



Liberty's Exiles: The Loss of America and the Remaking of the British Empire.

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Liberty's Exiles (shortlisted for last year's Samuel Johnson prize) follows the fortunes of those on its losing side – the American loyalists whose allegiance to George III rendered them enemies of the new United States. They scattered all over the world. Some sought refuge in Britain itself, others in outposts of the British Empire: Canada, the Caribbean, Sierra Leone and India. Jasanoff explores the loyalist diaspora through nimble leaps between historical narrative and individual histories, her characters bringing to life a global story about revolution and displacement. Some, like The loss of the American colonies had a remarkable effect on the British Empire itself, setting it on a path of empire-building in Asia, Africa and Australia to compensate for the loss, aided in no small part by those same loyalists. They spread out in a diaspora across the British Empire, from Nova Scotia in what was then known as British North America, to Jamaica and the Bahamas, to the new black colony of Freetown in Sierra Leone, and eventually to the British Empire's newest jewel in the Crown, India. These exiles of liberty endured unimaginable hardships following their expulsion from the US for simply picking the wrong side or by following their convictions. Their lot was inevitably an unhappy one, regardless of skin colour, political standing or wealth. "Liberty's Exiles is a book which in scope and originality, global reach and research, intellectual curiosity and sheer provocative panache - upturning in its wake whole apple-carts of unchallenged assumptions - can sustain comparison with Linda Colley or the young Simon Schama. The truth is that Maya Jasanoff is not just a very good writer, an indefatigable researcher and a fine historian, she is also a bit of a genius." Alongside the Spirit of 1776, Jasanoff gives us the Spirit of 1783, dedicated to remaking the mighty British Empire, and then offers a stunning reinterpretation of the loyalists' complicated role in that remaking. MAYA JASANOFF. Liberty's Exiles. The Loss of America and the Remaking of the British Empire. Dedication. In memory of Kamala Sen (1914–2005) and. For them, America seemed less an Assylum to the persecuted than a potential persecutor. It was the British Empire that would be their asylum, offering land, emergency relief, and financial incentives to help them start over. Evacuation Day did not mark an end for the loyalist refugees. It was a fresh beginning – and it carried them into a dynamic if uncertain new world.