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The Spanish Political Crisis of 1820 and the Loss of New Granada

REBECCA EARLE¹

The first great fracture of Spain's empire came in 1810, when, following Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, Spanish rule was rejected across America, and many colonial governments collapsed. Spain, however, did not succumb completely to this unprecedented challenge to its authority. Although most of the South American colonies broke from metropolitan control, Peru remained a bastion of royalism in the continent. Moreover, after quelling the Hidalgo revolt of 1810, the viceregal government in Mexico City withstood a protracted insurgency and managed to preserve royal authority throughout New Spain. Indeed, after the restoration of Ferdinand VII in 1814, Spain succeeded in reconstructing much of its American possessions, and by the end of 1816, Spanish armies had retaken all of the rebellious South American colonies except Río de la Plata.

The reconstructed colonial order was, however, built on insecure foundations. In the first place, royalist repression did not succeed in extirpating armed opposition. The challenge to Spanish authority persisted in the Río de la Plata, where José de San Martín developed plans and amassed men for an attack on Peru. Meanwhile, patriot guerrillas continued to harass Spanish forces in New Granada and Venezuela, as Simón Bolívar gradually built a unified command over forces that he was to direct against royalist governments in northern South America. In 1817, San Martín marched across the Andes into Chile, overcoming royal forces first at Chacabuco, then, more decisively, at Maipú in March 1818. From Chile, San Martín then launched an assault on Peru, opening a new front against Spain by establishing a base in Lima. During these same years, republican forces were also on the move in the north. In 1819, Bolívar crossed the Andes

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from Venezuela into New Granada, defeated a royalist army at the Battle of Boyacá, and seized the heart of the viceroyalty of New Granada, thus jeopardizing all the efforts made to reconstruct royal government in the region since Pablo Morillo's successful invasion and reconquest of Venezuela and New Granada in 1815-1816.

However, in the midst of these military reverses, it was crisis at the core of the empire, in Spain itself, that delivered a *coup de grâce* to the collapsing empire. In 1810, political crisis in the metropolis had created the conditions for the first collapse of the empire; in 1820, renewed political crisis at the center finally made it clear that Spain was unable to reestablish its authority and sovereignty in America. The year opened with revolution in Andalusia that reflected and accentuated the struggle between absolutists and liberals for power over the monarchy, and plunged the metropolitan government into a period of instability and uncertainty. Crisis at home was succeeded by crisis in America. The year ended with virtually the whole of Spain's American empire in ruins. By December 1820, only Peru, Cuba, and a few enclaves in New Granada remained firmly in royalist hands, and within five years all but Cuba were to become independent.

The connection between these two processes—liberal revolt and the restoration of constitutional government in Spain, and the loss of the American empire—is most vividly reflected in the history of Mexico. As will be seen later, historians differ in their interpretations of the genesis of Mexican independence in 1821, but they generally agree that the Spanish crisis of 1820 was a vital catalyst for the breakdown of Spain's government in the viceroyalty of New Spain. The repercussions of the crisis in other regions of Spanish America have, however, been less fully understood and appreciated. To refocus attention on the importance of the 1820 crisis in regions other than Mexico, this paper will examine its repercussions in the viceroyalty of New Granada. It will also compare these repercussions with the effects of the crisis in other American colonies, and show how the second collapse of metropolitan government, a decade after 1810, finally undermined Spain's hold on New Granada, as well as other regions of America.

The roots of the 1820 crisis in Spain itself must be traced to the political polarization that came in the wake of the Bourbon collapse in 1808. The capture of Charles IV and Ferdinand VII, the coronation of Napoleon's brother, Joseph, as king of Spain, and the creation of the

various Spanish resistance juntas led to increasing political polarization among Spaniards and the rise of what were to become political parties. The different groupings coalesced around the absolutists, and the so-called liberals divided into subfactions. Details of the precise nature of these nascent parties are unnecessary here. Let it simply be noted that liberals were associated with the more radical delegates to the Spanish Cortes who championed the Constitution of 1812, while royalists, or absolutists, supported a return to Bourbon absolutism.²

The division between liberals and absolutists deepened during the years of Ferdinand VII's captivity in France; from 1808 to 1814. In 1810, with the opening of the Cortes, which governed free Spain in Ferdinand's name, liberals took charge of the rump Spanish government, at the time confined first to Cádiz and then to the island of León. The great achievement of the Cortes was the framing of the Constitution of 1812, Spain's first written constitution.³ This document limited the role of the king and introduced a number of controversial reforms both to Spain and to the colonies. It established a constitutional monarchy in which authority was to reside essentially with the Cortes. America was declared an integral part of Spain, rather than a colony. The judicial system was reorganized, a single, universal tax was introduced, the military was restructured, and freedom of the press was decreed. The document was promulgated in the royalist-controlled regions of Spanish America with varying degrees of sincerity.

Indeed, both the summoning of the Cortes in 1809 and the promulgation of the constitution in 1812 had left peninsulars and Americans alike unsure of how to respond. To begin with, by the time details of the new constitution reached Spanish America, Venezuela, New Granada, and Río de la Plata were in revolt. Many of the new insurgent governments in these regions were themselves engaged in designing their own constitutions, and had little interest in accepting the

See Iris M. Zavala, *Masones, comuneros y carbonarios* (Madrid: Siglo veintiuno, 1971), 46; and Josep Fontana, *La crisis del antiguo régimen, 1808-1833* (Barcelona: Editorial crítica; 1988), 141-53, for more detailed discussions of these various factions.

For a fine summary of the provisions of the Constitution of 1812, see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Revolution in Spain* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975), 57-61; or, for a more recent assessment, Mario Rodríguez, *The Cádiz Experiment in Central America, 1808 to 1826* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 75-100.

Spanish Constitution of 1812.⁴ In those areas which remained in Spanish control the constitution often received an equivocal welcome; Spanish authorities on the one hand expressed doubts about the wisdom of holding elections in the first place, while many creoles responded with enthusiasm. In the parts of Mexico where elections for constitutional *ayuntamientos* (town councils) were held, creoles often obtained a majority on the new councils, and in Guatemala, constitutional elections aroused almost universal support and proceeded without difficulty.⁵ In New Granada, on the other hand, the constitutional reforms were implemented only in areas of royalist domination, and even there had limited impact.⁶ In Panama, elections to the Cortes were held in August 1812, but the failure of Viceroy Pérez to implement certain articles of the constitution became fodder in the long-running battle between the viceroy, backed by the Panama City *cabildo* (town council), and the officials of the high court, or *Audiencia*.⁷ Within the viceroyalty of New Granada, the constitutional system appears to have been implemented most fully in Quito, during the presidency of Toribio Montes. There elections to constitutional bodies

⁴ This is not to say that the Constitution of 1812 did not influence the American constitutions. See Otto Carlos Stoetzer, "La constitución de Cádiz en la América española," *Revista de estudios políticos* 126 (1962):641-64.

⁵ The impact of the Constitution of 1812 in Mexico, and in particular the constitutional elections of 1812, have been comparatively well studied. See, for example, Antonio Annino, "Pratiche creole e liberalismo nella crisi dello spazio urbano coloniale: il 29 novembre 1812 a Città del Messico," *Quaderni storici: notabili elettori elezioni* 69 (1988):727-63; Nettie Lee Benson, ed., *Mexico and the Spanish Cortes, 1810-1822* (Austin: University of Texas Press for the Institute of Latin American Studies, 1968); François-Xavier Guerra, "La independencia de México y las revoluciones hispánicas," in Antonio Annino and Raymond Buve, eds., *El liberalismo en México*, Cuadernos de historia latinoamericana, no. 1 (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1993), 15-48; and Virginia Guedea, "El pueblo de México y la política capitalina: 1808 y 1812," paper presented at 17th International LASA Congress, Los Angeles, 24-27 September 1992. For Guatemala, see Rodríguez, *The Cádiz Experiment*, 108.

