

Early Psychological Warfare in the Hidalgo Revolt

HUGH M. HAMILL, JR.*

COLONEL TORCUATO TRUJILLO had been sent on a desperate—almost hopeless—mission by the viceroy of New Spain.¹ His orders were to hold the pass at Monte de las Cruces on the Toluca road over which the priest Miguel Hidalgo was expected to lead his insurgent horde. Trujillo's 2,500 men did have the topographical advantage, but the mob, one could hardly call it an army, which advanced toward the capital of the kingdom outnumbered them more than thirty to one. If the vain and unpopular Spanish colonel failed, the rebels could march unhindered on Mexico City.

On October 30, 1810, the forces clashed in a bloody and prolonged battle. It was the first time that the unwieldy mass of rebel recruits had faced disciplined soldiers and well serviced artillery in the field. Under such circumstances coordinated attack was difficult and Hidalgo's casualties were heavy. Toward nightfall Trujillo's troop, though decimated, was able to break out of its encircled position and retreat into the Valley of Anáhuac. The insurgents gained the heights of Las Cruces and advanced the next day over the divide and down to the hamlet of Cuajimalpa. The capital of New Spain lay below them.

Why was the six weeks old revolution not consummated immediately by the occupation of Mexico City? Why, after poising three days above the city, did Hidalgo abandon his goal and retreat?

* The author is assistant professor of history at Ohio Wesleyan University.

¹ Materials from Mexican archives used in this article were obtained in 1954 while I was enjoying the benefits of a fellowship from the Henry L. and Grace Doherty Charitable Foundation. Archives consulted include the Archivo General de la Nación; Archivo del Museo Nacional de Arqueología e Historia; and the Mariano Cuevas Collection, Colegio Máximo de Cristo Rey de la Provincia Mexicana de la Compañía de Jesús, San Angel, D. F. (abbreviated hereinafter as AGN, AMN, and Cuevas, respectively). For additional primary materials I am indebted to the staffs of the Library of Congress; the Sutro Branch of the California State Library; the Latin American Collection of the University of Texas Library; the Henry Raup Wagner Collection of Yale University; and the Yale University Library (cited hereinafter as L.C., Sutro, Texas, Wagner, and Yale, respectively). I wish to thank Charles Griffin and Charles Hale for their helpful suggestions. I am responsible for all errors and conclusions.

The most obvious explanation is that another Spanish army under the able Brigadier Félix María Calleja del Rey was advancing south from San Luis Potosí. The rebel commander feared that his poorly disciplined horde, already drastically reduced to about 40,000 by Trujillo and by desertions, would not be able to regroup effectively if given the opportunity to sack the capital.² But of greater though more subtle significance was the psychological victory which the royalist defenders had won in the weeks before Las Cruces without benefit of musket or grape.

Hidalgo and militia Captain Ignacio Allende had begun the rebellion on September 16 expecting to achieve a rapid victory. They had counted on the intense hatred and jealousy which so many of their own criollo class bore for the few peninsular Spaniards, or *gachupines*, who held the political and ecclesiastical reins of power in the kingdom. They had thought that, once initiated, the campaign would become a triumphal procession into the capital with, perhaps, a few glorious encounters with Spanish regulars and dissident and misguided Mexicans. Indeed, for a month and a half the rebels swept all before them. But the icy reception given them after Las Cruces, when the criollos of the city united solidly with the *gachupines*, was a disheartening and unexpected shock. Even the lower classes shrank from the insurgent banner which had earlier attracted so many of their fellows in the Bajío.³ What had happened? Why had they lost the ideological war in so short a time?

From the beginning of their conspiracy, early in 1810, the criollos who gathered at Querétaro to plot the overthrow of peninsular rule in New Spain realized the importance of winning over the members

² "Relación que hizo al virrey Venegas el coronel D. Diego García Conde, de todos los sucesos ocurridos en el ejército de Hidalgo desde el día 17 de Octubre . . . hasta el 7 de Noviembre. . .," in Lucas Alamán, *Historia de México* (Mexico City, 1883-1885), I, Appendix, Doc. 18, p. 467. There are other factors which may have contributed to Hidalgo's decision. One was the possible depressing effect on the rebels of the failure of an advance patrol of insurgents to capture the Virgin of Remedios before the image was removed to Mexico City. See Blas Abadiano y Jaso, *Prólogo y dedicatorio de nobles patriotas, soldados voluntarios de nuestro amado y deseado Fernando VII* (Mexico City, December 3, 1810). Cuevas. The reason which Hidalgo gave in a letter to Morelos was the shortage of ammunition after Las Cruces. Transcript, Celaya, November 12, 1810, Texas. Finally, the rebel irregulars were told that the mined entrances to the city would cause too many casualties. Joseph Antonio Sarrón (?) to Doña Catarina Gómez, November 5, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Operaciones de Guerra, Vol. 939, fol. 135.

³ For a plausible evaluation of the unique character of the lower classes in the Bajío which helped to make them susceptible to rebellion, see Eric R. Wolf, "The Mexican Bajío in the Eighteenth Century," *Middle American Research Institute Publications*, No. 17 (1955), pp. 177-200.

of their own class. They felt certain of wide support from those criollos who had suffered the long-term ignominy of second-class status and who were bitter over the successful gachupín *coup d'état* in 1808 which had replaced that potential champion of the criollo cause, Viceroy José de Iturrigaray, with a tool of the peninsular faction. Yet this confidence was accompanied by the fear that poor communications would make spontaneous revolts in many provincial centers difficult and that not enough criollos would join before the royalist reaction became effective. The conspirators, therefore, decided to rely on a general appeal to all Mexicans—Indians and castes as well as criollos.⁴

There was precedent for such a universal call to arms. The abortive plot of Valladolid in 1809 had been predicated on recruiting an army of 18,000 to 20,000 peasants mixed with some criollo militia.⁵ Allende, Hidalgo, Corregidor Miguel Domínguez of Querétaro, and others agreed that a similar force would be necessary for security. As in the Valladolid plot, the peasant army was to be raised by the promise of the abolition of tribute. The criollos, seeing such strength, would then flock to the insurgent standard in order to oust the hated gachupines.⁶

During the summer of 1810, plans were advanced; Hidalgo, for instance, confided in some of the workers in his Dolores craft shops and put them to work making slings, machetes, and lances. Eduardo Tresguerras, the famous criollo architect, annoyed at the loss of a rich contract, busied himself with the design and casting of small cannon. The plotters were practically ready when the discovery of their intentions forced them to act two weeks prematurely. One thing they did not take into account, however, was adequate propaganda machinery. There is no indication that extra time would have altered this. Printing presses existed then in only four cities in New Spain: Mexico, Puebla, Guadalajara, and Vera Cruz. If Hidalgo had not been forced to act on September 16, the rebellion would have been

⁴ A letter from Ignacio de Allende to Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, written more than a fortnight before the Grito de Dolores, proves that the conspirators considered Indian levies essential for the success of the enterprise. San Miguel el Grande, August 31, 1810, AMN, Papeles Sueltos.

⁵ José Mariano Michelena, "Verdadero origen de la revolución de 1809 en el Departamento de Michoacán," in Genaro García, ed., *Documentos históricos mexicanos* (Mexico City, 1910), I, 467-471. See also the testimony recorded in "Fray Vicente Santa María y la Conjunción de Valladolid," *Boletín del AGN*, II (September-October 1931).

⁶ The choice of a priest to lead the rebellion in part reflected a desire to attract the lower classes who might not care about or understand the selfish motives of the criollos. See Pedro García, *Con el cura Hidalgo en la guerra de independencia* (Mexico City, 1948), p. 36.

started on October 2 by agents acting in concert in Querétaro and San Miguel el Grande.⁷ Neither possessed a press. This is not to suggest that the insurgents failed to make serious efforts to convince their fellow criollos to join the enterprise soon after the *Grito de Dolores*. But concern for other important details before the outbreak and the dramatic success in amassing a peasant army in the first two weeks after September 16 clouded the importance of effectively disseminated propaganda. The insurgents did not control a printing press until the capture of Guadalajara on November 11. By then it was too late.

Much has been written about the Grito de Dolores. Whatever the actual words Hidalgo used, the effect was to fulfill the mandate of the Querétaro conspiracy. The cura's appeal was general and emotional, in keeping with the prearrangements. Long live religion and the imprisoned king, death to bad government, and exile for the gachupines were the central points of the Grito. The concept of independence was not yet introduced because it was feared that the illiterate Indians and castes would only be confused by that abstraction.⁸

The delicate first step of revolution was a complete success. The insurgents were able to march from Dolores later the same day with a nucleus of followers which swelled to nearly 4,000 by the time they arrived at San Miguel el Grande that evening. San Miguel promptly went over to the revolution and soon became a rebel propaganda center. The means for producing leaflets and posters here as elsewhere during the first two months, however, were quills and sand rather than font and press.

Some insurgent psychological warfare efforts were successful, nevertheless, in helping to raise a peasant army of 25,000 within two weeks of the Grito. The illiterate Indians and castes along the army's route were won by means of slogans, songs, and banners which aroused

⁷ "Proceso militar de Hidalgo," Chihuahua, May 8, 1811, in J.E. Hernández y Dávalos, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la guerra de independencia de México de 1808 a 1821* (Mexico City, 1877-1882), I, 14.

