

The Juntas of 1808 and the Spanish Colonies

THE intrigues at the court of Spain which furnished Napoleon with a pretext for intervention in the affairs of his ally are well known. It is here only necessary to note the steps which led up to the appointment of King Joseph. At Bayonne, early in May 1808, Napoleon induced the ex-king, Charles IV, and his heir, who had been acclaimed by the Spaniards as King Ferdinand VII, to renounce their rights to the Spanish crown. A short time after the deposition of Ferdinand VII, Napoleon convoked a general deputation of Spaniards at Bayonne. On 6 June he issued an imperial decree proclaiming his brother Joseph 'king of Spain and the Indies'; and five days later, when the Spanish notables assembled at Bayonne, they recognized Joseph as their king. These notables adopted, with slight modifications, a Napoleonic statute as the constitution for Spain, which declared in Title X that 'the kingdoms and Spanish provinces in America and Asia' were to enjoy the same rights as the provinces of the Peninsula. On 8 July, in the presence of the Spanish notables, King Joseph swore to observe the constitution and to maintain the integrity and independence of Spain and her possessions. In his edicts and proclamations he ordinarily used the title 'Joseph Napoleon, by the grace of God and the constitution of the state, King of Spain and the Indies'.

The news of the startling changes in Spain was at once transmitted to the Indies. At the instance of Murat, on 13 May, Miguel José de Azanza, who had been minister of hacienda under Ferdinand, addressed a dispatch to the intendant of Caracas ordering him to suspend the execution of the royal order of 10 April directing that the elevation of Prince Ferdinand to the Spanish throne should be publicly celebrated. He also informed him of Ferdinand VII's journey to Bayonne, and of his abdication in favour of his father, who had made Murat the lieutenant-general of Spain.¹ As early as 19 May, Murat addressed a note to the captain-general of Chile affirming that the house of Bourbon

¹ J. Pérez de Guzmán, *El dos de Mayo de 1808 en Madrid*, pp. 854, 855.

had renounced its rights to the crown of Spain in favour of 'one of the august brothers of the emperor'. He declared that the Spanish people would soon behold the reins of government in the hands of a prince who was experienced

in the art of reigning and an appreciative judge of the virtue and merit of men. I shall consider myself very happy, if . . . I can promote the important object of reuniting all the Spaniards around a throne which is about to regain in Europe the elevated position which it should never have lost. To attain an end so essential to the prosperity of the monarchy, I calculate above all upon the zeal and vigilance of the illustrious persons holding important offices. Make this known to those serving under you who may by their influence and good example strengthen the bonds which unite those dominions with their ancient capital. More and more will the benefits of this union become reciprocal, and the perfidious suggestions by which our common enemy will attempt to destroy it may be frustrated: those rich dominions will advance to that state of prosperity which may satisfy the desires of the inhabitants.²

The French emperor also took steps to transmit news of the dynastic changes to the Indies. In May he wrote to Vice-Admiral Decrès, minister of marine, instructing him to send to Spanish America vessels freighted with dispatches, muskets, sabres, pistols, and bullets.³ On 22 May Napoleon wrote to Murat, 'You can announce at Madrid that six vessels have already left the ports of France carrying letters, proclamations, and instructions for Spanish officials in the Americas'.⁴ Although an authoritative list of French emissaries to the Indies has not been found,⁵ yet it is clear that measures were taken to forward the news of the fall of the house of Bourbon to Mexico, Venezuela, La Plata, and even Chile. The envoy whom Napoleon sent from Bayonne to the viceroyalty of La Plata was the Marquis de Sassenay. His general instructions, signed by Champagny in the end of May 1808, directed him to present to the viceroy of La Plata the papers with which he was entrusted, to collect information concerning the condition of the Platean provinces, and, if possible, of Peru and Chile. In particular, he was to

² J. Pérez de Guzmán, *El dos de Mayo de 1808 en Madrid*, p. 455.

³ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, xvii. 90, 93, 129, 139. See further L. Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon I^{er}*, p. 171; G. Roloff, *Die Kolonialpolitik Napoleons I*, pp. 256, 257.

⁴ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, xvii. 186.

