

IN THE EYES OF THE EAGLE: U.S. VIEWS OF BOLÍVAR AND HIS
SPANISH AMERICA

by

Kyle Futrelle

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The thesis of _____ **Kyle Futrelle** _____

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

_____ **Edward Davies** _____ , Chair _____ **3/16/2012**
Date Approved

_____ **Ray Gunn** _____ , Member _____ **3/16/2012**
Date Approved

_____ **Susie Porter** _____ , Member _____ **3/16/2012**
Date Approved

and by _____ **Isabel Moreira** _____ , Chair of
the Department of _____ **History** _____

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the United States perception of Simón Bolívar, the liberator of six South American republics. Heralded today as a hero, in his lifetime, Bolívar endured a barrage of criticism from United States diplomats and other public figures who saw him as power hungry and monarchical in his designs. Diplomatic correspondences, congressional debates, personal memoirs, and press articles during the years 1811 to 1831 reveal the origins of these views of the Liberator. The sources demonstrated that people in the United States failed to understand Bolívar's actions or motives as a military and political leader in northern South America. At first these North Americans saw Bolívar embracing United States style of republicanism and following George Washington's example of peacefully giving up power in the interests of the republic. Critics began to suspect Bolívar as having imperial ambitions and lusting for power, the very antithesis of Washington. Only Bolívar's public resignation from his position of power silenced these critics. As important, some public figures never abandoned their positive view of Bolívar. Certainly President Andrew Jackson saw him as a model of republicanism, a sentiment that ultimately prevailed in the United States.

During the development of relations between North and South America, new racial ideologies emerged in the United States. The notion of innate racial differences and natural superiority of white United States citizens profoundly shaped the image many in the United States held of South Americans. Those who embraced the innate superiority of white North Americans in the United States saw their South America

neighbors as lacking the necessary characteristics for an effective republic. The increasingly hostile opinions of Bolívar corresponded with a rising sense of the natural superiority of the U.S. embodied in the notion of descending from Anglo-Saxons. The lens of republicanism, notions of race, and perceptions of a model government help us capture how the young republic of the United States interpreted the development of republicanism in the Western Hemisphere.

“The seed of liberty yields its just fruit. If there is anything which is never lost, it is the blood which is shed for a deserving cause.”¹

- Simón Bolívar

¹As quoted in Arthur Bullard, *Panama, the Canal, the Country, and the People* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1912), 373.

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INTRODUCTION

The American Revolution against England spawned a series of independence movements which engaged the majority of the Atlantic World over a fifty-year period. Simón Bolívar emerged as the most controversial hero from these wars. He envisioned a unified South America under one form of government. Along with the U.S., he desired a hemisphere of liberty with strong republics free from Spain.² He and other South American leaders looked first to the United States as a guide to establish republics.³ Bolívar later turned to European forms of government as models for the republican states in South America. His preference for a democratic monarchy – similar to Great Britain’s constitutional monarchy – produced a great deal of tension within hemispheric relations. The United States failed to understand a man such as Bolívar.⁴ He was a complicated individual whose philosophies and words were sometimes inconsistent with his actions. John Lynch, a Latin American historian and Bolívar biographer, described Bolívar as “an exceptionally complex man, a liberator who scorned liberalism,

² John J. Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart: The Foundations of United States Policy toward Latin America* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 81.

³ “Libertador Presidente al Encargado de Negocios de los Estados Unidos de América, Lima, 16 Noviembre 1826” in Simón Bolívar, *Obras Completas* (Caracas, D.F.: E. Requena Mira, 1963), vol. III, 776.

⁴ When I refer to the United States throughout this work, I refer to both the government and the public. The press published many of the dispatches to and speeches in Washington. Often the author, receiver, or note-taker of such articles sent an editor a copy for release.

a soldier who disparaged militarism, a republican who admired monarchy.”⁵The United States viewed Bolívar as embracing its model of republicanism and following George Washington’s peaceful surrender of power in the interests of the republic. Many in the U.S. soon regretted this position as they interpreted Bolívar’s actions as contrary to the spirit of republicanism and Washington. This shift in public opinion occurred as ideas of racial distinctions and of racial superiority developed within the United States. These cast South Americans in an inferior light and, therefore, incapable of building a republic comparable to the one found in the United States.

Diplomats, business partners, family, and unnamed informants provided the opinions of Bolívar and his policies. These views eventually reached the public via newspapers, magazines, and other media outlets. Public reaction varied depending on the region and specific social groups; however, fashioning a singular view of the Liberator proves difficult given his complexity. For the purpose of analysis, this study focuses on three aspects of U.S. comprehension of Bolívar. First, the U.S. projecting itself as the republican model for South Americans shapes the reactions of U.S. officials to Bolívar. Next, for some in the U.S., Bolívar’s ambition for power drove him to seek a monarchy and empire. These clearly undermined essential features of republicanism, i.e., rule by the people. Such ambitions separated him from Washington who sought the peaceful interests of the republic through his resignation of power. Concurrently, emergent racial ideologies within the United States trumped racial and natural superiority over Spanish

⁵ John Lynch, *Simón Bolívar: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 262-266.

Americans. Religion would seem an obvious choice as well; however, during the time of Bolívar the focus remained on republican values and racial ideologies.⁶

Though many have written about Bolívar, few have attempted to tackle U.S. opinion toward him.⁷ J. Fred Rippy looks at how U.S. diplomats viewed Bolívar during the last five years of his life and argues that the diplomats generally praised Bolívar until the South American patriots drove the Spaniards out of the region. From 1826 on, U.S. agents began sending back negative reports to the government. Rippy states that by 1829 “the condemnation was almost unanimous.”⁸ In another article, David Sowell examines newspapers popular in the United States to demonstrate how the public interpreted Bolívar through a lens of republicanism. Sowell employs the term republicanism believing that since the U.S. had “few material or cultural achievements, the United States placed a high premium on its civic and political accomplishments.”⁹ Sowell writes that the U.S. population felt their form of government was the best in the world and all countries should adopt it. He illustrates how the lens of republicanism formed the image of Bolívar in the United States especially during periods of disillusionment with Bolívar.

In her dissertation, Caitlin Fitz combines republicanism and race as lenses through which the U.S. viewed Bolívar.¹⁰ She writes that the U.S. supported the independence

⁶ Fredrick Pike, *United States and Latin America: Myths and Stereotypes of Civilization and Nature* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992), 76-80.

⁷ The first is J. Fred Rippy, “Bolívar as Viewed by Contemporary Diplomats of the United States,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 15, no. 3 (August 1935), 287-297. The second is David Sowell, “The Mirror of Public Opinion: Bolívar, Republicanism and the United States Press, 1821-1831,” *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 134 (Jan. - June 2004), 165-183.

⁸ Rippy, “Bolívar as Viewed by Contemporary Diplomats of the United States,” 287-288.

⁹ Sowell, “The Mirror of Public Opinion,” 167.

¹⁰ Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions*. Yale University, 2010.

movements in South America due to a shared sense of republicanism. Fitz argues that the U.S. did not define South Americans as racially distinct until the congressional debates on the Panama Congress in 1826 when politicians used racialized language to distinguish themselves from South American countries which had emancipated their slaves.

Speeches from the congressional debates on the Panama Mission, spread by the press, influenced U.S. citizens who began to accept these racial distinctions. Fitz's argument is congruent with Mark Jaede's dissertation in which he argues that the Panama debates in Congress redefined how the United States observed racial differences between North and South Americans.¹¹ Before the Panama question, the U.S. saw Spanish Americans as fellow republicans "despite reservations about Spanish Americans' religion, culture, [and] racial makeup."¹²

The argument of the thesis contends that the United States saw itself as the model for South American independence, republican institutions, and the proper use of power. For most of Bolívar's career, the U.S. saw him as the Washington of South America. The year 1826 marked a turning point in views toward Bolívar. As he maintained and consolidated his political powers, people in the U.S. disassociated Bolívar from Washington. Racial issues concerning Spanish America materialized during this period. While acknowledging the emergence of racial distinctions argued by Fitz and Jaede based on congressional debates concerning the Panama Congress of 1826, the thesis stresses that such views of racial differences and superiority developed over time in the United States, rather than at one moment. These growing racial ideologies reached the height of public

¹¹ Mark G. Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance: Race, Religion, Culture and U.S. Views of Spanish America, 1800-1830*. State University of New York at Buffalo, 2001.

¹² Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance*, iv-v.

attention in 1826 with the Panama Question and gained widespread acceptance by the 1830s. This study concentrates on Bolívar and northern South America in which he operated rather than dealing with the cone of South America where San Martín and others played the critical roles of independence. This permits me to tailor comments about northern Spanish Americans to Bolívar himself. My research encompasses the years 1811 to 1831 which coincides with Bolívar's activities in South American history.

The examination brings together diplomatic dispatches and newspaper articles written about Bolívar during his life. The sources— though intended for specific audiences – help answer the question of how the generation after the founding fathers reacted to Bolívar within the broader context of international relations. The dispatches, which commented at length on Bolívar, also assisted politicians in forming and maintaining relations between the U.S. government and the new South American states. The newspapers informed the public with both opinions and facts – which were not consistently validated. Both types of sources illustrate a United States that perceived itself as the model of republicanism, one in which leaders showed a disinterest in power, and an emerging ideology which argued racial superiority over the mixed races of Spanish America. This ideology reinforced the positions on republicanism. Additional sources include memoirs, personal correspondence, and eye-witness accounts of Bolívar's Spanish America during the formative years of the South American republics. Many of the correspondences between U.S. agents and the Secretary of State are found in William R. Manning's *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations*. Though published in 1925, it continues to be a main source of information on foreign diplomacy. Despite some references to other

newspapers, I focus on *The Niles' Weekly Register*, *The Commercial Advertiser* of New York, *The Christian Advocate* of Philadelphia, and *The Daily National Intelligencer* of Washington, D.C. These newspapers were more accessible than others with many references to Bolívar. Though not the best sampling, many secondary sources about Bolívar contain references to newspapers less accessible for my research. The dissertations of Fitz and Jaede – combined with the *Register of Debates* – provided data on racial tensions between the U.S. and Spanish America. Their works influenced me to include race as a lens through which the United States defined Bolívar.

The thesis intends to expand our understanding of a complex historical figure as Bolívar and how the U.S. interpreted him and his fellow Spanish Americans. In accomplishing this task the study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides a brief history of Bolívar and the independence movements in northern South America. This includes Bolívar's views of the United States and how they changed over time. The next chapter focuses on the U.S. perspective on South American independence, the creation of the Spanish American republics, and the question of recognition of these new republics. This chapter shows how the United States viewed Bolívar during the years of 1811 to 1825 identifying the South American patriots as fellow republicans and Bolívar as Washington. Chapter 3 explores the shifts in opinions regarding Bolívar in the U.S. as he consolidated power among the new northern republics between 1826 and 1830. This period marked an era of disillusionment with Bolívar based on varying reports from informants to Washington and the press of his ambitions for building an empire and/or creating a South American monarchy. Optimistic views toward Bolívar recommenced with the inauguration of the Jackson administration who contended against

persistent negative reports on Bolívar from the press. This chapter contains Bolívar's retort to reports that he was establishing a monarchy in South America. It also includes U.S. reaction to Bolívar's final resignation from power and his sudden death on the eve of self-imposed exile.

