in February 1823. It is important to note that Pecchio was another liberal exile living in the City at the beginning on the 1820s. In his introduction

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[17] Stephen Conway (ed.), *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham. Volume. 9. January 1817 to June 1820*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989), 430-431, 430.
[18] Letter of Edward Blaquiere to Jeremy Bentham, 26 June 1820, in Stephen Conway (ed.), Ib., 493-497, 494.
[19] Letter of Edward Blaquiere to Jeremy Bentham, 15 August 1820, in Stephen Conway (ed.) *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham. Volume. 10. July 1820 to December 1821*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994) 41-44, 42.
[20] See, among others, Paula Rudan's PhD dissertation, *Dalla Costituzione al Governo. Jeremy Bentham e le Americhe* (University of Bologna, 2007). Available at http://amsdottorato.cib.unibo.it/193/1/Rudan._Jeremy_Bentham_e_le_Americhe.pdf
[21] Stephen Conway (ed.), *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham,* 458-459, 458.

Blaquiere went on some length discussing the main factors that made Iberia such a focal point of enlightened public opinion throughout Europe at the time. Modern liberty was fighting there a final struggle against the reactionary powers that formed the Holly Alliance who had decided to wipe constitutional rule from Spain at the Congress of Verona of October 1822.[22]

In his introduction, Blaquiere underlined his commitment to liberalism and reform in the Mediterranean departing from a concise and clear axiom: 'Political regeneration, when properly conducted, is among the first necessities as it is the greatest blessing reserved for the civilized man'.[23] Nonetheless, he also expressed his surprise at the contradictory tendencies shown by Spanish political leaders regarding the American situation and stated that 'I cannot help condemning and deploring the fatality which could induce the ministers of (king) Ferdinand (VII), and not a few men in the Spanish Cortes, to continue war against principles in the New World, which they are fighting to sustain in Europe'.[24] Blaquiere recommended further change of attitudes amongst Spanish ruling elites as the cause of reform in the Peninsula 'will never be secured or consolidated until Spain recognizes an independence, which she cannot possibly hope to prevent'.[25] Bentham devoted his books *Rid yourselves of Ultramaria* and *Spanish Emancipations* published in 1820 and 1822, respectively, to this very topic.

The second part of Blaquiere's introduction to Pecchio's book focused on the 'tremendous external perils that threatened the asylum of European freedom", i.e. the Iberian Peninsula. In order to counter the threat and defeat their enemies our author recommended the Constitutionalist to be united under the same banner as victory could only be achieved "by unanimity, in sentiment and in action'. [26] The Liberals, both in Portugal and Spain, should overcome divisions based on 'jealousies, falsely called *national*; but which, in reality, are only the natural effects of that feudal system, which, from the earliest ages, down to the times we live in, has adopted for its motto and rule of policy the Machiavellian maxim of divide et impera'.[27] Therefore, if treaties of reciprocal benefit could be signed, 'every people who are struggling for freedom would become the natural ally of Spain'. This alliance that was extendable to Portugal should also be offered to Greece. Blaquiere put it rather bluntly: 'The experience of the last two years must have convinced the Ministers of Spain and Portugal that there is but one nation in Europe, from whose cooperation they might derive more efficient aid, that from the Hellenic Confederation'.[28]

Although Blaquiere praised some of the measures introduced by the Spanish

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[22] That very year Blaquiere had published *An historical review of the Spanish Revolution: including some account of religion, manners, and literature, in Spain.*

[23] Giussepe Pecchio's *Anecdotes of the Spanish and the Portuguese Revolutions*, (London: 1823), XIV.
[24] Ibid., XIV-XV.
[25] Ib. XVI.
[26] Ib. XVIIII.
[27] Ib. XIX.
[28] Ib. XIX-XXI.

government, such as those ‘taken to identify the army with the political code’, he trusted that the civil authorities were “not unmindful of those foreign relations, which, at this crisis, it is so desirable and indispensable to cultivate”. Finally, this short tract clearly demonstrated that cosmopolitanism and nationalism are not incompatible in Romantic Liberalism. Thus Blaquiere closed his introductory remarks by ascertaining that the cause of freedom and reform in Iberia was also of utmost interest for Britain and emphatically stated: ‘So alive am I to the importance of a good understanding between the Peninsula and England, that I venture to say its most vital interest –the very issue and fortune of the coming struggle- depend on its cementing that union with us, to which it is well known we are enthusiastically disposed’.[29]

However, according Bentham and the Benthamites, recovered liberty in Spain could only be secured if further legal and institutional reforms were introduced. As it regarded the expected alterations to the 1812 Constitution to be introduced by the new Constituent Cortes, Bentham suggested reducing from three to one the electoral tiers to simplify the voting system and to avoid the article by which constitutional reform could only take place after eight years. On 26 June 1823, Blaquiere made aware Bentham of the two delicate points that he assumed would be the hardest to change in the text: those concerning religion and America. According to the informer both were topics that one could not even mention to Spanish Liberal leaders without 'risking an explosion'. According to him the country would therefore stay constitutionally intolerant in religious matters. Blaquiere could not envisage any chances for American independence process being acknowledged, let alone facilitated, by Spanish politicians either.

