



ON THE COMPARATIVE CONDUCT OF FRANCE AND GREAT BRITAIN IN THE PRESENT WAR

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During the summer of 1791, some of the principal powers of Europe, at a convention at Pilnitz in Saxony, agreed to take advantage of the distracted situation of France, to new model her government, and to divide among themselves such parts of that kingdom as were most convenient to their respective territories. On the 6th of July, 1791, the emperor of Germany issued his circular letter against the French, dated at Pavia, and in that month the following articles were agreed on by the combined powers.

Partition Treaty between the Courts in concert, concluded and signed at Pavia, July, 1791.

His majesty the Emperor will re-take *all that Louis XIV conquered in the Austrian Netherlands*; and uniting these provinces to the said Netherlands, will give them to his serene highness the Elector Palatine, so that these new possessions added to the Palatinate may hereafter have the name of Australia.

His majesty the Emperor will preserve forever the property and possession of *Bavaria*, to make in future an

indivisible mass with the domains and hereditary possessions of the house of Austria.

Her serene highness the Arch-duchess Maria Christina shall be, conjointly with his serene highness her nephew the Arch-duke Charles, put into hereditary possession of the Duchy of *Lorraine*.

Alsace shall be restored to the empire, and the Bishop of Strasburgh, as well as the Chapter, shall recover their antient privileges, and the ecclesiastical sovereigns of Germany shall do the same.

If the Swiss Cantons consent and accede to the coalition, it may be proposed to them to annex to the Helvetic League *the bishoprick of Porentrui, the defiles of Franche-Compte and even those of the Tyrol, with the neighbouring bailiwicks, as well as the territory of Versay which intersects the Pays de Vaud.*

Should his majesty the king of Sardinia subscribe to the coalition, *La Bresse, Le Bugey and the Pays de Gex*, usurped by France from Savoy, shall be restored to him.

In case his Sardinian majesty can make a grand division, he shall be suffered to take *Dauphiny*, to belong to him forever, as the nearest descendant of the antient Dauphin.

His majesty the King of Spain shall have *Rousillon and Berne, with the Island of Corsica, and shall take possession of the French part of St. Domingo.*

Her majesty the Empress of all the Russias, shall take upon herself the invasion of Poland, and at the same time retain *Kaminieck, with that part of Padolia which borders on Moldavia.*

His majesty the Emperor shall oblige the *Porte* to give up *Chouzim*, as well as the small forts of *Servia*, and those on the river *Lurna*.

His majesty the king of Prussia, by means of the above mentioned invasion of the Empress of all the Russias into Poland, shall make an acquisition of *Thorn and Dantzic, and thereunto the Palatinate on the east to the confines of Silesia.*

His majesty the king of Prussia shall besides acquire *Lusace*, and his serene highness the elector of Saxony shall, in exchange, receive *the rest of Poland*, and occupy the throne as hereditary Sovereign.

His majesty the present King of Poland shall abdicate the throne on receiving a suitable annuity.

His royal highness the Elector of Saxony, shall give his daughter in marriage to his serene highness the youngest son of his royal highness the Grand Duke of all the Russias, who will be the father of the race of the hereditary Kings of Poland and Lithuania.

(Signed)

LEOPOLD,
PRINCE NASSAU,
COUNT FLORIDA
BLANCA,
BISHOFFSWERDER.¹

Has my reader perused with attention this most impudent and iniquitous agreement? If so, I ask of him whether any of the powers thus confederating to divide between them the territories of France, has any right to complain if the French, in retaliation, should conquer and retain *their* territory? I ask, whether it is any thing more than rational self-defence on the part of France to secure to herself, if possible, such an accession of territory at the expence of her enemies, as to increase the difficulties of such an unprincipled confederacy in future?

Let us now see what took place in consequence of this treaty.

The Empress of Russia, early in the summer of 1792, commenced her attack on Poland. The Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia in pursuance of their engagement secretly aided the destruction of that unhappy country. "In the subjugation and dismemberment of

¹ This paper, and the other public facts herein stated, I take from the New Annual Register for 1792, and the following years:—A book of established authority and acknowledged impartiality.

Poland, (say the Authors of the New Annual Register for 1792, Brit. and For. hist. p. 106) the spirit of that nefarious band of conspirators who signed the treaty of Pilnitz is sufficiently manifested, and that man who does not feel himself actuated by the strongest resentment at such violations of every thing that is laudable and right, must necessarily be deficient either in sense or in honesty."

In the further prosecution of this treaty, the King of Prussia and the Emperor joined forces under the Duke of Brunswick, and published their circular and manifesto, stating, as the pretext for going to war, their commiseration for the King of France, and a determination to re-establish what they are pleased to call good order and government in that kingdom. I ask, whether this treaty has any reference to the interests of the King or the People of France? Whether that unfortunate Monarch was not made the dupe and the sacrifice of the combined powers, at the very time when, in violation of his oath, he was treacherously sending money out of the nation to pay the emigrant troops at Coblenz, enlisted under the banners of this infamous coalition?