The final chapter tackles the development of U.S. popular conceptions of racial distinctions arising in the early nineteenth century. I give a history of race theory in the U.S., a definition of the Black Legend, the growing link of North American whites to a superior Anglo-Saxon race, and how pseudo-sciences changed the accepted theories on race to one of racial distinction and superiority. The language found in correspondences, political debates, and newspapers illustrates an increasing sense of superiority over the racially mixed corps of Spanish Americans. The study highlights the congressional debates on the Panama Mission of 1826 which bring the emerging racial ideologies to the center stage of public attention. Their highly publicized words and the rising popularity of pseudo-sciences made the theories of racial distinctions and superiority widely accepted in the United States by 1830. For this section, I rely on the *Register of Debates*, the dissertations of Fitz and Jaede, and Reginald Horsman's *Race and Manifest Destiny*.¹³

¹³ For full coverage of the debates on the Panama Congress, see Joseph Gales and William Winston Seaton, *Register of Debates*, 19th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1826). For theories on innate racial distinctions and the emergence of Anglo-Saxon ties to the U.S., see Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

CHAPTER 1

BOLÍVAR AND INDEPENDENCE

A Brief History of Bolívar and his Independence Movements

Simón Bolívar was born on July 24, 1783, in Caracas, Venezuela. A wealthy creole, “Bolívar’s possessions included horse and cattle farms, copper mines, and extensive plantations where cacao and cotton were grown.”¹⁴ After his parents died, Bolívar went to live with Simón Rodríguez, a tutor who taught him of the recent revolutions, the new republics, and the liberal ideologies behind them.¹⁵ Bolívar’s youthful marriage ended abruptly with the sudden death of his wife. He returned to Rodríguez who travelled with him to Europe.¹⁶ His time in Europe introduced Bolívar to Napoleon’s empire and other political strife occurring on the continent at that time.¹⁷ On August 15, 1805, at the age of twenty-two, Bolívar made his famous vow on Monte Sacro in Rome: “I swear before you [Rodríguez], I swear by the God of my fathers, I swear by my fathers, I swear by my honour, I swear by my country that I will not rest body or soul until I have broken the chains with which Spanish power oppresses us!”¹⁸

¹⁴ Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2009), 137.

¹⁵ Ed. David Bushnell, *El Libertador: Writings of Simón Bolívar* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), *xiii*. See also John Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, 25.

¹⁶ Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*, 137.

¹⁷ Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, 27.

¹⁸ As quoted in *Ibid*, 26.

On Bolívar's return from Europe, he stayed briefly in the United States. There he observed a republican system that nurtured its citizens. Recalling his visit evoked this sentiment: "During my short visit to the United States, I saw rational liberty for the first time in my life."¹⁹ His observations influenced his ideas of liberty and republican principles throughout the years of the Spanish American revolutions. These revolutions began due to political strife in Europe. In 1808, Napoleon forced Charles IV and his son Ferdinand to abdicate the throne to Joseph Bonaparte. *Juntas* – metropolitan political committees – formed in various parts of Spain and in her American colonies. The *junta* of Caracas eventually decided in favor of declaring independence from Spain. They formed a congress and declared their independence on July 5, 1811.²⁰ This republic came to an abrupt end after an earthquake destroyed Caracas and many other towns in March, 1812. The earthquake demolished buildings which held war materiel for the patriots. The clergy blamed the patriotic uprising for God's vengeance manifested by the earthquake. Factions among the creoles, uprisings from the slaves, and the devastating effects of the earthquake ultimately caused the patriots to retreat and the republic to fail.²¹

Bolívar left Venezuela for Curaçao in hopes to regroup the republican efforts. Later in 1812, he sailed to Cartagena in New Granada – present day Colombia. There he convinced the republican government at Cartagena to give him command of some troops to aid the patriot cause. He began what is called the Admirable Campaign, freeing the

¹⁹ "Beaufort T. Watts to Henry Clay, Cartagena, March 10, 1828" in William R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1925), vol. II, 1322.

²⁰ Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, 54-55. See also Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes, *A History of Latin America* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 160-162.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 59-64.

areas surrounding the Magdalena River to the border of Venezuela. General Bolívar persuaded the New Granadan politicians that their country would not be free until he had liberated Venezuela. The government at Cartagena permitted Bolívar to continue his operation into Venezuela and on to Caracas. He pushed through Venezuela, gaining many victories and eventually walking into an abandoned Caracas in 1813.²² In a parade celebrating the patriot victory, the creole city council bestowed upon him the title of Liberator.²³ However, republican power soon received resistance from royalist factions, Spanish reinforcements, and the violent, sporadic attacks from *llaneros* – Venezuelan plainsmen. The patriots retreated from Caracas to eastern Venezuela where Bolívar took a boat back to Cartagena to assist in the independence movements there. Failures to further the republican cause forced Bolívar into a self-imposed exile to Jamaica.²⁴

While in Jamaica, Bolívar wrote to *The Royal Gazette* in what later became known as the Jamaica Letter. He assessed the patriotic movements in Venezuela and expounded the attributes and natural rights of liberal governments. To help Spanish Americans on the path to liberty, Bolívar wrote: “[As] long as our countrymen do not acquire the abilities and political virtues that distinguish our brothers of the north, wholly popular systems, far from working to our advantage, will, I greatly fear, bring about our downfall.”²⁵ Educated creoles like Bolívar gained inspiration from Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*, “the U.S. Constitution, and those of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia” as well as the United States’ Declaration of

²² Ibid., 67-75.

²³ Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 163.

²⁴ Ibid., See also Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, 88-89.

²⁵ “Simón Bolívar to Mr. Henry Cullen, ‘Answer of a South American to a Gentleman of this Island,’ Kingston, September 6, 1815” in Ed. Harold A. Bierck, Jr., *Selected Writings of Bolívar* (New York, NY: The Colonial Press Inc., 1951), vol.I, 115.

Independence!²⁶ The U.S. Declaration deeply influenced the authors of Venezuela's "declaration of independence [... of 1811 which] borrowed entire passages from its illustrious example from 1776."²⁷ Bolívar noted that, "The Venezuelan constitution [... has] taken as its model the most perfect constitution ever formulated in terms of the correctness of principles and the beneficent effects of its administration, [...] the North American."²⁸ Early on, Bolívar professed a great respect for the democracy of the United States and the need for South Americans to acquire "political virtues" to attain freedom from Spain.

From Exile to Liberator: Act Two

After only a few months in Jamaica, Bolívar resolved to go to Haiti to plan an invasion of Venezuela. He gathered other exiled South American patriots and with the assistance of materiel and troops from President Pétion, Bolívar launched an expedition to the island of Margarita in March 1816. Failing to gain a footing on the island, he returned to Haiti. He initiated a second invasion of the country a few months later sailing down the Orinoco River to Angostura. There he set up headquarters and spent the next two years gaining small victories and creating alliances with leading caudillos.²⁹ In 1819, Bolívar gave the Address of Angostura in which he explained that Venezuela relied too heavily on the U.S. constitution. "In my opinion, it is a miracle that [our federal

²⁶ Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*, 172.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Discurso pronunciado por el Libertador ante el Congreso de Angostura, 15 Febrero 1819" in Bolívar, *Obras Completas* III, 680. Translation taken from Bushnell, *El Libertador*, 37.

²⁹ Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 164. See also Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, 102-118.

constitution's] model in North America endures with such prosperity and that it does not fall apart at the first manifestation of trouble or danger." He believed that federalism was a "weak and complex" system. Despite these qualms, Bolívar retained his opinion that the U.S. "is a singular model of political and moral virtue, [... and] is unique in the history of the human race." However, he did not believe that federalism applied to Venezuela: "it never entered my mind to compare the situation and nature of two states as diametrically different as English America and Spanish America."³⁰

Bolívar utilized this address to announce his plans for the new Venezuelan constitution and government. Having studied Montesquieu, Bolívar knew that the laws and liberties of one nation were not applicable to another: "Do we not read in the *Spirit of Laws* that they must be suitable to the country for which they are written?"³¹ Bolívar then relayed that each country has its distinct cultures, climates, religions, economics, and geography. These varying demographics, along with Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*, were what Bolívar had in mind when he exclaimed, "This then is the code we should consult, not the one written for Washington!"³² He wanted a constitution that worked for Venezuela, not a dream but a reality.

Following Bolívar's address, the Congress of Angostura created a republican constitution and formed the Republic of Colombia. This republic consisted of the regions found in the former Viceroyalty of New Granada: Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador.³³ The campaign following the congress of Angostura determined the liberty of

³⁰ "Discurso de Angostura" in Bolívar, *Obras Completas* III, 680. Translations by author from Spanish sources unless otherwise stated.

³¹ Ibid., Translation taken from Bushnell, *El Libertador*, 37.

³² Ibid.

³³ Lynch, *Simon Bolívar*, 134. See also 129-130 and 138-139.

the new republic. The battle of Boyacá in 1819 ensured the independence of Colombia. After a brief armistice in 1820, Bolívar and the patriots won the battle of Carabobo which guaranteed the freedom of Venezuela.³⁴ Over the next few years, the Liberator and his generals gained victories in Guayaquil, Quito, Lima, and Chochabamba. By 1825, all of northern South America was free under republican constitutions or in the process of creating constitutions.³⁵ Political strife, insurrections, and an assassination attempt marred the final years of Bolívar's life between 1826 and 1830. Peru and Bolivia quickly abolished Bolívar's constitution forming new ones suitable to their republics.³⁶ Venezuela left the Republic of Colombia followed shortly after by Ecuador in 1830 to create their own nations.³⁷ The tumult these events produced caused many observers to question the stability of the new republican states as well as Bolívar's leadership abilities. As the United States questioned his commitment to republican values, Bolívar's views of the United States continued to wane.

Bolívar's Diminishing Opinion of the United States

The process of liberation required a consistent struggle against Spain and royalist factions. After many years of constant warfare, Bolívar felt hopeless. He greatly desired to establish solid republics in every part of Spanish America. Nevertheless, he recognized this was impossible without help from the U.S. As early as 1818, Bolívar expressed his dissatisfaction with the United States: "There is nothing more horrible than

³⁴Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 164-165.

³⁵Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, on Ecuador 170, on Peru 192-194 and on Upper Peru (Bolivia) 198.

³⁶Jaime E Rodríguez O., *The Independence of Spanish America* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 234-235.

³⁷Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 110-111.

the conduct of our own countrymen of this continent. This afflicts the soul because who can cure the entire world? The United States are the worst and the strongest at the same time.”³⁸The United States had inspired Bolívar to fight for independence. He anticipated real support and aid from the U.S., instead they stood by as a neutral observer. Their neutrality caused Bolívar to lament that “even our brothers to the North have remained peaceful spectators of our extermination.”³⁹Years later, in a message to General O’Leary – a close friend and Bolívar’s former *aide-de-camp* – manifested how distant Bolívar felt the U.S. was from South American needs, “I think that it would be better for America to adopt the Koran than the government of the United States, even though it be the best in the world.”⁴⁰ Though he admired its republican government, in Bolívar’s eyes the U.S. had the power to spread liberty or watch it die. He believed that the United States “seem destined by Providence to plague America with miseries in the name of Freedom.”⁴¹

Comprehending Bolívar’s evolving views toward the United States is key to interpreting diplomatic views reported back to Washington. As Bolívar’s opinions of the U.S. degraded, he looked to various other republican models to find the best form of democracy for South America. As his gaze turned further away from the United States, diplomats and newspapers construed his actions as unrepublican. Though to Bolívar his deeds manifested a deep interest in the progress and protection of Spanish Americans, the

³⁸“Simón Bolívar al señor general Pedro Zaraza, Angostura, 9 Agosto 1818” in Bolívar, *Obras Completas*, I, 323.

³⁹“Presidente Bolívar al EXCMO Señor vicepresidente de Cundinamarca, Angostura, 20 Diciembre 1819” in Bolívar, *Obras Completas* I, 406.

⁴⁰“Presidente Bolívar al señor general Daniel F. O’Leary, Guayaquil, 13 Septiembre 1829” in Simón Bolívar, *Cartas del Libertador* (Caracas, D.F.: Lit. y Tip. del Comercio, 1929), vol. IX, 124.

⁴¹ “Presidente Bolívar al señor coronel Patricio Campbell, Encargado de Negocios de S.M.B, Guayaquil, 5 Agosto 1819” in *Ibid.*, 69.

U.S. saw them as a smokescreen for his underlying ambition for absolute power. However, before this scene played out, the United States praised Bolívar as a true republican in the image of their beloved Washington.

