

## Selva Alegre, President of the Quiteña Junta of 1809: Traitor or Patriot?

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RECENTLY several monographs were published commemorating the sesquicentennial of Quito's attempt in 1809 to liberate itself from Spain. The first of these, Manuel María Borrero, *Quito, luz de América*, reopened the debate on why Quito failed to obtain its independence at that time.<sup>1</sup> Borrero charged that the Marquis of Selva Alegre, the president of the Quito junta of 1809, and to a lesser extent its other titled members had conspired with the deposed peninsular authorities of the *audiencia* to restore the old regime.<sup>2</sup> However, most newspaper articles and scholarly studies which celebrated the anniversary refuted the exponents of what may be called the "traitor thesis" and reaffirmed the patriotism of the marquis and his confreres.

The question whether these aristocrats were traitors or patriots does not lend itself to brief treatment. Instead this essay focuses primarily on the controversy as it affects Selva Alegre, the most important and the most criticized of these men whom Ecuador's lawyer historians have literally put on trial. Such a study serves two purposes. It assesses the state of Ecuadorian historiography on the beginnings of the movement for independence in that country.<sup>3</sup> And it demonstrates the applicability to Ecuador of at least two generalizations by Charles Gibson on contemporary history-writing in much of Spanish America: that it "is written as an adjunct to the lives of outstanding [and it may be added, not so outstanding] political figures," and that "artificial centennials are occasions for reworking the meager materials known."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> First published in Quito, 1959, and reprinted as the first half of *La revolución quiteña, 1809-1812* (Quito, 1962) to which all pagination references will be made.

<sup>2</sup> Borrero, *La revolución quiteña, passim*, esp. 4, 51, 92, 120-121, and 164.

<sup>3</sup> Alberto Muñoz Vernaza, *Memorias sobre la revolución de Quito* (Cuenca, 1966). This work, though it does not deal directly with the theme of this article, merits attention as a well-documented study of Cuenca's role as a bulwark of royalism.

<sup>4</sup> "Spanish American Historiography: A Review of Two Decades," *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, XXVIII (Gainesville, 1966), 63.

Juan Pío Montúfar y Larrea, the second Marquis of Selva Alegre (1758-1821), was the scion of a peninsular grandee and a quiteña aristocrat through whom he was related to most of the nobility in the Viceroyalty of New Granada.<sup>5</sup> Prior to 1809 he had enjoyed a successful and distinguished career as hacendado and member of the local cabildo. He early became concerned over the impoverishment which beset the Ecuadorian highlands during the second half of the eighteenth century. For that reason he befriended Eugenio Espejo, philosophe and so-called precursor of independence, and cooperated with him in founding the Patriotic Society of the Friends of the Country of Quito.<sup>6</sup> But apparently Selva Alegre did not sympathize with the revolutionary ideals often attributed to the man of the Enlightenment. Espejo supposedly desired the immediate realization of independent democratic republics in Spanish America,<sup>7</sup> whereas the marquis is said to have envisaged the eventual establishment of autonomous constitutional monarchies.<sup>8</sup>

The intervention of Napoleon in Spain brought about Montúfar y Larrea's involvement in a conspiracy against the gachupín governors of Quito. On Christmas day, 1808, the marquis presided over a meeting attended by Juan Salinas, a disgruntled infantry captain; Juan de Dios Morales, a cashiered secretary of the presidency; Manuel Rodríguez de Quiroga, a disbarred advocate; and Nicolás de la Peña, an impoverished rancher.<sup>9</sup> They proposed to overthrow the existing government and establish a junta as soon as the armies of "the tyrant of Europe" had finished conquering Spain.<sup>10</sup> Although they were arrested in early March 1809, the outcome of the trial for treason against these conspirators was inconclusive. Rodríguez de Quiroga clearly argued the doctrine of popular sovereignty in his defense.<sup>11</sup> Yet the proceedings were suspended

<sup>5</sup> On Selva Alegre's background see Neptalí Zúñiga, *Juan Pío Montúfar y Larrea ó el primer presidente de la América revolucionaria* (2 vols., Quito, 1945-1947).

