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Spanish Aid to the Americans in the West During the Revolution

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**SPANISH AID TO THE AMERICANS
IN THE WEST DURING
THE REVOLUTION**

by

Nicholas V. Ricci, S. J.

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts**

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1955

LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

Much has been said concerning the indispensable aid which France gave to the American Colonies during the Revolutionary War. There were soldiers like the Marquis de Lafayette whose services to General Washington were outstanding, and General Rochambeau who commanded the French troops at the Battle of Yorktown. There were admirals like Comte d'Estaing who was commissioned by France to harass English shipping, and Comte de Grasse who blockaded Cornwallis by sea at the Battle of Yorktown. Besides military aid, France gave considerable aid in the way of money, credit, armament, and clothing.

Poland, also, may be said to have contributed her share in aiding the American Colonies with such soldiers as Pulaski and Kosciusko who served as officers under General Washington. Germany, too, rendered valuable service with men like de Kalb, and Von Steuben who helped drill the green recruits of General Washington at Valley Forge. Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Holland formed an alliance to defend their commercial rights against England, and thereby aided the Colonies in an indirect way.

In 1780, Holland recognized the independence of the United States and entered the war against England. She also made substantial loans to the Colonists which amounted to 3,000,000 livres.

Hence, it is said that, if it were not for the aid given by foreign countries, and the aid especially given by France, the Colonies would never have won the war. Yet, it is precisely because French aid to the American Colonies is so stressed by historians that one country in particular is seldom credited with aiding the Colonists. That country is Spain, the Spain of the Bourbon Kings.

Therefore, it is our purpose to emphasize Spain's part in the Revolutionary War. Since Spain's participation extended to parts of the world other than the North American Continent, and since a full treatment of this subject is impossible in a work of this kind, we have limited ourselves to a consideration of Spain's influence and aid to the Americans in the West, the Mississippi Valley area.

CHAPTER I
SPANISH DIPLOMACY AND THE
AMERICAN COLONIES

Spain's attitude and participation in the American Revolution may seem a paradox to some. Spain, like the other European powers, was interested in the revolt of the American Colonies against their mother-country. From the very outset of the war Spain instructed her agents in America to investigate and report the intention and activities of both Britain and the Colonies.¹ She attached great importance to this information, so much so that the governor of Louisiana was instructed to omit nothing from his despatches which pertained to any phase of the American situation.² For a time, New Orleans and Havana were the two centers of operation, whence the governors of Louisiana could get in touch with the Americans.³ Early in May, 1776, a Spanish

1 Kathryn Abbey, "Efforts of Spain to Maintain Sources of Information in the British Colonies before 1779," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XV, 1928, 56.

2 Ibid., 58. Abbey quoting from Jose de Galvez to Terra, December 10, 1776.

3 Ibid., 63.

agent in Havana, Torre, wrote to the Captain General of Cuba:

.... measures are being taken in this port to investigate the operations of the English forces and to communicate information to the places where it is considered advisable to have news of them. I inform Your Excellency that not only will an attempt be made to obtain this information in the colonies themselves, but also that cruisers will be stationed at the principal places through which shipping passes from North America to our settlements, in order to observe and watch the English vessels passing through, and to communicate the information which they observe, sending it preferably to that port or province which is considered most interested.⁴

The following month the Spanish governor of Louisiana, Luis de Unzaga, sent a dispatch to the Spanish Minister of the Indies in which he recounted the latest news of the successes of the British and the Americans. He also warned the Minister that such information was questionable, since the royalists and the rebels reported news according to their feelings.⁵ In this same dispatch the governor stated that he intended to send a trustworthy man to Pensacola and a secret agent to Philadelphia to gather information concerning the war.

But information thus received often proved unsatisfactory.

⁴ Lawrence Kinnaid, ed., Annual Report of the American Historical Association, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794, II, Pt. I, Washington, 1949, 231-232, Torre to Bucarelli, May 2, 1776.

⁵ Ibid., 232-234, Unzaga to [Joseph] Galvez. June 19, 1776.

so that in the autumn of 1777 Spain sent "two permanent agents to the mainland, one to the seat of war and the other to the Continental Congress,"⁶ to gather accurate intelligence and to act as intermediaries with the Americans. However, the assignment of these two agents, Juan de Miralles and Josef Eligio de la Puente, did not mean that the Spanish Court had recognized the Independence of America, or that her forthcoming assistance was based on altruistic motives. Nor were her motives in aiding the Americans those of close friendship or of hope that subjected colonies would gain independence. For, while she favored such a revolt by the Americans Colonies, at the same time she feared it intensely, and, though she gave secret aid and assistance to the Colonies, she refused to recognize Colonial Independence. However contradictory this conduct may appear, it is not difficult to reconcile it. To find a satisfactory explanation for this paradox appeal must be made to Spain's attitude in her diplomatic relations with England and France.

"Balance of Power" was the watchword of the early part of the eighteenth century. A study of the various treaties of this period indicates that many of them dealt with trade regulation and privileges which sought a definite maintenance of balance of power.

⁶ Abbey, "Efforts of Spain," 64.

On September 7, 1701, England, the Netherlands, and Austria formed an alliance against Spain, and the Dutch were promised extensive commercial advantages in the Spanish Netherlands.⁷ "The Methuen treaties, not only involved allied policy in a hapless attempt to place the Hapsburg prince on the Spanish throne, but also laid the foundation for the Anglo-Portuguese trade of the next two centuries."⁸ The Second Grand Alliance was concluded in order to prevent France from coming into possession of the Spanish Indies and carrying on trade with them.⁹ The Asiento agreement, which was in reality one of the series of treaties of the Treaty of Utrecht, granted England an important share in the Spanish slave market. As soon as one nation tried to upset the balance, there would invariably follow a score of secret treaties to oppose such an upset, and when war did occur, the peace treaties would have as their main concern the restoring of the status quo before the war and the reestablishing of the balance. Such was the general ideal contained in the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713. Such was the case in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which ended the War of Austrian Succession.

7 John B. Wolf, The Emergence of the Great Powers, 1685-1715, New York, 1951, 64.

8 Ibid., 207.

9 Max Savelle, "The American Balance of Power and European Diplomacy, 1713-78," The Era of the American Revolution, ed., Richard B. Morris, New York, 1939, 141. Savelle quoting from Frances G. Davenport, ed., European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies, III, 86.

No one nation was given the opportunity to become predominant at the expense of other nations.

One of the factors which guided policies for the maintenance of balance was colonial possessions. By 1750 mercantilists held that the greater the number of colonies a country possessed, the greater would be the commercial success and security of that country. In fact, colonial possessions came to play such an important role in European politics that they were considered the foundation on which European balance of power rested. Balance of power in the colonial world meant balance of power in Europe.¹⁰

The first major conflict which permanently upset that balance of power was the Seven Years' War, more commonly referred to in American history as the French and Indian War. This conflict was in reality a struggle for the possession of America. The incident which precipitated the war was Washington's expedition in 1754 into the Ohio Valley which was then under French rule. Such an act made war inevitable, for France considered the expedition to be nothing less than an attempt on the part of England to seize the whole continent of America. War was declared between the two countries in 1754.

¹⁰ Ibid., 158.

Meanwhile, France tried to lure Spain into the conflict. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Duc de Choiseul, finally succeeded in winning an alliance with the Spaniards by playing up the danger of England's increasing colonial power, and the English threat to seize Spanish possessions. The conditions of the alliance were drafted by Choiseul and set down in two treaties which have been called jointly the second Family Compact. The first of these treaties was signed in August, 1761; the second, in February, 1762.

The Family Compact (pacte de famille) was in reality a secret agreement which bound the Bourbon House of France to the Bourbon House of Spain. It was based on family relationship, for, as was agreed to: "no other Power than those of this House (the House of Bourbon) shall be either invited or permitted to give adherence to this Compact."¹¹ It was a mutual agreement to aid each other whenever either of the two was attacked: "any Power which shall become the enemy of one or the other two Crowns' was declared the enemy of both."¹² During times of war each country was to furnish a fixed number of ships and soldiers, and peace

¹¹ A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathers, eds, The Cambridge Modern History, VI, New York, 1925, 345, as quoted by the editors.

¹² Ibid., 344, as quoted by the editors.

negotiations could not be commenced unless there was a mutual and common agreement and consent, and "on the bases of an equitable balance of losses and gains."¹³ In one division of the Compact the political relations between the two countries were clearly defined, and in another section trading rights and privileges were set down in unequivocal terms.

The Family Compact was the determining force in Spanish politics and the cornerstone of French diplomacy in the latter part of the eighteenth century. It brought these two countries together to fight side by side against their common rival, England. One of its principal aims was to reduce England's commercial prestige. It was to play an important part in forming the attitude of France and Spain toward the American Revolution.

England declared war on her new enemy on January 2, 1762. In less than a year the successes of her armies and navy were so overwhelming that France and Spain were forced to sue for peace.

The consequences of this war and the effects of the Peace of 1763 cannot be over-estimated. England emerged from the conflict the mightiest nation of Europe, while France was reduced to a second rate power. France had to cede to England all her possessions east of the Mississippi and the Province of Canada, and by a secret separate agreement ceded the territory of

13 Ibid.

Louisiana to Spain. She was permitted to retain only a few islands along the Canadian coast and in the Caribbean Sea. Thus did New France disappear, and not a foothold was left to the French Bourbons on the North American mainland.¹⁴

Spain also suffered. She emerged with "her troops in a miserable condition, her fleet worse and her coffers empty."¹⁵ She was likewise forced to give up some of her possessions. During the War England seized the Philippine Islands and Havana, and in order to regain possession of these colonies Spain was forced to relinquish all claims to the territory of Florida. By this final stroke of diplomacy England gained control of the entire Atlantic coast of North America. Thus did the Treaty of Paris, 1763 bring an end to that tripartite balance of powers, and bring Spain face to face with England in North America.

