

THE RELUCTANT DIPLOMACY OF JOSE MARIA ROJAS:  
1873-1883

By

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For David Bushnell, who understands  
it all so well, and Mai Surran and  
Barbara.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- G.G. González Guinán, Francisco. Historia contemporánea de Venezuela. 15 vols. 2d. ed. Caracas: Ministerio de Educación, 1954.
- G.o. Venezuela. Gaceta oficial (1872-1883).
- L.o. Venezuela, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Memoria /Libro amarillo/ (1856, 1863, 1868, 1874-1878, 1880-1883, 1886-1887).
- Mem. de C. P. Venezuela, Ministerio de Crédito Público. Memoria (1874-1875, 1880).
- MRE Caracas. Archivos del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores.
- MRE/E Ibid., Índice general de España.
- MRE/E/CG MRE/E, Cartas de Gabinete.
- MRE/E/F MRE/E, Funcionarios diplomáticos de Venezuela.
- MRE/E/I MRE/E, Invitaciones para exposiciones, congresos y conferencias.
- MRE/E/N MRE/E, Negociaciones para tratados y convenios.
- MRE/F Caracas. Archivos del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Índice general de Francia.
- MRE/F/CLP Ibid., Correspondencia con la legación de Venezuela en París.
- MRE/F/CM MRE/F, Comisión mixta venezolana-francesa.

MRE/F/FDEV MRE/F, Funcionarios diplomáticos en Venezuela.

MRE/F/FDV MRE/F, Funcionarios diplomáticos de Venezuela.

MRE/F/IE MRE/F, Invitaciones para exposiciones, congresos y conferencias.

MRE/F/IRR MRE/F, Interrupción y restablecimiento de relaciones diplomáticas entre Venezuela y Francia.

MRE/F/TC MRE/F, Tratados, convenciones y convenios.

MRE/GB Caracas. Archivos del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Índice general de Gran Bretaña.

MRE/GB/CB Ibid., Cartas de Gabinete.

MRE/GB/CI MRE/GB, Cortesía internacional.

MRE/GB/CLVL MRE/GB, Correspondencia con la legación de Venezuela en Londres.

MRE/GB/CR MRE/GB, Correspondencia sobre reclamaciones.

MRE/GB/CVGB MRE/GB, Consules y vice consules de Venezuela en Gran Bretaña.

MRE/GB/E MRE/GB, Extradición.

MRE/GB/FDGB MRE/GB, Funcionarios diplomáticos de Gran Bretaña.

MRE/GB/FDV MRE/GB, Funcionarios diplomáticos de Venezuela.

MRE/GB/GR MRE/GB, Gestiones y reclamaciones de Gran Bretaña.

MRE/GB/IP MRE/GB, Isla de Pato.

MRE/GB/LG MRE/GB, Límites de Guayana.

MRE/GB/SP MRE/GB, Seguridad pública.

MRE/GB/TC MRE/GB, Tratados y convenios.

- MRE/H Caracas. Archivos del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Índice general de Holanda.
- MRE/H/AV Ibid., Asuntos varios.
- MRE/H/CCV MRE/H, Correspondencia con los consules de Venezuela.
- MRE/H/CD MRE/H, Correspondencia diplomática.
- MRE/H/CI MRE/H, Cortesía internacional.
- MRE/H/CVI MRE/H, Consules y vice consules de Venezuela en Holanda.
- MRE/H/FDVI MRE/H, Funcionarios diplomáticos de Venezuela.
- MRE/H/FDEVI MRE/H, Funcionarios diplomáticos en Venezuela.
- MRE/H/GH MRE/H, Gestiones, quejas y reclamaciones de Holanda.
- MRE/H/GV MRE/H, Gestiones, quejas y reclamos de Venezuela.
- MRE/H/IRD MRE/H, Interrupción de relaciones diplomáticas.
- MRE/H/PIV MRE/H, Pretensiones de Holanda contra Venezuela.
- MRE/H/RRD MRE/H, Restablecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas.
- MRE/H/SP MRE/H, Seguridad pública.
- MRE/H/TC MRE/H, Tratados y convenios.
- MRE/EV Caracas. Archivos del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Índice, años 1596 a 1891, documentos sobre Guayana. Colección de 26 tomos en pasta verde, perteneciente a la compilación de tomos del acervo documental del archivo antiguo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Venezuela. Cuestión límites de Venezuela con la Guayana Británica.
- Recop. Venezuela. Recopilación de leyes y decretos de Venezuela, formada de orden del Ilustre Americano, General Guzmán Blanco, edición oficial. Vols. 2, 5, 7-10, and 12. Caracas: Imprenta de "La Opinión Nacional," 1874.
- Tratados. Venezuela, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Tratados públicos y acuerdos internacionales de Venezuela. Vol. I. Caracas, 1957.

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Council  
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Venezuela was still a small, young nation in the latter half of the nineteenth century. With foreign recognition already accomplished, the nation now faced the diplomatic problems of commercial relations, boundary disputes, the large foreign debt, and growing nationalism. A chronic shortage of permanent ministers abroad complicated this diplomacy. When Antonio Guzmán Blanco became President in 1870, he wished to develop Venezuela both culturally and materially. The success of this program depended, in part, on effective diplomacy and international fiscal operations.

José María Rojas, a life-long friend of Guzmán Blanco, did valuable work in implementing his President's program. Rojas, a caraqueño lawyer, businessman, and intellectual, belonged to the Guzmán Blanco coterie. Rojas left Caracas in 1873 for personal reasons and settled in Paris. While he did not seek them out, Guzmán Blanco thrust upon him the responsibilities of Fiscal Agent of

Venezuela in London and diplomatic portfolios in Spain, Holland, Great Britain, and France.

Rojas handled these various responsibilities over the next decade. Using his Paris home as a base, he wrote letters and traveled as necessary. He was a competent diplomat and fiscal agent on the basis of his own ability, his friendship with Guzmán Blanco, which meant many direct orders, and his general availability. Financially, these operations probably were profitable to Rojas.