<sup>6</sup> On Espejo see Philip L. Astuto, "Eugenio Espejo, a man of the Enlightenment in Ecuador," *Revista de Historia de América*, No. 44 (1957), 369-391; and on the Economic Society of Quito, Robert Jones Shafer, *The Economic Societies in the Spanish World (1763-1821)* (Syracuse, 1958), 168-177.

<sup>7</sup> *Escritos del doctor Francisco Javier Eugenio Santa Cruz y Espejo* (3 vols., Quito, 1912-1923), I, xvii.

<sup>8</sup> Zúñiga, *Juan Pío Montúfar*, I, 271-272.

<sup>9</sup> For biographies of these revolutionaries see Isaac J. Barrera, *Próceres de la patria, lecturas biográficas* (Quito, 1939).

<sup>10</sup> Jacinto Jijón y Caamaño, *Influencia de Quito en la emancipación del continente americano* (Quito, 1924), 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> "Alegato de Manuel Rodríguez de Quiroga," in *Memorias de la Academia ecuatoriana*, número extraordinario (1922), 71-100.

and the defendants released in late April. Selva Alegre then seems to have withdrawn from the revolutionary cabal.<sup>12</sup>

The others continued plotting. Their plans reached fruition on August 10, 1809, when, backed by the garrison, they arrested the officials of the presidency and with several nobles formed a Supreme Junta of Government. Selva Alegre became president; Morales and Rodríguez de Quiroga appropriated the strategic Ministries of Foreign Affairs and War and of Grace and Justice; and Salinas became commander in chief of the rebel army. A power struggle ensued between Montúfar y Larrea and these three revolutionaries. Divided and weakened from within, the junta was also threatened from without, for Popayán, Cuenca, and Guayaquil refused to second the coup,<sup>13</sup> and Santa Fé de Bogotá and Lima marshalled broadsheets, men, money, and munitions against Quito. On October 5, a "counter-revolution" broke out in the central highland corregimientos of the presidency. Selva Alegre panicked, resigned, and fled.

The remaining members of the junta capitulated in late October, and about a month later troops arrived from Panama and Lima. The Count of Ruiz de Castilla, the restored president of the audiencia, then arrested about seventy rebels and began proceedings against them. Tomás Arechaga, the interim fiscal, acted as prosecutor and on April 21, 1810, presented his findings. He demanded death or imprisonment and confiscation of property for most of "the men of August" but recommended clemency for Montúfar y Larrea, stating that the marquis had promptly realized his error and thereafter labored ardently for the restoration of Ruiz de Castilla.<sup>14</sup> Antonio de Amar y Borbón, viceroy of New Granada (1803-1810), postponed the sentencing.

Meanwhile the Council of Regency dispatched Carlos Montúfar, a son of Selva Alegre, to Quito as its commissioner. Before he could reach the city, an attempt to free the prisoners provoked the assassination of most of them by their limeño jailers on August 2, 1810. Morales, Rodríguez de Quiroga, and Salinas were among those illegally executed. By his flight, the Marquis not only avoided the death penalty, but his properties were "embargados en poder de sus mismos parientes, que es lo mismo que estar en su poder."<sup>15</sup> Subsequently

<sup>12</sup> Selva Alegre to José Riofrío, November 18, 1809, in Borrero, *La revolución quiteña*, 420.

<sup>13</sup> Popayán was within the jurisdiction of the audiencia but not the presidencia of Quito (Manuel de Villavicencio, *Geografía de la República del Ecuador* [New York, 1858], 215).

<sup>14</sup> Vista fiscal, April 21, 1810 in Roberto Andrade, *Historia del Ecuador* (2 vols., Guayaquil, 1934-1937?), II, 536-573.