Now that Britain had eliminated her greatest rival in the New World and had secured a virtual dominion in the Gulf of Mexico by the acquisition of Florida, her attitude toward Spain changed to that of conciliation. Her main objective now was to renew trade relations with Spain and to enjoy again the position she held in the Spanish peninsula during the time of the

¹⁴ Justin Winsor, The Mississippi Basin: the Struggle in America Between England and France, 1697-1763, Boston, 1895, 420.

¹⁵ Vera Lee Brown, "Studies in the History of Spain in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," Smith College Studies Northampton, XV, October, 1929, 28.

Hapsburgs.¹⁶ To accomplish this, she tried to persuade the Spanish government that all its troubles were due to the alliance with France, especially through the Family Compact. France, on the other hand, was not unaware of England's renewed interest in Spain and her particular bent to destroy Franco-Spanish relations by belittling that sacred dynastic pacte de famille. For France, the Family Compact with Spain was the essential mainstay of her military and naval support against England.¹⁷ Especially vehement in denouncing English supremacy was Choiseul, and later his successor, Count de Vergennes. Both men were determined to weaken Britain and to gain a monopoly of trade concessions from Spain. To this end they appealed to the Family Compact:

. . . the French government under Choiseul leadership, was resolved . . . that the old conditions should not be returned to without a struggle. France would use the memory of the late common defeat and her influence as the strongest member of the Family Alliance to supersede England as the first commercial power in Spain.¹⁸

When Vergennes became Minister of State, he was determined to do everything possible to curb England's commercial and colonial power. To accomplish this end, France needed the active cooperation of Spain. He wrote often to the Spanish Minister, Grimaldi, to try to persuade him that Spain and France had a common cause

16 Ibid., 30.

17 Samuel Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution, New York, 1935, 18.

18 Brown, "Studies in the History of Spain," 42.

in redressing their grievances against England. Both had suffered humiliation in the victory of England in the French and Indian War, both had lost possessions, and both were at the mercy of England's commercial supremacy. Like Choiseul, Vergennes not only appealed to the Family Compact, but also attempted to unite the two Bourbon Kings in a closer union. When writing to his minister in Madrid, Ossun, Vergennes asserts:

. . . I ask you about my cooperation and eagerness to maintain a very desirable union between the two monarchs. If M. le M^{rs}. de Grimaldi recalls the period during which we stayed together in front of the fire, the king of England, perhaps, will remember that my attachment to the union does not date from the Pacte de Famille which as a matter of fact we henceforth made an obligation.¹⁹

Vergennes' persuasions failed. Spain would not wage war against England.

France had to wait until 1775 before an opportunity presented itself to sever Anglo-Spanish relations. In that year the American Colonies rebelled, and almost immediately France made use of the situation to strike back at England by secretly aiding the Colonies and finally forming an open alliance with them. Meanwhile, as in the French and Indian War, so also now, her statesmen, led by Vergennes, tried to draw Spain into the conflict by urging her to form an alliance with the revolting Colonies and to

¹⁹ Paul Chrisler Phillips, The West in the Diplomacy of the American Revolution, Campaign, 1913, 36. Quoting from Vergennes to Ossun, July 22, 1774. French letter extract trans. by the author.

give them aid. Vergennes' main argument was that if France and Spain did not aid the Colonies, they would practically be forcing the Colonies back to their mother-country, and thus reconciled, England and the American Colonies would seize opportunities to expand in America.²⁰

Yet, Spain was not easily lured by Vergennes' seemingly plausible arguments. For, in forming an alliance with the Colonies Spain would have to recognize their independence. To declare the American "rebels" free and independent might incite her own American Colonies to rebellion and attempts to achieve their own independence. In this respect, Spain had a good reason to fear the revolt of the colonies, and also to hesitate in making an alliance. Then, too, an alliance with the Colonies would mean open hostilities with England, which at this particular time would be most inopportune. Spain was not only not prepared to undertake another war, but she was also in dire need of markets for trade at this time. England, was one of her main outlets for exports.

Lastly, what is perhaps the main reason why Spain refused to ally herself with the Colonies, was that by maintaining a policy of neutrality she hoped to recover her lost and priceless possession, Gibraltar. Transactions carried on in the Hussey-

20 Savelle, "The American Balance of Power," 166-167.

Cumberland Mission bear out this fact.²¹ From the very moment when England seized this cherished possession in 1704, Spanish statesmen were bent on its recovery. Every means of diplomacy was tried, but in vain. Here, at last, in the American Revolution was the long-awaited opportunity. Spain would be willing to sell her neutrality to Britain in return for Gibraltar. Of course, there were other concessions such as the restoration of Minorca and Florida, the expulsion of the British interlopers from the Bay of Honduras and the Campeche Coast. Spain also wished a share in the codfisheries of Newfoundland.²² However, Gibraltar was at the head of this list of objectives. Even on the very eve of open hostilities between the two countries, Spanish statesmen were trying to induce England to make such an agreement. Especially was this the hope of Spain's ambitious Prince Minister, Count de Floridablanca, when he wrote to Thomas Hussey, his priest-representative in England, January, 1780:

I also think that, if England could assure us that she would not invade the Spanish possessions in America and the Philippine Islands, we could induce our Catholic King to cease his invasion of England's possessions, and further, to extract a promise from him not to invade them in the future. All this can be made possible, provided that an agreement could be reached in

21 For an excellent account of this Mission and its consequences, consult Samuel Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission and American Independence, Princeton, 1931.

22 Ibid., 6.

regards to Florida and another agreement concerning Honduras and Campeche.²³

Again, in the second memorandum of de Floridablanca to Hussey one reads:

As for Spain, the country would like an agreement reached in regards to Campeche and Honduras, and to acquire that part of Florida which lies within the Bahama Channel [Florida Keys], including Pensacola and Mobile. The rest of that territory, with the city of St. Augustine and its surroundings, may be retained by England. I repeat, that in my opinion, everything will depend on the fact that we can win the confidence of his Spanish Majesty from forming an alliance with the Colonies and invading England, if only the English promptly and entirely evacuate Gibraltar.²⁴

This was also the attitude of other Spanish officials.²⁵ The Spanish government and de Floridablanca desired Gibraltar at all cost, whether through a maintenance of a policy of neutrality, or, if need be, by war as an ally of France.

Meanwhile, Spain's hopes of raising the Spanish flag on that rock-citadel never for a moment lessened her dislike and distrust of England. Even while these secret negotiations were

²³ Ibid., Appendix, 135-136. Translated freely from the Spanish texts by the author. Special acknowledgement is to be given to Louis Acevez, S. J. for assisting the author in this and other translations.

²⁴ Ibid., Appendix, 137-138.

²⁵ For "individual opinions of members of the Spanish Council of ministers on the question of separate Peace Negotiations with Great Britain," confer copies of the Spanish texts as found in Bemis' Hussey-Cumberland Mission, Appendix, 139-144.

being transacted, she feared that England would expose them to France, her ally through the Family Compact. Consequently, from the very outset of the American Revolution she took necessary measures and precautions to guard herself against England in case she ever found it impossible to maintain her neutrality. This explains her secret aid to the Colonies. For, aid to the Colonies would continue the strife and thus sap the mother-country of its strength. Hence, it is not difficult to understand why Spain expressed some joy when the Revolution broke out in America. Here was an excellent opportunity to reduce British colonial power, and at the same time avenge the great number of wrongs which England had inflicted upon her. She could hold the balance of power between England and her opponents; she could sell her neutrality to wrest new territory from England. Spain had something to gain in aiding the revolting Colonies.

When Spain's hopes were frustrated by King George's refusal to barter Gibraltar, or anything else for that matter, for Spanish neutrality, there was nothing left for the Spanish Court but to take offensive steps against her enemy. Before doing so Spain had tried to set herself up as a peace mediator in the conflict. In 1778 she began negotiations by asking the Courts of England and France to submit their preliminary demands for a peace settlement. When France replied that the Colonies should be recognized as free and independent States, whereas, England obstinately refused to acknowledge such a claim, the negotiations

terminated without success. On April 3, 1779 Spain finally sent to England and France a request to arrange for a cessation of hostilities and a settlement of differences. She also asked that the Colonies as well as England send to Madrid one or more commissioners "to adjust all those points and others which respect this suspension of arms and the effects which it ought to produce."²⁶ She also suggested that during the interval the Colonies were to be treated as "independent in fact."²⁷ England refused the Spanish terms, especially the proposition that she acknowledge the Colonies as independent in fact during the interval of the

²⁸ On April 12 a council was held between Spain and France at Aranjuez, in which Spain renewed the articles of the Family Compact. She allied herself with France against England:

to procure . . . by means of the war and the future treaty of peace the following advantages: (1) Restitution of Gibraltar; (2) possession of the river and port of Mobile; (3) restitution of Pensacola with all the coast of Florida along the Bahama Channel so that no

²⁶ Francis Wharton, ed., The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, III, Washington, 1889, 466. Translated ultimatum proposed by the court of Madrid to the courts of France and England, April 3, 1779, as found in the papers mentioned in the letter of Luzerne to Washington, January 23, 1780.

²⁷ Ibid., 466-467

²⁸ Ibid., 467. Extract from the exposition of the motives of the court of Spain relative to England.

foreign power may have an establishment on that Channel; (4) expulsion of the English from the Bay of Honduras, and execution of the prohibition stipulated by the last treaty of Paris in 1763 against forming any establishment in that bay, any more than in the other Spanish territories; (5) revocation of the privilege accorded to the same English to cut dyewood on the coast of Campeche; and (6) restitution of the Island of Minorca.²⁹

On May 4 Spain sent her ultimatum to England, and, again, King George flatly rejected the Spanish Minister's proposals. Four days later King Charles declared war against England. In reference to England's conduct in rejecting the mediation of Spain, Washington remarked to Jay that such conduct was "more strongly tinged with insanity than any thing she has done in the course of the contest,"³⁰ and surmised that the only rational solution that can be given to England's obstinacy was perhaps her hopes of a very powerful aid from some of the Northern states.³¹ Four months later, when writing to the governor of Havana, the Spanish Minister of the Indies, Jose de Galvez, made known the objectives of King Charles in pursuing the war in the West:

29 Samuel Bemis, ed., The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy, New York, 1927, I, Appendix, 297-298, Convention Between France and Spain of Aranjuez, April 12, 1779.

