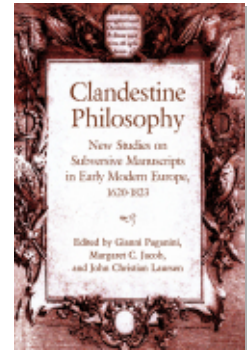




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The Spanish Revolution of 1820-1823 and the Clandestine Philosophical Literature

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PART SIX

SPANISH DEVELOPMENTS

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The Spanish Revolution of 1820–1823 and the Clandestine Philosophical Literature

JONATHAN ISRAEL

I. “Radical” and “Moderate” Enlightenment in Post-1808 Spain

The thesis that the Western Enlightenment in general needs to be divided into two main categories with fundamentally different traits, moderate and radical, was first conceptualized in detail by Leo Strauss (1899–1973) around 1928.¹ The concept was later further developed by Strauss himself, Günter Mühlhfordt,² Henry May, Giuseppe Ricupérati, Margaret Jacob (who, however, largely rejects the interpretation presented here), Silvia Berti, and Wim Klever. As conceived by Strauss, “Radical Enlightenment” preceded the “Moderate Enlightenment” chronologically and outlived it. From the late seventeenth century onwards, “moderate Enlightenment” remained the mainstream as far as governments, churches, and educators were concerned, but beneath the surface, contended Strauss, the radical impulse proved the more robust, philosophically and culturally. It constituted the “real” or main Enlightenment especially with respect to shaping the Enlightenment’s troubled legacy – the intellectual paradoxes and dilemmas of post-1800 modernity. Strauss accordingly classified *Radikale Aufklärung* as the “veritable” Enlightenment, casting Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Moses Mendelssohn, and other “moderates” as cautious compromisers whose unworkable deistic and “Socinian” philosophical “fixes” unwittingly weakened rather than strengthened their ultimately untenable theses reconciling reason with religion.

Since *Radikale Aufklärung* for Leo Strauss meant essentially philosophical “atheism,” he chiefly distinguished what by 1928 he already termed “moderate Enlightenment” by the latter’s theistic premises and willingness to compromise with ecclesiastical authority.³ By contrast, Henry

May, the first to introduce the “Radical Enlightenment” construct in English,⁴ highlighted the American Enlightenment’s abiding split between radicals and moderates principally in terms of support for or against the democratizing tendency in the American Revolution without linking this especially closely to critique of religion. My own approach to the Radical Enlightenment phenomenon combines the Straussian and May lines of analysis, placing the main stress precisely on the philosophical, ideological, and eventually political linkage of these two elements – eliminating religious authority tied to democratizing republicanism. In my *Revolutionary Ideas*, I argue that while from the standpoint of popular culture and society “at the beginning of the French Revolution, no apparent contradiction between the Revolution and religion” existed, from the perspective of that revolution’s left republican leadership – a large slice of the revolutionary vanguard and pro-revolutionary newspaper editors, if not the populace – it was manifest from the outset that the revolution, given its radical intellectual background and priorities, would comprehensively assail the Church as an authority, autonomous institution, value system, and set of doctrines.⁵

Portraying the Radical Enlightenment as an ideological set of sails well-placed as it turned out to catch at least a modest proportion of the everywhere powerful but usually inchoate winds of social discontent, anger, and frustration, I identified 1789–93 as the juncture within the French Revolution when Radical Enlightenment as a set of slogans and values based on universal and equal human rights gave birth, for the first time, to an ugly and seemingly inevitable concomitant, a vigorous mass political anticlericalism expressly directed against the Christian religion characterized by persecution, widespread vandalism, and self-defeating results. The point at which modern Spanish militant mass political anticlericalism comparably – if at this point so far much more weakly – emerged as a tentative mass movement was with the Spanish Revolution of 1820–3.

The years 1814–20 in Spain were rife with conspiracy and a seething revolutionary underground.⁶ Following six years of intensely reactionary royalist repression, the Cádiz Constitution of 1812 was powerfully revived by the insurrection of early 1820, commencing with the mutiny of 14,000 troops King Fernando VII (reigned: 1808–33) had gathered at Cádiz for his projected attempt to reconquer Buenos Aires and the Río de la Plata. At first, the peasantry and urban masses, especially in Andalusia where the insurgency began, evinced only indifference; but as the weeks passed, sufficient mass support materialized particularly in

Galicia and elsewhere in the north to enable the rebels to encircle the capital and finally the royal palace. The sporadic urban rioting extended to attacks on the recently reinstated Jesuits in Madrid and on the Inquisition's tribunals, prisons, and archives in Madrid, Santiago de Compostela, Zaragoza, Valencia, Barcelona, and elsewhere.⁷ In the 1820s and 1830s the great majority of the Spanish people remained deeply loyal to traditional Catholic piety; however, some scholars have discerned the first seeds of later Spanish political mass anticlericalism. It is important, therefore, to examine the role of Radical Enlightenment in this much-neglected revolution and, in particular, to investigate the wave of vehemently anti-religious and anticlerical books that poured out in Spain during the three years 1820–3. Books and texts that had been vigorously banned and repressed earlier by the crown and bishops as well as by the Inquisition – albeit with a major interruption in 1808–14 – for the first time in Spanish history gained a firm grip during this revolutionary upsurge of 1820–3, usually known in Spanish as “the Trienio.” This formidable wave of clandestine philosophical literature in Spanish was simultaneously generated by presses within Spain – and not only in Madrid, as we shall see – and abroad, especially London, Bordeaux, and Paris but also Lisbon, Philadelphia, and Geneva.

