

Baron Brandes to HRH

Nov. 4. 1702.

Enclosure -

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Hanover the 4th of November 1702

Sir,

Your Royal Highness's well known gracious and wise intentions for the welfare of a Country, the old inheritance of Your Royal Family, will I hope excuse the presumption of an address from a Man totally unknown to Your Royal Highness who has no other title to approach Your Royal Highness with the greatest submission than this, that if he lives he will be one day Your Subject and Servant, a Man who feels to the full the irregularity of his proceeding, but who thinks that all other considerations ought to give way to the duty he owes to his Sovereign and Country on a pressing and great occasion, to the pursuing of an object in which he is not in the least personally interested.

Your Royal Highness is fully inform'd how much the security and well being of the Electorate of Hanover has been endanger'd by the King of Prussia having the Bishoprick of Hildesheim allotted to him in the full share of the indemnities he has receiv'd. As Hildesheim is nearly in circled by the dominions of Your Royal House, the acquisition of that Country by a great power most naturally endangers to the utmost extent the security of the Electorate. Hanover is now and will be for ever in the same situation with regard to Prussia

Prussia in which Bavaria stands placed with respect to Austria. On the first favourable occasion Prussia will try to acquire more or less of the Electoral dominions. Its purpose will invariably be bent on swallowing up the whole Electorate either at once or by and by.

On the breaking out of the late War I foresaw that it would most probably end by a material change in the German Constitution. The question was not what was to be wished for, but what could be hindered, what, if this change was unavoidable, was to be done for the benefit of my native country, for its future security, for its future independance. My unremitting endeavors went to the purpose of making people in power here sensible, that in the case of an unavoidable change it ought never to be suffered that Hildesheim came into other hands than His Majesty's. I can name vouchers for the truth of my assertion and amongst them one whose veracity will not be questioned by Your Royal Highness. I mean H. A. H. the Duke of Cambridge, to whom I opened myself on this head most fully and proposed to him the plans to be pursued. His Royal Highness felt to the greatest extent how much the interest of his Royal House was concerned in the matter. He took the utmost pains to be authorised to act and after having got an authorisation he opened himself on this subject to the late King of Prussia and Count Haugwitz in the summer of 1797 at Pyrmont. Most unfortunately this opening was not pursued by a further negociation afterwards, on the accession of the present King of Prussia to the throne. My endeavors to this effect were in vain. At that time the projects of aggrandizement

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on the part of Prussia were not absolutely fix'd on special objects. The proposition of a change between Osnabruck and Hildesheim would perhaps have met with a favorable reception at that time at Berlin. At that time Prussia was the only Court were we could have opened our views on this subject.

We had no connexion at all with France. Hanover being subject to the King of Great Britain was look'd upon with the most unfavorable eye by the French rulers of the moment. When the negociations at Rastadt were on foot, I try'd again, but again in vain, to have the interest of this Country with regard to Hildesheim brought forward in a decided manner. Tho' nothing was definitively arrang'd there, yet some connexions on this head might perhaps have been procur'd and it is but doing justice to the persons employ'd by the Government here at Rastadt to say, that they felt the consequence of this, but they had no authorisation to come forward in a decided manner.

When the league was form'd between Prussia and France against Great Britain, Hanover was mark'd out as the sacrifice. Some Prussian Ministers were at least very well pleas'd to be forced to invade this country, as they certainly thought, that the measure might perhaps lead to their Masters retaining the possession of a part of the Electorate, if not of the whole. The result was impossible to be foreseen if the Emperor Paul had lived somewhat longer. God knows the situation we were in here at that time and how much every class of people felt and suffer'd! It is impossible for any nation to give stronger proofs of its loyalty and attachment to the sovereign and his family than my countrymen did at that period. The state of health of our Royal Master at that same time was no secret for us. Amongst the general depression a letter receiv'd from Your Royal Highness by the Duke of Cambridge was
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alone capable to dispel the gloom that hung on men's minds. As I was one of the first who heard of the admirable passage in this letter, in which Your Royal Highness in the most forcible and most eloquent manner expressed Your Royal sollicitude and warmest attachment for the old inheritance of Your family, for a Country You had never seen, I most humbly ask'd for an extract of this passage and the permission to make it known, a request and permission which was immediatly granted, of which I did make the fullest use and of which I had the great pleasure to see the most admirable effects.

