

Tadeo Ortiz, Mexican Emissary Extraordinary

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T ADEO ORTIZ is best known as a Mexican intellectual of the post-Independence period, author of a work on political economy entitled *México considerado como nación independiente y libre* (1832). Like his more influential contemporaries Alamán and Mora, Ortiz witnessed the new Mexican republic's struggles with the problem of nationhood, and offered, as they did, constructive proposals for its political, social, and economic improvement. His book, which later became, according to Justo Sierra, "the vade mecum of Benito Juárez,"¹ was the product of a lifetime of travel, study, work, and adventure, including twelve years' experience as a revolutionary and an equal time as a colonizer of Mexico's frontiers. His adult life, from 1809 until his premature death in 1833, was dedicated to serving two principal goals: Mexico's political independence and its economic development. Ortiz' role in realizing the first of these goals, which he regarded as a necessary prelude to the second, is the primary concern of this paper. Untold to date, the story can be reconstructed with some degree of continuity by utilizing manuscript materials located in Seville² and Buenos Aires.³

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1. Justo Sierra, *Juárez, su obra y su tiempo* (México, 1905-1906), 25.

2. The documents now in Seville, which cover Ortiz' career from 1813 to 1815, were captured in Bogotá by royalist forces under General Pablo Morillo in May 1816. The materials were then inventoried, copied, and forwarded to the Spanish government, eventually to be deposited in the Archive of the Indies and filed in Estado-Santa Fe, Legajo 6(22), hereafter cited as AGI, Estado-Santa Fe, 6(22). They are catalogued and summarized in Pedro Torres Lanzas (ed.), *Independencia de América* (5 vols., Madrid, 1912), III and IV. I am very grateful to the former director of the Archive of the Indies, José de la Peña y Cámara, for providing me with a microfilm copy of these materials.

3. The Buenos Aires documents, which cover 1818-1819, the years of Ortiz' residence there, are in the Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter AGN), Sección Gobierno, Méjico, varios: 1811-1840. Mario Belgrano summarized and published portions of these documents in "Don Simón Tadeo Ortiz y Ayala, Comisionado de Méjico en Buenos Aires, 1818-1819," *Humanidades*, 25 (1936), 301-314. This article was reprinted as "Un diplomático mexicano ignorado, Don Simón Tadeo Ortiz," *Boletín Bibliográfico de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público* (June 1957). Belgrano was unaware of the Seville documents, and the full significance of the Buenos Aires materials can be grasped only after a

Simón Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala, or Tadeo Ortiz, as he usually styled himself, wrote much during his lifetime, but little about his background. He was born, according to his own words, in the town of Mascota,⁴ in the Intendancy of Guadalajara, now the state of Jalisco. A baptismal certificate signed by the superior of the Convent of San Francisco de Guadalajara indicates that Ortiz' birthdate was October 18, 1788; his godfather was a Don Luis Gil Naldaz.⁵

While little is known about Ortiz' parents, one might judge from his later associates and activities that he came from a creole mercantile family of some means and social standing. He had several sisters and at least two brothers, named Agustín and Guadalupe.⁶ Most likely the youthful Tadeo received some of the rudiments of an education in Guadalajara, prior to his study of Latin and philosophy in Mexico City. Apparently he soon became restless and discontented in the capital; desiring to complete his education in Europe, he embarked from Veracruz for Spain in October 1809.⁷ While this was the end of his formal training, it was the beginning of his education within a larger framework of travel and adventure. Six years would elapse before he set foot on the soil of his native land again; in that time he became a revolutionary.

Young Don Tadeo arrived in Spain at a moment when almost the entire peninsula was under the control of the French legions of Napoleon Bonaparte. Since travel was difficult, he spent more than a year in Cádiz, one of the few remaining cities not under French occupation.⁸ In early 1811 he became an assistant to Joaquín Maniau, deputy from Veracruz to the Spanish Cortes, the legislative body which had

study of the ones in Seville. I am indeed grateful to Professor Germán O. E. Tjarks, who obtained for me a microfilm copy of the papers in Buenos Aires.

4. Tadeo Ortiz, *México considerado como nación independiente y libre* (Burdos, 1832), 320.

5. Baptismal certificate of Tadeo Ortiz, enclosed in Letter No. 10 of D. Pablo Morillo, November 12, 1816, AGI, Estado-Santa Fe, 6(22).