30 John C. Fitzpatrick, The Writings of George Washington, 1745-1799, Washington, 1937, XVI, 115. To John Jay, August 16, 1779.

31 Ibid.

The King has decided that the principal objective of his arms in America during the war with the English is to drive them from the Gulf of Mexico and the banks of the Mississippi, where their settlements are so prejudicial to our commerce, as well as to the security of our richest possessions.³²

With this quotation our survey of Spanish Diplomacy before the Revolution is concluded. It is clear what Spain's aims were and how she intended to achieve them. Attention will now be focused on the actual aid and assistance which she gave the Colonies, especially in the West, and to see whether she actually expelled the English from the Gulf of Mexico and the banks of the Mississippi.

³² Kinnaird, Spain in Mississippi, 355. Galvez to Navarro, August 29, 1779.

CHAPTER II

SPAIN'S SECRET AID TO THE AMERICANS

With the battles of Concord and Lexington war between Britain and the Colonies became inevitable. The Second Continental Congress finally declared independence, authorized preparations for a war against England, and began to enlist the aid of European countries. In 1776, Silas Deane went to Paris to procure clothing, arms, munitions, and artillery. Agents were likewise sent to the courts of Spain, Austria, and Prussia. Spain, however, refused to recognize the independence of the Colonies, but, after some deliberation, she did promise to give the Colonists some sort of secret assistance.

Spain's first loan to the Colonies was made in the summer of 1776,¹ when the French King Louis XVI succeeded in persuading his uncle, Charles III of Spain, to grant the Colonists 1,000,000 livres. To avoid suspicion of aiding the Colonists

¹ John J. Meng, ed., Dispatches and Instructions of Conrad Alexandre Gerard, 1778-1780, Baltimore, 1939, 60, Historical Introduction.

this amount was turned over to the French agent, Beaumarchais, who in turn, along with 1,000,000 livres which France had granted, passed this sum to the American Colonies.² Beside this loan of 1,000,000 livres, further subsidies, loans, and supplies were promised and eventually granted. Later, when Arthur Lee tried to solicit the aid of France, he could use as one of his principal arguments that:

the Spaniards had already given the following assistance to the Americans: 216 bronze cannons, 209 gun carriages, 27 mortars, 29 couplings, 12,826 bombs, 51,134 bullets, 300,000 kilograms of powder, 30,000 guns with bayonets, 4,000 tents, and 30,000 uniforms.³

In one of the accounts (la conferencia) of a certain Vaca da Osma, there is an exact list of what this Spaniard gave the Americans. He begins by sending a ship to Boston with a cargo of 12,000 guns. Then, on April 21, 1777, 50,000 pesos in letters of exchange; on April 24, 81,000 (libras tornesas); June 27, 21,106,500 libras in letters of exchange.⁴ Another Spaniard, Diego Gardoqui, supplied the Americans from time to time with provisions and money. On one occasion he sent six ships laden with supplies and three millinn reales.⁵

2 Ibid.,

3 A. Gonzalez Muniz, "La ayuda de Espana a la independencia norteamericana," Mundo Hispanica, Madrid, XLIX, April, 1952, 16, citing from the French historian Henri Doniol.

4 Ibid., 17.

5 Ibid.

Later, he "sent several cargoes of naval stores, cordage, sail cloth, anchors, etc., for public use, consigned to Elridge Gerry, esq."⁶ All this took place in 1777. In May of this same year Franklin and Deane could write to the Committee of Foreign Affairs "The latter [Spain] has already remitted to us a large sum of money, as you will see by Mr. Lee's letters, and continues to send cargoes of supplies, of which you have herewith sundry accounts."⁷

On January 15, 1778 Arthur Lee informed the same Committee of Foreign Affairs "that our friends in Spain have promised to supply us with three millions of livres in the course of this year."⁸ In this same year Oliver Pollock, the great American financier and intermediary between Spain and the United States, was granted a loan of \$74,087 from Spain.⁹ In July, the French Minister to the American Colonies, Conrad Alexandre Gerard, informed Vergennes that Spain had granted several secret favors to the Americans, among which was the ordering of five vessels laden with powder to be sent to New Orleans.¹⁰ In October Washington

6 Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 404. Franklin, Deane, and Lee to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, October 7, 1777.

7 Ibid., 323. Franklin and Deane to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, May 25, 1777.

8 Ibid., A. Lee to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, January 15, 1778.

9 Bemis, Diplomacy, 92.

10 Meng, Dispatches, 185, Gerard to Vergennes, July 25, 1778.

mentioned to the Board of War that he had heard "that a ship from Spain has just arrived at Baltimore with a very considerable cargo."¹¹ It has been estimated that between the years 1776 and 1779 the Americans received \$397,230 in subsidies from Spain.

Spain continued to give aid to the United States to the very end of the war. In the autumn of 1780 John Jay, who was then the American Minister to Spain, wrote the President of Congress that "His Catholic majesty has been pleased to offer his responsibility to facilitate a loan of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for us, payable in three years, and to promise us some clothing."¹² The following year Jay was granted a loan of \$174,011,¹³ and in June Washington informed General William Heath that a quantity of clothing (about 2,000 suits) had just arrived at Boston from Spain.¹⁴

In the West secret aid was given to the Americans by the Spanish governors of the strategic territory of Louisiana. At the outbreak of the War Louisiana was then under the governorship of Luis de Unzaga. Toward the end of his administration Americans

¹¹ Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XIII, 105. To the Board of War, October 18, 1778.

¹² Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 59. Jay to the President of Congress, September 16, 1780.

¹³ Bemis, Diplomacy, 92.

¹⁴ Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XXII, 183. to Major-General William Heath, June 8, 1781.

began to appear along the Mississippi. At the same time there occurred an event which marked the beginning of the aid of these Spanish officials to the Colonies.

In the Spring of 1776, the Indian agent George Morgan was authorized by Congress to regarrison Fort Pitt which was threatened by the British and hostile Indians. "One of the suggestions of his was quickly acted upon, to secure powder from New Orleans, then in the hands of friendly Spanish officials."¹⁵ Morgan sent Captain George Gibson and Lieutenant William Linn to New Orleans to de Unzaga to try to purchase the necessary powder. At first, de Unzaga was quite reluctant to grant their request. It was only through the intercession of Oliver Pollock that de Unzaga finally sold them "one hundred quintals of powder from the royal stores . . . the value of the powder was one thousand eight hundred and fifty pesos."¹⁶ This powder proved to be of great importance. With his share Linn arrived in time to save Ft. Pitt and Ft. Wheeling from falling into the hands of the British and the Indians.¹⁷ Later, when George Rogers Clark set out to

¹⁵ Louise Phelps Kellogg, The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest, Madison, 1935, 137.

¹⁶ Kinnaird, Spain in the Mississippi, 234. Unzaga to Navarro, September 20, 1776.

¹⁷ John Caughey, Bernardo de Galvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783, Berkeley, California, 1934, 87.

invade the Illinois country, he was able to furnish his men with some of this powder.

This powder, along with some supplies which Gibson took with him to Philadelphia, was the only thing sent to the Colonists during the governorship of de Unzaga. In the following year, 1777, de Unzaga was succeeded by Bernardo de Galvez, and under the governorship of this friendly Spaniard the Americans received ample supplies and financial aid to enable them to pursue the war in the West.

On February 20, 1777, two royal orders were sent to de Galvez which instructed him to receive and store a certain shipment of supplies,¹⁸ which were intended for the Americans. He was also ordered not to take any part in the delivery of these supplies, but rather, the supplies were to be entrusted to some merchant who would act as an owner and would sell them to Colonial agents.¹⁹ In this way "England could never argue that Spain had aided her insurgent foes,"²⁰ and, therefore, the greatest charge that England could ever raise against Spain would be that her merchants sold the Americans the needed goods.²¹

18 Ibid., 88-89. This shipment of supplies consisted of 6 cases of quinine, 8 cases of other medicine, 108 bolls of woolen cloth and serge, 100 hundredweights of powder in 100 barrels, and 300 musket with bayonets in 30 boxes.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

On March 4, Arthur Lee again tried to win an alliance with Spain, but, as before, the Spaniards refused to recognize Colonial independence. Yet, a promise was given that the Americans would find ammunition and clothing deposited at New Orleans and at Havana, and these could be picked up by any American vessel. Lee also succeeded in making a contract for a supply of blankets. Finally, he was assured that the Spaniards would send supplies for the army by every opportune means from the port of Bilboa.²² Several months later, General Charles Lee was given two thousand barrels of gunpowder, a quantity of lead, and a large amount of clothing, deposited at New Orleans.²³ Besides these goods information was furnished concerning the strength of the British at Pensacola.

Meanwhile, Captain George Morgan was soliciting further aid and commercial privileges from de Galvez. In a reply to Morgan, dated August 9, 1777, de Galvez asserts:

. . . you may be assured that I shall lend him [Pollock] my permission and all the aid that I can . . . the trade desired by you with this district may be undertaken from

22 Jared Sparks, ed., The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution, I, Washington, 1857, 405. Arthur Lee to the Committee of Secret Correspondence.

23 James Alton James, Oliver Pollock, New York, 1937, 108, quoting from Stevens, Fascimiles, London, May, 1777, 151.

whatever point you wish or is most convenient to you and you may be sure that those who take part in it shall be welcomed and be well received by me and I shall be responsible for everything.²⁴

Besides these promises de Galvez sent Morgan a shipment of arms, ammunition, and other supplies.

In the autumn of this same year, Patrick Henry, who was then Governor of Virginia, wrote a letter to de Galvez in which he stated that he was sending an agent to New Orleans to collect some supplies which he (de Galvez) had so generously placed there for the Americans.²⁵ In this same letter Henry also raised the question of free access to the Mississippi river and the Port of New Orleans.

This question of free navigation of the Mississippi created a number of serious problems for the Spaniards and Americans alike. The lower portion of the river and the all-important port of New Orleans were controlled by Spain. As early as 1768 an English officer reported that the Illinois country would never be of any advantage to England unless the Port of New Orleans was procured. For the Americans the free navigation of the Mississippi river, and the use of the Port of New

²⁴ Ibid., quoting from Galvez to Morgan.