Rojas achieved several of the goals he sought. His success as Fiscal Agent was outstanding. Twice he renegotiated the foreign debt and exhibited talent in bargaining with the London bondholders. He also arranged and signed various construction contracts. The most notable of these called for the construction of a railroad from Caracas to the sea.

In a purely diplomatic sense, Rojas had less success. He negotiated a convention with Spain whereby Venezuela would pay its Spanish debts but failed to achieve a desired reverse convention. He also went to The Hague to settle current problems with Holland about exiles on Curaçao. Acting on instructions born of concern with internal security and nationalism, he broke diplomatic relations with Holland.

Rojas faced many problems as Minister to Great Britain. He vainly negotiated several years for a renewed treaty of commerce and sought to settle the boundary problem with British Guiana. In both instances Rojas worked hard and cleverly but without ultimate success.

He also sought treaties of commerce as Minister to France and Spain. France flatly refused to negotiate and then broke relations with Venezuela because of its poor debt payment record. With Spain, however, Rojas achieved the treaty, including a most-favored-nation clause, but it later underwent modification in Caracas.

During this entire period Rojas also led a private life and performed the lesser diplomatic responsibilities. A widower, he raised and educated his children in Paris, remained intellectually active, pursued business opportunities, and even led a private, private life. He also handled the multitude of Ministerial details such as supervising consuls, forwarding letters of international courtesy, etc. Some of this was humorous, some tragic.

As early as 1881 Rojas wished to return to a completely private life. Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, Guzmán Blanco's father and consultant to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, seemed to make Rojas' diplomatic life more difficult, particularly in the Guiana boundary and Spanish commercial treaty negotiations. Guzmán Blanco himself also made greater demands.

In 1883 a Rojas publication, apparently without malicious intent, raised embarrassing questions about the patriotism of the elder Guzmán. Venezuela now accepted his prior offer to resign. The resignation was almost lost in the swirl of resultant personal charges that spelled the end of the friendship between Rojas and Guzmán Blanco. Ten years later the two old friends had a tender reconciliation.

## CHAPTER I

### NINETEENTH-CENTURY VENEZUELAN DIPLOMACY: THE SETTING

The Republic of Venezuela, on the very northernmost part of the South American continent and forming much of the southern shore of the Caribbean Sea, is bounded on the west by Colombia, the south by Brazil, and the east by Guiana. In the nineteenth century Venezuela was a young, pastoral republic with a variety of geographical conditions ranging from the hot shores of the Caribbean to the cool Andes highlands and the alternate wet and dry llanos and bushland of the broad Orinoco valley. The majority of the settled areas were in the spots along the coast and the Andes valleys.

The geographical location of Venezuela made it susceptible to potential diplomatic problems. Pirates raided the early coastal settlements from the sixteenth century. In the nineteenth century there were vestiges of the outposts of ancient enemies still close at hand. A few miles off the eastern coastal tip of the young nation lay the British island of Trinidad. To the west, above the Coro Peninsula, lay the Dutch islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao. South of the Orinoco and to the east lay the vast, uncharted lands of Guiana, still waiting for the line to divide them between Venezuelan and British Guiana. The problems

to be handled, hopefully by diplomacy rather than force, were present merely in the geography of the area.

The land with these potential problems had a Spanish heritage. Venezuela bloomed as a Spanish outpost only late in the colonial period. The Captaincy General of Caracas dated from 18---. Despite this lateness, Venezuela took its full measure of Spanish institutions. Indian and African institutional influences were minimal; the Spanish heritage was supreme. In the nineteenth century the oligarchy in Venezuela probably was primarily criollo, although the total population approached a mixture of mulatto and mestizo. The 1825 census indicated a population of 659,000, while that of 1881 counted 2,075,000. In 1829 the population of the capital city, Caracas, was 29,320, while the official census of 1869 listed 47,013.<sup>1</sup>

This small land produced a variety of exportable agricultural products. Notable among them were coffee and cacao. Other major nineteenth-century products were cotton, beef, and tobacco. Exportation of these products implied a diplomatic policy that would enhance their international marketability. Cacao, in particular, became a sensitive commodity in the Spanish market. Venezuela consistently had a favorable balance of trade during the nineteenth century, even though the economy was essentially pastoral.<sup>2</sup>

Venezuela had a rich and stimulating diplomatic experience during its independence movement. The first real break with Spain dated from 19 April 1810. One of the hotspots in the

activities of the Caracas Cabildo was the young aristocrat, Simón Bolívar. Bolívar, later to be immortalized as the "Liberator," led the first real diplomatic mission of the small revolutionary junta that later became the Republic of Venezuela. As the confusing sequence of events transpired over the next twenty years, the diplomacy pursued by the junta, then the larger Gran Colombia, and, finally, Venezuela was oriented toward aid and recognition.<sup>3</sup>

While Bolívar led the way with his mission to London in 1810, other individuals in the years to come went to European capitals, the young United States, and the other emerging states of Latin America. It has been observed, on the basis of these activities, that

The origins of Latin American diplomacy were found in the initiative of the Junta of Caracas that directed, from the first moment, the international politics of the new states toward that double goal of American understanding and the guarantee of absolute independence.<sup>4</sup>

The patriotic urge aside, diplomatic recognition meant the opportunity to trade and exist on the basis of goods wanted abroad.

Recognition by foreign powers was of prime importance for Venezuela. Recognition by any power implied legalization of existence, even if Spain, the country against which the Venezuelans and others were rebelling, did not recognize their independence. There were three such important treaties while Venezuela was part of Gran Colombia, during the decade of the 1820's. The United States, Great Britain, and Holland signed treaties of

friendship, navigation, and commerce in 1824, 1825, and 1829, respectively. When Venezuela went its own way in 1830, the trend continued with France, in 1833, and smaller European nations, in the next few years to come. Spain finally signed a treaty of peace and recognition with Venezuela in 1845. Venezuela thus became an accepted member of the community of European and European-descended nations.<sup>5</sup>

Diplomatic recognition alone did not assure the young Republic of Venezuela smooth international relations. Many of the problems the country had throughout the nineteenth century stemmed from the independence period. One such problem was Venezuela's external debt. This debt began with the assumption in 1834 of the young republic's share of the exterior debt of Gran Colombia, a debt incurred during the independence period. Due to lack of punctual servicing of this debt, Venezuela generally had a poor credit rating in European financial circles. Additionally, beginning in 1835, the country incurred numerous liabilities in the form of damage claims by various foreign nationals. Other problems, inherent in the geography of the area and left unsettled by independence and even recognition, centered around the off-shore islands belonging to other nations and the land boundaries, particularly that of British Guiana to the east.<sup>6</sup>

The settlement of these problems required skilled diplomats working over time. While Venezuela had the time, the small country had few diplomats or people who could become diplomats.

