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# *The Spanish American Revolutions 1808-1826*

*Second Edition*

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# ONE *The Origins of Spanish American Nationality*

## (i) The New Imperialism

The revolutions for independence in Spanish America were sudden, violent and universal. When, in 1808, Spain collapsed under the onslaught of Napoleon, she ruled an empire stretching from California to Cape Horn, from the mouth of the Orinoco to the shores of the Pacific, the site of four viceroyalties, the home of seventeen million people. Fifteen years later she retained only Cuba and Puerto Rico, and new nations were already proliferating. Yet independence, precipitated though it was by external shock, was the culmination of a long process of alienation in which Spanish Americans became aware of their own identity, conscious of their own culture, jealous of their own resources. This growing *conciencia de sí* caused Alexander von Humboldt to observe: 'The creoles prefer to be called Americans. Since the Peace of Versailles, and in particular since the year 1789, they are frequently heard to declare with pride, "I am not a Spaniard, I am an American", words which reveal the symptoms of a long resentment'.[1] They

also revealed, though still obscurely, the existence of divided loyalties, for without disavowing the sovereignty of the crown, or even ties with Spain, Americans had begun to question the basis of their allegiance. Spain itself fed their doubts, for in the twilight of empire Spain became not less but more imperialist.

Spanish America was subject in the late eighteenth century to a new imperialism; its administration was reformed, its defence reorganized, its commerce revived. The new policy was essentially an application of control, which sought to increase the colonial status of America and to heighten its dependency. Yet imperial reform planted the seeds of its own destruction: its reformism whetted appetites which it could not satisfy, while its imperialism mounted a direct attack on local interests and disturbed the delicate balance of power within colonial society. But if Spain now sought to create a second empire, what had become of the first?

By the end of the seventeenth century Spanish America had emancipated itself from its initial dependence on Spain.[2] The primitive imperialism of the sixteenth century could not endure. Mineral wealth was a wasting asset, and invariably engendered other activities. American societies gradually acquired an identity of their own, developing further sources of wealth, reinvesting in production, improving their subsistence economies in foodstuffs, wines, textiles and other consumer goods. As the inequity, shortages and high prices of the Spanish monopoly system became more flagrant, the colonies extended economic relations between themselves, and intercolonial trade developed a buoyancy of its own, independent of the trans-Atlantic network. Economic growth was accompanied by social change, by the formation of a creole elite of landowners and others, whose interests did not always coincide with those of the metropolis, least of all in their pressing claims to property and labour. The creole was a Spaniard born in America. And while the colonial aristocracy never acquired formal political power, it was a force which bureaucrats could not ignore, and Spanish colonial government became in effect a compromise between imperial sovereignty and settler interests.

The new balance of power was first reflected in the notorious diminution of treasure returns to Spain. This was a consequence



not merely of recession in the mining industry but also of redistribution of wealth within the Hispanic world. It meant that the colonies now appropriated more of their own production, and employed their capital in their own administration, defence and economy. Living more for itself, America gave less to Spain. Shift of power could also be seen outside the mining sector, in the development of plantation economies in the Caribbean and northern South America, which sold their products direct to foreigners or to other colonies. The expansion of economic activity in the colonies denoted an investment pattern – American capital in the American economy – which, though modest in its proportions, was outside the trans-Atlantic sector. America developed its own shipbuilding industry, in Cuba, Cartagena and Guayaquil, and acquired an overall self-sufficiency in defence. Military and naval defence in Mexico and Peru were financed out of the local treasuries, and this activated not only shipyards, copper-foundries and arms workshops, but also secondary supply bases servicing these industries. The decline of mining, therefore, was not necessarily a sign of economic recession: it could indicate greater economic development, a transition from a narrowly based economy to one of greater variety.

As Mexico's first mining cycle drew to a close, about the middle of the seventeenth century, the colony reorientated its economy towards agriculture and livestock and began to supply more of its own needs in manufactured goods. The hacienda, the great landed estate, became a microcosm of Mexico's economic self-sufficiency and of its growing independence. But the hacienda could generate further activity, for it needed to import some consumer goods and it provided raw materials for the colony's own production. At the same time an increasing proportion of government income in Mexico remained in the colony or its dependencies for administration, defence and public works, which meant that Mexico's wealth now sustained Mexico rather than Spain. It is assumed too readily that because a colony is not behaving as a colony it is therefore declining, that because it is not exporting a public and private surplus to the metropolis, participating in the trans-Atlantic trade, consuming great quantities of monopoly imports, therefore it is depressed. But these can be signs of growth, not depression. Peru always remained more 'colonial', less

'developed' than Mexico, and its mining capacity survived longer. But to supply the mining settlements the colony created an agricultural economy which developed a prosperity of its own. Peru never became so self-sufficient in manufactures as it did in agriculture. But numerous workshops, the notorious *obrajes*, employing forced labour and owned by the state or private enterprise, produced for the lower-class market or for particular needs. For the rest, Peru did not necessarily rely on imports from Spain: she had surplus capital and a merchant marine, and she could satisfy many of her consumer needs within America, particularly from Mexico, and from Asia. And remittances to Spain dropped spectacularly. Between 1651 and 1739, 30 per cent of the income of the Lima Treasury was invested in defence of the viceroyalty and its dependencies; a further 49.4 per cent was expended on viceregal administration, salaries, pensions, grants and purchase of supplies for the mining industry; and only 20·6 per cent was remitted to Spain. The bulk of the Peruvian revenue, therefore, was spent in Peru. The colony had become in some degree its own metropolis.

Historiography is familiar with the concept of informal empire, of outside economic control, as applied to Latin America in the national period. But was not Spanish America in a state of informal emancipation in the colonial period, or more precisely in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries? It is true that the imperial power continued to exert its bureaucratic control; it is also true that the colonies did not declare their independence during the War of the Spanish Succession, when the metropolis was helpless. Apart from the fact that the political and ideological environment of the early eighteenth century was not propitious for a colonial liberation movement, Spanish Americans had little need to declare formal independence, for they enjoyed a considerable degree of *de facto* independence, and the pressure upon them was not great. A century later the situation was different. Then the weight of imperialism was much heavier, precisely as a result of the renewal of imperial control after 1765. Provocation occurs not when the metropolis is inert but when it is active.

The self-sufficiency of the American colonies was appreciated by contemporaries, particularly by the Spanish authorities. This was a recurring theme of the developmental literature of the



eighteenth century, which sought a way to bind the Spanish American economy more closely to Spain. And this was the obsession of so many viceroys and other officials, seen in their frantic advice that economic dependence should be increased as a basic condition of political union. These views were reflected in 1790–91 by Gil de Taboada, Viceroy of Peru, who rejoiced in the increase of trade and lowering of prices which followed the commercial changes decreed by Charles III, especially the notable rise of imports into the colony and the consequent damage to Peruvian industries. 'The security of the Americas', he announced, 'must be measured by the extent of their dependence on the metropolis, and this dependence is founded on their need of consumer goods. The day they can supply all their needs themselves, their dependence will be voluntary.'[3]

To reverse the first emancipation of Spanish America – this was the object of the new imperialism of Charles III. The policy carried some risks: to disturb the balance of forces in the colonies might undermine the fabric of empire. But in so far as they were appreciated, the risks were regarded as acceptable. For colonial reform was part of a larger design to create a greater Spain, a vision shared by Charles III and his enlightened ministers, and brought to life in a movement of reform which sought to rescue Spain from the stranglehold of the past and to restore her power and prestige. Reform was given impetus by disastrous defeat at the hands of Britain in the Seven Years War, and from 1763 Spain made a supreme effort to redress the balance in Europe and in the Americas. A national reappraisal was undertaken. The ruling elite – a select group of intellectuals, economists, prelates and bureaucrats – canvassed various measures: equitable taxation, industrialization, expansion of overseas trade, improvement of communications, a programme of internal colonization, projects for the disentailing of estates and Church property, the ending of the pasture privileges of the powerful sheep-breeders in favour of arable farming, and many other proposals for economic development. The quasi-official economic societies were an important focus of reform, attached as they were to pragmatic solutions rather than abstract speculation and aiming essentially at the prosperity of the country by applied science. Not all of these plans were brought to fruition, but in the course of his




reign (1759–88) Charles III led Spain in a political, economic and cultural revival, and left the nation more powerful than he had found it. Government was centralized, the administration overhauled; agriculture was made to increase its yield and industry to expand output; overseas commerce was promoted and protected.

What did reform mean for Spanish America? Creole elites were by now well established throughout America, based on vested interests in land, mining and trade, on enduring ties of kinship and alliance with the colonial bureaucracy, and on a strong sense of regional identity. The weakness of royal government and its need for revenue had enabled these groups to develop effective forms of resistance to the distant metropolis. Offices were bought, fiscal bargains made, trade restrictions ignored. The traditional bureaucracy reflected these conditions, bending to pressure and avoiding conflict, constituting in effect not the agents of imperial centralisation but mediators between Spanish crown and American subjects. The Bourbons had a different concept of empire. Their government was absolutist, their taxation non-negotiable, their economic system strictly imperial.[4]

## (ii) American Responses

The second conquest of America was first of all a bureaucratic conquest.[5] After a century of inertia, Spain at last laid hands on America. New viceroyalties and other units of administration were created. New officials, the intendants, were appointed. New methods of government were tried. These were not merely administrative and fiscal devices: they also implied closer supervision of the American population. The intendants were instruments of social control, sent by the imperial government to recover America.[6] During the age of inertia colonization had meant different things to different interests. The crown wanted America governed without expense. Bureaucrats wanted a well-paid job. Merchants wanted produce for export. Indian peasants wanted to be left alone. Many of these interests were irreconcilable; yet they were in fact resolved by an expedient of startling simplicity.

At some time in the early seventeenth century, in a period of great economic crisis, the crown virtually stopped paying a salary to its key officials in America, the *alcades mayores* and *corregidores,* the district officers of the Spanish empire. Instead they were allowed to raise an income by breaking the law, by becoming in effect pure merchants, trading with the Indians under their jurisdiction, advancing capital and credit, supplying equipment and goods, and exercising an economic monopoly in their districts.[7] Very few officials possessed initial capital to stimulate such economic activity. On route to their posts, therefore, they signed contracts with merchant capitalists – in Mexico City, for example – and entered into commercial partnership with these so-called *aviadores*.[8] The merchants guaranteed a salary and expenses to ingoing officials, who then forced the Indians to accept advances of cash and equipment in order to produce an export crop or simply to consume surplus commodities. This was the infamous *repartimiento*, a device which forced the Indians into financial dependence and debt peonage. In this way the different interest groups were satisfied. The Indians were forced into producing and consuming; royal officials received an income; merchants gained an export crop; and the crown saved money on salaries. But the price was high in other ways. It diminished imperial control over local policy and interests; the empire was administered by men dependent not on government salaries but on trade and the financiers of trade. And it reduced the Indians to a form of servitude from which they could not escape. The system was extensive in Mexico, in Oaxaca, Zacatecas and Yucatán; and in Peru, where it was practised with particular violence, it helped to cause the Indian rebellion of Tupac Amaru in 1780.

The system had its defenders. According to the author of *El Lazarillo de ciegos caminantes*, 'if it were absolutely forbidden to supply the Indians with clothes, mules and iron for farm tools, they would be ruined within ten years and would let themselves be eaten by lice, so lazy is their temperament and so prone are they to drunkenness'.[9] But it outraged the Spanish reformers of the eighteenth century. In the interests of rational and humane administration they abolished the entire system by royal decree. The Ordinance of Intendants (4 December 1786), a basic



instrument of the reconquest, ended repartimientos and replaced corregidores and alcaldes mayores by intendants, assisted by subdelegates in the *pueblos de indios*. This was in Mexico. In Peru too the repartimientos were abolished and the intendant system imposed (1784).[10] The new legislation introduced paid officials; and it guaranteed the Indians the right to trade freely with whom they wished. They could now refuse to work on the haciendas or on any land not their own and to pay debts not freely contracted. Above all, landowners and financiers were restricted in their use of labour; the crown interposed its sovereignty between private enterprise and the Indian sector.[11]

Spanish liberals were not popular in America. Colonial interests found the new policy inhibiting and they resented the unwonted pressure from the metropolis. Peruvians believed that land and trade depended on the old system. As the author of *El Lazarillo* explained, 'When the Indians are indebted to the corregidor ... then the hacendado finds labourers and the shopkeeper moderately priced textiles. The Indians have the same quality as mules in that they are ruined by very hard work but become torpid and almost useless with too much idleness.'[12] In Peru the repartimientos reappeared, as the subdelegates sought to increase their income, the landowners to retain their grip on labour, and the merchants to re-establish old consumer markets.[13] In Mexico, too, powerful groups were alerted, and the new officials were gradually persuaded to resume the old methods.[14] After a brief experiment, therefore, Bourbon policy was sabotaged within the colonies themselves; and in Mexico a local elite would eventually reach for political power in order to prevent, among other things, a repetition of liberal legislation. Absolute control over labour was too important to be relinquished.

As the Bourbons strengthened the administration, so they weakened the Church. In 1767 they expelled the Jesuits from America, some 2,500 in all, many of whom were creoles and were thus deprived of their homelands as well as their missions. No reason was given for the expulsion, but it was essentially an attack on the semi-independence of the Jesuits and an assertion of imperial control. For the Jesuits possessed a great franchise in America; they also enjoyed independent economic power through their ownership of haciendas and other forms of property and

their successful entrepreneurial activities. Spanish Americans regarded the expulsion as despotism against their compatriots in their own countries. Of the 680 Jesuits expelled from Mexico about 450 were Mexicans; their life-long exile was a cause of great resentment not only among themselves but also among the families and sympathizers whom they left behind.[15] But this was only the preliminary round of a long struggle with the Church.