Trapped in his palace, Spain's fuming monarch hurriedly proclaimed the Constitution's reinstatement by decree of 10 March 1820, expressing his royal “satisfaction” with a show of hypocrisy that duped no one. For the remainder of the revolution, the king remained under virtual house arrest. The Holy Alliance and all of Restoration Europe were profoundly shocked by this fresh assault on monarchy so soon after the inception of the Restoration in Europe and not least by the open display of revolutionary exhilaration in Madrid and other parts of Spain; they were especially angered by the enthusiasm for this new Spanish revolution displayed by the country's intelligentsia and their eager ideological allies abroad. There was no “liberal ilustrado” (enlightened liberal) in Europe, declared one of the revolution's leading ideologues, the writer, educator, and political activist José Joaquín de Mora (1783–1864), in 1820, in a leaflet introducing the ideas of Jeremy Bentham in Spanish, “who did not look on this event as the ‘predecessor y anuncio’ of the regeneration of the civilized nations.”⁸

By indiscriminately expelling both radicals and constitutional moderates, both *Josefinos* and liberal loyalists, in 1814–15, and on a scale unmatched by any other monarch of the Restoration era,⁹ Fernando had massively expanded the burgeoning pan-European exodus of

revolutionary *émigrés*, thus creating an exceptionally large Spanish liberation movement in exile. Drove of defeated radicals, “moderates,” and Napoleonists, driven from their homes, posts, and pensions in Italy, Germany, Austria, Poland, Britain, and Ireland and well as France and Spain, had migrated abroad.¹⁰ But the total ejected from Spain, in 1814, estimated at around 12,000 families, was undoubtedly the largest contingent expelled from any European country.¹¹ Thousands of Spanish political fugitives and refugees had congregated in semi-permanent exile, often remaining committed political activists in France, England, Belgium, Switzerland, and other places of refuge. Among them were a number of leading Spanish American revolutionaries menaced with arrest in Spain, such as Ecuador’s foremost enlightener Vicente Rocafuerte (1783–1847), who had spent many years studying in Spain and France, had first-hand experience of the French Revolution, and had been a *diputado* for Guayaquil at the Cádiz Cortes before being forced to flee.

In 1820, reversing direction, radicals, moderates, and *josefinos* banished from Spain in 1814 streamed back from exile while those silenced internally resumed their former writing and gatherings.¹² Mexican and some other Spanish American deputies present at Cádiz in 1810–13 also now returned to Spain, hoping to participate once again in the empire’s much heralded revival on the basis of the 1820 constitution. For a time there were extravagant hopes that the Spanish American rebellions could now at last be quieted and resolved by equitable and peaceful compromise. A six-month ceasefire between the Spanish crown and the Spanish American revolutionaries was proclaimed, and new constitutional arrangements were proposed for the whole empire based on the principles of “Cádiz” and “1812.”¹³ Excited optimism at first prevailed. But much time was lost owing to the deep split between moderates and radicals, which led to stalled or ineffective debates in the legislature so that only excruciatingly slow progress was registered in nearly all legislative areas. Between 1820 and 1823 the Dirección General de Estudios, headed by Quintana, set up to revolutionize Spain’s education system, likewise proved largely ineffective in secularizing education, owing the depth of the intellectual rift between the two enlightenments, just as had occurred in 1808–14, though in April 1822 it did finally produce a measure for dissolving monasteries and converting them into schools, which scored a few successes.¹⁴

The revolution was eventually crushed, in March 1823, with the aid of a French army sent by Louis XVIII acting on behalf of the conservative powers of the Holy Alliance. Those elements in Spain eager to suppress

religious toleration and restore the Inquisition at that point seized with alacrity the opportunity for thoroughgoing repression of Enlightenment values, in some cases invoking Rousseau's *Contrat social* to prove that even the most read political philosopher of the age contended, like them, that the upkeep of viable civil religion requires organized, institutionalized intolerance and the expulsion of those who dissent.¹⁵

II. The Influx of Previously Suppressed European Political Thought

Like all the European revolutions of the early nineteenth century, the Spanish Revolution of 1820–3 was carried out in the name of the people but was only to a limited extent a revolution *of* the people. Mainly, it needs stressing, it was a revolution of intellectuals consciously striving to establish a *público ilustrado* (enlightened public) in conscious opposition to the traditionally minded *vulgo irracional*. The principal architects of the revolution of 1808–12, the revolutionary vanguard, had been intellectuals, artists, professors, and journalists, and after March 1820 these groups were again the main actors, the backbone of the Trienio. Immediately after the king and his reactionary ministers and policies were defeated, key political prisoners, including leading figures from the earlier revolution such as Agustín Argüelles (1776–1844), a former bishop's secretary estranged from the Church who had composed the preface to the 1812 Cádiz Constitution, and Manuel José Quintana (1772–1857), a successful poet, playwright, and enlightened essayist, were released – Argüelles on Majorca, Quintana at Pamplona – and free to rejoin the revolution. Spanish political exiles expelled in 1814 or who had fled abroad returned *en masse*, often in a state of great excitement.