CHAPTER 2

REVOLUTIONS AND REPUBLICS

Venezuela and the Question of Recognition

In 1811, Venezuela declared freedom from Spain and sent delegates to various countries requesting recognition. Before the United States recognized any of the South American provinces, it required evidence that those states could maintain their independence from Spain. After a tragic earthquake hit Venezuela in early 1812 the United States commissioned Alexander Scott as an agent for the relief of the victims in Caracas. James Monroe, then the U.S. Secretary of State, wrote these instructions for Scott's commission: "[You are] to ascertain how far those Provinces are competent to its support [...]. If the people are resolved to maintain their independence, their success seems to be inevitable. The United States take a sincere interest in it [...]." As pertaining to Scott's conduct as a representative of the U.S., Monroe cautioned, "Nothing, however, would be more absurd than for the United States to acknowledge their independence in form, until it was evident that the people themselves were resolved and able to support it."⁴²

The U.S. wanted concrete evidence that South Americans would retain their freedom before siding against Spain by recognizing the independence of her warring colonies. The reports from Scott did not inspire hope of recognition. In a dispatch to

⁴²“James Monroe to Alexander Scott, Washington, May 14, 1812” in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* I, 15.

Monroe, dated November 16, 1812, Scott described the people in Venezuela as not fit “for the enjoyment of a free and rational government. Certain principles of honor, virtue and morality are wanting [...]. Their minds require to be more enlightened, and emancipated from the absolute sway of ignorant and depraved clergy.”⁴³ Days before leaving Venezuela, he gave his opinion on the diplomatic course the United States should follow. “Towards the patriots of South America, our government, cannot, in my opinion, pursue a conduct too friendly.”⁴⁴ Due to the lack of republican principles Scott observed, he felt it necessary to maintain a cautious relationship with Venezuela. His report helped influence the U.S. to choose a path of neutrality toward the emerging Spanish American provinces. This neutrality became certain in the Neutrality Act of 1815, delayed in Congress as a result of the War of 1812.

The U.S. government had many reasons to seek intelligence on the Spanish American provinces. The United States was a young republic which did not wish to make enemies. Politicians knew that if they granted official recognition to any of the Spanish American republics, they would consciously be declaring war against Spain!⁴⁵ John Quincy Adams, writing to Secretary Monroe in 1816, stated, “[If] the United States were openly to join the cause of South America, [...] the British people would immediately consider them as the principals in the contest [...] and engage this nation upon the side of Spain, merely because the United States would be on the other

⁴³ “Alexander Scott to James Monroe, Caracas, November 16, 1812” in *Ibid.*, vol. II, 1163.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1167.

⁴⁵ Frederic L. Paxson, *The Independence of the South-American Republics, a study in recognition and foreign policy* (Philadelphia, PA: Ferris & Leach, 1903), 105.

side.”⁴⁶The country had recently terminated a war with England and did not wish to provoke another conflict. To prevent war with Spain and Great Britain, the U.S. chose neutrality during the wars in the South American states.⁴⁷Congress passed the Neutrality Act in 1815 to maintain peace and trade with Europe and the Caribbean. Adams “made clear the conditions under which the United States would recognize a new Spanish American republic: ‘It is the stage when independence is established as a matter of fact so as to leave the chances of the opposite party to recover their dominion utterly desperate.’”⁴⁸Though the United States recognized “Gran Colombia (which included Venezuela) before any other independent Latin American nation,” prolonged civil war in South America delayed recognition of the southern republics until 1822. By this time, many in the U.S. had acquired an admiration for Bolívar as the Liberator of South America.

Their Cause as Our Own: Praises to Bolívar
and the Patriots of South America

Early press reports on General Bolívar depicted him in a positive manner. However, one of the earliest articles stated, “The most horrible scenes of barbarity are committed at Venezuela since the fierce monster, Bolivar, joining a band of assassins and thieves has forced some people of color and creoles to follow his banners, and carry

⁴⁶ “John Quincy Adams to the Secretary of State [James Monroe], London, March 30, 1816” in Ed. Worthington C. Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1915), vol. V, 552.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 551.

⁴⁸ As quoted in Richard W. Slatta and Jane Lucas De Grummond, *Simón Bolívar’s Quest for Glory* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2003), 175.

plunder, bloodshed, devastation and terror throughout that unhappy region.”⁴⁹ Despite this negative description the editor of the *Commercial Advertiser* of New York wrote that General Bolívar was “an able and brave man.”⁵⁰ As the war continued, admiration from the press grew as well: “Bolívar [...] is a gentleman of high and honourable [sic] feelings; of courage and activity. He has embarked all his wealth, which was considered as immense, in the great cause in which he is engaged.”⁵¹ Feelings of congeniality toward the Spanish American patriots reflected the cherish sentiments the U.S. held to the patriots of the American Revolution.

Praise for Bolívar and his patriots permeated patriotic activities and events celebrating U.S. independence. Newspapers presented toasts given in Bolívar’s honor at public occasions. On July 4, 1816, West Point cadets toasted, “The patriots of South America”: “While remembering our forefathers, we can but view with kindred emotions, the efforts of those new champions of the same cause.”⁵² One man from Kentucky proclaimed, “Success to their struggles for Independence – our hearts are with them.”⁵³ The *Richmond Enquirer* wrote a column in 1817 summarizing the toasts given at the recent Fourth of July parties, “[The] favorite sentiment from all numbers and all parties has been, *Success to the Spanish [American] Patriots*.”⁵⁴ Following the trend in 1819, a group called the Philadelphia Fencibles raised their cups to “America: May the South be as successful as the North.”⁵⁵ In almost all of these cases, people in the United States

⁴⁹ *Commercial Advertiser* (NY) April 29, 1814 – taken from the *Freeman’s Journal*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, September 6, 1816.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, September 19, 1816.

⁵² *Boston Patriot* July 13, 1816, as quoted in Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 152.

⁵³ *Kentucky Gazette* July 8, 1816, as quoted in Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance*, 42.

⁵⁴ Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 157.

⁵⁵ *Aurora General Advertiser (Philadelphia)* July 13, 1819, as quoted in *Ibid.*, 153.

perceived the South American patriots as imitating their own path to independence. As they observed the republican movements from afar, they noticed a resemblance to their own struggle for independence years before.

Newspapers Laud Bolívar as Washington

Bolívar's bold leadership in the wars for independence in South America led many to compare him to George Washington. In fact many people in the United States viewed Bolívar as the "Washington of South America."⁵⁶ Hezekiah Niles in his weekly newspaper wrote, "Bolivar is efficiently copying the most illustrious traits in the character to our Washington – May he continue faithful to the end, and become entitled to be called 'the father of his country!'"⁵⁷ In response to the final victory at Carthagená, Niles asserted, "Another *Washington* has hewed out the path of another country's glory, and the hope may be well entertained that the United States will not constitute the only republic – remain the only section of the world wherein it is acknowledged that men possess certain 'natural and unalienable rights.'"⁵⁸ His articles illustrated a natural inclination to project the republican history of the United States onto Bolívar and the nascent Spanish American provinces.

By 1825, republican victories over Spain ensured South American independence which encouraged many leaders in the United States to openly toast Bolívar at public occasions. At one public dinner celebrating the New Year, Henry Clay proposed,

⁵⁶ David Bushnell, "Simón Bolívar and the United States: A Study in Ambivalence," *Air University Review* (July-August 1986): 12.

⁵⁷ *Niles' Weekly Register*, October 27, 1821.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, November 10, 1821 – emphasis in original.

“General Bolivar, the Washington of South America, and the Republic of Colombia.”⁵⁹

Three months later in March, General Andrew Jackson wrote a message to be read at a dinner he could not attend. In this letter General Jackson submitted this toast: “*Bolivar* – Blessed by the same Divinity that guided our Revolutionary struggles, he has given Freedom and Independence to his country – May he resign his commission to the People as the only legitimate source of power, and thereby be associated with our immortal Washington.”⁶⁰ One toast came after a Fourth of July parade during a celebration of the Washington Cavalry: “Simon Bolivar, the founder of South American Independence: He follows the footsteps of Washington in the path to immortality.”⁶¹ Also in 1825, Vice President John C. Calhoun toasted, “*The Patriots of South America*: We rejoice in their success, and hail their Bolivar as a second Washington.”⁶² As South America became a land of liberty, many in the U.S. believed Bolívar’s actions in the cause of freedom deserved the glory of Washington. Bolívar reached the height of his career as a military leader and liberator of South America. Within the year, reports of Bolívar’s lust for power dissuaded some from comparing him to General Washington.

Bolívar’s Ambition Reaches the United States

The toasts of 1825 highlighted the peak of praise toward Bolívar within the United States. Fitz stated that toasts to Bolívar dropped dramatically and never fully

⁵⁹ Ed. James F. Hopkins, *The Papers of Henry Clay*. Volume 4: *Secretary of State, 1825* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), 1.

⁶⁰ *Daily National Intelligencer* (DC) March 28, 1828 – emphasis in original.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, July 7, 1825.

⁶² *Ibid.*, May 21, 1825– taken from the *Columbia State Gazette* – emphasis in original.

recovered after 1826.⁶³ Despite what some began to think, the press continued to bestow honor on the Liberator's character. Ashbel Green – editor of the *Christian Advocate* in Philadelphia – wrote in May 1825, “Bolívar seems to be a man of noble spirit, of sterling integrity, and of true republican principles.”⁶⁴ Green's assessment equaled the views of many other editors in the U.S. The *Daily National Intelligencer* of Washington, D.C., reprinted an article from the *North American Review* which depicted Bolívar as the “most brilliant star in Colombian history, and indeed in the history of modern revolutions.” The article described his accomplishments and then asserted, “His ambition has never been too strong for his integrity, and a sincere desire for his country's good.”⁶⁵ The editor of the *North American Review* recognized Bolívar's ambitious nature; however, he believed that the Liberator's altruistic characteristics prevented him from doing any real harm to his countrymen.

Despite the optimistic reports from the press, some questioned whether or not Bolívar deserved praise from the United States. One former statesman and diplomat felt that comparing Bolívar to Washington was premature. Alexander Everett wrote a book on his travels in South America during the height of admiration in the U.S. towards Bolívar. He noted, “The attempt to compare them [Bolívar and Washington] is wholly premature. Bolívar is still in the midst of his career; [...] the glorious mission which has been allotted to him, it is nevertheless too early to award the prize before the race is run.” Everett believed that despite all of Bolívar's labors and great efforts among his countrymen, he needed to accomplish one more act to prove himself worthy of

⁶³Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 270, 279-280.

⁶⁴J. Orin Oliphant, “A Philadelphia Editor Looks at Latin America, 1823-1834,” in *Pennsylvania History*, vol. 12, no. 2 (April, 1945), 137.

⁶⁵*Daily National Intelligencer (DC)* July 26, 1825.

Washington's acclaim. Everett described this final act as "more difficult, if we may judge at least by its rarity, than all the rest; and without which all the rest will go for nothing and worse than nothing." Leading an entire region of South America into wars of independence against Spain held no merit compared to what Everett believed Bolívar's actions lacked. "He has yet to show, that he knows the difference between true and false greatness, that is, between true greatness and a hoop of gold or a wooden seat covered with velvet." Everett referred to Bolívar's ambitions for glory and power. "After subduing hostile enemies, he has yet to subdue (if he is unfortunate enough to feel them) the impulses of irregular ambition."⁶⁶

Everett enumerated further actions he thought requisite for Bolívar aside from controlling his ambition. The Liberator had to do all to assist his countrymen in the "foundation and administration of their civil institutions, must have rescued them from monarchy, as he had redeemed them before from foreign bondage, must have held out to them the graceful and edifying example of a private life corresponding in dignity and purity with the glory of his public career." In order for Bolívar to attain a comparable position with Washington, he would have to seal his liberal actions with his death. "[And] finally must have brought his earthly course to an honourable end. [...] All this, however, must be done before Bolivar can claim the honour of being a worthy and successful student in the school of Washington. Greater honour than this he need not wish, and can never under any circumstances aspire to." Though Everett recognized within Bolívar aspirations for power and glory beyond that which Washington acquired,

⁶⁶ Alexander Everett, *America: Or a General Survey of the Political Situation of the Several Powers of the Western Continent, with Conjectures on their Future Prospects by a Citizen of the United States*. (Philadelphia, PA: H.C. Carey & I. Lea, 1827), 181-182.

he retained his faith in the Liberator. “I feel the fullest confidence that he will justify the hopes of the world, and terminate as he has commenced.”⁶⁷

Rumors of Bolívar’s ambition caused some to question his republicanism and the honor bestowed upon him as the “Washington of South America.” The press continued to focus on the Liberator’s qualities which had given northern South America its freedom from Spain. His deeds as a military leader and patriotic hero followed the patterns of the heroes from the American Revolution. Some people in the U.S. believed Bolívar’s ambition prevented him from achieving true glory. They felt that Bolívar needed to step down from his supreme powers and give them back to the people – liked Washington had done. People in the U.S. continued applying their model of liberty, democracy, and selfless service to a distant hero who – to them – no longer resembled a true republican.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 182.