<sup>15</sup> Pedro Calisto y Muñoz to Supreme Central Junta, January 5, 1810, in Alfredo Ponce Ribadeneira, *Quito, 1809-1812* (Madrid, 1960), 200-201.

the commissioner and the creole party organized a Superior Junta of Government subordinate to the Regency, with Ruiz de Castilla as its president and Selva Alegre as its vice-president.<sup>16</sup> For the next year and a half the Montúfares dictated junta policy. The Superior Junta ignored directives from Cádiz and campaigned against Joaquín Molina, the new president of the audiencia, whose seat he transferred to Cuenca. Quito declared its independence on October 11, 1811, and Selva Alegre became the first president of the Free State of Quito in early 1812. Meanwhile, Molina had been replaced by Toribio Montes (president of Quito, 1812-1817). Montes entered Quito later that year after a series of hard fought battles. As is well known, Quito did not obtain independence from Spain until 1822, a year after the marquis had died in exile.

Apparently Vicente Solano (1791-1856), a Franciscan friar and journalist who had studied for the priesthood in Quito between 1809 and 1814, was the first to memorialize Selva Alegre and at the same time apologize for his paradoxical conduct. In 1856 Solano wrote:<sup>17</sup>

Montúfar's heart burned with love for his country. He longed to see it raised to an eminent position. However, the circumstances of the time did not permit it. . . . Surrounded by enemies and by friends who opposed his ideas, he thought of nothing but to dissolve the junta and to reestablish the government of President Ruiz de Castilla. Herewithin lie the origins of the sufferings of Selva Alegre and the rivalry of the two parties, the one led by Montúfar and the other by Morales, until it produced the lamentable denouement of August 2 [, 1810].

The first Ecuadorian to write an account of the liberation of his country was Pedro Fermín Cevallos. Cevallos (1812-1893) was a lawyer, a prominent Liberal, a philologist, and a university professor.<sup>18</sup> In outlining the politics of the independence period, he had to face the problem of how to interpret Selva Alegre's letter of

<sup>16</sup> That the Superior Junta may have been established with the Regency's permission is lent credence by the fact that Cádiz recognized the Superior Junta as the provisional government of Quito early in 1811 (Council of Regency to Joaquín Molina, April 4, 1811, in Borrero, *La revolución quiteña*, 302-304). Carlos Montúfar's instructions, if committed to writing, have yet to be found (José D. Monsalve, *Antonio de Villavicencio [el protomártir] y la revolución de la independencia*, I [Bogotá, 1920], 72).

<sup>17</sup> *La Escoba* (Cuenca, Ecuador), October 29 and November 5, 1856. On Solano see Isaac J. Barrera, *Historia de la literatura ecuatoriana* (4 vols., Quito, 1954), III: *Siglo XIX*, 96-105.

<sup>18</sup> On Cevallos see Isaac J. Barrera, *Historiografía del Ecuador* (México, 1956), 43-54.

September 9, 1809, to Fernando José de Abascal, viceroy of Peru (1804-1816). In it the marquis portrayed himself as a loyal vassal of His Majesty who had accepted the presidency of the junta in order to prevent mob violence and to work for the restoration of the rightful regime.<sup>19</sup> Despite his avowal of fidelity to the Crown, Cevallos decided that Montúfar y Larrea was a "sincere friend of independence," but lacked the courage to back his convictions. As proof of Selva Alegre's patriotism, Cevallos cited the condemnation of the marquis as a rebel by the Spanish historian Mariano Torrente (1792-1856), that "passionate apologist of all those Americans who did collaborate with the Spaniards."<sup>20</sup>

The next historian to treat the problem was the conservative José María Le Gouhir Raud (1871-1940), a French Jesuit who came to Quito at the age of nineteen.<sup>21</sup> Father Le Gouhir reiterated Cevallos' explanation of Montúfar y Larrea's seemingly ambivalent behavior. In fact, he went so far as to call him "el personaje más condecorado de nuestra [sic] revolución. . . ."<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, a transcript of the 1810 trial proceedings against the men of August had been found in Bogotá and an incomplete copy made for Roberto Andrade (1852-1938), the well-known Liberal politician and polemicist.<sup>23</sup> Andrade published the documents sent him in the second volume of his *Historia del Ecuador*, including new letters of Selva Alegre to the viceroy of Lima and one to the viceroy of Bogotá.<sup>24</sup>

Andrade seems to have been the first exponent of the traitor thesis. Montúfar y Larrea's letter of January 6, 1810, to Amar was for him conclusive evidence that Selva Alegre had betrayed the revolution of 1809, inasmuch as the marquis not only reiterated the sentiments expressed in his letters to Abascal, but also claimed a hand in the counterrevolution of October 5.<sup>25</sup> In fact, one of the two delegates whom Quito had dispatched to Cuenca, ostensibly to negotiate reconciliation, was Pedro de Calisto y Muñoz, a known royalist and

<sup>19</sup> For the text of this letter see Ponce Ribadeneira, Quito, 162-163.