An essential theme of Bourbon policy was opposition to corporate bodies enjoying special status and privilege. The greatest example of privilege was the Church, whose religious mission in America was supported by two powerful foundations, its *fueros* and its wealth. Its fueros gave it clerical immunity from civil jurisdiction and were a closely guarded privilege. Its wealth was measured not only in terms of tithes, real estate and liens on property, but also by its enormous capital, amassed through donations of the faithful, capital which made the Church the largest spender and lender in Spanish America. This complex of ecclesiastical interests, another focus of independence, was one of the principal targets of the Bourbon reformers. They sought to bring the clergy under the jurisdiction of the secular courts, and in the process they increasingly curtailed clerical immunity.[16] Then, with the defences of the Church thus exposed, they hoped to launch a major attack on its property. The Church reacted strongly. While the clergy did not challenge Bourbon regalism, they bitterly resented the infringement of their personal privilege and immunity. They therefore resisted Bourbon policy, and were supported in many cases by pious laymen. The lower clergy, whose fuero was virtually their only material asset, were permanently alienated, and it was from their ranks that many of the insurgent officers and guerrilla leaders were to be recruited. As the great priest-revolutionary Morelos proclaimed to the Bishop of Puebla: 'We are more religious than the Europeans.'[17]

Another focus of power and privilege was the army, but here the metropolis had to proceed more warily. Spain had neither the money nor the manpower to maintain large garrisons of regular troops in America, and she relied chiefly on colonial militias, which from the mid-eighteenth century were expanded and reorganized. To encourage recruits, they were admitted to the *fuero militar,* thus giving creoles, and even mixed races, the



privileges enjoyed by the Spanish military, in particular the protection of military law. As imperial defence came to depend more on local militias, as even the regular colonial army became increasingly Americanised, so Spain designed a weapon which might be turned against her.[18] The risk to security was soon evident. In Peru the Indian rebellion of 1780 called into question the efficiency and the loyalty of creole and mestizo units, and Spain subsequently acted to strengthen imperial control. The role of the militia was reduced in favour of the regular army. Senior officers in both forces were now invariably Spaniards; and the *fuero militar* was restricted, especially among non-whites. In Mexico too the militia had its critics. Viceroy Revillagigedo thought it folly to give weapons to Indians, Blacks and other castes, and he doubted the loyalty of creole officers. It became rare for a creole to obtain a senior commission, and Mexicans learnt that access to military promotion, as well as civil office, was increasingly restricted.[19]

While Spain sought to apply greater bureaucratic control, so she was concerned to reassert closer economic control. The object was not only to undermine the position of the foreigners but also to destroy the self-sufficiency of the creoles, to make the colonial economies work directly for Spain, to syphon off the surplus of production which for so long had been retained within America. From the 1750s great efforts were made to increase imperial revenue. Two devices were particularly favoured: the extension of a state tobacco monopoly and the direct administration of the *alcabala* (sales tax), previously farmed out to private contractors. The alcabala was a classical Spanish tax, a sturdy transplant from the peninsula. Now its level was raised – in some cases from 4 to 6 per cent – and its collection more rigorously enforced. While the colonies were thus made to yield a greater quota of taxation, they were not consulted either about revenue or expenditure. In the past there had been no major objection to the raising of revenue for expenditure within America, on public works, roads, social services and defence. But now the intention was to divert this to metropolitan interests, in particular to make taxpayers in America subsidize Spain's wars in Europe. From about 1765 resistance to taxation was constant and sometimes violent.[20] And as, from 1779, Spain began to turn the screw more tightly to

finance its war with Britain, so opposition became more defiant; in Peru in 1780 creole riots were overtaken by Indian rebellion; and in New Granada in 1781 mestizo taxpayers – the *comuneros* – surprised the authorities by the violence of their protest. Less spectacular but more relentless opposition came from the *cabildos*, or town councils, the only institutions in which creole interests were represented. Here too the hands of Bourbon control were imposed, as the new intendants stirred the municipalities from their previous inertia. The finances of the cabildos were improved and their energies directed to public works and services. But the price of these gains was high: as royal agents subjected the cabildos to ever-closer supervision, so, from the 1790s, they provoked in them an unexpected opposition, and councillors began to claim the right not only to raise revenue but also to control expenditure.

The planners sought to apply the new fiscal pressure to an expanding and a controlled economy. Between 1765 and 1776 they dismantled the restrictive framework of colonial trade and abandoned centuries-old rules. They lowered tariffs, abolished the monopoly of Cadiz and Seville, opened free communications between the ports of the peninsula and the Caribbean and its mainland, and authorized intercolonial trade.[21] And in 1778 'a free and protected trade' between Spain and America was extended to include Buenos Aires, Chile and Peru, in 1789 Venezuela and Mexico. All this, combined with the extension of a free slave trade from 1789, permission to trade with foreign colonies from 1795, and in neutral vessels from 1797, greatly expanded trade and navigation in the Spanish Atlantic. But to what extent did it benefit Spain? The average annual value of exports from Spain to Spanish America in the years 1782–96 was 400 per cent higher than in 1788, and there seems little doubt that the metropolis profited from the receipt of greater surpluses from the colonies, public and private, and from better export opportunities for Spanish goods.[22] Yet, in spite of the formal exclusion of foreigners from imperial trade, Spain still relied on the more advanced economies of western Europe for goods and shipping, and even for permission to keep the routes open. Much of the Cadiz trade to America was a re-export trade in foreign goods. In 1778 foreign products amounted to 62 per cent of



registered exports to America, and they were also ahead in 1784, 1785 and 1787. Thereafter the share of national goods improved and in the whole period 1782–96 they averaged 52 per cent. But these were predominantly agricultural goods. National industry did not respond to the colonial market, Spain did not become a developed metropolis.

Spanish America experienced revival and recession under free trade. During 1782–96 the average value of American exports to Spain was more than ten times greater than that of 1778.[23] Mexico accounted for 36 per cent of these, followed by the Caribbean (23 per cent), Peru (14 per cent), the Río de la Plata (12 per cent), and Venezuela (10 per cent). Treasure exports, at 56 per cent, continued to dominate the trade, and of these about one-quarter were crown revenues. But agricultural exports, tobacco, cacao, sugar, cochineal, indigo and hides, accounted for 44 per cent. This indicates that marginal regions – the Río de la Plata and Venezuela – and neglected products – agropastoral goods – were now brought into the mainstream of the export economy. But Americans also learnt that they were still subject to a monopoly, still deprived of market options, still dependent on Spanish-controlled imports.

There was, moreover, a basic flaw in *comercio libre*. The American economy could not respond quickly enough to external stimulus. It remained essentially underdeveloped and starved of investment, open to imports but short of exports. The result was predictable – an outflow of bullion, one of the few American products for which there was a constant world demand. In one year alone, 1786, Peru was flooded with twenty-two million pesos worth of imports, compared with its previous annual average of five million.[24] The markets of Peru, Chile and the Río de la Plata were saturated, and while this lowered prices for the consumer, it ruined many local merchants and drained the colonies of their money.[25] From all South America cries arose that the metropolis restrain itself. No doubt these were the squeals of monopolists unable or unwilling to readjust to competition and lower prices, and impervious to consumer interests. But other complaints were genuine and desperate: they were the outcries of local industries, the textile *obrajes* of Quito, Cuzco and Tucumán, the hardware of Chile, the viniculture of Mendoza.

Soon even the ponchos and stirrups for the gauchos of the pampas would come from England. This was the crucial problem – colonial industries unprotected, European manufactures flooding in, and the local economies unable to earn them through increasing their own production and exports. Bourbon economic policy thus increased the colonial status of Spanish America and intensified its underdevelopment. The economic dependence – the 'colonial heritage' – of Spanish America had its origin not in the age of inertia but in the new imperialism.

American manufactures and products which duplicated European imports were deprived of essential protection by Bourbon policy. The Río de la Plata was an example. The textiles of Tucumán receded before imports through Buenos Aires. The wine industry of Mendoza was crippled by a combination of heavy taxes and competition from Spain. Mendoza complained of 'tyrannical taxes', of its status as 'feudatory of Buenos Aires', and requested Spain to halt the export of its own wine to the Río de la Plata.[26] The request was inevitably rejected, for it struck at the foundations of the imperial economy. Even when Spain could not apply her monopoly effectively, especially during the Napoleonic wars and the British-imposed blockade, foreign merchants penetrated to perpetuate dependency. Mexico, with a rising population, agricultural prosperity and a mining boom, was an economic success in the later eighteenth century. Its silver production rose continuously, from five million pesos in 1762 to a peak of twenty-seven million in 1804.[27] By 1800 Mexico produced 66 per cent of the world's silver output, and Spanish America contributed 90 per cent of total world production.[28] Mexico was now a source of considerable revenue to Spain, sending a surplus of over 6·5 million pesos a year in the period 1800 to 1810. But Mexico's own prospects of development were severely limited and her few existing industries found themselves in imminent jeopardy. By 1810 textiles in Querétaro and Puebla, a growth industry in the eighteenth century, were in recession, hit by regional difficulties and competition from imported cloth. This was the meaning of the new imperialism. As Viceroy Revillagigedo observed to his successor in Mexico in 1794: 'It should not be forgotten that this is a colony which must depend on its mother country, Spain, and must yield her some



benefit because of the protection it receives from her; and thus great skill is needed to cement this dependence and to make the interest mutual and reciprocal; for dependence would cease once European manufactures and products were not needed here.'[29] The function of America was to produce raw materials. Bolívar himself described it: 'Do you wish to know what our future was? We were mere consumers, confined to the cultivation of indigo, grain, coffee, sugar, cacao and cotton; raising cattle on the empty plains; hunting wild game in the wilderness; mining in the earth to produce gold for the insatiable greed of Spain.'[30]

Spanish policy created a dilemma of interests between agricultural exporters and local manufacturers, a conflict between free trade and protection which was transferred almost intact to the new republics. While industry vainly demanded protection, agriculture sought greater export outlets than Spain would allow. America was still debarred from direct access to international markets, still forced to trade only to Spain, still deprived of commercial stimulus for production. In Venezuela the great creole landowners, lords of vast haciendas, owners of numerous slaves, producers of cacao, indigo, tobacco, coffee, cotton and hides, were permanently frustrated by Spanish control of the import-export trade. The intendant of Caracas, José Abalos, concluded that 'if His Majesty does not grant them the freedom of trade which they desire, then he cannot count on their loyalty'.[31] In 1781 the Caracas Company, the chief instrument of monopoly, lost its contract, and in 1789 *comercio libre* was extended to Venezuela. But the new breed of merchants were still Spaniards or Spanish-orientated creoles, and their control of the trans-Atlantic trade enabled them to exert a stranglehold on the Venezuelan economy, to underpay for exports and overcharge for imports. Creole landowners and consumers demanded more trade with foreigners, denounced Spanish merchants as 'oppressors', attacked the idea that commerce existed 'solely for the benefit of the metropolis', and agitated against what they called in 1797 'the spirit of monopoly under which this province groans'.[32]

The Río de la Plata, like Venezuela, underwent its first economic development in the eighteenth century, when an incipient cattle interest emerged, ready to expand the export of

hides and other animal products to the markets of the world. From 1778 the Cadiz merchant houses with capital and contacts secured firm control of the Buenos Aires trade and interposed themselves between the Río de la Plata and Europe. But in the 1790s these were challenged by independent *porteño* (Buenos Aires) merchants, who procured slave trade concessions and with them permission to export hides. They employed their own capital and shipping, and they offered better prices for hides than did the Cadiz merchants, freeing the *estancieros* from the grip of monopoly.[33] The ranchers formed a third pressure group, small as yet and undistinguished, but allies of the creole merchants against Spanish monopolists. These porteño interests had spokesmen in Manuel Belgrano, Hipólito Vieytes, and Manuel José de Lavardén. Belgrano was secretary of the *consulado*, or merchant guild, which he made a focus of liberal economic thinking. Lavardén, son of a colonial official, man of letters, successful rancher, whose essential moderation added force to his views, reduced the economic programme of porteño reformers to a demand for four basic freedoms: to trade directly with all countries, thereby obtaining imports from the cheapest source; to own an independent merchant marine; to export the products of the country without restriction; to expand livestock and agriculture by land distribution on condition that the recipient worked the grant.[34] The coherence of this programme can be misleading. Economic interests in America were not homogeneous: there was conflict between and within the various colonies. And emancipation was not simply a movement for freedom of trade. But if there was a universal ideal, it was desire for a government which cared for American interests yet limited itself to protecting liberty and property. Americans were increasingly sceptical of the possibility of procuring this from Spain.

The second conquest of America was reinforced by continuous waves of immigration from the peninsula, as bureaucrats and merchants flocked to the colonies in search of a new world, a world fit for Spaniards, where they were still preferred in the higher administration, and where *comercio libre* had built-in safeguards for peninsular monopolists. The decree of 1778 was the signal for renewed immigration and a new process of control. Cadiz firms and their subsidiaries moved into the south Atlantic



trade, and to Buenos Aires went the Anchorena, Santa Coloma, Alzaga, Ezcurra, Martínez de Hoz, agents of commercial conquest and precursors of the Argentine oligarchy.[35] In Mexico generation after generation of peninsulares renewed the Spanish presence.[36] During the period 1780–90 the level of immigration from Spain to America was five times as high as that of 1710–30.[37] Spanish Americans had a distinct, if exaggerated, impression that their countries were being invaded by shiploads of *gachupines* and *chapetones* their derisive nicknames for peninsulares. And the reconquest brought not only more immigrants but a new type of immigrant. Whereas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the majority of Spaniards who went to America were from central and southern Spain, the new conquistadores came from the north, from Cantabrian Spain, hard, ruthless and parsimonious men, true products of their patria.[38] The Mexican statesman and historian, Lucas Alamán, described these immigrants as he remembered them. The majority were young men of humble origin who came to 'make America' and were assigned to a relative or friend already established, under whom they served a business apprenticeship. It was a harsh and grinding service; working hours were long, supervision by the patrón was exacting, and living was frugal, as the trainee had his earnings saved for him, perhaps married into the firm or was eventually given his arrears of salary with interest to start out on his own. The products of the system came to form a serious and successful entrepreneurial class, active in commerce and mining, and constantly reinforced from the peninsula, for the creole sons did not usually follow their father's vocation, preferring the life of the landed aristocracy. Alamán recorded the culmination of this success story: 'With wealth and marriage into respectable families came prestige, municipal offices and influence, which sometimes unfortunately gave them absolute predominance.'[39] From this point of view the revolution for independence can be interpreted as an American reaction against a new colonization, a defence mechanism set in motion by a new Spanish onslaught on commerce and office.