6. Ortiz to Joaquín Rayón, June 16, 1812, in Juan Hernández y Dávalos (ed.), *Colección de documentos para la historia de la guerra de independencia de México de 1808 a 1821* (6 vols., México, 1877-1882), V, 193. See also Agustín Ortiz to J. R. Larranaga, August 4, 1834, in Archivo de la Secretaría de Fomento, Colonización, leg. 7, exp. 57, typescripts, Archives of the University of Texas, B 12/50, 317; and Guadalupe Ortiz to Valentín Gómez Farías, September 1, 1846, in Gómez Farías Papers, No. 1671, f. 50, Latin American Collection, University of Texas.

7. Ortiz to Rayón, June 16, 1812, Hernández y Dávalos, *Colección*, V, 193; enclosure in Letter No. 10 of Morillo, November 12, 1816, AGI, Estado-Santa Fe, 6(22).

8. Luis Pérez Verdía, *Historia particular del estado de Jalisco* (3 vols., Guadalajara, 1911), III, 516, states that Ortiz went to Spain as a servant of the children of José de Iturrigaray, Viceroy of New Spain, who was deposed in 1808.

been serving since September 1810 as a provisional Spanish government.⁹ The relation with Maniau was significant, for he was a representative of the powerful merchants' guild of Veracruz and had become the foremost spokesman in the Cortes for a policy of free trade reform.¹⁰

The young and impressionable Ortiz gained considerable knowledge of peninsular and colonial affairs, and at length became acquainted with José Alvarez de Toledo, deputy from Santo Domingo, whose revolutionary activities in America would soon become known far and wide. According to the testimony of Friar Servando Teresa de Mier of Nuevo León, who was residing in Cádiz at the time, both Ortiz and Toledo were members of a secret society, *Los Caballeros Racionales*, founded by Buenos Aires revolutionary Carlos Alvear, and said to have had connections with Masonic lodges in the United States, England, and Spain.¹¹

About the middle of 1811 Ortiz received news of the death of his father, and decided to return to Mexico to help support his mother and sisters. He had also heard of the progress of the insurgent movement under Miguel Hidalgo; and since he had become disillusioned about the prospects of colonial representatives in the Cortes ever gaining an equal voice with the peninsulars, he appears at this time to have decided to dedicate himself to the cause of Mexican independence.¹² When his request for a passport to Mexico was denied by the Spanish authorities, he left secretly through Portugal for the United States, planning to return to Mexico by way of the Interior Provinces, on the northern frontier.

In December 1811 the Spanish ambassador to the United States, Luis de Onís, reported that "a certain Don Tadeo Ortiz, native of Guadalajara," had arrived in Philadelphia, and that he was one of several being watched for alleged connections with Alvarez de Toledo, Ortiz' former associate.¹³ A few days later, Onís warned the Spanish commander at Nacogdoches as follows:

9. "Una papeleta de habitación," enclosed in Letter No. 10 of D. Pablo Morillo, November 12, 1816, AGI, Estado-Santa Fe, 6(22).

10. John H. Hann, "The Role of the Mexican Deputies in the Proposal and Enactment of Measures of Economic Reform Applicable to Mexico," in Nettie Lee Benson (ed.), *Mexico and the Spanish Cortes, 1810-1822: Eight Essays* (Austin, 1966), p. 164-165.

11. Declaration of Fray Servando de Mier, December 4, 1817, Hernández y Dávalos, *Colección*, VI, 821; see also Luis Pérez Verdía, *Historia particular*, III, 516.

12. Ortiz to Rayón, June 16, 1812, Hernández y Dávalos, *Colección*, V, 193.

13. Luis de Onís to the Viceroy of New Spain, December 17, 1811, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Estado, leg. 5554, exp. 12. Photostat in the Library of Congress.

There has arrived in this city [Philadelphia], coming from Cádiz, a youth named Don Tadeo Ortiz, native of Guadalajara of this kingdom. His conduct here has been very suspicious, for he has joined the fugitive ex-deputy of the Cortes, Don José Alvarez de Toledo, alternate delegate for the island of Santo Domingo, and a refugee in this city who has published by means of a manifesto a burning and libelous denunciation which attempts to discredit the legitimate government and to promote insurrection in Spain's dominions in America.