⁸ There is not to my knowledge any definitive account of what Hidalgo said in his grito. Pedro García's version is moving but unreliable because he did not join the insurgents until they arrived in San Miguel. *Con el cura*. . . , pp. 50-51. Pedro José Sotelo, an eyewitness whose impressions were recorded 64 years after the event, mentions only Hidalgo's pre-dawn exhortation to the first knot of followers in front of his house. "Memoria del último de los primeros soldados de la Independencia, Pedro José Sotelo," Dolores Hidalgo, 1874, in Hernández y Dávalos, II, 322. Juan de Aldama is most trustworthy. His account concentrates on the abolition of tribute and the defense of the kingdom against the pro-French machinations of the gachupines. "Proceso militar de Juan de Aldama, Chihuahua, May 20, 1811, coetaneous copy, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 116, fol. 225. "Independence" was unquestionably omitted in keeping with the advice of Allende. Allende to Hidalgo, August 31, 1810, AMN, Papeles Sueltos.

basic hatreds; promised simple economic improvements; and evoked those traditional symbols of goodness, Catholicism, and the crown, on behalf of the movement. The white Mexican population, however, had to be convinced by more subtle means. The urgency of the papers addressed to the criollos indicates that the rebels realized the absolute necessity of winning at least a large and active minority of them to the cause.

Everywhere nothing is heard but long live religion, long live the Patria, long live Ferdinand VII, long live Our Most Holy Queen and Mother of Guadalupe, and death to bad government and that the wealth of the Gachupines shall serve to defend our kingdom against the French, against the English, and against all the Enemies of God⁹

This early rebel plea includes most of the propaganda arguments which the rebels developed after the Grito. Hand written papers containing such messages were circulating within a few days. On September 22 the royalist intendant of San Luis Potosí wrote to the cabildo of Saltillo urging it "to obstruct the anonymous seditious and subversive Papers which are beginning to be circulated by the Emissaries of the cura of Dolores."¹⁰ Calleja reported to Viceroy Venegas on October 1 that his vanguard had caught several rebel agents carrying "*Proclamas del terror*" for distribution in various communities.¹¹

The insurgents concentrated on the subject most dear to the hearts of the criollos: the removal of the gachupines. Luis Bernardo López, a patriot propagandist in San Miguel, wrote his son, Nicolás, "what we all want . . . is not to be subjects of the Gachupines, [but rather] to take away the control which they unjustly have . . . [;] the criollos, natives of the Kingdom, deserve [that control] and ought to obtain it . . ."¹² In San Luis Potosí, a crude handbill was distributed:

CRIOLLOS OF SAN

Luis: it is desirable for you to seize all the Gachupines. Do not oppose the Cura of Dolores. God raised him to castigate these Tyrants. Soldiers of San Luis it is necessary to banish these dissimulating Robbers from the entire

⁹ Propaganda Sheet (No. 1), MS by Luis Bernardo López, San Miguel el Grande, on or before September 29, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 111, fol. 181.

¹⁰ Cabildo of Saltillo to Antonio Cordero y Bustamante, Governor of the Province of Coahuila, including this dispatch, October 1, 1810, Wagner.

¹¹ AGN, Ramo de Operaciones de Guerra, Vol. 204, fol. 1-10.

¹² September 29, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 111, fol. 187-188. Three propaganda sheets accompanied this letter. López' instructions included: "Tú enseña a los amigos Criollos todas las copias, y anímalos a la reunión de la Paz y sosiego . . ."

Kingdom. Do not touch their lives because that would cover our nation with opprobrium. But deliver them to the Cura of Dolores if you want to be Happy.¹³

Some of the insurgents were worried that ruthless violence against the gachupines might be abhorrent to their criollo kinsmen. In an anonymous leaflet, written before the carnage of Guanajuato, the rebels said that they as criollos had resolved to abide by the most humane and equitable principles. They promised to take care that not a drop of blood be spilled. The criollo population was told that the leaders of the rebellion looked askance at the sack of a store in Celaya by the "blind vulgar crowd" and that they were "exceedingly heartsick" that they had been unable to contain "such an ugly occurrence." This statement was made to counter the royalist attempt to attract "our own brothers the criollos with the detestable idea that we are destroying ourselves and killing criollos."¹⁴ Even at this early date, the most perceptive revolutionaries realized that the gravest danger to their cause lay in the alienation of the criollo population. López appealed to the conservative nature of the majority of criollos and assured them that no harm would come to them or their property. He promised that the future would find them with the same businesses, the same laws, the same customs, the same churches, the same convents, the same religious services, and even the same Saints, "in a word the same," except that the gachupines would no longer rule.¹⁵

The revolt was begun in the name of the popular Ferdinand VII. Insurgent propaganda proclaimed him. "*Viva Fernando 7º*" was inscribed on the rebel banners, in at least one case, directly under a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe.¹⁶ Since in 1810 it was doubtful that any Bourbon would ever return to rule Spain, even those revolutionaries who desired total independence believed it safe to affirm the king so as to attract the conservative criollos. Furthermore, there had to be some consistency between the appeals made to the Indians and castes and those made to the criollos. The leaders of the revolt could expect that the problem of their relationship to the legitimate king would never arise. The possibility that Ferdinand would return to power was so slim, however, that the insurgents felt obliged to

¹³ Anon., undated, AGN, Ramo de Operaciones de Guerra, Vol. 204, Calleja papers, fol. 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 13-14.

¹⁵ Propaganda Sheet (No. 2), MS by López, on or before September 29, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 111, fol. 183.

¹⁶ Julián Villagrán, Subdelegado comandante de armas de Huichapán, to Hidalgo, November 19, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Operaciones de Guerra, Vol. 913, fol. 330.

hint at the real motive of independence. Thus revolutionaries began to proclaim *both* independence and Ferdinand simultaneously! A group of insurgents in San Miguel el Grande wrote in September that the rebellion was dedicated to defending Christian religion and "the liberty of the Nation, breaking the chains in which the despotic government of the Gachupines has bound her." They also claimed that they were guarding and preserving "these precious dominions for our Captive King, Señor Don Ferdinand the Seventh, provided that he is restored to the throne, or [for] any other person on whom the succession to the throne legitimately falls."¹⁷ Another propaganda sheet begins:

On the 16th day of September 1810, we, the criollos of the village of Dolores and the town of San Miguel el Grande, carried out *the memorable and glorious action of initiating our holy liberty*, making prisoners of the Gachupines who in order to maintain the dominion . . . which we have suffered for three hundred years have determined to deliver this Christian Kingdom to the Heretic King of England, by which we would lose our Holy Catholic Faith, *our legitimate King D. Ferdinand the Seventh*, and would find ourselves in a worse and more difficult slavery.¹⁸

"Liberty" was, therefore, mentioned at an early date but its definition remained vague. It was difficult to determine whether the insurgents meant liberty simply from gachupín control or a total severance of connections with Spain including the crown.

After the insurrection had gained momentum, Hidalgo made no pretext of personal support for Ferdinand VII. In his ultimatum to the Spanish commander in Guanajuato, Hidalgo said that his project was reduced to "proclaiming the independence and liberty of the Nation." He made no mention of Ferdinand.¹⁹ After the fall of Guanajuato, the rebel commander met with some of the principal criollos of the city and attempted to persuade them to join the rebellion. During the discussion the subject of loyalty to the Spanish king arose. Hidalgo's old friend Padro Antonio Labarrieta and others maintained that their oath to the crown made it impossible for them to reconcile themselves with the revolt against constituted authority, even though insurgent standards proclaimed "Long Live Ferdinand VII." Hidalgo became exasperated by this argument and

¹⁷ Propaganda sheet (No. 3), MS sent by López to his son, being the text of a resolution by eight men presided over by Lic. Ignacio de Aldama, San Miguel, September 24, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 111, fol. 185.

¹⁸ Anon., undated (internal evidence indicates September, 1810), AGN, Ramo de Operaciones de Guerra, Vol. 204, Calleja papers, fol. 13. Italics mine.

¹⁹ Hidalgo to Juan Antonio Riaño, September 28, 1810, in José Maria de Liceaga, *Adiciones y rectificaciones a la historia de México que escribió D. Lucas Alamán* (Mexico City, 1944), I, Doc. No. III, 201-202.

said that Ferdinand VII was an entity that no longer existed and that the oath to him had ceased to be obligatory.²⁰

By the end of the revolt in January 1811, the revolutionary slogans, propaganda, and banners generally made no mention of "the Captive King." This was probably due to Hidalgo's decision that the use of Ferdinand's name had aroused more confusion than support. Furthermore, the viceregal government, with much more authority, used the defense of the kingdom for the Spanish monarch as one of its own propaganda weapons. During the first phase of the war, however, revolutionists and royalists killed one another with the mutual cry of "¡Viva Fernando Séptimo!"

Whatever may have been the inconsistencies of the insurgent use of Ferdinand VII, they did not apply to religion. Although both sides said they were fighting to preserve the established religion from falling into the hands of Protestants or heretics, no question of the sincerity of the insurgents arises. For the majority of criollos religious conservatism was characteristic. At the time of the Hidalgo revolt no threat, internal or external, existed capable of destroying Catholicism in New Spain. That many of the clergy fought and propagandized with fervor for the insurgents as well as for the royalists was further indication that religious principles were not at stake.