Spain did not trust Americans for positions of political responsibility; peninsula-born Spaniards were still preferred in higher office as well as trans-Atlantic commerce. Some creoles possessed

large fortunes, based principally on land and in some cases on mines. But the majority had only a moderate income; they were struggling hacendados, managers of estates or mines, local businessmen; or they scraped a living in the liberal professions, including the overcrowded legal profession. First-generation creoles felt the greatest pressure, for they were immediately challenged by a new wave of immigrants. To the creole, therefore, office was a need not a bonus. During the first half of the eighteenth century creoles were allowed to purchase offices, and by the 1760s the majority of judges in the *audiencias* of Lima, Santiago and Mexico were creoles, linked by kinship or interest to the local elite.[40] Then came a Spanish reaction: the metropolis began to reassert its authority, reduce creole participation in government, and break the links between bureaucrats and local families. Higher appointments in the Church, the administration, and the military were restored to Europeans in an effort to de-Americanise the government of America. In the period 1751–1808, of the 266 appointments in audiencias only 62 went to creoles, compared with 200 to peninsulares. In 1808 of the 99 officials in the colonial tribunals only six creoles had appointments in their own regions, and nineteen elsewhere.[41] The crown acquired a new imperial government, but frustration among Americans mounted. In Peru, New Granada and Mexico creoles made explicit demands for appointments: they wanted a share, or a majority, or an absolute monopoly of offices, and they wanted them in their homelands. So the traditional antagonism between the two groups was aggravated by the new colonization. As Humboldt observed: 'The lowest, least educated and uncultivated European believes himself superior to the white born in the New World.'[42] In the Río de la Plata Félix de Azara reported that mutual aversion was so great that it often existed between father and son, between husband and wife. In Mexico Alamán was convinced that this antagonism was the cause of the revolution for independence:

> This preference shown to Spaniards in political offices and ecclesiastical benefices has been the principal cause of the rivalry between the two classes; add to this the fact that the Europeans possessed great wealth, which, although it may have been the just reward of effort and industry, excited the envy of Americans and was considered as so much usurpation from them; consider that for all these reasons the Spaniards had obtained a decided preponderance over those born in the country; and it will not be difficult to explain the increasing jealousy and rivalry between the two groups which culminated in hatred and enmity.[43]



American expectations, nurtured during the age of inertia, were thwarted by the new imperialism. The set-back was uncompromising yet unreal, granted the demographic superiority of the creoles. There was an obvious difference between the first conquest and the second. The first was a conquest of the Indians; the second sought to control the creoles. This was a losing battle, for the creoles constantly increased their numbers. In the sixteenth century, about 1570, there were 115,000 to 120,000 whites in Spanish America, just over half of whom were born in Spain. At the beginning of the nineteenth century in a total population of 16·9 million there were 3·2 million whites, and of these only 30–40,000 were peninsulares.[44] This minority could not expect to hold political power indefinitely. In spite of increased immigration, the facts of population were against them: the creoles now dominated the peninsulares by some 99 per cent. In these terms independence had a demographic inevitability and was simply the overthrow of a minority by the majority. But there was more to it than numbers. The social hostility of Americans towards the new immigrants had racial undertones. The peninsulares were pure whites, with a sense of superiority born of their colour. Americans were more or less white; in fact many of them were dark with thick lips and coarse skin, rather like Bolívar himself as described by his Irish-born aide, General O'Leary.[45] They resented the Spanish super-whites and desperately wanted to be regarded as whites themselves. Humboldt observed this race consciousness: 'In America a more or less white skin determines the class which a man occupies in society.'[46] This explains the obsession with minute definition of racial gradations – *zambo prieto* was seven-eights Negro, one-eighth white – and the anxiety of suspect families to prove their whiteness even by litigation, having sometimes to be satisfied with the court's declaration that 'they may be regarded as white'.

Colonial societies were composed, in varying proportions, of a great mass of Indians, a lesser number of mestizos, and a minority

of whites. The Indian base of this vast pyramid was extensive in Peru, Mexico and Guatemala, less so in the Río de la Plata and Chile. But almost everywhere the Indians were a conquered people, forced into an inferior status, subject to the tribute and to personal and public services. Throughout Spanish America, but especially in northern South America and coastal Peru, the Negro slave was an added element, from whom descended free Negroes and mulattos, sometimes called *pardos* or *castas*. The status of the pardos was even worse than that of the other mixed group, the mestizos, who were the offspring of Spanish-Indian unions. The pardo was despised for his slave origin and his colour; discriminatory legislation debarred him from all white status symbols, including education; he was confined to *oficios bajos y serviles* in the towns and to peon-type labour in the country; and his ancestry in the union of white and Negro was regarded as so monstrous that it was compared to the nature of the mule, hence the term mulatto. A Spaniard might marry a mestizo but rarely a mulatto; the mulattos and Indians were regarded as inferior beings with whom even social proximates like poor whites and mestizos did not wish to marry.[47] Racial distinctions formed a part, though not an exclusive part, of class definitions.[48] 'Colonial social stratification was based on a graduated series of positions, openly called castes by colonial officials, which were determined by racial, economic and social differences.'[49] Whatever the degree of racial and cultural factors in determining social structure, colonial society was marked by rigid stratification; it was a caste society, though without religious sanction and with at least the possibility of movement. It was this possibility which alarmed the whites.

The creoles were intensely aware of social pressure from below, and they strove to keep the coloured people at a distance. Race prejudice created in Americans an ambivalent attitude towards Spain. In parts of Spanish America slave revolt was so haunting a prospect that the creoles would not lightly leave the shelter of imperial government. This was a major reason why Cuba remained aloof from the cause of independence. On the other hand Bourbon policy introduced an element of social mobility. The pardos were allowed into the militia, which gave them access to fueros, status and wealth, to an extent which many whites did



not enjoy. They could also buy legal whiteness through purchase of *cédulas de gracias al sacar*. By law of 10 February 1795 dispensation from the status of pardo was offered for a sum of 1,500 reales de vellón, lowered in 1801 to 700 reales.[50] Successful applicants were authorised to receive an education, marry whites, hold public office and enter holy orders. This mobility was encouraged by the imperial government for reasons of its own. The reasons were not entirely fiscal, for the device did not have great revenue potential; nor were they purely humanitarian. The policy was basically a recognition of changes in society. Pardos were increasing in numbers yet suffered gross injustice; it was necessary to offer them space and release tensions. The policy also reflected perhaps the economic thinking of the metropolis and its attitude towards aristocratic power and independence. To increase social mobility would be to reinforce the white elite by an economically motivated and ambitious class; this would simultaneously undermine traditional ideals of honour and status and enhance entrepreneurial values. Whatever the motive, the result was to blur the lines between whites and castes and to enable many who were not clearly Indian or Black to be regarded as socially and culturally Spanish. The irony was that this liberal attack on seigneurial values ended by invigorating them, with the result that they were bequeathed to the independent states in yet more extreme form.

For the whites reacted sharply to these concessions. Their concern could be seen in a growing exclusiveness and sharpened sensitivity about race. In the Río de la Plata, according to Concolorcorvo, the principal families of Córdoba 'are very tenacious in observing the customs of their forbears; they do not allow the slaves or even the free coloureds to wear anything except their working dress, though this is quite coarse.' In parish churches whites and castes had separate registers for births, marriages and deaths, which made the Church in effect one of the guardians of racial purity; indeed it was the practice of the whites to have their children baptized at home, in the belief 'that to be baptized in church was a mark of Indians and mulattos'.[51] In New Granada the creoles regarded the terms mestizo, mulatto and zambo as insulting, and clung to their privileges as important class distinctions, at a time when the crown was increasingly

critical of fueros and anxious to reduce them. The courts were flooded with requests for declarations of whiteness, the petitioners rejecting allegations that 'he is no more than a poor mulatto', and seeking certificates 'that he does not belong to the class of mestizos or have any other defect'.[52] Equally the mestizos sought to be declared mestizos, not Indians, and thereby free from tribute and better placed to profit from social mobility and the possibility of passing for white. But it was Venezuela, with its plantation economy, slave labour force and numerous pardos – together forming 61 per cent of the population – which took the lead in rejecting the social policy of the second empire and established the climate of the revolution to come.

The Venezuelan aristocracy, a relatively small group of white landowners and merchants, fiercely resisted the advance of the *gente de color*, rejected a new slave law, protested against the *cédulas de gracias al sacar*, and opposed popular education. According to the cabildo of Caracas, the laws of the Indies 'do not intend the pardos to live without masters, even though they are free'.[53] These issues came to a head in 1796, when improved status was granted to a pardo doctor, Diego Mejías Bejarano; he was dispensed from the 'status of pardo', and his children were permitted to dress like whites, marry whites, obtain public office and enter the priesthood. The cabildo of Caracas protested against what it called this 'amalgamation of whites and pardos', and concluded:

> The great numbers of pardos in this province, their proud and arrogant nature, their stubborn determination to gain equality with the whites, demands as priority policy that Your Majesty keep them always in a certain dependence and subordination to the whites, as they have been until now; otherwise they will become intolerable in their insolence, and very soon they will seek to dominate those who have hitherto been their lords.[54]

The policy would lead, they insisted, to 'subversion of social order, a system of anarchy, and will cause the ruin and loss of the states of America, whose people have to live here and suffer the dismal consequences of this policy'. The crown repudiated these arguments and ordered its law officers to apply the cédula. But when, in 1803, Mejías tried to enter his son in the University of Caracas, the latter resisted, on the grounds that this would 'ruin the university for ever, submerging it in the deep abyss of barbarism and confusion, where the pardos would spread the pernicious seed of their ideas of equality and predominance'.[55]



In Mexico, too, the social situation was explosive, and the whites were always aware of the simmering resentment of the Indians and castes. Alamán described the Mexican Indians as 'an entirely separate nation; all those who did not belong to them they regarded as foreigners, and as in spite of their privileges they were oppressed by all the other classes, they in turn regarded all the others with equal hatred and distrust'.[56] In 1799 Manuel Abad y Queipo, Bishop Elect of Michoacán, analyzed the deep cleavage in Mexican society:

> The Indians and castes are employed in domestic service, agriculture, the menial side of commerce, the crafts and trades. In other words they are servants, menials or labourers employed by the upper class. Consequently between them and the Spanish class there is the conflict of interests and the hostility which invariably prevails between those who have nothing and those who have everything, between vassals and lords. To some extent these conditions are prevalent all over the world. But in America it is worse, for there are no gradations between classes, no mean; they are all either rich or poor, noble or vile.[57]

The pent-up anger of the Mexican masses exploded in 1810 in a violent social revolution, which proved to the creoles what they had long suspected, that in the final analysis they themselves were the guardians of social order and the colonial heritage.

The creoles, therefore, lost confidence in Bourbon government and began to doubt whether Spain had the will to defend them. Their dilemma was real. They were caught between the imperial government and the mass of the people. The government allowed them privilege but not the power to protect it; the masses resented privilege and might be tempted to destroy it. In these circumstances, when the monarchy collapsed in 1808, the creoles could not allow the political vacuum to remain unfilled: they had to move quickly to anticipate popular rebellion. They then had to seize the opportunity of independence not only to take power from Spain but, above all, to prevent the pardos from taking it. Bolívar was appalled by the dilemma, aware that it survived

independence: 'A great volcano lies at our feet. Who shall restrain the oppressed classes? Slavery will break its yoke, each shade of complexion will seek mastery.'[58]

Meanwhile the advance of the Bourbon state, the curbing of creole participation, the increase of taxation did not go unchallenged. Resistance to government innovation and abuse of power found expression in protest and rebellion, culminating in the revolts of 1780–81 in Peru, New Granada and Venezuela.[59] These were not so much popular movements as temporary coalitions of social groups, which the creoles first led and then, alarmed by the pressure from below, abandoned. They were not 'antecedents' of independence. The rebels appealed rather to a past utopia when bureaucratic centralisation and tax oppression were unknown. While they did not anticipate independence, they nevertheless helped to undermine loyalty to Bourbon rule. They demonstrated that the traditional formula of protest, 'Long live the King, down with bad government', was obsolete, discredited not least by the Bourbons themselves, whose policy of centralisation invalidated the old distinction between king and government and made the crown directly responsible for the actions of its servants. The rebels characterised the Spanish authorities as outsiders and the Americans as claimants to their own countries. In this sense they were a further stage in the development of colonial self awareness, a defense of American interests against those of Spain.

### (iii) Incipient Nationalism

Political power, social order: these were the basic requirements of the creoles. But even had Spain been able and willing to guarantee their needs, the creoles would not have been satisfied for long. The demands for office and security expressed a deeper awareness, a developing sense of identity, a conviction that Americans were not Spaniards. This presentiment of nationality could only find satisfaction in independence. At the same time as Americans began to disavow Spanish nationality they were also aware of differences among themselves, for even in their pre-national state the various colonies rivalled each other in their resources and their pretensions. America was too vast a continent



and too vague a concept to attract individual loyalty. Men were primarily Mexicans, Venezuelans, Peruvians, Chileans, and it was in their own country, not America, that they found their national home. This sense of identity, of course, was confined to the creoles, and even they were conscious of an ambiguity in their position. As Bolívar recalled:

> We are neither Europeans nor Indians, but a mixed species midway between aborigenes and Spaniards. Americans by birth and Europeans by law, we find ourselves engaged in a dual conflict, disputing with the natives for titles of ownership, and at the same time struggling to maintain ourselves in the country of our birth against the opposition of the [Spanish] invaders. Thus our position is most extraordinary and complicated.[60]

In so far as there was a nation it was a creole nation, for the castes had only an obscure sense of national identity, and the Indians and Negroes none at all.

Conditions in the colonial period favoured the formation of regional units distinct from each other. Spanish administrative divisions provided the political framework of nationality. The empire was divided into administrative units – viceroyalties, captaincies general, audiencias – each with a bureaucratic machine and a chief executive. These divisions, based on existing pre-Spanish regions, further promoted regionalism and a sense of local loyalty. And after 1810 they were adopted as the territorial framework of the new states, under the principle of *uti possidetis*, or, as Bolívar expounded it: 'What has come to be recognized as a principle of international law in America, namely, that the republican governments are founded within the boundaries of the former viceroyalties, captaincies general, or presidencies'.[61]

Nature reinforced the divisions imposed by man. America was a conglomeration of countries. Was there not a world of difference between the pampas of the Río de la Plata and the altiplano of Upper Peru, between the Chilean countryside and the plantations of coastal Venezuela, between the agricultural economy of New Granada and the mining zones of Mexico and Peru, between the gaucho, the llanero, the cholo and the inquilino? The difficulties of communications further separated the various colonies from each other. The Bourbons improved the roads,

postal services and maritime communications of the empire, but natural obstacles, the formidable rivers, plains and deserts, the impenetrable jungles and mountains of America, were too great to overcome. Journeys were long and slow. It took four months by sea from Buenos Aires to Acapulco, and the return was even slower.[62] The journey by land from Buenos Aires to Santiago, crossing pampas and cordillera, took two tiring months. Anyone rash enough to travel from Buenos Aires to Cartagena by land faced a journey by horse, mule, wagons and river transports via Lima, Quito and Bogotá, and it took nine months. Regional isolation helped to stifle American unity and to promote particularism.