⁵ An alleged list of the commissioners of King Joseph in Spanish America, which was found among the papers of the captain-general of Venezuela in 1810, is printed in C. A. Villanueva, *Napoléon y la Independencia de América*, pp. 238-41. For instructions said to have been sent by King Joseph to an agent at Baltimore, see *ibid.*, pp. 242-5. An alleged list of Joseph's agents was sent by Lardizabal, minister of the Indies, to Calleja, viceroy of New Spain, on 22 May 1815: Archivo General de México, correspondencia de virreyes, 18/268. See also Roederer to Napoleon, 21 August 1811, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Amérique, 33.

observe the effect of the news from Spain upon the colonial officials.⁶ De Sassenay carried dispatches, dated on 17 May, addressed to certain viceroys and captains-general in South America. These dispatches reviewed the events which had occasioned the renunciation of the Spanish crown by Charles IV and the prince of Asturias. They declared that the emperor of the French would guarantee 'the independence of Spain, the integrity of her territory, and the unity of her religion' under the rule of his brother Joseph. The colonial officials were informed that they were confirmed in their appointments by the new sovereign.

King Charles and the royal family, after renouncing all their rights, have exhorted their peoples to obey the royal authority of the new monarch. . . . The dynasty has changed, but the monarchy still lives. You should honour and defend that part of it which is entrusted to your care, and prevent such a magnificent monarchy from losing a single one of its precious possessions. . . . The bond uniting France to Spain will become useful to the American colonies after it opens a vaster field to their commerce. The emperor will not lose from view the condition or the necessities of the region which you govern, and promises to aid the king, his brother, by sending all the necessary succour.⁷

Besides these dispatches, De Sassenay was given copies of the important state papers which recorded the dynastic changes in Spain.⁸ Near the end of May, Murat wrote to Napoleon that he intended to arrange everything at Ferrol for an expedition to Buenos Aires. He declared that he contemplated expeditions to the vice-royalties of New Spain and La Plata, the control of the provinces of which estuary he considered most important 'for the conservation of a large part of the Spanish colonies. . . . The English will not succeed in detaching them from the mother country.'⁹ There is other evidence to show that, in the mid-summer of 1808, Murat was planning a military expedition to South America.¹⁰

But the French were soon forced to pay more attention to the Peninsula itself. A spirit of opposition to their usurpation early became manifest in the principality of Asturias. The organ of discontent was the junta of that principality—an

⁶ Marqués de Sassenay, *Napoléon I^{er} et la Fondation de la République Argentine*, pp. 131-4.

⁷ Villanueva, *Napoleón y la Independencia*, pp. 172-5, from the French archives.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 174, note.

⁹ Murat to Napoleon, 23 and 25 May, 1808, Comte Murat, *Murat, Lieutenant de l'Empereur en Espagne*, p. 374. See further G. de Grandmaison, *L'Espagne et Napoléon, 1804-1809*, p. 328, note 1.

¹⁰ Translation of dispatch from F. F. Gil to the government of Buenos Aires, 25 May 1808, communicated by Sir Sidney Smith to the Admiralty Office, 24 March 1809: Public Record Office, War Office Correspondence, i. 163.

institution which seems to have descended from the medieval *concejo*.¹¹ That junta was composed of representatives of certain towns who occasionally assembled for legislative purposes at Oviedo, the capital of the principality.¹² After the news of the uprising of 2 May reached Asturias, these delegates met at Oviedo at the summons of Francisco Antonio Touves, *oidor* of the royal *audiencia* of that city.¹³ On 9 May, in the cathedral, the junta considered what measures should be taken for the preservation of the monarchy and for the defence of the country. It selected three members to form a plan of operations, and appointed envoys to inform the provinces of Galicia, Leon, and Santander of their proceedings.¹⁴ A short time afterwards a proclamation was addressed to the loyal Asturians by Alvaro F. Estrada, as the representative of the junta. He announced that the principality had formally declared war upon France, and made an impassioned appeal to his compatriots, reminding them of the heroic struggles of their forefathers against the Moorish invaders. He asked them not to forget that in the case of that invasion Asturias restored the Spanish monarchy.¹⁵ On 25 May the junta of Asturias determined to seek help from England, Napoleon's inveterate foe. The Asturians accordingly addressed a petition to King George III, declaring that they had taken up arms to win back the independence of the Spanish monarchy, if not indeed to procure the liberty of their captive sovereign; and asked the English government to furnish them succour in the struggle with Napoleon.¹⁶

Andrés de la Vega and Viscount Matarrosa, afterwards Count of Toreno, were entrusted with this petition. They had the good fortune to find an English privateer at Gijón, on which they embarked on 20 May. Landing at Falmouth on 6 June, they proceeded at once to London, accompanied by an officer of the British navy, and arrived there early in the morning of 8 June.¹⁷ According to Toreno, they soon met Wellesley Pole, the secretary of the admiralty, and George Canning, the secretary of state for foreign affairs.¹⁸ On 9 June *The Times*, mentioning the arrival

¹¹ F. C. Secades, *Memorias Asturianas del año ocho*, p. 41. ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 42-4.