The insurgents recognized that in the orthodoxy of the criollos and the superstitious faith of the Indians and castes they had a potent weapon. They employed religion in various ways to attract all classes to their cause. The dire possibility that the Spaniards in Mexico City might turn New Spain over to either the French or the English was incessantly repeated as a dreadful threat to the faith. When "liberty" was mentioned by the propagandists, they hastened to add that they wished to enjoy "Holy liberty" and "not French liberty, inimical to Religion."²¹

The Querétaro conspirators realized the appeal of the priesthood when they chose Miguel Hidalgo to lead the insurgent forces. Most certainly of equal importance was a replica of the sacred image of Guadalupe which became the principal standard of the revolt. Probably the men who planned the insurrection did not decide in advance to rely on this vital symbol of Mexican religion and nationalism. Hidalgo's account of the removal of the picture of Mary of Guadalupe from the church in Atotonilco on the afternoon of September 16

²⁰ *Pública vindicación del ilustre ayuntamiento de Santa Fe de Guanajuato, justificando su conducta moral y política en la entrada, y crímenes que cometieron en aquella ciudad las huestes insurgentes agavilladas por sus corifeos Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende* (Mexico City, 1811), pp. 36-37. Cuevas.

²¹ Propaganda Sheet (No. 1).

suggests a spontaneous decision. In his trial he was asked if he had assigned "the image of our Lady of Guadalupe" as a standard for the army. Hidalgo answered "that . . . on passing through Atotonilco, [he] took an image of Guadalupe on a canvas and put it in the hands of someone, so that it might be carried in front of the people who accompanied him . . . [He] took advantage of it for it appeared to him apropos in order to attract the people."²² The development of Guadalupe into a symbol of criollo nationalism as well as of autochthonous religion had occurred during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hidalgo was probably aware of some of the nationalistic literature surrounding the Mexican Virgin.²³ Unquestionably the choice of Mary of Guadalupe as a standard was sound psychological warfare. It was known that this Virgin was a latter-day Tonantzin, that she was adored by the masses, and that as a divine apparition in Mexico without relation to Europe she had become a focus of criollo worship and the core of their patriotic development.

When Hidalgo's army marched from Celaya on September 23, six priests in front carried three standards representing Guadalupe.²⁴ By the time the horde reached Guanajuato on September 28 there was a huge standard on which was painted the images of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Michael, with an inscription that read: "Long Live North America [*América Septentrional*] and the Catholic Religion!" Each group of Indians carried a small white banner with an impression of the same Virgin stamped on it.²⁵ Indeed, the revolt of 1810 had the outward appearance of a religious crusade. But Lucas Alamán, an eyewitness, wrote that while the banners in Guanajuato proclaimed religion, Guadalupe, Ferdinand VII, and America, and promised death to bad government, the cries of the irregulars reduced the cause to "Long Live the Virgin of Guadalupe and death to the gachupines!"²⁶ The horrible destruction of the handsome mining capital which ensued would seem to indicate that the Guadalupe banner represented not the general mother of Christ but rather the fierce parent of Huitzilopochtli.

²² "Proceso militar de Hidalgo. . .," p. 13.

²³ Francisco de la Maza, *El guadalupanismo mexicano* (Mexico City, 1953), pp. 49-50, 103.

²⁴ Copy of a spy's anonymous report, countersigned by Calleja, describing events and conditions of the insurrection from September 23 to 29, San Luis Potosí, October 1, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Operaciones de Guerra, Vol. 204, Calleja Papers, fol. 19.

²⁵ "Relación acireunstanciada de los sucesos acaecidos en Guanaxuato desde el día trece de Septiembre de mil ochocientos diez hasta once de Diciembre del mismo año," Centro de Documentación Histórica, Archivo del Lic. Miguel Marín, Puebla Series Microfilm, Roll 91, fol. 21.

²⁶ Alamán, *Historia*. . . , I, 335.

In the ideological war the royalists had the advantage. During the first two months of the rebellion they possessed all the printing presses in the kingdom. They controlled a greater area of the country than did the insurgents at any one time and, thus, were able to circulate a large number of pamphlets, pasquinades, and proclamations. Furthermore, the representatives of the legal government were able to present their case from pulpits and government balconies and on thousands of walls. All the archepiscopal, episcopal, and Inquisitorial power belonged to the royalist faction. As time went on, added weight was given to the peninsular cause by ardent propaganda support from many disaffected criollos. Finally, the events of the rebellion provided unlimited material for the propagandist. An unvarnished report of the sack of Guanajuato was evidence enough of the violent nature of the revolt.

That the power of the printed word was appreciated by the royalists is substantiated by statistics. More works came off Mexican presses in 1810 than during the year before or the year after. In 1809, 188 titles were produced; in 1810, there emerged 232; and in 1811, 147 were published. What is more significant is the number of works produced after the news of the Grito de Dolores reached Mexico City. Forty-four dated titles appeared during the first eight-and-a-half months of 1810. But during the remaining months, 101 dated works were published. Eighty-seven titles, chiefly religious works, also came out during the year without specific dates. It is important, furthermore, to note that 25 per cent more works were printed by the royalists in the critical six weeks from the Grito to Hidalgo's withdrawal than during the last two months of the year.²⁷ This period from mid-September to November 2, when anti-Hidalgo pamphlets were appearing at the rate of nearly two a day, was the time of decision. An examination of the variegated contents of royalist propaganda during those crucial weeks is now in order.

The clerical arm of legitimist psychological warfare was most active. Manuel Abad y Queipo issued an edict in which he called on the "venerable clergy, ministers of the peace of God" to display their "talents and learning in order to persuade the people and make them understand their obligations and their true interests."²⁸ Members of

²⁷ José Toribio Medina, *La imprenta en México: 1539-1821* (Santiago de Chile, 1907-1912), VII, 453-592. Medina lists 216 works published in 1810 but two of these were produced in separate installments, thus raising the total to 232.

²⁸ *Edicto instructivo que el ilustrísimo señor Don Miguel Abad Queypo, obispo electo de Michoacán, dirige a sus diocesanos* (Valladolid, September 30, 1810), p. 24. Cuevas.

the Apostolic College of San Francisco de Pachuca suggested to Venegas that they send out zealous priests in pairs to various parts of the country. These were to make contact with the principal citizens, both American and European, and convince them and the people at large not to forsake order and religion.²⁹ At the same time that royalist priests began to preach against the rebellion, two other weapons of the church were unleashed, excommunication and the Inquisition.

In Valladolid, on September 24, the bishop-elect of Michoacán declared Hidalgo, Allende, Juan de Aldama, and José Mariano Abasolo ex-communicated. In addition, all those who remained with the insurgent leaders more than three days after learning of this proclamation and all who joined the revolt in the future were to be considered excommunicants. The basis for Abad y Queipo's case against the rebels was that religion condemns rebellion, assassination, and the oppression of innocents. The archbishop of Mexico publicly confirmed Abad's edict on October 11.³⁰

The effect of the excommunication is difficult to ascertain. Certainly there were many who accepted the proclamation and abandoned any intentions of joining the revolt. There is evidence, however, that particularly among the lower classes there was a tendency to scoff at it. The members of the Auxiliary Junta of Guadalajara commented on October 9 that "the common people of this Capital doubt and criticize the excommunication which the illustrious Bishop of Valladolid fulminated against the rebel Cura Hidalgo and his followers . . ."³¹ Popular belief in the excommunication was further confused by the events that followed Hidalgo's entry into Valladolid in mid-October. A canon, the Conde de Sierra Gorda, had been left in charge of the bishopric by the fugitive Abad y Queipo. Hidalgo pointedly suggested that the ban be lifted. Sierra Gorda complied. The proclamation was removed from the doors of churches and circulars were sent to the priests in the diocese instructing them to inform their parishioners of the removal of the excommunication. Such

²⁹ October 13, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 111, fol. 295-296.

³⁰ "Don Manuel Abad Queipo, Canónigo penitenciario de esta Santa Iglesia, obispo electo y gobernador de este obispado de Michoacán: á todos sus habitantes. . .," Valladolid, September 24, 1810, in Hernández y Dávalos, II, 104-106; Francisco Xaxier Lizana y Beaumont, *Nos Don . . . por la gracia de Dios . . . arzobispo de México . . .* (Mexico City, October 11, 1810). *Sutro*. For a defense of Abad y Queipo's right to declare Hidalgo and the others excommunicated, see Jesús García Gutiérrez, "Cuestiones históricas disputadas: III. La excomuni6n de Hidalgo," *Abside*, IV (March 1940), 42-49. Strong criticism of the anathema is offered by Francisco López Cámara in *La génesis de la conciencia liberal en México* (Mexico City, 1954), pp. 153-163.