Ortiz has announced his intention to go to New Orleans. He has avoided seeing me, but I am certain that he carries some papers written by insurgents in Spain for Hidalgo and other leaders of the revolution there. I have advised the Spanish consul in New Orleans to watch his behavior and advise you of his movements. . . . Don Tadeo Ortiz is about twenty-two years of age, of slender build, medium stature, dark complexion, with black hair and eyes. Do not be surprised if some papers of Toledo are found among those carried by Ortiz.¹⁴

In January 1812 Ortiz and Toledo journeyed to Washington, no doubt to confer with officials in the State Department about the possibility of obtaining aid from the United States. There they met José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, an ardent Mexican revolutionary leader who claimed he held a commission from the Hidalgo government to enlist United States support.¹⁵ Presumably all three—Ortiz, Toledo, and Gutiérrez—talked with the American Secretary of State, James Monroe, who offered strong encouragement while promising little material assistance.¹⁶ At this time Ortiz sought permission from President James Madison to serve with an expedition reportedly being sent under the secret protection of the United States from Louisiana to the Interior Provinces, but he failed to contact the president. He then turned to Gutiérrez de Lara, who apparently had broken with Toledo in a quarrel over command.¹⁷ Ortiz and Gutiérrez set sail together for New Or-

14. Luis de Onís to the commander at Nacogdoches, December 21, 1811, enclosure in *expediente* of May 13, 1812, Bexar Archives, A 2/111. Archives of the University of Texas.

15. Elizabeth H. West (ed.), "Diary of José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara," *American Historical Review*, 34 (October 1928), 76; Gutiérrez de Lara to the Mexican Congress, August 1, 1815, in Charles A. Gulick and Katherine Elliot (eds.), *The Papers of Mirabeau B. Lamar* (6 vols., Austin, 1921-1927), I, 9-10; Harris C. Warren, "José Alvarez de Toledo's Initiation as a Filibuster, 1811-1813," *HAHR*, 20:1 (February 1940), 60.

16. Isaac J. Cox, "Monroe and the Early Mexican Revolutionary Agents," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1911* (Washington, 1913), I, 201-203.

17. Ortiz' "Relación de mi viaje," AGI, Estado-Santa Fe, 6(22).

leans about the middle of February, arriving late in March, while Toledo remained in Philadelphia for the rest of the year.¹⁸

Few towns anywhere in the early nineteenth century could match New Orleans in the opportunities it offered for adventure, conspiracy, and intrigue. Here the flag of the United States, which had been hoisted scarcely nine years before Ortiz' arrival there, had only superficially modified a heritage primarily French, and secondarily Spanish. Still a frontier outpost, it was the haven for hundreds of men of dubious origin, uncertain status, and questionable intent—outcasts, filibusters, adventurers, or pirates. Most of their plots involved, in some form or other, an invasion of Texas and the Spanish northern frontier; thus an extraordinary diligence was demanded of the Spanish consul in New Orleans.

Ortiz' activities in New Orleans soon came to the attention of Spanish consul Diego Morphy. Writing to the Spanish commander at Nacogdoches on April 26, 1812, Morphy reported that Ortiz had left New Orleans on a steamboat for Natchez, carrying sealed papers written by Spanish rebels for the Mexican insurgents, and that he had already become a close associate of Monsieur Leclerc, editor of a newspaper called *L'ami des lois* and a rabid Bonapartist.¹⁹

By late May Ortiz was back in New Orleans. From there he wrote to Gutiérrez de Lara in Nacogdoches, saying that since Toledo was a scoundrel, it was now more imperative than ever that he and Gutiérrez join together as true patriots to save the nation. He had heard that the French government was desirous of aiding the Mexicans, as were other European governments. Although the Hidalgo movement had collapsed, he said, the revolution was making steady progress under the leadership of Morelos and Rayón.²⁰

For the purpose of establishing contact with these leaders, whose first names he did not know,²¹ Ortiz wrote letters from New Orleans in June, sending them by way of the American brigantine *Sirena* to a friend in Veracruz named Juan Castilla. In a letter to Rayón, Ortiz

18. Ortiz to Gutiérrez de Lara, May 29, 1812, Archivo General de la Nación, México, Historia, Operaciones de Guerra, Independientes, tomo XXVII. Chronologically speaking, this is the first Ortiz letter which has come to light so far. It is barely legible, and the spelling and punctuation are very bad. I must express my appreciation to Lic. Ernesto Lemoine Villacaña for calling my attention to this letter. See also West, "Diary of Gutiérrez de Lara," pp. 286-289.

19. Morphy to the commander at Nacogdoches, April 26, 1812, Bexar Archives, A 2/110. See also Alfred T. Wellborn, "The Relations between New Orleans and Latin America, 1810-1824," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 22 (July 1939), 793.