Regionalism was reinforced by economic divisions. Some colonies had agricultural and mineral surpluses for export to others and they broke through the legal barriers to intercolonial trade. When these barriers were formally removed, from 1765, the imperial government encouraged inter-American trade, but could not effect economic integration. Chile resented its dependence on Peru, virtually the only market for its wheat. Buenos Aires competed with Lima for the market of Upper Peru.[63] Peru bitterly resented the loss of Potosí to the Río de la Plata in 1776 and objected to the obligation to provide mita Indians for continued operation of the mines.[64] Buenos Aires in its turn became a kind of metropolis, controlling river communications, channelling all trade to itself, and arousing the resentment of its satellites, the Banda Oriental and Paraguay. These economic rivalries had a dual significance. First, viceroys and other officials, Spaniards as well as creoles, took up the regionalist position of their colony and supported it against rivals. Secondly, while it might appear that colonial nationalism first showed itself less against Spain than against other colonies, in fact the colonies learnt the lesson that their economic interests had little chance of an impartial hearing from the imperial government, that the rivalries of the various regions were an inevitable consequence of colonial rule, and that they needed independent control over their own destinies. And after 1810 each country would seek its individual solution and attempt to resolve its economic problems by establishing relations with Europe or the United States without reference to its neighbours.



Incipient nationalism also received a degree of political expression. This was the meaning of the irrepressible American demand for office, a demand which probably reflected more concern with patronage than with policy. But it was further evidence of a growing assumption – that Americans were different from Spaniards. In 1771 the cabildo of Mexico City asserted that Mexicans should have exclusive right to office in their own country. Americans, they claimed, were educated and qualified for office, and had a prior right over Spaniards, who were foreigners in Mexico. True, Spaniards and Mexicans were subjects of the same sovereign and as such members of the same body politic, but, they argued, 'as far as appointments to offices is concerned European Spaniards must be counted as foreigners here, for they are liable to the same objections which all peoples bring against the employment of foreigners'.[65]

What were the intellectual sources of the new Americanism? The ideas of the French *philosophes*, their criticisms of contemporary social, political and religious institutions, were known to Americans though they were not accepted indiscriminately. The literature of the Enlightenment circulated in Spanish America with comparative freedom. In Mexico there was an audience for Newton, Locke and Adam Smith, for Descartes, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Condillac and D'Alembert. Readers were to be found among viceroys and other officials, members of the professional and business classes, university personnel and ecclesiastics. The inundation reached its height in the 1790s, and it was now that the Mexican Inquisition began to move, alarmed less by religious heterodoxy than by the political content of the new philosophy, which it regarded as seditious, 'contrary to the security of states', full of 'general principles of equality and liberty for all men', and in some cases a vehicle for news of 'the frightful and damaging revolution in France'.[66] But the new intellectual movement was not an issue which divided creoles from Spaniards, nor was it an essential ingredient of independence. To possess a book was not necessarily to accept its ideas. American readers were often inspired by nothing more than intellectual curiosity; they wanted to know what was happening in the wider world; they resented official attempts to keep them ignorant; and they welcomed contemporary ideas as instruments

of reform, not destruction. It is true that some educated creoles were more than reformers; they were revolutionaries. In northern South America Francisco de Miranda, Pedro Fermín de Vargas, Antonio Nariño, and the young Simón Bolívar were all disciples of the new philosophy, ardent seekers after human liberty and happiness. In the Río de la Plata Viceroy Avilés observed 'signs of a spirit of independence', which he attributed precisely to excessive contact with foreigners.[67] Manuel Belgrano was widely read in the thought of the Enlightenment. Mariano Moreno was an enthusiastic admirer of Rousseau, whose *Social Contract* he edited in 1810 'for the instruction of young Americans'. These men were true precursors of independence; yet they were a small elite and undoubtedly ahead of creole opinion. The mass of Americans had many objections to the colonial regime, but these were pragmatic rather than ideological; in the ultimate analysis the greatest threat to the Spanish empire came from American interests rather than European ideas. To suppose that the thought of the Enlightenment made revolutionaries of Spanish Americans is to confuse cause and effect. Some were already dissenters; for this reason they sought in the new philosophy further inspiration for their own ideals, intellectual justification for the revolution to come. While the Enlightenment had an important role in Spanish America, therefore, this role was not primarily a 'cause' of independence. Rather there was a movement of ideas from the Enlightenment via the revolutionary movement into the new republics, where they became an essential ingredient of Latin American liberalism.[68] And in the final reckoning Americans received from the Enlightenment not so much new information and ideas as a new approach to knowledge, a preference for reason and experiment as opposed to authority and tradition. This was a potent if intangible challenge to Spanish rule.

The Enlightenment was brought into sharper focus by the revolutions in North America and France. Of these two great liberating movements the French model had less appeal to Spanish Americans. Their reaction was based not on ignorance but on interest. Spanish government, it is true, attempted to prevent French news and propaganda from reaching its subjects, but the barriers were breached by a flood of revolutionary literature in Spain and in America. Some read the new material out of curiosity. Others instinctively recognized their spiritual home, embracing the principles of liberty and applauding the rights of man. Equality was another matter. Situated as they were between the Spaniards and the masses, the creoles wanted more than equality for themselves and less than equality for their inferiors. In 1791 the French island colony of Saint Domingue was engulfed in a ferocious slave revolt, and in 1804 Negro and mulatto generals proclaimed a new and independent state, Haiti. As violence spread from Haiti to the slave compounds of Venezuela, white property owners rejected with horror revolutionary doctrines which could so inflame their dependants. The more radical the French revolution became and the better it was known, the less it appealed to the creole aristocracy. They saw it as an archtype of extreme democracy and social anarchy; and even liberals like the Mexican José Luis Mora came to believe that Spanish America had nothing to learn from the French revolution, which had attacked, not promoted, individual liberty and civil rights. As for Napoleon, the instigator of crisis in the Hispanic world in 1808, to Americans he stood not for national interests but for French imperialism.



The influence of the United States was more benevolent and more enduring. In the years before and after 1810 the very existence of the United States excited the imagination of Spanish Americans, and its embodiment of liberty and republicanism placed a powerful example before their eyes. The works of Tom Paine and Franklin, the speeches of John Adams, Jefferson and Washington all circulated in Spanish America. Many of the precursors and leaders of independence visited the United States and saw free institutions at first hand; Bolívar respected Washington and admired, though never uncritically, the United States, 'land of freedom and home of civic virtue', as he described it. Economic relations forged further bonds. United States trade with Spanish America, first with the Caribbean then, after the disintegration of the Spanish monopoly during the Napoleonic wars, with the Río de la Plata and the Pacific coast, was a channel not only of goods and services but also of books and ideas. Copies of the Federal Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, conveniently translated into Spanish, were carried

into the area by United States traders whose liberal views coincided with their interest in developing a market free of the Spanish monopoly. After 1810, before disillusion with their powerful neighbour prevailed, Spanish American statesmen looked north for guidance. Constitutions in Venezuela, Mexico and elsewhere would be closely modelled on that of the United States, and many of the new leaders – though not Bolívar – would be profoundly influenced by North American federalism.

The influence of the United States, like that of Europe, is difficult to measure. If it played only a secondary role in the political education of Spanish Americans, it was still significant, for, like the Enlightenment, it helped to open their minds. This new vision they now applied to their own environment. In the course of the eighteenth century Spanish Americans began to rediscover their own land in a uniquely American literature. Their patriotism was American, not Spanish, regional rather than continental, for each country had its own identity, observed by its peoples and glorified by its writers. Creole intellectuals in Mexico, Peru and Chile expressed and nurtured a new awareness of patria and a greater sense of exclusiveness, for as the *Mercurio Peruano* observed, 'it interests us more to know what is happening in our own nation'.[69] Among the first to give cultural expression to 'Americanism' were the creole Jesuits expelled from their homelands in 1767, who became in exile literary precursors of American nationalism.

To some extent it was a literature of nostalgia. The Chilean Jesuit Manuel Lacunza imagined himself eating his favourite Chilean dishes, while Juan Ignacio Molina thirsted for the sparkling water of the cordillera. The Mexican Juan Luis Maneiro implored the Spanish king to allow him to die 'en patria suelo':

> Quisiéramos morir bajo aquel cielo
> Que influyó tanto a nuestro ser humano.[70]

But the patriotism of the American Jesuits went beyond personal sentiment. They wrote to dispel European ignorance of their countries, and in particular to destroy the myth of the inferiority and degeneracy of man, animal and vegetable in the New World, a myth propagated by a number of anti-American works of the mid-eighteenth century. Buffon claimed that American immaturity could be seen in the puma, which was more cowardly than the lion; De Pauw alleged that the Mexican Indians could only count up to three; Raynal referred to American decrepitude and even censured America for the 'excessive altitude of the Peruvian mountains'.[71] In reply the exiles described the nature and history of their countries, their resources and qualities, producing in the process works of scholarship as well as of literature. Juan Ignacio Molina, the Chilean Jesuit, wrote a major study of the geography and history of Chile, its mineral, vegetable and animal resources, whose scientific spirit caught the attention of Europe. Molina had a distinctly pro-creole bias and he defended his fellow Americans for the progress which they had made despite lack of opportunity and education. He was also Indianist in his sympathies. Deploring the universal ignorance about Chile, he remarked, 'the nature, customs and beautiful language of its ancient inhabitants remain unknown, as are their remarkable efforts in defence of their liberty, in battles stretching from the beginning of the conquest to the present day'.[72]



The most eloquent and perhaps the most scholarly of all the exile writers was Francisco Javier Clavijero, who compared his native Mexico to the heavenly Jerusalem of Holy Scripture.[73] Clavijero's nostalgia masked a more serious intent. He sought to provide an exact study of Mexico, especially of its prehistory, and in the process to refute De Pauw. He himself was a creole, born in Veracruz in 1731, and as a youth he learnt the Indian languages. His *Historia Antigua de México*, therefore, first published in 1780–1, was a history of ancient Mexico written in a scientific spirit by a qualified Mexican, in order, as he put it, 'to make himself useful to his patria'. He underlined the differences between Mexico and Spain, especially the ethnic differences. He argued that a more homogeneous Mexican nationality could have been formed by means of complete *mestizaje*: 'There is no doubt that the policy of the Spaniards would have been wiser if, instead of taking European women and African slaves to America, they had intermarried with the Mexicans alone and thus formed a single nation.'[74] Clavijero's work circulated not only in Europe but also in Mexico, where the rector of the university promoted its distribution. And it was

continued by Andrés Cavo, who extended the story into the colonial period.[75] Cavo prefaced his study with the hope 'that this history undertaken out of love of my native land may be received with favour by those of my nation'. And he too considered the problem of nationality: 'If after the conquest there had been widespread intermarriage between the two nations, which the Mexicans would have welcomed, then in the course of time out of two nations a single nation would have been formed.'[76]

The literature of the Jesuit exiles belonged to Spanish American rather than Spanish culture. And if it was not yet a 'national' literature, it contained an essential ingredient of nationalism, awareness of the patria's historical past. But the significance of the Jesuit works lay less in their direct influence than in the way they reflected the thinking of other less articulate Americans. The Jesuits were simply interpreters of regionalist sentiments which had already taken root in the creole mind. And when the creoles themselves expressed their patriotism it was usually more optimistic than that of the exiles. The pre-independence period saw the emergence of a literature of hyperbole, in which Americans glorified their countries, extolled their resources, and praised their peoples. No doubt there was something pretentious about these works; their patriotism was exaggerated; and their knowledge of other parts of the world was not impressive. But they represented a natural reaction against European prejudice and an important stage in American cultural development.[77]

In Buenos Aires the *Telégrafo Mercantil* described the Río de la Plata as 'the richest country in the world'. Manuel de Salas described Chile as 'without doubt the most fertile land in America and the most propitious for human happiness', summing up the thought of a whole generation of creoles such as José Antonio de Rojas and Juan Egaña, who paid lyrical tribute to their country and affirmed their patriotism in literature. And by 1810 the word *patria* was coming to mean Chile rather than the Hispanic world as a whole.[78] In New Granada the botanist and patriot Francisco José de Caldas – he was shot by the Spaniards in 1816 – eulogized the environment, the mineral resources, the animal life of his country, and concluded 'there is no



place better situated in the Old World or the New than New Granada'.[79] The Economic Societies, which in the 1780's spread from Spain to America, were another vehicle of Americanism. Their function was to encourage agriculture, commerce and industry by study and experiment, and while they were reformist rather than revolutionary they sought American solutions to American problems. A patriotic and anti-Spanish note was struck in the Quito Society's *Primicias de la cultura de Quito,* edited by Francisco Javier Espejo, who spent years rebutting European prejudices about America and wrote in the *Primicias* of a 'nation' which was 'American'.[80]

In Peru the works of doctors José Manuel Dávalos and Hipólito Unánue entered the controversy against De Pauw and acclaimed the natural assets of the country.[81] They went to extraordinary lengths. The mulatto doctor Dávalos claimed that 'there is a place in Peru called Piura where syphilis disappears simply through the salubrious influence of the climate', and that the balmy breezes of Miraflores automatically cured chest complaints. The Academic Society of Lima was founded to study and promote the interests of Peru, and in particular to produce a new periodical, the *Mercurio Peruano.*[82] The latter was frank in its patriotism: 'We love Peru because it is right to do so, because of our natural inclinations, and because of its particular character.' A precondition of patriotism was knowledge, so the *Mercurio* was concerned almost exclusively with Peru: 'Love of the patria makes us detest that vice of preferring foreign defects to our own, and helps us to follow the dictates of natural reason, preferring our own to foreign good.'[83] But Peruvianism contained diverse elements, conservative as well as radical, and conflicting notions of patria: some saw it as compatible with imperial unity; others believed that it could only be fulfilled in independent nationality.