<sup>20</sup> *Resumen de la historia del Ecuador desde su origen hasta 1845* (2nd ed., 6 vols., Guayaquil, 1886), III, 49-50; for Torrente's view of Quito's uprising of 1809, see his *Historia de la revolución hispano-americana* (3 vols., Madrid, 1829), I, 39-49.

<sup>21</sup> Julio Tobar Donoso, "José María Le Gouhir y Raud," *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia* (hereafter cited as *BANH*), XX (Quito, 1940), 285-288.

<sup>22</sup> José María Le Gouhir Raud, *Historia de la República del Ecuador* (2 vols., Quito, 1920-1938), I, 98.

<sup>23</sup> See Manuel Aparicio Suárez, *Roberto Andrade, su tribu, su época y la República del Ecuador* (La Habana, 1958).

<sup>24</sup> Andrade, *Historia del Ecuador*, II, 845-855, 877-880.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 181.

the principal promoter of the counterrevolution. Finally, as further proof of Selva Alegre's guilt, Andrade published Arechaga's *vista fiscal* in which, as we have seen, the royal prosecutor pleaded clemency for the repentant marquis.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, Andrade's arguments did not provoke a dialogue between the detractors and defenders of Montúfar y Larrea until 1959.

Two pertinent studies appeared in the 1940s: José Rumazo González, "Guayaquil alrededor de 1809,"<sup>27</sup> and Neptalí Zúñiga, *Juan Pío Montúfar y Larrea*. Rumazo González (1904-), one of Ecuador's few documentary historians, detailed the activities of Bartolomé de Cevalón, governor of Guayaquil (1803-1810), in containing the Superior Junta, and published sources which shed light on the controversy. No record of the activities of the junta exists in print for most of the period between August 17 and October 12, 1809. But the session of September 6 has long been stressed as critical. On that day Selva Alegre first proposed the restoration of Ruiz de Castilla, but it was not known under what conditions. A letter which Rumazo González found in the Archivo General de Indias clarifies the situation somewhat. On September 8, Ruiz de Castilla wrote Cevalón that "they are going to restore me to the presidency provided that I simultaneously exercise that of the Junta. . . ."<sup>28</sup> Perhaps Selva Alegre and supporters sought a legalistic formula which would appease royalists, yet achieve autonomy of government for them.

Zúñiga (one of the few Ecuadorians to hold a doctorate in history) has written the only full-length biography of Montúfar y Larrea. Although based on some unpublished material, especially late eighteenth-century cabildo records, his study is unsatisfactory, for he says little about the role played by Selva Alegre in the Junta of 1810 or succeeding governments, and he whitewashes the correspondence of the marquis with the viceroys of Peru and New Granada. Zúñiga maintains that Selva Alegre sought to placate Abascal and Amar in order to gain time in which to organize the defenses of Quito. He also maintains that this policy produced positive results inasmuch as the northern viceroy dispatched a relative of Montúfar y Larrea to negotiate pacific restoration of the rebels to royal ranks. And the southern viceroy, he says, responded by merely threatening to attack Quito if Ruiz de Castilla were not forthwith reinstated.<sup>29</sup>

Zúñiga is wrong on both counts. Amar did send the Marquis of San Jorge south but as a sop to the restive creole party of the vice-

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 536-573; note esp. his marginal comment on 553.

<sup>27</sup> *Revista de Indias*, V (1944), 631-680.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 641.