20. Ortiz to Gutiérrez de Lara, May 29, 1812, AGN, México, Historia, Operaciones de Guerra, Independientes, tomo XXVII.

21. He thought Rayón's was Joaquín (really Ignacio), and Morelos' Manuel (actually José María).

introduced himself as a native of Guadalajara and a patriotic American who desired the liberty of his country. He spoke enthusiastically of the progress of the revolutions in South America, and emphasized foreign sympathy for Mexican independence. He urged particularly the occupation of a port on the Mexican Gulf to facilitate shipment of arms and supplies, and the appointment of a deputy authorized to obtain foreign assistance for the cause.²²

A letter addressed to Morelos was similar in tone.²³ With regard to the deputy mentioned in the letter to Rayón, Ortiz wrote that he would welcome the appointment for himself. "While I consider myself unworthy of such a position," he said,

I have friends experienced in matters of diplomacy who hold me in esteem. . . . If therefore the matter of sending a deputy is approved, I would be deeply grateful if you did not overlook me for one of the inferior commissions. I am not motivated by ambition, but only by a desire to serve my country. I must point out that I have some knowledge of this nation the United States, its government, and its language; and some of my friends in foreign embassies with whom I have influence would like for me to have a commission authorizing me to undertake negotiations.²⁴

As it turned out, Ortiz' letters to Rayón and Morelos never reached their destination. Addressed to Don Juan Castilla of Veracruz, they were delivered instead to his brother, Don Diego González de Castilla, an army officer, who promptly handed over all the correspondence to the Spanish governor.²⁵ Ortiz later said he wrote Morelos a second letter, and insisted that his correspondence had reached insurgent hands. He even boasted that he had received a number of letters in return, including one urging him to organize an expedition to revolutionize Texas, and promising that he would soon be named deputy to the United States.²⁶ Yet Diego Morphy, the Spanish consul at New Orleans, was probably correct in his belief that Ortiz was not in communication with the Mexican insurgents. "I have kept him under constant surveillance," wrote Morphy in May, 1813,

and I have learned through persons who know him that he is a youth of little education or talent, that even though he knows

22. Ortiz to Rayón, June 16, 1812, Hernández y Dávalos, *Colección*, V, 193-195.

23. Ortiz to Morelos, June 18, 1812, *ibid.*, 189-191.

24. *Ibid.*

25. "Averiguación sobre las cartas de D. Tadeo Ortiz interceptadas en Veracruz," *ibid.*, 188.

26. Ortiz, "Relación de mi viaje," AGI, Estado-Santa Fe, 6(22).

a little about writing, he does it badly, without feeling, and without orthography or punctuation, and that he does not seem to comprehend at present what is happening in the Kingdom of New Spain. I am told that he anxiously awaits news and manifests an ardent desire for insurgent victories. He does not have a single penny, and survives only because of the help of first one and then another. One person kept him in his house in the country for six months, and he returned here only a few days ago. All this leads me to believe that he is not in correspondence with Morelos as is suspected; but if he is, it will be difficult to investigate or to prohibit this in a country whose government does not involve itself in matters of this sort.²⁷

Meanwhile, important developments had been taking place in the province of Texas. Late in 1812, Ortiz' associate, Gutiérrez de Lara, and a former United States army lieutenant named Augustus W. Magee, organized an expedition to overthrow Spanish power in Texas. Although their forces won some initial successes at Nacogdoches, La Bahía, and San Antonio, Magee died, and Gutiérrez, having lost favor with the American officers on the expedition, was compelled to relinquish his command to Alvarez de Toledo, who had arrived on the scene from Philadelphia in August 1813. A decisive battle took place on August 18, resulting in the rout of the insurgents. Toledo fled, and after another unsuccessful attempt to take Texas, retired to New Orleans late in 1814.²⁸

Ortiz took little part in all this. Later he said that when he learned of Toledo's arrival in Texas, he thought of going to San Antonio, but dropped the idea when he heard about Toledo's poor leadership, the lack of discipline among the troops, and the unfavorable situation throughout the province. After the defeat of the expedition, Ortiz said he tried to help organize another by land, but that his plans were interrupted by his alleged receipt of a commission assigning him as deputy to New Granada. Had the revolution in Texas been a success, and had free communication across the frontier been established between Mexico and Louisiana, he was convinced that he would have been assigned to the United States.