³¹ Libro de Actas de la Junta Auxiliar, Vol. I, Coetaneous copy, AMN, T.3-11.

vacillations of religious policy, dependent on whether royalists or insurgents were in control of a city, so complicated matters that grave misgivings arose as to the validity of the anathemas.³²

The Inquisition joined the attack on Hidalgo with vigor. In its edict of October 13 the Holy Office falsely charged that in the brief assembled against Hidalgo from 1800 to 1809 it was proved that Hidalgo was guilty of heresy and apostasy and that he was a seditious and schismatic man. All the old but unsubstantiated charges were revived and presented as statements of fact in the most lurid and damning fashion.³³ It was inevitable, of course, that some people would ask why Hidalgo, being such a desperate type, had not been imprisoned long before. Miguel Neve, himself a notary of the Inquisition, was temporarily held under suspicion for suggesting that if Hidalgo had been allowed his freedom for ten years he certainly could not have been as evil as the Edict maintained.³⁴ That the Inquisition in 1813 had to retract and admit that there was insufficient evidence against Hidalgo to condemn his memory indicates that the anathemas were for popular consumption and could not be taken seriously when held up to impartial and secret scrutiny by the inquisitors.³⁵

The political use of excommunication and the Inquisition's charges of heresy were too contrived to have had a decisive effect. Nevertheless, the propaganda campaign of the royalists neglected no argument that could possibly discredit the Revolt. The most effective tactics used in pamphlets, broadsides, and sermons, however, emphasized the anarchic and destructive qualities of Hidalgo's rebellion. Abadiano y Jaso expressed the essence of these arguments in his open letter to Miguel Hidalgo. "Can you observe with indifference that a year in which a fine harvest has been obtained, you have converted

³² For a discussion of this see Karl M. Schmitt, "The Clergy and the Independence of New Spain," *HAHR*, XXXIV (August, 1954), 298.

³³ Inquisition Edict, signed by Bernardo de Prado y Obejero and Isidro Sainz de Alfaro y Beaumont, Mexico City, October 13, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Inquisición, Vol. 1450, no. 1. On October 1, 1801, the case against Hidalgo had been suspended for lack of conclusive evidence and because of the apparent reform of the suspect. (Actually Hidalgo was in debt and temporarily eliminated those activities of "*Francia Chiquita*" in San Felipe which had offended some orthodox citizens in order to save money.) See the order of suspension signed by the Inquisitor Dr. Manuel de Flores, L.C., Inquisition vs. Hidalgo, fol. 79. Additional accusations in 1808 and 1809 had been considered either inconclusive or trivial and the case was not reopened, *ibid.*, fol. 85, 88-89.

³⁴ Inquisition vs. Miguel Neve, San Angel, 1810-1811. *Ibid.*, vol. 1217, fol. 283-298.

³⁵ "Suspension of case vs. Hidalgo, Mexico City, March 15, 1813," in Hernández y Dávalos, I, 182.

into a year of scarcity, calamity, and misery?"³⁶ A horrible fate was pictured for the happy residents of the land of plenty by the criollo bishop of Puebla:

We unfortunates! the fruits of our hard labors and application would disappear at the hands of a dissipated idler with no right save only force; your dear wives and daughters would be sacrificed to the brutal turpitude of some men [made] unworthy by their base extraction and preverse conduct. . . ; and this beautiful realm so privileged by nature would become devastated and converted into a desert.³⁷

The royalists made the most of the social implications of Hidalgo's horde. In papers directed at the criollos, the savage origins of the Indians were emphasized. In one of these, composed in late September, the rapidly expanding insurgent army was mentioned. The ease with which the Indians were seduced into joining was stressed and the criollos were warned that they could expect to see "an Army as terrible as a lobster."³⁸

Abad y Queipo wrote several of the most powerful propaganda pamphlets against the revolt. He outdid himself visualizing the horrors which civil war would bring to Mexico. As an enlightened prelate, Abad was interested in new ideas, and concerned with the improvement of the economic conditions of the kingdom. He was convinced that prosperity and social progress could not be achieved by violence. Not only was he fearful of the destructive anarchy of the rebellion, but also he refused to condone the insurgent plan to eliminate the gachupines from the kingdom. His disapproval was due in part, of course, to the fact that he himself was of peninsular origin. But Abad y Queipo also had sound economic motives for the retention of the gachupines:

The individuals who are the most useful, the most concerned, and the most beneficial to society are those who by their economy, their activity, and their talents have learned how to acquire greater capital, sustain a greater quantity of work, and make greater use of life in general. These capitalists are true springs of life, which spread over the whole social body . . . These individuals are, moreover, the censors of customs, who by giving examples of application, industry, order, and good government, oppose the eruption of vices and the corruption of customs. On the other hand the individuals who are the most prejudicial to society are the prodigal idlers, who far from acquiring and investing capital, spend all that they had acquired from their

³⁶ Blas Abadiano y Jaso, *Carta de un concolega a Don Miguel Hidalgo* (Mexico City, 1810), p. 7. Yale.

³⁷ *Pastoral que el ilustrísimo señor dor. D. Manuel Ignacio González del Campillo, dignísimo obispo de la Puebla de los Angeles dirige a sus diocesanos* (Puebla, September 30, 1810), pp. 5-6. Cuevas.

³⁸ José Mariano Beristain de Sousa, *Diálogos patrióticos* (Mexico City, 1810-1811), Dialogue No. 1, pp. 4, 6-7. Yale.

fathers. It is well known that the gachupines in general pertain to the first class, and for this reason they constitute a very interested and concerned portion of the populace. New Spain and all our possessions in America would be left cadaverous shells if the investment of capital, the industry, and the talents of the gachupines should suddenly be removed, as cura Hidalgo proposes. It is true that it would be possible to retain the capital; but this fact would not go far to reduce the misfortune, because capital is dissipated in a moment with the decline of morality and public order . . .³⁹

Abad y Queipo argued that gradual education of the populace was the only way to achieve equal economic opportunity. In the meantime, the commercial and industrial power of the nation must be retained intact by the men who were best able to manage and improve the economy. He warned the rich, however, of their responsibility to society and of the fate they would suffer if they did not work to improve the lot of the masses. Abad said that four-fifths of the population were poor Indians and that half of the Spanish population was also poor. Unless something was done, the impoverished nine-tenths would eventually rise against the wealthy tenth. The bishop-elect predicted a great explosion. Perhaps he sensed that the rebellion of 1810 would fail. His vision was, nevertheless, prophetic.

Abad y Queipo reported the early material losses suffered by the criollos at the hands of the rebels. In Chamacuero 80,000 pesos were stolen, 70,000 of which were criollo profits from the corn harvest, and 40,000 pesos belonging to criollos were taken from the Augustine convent in Salamanca. Horses, mules, and other livestock were seized regardless of ownership. Since most of the gachupines fled with their money and precious possessions, the confiscated wealth of the peninsulares was not sufficient to pay the huge army. It was obvious that wholesale "robbery of the sons of the country" was taking place. The economy-conscious prelate estimated that the country had already lost 500,000 working days in the two weeks since the revolt began.⁴⁰

In another edict issued on October 8, Abad y Queipo described the specter of social upheaval in these terms: "the priest Hidalgo and his subordinates intend to persuade and are persuading the Indians that they are the owners and masters of the land, of which the Spaniards deprived them by conquest, and that by the same means

³⁹ *Edicto instructivo*. . . , pp. 12-13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19. It is probable that 18,000 pesos of the sum confiscated in Chamacuero belonged to Don José Ramón de Mora. Nevertheless, he was able to escape to Celaya with the bulk of his fortune. Unfortunately, however, he deposited it in Tresguerras' famous Iglesia del Carmen from whence it was taken several days later by Hidalgo. His son, José María Luis Mora, may well have begun to develop his anti-Hidalgo bias at this time. See J. M. L. Mora, *Obras sueltas* (Paris, 1837), I, cexcii-cexcii.

they would restore them to the same Indians . . . the project of the cura Hidalgo constitutes a specific cause of civil war, of anarchy and destruction . . . between the Indians, castes and Spaniards who compose all the sons of the country. . . .'⁴¹

The deputies bound for the Cortes of Cádiz issued an *Exhortación* against the rebellion. One of their arguments compared the situation of New Spain with that of France in 1789. They said that France had had a high reputation which was maintained so long as the French preserved unity, law, and respect for other powers. But they had now converted their nation into an object of detestation, devastated provinces, and finally "concluded the heralded project of imaginary liberty by becoming vilely enslaved by the most hateful of men."⁴²

The royalists realized as quickly as the insurgents the power of religious appeals. The Christian ideal of peace appeared on page after page of the propaganda attacks on the Hidalgo revolt. One defender of the status quo maintained that religion inspired in its believers obedience to legitimate power and abhorrence of any conspiracy. He called on God to fill the hearts of the Mexican people with holy maxims and thus maintain the political and social links with the Catholic Spanish Government. The Lord Himself had ordained that there should never be separation of New Spain from the metropolis.⁴³ Another royalist insisted that an insurgent victory would most certainly bring the ejection of "the holy religion of our fathers" from the ruined country.⁴⁴

Hidalgo was vehemently attacked for taking the Virgin of Guadalupe as a standard. Abad y Queipo charged that Hidalgo had committed a sacrilege by so doing.⁴⁵ The Inquisition accused Hidalgo of a grave insult against the faith for raising the people to insurrection in the name of the holy religion and Guadalupe.⁴⁶

If the criollos were to be won to the royalist cause, an appeal in the name of Guadalupe was desirable. The Tepeyac Virgin at the vanguard of the insurgents might attract criollos as well as the lower classes. The royalist propagandists, then, sought to associate Guadalupe with their own cause. They also took advantage of the Virgen de los Remedios. There was, however, no royalist attempt before the

⁴¹ "D. Manuel Abad Queipo. . . , Obispo electo . . . de Michoacán: a todos sus habitantes. . . ," Valladolid, October 8, 1810, in Hernández y Dávalos, II, 153.