<sup>29</sup> Zúñiga, *Juan Pío Montúfar*, I, 436-437.

regal capital. He ordered the governor of Popayán to detain San Jorge en route and to reincorporate Quito by force.<sup>30</sup> Abascal did content himself momentarily with a verbal reproach to Quito in a broadsheet penned on September 17. Two days later, however, he reinforced Cucalón with 400 men and a month later ordered him to subjugate Quito militarily.<sup>31</sup>

With Zúñiga the case for the defense temporarily rested. In the meantime, Jorge A. Garcés (1903-), then municipal archivist of Quito, microfilmed the complete 1810 trial transcript, the original of which is in the Colombian Archivo Nacional, and transcribed it for eventual publication. Much of the proceedings has already appeared in *Museo Histórico*.<sup>32</sup> It was Garcés' transcription of the trial on which Manuel M. Borrero based *Quito, luz de América*.<sup>33</sup> Borrero (1884-), a *cuencano*, a journalist, a Socialist, and a former president of Ecuador, revived the traitor thesis and strengthened it with new evidence. For example, he published Selva Alegre's letter of September 2, 1809, to his eldest son, Francisco Javier, corregidor of Riobamba (1803-1809), advising him that he was working incessantly for the return of Ruiz de Castilla.<sup>34</sup> And like Andrade, Borrero argues that Morales, Rodríguez de Quiroga, and other "middle-class" spokesmen of the people were the true revolutionaries of 1809, not Selva Alegre and the other lords who, as they would have it, espoused throne and altar.<sup>35</sup>

Neither the detractors nor the defenders of the marquis have adequately come to grips with the problem of reconstructing the political philosophies of the men of August. Both Borrero and Zúñiga, for example, without defining terms, refer to Morales and his "party"

<sup>30</sup> José Manuel Restrepo, *Historia de la revolución de la República de Colombia* (10 vols., Paris, 1827), II, 129, and Robert L. Gilmore, "The Imperial Crisis, Rebellion and the Viceroy: Nueva Granada in 1809," *HAHR*, XL (February 1960), 15-18.

<sup>31</sup> Fernando Díaz Venteo, *Las campañas militares del virrey Abascal* (Seville, 1948), 85-88.

<sup>32</sup> Jorge A. Garcés G., "En el Archivo Nacional de Bogotá [sic]," *Museo Histórico*, I, No. 3 (December 1944), 1-3. Publication of the proceedings began with the fourth number in 1950.

<sup>33</sup> About the same time as Borrero, Marco Antonio Guzmán Carrasco (1940-) also studied Garcés' transcription and the existing literature and concluded that Selva Alegre had betrayed the cause of independence (*La revolución quiteña del 10 de agosto de 1809* [Quito, 1961], 42,68,70,72,74). He publishes documentation which indirectly implicates the marquis in the genesis of the October counter-revolution. See esp. the Minutes of the Council of War of Alausí, October 12, 1809, 114, fn. 135.

<sup>34</sup> Borrero, *La revolución quiteña*, 116.

<sup>35</sup> Andrade, *Historia del Ecuador*; I, 181; Borrero, *La revolución quiteña*, 54-59.

as "democrats" and "republicans." On the other hand Borrero maintains that Montúfar y Larrea was a convinced partisan of the old regime—deducing this from his own interpretation of the marquis' controversial conduct, rather than from any serious evidence as to his political thought—whereas Zúñiga believes that he desired the establishment of independent constitutional monarchies. Zúñiga even fabricates an imaginary conversation between Espejo and Selva Alegre in which he has his hero extol the virtues of such a system of government. As his source he cites a high school text.<sup>36</sup>

Zúñiga is not the only historian guilty of excesses in defending Montúfar y Larrea. For example, Oscar Efrén Reyes (1896-1966), who is Zúñiga's source on Selva Alegre's beliefs, quotes the often cited testimonies of Espejo, Humboldt, Solano, and Stevenson.<sup>37</sup> What else could Espejo say of his patron but that he was "more illustrious for his patriotic virtues than for the splendor of his birth . . ." <sup>38</sup> Besides, the philosophe was praising Selva Alegre for his aid in promoting an economic society, not for presiding over a revolutionary junta. According to Reyes, Alexander von Humboldt wrote that he was "a distinguished youth, enamoured of his *patria*." The German savant, however, was referring to Carlos Montúfar, his travelling companion between Quito and Lima, not to the then forty-four year-old marquis. Reyes states that the ultramontanist and ultramundanist Vicente Solano, quoted earlier, was "without prejudice." And he considers not nearly as acute an observer William Bennet Stevenson, the private secretary of Ruiz de Castilla. But Stevenson's portrayal of Selva Alegre is more revealing:<sup>39</sup>