CHAPTER 3

STRIVE FOR POWER, FALL FROM GRACE

The Dilemma of Power: The Perus, Monarchy, and Empire⁶⁸

Opinions of Bolívar varied dramatically after knowledge of his ambition for more authority reached the United States. Diplomats and the press tended to report first positive and then negative views toward Bolívar. The special agent of the U.S. to Peru, John B. Prevost, championed the efforts of the Liberator. In addressing the prolonged war in Peru, Prevost lamented, “All has been adverse to Bolivar since his arrival; he has had to surmount difficulties that would have appalled a man less firm and less ardent in the cause.” Prevost specified the difficulties Bolívar faced in Peru: “[He] has had to contend with Civil dissentions; he has had to watch over domestic treason among those to whom he was compelled to lend a portion of his confidence; and he has had to encounter the dereliction of a powerful Body of Troops, upon which he had a right to rely.”⁶⁹ In Prevost’s eyes, Bolívar deserved more than the hardships he received in the struggle for Peru’s independence.

William Tudor, who served as the U.S. Minister to Peru, agreed with Prevost’s assessment of the Liberator. He arrived in Lima as a passionate admirer of General Bolívar. He believed that Bolívar was the only leader in South America with the ability

⁶⁸ The Vice Royalty of Peru included modern day Peru and Bolivia, the latter so named in honor of Bolívar.

⁶⁹“John B. Prevost to John Quincy Adams, Lima, January 10, 1824” in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* III, 1745.

to maintain order and to establish a republic in the region: only through the Liberator could Peru remain peaceful and safe.⁷⁰ Reporting to Clay on Bolívar's character, Tudor described him as "ardent" and "impetuous," but that Bolívar "appears to be a man of too much talent to follow the career of false ambition which his enemies attribute to him, which would cause his ruin, & would degrade him inevitably from the lofty station in the list of pure & virtuous patriot."⁷¹ Less than a month later, in May of 1826, Tudor wrote to Clay on the current conditions in Peru. He heavily critiqued Bolívar based on intelligence that the Liberator desired to establish an empire in South America. Tudor angrily wrote, "The deep hypocrisy of General Bolivar has hitherto deceived the world [...]."⁷² This intelligence informed Tudor that Bolívar recently accepted authoritarian powers in Peru while retaining his supreme powers in the Republic of Colombia.

Tudor soon acknowledged the previous reports of Bolívar's lust for power. After acquiring dictatorial power over Peru and dissolving Congress, Tudor claimed, "[Bolivar] has evidently passed the Rubicon, but is still within sight of its banks, & might secure his retreat: the desperate hope that he will do so is hardly worth entertaining." The minister's intense loathing for Bolívar came from what Tudor saw as a betrayal of trust in the U.S. and in Spanish Americans. Tudor reflected, "I have believed Gen. Bolivar, animated by the most pure & lofty ambition, & that notwithstanding some defects of private character, & personal traits & habits wholly dissimilar, that he had taken a model in view, of which we are so proud, & the world so admiring." In this he referred to Washington and the United States as Bolívar's model. Tudor accredited his faith in Bolívar to the fame and

⁷⁰ "William Tudor to Henry Clay, Lima, April 9, 1826" in *Ibid.*, 1787. See also Tudor's letters to Clay February 25, 1825, 1779, and June 4, 1825, 1783.

⁷¹ "William Tudor to Henry Clay, Lima, April 25, 1826" in *Ibid.*, 1790-1791.

⁷² "William Tudor to Henry Clay, Lima, May 17, 1826" in *Ibid.*, 1792.

glory which “posterity would have recognized him.” However, with the reality of Bolívar’s ambition confirmed, Tudor admitted that he “could never believe any man would descend from that lofty eminence [...] to confound himself with the ignoble herd of ambitious, usurping, military chieftains.”⁷³

From that day in 1826, Tudor became a fierce opponent of the Liberator President. He began comparing Bolívar to another known military despot and tyrant, Napoleon.⁷⁴ In July of 1826, Tudor reported to Clay, “A year ago [Bolívar] appeared pleased with the comparison to Washington, & affected to resent that with Napoleon.”⁷⁵ He viewed the Liberator as following Napoleon’s example instead of Washington due to Bolívar’s rumored imperial plans. Tudor’s next correspondence depicted a Bolívar who wished to form his own path to glory. “[On] his birthday last week, [... Bolívar] declared himself a greater man than any which history has recorded, that not only the heroes of antiquity were inferior [sic] to him in ‘liberal ideas’, but that Washington & Napoleon he had left much in the rear.”⁷⁶ Bolívar felt that Washington and Napoleon did not merit the same acclaim which he had attained. Actions such as these caused many diplomats to view Bolívar as unrepugnant and no longer comparable to Washington.

Tudor’s dispatches to Clay described the details of Bolívar’s deceit. “His solemn, reiterated, & vehement protestations of disinterestedness, [... and] affected horror [sic] of the dictatorship, his contemptuous refusal of the millions offered him, his declaration

⁷³ Ibid., 1796-1797.

⁷⁴ Ibid., see also Tudor’s letters to Clay July 5, 1826, 1799, and August 24, 1826, 1807 and 1808.

⁷⁵ “William Tudor to Henry Clay, Lima, July 26, 1826” in Ibid., 1802.

⁷⁶ “William Tudor to Henry Clay, Lima, August 1, 1826” in Ibid., 1805.

that he would not take a grain of sand from Peru, all contributed to deceive the world.” All this Bolívar did, Tudor thought, “while he was preparing to make himself master of the country, & from South America into one empire.”⁷⁷ When reports from Peru detailed the new authoritarian powers Bolívar had acquired, editors justified Bolívar’s actions. The *Commercial Advertiser* of New York wrote, “Year after year we behold him resigning offices, public honors, and powers, and in almost every instance taking upon himself again the next day, higher offices, greater honors and more extensive powers. And yet, we know of no instance of his playing the tyrant.”⁷⁸ Charles Hammond – a friend to Henry Clay – included his justification of Bolívar in a letter to Clay. “Perhaps the condition of that Country renders this course on his part indispensable – It is easy to perceive that he could contribute much to produce that very state of things, which furnishes the best apology for his present course.”⁷⁹ However, the *Niles’ Weekly Register* responded to Bolívar’s ambitious designs stating, “[We] are apprehensive that Bolívar is about to *resign* his pretensions to the character of the ‘Washington of the South.’ We would yet hope not.”⁸⁰

To Tudor, the Liberator’s many renunciations of authority masked his greatest aspiration – an empire. Tudor believed that Bolívar’s “inordinate, insane ambition, which aims at forming an empire of more extensive limits, than any the world has known, will leave no doubt as to his motive in preparing [Peru’s new] constitution [with a life-

⁷⁷ “William Tudor to Henry Clay, Lima, August 24, 1826” in *Ibid.*, 1807.

⁷⁸ *Commercial Advertiser* (NY) August 28, 1826.

⁷⁹ “C[harles] Hammond to Henry Clay, Columbus, December 24, 1826” in Eds. James F. Hopkins and Mary W. M. Hargreaves, *The Papers of Henry Clay*. Volume 5: *Secretary of State, 1826* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 1029.

⁸⁰ *Niles’ Weekly Register* November 18, 1826 – emphasis in original.

term presidency].”⁸¹ Bolívar had already applied this constitution to the new Republic of Bolivia. Bolivia’s constitution contained elements of Bolívar’s tendency toward centralized, and possibly monarchical, authority.

The Roots for Bolívar’s Monarchy

Early on, Bolívar expressed his desires for a Spanish American union under a single government. While in exile at Jamaica in 1815 he wrote, “It is a grandiose idea to think of consolidating the New World into a single nation, united by parts into a single bond. It is reasoned that, as these parts have a common origin, language, customs, and religion, they ought to have a single government to permit the newly formed states to unite in a confederation.” Despite confessing that unity was impossible due to regional differences, Bolívar sustained a belief in a united South America.⁸² He wanted a Spanish American alliance which could rival Great Britain and the United States. In his Address of Angostura he professed that England’s government was a “perfect model for a kingdom, for an aristocracy, or for a democracy.”⁸³ Despite this admission, J. Fred Rippy wrote that Bolívar first realistically contemplated a monarchy for South America while in Peru.

According to Rippy, Bolívar met several times with British diplomats posted in Peru. He argued, “In all of [the conferences with British agents in Peru] Bolívar evinced both a preference for the English political system and a desire for an English alliance, and

⁸¹ “William Tudor to Henry Clay, Lima, December 13, 1826” in Eds. Hopkins and Hargreaves, *The Papers of Henry Clay* V, 999, see also “James Brown to Henry Clay, Paris, December 29, 1826,” 1049.

⁸² As quoted in Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 83.

⁸³ As quoted in Lynch, *Simon Bolívar*, 121.

so was placing himself in opposition to the favorite Yankee ideas of republicanism and New World isolation.”⁸⁴In one such meeting in 1825, Bolívar met with a British representative named Captain Thomas Maling. Captain Maling wrote to Lord Melville about the contents of his meeting with General Bolívar. He related to Melville that Bolívar had said, “No country, [...] is more free than England, under a well-regulated Monarchy; England is the envy of all Countries in the world, and the pattern all would wish to follow in forming a new Constitution and Government.” Bolívar further explained his desires for England’s assistance: “Democracy has its charms for the people, [...] but England is again our example. [...] If we are to have a new Government let it be modelled [sic] on yours.”⁸⁵ According to Maling, Bolívar applauded England for its constitutional monarchy while questioning the permanence of the republican government in the United States. Bolívar desired a monarchy which could appease both the commonwealth as well as the aristocracy.

Less than a year later, Bolívar met with the British diplomat Charles Ricketts in Lima. Consistent with Captain Maling’s report, Ricketts wrote, “For an ally [Bolívar] preferred England to any other country, ‘even more than any of the States of America.’ [...] As for himself, he ‘most assuredly did not at this juncture uphold a Republican form of Government as superior to another.’” Bolívar did not focus on the United States as a model for Spanish American republics. He wanted to create a republic that worked for the various people of South America. Bolívar believed that England’s democratic monarchy provided the best example for such a government. Then Bolívar revealed to

⁸⁴ J. F. Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain over Latin American (1808-1830)* (Reprint. New York, NY: Octagon Books, Inc., 1972), 152.

⁸⁵ “Captain Thomas Maling to Lord Melville Chorillas, March 18-20, 1825” as quoted in *Ibid.*, 152-153 – emphasis in original.

Ricketts his persistent internal conflict concerning Old World and New World definitions of authority. “He also said that his heart always beat in favor of liberty, but that his head ever leaned toward aristocracy.”⁸⁶ Though the New World contended that power rested in the people, Bolívar felt that South America required Old World solutions for the problem of governance. The Bolivian Constitution manifested his inclination to aristocracy and authority.

The Bolivian Constitution: Foundation for an Empire

Reports from South America detailed the constitution Bolívar authored for Bolivia which prescribed a life-term presidency with the right to name his successor. Bolívar applied this same constitution to Peru months later with designs to present it before Colombia.⁸⁷ A U.S. agent in Paris at the time – James Brown – stated that Bolívar’s acceptance of such a presidency was considered “as a prelude to declaring himself Emperor of all South America.”⁸⁸ In reaction to news of the Bolivian Constitution, the editor for the *Commercial Advertiser* claimed that too many newspapers had “ridiculously enough styled [Bolívar as the] WASHINGTON of South America.”⁸⁹ The editor of the *Niles’ Weekly Register* reacted similarly when he confirmed accounts of Bolívar’s ambitious plans. “We now fear, indeed that Bolivar, [...] whose name should have descended to the most distant posterity associated with that of Washington, as common benefactors of mankind, will, have hereafter to be regarded as a *traitor to*

⁸⁶ “Charles Ricketts to Canning, Lima, February 18, 1826” as quoted in *Ibid.*, 154-155.