Bentham, however, was adamant and militant in both subjects. Spain would only embrace modern liberty if it put an end to the privileged position given to the Catholic Church and if it permitted religious tolerance. In 1818 he has published a short work on the matter entitled 'The Church on Englandism' where he reflected upon and criticised the negative effects of granting Anglicanism the protected status it enjoyed in England. He would keep on working on the matter and revisit the topic in 1822 when he published Not Paul but Jesus.

Bentham’s plans for Spain, Portugal and Greece were not only confined to a set of overarching political principles or a set of moral values, but he also devised a legal corpus to arrange the practical workings of a system of government, or a state, compatible with democracy. An organization of public life that would promote utility for the most respecting differences of religion and based on popular participation in politics. His democratic credentials were so clear that his name has been included in the exquisite saga of intellectual parents of modern democracy by authors such as Filimon Peonidis who synthesised Bentham’s position as

[29] Ib. XXII-XIV.

an 'unusually liberal' representative democracy.[30]

Moreover, Bentham made still one more all-important contribution to democratic theory by opposing the adoption of bicameralism by the Spanish Parliament.[31] By aligning himself with radical liberals exiled in London such as Agustin de Argüelles, Bentham heavily condemned the moderate sectors' belief of the need for a second chamber in Parliament to somehow balance public opinion with the due respect to the interests of the ruling elites.[32] In his *Letter to the Spanish Nation, on a then proposed House of Lords*, published in London in 1821 in conjunction with two other treaties as *Three Tracts relative to Portuguese and Spanish Affairs,* Bentham wondered if 'in addition to a Supreme Assembly composed of agents whom the subject many have appointed and can remove, shall there be another composed of men whom they will not have appointed, nor will they be able to remove?'. His contempt for upper chambers stemmed from his own view of the British House of Lords, whose eminence was 'composed of power, opulence and factitious dignity' and where only 'corruption' and 'depredation' were best served. In short, if a second chamber was to be introduced in Spain, the unelected lords of the realm would also play a political game whereby they would 'enrich' themselves 'at our expense'. [33]

On the other hand, representative democracy would only be properly established and secure if some requisites were strictly met. Bentham specified them in a letter to Blaquiere:

> As to the four cardinal points of the system of Representation, viz Universality, Secrecy, Equality and Annuality (sic) of Suffrage it is together with the making the being able to read a necessary qualification for suffrage, it is serious enough that without any concert, the framers of the Constitution and your humble servant bet upon their points at the same time.[34]

By providing useful advice like these ones, on both legislative matters and politico-institutional arrangements, Bentham made significant contributions to the configuration of the theory of democratic politics and thus granted a good range of empowering and practical tools to help shape continental versions of liberalism. Thanks to his writings and the activities carried out by his collaborators, a pattern of what the rule of law should be like in the modern era was set. Moreover, he also taught the ruling liberal elites the specific dimensions that the liberty of the moderns should acquire as it regards individual rights and duties. His name became very

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[30] Filimon Peonidis, 'Jeremy Bentham's 'unusually liberal' representative democracy', History of European Ideas, 37 (2011), 446-453.
[31] Juan José Ruiz Ruiz, "'Antisenatica' en el Trienio Liberal (1820-1823): Bentham contra la imposición del bicameralismo en España", *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 123 (2004), 351-391.
[32] See Lewis Rockow, 'Bentham on the Theory of Second Chambers', *The American Political Science Revíew,* 22 (1928), 576-590 quoted in J. José Ruiz Ruiz, ib., and Fred Rosen, *Jeremy Bentham and representative democracy. A Study of the 'Constitutional Code'* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993).
[33] See *The Works of Jeremy Bentham, published under the superintendence of his executor John Bowring. Volume 8* (Edinburgh, 1843), 468-474, 468-
[34] Letter of Jeremy Bentham to Edward Blaquiere, 28 August 1820, in Stephen Conway (ed.) *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham. Volume. 10. July 1820 to December 1821*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994) 47-50, 49.

popular in the Liberal press during the Liberal Triennium and he was meant to be invited to visit Spain and provide expert assistance in the drafting of the Criminal and Civil Codes to the Spanish government, as Blaquiere informed him in August 1820.[35] However, that was never the case for Bentham's bitter disappointment.

