

Popular Royalists, Empire, and Politics in Southwestern New Granada, 1809–1819

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During the first decade of the nineteenth century, as Napoleon Bonaparte invaded the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish monarchy entered into a transformation unlike any other it had experienced since it claimed possession of the Americas. The replacement of King Fernando VII on the throne by Napoleon's brother José in 1808 started a crisis of sovereignty felt from Madrid to Oaxaca to Tucumán, and all Spanish vassals were confronted with novel opportunities in the changing political landscape. In every corner of Spanish America, men and women faced the *vacatio regis* and adjusted to the liberal experiment taking form in the peninsula, as Spanish liberals unified to resist the French invasion. Their multiple and varied responses gave shape to anticolonial movements, in some cases, and in others were expressed through a renewed, full-fledged royalism.

Since 1809 the Province of Popayán, encompassing the Pacific lowlands mining district and the Andean city of Pasto, had been a site of royalist resistance to the diverse autonomist and revolutionary projects that emerged in the viceroyalty of New Granada (colonial Colombia).¹ Indians from the Pasto

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1. The viceroyalty of New Granada replaced the New Kingdom of Granada in 1717. Within New Granada there were two *audiencias* or high courts, one in Santa Fe (the capital of the viceroyalty) and the other in Quito. The southwestern province of Popayán was

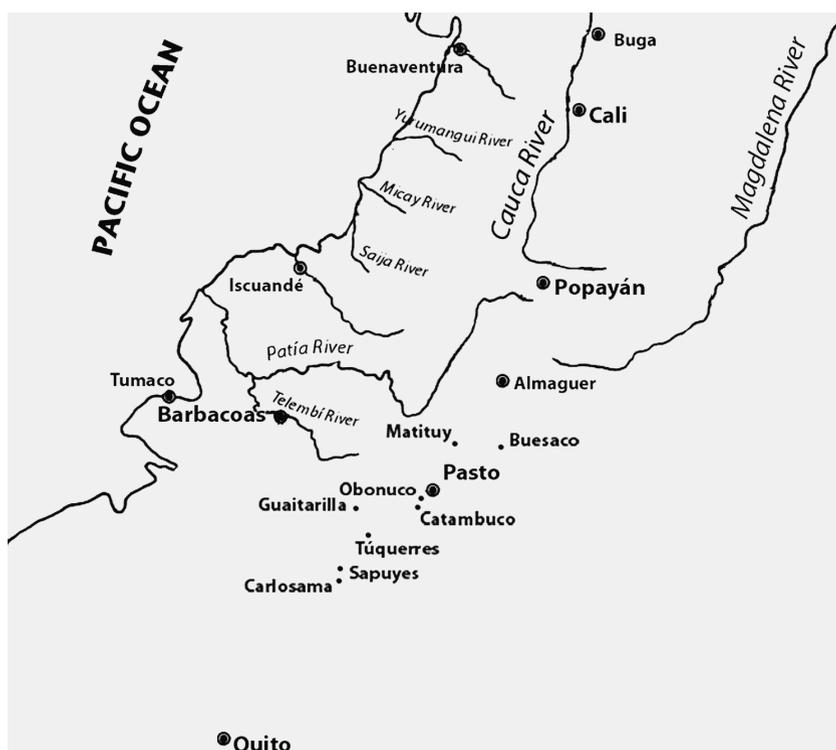


Figure 1. Popayán and Environs, 1808–1820

highlands, African slaves from the mines to the west, and local military officers defended the region from the insurgency that emerged in southwestern New Granada.

In 1809 the insurgency in New Granada was based upon the defense of local sovereignty in the face of the Napoleonic invasion, but by 1810 it had grown into

administered through the latter audiencia. Characterized by its large native population, since the sixteenth century Popayán combined the *encomienda* system, which gave Spanish or creole elites control over the economic surplus of Indians, with African slavery, which constituted a mobile and flexible labor source. Kris E. Lane, “The Transition from Encomienda to Slavery in Seventeenth-Century Barbacoas (Colombia),” *Slavery & Abolition* 21, no. 1 (2000): 73–95. By the eighteenth century Popayán had become a “slave society.” See Germán Colmenares, *Historia económica y social de Colombia*, vol. 1, *Popayán: Una sociedad esclavista, 1680–1800* (1979; Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1999); Sherwin Bryant, “Finding Gold, Forming Slavery: The Creation of a Classic Slave Society, Popayán, 1600–1700,” *The Americas* 63, no. 1 (2006): 81–112.

a full-blown independence project.² Similarly, royalism underwent transformation. It had begun as an absolutist reaction to the local juntas that were created by the municipal councils in major cities throughout the viceroyalty, such as Cartagena, Santa Fe, and Cali. However, royalism in New Granada shifted because of changes at both imperial and local levels. At the imperial level, the most notable transformation in the period came with the liberal precepts of the Spanish Cortes, an assembly of deputies from all the regions that composed the monarchy, established by the ruling group in Spain in 1810. In all Spanish territories the application of the decrees of the Cortes and the institutionalization of the 1812 Constitution brought major changes to political relations. At the local level, the formation of Quito's 1809 junta sparked an unprecedented reaction by the government, altering royalist politics in southwestern New Granada. The governor of Popayán radically broke with imperial political arrangements and with the customs that had previously framed local politics by seeking an alliance with the Indian communities in Pasto and with the thousands of slaves who labored in the mines and haciendas. Popular royalism took on a new meaning as Indians and slaves saw an opportunity to gain new power and to redefine the terms of their relation to the royalist elites.

The historiography of Latin American independence has recently begun to focus on Indians, people of African descent, and other popular groups and their active participation in independence movements, examining the ways in which they appropriated and radicalized the principles of the revolutionary enlightenment. Some earlier works assumed that popular groups were not drawn to anticolonial politics either because they had little awareness of the larger political context or because their interests were essentially different from the modernizing thrust of the elites.³ In the last two decades, authors have countered

2. Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006); José María Portillo Valdés, *Crisis Atlántica: Autonomía e independencia en la crisis de la monarquía hispánica* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006).

3. The first argument is characteristic of nineteenth-century foundational nationalist narratives, such as José Manuel Restrepo, *Historia de la revolución de la República de Colombia en la América meridional* (1827; Besanzon: Imprenta de José Jacquin, 1958). The most recent work investigating the emergence of nationalist principles among New Granadans is Margarita Garrido, *Reclamos y representaciones: Variaciones sobre la política en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, 1770–1815* (Bogotá: Colección Bibliográfica del Banco de la República, 1993). The second argument was espoused by authors writing from a materialist perspective, such as John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808–1826* (1973; New York: W. W. Norton, 1986); Brian Hamnett, *Revolución y contrarrevolución en México y el Perú: Liberalismo, realista y separatismo* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1978); Heraclio Bonilla et al., *La independencia en el Perú* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos,

those premises with wide evidence about the military involvement of subalterns in the independence cause and their political engagement with republican and liberal ideas. This debate has flourished in the field of Latin American history from Mexico to the Caribbean to the Andes, and today it is almost impossible to overlook that Indians, slaves, mestizos, or free blacks were aware and part of the revolutionary currents that cut across the Atlantic world.⁴

By focusing exclusively on popular republicanism and ignoring the cross-class and multiethnic appeal of royalism, such interpretations tend to reinscribe, albeit from a subaltern perspective, a modernizing narrative of independence and liberal revolution.⁵ At the time, in fact, royalism was a broadly available option for political identification. This essay will look closely at Popayán dur-

1981). Recently this latter view was reinstated by Bonilla, "Rey o República: El dilema de los indios frente a la independencia," in *Independencia y transición a los estados nacionales en los países andinos: Nuevas perspectivas*, ed. Armando Martínez Garnica (Bucaramanga: Universidad Industrial de Santander / Bogotá: Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos, 2005); Jairo Gutiérrez Ramos, *Los indios de Pasto contra la República (1809–1824)* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2007); Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and Struggle for Independence* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2001).

4. See Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004); Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1999); Peter F. Guardino, *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750–1850* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2005); Peter F. Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800–1857* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996); Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia 1795–1831* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2007); Mimi Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica* (Gainesville: Univ. of Florida Press, 2001); Camilla Townsend, "Half My Body Free, the Other Half Enslaved: The Politics of the Slaves of Guayaquil at the End of the Colonial Era," *Colonial Latin American Review* 7, no. 1 (1998): 105–28; Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*; Aline Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770–1835* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004).

5. In the last two decades scholars have reemphasized the revolutionary and modernizing character of Latin American independence movements focusing on the political-institutional transformations started during the independence process. See Francois-Xavier Guerra, *Modernidad e independencias: Ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas* (Madrid: MAPFRE, FCE, 1993); Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *The Independence of Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998); Jaime E. Rodríguez O., ed., *Revolución, independencia y las nuevas naciones de América* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 2005); Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *La revolución política durante la época de la independencia: El reino de Quito, 1808–1822* (Quito: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Corporación Editora Nacional, 2006).

ing this period to demonstrate that structural factors such as race, poverty, and oppression did not determine the response of different groups to the crisis of the monarchy.