⁶ See José Manuel Restrepo, *Historia de la revolución de la república de Colombia*, 6 vols. (Medellín: Editorial Bedout, 1974), 1:241-42; and Timothy Anna, *Spain and the Loss of America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 95.

⁷ See "Benito Pérez to minister of grace and justice," Panama, 16 November 1812, and "Joaquín Carrión, Manuel Igarrio, and Tomás de Arechaga to Council of the Indies," Panama, 6 February 1813, both in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereinafter cited as AGI), Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 668.

were held, to the disgust of Quito's absolutists.⁸ President Montes, however, suspended the two most important elections, those to the Cortes and to the provincial deputation, until late 1813.⁹ Indeed, in New Granada the principal reaction of royalist officials to the new code was one of perplexity. The governor of Veragua, for example, requested clarification of a series of points. If the Indians refused to accept the constitutional *ayuntamientos*, should they be compelled to do so? If separate Indian *cabildos* were to be abolished, who was then responsible for ensuring that laws were obeyed? And could illegitimate children be elected to the Cortes?¹⁰ None of these questions were answered before Ferdinand's return to the throne in 1814.

On his resumption of the throne, Ferdinand not only annulled all laws passed by the Cortes during his absence, but also arrested many prominent liberals and set about creating a monarchy purged of any democratizing influence. After his return, hostility between the king and liberals of all stripes simmered ominously until 1820, when an open rupture occurred. On New Year's Day 1820 a historic uprising began in the Andalusian town of Las Cabezas de San Juan. On that day Colonel Rafael Riego, the leader of the revolt, pronounced in favor of the Constitution of 1812, and troops stationed in Las Cabezas rebelled. Over the next few days Riego marched through other towns in Andalusia, and then to Cádiz itself, where Colonel Antonio Quiroga attempted an assault on the city's military warehouses. This attack on Cádiz was unsuccessful, and initially the revolt aroused little support. The rest of the army, however, did nothing to stop the unrest, and in the ensuing months pro-constitutional uprisings broke out across Spain. Three months later, on 7 March 1820, the king was forced to reconvene the Cortes and proclaim the Constitution of 1812. On 9 March 1820 Ferdinand was himself obliged to swear loyalty to the very constitution which he had personally overthrown in 1814. These events ushered in a three-year period of liberal, constitutional rule in Spain.

⁸ See Pedro Pérez Muñoz, "Historia de la rebelión de América," Guayaquil, 31 December 1815, AGI, Diversos, carta 29, legajo 42.

⁹ "Toribio Montes to minister of overseas," Quito, 7 October 1814, AGI, Audiencia de Quito, legajo 260.

¹⁰ See "Juan Domingo de Iturralde to minister of overseas," Santiago de Veragua, 3 August 1813, AGI, Audiencia de Panama, legajo 265; and "Francisco Montalvo to minister of overseas," Santa Marta, 9 November 1814, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 668 (this letter is also in *ibid.*, legajo 631).

The causes of the revolution of 1820 have been much discussed. It is clear that dissatisfaction with Ferdinand's government had increased throughout 1819, and various anti-government plots had already been hatched.¹¹ Certain features, however, distinguish the revolt of 1820 from previous conspiracies. In particular, it was supported by the troops, not out of liberal sentiment, but because of their profound disgust with the army. The first troops to rebel were new recruits about to be shipped to Buenos Aires to fight the insurgents. They joined the revolt to avoid being sent to fight in the increasingly unpopular colonial war; indeed, Antonio Alcalá Galiano asserted that the revolt was entirely due to "the repugnance of the rank and file against embarking for America."¹² Nonetheless, their participation in the revolution was critical to events not only in Spain but also in the Americas. The effect of the revolt was expressed intemperately by one officer, who complained that "the Spanish continent of America, [which was] discovered, conquered and civilized at a time when God and the *Patria* were respected, was lost because of [the scandalous uprising of the army in Andalusia, whose authors] later called themselves patriots."¹³ Because of the uprising, the 1819 expedition to Río de la Plata never left Spain, thereby guaranteeing the independence of Buenos Aires. The royalist enclaves in Peru, New Granada, and Venezuela were also deprived of essential reinforcements.

Equally importantly, the return of the liberals in Spain threw the surviving royalist governments in America into turmoil. Royalist officials were just as influenced by Spanish politics as their peninsular

¹¹ See José Luis Comellas García Llera, *Los primeros pronunciamientos en España, 1814-1820* (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1958); and Josep Fontana, *La crisis del antiguo régimen 1808-1833* (Barcelona: Editorial crítica, 1988), 127-40.

¹² Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 127. See also Comellas, *Los primeros pronunciamientos*, 303-9. The recruits were also unhappy with the choice of officers and the terms of recruitment. Although liberalism was not the motor driving army unrest, liberal sentiment in the Spanish army had grown during Ferdinand's rule. Francisco Eguía, minister of war during much of the period, was violently anti-liberal and cashiered many liberals and heroes of the resistance. This stimulated anti-government, anti-conservative feeling within the officer corps. See E. Christiansen, *The Origins of Military Power in Spain, 1800-1954* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 19.

¹³ Comellas, *Los primeros pronunciamientos*, 304. The doubtful grammar of the original quotation has been corrected.

cousins, and political division was just as virulent among royalists in Spanish America as it was in Spain. With the dramatic return of the liberals in Spain, political hatreds that had festered since the establishment of the Cortes burst open. As a consequence, three viceroys were overthrown, as royalists in Spanish America sank into a mire of political infighting. This essay will now examine the reception of the restored constitution, first in New Granada, and then, more briefly, in other parts of Spanish America.

The first colony to learn of the liberal revolt was Cuba. News of events in Spain arrived on 15 April 1820 and was greeted immediately with great enthusiasm. The captain general of Cuba, José Manuel Cajigal, published the information without delay, and on 16 April the entire government of Havana swore loyalty to the constitution amidst general rejoicing. By the next day the *lotería real* of Havana had changed its name to the *lotería constitucional*.¹⁴

Despite the appearance of order, this transfer to the constitutional system was not accomplished without discord. In fact, Captain General Cajigal had been forced to accept the constitution by liberals who threatened to depose him if he did not. They intended to replace him with the former viceroy of New Granada, Francisco Montalvo, a liberal appointee loathed by absolutists as a dupe of the insurgents, and currently in retirement in Cuba.¹⁵ The reception of the constitution in Cuba presaged its welcome on the mainland. There, too, the change of government in Spain was used to effect changes in the colonial administration—changes that were accomplished through intimidation and threats.