¹³ R. A. Valdés, *Memorias del Levantamiento de Asturias en 1808*, pp. 192, 193.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁵ An undated copy of this proclamation is in Archivo Histórico Nacional, estado 70; a slightly different text is printed in Secades, *Memorias Asturianas*, pp. 121, 122, and Valdés, *Memorias*, p. 204.

¹⁶ Valdés, *Memorias*, pp. 202, 203. See further C. W. Vane, *Correspondence, Dispatches, and Other Papers of Viscount Castlereagh*, vi. 363, 364.

¹⁷ Count Toreno, *Levantamiento, Guerra, y Revolución de España* (México, 1839), i. 213; the *Times*, 9 June 1808. A brief mention is made of the Asturian mission to England by J. G. de Arteche, *Guerra de la Independencia*, i. 379; M. Hume, *Modern Spain*, pp. 131, 132; and by C. Oman, *The Peninsular War*, i. 66.

¹⁸ Toreno, *Levantamiento*, i. 213, 214. See also *The Times*, 9 June 1808.

of the Asturian deputies, said that if the Spaniards were 'in earnest, and unanimous in their determination to preserve their country from the shame and degradation of submitting to a foreign yoke', England was bound by every dictate of honour and policy to furnish them all possible assistance. On the same day the deputies sent a note to Canning embodying their requests. They asked that an English cruiser should guard the Asturian coasts, that the inhabitants should be supplied with ammunition, cannon, swords, and sabres, and that munitions should also be sent to the interior provinces of Spain.¹⁹ On the 12th Canning answered that the king of England saw 'with the most kindly interest the loyal and brave determination of the principality of Asturias to maintain against the unprincipled usurpation of France a struggle for the restoration and independence of the Spanish monarchy', and that his Majesty was disposed 'to afford every assistance and support to an effort so magnanimous and praiseworthy'. The envoys were informed that military supplies would be sent from England to Gijón, and that a naval force would be detached to the Asturian coast to prevent the French from introducing troops by sea. 'I am commanded', said Canning, 'to declare to you his Majesty's willingness to extend his support to all such other parts of the Spanish monarchy as shall show themselves to be animated by the same spirit which animates the inhabitants of Asturias.'²⁰ The arrival of the envoys from Asturias was soon publicly referred to in Parliament. On 15 June Sheridan said that, if the spirit of the Asturians should spread through Spain, 'since the first burst of the French revolution, there never existed so happy an opportunity for Great Britain to strike a bold stroke for the rescue of the world'.²¹ In his reply Canning declared that the cabinet would not consider that 'a state of war' existed between Spain and Great Britain, and announced with emphasis that the primary object of Great Britain would be to conquer from France 'the complete integrity of the dominions of Spain in every quarter of the world'.²²

The province of Galicia soon followed the example of Asturias. On 15 June representatives of various districts met at Coruña and affirmed that, because of the king's captivity in France, they assumed the sovereignty of Ferdinand VII. They declared that they were independent of the government at Madrid, and that

¹⁹ Public Record Office, Foreign Office Correspondence, Spain, 66; W. R. de Villa-Urrutia, *Relaciones entre España é Inglaterra durante la Guerra de la Independencia*, i. 128, 129.

²⁰ Foreign Office Correspondence, Spain, 66 (draft). A slightly different text is given in the *Annual Register*, 1808, 321, 322; a Spanish translation may be found in Valdés, *Memorias*, p. 203.