Mexican nationalism was less ambiguous. In the second half of the eighteenth century a group of Mexicans deliberately undertook an analysis of the condition and the prospects of their country. Some like Clavijero, wrote primarily for a foreign audience. Others such as José Antonio Alzate Ramírez and Juan Ignacio Bartolache were inspired by a desire to teach their

own compatriots, and this they did in a series of periodicals, including the *Gaceta de Literatura de México* and the *Mercurio Volante*.[84] These described the resources, flora and fauna, climate, agriculture, mines and commerce of Mexico, in order to instruct Mexicans in their own assets and culture and to demonstrate to them that they were as rational as Europeans. Their Americanism was uninhibited and employed terms such as 'la nación', 'la patria', 'nuestra nación', 'nuestra América', 'nosotros los Americanos'. The *Gaceta de Literatura* used the phrase 'nuestra Nación Hispano Americana' as early as 1788. While this was a cultural rather than political nationalism, and did not immediately seek to destroy the unity of the Hispanic world, yet it prepared men's minds for independence by showing that Mexico had independent resources. Mexico's wealth, human talents, military strength, these were the qualities emphasized by Jesuit and creole writers and assumed by their public.[85] They were also applauded by a number of foreign observers, notably by Alexander von Humboldt, whose scientific and political works gave Mexicans renewed confidence in their country and perhaps an inflated idea of its potential. As Lucas Alamán subsequently remarked: 'The writings which he published while still in Mexico, and later his *Ensayo Político sobre la Nueva España,* made known this important dominion to Spain itself, to all the nations whose attention he aroused, and to the Mexicans, who formed an extremely exaggerated idea of the richness of their country, and imagined that if it were only independent it would become the most powerful nation in the world.'[86] It was an irresistible conclusion: if Mexico had great assets, it needed independence to realize them.

In order that loyalism should diminish and Americanism grow a further factor was needed, the factor of opportunity. This came in 1808 when the crisis of government in Spain in effect deprived the colonies of a metropolis. The end was quick though the preceding agony prolonged. Before the final catastrophe Spain endured two decades of national humiliation, as Charles III's programme of reform and revival gave way to renewed decline and a new dependence. Startled by the French revolution, helpless before the power of France, Spain lurched from crisis to



crisis. As leadership declined from the standards of Charles III and his enlightened ministers to those of Charles IV and his favourite, Manuel Godoy, government survived by improvisation.

From 1796 Spain was dragged through France's wars against Britain in a satellite role, forced to subsidize its imperial neighbour and to sacrifice its own interests. Colonial trade was the first victim. The British navy blockaded Cadiz and cut the transatlantic route. To supply colonial markets and preserve for itself some returns, Spain allowed neutrals to trade with America, by decree of 18 November 1797. This was revoked eighteen months later but the revocation was ignored and neutral vessels continued to trade into Veracruz, Cartagena and Buenos Aires at a time when Spanish vessels simply could not make the crossing. The Spanish trade monopoly came to an effective end in the period 1797–1801, and the economic independence of the colonies was brought inexorably closer. After a brief respite during the peace of Amiens (1802–4), the renewal of war with Britain accelerated the decline of imperial trade. A series of naval reverses, culminating in Trafalgar, deprived Spain of an Atlantic fleet and further isolated her from the Americas. Imports of colonial products and precious metals slumped, and in 1805 exports from Cadiz declined by 85 per cent from those of 1804. The demise of Spain's American trade coincided with a desperate British thrust to compensate for the closure of European markets by Napoleon's continental blockade, and there was a new urgency to British contraband trade. Spanish policy was under pressure from various groups, from the central government dependent on colonial revenue, from agricultural and industrial exporters in the trading regions demanding a monopoly market, and from the colonies anxious to maintain trade and supplies. To satisfy as many interests as possible the Spanish government again authorised a neutral trade and from 1805 neutral shipping dominated the Spanish Atlantic, contributing 60 per cent of the total imports of Vera Cruz in 1807 and 95 per cent of exports, of which silver constituted 80 per cent. The future of Spain as an imperial power was now in the balance. The economic monopoly was lost beyond recovery. All

that remained was political control, and this too was under increasing strain.

When, in 1807–8, Napoleon decided to destroy the last shreds of Spanish independence and invaded the peninsula, Bourbon government was divided against itself and the country defenceless against attack. In March 1808 a palace revolution forced Charles IV to dismiss Godoy and to abdicate in favour of his son, Ferdinand. The French then occupied Madrid, and Napoleon induced Charles and Ferdinand to proceed to Bayonne for discussion. There, on 5 May 1808, he forced both of them to abdicate and in the following month proclaimed Joseph Bonaparte King of Spain and the Indies.

In Spain the people began to fight for their independence and the liberals to plan for a constitution. Provincial juntas organized resistance to France, and in September 1808 a central junta was formed, invoking the name of the king and, from Seville in January 1809, issuing a decree that Spanish dominions in America were not colonies but an integral part of the Spanish monarchy with rights of representation. But as French forces penetrated Andalucía the junta was driven into a corner and in January 1810 it dissolved, leaving in its place a regency of five instructed to summon a Cortes (Parliament) which would represent both Spain and America. Spanish liberals were no less imperialist than Spanish conservatives. The Cortes of Cadiz produced the constitution of 1812 which declared Spain and America a single nation. But while Americans were granted representation they were denied equal representation, and while they were promised reform they were refused freedom of trade.

What did these events mean to Spanish America? The two years after 1808 were decisive. The French conquest of Spain, the collapse of the Spanish Bourbons, the implacable imperialism of Spanish liberals, all delivered a profound and irreparable shock to relations between Spain and America. Americans were faced with a crisis of political legitimacy. They could not have the Bourbons; they did not want Napoleon; they did not trust the liberals. Whom then should they obey? And how should power be distributed between imperial officials and local elites? Once autonomous decisions were taken upon these



issues, independence quickly gathered momentum. It swept across the subcontinent in two great movements. The southern revolution gained a slight lead in time, advancing from the Río de la Plata, across the Andes to the Pacific. The northern revolution, more closely harassed by Spain, veered from Venezuela to New Granada and back to its birthplace. Both converged on Peru, the fortress of Spain in America. And in the north Mexican insurgency followed a course of its own – frustrated social revolution, prolonged counter-revolution, and successful conservative revolution – demonstrating in microcosm the essential character of Spanish American independence.

the secularized land of the former Jesuit missions, where government agents put the Indians to work or hired them out to private landowners. Elsewhere peonage endured and no one planned an agrarian revolution. It is true that Francia de-hispanicised Paraguayan society, expelling many peninsulares and terrorising the rest. He even issued a decree prohibiting Spaniards from marrying whites, restricting them to Indians, mestizos and mulattos in a policy of enforced mestizisation.[82] But this did not prevent the survival of a creole elite, politically crushed but clinging grimly to the remnants of a primitive social structure.

### (iii) The War of Guerrillas in Upper Peru

Buenos Aires had a vital stake in Upper Peru. Up to the May revolution this mining province in the distant Andes had been, like the Banda Oriental and Paraguay, part of the viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. When Buenos Aires revolted Lima moved quickly to claim its ancient patrimony and, with the eager co-operation of local colonial officials, to reintegrate it into the royalist stronghold of Peru. Buenos Aires refused to accept this secession and made the liberation of Upper Peru one of the essential objectives of the revolution. Politically Upper Peru was a challenge to the ideals of 1810. Economically its silver production had become an important item in the overseas trade of Buenos Aires. And strategically it was an obvious springboard for Spanish counter-insurgency operations. The porteños had allies among the patriots in Upper Peru, and believed it would be a simple matter for a liberating expedition to join with the politicians of the towns and the guerrillas of the mountains in a concerted campaign to drive out the Spaniards.

Yet Upper Peru was not an easy terrain for a war of liberation. The failure of the revolution of 1809, the reluctance of the creole aristocracy to subvert the social order in a population where they were vastly outnumbered by Indians and mestizos, the military resources and resourcefulness of the viceroy in Lima, all made it difficult for the forces of liberation to secure Upper Peru. But the revolutionary cause had one asset. This mountain corner of the Hispanic world was made by nature for irregular warfare.



And independence was first expressed as guerrilla resistance to royalist armies of occupation.

The guerrillas of Upper Peru, the montoneros of the peaks, deserts and jungles, assembled spontaneously in bands of various sizes, and were held together less by military discipline than by a common, and sometimes temporary, purpose and by allegiance to a successful caudillo. Individuals contributed arms and horses, or acquired them in action, and expected a return from operations. And for supplies they lived on the country, drawing an income from voluntary or forced exactions on the towns and villages they controlled, from crops such as *coca* which were taken and traded, from estates whose pro-royalist proprietors had fled to the towns, and from the Indians who were forced to yield services and foodstuffs.[83] Each valley, each mountain, each village had its partisan group and its petty caudillo, who made their locality a minor zone of insurrection, a *republiqueta*, where local patriotism burgeoned into local independence. There were six major foci of resistance, each under the command of a senior guerrilla chief.[84] In the north, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the priest Ildefonso de las Muñecas operated out of Ayata, and menaced the route from Lower Peru. In the central zone there were two extensive republiquetas. Juan Antonio Alvarez de Arenales commanded a band based on Mizque and Vallegrande, harassing communications between Cochabamba, Chuquisaca and Santa Cruz; the other, the republiqueta of Ayopaya hidden in the mountains and jungles between La Paz and Cochabamba, fell under the violent rule of Miguel Lanza after bloody disputes for the leadership. In the south, covering the route from Argentina over which the liberating armies passed, lay the republiqueta of José Vicente Camargo. The capital itself, Chuquisaca, was screened by another partisan group, that of Manuel Ascensio Padilla. And in the far east lay the extensive republiqueta of Ignacio Warnes, based on Santa Cruz de la Sierra and providing the ultimate refuge of all the guerrillas.

These mounted resistance fighters played only a limited role in the war of independence. Numerically the guerrillas were never very strong, and even the principal groups comprised only a few hundred men each. But they exposed some of the gaps in Spanish defences. They dominated communications between

towns and immobilized the enemy. They pinned down royalist forces and diverted them from other theatres of war. And until 1816 they frustrated effective Spanish control of Upper Peru and forced the authorities to mount a major campaign against them. This the guerrillas were not equipped to resist and, with the exception of the Ayopaya band which fought on until 1825, they were destroyed in 1816 by the Spanish security forces, their leaders killed and their bands scattered. They were thus not a decisive force for independence in 1825. This was predictable, for the guerrillas were not strongly motivated politically. They had no programme and their activities were not geared to a war of independence. It is true that the mass of the guerrillas fought for independence, but not necessarily national independence; they fought for independence of Spanish law and order, of political and fiscal control. The montoneros were a mixture of nonconformists, adventurers and delinquents, seizing the opportunity of metropolitan weakness to fight private and local wars in which booty was an important object. The military individualism of the caudillos precluded concerted action against the Spanish forces, and tactically individual bands were often ready to do a deal with the enemy. While they lacked a clear social programme, the guerrillas were more than bandits and they appealed unequivocally to the popular sectors. They were not an Indian movement. The caudillos and officers were creoles of middle and lower rank, and their immediate followers were mestizos. They regarded the Indians as allies, though not perhaps as equals, recruiting them when they could and drawing on their services, but rarely integrating them into the guerrilla ranks. When they used them as combat troops it was as auxiliaries in separate units, crudely armed with lances, slings and cudgels and liable to disperse after a given engagement. But normally they used the Indians as a kind of service corps, producers of food, transporters of goods and equipment; the guerrillas in effect continued the system of taking tribute and forced labour from the Indians, as did the liberating armies from Argentina. The Spaniards, of course, exacted similar services and their record was not much better than that of the creoles, but as they did not dominate the countryside they had less access to the Indian population.[85]



The guerrillas spoke of fighting for the patria, but this did not yet mean the nation. Patria in Upper Peru simply meant freedom and was accompanied by nominal acknowledgment of the revolutionary movement in the Río de la Plata, where freedom already existed. But Buenos Aires was over a thousand miles away and perhaps distance made its authority more acceptable. Even when its armies reached out to Upper Peru the guerrillas at first regarded them as senior allies and collaborated with them. But this sentiment of allegiance did not survive the early years of the revolution, when it became clear that the porteño armies aimed not only to liberate Upper Peru but also to attach it in a subordinate position to Buenos Aires, when they behaved like depredators rather than allies, and when they finally retreated in ignominious defeat. Then the political orientation of Upper Peru would turn away from Buenos Aires towards self-determination.

The first of the liberating expeditions, or 'auxiliary armies' as they were called, arrived in a blaze of glory. Having wiped out a pocket of royalist resistance in Córdoba and carried the revolution to Salta and Tucumán, it proceeded to Upper Peru in October 1810, pushing its way through the spectacular passes of the Andes into the altiplano. There, on 7 November, it defeated a royalist force at Suipacha, a victory which opened the gates of Potosí to the revolution; soon the whole of Upper Peru – Chuquisaca, Cochabamba, Oruro and La Paz – battered but unbroken by the repression of 1809, declared for the revolution. It was a premature triumph. The liberating army, nominally commanded by a porteño soldier Antonio González Balcarce, was in fact under the direction of a political commissioner, the humourless and fanatical Castelli, who knew Upper Peru from his student days at the University of San Francisco Xavier in Chuquisaca but was otherwise out of touch with reality. He claimed to offer freedom and military assistance, but his proclamations, cast in language of extravagant pomposity, masked a hard and cruel purpose. He initiated a rule of terror which soon alerted even the patriots.[86] Royal officials were shot, Spaniards penalized, and the patriots treated as mere provincials. Audiencia President Vicente Nieto, Intendant Francisco de Paula Sanz, and General José de Córdova were shot without trial in the main square of Potosí, in spite of local pleas for

clemency and for no other crime than being royal officials. Castelli then asserted himself politically. He personally appointed officials and remodelled the administration, regardless of local interests, and he promised death to anyone who opposed or even criticized. Meanwhile the auxiliary army was on the rampage, plundering the country, terrorizing anyone who stood in its way and many who just stayed at home, and behaving suspiciously like an army of occupation. While Castelli and his forces were making the Upper Peruvians think twice about 'liberation', the royalist army under General José Manuel de Goyeneche was regrouping on the other side of the river Desaguadero. Castelli, as lacking in military ability as he was in political judgement and obsessed with the illusion of advancing upon Lima itself, walked into a trap and was defeated at Huaqui (20 June 1811); if 'defeat' it was, for the patriot army simply disintegrated at sight of the enemy and fled with very few casualties. As a contemporary remarked, this was 'a disgraceful event in which the enemy became the victor without winning any victory'.[87] The behaviour of the auxiliary army was even more discreditable in retreat than in attack; and in Potosí the people rose up and massacred one unit, causing more casualties than the battle of Huaqui. Having helped themselves to the contents of the Casa de Moneda (mint), the 'liberators' retreated in disorder into Salta. So in the eyes of Upper Peruvians the first expedition brought them nothing and took their silver. Castelli was recalled to stand trial in Buenos Aires where he died less than a year later in disgrace.