Such men were simultaneously the symbols of “revolution” and “Enlightenment” in Spain. Argüelles had been one of the main promoters of Beccaria's egalitarian legal theories in the Spanish-speaking world and a key inspiration behind moves to abolish judicial torture, which had finally succeeded with a decree of the Cortes of 22 April 1811. Argüelles was also a leading opponent of the slave trade.¹⁶ Likewise released in March 1820 were all the South American revolutionaries held in Spanish jails, such as the veteran enlightener Antonio Nariño (1764–1824) of New Granada (Colombia), an aristocratic admirer of Franklin and eager zealot for the American and French revolutions who as early as 1794 had disseminated in his own Spanish translation the 1789 French “Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen” in Peru as well as New Granada.¹⁷

An uneasy alliance of moderate and radical Enlightenment ideologues, the revolution's vanguard was highly precarious politically, intellectually, and religiously. The Spanish Revolution of 1820–3 faced a massive external obstacle to its success – the Holy Alliance, backed by a deeply reactionary British government – as well as two major internal obstacles, one of which was the continuing and formidable resistance in many parts of Spain of the reactionary right, including the nobility, a large part of the ecclesiastical establishment and the Inquisition, and much of the populace. The other obstacle within Spain was the more recent split, evident since the years 1810–14, between pro-revolution “moderates,” including the liberal wing of the Catholic Church in Spain, and Spain's openly anticlerical radicals. The moderates had the great advantage of enjoying the firm and consistent support of the primate of the Spanish Church since 1799, the Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo, Don Luis de Borbón (1777–1823), the “cardinal of the liberals.” On all three levels, among radicals, reactionaries, and moderates alike, the essential battle – and this requires special emphasis – was envisaged as a clash of fundamental principles, as a struggle between Enlightenment “philosophy” and religion – or, in the moderates' case, as a struggle over how to reconcile them.

A particular problem, in the view of the revolutionary vanguard, was the country's lack of exposure hitherto to such political writers as Rousseau, Paine, Price, Priestley, Helvétius, d'Holbach, Filangieri, Condorcet, Constant, and Bentham, a result of their being banned by the Inquisition owing to the conspicuously irreligious and anti-ecclesiastical elements present in much of their writing. Very few texts propagating the new political consciousness of the late Enlightenment enjoyed much circulation in Spanish prior to 1820.¹⁸ Among its first actions, the reinstated Cortes ordered courses in political science introduced in the Spanish universities. A leading *josefino* resident in France since 1814, and supporter of revolutionary change in Spain, Juan Antonio Llorente (1756–1823) – former secretary of the Inquisition in the years 1789–91 and recent author of the first full-scale critical history of (and modern assault on) the Inquisition, the *Histoire critique de l'Inquisition espagnole* (Paris, 1817) – commented on this Spanish advent of political science in Marc-Antoine Jullien's *Revue Encyclopédique* (Paris).¹⁹ The Spanish Revolution directed the universities to use Benjamin Constant's *Cours de Politique constitutionnelle* (1818–20), recently published at Paris, to modernize and enlighten Spain's political consciousness. Translated by Marcial Antonio López, Constant's course appeared in three volumes, at Madrid

in 1820, under the title *Curso de política constitucional*, and again, in the same translation, but in two volumes, at Bordeaux in 1823.²⁰ Less radical than in the 1790s, and now no revolutionary, the Constant of 1820 still energetically promoted reform, constitutionalism, freedom of the press, and the abolition of slavery.

The second Spanish Revolution began auspiciously, but before long the old rift between moderates and radicals reopened, with the former seeking to conciliate and palliate the Church and modify the unicameral Cádiz constitution by introducing a second, upper chamber and by safeguarding royalty and the royal veto as well as urging a continued political role for the Church and nobility.²¹ Joseph Blanco White (born José María Blanco Crespo) (1775–1841), Spain's most eminent "moderate" exile still abroad, charged the 1812 constitution's framers with being doctrinaire, naive admirers of French radical ideas and, even more deplorably, of Thomas Paine, who had posthumously emerged since 1811 as Spanish America's principal democratic guide. Resuming contact with his old ally, Quintana, from England, Blanco White tried to dissuade him and his colleagues from restoring the 1812 Constitution with its democratic features unaltered. He implored the revolution's leaders to dilute the Cádiz Constitution's radicalism, meaning its Franco-American republican tendency, and to opt for British-style "mixed monarchy," assuredly the correct path. Sceptical about the revived revolution's prospects, he was soon proved right with respect to the insufficiency of popular support. The *constitucionales* and enlighteners of 1820–3, he correctly predicted, would before long again be overwhelmed by "superstition" and ignorance mobilized by the Church.²² Popular deference to the clergy was the radical revolutionaries' greatest foe. In parts of Spain, civil war erupted within the first few months, with Aragon, the Basque provinces, Navarre, and Catalonia emerging as particular centres of loyalist *absolutista* resistance.

With the Cortes's Edict of Freedom of the Press in place, and the Inquisition formally dismantled, publishers, printers, and booksellers, intoxicated with the supposed sudden advent of press freedom, and freedom to import books into the Spanish-speaking world, set to work with energy to generate a wave of publications addressing political, social, moral, and religious issues in a critical, philosophical manner that had not been permitted before 1811 and had been again forbidden between 1814 and 1820. A considerable degree of evasion and subterfuge remained necessary, however, in view of the continuing episcopal censorship machinery, which was still in place. Hence, many of the formerly clandestine – and

soon again, from 1823, *definitely* clandestine – works published with an eye to the Spanish market during the years 1820–3 were published abroad rather than in Spain itself, and all these publications still often concealed the names of the Spanish translators and the distributing booksellers (*libreros*) in Spain. In Madrid, Paris, and London especially, translations banned under Fernando's rule poured out in editions intended for diffusion throughout Spain and the Spanish-speaking world.