[His] character . . . is almost indefinable. As a private man he was extremely kind and polite, having more of the polished courtier about him than might be supposed to exist in an individual born in what may be termed a sequestered country. Both in his town and country house a great deal of taste and splendour were exhibited, in a manner somewhat uncommon in Quito; yet neither his income nor his popularity could be in any way be compared to those of [the Marquises of] Miraflores nor Solanda. As a public character Selva Alegre was extremely unfit; wavering and timid, wishing rather to recon-

<sup>36</sup> Zúñiga, *Juan Pío Montúfar*, I, 234; Oscar Efrén Reyes, *Breve historia general del Ecuador* (2 vols., Quito, 1942), II, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Efrén Reyes, *Breve historia general* (6th ed., Quito, 1960), I, 356, fn. 176.

<sup>38</sup> Eugenio Santa Cruz y Espejo, *Primicias de la cultura de Quito* (fac. ed., Quito, 1947), March 29, 1792.

<sup>39</sup> William Bennet Stevenson, *A Historical and Descriptive Narrative of Twenty Years' Residence in South America* (3 vols., London, 1825-1828), III, 15-16.

cile the two parties than to support either; fond of show and parade, but frightened at his own shadow, as if it mocked him.

Jorge Salvador Lara (1926-), a member of the select Academia Nacional de Historia, was the first to reply to Borreo in a letter published in the principal capital daily.<sup>40</sup> He typifies the patriot school.<sup>41</sup> A conservative, Salvador Lara criticizes Borrero, a Marxist, for not having used primary sources other than the trial proceedings and for advancing the naive thesis that the nobility betrayed the revolution made and sustained by the middle and lower classes. Of his second criticism, suffice it to say that so little is known about the participation of "the people" in and their attitude toward the events of 1809 that exponents of the traitor thesis would do well to study the crowd before invoking it in support of their position. Regarding Selva Alegre, Salvador Lara accuses Borrero of misjudging him from the viewpoint of a twentieth-century man. As a corrective he reprints "as probably the most accurate opinion of Montúfar" that held by his conservative predecessor Father Solano.<sup>42</sup>

The Catholic conservative questions the veracity of testimonies and evidence submitted during the 1810 trial. The advocates of the traitor thesis affirm their credibility. Andrade and Borrero therefore accuse of collaborating with Ruiz de Castilla, not only Selva Alegre, but also the other aristocratic members of the Supreme Junta. These were the marquises of Solanda, of Villa Orellana, and of Miraflores, and Manuel de Mateu y Herrera, heir to the title of marquis of Maenza, and Manuel de Larrea y Jijón, who would become the marquis of San José in 1815.<sup>43</sup> These five individuals testified that they had voted with Selva Alegre on September 6, 1809, to restore the peninsular authorities. As Salvador Lara would have it, however, these lords were patriots who perjured themselves to escape the death penalty for lese majesty.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps they did. Nevertheless, since

<sup>40</sup> *El Comercio*, July 29, 1959, reprinted as "Puntos de vista sobre la revolución de 1809," in Jorge Salvador Lara, *La patria heroica* (Quito, 1961), 137-150. For Borrero's reply to Salvador Lara see *BANH*, XXXX (1959), 237-242.

<sup>41</sup> Supporters of the patriot school include: Father Alfredo Ponce Ribadeneira (1918-), *Quito, 1809-1812*, 43-49 and "Reflexiones sobre las gestas libertadoras de Quito," *Once ensayos* (Quito, 1963), 89-118; Pío Jaramillo Alvarado (1889-1968), "Apuntaciones para el estudio de la revolución del 10 de agosto de 1809," *Estudios históricos* (Quito, 1960), 9-45; and the Academia Nacional de Historia whose censure of *Quito, luz de América* Borrero reprints in *La revolución quiteña*, 398-403, as well as his replies to it, 404-427, and to Jaramillo Alvarado, 439-454.