It took several months for news of the Riego revolution to reach the surviving Spanish government of New Granada, which had retreated to Cartagena following its military defeat at the Battle of Boyacá in 1819. Rumors had been circulating for some time about political divisions in Spain, and there were fears that the metropolis

¹⁴ "Diario extraordinario constitucional del gobierno de la Habana," Havana, 17 April 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 580. See also "José María Ramírez to Juan Sámano," 19 April 1820, *ibid.*

¹⁵ "Pedro Ruíz de Porras to Juan Sámano," Santa Marta, 15 May 1820, *ibid.*

might be enveloped in another civil war.¹⁶ However, the first reports of the reinstatement of the Constitution of 1812 were dismissed as republican propaganda by Cartagena's governor, Gabriel de Torres.¹⁷ Then, in early May, Governor Torres learned unofficially from sources in Cuba that the king had indeed sworn loyalty to the constitution, but the governor did not immediately publicize the news. Although he recognized that it would be difficult to prevent word from spreading throughout New Granada, he felt inclined to keep quiet, at least until further instructions from Spain arrived. Governor Torres instead wrote to Viceroy Juan Sámano, also resident in Cartagena, to ask for advice. Sámano, a hard-line conservative, immediately urged suppression of the news. In fact, the viceroy had already learned in April of the revolution in Spain, and had sent an envoy to Spain to learn more.¹⁸ However,

¹⁶ The description of events in Cartagena is drawn, where not otherwise indicated, from Gabriel de Torres, "Resumen documentado que manifiesta el origen y sucesos ocurridos en la Plaza de Cartagena de Indias desde el día 7 de Junio hasta el 5 de Julio últimos, con motivo del juramento de la constitución de la Monarquía Española," Cartagena, 1 August 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 1011.

¹⁷ "Gabriel de Torres to Gabriel García Vallecilla," Cartagena, 23 March 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 742. Gabriel de Torres had accompanied General Pablo Morillo to Venezuela in 1815 as a brigadier in the expeditionary army. He was appointed governor of Cartagena in 1816, soon after its recapture from the insurgents, and remained in this post until the city's surrender to the republicans in 1821. He would have been thirty-nine years old in 1820, and, according to General Morillo, was extremely ambitious. He was married to a *criolla* (a Spanish woman born in the Americas), the daughter of Juan Jurado, an *oidor* (a judge on the *Audiencia*). See "Pablo Morillo to José María Barreiro," Barquisimeto, 20 July 1818, printed in Alberto Lee López, ed., *Los ejércitos del rey, 1818-1819*, 2 vols. (Bogotá: Biblioteca de la presidencia de la república, 1989), 1:25-28; Oswaldo Díaz Díaz, *La reconquista española*, 2 vols. (Bogotá: Lerner, 1964-1967), 1:353-54; and "Hoja de servicio de Gabriel de Torres," AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 2136B.

¹⁸ "Gabriel de Torres to Juan Sámano," Cartagena, 10 May 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 580; "José María Ramírez to Juan Sámano," Havana, 19 April 1820, *ibid.*; and "Report on letter by Juan Sámano," 30 May 1820, *ibid.* See also the comments about Torres's reaction in José Manuel Groot, *Historia eclesiástica y civil de Nueva Granada*, 5 vols. (Bogotá: Editorial M. Rivas, 1893) 4:104. Juan Sámano, unlike Gabriel de Torres, had a long career as an officer in the colonies. In 1810, as commander of the Batallón Auxiliar of Santa Fe, Sámano had been an unwilling participant in that city's initial break with Spain, but he had soon joined royalist forces in southern New Granada, earning a reputation for inflexibility and complete opposition to compromise with insurgents. By 1820, he was in his late seventies, unmarried, and reportedly going deaf. See, for example, "Pablo Morillo to minister of war," Santa Fe,

he had not informed Governor Torres. The two men had disliked each other since the disastrous battle of Boyacá, when Governor Torres had been highly critical of the viceroy's rapid flight to Cartagena and his failure to take command of remaining royalist troops. These disagreements over military policy had not been resolved, and the viceroy's relationship with the governor had been deteriorating steadily.¹⁹

Definitive news that Ferdinand had sworn loyalty to the constitution and that it had been adopted in Cuba was brought to Cartagena from Havana in early June 1820. Viceroy Sámano was still not willing to make the news public; and initially placed under house arrest a passenger who had actually witnessed the oath in Cuba. This measure proved completely ineffective, as within days other ships arrived with reports confirming the earlier notices.

This caused considerable uproar in the city and matters came to a head on 7 June 1820. Around half past four in the afternoon the members of the Artillery Brigade, under the leadership of its commander Ignacio Romero, and the León Regiment, led, not by its commander, but by another officer, presented themselves at the Palacio de Gobierno to demand the immediate promulgation of the Constitution of 1812. The royalist troops brought four cannons with them, and some reports state that the soldiers were accompanied by the townspeople.²⁰ The crowd called for Governor Torres, who informed them that although he supported their demand for the restoration of the constitution, he could take no action without the support of the other commanding officers and the viceroy—however, Viceroy Sámano had already made his opposition to the constitution known.

31 August 1816, printed in Antonio Rodríguez Villa, *El teniente general don Pablo Morillo, primer conde de Cartagena, marqués de la Puerta (1778-1837)*, 4 vols. (Madrid: Establecimiento tipográfico de Fortanet, 1908-1910), 3:190-91; "Francisco Montalvo to the minister of grace and justice," Cartagena, 24 September 1817, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 631; and "Juan Sámano to minister of war," Santa Fe, 29 May 1818, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 720A.

¹⁹ See "Juan Sámano to minister of war," Cartagena, 26 September 1819, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 720A; "Gabriel de Torres to Ferdinand," Cartagena, 18 October 1819, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 748; and "Pablo Morillo to minister of war," Valencia, 29 March 1820, printed in Rodríguez Villa, *El teniente*, 4:165-72.

²⁰ "José Santa Cruz to José Cienfuegos," Portobelo, 29 June 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 1945. Governor Torres described the public as a "mere spectator," but stated that it supported the troops. See his "Resumen documentado."

At this juncture the commander of the León Regiment, Brigadier Antonio Cano, arrived in the plaza and announced his complete opposition to any adoption of the constitution. This, Governor Torres reported, nearly caused an armed confrontation between the members of the Artillery Brigade and Cano's troops.²¹ Tension mounted further when Cano's supporters thought they heard voices calling for his imprisonment, and it was only with great effort that Governor Torres succeeded in getting some of the troops to return to the barracks. Aware that swift action was necessary, he convoked a *cabildo extraordinario* (a special assembly of the city's notables) and a *junta militar*, attended by most senior officers from the garrison and Governor Torres.²² Brigadier Antonio Cano did not attend. Both meetings agreed that Torres should send Sámano all the available documentary evidence confirming that the king had indeed embraced the constitution, in an effort to convince the viceroy to support the new system. It was further agreed to send a deputation to the bishop of Cartagena to try to enlist his support. All of this was done immediately and the *cabildo* decided to remain in session until a reply from Sámano was received, although it was by then midnight.

While these groups were meeting, Viceroy Sámano allegedly sent agents throughout Cartagena to arrest everyone who had demonstrated in favor of the constitution that afternoon. Most liberals, suspecting that something of this sort would take place, had already gone into hiding, but Sámano was able to detain two officers and an official from the city's customs house. These arrests provided him with the confidence to inform Torres at three o'clock on the morning of 8 June 1820 that there was no urgent need to implement any changes to the government, as Cartagena had returned to a state of complete calm, and as he in any event needed to study the matter. In fact, Cartagena was far from being calm. The troops by this stage no longer remained in even minimal subordination, and in particular one company of grenadiers had spent the entire night "*sobre las armas*" (under arms) in

²¹ "...Cartagena was close to experiencing its most disastrous day ever.... In this riot it was a miracle that they didn't kill each other," reported Torres. See his "Resumen documentado." See also "Gabriel de Torres to Juan Sámano," Cartagena, 7 June 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 748.

