

**COUNTER MANIFEST OF THE
MINISTER OF FOREIGN
RELATIONS OF CHILE, ON THE
PRESENT WAR BETWEEN THE
REPUBLIC AND SPAIN**

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Counter Manifest of the Minister of Foreign Relations of Chile, on the Present War between the Republic and Spain by Various

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VARIOUS

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COUNTER MANIFEST

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OF THE

MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

OF CHILE,

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ON

THE PRESENT WAR

BETWEEN

THE REPUBLIC AND SPAIN.

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1866.

COUNTER MANIFEST.

From the 14th April of the year last past, the Pacific has been the theatre of hostilities, without justification or excuse whatever, practiced by the naval forces of Spain against different American states.

At that date, a small Spanish squadron took possession of the Chincha Islands, belonging to the Republic of Peru, with the purpose not to return them to their owner until after an occupation of ten months, and in exchange for a sum of three millions of dollars, exacted upon the most trivial pretexts.

Now, the commander of the Spanish squadron in those seas has just declared the ports of Chile to be blockaded, committing hostilities against some of them, with the ships under his command; and his aggression has kindled a war between the Republic and Spain. The Cabinet of Madrid has not cared even to gloss, with the appearance of justice, this aggressive and violent policy. If she had not found her motive in forbidden designs of usurpation and aggrandizement, this (can) could only be explained by the wish to make a facile ostentation of maritime preponderance over nations which, caught by surprise in the midst of the confidence and of the beneficent activity of peace, find themselves almost disarmed, and without naval strength.

But such puerile desire was not motive sufficient to determine the conduct of the Government of Spain. Little as might be the discretion attributed to her, motives more powerful must have influenced her, and, in reality, have

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done so. The existence of settled designs appears evident, when antecedents and the history of events are remembered, and when the tortuous course which Spanish policy has pursued in America is observed with attention. For some time back the daily press of the Peninsula has diffused opinions adverse to the external security of Peru, and fostered projects of reconquest, and of monarchizing the American states which were colonies of Spain. At the same time the Cabinet of Madrid undertook, through blood and fire, the annexation of the Republic of Santo Domingo; took part in the expedition against Mexico; and sent a small squadron to the Pacific, which had on board an illusory scientific commission to cover up the true objects of the voyage. Under such auspices, Mr. Eusebio de Salazar y Mazzaredo, Special Commissary (*Comisario*) Extraordinary of Spain, arrived at Lima in March, 1864.

The unwonted title under which this agent came accredited suggested some doubts to the Peruvian Government, which deemed proper to hint them to Mr. Salazar y Mazzaredo, and at the same time signifying to him their good disposition to recognize him in the character of confidential agent. The Spanish commissary repelled this conciliatory measure with vain threats, and closed the door against every sort of friendly explanation, forthwith abandoning Lima, and going to embark at Callao on board the despatch boat of the small Spanish squadron.

Although precipitate in appearance, his conduct was no other than the effect of preconceived determination. For this purpose it was that he had, in anticipation, summoned into the Peruvian waters the two frigates which, united with the aforesaid steam despatch boat, formed the squadron of General Pinzon. Setting out from Callao, he went to join these ships, which had without delay left the roadstead of Valparaiso, and were already waiting for him in the latitude of the Chincha Islands.

Two days after Mr. Salazar y Mazzaredo left Lima, the Peruvian Government was surprised by the news that those islands were in the possession of the Spanish squadron. The

commander thereof, and the commissary of her Catholic Majesty, had occupied them on the 14th April, in the name of Spain, by hauling down the flag of Peru, and hoisting over them the flag of their country.

On the same day they issued a declaration, intended to set forth the considerations on which they founded their procedure. On the one hand, they alleged the necessity for compelling Peru, by means of force, to fulfil the sacred obligations she had with Spain. They pretended, on the other hand, that even yet the war of emancipation was not complete in Peru—between which and her ancient mistress existed only a truce in fact—and that the crown of Castile might revindicate its ownership of those islands.

Such considerations, far from justifying the occupation, impressed it with a character so much the more dangerous as it was less definite. On one hand, the fact might be regarded as an act of reprisal; on another, as the beginning of a reconquest. Under the one or the other aspect it was a sad abuse of force, offensive to the dignity and rights of Peru, threatening to the safety of the other American republics, and deserving the censure of all civilized nations.

If the Spanish agents only sought to obtain from the Peruvian Government satisfaction for wrongs or pending obligations, before employing coercive measures they should have set out their demands, and, if those were rejected or eluded, have presented an *ultimatum*—addressed some intimation. They did nothing of the sort; but rather aggravated the anomaly of their proceeding by putting on it the stamp of a surprise incompatible with international integrity.

Considered as an act of reprisals, the Spanish occupation trampled upon all the guarantees which the law of nations offers to weak states as safeguards of their legitimate interests; and consequently affected those American republics which, like Peru, are in want of a military marine powerful enough to preserve them from the aggressions of a foreign squadron. In this point of view, the cause of Peru was the cause of all the other nations of the continent.