<sup>42</sup> Salvador Lara, *La patria heroica*, 142-143, fn. 2.

<sup>43</sup> The little that is known about these five lords may be found in José Alejandro Guzmán Rodríguez, *Títulos nobiliarios en el Ecuador* (Madrid, 1957).

<sup>44</sup> Salvador Lara, *La patria heroica*, 158.

even less is known about their role than that of "the people" in the August revolution, neither school is able to do much more than *palabrear*.

Borrero also brands as traitors the clergy of the capital and its bishop José Cuero y Caicedo (1800-1815), who was vice-president of the Supreme Junta.<sup>45</sup> In support of this accusation he publishes what is purportedly a transcript of a meeting between the bishop and his ecclesiastical chapter. According to it, Cuero y Caicedo and his advisors judged prudence more advisable than rashness and decided that he should participate nominally in the junta. Meanwhile the priests of Quito would attempt to calm their flock and work quietly for the restoration of the rightful regime.<sup>46</sup> Salvador Lara, however, maintains that this so-called Acta de Exclamación was mere sophistry in view of active participation by Cuero y Caicedo and the religious in defense of the Free State of Quito in 1812.<sup>47</sup> Other documentation, nevertheless, curiously not cited by Borrero, clearly demonstrates the bishop's loyalty to the Crown and its officials in 1809.<sup>48</sup> As Fray José María Vargas, O.P. (1903-) refreshingly argues, the reign of terror imposed by the royalists once back in power explains in part why this prelate from Popayán and the clergy of the capital subsequently supported the creole cause.<sup>49</sup>

Carlos de la Torre Reyes (1927-), a nephew of Cardinal de la Torre and one of Ecuador's more promising young historians, adds nothing to the arguments affirming the patriotism of Quito's first estate.<sup>50</sup> But he does bring new evidence to bear on Selva Alegre's paradoxical behavior as president of the Supreme Junta. Like Zúñiga, de la Torre Reyes believes that the marquis pretended to promote the return of Ruiz de Castilla while in reality seeking arms and time in which to organize the capital's defenses.<sup>51</sup> He publishes a hitherto unused letter of Montúfar y Larrea addressed to "the captain of any English ship" and dated September 14, 1809, in which the rebel president requested that the junta be sold flintlocks and cutlasses.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Borrero, *La revolución quiteña*, 32, 35, and 39.

<sup>46</sup> Acta de Exclamación del Il<sup>cmo</sup> Sr Obispo y V<sup>o</sup>. Deán y Cabildo de esta diócesis, August 14, 1809 in *ibid.*, 36-38.

<sup>47</sup> Lara, *La patria heroica*, 133-144.

<sup>48</sup> See esp. the correspondence of August 12-August 18, 1809 between Ruiz de Castilla and Cuero y Caicedo in Ponce Ribadeneira, *Quito, 1809-1812*, 140-142.

<sup>49</sup> José María Vargas, *Historia de la iglesia en el Ecuador durante el patronato español* (Quito, 1962), 479, 482-483.

<sup>50</sup> Carlos de la Torre Reyes, *La revolución de Quito del 10 de agosto de 1809* (Quito, 1962), 444-459. It is the best account of the movement to have appeared.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>52</sup> For a copy of the text see *ibid.*, 328-329.

Adding credence to this argument is the fact that both the count and the viceroy of Peru suspected Selva Alegre of duplicity. Ruiz de Castilla requested a passport in early October in order to retire to Lima,<sup>53</sup> and Abascal, as we have seen, ordered the governor of Guayaquil on October 23 to reduce the rebels by force of arms.