After some "pecuniary sacrifices," the young revolutionary set sail from New Orleans in the latter part of 1813. Before he arrived in Cartagena a year later, he had encountered and somehow survived one scrape after another, all vividly described and perhaps enlarged

27. Morphy to the Governor and Captain General of Cuba, May 6, 1813, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, leg. 1836, No. 2.

28. Harris G. Warren, *The Sword was their Passport* (Baton Rouge, 1943), pp. 66-71.

upon in his "Relación de mi viaje." The captain of the vessel on which he embarked proved to be a pirate. Landing on the coast of Cuba, he abandoned all his passengers, who were obliged to spend three months in the open, almost without provisions. At length they found a boat which they repaired sufficiently to set sail for Santo Domingo. Then a hurricane struck, throwing the party up on a deserted island near Port au Prince. Ortiz fell ill, and when his companions found an abandoned schooner and prepared to sail again, they left him in a fisherman's hut. A group from Port au Prince, composed mainly of Catalans, took him prisoner, stole everything he had, escorted him to Novitas on the north-eastern coast of Cuba, and released him to two Frenchmen. Sick, despondent, and afraid he was near death, Ortiz, according to his own words, accepted the advice of the Frenchmen to destroy his papers in order to prevent them from falling into the hands of an enemy; at the same time he asked his new friends to make notes from the originals and save fragments to help him reconstruct the essence should he survive.

Somehow the young man recovered. He eventually returned to Port au Prince, spent a few days in jail, escaped with the help of friends, and in September 1814 took refuge on an hacienda belonging to a priest near Manzanillo, on the southeast coast of Cuba. In October Ortiz reached Kingston, Jamaica, where he almost became exposed to the plague; and from Kingston he set sail for Cartagena, arriving there in November, nearly a year after he left New Orleans.²⁹

The fortress city of Cartagena, facing westward across the Caribbean, had overthrown Spanish rule late in 1811 and had subsequently joined the Granadine republican federation, the creation of Simón Bolívar. But so strong were the forces of provincialism throughout the area that it was late 1814 before Bolívar could bring the old viceregal capital, Santa Fe de Bogotá, into the federation; and when he called upon Cartagena to furnish arms and supplies for a proposed campaign to complete the liberation of neighboring Venezuela, he encountered fierce resistance which exhausted the strength and energies of both sides. Hearing that a large Spanish force under General Pablo Morillo had landed in Venezuela, Bolívar abandoned the Cartagena campaign and retired to Jamaica.

29. Ortiz' "Relación de mi viaje," AGI, Estado-Santa Fe, 6(22). Although Ortiz probably colored and exaggerated his misfortunes, he seems to have written a fairly accurate account of his travels. Several passports which were found among his captured papers indicate that he was in Cuba, Haiti, and Jamaica. On the other hand, his story about the loss of his papers is a concoction devised to give his mission the appearance of legality; it is highly unlikely that he ever received any credentials.

Meanwhile, the warm and enthusiastic welcome which Ortiz no doubt expected from his revolutionary brothers in Cartagena failed to materialize. His story about the loss of his papers aroused such suspicions that the Cartagena officials, though listening politely, rejected all his proposals for establishing relations with Mexico. Ortiz soon concluded that he had no future in Cartagena, and although broken in health and without funds, he left for the Magdalena river valley to begin the long ascent to Bogotá.³⁰ He afterward claimed that the towns through which he passed received him with the greatest kindness as a Mexican and a patriot.³¹

On arrival in Bogotá early in March 1815, Ortiz bore two spurious documents which he had concocted with an eye to avoiding recurrence of his Cartagena experience. The first was a letter addressed to Don Simón Tadeo Ortiz, signed at "Guaxaca" on November 29, 1813 by "Manuel" Morelos, "General in Chief of Mexico;" the second purported to be Ortiz' commission, which was enclosed in the above letter and signed in the same way. Ortiz had also completed his "Relación de mi viaje," describing his adventures, experiences, and misfortunes since leaving Spain in 1811, and including his dubious explanation about the loss of his credentials. As "Agent of Foreign Affairs and Provisional Deputy to the Independent Governments of Caracas and the new Kingdom of Granada," Ortiz was supposedly commissioned to solicit a loan to the rebel Mexican government, enough to pay for 15,000 guns—or failing that, at least enough to pay Ortiz' travel expenses to Europe or North America.³²