In the state we were in we had only to try if it was possible to make Bonaparte sensible how much it was against the interest of France to suffer Prussia to become master of the two great rivers of the North of Germany by retaining possession of the Electorate. This could be only done by a mission from Hanover to Paris. Immediatly on receiving the news of Paul's death I did entertain the greatest hopes, that the Prussians would soon be obliged to leave this Country. But I was still of the opinion, that if any thing could be done for the acquisition of Hildesheim it must be brought about at Paris, be negociated there by the same means employed by other Powers. Others as well as myself, felt the truth of this observation. I did all I could to engage the Government in the Month of April 1801 to send somebody to Paris, but this, like my former steps, was in vain, tho' at that time they were at full liberty here to act as they chose.

What every intelligent observer could foresee happened. Prussia made a definitive arrangement with France and put itself in possession of Hildesheim. We had only the feeble support of Russia in our favor which, according to the Character of the Emperor and the system adopted in his Cabinet, must be only a feeble one. It is not for me to decide if it was prudent that the British Ministry so absolutely neglected the interests of Hanover both at Amiens and at Paris. The two Countries tho'

tho' united under the dominion of one Sovereign, may have their separate interests and it is certainly not my wish to have the real interests of any one of the two sacrificed to those of the other, but according to my humble opinion the interests of Great Britain can clash but very seldom with those of Hanover and certainly did the great Statesmen and Whigs in the reign of George the 1st judge very wisely, when they deemed the possession of the Mouths of the two great Rivers in the North of Germany in the hands of a middle and always friendly power, as Hanover, of the greatest consequence to England.

Deft as we were of every other support we could look up only to France. It was at Paris that every thing was bought and sold. The most petty Court had his Agent there. Hanover alone had none. There was a decided aversion to a Mission to Paris in a quarter whose decisions every body must respect and obey. But was it prudent to press this decision? Was it well done to wait for it, for a Government obliged so many times to act on its own strength, as every Government, very distant from the seat of its Sovereign, must do on very great and pressing occasions? Was it to be feared that steps undertaken only for the real benefit of a Country would in the end be most ungraciously view'd by Him, who could alone have the true interest of his country at heart? All these reasons were often urged but always in vain.

France resented most undoubtedly this neglect, vain as the rulers there will always be and rapacious to the extreme as they are now. They certainly expected their share of Gold and Frankincense from Hanover, as well as from every other German Country. An overture made very late by a third hand on this head from hence, but not pursued, can have only excited their appetite, but must have ended in incensing them, because they may think that they

they shall be frustrated from that which was held out as a boon.
Osnabrück has been ceded to our Sovereign. Bonaparte did this certainly only
with a view to gratify the Royal Family of England, to show his regard for
Your Royal Highness, of whose gracious disposition for Hanover he was informed.
According to all what I know I don't doubt in the least that we could have got
both Hildesheim and Osnabrück, if the proper measures had been pursued in the
proper time. Osnabrück is not by far so valuable an acquisition in itself as Hildesheim
would have been, but what far outweighs every thing, it does not add neither to our
security nor to our independance. Hildesheim lies in the heart of the Electoral domi-
nions, that is to say, the Prussians are got now into the centre of Your Royal Highness's
future possessions here.

After the occupation of Hildesheim people in power flattered themselves for a long
while to bring about an exchange between Hildesheim and Osnabrück at Ber-
lin, but never could I indulge in these flattering hopes. The only way capable of bring-
ing about this exchange was to buy an order at Paris, for the issuing of a Mandate
to the King of Prussia to give his consent to this exchange. I know that this Mandate
might very possibly have been got not two months ago for a fixed price. Heaven knows
if it is not now too late!

Prussia will never on its own accord consent to such an exchange. It may open a negocia-
tion for the exchange of Hildesheim against other old and much more valuable posses-
sions of His Majesty, propose conditions of exchanges to which no true friend of this Coun-
try could give his consent. The cession of Osnabrück has been clogged by other cessions
and sacrifices to be made by His Majesty, not at all imaterial in themselves. They have
been acquiesced in, as they ought to be. However not content with the cessions stipulated
in the first partition treaty, in the second still more favorable cessions to the town of
Bremer have been enacted, without any equivalent at all. Great rumors are going
abroad.

abroad of still more cessions to be demanded from His Majesty as Elector of Hanover. Who can pretend to say where all this will stop? What may not be asked from a Country known to have no interest of consequence among the great powers, no ally whatsoever? I know that negotiations between the Hanoverian Minister at London and Mr. Otto have been going on and useful as they may have been they are at least certainly not sufficient for our security and interest.