Part of this wave carried what in other countries would be considered mainstream political thought. A five-volume translation of Montesquieu's *L'esprit de loix*, which had been placed on the papal *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1751, appeared in Spanish, translated by D. Juan López de Peñalver, at Madrid, in 1820; this was followed by a three-volume edition that concealed the translator's name as Don M.V.M., Licenciado, published in three successive volumes between 1820 and 1823, in Madrid, Paris, and London.²³ In 1821, in a tenacious last stand against "philosophy," the not yet fully abolished Inquisition, entrenched where *absolutistas* prevailed, renewed its general "ban" on Montesquieu in Spanish.²⁴ Machiavelli's *El Príncipe* appeared in Spanish at Madrid, in 1821, as did John Locke's *Tratado del gobierno civil*.²⁵ Beccaria's classic text of 1764, translated by Juan Ribera as the *Tratado de los delitos y de las penas*, was published in successive editions at Madrid in 1820 and 1821 by the firm Fermín Villalpando, one of Spain's major presses active in Madrid between 1794 and 1830, which, precisely during the Trienio, also published Spanish versions of works by Bentham and Jean-Baptiste Say. Beccaria's *Tratado* appeared again in a new translation of 1822, and was also issued for the Spanish American market, from Philadelphia, in 1823.

Rousseau's *Contrat social* had first appeared in Spanish, translated by the "Spanish Brissotin," José Marchena y Ruiz de Cueto (1768–1821), considerably earlier. But *Émile*, *Julie*, and other key Rousseau texts appeared for the first time only during the Trienio, including the discourse on inequality published in Spanish under the title *Discurso sobre el origen y los fundamentos de la desigualdad de condiciones entre los hombres, puesto en castellano por M.*, at Madrid, in 1822.²⁶ In all, no fewer than eighteen Spanish-language editions of Rousseau's principal works, mostly in translations by Marchena, were supplied to the Spanish reading public during the Trienio.²⁷

If Rousseau was a radical republican in some respects but not in others, only a few of the major political thinkers of the Enlightenment could be classified as fully "radical," but among these were certainly Bentham and the great Italian theorist Gaetano Filangieri, whose work was firmly

prohibited by the Spanish Inquisition in the late eighteenth century, as also for many years after 1823, but who remained, underground and behind the counter, arguably the most widely influential of all the radical political and constitutional thinkers in Spain and Spanish America. A Spanish translation of his great work rendered by D. Jaime Rubio had appeared, in ten volumes, under the title *Ciencia de la Legislación*, at Madrid in 1813, but been repressed after 1814, with many copies seized.²⁸ A second edition, newly translated by D. Juan Ribera, was published at Madrid in six volumes in 1821–2. A third edition, the second of Rubio’s rendering, was published again in ten volumes – probably just after the ending of freedom of the press in Spain – this time at Bordeaux in 1823.²⁹

In 1822 appeared Bentham’s *Tratado de legislación civil y penal*, translated by the distinguished Aragonese jurist and Salamanca professor, Ramón de Salas y Cortes (1753–1837),³⁰ who together with José Joaquín de Mora was one of the strongest promoters of Bentham’s soon imposing reputation in Spain. Despite his vigorous promotion of Bentham’s work in Spanish, Salas – a central figure in our story – was in many respects more of a disciple of Constant and especially Destutt de Tracy, whose commentary on Montesquieu (a favourite text also of Jefferson’s) criticized Montesquieu for being too favourable to “mixed government” and the British system. Salas’s translation of Destutt appeared in Spanish in one edition bound together with the Spanish translation of Montesquieu’s *l’esprit des lois*, and in another, at Madrid, on its own as Destutt de Tracy, *Comentario sobre el Espíritu de las Leyes*, traducido por Ramón de Salas y Cortés (1821).³¹

III. The Clandestine Literature Attacking Religion

Among the foremost dilemmas faced by the Spanish Revolution of 1820–3 – and the most divisive – was that clandestine philosophical literature was spreading subversive attitudes towards religion and the Church. Initially it was an enormous boost to the revolution that leading “liberal” churchmen rallied to the cause of the restored constitution. In his capacity as Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo and a leading figure in the revolutionary *junta*, Don Luis de Borbón had promptly issued a printed circular to his clergy, dated 15 March 1820, ordering them to instruct their flocks to support the restored 1812 constitution and obey the revolutionary *junta* and restored Cortes, and to make it clear to the faithful that the true Catholic can embrace toleration and the

liberal and enlightened principles and values embodied in the constitution. Two days later, on 24 March, Borbón instructed all the curates and ecclesiastics of his archbishopric to undergo public ceremonies in which they were to swear their allegiance on the Gospel to the restored constitution.³² The problem with Don Luis de Borbón's stance was that he simultaneously instructed his clergy that "toleration" and the principle of "freedom of the press" – the latter enacted by the revolutionary *junta*'s provisional Consultativa de Gobierno on 11 March 1820 – were allowable but were in no way to be confused with *libertinaje* (libertinage) and irreligion; and that freedom of the press was permissible and Christian as long as it remained free of "los sarcasmos y de las injurias" levelled by libertines and the irreligious at Church, clergy and Christian doctrine alike.³³ On 29 April the Cardinal-Archbishop issued an edict seeking to regulate book censorship and the prohibition of texts considered "contrary to religion".³⁴