My research also illustrates the relevance of colonial political dynamics for the study of independence. Understanding the emergence of royalist alliances in the context of independence challenges the representation of the colonial world as benighted, irrational, and ultimately prepolitical. Throughout centuries of Iberian rule, all Spanish-American subjects were variously invested in imperial structures of rights and identities. My interpretation is based on insights into the ways in which Indians and slaves positioned themselves as political actors in the context of empire and how their particular political histories determined their negotiation with royalist factions during the independence process, when, for both groups, militia service became an avenue toward social mobility and provided new means of protecting and expanding their rights.⁶

Notions of rights and freedom should not be exclusively circumscribed to liberal, republican, or Enlightenment thought and institutions, because they were also part of colonial society and Hispanic and monarchical political culture.⁷ Both Indians and slaves were engaged with the Hispanic discourse of justice, and they appropriated monarchical values for individual and collective gains and empowerment.⁸ With independence far from assured (or even neces-

6. Marcela Echeverri, "Popular Royalists and Revolution in Colombia: Nationalism and Empire, 1780–1820" (PhD diss., New York Univ., 2008).

7. Charles Cutter, "The Legal Culture of Spanish America on the Eve of Independence," in *Judicial Institutions in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, ed. Eduardo Zimmermann (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, Univ. of London, 1999), 9.

8. Recent works have explored the discourse of law and Spanish political ideology and their importance among popular groups: for slaves, Sherwin Bryant, "Enslaved Rebels, Fugitives, and Litigants: The Resistance Continuum in Colonial Quito," *Colonial Latin American Review* 13, no. 1 (2004): 7–46; María Elena Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670–1780* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000); Alejandro de la Fuente, "Slaves and the Creation of Legal Rights in Cuba: *Coartación* and *Papel*," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 87, no. 4 (2007): 659–92; Marcela Echeverri, "'Enraged to the Limit of Despair': Infanticide and Slave Judicial Strategies in Barbacoas, 1789–1798," *Slavery & Abolition* 30, no. 3 (2009): 403–26; for Indians, Brian P. Owensby, *Empire of Law and Indian Justice in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2008); Sergio Serulnikov, *Subverting Colonial Authority: Challenges to Spanish Rule in Eighteenth-Century Southern Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003); Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2008). For a simultaneous look at Indians and Africans, see Rachel S. O'Toole, "In a War Against the Spanish: Andean Protection and African Resistance on the Northern Peruvian Coast,"

sarily desired), it was precisely the content and form of these Hispanic political relations that royalist Indians and slaves sought to redefine. Indians and slaves were perceived by royalist elites as valuable allies, and for that reason elites were willing to negotiate and offer concessions to secure their loyalty.

In this article I describe the complex negotiations that took place with Indians over tribute payment and with slaves over freedom. These accounts are missing from independence narratives, which assumed that Indians and blacks participated as royalists primarily as cannon fodder and always on disadvantageous terms.⁹ Yet negotiations were intrinsic to any popular participation in the war; this aspect has been extensively explored in the case of popular republicans but remains understudied for royalists.¹⁰

In the last decade a few historians have addressed royalism, acknowledging the mobilizing power of monarchist discourse in Spanish America in diverse independence contexts.¹¹ Thus far it is Eric Van Young's definition of indig-

The Americas 63, no. 1 (2006): 19–52; and Renée Soulodre-La France, “‘Whites and Mulattos, Our Enemies’: Race Relations and Popular Political Culture in New Granada,” in *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Matthew Restall (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2005), 137–58.

9. Restrepo, *Historia de la Revolución de la República de Colombia*. Studies of militia service in the Spanish context recount the multiple ways in which Indians and free or enslaved Africans were able to better their condition by allying with the crown. The government was often open to incorporating subalterns into its project of expanding frontiers or controlling rebel groups of Indians or maroons. See Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2006); Ben Vinson III and Matthew Restall, “Black Soldiers, Native Soldiers: Meanings of Military Service in the Spanish American Colonies,” in Restall, *Beyond Black and Red*, 15–52.

10. See Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*; Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1990); Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*; Lasso, *Myths of Harmony*; Peter Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom: Slave Soldiers and the Wars of Independence in Spanish South America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008).

11. For Peru in the post-Bolivarian period, see Cecilia Méndez, *The Plebeian Republic: The Huanta Rebellion and the Making of the Peruvian State, 1820–1850* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2005). Jaime E. Rodríguez O., “Las primeras elecciones constitucionales en el Reino de Quito, 1809–1814 y 1821–1822,” *Revista Procesos* 14 (1999), and Rodríguez, *La revolución política* are the first to acknowledge the importance of the institutionalization of the Cádiz Constitution for the transformation of royalist politics in the American context. Rebecca Earle deals with royalism across New Granada in *Spain and the Independence of Colombia* (Exeter: Univ. of Exeter Press, 2000); Steinar Saether focuses on the Caribbean provinces of Santa Marta and Riohacha, the other region with widespread popular royalism in New Granada. Steinar Saether, *Identidades e independencia en Santa Marta y*

enous peasant monarchism as naïve which has become a fundamental reference for interpreting popular conceptions of the king and monarchic power.¹² In his work on Mexican independence, Van Young explains monarchism as a result of Indian mystification of the image of the Spanish king.¹³ This notion of naïve monarchism segregates royalism during the independence wars from the political history of Indians in the Hispanic imperial context. By doing so, it continues to support the parochial image of Indians and reproduces an understanding of royalism as static.¹⁴

I do not approach popular royalism as a mystification but seek to explain it in terms of a practical, strategic political consciousness. Opposed to earlier

Riobacha, 1750–1850 (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2005). David Sartorius studies black loyalism in nineteenth-century Cuba in “Limits of Loyalty: Race and the Public Sphere in Cienfuegos, Cuba, 1845–1898” (PhD diss., Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2003).

12. Scholars of Latin America have adapted Van Young’s notion of subalterns’ mystified view of the king. It was echoed in Matt Childs’s work on the Aponte rebellion in Cuba as well as in Renée Soloudre-La France’s work on New Granada, both studies of slave political action in colonial contexts. Matt Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006); Renée Soloudre-La France, “‘Los esclavos de su Magestad’: Slave Protest and Politics in Late Colonial New Granada,” in *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Jane G. Landers and Barry M. Robinson (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2006). Van Young’s approach also has been critiqued; see for example Luis Miguel Glave, “Las otras rebeliones: Cultura popular e independencias,” *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 62, no. 1 (2005): 275–312; and Mark Morris, “Language in Service of the State: The Nahuatl Counterinsurgency Broadside of 1810,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (2007): 438.

13. Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*, 382. In his earlier work this author associated naïve monarchism and messianic beliefs with backwardness and ignorance among Indians. See Van Young, “Quetzalcóatl, King Ferdinand, and Ignacio Allende Go to the Seashore; or Messianism and Mystical Kingship in Mexico, 1800–1821,” in *The Independence of Mexico and the Creation of the New Nation*, ed. Jaime E. Rodríguez O. (Los Angeles, UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1989), 115.

14. The profound impact of Indians on Spanish law has been explored by R. Jovita Baber, “The Construction of Empire: Politics, Law and Community in Tlaxcala, New Spain, 1521–1640” (PhD diss., Univ. of Chicago, 2005); Echeverri, “Popular Royalists and Revolution”; Owensby, *Empire of Law*; Serulnikov, *Subverting Colonial Authority*. Challenging Van Young’s approach, Peter Guardino has rightly stated that “the fact that peasant social and cultural aspirations were centered on life in the village” is not exclusive of their connection to “allies, discourses, or symbols from the outside world.” Furthermore, “whether peasants acted within grand social movements or through seemingly petty lawsuits, they were involved in a political system that extended much farther than one could see from the top of the village bell tower.” Guardino, *The Time of Liberty*, 286.

interpretations of royalism as naïve or irrational, my definition of royalism also avoids espousing rationalist or utilitarian notions of politics and identity.¹⁵ I emphasize contingency in the relation of Indians and slaves to royalism, situating that relationship against the background of imperial legal and political discourses. Since these were constantly changing, royalism was dynamic and redefined on the ground by all colonial subjects.

Furthermore, by focusing on the pre-Bolivarian period, this work contributes to the study of royalism at a time when the liberal republics had not yet been established. It therefore proves that royalism can be seen in a “positive” or creative way and not merely as a reaction. For example, the opinion that Indians turned to royalism as a rejection of the (later) liberal offensive on their traditional rights and territories does not accurately explain royalism at the beginning of the war. My study of the 1809–19 period asserts that at this stage royalism was open to multiple interpretations due to the shifts in imperial politics between liberal and absolutist principles and institutions. Local dynamics following the start of the monarchic crisis reveal previously unrecognized complexities and nuances in the periodization of independence.

Freedom and Imperial Rights: Slave Royalists in Popayán

In 1809, confronted with the creation of an autonomist junta in Quito, Popayán governor Miguel Tacón focused his concerns on the large population of slaves living in the Pacific lowlands in order to attract the attention of the authorities in Santa Fe and get military support from the viceregal capital. The governor wrote to the viceroy, “We should keep in mind that the number of black slaves in this province is between fifteen and twenty thousand and that the plans of the seditious [junta in Quito] must be to stir up a revolt among these slaves to distract our attention.”¹⁶ With the heightened fear that the Quito “rebels” would

15. An interesting discussion about the risks of falling into cultural reductionism and mechanistic voluntarism when adopting a pragmatic perspective on political culture can be found in Nils Jacobsen and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada, “The Long and the Short of It: A Pragmatic Perspective on Political Cultures, Especially for the Modern History of the Andes,” in *Political Cultures in the Andes, 1750–1950*, ed. Nils Jacobsen and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2005), 20.

16. Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid, hereinafter AHN), Consejos 21674, exp. 1, doc. 5. The Pacific lowlands in New Granada had evolved into a large mining center since the seventeenth century. Originally the city of Barbaças was the most important, governing over the rivers of Telembí and Patía. During the eighteenth century, pacification of local Indians occurred in the northern region and the mining frontier

take control of Barbacoas and the “six thousand *negros* destined for labor in such mines,” Tacón headed south to confront the danger. The governor’s priority was to approach mining communities in the Pacific lowlands and guarantee the government’s control over the region’s slaves.¹⁷

Once the conflict between the cities of Popayán and Quito receded, Governor Tacón had to confront new challenges from the northern city of Cali (also part of Popayán Province). Because the main source of wealth in Popayán was gold extraction, and the mining economy was linked to the hacienda economy based in Popayán as well as in Cali, conflicts between elites in this region during the war years gave enslaved people the opportunity to become fundamental political actors, both as objects of contention and as potential militia conscripts. Conscious of Tacón’s need for allies, enslaved black individuals and communities in the Pacific lowlands devised multiple strategies of freedom that contributed to the destabilization of old political relations and of slavery in the region.

In 1811, Gerónimo Torres, owner of the San Juan mine located along the Micay River, registered a complaint with the government of Popayán in which he denounced the insurrection of his slave gangs as the result of Governor Tacón’s call for slaves to join him in defending the king’s sovereignty in Popayán Province. Torres claimed that the slave gangs had been misled and stirred up by two royalist army deserters who told the slaves that Tacón had decreed their freedom.

Given that the insurrection of Torres’s slave gangs had been sparked “by the false news of the declaration of freedom of slaves,” the simplest way to counter such a movement and return the slaves to their subordinate status was to declare that the government had never decreed a “provision of freedom.” Tacón’s response, which did not find the slaves’ actions criminal or rebellious, recognized implicitly that the government bore a certain degree of responsibility for the situation. That the government interpreted the slaves’ actions as a “‘misunderstanding’ rather than as a strike for freedom” also reflected the suc-

expanded to the rivers Micay, Timbiquí, Saija, Naya, Cajambre, Raposo, and Yurumanguí with centers in the towns of Guapi, Micay, and Iscuandé. See Anthony McFarlane, *Colombia before Independence: Economy, Society, and Politics under Bourbon Rule* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), chap. 3; Robert West, *Colonial Placer Mining in Colombia* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1952).

17. AHN, Consejos 21674, exp. 1, doc. 23; Archivo Nacional del Ecuador (Quito, hereinafter ANE), Popayán 294. Peter Blanchard makes reference to this case in his recent book, yet he does not analyze the contingencies of the process through which Tacón negotiated with slaves in southwestern New Granada. See Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom*, 20.

cess of the slaves' strategy because, as another scholar has noted, "by claiming royalist approval for rising in rebellion, slaves provided a recognized justification to explain their actions in a colony governed by a monarchical paradigm."¹⁸

Tacón's subsequent communication to the slaves at the mines aimed to prove and officially state that the government had not emancipated the slaves. Exactly what version the two deserters told the slaves is lost to us. In any case, the rumor of emancipation permitted the slaves in San Juan to open an important path, symbolic and practical, toward the freeing of the whole slave gang in January 1811. They drew strength from the idea of the governor's promise of freedom to slaves and proceeded to take and defend their own freedom by sending an announcement to their masters in the city, "advising them that they should no longer count on their slaves or the mine because the mine was now theirs and they were free."¹⁹ Such a move was not only based on the news the slaves received about the alleged declaration of freedom by Tacón, however. A year before, in 1810, slaves in the San Juan mine had revolted because of rumors that "a black queen had arrived in the Americas bringing freedom to the slaves, and slave owners were trying to hide her." For that reason, according to the mine owner, Gerónimo Torres, slaves "began meeting at night in juntas to take measures to shake off obedience."²⁰ Thus we see that even before the arrival of rumors of emancipation by the government, slaves had been pursuing different avenues to secure their freedom. They had established a political organization, their own juntas, to accomplish their goals. The strategic combination of those two different rumors speaks of the practical importance that rumor had among slaves and illustrates how, as Julius Scott wrote, "local black activists themselves created, transmitted, and utilized combinations of news and rumor to advance their interests independently."²¹

How the rumor originated about a black queen granting freedom to slaves in 1810–11 cannot be easily or satisfactorily explained. It could be that an African or otherwise black royal arrived somewhere in the Americas, representing hopes of freedom for enslaved blacks.²² It is telling that the story shares

18. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba*, 160.

19. Archivo Central del Cauca (Popayán, hereinafter ACC), Independencia CIII 2g 6596, fol. iv.

20. *Ibid.*, fol. i.

21. Julius Scott, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution" (PhD diss., Duke Univ., 1986), 117.

22. Throughout the Atlantic world, enslaved Africans had a tradition of electing kings and queens at festivals or celebrations. It might be possible that slaves were referring to an actual black female leader who was promoting ideas of emancipation among enslaved black

two fundamental elements with other emancipation rumors circulating among enslaved people at the time. First, the slaves said that the slave owners and local authorities were hiding the black queen, which resembles the notion that the ones preventing justice were the white local elites. Second, the monarchic element in the rumor about the black queen suggests that the monarchy was in itself a symbol of justice. This means that emancipation and freedom were not exclusive of monarchic symbolism or imagination in the minds of the slaves.

Slaves who referred to royal decrees in order to legitimate their freedom were acting politically according to their available political choices. Furthermore, it suggests their sophisticated understanding of political institutions and authority and of their legal condition in a slave society. By invoking the principle of the justice of freedom granted by a king, slaves were recognizing royal authority, which allowed them to legitimize their own pleas and struggles, even if through revolt.²³

The controversy sparked by the royalists' alliance with slaves was heightened during Cali insurgents' march toward the city of Popayán. Facing the fear of imminent invasion, the Popayán municipal council agreed to offer freedom to those slaves who took up arms in defense of the royalist party. The council drafted those plans and included them in the minutes of the meeting of March 10, 1811, noting that the existence of thousands of slaves in the province was increasingly complicated by the fact that slave owners sympathetic to the insurgents were publicly affirming that "the time had come to break the chains of

communities. For Cuba, see Philip A. Howard, *Changing History: Afro-Cuban Cabildos and Societies of Color in the Nineteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1998). For the Brazilian case, see Elizabeth Kiddy, "Who is the King of Congo? A New Look at African and Afro-Brazilian Kings in Brazil," in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, ed. Linda M. Heywood (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 153–82. Thanks to Michael Gomez for discussing this issue with me.

23. As Matt Childs has shown, the 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba drew on rumors about decrees from the Cortes in Cádiz, as well as from the kings of Spain, England, Kongo, and Haiti (Henri Cristophe, crowned in June). See Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba*, chap. 5. In addition to the rebellion in Cuba, in the year 1811 slave rebellions or conspiracies occurred in New Orleans, Santo Domingo, and Martinique. See Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776–1848* (1988; London: Verso, 2000); Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture / Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004), chap. 3; David P. Geggus, "Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean," in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, ed. David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1997).

slavery, tyranny, and despotism, and to recover freedom,” creating an unstable environment and powerful rhetoric for slave revolts.²⁴

The municipal council was aware of a general uprising among slaves in the Pacific lowlands. In 1811 in the mine of Yurumanguí, owned by the Valencia family, a revolt occurred similar to the one that had broken out at San Juan. Once slaves there “understood the aggression” that the confederate cities of the Cauca Valley (led by Cali) planned against the capital city of Popayán, to separate from Popayán’s jurisdiction and deny Spanish sovereignty, the slaves claimed they “had remained enslaved to their masters given that these were vassals of the king, [and the king] guaranteed the slaves protection against excessive violence and cruel treatment; yet if the latter ceased to do so the slaves would remain vassals of the king and enjoy the same freedom as other vassals had.”²⁵ In other words, the slaves promised to remain faithful to the king and to oppose the insurgents of Cali and Popayán.²⁶ As in the early years of the Saint Domingue Revolution studied by Laurent Dubois, “slave rebels became the allies of imperial power,” advocating an imperial relationship that benefited them.²⁷

Royalist miners and mine owners who confronted the revolting slaves tried to persuade the slaves to end their seemingly legal insurrection, given that they, as royalists, were not giving up their respect for the legitimate authorities. The slaves then responded that other slave gangs had threatened them that “if they did not pursue their freedom they would be persecuted and treated as enemies”; this obliged them to continue defending their freedom.²⁸ Along the Pacific lowlands, slaves destroyed the machinery and infrastructure that made the mines productive and took over the territory to produce their own goods. Through this alliance (presented to the elites as a menace and backed up by complex legal arguments) the slave gangs took advantage of their

24. Archivo General de Indias (Seville, hereinafter AGI), *Quito* 386, doc. without page numbers.

25. AGI *Quito* 386, doc. without page numbers. This was stated by a concerned mine owner.

26. In different contexts slaves appropriated ideologies of contending sides to justify rebellion against their masters. In the context of the French Revolution, slaves rebelling in 1793 in Guadeloupe explained that they “rose in defense of the Republic against their royalist masters.” Laurent Dubois, “Citizen Soldiers: Emancipation and Military Service in the Revolutionary French Caribbean,” in Brown and Morgan, *Arming Slaves*, 237.

27. Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 3–4.

28. AGI *Quito* 386, doc. without page numbers.

numerical strength and revealed their ability to pursue a common project of controlling the local territory.²⁹

Clearly, the rise of conflicts between the Cali and Popayán elites and the government of Tacón, of which the slaves were immediately aware, catalyzed a movement among slave gangs who were able to unify under a seemingly legitimate argument. This situation was particularly possible in the mining areas, distant from the city, because mine owners had left their properties to join the insurgent armies. The slaves were also aware of the weakness of the government at the time, which did not have the military capacity to undertake the pacification of the slave gangs because of the multiple offensives it had to deal with in the cities.