⁸⁷ Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 274.

⁸⁸ “James Brown to Henry Clay, Paris, December 29, 1826” in Eds. Hopkins and Hargreaves, *The Papers of Henry Clay V*, 1049.

⁸⁹ *Commercial Advertiser (NY)* December 12, 1826.

liberty— the tyrant and not the liberator of his countrymen.”⁹⁰ People in the U.S. believed that imperial plans completely rejected principles of republicanism and liberty. To them, Bolívar was no longer a patriot but a traitor and a tyrant.

Concerning Bolívar’s quest for a South American empire, New York’s *Commercial Advertiser* reprinted an extract of a letter they had received from a Baltimorean living in Peru. The informant claimed that “Gen. Bolivar has, I believe, been playing a deep game.” He then explained that while the general passed through Peru, Bolívar informed legislators that there would be no congressional meetings. The majority of these members excused themselves from congress which caused “that there [was] not enough to form a quorum. He then assumes the extraordinary power, gets everything altered [...] then resigns the Presidency, well knowing there would be no person to accept it [...]” The Baltimorean elucidated that all of this was done according to Bolívar’s desire, “which was to form the whole of *Bolivia, Peru* and *Colombia* in one *General Government* and place himself at the head of it.”⁹¹

In reaction to such reports from South America, the *Commercial Advertiser* divulged they had long believed the Liberator guilty of imperialistic ambitions. “This intelligence [reports of Bolívar attempting to create a military confederacy between Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia] only confirms the opinion which we have long entertained of Bolivar. We never had any confidence in the republicanism of the man. That he aims at the universal absolute dominion of the Southern Continent, we have long believed.”⁹² The press considered Bolívar to be unrepublican, siding with Niles’ prior claim that

⁹⁰ *Niles’ Weekly Register* December 16, 1826 – emphasis in original

⁹¹ *Commercial Advertiser (NY)* June 30, 1827 – emphasis in original.

⁹² *Ibid.*, March 29, 1827.

General Bolívar was “a traitor to liberty.” By 1827 “Bolívar’s reputation in the United States had already declined.”⁹³

In maintaining perceptions that Bolívar followed the pattern set by Washington, Niles wrote, “[In] the early stage of that republic it was certainly necessary that an individual of his talents, patriotism and discernment, should take the helm of the state, until the government was somewhat matured.” Bolívar’s qualities mirrored Washington’s characteristics which had brought freedom to the United States. However, Bolívar retained his power and sought more. Upon establishing a free and democratic republic, Niles clarified that once “this was accomplished and the people manifested a capacity for *self-government*, he should have retired from the presidential chair and stood by in the capacity of a counsellor [sic] and friend, to prove that the existence of their institutions did not depend upon *one man*, but that they were implanted in every [citizen].”⁹⁴ Like Bolívar’s presumed model, Washington, the Liberator needed to relinquish his authority and return it to the people consistent with conceived republican principles within the United States.

Era of Disillusionment: Reactions to Bolívar

James Cooley, U.S. *Charges d’Affaires* at Lima, seemed uncertain as to which opinions of Bolívar were correct. In a letter to Secretary Henry Clay, he wrote, “I am free to confess, I have been slow in forming opinions adverse to the principles of one [Bolívar] who has done so much for the cause of Independence in this quarter of the

⁹³ Judith Ewell, *Venezuela and the United States: From Monroe’s Hemisphere to Petroleum’s Empire* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), 43.

⁹⁴ Niles’ *Weekly Register*, July 14, 1827 – emphasis in original.

world. But proofs multiply upon proofs in such a manner as to be irresistible.”⁹⁵ Within the year Cooley grew leery of Bolívar’s motives and reported to Clay, “It can certainly neither accord with our principles, our feelings, or our interests, to witness these immense regions sinking under a military government – the whole concentrated in the hands of a single ambitious and profligate individual.”⁹⁶ Cooley believed that continued relations with a military despotism incongruent to U.S. republicanism put the United States in a potentially questionable position.

By 1828, many were aware of the rumors that Bolívar sought a crown and a South American empire. General William Henry Harrison, recently arrived U.S. Minister to Colombia, quickly fell in with the anti-Bolívar crowd in Bogotá. He soon made up his mind about the Liberator President and “charged that Bolívar was a tyrant with monarchical tendencies.”⁹⁷ Shortly after Harrison arrived in Colombia, Martin Van Buren – the new Secretary of State under President Andrew Jackson – recalled him assigning his commission to Thomas P. Moore, a former statesman from Kentucky. Harrison’s most diplomatic act in South America came as a private citizen after Moore relieved Harrison of his commission. Just before Harrison embarked from Colombia, he wrote a personal letter to Bolívar in which he rebuked the Liberator for seeking unlimited powers. Harrison tried to persuade Bolívar not to aspire to more authority, but to seek a place next to Washington as an immortal legend. General Harrison wrote,

[Nor] can a citizen of the country of Washington cease to wish that, in Bolivar, the world might behold another instance of the highest military

⁹⁵ “James Cooley to Henry Clay, Lima, November 7, 1827” in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* III, 1836.

⁹⁶ “James Cooley to Henry Clay, Lima December 12, 1828” as quoted in Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, 171.

⁹⁷ As quoted in Ewell, *Venezuela and the United States*, 6.

attainments united with the purest patriotism, and the greatest capacity for civil government. Such, sir, have been the fond hopes, not only of the people of the United States, but of the friends of liberty throughout the world. [...] But trust me, sir, that there is nothing more corrupting, nothing more destructive of the noblest and finest feelings of our nature, than the exercise of unlimited power. [...] The people of Colombia possess many traits, suitable for a republican government. A more orderly, forbearing, and well-disposed people are nowhere to be met with. [...] Are you willing that your name should descend to posterity, amongst the mass of those whose fame has been derived from shedding human blood, without a single advantage to the human race? Or, shall it be united to that of Washington, as the founder and father of a great and happy people? The choice is before you. The friends of liberty throughout the world, and the people of the United States in particular, are waiting for decision with intense anxiety.⁹⁸

Harrison's words revealed that many continued to project their perceptions of democratic leadership attained from the example of Washington. Reports from South America during this period influence the Adams administration and the press to interpret Bolívar's actions as inconsistent with republican principles in the United States. No other example illustrated this concept more than two of Henry Clay's letters as Secretary of State.

Henry Clay's Letters

Henry Clay served as the Secretary of State during Bolívar's darkest years as a leader in South America. Before his appointment, he was known as the champion of Spanish America on the floor of Congress.⁹⁹ Bolívar even wrote a letter of gratitude to Clay for his service on the behalf of South Americans: "All America, Colombia, and myself, owe your excellency our purest gratitude for the incomparable services you have

⁹⁸ "General Harrison to General Bolívar, Bogotá, September 27, 1829" in Samuel J. Burr, *The life and times of William Henry Harrison* (New York, NY: L. W. Ransom, 1840), 282-293.

⁹⁹ Ed. Calvin Colton, *The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay* (New York, NY: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1855), 165. See also Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance*, 57. See also Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 83.

rendered to us.”¹⁰⁰ Although Clay had done much for South American recognition, correspondence from his agents began to alter his opinion of the Liberator. In a message to General Lafayette, Clay disclosed, “You will recollect that [...] I proposed as a toast Bolivar, the Washington of South America. I must revoke or at least suspend that sentiment.” Secretary Clay regretfully informed Lafayette “that evidence has reached me from so many quarters, and of a kind so entirely satisfactory, that I can no longer resist the conviction, which I very reluctantly adopted, that he has conceived and actually commenced the execution of a vast project of ambition, which involved the overthrow of the liberties of South America.” He clarified, “That project was no less than the ultimate establishment of an Empire which should stretch from the Isthmus of Dairen to Cape Horn.”¹⁰¹

As Secretary of State, his agents had provided ample proof of Bolívar’s ambitious plans. Clay felt that such a project destroyed liberty instead of supporting it. To Clay, principles of republicanism nurtured liberty and freedom among its people. Clay explained the details of Bolívar’s project to Lafayette: “The first movement was the Bolivian Constitution, with its President for life &c; the next its adoption in Lima; the third which he proposed was its introduction in Colombia; and then he designed the union of Bolivia, Peru and Colombia, which were to form a nucleus only for ulterior

¹⁰⁰ “Liberator President to His Excellency Henry Clay, Bogotá, November 21, 1827” in George D. Prentice, *Biography of Henry Clay* (Hartford, CT: S. Hanmer, Jr. and J. J. Phelps, 1831), 143.

¹⁰¹ “Henry Clay to General Lafayette, Washington, August 10, 1827” in Eds. Hopkins and Hargreaves, *The Papers of Henry Clay V*, 872-873.

purposes.”¹⁰² Instead of building governments consistent with republican values found in the United States, this project sought to form an empire with Bolívar at its head.

Clay believed that Bolívar was on the verge of committing horrible crimes against liberty. Clay informed General Lafayette that Bolívar “has grown, I understand, passionate, impatient and overbearing, and takes Bonaparte as his model. Was ever man guilty of greater folly? What glory awaited him, if he had been true to Liberty and to his Country! Greater than ever man has acquired or can achieve.”¹⁰³ Maintaining a perception that the United States provided the best model for republicanism, Clay lamented Bolívar’s turn toward Napoleonic desires. His reference to “Bonaparte as his model” clearly demonstrated the influence of Tudor’s messages on Clay. In 1828, he responded to Bolívar’s letter from the year before. Though written with diplomacy, the message rebuked Bolívar for his schemes to create an empire or establish a monarchy.

Clay informed Bolívar that the United States had hoped for a “great and virtuous man” to bring liberty, peace and safety to South America. “We have even flattered ourselves that we beheld that genius in your excellency; but [...] that ambitious designs have been attributed by your enemies to your excellency, which have created in my mind great solicitude.” The U.S. saw Bolívar’s recent activities as unrepblican. Supporters for South American independence, like Clay, wondered how a patriot of liberty could so easily set aside basic republican principles. Trying to reassure Bolívar that he hadn’t lost faith in the Liberator, Clay wrote “I have been most unwilling to credit the unfavorable accounts which have [...] reached me.” He then quietly rebuked and warned Bolívar for what consequences his ambitious plans would bring. “I cannot allow myself to believe

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 873.

that your excellency will abandon the bright and glorious path which lies plainly before you, for the bloody road, passing over the liberties of the human race, on which the vulgar crowd of tyrants and military despots have often trodden.” He followed this caution with friendly support, believing that Bolívar would soon “render a satisfactory explanation to Colombia, and to the world, of the parts of your public conduct which have excited any distrust.” Clay reminded the Liberator of “the true glory of our immortal Washington,” and of Bolívar’s own “patriotic resolution of ultimately placing the freedom of Colombia upon a firm and sure foundation.” He concluded, “That your efforts to that end, may be crowned with complete success, I most fervently pray.”¹⁰⁴ Though Clay’s faith in the Liberator had faltered, he reminded Bolívar of the glorious example already before him – Washington. As long as Bolívar promoted republican values and principles, Clay and others would continue to support his cause.

The Jackson Administration: Press Versus Policy

Prior to the Jackson administration, people looked to the founding fathers as a guide for principles and policy. By Jackson’s election, a majority of politicians and citizens were not alive during the American Revolution or too young to remember the sensation of their newly created republic. The current generation admired the heroes of the War of 1812 and the recent battles in Florida – which Jackson had led. As a fellow warrior turned statesman, Jackson looked to Bolívar’s patriotic accomplishments to define his administration’s view of the Liberator. They did not project U.S. republicanism onto Bolívar. Rather they focused on his heroism and liberalism, traits

¹⁰⁴Henry Clay to Simón Bolívar, Washington, October 27, 1828” in Ed. Seager, *The Papers of Henry Clay* VII, 518.