²² The *cabildo extraordinario* was attended by the members of the *cabildo*, the governor, and two other officials.

the *plaza de la merced*, deaf to the orders of Brigadier Cano to return to the barracks. The townspeople were also reported to be in a state of extreme commotion.

Another *cabildo extraordinario* was held that morning, and the viceroy was again urged to accept the new constitution. Sámano, supported by the *Audiencia*, responded by denouncing the previous night's *cabildo extraordinario* as unnecessary and illegal, and deprived Torres of the authority to convoke any more meetings without written permission from Sámano himself. Meanwhile, unrest in Cartagena continued to grow, and began to take on an anti-Spanish nature: the members of the Company of León Grenadiers tried to expel all the Spaniards from the garrison. Violence was necessary to compel the troops to sleep in the barracks that night, but by the morning of 9 June order could no longer be maintained. Soldiers leaving the barracks that morning openly disobeyed their officers and seized control of the Baluarte de Santo Domingo, where they were joined by more troops who had overthrown their officers and forced open the doors to the barracks. Both the bishop and Brigadier Cano tried to persuade the men to return to the barracks, and both were "rudely disregarded."²³

The members of the Artillery Brigade and the León Regiment then set off in an orderly fashion toward the *plaza de la inquisición* with the intention of proclaiming the constitution. The soldiers also demanded the back pay owed to them. Members of the public, in an attempt to avoid further unrest, began distributing cash (twenty pesos per soldier), and Viceroy Sámano, on learning of the gathering in the *plaza de la inquisición*, supplied an additional sum of money. The distribution of money lasted well into the afternoon, but did not succeed in diverting the troops from their principal demand of the establishment of the constitution, and further messages were sent to Sámano to this effect.

Viceroy Sámano then made a quite extraordinary decision. He wrote to Governor Torres that afternoon, "Finding myself gravely ill, I have decided to retire to the town of Sabanalarga...leaving political control of the province in the hands of the *oidor decano* [senior judge]

²³ This is reported in Torres, "Resumen documentado." The bishop himself makes no mention of it in his own report on events. See "Bishop Gregorio José to the minister of grace and justice," Guanabacoa, 4 October 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 748.

of the *Audiencia*, and military control in your hands."²⁴ He thus chose to resign temporarily. Governor Torres, invested with this new authority, of course immediately convoked another *junta extraordinaria*, which was attended by the military commanders, and by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The junta approved the adoption of the constitution, and this resolution was put into effect immediately thereafter in front of the assembled troops, who greeted the oath with "the greatest demonstrations of happiness."²⁵ They then returned to the barracks in an orderly fashion.

The following day, 10 June, the adoption of the constitution was formally announced and orders to swear loyalty were sent to the remaining Spanish officials throughout the province. At eleven o'clock on the same day government officials, civil and military, gathered in the cathedral to attend a Te Deum. Illuminations and public festivities were then held. Viceroy Sámano, of course, did not attend. Consequently, on 12 June, various officers informed Governor Torres that in their view Sámano could not remain viceroy without himself swearing loyalty to the constitution, since Article 374 of the constitution ordained that all officials swear loyalty to it before assuming office.²⁶ An emergency junta of officers, attended also by some members of the town *cabildo*, was immediately held to debate this matter.²⁷ The junta

²⁴ See "Juan Sámano to Gabriel de Torres," Cartagena, 9 June 1820, printed in Torres, "Resumen documentado," and also in AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 890B.

²⁵ Torres, "Resumen documentado."

²⁶ The memo of the *comandante de la Brigada de Artillería*, Ignacio Romero, is typical: "Neither the Artillery Brigade under my command, nor I personally can under any circumstances submit ourselves to the orders of Juan Sámano if he does not swear loyalty to the constitution, which all the civil and military authorities swore loyalty to yesterday with the greatest solemnity, as a consequence of the king and all the nation's having done so. I am informing you of this, so that should you find it appropriate you may enlighten me about this important matter, as not only do all the officers and troops [want Sámano to swear loyalty to the constitution], but it is furthermore absolutely necessary [that he do so], so that all the authorities rule and be ruled under one uniform system of government." "Ignacio Romero to Gabriel de Torres," Cartagena, 12 June 1820, in Torres "Resumen documentado." Article 374 of the constitution stated that "everyone who carries out a public office, civil, military or ecclesiastic, shall on taking office swear to uphold the constitution."

²⁷ No member of the *Audiencia* attended. In particular, the *oidor decano* whom Sámano appointed to exercise the *mando político* (political control) on 9 June did not attend. See Torres, "Resumen documentado" and "Report on the junta," Cartagena, 12

sent Sámano an ultimatum, informing him that if he did not accept the new constitution he would be deprived of authority. The following day he repeated that he could not accept it until he received official orders to do so from Spain, and offered to leave the country. It was perhaps at this point that certain members of the junta suggested that the easiest way to solve the problem would be to assassinate Sámano.²⁸ The bishop of Cartagena tried to dissuade those in favor, pointing out that it was against the spirit of the constitution itself to force Sámano to "*morir o jurarla*." He was evidently successful, as in the end no attempts were made on the viceroy's life.

Furthermore, the junta did not abandon its attempts to compel Sámano's obedience by peaceful means. On 13 June the junta again petitioned him to reconsider, but two days later, on 15 June, he reiterated that he did not accept the constitution, and could not even contemplate doing so without consulting the opinion of the governors of the other royalist provinces—which at this stage consisted of southern New Granada and little else. Such a consultation would take months. The junta sent a final deputation to Sámano in a last attempt to obtain his oath of loyalty.²⁹ The deputation made it clear to the viceroy that he would be removed from office if he did not accept the constitution.

Within half an hour the delegation returned. Sámano persisted in his refusal to accept the constitution and announced his intention of resigning, citing his poor health as the motive. The junta then formally removed him from office—something it of course had no real authority to do. Over the course of the next few days, the *oidor decano*, Francisco de Mosquera y Cabrera, resigned from exercising the *mando político* that he had been granted by Sámano on 9 June, and Governor Torres took political control of the province of Cartagena, an action

June 820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 748.

²⁸ "Bishop Gregorio José to the minister of grace and justice," Guanabacoa, 4 October 1820, *ibid*.

²⁹ The junta also provided Sámano with original copies of the reports from Spain and elsewhere testifying to the introduction of the constitution. The junta was by this time irritated by Sámano's insinuations that its members had acted disloyally in having sworn to accept the constitution before the arrival of official orders to do so. Its members pointed out that they had only accepted it because of the reliable news that the king himself had done so.

which he claimed was supported by Article 324 of the constitution. Torres thus became the de facto viceroy.

The initial response of the public in Cartagena to these events seems to have been uniformly positive. Torres, at least, claimed that the troops were very pleased by Sámano's overthrow, especially given his reputation for vengefulness. (Those who had taken part in the pro-constitutional uprising feared they would be victimized if Sámano regained power.)³⁰ Another officer also reported that immediately following the public oath of loyalty to the constitution on 10 June, large numbers of enthusiastic individuals enlisted in the army to fight the republican Luís Brion in the nearby town of Sabanilla.³¹ The reintroduction of the constitution to Cartagena also resulted in other formal changes: Cartagena's *cabildo* began calling itself the *ayuntamiento constitucional*, and referred to Cartagena not as "Cartagena de Indias" but as "Cartagena de América."³² There is, however, no evidence that the actual machinery of the constitution was put into place. Elections for deputies to the Cortes, for example, do not appear ever to have been held.