This position was bound to generate serious rifts in the 1820–3 revolution, since "freedom of the press" was not a principle that had been categorically asserted by the Cádiz Cortes. Nor did it have much support among the Spanish clergy; on the contrary, it stepped into a deep residue of outright opposition.³⁵ Although irreligious, anticlerical, and anti-Inquisition texts had circulated relatively freely in much of Spain during the years 1808 to 1814, a closer and clearer connection between irreligion and revolutionary republicanism became evident during the Trienio, doubtless in response to the repression of 1814–20, which had powerfully reinforced the linkage of royal absolutism with religious repression.³⁶ As one writer put it, in Spain the year 1820 was "el año de partida para la ideología anticlerical revolucionaria o moderna."³⁷ The result was a conundrum at the heart of the Revolution of 1820–3, one that would become manifest with the readoption of the Cádiz Constitution's special provisions to prevent the printing of anything detrimental to Church and religion, the *Junta Suprema de Censura* of 1813, provisions voted in again by the Cortes after it convened in June 1820. These sought precisely to balance freedom of the press against the need to prevent ironic, sarcastic, or insulting criticism of Church, clergy, and religious doctrine.³⁸

But what actually was banned and what was permitted? When the Spanish Inquisition was suppressed for the second time, in 1813, having been abolished first by Napoleon in 1808, the Cortes had agreed that "escritos prohibidos, o que sean contrarios a la religion" would remain prohibited in Spain and its empire; thus it established *Tribunales protectores*

de la Fe (Tribunals to protect the Faith) and assigned to them the task of drawing up a detailed list of prohibited publications. However, no such list ever appeared. Instead, the bishops and *tribunales* simply reiterated that all the books “que están prohibidos por el Santo Oficio, subsisten prohibidos.”³⁹ Censorship then tightened markedly after 1814. Spain’s Inquisitor-General between 1814 and 1818, the Bishop of Almería, Don Francisco Mier y Campillo, had a supplementary list compiled to bring the *Índice último de los libros prohibidos* of 1805 up to date.⁴⁰ When on 9 March 1820 the Spanish Inquisition was abolished for the third time, the *absolutista* bishops again issued pastoral circulars affirming that while the Inquisition itself was now in abeyance, the task of suppressing condemned writings had devolved upon the episcopate. On 14 April 1821 the Cortes confirmed that many books “prohibidos o contrarios a la Religión” were being sold in Spain publicly and petitioned the governing council to draw up a fresh list of prohibited books, in accordance with the law of 22 February 1813.⁴¹

The influx of Spanish translations of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Filangieri, Bentham, and other modern political thinkers banned by the Spanish Inquisition was a key phenomenon in itself. That surge also displayed on various levels inherent links with the underground literature assaulting religious authority and the Church. This is evident from the roles and life histories of the revolution’s three principal translators of political thought: Salas, Mora, and Marchena. Salas had been denounced to the Inquisition in January 1792 and, on being found guilty of divulging and translating works prejudicial to religion, had been stripped of his chair at Salamanca; then on 25 September 1796 he had been sentenced to a year’s imprisonment in a monastery. Not surprisingly, for Ramón de Salas, freedom of the press was “la más importante de todas la libertades.” In 1808 he had joined King Joseph and the *afrancesados* and become Joseph’s prefect of Guadalajara and later of Toledo. With the collapse of Joseph’s regime, he had fled to France, only to return in 1820, enter the Cortes as an elected member, and play a notable part in the new revolution. He took up the task of providing a standard course in constitutional thought for Spain’s schools; this was published under the title *Lecciones de Derecho público constitucional para las escuelas de España* (Madrid, 1821).

A still more striking illustration of the linkage of revolutionary politics with – in this case – an openly expressed atheistic tendency, is the life story of Marchena. A student and associate of Salas at Salamanca, by 1791 Marchena had read widely in the irreligious texts and imbibed a “razonable dosis de espíritu filosófico” (reasonable dose of *esprit*

philosophique).⁴² In difficulties with the Inquisition, he fled to France, where in August 1792 he emerged as an editor of the *Gaceta de la Libertad y de la Igualdad* and as one of a group of Spanish exiles introducing Brissotin revolutionary propaganda clandestinely into Spain. During 1792–93, following the Montagnard *coup d'état* of June 1793, being a political ally of Brissot, he was imprisoned by the Robespierre regime, being released only after Thermidor. Marchena referred to the Brissotins as the “mártires de la libertad.” His *Essai de théologie* (1797) was denounced by opponents, French and Spanish, as “atheistic.” He returned to Spain with King Joseph in 1808 and held various posts in his administration, with the inevitable consequence that during the years 1814–20 he was again forced into exile, in Perpignan, Nîmes, and Montpellier.

During these years, Marchena translated a number of key French works into Spanish, publishing them in southern France presumably for clandestine introduction into Spain. These included his version of Rousseau’s *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, originally published in Spanish in 1814; *Émile*, which had first appeared at Bordeaux, in 1817; and Montesquieu’s *Lettres persanes* of 1818. In 1820 he returned to Spain, where he threw himself into political debate in Seville and became notorious as a leading anticlerical urging strict subordination of the clergy to the state. His Spanish renderings of Rousseau and Montesquieu were then promptly reissued in Spain and France, under the titles *Contrato Social* (Madrid, 1820); *Emilio, ó de la educación* traducido por J. Marchena (Madrid, 2 vols, 1821); *Julia o la nueva Héloïsa*, which came out in 1821 in separate editions at Bordeaux and Toulouse and then reappeared at Madrid; and the *Cartas persanas* escritas en francés por Montesquieu puesto en castellano por D. J. Marchena, nueva edicion (2 vols, Cadiz, 1821).⁴³ Another major work translated by Marchena, one that combined political thought with an outright attack on religion and the clergy, was Volney’s *Ruines*, among the most celebrated radical works of the 1790s, which appeared under the title *Meditaciones sobre la Ruinas* in “Londres” in 1818 and then reappeared at Bordeaux in 1822.