²⁵ Kinnaird, Spain in the Mississippi, 241. Henry to the Governor of Louisiana, October 20, 1777.

Orleans, were the life line and heart of the Revolution in the West. Would the Spaniards, therefore, allow the Americans to conduct their business in this port, and would they permit free access to the Mississippi?²⁶

De Galvez not only granted the Americans permission to navigate the Mississippi and use the port of New Orleans, but he went on to give them considerable aid and protection. "Moreover, de Galvez declared to Pollock that he was prepared to suppress the commerce with Great Britain and engage in trade with the United States,"²⁷ and, subsequently, de Galvez ordered a number of British vessels to be seized for contraband trade.²⁸ There are a number of instances when de Galvez and the Spaniards gave protection to American vessels. On one occasion several trading vessels, after arriving at the mouth of the Mississippi, were on the verge of being seized by a British warship. The Spaniards immediately took over these American ships and claimed them as Spanish property. Thus did they save them from the British.²⁹ De Galvez also

²⁶ It was after Spain's entrance into the war and when a treaty of peace was in sight that this question became so acute as to be a real obstacle to a peace treaty. The Spanish King was determined to exclude all nations from the Gulf of Mexico and hence he did not wish to relinquish any claims to the port of New Orleans or to control the Mississippi. In fact, it was stated to Jay that control of the Mississippi was even more sought for than the acquisition of Gibraltar.

²⁷ James, Oliver Pollock, 75.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

declared that American cruisers and privateers could use the port of New Orleans to sell their prizes and plunder. On another occasion, de Galvez incurred the displeasure of a certain British sea captain because he harbored Captain John Barry.

By the end of 1777, the Spaniards had contributed much toward the American cause. De Galvez had sent seventy thousand dollars worth of arms, ammunition and provisions, and "by this means, the posts occupied by the Militia of Virginia on the Mississippi, and the frontier inhabitants of Pennsylvania had received material and comfort."³⁰ At New Orleans Oliver Pollock was permitted to purchase goods and merchandise from Spanish storehouses. Many of the boats which Pollock had laden with supplies made their way up the Mississippi unmolested, and finally reached their destination safely because they sailed under Spanish colors.

In the following year, 1778, the war finally reached the Mississippi Valley in the expedition of George Rogers Clark into the Illinois Country. When Virginia had decided to send an expeditionary force to invade the Northwest territory and to enforce claims to that region, George Rogers Clark was commissioned to lead the band of recruits. Late in May, 1778, after he was assured that the Spaniards would look upon him as a friend, and

³⁰ Charles Gayarre, History of Louisiana, III, New Orleans, 1885, 113.

that they would sell him supplies, Clark set out to capture the British posts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes. The journey from Pittsburg down the Ohio to Ft. Massac, and from Ft. Massac overland to Kaskaskia, taxed Clark's finances and supplies. Fernando de Leyba, the Spanish commandant of St. Louis, after meeting Clark could write to de Galvez that "the commanding colonel arrived at this town [Kaskaskia] in hunting shirt, and breech-cloth, naked of foot and limb with his bed, food, and gun on his shoulder. The troops had no other equipment than breech-cloth, powderhorn, gun, and knapsack."³¹ Clark found it necessary to depend on others for money, credit, and provisions to carry on his campaigns, and the Spaniards supported him.

De Leyba befriended him, and an intimate, lasting relationship ensued between these two men. In writing to George Mason, Clark says that de Leyba "omitted nothing in his Power to prove his Attachment to the Americans with such openness as left no room for doubt."³² And, since this was Clark's first opportunity to be in the company of a Spanish gentleman, he exclaims: "I was much surprised in my expectations; for instead of finding that

³¹ Charles Hackett, George Hammond, and Lloyd Meham, eds., New Spain and the West, Lancaster, 1932, 213. Kinnaird, "American Penetration into Spanish America," citing De Leyba.

³² James Alton James, ed., George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781, Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, XIX, Springfield, 1912, 129. Clark to Mason, November 19, 1779.

reserve thought peculiar to that nation, I saw not the least symptoms of it, freedom almost to excess gave the greatest pleasure."³³ In his Narratives of his conquest of the Northwest, after describing the capture of Kaskaskia and Cahokia, Clark wrote: "Friendly correspondence which was at once commenced between the Spanish officers and ourselves added much to the general tranquillity and happiness."³⁴ Elsewhere in these Narratives one reads: "The friendly correspondence between the Spaniards and ourselves was also much to our advantage, since everything the Indians heard from them was favorable to us."³⁵ When the merchants of St. Louis refused to accept Clark's credit slips, de Leyba "personally guaranteed a considerable portion of the debts. As a result he, as well as many others who helped supply American forces in the West suffered financial losses."³⁶

In the fall of 1778, when the British Colonel at Detroit, Henry Hamilton, was inciting the Indians to retake the Illinois Country, de Leyba offered Clark all the forces he could muster,

³³ Reuben Gold Thwaites, How George Rogers Clark Won the Northwest, Chicago, 1903, 38, citing Clark.

³⁴ Milo M. Quaife, ed., The Capture of Old Vincennes: the Original Narratives of George Rogers Clark and of His Opponent Gov. Henry Hamilton, Indianapolis, 1927, 67.

³⁵ Ibid., 88.

³⁶ Kinnaird, Spain in Mississippi, Introduction, xxvii.

if the Indians ever attacked. Clark speaks of de Leyba as a "Gentleman who interests himself much in the favor of the States, - more so than he had ever expected."³⁷ It is little wonder that Clark could write to George Mason: "Our friends the Spaniards [sic] are doing everything in their power to convince me of their friendship."³⁸

After the death of de Leyba, the new Spanish commandant of St. Louis, Francisco Cruzat, was no less friendly to the Americans. In fact, upon his appointment, he received instructions from de Galvez that he was to "maintain the most perfect relationship with the colonel and other American commandants in so far as this shall not wrong the rights, exemptions, and privileges of His Catholic Majesty."³⁹ How Cruzat followed these instructions is best shown in a letter of Geoffrey Linctot to Clark when he says: "He has on all occasions tried to prove to me the part he played for the success of the Americans, and has spared nothing in giving me irrefutable proof."⁴⁰ That the Spaniards had given aid to the Americans in the Illinois country

³⁸ Ibid., 122. Clark to Mason, November 19, 1779.

³⁹ Louis Houck, ed., The Spanish Regime in Missouri, I, Chicago, 1909, 172. Instructions, Bernardo de Galvez to Cruzat, July 25, 1780.

⁴⁰ James, Clark Papers, 1771-1781, 576. Linctot to Clark, July 18, 1781.

is borne out in the Report of General Hamilton when he states that "Spaniards had supplied [sic] the Rebel Forts with Powder,

&c . . ."⁴¹ On another occasion he writes in his Journal:

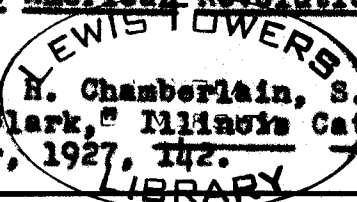
. . . I gave Le Comte a letter for the Governor of New Orleans, Don Bernardo de Galvez . . . it contained chiefly a remonstrance to the Spanish Governor upon the permission granted to the traders of New Orleans, to supply the Rebels at their posts with ammunition & ca. also a warning to the Spanish officers, commanding at the several posts on the Mississippi, not to give protection to the Rebels, otherways [sic] that they must abide the consequences.⁴²

Clark also received money and provisions from the merchant Francis Vigo, an Italian by descent but a Spanish subject. It was this friendly merchant who introduced Clark to de Leyba. He gave the Americans over \$20,000, and he had "upheld the value of paper money by redeeming and offering to redeem it at face value for anyone demanding it."⁴³ But the best instance of this untiring Spanish citizen's aid to Clark was the gathering of detailed military intelligence concerning the post of Vincennes. Just before the second occupancy of this post by the British (December 17, 1778) Vigo was commissioned to replenish the post

⁴¹ Ibid., 182. Report by Lieutenant-Governor Henry Hamilton on His Proceedings from November, 1776 to June 1781.

⁴² John D. Barnhart, ed., The Unpublished Journal of Lieut. Gov. Henry Hamilton, contained in Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution, Crawdsville, 1951, 164, January 14, 1779.

⁴³ Cecil N. Chamberlain, S.J., "Colonel Francis Vigo and George Rogers Clark," Illiana Catholic Historical Review, Chicago, X, October, 1927, 142.



with supplies. In the middle of December, 1778, he set out for Vincennes, unaware that the British had retaken it. When he was within six miles of the post, he was taken captive by the British Lieutenant de Quindre and seventeen Indians, who had been sent out on the Kaskaskia road to intercept stragglers.⁴⁴ Upon learning that Vigo was a Spanish subject, Hamilton ordered his release, for England and Spain were not at war. During his short stay in Vincennes Vigo made careful notes of the size of Hamilton's forces, the whereabouts of the Indians who allied themselves with the British, and the prospects of a surprise winter attack on the post.⁴⁵ When Vigo returned, he immediately rushed to Clark and gave him, as Clark says, "all the information . . . that we could desire as he had enjoyed a good opportunity to inform himself and had taken pains to do so with a view to bringing the report to us."⁴⁶ On the basis of this firsthand information Clark hazarded in the middle of winter a recapture of the post of Vincennes. The venture was a complete success; never again did Vincennes fall into the hands of the British.