Jackson admired. In May 1829, Secretary Van Buren wrote to the Colombian Consul General at New York, Xavier de Medina. He noted that Bolívar's "past services in the cause of freedom and his Country the history of Colombia affords so many striking proofs and whose continued attachment to the principles of free Government will I trust be made equally manifest by future events."¹⁰⁵

Despite an optimistic policy toward Bolívar, not all U.S. diplomats posted in the northern South America shared this view. Samuel Larned, the Consul at Lima, reported to Van Buren "that this powerful leader was a factor to be reckoned with all the way from Mexico to Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. [...] Bolívar's influence [...] uniformly manifests itself inimical to the interests and good name of the United States, and their government."¹⁰⁶ Larned saw through the previous acts of heroism and liberalism to the ambitious Bolívar who was attempting to establish an empire or monarchy. J.G.A. Williamson, U.S. Consul at La Guayra, blamed personal meetings which Bolívar held with British Minister Cockburn in 1827 for filling Bolívar's head with monarchical designs. He informed Van Buren, "That Genl Bolivar has had & may yet have such views [toward monarchical policies] I have no doubt."¹⁰⁷

Reports like these from Larned and Williamson inspired editors to write less cautiously about the Liberator. The *Niles' Weekly Register* ran an article stating, "The accounts from Colombia, if to be relied on, pretty clearly shew that Bolívar has become a traitor to liberty. We have long feared this, but yet hoped the preservation of the

¹⁰⁵ "Martin Van Buren to Xavier de Medina, Washington, May 6, 1829" in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* I, 303.

¹⁰⁶ "Samuel Larned to Martin Van Buren, Lima, January 14 and March 8, 1830" as quoted in Rippey, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, 172-173.

¹⁰⁷ "J.G.A. Williamson to Martin Van Buren, Caracas, December 12, 1829" in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* II, 1343.

republic. In time, and after the military spirit has been fully subjected to the civil power, Colombia might be regenerated [...].”¹⁰⁸ Knowing that negative reports from diplomats directly influenced the U.S. population through the press, Van Buren forwarded President Jackson’s policy toward Bolívar to his agents. “The President is unwilling to believe that he [Bolívar] who has made such liberal sacrifices [...], can ever consent to exchange the imperishable renown which posterity will doubtless award to the constant and untiring patron of public liberty for the fleeting and sordid gratification of personal aggrandizement.”¹⁰⁹ President Jackson reaffirmed his belief that the Liberator would not renounce his position in history for personal ambition.

According to the U.S. Minister to Colombia – Thomas Moore – Bolívar “spoke of [President Jackson] in terms of the highest admiration, as a patriot and a warrior.”¹¹⁰ In January 1830, President Jackson received a gold medal from General Bolívar. The medal commemorated Bolívar’s escape from assassins on September 25, 1829. When President Jackson presented the medal to Congress he warned, “The powerful influence [...] of General Bolivar [...] creates an anxiety as to his future course in which the friends of liberal institutions throughout the world deeply participate.” Almost as an answer to this caution, Jackson added, “The favorable estimate which I have formed of the nature of the services rendered by him, and of his personal character, impresses me with the strongest confidence that his conduct in the present condition of his country will be such as may

¹⁰⁸ *Niles’ Weekly Register* January 2, 1830, as quoted in Sowell, “The Mirror of Public Opinion,” 177.

¹⁰⁹ “Instructions to Thomas P. Moore from Martin Van Buren, Washington, June 9, 1829” as quoted in Rippey, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, 213.

¹¹⁰ “Thomas P. Moore to Martin Van Buren, Bogotá, January 21, 1830” in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence II*, 1349.

best promote her true interest and best secure his own permanent fame.”¹¹¹ The president held no doubts that time would vindicate Bolívar’s actions as a leader in South America.

Bolívar Seeks to Redeem his Title: El Libertador

Bolívar Resigns

In January 1830, Bolívar resigned from the office of president for the last time.¹¹² The New York *Commercial Advertiser* responded to his proclamation of resignation: “It will thus be seen that for the seventeenth time Bolivar has made a parade of resigning his arbitrary power. If he is in earnest this time, it is because he has found public opinion two [sic] powerful to carry his views into effect.”¹¹³ Later the newspaper questioned the genuineness of Bolívar’s withdrawal from his authority. “Whether the retirement of Bolivar has been voluntary or not, and whether his purpose to depart was sincere or feigned, still remains to be seen.”¹¹⁴ John Quincy Adams also doubted Bolívar’s ability to resign indefinitely. After Henry William Harrison arrived home from Colombia, Adams invited the general to his home. After meeting with Harrison about his time in Colombia, Adams wrote in his diary:

The conduct of Bolivar has for many years been equivocal. As a military leader, his course has been despotic and sanguinary. His principles of government have been always monarchical, but for himself he has repeatedly played off the farce of renouncing his power and going into

¹¹¹ “President Andrew Jackson to the Senate and House of Representatives, Washington, January 19, 1830” in James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1877* (Washington, DC: By Authority of Congress, 1899), vol. II, 466-467.

¹¹² As quoted in Ed. Bushnell, *El Libertador*, 143.

¹¹³ *Commercial Advertiser* (NY) March 9, 1830.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, June 23, 1830.

retirement. He still holds out this pretence, while at the same time he cannot disguise his hankering for a crown.¹¹⁵

By 1830, the U.S. repeatedly observed Bolívar resign his authority only to regain it. Bolívar's unrepugnant views of power created disillusionment in the United States which persisted even after Bolívar's final resignation from politics.

Bolívar left Bogotá with the intentions of leaving South America and traveling to Europe in self-imposed exile. After Bolívar left the city, Moore wrote to Van Buren of Bolívar's "talents, private integrity and past services and disinterested conduct, [and] when I recollect, that he made the first stand for liberty in Venezuela with his own slaves, liberating them to fight the battles of Freedom, [...] although he has frequently erred, I cannot but regret his departure."¹¹⁶ The press did not share Moore's views on Bolívar's resignation. In reflecting on Bolívar's career, the editor of the *Niles' Weekly Register* wrote, "it is hard to believe that he always preserved his balance, as a republican statesman."¹¹⁷ Some papers questioned if Bolívar's sincerity about going into exile once he began to delay his departure from the coast. The *Commercial Advertiser* editorialized, "The course of Bolivar is truly a singular one, and it baffles conjecture to anticipate what will be the ultimate conduct of the Liberator."¹¹⁸

The editor included a column assessing Bolívar's conduct and the tensions his delay created. "It may be that after all Colombia is not fit to be free, and that Canning and Clay made splendid mistakes in helping her to assume the attitude of a nation."

¹¹⁵ Ed. Charles F. Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, comprising portions of his diary from 1795 to 1848* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), VIII, 176.

¹¹⁶ "Thomas Moore to Martin Van Buren, Bogotá, May 7, 1830" as quoted in Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, 199.

¹¹⁷ *Niles' Weekly Register* July 17, 1830 – emphasis in original.

¹¹⁸ *Commercial Advertiser (NY)* July 16, 1830.

He wondered if the people required a charismatic leader such as Bolívar, or if the Liberator believed the republic needed him. “It may be that nothing but a dictator will do for her, and that Bolivar, understanding this, is willing to sacrifice his consistency for the sixth or seventh time, (for so often has he solemnly asseverated his determination to retire from the exercise of power,) all for the good of his country.” Believing that Bolívar had failed as a republican leader, the paper stated, “we are sorry that he means to remain and trouble the waters. If he would depart with his thousand generals, these would soon be calm.”¹¹⁹ Doubts remained in the United States as to whether or not Bolívar was genuine in his resignation and departure.

Even papers that were friendly to Bolívar began to question his motives. The *Pennsylvania Inquirer* – one such paper – contained an article on Bolívar’s delay: “Although the late relinquishment of supreme power by that chieftain, and his declaration that he meant hereafter to remain forever in retirement, were calculated to make a favorable impression on the public mind of this country as to the integrity of his intentions, our apprehensions concerning his real views have been revived by the mystery and equivocal nature of his movements.” The delayed exile and reports of threats from Bolívar to reunite Venezuela with Colombia by force produced distrust among his supporters in the United States. Newspapers agreed with the *Pennsylvania Inquisitor* and began doubting Bolívar’s sincerity. The *Christian Advocate* published, “[Bolívar] has certainly acted in a manner that must forever destroy, in our minds at least, all confidence in his integrity and his most solemn declarations.”¹²⁰ Bolívar’s recent ambitions for

¹¹⁹ Ibid., July 30, 1830.

¹²⁰ As quoted in Oliphant, “A Philadelphia Editor Looks at Latin America, 1823-1834,” 139.

power and his delay in leaving the country caused many to continue questioning his values as a true republican. People in the U.S. still perceived a desire for authority in spite of his resignation.

Death as Vindication: Not a Monarch but the Liberator

Despite what others saw as a “hankering for a crown,” Bolívar repeatedly defended himself as a fighter for freedom in the last years of his life. In a letter to General Páez in March 1826, Bolívar confessed that a monarchy in South America did not make sense to him. He believed “that this project is not good for you or for me or for the country.” He clearly explained why he was not in favor of a monarchy in South America. “Colombia has never been a monarchy. A throne would be frightening as much for its height as for its brilliance. Equality would be destroyed, and the people of color would see all their rights stripped away by a new aristocracy.” Bolívar did not want to take away the liberties he had fought for during the past two decades. He was not Napoleon; he did not wish for a crown. He was the great Liberator! “Napoleon was a great and unique man, in addition to being extremely ambitious. None of this applies here. I am not Napoleon, nor do I wish to be. Neither do I wish to imitate Caesar [...]. Such models seem unworthy of my glory. The title of Liberator is superior to any ever granted to human pride. Therefore, it is impossible to degrade it.”¹²¹ Bolívar felt he had attained such great glory as the Liberator that nothing could tempt him to tarnish that title. Even if the United States saw Bolívar as a tyrant, he retained a conviction that he had done everything for the good of his country.

¹²¹ “Simón Bolívar to José Antonio Páez, Magdelana, March 6, 1826” in Bushnell, *El Libertador*, 137-138.

Bolívar gave two proclamations to the Republic of Colombia which stood above the rest as bold refutations of his aspirations for a crown. The first appeared in his resignation from all authority in January 1830. He declared, “[A] crown which [... has been] offered me on more than one occasion and which I have rejected with the indignation of the fiercest republican.” He adamantly rejoined, “Never, never, I swear to you, has it crossed my mind to aspire to a kingship that my enemies have fabricated in order to ruin me in your regard.” He then reassured his fellow countrymen of the motives for his actions. “Do not be deceived, Colombians! My only desire has been to contribute to your freedom and to the preservation of your peace of mind.”¹²² In this proclamation, Bolívar denounced his supposed schemes for establishing a monarchy. As he retired from public life, the famed general wanted Colombia to remember him only as the Liberator.

He desired that Colombia and history preserve his glory, which became evident in his final proclamation to Colombia days before his death in December 1830.

“Colombians! You have been witness to my efforts to establish freedom where tyranny previously reigned. I have worked without thought of personal gain, sacrificing my fortune and even my peace of mind.” He explained why he continually renounced his political powers and how his enemies abused him. “I relinquished my power when I became convinced that you mistrusted my detachment. My enemies took advantage of your credulity and undermined what is most sacred to me: my reputation and my love of freedom.” In an act of tragic heroism, he stated, “I have been the victim of my

¹²² “Proclamation to Colombia by Simón Bolívar, Liberator President of Colombia, Bogotá, January 20, 1830” in *Ibid.*, 143-144.

persecutors, who have driven me to the very threshold of my grave. I forgive them.”¹²³

Bolívar died only days later. He never acquired a kingdom or an empire. His death quieted many who questioned his actions and motives as the Liberator.

