

ADDRESS DELIVERED

by

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AT THE SPANISH EMBASSY IN THE UNITED STATES

in the

Edward L. Bernays Foundation Lectures  
"Europe's Contribution to American Civilization"

at

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

on

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1963

Spain's Contribution to American Civilization

A blithe spirit seems to loom over the relations between America and Europe, preventing them from establishing a healthy, fair and dispassionate communication. The emotional charge that prevails in their contacts is also transmitted to those who observe them; who - keeping in mind that classic proverb "sine ira studio" - follow its advice to study but do not seem capable of spelling away their ire.

This should not surprise us, however, since it is after all a family relation in which, therefore, there is no indifference. On the contrary, everything vibrates with passion.

The relation between Europe and America may be characterized as that of father and son. It is evident indeed that the American civilization is a continuation of something that was transplanted from Europe. This is especially true in the case of North America where almost nothing remained of the cultural and racial elements of the pre-Colombian era, while in Latin America it can be said that there was, to a certain point, a blending of cultures. Indeed, Spaniards as well as Portuguese took care of the conservation of the Indian races and cultures; of their languages and customs.

However, although the European-American relation might be considered as that of father to son, this quality does not make it any easier or smoother, nor does it help us - especially for the purpose of this lecture - to have a clearer and more intelligible image of it.

American history is so recent, so rational and crystal clear - after all it started during the Enlightenment - that it is awkward to insinuate that it contains certain non-intelligible and irrational elements.

The truth, however, the simple truth, forces us to admit that America's past cannot be understood without the use of myths, which have always preceded and prepared history.

Now, which is the myth of this father to son relationship that we have just established between Europe and America?

Ancient mythology teaches us that there is only a cruel biological alternative: either the father annuls the son or vice versa, the son destroys the father. In the myth of Cronus, indeed we can see that the father literally devours his son and not without some reason since the only one who escaped his sad lot - Zeus - only returned to de-throne his parent.

The old myth symbolizes the profound truth that every new young generation tends to assert itself at the cost of the previous one, that of its parents. And this happens in an automatic and fatal way, against their own will, as is depicted in Oedipus' case. In this myth we find the opposite situation, which can be applied to the American case: the son who rebels against the father fighting him if necessary. The anthropologist Frazer, has studied this phenomenon, that can be found even at the highest cultural levels.

The English writer, D. H. Lawrence, has dramatized the relations between the Old and the New World in the following words: "For the American it is necessary to destroy. His destiny pushes him to destroy all of the white soul, the conscience of the white man". If this makes any sense, it is to mean that in order to build her own civilization, America has to break away from Europe.

In view of these implications of the question - that almost belong to the subconscious world - it is understandable that there should be some difficulties between Americans and Europeans to establish a normal and harmonious relationship. Sometimes there is an excess of admiration, almost flattery; at other times, on the contrary, there is contempt, almost offense. However, what generally happens is that Europeans tend to consider Americans less mature, while Americans consider Europeans decadent and their culture old-fashioned (Jefferson, Emerson, et cetera).

Thus it is for both a painful or a happy surprise to discover suddenly that the one is not so decadent and the other not so immature.

As young America, however, has consolidated and asserted herself to the point of becoming the foremost World power, it has of course been natural for Europeans to shed their prejudices and reserves. In this sense, it is curious to note how the view of the British themselves - Thomas Hardy, Dickens, and even those of some Americans like Henry James and T. S. Elliot - contrast with the confidence that some continental Europeans - such as Goethe, Hegel, Tocqueville and the Count of Aranda - had in America's future. Every European country now brandishes her own vindications, claiming certain American glories and virtues.

Speaking candidly, I would say that the different European nations which participated in the development of American civilization seem to be arranged in a kind of hierarchical order. First of all, of course, there is Great Britain; followed by other Northern peoples - a vague but practical denomination that includes the Scandinavians, Irish, Germans, and certain of the Slavs - and then, finally, the Latins. Let us recall, to illustrate this point, Parkman's characteristic assertion that the only heritage left from the Spanish and

French colonization was a lack of civil liberties, and ecclesiastical rule. But the French at least are recognized for having participated in your independence; while the Spanish, who originated the lineage of a whole continent, only constituted for America, in the Caribbean or south of the Rio Grande, a persistent presence of disconcerting effect, which only produced worries, at the most. Nothing else is granted to us.