The smallness of the total population base meant that there was a very small pool indeed from which properly qualified people could be drawn for diplomatic posts. It was not surprising, then, that various and sundry politicians and military figures often carried diplomatic papers with them when they went abroad for whatever reasons.<sup>7</sup>

A mid-century exception to this practice was the diplomacy of the great Alejo Fortique. Born in Valencia in 1797, Fortique planned, at the age of thirteen, for the priesthood but ultimately became a lawyer in Caracas. He made his first voyage to Europe in 1832 without any diplomatic sanction. Seven years later he returned in the capacity of Minister to Great Britain. For the next six years, until his death in 1845, Fortique labored on behalf of Venezuela. His duties included work on the foreign debt, the majority of the bondholders being British, the Guiana boundary, and the treaty of commerce. Fortique also negotiated the treaty of peace and recognition with Spain in 1845. After Fortique, however, there was relatively little Venezuelan diplomacy abroad for the next thirty years.<sup>8</sup>

Domestic political turmoil perhaps was the major factor in impeding Venezuelan diplomacy abroad after Fortique. From 1830 to 1848, even though Venezuela could already be considered in its caudillo period, the political situation was essentially stable under José Antonio Páez and his allies. From 1848 to 1870, however, Venezuela went through a period of "Anarchic Caudillism." Within this period, from 1859 to 1864, the young

republic suffered near anarchy during the Federal War. It is not surprising that diplomacy abroad suffered throughout the entire period.<sup>9</sup>

Domestic stability showed relative improvement beginning in 1870 with the consolidation of power by Antonio Guzmán Blanco. Guzmán Blanco ran Venezuela either personally or through henchmen until his fall in 1889. While he was a vain and corrupt man, he brought many benefits to Venezuela. Domestically, he was responsible for many material and cultural improvements. His projects ran the gamut from sewage and street improvements to a broadening of educational facilities within the country.<sup>10</sup>

Guzmán Blanco's foreign policy can be viewed as an adjunct to his domestic policy. He needed internal stability, good finances, and overseas markets to achieve his planned development of Venezuela. These three characteristics, in turn, depended on an effective foreign policy. Internal stability was a case in point. He would not have survived without controlling domestic insurrections. Such actions became diplomatic concerns when the revolutionaries used the island of Curaçao as a base for staging filibustering expeditions against the Venezuelan mainland. The great uncharted area of Guiana also served as a haven for rebels. Thus, Guzmán Blanco had reason to negotiate with The Netherlands and Great Britain on the basis of internal stability alone. Consciously tied in with these negotiations was a dose of nationalism over the issue of sovereignty.

A strong financial base for Venezuelan governmental opera-

tion also had diplomatic overtones. The young republic was not on firm financial ground due to the debts incurred during the independence period and the mid-century turmoil which delayed their servicing. Much of this debt was foreign. Hence, Guzmán Blanco's foreign policy included attempts to stabilize the foreign debt, even lower it if possible, so the development of the nation could proceed apace. Finally, to insure the resources for his planned development, Venezuela needed guaranteed and favorable markets for its export commodities. This meant, on the basis of foreign relations, good and workable treaties of amity and commerce and, if possible, even sheltered markets under most-favored-nation arrangements.<sup>11</sup>

Considering the chronic shortage of personnel available for ministerial duty abroad, it is not surprising that Guzmán Blanco had difficulty in pursuing these key issues to his foreign policy, his domestic policy, and his own political survival in Venezuela. As it turned out, the European phase came to be implemented by a life-long friend from Caracas. This friend, José María Rojas, ultimately better known as a Venezuelan historian and literary figure than diplomat, spent almost a decade, though reluctantly, in the diplomatic service of his country.<sup>12</sup> An adequate examination of Rojas and the experiences of both himself and those around him, including Guzmán Blanco, sets the stage for a detailed study of his diplomatic experience.

## NOTES

1. Mariano Picón-Salas et al., Venezuela independiente: 1810-1960 (Caracas: Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, 1962), pp. 351-52, 355.
2. Ibid., 356 ff. A series of charts between pages 416 and 417 includes production figures for various items. There also is a chart on "Comercio exterior," which clearly indicates that exports consistently had more value than imports. See also Federico Brito Figueroa, Historia económica y social de Venezuela, 2 vols. (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1966), vol. 1, 272 ff.
3. There is extensive printed material available on the Latin American independence movement, generally, and Bolívar, specifically. A good selected bibliography on Bolívar is found in David Bushnell, ed., The Liberator, Simón Bolívar, Borzoi Books on Latin America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 212-18.
4. Cristobal L. Mendoza, Las primeras misiones diplomáticas de Venezuela, Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 8 vols. (Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1962), vol. 7, p. 57.
5. Copies of these various treaties are located in Tratados., vol. 1, 28 ff. Somewhat more detailed background information on diplomatic problems with particular nations is contained in the body of the text.
6. Venezuela, Ministerio de Hacienda, Bosquejo histórico de la vida fiscal de Venezuela (Caracas: Tip. Vargas, 1924), 44 ff. This source is also available in an English translation, Venezuela, Ministerio de Hacienda, Historical Sketch of the Fiscal Life of Venezuela (Caracas: Litografía e Imprenta Vargas, 1925). Pedro Manuel Arcaya, Historia de las reclamaciones contra Venezuela (Caracas: Pensamiento Vivo, 1964), 35 ff.
7. For examples of incidental, or timely, diplomatic appointments see above pp. 46, 55 and n. 23, p. 71 and n. 34, p. 73.
8. A brief summary of the life and diplomatic experience of Fortique is found in Alejo Fortique, Los papeles de Alejo

Fortique, edited by Armando Rojas (Caracas: Ediciones Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1962), pp. 7-56. The Spanish treaty of 1845 is reproduced in Tratados, vol. 1, pp. 157-162. The vast majority of the treaties, conventions, etc., signed by Venezuela and other parties were signed in Caracas, an indication that the other parties displayed greater initiative during the period. See Tratados, vol. 1, pp. 1775-77.