The late José Gabriel Navarro (1887-1965) ignored the traitor-patriot controversy in his well-documented but poorly written *La revolución de Quito del 10 de agosto de 1809* (Quito, 1962). In a posthumously published article, however, Navarro asserted that the Supreme Junta had capitulated seventy-five days after taking office, not because its titled members had betrayed it, but because it failed to obtain the support of the critical outlying provinces of Popayán, Cuenca, and Guayaquil.<sup>54</sup> He further contended that all Ecuadorian historians of the patriot school have erred in arguing that the men of August hid their true intentions behind a mask of obedience to the authority of Ferdinand VII. Instead Navarro insisted that in 1809 the *quiteños* were monarchical and nationalistic, that they sought to make war on Napoleon and to reject the pretensions of the Supreme Central Junta to the rights of the dethroned monarch. This thesis restates Solano's analysis of Selva Alegre's goals and applies to Ecuador the interpretation loudly proclaimed by the Argentine Enrique de Gandía for the initial phase of the Spanish American independence movement as a whole.<sup>55</sup>

In 1962 Borrero renewed his attack against the aristocracy in *La revolución quiteña* which reprints his earlier study, continues the story through 1812, and rebuts his critics.<sup>56</sup> Through a complicated and unconvincing manipulation of old and new sources, he argues that Selva Alegre and his family attempted anew after 1810 to return Quito to peninsular rule.<sup>57</sup> This new assault failed to provoke a reply from the patriot school, and since 1962 the controversy has languished.<sup>58</sup> This is unfortunate, for the period 1810-1812 badly needs research.

Neither the defamers nor the defenders of Selva Alegre have proved that he was a traitor or a patriot. Each school has marshalled

<sup>53</sup> Ruiz de Castilla to Selva Alegre, October 12, 1809, in Borrero, *La revolución quiteña*, 168-169.

<sup>54</sup> José Gabriel Navarro, "La verdad de nuestra historia," *BANH*, XLVIII (1962), 199-201.

<sup>55</sup> Enrique de Gandía, "Causas y caracteres de la independencia de América," in his *La independencia americana* (Buenos Aires, 1961), 9-32.

<sup>56</sup> See note 41.

<sup>57</sup> Borrero, *La revolución quiteña*, 234, 294-308.

<sup>58</sup> Since this article went to press, a new study has appeared, César Vicente Velásquez, *10 de agosto; leyenda y verdad histórica* (Quito, 1968). Velásquez,

evidence which suggests but does not prove that he was one or the other. With regard to his incriminating correspondence, his abologists argue ably that he was merely disguising his real intentions. On the other hand they remain silent in the face of his accusers' secondary charge, that the marquis promoted the counterrevolution of October 5. A basic question remains unanswered: why were individuals known to be openly hostile to the junta chosen as its envoys to Cuenca and Guayaquil?<sup>59</sup> It will be remembered that Pedro Calisto y Muñoz, for example, was appointed commissioner to Cuenca, and that, as Borrero has unequivocally shown, he sparked the counterrevolution.

Perhaps the controversy may prove impossible to resolve. It may be that the whole dispute is couched in the wrong terms. That Selva Alegre was a "patriot" does not preclude his having been an opportunist or, for that matter, "wavering and timid." As an alternate explanation, he may have been a royalist in 1809 and become a "revolutionary" after the massacre of August 2, 1810, like Cuero y Caicedo. Sustained and methodical research in Ecuadorian, Colombian, Peruvian, and Spanish archives is needed to clarify the part that Montúfar y Larrea and the others played in Quito's bid for independence. Little is known about the political philosophies of the members and supporters of the creole governments of 1809-1812. What were their backgrounds? What did they debate in those juntas and congresses? What decisions did they reach and actions undertake? The literature on Quito's revolution of August 10, 1809, has inflamed the arguments without illuminating the issues, and politics and provincialism have distorted both.

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without adding any fresh evidence, sustains that Montúfar y Larrea—a moderate who at most desired creole autonomy within the empire as well as monarchical rule—wrote Abascal to stall for time, but forced to decide between revolution or restoration, chose the latter (*passim*, esp. 55, 68, and 78).

<sup>59</sup> See José Viscayno, Minutes of the cabildo of Quito's relationship with the junta between Sept. 5 and 19, 1809 in Alfredo Flores y Caamaño, *Descubrimiento histórico relativo a la independencia de Quito* (Quito, 1909) xiii-xxiv.