That is why this lecture will necessarily tend to be a "pro domo apologia" - a vindication of our role in America.

I will begin by quoting the words of one of your fellow-countrymen on this matter. "Too many Americans think that America was discovered in 1620 when the Pilgrims came to my own State, and they forget the tremendous adventure of the Sixteenth Century and the early Seventeenth Century in the Southern and Southwest United States."

I think it was convenient to shelter myself under the authority of an illustrious Bostonian, President Kennedy, who pronounced these words, that have the merit of putting the question of the Spanish contribution to America in its own terms, and not basing it principally on emigration currents, which would not apply very appropriately to our case. What must be underlined in the case of the Spaniards are, above all, two things: to begin with, that we were the first to discover and even colonize a good part of the present day territory of your nation; and secondly, that we occupied more than half of it for a long period of time.

In regard to the first point - Spanish priority in American history - it has been minimized in different ways. On the one hand, it is said that the Spaniards were preceded by the Scandinavian, followers of Eric the Red. On the other hand, they say that it was not a Spaniard but a Genovese, Columbus, who was to blame for the discovery.

Finally, it is concluded, if it had not been for the Spaniards, the discovery of America would have taken place anyhow, sooner or later, under the auspices of another country.

I will not spend time on the first assertion, since we all know the difference between a mere physical happening - devoid of intentional drive, without any real impact or effect- and an actual historical event. In regard to the second, it is convenient to make the following points clear - points which can also be applied to the third argument.

As is generally known, America was discovered by mistake - and never a better opportunity to say "felix culpa" - it was the consequence of a mistaken conception of the size of the world, which was thought to be smaller, and the belief that the Atlantic connected both shores of Asia. Columbus was one of the navigators who surmised that the earth was round - a fact generally admitted in his time, and thought, therefore, that it was possible to reach the Indies through the Atlantic. His merit, however, lay not in his idea but in his perseverance in putting it into practice. In the same way, the merit of the Catholic Kings lay in taking the risks of this decision, unlike other European courts.

In order to understand this latter aspect, it is necessary to take into account certain preceding facts. In the first place, in the case of Spain, to the general attraction that the East - the almost legendary kingdoms of Cipango and Cathay - exerted over all Europe, was added the specific attraction that the so-called "Lost Islands" held for the Spanish people.

The ancient Platonic myth of the Atlantide, which derived new strength from the writings of the Roman, Seneca, who was born in Spain, worked with practical and immediate effects in the Iberian

Peninsula, which looks straight into the Atlantic like the stern of the European Continent. The Spanish and Portuguese long before had occupied the Canary Islands and Madera, and we now know that the Spaniards Pedro Velasco and Alonso Sanchez personally assured Columbus that they had seen, on some of their navigations deep into the Atlantic certain distant islands or shores.

Also, the Spaniards were great activists; dynamic, full of a missionary spirit of universal scope. They had been forced, by the historical circumstance of the Mohammedan invasion, to recover their territory in a war that lasted seven centuries. And this long conflict had predisposed them to an attitude of constant alertness, alacrity and adventure; while other European peoples, protected from foreign dangers, had become comfortable burgers in their feudal structures at the end of the Fifteenth Century. In the case of Spain, to the excitement of the overseas adventure, was added the missionary spirit of the Crusades, the passion for action; that is to say, an epic sense of life. This unrefrainable dynamism of the Spaniards of that period had two important consequences:

A. A curiosity that embraced the whole world in its scope. Elcano circled the world for the first time in 1522 after a voyage three days short of three years. The second voyage around the world would be Drake's, and the third, undertaken by the French ship "La Boudeuse". This very clearly illustrates the exploring activities of the principal nations of Europe. The United States benefited from this activity, since during the first fifty years after the Discovery, Spaniards reconnoitered the whole Atlantic coast of America. The territory of the United States was pictured on the first map of North America made by Diego Ribero in 1529, on which we can see all your coast to the north of "New Spain" - that is to say, present day

Mexico - under Spanish names: Tierra de Garay, Tierra de Ayllon, Tierra de Esteban Gómez - up to Newfoundland, which was then Tierra del Labrador.