9. Robert L. Gilmore refers to the period of 1848 to 1870 as one of anarchic caudillism in a chart of "Political Periodization and Presidential Administrations of Venezuela," in his study of Caudillism and Militarism in Venezuela, 1810-1910 (Athens, Oh.: Ohio University Press, 1964), pp. vii-viii.

10. A brief introduction to Guzmán Blanco and his technique of caudillismo is George S/chneiweis/ Wise, Caudillo: A Portrait of Antonio Guzmán Blanco (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1970).

11. The sources on which the European phase of the foreign policy of Guzmán Blanco can be based are the main substance of this study and constitute much of the footnote material in the following chapter.

12. There has been little direct work on the life of Rojas. A brief biographical sketch is in Enciclopedia universal ilustrada, europeo-americano, 70 vols. (Bilbao: Espasa-Calpe, 1907-1972). More detailed material, a major source in the following chapter, is in Pedro Grases, Investigaciones bibliográficas, 2 vols. (Caracas: Ministerio de Educación, 1968), vol. 2, pp. 7-36.

## CHAPTER II

### INTRODUCING JOSÉ MARÍA ROJAS

José María Rojas, one of Guzmán Blanco's collaborators for the development of Venezuela and, also, for enhancing the prestige of Venezuela among the nations of the world, was an integral part of the Caracas scene for many years. Born in the capital city in 1828, he grew up and lived in Caracas, with the exception of several trips abroad, until 1873. That year he left Caracas and Venezuela permanently, except for a brief visit in 1876, and lived the remainder of his life in Europe, primarily Paris, until his death in 1907.

While the focus of this study is centered around the diplomatic activities of Rojas on behalf of Venezuela, beginning in 1873, it is worthwhile to examine in moderate detail the life of Rojas before he left Caracas. In those days Caracas was a small city, everyone knew everyone else, and the coterie of those who ran the country was small and interwoven. Rojas definitely was a member of that coterie, and he and the principals of the government were friends and acquaintances of long standing.

Rojas was a first-generation Venezuelan. His parents, José María de Rojas and Doña Dolores Espaillet, were aristocratic natives of Santo Domingo. The elder Rojas, born in 1793 into one

of the leading families of Santiago de los Caballeros, was trained to be a financier. In that role, as a very young man, he became associated with the then important customs house of Puerto Plata. When the Haitian forces invaded Santo Domingo in 1821, Rojas was one of the commissioners to deal with the representatives of Jean Pierre Boyer, the Haitian leader. In the wake of these negotiations, Rojas was offered certain advantages by Boyer if he would identify with the Haitian authorities. This he would not do and instead migrated to Venezuela in 1822 with his wife and young family.<sup>1</sup>

The elder Rojas settled in Venezuela and lived the balance of his life in Caracas and its environs until his death from cholera in 1855. In 1825 he became Director of the La Guaira customs house and administered it well until outside pressure forced his resignation, and he looked for other pursuits. He seriously considered moving to Peru and even got a letter of recommendation from Simón Bolívar in 1827 for that purpose. Instead, he remained in Caracas and rather quickly gained acceptance into the inner circle of business, letters, politics, and society.<sup>2</sup>

Rojas' activities were many and varied. He founded, in 1838, the famous bookstore Almacén de José María de Rojas. This enterprise quickly prospered and became the center in Caracas for books, pamphlets, and periodicals. It was a focal point where literati exchanged ideas that were important in the years to come. Young José María and his six brothers, including the well-known Arístides, carried on this family business under the name of

Rojas Hermanos after the death of their father.<sup>3</sup>

The elder Rojas also published and edited periodicals. He founded, in 1841, El liberal, an organ which served the interests of the conservative party, even though at times Rojas appeared more liberal than many of the self-styled liberals of the time. Rojas' counterpart, both journalistic and political, during the early 1840's, was Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, the editor of El venezolano, the organ of the opposition or liberal party, and also the father of young Antonio Guzmán Blanco. While the men were rivals and espoused divergent programs, they fought each other with dignity and gallantry. To many, these were the halcyon days of Venezuelan politics and letters. Shortly before his death Rojas published, in the spring of 1855, another journal, the short-lived El economista. By then, however, his political experiences had disillusioned him to the point that he editorially lamented that after forty-five years of independence, Venezuela had reached an epoch in which it was more enslaved than under the colonial government from which the Liberator's sword redeemed it.<sup>4</sup>

This disillusionment came out of the prior political experiences the senior Rojas had in Caracas. Actually, he had shown his colors as early as 1830 by supporting the break from Gran Colombia. Then he had done public service as a member of the municipal council of Caracas and as spokesman for groups advocating the development and beautification of the capital. By 1841 he was a member of the provincial deputation of Caracas and the following year participated in the creation of Plaza

Bolívar in the heart of the city. By 1845, however, he had acquired political enemies to the extent that a mob stayed outside his home the night of March 10 and threatened him. Moreover, he did not think highly of the presidency of Carlos Soublette, the chief executive from 1843 to 1847. On 18 August 1846, writing in response to a friend who had urged him to reassert himself politically, Rojas commented that, when a government can neither do good nor stop bad, then the forces of patriotism are sterile, and the most he could do was continue writing in El liberal. Nevertheless, he did rejoin the political fray and the very next year won an election to the Chamber of Deputies as a representative of the province of Caracas. As such, he became one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the new President, General José Tadeo Monagas.<sup>5</sup>

It was under Monagas, however, that Rojas witnessed the end of an era of relative peace and order in Venezuelan politics, based on the ascendancy of Páez and the Constitution of 1830. Monagas owed his triumph in 1846 to the aid of the conservatives. He preferred to govern, however, with the liberals, and shortly after gaining power he replaced several conservative ministers with liberal henchmen. This flew in the face of the conservative congress. Then, the Chamber elected Rojas Vice President on 23 January 1848. The next day, January 24, Rojas and other members of the Chamber led a confrontation with Monagas' liberal Minister of the Interior, José Tomás Sanabria. Sanabria had come to deliver a message from Monagas and to transmit certain of his decrees.