⁴² *Exhortación que los diputados para las próximas cortes hacen a los habitantes de las provincias de la Nueva España* (Mexico City, October 3, 1810), pp. 11-13. Cuevas.

⁴³ *Proclama*, signed by "L. B. J. G." (n.p., n.d.), pp. 2, 9. Cuevas.

⁴⁴ Juan Bautista Díaz Calvillo, *Discurso* . . . (Mexico City, n.d.), p. 4. Cuevas.

⁴⁵ Declaration of excommunication, September 24, 1810.

⁴⁶ Edict, October 13, 1810.

battle of Las Cruces to associate Remedios exclusively with their cause. The traditional worship of both virgins by all classes made them almost equally important for the peninsular supporters.⁴⁷

While Hidalgo's horde advanced towards Mexico City on October 29, the shrewd viceroy attempted to take advantage of the religious symbols in the defense of the capital. Venegas tried to bring *both* images of Mary into the city. The canons of the basilica of Guadalupe, however, saw no reason to remove their Virgin from her shrine, Tepeyac being on the other side of Mexico City from the route of the insurgents. Remedios, however, was conducted by thousands of local Indians from her exposed position in Totoltepec and deposited in the cathedral.⁴⁸ It was thus a geographical accident which made Remedios the defender of the city. If Hidalgo's approach had been from the North, Guadalupe might have stood against herself. Naturally, when the insurgents withdrew without attacking the capital, it was Remedios who was praised. It was only afterwards that Remedios became particularly associated with the royalist cause.⁴⁹

The royalists expressed their shocked disapproval that a priest was leading the destructive rebellion. In the anti-revolutionary *Diálogos* of Beristain de Sousa, Hidalgo was described as a "clerical bully, a priest bearing arms, a cura commanding highwaymen, sacking houses and haciendas, and killing innocent men . . . a most abominable thing for those who profess Christianity."⁵⁰ The royalists also played upon the popular fears of French invasion with virtually the same intensity found in insurgent writings. The fact that in 1808 the French agent d'Alvimart had met Hidalgo in Dolores provided the chief ammunition. Bishop González del Campillo of Puebla wrote:

when I have seen in public papers that D'alvimar [*sic*] stayed in Hidalgo's house and received the gifts of this detestable man, opprobrium of the priesthood, and the dishonor of America: when I have seen that there were papers, minutes, plans, and instructions in French very like those that he [Napoleon] gave to his satellites for the unjust invasion of Spain being interpreted; no longer did I maintain the least doubt that in spite of the

⁴⁷ For a discussion see the work by de la Maza.

⁴⁸ See Jesús García Gutiérrez, "El culto de la Virgen Santísima de Guadalupe durante la guerra de independencia," *Memorias de la Academia Mexicana de la Historia*, IV (January-March, 1945), 40-41.

⁴⁹ Blas Abadiano y Jaso, *Prólogo y dedicatoria al regimiento de nobles patriotas, soldados voluntarios de nuestro amado y deseado Fernando VII* (Mexico City, December 3, 1810), pp. 6-7. Cuevas.

⁵⁰ Dialogue No. 1, p. 6. For further discussion of the contemporary royalist opinion of Hidalgo, per se, see Juan Hernández Luna, *Imágenes históricas de Hidalgo* (Mexico City, 1954), pp. 21-39, 56-69.

vigilance of the government the apostles of rebellion have penetrated our pacific peoples.⁵¹

The royalists placed some of the blame for the unhappiness in New Spain on the machinations of the French. It was maintained that the Bonapartists took advantage of the ancient rivalry between *ultra-marinos* (peninsulares) and Americans to foment discord. One pamphleteer described the seditious work of the French agents. He claimed that the imaginary differences between gachupín and criollo had been inflated so much that the situation might explode. In that event, cries of fury would be heard everywhere; sons would denounce fathers, wives would poison husbands, husbands would stab wives; bodies would fill the streets; desolation and mourning would prevail. At that moment the French would descend on the ravaged country, seize the property, burn houses, and take away the liberty and religion of the people. All this could happen, he concluded, if the people of New Spain succumbed to the subversive elements introduced by Napoleon and advanced by Hidalgo and Allende.⁵²

This account reveals a basic fear running throughout the royalist propaganda: the potential consequences of criollo hatred for the gachupín. A variety of arguments were advanced to assuage the criollos' ire and unite the two Spanish elements against Hidalgo. The familiar roster of all criollos who had held important offices in all the Spanish American colonies for the past three centuries was published in order to counter the criollo complaints about the unfair appointment policy. One list was dragged out for ten pages.⁵³ The common heritage of the criollos and gachupines was incessantly emphasized. The same blood, the same religion, patriotic homage to the same monarch, and the continual intermarriage of peninsulares with American women were favorite themes. "We are all Spaniards . . ." became the major argument for union.⁵⁴ The many contributions of the peninsula were held up for criollo inspection. One polemicist pointed out that not only had Spain civilized, enlightened, and ennobled America but she had also provided military protection so that the inhabitants of the New World had been able to live in tranquility. He claimed that Mexico, "the most coveted country of all," had been

⁵¹ *Manifiesto que el obispo de la Puebla de los Angeles dirige a sus diocesanos* (Puebla, November 3, 1810), pp. 2-3. Cuevas.

⁵² Díaz Calvillo, pp. 12-14.

⁵³ Beristain de Sousa, Dialogue No. 3, pp. 17-27.

⁵⁴ E.g. *Exhortación a los patrióticos distinguidos de Fernando Séptimo de un Americano de los mismos* (Mexico City, October 13, 1810), pp. 2-3. Cuevas; Lic. José Pedro García y García, *Prosperidades de la unión, y desastres del vicio opuesto* (Mexico City, October 11, 1810), pp. 9-10. AGN, Ramo de Impresos Oficiales, Vol. 31, no. 14.

kept immune from foreign invasion by the power of the Spanish throne. The intent of a "few traitors" to deny this protection was just the sort of schism that Napoleon would most appreciate.⁵⁵

Appeal was made to the criollos' honor and decency. After all Spain had done for America, how could the Mexicans forsake her in her hour of need? Díaz Calvillo warned that if New Spain ignored the plight of the mother country an indelible stigma would be attached to all Spanish Americans. They would become the object of universal scorn; men would point to a Mexican and say, "Behold someone ungrateful to his benefactors, a cruel person who broke with his country, and a traitor to God and his King."⁵⁶ Unity of the two Spains was to be preserved at all cost. Royalist banners proclaimed their defense of the realm with the inscriptions: "Ferdinand Seventh King of Spain and the Indies," "Long Live the true union," and "Happiness consists in the union of both Spains."⁵⁷ The royalists fervently supported the case that united, America and Spain might weather the Napoleonic storm, but if separated, the glory and liberty of both would be lost forever.

Of all the royalist arguments, those that emphasized the destructive and anarchic character of the Hidalgo revolt were the most compelling. These were also, however, negative arguments, for they left the criollos with only two unsavory choices: to support a social rebellion or to remain subordinate to the rule of gachupines. A positive alternative was needed. Events in the peninsula, meanwhile, played into the hands of the royalists. Spain was on the verge of total collapse. If this happened, Mexico would then have no further obligation as a colony and could establish her own independent sovereignty. If, however, by the slimmest chance, Napoleon were defeated, the projected Cortes of Cádiz was expected to improve the status of New Spain within the empire. In either case, the royalists made a positive case for adherence to the legitimate cause. No matter whether Spain won or lost, the criollos could hope for a brighter future without resort to bloodshed.

Of importance was the remarkable declaration issued by the

⁵⁵ Dr. Luis Montaña, *Reflexiones sobre los alborotos acaecidos en algunos Pueblos de tierradentro, Impresas . . . a costa de los Doctores de la Real y Pontificia Universidad* (Mexico City, October 2, 1810), p. 19. Cuevas. Montaña himself contributed heavily to the publication of this. See José J. Izquierdo, *Montaña y los orígenes del movimiento social y científico de México* (Mexico City, 1955), p. 252.

⁵⁶ *Discurso*. . . , p. 16.

⁵⁷ "Relato de los sucesos de Valladolid escrito por el Canónigo Don Sebastián de Betancourt y León," September 18 to December 28, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 116, fol. 194-195.

regency council of Spain and the Indies on February 14, 1810. This document was directed to the Spanish Americans and declared their dominions "integral and essential parts of the Spanish Monarchy." They were invited to send representatives to the proposed "national cortes."

