

Origins of the Rebellion of Paraguay

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THE REBELLION OF PARAGUAY, often called the revolt of Antequera and the *comuneros*, lasted a turbulent fifteen years. It began in 1721, broke violently in 1724, smoldered for a few years, erupted again in 1730, and was suppressed in 1735. Since then scholars have generally treated the subject in two ways. Some argue that the reasons for Paraguayan discontent were largely economic. Writing in the mid-eighteenth century, for example, the Jesuit chronicler Pedro Lozano charged that Paraguayan *encomenderos* and *estancieros* took part in the rebellion to gain the services of the thousands of Guaraní Indians then living in happiness and harmony in missions under the protection of the Society of Jesus. Acceptance of this thesis, with limitations, modifications, or extensions, appears in a number of general works by a variety of authors, such as Sebastián Lorente, Bernard Moses, and Harris Gaylord Warren.¹

Another line interprets the revolt as a political phenomenon. Mariano Picón-Salas, for example, refers to it as a "populist" uprising and a "heroic defense of local institutions against the centralizing tendencies of the monarchy. . ." Salvador de Madariaga says it was a typical example of Spanish American rebellions and an early precursor of the independence movements of the next century. Germán Arciniegas agrees that its causes were similar to those which moved the generation of Bolívar and San Martín; it was significant, he asserts, as an early example of the Rousseauian doctrines contained in *The Social Contract*, though its origins predated the exposition of the famous Genevan. Lillian Estelle Fisher dismisses the movement as simply "a case of pure

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1. Pedro Lozano, *Historia de las revoluciones de la provincia del Paraguay, 1721-1735*. (Buenos Aires, 1905), I, 15-17 ff.; Sebastián Lorente, *Historia del Perú bajo los Borbones, 1700-1821* (Lima, 1871), p. 39; Bernard Moses, *The Spanish Dependencies in South America: An Introduction to the History of Their Civilization* (New York and London, 1914), II, 282-283; Harris Gaylord Warren, *Paraguay: An Informal History* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1949), pp. 110-123.

disobedience on the part of a usurping governor.”² Although the Paraguayan revolt has been considered important enough for inclusion in textbooks and general surveys, systematic historical analyses of the movement in the twentieth century have been confined largely to such Jesuit scholars as Antonio Astráin and Paraguayan nationalists like Efraím Cardozo.³

Colonized in the 1530s, early Spanish Paraguay was inhabited mostly by Indians belonging to the Tupí-Guaraní linguistic family. A sedentary people, the Guaraní exhibited few of the warlike characteristics of the Puelche and Abipones of Argentina or the Payaguás, Guaycurús, and Charrúas, who also lived in Paraguay.⁴ Their docility made their conversion to Christianity and reduction to Spanish authority relatively easy tasks. With a plentiful supply of tractable laborers, the colonizers of Paraguay were also favored by good soil for farming, a mild climate, forests, and grasslands. These partly compensated for the region’s absence of mineral wealth. Spanish Paraguay consisted of an irregular triangle of roughly 60,000 square miles, spreading out from Asunción in a radius of some one hundred and twenty miles north, east, and south of the city. To the west lay the uninhabitable Chaco.⁵

“In the Spanish colonization of the New World,” Elman R. Service notes, “the encomienda system and the mission system were the two most important means of institutionalizing control of the native pop-

2. Mariano Picón-Salas, *A Cultural History of Spanish America from Conquest to Independence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), p. 134; Salvador de Madariaga, *The Fall of the Spanish American Empire* (rev. ed., New York, 1963), pp. 188-193; Germán Arciniegas, *Latin America, A Cultural History* (New York, 1967), pp. 243-245; Lillian Estelle Fisher, *Viceregal Administration in the Spanish-American Colonies* (New York, 1967), p. 88.

3. Antonio Astráin, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la asistencia de España* (Madrid, 1925), VII, 479ff.; Efraím Cardozo, *El Paraguay colonial; Las raíces de la nacionalidad* (Buenos Aires and Asunción, 1959), pp. 179-181. Astráin’s work has merit but his footnotes reveal a partisan selectivity in his source citations, because manuscript and published sources traditionally used to justify the Rebellion are conspicuously absent, and the Jesuit author was too good a scholar not to have known of their existence. Thus, his account suffers. Cardozo denies the importance of economic factors in favor of a legalistic-political rights interpretation.

4. Julian H. Steward and Lewis C. Faron, *Native Peoples of South America* (New York, Toronto, London, 1959), pp. 324-334; Alfred Mettraux, “The Guaraní,” in Julian H. Steward (ed.), *Handbook of South American Indians*, III (Washington, D.C., 1948), 69-94.