Rojas and others knew what this implied; they were losing power to Monagas. Thus, they challenged Sanabria. The Deputies tried to detain him in their chamber while they sent for other ministers. Word that Sanabria was imprisoned spread to the street, where both sides had partisans, and the fight was on. Rojas, fearful that the fight might spread to the chamber itself, pulled his dagger and told Sanabria that he would be the first person killed if the guards or others entered the chamber. While Rojas did not carry out his threat, five people did die in the streets. Rojas now retired from public life, and the era of anarchic caudillism had begun in Venezuela. Seven years later, after a period of political reticence and just before his death, Rojas would briefly resume his role as a political gadfly by publishing El economista.<sup>6</sup>

It was in these at first pleasant and then hectic days that young José María Rojas grew up. He and his childhood friend, young Antonio Guzmán Blanco, attended primary school together. It is easy to imagine these two youngsters, both the sons of volatile and outspoken fathers, studying together in class and running and playing together in the streets of Caracas. Subsequently, young José María attended the Colegio de Feliciano Montenegro y Colón and received his degree in law from the Central University of Venezuela in 1852. Young Guzmán Blanco also was a contemporary in law school, except for a period after 1846 when the elder Guzmán was accused of conspiracy.<sup>7</sup>

The stormy political life of Guzmán had begun as early as 1840 when he broke with the government of the old llanero, José

Antonio Páez, because of personal problems with the Minister of Justice, Angel Quintero. Subsequently, he became the leader of the various anti-Páez groups and used his newspaper, El venezolano, as the focal point of liberal opposition to the power structure in Caracas. This had been the setting for the journalistic jousting with the senior Rojas and his El liberal. In 1846, as a candidate for the presidency, he sought a political alliance with Páez. While Guzmán was en route to Maracay for a meeting with Páez, one of his supporters, apparently without his authority, triggered an uprising in his name. As a result of this, the government of José Tadeo Monagas, the victor, accused Guzmán of conspiracy. Guzmán was convicted, and the new Minister of Justice, the same Angel Quintero, sought the death penalty. But, in the wake of the resignation of Quintero and supplications by Señora Guzmán and her children, including young Antonio, Monagas commuted the sentence to permanent exile. Guzmán subsequently returned to Venezuela, however, and held important diplomatic, legislative, and advisory positions until his death in 1884.<sup>8</sup>

These were the circumstances under which the two young caraqueños grew up, one the son of a stormy, aggressive, at times exiled liberal, the other the son of an aristocratic immigrant with an oligarchic identification who sought solace from his political misfortunes in his prestigious bookstore. The fathers were of different political persuasions and at times had journalistic confrontations, but there is no indication that they had personal animosities. Antonio Guzmán Blanco, so positively

identified with the activities of his father, became active in the liberal political camp and subsequently worked his way up in positions of power through the medium of the Federal War. The story of his rise and subsequent domination of the Venezuelan political scene is well known. The friendship of young José María and Antonio survived their divergent careers, however, and later Rojas would do important diplomatic and fiscal work for the liberal caudillo.<sup>9</sup>

Rojas, unlike Guzmán Blanco, pursued a career as a young lawyer and businessman in Caracas, beginning in the 1850's. While on the fringes of being a major figure in the city and nation, he still led a rather private family life. He married a daughter of Angel Quintero, the nemesis of the elder Guzmán. Quintero was a politician of some note and had been a member of the Venezuelan Constituent Congress of 1830. Later, under José Tadeo Monagas, he served briefly as Minister of Justice and was even offered the Ministry of the Interior. But, he soon broke with Monagas and took to the field with Páez after the Chamber of Deputies confrontation of 24 January 1848. He spent the decade of the 1850's as an exile in Puerto Rico. Quintero made one brief visit to Venezuela in 1861 but misjudged things politically and rather quickly returned to Puerto Rico. He finally returned to Caracas in 1866 in poor health and died there on the second of September of the same year. Perhaps the fact that Quintero was a political exile during so much of Rojas' young-married period of life contributed in part to the privacy of his life. Doubtless he lay

low. Even so, he and his wife had seven children, and it is likely that the family life was pleasant, even if screened from public view. His wife died in the latter part of 1867, and José María Rojas, the young Caracas lawyer and businessman, reacting sorrowfully to the personal tragedy, now had the added burden of raising and educating his children alone. He never married again. But, Rojas adjusted his life as necessary and continued his career.<sup>10</sup>

By the time his wife died, Rojas and his brothers had been operating the firm of Rojas Hermanos for twelve years. When their father died in 1855, the brothers had decided to pursue strictly commercial undertakings and avoid political activities. The charter of this mercantile company, accordingly, even had a clause prohibiting all political activity both jointly and individually. Arístides, Carlos, and José María, the last being in charge of the business end of the enterprise, were the three main participants in this undertaking, an admirable sequel to the Almacén of their father.<sup>11</sup>

The firm of Rojas Hermanos was one of the outstanding business and literary endeavors in all of Latin America during its heyday of the 1850's, 60's, and 70's. The brothers wrote and published their own works, published the works of others, and sold still other publications. Brother Marco Aurelio, for example, published a book on the animal kingdom, Arístides published his Libro en prosa (1876), and José María published his famous Biblioteca de escritores venezolanos contemporáneos (1875). In 1870 they published in Paris the first compilation of the original

poems of Andrés Bello, the great Venezuelan man of letters who had established the National University of Chile in 1842. As an example of the offerings of Rojas Hermanos, the eighth edition of their catalog (1865), 128 pages in length, included such offerings as selections of Lamartine, Zorilla, Dumas, etc. Perhaps the best-known of their publications, and certainly the one that made the firm a household name in Venezuela, was the Almanaque para todos. This almanac, published annually from 1870, contained not only the standard weather projections, business statistics, etc., but also ecclesiastical and literary sections.<sup>12</sup> The publishing house, however, appeared to be merely a point of departure for José María, and he used it for advancement of other interests.