²¹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, xi. 886-8.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 890, 891.

they were organizing an army to defend the legitimate rights of their sovereign as well as the liberty and honour of their country. The Galicians likewise commissioned two envoys, Francisco Sangro and Joaquín Freire de Andrade, to lay their case before the English government and appeal to England for aid against the French emperor.²³ On 26 June they arrived in London, where they were cordially received,²⁴ and soon afterwards presented their credentials to the English cabinet. In accordance with Sangro's instructions,²⁵ on 28 June they addressed a note to Canning expressing the hope that the generous government of England would aid them to restore their beloved sovereign, Ferdinand VII. They made four specific requests. First, they asked for a loan of two million duros, to be repaid as soon as money was received from America, or when the national government of Spain was established. Secondly, they desired passports for three frigates which were to sail from Spain for Vera Cruz, Buenos Aires, and Lima. Thirdly, they asked for the release of Spanish prisoners of war who were confined in England. Fourthly, they requested that a vessel should proceed to Galicia as soon as possible, in order to assure that province that England would send subsidies immediately.²⁶ Canning made a favourable reply,²⁷ and on 29 June Sangro informed the junta of Galicia that England would soon advance a subsidy of one million pesos, that Spanish soldiers who had been held as prisoners of war would be returned to Spain clothed and equipped, that an expedition of from eight to ten thousand men would be sent from Ireland to Vigo, and that passports would be granted to frigates destined for Spanish America.²⁸ On 30 June Canning sent to the Galician deputies admiralty passports for vessels which, in his words, were to proceed from Coruña or Ferrol to Buenos Aires, Lima, and Vera Cruz,

for the purpose of conveying to the Spanish dominions in South America intelligence of the loyal and brave determination of the kingdoms and provinces of Spain, to resist the tyranny and usurpation of France, and to maintain the independence and integrity of the Spanish monarchy.²⁹

In order to understand the significance of Canning's decision to support the Spanish patriots, it should be noticed that England had been seriously contemplating an attack upon the Spanish

²³ The jun of Galicia to 'V. M.', Coruña, 15 June 1808, Archivo Histórico Nacional, estado 71.

²⁴ Sangro to the junta of Galicia, 29 June 1808, *ibid.*

²⁵ 'Instrucciones reservadas pa. Sangro' (undated), *ibid.*

²⁶ Sangro and Freire to Canning, 28 June 1808, Foreign Office Correspondence, Spain, 66; Villa-Urrutia, *Relaciones entre España é Inglaterra*, pp. 144, 145.

²⁷ Canning to the Galician deputies, 29 June 1808, Foreign Office, Spain, 66.

²⁸ Archivo Histórico Nacional, estado 71.

²⁹ Canning to Sangro and Freire, 30 June 1808, Foreign Office, Spain, 66.

Indies. The chief promoter of the project was the remarkable Venezuelan, Francisco de Miranda, who on various occasions had urged England to intervene in Spanish America. He argued that this policy would enable England to inflict injury upon Napoleon's ally and to check any designs which France might form with regard to the colonial dominions of Spain. His belief was that, if he appeared upon the South American coast at the head of a liberating expedition, the oppressed inhabitants would rise in revolt; and he had even framed an elaborate constitution for an independent state to be founded in Spanish America. In 1808 Miranda had interested in this ambitious project Lord Castlereagh, the secretary for war and the colonies, and his friend, Sir Arthur Wellesley; and Wellesley had drawn up a plan for an attack upon the northern coast of South America with ten thousand soldiers, while Castlereagh had selected Wellesley to command the expedition. Wellesley had prepared detailed memoranda concerning the munitions necessary for the attack. A fleet was collected at Cork, and early in June 1808 thousands of soldiers were bivouacking upon the Irish coast ready to start.³⁰

But the news brought by the Asturian deputies caused England to make a radical change in her military plans. The result of the negotiations between the envoys of the Spanish patriots and Canning was that the English cabinet decided against dispatching Wellesley's force of about nine thousand men to the Indies. A dramatic scene occurred when Sir Arthur Wellesley broke the news to Miranda. Twenty-seven years later, he declared: 'I think I never had a more difficult business than when the government bade me tell Miranda that we would have nothing to do with his plan.'³¹ On 10 June, after mentioning Miranda, Wellesley, and the Asturian movement, *The Times* said that the expedition from Cork had been 'directed to proceed to Gibraltar instead of South America'. On the 30th Castlereagh instructed Wellesley that the object of the expedition was to counteract the designs of the French and to afford 'to the Spanish and Portuguese nations every possible aid in throwing off the yoke of France'; in accordance with the wishes of the envoys of Asturias and Galicia for a diversion in their favour, his soldiers were to be employed in 'the expulsion of the enemy from Portugal'; any military arrangement which he might make with the Spaniards or the Portuguese should be based upon the principle that the English policy was to restore and maintain 'the independence and integrity of their respective monarchies. . . . You will facilitate, as much as possible,' said Castlereagh,

³⁰ See my paper on 'Francisco de Miranda and the Revolutionizing of Spanish America' in the *American Historical Association Report*, 1907, i, especially pp. 399-413.