From this moment, Spanish Americans, you see yourselves raised to the dignity of free men; you are no longer . . . bent under a yoke made heavier the farther you were from the center of power . . . Bear in mind that on pronouncing the name of he who shall represent you in the national Cortes, your destinies no longer depend either on ministers, or viceroys, or governors: they are in your hands.⁵⁸

The cortes did not convene until September 24, 1810, and the regency's activities in the meantime cast some doubt as to the probability of perfect equality for the colonists. The proportional rate of representation for peninsular delegates to the forthcoming cortes was increased so as to maintain the balance of power in Spain. On June 28, 1810, the regency reduced the total number of criollo delegates to twenty-eight for all the American kingdoms. Previously, by the February 14 order, New Spain alone was to have sent seventeen representatives. The royalists in Mexico carefully ignored these discouraging signs and did their utmost to capitalize on the stated promise of equality within the empire.⁵⁹

Abad y Queipo was one of the foremost propagandists to make use of the possibilities for New Spain implied in either the demise or resurrection of the peninsula. He was, however, practically convinced of Spain's inability to survive.⁶⁰ Abad believed that if and when the toehold in the peninsula was lost, the Cádiz Cortes could be reestablished in New Spain. Mexico would then become "ultramarine Spain" under the authority of Ferdinand or another Bourbon prince and "under the form or constitution which best suits our conservation and glory." Thereupon he boldly concluded, "Behold the independence of New Spain." If, on the other hand, Spain should survive, New Spain would be an integral part of a great independent nation.⁶¹

⁵⁸ "Isla de León, February 14, 1810," in *México en las Cortes de Cádiz: Documentos* (Mexico City, 1949), pp. 7-9.

⁵⁹ Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of Mexico* (San Francisco, 1885-1887), IV, 87-88.

⁶⁰ This opinion held by Abad y Queipo was brought to the attention of the Inquisition. Fray Juan de San Anastasio, in his testimony against Hidalgo, mentioned in passing, that he had heard the bishop-elect say that the restoration of the Spanish monarch was an extremely difficult task. Mexico City, October 22, 1810, L.C., Inquisition vs. Hidalgo, fol. 107-108.

⁶¹ *Edicto instructivo*. . . , pp. 11-12.

Another legitimist, a criollo professor of medicine in the University of Mexico, who doubted the ability of the peninsula to survive, envisioned a considerable boost to the prosperity of New Spain if the mother country collapsed. He painted the fanciful picture of hundreds of decent settlers, industrious artisans, honest laborers used to hardship, and capitalists willing to stimulate commerce arriving in America aboard Spanish ships. The latter would compose Mexico's navy. The immigrants would enlarge the population and improve the economy.⁶² This argument was generally unappealing, however. For the criollos, the dream of an independent Mexico did not include the introduction of any additional gachupines.

The opening of the cortes and the tardy departure of the Mexican delegates occurred shortly after the outbreak of the Hidalgo revolt. The coincidence of the three events was a particular liability for the insurrection. Unfortunately for Hidalgo and Allende, the criollos did not foresee that the niggardly behavior of the Spanish representatives at Cádiz would exceed that of the regency, and particularly that the denial of an equal population base for representation would be stoutly maintained; nor could they anticipate the despotic reaction engineered by Ferdinand the Desired on his return to Spain.⁶³ The Mexican deputies themselves published an energetic declaration of their optimism to their compatriots before setting out for Spain. They concluded with the assurance that their representation "together with that of other provinces in the Cortes, will make sure that the rights of all the parts which compose the monarchy with just equality are seen triumphant: so that all are left without a motive for complaint, governed by wise laws, in which only equity, justice and impartiality shine. . . ."⁶⁴

Meanwhile, Francisco Xavier Venegas moved rapidly to counter the Hidalgo revolt. Though boorish he possessed more vigor and insight than any viceroy of New Spain since Revillagigedo. Within a week of the Grito, Venegas issued a proclamation calling for popular obedience and confidence in his government. He told the Mexicans that he was placing himself at their service. He described the earliest destruction of the rebellion and prophetically warned the Mexicans that "this evil, if by ill-fortune it should continue, would be the beginning of our ruin." The viceroy emphasized that those

⁶² Luis Montaña, pp. 12-13.

⁶³ See James F. King, "The Colored Castes and American Representation in the Cortes of Cádiz," *HAHR*, XXXIII (February 1953), 33-64.

⁶⁴ *Exhortación que los Diputados . . . hacen. . .*, p. 16. A list of the "Diputados de las provincias del virreynato de Nueva-España para las Cortes nacionales" is in Alamán, I, Appendix, Docs. no. 15, 451-453.

who were joining the revolt had been seduced by misguided leaders and deceived by the prospects of a false happiness. He was one of the first to cite many of the principal royalist propaganda arguments.⁶⁵

Four days later, having received the news of the capture of Celaya and accounts of the ravages of the insurgents, Venegas issued another proclamation. After denouncing the sacrilege of carrying the image of Guadalupe, whom he called "The Patroness and Protectress of this Kingdom," and stating that two criollos were "inhumanly killed," the viceroy put a price on the heads of Hidalgo, Allende, and Juan de Aldama. The sum of 10,000 pesos was offered for the death or capture of any of the three. In addition a pardon was offered to any insurgent who accomplished this task.⁶⁶

Venegas devoted much of his attention to military preparations but without losing sight of the psychological battlefield. At the same time that he offered the reward, the viceroy announced that he was "sending picked troops in charge of . . . officers of proven valor, military skill, loyalty and patriotism" to contain the revolt. Although the Spaniard Calleja was Venegas' principal field officer, the viceroy proved his political acumen by naming Manuel de Flon, the Conde de la Cadena, second in command. Flon was a prominent criollo related by marriage to Viceroy Bernardo de Gálvez and currently the intendant of Puebla. The memory of this politic move lived after the revolution for independence. H. G. Ward learned during his stay in Mexico that

by way of conciliating the Creoles, [Venegas] intrusted the command of one of the finest regiments to the Conde de la Cadena, a Mexican born. The event proved his calculation to be correct, for the Count, who had been supposed before to be one of those most desirous of seeing Mexico independent, became, from that moment, a zealous adherent of Spain, and perished soon after [at Calderón] in the defense of her cause.⁶⁷

Finally, Venegas appealed further to Mexican pride by the creation of an elite corps of "Distinguished Patriots for Ferdinand VII" in Mexico City. The title itself was a master stroke.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *El Virrey de Nueva España a todos sus habitantes* (Mexico City, September 23, 1810), AMN, Gómez Orozco Collection, Impresos 6-I. There has been an historical debate over the abilities of Venegas. For a detailed summary see Bancroft, IV, 93-94. Venegas' efforts to save the capital did border on the theatrical when he assumed a sanctimonious air and went to the cathedral to put his captain-general's baton in the tiny hands of the Virgin of Remedios. This had the desired emotional effect on the congregation, however. José María Luis Mora, *México y sus revoluciones* (Mexico City, 1950), III, 83.

⁶⁶ September 27, 1810, in Hernández y Dávalos, II, 114-115.

⁶⁷ *Mexico* (London, 1829), I, 125.

⁶⁸ "Orden para la organización de batallones de patriotas distinguidos de Fernando VII," October 5, 1810, in Hernández y Dávalos, II, 136-137.

The viceroy also recognized the urgent necessity of retaining the allegiance of the Indian and caste population. Fortunately, he claimed to possess an unpublished decree abolishing the tribute, passed by the Regency Council on May 26, 1810. When Venegas realized how serious the defection of the tributary class had become, he published the decree on October 5, 1810. So that the provision might receive the greatest possible attention among the indigenous population, it was translated into Nahuatl.⁶⁹

Despite the feverish material preparations to restrain and defeat the Hidalgo horde, the struggle for men's minds was the royalists' major preoccupation. Félix Calleja made an impassioned address to his troops in San Luis, telling them that they had gathered to fight for man's three most sacred causes: religion, king, and country. The insurgents were described as agents of Bonaparte bent on seizing property behind the mask of religion and independence. There would soon be no distinction made between the goods of Europeans and Americans. After the rebels had been properly chastised, "contented and glorious with having restored peace and tranquility to our country, we shall return to our homes to enjoy the honor that is reserved for valiant men alone."⁷⁰

An evaluation of the popular reactions to the propaganda war requires recognition of the parallel effects which rumor, personal contact, and private correspondence had on public opinion. It is impossible to judge with precision the effectiveness of these unknown quantities as against that of controlled psychological warfare. The resultant reaction, nevertheless, would indicate that the powerful royalist propaganda machine was a major factor. This is not to suggest that no support came for Hidalgo from the crucial criollo sector or that none of the insurgent propaganda reached it mark. There were criollos who joined the rebellion throughout its four month duration. The men who initiated the insurrection in Dolores were themselves criollos. In San Miguel many of the principal criollo citizens joined the rebel junta that reorganized the local government.⁷¹ This criollo

⁶⁹ Proclamation in *ibid.*, 137-139; the same in Nahuatl, *ibid.*, 140-141. Fray Servando Teresa de Mier attacked Venegas' abolition of the tribute on the grounds that the viceroy had no such specific decree from the Regency. *Historia de la revolución de Nueva España* . . . (London, 1813), I, 300-301.

⁷⁰ October 2, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Operaciones de Guerra, Vol. 204, Calleja papers, fol. 16-17.