After the defeat of the Duke of Brunswick, the King of Prussia retired from the league. So did the court of Spain as soon as the Marquis D'Aranda, became minister. The King of Sardinia, however, aided by the Swiss Cantons (particularly of Berne) was an early and active partizan: he augmented his troops; entertained the emigrants; arrested the French ambassador; and held a congress on the mode of invading France. Hence that nation, in September 1792, declared war against Sardinia?

Great Britain acceded to this league in March 1792, and at her instigation so did Holland soon after. Three times the French attempted to conciliate Great Britain: they sent Chauvelin first with Talleyrand: then with Le Brun; even after the commencement of hostilities, they were twice sent² over M. Maret, with powers to

² "We have hinted it before and we now assert it for a fact (says the N.A. Register 1796, p. 5) that M. Chauvelin was authorized and M. Maret expressly dispatched to offer the British Cabinet their choice of the French possessions in the East or West Indies as the price of neutrality."

treat. Great Britain did not pretend to have any complaint herself. She made the opening of the Scheldt the pretext—The French renounced the scheme, and offered to leave it to discussion between Holland and Belgium. Holland (by the way) made no objection to the opening of this river. The English complained farther of a resolution of the French legislature undertaking to assist those nations who were struggling for their liberties: it was acknowledged that Chauvelin voluntarily gave the most repeated and satisfactory explanations on this head, in his official notes to Lord Grenville, approved of and confirmed by the executive council: but the treaty of Pilnitz was entered into, the die was cast, and Chauvelin was dismissed with hauteur: wearied of entreaty the French declared war against England and Holland, 1st February 1793.

“Switzerland had, during the progress of the French revolution, and during the war, remained *apparently* neuter, but the spirit evinced by the cantons was extremely hostile to the cause of France. Nor was it till the Prussian negotiation, that Basle recognized the French Republic.³ Some of the Swiss cantons, particularly Soleur and Fribourg, had treated the French minister M. Barthelemy with great indignity, and had been excited by the numerous emigrants who filled those cantons, to such violent animosity toward the French cause, that they were only prevented from declaring hostilities by the wise and moderate counsel of the cantons of Zurich, Basle and some others.⁴

It appears from Col. De la Harpe’s book on Switzerland, published in 1796 and 1797, that the canton of Berne, without waiting the concurrence of the other cantons, fitted out 16,000 troops to advance to the frontiers of Ain and Iura and take possession of La Breffe, Le Bugey and the Pays De Gex; but the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick induced them to re-call their army: M. De la Harpe gives other indubitable instances of the active hostility of this canton in particular. I refer to the extracts from his work published in the Aurora, August 16th and 17th,

³ Spring of 1795.

⁴ N. A. Register for 1795, p. 212.

1798. This disposition was constantly kept up by the presence and intrigues of the British residents, Fitzgerald and Wickham.

The insolent threats of Lord Hervey, joined to the influence of his Brother the Emperor, induced the Grand Duke of Tuscany to declare war against France on the 10th October 1793.—Those parts of Italy which belonged to the house of Austria, would of course be engaged in the contest, such as Mantua, Milan, Mirandola, &c.—The Prince of Parma, the Pope, the King of Naples⁵ and the Venetians were afterwards induced to join the combined powers, and thus incurred the resentment of the French, till the success of the latter compelled them to sue for peace.—Unfaithful to their engagements, however, the Pope, the Neapolitans and Sardinia, again assisted, as far they dared, the Austrian troops: and the murder of 500 Frenchmen in cold blood, in the Venetian territory unpunished, and almost unnoticed, by that government gave in my opinion a just and reasonable cause for the punishment subsequently inflicted by the French.

Such is a plain and faithful narrative of facts so far as it goes. Facts too notorious to be controverted. Do they not prove,—

1st. That the commencement of hostilities in every case (I except the invasion of Leghorn) has been owing, not to the French, but to their Enemies: that the French, on the contrary, were earnestly solicitous for peace and neutrality;—and that they were reasonably driven to desperation at home and retaliation abroad by the unprovoked, unprincipled, and selfish conduct of their opponents?

2dly. That the *popular* governments alone, Poland which had just regenerated peaceably and unanimously her former constitution, and France engaged in the same pursuit, were the sole objects of this confederacy of tyrants?

Before my arrival in this country, an intimate friend of mine, resident at Pilnitz during the convention there, told me it was a

⁵ When the Pope and the King of Naples were intimidated by the French successes in June 1796, they agreed to renounce their former allies and withdraw their forces. see the N. A. Reg. 1796, p. 210. The ports of the Pope's dominions were open to the British, and the ships of the King of Naples had joined the British squadron.

matter notorious and openly spoken of, that after the success of the combined powers against France and Poland, *America as a republic* was to be next attacked and reduced to a monarchical form.