No new upheavals occurred for the next week, but on 28 June a ship at last arrived from Spain with official orders to swear loyalty to the constitution. Sámano immediately offered to take the oath of loyalty, but it was too late. Torres reminded him that he was no longer viceroy.³³ During the next few weeks Sámano made efforts to organize the anti-constitutional faction in Cartagena in order to regain command, but was unsuccessful. On 5 July 1820 he set sail for Jamaica, leaving Gabriel de Torres in command of royalist forces in New Granada.

³⁰ "Gabriel de Torres to minister of overseas," Cartagena, 27 July 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 748.

³¹ "José Santa Cruz to José Cienfuegos," Portobelo, 29 June 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 1945. Nonetheless, not enough people signed up, and on 14 June 1820 Governor Torres was obliged to issue a proclamation reminding the citizens of Cartagena that Article 9 of the recently adopted constitution obliged them to defend the *Patria*, and urging more to enlist. See "Proclama de Gabriel de Torres," Cartagena, 14 June 1820, *ibid.*

³² "Report by the *cabildo*," Cartagena, 31 December 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 716.

³³ "Gabriel de Torres to Juan Sámano," Cartagena, 29 June 1820, printed in Torres, "Resumen documentado" and also in AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 748.

While this palace coup was occurring in Cartagena, the only important New Granadan city remaining in Spanish hands, similarly fraught developments were taking place in Venezuela, where the royalists were in an equally disheveled state. General Pablo Morillo, commander-in-chief of the royalist army in New Granada and Venezuela, was in desperate need of the reinforcements he assumed were about to depart from Spain. Unaware that these very troops had rebelled, Morillo continued to expect their arrival until late March 1820, when he at last learned of Riego's revolution. News of Ferdinand's adoption of the constitution did not reach him until mid-May. Morillo himself promptly swore loyalty to the constitution in Caracas on 7 June 1820.³⁴ Not all officials were equally enthusiastic, and in Venezuela, as in New Granada, news of the constitutional revolution in Spain provoked high-level splits. Indeed, Francisco Tomás Morales, one of the highest-ranking royalist officers and future commander-in-chief, threatened to resign after learning of the reintroduction of the constitution.³⁵ Ramón Correa, the acting captain general of Venezuela, at first refused to publish the constitution in Caracas, and it was only after a commission of Caraqueño notables prevailed upon Morillo to intervene that the document was promulgated. These maneuverings in Caracas were politically motivated, as they were elsewhere, although in Caracas the issue seems to have revolved not around a liberal-absolutist split, but rather around the administrative effects of implementing the constitution. Members of the Caracas *Audiencia*, who backed the constitution, hoped it would reduce the authority of the captain general, who would be demoted to a mere *jefe político* with reduced powers under the constitutional system. General Morillo for his part had doubts about the wisdom of implementing the

³⁴ See "Morillo's letters to Miguel de la Torre," Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de Historia (hereinafter cited as BRAH), Colección Morillo, signatura 9/7664, legajo 21, fols. 104-57. See also "Proclama de Pablo Morillo," Caracas, 8 June 1820, AGI, Indiferente General, legajo 1568; and "Pablo Morillo to Antonio López de Mendoza," Valencia, 4 August 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 759B.

³⁵ "Pablo Morillo to Francisco Tomás Morales," Valencia, 29 April 1820, BRAH, signatura 9/7662, legajo 19, fols. 169-72.

constitution in war-torn Venezuela and repeatedly asked to resign following its promulgation.³⁶

General Morillo's own political beliefs may best be deduced from his career. Although he had been a protégé of General Francisco Castaños, hero of the resistance to Napoleon and later member of the Regency, and had refused to swear loyalty to the constitution in 1812, all of which suggest conservative leanings, he developed more liberal sentiments in the following years. Indeed, before the Expeditionary Army left Cádiz in 1814, rumors circulated that Morillo was not only a liberal, but also a Freemason. Conscious of the damage such a rumor could do to his reputation in newly absolutist Spain, Morillo immediately joined a religious confraternity, hoping thereby to establish his credentials as a conservative.³⁷ He nonetheless retained an essentially liberal outlook, and after the conclusion of the war developed an amicable friendship with his erstwhile opponents, even describing the republican generals Soublotte and O'Leary as "good friends and comrades."³⁸ Morillo was, nonetheless, a *moderado* (moderate liberal) rather than an *exaltado* (radical).³⁹ Indeed, he enjoyed the confidence of Ferdinand VII, who not only appointed him commander of the Expeditionary Army in 1814, but expected him to participate in an anti-constitutional coup planned for 1821. Although Morillo did not involve himself with this plot, he opposed the anti-monarchical aspects of 1820s

³⁶ See Stephen Stoa, *Pablo Morillo and Venezuela, 1815-1820* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), 222-29; and Rodríguez Villa, *El teniente*, 1:481. An uprising also occurred in Maracaibo. Morillo reported to the minister of war that a state of anarchy reigned in the province following the promulgation of the constitution, and that the governor, Feliciano Montenegro, had been deposed. See "Pablo Morillo to the minister of war," Caracas, 30 September 1820, printed in Rodríguez Villa, *El teniente*, 4:234-35.

³⁷ Stoa, *Pablo Morillo*, 65. Stoa further reports that the Venezuelan historian Juan Uslar Pietri "insists that his own grandfather had a death penalty commuted personally by Morillo after giving the general a secret Masonic sign."

³⁸ "Pablo Morillo to Francisco Martínez de la Rosa," La Coruña, 24 March 1834, AGI, Estado, legajo 69, doc. 60. Morillo further assisted General O'Leary in writing his great biography of Bolívar. See Daniel Florencio O'Leary, *Bolívar and the War of Independence* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), xvi, 187.

³⁹ See "Manifiesto a la nación española de José Moreno de García," Cádiz, 16 February 1822, printed in Iris M. Zavala, *Masones, comuneros y carbonarios* (Madrid: Siglo veintiuno, 1971), 250-79, for a partisan discussion of *moderados*; and Rodríguez Villa, *El teniente*, 1:498.

liberalism and helped restore the king to the throne in 1823, an action which he immediately regretted once the regressive and vindictive nature of Ferdinand's regime became apparent. He then chose exile in France in preference to further public duties in absolutist Spain, and returned only after the "ominous decade" of triumphant absolutism ended.⁴⁰

It is evident that the introduction of the constitution into Cartagena provoked a major schism within New Granada's royalist government. This schism did not heal with the flight of the viceroy, for there remained in Cartagena many individuals opposed to the new liberal regime. Indeed, less than a month after the coup, Governor Torres was complaining that "persons pretending to be loyal to the king" were putting up offensive anti-constitutional lampoons.⁴¹ The most important opponents of the new regime were two high-ranking officers, the commander of the León Regiment, Brigadier Antonio Cano, and Colonel Francisco Warleta. Warleta's attitude to the constitution may be deduced from the following description of his behavior on learning of its reintroduction:

After he learned in the town of Barranca, where he was stationed, that the Constitution had been reinstated, he tore off all his insignia of office, burned the buttons which were embossed with the name of his regiment, opened and threw into the fire all the correspondence which dealt with this matter, and under the pretext of illness, withdrew to the town of Soledad, abandoning his post.⁴²

⁴⁰ Anna, *Spain*, 269. The king's expectations of support from Morillo in 1821 were based in part on Morillo's vigorous suppression of a radical demonstration in Madrid in July 1821. See the many documents in Rodríguez Villa, *El teniente*, vol. 4, and also 1:563.