Naturally, these two documents—the covering letter and the enclosure—would provoke questions, since Morelos' given name and title were blatantly inauthentic, and Morelos was nowhere near Oaxaca in November 1813. Moreover, the writing sounds more like Ortiz than Morelos. At any rate, the documents were enclosed in a letter written by Ortiz, dated March 8, 1815, to the "President of the General Government of New Granada." Requesting an interview, he wrote enthusiastically of an America united in defense of its rights, and spoke of the great joy which would be his if he became "the first American to provide steps toward the union, alliance, and eternal friendship of the two Americas."³³

The Bogotá officials, however, with their own revolution at a low ebb, could not help Mexico. In any case, they refused to receive the

30. *Ibid.*

31. Ortiz to the Secretary of State of New Granada, January 12, 1815, *ibid.*

32. Manuel Morelos to Don Simón Tadeo Ortiz, November 29, 1813, *ibid.*

33. Ortiz to the President of New Granada, with enclosures, March 8, 1815, *ibid.*

young emissary on the grounds that his credentials were questionable and he himself was a fraud. So far as they were concerned, the sooner he left the country the better.

But Ortiz was not one to give up so easily. Concluding that he was not going to be granted an interview, he composed an "Official Note to the General Government of New Granada" to explain the purpose of his mission. He again insisted on Mexico's need for assistance, which he said New Granadan corsairs could do much to provide, and he urged the desirability of establishing a federated union between Mexico and New Granada. He expressed regret that Morelos had struck out for the Pacific coast instead of the Caribbean in 1813.³⁴

The Bogotá officials still remained silent; another similar proposal by Ortiz followed, and also failed to elicit a response. At length, on April 27, his patience exhausted, Ortiz wrote that he was leaving the country, and that he sought from the New Granadan government only a written explanation of its conduct, to assist him in reporting to his superiors in Mexico.³⁵ In a final note, he said that he had been ignored and abused, that his pride and honor had been injured, and that the cause of independence had suffered great damage. His last request was for a passport and a small sum of money to help him begin his journey to the United States. There he hoped to meet Juan Pablo Anaya, who, he had heard, had gone to New Orleans to obtain assistance for the revolution in Mexico.³⁶ No doubt the Bogotá revolutionaries were more than willing to oblige.

Ortiz was correctly informed about Anaya's mission to New Orleans, but did not know that he had already returned to Mexico. Anaya had received money from the Mexican revolutionary government in August 1814 to purchase arms and munitions in the United States. Arriving in New Orleans, he quickly became involved in various schemes for revolutionizing the northern frontier, only to be tricked and betrayed by several ostensible friends, including the ubiquitous Alvarez de Toledo. Frustrated and disgusted, Anaya set sail for Mexico in the spring of 1815, accompanied by Dr. John Hamilton Robinson, an American physician who had been active in Southwest exploration. At length Anaya and Robinson overtook the itinerant insurgent Mexican government in the interior of the country, about the same time that body commissioned José Manuel Herrera as minister plenipotentiary to the United States.³⁷

34. Ortiz to the General Government of New Granada, April 4, 1815, *ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*, April 27, 1815.

36. *Ibid.*, May 7, 1815.

37. Isidro Fabela, "Los precursores de la diplomacia mexicana," *Archivo*

That Ortiz ever reached New Orleans is highly improbable, although Luis de Onís, the Spanish ambassador, may have suspected that he was there late in 1815.³⁸ In a letter to James Monroe, the Secretary of State, Onís compiled a list of names of people in the New Orleans area who were suspected of seditious activities, and called upon the American government to “prosecute the principal persons concerned, that is to say, José Alvarez de Toledo, Anaya, Ortez [*sic*], the self-styled minister, Manuel de Herrera, Dr. Robinson, and their followers, so that they may be punished with all the rigor which the laws prescribe in cases of this kind.³⁹ But the evidence indicates that Ortiz, instead of returning to New Orleans or his native land, continued his travels in behalf of the cause of Mexican independence through South America, arriving three years later, in mid-1818, in Buenos Aires.⁴⁰

Most of Spanish America after 1815 still remained under the control of the Spanish crown. Bonaparte had been defeated, Ferdinand VII had been restored as an absolute monarch, and Spanish troops, no longer needed to fight the French, had been released for duty in America to suppress the revolutionary movements. Only Buenos Aires remained unconquered, and by 1817 there was noticeable revolutionary progress only in Chile and Venezuela. The rest would have to await the liberating armies of Bolívar and San Martín.

