

Duke of Portland to H.R.H.

Jan. 21 1793

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Sir

I must request Your Royal Highness's permission most thankfully, to acknowledge the Condescension with which You have honored me, & to offer You the most respectfull & gratefull tribute of my Admiration of the more important Motives You are pleas'd to advise for opening Your mind to me upon the present posture of Affairs —

The Declaration, which Your Royal Highness judges it proper to make of Your intention to give the most publick & active testimony of Your Duty & Affection to the King, of the lively interest You take in the security of the Government, & of Your care & sollicitude for the happiness & prosperity of the Nation, is enough expressive only of sentiments with which

which I have been always acquainted, can never be repeated without producing that satisfaction & gratitude which must attend so wise so beneficial & so salutary a determination - Although the exalted sphere, in which Your Royal Highness is happily placed, elevates You above those prejudices to which persons of every other description are subject, & disposes You as well as it enables You to disdain the recollection of a series of measures highly prejudicial to the Interests of the Kingdom, & even of a system not less injurious to Your Royal Highness's Feelings & Interests & those of Your Illustrious House, than they were subversive of the Constitution itself You must allow me, Sir, to admire the generosity & magnanimity which suggest & influence that conduct. But, Sir, as a subject of this Empire, as a supporter of its Constitution, as one for whom, Your Royal Highness designs to

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profess a regard, I must entreat your pardon for saying, that it is not in  
my power to imitate that liberality which is so conspicuous & so meritorious  
in your Royal Highness - I can not place an implicit confidence, in the  
persons who compose His Majesty's present Administration - I am willing  
& even desirous of giving it to them in all measures which may be necessary  
for the safety of the State, & for enabling them to act with effect in the  
present crisis - your Royal Highness's proper means of information which  
I can not, & ought not to have - The Indulgence of your natural affections  
can give vigor & energy, to the united efforts of the Kingdom; & it is the  
most earnest & most anxious of my wishes that you should enjoy all  
the benefits of those sensations in their utmost extent - My situation, on the  
contrary, induces me to think, that I can more effectually serve the Cause,  
which

which, Your Royal Highness will give me leave to say, You can not have  
more at heart than I have, by a more circumspect & measured conduct.  
Whatever influence, I may be supposed to possess, can only, be productive of  
effect by the confidence <sup>of others</sup> in the prudence & disinterestedness of its possessor.  
I am persuaded that that <sup>influence</sup> would be greatly reduced & perhaps annihilated by a  
perception of unconditional support to any set of measures or for any  
stipulated time. I avow it to be my wish, that the measures of Administration  
may be such as to enable me to give my support to them upon all  
measures respecting the safety of the Country internally, & externally. I pray  
for unanimity.

If these considerations should lead me to attempt to modify, the  
Regret which Your Royal Highness so affectingly expresses for the difference

of Opinion upon radical Principles, which appear, to Your Royal Highness,  
to prevail among persons whom You have undertaken to distinguish by Your  
good wishes & esteem, I believe I may safely venture to rely upon Your  
Royal Highness's candor & partiality for forgiveness; & should I prove  
unsuccessful in these endeavours, I should flatter myself, that I had underr'd an  
acceptable service to Your Royal Highness - In the very many conversations  
I have had with the principal person to whom, I imagine, Your Royal Highness  
to allude, I have not observed any such difference as should seem to me to  
preclude a separation, or to render it not desirable. I certainly very much  
lament his conduct at the opening of the Opinion, & the time he took for recommending  
negotiation to be entered into with France, & yet I am sure that that conduct could  
only be dictated by the purest motives, & that in a cooler moment, the expediency  
of the measure, which, in particular, gave so much offence, may not only be admitted  
but approved. When I have the misfortune to differ from Your Royal Highness  
it

it would ill become me, to contest the point at all, unless I should have reason  
to think it so essential to Your Honour or to Your Happiness as to believe, that Your  
Royal Highness would have a pleasure in discovering that Your judgement had  
been formed upon an imperfect view or state of the Case. Thus, Sir, I wish to  
think to be exactly, one of those cases, & conceiving that the difference between  
Mr Fox's case, consists in the opinions he entertains of the existence & extent of  
the danger to which the Constitution has been & continues to be exposed, I know not  
how to suffer myself to believe, that such a difference <sup>in</sup> <sup>your Royal Highness to require</sup> only can be thought by an  
irreconcilable, or even more <sup>at most</sup> than a temporary or occasional separation. The liberality  
of Mr Fox's disposition, the confidential intercourse, in which he has lived with  
his political as well as his private connections, & his natural habits render  
him aware, from fear, jealousy, & suspicion - he had a confidence in the good sense  
of the People of England, & in their attachment to the Constitution, of which, I must  
sincerely congratulate Your Royal Highness on the recent & unequivocal proof you  
have

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received by the Associations &c which have been formed throughout the Kingdom.  
 Mr. Fox further thought that the interest of the ruling power in France, evidently &  
 necessarily, opposed itself to any interference, on their part in the domestic concerns  
 of this Country, & he still contends that France has been governed by this sense  
 of her interest. These then, Sir, are the principal, & perhaps the only, material  
 points of difference <sup>between us & her</sup>, in every other question in which the State of France, can  
 make a part of the Consideration, whether it be, Peace or War, the prevention  
 of the aggrandisement of France, or of the propagation of her Principles, the  
 support of our Allies, the observance of Treaties, or the maintenance of the  
 Good Faith & Honor of the Nation, I think, I have good reason to believe, that  
 your Royal Highness will not & can not find any one more explicit, more  
 zealous or more to be depended upon. In times like the present where  
 Passion too often assumes the place of Reason, it can not have escaped your  
 Royal Highness's Attention, to what strange misconceptions & misrepresentations

The Duke of Portland  
to  
The Prince of Wales  
21. Jan'y 1793.  
In Answer to His R.  
M<sup>ty</sup> declaration to  
support such Justice  
Measures of Ministers  
as should be approved  
by the King.

The conduct of every publick man is exposed - Your Royal Highness can not but have observed, the jealousy, with which the best intentions are, scrutinized, & the warmth & violence with which Opinions are, arraigned & condemned - I beg me then, Sir, to appeal to that conciliatory, that indulgent, that parental spirit which has so often & so lately, animated Your Royal Highness's exertions for the publick good, in behalf of one whose Abilities, I believe, to be fully equalled by his Integrity, & whose attachment to Your Royal Highness's Person, to His Majesty & to His Government are, fully known to you. - I most humbly beg Your Royal Highness's pardon for having taken up so much of your time. I shall <sup>perplex</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>to press upon it</sup> ~~not~~ presume to, while I add my most earnest entreaties that Your Royal Highness will believe me to be, with every sentiment of Attachment Veneration & Gratitude Sir

Your Royal Highness's  
most Dutifull Servant  
(Portland)

Whitehall Monday morn:  
21. Jan'y 1793.