3dly. That the principles of this coalition are so detestably unjust, that every motive of prudence and retaliation will justify the French, in seizing upon the territory and weakening the power of those who engaged in it.

4thly. That those therefore who cry out against the French conquests in Holland, the Netherlands, in Italy or Switzerland, cannot advert to the obvious, the *necessary* policy of the French, to deprive her enemies of as much power, as much influence, and as many friends as possible—or they must in their hearts be friendly to the cause of European despotism. —

The French entered Leghorn, as a principle deposit of British merchandize. I do not mean to justify this, though it might be difficult to assign a satisfactory reason why enemy's property should be screened in neutral storehouses from the French, and not in neutral ships from the English.

The invasion of Egypt, was certainly begun with the knowledge of the Porte, for there was a French Ambassador at Constantinople and a Turkish Minister at Paris, while the projected expedition was publicly talked of.

Let it be further noted, 1st. That from the beginning to the present period of this destructive war, it has been the policy, pursued by France, to seek, to entreat for peace and neutrality—of Great Britain, in particular, to excite, to force, to insist on the active hostility of neutral nations. Witness the insolent tone of Lord Auckland in Holland, Lord Hervey at Tuscany, Mr. Drake at Genoa, &c.

2dly. That Great Britain has during this war adopted unjust and unusual methods of hostility. She seized on the private property of French citizens quietly resident in England, without any previous notice. Witness the case of Chollet and Co. and the bill for prohibiting the transfer of French property.

She behaved for some time with so much impropriety toward neutral vessels, that Denmark and Sweden agreed to fit out 8 ships of the line each to repel her insults; and demanded and compelled

restitution. On the 6th of November, 1793, an order issued, aimed at the Americans, to stop and detain for trial all ships laden with the produce of any French colony, or carrying provisions thereto.

Previous to the regular declaration of war against France, the courts of England and Holland did in fact declare the whole French coast in a state of blockade, and with the view of starving France, prohibited the carrying of provisions there. This has since been done also in the West Indies.—In October, 1794, the Dutch merchants requested leave to deposit their merchandize in England, as a place of safety, without paying a duty *ad valorem*. This was refused: on the 16th of January following it was permitted: within a few days after, two Dutch 64's, two sloops, nine Dutch India ships, and 60 other vessels were seized in the British ports, and on February 9th, letters of marque were issued against all Dutch vessels bound to or from Holland, and all neutrals bound thither with military stores.

I say nothing of the searching our ships, and capturing our seamen; we have no obligations as a *Commercial* nation either to England or France.

3dly. The negotiations for peace with Great Britain went off on account of the Cape of Good Hope, the island of Ceylon, &c.—That is, Great Britain would not make peace unless she were permitted to plunder her allies: she led, she forced Holland into the war; and now seeks to profit by the losses of that country. France, on the other hand, would not make peace on the terms of sacrificing the interest of her friends. She did not ask for the captured colonies to be given up to her, but to the nation from whom they were taken.

4thly. The present campaign is notoriously owing to the breach of faith of the Austrians, in privately calling in the Russian troops while they were amusing the French by negotiations at Rastadt.

5thly. Great Britain and the combined powers have professedly interfered in this war and with other nations, to work the downfall of republican principles, and to prostrate the rights of the people. - France, on the contrary, has never yet invaded an enemy's country, but she has endeavoured to propagate and establish the very principles on which her own, on which the American governments are

founded; equality of rights, abolition of privileges, and the sovereignty of the people exercised in a representative government. Is this so or not? Who then are the declaimers against this magnanimous mode of waging war? In Europe, we know them to be the adherents of the coalition. But is it for the freemen of *this* country to sigh and lament over the downfall of the most oppressive and insulting tyrannies? Surely these mourners in the train of despotism, cannot be the sincere friends of republican America.⁶

T.C.

⁶ I have left out all considerations of the French being *invited* to other countries and yet the *Americans* thought such an interference perfectly justifiable in their own case; why not then in the case of Ireland or Switzerland? Let the reader peruse Miss H. Maria William's account of that country or Mr. Gibbons's letter on Switzerland in his posthumous works (vol. I, p. 412, 8vo. edit.) and blame the revolutionists if he can. Mr. Gibbons at least cannot be suspected of partiality toward republics, yet his letter confirms De la Harpe's account of the Warevilles and the Steigers. Toward the conclusion of that letter Mr. Gibbon, speaking of remonstrances on the part of part of the people, says, "But there is another remedy, more prompt, more perfect, more glorious. William Tell would have prescribed it; I do not." --