The Pacific coast was explored as far as just south of what is today the State of Oregon. But what was even more important is that the explorers' curiosity of the Spaniards extended not only around both coasts but also inland. Thus, only half a century after Columbus' first voyage, Spaniards had crossed all or part of the territory of the present States of Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico & Arizona.

The first European establishment in North American territory also dates from this period: San Miguel de Guadalupe, founded in 1526 to the south of Cape Fear by three Dominican monks, later disappeared because of the hardships of the weather and the attacks of the Indians. Shortly after this, in 1559, Tristan de Luna and Arellana founded Pensacola during one of their expeditions. Two years later, Angel Villafañe founded the establishment of Santa Elena on the coast of Florida.

Even leaving aside these temporary outposts, the first permanent European establishment in the United States was founded on August 28, 1565. It was the first American city, San Agustín de la Florida, resulting from the expedition of Menéndez de Aviles. The first castle or fort, and also the first church, whose archives go back as far as 1594, were built there.

Spanish colonizers journeyed as far north on the Atlantic coast as Chesapeake Bay, where the Jesuits, led by Father Segura, suffered their first martyrs on American soil, when seven of the members of his mission were killed by the Indians.

It cannot be denied, however, that the Spanish explorers had a marked preference for the South. Thus, Pedro Martir, commenting on

the oaks and wild vines that had been found in the north of the United States, exclaimed: "But what need have we for such things that can be found anywhere in Europe. All those who want to try their fortune must direct their steps to the south, not to the north, because all of the Equator is rich."

In his turn, the historian Oviedo, criticized the expedition of Vazquez de Ayllon to the territory called "Chicora" - that is to say, South Carolina - by asserting that he "had certainly been displeased by the direction that the expedition had taken". But even taking into account these limitations, there is no comparison between these deep Spanish explorations, far into the Continent, with the establishments of the English on the coast, from Virginia to Massachusetts, that only remained on the coast until the late Eighteenth Century.

This fact has a bearing on the second important consequence to which I referred and which directly affects the very subject of this lecture, since it touches the question of the American civilization.

B. There could be no real civilization as long as the primitive colonies remained nothing more than coastal establishments, mere ports with some hinterland.

The Alleghenies had to be crossed and the Mississippi reached before these establishments could develop into more than coastal establishments, mere ports with some hinterland.

The Alleghenies had to be crossed and the Mississippi reached before these establishments could develop into more than mere overseas extensions of British culture. It could be said that the geographic barrier presented by that frontier constituted a "point of no return". Once it was overcome, that young culture could become continental, that is to say, authentically American. Imagine, however, the importance of the fact that the Spaniards had explored, occupied and lives in these vast zones of the Continent before the first Yankee incursion



into the West.

And so, the Spanish presence was felt not only during a certain period of time, but also throughout Northamerican geography. As President Kennedy indicated, the truth is that more than half of the territory of the United States was under Spanish domination, and that it lasted for three, and in some cases, four centuries.

I would not like to tire you now, nor exhaust my subject, with an enumeration of the Spanish explorations and settlements in the territory of the present day States of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Louisiana... It would serve only to overload this lecture with facts and I fear that even then I would not convince you of the weight of the Spanish contribution to American civilization. You may still think what McWilliams said with great eloquence in his book "North of Mexico"; "In a great expanse of large uninhabited territory, a handful of Spaniards - tiny pinpricks in the desert - were conducting a not too gory duel with a few widely scattered Indian tribes". A more contemporaneous and concise description of the Spanish colonizing feat cannot be found. True, there was a great disproportion between the vastness of the lands and the number of the explorers, and this certainly was one of the first handicaps Spain had to endure.