In his travels Ortiz visited Caracas, Cundinamarca, Lima, Quito, Guayaquil, and Santiago during 1816 and 1817, took careful notes on the agricultural and mineral resources of the areas through which he passed, and kept abreast of developments in Mexico by means of the *Gazeta de México*, which fell into his hands from time to time.⁴¹ One would need a fertile imagination to try to contemplate what Ortiz must have encountered on his journey. How did he avoid capture? How did he survive? Where did he obtain funds? It must have been

Histórico Diplomático Mexicano, XX (1926), 64-76; Harold A. Bierck, Jr., “Dr. John Hamilton Robinson,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 25 (July 1942), 665-666.

38. Luis de Onís to the viceroy of New Spain, October 26, 1815, Archivo General de la Nación, México, Historia, Operaciones de Guerra, Notas diplomáticas, tomo I.

39. Luis de Onís to James Monroe, December 30, 1815, William R. Manning (ed.), *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations* (3 vols., New York, 1925), III, 1893.

40. In his book Ortiz makes a casual reference to the “towns of South America, whose capitals, with the exception of that of Brazil, as a result of a combination of circumstances, I have visited.” See his *México considerado . . .*, p. 498.

41. As indicated particularly in Ortiz’ letters and enclosures of September 16, 1818 and May 8, 1819 to the Secretary of State, AGN, Buenos Aires, Sección gobierno, Méjico, varios: 1811-1840.

an incredible set of adventures, and it is regrettable that he did not leave another "Relación" to provide details. At any rate, about the middle of 1818 Tadeo Ortiz, still a professing revolutionary, appeared in Buenos Aires, capital of the former Viceroyalty of La Plata.

In Buenos Aires revolutionary activities had been going on unhampered since 1810. In July 1816, or about two years prior to Ortiz' arrival, a congress at Tucumán declared independence from Spain, created the United Provinces of La Plata, and appointed the able Juan Martín de Pueyrredón to the executive power as Supreme Director. His administration established a measure of order and stability, and gave its support to the great commander, José de San Martín, in assembling an army, crossing the Andes, and liberating Chile in early 1818.

Ortiz' proceedings in Buenos Aires have a familiar ring. After three unsuccessful attempts to obtain an interview with Pueyrredón to discuss an alliance between Mexico and Buenos Aires, Ortiz wrote the Secretary of State, saying that he was enclosing documents to affirm the validity of his mission, and requesting that they be submitted to the Supreme Director for his consideration. As one might expect, the first was signed by Ignacio Rayón (this time his first name was correct), President of the Government of Mexico, in the National Palace of America, Zitácuaro, January 16, 1813; and the second by "Manuel Morelos," General in Chief of the Armies of Mexico and Executive Power in the Department of the South, Guaxaca, February 18, 1813! They designated Tadeo Ortiz deputy commissioner, authorized him to negotiate with foreign nations, and ordered him to arrange for the outfitting of a naval expedition, involving ships, arms, and other weapons of war, to be landed at Mexico's ports, for which Mexico would pay a sum up to one-third of its national wealth.⁴²

Included with these two documents was one entitled "Instructions from the Government of Mexico to the Governments of South America." Here Ortiz proposed a reciprocal defensive and commercial alliance between Mexico and all those South American countries which wished to join. Import and export duties would be removed, and all participating members would observe a policy of free trade, thus establishing, in effect, a hemispheric customs union. The proposal also called for the formation of a company of merchant stockholders in Great Britain or the United States which would be granted commercial

42. *Ibid.*, September 16, 1818; see also Mario Belgrano, *Don Simón Tadeo Ortiz y Ayala . . .*, pp. 302-304. On January 16, 1813 Rayón was at Tlalpujahua rather than Zitácuaro; and Morelos on February 18, 1813 was at Yanhuítlan, on the way to Acapulco, rather than Oaxaca.

privileges, including the right to import and export goods duty free, in exchange for arms, munitions, and naval squadrons. These, Ortiz pointed out, would be used by South American countries to defend their coasts, and to attack strategic targets such as the Isthmus of Panama, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and the Floridas.⁴³

Six months passed, and still there was no word from the Pueyrredón government. At length, in April 1819 a despondent Ortiz wrote that he had given up his home, his friends, and the comforts of his native land in behalf of the cause; that he had subjected himself to the wandering life and to every kind of privation and misfortune one could possibly experience. In view of his sacrifices and other projects he wanted to pursue, he hoped that there would be no further delay in granting him a hearing.⁴⁴ He still clung to his story of being forced to destroy his original credentials to save his life and prevent his plans from falling into the hands of an enemy.⁴⁵ But if Ortiz was hoping to impress the Buenos Aires authorities with either documents or zeal, the effort was futile.