In this case of the greatest emergency, the salvation of this country, the hindering it to be further dismembered, seems only to be possible to be brought about by the Mission of an Hanoverian Envoy or Agent to Paris, to negotiate there with the usual means. I have left no Stone unturned to effectuate this measure in the common way, but it is absolutely impossible to succeed. The only method for the adoption of this plan now left is if Your Royal Highness would deign to come forward and express Your fixed determination for such a measure to the Hanoverian Minister at London. I believe the intentions of the Man to be honest and if he would only strongly recommend privately the sending of somebody from hence to Paris to the Government here the plan would immediately be taken up, as it was only by his expressing himself averse to it, that it was not pursued a very short time ago. The purpose of a Mission to Paris would be according to my humble opinion:

- 1, The procuring from Bonaparte a decisive recommendation to Berlin for the exchange of Hildesheim against Osnaabruck.
- 2, To hinder any other dismemberment of the Electorate and to try to get if possible some equivalents for the cessions that have been newly enacted.

If this Mission should not be frustrated in its purpose it would be necessary to have the proper instructions administered to it from England, because it then could act in a more dignified manner and with the less loss of time.

I will not venture to affirm that it will not be too late now to resort to such a measure

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tho' I still entertain hopes to the contrary, but the irregularity of submitting this proposition in such a manner to Your Royal Highness must serve as an excuse why it has not been proposed sooner. Rational Men resort only to irregular steps with the greatest reluctance. Still every consideration in them gives way to the pressure of the last moment, when they absolutely see, that only by such a measure the salvation of their country may be procured and the else unavoidable degradation of their government may be hinder'd.

I know full well that I have yet the greatest ^{to make} apology for my uncalled for intrusion to Your Royal Highness's notice and especially for having so often brought forward the Man when I mention'd the measures. But in general Men and measures can not be separated, for measures will only be the result of the characters and ideas of Men, and in the venturing on such a step, as I have taken now on mature deliberation, it seem'd absolutely necessary to speak much of the Man who undertook it, in order that the matter he submitted most humbly to Your Royal Highness's consideration might appear in a less questionable shape.

Prompted by these reasons I must with the greatest submission entreat Your Royal Highness's pardon for saying still somewhat more of the Man.

I have no property whatever in the Bishoprick of Hildesheim, no personal friend there. To me as an individual it is ^{indifferent} totally to whom that Country will remain.

I have not the least inclination to be charged with a Mission to Paris. I know others much better qualified for this task, whom I could name, nay it would be quite impossible for me to undertake this Mission at this moment.

I have no inclination what soever to inculpate individuals, tho' I know full well to whose charge the faults that have been committed may be attributed and those who are innocent of them.

Ambitions

Ambitious as I always shall be of serving my Sovereigns in any capacity in which they may be inclined to employ me and for which I may think myself not unqualified, I shall not feel myself unhappy, if I do remain exactly in the situation in which I now do stand. I do enjoy a rational independance of mind and fortune, suitable to my personal inclinations. I have no family of my own to provide for and if I cannot act in the greatest ostensible sphere to the best of my endeavour for the benefit of my Sovereign and Country I shall continue to enjoy uncontroul'd the charms of literary pursuits and the endearments which friendship can bestow on a life fully sensible of the worth of both these blessings.

The truth of all what relates to the Man could be confirm'd to Your Royal Highness by G. R. H. the Duke of Cambridge, to whom I have the honor of being very well known. But G. R. H. the Duke does not know, nor do I wish he ever should, this my bold intrusion to Your Royal Highness. According to the peculiar situation the Duke stands in I felt it to be my duty not to open myself to him on this subject, tho' I full well knew that the measures I have submitted to Your Royal Highness's wisdom have long ago had his fullest approbation. If I am to blame for the irregularity of my proceeding, mine alone is the blame. I did undertake this step absolutely on my own accord, prompted by nobody whosoever.

The only personal request I must with the greatest humility beseech Your Royal Highness to grant to me is not to mention to any one, and especially not to any one Hanoverian, that I ventured to write to Your Royal Highness. The unavoidable consequences of the contrary will be obvious and tho' certainly I could well defend all what I have done in due time and in its proper place, I have the greatest reasons imaginable not to come openly forward in an
unfavorable

unfavorable period. The measure was taken up and pursued upon general principles, according to what I thought to be for the real benefit of my Sovereign and my Country. My situation will not be the better for having ventured to do what I did, The only thing I may reasonably desire, is that it may not grow the worse for having deliver'd my sentiments to Your Royal Highness.

I have dared to approach with the greatest openness and confidence the their apparent of my native country, the Man of Genius and most penetrating Judgment, to whose wise decisions I shall for ever most respectfully bow and submit myself and my own opinions. It is for the first and for the last time that I approach Your Royal Highness without having had Your special permission to do so. The only wish remaining for me is, that if I can not be honor'd by Your Royal Highness's approbation I may escape Your Royal Highness's blame.

It is with the greatest humility and possible respect that I shall for ever remain

Your Royal Highness

most humble, most obedient and most devoted servant

Brandes
Counsellor of the Board of Trade and Secretary
to the Privy Council