The municipal council of Popayán argued that in order to recruit large numbers of men to prepare for a confrontation with the Cauca Valley insurgents, it made the most sense to approach the slaves and co-opt them by offering them freedom rather than waiting for the “loss of all the slave gangs” who might in an “unexpected situation join the enemy’s destructive force.”³⁰ This controversial idea, which the municipal council proposed to Tacón, was to

invite slaves to voluntarily enroll for the defense of the city [of Popayán] assuring them that if they perform such defense with honor, loyalty and *patriotismo* . . . presenting themselves with their arms and horses, if they have any, such important service to religion and to the state will be rewarded with *la libertad*, which they will be granted in the name of the king; a full and certain freedom so that they never again can be reduced to servitude nor be appraised [to be sold] because they were previously slaves, compensating their owners (those who can prove to have remained loyal and not contributed to the alteration of the legitimate government) for their fair value by account of the royal treasury.³¹

In order to prevent further disorder, and because Tacón was aware that promising freedom to slaves in such a way could have unintended consequences, the decree from the municipal council was never officially publicized. Nonetheless, the slaves were unofficially informed. Soon, slaves from the haciendas near

29. At play here was the centrality of “legal reasoning” to slaves’ ongoing political strategies. See Laurent Dubois, “An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic,” *Social History* 31, no. 1 (2006): 13.

30. AGI *Quito* 386, doc. without page numbers.

31. *Ibid.*

Popayán eagerly joined the governor's army. When the slaves were questioned about why they chose to leave their masters to join the royalists, they noted that they had left their masters because they were aware of their owners' plans to rebel and, fearing that their masters would force them to collaborate with the insurgents, they preferred to join the governor's army to defend the "legitimate" government. Another important point common to the slaves' testimony was that they continually tried to clarify that their actions were not intended as a rebellion against their masters. Hence Cayetano Sarasti declared that he had joined the governments' troops, not informing his owner, "without the intention of acting against him but to defend the city from the enemies . . . and because the negro captain told them that their owner was making a prison to secure them and prevent them from running away to defend the governor . . . and they decided *they preferred to die defending the law* and not in those prisons." Felipe Mosquera said he did not ask the permission of his owner, María Josefa Hurtado, to enlist in the governor's army "not because I wanted to act against her but to defend the law of God, the authority of the king, and the city."³² Such arguments reveal an important element in the slaves' declarations: that they were either tired of their owners' treatment or fearful of their punishment. The declarations suggest that although the slaves were openly defending the royalist cause, they moreover had an opportunity to avenge themselves, manifested not only by the act of fleeing their masters but also with the possibility of confronting them militarily.

Also during this time, the case of the mulatto José Joaquín Sánchez established a precedent for all slaves who wished to achieve freedom. Sánchez joined the royalist army when his owner, the Colegio de San Camilo, "voluntarily" gave him to Tacón. He distinguished himself when he ran to seize an enemy cannon during the entrance of the insurgent troops into Popayán. He was valued at 450 pesos, which the royal treasury paid to the priests to grant José Joaquín his freedom.³³

The politics of the slaves in Popayán Province was most often framed within royalist terms because at the time it was the most promising avenue toward ending slavery. Additionally, the slave owners' reaction to Tacón's policy evinced their fear of armed slaves as well as their reluctance to give up their property (horses, weapons, and slaves) as a response to what they saw as a violent misappropriation by the government. In view of the radicalization of slave

32. AGI *Quito* 386, doc. without page numbers. Emphasis added.

33. AGI *Quito* 386, doc. without page numbers. Aside from being an example for those slaves who learned about the mulatto's reward, this became a legal precedent.

owners in Cali and Popayán, who rebelled against the government because of, among other things, their disagreement with the policy of arming and freeing slaves in the region, it became evident to the slaves that freedom would not come to them from the revolutionary faction, thus making the contradictions of the insurgents' talk about freedom and liberation all the more clear.

In August 1816, Camilo Torres, the slave captain at the mine of San Juan, presented a memorial or written request in name of his *compañeros* (23 men) to account for the services they had performed for "our sovereign," asking to be rewarded with their freedom.³⁴ As Torres's written petition proves, once Tacón officially informed the slaves about the requisites of loyalty to gain freedom in 1811, the slave gang proceeded to maintain a positive and fruitful relation with the royalists and devised a legal strategy to secure their freedom over time.

During the nine years in which these slaves remained on their own, their relations with outside political and economic powers seem to have been ambivalent. On the one hand, the slaves maintained good relations with the royalist authorities, who may have delegated to them the control of the region in the face of the danger posed by the insurgent forces. This was an alternative for royalists who were not able to cover the province's entire territory because of a lack of men. By negotiating with the slave gang in San Juan (and presumably also with the slaves along the Yurumanguí and Saija rivers), the royalists acquired something akin to irregular soldiers. On the other hand, the slaves took the opportunity to form a free community, welcoming fugitive slaves from surrounding areas while guaranteeing for themselves the approval of the authorities, albeit not that of their masters.

In fact, although the governor attempted to return the slaves to a state of subordination, once they learned that one of their owners, Ignacio Torres, had joined the insurgents, they instead remained at the mine, living as if in an independent state, keeping the profits for themselves. After 1811, they "strengthened their libertine state, affecting other slave gangs on the coast with their behavior, became an asylum for every fugitive slave, and from that

34. An important aspect of the lives of enslaved Africans in the Pacific lowlands of New Granada was their organization in *cuadrillas* or slave gangs, headed by a slave captain. As Mario Diego Romero has shown, what was intended to be an economic structure that suited the purposes of gold extraction had a crucial impact on the social world of slaves. Mario Diego Romero, *Poblamiento y sociedad en el Pacífico colombiano siglos XVI al XVIII* (Cali: Editorial Universidad del Valle, 1995). Further evidence of the captains' political role, which derived from their knowledge and uses of the law, can be found in Echeverri, "Enraged to the Limit of Despair," 418.

time on turned absolutely indifferent, governing themselves and laboring only for their comfort and benefit.”³⁵

Between 1811 and 1818 the slaves of San Juan, who were now closer to ex-slaves, had developed a subsistence economy, having “divided the mine and hacienda among themselves.” In a letter to the governor of Popayán in 1820, mine owner Gerónimo Torres described how upon his return to the mine he found “all the tools worn out [and that the slaves had] divided the terrain for their own plots [*sementeras*] and personal labor.”³⁶ The means for paying for their families’ freedom had already been saved up by the slaves, who were able to maintain an internal economy of their own during the nine years when the mine was not inhabited by whites or officially exploited for the benefit of the mine owners or the king’s treasury. It is not surprising, then, that Camilo Torres’s legal plea included a request for the slaves’ families to be valued for sale or manumitted.

If the accounts of the mine owner Torres portray an insubordinate slave gang during this period, how can we reconcile such a representation with the witnesses’ testimony that supported the slave gang’s appeal for freedom on the basis of their loyalty to the king? What is striking is the decision of the slaves to defer to a legal strategy even after having lived in de facto freedom for years. Such a choice reveals the slaves’ continued belief in legal and juridical strategies as viable (perhaps even preferred) means to secure their freedom. Their appeal may have been a product of their ongoing relation with royalist authorities, who could have advised Camilo Torres and the others to plead for their freedom in court on the basis of their services to the royalist cause. Certainly the evidence of an ongoing relationship between the slaves and the royalist military authorities during the period of their de facto independence suggests it was in their strategic interest to negotiate with the government, as they did with their petition to be liberated in 1816. Additionally, the timing of their legal request must have been calculated because it was during those years, once the king returned to his throne, that Pablo Morillo was promoting an intense policy aimed at the persecution of revolutionaries in New Granada.³⁷ To the slaves this may have seemed like the perfect moment to prove their loyalty and be rewarded for it.³⁸

35. ACC, Independencia CIII 2g 6596, fol. iv. This information was provided by Gerónimo Torres in his letter written in July 1820.

36. ACC, Independencia CIII 2g 6596, fol. 1.

37. Pablo Morillo and his army, who arrived from the peninsula in 1815 as envoys of King Fernando VII, headed the “reconquista,” an attempt to crush insurgent governments in Venezuela and New Granada.

38. Saether notes that among Indians and powerful whites alike, “those who fought for the royalist cause had acquired the right to distinctions and favors.” Saether, *Identidades e independencia*, 203.

It is very probable that the request for liberation of the slaves of San Juan was not fulfilled. However, the political action of the San Juan slaves was not squelched, as is apparent from developments in 1820, when Gerónimo Torres returned to his mine.³⁹

Torres arrived thinking he would find “the slaves weakened, submissive, and willing to repair all of the damages they had caused their masters.” Instead he was shocked when all he found in the slaves was “pride, arrogance, insubordination, and neglect.” The description that Torres provides in his letter is interesting and certainly exceptional as a source. He notes that in the months he spent among those he considered to be his slaves they rejected his orders and amendments, forcing him to tolerate their disorder and disrespect. Particularly noteworthy, Torres said that whenever he attempted to scold a slave, the parents and family of the slave being punished would soon arrive at Torres’s house to challenge him. He also recounted that he constantly received threats from the slaves, who possessed spears for hunting and who said “if I punished them they would kill me with their spears.” Finally, Torres noted that he was particularly bothered because they “have organized dances in my house without my permission, insulting me even in their songs,” and “the slaves act as if they were free.”⁴⁰

The evidence for the specific happenings in the mine of San Juan, which is representative of the events in the Pacific lowlands of New Granada during the wars of independence, is crucial for understanding the notion that slaves in the region had of slavery or servitude, their view of the war and of the contending sides, and the underlying interests and principles that guided their choices to support the royalist side. As we have seen, as soon as the war broke out and the slaves became aware that the majority of their masters were turning against the crown, they revolted against them in order to gain their freedom. The slaves in the mines of the Pacific lowlands could benefit from their relative isolation and from the fact that with their numbers they could intimidate the authorities and force them to negotiate on the slaves’ terms. Two arguments underlay their collective movement: one, the assumption that a decree of freedom entitled them to receive emancipation and, on a different note, that they were not willing to continue being enslaved under masters who denied

39. ACC, Independencia CIII 2g 6598, fol. 10. Almarío notes that “the royal authorities’ denial of the blacks’ request [for freedom] turned the region in a serious problem for social order.” Oscar Almarío, “Racialización, etnicidad y ciudadanía en el pacífico neogranadino, 1780–1830,” in *La invención del suroccidente colombiano. Independencia, Etnicidad y Estado Nacional entre 1780 y 1930* (Medellín: Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, 2006), 125.