⁴¹ "Bando de Gabriel de Torres," Cartagena, 3 August 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 717.

⁴² "Gabriel de Torres to the secretary of state," Cartagena, 10 July 1820, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid (hereinafter cited as AHN), Estado, legajo 8717. Warleta left New Granada altogether and went first to Jamaica and then to Spain. See José María Restrepo Saenz, *Gobernadores de Antioquia, 1571-1819* (Bogotá: Imprenta nacional, 1932), 304; and also "Francisco Warleta to Juan Sámano," Barranca, 9 June 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 713B. Colonel Antonio Cano also left his post,

The effect of this high-level opposition was serious. Torres reported that "the anti-constitutional character of the viceroy, the brigadier colonel of the León Regiment Don Antonio Cano, and of Colonel Don Francisco Warleta placed this city in the most distressing state."⁴³ The public breach between the governor and the viceroy led to a breakdown of discipline in the army, and a general decline in respect for royalist authority. Mariano Sixto, Governor Torres's representative to General Morillo, reported in early December 1820 that "the garrison of Cartagena...because of the extremely bad example set by the brigadier Antonio Cano and the colonel Francisco Warleta when the constitution was reinstated, is now entirely undisciplined."⁴⁴ The breakdown in control permitted increasing desertion from the royalist army in the months after the rift.⁴⁵ Moreover, Colonel Warleta's refusal to accept the constitutional regime was directly responsible for the loss of the town of Barranca, which was captured by republicans within days of the colonel's decamping. Most importantly, the struggle between the viceroy and the governor distracted the royalists from the real threat to the Spanish presence in New Granada: the republican army.

While Sámano and Torres argued over politics, the republicans were preparing to lay siege to Cartagena. Four days after the defeated Sámano left the city for Jamaica, insurgent forces began the blockade that resulted in Cartagena's surrender in October 1821. The royalist garrison of Ríoacha had already surrendered to Luís Brion in March 1820, and throughout May, June, and July, fighting had occurred in the villages surrounding Cartagena and in its bay.⁴⁶ Then, on 9-10 July 1820, naval forces, led by Brion and republican infantry under Mariano

although the circumstances of his removal are not clear. See "José Santa Cruz to José Cienfuegos," Portobelo, 29 June 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 1945.

⁴³ "Gabriel de Torres to the secretary of state," Cartagena, 10 July 1820, AHN, Estado, legajo 8717.

⁴⁴ "Mariano Sixto to Pablo Morillo," Valencia, 11 December 1820, AHN, Estado, legajo 8725.

⁴⁵ "Gabriel de Torres to Francisco Mosquera y Cabrera," Cartagena, 18 June 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 742.

⁴⁶ For the fall of Ríoacha, see "Mariano Montilla to Francisco de Paula Santander," Ríoacha, 22 March 1820; and other related documents, all in AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 745; and also "Pablo Morillo to minister of war," Valencia, 29 March 1820, printed in Rodríguez Villa, *El teniente*, 4:165-72.

Montilla, surrounded Cartagena and began a slow but effective strangulation of the city.⁴⁷ Yet, despite this, during the preceding weeks little of the attention of Cartagena's royalist government had been focused on preparing for this siege. Royalist energies had been centered on the struggle between Governor Torres and Viceroy Sámano, and on containing the army's pro-constitutional agitations. Not surprisingly, Cartagena's government was in a continual state of crisis throughout the siege, and constant efforts at increasing the city's supply of food were necessary.⁴⁸ Lack of food, accompanied by poor weather and exhaustion, soon reduced the already slim royalist garrison to a mere 630 men fit for active service, plus an additional 550-man "volunteer" militia. By September 1821, the total royalist force numbered only 732, many of whom were ill and unfit for service.⁴⁹

Republican military advances continued throughout 1820 and early 1821, while morale among the royalist troops declined alarmingly. By the end of August 1821, the prospects for royalist victory were remote, and Governor Torres began negotiating the capitulation of the only important city in New Granada remaining in royalist hands. Negotiations were completed in late September 1821, and a generous surrender was arranged.⁵⁰ Cartagena was evacuated by the royalists on 10 October 1821.

Parenthetically, it might be noted that Viceroy Sámano ended up not in Jamaica, but in Panama City, where he died the following year. Before his death he managed to stir up sufficient hostility to the isthmus's liberals to provoke a riot. Although the city had sworn loyalty to the constitution on 3 July 1820, the constitutional system had

⁴⁷ See first declaration of Gabriel de Torres, "Proceso contra Gabriel de Torres," Havana, 2 November 1824, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 2136A; "Gabriel de Torres to Pedro Ruiz de Porras," Cartagena, 8 July 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 709; and "Francisco Warleta to Juan Sámano," Barranca, 9 June 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 713B.

⁴⁸ See, for example, the documents about Cartagena's food supply in AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 715; "Gabriel de Torres to Alejandro Ramírez," Cartagena, 19 August 1820, and "Proclama de Gabriel de Torres," Cartagena, 13 September 1820, both in AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 714.

⁴⁹ First declaration of Gabriel de Torres, "Proceso contra Gabriel de Torres," Havana, 2 November 1824, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 2136A.

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*; and "Proposals for Cartagena's capitulation," Havana, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 717. The details of the surrender negotiations are contained in AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 709.

not been implemented, and, as elsewhere, the constitution remained more an ideal than an actual legal code. Sámano and his ally, the equally absolutist former governor of Santa Marta, Pedro Ruíz de Porras, allegedly so encouraged opposition to the constitution that unrest broke out between supporters and opponents. Sámano's provocative behavior, charged Panama's captain general, Juan de la Cruz Mourgeon, had placed the city "in an utterly desperate state," and Cruz Mourgeon further urged that Ruíz de Porras be expelled from the isthmus as an anti-constitutional troublemaker.⁵¹

New Granada was far from being the only region affected by the struggle between liberals and absolutists. Readers are most likely familiar with the history of Mexico's ultimate independence. After the arrival of news about the restoration of the Constitution of 1812, conservative Mexicans rebelled against the new liberal regime in Spain and declared independence. That is the most common understanding of what occurred, although one may argue about whether Agustín de Iturbide's revolt was conservative, or merely autonomist. In any event, while Mexicans were separating themselves from the temporarily liberal and anti-clerical Spain, Spanish forces in Mexico were themselves engaged in a fierce struggle between supporters of the constitution and its opponents. Reports of the restoration of the Constitution of 1812 and of Havana's adoption of it reached Mexico City in late April 1820. The news immediately provoked great dissent among Spaniards in the capital, only some of whom supported the constitution. As Viceroy Sámano had done in Cartagena, Mexican Viceroy Juan Ruíz de Apodaca initially attempted to suppress the reports, but, fearing a military coup à la Riego, he agreed to promulgate the constitution. This was done on 31 May 1820, with only minimal popular support. Lucas Alamán comments that the promulgation "appeared more like a funeral than a happy event."⁵²

⁵¹ "Report by the cabildo of Panama," Panama, 29 July 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Panama, legajo 272; and "Juan de la Cruz Mourgeon to minister of overseas," Panama, 28 August 1821, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 668. See also "Gabriel de Torres to minister of overseas," Cartagena, 27 July 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 748. Sámano had insisted on his arrival in Panama on being treated as though he were still viceroy, and nominated Pedro Ruíz de Porras to succeed him as viceroy.