It was through Rojas Hermanos, for example, that Rojas established a long-lasting relationship with the firm of H. L. Boulton and Company. The Boulton firm, established by an English migrant in the early nineteenth century, engaged in general business and trade in Caracas, La Guaira, and elsewhere. From 1856 to 1870 Rojas Hermanos ran the Caracas agency of H. L. Boulton. José María directed the Caracas office and played a variety of roles in this position. He both loaned and collected money, acted as attorney, and wrote at least one tract in defense of the company when its favorable position in the imported wheat and flour market was threatened. From 1871 to 1876 Rojas had a specific, personal working agreement with the Boulton firm. He was described as representative and second of the firm--in other

words, a partner. His activities with H. L. Boulton and Company doubtless made him much money and put him in a position to capitalize on other endeavors.<sup>13</sup>

Rojas' other business activities were many and varied. Beginning in 1857 he acted as attorney for Henry Shelton Sanford, the United States lawyer who was pressing the Aves Island claims against the government of Venezuela. Sanford represented North American claimants who resented having been ousted from tiny Aves Island in 1855 by Venezuelan forces. Both sides thought the island contained commercial quantities of guano. Rojas pursued this activity through the signing of a claims convention at the Valencia Convention of 1858 and then assisted Sanford off and on for the next thirty years in the latter's efforts to collect the final payment due under the convention. Rojas and Sanford also became firm friends over the years, and Rojas often revealed in private correspondence to his Yankee friend what he would not reveal to others.<sup>14</sup>

The business activities of Rojas also included such various undertakings as being Consul of Chile in Venezuela in the early 1860's and President of the Ferrocarril del Este, a line established under a contract gained by Rojas at that same Valencia convention in 1858. This proposed line was to run from Caracas eastward to Petare. By 1861 there actually was an engine on the tracks, but Rojas and his associates did not complete the line. Even so, the Chilean activity gave the young caraqueño an entrée into the diplomatic circles of Caracas, while the Petare undertaking was

the beginning of Rojas' activities for many years in railroad and mining enterprises.<sup>15</sup>

Rojas certainly was an aggressive young businessman in his own right, but the gaining of the Aves Island convention and the railroad contract, both at the Valencia Convention of 1858, plus the diplomatic position gained three years later, indicate that he was not holding true to the business arrangement with his brothers to avoid politics. Actually, the reverse was the case. José Tadeo Monagas had been the president in 1848 when his father had narrowly escaped death in the Chamber of Deputies on January 24. The same Monagas was President again in 1857, after a term by his brother, José Gregorio, and proceeded to replace the Constitution of 1830 with one that would allow him to succeed himself. This action so irritated both conservatives and liberals that, after briefly jockeying for a leader to satisfy both factions, they joined together under Julián Castro and ousted Monagas in the March Revolution of 1858.<sup>16</sup> Rojas, writing his Yankee friend Sanford about these activities, commented that he was "involved in the secret of the revolution up to the ears."<sup>17</sup> Another time he wrote, "I have much influence in the new order of things, because I have worked much in favor of the revolution. They have proffered me offices, but my mercantile career does not permit me to accept them."<sup>18</sup> So Rojas was involved politically, and in the turbulent years that followed, while his role in politics was subtle, it does appear that he turned it to his own advantage.

Perhaps Rojas' trips abroad in the next few years can be

seen in this light. His first trip to the United States in the summer and early fall of 1858, it appears, was for business on behalf of the Boulton firm and, also, for pleasure. But, his trips to Europe in 1863 and 1864 more properly might be described as financially beneficial spinoffs from his political and business connections in Venezuela. In 1863 he went to Europe with Antonio Guzmán Blanco to assist in the acquisition of the Loan of 1864, sometimes referred to as the Loan of the Federation.<sup>19</sup> While Guzmán Blanco went as the authorized fiscal commissioner of the new government of General Juan Crisóstomo Falcón, Rojas described his presence with Guzmán Blanco to his Yankee friend Sanford as that of "only. . . his friend or private councilor."<sup>20</sup> Be that as it may, Rojas did play an important part in the consummation of the loan. The next year, in the summer and fall of 1864, he was in various points in Europe, helping tidy up the final details of the controversial loan.<sup>21</sup>

Rojas' reasons for these activities were varied. First, he and Guzmán Blanco were friends of long standing. Perhaps he hoped the alliance of Guzmán Blanco and Falcón would lead Venezuela back to the desired position of political stability; perhaps Venezuela could once again achieve a political life marked by the free exchange of ideas under the law as he remembered it in the early 1840's. Second, he stood to profit personally from the loan. While he modestly described himself as the friend or private councilor of Guzmán Blanco, the fact remains that he signed his name to much of the business correspondence about the abortive

loan agreement of 1863 and the Federation Loan of 1864. Surely he did not do this merely out of the goodness of his heart for his old friend Guzmán Blanco; indeed, he later confirmed that he, too, had profited from the 1864 loan. Finally, he doubtless was protecting the interests of his firm, H. L. Boulton and Company. This company--described by Edward B. Eastwick, the commissioner sent to Venezuela in 1864 by the General Credit Company, the lending agency, to verify the conditions of the Federation loan, as "incontestably the most respectable house in Venezuela"--was rather heavily involved in Venezuelan government finances as early as 1860.<sup>22</sup>