³¹ P. H. Stanhope, *Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, p. 69.

'communications between the respective provinces and colonies of Spain, and reconcile, by your good offices, any differences that may arise between them in the execution of the common purpose.'³² Two days earlier Castlereagh ordered General Spencer, who was in command of an English detachment on the coast of Portugal, to place himself under Wellesley's command.³³ The soldiers on the Irish coast were reinforced, and Wellesley left London to take charge. The embarkation of the soldiers and munitions was soon completed, and on 12 July the expedition sailed from Ireland.³⁴

On 4 July, in the king's speech to Parliament a reference was made to 'the loyal and determined spirit' which the Spanish people had displayed in their resistance to Napoleon.

Thus nobly struggling against the tyranny and usurpation of France, the Spanish nation can no longer be considered as the enemy of Great Britain; but is recognized by his majesty as a natural friend and ally. . . . His majesty has no other object than that of preserving unimpaired the integrity and independence of the Spanish monarchy.³⁵

On the same day a proclamation of peace with Spain was issued, which declared that all hostilities against Spain were to cease at once; the blockade of Spanish ports was to be raised, unless they were under French control; all Spanish vessels were to be freely admitted into English ports; Spanish vessels at sea were to be treated by the English as the property of a friendly nation; and all vessels and goods belonging to residents of the Spanish colonies which might be seized by English cruisers, were to be kept in English ports until it was known whether or not those colonies had made 'common cause with Spain against the power of France'.³⁶

Even before this proclamation was published, England had sent to Asturias the news of her favourable attitude towards the patriots. Peace and an alliance between England and Spain had been proclaimed at Oviedo by the junta acting in the name of Ferdinand VII.³⁷ On 6 July Canning sent to the agents of Asturias and Galicia a Spanish translation of the state papers of 4 July relating to Spain. In transmitting these documents Canning expressed the belief that the Asturian and Galician juntas would consider the sentiments expressed in the king's

³² *Wellington Dispatches*, ed. J. Gurwood, iv. 16-19.

³³ Castlereagh to Spencer, 28 June 1808, Public Record Office, War Office Correspondence, i. 326.

³⁴ Wellesley to Castlereagh, on board the *Bengal*, 12 July; *ibid.* 228. The departure of the expedition is mentioned in *The Times* of 19 July. Cf. Oman, *The Peninsular War*, i. 226.

³⁵ *Hansard's Debates*, xi. 1140, 1141.

³⁶ *The London Gazette*, no. 16150, 2 July-5 July 1808.

³⁷ *Correio Braziliense*, ii. 21, 22; Hunter to Canning, 20 June 1808, Foreign Office Correspondence, Spain, 62.

speech and the measures prescribed by the proclamation as 'the most convincing proof of the interest which his Majesty takes in the glorious struggle now maintained by the Spanish nation against the usurpation of France'.³⁸ A day before, Canning informed the Galician deputies that the king had appointed Mr. Charles Stuart to reside in Galicia and to manage the communications between that province and England.³⁹ Stuart was to proceed to Coruña on his Majesty's ship *Alcmene* in company with Joaquín Freire, and to inform the junta of Galicia that the *Alcmene* carried two hundred thousand pounds in Spanish dollars as a loan to the Galicians from the government of England. Stuart was advised that whenever the Spanish patriots established a general government, England would lose 'no time in sending an accredited minister to reside at the seat of government wherever it may be fixed'.⁴⁰ At the same time Mr. John Hunter was sent as consul to Gijón to superintend the communications between England and the principality of Asturias. At Hunter's suggestion, on 20 July, a *Gazeta Extraordinaria* at Oviedo printed a translation of the king's speech and of the proclamation of 4 July.⁴¹

But the Spanish patriotic juntas were not content to open the negotiations with England which led to concerted action against Napoleon: they were also anxious to inform the Spanish-American colonists of the stirring events that had occurred at home. On 21 June the Asturian envoys in London wrote to José de Iturrigaray, the viceroy of New Spain, to acquaint him with the course of events which we have related.⁴² They addressed a similar dispatch to the viceroy of Peru.⁴³ On 22 July Stuart reported to Canning from Coruña that he had just asked the Galician junta what measures had been taken 'for the purpose of inducing the principal authorities in the Spanish colonies in America to follow the example of Old Spain, and at once to oppose every effort for their subjugation which might be made on the part of the French government'; and that the junta had assured him that no time would be lost in sending vessels to Montevideo, Carthagena, and Vera Cruz.⁴⁴ Accordingly,

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Spain, 66; Archivo Histórico Nacional, estado 71.