The royalists too overreached themselves and were defeated in their invasion of the Río de la Plata at the battle of Salta (20 February 1813). In the euphoria of victory the porteños dispatched a second expedition to Upper Peru in 1813, this time under General Belgrano. The new commander and his forces were a better advertisement for Buenos Aires than their predecessors, but militarily they were just as vulnerable. And they were confronted by an able and experienced Spanish general, the recently arrived Joaquín de la Pezuela, who briskly brought Belgrano to two battles and defeated him each time.[88] Again adversity brought out the worst in the porteños. Belgrano himself was responsible for the monstrous, though happily abortive



plan of blowing up the Casa de Moneda in Potosí and with it presumably the entire city centre, 'a barbarous project whose fulfillment would have done more damage to the credit of the revolution than to the enemy'.[89] Again the royalists overestimated their own prospects by invading Tucumán, and again they were defeated, this time by the newly appointed San Martín. But San Martín had no desire to retrace the disastrous steps of Castelli and Belgrano. He was already convinced that the way to Lima lay not north through Upper Peru but west via Chile and the Pacific. And he left his command of the army of the north in order to effect his great strategy.

Meanwhile command of the third expedition to Upper Peru in 1815 fell to General José Rondeau, a second-rate soldier and something of a fool. He had the best chance of all the liberators, for the guerrilla leaders had intensified their operations and were pinning down the security forces, while the Spaniards themselves had been forced to divert some of their units to deal with the rebellion of Pumacahua in Peru.[90] But Rondeau had no control over his troops; they plundered on a scale unprecedented even among the liberating expeditions, and when they were not looting they were drinking. Pezuela outmanoeuvred Rondeau with effortless precision and annihilated the third auxiliary army on the plains of Sipe Sipe on 29 November 1815.

Sipe Sipe confirmed the Spanish reconquest of Upper Peru. Rondeau had virtually no army even for retreat. Only the guerrillas remained, and they now lost confidence in Buenos Aires. They also began to lose the war, for the royalists followed up their victory by mounting an anti-insurgency campaign, and success enabled them to use Upper Peru as a base for incursions into Salta and Tucumán. But in the long run Sipe Sipe also helped the Upper Peruvians to discover their own identity. With the collapse of military assistance from Buenos Aires, the resistance movement in Upper Peru ceased to defer to its senior ally and began to develop a growing self-awareness and an incipient sense of nationality. 'After Sipe Sipe', Mitre remarked, 'the enlightened classes of Upper Peru were determined to form a nation apart.'[91] As for Buenos Aires, apart from a minor raid under Colonel Aráoz de la Madrid in 1817, this was the last

attempt to strike northwards. From now on San Martín's strategy prevailed, and revolutionary policy looked westwards to Chile and the Pacific.

Monteagudo, with characteristic extremism, attributed the defeat of Castelli to 'the crime of lenity', to excessive toleration of royalists. He was wrong. The porteño armies of the north, hastily raised and relying to some extent on mestizos recruited in Upper Peru itself, were easily demoralized by defeat at the hands of Spanish regular troops. Their higher command, civilians turned soldiers, did not bear comparison with the royalists. The Spanish army in Upper Peru, a skilled and experienced body, reinforced after 1815 by troops from other theatres of war in Europe and America, was simply the outer bastion of Spain's great fortress in America, the viceroyalty of Peru. Its commanders were experienced professional officers. General Pezuela, conservative, absolutist and military-minded, relentlessly destroyed organized resistance in Upper Peru, and was rewarded after Sipe Sipe by appointment as viceroy. His principal colleagues in Upper Peru were General Juan Ramírez who crushed the rebellion of Pumacahua and later became president of the audiencia of Quito, and Colonel Pedro Antonio de Olañeta, a hard-headed businessman from Salta, a fanatical royalist who fought for the Spanish cause until his death in battle in 1825. Compared with this successful team, the porteños were amateurs, their officers incompetent, their ranks split by the factional politics of Buenos Aires. Yet the adverse balance of military power was not the only cause of their defeat. Their position in Upper Peru was already undermined before the battles of Huaqui and Sipe Sipe; it was undermined by their own reputation. They bore the unfortunate stigma of social reformers.

A revolution in Upper Peru could not ignore the Indians.[91] The revolutionaries of La Paz in 1809 had sought to appeal to the Indian masses and to mobilize them, though in a vague and insincere way. According to Viceroy Abascal, the *paceños* attempted 'to engage in their unworthy cause the innocent natives of the country, exploiting their very rusticity and ignorance'.[93] The porteño armies of the north also addressed themselves to the Indians: this was the policy established by the junta in Buenos Aires. The object was to end Indian servitude and to



convert the Indians into salaried workers and consumers. Castelli was instructed to 'conquer the will of the Indians', and in his progress through Upper Peru he halted in Indian villages to explain revolutionary policy, proclaimed the message of freedom brought by the May revolution, gave interviews to caciques, and raised them up from their prostrate obeisances, saying 'all that is finished now, we are all equal'.[94] Castelli issued instructions for enfranchizing the Indians according to a decree of the junta that in each intendancy they should elect a deputy of their own to a general congress. From Charcas he delivered a manifesto to counter what he described as a fraudulent proclamation of Viceroy Abascal which had offered the Indians education, honours and offices. 'I have a great interest in your welfare,' declared Castelli, 'not only personally but as a matter of policy', and he gave an undertaking that the junta of Buenos Aires 'will regard you always as brothers and equals'.[95] On 25 May 1811, among the Inca ruins of Tihuanaco, he celebrated the anniversary of the May revolution with a parade of his troops, firing of guns and blowing of trumpets; and before the concourse of Indians whom he had summoned he issued a decree suppressing abuses, exempting the Indians from charges and tributes, distributing lands, establishing schools and declaring 'the Indian is equal to any other national'.[96]

These declamatory promises did not automatically win the Indians to the revolutionary cause, nor did they go unchallenged by the royalists; these, too, addressed themselves to the caciques and argued that the revolution held nothing for their people. While he was regrouping at the Desaguadero, General Goyeneche made much propaganda among the indigenous population over Castelli's failure to fulfil his promises; and he was able to secure if not the support of the Indians at least their neutrality and the bonus of intelligence reports on the patriot forces. When the first auxiliary army was defeated and forced into disorderly retreat, it pillaged the lands of Indians in its path, who were easily persuaded by the royalists to cut off stragglers. The royalists could usually find Indian allies, as they did in 1811, when they used Pumacahua and three thousand of his followers to suppress the rebellion of cacique Juan Manuel Cázerez in the province of La Paz.[97] But neither side won the war of words for

the soul of the Indian. Apolitical and largely ignorant of the issues involved, the Indians were never reliable allies. When they were not dragged in as the beasts of burden of the wars of independence, they remained passive spectators, rightly divining that the revolution offered them little more than did the colonial regime.

Without gaining the confidence of the Indians, the patriots said enough to frighten the creole aristocracy. Belgrano was more cautious than Castelli and forbade his army to contravene the local '*usos y costumbres*', that is the existing social structure. But this attempt to reassure the creoles was frustrated when he too indulged in pro-Indian demagogy in order to procure provisions and support; and he did in fact receive the alliance of the Indian caudillo Baltasar Cárdenas. Belgrano reiterated that the intention of the Buenos Aires government was to liberate the Indians from servitude and forced labour, including agricultural duties and the mining mita.[98] Again, this was not implemented, nor was there time to do so. Society could not be changed overnight by mere decree. It was easy for the agents of Buenos Aires to proclaim Indian emancipation in a country which was not their own, but without the agreement of local creoles such a policy was meaningless. The most powerful social groups in Upper Peru reacted strongly to the Indian policy of the auxiliary armies. The mine-owners believed that the liberation of the Indians and in particular the suppression of the labour mita threatened their social predominance and economic prospects. They joined the counter-revolution with arms and money. The landed proprietors, too, abhorred the egalitarianism shown towards Indians, mestizos and mulattos, and resented the threat to their labour supply. After Sipe Sipe the Upper Peruvian aristocracy were openly royalist and supported the security forces against the partisans, whom they feared and hated. When the Spaniards wiped out the guerrillas in 1815–6, the field was left clear for the creole ruling class, who remained loyal to Spain until it was obvious that the Spanish cause was doomed. It was into their hands, not to the porteños or the guerrillas, that the independence of Upper Peru fell.

Meanwhile the guerrillas fulfilled an important role even in



their death throes. It was to destroy them that Viceroy Pezuela reinforced the army of Upper Peru, thus diverting troops – some 3,500 – from use in Chile and Peru. The failure to reinforce General Marcó's army in Chile in anticipation of San Martín's trans-Andean expedition was due in large part to this decision to augment the army of Upper Peru.[99]

enjoyed by Central America was that imposed by the Bourbons. The collapse of absolutism ended centralisation, and Central America opted for division. By 1838 this amounted to five weak states which had still to become nations.

# TEN *The Reckoning*

THE BOURBON STATE in Spanish America was not succeeded immediately by new nation states. There was an intermediate stage in which liberating armies or caudillo bands first challenged the political and military power of Spain and then destroyed it. In some cases this was a lengthy process and involved the creation of rudimentary wartime states, capable of raising taxes and recruiting troops. But these states were not necessarily nations. Even after independence had been won the establishment of new states preceded the formation of nations. For the growth of national consciousness was slow and partial, and subject to many impediments. Yet there were new factors favouring a more positive concept of nation. The revolutionary war was itself a noble cause, for which the insurgent armies fought glorious battles, and the people made great if grudging sacrifices. Spanish Americans now had their own heroic past, their own military honour, their own revolutionary myths. They had enhanced their sense of a common past, what John Stuart Mill called an 'identity of political antecedents, the possession of a national history, and consequent community of recollections'.[1]

They were obliged, moreover, to enter into relations with other states, in Europe and in America, a process which made them more conscious of their own nationality and more exposed to national rivalries. Some of the new states – Uruguay and Bolivia – found their true identity precisely in conflict with their American neighbours.

The symbols and the language of nationalism acquired a new urgency. In the Río de la Plata the defeat of the British invaders in 1807 was celebrated as an Argentine victory in the poem of Vicente López y Planes, *El triunfo argentino,* which anticipated the use of the name Argentina, a name already hallowed in local usage but lacking 'colonial' connotations. The *Telégrafo Mercantil* further propagated the word, referring frequently to the 'ninfas argentinas', the 'sabios y ilustres argentinos', and the 'capital de la Argentina'.[2] The porteño leaders exulted in the revolution of 1810 and quickly crowned it with national symbols. 'Our liberty', observed Belgrano, 'can have as many enemies as it likes and undergo every vicissitude; for the truth is that we need these experiences to form our national character.'[3] Belgrano himself designed the blue and white flag of Argentina. López y Planes wrote the 'Patriotic March' with music by Blas Parera which in 1813 was adopted as the national anthem. He was only one of a group of writers and poets – all of them sadly untalented – whose themes were almost exclusively patriotic. They sang of the heroes of independence, victories over the Spanish tyrants, the greatness of Argentina. When independence was complete these effusions were collected and published by authority in a volume entitled *La lira argentina* (1824), a hopeful gesture at a time when the nation was threatened at best by extreme federalism, at worst by utter anarchy.

Mexican nationalism, anticipated in the intellectual euphoria of the late colonial period, advanced a stage further during the revolutionary wars. 'Independence', wrote Alamán, 'is a natural and noble inclination in nations as in individuals, all the more when it presents a promising future and exposes great and incalculable advantages.'[4] In the early days of the revolution Mexican nationalists such as Morelos used the term 'American' to describe their country, and they referred to themselves as 'Americanos', 'la nación americana', 'los ejércitos americanos',



to appropriate the wider name – as the United States did more decisively – was not to deny but to affirm their nationality. As Alamán remarked: 'It was very common among Mexicans to speak of the whole of America when referring to Mexico, either out of boastfulness or because they thought that America had to follow Mexico's example in everything, as Mexico was such a principal part of America.... All this proves the exaggerated ideas which Mexicans held about the importance of their country.'[5]

To what extent did Americans achieve economic independence? Economic nationalism, hostility to foreign penetration, resentment of external control, these later ingredients of Latin American nationalism were almost completely absent from contemporary attitudes. While the new nations rejected the Spanish monopoly, they welcomed foreigners who subscribed to free competition and who brought much needed capital, manufactured goods and entrepreneurial skills.[6] Latin Americans were positively deferential to Britain. 'Politically,' wrote Bolívar, 'alliance with Great Britain would be a greater victory than Ayacucho, and if we procure it you may be certain that our future happiness is assured. The advantages which will result for Colombia, if we ally ourselves with that mistress of the universe, are incalculable.'[7] These views contained a large measure of self-interest and betrayed the anxiety of young and weak states to acquire a protector – a liberal protector – against the Holy Alliance. In general, Latin American leaders overestimated the extent to which their countries needed protection: the fact was that the powers of Europe had neither the will nor the means to intervene militarily in the Americas. The Monroe Doctrine, first proclaimed in 1823, had only slight relevance at the time. It meant little to Latin Americans and indeed was not primarily directed to them: it was a unilateral statement of United States policy, warning off European incursions in the Americas, either for new colonization or for recolonizing the new states. The United States subsequently made no move to implement the doctrine unless its own interests were directly at stake. Britain too sought to pose as a protector of the new states, with no more justification but with more success. Latin Americans continued to look to British sea power and British commercial power as the best pledges of their security.

And they were prepared to invite a greater British stake in th
countries than would be tolerable to later generations. 'Fr
[Peru], I have sold the mines for two and a half million pe
and I expect to obtain far more from other sources. I ha
suggested to the Peruvian government that it sell in England
its mines, lands, properties, and other government assets to co
the national debt, which is at least twenty million pesos.' It
is not the language of modern nationalism. But what did it me
Had the new states a realistic choice between autarchy a
dependence, between development and underdevelopment?

Independence ended the Spanish monopoly, removed the
intermediary, and gave Spanish America direct access to th
world economy. British merchants and industrialists, or the
agents, promptly moved into the new markets, looking for qu
sales at low prices and selling to the popular sectors as well
to the elite. Britain was not only the leading exporter to Lat
America — followed at some distance by the United Stat
France and Germany — but also the principal market for Lat
American exports. There was at first an imbalance of trade
Spanish American agricultural and mining exports stagnat
and local capital was expended on imports rather than ac
mulated for investment.[9] The principal owners of capital
Church and merchants — had little inducement to invest
industry in the absence of a strong and protected market. It
easier to allow British manufactures to flood the market a
force out national products. Moreover, the superior suppli
credit and shipping resources of the British made it difficult f
local merchants to compete and drove many of them out
business. Yet there were compensations. These were years
further industrial growth in Britain when the price of expo
fell; and they fell more substantially than did the price of p
mary products. This seems to have given Latin America favo
able terms of trade, at least until the 1850s. Meanwhile Brit
merchants had very little political leverage in Latin Amer
and no influence over the tariff policy of the new states; unl
Spain, the new commercial metropolis could not be accused
fiscal extortion.