Rojas returned to Caracas after his two trips abroad in 1863 and 1864, but things were not the same. Perhaps his horizons had been broadened to the point that he dreamed of permanent change. Perhaps the continuation of anarchic caudillism depressed him. His wife died in 1867, and that tragic event, saddling him with the added responsibility of raising his children, must have contributed further to his depression. Whatever the reason or reasons, beginning as early as October 1863, Rojas intimated to at least one confidant that he was seriously thinking of leaving Venezuela permanently and that the country was quite incapable of political stability.<sup>23</sup>

Rojas' thoughts along these lines are interesting, if not necessarily complimentary, to his home country. From Paris, in the fall of 1863, he wrote his friend Sanford that on learning of the military authorities fighting the civilians and Falcón

in Venezuela, he was completely sick and thinking more than ever of leaving Venezuela for good. He thought of Spain as the country of the future for making money. By August of 1865 he was thinking of establishing himself in either Spain or New York. In 1869, two years after the death of his wife, Rojas wrote Sanford about how his children were growing and becoming educated. "Actually, I have the two oldest ones in a good colegio in Curaçao, and in 1871 they will go to Germany, probably with me. Anyhow, my desire is to emigrate from the fatherland of Bolívar!!"<sup>24</sup>

Even earlier, Rojas seriously had his doubts as to whether it was worthwhile to remain there. For example, writing Sanford in December 1863 that he planned to return to Europe the next May, Rojas rather flippantly commented that "this project presupposes that this country does not fall to pieces." The next fall, writing from Paris about new disorders in Venezuela, he expressed the opinion that "that land gives no hopes." Three years later he advised Sanford not to invest money in a project in Coro, because "this property, like those of other things of Venezuela, is a real humbug. . . ."<sup>25</sup> Perhaps Rojas' greatest outpouring of vitriol came in November 1869 when he wrote Sanford,

Here [Caracas] things continue in the same state of disorder you know. This mixed and unenlightened race cannot practice democracy, which is a form of government that requires enlightenment and homogeneity in the people. Actually, we are in civil war, and the public treasury, in place of being applied to the payment of the pledges of the nation, is being spent sadly on elements of destruction and ruin. This is a lost country, and within some years no one will take it into consideration in the catalog of nations!!<sup>26</sup>

These were the feelings of Rojas in the decade before he actually left Venezuela.

Meanwhile, Rojas spent his last few years there in pursuit of general business, particularly on behalf of the Boulton firm. He handled numerous loan and collection details and presumably also was involved in the Almacén with his brothers. It was also during this time that he made the study of the flour and wheat market for Boulton.<sup>27</sup> An outsider who encountered Rojas during those active days was James Mudie Spence, an English investor who was in Venezuela in 1871 and 1872. Spence met Rojas at one point in his travels and described him as "one of the best scholars in the republic and an energetic businessman of Caracas."<sup>28</sup> Rojas definitely was a visible man in Caracas in the early 1870's, but the urge to emigrate remained.

While Rojas' motives for emigration remained in his mind, his criticism of political anarchy in Venezuela was not as justifiable when he finally did leave, in 1873, as it had been several years earlier. What had happened was that his friend Antonio Guzmán Blanco had achieved power in 1870, and at least there was hope for stability. The hope was threatened by continuous rebellions against Guzmán Blanco in the early 1870's.<sup>29</sup> Even so, Rojas cast his lot with Guzmán Blanco and openly identified with the caudillo.

It might even be said that Rojas was a member of the clique around Guzmán Blanco, a retainer of the caudillo, ready to praise him and willing to work for him, particularly if a profit

could be realized. For example, he fed the vanity of the leader in early 1872 when the merchants' association of Caracas held a banquet on March 6 in honor of Guzmán Blanco and his victories over assorted enemies. Rojas, the treasurer for this special banquet, also acted as a member of the reception committee who greeted the guests at the door to the principal banquet room of the Hotel León de Oro. This visible political life continued into 1873 as Rojas supervised, under a decree of 11 September 1872, the construction of the new federal capital. Interestingly, the area of construction included a store owned by H. L. Boulton and Company, the firm in which Rojas held a partnership. Surely the profit was there to be made in the condemnation proceedings.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the open identity with Guzmán Blanco and the financial advantages such a relationship offered right there in Caracas, particularly since the caudillo seemed to be strengthening his hold on the country, Rojas still planned to migrate from his homeland. For several years he studied German under the locally well-known Professor Adolf Ernst.<sup>31</sup> Surely this action was in line with his plans of 1869 to go to Germany for the continuation of the education of his children. As it turned out he went, instead, to Paris, the mecca of so many Latin American leaders, intellectuals, and exiles. There he pursued various private undertakings and also engaged in diplomatic and fiscal activities on behalf of Venezuela and rather specifically Guzmán Blanco.

To put it simply, José María Rojas was exceedingly literate, politically shy but with both conservative and liberal connections,

well versed in financial affairs, willing to take a risk for profit, contemptuous of political disorganization, intellectually arrogant, a seeker of the good life, and quite capable of being a good diplomat for his native Venezuela, even though he had not planned on it.

## NOTES

1. Grases, Investigaciones, vol. 2, 8 ff. A good brief sketch of the senior Rojas is contained in "José María /de/ Rojas" /by Ramón Azpurua/, Fundación Boulton, Caracas. The Fundación also holds a genealogical study of the Rojas family, "Documentos de la familia Rojas (Informaciones justificativas de la limpieza de sangre y distinción de la familia de los Rojas y sus conexiones)," Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic, 19 February 1821, Fundación Boulton, Caracas. G.G., vol. 5; p. 475. González Guinán, while smacking of antiquarianism, is the definitive, fifteen-volume work of the period.

2. Grases, Investigaciones, vol. 2, pp. 8-9.

3. Ibid. Aristides Rojas was a prolific writer in late nineteenth-century Venezuela. See, for example, his Obras escojidas de Aristides Rojas (Paris: Garnier Hermanos, 1907).

4. G.G., vol. 5, p. 475; Pedro Grases, ed., Materiales para la historia del periodismo en Venezuela durante el siglo XIX (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1950), p. 85; and Grases, Investigaciones, vol. 2, pp. 9-10.