40. ACC, Independencia CIII 2g 6596, fols. 1–2.

the authority of the king. Both arguments were based upon royalist political culture and each one reveals important elements of the slaves' perception of their opportunities to end slavery at the beginning of the war. The first one, as mentioned earlier, represents a strategic intention to uphold their legal right to freedom in a context where slave owners flouted the authority of the king. The second represented the slaves' vision of the institution of slavery as a relationship between them and their masters, which they respected only insofar as it was mediated by the king's justice. The slaves expressed their will to be free and to remain subject to the king's sovereignty, an argument that secured the royalist elite's confidence in their support for the king's cause.

The events studied here suggest that enslaved black communities of Popayán were doing what many had tried to do before to secure their freedom, that is, to take advantage of new opportunities that the moment provided. In a significant way, they attuned their project to the offerings that the royalist party made to slaves who remained loyal. The slaves maintained contact with the royalist authorities and played a role in the defense of the territory against the insurgents. Such military action was also a defense of their own freedom, which in the circumstances of the San Juan mine meant taking over the enterprise, working the mine for their own benefit, and perhaps trading. Even though they had secured their freedom in practice, which distanced them profoundly in social and political terms from their previous owners' authority, once the royalist government seemed about to achieve certain victory, during the years of the Reconquest (between 1815 and 1819), the slaves appealed to the law as an institutional arena in which to legitimate their *de facto* freedom.

To understand the historical choices of enslaved black people in the area during this period, it is crucial to put aside assumptions about the natural association between popular sectors and liberal-republican agendas.⁴¹ In Colombia,

41. The work of Eugene Genovese established a historiographical benchmark for understanding slave politics during the turn from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In his interpretation, emancipation and the demands of justice were only transcendental when slaves joined the "bourgeois-democratic revolutions" in the eighteenth century, particularly in the case of Saint Domingue/Haiti. Genovese's analysis established a time line dividing "traditional" or restorationist revolts from forward-looking revolutions, a perspective that dismissed the participation of royalist slaves in the context of an "independence revolution." Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1979), especially chap. 3. When referring to maroon involvement in the Saint Domingue revolution, Fick also critiques Genovese's overly simplified categories, which do not allow for understanding or even accessing "a highly fluid, rapidly changing, and richly diverse situation." Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 151.

the republican project neglected to address a transformation of the slave society, especially in places like Popayán, until 1852.⁴² In order to explain slave royalism it is not necessary to argue, as other scholars have done, that it reflects a mystification of the benevolence of the king, a type of “naïve monarchism.” While Matt Childs uses Van Young’s term when studying the appeal to royalist authority by Cuban rebel slaves in 1812, he also breaks free from its simplistic implications by adding that “the rebel leaders incorporated references to royalist authority to catalyze their movement,” and that “slaves and free people of color involved in the Aponte Rebellion legitimated their actions through royalist power that would aid them in their battle against the colonial elite.”⁴³ As has been shown here, in fact, slaves could also appeal to a colonial political discourse of justice in a strategic and practical way to guarantee their freedom, which they conceived of in terms of local economic, political, and military autonomy.

Royalism, Liberalism, and the Politics of Pasto Indian Communities

Although Indians had not been part of imperial armies during the late eighteenth century (the first time that Spanish America saw the creation of standing militias in almost every town), the rise of hostilities in 1809 forced the government to search for a negotiated incorporation of Indians into their armies.⁴⁴ In southwestern New Granada, Indian communities were eager to participate in the military defense of the sovereignty of the king. In exchange for military service, Indians gained certain concessions and benefits, particularly the reduction of their tribute payment, when they chose to join the armies of King Fernando

42. Alfonso Múnera and Marixa Lasso have recently shown the importance of *pardo* politics in Cartagena during independence and the links between republicanism and the discourse of racial equality, yet neither of these authors engages the problem of slavery in relation to the region of their study. Cartagena’s case was different than Popayán’s. See Alfonso Múnera, *El fracaso de la nación: Región, clase y raza en el Caribe colombiano (1717–1821)* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, El Ancora Editores, 1998); Lasso, *Myths of Harmony*. Helg includes slaves in her narrative but, as Saether has pointed out, Helg as well as Múnera provide a rather essentialist view of racial politics. Saether instead argues that “the fact that people were Indian, black, white or *mestiza* had less to do with their political affiliation than the nature of the conflicts and political tensions in each locality.” Saether, *Identidades e independencia*, 199, 202; Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia*.

43. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba*, 170–71.

44. Allan Kuethe, *Military Reform and Society in New Granada, 1773–1808* (Gainesville: Univ. Presses of Florida, 1978), 29. See also Vinson and Restall, “Black Soldiers, Native Soldiers.”

VII. Through the reduction of Indian tribute, colonial elites secured fundamental Indian support for their cause, including personnel, weapons, and the Indians' strategic knowledge of the territory.

Facing the threat of invasion from Quito's autonomist junta, Popayán's governor Miguel Tacón made a remarkable decision. He sought to attract Indian communities to his faction to confront the massive intra-elite challenge represented by Quito, thereby ending previous tensions between local government officials and the Indian groups and radically transforming the nature of royalist politics and discourse.⁴⁵ In the previous two decades, New Granada had been shaken by the opposition of creoles and Indians to Bourbon reformism.⁴⁶ That precedent adds significance to the government's decision to negotiate an alliance with the Indians of Popayán. Additionally, in an Andean postrebellion context where, as Charles Walker has stated, Spanish and creole elites were forced "to think twice about alliances with the lower classes," Tacón's decision to negotiate with Indians reveals his awareness that Indians were not necessarily loyal to the crown.⁴⁷

45. Whereas the Spanish Crown was open to negotiating with Indians or maroons in extraordinary situations, particularly in contexts where frontier expansion was the priority, there are no cases in which communities of Indians were armed by state officials with the express goal of countering a rebellion led by creoles.

46. For Pasto see Rebecca Earle, "Indian Rebellion and Bourbon Reform in New Granada: Riots in Pasto, 1780–1800," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 73, no. 1 (1993): 99–124; Marcela Echeverri, "Conflicto y hegemonía en el suroccidente de la Nueva Granada, 1780–1800," *Fronteras de la Historia* 11 (2006): 343–76. For Santa Fe see Anthony McFarlane, "Civil Disorders and Popular Protests in Late Colonial New Granada," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (1984): 17–54; John Leddy Phelan, *The People and the King: The Comunero Revolution in Colombia, 1781* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Jane Loy, "Forgotten Comuneros: The 1781 Revolt in the Llanos of Casanare," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 61, no. 2 (1981): 235–57. For Quito see Anthony McFarlane, "The Rebellion of the *Barrios*," in *Reform and Insurrection in Bourbon New Granada and Peru*, ed. John Fisher, Alan Kuethe, and Anthony McFarlane (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1990), 197–254; Segundo Moreno, *Sublevaciones indígenas en la Audiencia de Quito: Desde comienzos del siglo XVIII hasta finales de la Colonia* (Quito: Centro de Publicaciones Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, 1977).

47. Charles Walker, *Smoldering Ashes: Cuzco and the Creation of Republican Peru, 1780–1840* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1999), 55. This of course contradicts the idea prevalent in the historiography about the Indians' unquestionable royalism due to their communal priorities, stated by authors such as Lynch, *Spanish American Revolutions*; Hamnett, *Revolución y contrarrevolución*; Bonilla, "Rey o República," 367–68; and Gutiérrez, *Los indios de Pasto*. On the southern Andean rebellions, see Steve Stern, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Serulnikov, *Subverting Colonial Authority*; Sinclair Thomson, *We Alone Will Rule: Native Andean Politics in the Age of Insurgency* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

Colonial elites in Popayán understood that Indians could pose a threat to the authorities in a crisis, as past rebellions had shown. Therefore, Tacón's need to secure Indian loyalty drove him to break with the policy of tight control of communities that prevailed in the aftermath of the late eighteenth-century revolts. Instead he proposed appealing terms of negotiation to Indians in order to prevent them from being tempted to join the rebellion against the government.