⁵² There is some disagreement about when the constitution was promulgated. Lucas Alamán gives 31 May 1820. See Lucas Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, 2nd ed., 5 vols. (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1968-1972), 5:22-23. Brian Hamnett and Roger Cunniff

During the next eight months Apodaca gave tacit support to the constitution, and did not attempt to impede its implementation. However, in February 1821 he decided to suspend a number of its clauses, particularly those that mandated freedom of the press. There is some disagreement about his motives. Some assert that a liberal Apodaca had been forced to suspend these clauses by conservative offices, who felt the constitution allowed the insurgents a free hand.⁵³ Other claim that he was not a true supporter of the constitution and had willingly suspended parts of it.⁵⁴ What is agreed is that these suspensions proved a watershed. The suspensions lost Apodaca the support of Mexico City's liberal royalists, who decided he could no longer be relied upon to obey the constitution. There was, moreover, widespread dissatisfaction with Apodaca's response to Agustín de Iturbide, whose anti-royalist Army of the Three Guarantees loomed on the horizon. Events culminated on 5 July 1821, when, for the only time in the history of Mexico, a viceroy was overthrown by an army coup. A group of soldiers and officers, allegedly liberals and Freemasons, forced Viceroy Apodaca to resign.⁵⁵ The conspirators first chose to replace him with General Pascual Liñán, a liberal supporter of the constitution. Liñán refused, and in the end the troops settled on Field Marshal Francisco Novella, whose political beliefs were ambiguous. Viceroy Apodaca was thus removed from office partly as a result of Spain's liberal revolution. Moreover, the division between liberals and

also use this date. See Brian Hamnett, *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico, 1750-1821*, Cambridge Latin American Studies, vol. 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 144; and Roger Cuniff, "Mexican Municipal Electoral Reform, 1810-1822," in *Mexico and the Spanish Cortes*, 82. According to John Lynch and Neill Macaulay, it was promulgated on 27 May 1820. See John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808-1826* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), 319; and Neill Macaulay, "The Army of New Spain and the Mexican Delegation to the Spanish Cortes," in *Mexico and the Spanish Cortes*, 148.

⁵³ See Timothy Anna, *The Fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 205; and "Francisco Novella and the Last Stand of the Royal Army in New Spain," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 51 (1971):96-97.

⁵⁴ See Margaret Woodward, "The Spanish Army and the Loss of America, 1810-1824," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 48 (1968):601-2; and Brian Hamnett, "Mexico's Royalist Coalition: The Response to Revolution 1808-1821," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 12 (1980):77-79.

⁵⁵ See Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, 5:164-67.

conservatives within the royalist camp had one other obvious effect. In the face of clear royalist disharmony, most of the royalist army deserted and joined Iturbide, either to avoid the liberal reforms or to see them implemented in an autonomous Mexico.

In passing it may be noted that similar upheavals occurred elsewhere in Mexico. In Yucatán, a group of liberals forced Captain General Miguel de Castro Aroz to resign, and replaced him with Colonel Mariano Carrillo, a liberal and a Freemason.⁵⁶ In Veracruz, liberal merchants compelled General José Dávila to proclaim the constitution, despite his grave misgivings. He warned them: "Gentlemen, you have made me proclaim and swear to the constitution; now expect independence, for that is going to be the result of all this."⁵⁷ There were similar disturbances in Jalapa.⁵⁸

In July 1820 news of the Riego revolt reached Peru, the other great, embattled viceroyalty, where it received an unambiguous and hostile welcome. Viceroy Joaquín de la Pezuela, whose absolutist leanings were well known, refused, like Viceroy Sámano, to implement the constitution until he had received direct orders from the king to do so. These orders did not arrive until early September 1820. Indeed, the *cabildo* of Lima converted itself into a constitutional body without the viceroy's participation.⁵⁹ While this was going on, General San Martín's army was at the gates, and the very survival of royalist government in Peru was in doubt. Viceroy Pezuela, against the advice of all his officers, refused to withdraw royalist troops from Lima, despite the unlikelihood of their winning an encounter with San Martín's forces. Disagreements over military strategy continued for several months, outraging younger officers. Finally, on 29 January 1821, a group of officers overthrew Pezuela and elevated José de la Serna to the post of viceroy. It is generally agreed that military and economic concerns played the most important role in Pezuela's overthrow. It is, however, interesting to note that La Serna and his

⁵⁶ Timothy Anna, "The Independence of Mexico and Central America," in Leslie Bethell, ed., *The Independence of Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 87.

⁵⁷ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, 5:21-22. The translation is from Macaulay, "The Army of New Spain and the Mexican Delegation to the Spanish Cortes," in *Mexico and the Spanish Cortes*, 148.

⁵⁸ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, 5:22.

⁵⁹ Anna, *Spain*, 238; and Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions*, 172.

allies were all liberals. They had fought Napoleon in Spain, supported the constitution, and had opposed Ferdinand's absolutism. This suggests that political animosity may have played a role in their hostility towards Pezuela, as some contemporary observers thought. It was asserted at the time that his overthrow was due to "the existence in the Spanish Army of a constitutional party."⁶⁰ Indeed, in Peru the political splits within the royalist camp were so great that in the evacuation that followed the royalists' defeat at Ayacucho, liberals returning to Spain would not even sit in the same section of the ship as absolutists. Constitutionalists and anti-constitutionalists remained segregated throughout the return voyage.⁶¹ As in Mexico and New Granada, political controversy intruded into the military arena, revealing further the deep splits within the Spanish camp that had dogged the royalists since the outbreak of hostilities.

After the original promulgation of the constitution in 1812, officials in both Spain and the Americas had at first clung to the hope that the promulgation would in itself end the war, on the grounds that the constitution corrected any errors in the administration of the colonies, and thus eliminated the need for independence.⁶² By the early 1820s, however, the situation had changed radically. The Spanish forces were in full retreat across America (with the exception of Peru), and it was apparent to many observers, both Spanish and American, that the war had only one possible outcome. The liberal revolution served nonetheless to encourage some in Spain, who saw the restoration of the constitution as an opportunity for reconciliation with the rebellious overseas colonies, although opinion was divided about the

⁶⁰ Woodward, "The Spanish Army," 603. It is fair to note that Timothy Anna explicitly rejects this theory, although he does not provide much evidence for his view. See Timothy Anna, *The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 161.

⁶¹ Juan Marchena Fernández, "Militarismo y liberalismo en el Perú," paper presented at the Primer Seminario Intensivo Erasmus de Historia Latinoamericana, Florence, 24 March 1994.

⁶² See Edmundo Heredia, *Planes españoles para reconquistar hispanoamérica, 1810/1818* (Buenos Aires: Editorial universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1974), 19; and "Francisco Montalvo to the Regency," 27 June 1814, printed in *Los últimos virreyes de Nueva Granada, relación de mando del virrey don Francisco Montalvo y noticias del virrey Sámano sobre la pérdida del reino (1813-1819)* (Madrid: Editorial América, 1918), 49-54.

degree to which the implementation of the constitution would reduce the attraction of republicanism. In 1821 the government's official line, echoing the failed hopes of 1812, was that the insurgents no longer had any reason to continue fighting, as the constitution provided an ideal format for reconciliation. This view was advanced publicly by Ferdinand VII in his May 1820 declaration to the Americas, in which he announced the readoption of the constitution.⁶³ In fact, Ferdinand was privately convinced that the 1820 liberal revolution would result in the loss of America, notwithstanding his official pronouncements to the contrary. He summed up his views in a letter to Tsar Alexander I of Russia: "The Constitution formed in Cádiz, and the revolution made in Spain, were the work of the machinations of those who desired to separate the Americas from the metropolis. Thus it has happened. Now they are lost, and only with difficulty can they be recovered."⁶⁴

Ferdinand's private scepticism was shared by many royalist officials. General Morillo, royalist commander-in-chief in New Granada and Venezuela, himself put the matter succinctly.