³⁹ Archivo Histórico Nacional, estado 71.

⁴⁰ J. H. Rose, 'Canning and the Spanish Patriots in 1808', in the *American Historical Review*, xii. 40, 41. See further the *Gazeta Ministerial de Sevilla*, 30 August 1808.

⁴¹ Hunter to Canning, 27 July 1808, Foreign Office Correspondence, Spain, 57.

⁴² Matarrosa and La Vega to the viceroy, governor, and captain-general of New Spain, 21 June 1808, Foreign Office Correspondence, Spain, 66 (translation). See further G. García, *Documentos históricos mexicanos, Obra conmemorativa del primer Centenario de la Independencia de México*, ii. 84, 85, 100, 101, 133, 134.

⁴³ Lord Liverpool to Bowyer, 22 June 1809, Colonial Office Correspondence, Windward and Leeward Islands, 25.

⁴⁴ Foreign Office Correspondence, Spain, 57.

Admiral Ruiz Huidobro, who had just been appointed viceroy of La Plata, soon sailed to Montevideo on the frigate *La Prueba*; ⁴⁵ and a memorial from the junta of Galicia addressed to him was circulated in the viceroyalty of La Plata, declaring that all the kingdoms of Spain had taken up arms and established juntas 'which represented the authority and power of their king'. ⁴⁶

A junta which was formed in Seville took measures analogous to those in Asturias and Galicia. It commissioned Adrian Jacome and Juan Ruiz de Apodaca to proceed to London to make representations to the English cabinet; ⁴⁷ and on 6 June, ostentatiously assuming the title of 'the Supreme Governmental Junta of Spain and the Indies', it declared war on the French emperor. ⁴⁸ Brigadier José M. Goyeneche, whom it appointed commissioner to announce the measures which the Spaniards had taken against Napoleon and to solicit contributions for their support, ⁴⁹ proceeded to Buenos Aires, ⁵⁰ where an undated manifesto from it was published to the following purport:

The Americas, as loyal to their king as European Spain, cannot refrain from joining her in so just a cause. The power of Spain and the power of the Americas will become as one for their king, their laws, their mother-land, and their religion. The same evils threaten the Americas, if they do not unite, as those which have afflicted Europe: the destruction of the monarchy and the subversion of the government and laws. ⁵¹

In August the same junta sent Joaquín de Molina to Peru to inform the civil and military officials of the situation in the Peninsula and of the imperative necessity of preserving the bonds which united the American colonies to Spain; ⁵² and dispatched another commissioner, Captain Juan José San Llorente, to the viceroyalty of New Granada on a similar mission. ⁵³ Likewise, it dispatched two commissioners, Colonel Manuel Jáuregui and Captain Juan Jabat, to the West Indies and the viceroyalty of

⁴⁵ J. Presas, *Memorias secretas de la Princesa del Brazil*, 42-7.

⁴⁶ G. René-Moreno, *Últimos Días coloniales en el Alto-Perú*, i, 338, n. 2.

⁴⁷ *Gazeta ministerial de Sevilla*, 19 August 1808; Jacome and Apodaca to Canning, 18 July 1808, Foreign Office Correspondence, Spain, 66.

⁴⁸ A copy of the proclamation is found in Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente General, estante 146, cajón 1, legajo 13.

⁴⁹ Florida Blanca to Marqués de Baxamar, 26 September 1808; the Audiencia of Buenos Aires to 'S.M.', 21 January 1809; and 'Testimonio de la Real Audiencia', Buenos Aires, 14 August 1808, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Buenos Aires, 123. 2. 3; P. Torres Lanzas, *Independencia de América*, primera serie, i, 47, 51, 52.

⁵⁰ 'Testimonio de la Real Audiencia de Buenos Aires', 14 August 1808, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Buenos Aires, 123. 2. 3; *Documentos relativos á los Antecedentes de la Independencia de la República Argentina*, 146-9.

⁵¹ René-Moreno, *Últimos Días coloniales*, i, 331.

⁵² *Documentos relativos á los Antecedentes de la Independencia de la República Argentina*, 39-41.

⁵³ *Índice de los Papeles de la Junta central suprema gubernativa del Reino y del Consejo de Regencia*, 51.