Clark likewise received assistance from the Spanish

44 Barbhart, Unpublished Journal of Hamilton, 155.

45 Chamberlain, "Colonel Francis Vigo," 141.

46 Quaife, Capture of Old Vincennes, 117.

governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Galvez, who had originally ordered his Lieutenant, de Leyba, to assist Clark and those in his expedition in every way possible. Although provisions and money came directly from Pollock, it was de Galvez who at times supplied Pollock with the necessary loans and accepted American credit. In one letter Pollock writes to de Galvez:

I am absolutely under the necessity of applying to your Excellency for Two Thousand Dollars more, as Mons R, [sic] Pagot who is arrived from Illinois with different Bills of exchange drawn on me by the Commanding Officer there obliges me to pay him part of said Bills, which with other unexpected advances lays me under this Obligation.⁴⁶

In reality, to fill Clark's orders of supplies Pollock found it necessary to depend on his good friend de Galvez for funds which were given " 'as very secret service money' for the use of the United States . . . and delivered usually at night by Juan Morales, Galvez's private secretary."⁴⁸

This aid given to Clark certainly helped him to retain control of the Illinois territory. And, because Clark had actual possession of the land, Jay and Franklin could persist in demanding that territory for the States in the peace negotiations of 1782.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Kinnaid, Spain in Mississippi, 300, Pollock to Galvez, August 5, 1778.

⁴⁸ Caughey, Bernardo de Galvez, 99, quoting from the Deposition of Oliver Pollock, June 8, 1808.

⁴⁹ Thwaites, How Clark Won Northwest, 71-72.

Perhaps the best instance of Spanish aid to the Americans in the West was in connection with the expedition of James Willing into West Florida. Willing was commissioned by Congress to descend the Mississippi River and to seek the neutrality of the inhabitants along its bank. He was also to bring back provisions from New Orleans. On January 10, 1778, he set out from Pittsburg on a boat named the "Rattletrap." In his descent of the lower Mississippi he raided the plantations of the Tories, seized their property, and carried off their slaves.⁵⁰ At Natchez he managed to wring an oath of neutrality from the inhabitants. He also succeeded in capturing a number of British boats. One of his lieutenants captured the armed British vessel, the Rebecca, which had been patrolling the lake and canal that led to New Orleans.⁵¹ These prizes were useless unless Willing could hand them over to the American agent, Pollock, for disposal. The difficulty lay in the use of the port of New Orleans. Would the Spaniards allow the Americans to sell these prizes in this port? Permission was asked from the Spanish governor, and de Galvez not only granted Willing permission, but also allowed Willing's forces to remain in New Orleans. He even went so far as to assign them quarters in a government building.

⁵⁰ Gaughey, Bernardo de Galvez, 102.

⁵¹ James, Oliver Pollock, 120.

Such active succor to the Americans on the part of de Galvez aroused British protests. Peter Chester, the British governor of Pensacola, sent de Galvez a lengthy communication in which he rebuked the Spanish governor for giving aid and protection to the Americans. He demanded that Willing and Pollock be sent to Pensacola for the supposed murder of British seamen of a captured schooner, and among other protests he demanded that all the property which the Americans had seized and had taken to Louisiana be restored.⁵² Finally he brought the letter to a close by stating:

I cannot conclude this letter without once more Remonstrating against your Subjects transporting military Stores and Clothing up the River Mississippi destined for the Colonies in Rebellion, under Spanish Colours and Passports--Your Excellency cannot be ignorant of the General Principles which govern all States, and must know that by the Law of Nations "The Goods of an enemy on board the Ship of a Friend, may be taken, because supplying the Enemy with what enables him better to carry on the War, is a departure from neutrality . . . I know you have it in your Power, and if you refuse to exert your authority for such unjustifiable proceedings, you alone must be answerable for all the Calamities and Consequences that may ensue."⁵³

For the most part, de Galvez refused to comply with the British

⁵² Ibid., 123, citing Chester.

⁵³ Ibid., 124, quoting Chester, from Letters and Papers Relating to American Affairs, 1718-1796, (British Museum). Add. MSS., No. 24, 322, pp. 37-42.

demands and matters grew worse, to the extent that the British decided to take active measures against him. "According to secret reports," de Galvez wrote to the governor of Havana, "it appears that the English are planning an attack on this city for its having given asylum to the Americans and their prizes.⁵⁴ A month later he wrote to Patrick Henry:

I enclose for your lordship a copy, No. 2, of the letter which I am writing to Messrs. Morris and Smith, so that they may know the critical situation in which I find myself among my neighbors for having admitted into this province under my command, Captain Willing and his party and the prizes he has taken from the English.⁵⁵

Pollock best describes the situation when he informs Congress:

. . . I can not conclude this important subject without giving the greatest applause to Governor Galvez for his noble Spirit and Behavior on this occasion for tho he had no batteries erected or even men to defend the Place against two sloops of war, the Hound and Sylph, and at the same Time a small sloop with 100 men in the Lakes all coming against him with demands and Threats, yet in this situation he laughed at their Haughtiness and despised their attempts, and in short they returned as they came.⁵⁶

Yet, in spite of British warnings, the imminent danger of attack, and the possibility of being reprimanded by his own government, de Galvez did not hesitate to give protection and aid to Willing's party. In the same letter to Patrick Henry, he stated: "I also

⁵⁴ Kinnaird, Spain In Mississippi, 265, Galvez to Navarro, April 14, 1778.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 272, Galvez to Henry, May 6, 1778.

⁵⁶ James, Oliver Pollock, 124, citing from Pollock Letters.

enclose another copy, No. 3, to inform you how I am helping Mr. Pollock, agent of the Colonies, with money for the maintenance of Captain Willing's party, even though I do not know whether my Court will approve of it."⁵⁷ He ended this letter by assuring Henry: "I shall not spare any effort or trouble which may redound to the benefit of those colonies, on account of the particular affection I have for them."⁵⁸

In the early part of the summer Willing and his followers decided to return home. Permission was asked from de Galvez to fit out the captured British sloop Rebecca, renamed the Morris. Permission was granted, but Willing decided to prolong his stay and thus cause further embarrassments to de Galvez. By the beginning of the following year, 1779, he was finally persuaded to leave, and advised to return to Philadelphia by sea. He had hardly made his way homeward when he was seized by the British at Mobile, taken to New York and imprisoned. Later, he was released in exchange for Henry Hamilton, the British governor of Detroit who had been captured by the Americans. After receiving permission to pass through Spanish territory, Willing's followers, succeeded in making their way up the river to the headquarters of George Rogers

⁵⁷ Kinnaird, Spain in Mississippi, 272, Galvez to Henry, May 6, 1778.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 273.

Clark under whom they served for the remainder of the War.

On the whole, Willing's attempts to win over the inhabitants of West Florida to the American cause proved fruitless. For, no sooner had he seized and plundered a British outpost, than the British returned and recaptured it. His methods were said to be brutal, and consequently, merely generated hatred of him. Nevertheless, Willing's raids did have some good results, for his seizure of British vessels temporarily crippled the British navy in the lower Mississippi, and "interrupted the flow of supplies, especially of lumber from Natchez to Pensacola and Jamaica."⁵⁹ Another consequence of his expedition was that he induced the British Indians on the lower Mississippi River to remain neutral.⁶⁰ Whatever success he may have had was principally due to Pollock and de Galvez, without whose aid and protection Willing would never have remained in West Florida as long as he did.

The Americans had received a considerable amount of secret aid and assistance from the Court of Spain and Spanish officials in the West. They had been granted numerous loans and subsidies. On countless occasions their credit had been unquestioned. Many a cargo of essential supplies such as guns, powder, clothing, and medicine had been deposited in American ports and in New Orleans for their use. They had received protection

⁵⁹ John Caughey, "Willing's Expedition Down the Mississippi, 1778," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XV, January, 1932, 35.

⁶⁰ James, Oliver Pollock, 125.

under Spanish colors, and given passport through Spanish territory. Besides this financial and material aid, the Spaniards contributed militarily in the winning of the Mississippi Valley. We now turn to the struggle for the upper Mississippi and the part played by the Spaniards.

CHAPTER III

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

The year 1779 marks Spain's entrance into the War. Up to that year she had tried, at least outwardly, to maintain neutrality in order to achieve her aims. However, after King George flatly refused to return Gibraltar, and would not acknowledge Spain's offer to negotiate a peace, King Charles of Spain resorted to War. On May 8 he published a formal declaration of war against England, and two months later he authorized his Spanish subjects in America to take an active part in the hostilities to drive the British out of the West. When the Americans heard this news they rejoiced: "The declaration of Spain in favour of France," wrote Washington, "has given universal joy to every Whig, while the poor Tory droops like a withering flower under a declining Sun."¹

Washington hoped that Spain's declaration of War and her alliance with France would not fail to establish independence for America quickly.² Writing to the Spanish agent Juan de Miralles

1 Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XVI, 372; to Marquis de Lafayette, September 30, 1779.

2 Ibid., XVI, 222; to Major General John Sullivan, September 3, 1779.

concerning the union of Spain with France, he said: "We have every thing to hope over the arms of our common enemy, the English."³

The Spaniards, especially the followers of de Galvez, were also pleased at the declaration of war. The Supplement to the Gazeta de Madrid, of Friday, January 14, 1780, announced that, after de Galvez informed his troops of the declaration of war and the orders to attack the British posts, the "news caused a general rejoicing, and all of them in a determined manner manifested a desire to distinguish themselves in the service of the King, and for attacking their enemies without hesitation."⁴

De Galvez who had foreseen such a rupture between the two countries had secretly laid plans to capture such strategic British forts as Manchac, Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola. When he received word of the declaration of war, he was prepared to attack. Even General Campbell of Pensacola, when writing to Lord George Germain, stated "I cannot help observing that facts have demonstrated that Spain had predetermined on a rupture with

3 Ibid., 470; to Juan de Miralles, October 16, 1779.

4 Jac Nachbin, trans., "Spain's Report of the War with the British in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XV, 1932, 473-474.

Great Britain long before the declaration,"⁵ and "it is now uncontrovertibly known, that he (de Galvez) has long ago been secretly preparing for war."⁶

However, even though the English in the Mississippi Valley had been caught somewhat by surprise, they had, nevertheless, also laid plans to conquer the entire Valley, and even wrest the territory of Mexico from Spain. Briefly, the British scheme was that General Campbell, with a British fleet and army, would come up the Mississippi River to Natchez. At Natchez they were to meet an expeditious force of Sioux and other tribes west of the Mississippi River, which had been sent by the British Governor Sinclair. This Indian expedition was to descend the western bank of the Mississippi River and was to capture and destroy the Spanish posts on its way. Together the two forces would expel the Spaniards from all their settlements on the Lower Mississippi.⁷ In the Illinois country, one of the main objectives was the capture of the Spanish post of St. Louis, then known as

5 John Campbell and Alexander Dickson, "The Capture of Baton Rouge by Galvez, September 21, 1779," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XII, 256. Extract of a letter from Major-General Campbell to Lord Germain, dated Pensacola, December 15, 1779, as printed in the London Gazette, of Saturday, April 1, 1780.