In May 1819, having completed the draft of a new project, Ortiz announced that he was leaving for England. He had decided that Spanish America was in no position to liberate itself, and must look to Europe for help. England, he thought, could offer the most effective support, and he therefore urged the creation of a "Company of Assistance," which not only would supply the financial and material support necessary to win Spanish American independence, but would also assist later in the development of untapped resources, thus stabilizing the new republican governments. Company headquarters should be established in London, Ortiz thought, and the Dutch and English East India Companies should serve as models for organization and financing. He hoped that all Spanish America would cooperate in the project, particularly Buenos Aires, Chile, Venezuela, and Mexico.⁴⁶

Ortiz' bold project indicated to what extent his ideas had grown since he first joined the revolution. Beginning with simple suggestions of commercial alliances and financial aid for Mexico, his thinking now envisaged the employment of British capital on a continental scale, in order to achieve both Spanish American independence and economic development. The fundamental question, of course, was whether the interest of British financiers could be aroused.

43. Enclosure in Ortiz to the Secretary of State, September 16, 1818, AGN, Buenos Aires; Belgrano, pp. 305-307.

44. Ortiz to the Secretary of State, April 18, 1819, AGN, Buenos Aires; Belgrano, pp. 301-302.

45. Ortiz to the Secretary of State, May 4, 1819, AGN, Buenos Aires.

46. *Ibid.*, May 8, 1819.

Ortiz set sail from Buenos Aires for England in September 1819;⁴⁷ apparently he remained in London for only some three months, without attracting interest in his scheme. The project was premature and the risks were too great—British capital was still too uncertain about the future of South America.⁴⁸

About mid-1820 Ortiz arrived in Spain, having come by way of Holland and France.⁴⁹ The probable occasion for the trip was news of the military revolt in Spain which forced Ferdinand VII to restore constitutional government. Ortiz' activities in Spain are unknown, except that, apparently becoming alarmed over reports of Spanish cession of the Floridas to the United States, he tried to promote a colonization project in Texas to project the northern frontier. For the moment he may have even dropped his concern for the independence of Spanish America. At any rate, all his activities were abandoned in the spring of 1821. When he heard of the progress of the Mexican independence movement under the leadership of Agustín de Iturbide, Ortiz decided to return to the land of his birth.⁵⁰

Overjoyed with Iturbide's victory, Ortiz celebrated the occasion with the publication of his first book, *Resumen de la estadística del Imperio Mexicano*, which included a dedication to the liberator along with an acknowledgment of the author's intellectual debt to Baron Alexander von Humboldt. Ortiz' confidence in the future of Mexico was evident on practically every page. Now that the shackles of Spanish colonial rule had been removed, he exclaimed, Mexico was at last free to develop her resources, chart her independent course, and take her place among the nations.

Thus the first of Ortiz' two goals in life had been achieved, though certainly his own contribution to Mexican independence was negligible. While he seemed to have been motivated by considerations other than self-aggrandizement, his methods were incredibly amateurish,

47. Gregorio Tagle to Bernardino Rivadavia, September 9, 1819, in Bartolomé Mitre, *Historia de Belgrano y de la independencia Argentina* (4 vols., Buenos Aires, 1938-1941), IV, 448.

48. One might speculate that in London Ortiz met Alvaro Flores Estrada, a Spanish liberal, whose work, *Curso de economía política*, which was published in 1831, became such an influence on Ortiz' thought. A pamphlet written by Flores Estrada entitled *Profecías políticas a favor de nuestra independencia* was first printed in London in 1818, reprinted there in 1820, and again in Mexico in 1821.

49. Ortiz to Lucas Alamán, June 26, 1830, in Edith Louise Kelly and Mattie Austin Hatcher (eds.), "Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala and the Colonization of Texas, 1822-1833," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 32 (July 1928), 83; Ortiz to the Mexican government, February 22, 1825, *El Sol*, August 31, 1825.

50. He apparently returned to Mexico by way of Guatemala. See his *Resumen de la estadística del Imperio Mexicano* (México, 1822), p. 92 n.

his schemes were impractical, his opportunism was boundless, and his efforts were ineffective. Yet the experience he had gained during his travels from 1809 to 1821 gave him a maturity and a broad preparation for his second goal—the economic development of Mexico, now free and independent.