⁷¹ The Junta included Lic. Ignacio de Aldama, Lic. Luis Caballero, Lic. Juan José de Umarán, Procurador Domingo Unzaga, Alcalde de Barrio Benito Torres, Miguel Valleja, José Morelos (not José María Morelos y Pavón), Antonio Ramírez. Other criollos mentioned: El Guardián Manuel Castilblanque, R.P. Mexía, Felipe González, Vicente Umarán, José Mariano Castilblanque, Máximo

response at the very beginning, however, is not surprising for the social nature of the revolt was not yet clearly defined. Two weeks later in Guanajuato, however, Hidalgo's efforts to reorganize the city government met with passive resistance from most of the criollos.⁷²

There is evidence that the revolt was supported by some of the poorer criollos. The peninsular *subdelegado* of Huetamo, Michoacán, complained in October that he was having difficulty rallying volunteers from his section for the defense of Valladolid. He reported the recruitment of 300 men, but said these were unresponsive to his encouraging speeches. This royalist representative stated that insurgent propaganda had reached the area and was having effect, particularly those diatribes against all things European. The criollos among the recruits were quoted as saying: "If it were in defense of religion and the King we would go [to fight for the royalists] but we are not going to defend the Gachupines [;] let them defend themselves!!"⁷³

There was also support from criollos of higher social standing. José María Chico, a member of one of the most prominent families of Guanajuato and the only important one which sided with Hidalgo after the massacre, volunteered to become one of the two *alcaldes ordinarios* in the reorganization of the city.⁷⁴ Later, on October 23, Chico became Hidalgo's minister of police and good order at Acámbaro. Ignacio Rayón was another criollo partisan of the revolt. Rayón, a successful young lawyer, was still on his honeymoon when he joined Hidalgo's march toward Mexico City.

The members of the lower clergy offered perhaps more support than any other single criollo group. Because of their intimate contact with the Indians and castes, the priests of rural parishes were among the most effective leaders of the peasant army and guerrilla groups. José María Mercado, the priest of Aqualulco, joined the rebellion after the rebels had occupied Guadalajara. Given a command, Mercado captured the port of San Blas but was ultimately defeated and shot. Luis de Herrera, a friar in the order of San Juan de Dios, was chiefly responsible for the initial rebel seizure of San Luis Potosí.⁷⁵

Castañeda. Copy of the Acuerdo of September 24, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 111, fol. 185.

⁷² "Relación acircunstanciada. . .," fols. 15, 17.

⁷³ Report of José Martínez Samperio, October 16, 1810, AGN, Ramo de Historia, Vol. 111, fol. 384-385.

⁷⁴ Description of the fall of Guanajuato and subsequent events by Carlos Camargo, Celaya, October 2, 1810, *ibid.*, fol. 141-143.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of the moral right of the clergy to bear arms in the revolution see Jesús García Gutiérrez, "Cuestiones históricas disputadas: los clérigos y el ejercicio de las armas," *Abside*, IV (January, 1940), 92-97. His judgment is that the insurgent ecclesiastics broke their holy vows. For further

There were criollos, then, who responded favorably to the Grito, but their numbers were infinitesimal compared to those who did not. A few lawyers, country men, and lower clergy supported, led, and died for the insurgent cause, but a million other criollos in New Spain failed to act. This huge remainder became either openly hostile to the revolt or coldly aloof to the entreaties of Hidalgo and his followers. Immediately before September 16, the country was seething with hatred for the Spaniards. Six weeks later, the mass of the criollo population was either actively supporting the gachupines or sunk in sullen apathy. By then, the social character of the Hidalgo rebellion was evident.

The major proof of the criollo choice is negative. Unfortunately for Hidalgo, after Las Cruces there was no universal uprising; there was no triumphal procession into the capital. If only Mexico City had embraced the revolution, Calleja would have been impotent. The criollos may have wanted a revolution on their own terms; they did not, however, want one on Hidalgo's. A representative group of criollos from Angangueo, the site of a mine owned by Hidalgo, wrote to Venegas two weeks after the revolt began: "As soon as we learned . . . that some of our brothers . . . had raised their voices to start an insurrection contrary to the national character, and diametrically opposed to the maxims of our holy religion, we were filled with the greatest bitterness, and became fired with the flame of loyalty and patriotism . . ." This implies that another sort of insurrection might *not* have been "contrary to the national character."⁷⁶

The decision of the criollos not in direct contact with the revolt was often based on early rumors that the rebellion involved a class struggle. Royalist propaganda confirmed these reports. The members of the cabildo of Saltillo wrote the governor of Coahuila that they had heard that all the upper classes of Celaya, criollo and Spanish alike, had fled the city. This was proof to the regidores that the revolt was directed against the upper classes and they were fearful of the consequences. There is no indication that these men had any notion of the insurrection's objective to oust the gachupines.⁷⁷

material on criollo clerics in the rebellion see Elías Amador, "El clero mexicano en la revolución de la independencia," *Anales del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia, y Etnología*, I (1909), 177-192; José Bravo Ugarte, "El clero y la independencia," *Ábside*, V (October, 1941), 612-630; Bravo Ugarte, "El clero y la independencia. Adiciones al ensayo estadístico de los clérigos y religiosos que militaron durante la guerra de independencia. . .," *ibid.*, VII (July-September, 1943), 406-409; and Schmitt, "The Clergy . . ."

⁷⁶ Report to Venegas, September 30, 1810, in Hernández y Dávalos, II, 119-120.

⁷⁷ Cabildo de Saltillo to Coronel Antonio Cordenoy Bustamante, October 1, 1810, Wagner.

The motives of the insurgents in the minds of most criollos were, then, extremely vague. Except in rare cases when insurgent propaganda reached its destination, the criollos knew only that the rebellion was a bloody Indian and caste mutiny. They reasoned that a revolt engineered by criollos with purely criollo motives would not be described even by the peninsulares in terms of a jacquerie. Such an opinion was reflected by one criollo who decided against the revolt after he heard the news from Guanajuato:

Allende and his allies have not begun their hostility against the gachupines, or in order to improve the Country: only a brutal coarseness can throw the men of all classes into disorder . . . [and this means] fighting against ourselves, against our fathers, our brothers and our sons, in a word, [Allende *et al.*] wish us to destroy ourselves by our own hand, giving ourselves up to continual anguish, and the most perilous and troublesome anxiety.

The inference is unmistakable that if "Allende and his allies" had *really* directed their hostility against the gachupines alone, thereby improving the country, the author and other criollos would gladly have joined.⁷⁸

An especially good example of the criollo decision came from an unidentified citizen of Guadalajara. Addressing a long statement to the secretary of the Auxiliary Junta in that city, the author said he resented the rebel argument that the Europeans were trying to deliver the kingdom "to the Tyrant of the whole world Napoleon." He said that this was used to incite "the most vile and ignorant people in the Villages" and that the Chief of the "horrible uprising" was also urging them to murder and robbery. This criollo dwelt on his fear of civil war. He believed that Napoleon was behind it and that the fate of French killing French and Italians killing Italians was beginning to occur in America. He wrote that if internecine warfare was so bloody

in enlightened Countries among Citizens of the same color, the same Laws, Religion and interests, what can we expect in this Kingdom where there are European Spaniards and American Spaniards, although tightly bound by the indissoluble bonds of blood. . . ? where there are Indians, Mulattoes, Lobos, Negroes, and other castes at odds among themselves.⁷⁹

At the same time, another criollo wrote in despair that "the sacrosanct voice of independence" had come from the mouths of such crazed people. The interim intendant of the province of Mexico,

⁷⁸ *Reflexiones del patriota americano, Lic. D. Fernando Fernández de S. Salvador. Asesor ordinario por S.M. de esta intendencia* (Mexico City, October 10, 1810), p. 5. Biblioteca Pública de Morelia, Michoacán.

⁷⁹ Memorandum to D. Vicente Garro, October 12, 1810, in Hernández y Dávalos, II, 161-164.

Pedro María de Monterde, said that the independence sought by the rebels was liberty to confound the social order, to evade legality, and to give licentious vent to their passions. On the contrary, "the true civil independence of man consists substantially in the protection he receives through obedience to just laws and in being part or member of a great nation." Again the tinges of regret are apparent. If only it had been an *orderly political* revolution.⁸⁰

Juan Francisco de Azcárate, one of the criollo champions of 1808, abjured the Hidalgo revolt in an address at the College of Lawyers in Mexico City on the eve of the battle of Las Cruces. For him the rebellion was most unlike the independence which he, Talamantes, and Primo Verdad had hoped to achieve two years earlier. Azcárate saw the horde bearing down on the capital as a threat to order, virtue, and justice. Beautiful cities would be ruined; and sciences, the arts, mining, commerce, industry, and agriculture would be eclipsed.⁸¹

For the mass of criollos the insurgent appeal to religion and the symbol of Guadalupe was not effective. They found the vision of destruction under the sacred banner of the Virgin abhorrent. An "American Patriot" who turned vehemently against the Hidalgo revolt, was particularly disturbed by the use the rebels were making of Guadalupe. He told his fellow countrymen that they should place their hopes for the disappearance of the present melancholy situation in "the protection, the favor, the promise of Most Holy Mary in her marvelous image of *Guadalupe*." He begged all criollos to cast themselves at her feet and pray to her for peace and tranquility. His conclusion revealed the patriotic as well as the religious kinship of the criollos for that Virgin. "Courage, Mexicans, Valor, dear compatriots; hark to the voice of your sweet Mother, if you wish the end of this cruel and bloody war which the Cura Hidalgo, Allende and their followers have plotted . . ."⁸²

Some concern for the plight of the mother country was apparent among the criollos turning against the Hidalgo revolt. Fernando Fernández de San Salvador argued that he and his fellow criollos should consider the anguished state of the monarchy and of the unfortunate Spaniards who had lost their jobs, their property, their

⁸⁰ *Proclama que el intendente interino de la provincia de México dirige a todos los habitantes de esta Nueva España, y particularmente a los de su distrito* (Mexico City, October 12, 1810), pp. 4-6. AGN, Ramo de Impresos Oficiales, Vol. 31, no. 15.