5. Preston E. James, *Latin America* (New York, 1959), pp. 281-284; Philip Raine, *Paraguay* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1956), pp. 19-24; Enrique de Gandía, *Historia del Gran Chaco* (Buenos Aires, 1929), *passim*.

ulation. . ." In Paraguay both institutions existed in competition with each other. In the area around Asunción, the region of primary Spanish settlement, colonists controlled the natives through the *encomienda*, while the later Jesuit province of thirty mission towns was remote and nearly inaccessible from central Paraguay. Geographic, economic, racial and cultural factors altered the *encomienda* in Paraguay, so that "the ruling population and the Indians were brought into closer personal contact than the usual Spanish colonial systems."⁶ Few new Spanish colonists or soldiers migrated to Paraguay after the expeditions of the sixteenth century, and the original Spanish settlers gave way to a predominantly mestizo population. As miscegenation increased, the number of Indians diminished.

Paraguay's economy never rose much above the subsistence level, but the colony did sustain some commerce with cities to the south, especially Corrientes, Santa Fé and Buenos Aires. This intercolonial trade in yerba mate, tobacco, and other agricultural and pastoral commodities was a small but vital part of the Paraguayan economy, for it allowed colonists to buy a few luxury goods imported from Spain.⁷

Paraguay's most important export product was yerba mate (*Ilex Paraguayensis*). It came from a small tree native to the region whose leaves produced a tea prized throughout the Plata region and even as far away as Chile and Peru. The best yerba (*yerba caaminí*) came from stands (*yerbales*) in the Jesuit mission province just south of the Tebicuary River, near the reduction towns of San Ignacio Guazú, Santa María, Santa Rosa, and Santiago. The civil province produced an inferior brand (*yerba de palos*). Harvesting expeditions were harsh and also dangerous for the yerba workers (*beneficidores*), who were *encomienda* Indians plus some nominally free laborers.⁸ Labor was always in short supply because, for one thing, the mortality rate among yerba workers was high, and, for another, miscegenation had already reduced the number of *mitayos*, Indians bound by the formal

6. Elman R. Service, "The *Encomienda* in Paraguay," *HAHR*, 31:2 (May, 1951), 230-251.

7. Warren, *Paraguay*, 124-141; Pierre Charlevoix, *The History of Paraguay: Containing a Full and Authentic Account of the Establishments formed there by the Jesuits . . .* (London, 1769), I, 206-231; Clarence H. Haring, *Trade and Navigation between Spain and the Indies in the Time of the Hapsburgs* (Cambridge, 1918), pp. 140-143.

8. Félix de Azara, *Viajes por la América meridional* (Madrid, 1923), pp. 134-137, 147-157; W.H. Koebel, *Paraguay* (London, 1916), pp. 284-290; J.P. and W.P. Robertson, *Four Years in Paraguay: Comprising an Account of that Republic Under the Government of the Dictator Francia* (Philadelphia, 1838), II, 91-101; Raine, *Paraguay*, p. 55.

encomienda established by Domingo de Irala.⁹ The encomenderos of Paraguay, who often marketed yerba and tobacco also, were anxious to tap new sources of labor, and after the 1630s they increasingly coveted the Indians in the Paraguayan missions of the Jesuits.¹⁰

Never actually a part of the civil province of Paraguay, the Jesuit missions of Paraguay were virtually independent of all ordinary political control. Firmly established between the Paraná and Uruguay rivers in the 1630s, the mission province, including the college, ranches and farms, expanded rapidly. A hundred thousand Indians were reduced to a sedentary life in thirty mission towns under the control of the Jesuits. Reduction towns even had their own armed forces. Although each mission was economically self-sufficient, market-oriented production and the profit motive were also prominent features of the Jesuit province. Produce from the missions included sugar, tobacco, grain, fruits, cotton, wax, and honey. The missions also produced the best yerba in the Plata region, and money from the sale of yerba helped make the churches of the Jesuit province of Paraguay the finest in the Plata region.¹¹

Friction between the civil and religious provinces of Paraguay arose at the very beginning and intensified after the middle of the seventeenth century. Rumors circulated that the Paraguayan Jesuits had hidden great treasures and secretly operated fabulous mines in the reductions. Although these tales were exaggerated, the Company's wealth was considerable. The mission province was closed to outsiders, and ignorance lent credence to the rumors. Spanish, creole or mestizo Paraguayans were effectively prohibited from visiting, trading, or traveling within its borders. Paraguayans charged that the Company's goal was to overwhelm and incorporate them, but the Jesuits said their critics were only greedy, irreligious, unscrupulous men who would depopulate the missions to exploit the labor of the Indian converts. The Company's economic success was due partly to the order's recruitment of men of rare ability in such temporal things as commerce, industry, and warfare. Jesuits were preeminent in the yerba trade. They owned the best *yerbales* and could control the market. Their location gave them superior access to the markets to the south.