These details concerning the influx of political thought – in the last example directly linked to an outright attack on revealed religion and the supernatural – help place in context the wave of more violently and uncompromisingly clandestine, anti-religious, and anti-ecclesiastical literature. It is noticeable that this surge of clandestine literature was dominated by the works of d’Holbach, including those of his texts that drew, largely or more residually, on elements originating in pre-1760 clandestine manuscripts and authors, in other words texts circulating

in French in France and some other parts of Europe in printed versions since the 1760s at the latest. Among these latter were *La religion natural del buen cura Meslier* (also called *El buen sentido*), a copy of which was seized by the authorities in Algeciras in 1825.⁴⁴ A second version, titled *El buen-sentido fundado en la naturaleza por un cura despreocupado*, carried the subtitle “Tradúcelo y lo dedica a la Ilustración de sus compatriotas, el ciudadano S.L.M.M.J (‘Lisboa’ [Madrid?], Imp. Libertad, 1821”); this text was reissued in additional 1821 editions in “Londres” [Madrid?] and Bordeaux.⁴⁵

D’Holbach had clandestinely published his *Le Bons-Sens, ou Idées naturelles opposés aux idées surnaturelles* in 1772.⁴⁶ Subsequent editions often attributed the text to the deeply subversive Jean Meslier (1664–1729), whose later notorious *Testament* had been left unpublished at his death in 1729 and whom Voltaire, in his clandestinely published *Extrait des sentiments de Jean Meslier* (1762), had purported to summarize while actually defusing his social radicalism and subverting his vehement atheism so that he ended up sounding like a providential deist. Later anonymous editions of d’Holbach’s text often attributed the work to the curé Meslier – an example is the Spanish version circulating during the Trienio – though the reason for this is not altogether clear.⁴⁷ What is clear is that the text was a form of critical retaliation against Voltaire as well as religion and the Church, as was its customary post-1772 attribution to Meslier.⁴⁸

Even more directly inspired by and drawing on sources from the past was *El Cristianismo a descubierto, ó examen de los principios y efectos de la religión Cristiana*. Escrito en Francés por Boulanger y traducido al castellano por S.D.V. (“Londres” en la emprenta de Davidson, 1821).⁴⁹ This was the Spanish version of the *L’Antiquité dévoilée par ses usages*, which was genuinely based on and was already early on attributed to Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger (1722–1759), the republican friend of Diderot, Helvétius, and d’Holbach, a writer who exerted a profound influence on d’Holbach. The first clandestine French edition of this work, with a preface dated 4 May 1758, appeared at Geneva in 1761 (not 1766, as I, following Pecharroman and others, mistakenly stated in 2006).⁵⁰ Boulanger is notable for combining obvious republican tendencies with a vehement attack on organized religion.⁵¹ D’Holbach’s *Christianity Unveiled*, first published in English in 1795, appeared in Spanish only in 1821. Originally rendered from French under the title *El Cristianismo a descubierto*, supposedly in “Londres” (Madrid?) (1821), it reappeared in a second version, again supposedly in “London,” under the more literal title *El Cristianismo desvelado*.⁵²

Of the major works authored principally by d'Holbach himself, the *Système de la nature* (1770), appeared under the title *Sistema de la naturaleza. Los leyes del mundo físico y del mundo moral* in editions published at Paris (1822) and Gerona (1823).⁵³ The full Spanish version of *La Morale Universelle ou les Devoirs de l'homme fondés sur la nature* (Amsterdam, 1776) appeared in 1820, at Madrid, under the title *La moral universal, o los deberes del hombre fundados en su naturaleza*, translated by Don Manuel Díaz Moreno, secretary of Madrid's famous Compañía de los Cinco Gremios, a corporation founded in 1667 to link the monopolies and privileges of the jewellers, silk dealers, haberdashers, clothiers, and *drogueros*; during 1821 there were two follow-up editions. Still more widely diffused was an abbreviated version of this work by the "Barón de Olbach" titled *Elementos de la moral universal, o Catecismo de la naturaleza* (Madrid, 1820), which in later versions was called *Principios de moral universal, o Manuel de los deberes del hombre fundados en su naturaleza* "traducido por" D.M.L.G., purportedly published in Valladolid.⁵⁴ In a notable incident during the post-1823 repression, following the reimposition of the Inquisition, a certain forty-six-year-old widower, D. Florencio de Imaz, a native of the Basque region in Spain, had among the confiscated forbidden books found in his possession a copy of the *Elementos*. Imaz had recently been expelled from Mexico, where he had been a royal financial official at Veracruz, by the revolutionaries there. The officer handling his case in Madrid commented that the irreligion permeating such texts was strictly forbidden, pointing to "el ansía con que los compraban los constitucionales prueba que abunda en sus ideas" (the eagerness with which the *constitucionales* buy [such works], proof that it abounds in their ideas).⁵⁵