6 Ibid., 256-257.

7 Justin Winsor, ed., Narrative and Critical History of America, VI, Boston, 1886, 738-739.

"Pancour" or "Paincourt." These plans, however, miscarried because of the alertness and initiative of the Spaniards.

The Spanish Commandant of St. Louis, de Leyba, must be given partial credit for saving the Upper Mississippi Valley from falling into the hands of the British. On February 17, 1780, Sinclair ordered a British trader, Esse, to gather together several Indian tribes which were hostile to the Spaniards. This force, together with seven hundred and fifty Indians from Michilimackinac and some Canadians and British soldiers disguised as Indians, was to march down secretly to St. Louis and seize the post by surprise. After the capture Esse was to remain in command of the fort, and then the Indians, under the leadership of Chief Wabasha, were to take the towns of St. Genevieve and Kaskaskia. Acting on these plans, after gathering his recruits, Esse marched to St. Louis.

Meanwhile, de Leyba had received information of Esse's expedition. He lost no time in fortifying his post. On May 26 Captain Esse and his forces arrived before the fort, and about one o'clock in the afternoon he began an assault on the northern side of the fortifications. The fighting was vigorous but brief, and in the end de Leyba and his small force successfully repulsed the attack. As the British forces retreated, furious at not having captured the fort, they resorted to a scorched-earth policy, barbarously killed twenty-two men, wounded seven, and took fifty-eight prisoners, including Negro slaves as well as white men.

Navarro, the Spanish intendant at St. Louis, considered the destruction of crops and the killing of cattle as the natural consequence of war, but the wanton murder of innocent victims who had been working in the fields, he could not condone, and vehemently blamed the British.⁸

Immediately after the attack de Leyba sent word to Clark and asked for his assistance. Clark arrived a little after dawn with five hundred men and pursued the Indians, putting them to flight.⁹ A month later, when writing to de Galvez, de Leyba reported that he had agreed with Clark to launch a retaliatory expedition "to go against the English and savages . . . in the environs of the Illinois River as well as other places where they could be found."¹⁰ The Spaniards furnished one hundred men, while the Americans contributed one hundred regulars and another hundred volunteers.¹¹ This expeditionary force was under the command of the American Colonel Montgomery, who "proceeded up the Mississippi to the Illinois in boats as far as Peoria."¹² From there they

8 Houck, Spanish Regime, I, 167-168; report of the Intendant Navarro to the Senor Don Joseph de Galvez, Aug. 18, 1780.

9 Kinnaird, Spain in Mississippi, 378-379, Delavillebreuve to Galvez, June 24, 1780.

10 Hackett, Hammond, Neeham, eds., New Spain, I, 253, De Leyba to the Governor, June 20, 1780.

11 Ibid.

12 James, Life of Clark, 208.

travelled overland on horses to attack the Sauk village at the mouth of the Rock River, but by the time they arrived the Indians had already deserted it. The Americans then burned the village, destroyed the crops, and finally retreated homeward. The Spaniards, it is said, continued up the Mississippi to present-day Prairie du Chien.¹³

The British never again assaulted St. Louis, although there were constant rumors of threatened attacks. A month after the assault, the Spaniards were expecting a renewed attack by the British.¹⁴ In November the new Commandant of St. Louis, Francisco Cruzat, wrote to de Galvez, that a Canadian named St. Michel had reported that two hundred Canadians stationed at Michillimackinac were ready and willing to undertake a new expedition.¹⁵ The following February information reached Thomas Jefferson that the Spaniards and Americans in Illinois were preparing for heavy attack,¹⁶ but the British never came.

By repulsing Captain Esse and his forces at St. Louis, the Spaniards at least disrupted the British plan for seizing control

¹³ Louise Phelps Kellogg, The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest, Madison, 1935, 170.

¹⁴ Kinnaid, Spain in Mississippi, 379, Delavillebreuve to Galvez, June 24, 1780.

¹⁵ Ibid., 397, Cruzat to Galvez, November 13, 1780.

¹⁶ James, Clark Papers, 1771-1781, 503, John Todd, Jr. to Thomas Jefferson, February 1, 1781.

of the Upper Mississippi and dislodging the Americans from Illinois. It should also be pointed out that, while Montgomery's expedition turned out to be a futile attempt to retaliate, it did, nevertheless, display the readiness of the Spaniards to assist the Americans.

Another way in which the Spaniards aided the Americans in the Northwest was by keeping the hostile Indian tribes in check, and even winning some of them over to themselves and the American side. The ever-changing attitude of the Indians toward the American Revolution was one of the main concerns that constantly confronted the Spaniards and the Americans, as well as the British. Whichever party could win their friendship an alliance, or at least could prevail upon them to remain neutral, would have a powerful ally in waging the war.

In the late fall of 1780 the French inhabitants of the West were on the verge of placing themselves under the protection of Detroit because of a rumored Indian attack from Prairie du Chien. It was then that Cruzat sent Buche de Nonbreun with forty militiamen to build a fort among the Sauk and to attempt to pacify them. At the same time he dispatched another agent, Mays (Malliet) to the upper bank of the Illinois River to win the Indians there to an alliance with Spain.¹⁷ Both men succeeded in preventing an

17 Kellogg, British Regime, 175.

attack and thus kept the French from severing their relations with the Americans. On another occasion, January 26, 1781, Crusat ordered another of his agents, Pierre Dorion, to visit the Sioux Indians. After six months Dorion reported that he had won over six important Sioux Chieftains to the Spanish alliance.

Perhaps the best instance of the Spaniards' attempt to win over the Indians was in connection with the St. Joseph Expedition of 1780. Fort St. Joseph was a British outpost near present-day Niles, Michigan. Practically speaking, it was not a military post, but rather a fortified depot for large quantities of supplies to be used in inducing Indians to fight the Spaniards and Americans in the West. In September, 1779, Clark ordered Captain James Shelby to undertake an expedition to demolish the fort and seize its stores, but Shelby never succeeded in recruiting enough volunteers, and the expedition failed.¹⁸ But in the early summer of 1780 the French government agent, Colonel Mottin de la Salme, in his plan to conquer Detroit, sent sixteen men against the fort as a side expedition. This attack was successful; they seized fifty bales of goods and made prisoners of several traders. In their retreat they were overtaken by a

¹⁸ James, Clark Papers, 1771-1781, 366, Clark to Thomas Jefferson, September 23, 1779.

pursuing party of British traders and soldiers, and were killed.¹⁹

In January, 1781, Cruzat received a report from his agent, Maye (Malliet), in Illinois, that the British in Wisconsin were arousing the Indians for a renewed attack in the spring against the Spanish settlements, especially St. Louis, and that at Fort St. Joseph were three British officers "with large amounts of merchandise . . . employed for the war."²⁰ As a result of this information and the insistent urging of two powerful Indian Chiefs, Heturno and Naquiguen, Cruzat decided an expedition against the fort. On January 10, 1781, he listed to de Galvez his reasons for undertaking the expedition:

If these stores should remain in the hands of the English, they would be of assistance in furthering their hostile plans.

For me not to have consented to the petition of El Heturno and Naquiguen would have been to demonstrate to them our weakness and to make evident our inadequate forces; and perhaps, if they had learned of these facts, it might have been sufficient reason for them to change sides . . . for the Indians are in the habit of following the strongest one . . . nor would we have escaped experiencing the fatal results of the unfriendliness and inconsistency of the two chiefs.

To go to St. Joseph and seize the fort, the English commissioners, the merchandise, and the provisions would have the effect of terrorizing the surrounding natives . . .

19 Kellogg, British Regime, 174-175.

20 Kinnaird, Spain in Mississippi, 414, Malliet to Cruzat, January 9, 1781.

By permitting El Heturno and Naquiguen to go to make war and giving them forces against our enemies we shall succeed in turning our allied nations against those who are opposed to us.²¹

For the expedition Cruzat ordered on January 1, "a detachment of sixty volunteers under the orders of the Captain of the Militia Eugenio Pourre' (Pourre), a person skilled in war and accustomed to waging it in these countries."²² The Indians in the expedition were led by their chieftans, Heturno and Naquiguen. Pourre set out on January 2, and a month later he met Mays (Malliet) and twelve militiamen at a point on the Illinois River.²³ Together they trekked through the bitter cold, ice, and snow, and finally reached their destination at nightfall on February 11. Immediately, a young Potawatomi Indian was sent to instruct the neighboring Indians to remain neutral and quiet in their cabins. Half of the plunder to be taken from the fort was promised in exchange for their neutrality.²⁴

21 Ibid., 415-416, Cruzat to de Galvez, January 10, 1781.

22 Ibid., 415.

23 Frederick Teggart, "The Capture of St. Joseph, Mich., by the Spaniards in 1781," Missouri Historical Review, V, 1911, 214-216.

24 Kinnsird, Spain in Mississippi, 432, Cruzat to Miro, August 6, 1781.

On the following day, at seven o'clock in the morning, the entire detachment crossed the frozen St. Joseph River with the greatest possible speed, and before those in the fort could take up arms, the Spaniards occupied the post. They made prisoners of the merchant Duguet and seven recruits who were with him. All the merchandise was distributed among the Indians of the Spanish party and those living around St. Joseph who had remained neutral. Not a single militiaman was given a share of the booty.²⁵

Immediately after the seizure of the fort, Pourre ordered the Spanish flag to be hoisted and declared that in the name of the King of Spain he was annexing and joining to the Spanish domain the post of St. Joseph and its dependencies with the St. Joseph and Illinois Rivers.²⁶ Subsequently, with three officers and an interpreter he signed the proclamation of annexation. After the merchandise was disposed of and the declaration made, Pourre and the entire detachment departed from St. Joseph twenty-four hours after their arrival, and finally reached St. Louis on March 6 with their prisoners. Not a single man was wounded or killed on the side of the Spaniards; while only two men on the British side, who had tried to escape, were killed by

²⁵ Ibid., 432-433.