Actually, at the beginning of the XVI Century, Spain's population numbered approximately 8 million, and it was not possible to accomplish the enormous task of populating a practically uninhabited Continent the size of America. The demographic curve in Spain long followed a contrary course to that of every other European country, that is to say, a receding line: in 1700 there were about 5,700,000 inhabitants. Even taking into account the death toll produced by the European wars, this enormous demographic shortage in Spain must be attributed to the

emigration to America. But even so, the small amount of Spaniards in the United States could hardly control the Indians that were hostile to us; it was even more insufficient to counteract the strong migratory current that flowed to Northamerica from the whole European continent. It is understandable, therefore, that because of the predominance of these latter migratory trends, the Irish, Italians, Germans, Poles, et cetera, are more noticeable in the demographic pattern of the present United States than the Spaniards.

However, even under these conditions, the Spanish contribution to the United States cannot be underrated for several reasons:

A. The presence of Spain in North America was above all a challenge. For centuries, the Spanish United States were a menace to the English United States, if you allow me to express myself in such a way. Spain was feared both as a political power and as a support of the Catholic Church. The formidable feats of the Conquistadors were unknown or belittled. Disadvantageous comparisons between both colonizing systems were lightly made. Thus, Cotton Mather even forwarded with great naiveness the following assertion: "We have made a fair and just purchase of our country from the natives here; not encroaching on them after the Spanish fashion". The War of Independence, in which Spain had an active part, did not help to stamp out these misunderstandings. The new State that emerged from the union of the Colonies inherited the British feelings against Spain, and nourished them with the resentment they felt because she controlled the Mississippi valley and the Gulf of Mexico. In this way the feeling of hate and fear of Spain expressed in the "Song de liberance" of John Wilson in the XVIIth Century still existed. Not until the XIXth Century did the relations between our two countries improve. By then, Spain no longer was an enemy; after 1821 her colonial empire had been liquidated and her power in Europe had considerably diminished.

On the other hand, the Romantic Movement gave a new value to all things Spanish, not so much in their present as in their past. This cultural movement found its expression in the generation of Washington Irving, George Ticknor, Prescott, Longfellow, James R. Lowell, etc. These poets and historians felt a great understanding and sympathy for Spanish history; especially in what concerned them most - the Spanish venture in America.

However, Spain is no longer the immediate object of concern; the Spanish World now consists mainly of the countries of Spanish America; that is to say, countries that are a part of a culture greatly differing from the American one: mixed races, Catholic religion, agrarian economies, aristocratic and closed societies, a tendency to autocracy in political life, etc. The victory of the North over the South in the Civil War deepened the gulf that separates both Americas. The Civil War was, in a way, the final Latin danger to the new State, because the aristocratic society of the southern plantations, notwithstanding its British tradition, was influenced, more unconsciously than consciously, by the temptation of the Latin American model in many of its traits: predominance of agriculture over industry, colonial type of trade, slave labour, and above all, a meridional and languid way of life.

B. It so happens that a great part of the South and West of the United States is discovering that they not only have in their history the founders of the Union: Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, etc., but also the founders and fathers of their respective States. California has already given a place of honor to Fray Junipero Serra, but the same could be done in Florida with Ponce de Leon, in Texas with Cabeza de Vaca, in Louisiana with Hernando de Soto, in New Mexico with Juan de Onate, in Colorado with Vazquez Coronado...

This phenomenon does not have only a local significance. The soul of every nation must be found in her history, and the United States - if it wishes to counteract its strong tendency to futuristic dynamism, its lack of roots, the mobility of its open society, its continuous nomadic spirit - must find its soul in the history of its founders. And as we have seen, these founders, although not recognized in some States, have left nevertheless a latent and profound impression.

At the beginning I mentioned that this lecture was going to be a kind of "pro domo hispanico" vindication, but I am going to go further than that. Not only will I give myself the satisfaction of pointing out those parts of American territory that have a Spanish origin, however remote, I will even dare to claim that Spanish culture extends throughout the entire North American civilization. In order to prove this, I will have to mention that I will call some "events" and "coincidences", in order to avoid the word "influence" - a word that has so many disagreeable and pedantic overtones-that have bridged the history of Spain and the United States.