Other works by d'Holbach prepared for the Spanish market during the Trienio were the *Contagion sacrée, ou Histoire naturelle de la superstition* ("Londres" [Amsterdam], 1767), which appeared as *El contagion sagrado, ó Historio natural de la supersitición* (2 vols, Paris, Rodrique, 1822), and the *Lettres à Eugénie ou préservatif contre les préjugés* (1768), which first appeared in 1810 in Paris as *Cartas a Eugenia* por M. Freret and then again at Madrid in 1823.⁵⁶ The *Historia crítica de Jesús Christo, o Análisis razonado de los evangelios*, "traducido del francés por P.F. de T. ex-jesuita," appeared supposedly at "Londres" in two volumes in 1822.⁵⁷ An item directly linking this literature with one of the main figures of the revolution was d'Holbach's *Essai sur les préjugés, ou de l'influence des opinions sur les moeurs e sur le Bonheur des hommes, ouvrage contenant l'apologie d la philosophie par Mr. D.M.* (1769), which appeared under the title *Ensayo sobre las preocupaciones, escrito en francés por el Baron de Holbach, y traducido con correcciones y adiciones por José Joaquín de Mora* (Madrid, 1823).⁵⁸

José Joaquín de Mora (1783–1864), a writer, educator, and political activist from Cádiz, had at an early age become a professor of philosophy at Granada. Captured while fighting the French in 1809, he had been interned in France until 1814 and remained there subsequently, married to a French woman, until 1820. In 1820–3 he resumed his political activities in Madrid and became editor of *El Constitucional*, one of the main pro-revolution papers. With the French invasion of 1823 and the collapse of the revolution, he migrated to London, where he edited one of the main Spanish *émigré* papers, the *Correo Literario y Político de Londres* (1823–6), then to Buenos Aires (1826–7) and Chile (1828–31). Before long Mora was one of the principal intellectual bridges to be found anywhere between the constitutional movements in Europe and Spanish America. After Chile, he moved on for a three-year spell in Peru, a country from which he was expelled. He moved on to Bolivia (1834–7), where he became a professor of literature in La Paz. After several more years of wandering, he returned to Spain in 1843.

The most prominent anti-religious items flooding in during the Trienio in Spain – items the authorities were anxious to suppress after the restoration of the Inquisition in 1823–4 – were the works of d’Holbach.⁵⁹ But of course there were numerous others. The convoluted anticlerical novel *The Monk* (1796), by Matthew G. Lewis, was published under the title *El graile ó historia del padre Ambrosio y la bella Antonia* at Madrid in 1822.⁶⁰ Diderot’s *La Religieuse*, which had first been published with the blessing of the *Directoire*, in French, in 1796, which had reappeared numerous times in French, and which had been translated into English, German, and Italian by 1800, was by any reckoning a ferocious attack on what it presented as the sadism, narrowness, fanaticism, and ignorance of the life of the cloister. It appeared for the first time in a Spanish version at Paris in 1821. Although Diderot was never in fact elected to the Académie Française, and could not have been owing to the disapproval of the ecclesiastical authorities, this Spanish version was published under the title *La religiosa*, escrita en francés por M. Diderot, de la Academia Francesa. Traducida libremente al español por Don M.V.M., Licenciado.⁶¹

IV. Tom Paine and the Spanish-Speaking World

The early-nineteenth-century Spanish renderings of Thomas Paine’s writings seem to have been directed specifically at the Spanish American milieu, rather than Spain, presumably owing to their more explicitly republican character combined with Paine’s particular relevance for those seeking independence from imperial powers. When in 1821

Vicente Rocafuerte republished Paine's *Common Sense* in Spanish, at Philadelphia, supplying a prologue that loudly insisted that the American Revolution and especially Paine must be the principal guide for the Enlightenment as a political movement seeking toleration, freedom of expression, and liberty in Spanish America, he made no mention whatever of the renewed Spanish Revolution in progress at that moment.⁶² This notable publication capped a process of intellectual alienation from Spain (as well as from *Robespierrisme*, which Rocafuerte loathed, and from Napoleon) that had been going on for a decade.

Manuel García de Sena (1780–1816), a Venezuelan living in Philadelphia since 1803, had rendered into Spanish numerous extracts of Thomas Paine together with the American Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the state constitutions of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The quest to forge a broader and more coherent Spanish American revolutionary consciousness by teaching the American Revolution and its constitutional outcome was reinforced further, in London, by a separate Spanish rendering of Paine's *Common Sense* that appeared in 1811, the work of the Peruvian Manuel José de Arrunátegui. García de Sena and Arrunátegui hoped to bring the entire New World, North and South, to converge in terms of republican attitudes and practices.⁶³ García de Sena fully embraced Paine's idea that the American Revolution represented a giant step forward in man's understanding of government and politics and that the French Revolution had carried further the American Revolution's essential principles.⁶⁴

Five thousand copies of the Paine compilation, *La Independencia de la Costa Firme justificado por Thomas Paine treinta años ha* (The Independence of the Mainland justified by Thomas Paine Thirty Years Ago) (Philadelphia, 1811), which called for Spanish American independence from Spain and presented the turmoil gripping Spanish America as part of the wider global struggle of "liberty" against "oppression," reached Venezuela, with some seeping through to New Granada and New Spain (Mexico), besides Cuba and Puerto Rico. This was followed by García de Sena's rendering of John McCulloch's *A Concise History of the United States until 1807* (Philadelphia, 1812). Both works attracted attention in key Spanish American papers such as the *Gazeta de Caracas* (January 1812),⁶⁵ further entrenching Paine's name and ideas in the Ibero-American consciousness and before long rendering Paine the leading publicist evoking American solidarity with the Spanish American revolutions and Europe's "General Revolution." Among those contributing to discussion

of Paine's ideas in the *Gazeta* was a leading Caracas republican, the journalist Juan Germán Roscio (1763–1821). In this way, Paine's arguments for republicanism and independence, rather than the rigorous constitutional monarchism of the 1812 Cádiz Constitution, began to penetrate.⁶⁶