Once the forces of absolutism vanquished liberalism in Spain in early 1823, Greek independence acquired full prominence for the Benthamites. In April that year Edward Blaquiere and Andreas Louriotis (1789–1854), on their way to Greece with Bentham's completed *Observations* on the 1821 Epidavros constitution, stopped at Genoa to enlist Lord Byron (1788-1824). Blaquiere thus carried on devoting his economic resources and personal energy to fight against despotism in the Mediterranean basin and thus put in his own writings: 'Let Greece and the Peninsula be rescued from the barbarians, and I care not to what set of statesmen the palm belongs'.[36]

At the same time, John Bowring began an elaborate correspondence as honorary secretary of the London Greek Committee that would culminate in the first list of fifty names appearing on 29 March 1823 in the *Morning Chronicle*. Half of the list consisted of prominent whig MPs, together with representatives of the Greek community in London, and familiar names of those active in the cause of reform, such as John C. Hobhouse (1786-1869), Joseph Hume (1777-1855), Thomas Moore (1779-1852), Sir James Mackintosh (1765-1832), and Lord John Russell (1792-1878). Bentham and David Ricardo (1772-1823) were also members, though their friends James Mill and Francis Place apparently declined to join. The final list of eighty-four names contained some notable additions, for example Byron, Leicester Stanhope (1784-1862), Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), and Henry Brougham (1778-1868), as well as a number of classical scholars. Support was based generally on the belief that Greece and Britain were both Christian nations, that European civilization was based on the inheritance of ancient Greece, and that Greek independence would open the way for greater British investment in the Mediterranean. It can be argued that the London Greek Committee as well as the previous interventions in Spanish, Portuguese and Italian politics through the dissemination of ideas of freedom and justice went hand in hand with an imperial plan of expansion via favouring English trading interest in the region in order to render the Mediterranean a 'British Lake' as Robert Holland has very graphically put it in a his book *Blue-Water Empire*.

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[35] Letter of Edward Blaquiere to Jeremy Bentham, 15 August 1820, in Stephen Conway (ed.) *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham. Volume. 10*, 38-41, 41.

[36] Edward Blaquiere, *An Historical Review of the Spanish Revolution* (London: 1822), IX. For the Committee´s activities see Robert Holland and Diana Markides, *The British and the Hellenes. Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1850-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Some years down the line, Bowring acted as a free-trader propagandist and imperial broker as he would show in the 1855 *Bowring Treaty* with Siam, current Thailand. His self-funded career developed at a crossroads of patriotism, opportunism and high doses of self-aggrandisement. Thus his appropriation of Bentham's legacy and the way in which British colonialism with the promotion of freedom abroad intertwined but also clashed. It seemed that, when acting as the Governor of Hong Kong much later in his career, it was trade freedom and the promotion of British business' interest rather than civil liberties' promotion that mattered most. At least, when interacting with foreign leaders to agree on international business. Moreover, the figure of this Benthamite as representative of British early liberalism condensed and contained the seeds of future developments. Unfortunately, at least for truly radical liberals both in Spain and England, vested interests, both colonial and private, did in the end take the upper hand and dictated political agendas with rather conservative and class-driven overtones. Blaquiere, however, would die in 1832, sinking in the Atlantic close to the Azores when trying to restore constitutional rule in Portugal.

Returning to the Iberian peninsula, it seems a proven fact that through the examined correspondence and, not the least, the translations of Bentham's works by Toribio Núñez (1766-1834), Utilitarian ideas of political representation and law-making were readily available in Spain during the 1820s. Although his wise advice was not always taken on board and his hard work did not come to fruition as expected, the Benthamite influences of classic liberal thought in the Mediterranean can hardly be denied. The successive Liberal governments, moderate and radical, did not get rid of Ultramaria, the three tier electoral system or abolish slavery as Bentham requested from them, but they and Spanish Parliament did indeed bear in mind his works when codifying trade and penal matters.

Further proof of the close relationship between Bentham and Spanish Liberals would be the asylum and support request of José Joaquín de Mora (1783-1864), one of his most prolific Spanish correspondents and the editor of Liberal newspapers such as *El Constitucional* or *LaMinerva Nacional*, once absolutism returned to Spain and Mora found himself in London escaping death, imprisonment and torture.[37] The close relationship between Bentham and Spanih liberal leaders, initially built on pen-friendship and frequent interchange of journals, newspapers and original works, reached a new phase after 1823 when many of the latter sought refuge in England.

[37] Letter of José Joaquín de Mora to Jeremy Bentham, 17 June 1823, in Catherine Fuller (ed.) *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham. Volume. 11, January 1822 to June 1824,* 266.