

# Jeremy Bentham's Public Opinion Tribunal

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), the hired pen commissioned to write a rebuttal to the American Declaration of Independence for the British oligarchy, spelled out the principles of the British Empire's manipulation of public opinion as a path to tyranny in his infamous tract *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1780), in which he dismissed any notion of human creativity. He declared instead:

"Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do.... Every effort we make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. The principle of utility—the greatest happiness or greatest felicity principle—recognizes this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation.... Systems which attempt to

question it deal.... in caprice instead of reason, in darkness instead of light."

For Bentham, as for his master, Lord Shelburne, the architect of the post-1763 British Empire, public opinion was to be created, manipulated, and used as

the ultimate mechanism for social control. Bentham and Shelburne were the architects of the French Jacobin Terror, exploiting their network of traitors to the French Republic, to spread mob violence, as the means to impose the Napoleonic dictatorship and war.

To make pure mob democracy an instrument for oligarchical tyranny, Bentham drafted a model constitution, based on his pleasure-pain principle. In the over 1,000-page document, Bentham established an absolute dictatorship, led by what he called the Public Opinion Tribunal, a

"liberal" junta with absolute authority, utilizing their manipulation of popular opinion to secure their power.

Bentham's Public Opinion Tribunal is the essence of the British Empire's system of tyrannical control by mob manipulation.

—Jeffrey Steinberg



*Painting by Henry William Pickersgill (detail).*