In 1809, reacting to the news about Quito's revolt, Tacón wrote to the viceroy in Santa Fe: "The most interesting issue about this Province of Popayán is the district of Los Pastos because it borders on [Quito's rebel territory] and because of the large number of Indians who inhabit it, who are exposed to a risk of seduction that the rebels might attempt."⁴⁸ The militia captain, Gregorio Angulo, was advised of these dangers, and on September 13 he responded, assuring Tacón "that all the Indians in this district remain faithful and loyal, wishing to be employed in defense of the crown, and they offered to mobilize with slings and other weapons that they use."⁴⁹ Indians from the towns of Obonuco, Jongovito, and Catambuco were decisive in the defense of the Pasto district against Quito's attack.⁵⁰

What is especially noteworthy is that Angulo lowered the tribute demanded of the Indians "in order to keep them in such good disposition and so it serves as a stimulus for others in the province." Angulo decreed such dispensation (*gracia*) for Indians who remained firmly loyal and who provided help either with their bodies or with weapons. As a result of this offer, "all the Indian authorities in the district presented themselves [to Angulo] ratifying their disposition to collaborate." On September 18, Angulo notified Tacón that the Indian governor of Buesaco, Miguel Díaz, had offered to go with him in the march toward the south with other Indians from his town. Angulo thanked him and took only one Indian with him "to use his help to encourage other Indians in our path to join us."⁵¹

The overtures of Tacón and Angulo toward the Indians, who were seen both as potential allies and as threats, proved successful. This success was linked to the history of tribute in Pasto, because the negotiation was established in a traditional language of reciprocity between Indian communities and monarchic power. The dynamics in 1809 followed older monarchical logics of power, as

48. AHN, Consejos 21674, exp. 2, doc. 18, fol. 2. Similar arguments were used in ongoing communications from Governor Tacón to the viceroy, found in AHN, Consejos 21674, exp. 1, doc. 5.

49. AHN, Consejos 21674, exp. 2, doc. 18, fol. 7v.

50. Gerardo León Guerrero, *Pasto en la guerra de independencia, 1809–1824* (Bogotá: Tecnoimpresores, 1994), 29.

51. AHN, Consejos 21674, exp. 2, doc. 18, fol. 8.

can be seen by the fact that displaying magnanimity was always the first card that the government played. Granting dispensations in recognition of worthy behavior secured loyalty and an ongoing alliance in this “economy of favor.”⁵² Tacón’s gesture was legitimate in the eyes of the Indians, as it was framed within rules of royal patronage and “liberality.” The offer to lower the fiscal burden of Indian communities in exchange for their participation in the early confrontations in southwestern New Granada set the terms for subsequent attempts by royalists to recruit indigenous soldiers throughout the following decade of war and was a crucial factor for the redefinition of royalism among Indian communities in Pasto. As I will show, the link between tribute reduction and military service transformed political dynamics within Indian communities and in their relations to Spanish colonial officials and priests.

The careful negotiations undertaken by Popayán’s government involving the reduction of tribute ensured that the Indians would become essential supporters of the royalist cause. What is perhaps more significant is that in 1810 Indian governors in the district of Pasto declared their interest in donating to the king the tribute that military officials had waived in 1809 as reward for Indians’ alliance against Quito. In a letter written by the Indian governors of the province of Los Pastos in July 1810, 30 towns (*pueblos*) referred to their involvement in the early conflicts between Popayán and Quito, saying, “We Indians offered to serve the just cause [of the king] with our own persons and lives, for no other reason than our loyalty to and love for our unhappy, beloved King Don Fernando VII.” The Indians recalled that the captain of the royalist militias, Gregorio Angulo, rewarded their actions, “promising to lower by one-third the tribute payment to those who served in his armies.” The governors wrote, “We remit to His Majesty this tribute, the portion which had been promised to be forgiven. Although we could have claimed this clemency, far from doing so, considering the wants and afflictions that our King and natural Lord suffers because of the treachery and evils the French [have committed], and feeling our own poverty, which provides us nothing with which to save him, we would be so happy if we could aid our beloved sovereign with the cost of our own lives.”⁵³

52. See the discussion on transatlantic political practices of the Spanish monarchy in terms of an “economy of favor” in Alejandro Cañeque, *The King’s Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2005), chap. 5; and Antonio Hespanha, *La gracia del derecho: Economía de la cultura en la Edad Moderna* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 1993).

53. Printed in Gustavo Guerrero, *Documentos históricos de los hechos ocurridos en Pasto en la Guerra de Independencia* (Pasto: Imprenta del Departamento, 1912), 52–53. Emphasis added.

Is this decision of Indian communities to give up the financial reprieve Tacón had granted them an example of their ignorance or naïveté?⁵⁴ On the contrary, I would argue it actually reflects the strategic purpose of the Indian governors' alliance with royalist elites and the complex internal politics within Indian communities. The exemption of a third of their tribute was certainly a measure that appealed to the Indians when they chose to join the armies of Governor Tacón in the name of King Fernando VII in 1809. The caciques' proposal to Tacón in 1810 went a step further, showing their perception of changes in power relations in the monarchy and strategically displaying their loyalty to the Spanish king. In this exchange, the Indian caciques revealed an awareness of political relations and opportunities as well as their ability to transform their relation to the monarchic and local powers.

Traditionally the Pasto Indians had been able to negotiate their fiscal burden to benefit their communities, such as when they resisted the monetarization of tribute and continued paying it in textiles during the eighteenth century.⁵⁵ In 1810, however, the governors of those communities dynamically changed the content and meaning of tribute payment to legitimize, in a new way, their authority and that of the king. The governors' reestablishment of the tribute quota was more than an economic contribution; it was also a symbolic statement of Indian loyalty to the king. What the Indians gained through their donation of the traditional tribute to the king's treasury was a privileged position in the local political context.⁵⁶ Indeed, it had its desired effect: Popayán governor Miguel Tacón received their offer "with great satisfaction," responding in a public decree: "These loyal Indian towns should be aware that their [gift to the sovereign king] will from now on always be taken into account and trans-

54. Popular royalism has been referred to as fanatic, ignorant, primitive, and naïve. See Restrepo, *Historia de la Revolución de la República de Colombia*; Garrido, *Reclamos y representaciones*; Lynch, *Spanish American Revolutions*; and Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*.

55. Derek Williams, "Acomodación, resistencia y el actuar político: Resistencia y revuelta indígena en el altiplano de los Pastos, 1775–1808" (MA thesis, Universidad del Valle, 1994), 127.

56. Steinar Saether, "Independence and the Redefinition of Indianness around Santa Marta, Colombia, 1750–1850," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37 (2005): 70–72. In Saether's study, it is clear that the military role of Indians who allied with peninsular officials "gave them a moral capital which they actively used to gain influence." Claudia Guarisco highlights the importance that elites in Mexico gave to keeping Indians satisfied so as to prevent their association with the insurgents, which included allowing communities special freedom to use their communal resources between 1814 and 1820. Guarisco, *Los indios del valle de México y la construcción de una nueva sociabilidad política, 1770–1835* (Mexico City: El Colegio Mexiquense, 2003), 161.

lated into the considerate treatment that they deserve as loyal vassals of Don Fernando VII.”⁵⁷

This maneuver shows a great degree of politicization among the Indians, and it furthermore throws light on the fact that Indian politics was not static or ahistorical but susceptible to flux.⁵⁸ The moment of monarchic crisis allowed these communities to redefine what royalism meant for them, particularly as they reasserted their loyalty to the Spanish Crown through military service. The communities’ vision of the monarch’s authority was mediated by their understanding of the crown’s obligation to protect them as his vassals. Indian rights were secured through their commitment and response to different types of service such as payment of tribute and provision of labor. In Pasto, the caciques were able to negotiate the terms of that relationship in this way. By adding to the burden of the communities an obligation to participate in military service, Indians earned the right to be recognized for their crucial role in the defense of the territory. Once the caciques decided that the communities would continue paying the previously forgiven portion of the tribute, they were, in fact, securing extra recognition of the fundamental role of Indian vassals in Pasto, recognition which would be acknowledged by the local authorities as well as by the king in coming years.

It is necessary to note, however, that in the context of the crisis, Indian caciques, who historically were agents for the collection of tribute, sought new bases of power. As brokers of tribute payment, caciques received part of their income from the tribute itself. In addition, their authority derived from the traditional role that they played as overseers of the crown’s fiscal interests and representatives of their communities before the state. In deciding that communities would continue paying tribute, they benefited from the income, and, by guaranteeing that their communities would provide much-needed resources for the war, caciques were defending their privileges and authority as ethnic elites. The action of the Pasto caciques should not be surprising. Scholars of Peru and Upper Peru during the Túpac Amaru rebellion through independence

57. Guerrero, *Documentos históricos de los hechos ocurridos en Pasto*, 54.

58. The structural interpretation of the pact of reciprocity was given by Tristan Platt, *Estado Boliviano y ayllu andino: Tierra y tributo en el Norte de Potosí* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1982). See also Platt, “Liberalism and Ethnocide,” *History Workshop Journal* 17 (1984): 3–28; Brooke Larson, *Cochabamba, 1550–1900: Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia* (1988; Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1998); Larson, “Explotación y economía moral en los Andes del sur: Hacia una reconsideración crítica,” *Historia Crítica* 6 (1992): 75–97; Larson, *Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810–1910* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004).

have shown that Indian elites were among the most fervent in their loyalty to the monarchy and the dynamics of vassalage. While through their actions in support of the king's cause the caciques in Pasto were applying measures that might risk overburdening their communities, who now had to both pay tribute and perform militia service, the caciques expected that in return "the Spanish crown [would] preserve their special privileges."⁵⁹

More to the point, the fact that the caciques highlighted in their representation to Governor Tacón Angulo's promise to lower the tribute payment of "those who served in his armies" also suggests that the caciques were concerned that such a change would be introduced unevenly into community politics and financial institutions. Tribute payment among Indians traditionally had been determined by categories in the communities, such as age and land-holding status. From the perspective of the Indian governors, introducing a change in the individual tribute quota for many groups of Indians (based on the government's contingent military plan) could well have generated problems in terms of rule and authority. The tribute reduction was a threat to the caciques particularly because it could have vested men (especially young men who proved successful as warriors) with a separate source of status, thus calling into question their subordination to the caciques.