I would like to begin by referring to something I asserted at the beginning when I mentioned the dynamic nature of the Spanish people in contrast to the character of other Europeans and more conservative peoples.

My country is generally considered as reactionary, negative and pessimistic, when in truth it is the contrary. This is something I am very interested in underlining at this point, since America is the foremost representative of the European philosophy of progress and optimism of our times. I am afraid that you will be surprised and perhaps even shocked by my trying to establish a relation or coincidence between our two countries on these lines.

However, the most important consequence of the discovery of America was by far the fact that it constituted the starting point of

the ideology of "progress"; that is to say, for the optimistic conception of World History. Western civilization had been conscious of its decadence ever since the fall of the Roman Empire. This decadence had been so consciously felt, indeed, that it constituted what we would today call an inferiority complex. The Middle Ages looked backwards instead of looking forward. The objectives and ideals during the Middle Ages were found in the past, not in the future. This opinion is so widespread that it now constitutes a commonplace, almost a nonsensical expression. However, what is generally unknown or overlooked is that this "reactionary" attitude of the Middle Ages increased only during the Renaissance, when classic antiquity was exalted to an incredible degree. The Italian humanists, and in a lesser degree, all the European humanists, were convinced of the impossibility of outdoing the heroes of the Greco-Roman civilization. The incredible feats of the Spaniards in the Discovery, exploration and colonization of America, gave humanity a new hope in the future, by comparing the new enterprises to the ones of the ancients, that now seemed insignificant. I could quote here endless testimonies of Spanish writers of the time, to the effect that a new feeling of happiness was derived from the cultural liberation that America meant for them: the chains of the past had been broken forever.

This revolutionary and innovating character marked many aspects of the American Adventure.

In the economic field, I would like to point out to you, although briefly, how the incorporation or recovery of the new continent to the known world, the civilized world, made modern economy possible.

Without trying to belittle the importance of the Italian and Flemish cities of the Renaissance and their contribution to the origins of Capitalism, it is nevertheless a fact that the scope of their

economic life, both in geographic extension and commercial aims, was so reduced and their intrinsic values so short, that it would not have been possible to bring about the appearance of modern Capitalism. Capitalism is fundamentally a monetary economy and money in XVith Century Europe was notoriously too little in evidence, since it was based exclusively on earnings, to be the basis of an authentic economic expansion.

The precious metals of America - gold and silver - made modern Capitalism possible and determined the appearance of commercial enterprises of universal scale, and expanded what till then had only been the local market of the European "piccolo mondo".

Mark however, that I do not pretend to say that the Spaniards brought this about, but on the other hand, is it not true that the most men can do is not to oppose Fate? Let us remember the classic "fata nolente trahunt", that is, fate carries away those who resist it. What I do say is that the Spaniards were the instruments of this magnificent result.

The result was nothing less than the establishment or the starting point of world economy, which as you are aware, is one of the principles advocated by American politics and ideology. This is what the French philosopher Jean Bodin foresaw in 1539, when he wrote: "The Spaniards, having to obtain here by unavoidable need their grains, textiles, sheets, pastels, paper, books and even their furniture and the products of our crafts, must seek gold and silver and the species in the end of the world for our benefit." And it was only natural for a Spanish economist in 1680, Alfonso Nunez de Castro, to describe the same situation and special conditions of our economy under a more favorable light, when he said: "Let London do the best clothes, let Holland produce the best linen, Florence the best homespun, and India the best leather... for the enjoyment of our capital; as this only

proves that the crafts of nations produce for Madrid, which is the Queen of all cities, since all of them serve her needs and she serves no one".

After reading these two contradictory descriptions, we are free to choose, knowing however that the latter cannot be right since the result was a huge inflationary process.

I am the first to acknowledge the lack of enthusiasm of the Spaniard for work; in my country a man is valued not for what he does, but for what he is. Neither do I try to hide the traditional misconceptions in our economic policies. But we should take into account that the impact of America was too unexpected and too great for us to have been able to react in an adequate manner. The other European countries were able to learn from our misfortunes.