9. Service, "Encomienda in Paraguay," pp. 230-238.

10. Pablo Hernández, *Misiones del Paraguay: Organización social de las doctrinas de la Compañía de Jesús* (Barcelona, 1913), II, 167.

11. C.R. Boxer, *Salvador de Sá and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola* (London, 1952), pp. 70-71; Magnus Mörner, *The Political and Economic Activities of the Jesuits in the La Plata Region. The Hapsburg Era* (Stockholm, 1953), pp. 59-77, 198-202; Charlevoix, *History of Paraguay*, I, 374-410.

In addition, the Spanish crown exempted them from paying sales taxes and customs duties required of the Paraguayans.¹²

The Rebellion of Paraguay originated during the governorship of Diego de los Reyes y Balmaseda, between 1717 and 1721. A peninsular Spaniard, Reyes came to Paraguay around 1700 and married Francisca Benítez, whose family was known to be sympathetic to the aims and aspirations of the Jesuits.¹³ One of her uncles, Pablo Benítez, was Father Superior of the Jesuit missions, and another, Father Blas de Silva, was in charge of Jesuit commerce in the Plata region. By 1711 Reyes was prosperous enough to purchase the office of governor and captain general of Paraguay to succeed the then governor-designate, Juan Gregorio Bazán y Pedraza.¹⁴

After a brief time of conciliation and harmony, Reyes fell out with most of the important Paraguayan encomenderos and merchants, whose leader was José de Avalos y Mendoza. The first major dispute occurred in February, 1717, when the governor ordered an attack on a party of Payaguá Indians camped forty leagues south of Asunción. Three years earlier Governor Bazán had granted the Payaguás, who till then had been notable for their piracy, a treaty of peace and friendship. On the advice of Father Pablo Restivo, rector of the Jesuit college in Asunción, Reyes reversed his predecessor's decision, attacked the Payaguás and seized seventy of them, whom he remitted to the Jesuits for conversion to Christianity and reduction to mission life.¹⁵

This affair disturbed the inhabitants of Paraguay for several reasons. Some insisted that to march against the Payaguás when they were

12. Warren, *Paraguay*, 81-100; Mörner, *Political and Economic Activities of the Jesuits*, 167-168, 199-201; Magnus Mörner (ed.), *The Expulsion of the Jesuits from Latin America* (New York, 1965), pp. 11-15; Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 1-9.

13. For various summaries see Antonio Zinny, *Historia de los gobernantes del Paraguay, 1535-1887* (Buenos Aires, 1887), pp. 95-104; Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 7-16; Astráin, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la asistencia de España*, VII, 479-505.

14. Matías de Anglés y Gortari, "Informe á los Ilustres Señores Inquisidores Apostolicos del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de la Ciudad de Lima" (Potosí, May 10, 1731), in *Colección general de documentos que contiene los sucesos tocantes á la segunda época de las conmociones de los regulares de la Compañía en el Paraguay* (Madrid, 1769), Pieza IV, pp. 19-20, 23; AGI (Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain), Audiencia de Charcas (hereafter Charcas), Legajo 205. Traslado de la Real Cedula de Merced de Gobernador y Capitan General de la Provincia del Paraguay. Madrid, June 3, 1711.

15. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, Acuerdo del Consejo de Guerra, Asunción, May 8, 1714; Anglés y Gortari, "Informe," pp. 18, 20; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, Confesion del Alcalde provincial don Diego de los Reyes y Balmaseda, Asunción, September 17, 1721.

under a guarantee of peace was ignoble and dishonorable; furthermore, the attack might provoke the survivors to wage a bloody war against them. The new raids, apparently more serious than those prior to 1714, brought commerce to a virtual halt and prevented the inhabitants of Paraguay from tending their livestock and their fields. In his own defense Reyes later pointed out that there was no cause to believe that the Payaguás would have adhered permanently to the shaky truce made in 1714. Their past history indicated that they would resume their raids whenever they found it convenient.¹⁶

The principal affront to the colonists, however, was the role Jesuits played in the affair. Reyes had initiated the attack on the advice of Jesuit counselors, and the spoils of the campaign, the captured Indians, went only to the missions. It was common knowledge that the Jesuits wished to conduct a “just war” for new converts.¹⁷ The Paraguayans now feared the possibility of a long series of Indian campaigns which would result in loss of life and serious harm to the economy of an already poor province. Reyes compounded the encomenderos’ fears by sending the captured Payaguás to the Jesuit missions. Had he distributed them among Avalos and his friends, it is possible that the attack might not have caused such great consternation. As it was, the Paraguayans were doubly irate over the ensuing assaults by the surviving Indians because their commerce suffered more from these raids than the Jesuits’. Although the pillaging Payaguás did kill four members of the Company, including Blas de Silva, Jesuit embarcations usually traveled well guarded by Guaraní troops.¹⁸

During the years 1717-1721, the source of most disputes was the governor’s pro-Jesuit policy, which most Paraguayans felt unjust and prejudicial to the province’s economic well-being. Personal tension between the governor and influential Paraguayans often reflected the

16. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323. Charges against Reyes by don Tomás de Cárdenas, Asunción, September 14, 1721; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 205, report of don Juna de Mena Ortiz de Velasco, regidor, Asunción, October 12, 1720; Carozo, *El Paraguay Colonial*, pp. 174-176.