Yet the Latin American economies did not respond imme
ately to emancipation. The wars of independence were destruct



life and property; terror and insecurity, moreover, caused
ght of labour and capital, which made it difficult to organise
overy and even more difficult to diversify the economy. Lack
internal accumulation and absence, as yet, of foreign invest-
ent further impeded economic growth. Mining in particular
ffered from wartime dislocation and subsequent lack of capital.
ther sectors needed less capital. Cattle ranching in Argentina
d Venezuela could yield profits without great investment,
sisted as it was by liberalisation of trade and access to stable
arkets. Tropical agriculture was less buoyant, but also found
ays of surviving and expanding. The different economic sectors
mpeted for influence but the metropolis no longer arbitrated.

Policy was made by the new leaders and national economic
roups. These sought to build their particular interest into a new
etropolis and to reduce other regions or provinces to a kind of
olonial dependence upon themselves. Capitals or ports such as
uenos Aires thus tried to monopolize the fruits of independence,
terposing themselves as a controlling interest in national and
verseas trade. The subregions had to insist on economic
utonomy in order to protect themselves; Uruguay and Paraguay
pted for complete independence; the interior provinces of
rgentina chose the way of federalism. In Mexico the artisan
xtile industry was less successful in protecting itself against the
erchants of the capital who preferred to import British manu-
actures; Colombian industry suffered a similar fate. The national
conomies, therefore, were divided originally by internal rivalry,
y conflict between the centre and the regions, between free trade
nd protection, between agriculturalists seeking export outlets
nd those who favoured industry or mining, between supporters
f cheap imports and defenders of national products. On the
hole the promoters of primary exports and cheap imports won
e argument, and the British were waiting to take advantage.

But in the final analysis the prospects of national economic
velopment were defeated by the social structure of the new
ates. The polarization of Latin American society into two
ctors, a privileged minority monopolizing land and office, and
mass of peasants and workers, survived independence and
ntinued with greater momentum. Perhaps economic growth
uld have raised the living standards of the people and nurtured

a native middle class; in some countries, such as Mexico, [illegible] mobility was already producing a middle group. But [illegible] gidity and false social values were a cause as well as a [illegible] economic retardation. Many landowners regarded their [illegible] as a social rather than economic investment, and their [illegible] economic activity was conspicuous consumption. Even if the [illegible] sumption level of the upper income groups could have [illegible] reduced, there was no guarantee that the savings would [illegible] been invested in industry. As for the peasants, they were [illegible] of grotesque inequality – and a helpless obstacle to develop[illegible] Without agrarian reform there was no prospect of raising [illegible] living standards of the mass of the people, and without this [illegible] was no possibility of industrial development. The agrarian [illegible] was only one stage removed from a slave economy. Peas[illegible] living at subsistence level could not be consumers of many [illegible] tures; and urban workers had to spend too much on food to [illegible] anything left for consumer goods. In these circumstances [illegible] was no mass market for national industries: Latin Amer[illegible] either took foreign imports or went without consumer goo[illegible] Meanwhile the new nations relapsed into classical [illegible] economies, producing raw materials for the world mar[illegible] exploiting the area's primitive assets – land and labour.

The basic economic institution, therefore, was the hacienda [illegible] relatively inefficient organization, producing for national [illegible] sumption or for export to the world market, absorbing too much [illegible] land and too little capital, and carried ultimately on the back [illegible] cheap labour, seasonal or servile. But the hacienda had more than [illegible] an economic function. It was a social and political organization [illegible] a means of control, a base of the ruling oligarchy. Independence [illegible] strengthened the hacienda. As the colonial state and its institu[illegible] tions withered, the hacienda grew more powerful; amidst the [illegible] insecurity of revolution and civil war it stood firm, a bastion for [illegible] its owner, a refuge for its many inhabitants. It also grew at the [illegible] expense of the Church, continuing a process begun in 1767 when [illegible] the vast and highly commercial estates of the Jesuits were [illegible] auctioned at ridiculously low prices to neighbouring hacendados [illegible] and incoming land-owners. The precedent was not lost on the [illegible] new regimes. Lands of the Inquisition and of religious orders [illegible] were often confiscated and sold to buyers on easy terms. As



[illegible]ndados, backed by friendly governments, sometimes managed [illegible]e themselves from ecclesiastical mortgages on their property. [illegible]he war of independence was a struggle for power, it was also [illegible]spute over resources and the creoles fought for land as [illegible]as for liberty. A new elite of landowners, rewarded from [illegible]ist property or from public land, joined the colonial pro[illegible]tors and in some cases replaced them. The formation of [illegible]es went hand in hand with state building. The land[illegible]ers were the new ruling class, taking over from the old [illegible]nial urban sectors of mining, trade and bureaucracy. The [illegible]itical ambitions of the new elite were placated by office and [illegible]resentation; and to satisfy their economic needs they were [illegible]y in effect to do a deal with foreigners, obtaining from the [illegible]e developed nations of the northern hemisphere the credit, [illegible]kets and luxury imports which Latin America itself could [illegible]provide.[10]

[illegible]he new nationalism was almost entirely devoid of social con[illegible]t. It is true that independence was inspired by liberal and [illegible]n egalitarian ideas which rejected the rigid stratification of [illegible] colonial period, legislated against the society of castes, and [illegible]ught to integrate the ethnic groups into the nation. But in [illegible]actice the mass of the people had little loyalty to the nations in [illegible]ich they found themselves; they had to be forcibly conscripted [illegible]ing the war and closely controlled thereafter. The absence of [illegible]cial cohesion caused idealists like Bolívar to despair of creating [illegible]able nations. Negro slaves and the tied peons who succeeded [illegible]em, receiving few of the fruits of independence, had few reasons [illegible] feel a sense of national identity. The slave trade did not long [illegible]rvive independence, but slavery itself was another matter. The [illegible]ronology of abolition was determined by the importance of [illegible]aves in a given economy and by the numbers available. Where [illegible]here were few slaves, as in Chile, Central America and Mexico, [illegible]bolition was decreed soon after independence, in the 1820s. [illegible]sewhere, as in Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru, it [illegible]rvived until the 1850s, effectively barring slaves and ex-slaves [illegible]m the process of nation building. The Indian population, too, [illegible]mained unaware of nationality. The Indians were not inter[illegible]ated into the new nations.[11] As they emerged from the colony [illegible]ey were an isolated and to some extent protected people, whose

closest relations were with the hacienda or the Indian comm
ities, not with the state.

The colonial caste structure, of which Indians were a par
did not survive the wars of independence. For caste socie
generated tensions between its components which threatene
to destroy the traditional order in a holocaust of socio-rac
violence. The creoles were haunted by the spectre of caste w
And to some degree the chronology of their conversion
independence depended upon two factors — the strength
popular agitation, and the capacity of the colonial governme
to control it. In Mexico and Peru, where viceregal authority ha
the nerve and the means to govern effectively, the creoles did n
hasten to desert the shelter of imperial government. But whe
the colonial regime was thought to be weak and social explosi
imminent – in northern South America – then the obsession of th
creoles with law and order and their anxiety to preserve th
social structure persuaded them to make a bid for power fro
the very beginning. In any case, popular rebellion added a ne
dimension to the revolution which caused the creoles moments
near panic. There was, therefore, a causal connection between th
radicalism of the masses and the conservatism of independenc
Spanish America retained its colonial heritage not because th
masses were indifferent to the creole revolution but because the
were a threat to it. During the wars of independence popul
revolt, while not successful, was menacing enough to compel th
creoles to tighten their grip on the revolution: they had to contai
the resentment of the Indians and the ambitions of the pardo
and mestizos. And after the wars they sought to ease the int
tolerable tensions in society by abolishing the caste system and
preparing the way for a class society, simultaneously ending
discrimination against those of mixed race and maintaining their
own social and economic predominance.

The Indians, however, remained a people apart, ignored by
conservatives and harassed by liberals. The latter regarded the
Indians as an impediment to national development, and believed
that their autonomy and corporate identity must be destroyed by
forcing them into the nation through political dependence and
economic participation. Doctrinaire liberalism was responsible
for much of the irreparable damage done to Indian society in the



nineteenth century. Motives were doubtless impeccable. 'Indians,'
proclaimed the Peruvian patriots, 'noble children of the sun, you
are the first object of our concern. We recall your past sufferings,
we work for your present and future happiness. You are going to
be noble, educated, and owners of property.'[12] The final promise
was the most sinister. Legislation in Peru, New Granada and
Mexico sought to destroy communal and corporate entities in
order to mobilize Indian lands and funds and to force the Indians
out of their special status into a market economy and a national
society. This involved the division of Indian communal lands
among individual owners, theoretically among the Indians them-
selves, in practice among their more powerful white neighbours.
Legislation in itself, of course, could not abolish Indian com-
munities, which had their own mechanisms of survival. And
community land was often protected in effect by the stagnation
of commercial agriculture and the absence of competition for
land in the decades immediately after independence. But once
demographic and market pressures increased, and Spanish Amer-
ica became more closely integrated into the international
economy, then it would be found that the Indian communities
had been stripped of their defences and were open to the en-
croachment of the hacienda. Meanwhile, liberal policy did not
integrate the Indians into the nation; it isolated them still further
in hopeless poverty, their only outlet in blind and unavailing
rebellion. The fruits of revolution were not all sweet and not all
shared.

The history of nationalism affords examples of a further
process, beyond independence and unification. This is the
process of nation building, extending to the mass of the people a
belief in the existence of the nation, hitherto held only by the
elite, and incorporating into the nation all sectors of the popula-
tion and not simply the holders of property and privilege. This
objective was absent from the policy of the new leaders. The
creole elite of landowners, merchants and office-holders fought
not only to take power from Spain but also to determine who
should receive that power. The creation of nation states was a
slow and laborious process, during all stages of which the creoles
retained possession of the instruments of power and refused to
share them with the popular sectors.

The political systems of the new states represented the creole determination to control the Indians and Negroes, the rural labour force, and to curb the castes, the most ambitious of the lower classes. They also reacted inevitably to economic divisions and regional interests. What institutions were most appropriate to these tasks? Conservatives and liberals, products of the same elite, had different, though not consistently different, answers. A Colombian conservative remarked on the irritating self-righteousness of liberals: 'They alone tell the truth, they alone are men of honour, they alone are patriots. Those of us who do not belong to their party are dishonest, traitors, absolutists.'[18] But he conceded that at least the liberals had a coherent doctrine, whereas the conservatives stood only for personal groupings. The distinction was not entirely valid. It is true that liberals had a policy: they stood for constitutional government, the basic human freedoms, economic *laissez-faire,* opposition to military and ecclesiastical privilege. Constitutions in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Chile, inspired to some degree by the Spanish constitution of 1812, embodied typical liberal values, though even among liberals there was a tendency in Spanish America to grant the president extraordinary powers and to restrict the franchise to propertied literates. Conservatives favoured a more paternalist form of government, a virtual king with the name of president. In the case of Bolívar this was the fruit not of group prejudice but of prolonged political thinking and adaptation. In Mexico Lucas Alamán also had his principles, basing his support for the Church and traditional social institutions on a profound scepticism of human perfectibility, a firm belief in law and order, and a vivid memory of the terror and anarchy of the year 1810. To some extent liberalism and conservatism represented different interests: urban versus rural groupings, entrepreneurial versus aristocratic values, province versus capital. But these interest alignments often dissolved, leaving a residue of ideas and convictions as the major factor of division. And there remained always an element of opportunism. In theory liberals favoured federalism, supposedly a decentralized and democratic form of government, while conservatives demanded a strong executive and central control. But when the opportunity occurred liberals would impose liberalism by central institutions in a unitary regime, such as that favoured



by Rivadavia and Sarmiento in Argentina. And to preserve their control in particular provinces, or if they happened to be the 'outs', conservatives might well be federalists. Federalism, therefore, was not necessarily a 'progressive' force. It also tended to be an expensive form of government. The proliferation of state governments and legislatures was a means by which regional ruling classes took a firm grip of offices and patronage in their region and created jobs and sinecures for themselves. The rank growth of bureaucracies, federal and provincial, were intolerable parasites on the new states; as Bolívar complained, 'there is not a town, no matter how insignificant, that does not have a court of justice and a thousand other tribunals to devour the substantial revenue of the state'.[14] Moreover, the new states had expenses unknown to colonial government. Congressmen, judges, ministers, diplomats had to be paid salaries, new schools, hospitals and rudimentary social services had to be financed, all out of a revenue which the bureaucracy, sons or clients of the ruling class, regarded as fair game for plunder. One of the largest items of expenditure was the military budget. And one of the largest potential sources of revenue was the Church.

Independence weakened some of the basic structures of the Church. Many bishops deserted their dioceses and returned to Spain. Others were expelled. Others died and were not replaced. The responsibility for empty dioceses was shared between Rome, which dragged its feet over recognition of independence, and liberal governments, which would accept their own nominees or none. Shortage of bishops was inevitably accompanied by shortage of priests and religious, and many parishes were left unattended. The economic assets of the Church were also shrinking. Tithes were reduced during the wars of independence and phased out afterwards when governments withdrew official sanctions for their collection. The new rulers, conservatives and liberals alike, coveted church property and income, not to redistribute them in society but as a rightful revenue of the state; and most property owners were anxious to unburden themselves of ecclesiastical loans or liens. Yet the Church survived, and if it was temporarily weak, the state was weaker. In the aftermath of independence the Church was more stable, more popular, and apparently more wealthy than the state. Many politicians, particularly liberals,

saw the Church as a rival focus of allegiance, an obstacle to state building, and they reacted by seeking to control and to tax the Church, to abolish its fueros, and to reduce its power. Some of these objectives were also extended to that other focus of interest and allegiance, the military.