Bolívar died in December 1830 worn out from war and tuberculosis. The Jackson administration retained a positive attitude toward General Bolívar even after the Liberator’s death. Upon hearing the report of his death, U.S. Minister Moore wrote to the Minister of Foreign Relations of Colombia, Vicente Borrero: “In the Liberator, Colombia has lost a benefactor and a father, society one of its most distinguished ornaments, the human race a skillful and successful defender of civil liberty.... His name is that of a patriot and hero; and although his exploits encompass a hemisphere his reputation has spread to all nations and will reach to the extremes of posterity.”¹²⁴ With these words, the Jackson administration sealed their notes on Bolívar and triumphed over the negative reports from the press.

The news of Bolívar’s death did not arrive in the United States until February 1831. The newspapers reported on his death with mostly positive assessments. The *Niles’ Weekly Register* editorialized,

The time has not yet arrived for a just appreciation of the conduct and character of Simon Bolivar. That he had much personal courage, and unconquerable perseverance, is manifest; and, until latterly, all men seemed to regard him as solemnly devoted to liberty and the rights of man. Some parts of his proceedings have appeared mysterious to us, [...] and it was feared by many that he aimed at the sovereign power, and a crown.

¹²³ “Proclamation to Colombia by Simón Bolívar, Liberator of Colombia, etc., Santa Marta, December 10, 1830” in *Ibid.*, 150.

¹²⁴ Eugene R. Huck, “Early United States Recognition of Colombian Independence and Subsequent Relations to 1830” in *United States-Latin American Relations: The Formative Generations*, Ed. T. Ray Shurbutt (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 225.

[...] His value will be better estimated by the course of things that shall follow his death.¹²⁵

The *Evening Post* in New York observed in a short column: “Bolivar will be ranked as the greatest man, both as a statesman and soldier, who has hitherto appeared in the province of Spanish America, while his title to the reputation of a true and honest patriot, attested as it has been by numerous acts of his life, is now confirmed by his death.”¹²⁶ This short statement set the tone for many newspaper reports on Bolivar’s passing. The newspapers did not condemn the Liberator but desired to leave his legacy to the historians. The article in the *New-York Spectator* read, “The character of Bolivar now belongs to history; and after the lapse of a generation, justice will be done to it, when interest and prejudice shall have become silent. We will not presume to anticipate the verdict of posterity.”¹²⁷

The final four years of Bolívar’s life proved to be the most controversial. The U.S. perceived his actions as unrepblican, despotic, and imperialistic. Popular understandings in the United States found it difficult to dismiss rumors of Bolívar’s monarchical leanings. His dictatorships combined with the Bolivian Constitution created a period of disillusionment which endured until his death. Despite the Jackson administration’s efforts to bolster Bolívar’s image, the Liberator’s death finally dispersed all doubts of his presumed unrepblican acts. Though the U.S. continued to apply its conceptions of republicanism to Bolívar, it could not ignore the glory of his title.

¹²⁵*Niles’ Weekly Register* February 19, 1831.

¹²⁶*Evening Post* (NY) February 14, 1831. As quoted in Sowell, “The Mirror of Public Opinion,” 181.

¹²⁷*New-York Spectator* February 18, 1831.

CHAPTER 4

RACE OVER REPUBLICANISM

Race Theory in the Early United States

Since the time of colonization, the majority of Americans believed they were a chosen people of God. Reginald Horsman wrote that this idea “permeated first the Puritan and then American thought.”¹²⁸ Prior to the nineteenth century, the race philosophies in the Enlightenment embraced environment as the reason for racial distinctions of the physical body. Each race possessed the same mental aptitudes but regional and cultural differences “accounted for the marked gaps in achievement between different peoples and different nations.”¹²⁹ John Johnson argued that by 1815 people in the United States believed they “had become a super people, [...] because of historically derived behavior patterns, sets of values, beliefs, attitudes, laws, customs, and physical characteristics that they associated with Anglo-Saxonism.”¹³⁰ At this time, whites in North America began developing a connection to the European Anglo-Saxon race. They believed Anglo-Saxons to be a superior race whose descendants created “free governments by means of a Revolution.”¹³¹

Aside from inheriting an assumed superiority of race and culture, North Americans also perpetuated the bias of the Black Legend. This term did not appear until

¹²⁸Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 3.

¹²⁹Ibid., 98.

¹³⁰Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 46.

¹³¹Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 4.

the twentieth century but the Black Legend included all the degrading ideas Anglo-Americans taught about the Spanish. Accordingly, the Spanish were self-righteous, lazy, sanguinary, cruel, immoral, and superstitious. They blindly followed the precepts of a corrupt clergy and treacherously honored the Inquisition. British publications and cultural bias propagated hostility toward Spain throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹³²

Legalized slavery in the United States produced an atmosphere of natural superiority over the African race. Horsman described this as the “American experience” which generated “scientific theories of black and Indian inferiority.” This experience permitted pseudo-sciences to declare the “enhancement of the American Anglo-Saxon ‘race’.” New ideas of racial distinctions and polygenesis became popular due to the theories of pseudo-scientists.¹³³ Johnson identified these new sciences as “catastrophism, craniology, phrenology, and the study of facial angle and hair texture.” Both Johnson and Horsman argued that the growing popularity in the United States of the pseudo-sciences were key to the development of racial ideologies during the early nineteenth century.¹³⁴ These new ideologies stated that innate racial distinctions not environment generated the differences in skin color and in natural abilities. These views put the Anglo-Saxon race on top placing blacks, Indians, and mixed breeds on bottom. The new racial distinction theories became more accepted with “the widespread southern defense of slavery” and through the harsh racialized language used in the 1826 debates on the

¹³²Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 47-49.

¹³³Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 115.

¹³⁴Ibid., 118. See also Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 5.

Panama Congress. By 1830, many recognized innate racial differences which produced a natural racial hierarchy.¹³⁵

Early Racial Attitudes Toward Spanish America

The idea of enlightened superiority over Spanish Americans pervaded the attitudes of the leaders and citizens of the United States by the 1820s. Animosity toward Spaniards continued to permeate the white North American culture. During a session of Congress concerning the current state of the Spanish American provinces, Senator John Randolph from Virginia claimed that their struggle for independence would terminate in “a detestable despotism.” He argued, “You cannot make liberty out of Spanish matter [...]. What ideas had the Spaniards of rational liberty [...]? None.”¹³⁶ Thomas Jefferson echoed Randolph’s negative assessment in a letter to John Adams in 1818, “They [the South Americans] will succeed against Spain. But the dangerous enemy is within their own breasts. Ignorance and superstition will chain their minds and bodies under religious and military despotism. I do believe it would be better for them to obtain freedom by degrees only.”¹³⁷ In a later correspondence to Adams, Jefferson expressed his fears of South American independence: “I feared from the beginning, that these people were not yet sufficiently enlightened for self-government; and that after wading through blood and

¹³⁵ Ibid., 120-122. See also Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 57, 76, and 179.

¹³⁶ Joseph Gales and Winston William Seaton, *Annals*, 14th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 29 (Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1854), 728.

¹³⁷ “Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, May 17, 1818” in Ed. H. A. Washington, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: being his autobiography, correspondence, reports, messages, address, and other writings, official and private*, vol. VII (New York, NY: D. W. Derby, 1861), 104.

slaughter, they would end in military tyrannies, more or less numerous.”¹³⁸ Jefferson and Randolph represented the fears of the United States at this time: military despotism and the Black Legend prevented Spanish Americans to establish concrete republics.

John Quincy Adams held many views toward the peoples of South America which opposed their becoming independent states. Early on, he questioned Bolívar’s tactics in emancipating Venezuelan slaves. In response to “Bolívar’s decree freeing those slaves who fought under the patriot banner,” Adams wondered “whether the cause of Venezuela is precisely the same as ours was.”¹³⁹ He retained certain reservations about Bolívar based on his ideals of equality and the stratified society in which he lived. Adams saw the United States as an enlightened model of republicanism which did not free their slaves but allowed the states to decide the matter. He wrote in his diary on September 19, 1820, “As to an American system, we have it; we constitute the whole of it; there is no community of interests or of principles between North and South America. [...] Bolivar [...] talks] about an American system [...], but there is no basis for any such system.”¹⁴⁰

Less than a year later, Adams explained his sentiments about South America and their struggle for liberty. He stated, “So far as they were contending for independence, I wished well to their cause; but I had seen and yet see no prospect that they would establish free or liberal institutions of government.” He desired their independence from Spain as long as they formed a republican government which mirrored the virtues and morals of the United States’ government. Adams did not believe that South Americans

¹³⁸ “Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, January 22, 1821” in *Ibid.*, 200-201.

¹³⁹ “John Quincy Adams to Alexander Hill Everett, Washington, December 29, 1817” in Ed. Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams* VI, 282.

¹⁴⁰ Ed. Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* V, 176.

could organize such a liberal institution. “They have not the first elements of good or free government. Arbitrary power, military and ecclesiastical, was stamped upon their education, upon their habits, and upon all their institutions. [...] War and mutual destruction was in every member of their organization, moral, political, and physical.”¹⁴¹ Adams retained no hope for the people of Spanish America. He regarded their cultural weaknesses which they had inherited from Spain as too pervasive to overcome.

By the 1820s, North American whites considered the creoles and mixed races in South America as inferior to them. The different races in the Spanish America “inherited the least desirable attributes” from their progenitors.¹⁴² U.S. diplomats to northern South America reported on the perceived frailties of these races. Their observations reflected fears that Spanish Americans were not ready for self-government. Robert K. Lowry, Consul at La Guayra, Venezuela, from 1810 until 1826, reported on the complacency of the people even after the U.S. officially recognized the Republic of Colombia: “I shall content myself with saying that this People is ill prepared for the Rights of Civil Liberty, and that the leave of Spanish Despotism, has infected their present Rulers, as much as it ever did their former master.”¹⁴³ Charles S. Todd, a confidential agent of the U.S. from 1820 to 1824, provided Secretary Adams with a description of the current political state in the Republic of Colombia: “Under the imposing aspect of a Representative Republic, all the regulations, prejudices and caprices of the Spanish System really prevail.” Todd, like others, passed his derogatory attitudes toward Spain onto the people of the new republics. “[Until] the people shall be prepared by a radical reformation in their habits

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 325.

¹⁴² Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 56 and 179.

¹⁴³ “Robert K. Lowry to John Quincy Adams, La Guayra, September 22, 1822” in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence II*, 1223.

and degree of intelligence, it cannot be expected that they can realize an efficient Government emanating from the periodical Will of the Mass of the Community.”¹⁴⁴ Agents perceived an inability of South Americans to relate to the principles of democracy found in the United States. Some agreed with Jefferson that Spanish Americans had to take gradual steps toward freedom, “and in some cases imperceptible [progress].”¹⁴⁵

The Panama Question: Congressional Debates and Race

In 1825, the United States received an invitation to take part in a congress in Panama. Bolívar planned the Panama Congress originally for the new Spanish republics to with the hope of forming a larger union in the future. At first he did not wish the U.S. to be part of the congress, but after his vice-president sent an invitation to them he confessed, “I am also pleased that the United States is sending an envoy to the Isthmus, no matter what the terms.”¹⁴⁶ Though Bolívar appeared satisfied, there were some in the U.S. Congress who did not want to be a part of the conference. By the time of the debates, reports had reached the government of Bolívar’s ambition and possible plans for an empire. Aside from Bolívar’s ambition, many knew that the republics granted equality to everyone regardless of race. The liberation of every slave who fought for the republican cause produced a large number of free blacks within these republics.¹⁴⁷ In

¹⁴⁴ “Charles S. Todd to John Quincy Adams, Bogotá November 18, 1823” in *Ibid.*, 1268.

¹⁴⁵ “Charles S. Todd to John Quincy Adams, Bogotá, February 5, 1823” in *Ibid.*, 1242.

¹⁴⁶ “President Bolívar to José Rafael Revenga, Magdalena, April 8, 1826” in Ed. Harold A. Bierck, Jr., *Selected Writings of Bolívar* (New York, NY: The Colonial Press Inc., 1951), vol. II, 585.

¹⁴⁷ Gales and Seaton, *Register of Debates*, 19th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 2, Part 2 (Washington, DC: Gales & Seaton, 1826), 2449.