Until 1821, the "Tom Paine" propagated by elements of the revolutionary leadership in Spanish America was somewhat fragmentary, consisting only of *Common Sense* plus short extracts from other writings. *The Rights of Man* failed to appear in Spanish until an abbreviated version was brought out by Matthew Carey, in Philadelphia, in 1821.⁶⁷ Over several months in 1813, the ephemeral Chilean republican paper *Semanario Republicano de Chile* regularly cited Paine's republican views and pro-independence views while invoking the need for Spanish American "Washingtones." This noteworthy paper was edited by the Guatemalan Antonio José Irisarri (1786–1868), a central figure in the Chilean revolution of 1810 and commander of the Santiago National Guard. After completing his education in Europe, Irisarri had consistently figured among those Spanish American radicals claiming that republics pursue the happiness of peoples better than kings and denying that monarchy was instituted by God.⁶⁸ Reviling royalists, he rebuked fellow Spanish Americans for lamenting Napoleon's occupation of Spain as a vast calamity when they should have welcomed it as an opportunity to jettison royalty and seek independence. Deplorably, droves of ignorant loyalist Spanish Americans continued to "weep over the misfortune of Fernando."⁶⁹ Irisarri, though, also chided "moderates" of the Spanish reform party, like Joseph Blanco White, for demanding only modest changes and for obstinately championing Spain's imperial claims over Spanish America.⁷⁰

Irisarri fully agreed with Blanco White, though, that "lack of enlightenment of the popular masses," exploited by the baseness of ambitious individuals, had "always been the reef on which republics perish."⁷¹ Nothing illustrated this more clearly than the French Revolution. "Thus I believe that the firmest support of republics is Enlightenment and virtue; and I dread with pain in my soul that that people in which these qualities are lacking, cannot be republican," but only become more unhappy and revert to tyranny.⁷² Freedom of the press itself will be "prejudicial instead of beneficial to peoples if it does not serve to purify truth and present it to men cleansed of all error, passion and interest." Enlightenment alone can yield a well-considered coherent outcome, capable of stabilizing societies, benefiting the whole, and bringing peace under a constitution like that of the United States.⁷³

Events soon taught supporters of the Spanish Revolution of 1820–3 that their optimism of early 1820 was misplaced. On balance, Counter-Enlightenment opposition to the Spanish Trienio of 1820–3 did indeed mobilize greater popular support than did the revolution. In the Spanish conservative view, “la filosofía con su soberbia razón no ha hecho sino destruir: proscribió la virtud y canonizó los crimines; reinó por un instante: y quien contara los lamentos que ha causado este reinado impío? No podía ser otra cosa, por que sin Dios no hay más que injusticia, hipocresía y mentira entre los hombres” (philosophy and its proud reason has done nothing but destroy: it proscribed virtue and canonized crimes; it reigned for an instant: and who would count the laments that this impious reign has caused?).⁷⁴ For those whom Christianity was the source of all legitimate power, authority, and morality, eradicating Enlightenment philosophy in its irreligious, radical guise was a matter of society’s life and death and a vital objective of the Spanish Church and people. Starting in 1821, there were populist risings against the revolution in the cities and countryside of many parts of Spain well beyond Navarre and Aragon. In 1823, in contrast to 1808, most of the populace supported the French invasion and the repression that followed.

In April 1823, 100,000 French troops poured across the Pyrenees. The Spanish army divided while the Church called on the devout not to resist Louis XVIII’s “holy” invasion or in any way support the “godless” *constitucionales*. Efforts to mobilize something like the 1808 anti-French fury in reverse, behind the revolution, the Enlightenment, and the 1812 Constitution, soon came to nothing. There was simply not enough support. The common people, lamented Quintana, “obedient and submissive” by long habit, showed little ardour for the constitution and none whatever for enlightened values. The people preferred the royalist cry: “Absolute King and the Inquisition! Death to the *Liberales!*”⁷⁵ Rioting against the *constitucionales* erupted in many places. Among the victims was one of the most notable intellectual leaders of the 1808–12 revolution, Bartolomé José Gallardo (1776–1852), a peasant’s son trained in philosophy at Salamanca, a passionate bibliophile avid for French books, and author of the *Diccionario Critico-Burlesco* (1811), the most anticlerical Spanish text of the age.⁷⁶ In 1814, Gallardo had fled via Lisbon to London, then remained in England until 1820, when he returned to Spain. In 1823, during popular rioting in support of the king, at Seville, a mob destroyed Gallardo’s literary manuscripts, thousands of pages of his life’s work, including his draft history of the Spanish theatre.

With the reactionary powers, the priesthood, and the nobles behind him, and in the New World the United States more concerned to exploit Spain's difficulties and encourage the independence movements than aid the Spanish constitutionalists, Fernando triumphed resoundingly for a second time, resuming all his former implacable rejectionism of popular sovereignty, secularism, Enlightenment, and revolution. The bishops were jubilant. The Inquisition was restored. All the books banned until 1820 were again prohibited. General Riego was publicly hanged, in Madrid, on 7 November 1823. Louis XVIII's crushing of the Spanish Revolution was endorsed by the European powers, as was its aftermath – a ferocious crackdown on *constitucionales* and all adversaries of royal and church authority.

NOTES

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