In any event, what I wanted to prove - and I hope I have - is that Spain and the United States coincided in the economic field, a relationship that resulted in favor of the latter and damage to the former.

In the juridical field, as you know, Spanish contribution has been really extraordinary; not in error did the North American James Brown Scott describe the Spanish juridical school of the XVith Century as the founder of International Law.

It was not so much that the Spaniards invented Natural Law, which is a continuous tradition of classic and Christian philosophy, but that they interpreted it with greater extension, and they put it into practice when the Discovery of America offered the great opportunity for doing so. Until then, the equality of all races, the rights of the human being, the cooperation between different peoples, had only been the objects of theoretical inquiries of jurists and theologians.

I would like to say something to the same effect with regard to our political philosophy, underlining the identity that there is

between the political principles of both countries. I know only too well that this assertion sounds paradoxical since the consensus is that Spain was not capable of contributing to the process of development of the great political community of North America. And a relevant illustration of this opinion is the book "The Constitution of Liberty" by Professor Hayeck, in which British, German and French contributions are duly recognized, while the Spanish is ignored.

It is assumed that the modern State was born in the Modern Age, during the Renaissance, like Juno - perfect and by one stroke out of Zeus' mind. It is, however, much closer to reality to say that the Modern State sprang from its roots in the Past, and that it was precisely Spain that bridged the gap between both periods.

Spain did not assist with indifference the 1776 Revolution, which embodied in the Ten Amendments of the Constitution that form the Bill of Rights, the very principles that the Spanish school of natural law proclaimed: the equality of all men, the right of communication between all nations, the liberty of navigation and trade, colonization as a special protection of less developed nations, the responsibility of public servants, the idea of an international community, the submission of power to the dictates of law, the distinction between just and unjust wars, etc. It is important to emphasize that the proclamation of principles of such lofty spirituality took place precisely when Spain was in the zenith of her world power, and the fact that many of these theoretical declarations were never carried into practice does not reduce their merit.

Another important coincidence between the United States and Spain is that both developed a frontier spirit. The former in the conquest of the Continent and the latter in the reconquest of the Peninsula - against the odds of nature and the danger of the enemies - in one case



the Indians and in our case the Moors-. In both countries the frontier spirit helped to develop a trend toward democracy and individualism.

In relation to this it should also be pointed out that as long as this struggle lasted, livestock interests prevailed over agriculture, bringing about a very characteristic human personality, exemplified by the cowboy. Words as "lasso, corral, peon, rodeo, sombrero, bronco, desperado, palomino, etc" are, of course, of Spanish origin.

No matter how much surprise you may feel from these illustrations of the affinity that exists between our two countries, the fact is that it is perfectly logical. After all, World History is actually a single narrative of all the histories that have a universal significance. Even the history of China or India, which Hegel thought had no bearing on his European-centered conceptions, is by no means a lost current that died in its own fold. On the contrary; as we are proving today through the ecumenical conception of world unity. And so much so in the case of the History of Spain, which some, misled by their nationalistic or religious biases, have tried to relegate to a second level of importance, when in reality it cannot be understood out of the universal context of World History. All of the great enterprises of Spanish History have had, in one way or another, an ecumenical character: the resistance against the Mohammedan invasion, the fight for religious unity, the conquest and colonization of America.

But even so, you could object that all these arguments are somewhat rhetorical, having a vague general character, and are still remote from the subject with which we are dealing today. Therefore, I will try to keep myself from wandering and return to THE SPANISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Spanish contribution on the Atlantic Coast to the Independence of the United States is much too well known to have received so little

credit. But what is perhaps rather unknown is that Spain contributed to American independence in a very effective way on the Pacific Coast. But here it was not against the British, but against a much more powerful enemy, the Russians.