It is madness, in my view, to allow oneself to believe that this part of America wants to unite with [Spain], adopting the constitution.... They don't want to be Spanish; they've made this perfectly clear from the moment they declared independence, and they've maintained this position regardless of events in the peninsula. They continue to repeat this, without laying down their weapons, they'll go on repeating this, and no matter what we do, or what government we have, complete independence or war is the only choice they're offering us.⁶⁵

⁶³ "Declaration of the king to the Americas," Madrid, May 1820, printed in William Norman Hargreaves-Mawdsley, ed., *Spain under the Bourbons, 1700-1833* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 251-52. See also Anna, *Spain*, 225-27, 243; and Jaime Delgado, *La independencia de América en la prensa española* (Madrid: Seminario de problemas hispanoamericanos, 1949), 227-314.

⁶⁴ Anna, *Spain*, 272.

⁶⁵ "Pablo Morillo to the minister of overseas," Valencia, 26 July 1820, AGI, Indiferente General, legajo 1568. This document is also printed in Rodríguez Villa, *El teniente*, 4:204-9. See also "Pablo Morillo to minister of war," Valencia, 6 August 1820, printed in *ibid.*, 4:214-17; "Pablo Morillo to Miguel de la Torre," Valencia, 19

Most observers claimed that the reintroduction of the constitution was viewed favorably by the republicans in New Granada and Venezuela, but few felt it would have any real effect on the war.⁶⁶ The republican leaders in particular were restrained in their response. In July 1820, José Antonio Páez wrote to General Morillo that while the Colombians were "deeply moved" by the thought that their efforts had led to political reform in Spain, the constitution alone would have no effect on the war, as it did not offer outright independence.⁶⁷ This point was repeated frequently during the 1820 armistice negotiations in Venezuela and New Granada. The royalist negotiators pressed the claim that the new constitution provided the ideal framework for the reunion of Spain and its colonies. The republicans, however, not only stressed the central point that they wanted independence, but also drew attention to the constitution's many flaws, such as its failure to allow blacks to become citizens.⁶⁸

It is worth noting that some prominent American republicans did believe that reunion with Spain under the constitutional system was possible. Colombia's Antonio Nariño, in particular, took this view. He told the Spanish ambassador to England in September 1820 that "if it were up to him alone, he would, that very evening, sign his country's surrender to the king under the constitutional system." However, he

August 1820, BRAH, signatura 9/7664, legajo 21; and "Gabriel de Torres to the minister of overseas," Cartagena, 22 September 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 1017.

⁶⁶ See, for example, "Report by Celestino Bruguera," Paris, 12 July 1820, AGI, Indiferente General, legajo 1586; and also "Ramón Ayala to Gabriel de Torres," Turbaco, 23 December 1820, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 709.

⁶⁷ José Antonio Páez to Pablo Morillo, "San Juan de Payara, 13 July 1820, AGI, Indiferente General, legajo 1568. During the negotiations to arrange the 1820-1821 armistice in New Granada, the republican leaders Simón Bolívar and Francisco de Paula Santander astonished the royalist negotiator Antonio Van-Halen by their lavish praise for the constitution, but this admiration had no effect at all on their negotiating stance. See "Antonio Van-Halen to Miguel de la Torre," Caracas, March 1821, reported in "Miguel de la Torre to the minister of overseas," Caracas, 22 March 1821, AGI, Audiencia de Caracas, legajo 55.

⁶⁸ "Report by Juan Jaldón and Andrés María Alvarez," Caracas (?), AGI, Indiferente General, legajo 1568; and "Negotiations between Gabriel de Torres and Simón Bolívar," July-August 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 1017. See also O'Leary's account of the negotiations in *Bolívar*, 178-84, which reveals the complete irrelevance of the constitution.

added that most people in America did not share his views, and that most insurgents "would sooner submit to the Moors than to the Spanish."⁶⁹

In America, the most important consequence of the Spanish crisis of 1820 was the wedge that it drove through the ranks of the royalists. In some cases, the crisis at home stimulated ideological divisions, separating those who supported the absolutist Ferdinand from those who favored a reformist, constitutional government. In other cases, reactions to the Riego revolt and the liberal revival were non-ideological, and driven solely by the desire for bureaucratic survival. A good deal of jockeying for position occurred, and some individuals decided to place their money on the liberal horse without actually backing it ideologically. A prime example is Pedro Antonio Olañeta, a royalist general stationed in Upper Peru, who supported the constitution enthusiastically in 1820. Only after Ferdinand VII, with the help of the French, overthrew the liberal regime in 1823 did Olañeta reveal himself as an absolutist, indeed an arch-conservative. He then revolted against Peru's liberal viceroy, José de la Serna, and led a conservative resistance movement fighting both the republicans and the liberals. Clearly he was, as Margaret Woodward states, "an opportunist of the first water."⁷⁰ Olañeta had supported the constitution when it was expedient to do so and rejected it when it was no longer convenient to support it. Such behavior was common, indeed, perhaps just as common as the politically motivated maneuvers of Governor Torres and José de la Serna.

What is transparently clear, however, is that the splits in the royalist camp greatly discredited the Spanish cause in the colonies. Spanish authority, already wounded by the long sequence of events in Spain starting in 1808, was finally shown to be not only enfeebled, but indeed irrelevant to the Americas. O'Leary's remark that "the bond uniting the people of Colombia to the Spanish nation was at last broken," might indeed be generalized to much of Spanish America.⁷¹ The constitution had questioned the very basis of traditional Spanish

⁶⁹ "Duke of Frías to Evaristo Pérez de Castro," London, 23 September 1820, AGI, Indiferente General, legajo 1568.

⁷⁰ Woodward, "The Spanish Army," 605. See *ibid.*, 603-7, and Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions*, 280-83, for details about Olañeta.

⁷¹ O'Leary, *Bolívar*, 175.

government and the fight within the royalist camp over its implementation accentuated this. As Timothy Anna has pointed out, it was simply no longer possible to present Spain as a unified entity:⁷² indeed, Simón Bolívar wrote to Governor Torres in August 1820, "it is the height of madness, and moreover of idiocy, to suggest that the Republic of Colombia submit itself to Spain.... Do you still imagine that the decrepit and corrupt Spain could govern this modern world?"⁷³ The inhabitants of Mexico City, Lima, and Cartagena saw that while the myth of imperial unity dissolved, the forces of Iturbide, San Martín, and Bolívar marched ever closer to victory. It was clear that the royalists, with or without the constitution, had little to offer.

⁷² The loss of credit suffered by the royalist cause as a result of the political rifts in Spain has been noted in particular by Timothy Anna, who has demonstrated in his many works on the wars of independence that this increasing loss of prestige was one of the principal reasons for Spain's loss of America.

⁷³ "Simón Bolívar to Gabriel de Torres," Turbaco, 28 August 1820, AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fe, legajo 1017.