17. Mörner, *Political and Economic Activities of the Jesuits*, p. 160.

18. These soldiers, well-trained and capably led by Jesuits, gave the Paraguayans solid reasons to fear Jesuit power, and contributed to periodic outbreaks of Paraguayan paranoia. Colonists recalled with horror that Guaraní troops had harshly put down a rebellion centered in Asunción in the 1640s. Military contingents from the reductions were also mobilized against the colonists in 1724, 1725, and 1735. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 205, letter of cabildo of Asunción, October 8, 1720; Anglés y Gortari, “Informe,” pp. 21, 23; Astráin, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, VII, 479-505, passim. Charles A. Washburn, *The History of Paraguay . . .* (Boston and New York, 1871), I, 89-107; Warren, *Paraguay*, pp. 101-109, 116-117; Charlevoix, *History of Paraguay*, I, 410-463; II, 1-67.

larger conflict. Reyes' critics cited his son Carlos' harsh treatment of Indians engaged in the relief of the new *población* of Caruguay in the winter (June-August) of 1717 as proof of the governor's cruelty to the Indians of the civil province. They said this aspect of his administration alone should have sufficed to cause his removal from office. But Reyes also ordered that Paraguayan encomienda Indians doing personal service be rotated every month, and his critics still grumbled. We can see that the basic issue was not cruelty to Indians, but the governor's alliance with the Jesuits.¹⁹

Another common allegation was that Reyes illegally used the powers of his office to enrich himself, and so he did. On one occasion he announced that the many and frequent embarcations of Paraguayan goods to market had lowered their price, especially in Santa Fé, and added that the constant sailings caused great hardships for the Indian mariners. To correct these abuses, he ordered that only three large fleets a year would henceforth travel to the river ports to the south. In this way he could control the province's exports to benefit his own commercial interests, strike a blow at the fortunes of Avalos and other opponents, and be a humanitarian too.²⁰

A further source of friction between Governor Reyes and the most wealthy Paraguayans was the issue of taxation. To bolster the defenses of the frontier province, the governor ordered the construction of two new forts, Peñón and Arecutacuá. Though Reyes himself apparently bore a significant portion of their cost, he also levied additional taxes for the fortifications, to his opponents' rage. Later he denied having ordered new taxes, claiming that he had rather removed or lowered many, especially the excessive tribute payments required of Indians. This was the crux of the matter, because the reaction from the encomenderos, who customarily got tribute payments, was uniformly hostile, varying from indignation to threats of rebellion or assassination. Reyes inadvertently revealed the essential truth of the Paraguayans' allegations by claiming that the import taxes were only requests for donations and that, even so, only three shipowners were involved. This was technically correct, but the governor ordered the three to "donate" four hundred pesos apiece for large shipments, and two hundred for small, in such a way that refusal was difficult. Even more

19. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, Confesión de don Diego de los Reyes . . . Asunción, September 17, 1721; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 206, Informe de la Real Audiencia de la Plata a S.M., Plata, December 6, 1725.

20. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, various testimony, Asunción, August 21 to September 14, 1721.

significant, the three shipowners from whom he exacted donations were José de Avalos and two close companions, José de Urrunaga and Antonio Ruíz de Arellano, both encomenderos and *regidores* of Asunción.²¹ They were three of the most influential members of the Paraguayan elite, and all were prominent in the Rebellion.

Following this episode most important native Paraguayans, or at least most of the elite who counted in such matters, were determined to obtain Reyes' recall, and failing that, to rebel. The *regidores* José de Avalos, Antonio Ruíz de Arellano, and José de Urrunaga, *alguacil mayor* Juan de Mena Ortiz y Velasco, and Captain Ramón de las Llanas announced their refusal to pay any taxes or to fulfill their obligations to serve in wars and provincial defense. Their hope was to enlist the audiencia of Charcas in the anti-Reyes, anti-Jesuit, movement, but for two years Reyes prevented their protests from reaching the court at La Plata.²²

Eventually a series of charges initiated in Paraguay reached the audiencia. Coming, as they did, on top of several disputes of a jurisdictional nature between the audiencia and Reyes (supported by several viceroys of Peru), the allegations convinced the judges in Chquisaca to recall the governor. Although they ordered Reyes to be tried formally and according to the best legal procedures possible in this remote and impoverished frontier province, the case was a farce.²³

21. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 217, Carta del gobernador del Paraguay a S.M., Asunción, November 29, 1720; Informe del Maestre de Campo don Diego de los Reyes a S.M., Corrientes, Año de 1723; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323; Confesion de don Diego de los Reyes . . . Asunción, September 14, 1721.

22. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 321, Auto proveído por . . . Joseph Delgado, Asunción, September 15, 1719; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 321, Declaracion de Juan de Mena, Asunción, May 19, 1718; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 321, Mandato del Gobernador don Diego de los Reyes, Asunción, May 19, 1720.

23. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, Carta de la senora Dona Ignacia del Valle á la Real Audiencia de la Plata, Asunción, October 19, 1719; Copia de la carta del Maestre de Campo Joseph de Garcia Miranda a la Real Audiencia de la Plata, Asunción, May 29, 1720; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 206, Copia del decreto de los señores Presidente y Oidores de la Real Audiencia de la Plata, Plata, January 23, 1720. The charges against Reyes can be found in printed form in "Memorial . . . en defensa de las operaciones del Sr. Pesquisidor D. Josef de Antequera y Castro" (hereafter Antequera, "Memorial,") September 4, 1728 in *Colección general de documentos*, Tomo III, Pieza I, pp. 9-15. The manuscript text of Antequera's "Memorial" can be found in AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323. Antequera's "Memorial," which is comprised mainly of documents relating to the Paraguayan rebellion prior to September 1724, is no whitewash of either the audiencia of Charcas or of José de Antequera, the first and most famous leader of the Rebellion of Paraguay. But neither does it support the arguments later used by the Reyes-Jesuit party to convince higher authorities first to remove from office and then to execute Antequera.

Not only had the *oidores* pre-judged Reyes' guilt and determined his removal from office, but they had also picked as his successor the man whom they designated to conduct his trial.²⁴

José de Antequera y Castro replaced Diego de los Reyes as governor of Paraguay in September, 1721, and served in office until 1725. Born in Panama in 1693, he spent several years as a youth in La Plata where his father was an *oidor* on the audiencia of Charcas. Educated first in a Jesuit college, he eventually earned his licenciature in Law. He worked briefly at the court of Philip V in several minor capacities and then returned to the New World as Protector of the Indians for the audiencia of Charcas. His facile intelligence, ability to display erudition without appearing pompous, his handsome appearance, attractive personality, and powers of persuasion enabled him to win people's affection easily. His youthful zeal, exuberance, and energy were also qualities that would make him a natural leader in Paraguay.²⁵ His most valuable asset as governor, at least for the Paraguayans, was his attitude toward the Jesuits, which was remarkably similar to the colonists' outlook.

The extent to which Antequera's opposition to the Jesuits might have originated in bribes and gifts from leading Paraguayans is unclear. Such exchanges of favors for funds undoubtedly occurred, and the new governor did proclaim himself the champion of the economic interests of the settlers of Paraguay. In 1728, while a prisoner in Lima, Antequera wrote that at the time of his appointment in 1721, his sole emotion toward the Company was love. Although he was less than candid, one has little reason to doubt his assertion that the main reason he became hostile to the Paraguayan Jesuits was his first-hand observation of their discriminatory commercial activities, superior economic status, and arrogant political behavior. Special privileges put their yerba and livestock businesses in a favored market position and depressed the fortunes of the inhabitants of the civil province. The various Jesuit commercial activities had negative effects on those of the colonists, Antequera said, and were the most serious problem his government had to confront. He saw his role as that of forcing the Company to conform to the Laws of the Indies, or at least those laws

24. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 324, Traslado de la Real Provision de la Real Audiencia de la Plata al Cabildo de la Asunción, Plata, January 15, 1721; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 321. Respuesta fiscal de don Pedro Vásquez de Velasco, La Plata, November 14, 1721.

25. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 324. Confession de don Joseph de Antequera y Castro, Lima, June 1, 1731; Astráin, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, VII, 509-516; Zinny, *Gobernantes del Paraguay*, pp. 103-115; Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 13.

he wished them to obey. He believed, for example, that the missions should be required to pay taxes like the *alcabala*, from which they were exempt.²⁶

In office Antequera offended those few Paraguayans formerly allied with Reyes and still sympathetic to him; they were mostly members of the González, de Silva, Caballero, and Benítez families and were related to Reyes by marriage. Antequera's most powerful opposition, however, came from the Jesuits, who were vitally interested in retaining Diego de los Reyes, allied to them by commercial as well as family ties.²⁷ Antequera blocked four different Jesuit attempts to restore Reyes to office between 1721 and 1724. He also tried to enforce in practice the theoretical authority which governors of Paraguay held over the mission province. This anti-Reyes and anti-Jesuit posture ensured him the support of most powerful and politically aware Paraguayans. The governor's actions and public statements aroused the colonists' longstanding hostility toward the Jesuits and incited them to rebellion.

