

Mateo Gonzalez Manrique to Andrew Jackson, August 30, 1814, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

GONZÁLEZ MANRIQUE TO JACKSON.1

1 The Spanish original of this letter is in the Jackson MSS.

Pensacola, August 30, 1814.

Excellent Sir. I have received your communication of the 27th of August, in reply to my letter of the 26th of July last.

Whoever reads that communication written by an American General, would think that the United States have strictly and religiously observed their Treaties with Spain.

I must recal to your recollection, General, that the materials that compose my reply ought to convince you of the little, or no justice contained in the demands made on us by your Government, or its Generals. In the year 1810, Spain saw herself in peaceable possession of the District of Baton-Rouge, and of the legality of her claim, none ever doubted, but the President of the U: S, who with no other title but his own will supported by force, assassinated two officers of the garrison of that place, and treacherously took possession of it, under the specious title the Insurgents had acquired. The settlements on the Lakes, the District of Mobile, and of the river Perdido have suffered the same fate.

At the same period, that same will of the President would also have seized upon Amelia-Island, under the same title, and for the same reasons that he ordered the invasion of Baton-Rouge. And it is now only necessary for you to recal to your recollection the transactions of that period to enable you to appreciate the generosity of your Government.

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I ought to remind you also, that within the American Territory a band of fellows were publicly suffered to recruit men, to aid in spreading the flames of discord to shed the blood of their brothers, and to encourage the Insurgents of the internal provinces of the Kingdom of Mexico, which however you disclaim in your reply of the 27th.

Besides you cannot have forgotten that the U: S furnished the insurgent, and traitor Miranda, with arms, ammunition, and other necessaries, with the avowed design of exciting an insurrection in Carracas and the other Spanish possessions of America.

You disclaim also having violated the Spanish Territory by approaching with a body of American Troops accompanied by the auxillary Choctaw Indians, within canon-shot of the Fort of St Michael,² and of proceeding to the extremity of committing, by the effusion of blood, hostilities on the rural settlements on the river Scambia,³ and the coast of Galvez-bay, without provocation, without a declaration of war, contrary to every moral and National law.

2 At Pensacola.

3 Escambia.

It results then, that because it suited the convenience of the Government of the U: S they deprived us of our before-mentioned possessions in spite of the legitimacy of our title and of the Treaties of peace that exist even yet.

And now that it suits their convenience to criminate us, they suppose ours a territory that has never belonged to Spain; and you recal to our recollection the treaties of peace of which the U: S were so forgetful whenever they felt an inclination to dispossess us of our property. Even admitting that the river Apalachicola belonged to us, we had ne[i]ther forces, nor troops in that quarter that could have prevented a debarcation wherever it might have been attempted. This answer alone given by the Americans for their Governments having tolerated in Barataria (an indubitable possession of the U: S)

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and for its having suffered a fortification which bears the French-flag, and whose only object is to destroy the Spanish Commerce which has sustained the loss of incredible sums, with such scandalous notoriety that the sale of the cargoes of Spanish vessels taken by those pirates, has been publicly permitted in N: O. whence have sailed armed privateers, and Pirates to make war on us, I repeat that in retorting, they endeavor to exonerate themselves from this weighty charge, by replying that they have no forces in Barrataria; but this reply is not admissible with regard to the river Apalachicola.

You say in your communication that the infamous and vile Pirate Lafitte, and not Monsieur Lafitte as you are pleased to stile him, has been arrested and imprisoned for the enormous crimes, and piracies with other complaints that have been alledged against him. We are not ignorant that the complaint for which he has been arrested and imprisoned, was for the blood he has shed of those Americans he fired upon, and that for his piracies and enormous crimes he is now at liberty to return to his honorable occupation, that of the vilest of all Pirates.

In order that I may not be too diffuse, I omit to recapitulate many acts done by the U: S, but I will tell you, Sir, that they are not well calculated to promote the duration of peace and good harmony, which, if the contents of your letter of the 12th Ultmo. can be relied on, your are desirous to preserve with Spain, on the contrary they are of a complexion to irritate, and foment a war, which considering the turn that the political affairs of Europe have taken, might be very fatal to the interests of the U. S.

The former menacing letters I received from General Flournoy, and those lately from you, filled with insulting expressions present a glaring contrast to the ingenuous, frank, and open reply I made to your letter of the 12th Ultmo., in which my only wish was to acquit myself of the duties imposed on me by the appointment I hold under my King and Government a greater and more powerful motive for me, than that of pleasing you, Sir; believing at the same time that I did not merit those insulting expressions I have treated them with contempt; But neither the one, nor the other of those communications

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have manifested the respect that the American Generals have considered due to the character of the Spanish Nation, being predicated upon ideas as foreign, and repugnant to its distinguished mode of thinking as was that one which contained the demand for the delivery of the Indian chiefs to be punished; And committing, at the same time, hostilities on us, violating our Territory, disturbing the tranquility, and repose of this part of Florida which amidst so many storms has preserved itself free from the snares of seduction that have been set for it in the district of Mobile. And lastly, General, I have armed the Indians, and have taken all the measures that I have been obliged to take, not for the purpose of committing hostilities on the U: S, nor on their property, but to defend myself from the insults that may be offered.

If the U: S continue the aggressions they have begun the officer and soldiers subject to my orders will do their duty, and support to the last extremity, the great, heroic and generous character of the Spanish Nation to which they belong, and they will do it with a greater zeal, and with more confidence as Spain is now disembarassed from the murderous war waged against her by the fallen, exiled robber, the tyrant of Europe the protector of the U: S. Superadded to the satisfaction of seeing my beloved Sovereign seated on his ever respectable and brilliant Throne, there remains not a doubt, but that if we should receive other, or similar aggressions to those we have already suffered his Catholic Majesty will avenge himself not only for these repeated insults, but for those Spain experienced at the time of her persecutions and difficulties of which the generosity of the U S thought proper to take advantage.

The extract of the Treaty between Spain and the U: S which you were good enough to send me on the supposition that I had forgotten it, I return as I received it, in order that the Government of the U: S and you may reflect upon it, and be careful to observe it, and not forget its contents, when you feel it convenient to make a bad use of it.

And with regard to a Treaty having been made between the U: S and the Creek-Indians,⁴ by which the latter cede to the U: S, all the lands bordering on the Spanish Territories, I

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protest against the act, and declare the cession void, in the name of the King, and shall make a representation of it to the Spanish Government, who will know what measures to take, and will distinguish the right of property from that of the sovereignty we claim.

4 Treaty of Fort Jackson, Aug. 9, 1814.

Laying aside the affairs that relate to the service of my King and Country, It will give me pleasure to serve you under circumstances and in every other point of view. I pray God to preserve your life many years.