The Court of Madrid was well aware of the Russian expeditions that started in 1764 from Arcangel and Kamchata to Alaska. It was precisely against the menace of this invasion that Spain decided to take complete control of the entire Pacific Coast. This was accomplished by the erection of a number of forts and military castles, and also by the famous mission of Fray Junipero Serra. In this way, the immediate objective of containing the Russians was achieved, while at the same time attaining the indirect aim of transforming a desert territory into the flowering California, a success that heralded the future of the most dynamic State of the Union.

Spain's foresight in this sense deserves special credit, especially if we take into account that the English colonies of the Atlantic Coast were incapable of realizing the Russian danger, either before or after the Independence. Thus it happened, that while the Spaniards were waging a military and commercial war against the Russian establishments the Yankees were paradoxically helping them in their expansion by loaning them ships and even by forming Russian-American companies for commercial purposes.

Obviously, the Court of Madrid was acting not on behalf of the United States but to protect her own interests. But the fact remains that these interests coincided with those of the North American Republic. Thanks to the fact that the Pacific Ocean was then considered as the "Mare Nostrum" of the Spaniards, California remained protected in the fold of the United States. It is certain that the history of the world would have been different had the Russians succeeded in

their imperialist expansion, which reached its peak between 1789 and 1820 - exactly one year before California ceased being Spanish. This clearly showed that the Russians lost their strength against Spanish resistance.

The history of the Spanish contribution to the fight of the Colonies against Britain is well known, although the facts have somehow been distorted. It is held against the Court of Madrid that her cooperation was meager and reluctant.

In regard to the second accusation, it is true that Spain could be called a "reluctant ally", but only in a disadvantageous comparison with France. No one can deny that the Court of Versailles offered a decisive help to the insurrection, in a noble and generous way. However, one must take into account that this help was granted not for the benefit of the Americans as much as against the English, the bitter enemies of the French.

One must also remember that after 1763 France no longer was a colonial power; that is to say, she had nothing to lose when she helped the Colonies. Finally, there undoubtedly was a great feeling of kinship between the American independentists and the French revolutionaries who toppled the French monarchy in 1789.

None of these motivations were found in Spain. On the contrary, England was not our irreconcilable enemy, since Spain occupied an intermediate position in the struggles of the super-powers of the time, playing the role of neutrality. She expected, moreover, that England would eventually return Gibraltar. Besides, Spain obviously still had an important colonial empire in America and the example of the North American colonies would in time be fatal for her interests. In fact, only 38 years later, Spain was to lose all her colonies. Finally, in Madrid, contrary to what happened in Paris, the old regime

was firmly established and the revolutionary tides had not yet stirred her population.

All of this indicates that Charles III was acutely aware of the dangers and risks he was facing when he decided to aid American independence. We have in this context an important testimony; one that constitutes a prophetic vision of the United States, conceived many years before Tocqueville. The Count of Aranda, head of the Spanish diplomacy at the time, wrote: "Spain will be left hand to hand with another power, alone in all the lands that constitute the northern part of America. And which and how is this Power? It is a stable and territorial one that has already invoked the patrician name of 'America', that counts with two and a half million inhabitants of European origin, that will double its population every 25 or 30 years due to the special laws she has adopted for her growth, raising it to eight or ten million subjects in fifty or sixty years, especially taking into account that the laws of this new domain will continue to attract emigration from Europe".

There does not seem to be much justice in the reproach sometimes made against Spain for having asked the return of Gibraltar as a price for her intervention. It is certainly true that the two Borbonic court had secretly agreed to attain this objective before France signed the peace treaty. However, we also know perfectly well that as soon as the colonies attained their independence, Spain had to acquiesce to the signing of the peace treaty without having attained her principal objective. It so happened that Great Britain offered in 1779 to return Gibraltar in exchange for our connivance during the American wars.

With respect to the reproach that our military aid was meager, allow me to point out that it is practically impossible to calculate the total amount of our economic aid to the Colonies, for the simple

reason that the Court of Madrid took great care to keep these contributions secret, so as to prevent the bad effect on our own colonies.