⁸¹ "Alocución del Colegio de Abogados de México," October 29, 1810, quoted by Alamán, I, 346-347. Although on parole, there was no necessity for Azcárate to make this public statement.

⁸² *Exhortación de un patriota americano a los habitantes de este reyno*, signed "L. G. C. P. A." (Mexico City, 1810), pp. 3-4. Italics his. Cuevas.

families, and had been forced out of their country. These peninsulares had been fighting to maintain the common religion and the common defense of the empire. Therefore, the cause of all Spaniards, European or American, was the same.⁸³ Another criollo, Pedro María de Monterde, reflected a desire to cling to the promise of the Cádiz Cortes. He opposed Hidalgo's impetuous rebellion in view of the amelioration which could be hoped for within the empire. "In the convocation of your deputies to the august congress of our Cortes you are given the surest signal of paternal concern which aspires to our general welfare . . . [for in the cortes] they will reform and establish that which best suits our political system and our laws."⁸⁴

By the end of October, most of the criollos had decided against Hidalgo though not without traces of regret and frustration. The arguments of religion, loyalty to the king, fear of the French, the dire straits of the mother country, and confidence in the Cortes of Cádiz all were influential, but these were minor compared to descriptions of Hidalgo's horde. The rebellion was no political coup d'état. It involved the destruction of American lives and millions of pesos' worth of American property. Even the criollo riff-raff of Mexico City, the men who had organized the abortive Machete conspiracy of 1799, failed to support an insurrection which promised to release the Indians and castes from their base status.⁸⁵

By refusing to support the revolt the criollos seriously crippled Hidalgo's chances for success, but that fact alone did not destroy those chances. Had the criollos remained aloof from the whole struggle, Hidalgo might have raised most of the tributary class against the peninsulares. Many of the criollos, however, were not passive but worked actively to defeat the rebellion. The *regidores*, parish priests, and private citizens who feared social revolution exerted profound influence on the masses not to join Hidalgo. These criollos united with the gachupines in a desperate effort to limit the number of insurgents. With the depressed groups it was largely a question of whose appeal first reached them which determined their allegiance. In areas in direct contact with the rebellion, Hidalgo had no difficulty in raising a huge peasant army; in the greater part of the kingdom, however, where royalist propaganda, promises, and the influence of the clergy and local officials anticipated the rebels, the Indians and

⁸³ *Reflexiones del . . . Lic. Fernando Fernández de S. Salvador. . .*, p. 14.

⁸⁴ *Proclama que el intendente interino . . . dirige. . .*, p. 7.

⁸⁵ For a brief but incisive discussion of similar criollo reactions to the threat of social revolution in Guatemala, see John Tate Lanning, *The Eighteenth-Century Enlightenment in the University of San Carlos de Guatemala* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1956), pp. 354-355.

castes remained loyal. Furthermore, the greater stability of the corporate Indian communities made the core area of New Spain less prone to defection than the Bajío.⁸⁶

A representative criollo appeal maintained that the Indians had a protected place in the society and that they should, therefore, be exceedingly grateful:

Fortunate Indians worthy for so many reasons of all the attentions of justice! Loyal Indians, vassals like myself of the beloved captive [king]! Reflect. How just is the Spanish nation . . . which will cast out forever the injustices which despotism and the pride of some ministers, and not the Spanish nation, have worked in the past! . . . *Loyal Indian vassals of Ferdinand VII, now you are men, now you are Spaniards; there is no dignity nor honor however elevated which a loyal Indian cannot have and enjoy . . .*⁸⁷

Other psychological weapons were employed. Immediately after Las Cruces the royalist press accused Hidalgo of using the Indians as cannon fodder. Placing them in the vanguard, claimed one diatribe, was part of Hidalgo's plan to finish off the Indians as well as all the criollos so that Frenchmen could invade and introduce liberty of conscience into New Spain!⁸⁸

In an evaluation of the lower class response to the revolt the negative argument holds again. The expected peasant support from the Valley of Anáhuac and other central regions was not forthcoming.⁸⁹ There are, moreover, plentiful examples of declarations by the municipal councils of Indian communities swearing allegiance to the royalist cause well before Hidalgo's threat to Mexico City materialized. Venegas' appeals and the elimination of the tribute apparently were successful. The Indians felt common cause was being made with them by the government in defense of the realm. The Indian governor, *regidor mayor*, and *alcaldes ordinarios* of San Francisco Tepeaca (near Puebla), who first heard of the insurrection from Venegas, assured the viceroy that they had "entered into the

⁸⁶ See Wolf, "The Mexican Bajío . . ."

⁸⁷ Dr. D. Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, *La América en el trono Español. Exclamación . . . que da alguna idea de lo que son los diputados de estos dominios en las cortes* (Mexico City, 1810), pp. 3, 12. AGN, Ramo de Impresos Oficiales, Vol. 31, no. 22. Italics his.

⁸⁸ E. L. F., El Duranguense, *El patriotismo del lancero, dependiente de las haciendas del benemérito español D. Gabriel de Yermo. Diálogo entre Marianita y un lancero* (Mexico City, 1810), pp. 5-6. Sutro.

⁸⁹ That the resolution to defend the Capital against the advancing horde was widespread through all classes is suggested by a pamphlet written in November by "Un Mexicano," *México fiel y valiente en el crisol que la pusieron los insurgentes* (Mexico City, 1810). Sutro. See also Mariano Torrente, *Historia de la revolución hispano-americana* (Madrid, 1829-1830), I, 152-154. Based on documents from the Ministry of War in Madrid.

spirit of the proclamation" (of September 23) and that they had vowed to fight for "the conservation of our holy religion, for the liberty of our longed for monarch and for the independence of our beloved country [i.e. from French domination]." The Tepeaca cabildo was greatly troubled by the uprising, particularly since "among the traitors there are individuals of Indian origin." Nevertheless, they vigorously proclaimed their opposition to the malefactors of such horrible crimes. They felt assured of the happy outcome of the royalist cause for "the protection of this Kingdom is commended to our Most Sacred Mother and Most Pure Virgin Mary of Guadalupe."⁹⁰

The members of the ayuntamiento of Tecpán de Santiago, also Indian, offered more reasons to convince Venegas of their continued loyalty:

We are fully persuaded that the sacred and close links which unite us with mother Spain ought not to be cut while there exists a single bit of Spanish soil, free from the tyrannical domination [of the French] . . . In vain will these perturbers of peace and tranquility [Hidalgo, *et al*] sow their discord: in vain will they try to justify their excesses under the august name of our Patroness of Guadalupe and Ferdinand VII. The council of Santiago . . . assures Your Excellency that none of its sons will march with the black stain of infidelity and irreligiosity, nor contribute to the desolation, extermination and slavery in which this precious portion of the Spanish monarchy will doubtless fall if the perverse designs of the mutineers should have effect.⁹¹

Another Indian community that vigorously supported the viceroy was Tlaxcala. Recalling their privileged position as allies of Cortés in the conquest, the Tlaxcalans reported that they had heard of the "scandalous and detestable" acts committed by Hidalgo, Allende, and Aldama. They promised Venegas that they would make all the other Indians of their province aware of the evils of the revolt so that if some satellites of the rebels should come to the locality they would be rejected immediately.⁹²

Then came Las Cruces, the chilling reception in the Valley of Mexico, and the insurgent withdrawal. Nevertheless, the propaganda war continued. In late November, 1810, Hidalgo began to exploit the captured press in Guadalajara. Decrees, broadsides, and

⁹⁰ República de S. Francisco Tepeaca to Venegas, October 1, 1810, in Hernández y Dávalos, II, 121-122.

⁹¹ October 5, 1810, *ibid.*, 142.

⁹² Ayuntamiento de Tlaxcala to Venegas, October 6, 1810, *ibid.*, 144. Other documentary examples of Indian reaction against the insurrection may be found *ibid.*, nos. 52, 59. Loyalty in the name of Guadalupe or Ferdinand or both is specifically mentioned.

lengthy rebuttals of royalist propaganda were published. Six issues of the famous *Despertador Americano*, the first of a long series of rebel periodicals, came from this press during December and January. Yet after Hidalgo's retreat from the capital, the royalists relaxed. Undeterred by the Guadalajara press' production and the emergence of a new horde the volume of their polemical publications decreased, as statistics demonstrate,⁹³ in inverse ratio to their increased confidence. The defenders of the status quo may have realized that the rebellion would never become universal. Perhaps they saw that partly through their efforts, both physical and psychological, the only alternatives left were the rapid destruction of the insurgents or, at worst, a prolonged and sanguinary civil war. The initial phase of the Mexican war for independence did indeed give way to an enervating decade of internecine turmoil. Before this happened, however, it was the projected image of violent class warfare which jeopardized the success of Hidalgo's rebellion. The royalists could pride themselves that their efforts to strengthen traditional loyalties and to arouse fear of social revolution had helped to defeat the revolt long before the final military catastrophe at the Puente de Calderón in January, 1811.

⁹³ Of the 101 works published between the middle of September and the end of 1810, 28 have no precise date. But the balance do. Forty-two dated works came off the presses between the Grito and November 2; only 31 appeared during the remaining two months. See Medina, *op. cit.*, VII, 502-556.