New Spain.⁵⁴ On 7 November, in accordance with its wishes, the Council of the Indies addressed a circular to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, as well as the corporations, of Spanish America directing them to obey the decrees of the 'Supreme Governmental Junta of Spain and the Indies' as the depository of the authority of Ferdinand VII.⁵⁵

The arrival in London of the envoys from Asturias not only caused England to dispatch the expedition which had been destined for South America to the Iberian Peninsula, but also induced her cabinet to send special instructions to English officials in America. As early as 20 June, Lord Castlereagh informed the duke of Manchester, governor of Jamaica, that, as the insurrection in Asturias revived the hope of restoring the Spanish monarchy, the English government 'wished to suspend any measure tending to divide and therefore to weaken that monarchy'.⁵⁶ The duke was instructed to present those views in any correspondence which he might open with the viceroy of New Spain.⁵⁷ On 22 June Castlereagh ordered General Bowyer, commanding the English forces in the Leeward Islands, to forward to the Spanish-American colonies certain communications of the Asturian envoys.⁵⁸ Bowyer was instructed that if there were any reason to apprehend an attack by the French upon any of the Spanish-American colonies, England would support the resistance of those colonies 'by a sufficient force'.⁵⁹ Copies of the proclamation announcing the cessation of hostilities between England and Spain, as well as of the king's speech to Parliament, were soon sent to him for circulation in the Spanish-American colonies.⁶⁰ An English officer, Captain Christie, who carried the news of the altered relations between England and Spain from Curaçao to Caracas, declared that many colonists 'were clamorous for a declaration of independence with British protection'.⁶¹ On 12 March 1809,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 50, 52; *Documentos históricos mexicanos*, ii. 78, 84, 86, 94. More or less accurate news of the changes in Spain ultimately reached Chile, the most distant American colony of Spain: *Colección de Historiadores y de Documentos relativos á la Independencia de Chile*, viii. 9, 18, 24.

⁵⁵ J. F. Blanco, *Documentos para la Historia de la Vida pública del Libertador de Colombia, Perú, y Bolivia*, ii. 178, 179. The Council of the Indies, on 7 October 1808, sent to the viceroy of La Plata a copy of a letter which had been written by the Count of Florida Blanca to Marquis Baxamar on 26 September, announcing the formation of the supreme junta at Aranjuez: this announcement was printed at Buenos Aires: *Archivo General de Indias*, Audiencia de Buenos Aires, 123. 2. 3.

⁵⁶ Vane, *Correspondence of Castlereagh*, vi. 375.

⁵⁷ Colonial Office Correspondence, Jamaica, 64.

⁵⁸ Castlereagh to Bowyer, 22 June 1808, Colonial Office Correspondence, Windward and Leeward Islands, 25.

⁵⁹ Vane, *Correspondence of Castlereagh*, vi. 375.

⁶⁰ Castlereagh to Bowyer, 7 July 1808, Colonial Office Correspondence, Windward and Leeward Islands, 25.

⁶¹ Christie to Cockburn, 1 August 1808, Colonial Office Transmissions, Curaçao, 668.

on hearing a rumour that Charles IV had 'been embarked on board a French frigate destined to convey him to Buenos Aires with a view of distracting the attention of the Spaniards in South America, and shaking their allegiance to Ferdinand VII', Canning wrote to Lord Strangford, the English minister at Rio de Janeiro, and instructed him that as the English king had acknowledged Ferdinand VII, England could give 'no countenance to any attempt whatever' which might be made 'to interfere in the government of the Spanish settlements in South America'.⁶²

The movements in Spain, as well as the results of the battle of Trafalgar, made it impossible for Napoleon to take effective measures to exert his power in the Indies. On 2 August 1808 the five ministers of King Joseph declared to him that the weakest part of Napoleon's Spanish policy was 'the conservation of the Indies'. They frankly expressed their conviction that the Indies were lost to Spain.⁶³ In truth, the reports and rumours of the startling events which were happening in Spain had far-reaching results in the Three Americas. The news of the abdication of Charles IV evoked many manifestations of loyalty to Ferdinand VII, who was formally proclaimed king in important cities throughout Spanish America: Mexico City,⁶⁴ Caracas,⁶⁵ Chuquisaca,⁶⁶ and Buenos Aires.⁶⁷ In some parts of the Indies the news concerning the transfer of the Spanish crown to the Napoleonic dynasty produced a ferment. On 11 August 1808 Viceroy Iturrigaray issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of New Spain, on the advice of a junta, announcing that it had pledged itself to obey no orders of the emperor of the French.⁶⁸ The *audiencia* and the *cabildo* of Buenos Aires decided to cast De Sassenay's dispatches into the flames.⁶⁹ Two French emissaries who conveyed the news of the Napoleonic usurpations to Caracas fled precipitately from the infuriated inhabitants.⁷⁰ In various cities of Spanish America the news of the formation of local juntas in the Spanish Peninsula created a desire to imitate that example.⁷¹ Some colonial leaders claimed that the deposition of Ferdinand

⁶² Foreign Office Correspondence, Portugal (Brazil), 68.