Much more important than this is to appreciate these contributions in their proper perspective, since we must take into account their proportion to the needs of the insurgents. Thus, for example, the total sum of money given by France, Spain and Holland to the United States, seems rather small - fourteen million dollars - but is really quite significant when compared to the eighteen million thirteen thousand dollars which represented the total expenditures of the States of the Union.

The same reasoning may be applied to our military cooperation, in both military supplies and the participation of troops. Thus, the 2,000 men under Governor Golvez in Louisiana can be honorably compared with the Independent Armies, taking into account that Washington's troops oscillated between the eight thousand men he had during the operations in New York, the four thousand in Valley Forge, and the twenty-five thousand men he had under his orders at the end of the campaign.

We must also bear in mind not only the number of the forces but also the moment when they were used. Think, for example, how decisive the arrival of Marshall Blucher at Waterloo; and also the location where they intervened. By this, I am referring to the known but unexplained fact that the British Army suddenly transferred its troops to the South, practically abandoning North America. The motive could not be other than that the Spanish offensive on land and sea, after conquering Florida, advanced against both Carolinas. The truth is that Galvez' southern campaign took place in a moment of total depression, both psychological and military, of the American patriots.

It is also very important not to forget that the War of Independence was mainly a Naval war, as Washington himself clearly realized

when his fleet was only composed at its best of sixty ships. The superiority of the British fleet over the combined French and North-american one was overwhelming, and it can be asserted without doubt or exaggeration, that the intervention of the Spanish fleet - which both parties tried to entice to their side - broke the balance of forces and determined the outcome of the war. The communication of the English expeditionary army with the Metropolis was thus interrupted almost completely.

In 1780 the Spanish fleet in the Eastern Atlantic captured more than fifty English ships at the latitude of the Azores, and it seems that one of them was transporting an amount of munitions that had taken 18 months to produce. Great Britain lost control over the Atlantic, which helps to explain the surprising surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, since he could not receive reinforcements nor evacuate his forces by sea, although he was in a peninsula.

When American historians evaluate Spanish military efforts and specifically the role of the Spanish Navy, they somehow shortsightedly consider the American territory as the center of all the events of the War, forgetting that the naval operations took place in a large area, stretching to Gibraltar and Oceania.

But, you may now argue, although all these things are true, they belong in the past and what we want to know is the present influence of Spain on American civilization, since it is still in a forming period.

Let us not forget that many of the things that we enjoy in our present, are due to sacrifices undergone in the past. There is in Western folklore of the United States, the half legendary and half historical figure of Johnny Appleseed, to whom the pioneers attributed the apple orchards they found on their way across the continent. I

quite agree that it is just to remember and be grateful for what one man - if he ever existed - did for his country, but I claim a similar remembrance and gratitude for all of the generations of Spanish missionaries, soldiers, administrators and artists, who, for centuries, fought and civilized the Indians, toiled the fields, raised cattle, and, in a word, "humanized" a good part of the continent.

It is true that in a predominantly technological civilization, like the present one, Spain does not seem too significant. There are, however, many ways and means by which to influence a culture, and the human aspect is still - after all - the most important element - even in a society in which the machine is foremost.

Spain, today, may be a small country, far away on the other shores of the Atlantic. Spain has, nevertheless, a meaning and a presence in North America - not so much because of herself, but through Spanish America. This part of the Continent is present, active, and in expansion, not only to the South of the Rio Grande and in the Caribbean, but also, in the United States - like a Trojan horse - with the Mexicans in California, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas; the Cubans in Miami; and the Puerto Ricans in New York, which in addition to the population of Spanish origin gives a total of six and a half million inhabitants speaking Castilian well. The Latin American race, the Cinderella of the West, has now been offered a splendid future. According to the statistics of the United Nations, in less than forty years it will be the largest racial Community of the West: 500 million against 450 million Slavs and 400 million Anglosaxons.

The seed of "Johnny Spanish", more fertile than that of "Johnny Appleseed", has grown like the grain of mustard of the Gospel, covering a great part of America. Then, the most important contribution of Spain to the Northamerican Civilization would be to have balanced it with the Latin American world, thus creating a more harmonious and universal America.