

SPANISH MANIFESTO

Marquis d'Almodovar

London, 16 June 1799

All the world has been witness to the noble impartiality of the King in the midst of the disputes of the court of London with its American colonies and with France. Besides which His Majesty, having learned that his powerful mediation was desired, generously made an offer of it, which was accepted by the belligerent powers, and for this motive only a ship of war was sent on the part of His Britannic Majesty to one of the ports of Spain. The King has taken the most energetic steps, and such as ought to have produced the most happy effect, to bring those powers to an accommodation equally honorable to both parties; proposing for this end wise expedients for smoothing difficulties, and preventing the calamities of war. But although His Majesty's propositions, and particularly those of his ultimatum, have been conformable to those which at other times the Court of London itself had appeared to judge proper for an accommodation, and which were also quite as moderate, they have been rejected in a manner that fully proves the little desire which the British cabinet has to restore peace to Europe, and to preserve the King's friendship. In effect, the conduct of that cabinet, with regard to His Majesty, during the whole course of the negotiation, has had for its object to prolong it for more than eight months, either by vain pretences, or by answers which could not be more inconclusive; whilst, in this interval, the insults on the Spanish flag and the violation of the King's territories were carried on to an incredible excess; prizes have been made, ships have been searched and plundered, and a great number of them have been fired upon, which have been obliged to defend themselves; the registers have been opened and torn in pieces, and even the packets of the court found on board the King's packet boats.

The dominions of the crown in America have been threatened, and they have gone to the dreadful extremity of raising the Indian nations called the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Chicachas against the innocent inhabitants of Louisiana, who would have been the victims of the rage of these barbarians if the Choctaw themselves had not repented and revealed all that the seduction of the English had planned. The sovereignty of His Majesty in the province of Darien, and on the coast of Saint Blas, has been usurped; the Governor of Jamaica having granted to a rebel Indian the commission of Captain-General of those provinces.

In short the territory of the Bay of Honduras has been recently violated by exercising acts of hostility and other excesses against the Spaniards, who have been imprisoned and whose houses have been invaded; besides which, the Court of London has hitherto neglected to accomplish what the 16th article of the last Treaty of Paris stipulated relative to that coast.

Grievances so numerous, so weighty, and recent have been at different times the object of complaints made in the King's name, and stated in memorials which were delivered either to the British ministers at London, or transmitted to them through the channel of the English ambassador at Madrid; but although the answers which were received have been friendly, His Majesty has hitherto obtained no other satisfaction than to see the insults repeated, which lately have amounted to the number of one hundred.

The King, proceeding with the sincerity and candor which characterize him, has formally declared to the Court of London, from the commencement of its disputes with France, that the court of England should be the rule of that which Spain would hold.

His Majesty likewise declared to that court that at the time their differences with that of Paris might be accommodated, it would be absolutely necessary to regulate those which had arisen, or might still arise, with Spain; and with the plan of mediation which was sent to the underwritten ambassador the 28th of last September, and which was by him delivered to the British ministry in the beginning of October, a plan of which Lord Grantham was apprized, and of which he received a copy, His Majesty declared in positive terms to the belligerent powers that in consideration of the insults which his subjects and dominions had suffered, and likewise of the attempts leveled against his rights, he should be under the necessity of taking his part, in case the negotiation, instead of being continued with sincerity, should be broken off, or should produce no effect.

The causes of complaint given by the court of London not having ceased, and that court showing no disposition to give reparation for them, the King has resolved, and orders his ambassador to declare, that the honor of his crown, the protection which he owes to his subjects, and his own personal dignity do not permit him to suffer their insults to continue, and to neglect any longer the reparation of those already received; and that in this view, notwithstanding the pacific disposition of His Majesty, and even the particular inclination he has always had and expressed for

cultivating the friendship of His Britannic Majesty, he finds himself under the disagreeable necessity of making use of all the means which the Almighty has entrusted him with to obtain that justice which he has solicited by so many ways without being able to acquire. In confiding on the justice of his cause, His Majesty hopes that the consequences of this resolution will not be imputed to him before God or man; and that other nations will form a suitable idea of this resolution by comparing it to the conduct which they themselves have experienced on the part of the British ministry.

S.E. Winbolt, *American Independence and the French Revolution (1760–1801)* (1915):66–69.