⁶³ A. Du Casse, *Mémoires et correspondance politique et militaire du Roi Joseph*, iv. 467.

⁶⁴ J. E. Hernández y Dávalos, *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Guerra de Independencia de México de 1808 á 1821*, i. 495-505.

⁶⁵ Blanco, *Documentos*, ii. 110, 111.

⁶⁶ René-Moreno, *Últimos Días coloniales*, i. 240, 306, note 1.

⁶⁷ *Documentos relativos á los Antecedentes de la Independencia de la República argentina*, 14-16. ⁶⁸ García, *Documentos históricos mexicanos*, ii. 60, 61.

⁶⁹ *Documentos relativos á los Antecedentes de la Independencia de la República argentina*, 144, 145.

⁷⁰ Blanco, *Documentos*, ii. 166, 167; W. H. Smyth, *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver*, pp. 335, 336.

⁷¹ Blanco, *Documentos*, ii. 171-4; *Documentos relativos á los Antecedentes de la Independencia de la República argentina*, 31, 38; García, *Documentos históricos mexicanos*, ii, especially pp. 75, 104-5.

VII had destroyed the link which connected Spain and her colonies.⁷² The establishment, in 1810, of provisional juntas of government in certain important cities of Spanish America—juntas which assumed the authority of viceroys and captains-general, while loudly professing their fidelity to Ferdinand VII⁷³—was the logical result of the events of 1808. For this reason, in 1828, a verbose writer on the Mexican revolution, Carlos María Bustamante, thus extravagantly apostrophized the emperor of the French: 'Napoleon Bonaparte . . . to you, immortal genius, to you Spanish America owes the liberty and independence which she to-day enjoys! Your sword struck the first blow at the chain which bound the two worlds!' ⁷⁴

In truth, the events of 1808 marked an epoch in the history of two hemispheres. The Asturian rising signalized the beginning of the war of the peoples. The war between England and Spain came to an end; and an understanding between the English cabinet and the Spanish patriots was arrived at. The Spanish movement not only helped to frustrate Napoleon's designs upon Spain's empire, but it also thwarted England's project against the Spanish colonies. For, after the middle of 1808, Canning strove to preserve the integrity of Spain with the Indies against French aggression. Napoleon's policy towards Spain furnished some precedents for her liberal statesmen: a written constitution, the re-establishment of the Cortes, and the concession of constitutional rights to the American colonists. Napoleon's usurpations in Spain proved that the magnificent empire of Charles IV was an ill-cemented mosaic. Spain broke into fragments which tended to correspond in extent to her ancient kingdoms. Her disruption greatly impaired the prestige of the monarchy in the New World. Although certain economic, religious, and political conditions in the Indies had provoked disaffection there, yet it was not until after Ferdinand VII was forced to renounce his rights to the Spanish crown that the protracted revolution against Spanish rule began. The inflammable tinder that lay scattered throughout the vast dominions of Spain in America was lighted by Napoleon's hand. In time the map of the Three Americas revealed the shadowy outlines of a new group of states.

WILLIAM SPENCE ROBERTSON.

⁷² A letter of J. G. Roscio, of Venezuela, to Andrés Bello, 29 June 1810, expressing that view, is printed in M. L. Amunátegui's *Vida de Don Andrés Bello*, p. 83. Similar views were expressed by Melchor Talamantes in Mexico in 1808; see his 'Representación nacional de las colonias', in Garoía, *Documentos históricos mexicanos*, vii, especially pp. 393, 394. The argument of Mariano Moreno in 1810 is found in the *Gaceta de Buenos Aires*, 6 December 1810.

⁷³ See my paper on 'The Beginnings of Spanish-American Diplomacy', in F. J. Turner, *Essays in American History*, pp. 235-7.

⁷⁴ *Campañas del general D. Félix María Calleja*, p. 5.