One explanation for the alliance between Antequera and Paraguayan encomenderos is offered by the Jesuit historian Pablo Hernández, who says that the politically ambitious Antequera simply needed their support to remain in office while they needed his to advance their personal fortunes.²⁸ There is little doubt, however, that Antequera's motivations were not exclusively selfish, greedy, and parochial. He sincerely believed that imposing the authority of Asunción's civil government on the missions would benefit the crown. Many others in South America and in the metropolis agreed.²⁹ Though Antequera governed, his power was limited.

The most potent political force in the province was not the governor, despite the quality of his leadership, but the local elite, especially

26. Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 12-16; "Carta Segunda. Political y Legal Satisfacción del Señor Doctor D. Joseph de Antequera y Castro . . .," (hereafter Antequera, "Satisfacción"), Carcel de Corte de Lima, January 30, 1728, in *Colección General de Documentos*, Tomo III, Pieza III, pp. 242-250; Anglés y Gortari, "Informe," p. 6.

27. Lending money to governors of Paraguay was one of the Jesuits' principal means of controlling and directing their activities; Mörmér, *Political and Economic Activities of the Jesuits*, p. 208.

28. See Pablo Hernández, *Misiones del Paraguay: Organización social de las doctrinas de la Compañía de Jesús* (Barcelona, 1913) I, 460.

29. Martín de Barúa, who succeeded Antequera as governor of Paraguay in 1725, submitted a formal proposal to Spain describing the benefits, both economic and political, that would accrue to the crown if civil officials, secular, or other regular clerics administered the missions. Charlevoix, *History of Paraguay*, II, 329-341; Astraín, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, VII, 545.

the encomenderos. Despite hostility to the rebellious Paraguayans, both early and modern Jesuit writers have correctly assessed their primary objectives: to end the Jesuit perquisites that they considered prejudicial to their livelihood and to obtain the Company's property, to which they felt they were legally and morally entitled.³⁰ Objects of resentment included the reductions' labor supply; the order's freedom from all but nominal tribute payments; its permission to trade directly with Spain across the Atlantic; and its ancient and continuing practice of acquiring the best lands in the upper Plata region.

The Company's moves to restore Reyes to office produced the incidents which ignited the spark of rebellion. In April, 1722, Paraguayan Jesuits engineered Reyes' escape to Buenos Aires.³¹ On his first attempt to return a few months later, his claim to be the legitimate governor of Paraguay was honored in the Jesuit capital, Candelaria.³² Denying the legitimacy of Reyes' claim, Antequera and his supporters, including a contingent of six hundred soldiers, marched in the following September toward the mission province, and Reyes strategically withdrew.³³ His quarry gone, Antequera in October called off the march after issuing a stern warning to the missionaries to recognize his authority and obey his orders.

In August, 1723, thirty Paraguayans kidnapped Reyes from Corrientes and brought him to Asunción; this, they hoped, would prevent

30. See Hernández, *Misiones del Paraguay*, I, 26, 28, and Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 15-17. The greatest weakness in Lozano's account, after its pro-Jesuit and presentist biases, is the author's failure to understand the true source of political power in the province. Writing at a time when his order was being severely attacked, Lozano made Antequera the villain of the 1720s, thus giving him too great an importance. Capably led and articulately represented by Antequera, his supporters were just that, never disciples. When Antequera outlived his usefulness to them in 1725, they abandoned him. Only five Paraguayans followed him to exile and prison. Most provincial leaders remained in Paraguay, continued to pursue their basic objectives, and, when thwarted, rebelled again in 1730.

31. Antequera, "Memorial," 174-175; Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 32-37; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323. Carta del fray Pedro, Obispo de Buenos Aires a virrey, Buenos Aires, July 28, 1722.

32. This claim was true. By this time the viceroy of Peru, Fray Diego Morcillo, an uncharacteristic Franciscan who often advanced Jesuit interests, had twice ordered Reyes restored to office. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, Decreto de don frai Diego Morsillo Rubio de Auñon, Lima, October 9, 1721; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, Decreto de Don frai Diego Morsillo Rubio de Auñon, February 26, 1722. Morcillo revealed that letters from Paraguayan Jesuits led to his order for reinstatement of Reyes.

33. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 217, Carta dirigida al virrey por los Prelados de la Asunción . . . , Asunción, November 10, 1722; Antequera, "Memorial," pp. 176-177, 182-183; Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 47-61; Antequera, "Satisfacción," p. 163.

further efforts on his behalf. Their hopes were in vain, for in December, 1723, and January, 1724, there was another attempt to return him to power in Asunción, which again failed to gain its objective.³⁴

In July and August, 1724, the conflict grew into open warfare. Led by the lieutenant governor of Buenos Aires, Baltasar García Ros, a former interim Paraguayan governor and a friend of Reyes, an army of two thousand Guaraní soldiers from the Jesuit reductions assembled to subdue the Paraguayans and end their dreams of advancing their own interests at the expense of the Jesuits. In response to this threat, the Asunción cabildo on July 22, 1724, decided to call together the province's leading citizens in a *cabildo abierto* in order to strengthen the loyalties of the faithful and rally the faint-hearted and uncommitted to their cause.³⁵ Rumors, gossip, and gloomy recollections of past events circulated about Asunción. Such leaders as Miguel de Garay, Juan de Mena, José de Urrunaga, and Antonio Ruíz de Arellano warned that García Ros was a tool of the Reyes-Jesuit party, a puppet. Even without Reyes, a García Ros administration was a fearful thing to contemplate. Baltasar García Ros himself had always been an ally of the Jesuits. When he had governed the province nearly two decades earlier (1706-1707), it was charged he had disobeyed a royal *cédula* awarding the annual services of three hundred *mitayos* from the Jesuit reductions to several Paraguayan encomenderos. His only reason was his desire to please the Jesuits.³⁶

When the *cabildo abierto* met on July 24, 1724, it was attended by over a hundred men. Its members swore to fight to the death to defend their homeland, their king, and their families. They vowed never to accept García Ros or Reyes as governor or submit to the authority of any other advocate of the Company of Jesus. They asked the governor and the regular cabildo to take whatever steps necessary to implement their decision.³⁷

On August 7, 1724, Antequera and the cabildo met to decide upon an immediate course of action, to list the Paraguayans' grievances against the Jesuits and their allies, and to explain why the people of

34. Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 91-93, 109-110; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, Memoria del Licenciado don Clemente Quinones, Corrientes, September 6, 1724; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 323, Auto proveydo por don Baltasar Garcia Ros, Corrientes, September 1, 1724.

35. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 324, Auto de acuerdo del Cabildo, Justicia y Regimiento de la Asunción, Asunción, July 22, 1724.

36. Antequera, "Memorial," p. 208; Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 130, 145-151.

37. *Ibid.*; Antequera, "Memorial," p. 215; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 324, Auto de acuerdo del Gobernador y todos los demas ofziales de la provincia del Paraguay, Asunción, July 24, 1724.

Paraguay were forced to assemble themselves into an army and take the field. The governor and town council directed all military forces of the province to form a unified command under the leadership of Captain-General Antequera, find the invading force, and destroy it in defense of "King, God, Law, and Country."³⁸

It was not the Paraguayans, the *cabildo* charged, who brought on the present conflict. The current threat by Jesuit forces, nominally led by García Ros, was only one in a long series of attempts by the members of the Company to destroy the civil province of Paraguay. Since their arrival in the region over one hundred years earlier, the *cabildo* said, the Jesuits had tried to enslave the Paraguayans, frequently with threats and occasionally by force of arms. From the beginning the "missionaries" usurped whatever profits and surpluses the province yielded. While the Paraguayans worked diligently, they remained impoverished. The missions took the profits, and the Company prospered. For over a century, the Jesuits had consciously and carefully acquired the best lands of the province, in most cases without a just title, expelling the citizens (*vecinos*) who occupied them. They had never allowed Paraguayans to work the Company's lands nor even to enter the area of the reductions. The supposedly humanitarian Jesuits had not allowed the Paraguayans to cultivate their land or exploit their *yerbales* when the civil province was economically distressed. The Company, the *cabildo* said, naturally claimed that its members always had obeyed the Laws of the Indies and had tried to cooperate with governors in the civil province. But the most revealing aspect of relations between the governments in Asunción and Candelaria was that in the last hundred years only an insignificant minority of the governors of Paraguay had performed the visitation of the reductions required of them by law. Because the Jesuits had virtually sealed off the reductions from the outside, Paraguayan travellers and merchants were condemned to traversing terrible swamps and dense forests.³⁹

The *cabildo* said that the Paraguayans struggled and suffered, yet paid the customary taxes required by the crown. The missionaries and their charges, however, were totally free from these exactions. Their exemption from tribute payments was a scandal. If the crown wished to disregard hardships in Paraguay resulting from this discrimination, it at least should recognize the undue burden upon the royal treasury.

38. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 324. Auto capitular de acuerdo del Cabildo, Justicia y Regimiento de la ciudad de la Asunción del Paraguay, Asunción, August 7, 1724.