The size and expense of armies were out of all proportion to their function, particularly after the last Spanish bases had been removed; for it needed little insight to appreciate that European invaders would have little chance of survival in independent Latin America. So the new states were left with virtual armies of occupation, whose function was principally the welfare of their own members.[15] To disband them was difficult because it was expensive. In the immediate aftermath of the war the Colombian army stood at twenty-five to thirty thousand, and its budget represented three-quarters of the total expenditure of Santander's government.[16] Republican armies were relatively democratic institutions: while the creole aristocracy monopolized the higher commands, men of humble origin and even pardos could work their way up to middle officer rank. But wages were inadequate and often in arrears; the inevitable results were desertion, mutiny, pillage and general delinquency. Far from providing law and order, the army was often a prime cause of violence and anarchy. From Venezuela it was reported, 'from the impoverished state of the Treasury, the troops have long been unpaid, the result of which has already begun to manifest itself in the desertion of nearly the whole of those quartered in Valencia, the dissatisfied soldiery bending their course towards the plains of Apure, committing every sort of depredation and irregularity'.[17] The great liberating armies and their successors, therefore, were regarded by civilians with mixed feelings. Liberals were positively hostile to standing armies, preferring state militias; and they tried various devices to take the menace out of the military, by prohibiting the union of civil and military commands, subordinating the army to civil government, and above all by abolishing the fuero militar. But the military clung to their fuero as a vital remnant of privilege at a time when their economic prospects were poor. Unlike the other great power groups, the hacendados and the Church, the military did not have an independent source of income. They were therefore tempted to dominate the state and control the



allocation of resources. Latin America became the primeval home of the golpe and the caudillo.

During and after the wars of independence, therefore, a number of forces prevailed which were hostile to the growth of strong nation states. The hacienda was one of many rival bases of power and allegiance which challenged state institutions; peons were bound by duties to their *patrón,* whose power was immediate and whose decision was final. Corporate privilege also diminished the state. The existence of military and ecclesiastical fueros, and the survival of Indian communities as corporate entities, removed large sectors of society from the direct jurisdiction of the state. Regional separatism or autonomy, often expressing important economic interests, these too were alternative sovereignties which correspondingly weakened national development. Finally, the caudillo, who usually represented a regional power base, was one of the strongest obstacles to the development of the nation state. Yet paradoxically some caudillos could also act as defenders of national interests against outside pressure and so promote the independence and unity of their peoples and increase their national consciousness.[18]

The caudillo was a regional chieftain, deriving his power from control of local resources, especially of haciendas, which gave him access to men and supplies. Classical caudillism took the form of armed patron-client bands, held together by personal ties of dominance and submission, and by a common desire to obtain wealth by force of arms.[19] The caudillo's domain might grow from local to national dimensions. Here, too, supreme power was personal, not institutional; competition for offices and resources was violent and the achievements were rarely permanent. Caudillism was not born in colonial society. The Spanish empire was governed by an anonymous bureaucracy and maintained itself with a minimum of military sanction. The caudillo was a product of the wars of independence, when the colonial state was disrupted, institutions were destroyed, and social groups competed to fill the vacuum. Local proprietors or chieftains recruited followers who often progressed from vagrant, to bandit, to guerrilla fighter. While such bands might enlist under one political cause or another, the underlying factors were rural conditions and personal leadership. The countryside was often

impoverished by destruction, and people were ruined by
taxes and plunder. As the economy reached breaking poin
men were forced into bands for subsistence under a chief
who could lead them to booty and in the early years of the
banditry was stronger than ideology. Even when the poli
motivation became stronger the revolutionary armies were
professional armies, nor were the caudillos necessarily pr
sional soldiers; the armies came together as an informal
of obedience from various interests whom the caudillos re
sented and could assemble. The caudillo, then, was a war lead
He was born of a perennial and universal human instinc
time of war to confer absolute power on a strong man, a sing
executive, who can recruit troops and commandeer resour
The process was then perpetuated by postwar conflicts, betwe
unitarians and federalists in Argentina, between neighbouri
states such as Colombia and Peru, and in the north betwe
Mexico and the United States.

While he was originally a war leader, the caudillo al
responded to civilian pressure groups of various kinds. In so
cases he was representative of a large kinship elite; this was t
role of Martín Guëmes who was the creature of a group of powe
ful estancieros in Salta, made and controlled by them, a
possessing no personal power outside the kinship structure
More commonly the caudillo simply represented regional inte
ests. Sometimes this was little more than the 'outs' fighting t
'ins'. But characteristically, as in Argentina, the caudillo defend
regional economic interests against the policy of the centre. Aga
as the centre usually employed force, the regions would comm
their defence to a strong local warrior. Some caudillos – Quiro
'the tiger of the pampas' was one – had acquired their politi
position as delegates of the centre rather than representatives
their own people. But it was an easy transition from delegat
authority to local leadership. And many caudillos – Venezue
as well as Argentina, provides examples – were only local un
they became national, federalist until they became unitarian. O
a national scale a successful golpe could bring spectacu
rewards.

At this point another image of the caudillo emerged –
caudillo as benefactor, as distributor of patronage. Independen



ve the creoles what they had long craved – access to all public
ices. This particular fruit of independence at first went to their
ads and they gorged themselves without thought of the con-
quences. Bolívar regarded the new bureaucracies as parasites
ich devoured the revolution before it was complete, using the
vernment as a welfare service for themselves. There was no
il service, no competitive examinations, indeed little security;
appointments were made according to a spoils system, incom-
governments replacing previous officials by their own clients.
udillism, personalist as it was, fitted easily into this role.
udillos could attract a necessary clientage by promising their
llowers office and other rewards when they reached power.
nd clients would attach themselves to a promising patron in the
pectation of preferment when he reached the top. It was
garded as much safer to accept a personal promise from a
udillo than an anonymous undertaking from an institution,
hether executive or legislative. So the mutual needs of patron
nd client were one of the mainstays of caudillism in the new
ates. But the reward most prized was land, and a caudillo was
othing if he could not acquire and distribute land. In spite of
e spurious populism assumed by some caudillos, they were not
formers. Rosas was a demagogue who identified himself with
e primitive gauchos in order to dominate and exploit them. This
did ruthlessly, seeing them as nothing more than peons or
nscripts. The principal reward of revolution, land, he reserved
his elitist followers.

The disruption of the economy by the revolutionary wars, the
luctance to accumulate and invest capital, and the subsequent
agnation of production and export, left a large surplus of un-
mployed for recruitment into the armies of the caudillos, which
ave them an illusion of participation. But the precise relation-
ip between caudillism and economic conditions is obscure. The
udillo arose in regions dominated by the hacienda, where whole
rovinces were the private property of a few families, where great
oprietors, whose strength lay in their estates and their retainers,
puted for power. The social environment, the economic
tivity, the hacienda mentality, all instilled authority, obedience,
nd seigneurial values. Even if the caudillo was not in fact one of
e greatest land-owners, even if he came from the margin of the

landed complex, he would still have to enter into contact with the system, and use the established social relations to assemble power and recruit his own clientage.[21] In the post-colonial societies of Spanish America caudillos often fulfilled an important social function on behalf of republican elites as guardians of law and order and guarantors of the existing social structure. And the reason was that their personal power was usually more effective than the theoretical protection of a constitution.

Caudillism reflected the weakness of republican institutions, which did not reassure or convince, and which could not immediately fill the gap left by the collapse of colonial government. Yet the rise and fall of caudillos, the frequent turnover of presidents, the repeated golpes, the suspension of constitutions, the constant political clamour, masked a basic stability and durability in post-independence society which made Latin America one of the least revolutionary places in the world. For these were superficial changes, struggles for power within the ruling class, factional not revolutionary conflicts, and they did not affect the mass of the people. Independence was a powerful yet finite force, which tore through Spanish America like a great storm, sweeping away the lines of attachment to Spain and the fabric of colonial government, but leaving intact the deeply rooted bases of colonial society. The Mexican peasants saw it as the same rider on a new mule, a political revolution in which one ruling class displaced another.[21] Political independence was only the beginning. Latin America still awaited those further changes in social structure and economic organization without which its independence remained incomplete and its needs unfulfilled.

# Notes

## One *The Origins of Spanish American Nationality*

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# *Glossary of Spanish Terms*

*administradores de pueblos* civil administrators of Guaraní communities after expulsion of Jesuits.
*albocracia* white rule.
*alcabala* sales tax.
*alcalde mayor* district officer, comparable to a *corregidor*.
*alteza* Highness (title).
*arribeños* highlanders, regiment of creole militia in Buenos Aires.
*artiguismo* federal doctrine or movement of Artigas; *artiguista,* follower of Artigas or of his policy.
*audiencia* high court of justice with administrative functions.
*aviador* financier.
*ayuntamiento* town council, or *cabildo.*
*Banda Oriental* 'the east shore', i.e. of the river Uruguay and the Río de la Plata, equivalent to the modern Uruguay.
*blancos de orilla* poor whites.
*boga* boatman, in present context on the river Magdalena.
*bonos* bonus in national property, vouchers or bonds for this.
*caballero* gentleman.
*cabildo* town council, or *ayuntamiento*; *cabildo abierto,* a *cabildo* augmented with selected citizens for an extra-ordinary meeting.
*campesino* peasant.
*canarios* people of Canary Islands, emigrants from Canaries in Venezuela.

*castas* racially mixed groups, between Spaniards and Indians.
*caudillo* regional chieftain, leader, dictator.
*champan* pole-boat on river Magdalena.
*chapetón* South American nickname for a European-born Spaniard.
*cholo* Peruvian mestizo, near-Indian, non-community Indian.
*coca* coca, narcotic which formed part of staple diet of Andean Indians.
*colonos* labourers occupying land in return for service; Indian farmers.
*comuneros* members of a 'commune', supporters of a popular revolt.
*comunidad* community, settlement of free Indians enjoying communal use of land.
*consulado* merchant guild and commercial court.
*corregidor* district officer with administrative and judicial authority.
*coyote* a mixed-blood with mestizo and mulatto ancestry, a dark mestizo.
*criollo* creole, a Spaniard born in America.
*Cuerpo de Blandengues* cavalry corps employed as rural patrol and anti-rustling force in Banda Oriental.
*cuzqueños* inhabitants of Cuzco.
*delegado* delegate, representative.
*donativo* contribution, forced loan.
*encomienda* grant of Indians, especially as tribute payers; *encomendero,* holder of an *encomienda.*
*estancia* large landed estate or ranch; *estanciero,* owner of *estancia,* rancher.
*estanco* tobacco monopoly.
*estanqueros* hard-line conservatives in Chile who resented loss of *estanco* to the state.
*federales* federalists.
*fuero* corporate privilege or right giving possessor protection of his corporation's jurisdiction and courts; *fuero eclesiástico, fuero militar,* clerical and military immunity from civil jurisdiction.
*gachupines* nickname in Mexico for European-born Spaniards.



*gaucho* cowboy; *gauchos malos,* gaucho bandits or outlaws; *gauchos vagabundos,* vagrant gauchos unattached to any ranch.
*gente de color* coloured people.
*godos* pejorative name for Spaniards in America.
*golpe de estado* coup d'état; *golpista,* supporter of a *golpe.*
*grandes cacaos* nickname for wealthy owners of cacao plantations in Venezuela.
*grito* proclamation, especially of independence.
*guayaquileños* people of Guayaquil.
*hacienda* large landed estate; *hacendado,* owner of *hacienda.*
*hato* cattle ranch (Venezuela).
*honderos* Indians armed with slings.
*indio* Indian
*infame* infamous, vile.
*inquilino* tenant farmer, especially in Chile, holding land in return for labour services; *inquilinaje,* such a status or tenancy.
*jueces comisionados* judge-commissioners.
*junta* committee, board; *juntas provinciales,* provincial juntas; *juntista,* supporter of junta movement in Spain and America 1808–10.
*juzgado* court, tribunal.
*latifundia* large landed estate.
*letrado* lawyer or person with a legal training.
*limeño* inhabitant of Lima.
*mayorazgo* entail, entailed estate.
*mestizo* person of mixed white and Indian blood; *mestizaje,* miscegenation.
*mita* Quechua word meaning 'turn'; conscription of Indian labour for public or private work, especially in mines of Upper Peru; *mitayos,* Indians so conscripted.
*montoneros* guerrillas.
*morenista* follower of Mariano Moreno.
*obraje* workshop or factory, especially textile.
*o'higginistas* political adherents of Bernardo O'Higgins in Chile.
*olañetistas* followers of General Olañeta in Upper Peru.

*orejones* 'big-ears'; Indian caste of Inca Peru; herdsman or plainsman of northern South America.
*paceños* inhabitants of La Paz.
*palenque* commune or colony of fugitive slaves.
*pardo* mulatto, of mixed white and Black descent, free coloureds; *pardocracia,* pardo rule.
*pastusos* people of Pasto.
*patria* native land, fatherland; *patriotas* patriots.
*Patria Vieja* the old fatherland, name given to a country's first, if temporary, independence.
*patricios* patricians, regiment of creole militia in Buenos Aires.
*patronato* right of presentation to ecclesiastical benefices; royal or state authority over the Church.
*pelucones* 'big-wigs', nickname for conservatives in Chile.
*peruanidad* Peruvianness, sense of Peruvian identity.
*pipiolos* 'novices', nickname for liberals in Chile.
*poder moral* 'moral power' in Bolívar's constitution, as distinct from executive or legislative power.
*pongo* domestic servant of a land-owner, drafted from among tenants occupying land in return for services, in South American Andes; *pongaje, pongueaje*, forced domestic service thus rendered to a land-owner.
*porteño* of Buenos Aires; an inhabitant of Buenos Aires.
*presidio* prison, fortress.
*provinciano* provincial, partisan of provincial autonomy.
*pueblo bajo* common people, lower orders.
*pueblo de indios* Indian community or village.
*querencia* lair, home ground, especially of a fighting bull.
*quiteños* inhabitants of Quito.
*regidor* town councillor, member of a *cabildo.*
*reglamento provisorio* provisional regulation or ordinance.
*repartimiento* forced distribution of credit and goods to Indians by *corregidores.*
*republiqueta* mini-republic, guerrilla enclave.
*resguardos* reservations, Indian community lands, especially in Colombia.
*residencia* judicial review of an official's conduct at end of his term of office.
*saladero* meat-salting plant.



*tertulia* social gathering, literary *salon.*
*tierras baldías* crown lands, unoccupied or available for public use.
*unitarios* unitarians (political), as opposed to federalists, especially in Argentina.
*yanacona* tenant in Andean America holding land in return for labour service or, in coastal areas, in return for payment in money or kind.
*yerba mate* maté, Paraguayan tea; *yerbales*, maté plantations.
*zambo* a Black-Indian mixed-blood; *zambo prieto,* a dark *zambo.*