In addition to clear evidence that the royalist native elites sought to protect themselves from internal challenges to their power, royalism brought about conflicts at the level of the relation of Indian commoners to local holders of power such as priests and the municipal council. By siding with the royalist government in the second part of the decade (1815–20), Indian commoners implicitly challenged the rule of the "two pillars of government," God and King, and actively transformed the nature of monarchic rule and power in relation to Indian communities.⁶⁰ Let us examine why.

After 1811, the Cortes in Cádiz began a liberal shift that transformed royalist discourse, especially in the imperial context. The Cortes abolished tribute, one of the early expressions of the liberal spirit of the constituency in Cádiz, and this change was highly relevant to local developments in Pasto. Although the Cortes were acting in the name of the sovereignty of the abducted king, they were also promoting a series of preliminary arrangements with the goal of dismantling the seigneurial regime of royal jurisdiction over all Spanish terri-

59. David T. Garrett, *Shadows of Empire: The Indian Nobility of Cusco, 1750–1825* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 1; see also Thomson, *We Alone Will Rule*, 168–69; Walker, *Smoldering Ashes*, 52.

60. For the two pillars of government see Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*, chaps. 2, 3.

tory (in the peninsula as well as in America). In other words, as Manuel Chust has pointed out, the Cortes embarked on a process of nationalization of the territory and its economy. The ultimate logic behind the Spanish Cortes's abolition of *encomiendas* (grants of Indian labor), *mitas* (forced labor recruitment of Indians in rotation), the *reparto* (forced sale of goods to Indians), and tribute payment was the creation of the nation as the culmination of the revolution promulgated by the liberals.⁶¹

Of course, conditions in the American territories at the time did not allow for the complete execution of the Cortes's decrees. Not only were some of the cities controlled by insurgents, but royalist authorities sometimes also responded to the liberal mandates by questioning their viability. For example, Peru's viceroy José de Abascal famously opposed the alleged authority of the Cortes in the peninsula, especially given the liberal thrust of their rule. Abascal commented that the abolition of tribute was the product of "either the most incredible ignorance or the bad faith of the government that decreed it."⁶² Tribute amounted to a fundamental part of the revenue of the royal treasury; in particular, it was the basic source of the income of local administrators such as parish clergy and *corregidores* (Spanish governors).⁶³ In many regions the measure could not be applied as liberally as the Cortes expected, given the exigencies of war and the need to maintain troops in various parts of the Americas, paid for mainly by tributary income.

Nonetheless, the change in legislation gave the Pasto Indians important space for maneuvering. To seize on the opportunities that the new landscape offered, they strengthened their alliance with the *protector de naturales*. After the creation of this position during the second half of the sixteenth century in different parts of the Spanish American territories, the protectors' main responsibility was to give legal representation to indigenous people in the instances

61. Manuel Chust, "De esclavos, encomenderos y mitayos: El anticolonialismo en las Cortes de Cádiz," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 11, no. 2 (1995): 183; Cesáreo de Armellada, *La causa indígena americana en las Cortes de Cádiz* (Caracas: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, 1979); Portillo, *Crisis atlántica*, esp. chap. 4.

62. Cited in Heraclio Bonilla, "Clases populares y estado en el contexto de la crisis colonial," in Bonilla et al., *La independencia en el Perú*, 68. Discussions of the consequences of the Cádiz resolutions on tribute in Peru can be found in Mark Thurner, *From Two Republics to One Divided: Contradictions of Postcolonial Nationmaking in Andean Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1997), 21–25; Walker, *Smoldering Ashes*, 93–97.

63. During the Cádiz debates, the Cortes confronted the issue of how to obtain funding for parish clergy salaries once tribute was abolished. See Armellada, *La causa indígena Americana*, 34–40.

in which they required access to the judicial sphere.⁶⁴ During the early nineteenth century, Pasto's protector, Juan Díaz Gallardo, played a crucial role in guaranteeing the loyalty of Indian communities to the king and the royalist cause. Moreover, his support of Indian interest in lowering tribute payment in exchange for their military service generated new conflicts and transformed the relations of Indians with their caciques. Over time, the situation resulted in the politicization of the post of protector in an important and unprecedented way.

In 1814 Gallardo pleaded for the lowering of Indian tribute, appealing to the new liberal laws that had decreed its abolition. Such pleas are evidence of the evasion of the new law on the part of Pasto's municipal council and Popayán's governor, because if tribute had been abolished, there would have been no need to request its reduction. They are also revealing of two other issues. First, it is my contention that the 1809 process (in which royalist elites offered to lower tribute in exchange for military service) had crucial significance for the subsequent negotiations with indigenous communities to gain their military support, still needed in the latter part of the decade. In other words, the communities were expecting a reward in exchange for their loyalty in light of the history of negotiations in Pasto, and Gallardo's appeal for tribute reduction was based on those precedents. Combined with the new liberal law, the communities, through Gallardo, were able to put pressure on local elites to make the reduction effective. Second, the petition for tribute reduction was part of Gallardo's particular alliance with Indian commoners who, in contrast to the caciques' view, saw the tribute reduction to be in their best interest, particularly given their participation in the war as soldiers and supporters of the Spanish armies.

Already back on his throne, King Fernando VII responded positively to Gallardo's request in a decree dated May 15, 1817. He "lower[ed] the tribute in perpetuity by one peso to the [Pasto] Indians," wishing that "they be told how satisfied He is with their exemplary loyalty and services."⁶⁵ Additionally, the king decreed that more tangible symbols of his gratitude should be made, granting "that the caciques of such meritorious towns have the privilege of wearing a silver medal with the bust of the King, and written on the back: Fernando Séptimo for the fidelity of the caciques in Pasto." These medals would later be

64. As Charles Cutter notes, neither France nor England established a comparable institution for providing Indians with access to and representation in the legal system. Cutter, *The Protector de Indios in Colonial New Mexico, 1659–1821* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1986), 3. See also Owensby, *Empire of Law*.

65. The decree is in the dossier of Gallardo's complaint about being removed from the post of protector in 1817. ANE, Popayán 350, doc. dated 9-I-1819, fol. 52v.

used to show the king's benevolence toward the caciques of Santa Marta in the aftermath of the independence wars and were awarded by Pablo Morillo (leader of Spain's royalist armies during the Reconquest) to Indians in Venezuela loyal to the crown.⁶⁶

The Indian commoners' partnership with the protector, through which they challenged decisions on the tribute quota made by caciques and royalist elites, was akin to a quarrel between the communities and their priests. In 1817, Indians mounted protests over their duties to perform services for the clergy in the Indian towns. Gallardo seems to have supported the commoners in their contestation of the priests' entitlement to certain types of personal service.⁶⁷ For that reason, following an intense wave of complaints from priests and caciques against Gallardo, the Quito Audiencia ordered him replaced by Ramón Medina, captain of the militias of Pasto's royalist army.⁶⁸

In 1818, with Gallardo in Quito lodging a complaint against his removal from the post of protector, Ramón Medina provided new evidence of Gallardo's unsuitability for the post. He presented narratives written by the caciques of Obonuco and Botanilla and the Indian leaders of the parish of Jongovito, all of whom were highly concerned about developments under Gallardo's leadership in the previous years. They charged Gallardo with negligence of his duty to defend their communities (his primary responsibility) and said that the protector had "promoted discord, division, and revolt in our towns." Indians of the towns of Obonuco, Botanilla, and Jongovito were said to have declared themselves against the priest, resisting payment for his services (such as masses, burials, and marriages), and even to have "given up attendance at the sacred sacrifice of the mass."⁶⁹ The caciques stated their fear about Indian commoners: "Having lost the veneration and respect for a distinguished priest, what can we

66. Ibid. For awards to the caciques in Mamatoco, Santa Marta, for their service, see AGI Santafe 632 and Cuba 749, and Saether, "Independence and the Redefinition of Indianness," 73. Medals to the Indians of the pueblos of Pilar, Caigua, San Miguel, San Francisco, Clarines, and Piritu in Venezuela were given by Pablo Morillo in 1819, Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid), Colección Morillo 9.7664, fol. 287-287v.

67. ANE, Popayán 350, doc. dated 9-I-1819, fol. 81v. The forms of service included *pongo* and *platucama*. *Pongo* was a name given to the Indian who performed service for either a hacienda owner, or to a civil or ecclesiastical authority. At this time the meaning of *platucama* remains unclear.

68. ANE, Popayán 350, doc. dated 9-I-1819, fol. 31. A *fiscal* in Quito declared on 22 February 1819 that Medina's military title made him "very recommendable" for the post of protector.