²⁶ Ibid., Spanish Act of possession for the Valleys of St. Joseph and Illinois Rivers, February 12, 1781.

the Indians.²⁷ The victory, however, was short-lived, for on the following day Lieutenant Dagneau de Quindre recaptured the fort. He tried to induce the Indians to pursue the Spaniards, but they refused.

Cruzat, receiving Pourre and his detachment as true victors, rejoiced heartily upon accepting the captured British flag of St. Joseph and hearing the news of the proclamation of conquest. King Charles of Spain also applauded the courage of Pourre, and he displayed his gratification by ordering Pourre's rank raised to that of a first lieutenant in the army on half-pay.²⁸

The St. Joseph expedition may seem at first sight to have been an utterly insignificant and useless undertaking, but when viewed in the light of its effects on the war in the West, it plays an important role. From the very outset Cruzat had foreseen that the destruction of the supplies and merchandise would not entirely prevent the British from carrying out their intentions. He predicted that such an action "would cut off their resources in part and lessen their hopes of having in that place

27 Ibid.

28 Housk, Spanish Regime, I, 207, Jose de Galvez to Bernardo de Galvez, January 15, 1782.

a store of provisions with which to supply those who may attempt to come by that way to attack."²⁹ Not only did the British not attack St. Louis that spring, but the Indians were effectively intimidated and obliged to maintain their neutrality.³⁰ Furthermore, by heeding the requests of the two Indian Chiefs, Heturno and Naquiguen, to attack St. Joseph, and in giving them the booty, a closer friendship arose between these Indians and the Spaniards, thus lessening the threat of Indian attack upon the Americans.

The years 1780 and 1781 really proved to be two climactic years of the Revolution in the Upper Mississippi Valley. During these years the British took offensive measures to expel the Spaniards and Americans from the Valley, but the courage and initiative of the Spaniards, and their firm cooperation with the Americans effectively checked the British plan of seizing control of the Upper Mississippi. Furthermore, credit is due to the Spaniards for the friendly attitude of the Indians towards the Americans. Many delegations of western Indians sought favors from the Spaniards at St. Louis, and "the Milwaukee villages never wavered in their attachment to the Spanish-American cause and were at all crises prepared to serve."³¹

²⁹ Kinnaird, Spain in Mississippi, 416, Cruzat to de Galvez, January 10, 1781.

³⁰ Ibid., 433, Cruzat to Miro, August 6, 1781.

³¹ Kellogg, British Regime, 178.

CHAPTER IV

BERNARDO DE GALVEZ AND THE WAR IN THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

While Cruzat was warding off the attacks of the British and Indians in the Northwest, de Galvez was driving out the British from the lower half of the Mississippi Valley and winning new Claims for Spain. During the year previous to open hostilities between Spain and Britain, de Galvez had been receiving information that the British were daily strengthening the forts of Manchac, Baton Rouge, and Natches with veteran troops. Such preparations could have only one object namely, the early invasion of Louisiana.¹ In fact, two letters of the British intercepted at Natches gave a detailed plan of the British strategy.² De Galvez and his counselors were on the verge of carrying out their plans to fortify New Orleans, when he received the secret news of a declaration of war between Spain and England. He felt certain, though, that the British had not as yet heard of the

1 Nacbin, "Spain's Report," 470.

2 Ibid., 471.

break. A change in strategy then made him determined, first, to hide the news of the declaration from everyone, and, secondly, to take the offensive, attacking the English by surprise in their own posts before they could learn of the declaration of war.³

De Galvez had planned to begin his march on August 22, 1779, but a violent hurricane which arose four days previously caused great destruction and havoc in the Province of Louisiana. All but one of the ships in his fleet were sunk. This calamity, instead of discouraging the Governor, only gave him added reasons and excuses to hasten preparations for another campaign. Calling together the inhabitants and pointing out the need of defending the Province, he requested them to take an oath to aid him in defeating the English. When he had received their promises, he began making the necessary preparations, under the pretext that the troops were to be stationed in places where the English might direct their attack.⁴

On the afternoon of August 27, de Galvez, together with Oliver Pollock, several Americans, and a force numbering six hundred and sixty-seven men, set out for Fort Manchac. On the way he managed to recruit some Indians and other volunteers, until the

3 Ibid., 470-471.

4 Ibid., 472.

force numbered one thousand four hundred and twenty-seven men. Yet, by the time the expedition reached Manchac on September 6, one-third of the force had fallen out through illness and fatigue.⁵ Just before reaching Manchac, de Galvez finally told his troops that war had been declared and that the true object of his mission was to attack the British in their own settlements.⁶

At dawn on the 7th, the Spaniards stormed the fort and captured it easily without the loss of a single soldier. One British soldier was killed, and the rest were taken prisoners.⁷ After seizure, the Spanish militiamen were given a rest of six days, after which they marched on to their second objective, Baton Rouge. When they reached Baton Rouge, de Galvez and seven of his officers reconnoitered and found that it was impossible to take the fort by assault without great loss. The fort was well fortified by a rather deep and wide ditch. He then decided to bombard the fort. Early on the morning of the 21st, a battery of heavy cannons opened fire, and after an incessant barrage from

5 Ibid., 473.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 474. Several days before the attack, the British commandant of the fort, Lieutenant-Colonel Dickson, was informed of the Spaniards' intention of taking Manchac. Foreseeing that he could not successfully defend the fort, he removed the troops and supplies to Baton Rouge.

both sides for more than three hours, Alexander Dickson, the commandant of the fort, surrendered to the superior Spanish artillery.⁸

Among the Articles of Capitulation, de Galvez demanded that, besides Baton Rouge, Dickson should also surrender Fort Panmure at Natchez to the Spaniards. At this time this fort housed eighty soldiers and their officers. Dickson agreed to the proposal and so, without firing a single shot, another strategic post, which "would have been hard to take because of its situation on a height difficult to reach,"⁹ came into the hands of the Spaniards. In the meantime, Don Carlos de Grampre, captain of the battalion which had come up from the coast of Punta-Cortada, captured the English posts of Tonson and Amit with their respective garrisons, thus interrupting British communication between Baton Rouge and Natchez.¹⁰

While the main body of the expedition was operating with such success, Spanish gunboats were experiencing an equal degree of success on the lakes of the Iberville Peninsula. At Galvestown two British schooners and a brig were seized, and two schooners which had set out from the port of Pensacola laden with provisions were

⁸ Campbell and Dickson, "Capture of Baton Rouge," 263, Extract from Dickson's letter as it appeared in the London Gazette, April 1, 1780.

⁹ Nachbin, "Spain's Report," 475.

¹⁰ Ibid., 474.

likewise seized.¹¹ At the Manchac River another English sloop was captured by D. Vincente Rieux, a resident of New Orleans.¹² On Lake Pontchartrain, the American privateer William Pickles, commanding the Morris, which had been fitted out in New Orleans, boarded and captured the English cruising sloop of superior strength, the West Florida.¹³ This boat had been dominating Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas for two years.¹⁴

De Galvez had hardly returned to New Orleans after the seizure of these forts, when he began to lay careful plans for an assault on Mobile, the supply base for the all-important fort of Pensacola. He considered the conquest of Mobile of the utmost importance. In his instructions to Miro, who was to seek reinforcements and provisions from Havana, he said: "if Mobile is lost, this province runs a great risk because, if the Indians see us retreat one step backwards, they will turn coat, as they have done with the English, and they will move against this colony."¹⁵

11 Ibid., 476.

12 Ibid.,

13 Ibid.

14 W. Adolphe Roberts, Lake Pontchartrain, ed., Milo N. Quaife, Indianapolis, 1946, 96.

15 Kinnsird, Spain in Mississippi, 367, Instructions of Galvez to Miro, December 31, 1779.

The capture of Mobile turned out to be a difficult task. First, de Galvez's advance toward the post was delayed because he found it necessary to wait for additional troops from Havana. Secondly, weather interfered with the landing of the troops at Mobile Bay. When he was finally in sight of his objective on March 1, it took him fully two weeks to arrange his troops in such a position that they could bombard the British fort successfully. On March 13, he gave orders to cannonade the walls of the fort. The bombardment lasted only a single day, but it was effective enough to make a breach in the walls and to scare the English Commandant, Elias Durnford, into surrendering. The Spaniards thus had control of another fort. Though the commandant of Pensacola tried to recapture the fort, his attempt proved futile.

De Galvez's long cherished objective in his military campaigns against the British was to capture Pensacola, their main stronghold on the Gulf. The episode of the capture was to be the most famous of his career. Upon being informed that the post was still fortified, he asked for reinforcements from Havana. When they did not arrive, he himself set out for Havana to press the demands. On February 28, 1781, after he had gathered the necessary military and naval aid he set sail with part of his fleet and troops, but a hurricane overtook the expedition and de Galvez was forced to return to Havana, where once again, undaunted and energetic as ever, he set about organizing another

expedition.¹⁶ Finally, on February 13, he set sail for the Island of Santa Rosa, near Pensacola, where he disembarked and awaited his troops from Louisiana and Mobile.¹⁷

While de Galvez was waiting at Santa Rosa, his preparations for the siege were further delayed by the refusal of the admiral of his fleet to cross the channel bar. He feared to risk his vessels within range of the British cannons.¹⁸ De Galvez could not persuade or coerce him. At last, totally disgusted at the delay of the squadron and convoy, and fearing that a strong wind might compel them to turn the ships out to sea so that they would not be wrecked on shore, de Galvez decided to act promptly and shame the others into following him.¹⁹ Leaving the troops abandoned on the island without provisions, and determined to be the first to force the harbor, he embarked on the brig, Galvestown, which was anchored at the mouth of the harbor of Pensacola.²⁰ "After having hoisted a broad pennant, this ship made the corresponding salute and set sail followed by two armed launches and

¹⁶ Bernardo de Galvez, "Diary of Operations Against Pensacola," trans. Gilbert Pemberton, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, I, 1917, 46.