1823, before the need to consider the Panama Congress, Senator William Smith declared, “I should not prefer an intimate connection with these people, until they should first have given us some proofs of a national character favourable to our southern institutions.”¹⁴⁸

The debates in Congress on sending delegates to the Panama Congress began in March 1826. Jaede wrote of the apprehensions some congressmen felt toward sending delegates: “Many Southerners feared participation in the Panama Congress because of realities of race relations and emancipation in Spanish America.”¹⁴⁹ The opposition to the Panama Congress did not have enough votes on their side to prevent sending representatives. So they debated in order to delay the decision. The opposition prolonged the decision attempting to avoid participation in a congress where they assumed “that antislavery measures would be adopted. Congressmen presumed that many of the representatives from the other countries would be of African descent or be of a mixed race.”¹⁵⁰ They argued that liberal race ideologies and mixing in Spanish America prevented hemisphere cooperation.¹⁵¹ Representative W.C. Rives of Virginia proclaimed, “I do not believe there ever can be any *cordial* fraternity between us and them. The difference of origin, of blood, of physical and moral constitution, of language, of manners and customs, of religion, as they preclude any congeniality of feelings, must impose insuperable impediments to any intimate political union.”¹⁵² According to Rives, innate racial distinctions prevented any agreement on points relating to culture and policy.

¹⁴⁸As quoted in Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 233.

¹⁴⁹Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance*, 161-163.

¹⁵⁰Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 76, see also Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance*, 157-158.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁵²Gales and Seaton, *Register of Debates*, 19th C., 1st S., V. 2, P. 2, 2086.

Opposition members then turned to the question of emancipation. They believed that the United States would be the only country represented which hadn't emancipated their slaves.¹⁵³ Mr. Benton, a senator from Missouri, asked concerning the possible question of universal emancipation, "Who are to advise and sit in judgment upon it? Five nations who have already put the black man upon an equality with the white, not only in their constitutions but in real life; five nations who have at this moment (at least some of them) black Generals in their armies, and mulatto Senators in their Congresses!"¹⁵⁴ Benton and others argued that sending delegates to the congress would force them to accept any votes on emancipation due to their minority vote. Johnson wrote that in these debates, "creole leaders were harshly attacked as Negrophiles for supporting the emancipation of Afro-Americans and for recognizing all racial groups as equal before the law."¹⁵⁵ The opposition no longer saw Spanish Americans as republicans following the model of the United States. Instead, it viewed them through a lens of racial distinctions due to the delicacy of the question regarding slavery in the U.S. Any form of supporting the Panama Mission threatened the livelihood of the Southerners. However, the opposition felt that one item of the Panama Congress also threatened American lives.

The agenda for the Panama Congress included planning the invasion and liberation of Cuba and Puerto Rico – both of which held an "immense negro population" – and discussing "the diplomatic status of Haiti."¹⁵⁶ Concerning Haitian recognition, Congress agreed, "Our policy, with regard to Hayti [sic], is plain. We never can

¹⁵³ The complete abolition of slavery in Venezuela, Colombia, and Peru did not happen until the 1850s. See Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, 288.

¹⁵⁴ Gales and Seaton, *Register of Debates*, 19th C., 1st S., V. 2, P. 1, 330.

¹⁵⁵ Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 57.

¹⁵⁶ Gales and Seaton, *Register of Debates*, 19th C., 1st S., V. 2, P. 1, 114 and 155.

acknowledge her independence.”¹⁵⁷The possible invasion of Cuba made up the central factor to the opposition’s argument. Congressmen feared that an invasion of Cuba would create another black republic. They believed that the black republics in the Caribbean would unite and lead an assault on the southern United States where slavery still existed.¹⁵⁸ An attack would encourage enslaved blacks to foment an insurrection where the white population “will chiefly be put to death.”¹⁵⁹ Since the Panama Congress threatened slavery, it in turn endangered the lives of southern families. James Buchanan – Representative from Pennsylvania – asked, “Is there any man in this Union, who could, for one moment, indulge the horrid idea of abolishing slavery, by the massacre of the high-minded, and the chivalrous race of men in the South? I trust there is not one.” After bringing the perceived threat to the forefront, he followed, “For my own part I would, without hesitation, buckle on my knapsack, and march in company with my friend from Massachusetts (Mr. Everett) in defence [sic] of their cause.”¹⁶⁰ Opponents to sending delegates to the Panama Congress did not always come from the south. Many Northerners stood by their southern brothers and also employed racialized language to strengthen their arguments and delay the decision.

Newspapers reprinted the speeches from the Congressional Debates on the Panama Question of 1826. Concerning the editors of these papers, Fitz wrote, “[Whatever] position they took, one thing was clear: race was becoming more prominent in reports about South America.”¹⁶¹ Jaede illustrated that both parties in the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 166.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., P.2, 2450. See also Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 247-249.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 2232.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 2181.

¹⁶¹ Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 262-263.

debate spoke of the issue of race. “[The] majority of congressional speakers emphasized what was bad, foreign and dangerous about Latin America and Latin Americans. Not only opponents but also supporters of the mission agreed that the US and Latin America had distinct natures and interests.”¹⁶² Overt racial language resulted from the discussions on the Panama Congress. The words of politicians struck true with some of the editors in the United States. Even Niles, a defender of the Spanish American provinces, expressed in 1826, “That moral power which with us is superior even to the law, can hardly be said to exist in some of these new states ...”¹⁶³ One article went as far as claiming that, “True Americans, the author [of an editorial on the Panama question] insisted, were white.”¹⁶⁴ The Congressional debates on the Panama Mission heightened public awareness of racial distinctions with hemispheric relations. Combined with the “American Experience,” dispatches from diplomats in South America, and theories of pseudo-scientists, the debates accelerated the slow-paced growth of the evolving ideologies of innate racial differences which put white Anglo-Saxon on top. By 1830, many in the United States accepted the new theories of racial distinctions and superiority.

¹⁶²Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance*, 162.

¹⁶³Niles' *Weekly Register* February 25, 1826, as quoted in *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁶⁴As quoted in Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 267.

CONCLUSION

Over Bolívar's lifetime, views from the United States alternated between hero and dictator, republican and monarch, disinterested and ambitious, as well as through racial and nonracial terms. Jaede summed up reasons why the U.S. saw South Americans through a lens of republicanism. "To most North Americans, Spanish America looked like 'us': in our place, of our time, advancing our cause, and on our side in both the mundane and the cosmic contests of the day. North Americans counted their neighbors as presumptive allies against the 'Old World' of monarchy, ignorance, trade restrictions and oppression."¹⁶⁵ Diplomats to northern South America retained this view and promoted republicanism as part of U.S. policy at the time.¹⁶⁶ Rippy explained that these "witnesses" held "strong political prejudices" and "believed that the federal democratic republic was the best" form of government. In other words, these diplomats did not accept that Bolívar could maintain a preference for "a centralized and aristocratic system" over a liberal republican government.¹⁶⁷ Due to Bolívar's preference for a European solution for South American governance, the press began to label him a dictator, tyrant, and despot.¹⁶⁸ Many in the U.S. eventually concluded "that people are not by nature republicans."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance*, 79.

¹⁶⁶Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart*, 43.

¹⁶⁷Rippy, "Bolívar as Viewed by Contemporary Diplomats," 295.

¹⁶⁸Sowell, "The Mirror of Public Opinion," 166-167.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 173.

The faltering enthusiasm for Bolívar – based on his ambition and the political unrest in South America – coincided with the development of race relations within the United States. Both Fitz and Jaede pinpointed the debates of 1826 on the Panama Congress as a turning point in the way the U.S. viewed Spanish America. They agreed that the reality of race relations within the United States caused the U.S. to see South Americans as racially distinct and inferior.¹⁷⁰ Jaede illustrated the emerging racial ideology in the United States: “the Anglophone world of the early nineteenth century was beginning to define national groups in racial terms, and to invent the notion of a superior ‘Anglo-Saxon race.’”¹⁷¹

Racial distinctions actually developed overtime in the United States. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries public figures and commentators preached an emphasis on U.S. superiority as a direct result of white North American ancestry of the Anglo-Saxon race. In 1789, Jedidiah Morse described the people of the U.S. in his geography as “Anglo-Americans.”¹⁷² Relations between the United States and the new Spanish American provinces included evidence of a natural superiority over mixed races, which inherited the negative perceptions of the Black Legend. As early as 1812, diplomats reported their beliefs on the lack of “virtue and morality” and ignorance as “a prevailing feature in the character of the people.” Jaede and Fitz correctly point out that the debates in 1826 concerning the Panama Congress produced explicit racial language pertaining to the United States’ relationship with South Americans. However, these debates derived from already emerging opinions based on race. The press readily

¹⁷⁰Jaede, *Brothers at a Distance*, v and 202. See also Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 9-10; 239-240.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 98.

¹⁷²Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 94-95.

published copies of these speeches which directly influenced U.S. popular notions of race. Publications from the emerging pseudo-sciences reasserted the racialized language contained in the debates on the Panama Mission. According to Horsman, the theory of innate racial differences gained widespread acceptance in the U.S. by the 1830s.¹⁷³

A scholar of relations between Latin America and the United States, Fredrick Pike, best synthesized the stance of the U.S. toward Bolívar based on prevalent racial conceptions. Dealing with what he called “American perceptions of truth,” Pike wrote,

Incapable of subjecting his own passions to control even as he fought for independence, Bolívar in the course of the struggle liberated outward symbols of passion and primitivism: he freed the slaves of Latin America [...] and established a close alliance with the tumultuous blacks and mulattoes of Haiti [...]. Washington had the sense [...] to retain his slaves [...] and], unlike Bolívar, Washington did not entertain utopian dreams about the speedy incorporation of Indians into the political and social mainstream.¹⁷⁴

This perception of Bolívar demonstrated the developing racial distinctions in the U.S. between Anglo and Spanish Americans. Pike portrayed Bolívar’s characteristics as a deterrence to the overall success of establishing a secure democracy among the adolescent nations of South America. Many in the U.S. believed these traits prevented Bolívar from achieving the same glory as Washington.

Juan Vicente González once wrote, “With the majestic qualities of Bolívar, Washington would have awakened fears among the fervent puritans of the North; with the modest virtues of Washington, Bolívar would not have advanced by one day the cause of Independence in the South.”¹⁷⁵ To gain its independence from Spain, Spanish America required a hero like General Bolívar. Months before his death, Bolívar to a

¹⁷³ Ibid., 120-122.

¹⁷⁴ Pike, *United States and Latin America*, 64-65.

¹⁷⁵ As quoted in Ewell, *Venezuela and the United States*, 1.

friend, “Posterity will do me justice, and an assurance of this is all I possess to make me happy. My best intentions have been construed to the worst of motives; and, in the United States, where I expected justice, I have been abused.”¹⁷⁶The U.S. continually projected its ideals of republicanism and its notions of power onto Bolívar. Instead of conceptualizing what may be best for Spanish Americans, interpretations of Bolívar’s actions in the U.S. created disillusionment with the republicanism of South Americans.

In short, the United States saw Bolivar as a republican fighting against the tyranny of a monarch. The U.S. interpreted South Americans’ struggles as a similar cause as its own a few decades prior. At first, the U.S. applauded Bolívar for his acts of heroism and republicanism. Many granted him the title of the “Washington of South America.” As the U.S. became more aware of Bolívar’s ambition, ties of brotherhood and sisterhood to Spanish America began to deteriorate. Bolivar wanted a strong, central – possibly autocratic – government that educated its citizens in civic virtue and proper moral codes. He sought to establish a government which suited the needs of South Americans and gave liberty to any person regardless of race.¹⁷⁷Emerging definitions of race and the “Anglophone world” overlapped the rifts already forming between the United States and South America. Many in the U.S began to see the republics of South America as a growing threat to the institution of slavery and Bolívar as a “traitor to liberty.” Only the death of the Liberator and the continuance of republican governments in Spanish America quieted the doubters. Though his contemporaries misconceived his motives, Bolívar’s life left a legacy still glorified to this day.

¹⁷⁶*Daily National Intelligencer* (DC) June 29, 1830 – taken from the *New-York Evening Post*.

¹⁷⁷ Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, 121-122.

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