69. ANE, Popayán 350, doc. dated 9-I-1819, fol. 25v.

expect to happen with the unhappy and powerless governors and community authorities?" Indian authorities from the three towns concluded that, given the existing threat, they would rather give up their *varas* or staffs of authority "until our pueblos are *reconquered*," presumably by Spanish officials more respectful of their own authority.⁷⁰

The complaint of the royalist indigenous authorities in these towns of the Pasto district suggests that Gallardo had sided with those Indians who contested their fundamental, traditional subjection to the priests and to the caciques. Such a contestation was supported by the liberal transformations that the Cádiz Constitution promoted in terms of the treatment of Indians by priests and other Spanish authorities, a thrust that Gallardo was clearly taking to its ultimate consequences.⁷¹ The Indian elite felt threatened by the transformation that some Indians in the town were seeking, and they saw the need to deal immediately with the problem by removing Gallardo from the post of protector. The fact that Gallardo's removal took place in the years after the restoration of the monarchy is significant, because in 1814 Fernando VII had reinstated the basic tenets of absolutism and had forcefully erased all traces of the changes instituted while the liberals were in power. Clearly, although Gallardo amassed authority during his years as protector through the mobilization of Indians in favor of royalism, his support of nonelite Indians who wanted change became untenable once the political context shifted and absolutist values were again officially enforced. That is to say, an alliance between Indian elites and the *audiencia* was created through the mediation of Ramón Medina. As the new protector, he was expected to guarantee the preservation of the traditional order in the interest of the Indian authorities and village clergy, effectively terminating the

70. *Ibid.*, fol. 27. Emphasis added.

71. Pascual Temarán, a commoner from the town of Catambuco, declared that Gallardo had promised to enact the royal mandate to reduce Indian service to priests. ANE, Popayán 350, doc. dated 9–1–1819, fol. 130. Beginning with the early sessions in the Cortes of Cádiz, the deputies debated the need to address the afflictions of the Indians. One of the champions of this cause was Dionisio Inca Yupanqui who represented the Viceroyalty of Peru. His discourse on the need to protect Indians on 16 Dec. 1810 resulted in a decree that can be found in *Archivo del Congreso de los Diputados (Madrid)*, Sección General, legajo 7, no. 27; the printed copy of the decree dated 10 Feb. 1811 is in legajo 6, no. 89. The decree stated, "prohibiendo con todo rigor que bajo de ningún pretexto por racional que parezca persona alguna constituida en autoridad eclesiástica, civil o militar, ni otra alguna de cualquier clase o condición que sea, aflija al indio en su persona, ni le ocasione perjuicio el más leve en su propiedad, de lo que deberán cuidar todos los magistrados y jefes con una vigilancia la más escrupulosa." See also Armellada, *La causa indígena Americana*, 13–14.

shifts in social and political relations that certain commoners were putting into effect.

It seems paradoxical that such complaints of disorder and subversion were coming out of towns known for their unwavering royalism. However, acknowledging and understanding conflicts within Indian communities and between communities and local authorities is crucial for rethinking the political processes that took place between 1809 and 1819. During those years, the political landscape of Popayán was radically transformed as a result of Indians' negotiation with royalist elites on the terms of their duties and entitlements.

Conclusion

A look into the first years of the monarchical crisis and the war on the Spanish mainland allows us to recognize the options and opportunities that imperial subjects had between 1809 and 1819. Indians and slaves had a different vision of the crisis and their role in it than has been generally thought. They were neither naturally against nor necessarily drawn to the revolutionary cause. As in the case studied here, when Indians and slaves sided with the royalists, it was not because they were simple-minded or had parochial interests. In fact, as we have seen, royalist elites were the first to doubt the fidelity of these two groups and feared having to confront them if they rebelled and allied with the insurgents. For this reason the royalist elites offered bold concessions to Indians and slaves, and both groups faced situations in which they saw and took opportunities to side with the royalists. Both Indians and slaves had been excluded from the militias for a long time in this region, and the beginning of the war brought unparalleled opportunities for these alliances.

Although the royalist elites did not declare emancipation, and their plans at this juncture did not include abolishing slavery, the government's willingness to arm slaves became a growing point of contention with the insurgents, mostly slave and mine owners from Cali and Popayán. The slave-owning regime was what was at stake in the confrontation of creole insurgents against the crown's authority. The slaves perceived and seized upon this split among the elites. Interested in the governor's promises of freedom, some slaves in the city of Popayán joined the governor's militia while other slaves from the mines rebelled against their masters and reached a negotiated freedom by guaranteeing the governor their loyalty to the royalist cause. The cases analyzed here provide evidence of a remarkable moment when the crown freed and mobilized slaves against slave owners, and slaves allied with and defended the crown that had historically supported slavery.

By taking into account the informal means through which slaves partici-

pated as royalists in the war, this article also reveals an aspect until now unexplored in the historiography. Peter Blanchard's most recent book, which gathers wide evidence about the involvement of slaves both in the insurgent and royalist armies, argues that slaves only sought freedom individually during the independence wars in Spanish South America.⁷² The case of the slaves in the San Juan mine, however, indicates that slaves also pursued collective strategies for freedom and that royalism in Popayán during the years of 1809–19 was one means for them to accomplish such a communal goal.

Indian royalism was based on a deep relationship between the communities and the crown. This historical relationship was redefined simultaneously from both sides during the course of exceptional political circumstances. In the context of the crisis, the politics of the caciques in the state-community relationship was mediated by their role in maintaining the stability of Indian tributary obligations. Indian commoners, on the other hand, interpreted their participation as soldiers as a means to gain entitlements and be freed from their subjugated position in society. Liberalism, brought to Popayán by decrees and the Cádiz Constitution, gave important tools to commoners that enabled them to destabilize the traditional order, in particular the power of priests. Various scholars have argued that among the “revolutionary” aspects of the Cádiz Constitution in the American context were the local movements for the election of new council members, following articles 309, 312, and 313. Tlaxcala, Quito, and Cuenca have stood out in recent historiography as examples of the electoral dynamics that the liberal regime engendered among urban and rural populations.⁷³ The

72. Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom*, 6.

73. For Quito and Cuenca, see Rodríguez, *La revolución política*, and Federica Morelli, *Territorio o Nación: Reforma y disolución del espacio imperial en Ecuador, 1765–1830* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2005). For Cuenca, see Silvia Palomeque, “El sistema de autoridades de ‘pueblos de indios’ y sus transformaciones a fines del período colonial: El partido de Cuenca,” *Memoria Americana* 6 (1997): 10–47. For Mexico, see Antonio Annino, “Cádiz y la revolución territorial de los pueblos mexicanos,” in *Historia de las elecciones en Iberoamérica, siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: FCE, 1995), 177–226; and Guarisco, *Los indios del valle de México*. For Peru, see Víctor Peralta, “Los inicios del sistema representativo en Perú: Ayuntamientos constitucionales y diputaciones provinciales (1812–1815),” in *La mirada esquiva: Reflexiones sobre la interacción del estado y la ciudadanía en los Andes (Bolivia, Ecuador y Perú), siglo XIX*, ed. Marta Irurozqui (Madrid: CSIC, 2005). For Guatemala, see Sonia Alda, *La participación indígena en la construcción de la república de Guatemala, S. XIX* (Madrid: UNAM, 2002); and Jordana Dym, *From Sovereign Villages to National States* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2006). For Tlaxcala, see Marco Bellingeri, “Sistemas jurídicos y codificación en el primer liberalismo mexicano, 1824–1834,” in *Dinámicas de Antiguo Régimen y orden constitucional: Representación, justicia y administración en Iberoamérica, siglos XVIII–XIX*, ed. Bellingeri (Turin: Otto Editore,

case of Cuenca is highly illustrative of the speedy changes brought about by the elections convoked by Quito president Toribio Montes in 1813. There, according to Jaime Rodríguez, Indians formed “many *cabildos* [*constitucionales*] in the towns and haciendas,” because “the Cádiz charter made Indians equal [to Spaniards], and abolished their special privileges under the Indian republic.”⁷⁴

Although the Cádiz Constitution was publicized in Pasto in 1813, I have found little evidence to support the argument that Rodríguez and other authors are making about the radical transformations that it brought to the northern Andes in terms of electoral involvement by Indians. First of all, as Jairo Gutiérrez says, even if the *cabildo* renewed its title and became a *cabildo constitucional*, it did not involve the political process promised by the charter.⁷⁵ Likewise, the politics of royalist Indians does not reveal any particular engagement with the municipal measures dictated in the Cádiz Constitution and which Montes attempted to institutionalize in the region. Yet my findings on the influence that the Spanish Liberal regime had on Indian contestation of tribute payment and service for and punishment by priests in Pasto contribute to the debate by pointing to the importance that imperial transformations had in renewing the political dynamics within Indian communities and with local powers.

The combined analysis of Indians’ and enslaved blacks’ experiences in a single frame reveals important connections. The economic and legal institutions that defined slavery and “Indianness” were profoundly questioned during the years of this study. The monarchical crisis in Popayán drove Governor Miguel Tacón to the desperate decision to attract both groups to the royalist side by making significant concessions. Slaves who performed a heroic action for the crown would be freed, and Indians who participated in the royalist militias were granted a tribute reduction. This suggests that for royalist elites, as well as for the crown, both institutions were politically negotiable and were deployed simultaneously and intentionally for their potential to mobilize popular classes in favor of the monarchy.

By inserting popular royalists into the narrative of the independence process,

2000); and Raymond Buve, “La influencia del liberalismo doceañista en una provincia novohispana mayormente indígena: Tlaxcala, 1809–1824,” in *La trascendencia del liberalismo doceañista en España y en América*, ed. Manuel Chust and Ivana Frasset (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, 2004), 115–35.

74. Rodríguez, *La revolución política*, 109, 111.

75. Jairo Gutiérrez Ramos, “La Constitución de Cádiz en la Provincia de Pasto, Virreinato de la Nueva Granada, 1812–1822,” *Revista de Indias* 68, no. 242 (2008): 214–15.

my reenvisioning of independence also speaks to the contingencies of national state formation in Colombia. Popular royalism in this transformative process helps to explain the difficulty in consolidating nationalism in nineteenth-century Colombia and provides evidence of competing visions of empire, independence, freedom, and revolution present in colonial and postcolonial Colombian society.