¹⁷ Ibid., 48

¹⁸ Ibid., 50.

¹⁹ Ibid., 52.

²⁰ Ibid.

by the sloop commanded by Dn. Juan Rieno."²¹ Shot after shot whistled past the small ship as it ran the gauntlet of cannonfire. But, amid the applause and cheers of the army, the Galvestown entered the harbor with little damage, except for a great number of bullet holes in its sails and shrouds.²² This daring act had its proper effect. On the following day the squadron of ships crossed the bar amid fire from the cannons of the fort, and, though some ships were damaged, there were no losses of men.²³ This event occurred on March 18, 1781.

On March 20, de Galvez boarded a boat and explored the beach opposite the harbor in order to select a suitable landing place for his troops. Three days later, a convoy of 16 vessels, with 1400 men, cannon and ammunition arrived, and on the following day he ordered all the troops encamped on the Island of Santa Rosa to embark on the merchant ships and be transferred to the place he had selected for an encampment.²⁴ On March 29, the General decided to move the camp closer to Pensacola and on the next morning at the head of a column of 1100 men he march to the new

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 58.

site.²⁵ The next day, while the troops were digging a trench and erecting some tents, de Galvez made a survey of the City of Pensacola and the land in its vicinity. During the next month the soldiers busied themselves in constructing redoubts and in making fascines. While engaged in these preparations, they were constantly attacked by Indians allied to the British. Several times a part of the British militia sallied forth from the fort and fired upon the Spaniards. On one occasion de Galvez himself was almost mortally wounded, when "A bullet struck him which went through one of the fingers of his left hand and furrowed his abdomen."²⁶

On April 19, the General received news of the arrival of reinforcements from Havana. Fifteen ships, three frigates, and other vessels and a landing party of sixteen thousand men were near the Island of Santa Rosa.²⁷ On the next day he was informed that a British relief expedition was headed for Pensacola, and, consequently, he stepped up the preparations for the siege. By May 8, "only the esplanades to emplace the artillery remained to be finished."²⁸ Early in the morning of May 8, the British opened

25 Ibid., 60.

26 Ibid., 64.

27 Ibid., 66.

28 Ibid., 74.

fire, and the Spaniards replied with two cannons from the redoubt, with such success, that one of the shells hit the powder magazine and blew it up with 105 men of the garrison.²⁹ When this occurred the General ordered Brigadier Giron with the troops from the trench, and General Espeleta with several companies of light infantry, to occupy the ground.³⁰ The firing continued until three o'clock in the afternoon when Fort George [the fort at Pensacola] to hoist the white flag and an Adjutant of General Campbell came to propose a cease-fire until the following day in order to capitulate.³¹ On the next day, May 9, the terms of capitulation were drawn up, and Campbell signed them. Thus did Pensacola, the most important fort of the British in the Mississippi Valley, fall into the hands of the Spaniards. With its fall also declined the morale of many who had sided with the British.

The terms of surrender were favorable for the Spaniards, for Campbell surrendered the entire province of West Florida. In return, the English soldiers and sailors would be conducted at the expense of the Spanish King to any British post that Campbell

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

should designate.³² They were not "to serve against Spain or her allies until an exchange was verified for an equal number of Spanish prisoners of those of her allies, in accordance with the established customs in equality of rank and other equivalent things."³³ All the officers, soldiers and sailors of the garrison were permitted to retain their private property, baggage and personal effects, and were allowed to sell them in Pensacola or take them when they departed. All the inhabitants, even those who had taken up arms, were promised protection. Such terms, among others, the English found most gratifying, but to some Americans the Articles of Capitulation were not entirely pleasing, especially the clause which permitted the freeing of the garrison. Washington wrote to the President of Congress: "the Articles in the Capitulation of Pensacola, mentioned by your excellency, appears very extraordinary, not to say alarming."³⁴ No doubt further fears were raised, when the garrison actually arrived at New York.³⁵

32 Ibid., 76. Article I.

33 Ibid.

34 Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XXII, 357. To the President of Congress, July 10, 1781.

35 Ford, Worthington Chauncey, ed., Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, XXI, Washington, 1908, 854, A Report of the Board of War, August 15, 1781.

Nevertheless, at least Washington approved de Galvez's action as best under the circumstances:

I am obliged by the extract of Don Galvez's letter to the Count de Grasse explaining at large the necessity he was under of granting the terms of Capitulation to the Garrison of Pensacola which the Commandant required. I have no doubt, from Don Galvez's well known attachment to the cause of America, but he would have refused the Articles which have been deemed exceptionable, had there not been very powerful reasons to have induced his acceptance of them.³⁶

The Spaniards had achieved their goal, with the loss of relatively few men. They had driven the British from the Gulf, from Louisiana, from the entire Mississippi Valley. They had gained control of West Florida and the Mississippi River. With the fall of Pensacola the war in the West was over.

³⁶ Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XXIII, 211, To Francisco Rendon, October 12, 1781.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the Treaty of Paris, 1783, when England recognized the Colonies as a free and independent nation, Spain could easily boast that she had played a vital role in the winning of that independence. Although she could not come to acknowledge the "rebel Colonies" as independent, nevertheless, like France, she could claim that she had given them considerable aid and assistance. Between 1776 and 1779, that period in which she tried to maintain a policy of neutrality in order to regain Gibraltar and achieve other national aims, she had secretly granted the Americans many loans and subsidies. During these years she had sent many cargoes, of guns ammunition, powder, clothing, medicine, and other materials necessary for conducting a war.

Like Poland and Germany, Spain could claim great military strategists, as Eugene Pourre, Fernando de Leyba, and Bernardo de Galvez, all of whom in one way or another assisted the Colonists in their fight for freedom. Eugene Pourre, setting out in the middle of winter, for forty-two days treked through snow and ice to seize Fort St. Joseph and destroy its stores of supplies. This daring exploit intimidated the Indians into remaining neutral and upset the British plan to attack St. Louis and the Americans.

De Leyba, likewise, helped check the latter's southward thrust.

Clark might have wrested the Northwest from the British by his own heroic actions, but such a feat would hardly have been probable had he not received material and financial aid from the Spaniards. Kaskaskia might have remained under British control, had not Clark received assistance from the Spaniards, who deterred the inhabitants of the town from taking up arms. Vincennes might never have been recaptured, had not Vigo exerted himself to seek out military information and had he not granted Clark money and supplies for the venture. The Illinois country might not have remained under the control of the Americans, had there not remained that close and lasting friendship between the Spanish commandant of St. Louis, de Leyba, and the Americans. Clark, it is true, readily admits that it was Pollock's aid and assistance that enabled him to keep possession of the Northwest, but, we may ask, who without question credited Pollock's bills, and from whom did this American patriot obtain loans, clothing, ammunition, permissions to dispose of captured prizes and plunder, if not from the Spaniards in New Orleans? This fact Oliver Pollock readily admits.

The most colorful and the most important role in the fight to win the Mississippi Valley was played by the Governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Galvez. As a neutral, de Galvez had gone out of his way to give liberal aid and assistance to the Americans in the West. He had kept open the Mississippi River for American

shipping, and had sheltered American privateers from the British. He had collaborated with Pollock in sending powder and provisions to various forts in the West. Under his orders New Orleans became a storehouse whence American agents could obtain essential supplies, as well as a base of operation. He had given aid and protection to James Willing in the crucial stages of his expedition, and, consequently, had incurred the wrath of the British. Like de Leyba in the north, de Galvez also pacified hostile Indians along the southern Mississippi. Finally, when speaking of the Americans, de Galvez spoke favorable of them.

After Spain entered the war, it was de Galvez's victories in the lower Mississippi region--the assault on Manchac, the bombardment of Baton Rouge, the peaceful surrender of Ft. Panmure, the storming of Mobile, the capture of Pensacola--that removed the English menace from the Valley.

Such "spirited and disinterested conduct" on the part of de Galvez and the Spaniards did not go unnoticed. In the autumn of 1778 the American Board of War brought in a report:

That Governor Galvez be requested to accept the thanks of Congress for his spirited and disinterested conduct towards these States, and be assured that Congress will take every opportunity of evincing the favorable and friendly sentiments they entertain of Governor Galvez, and all the faithful subjects of his Catholic Majesty inhabiting the country under his government.¹

¹ Ford, Journals of the Continental Congress, XII, 1083
At a Board of War, October 10, 1778.

"I wish you to testify," wrote Patrick Henry to Clark, "to all the subjects of Spain upon every occasion, the high regard, and sincere friendship of Commonwealth towards them."² When speaking of de Galvez's plan for joint operations, Washington, said to the Spanish agent to the United States, Francisco Rendon: "It gives me pleasure to find so good a disposition in Don Bernardo de Galvez [sic] to concert his operations in such a manner against the common enemy that the interests of His Catholic Majesty and those of ourselves may be mutually benefitted."³ Perhaps the best expression of gratitude to this noble Spaniard's service to the American cause came from Oliver Pollock, when he wished to have a portrait made of de Galvez for Congress "in order to perpetuate your memory in the United States of America, as ranking in your Exalted Nation, as a Soldier and a Gentleman with those that have been a Singular Service in the Glorious Contest of Liberty."⁴

Yet, when all is said and done, prescindng from whatever motives may have prompted Spain, her greatest contribution to the American Revolution was not so much her financial and material aid,

² James, Clark Paper, 1771-1781, 80, Patrick Henry to Clark, December 12, 1778.

³ Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XXIII, 211, To Francisco Rendon, October 12, 1781.

⁴ Caughey, Bernardo de Galvez, 101, citing Pollock to Galvez, December 18, 1779.

as the fact that it was she who had successfully checked the British pincer movement in the West and driven the British from the Mississippi Valley. Thus she saved for the Americans that territory which could easily have become part of the British empire or the Province of Quebec. Spain, then, did aid the United States and Americans should feel indebted to this nation and her officials in the Mississippi Valley.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by **Nicholas V. Ricci, S.J.** has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

May 12, 1955
Date

Charles H. Metzger, S.J.
Signature of Adviser