39. *Ibid.*

Moreover, it appeared to the Paraguayans, the Jesuits refused to acknowledge the *Real Patronato*. Their *doctrineros* seldom recognized the authority of the king, and never that of his legally appointed representatives in Asunción.⁴⁰ Refusing to permit the extension of civil authority to the mission area, the Jesuits often manipulated the conduct of government in the civil province, the *cabildo* continued. If a governor of Paraguay proved hostile or uncooperative, the Jesuits conspired to bring about his removal. Since matters of criminal justice arising from offenses committed either in the reductions or by Guaraní neophytes traveling in the civil province were beyond the purview of governors of Paraguay, the Indians were able to commit horrendous, untold crimes against Paraguayan colonists and go unpunished. The town council believed that the Jesuit army presently threatening Paraguay meant to subjugate the Paraguayans and, thus, finally acquire the best lands in the territory around Asunción which the Jesuits had long coveted. This was more than men of honor could tolerate. The people of Paraguay must resist.⁴¹

And resist they did. First they banished the Jesuits resident in their college at Asunción, and later they expropriated the Company's property, including real estate, livestock, and slaves, in and around Asunción.⁴² Then, led by Antequera, three thousand Paraguayans marched south. On August 24, 1724, they routed the two thousand Indian soldiers and the small number of auxiliaries led by García Ros at the Tebicuary River.⁴³ Thus opened the active phase of the Rebellion of Paraguay, which would not be closed until 1735.⁴⁴

The Rebellion of Paraguay was the result of two principal factors. Contributing to but not causing the Rebellion was neglect by higher authorities; superior tribunals in Spain and America habitually ignored Paraguayan affairs when not a direct threat to royal authority or to the missions of the politically powerful Company of Jesus. In the early 1720s, competition among such vested interests as the crown and Council of the Indies, the viceroy of Peru, the *audiencia* of Charcas, the Company of Jesus, and, to a lesser extent, the province of Paraguay

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. AGI, Charcas, Legajo 324, Auto segundo del Cabildo, justicia y Regimiento de la Ciudad de la Asunción, August 7, 1724; Antequera, "Satisfacción," pp. 88-94, 100-101; Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 148-165.

43. *Ibid.*, 182-197; AGI, Charcas, Legajo 324. Declaración de don Baltasar García Ros, Corrientes, September 1, 1724.

44. General surveys of this period can be found in Lozano, *Revoluciones*, I, 298-436, II, *passim*, and Charlevoix, *History of Paraguay*, II, 185-415.

and the Franciscan Order⁴⁵ led to a paralysis of will on the part of colonial authority legally superior to Paraguayan officialdom. Because of this vacuum in decision-making and a variety of lesser influences, discontent in Paraguay was allowed to develop into a major rebellion.

But the most important causes of the Paraguayans' taking up arms were economic. These included their ancient jealousy of the prosperity of the Jesuit missions, and their desire to share in the same kind of profit-taking as the Company. Paraguayans needed to replenish their diminished labor force, and the convenient but forbidden mission area was the logical source. Also the colonists wished to check or halt the Jesuits' expansionist land policy. Paraguayans wished for themselves the commercial success of the Jesuits. And finally they coveted the fictional fortunes the Company was taking from non-existent mines.

The Rebellion of Paraguay was an anachronism. Its economic and anti-Jesuit origins and aims were similar to an earlier uprising in the province led by Bishop Bernardino de Cárdenas in the 1640s.⁴⁶ Thus the Paraguayan movement of the 1720s and 1730s belongs within the traditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It does not reflect new developments of the eighteenth century. Never a true revolution aiming at fundamental change within Paraguay itself, it had little if any relationship to such other uprisings in the eighteenth century as the *comuneros* of New Granada or the revolt of Túpac Amaru II. Despite the claims of Arciniegas, Picón-Salas, and others that it was an Enlightenment phenomenon which forecast the independence movements of the next century, the Rebellion of Paraguay was principally a local uprising led by local vested interest groups and unrelated to the important changes in the Spanish empire beginning in the eighteenth century.

45. Antequera's only important defenders outside of Paraguay were Franciscans. In Lima, they championed his cause after he was imprisoned in 1726, and some either incited, participated in or approved the riot which broke out when he was executed in July, 1731. Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain. (Ms/1863460). *Relacion de lo que acaeio en el Reyno del Peru en la Ciudad de Lima, sobre la muerte que se dio a Dn. Joseph de Antequera y Don Juan de Meña, que por noticia se a sabido*, Lima, 1731; José de Armendáriz, Marqués de Castelfuerte, "Relacion del estado de los reynos del Perú," Vol. III. of Manuel Fuentes (ed.), *Memorias de los virreyes que han gobernado el Perú durante el tempo del coloniaje español* (Lima, 1859), pp. 311-312.

46. Warren, *Paraguay*, pp. 102-109.