With more reason would it be so if the occupation of the

Chinchas imported the renewal of the war for independence, in which the ancient Spanish Colonies of America had indissolubly bound together their power and their destinies. The victory they achieved in that long sustained and glorious struggle gave them a common title to be counted among sovereign and independent nations; independent above all, because the consummated act was recognized by all civilized states, and was accepted by Spain herself, explicitly in respect of Chile, and in a manner implicit, but incontestable, in respect of Peru.

Again to call in doubt the force of that act, to resuscitate extinguished rights, to rekindle an ended war, the Spanish Government would have to blot out the history of half a century of international relations between America and Europe, and have to place herself in contradiction with her own acts. In such event the American republics, faithful to the first alliance, would have to fight for the independence of Peru in order to maintain the integrity of the principle of their political existence.

As is seen, the unexpected aggression of the Spanish agents had a range disastrous to the repose and stability of America. So the people and governments of this continent felt it to be; the news of the fact roused among them a profound agitation and the most energetic protests. Even the diplomatic representatives of nations foreign to America, associated themselves with their American colleagues resident in Lima to protest against the occupation, and against the foundations on which it rested.

The deforcians of the Peruvian islands then comprehended that they had gone too far, and endeavored to extenuate the gravity of their first step. In consequence, they declared that they had taken possession of Chíncha without authority from their government, whose instructions they would await, retaining, meantime, possession of the islands under title of reprisals, but not of revindication.

This assertion, incompatible with the first declaration of the 14th of April, is so, likewise, with the circumspection which should be attributed to the functionaries of a respect-

able government. It is scarcely conceivable that Spanish agents would occupy a part of the Peruvian territory—and for that purpose had invoked decayed and inadmissible titles, and at the risk of drawing upon themselves mortifying rebuke and serious responsibilities—without being authorized to do so. Nor can their conduct be attributed to an act of heedless precipitancy, because it has already been observed that it obeyed a premeditated and irrevocable purpose.

That this odious design had emanated from the Cabinet of Madrid is not at this day matter of doubt; although at that time the American Governments, placing in the honor of that cabinet a confidence most grievously abused at a later day, resisted the belief that it could participate in the irregularities of its agents.

Nevertheless, events have accused it from the beginning. If it had aspired only to obtain from Peru what was due to it, it would have adopted the frank course, straightforward and honorable, which is always followed by those who reclaim what is just. It would have sent naval forces to the Pacific without cautiously hiding the object of its expedition; it would have manifested, through the organ of diplomacy, its legitimate pretensions, have required their fulfilment, and, if that were not obtained, have appealed to the employment of force. It would not have ordered into these seas a small squadron under pretext of scientific expeditions; it would not have accredited to the Peruvian Government a commissary, (*comisario*,) whose title and whose acts were calculated to excite a conflict.

In the range of honest intentions its policy of simulation was so much the less comprehensible, inasmuch as having at disposal a maritime power, much superior to that of Peru, it was not necessary for it to take precautions against the naval armament of the Peruvian Government. That policy could not then have any other object than to lull to sleep the foresight of the American states, in order to execute, without resistance, lawless projects, injurious to all of them.

Thus is explained the retraction which the Spanish agents hastened to make of their first declaration. Thus, also, is

explained the precipitation with which the Cabinet of Madrid disapproved the conduct of these very agents, on the faith of a simple common rumor, before having received any official communication. For the sake of the honor of the functionaries of Spain, and of the dictates of the most ordinary prudence, the Spanish Cabinet should have abstained from such disapproval, and have suspended its judgment until it found itself possessed of authentic information. By not doing so, it caused it to be understood very clearly that it had good reason to regard at once as very likely to be true, the news of what had happened; a likelihood which it would not have hit upon if its agents had occupied the Chincha Islands, and invoked the right of revindication without competent instructions.

Thus, therefore, when it disapproved the consummated occupation, and the right of revindication, declaring them to be foreign to its views in respect of Peru, it obeyed only the suggestions of an unscrupulous policy. Like its agents, it comprehended that the step taken was premature and unskilful, and that it was matter of urgency to silence the protests of the American nations, whose coalitions might paralyze the execution of its forbidden and secret purposes.

Its want of sincerity was betrayed by its later acts. The commander who had taken possession of the Peruvian islands, and had pretended to revindicate them, was retained in his post; the occupation was itself continued. In this way, it not merely left unpunished an agent unfaithful to the instructions of his Government, but availed itself of the fruit of his offence. The connivance of the Cabinet of Madrid in the abuses of its agents could not be doubted, when it was seen to be regardless of the most absolute duties of demeanor and of public morality.

To give some show of justice to the permanency of the occupation, it laid hands on an unexpected expedient. A few days after the islands were occupied, the commissary, Mr. Salazar y Mazzaredo, determined to return to Spain, and embarked on board one of the packets of the Pacific Navigation Company.