5. "José María /de/ Rojas" /by Ramón Azpura/ and Venezuela, Presidencia de la República, Pensamiento político venezolano del siglo XIX, textos para su estudio, 15 vols. (Caracas: Ediciones Commemorativas del Sesquicentenario de la Independencia, 1961-1962), vol. 10, pp. 357-60. This second citation contains a letter of the senior Rojas dated Caracas, 18 August 1846, to Juan Vicente González. See also G.G., vol. 5, p. 475.

6. Venezuela, Gaceta de Caracas, no. 898 (23 January 1848), p. 189 and G.G., vol. 4, pp. 412-14, vol. 5, p. 442. José Gil Fortoul, Historia constitucional de Venezuela, Obras completas de José Gil Fortoul, vols. 1-3, 4th ed. (Caracas: Ministerio de Educación, Dirección de Cultura y Bellas Artes, Comisión Editora de las Obras Completas de José Gil Fortoul, 1954), vol. 2, 291 ff. See also Picón-Salas et al., Venezuela, p. 106. A very readable account of the events of 24 January 1848 is in William D. Marsland and Amy L. Marsland, Venezuela through Its History (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., c. 1954), pp. 186-87.

7. José María Rojas, Tiempo perdido: Colección de escritos sobre política, literatura, y hacienda pública, Colección distinta, edited by Efraín Subero, vol. 7 (Caracas: Fundación Shell, 1967), p. 54, and Grases, Investigaciones, vol. 2, p. 14. Tiempo perdido was originally published in Paris in 1905 by Garnier Hermanos. Life among the established families in Caracas at the end of the nineteenth century is delightfully described in T/homas/ R/ussell/ Ybarra, Young Man of Caracas (New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1941), passim. The exploits of Ybarra lead the writer to believe that youngsters such as Rojas and Guzmán Blanco played in the streets of Caracas even fifty years earlier.

8. See pp. 295-341 and passim in the critical biography of the elder Guzmán by Ramón Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán: Eclipse de una ambición de poder, 3d ed. (Caracas: Ediciones "Hortus," 1953). R. A. Rondón Márquez, Guzmán Blanco, "el autócrata civilizador": Parabola de los partidos políticos tradicionales en la historia de Venezuela, 2 vols. (Madrid: Imprenta García Vicente, 1952), vol. 1, p. 25; Grases, Materiales, p. 85; Wise, Caudillo, pp. 41-43, 45-46; G.G., vol. 4, pp. 345-47; and Gil Fortoul, Historia, vol. 2, 264 ff. Rojas, Tiempo perdido, pp. 84-89, claims that Quintero resigned his position, because he would not appoint certain directors to the customs houses as Monagas demanded.

9. A good working tool on Guzmán Blanco, both chronological and analytical, is that of Rondón Márquez, above, though it has no index or bibliography.

10. There is a rather good sketch of the life of Dr. Quintero in Rojas, Tiempo perdido, pp. 83-106. Rojas, Caracas, 24 October 1867, to Henry S. Sanford, box 35, folder 16, Henry Shelton Sanford manuscripts, General Sanford Memorial Library, Sanford, Fl.; hereinafter cited as Sanford MSS, 35-16 (indicating box and folder numbers).

11. Grases, Investigaciones, vol. 2, p. 10.

12. La reina animal of Marco Aurelio is cited in Grases, ibid., vol. 2, p. 11, n. 1. Rojas Hermanos, No. 11. Catálogo general de obras de fondo y de surtido de la librería y casa editorial de Rojas Hermanos, con un suplemento que contiene los principales artículos de escritorio y variedades que se encuentran en este establecimiento. Gran reducción de precios (Caracas: Rojas Hermanos, 1874), passim, contains similar citations covering a wide variety of offerings. The writer has examined the following Almanaques: Almanaque para todos (Caracas: Rojas Hermanos, 1871, 1874, 1875, 1881, 1882).

13. Concepto: "Ramas y dependencias," Nombre: "H. L. B. y Cia Agencia de Caracas, 1865-1870," Fundación Boulton manuscripts, 1828-1910, Fundación Boulton, Caracas; hereinafter cited

as Boulton MSS, plus appropriate Concepto. The year-end journal balance for the Caracas office during these years is signed "Messrs. Rojas Hrns., Nuestros Agentes," "José María Rojas," or "Para José María Rojas." The Concepto "Pagares y vales" contains a variety of notes and correspondence indicating the activities of Rojas on behalf of Boulton. "Personal y privado: José María Rojas" contains a copy of the letter of separation between Rojas and the Boulton firm, dated Caracas, 16 August 1876, attesting to the relationship between Rojas and the firm and the separation of the same. José María Rojas, La cuestión harina de trigo en sus relaciones con la sociedad y con el fisco (Caracas: Imprenta de Espinal e Hijos, 1869).

14. Sanford first went to Caracas in early 1857. The first correspondence from Rojas in the Sanford MSS is dated 11 August 1857, Sanford MSS, 35-13. A detailed study of the Aves Island claims is contained in William Lane Harris, Las reclamaciones de la Isla de Aves: Un estudio de las técnicas de las reclamaciones, translated by Jerónimo Carrera (Caracas: Ediciones de la Biblioteca, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1968).

15. Rojas, Caracas, 7 November 1861, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-14, and Boulton MSS, "Embajada de Chile, Caracas," "Negociaciones comerciales: Charles Congreve & Son, New York, 1859-1861," and "Actividades públicas: Cia del Ferrocarril del Este, Caracas, 1859."

16. Gil Fortoul, Historia, vol. 3, pp. 75-90, has a good summary of the events leading to the downfall of Monagas. Article 108 of the Constitution of 1830 (Venezuela, Constitution (1830)) prohibits the President from succeeding himself, while the Monagas Constitution of 1857 (Venezuela, Constitution (1857)) contains no such prohibition. The various Constitutions of Venezuela have been published together by Luís Marinas Otero, ed., Las constituciones de Venezuela (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1965).

17. Rojas, Confidential, Caracas, 20 May 1858, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-13.

18. Rojas, Confidential, Caracas, 13 April 1858, to Sanford, ibid.

19. Rojas, Philadelphia, July 9, September 13, New York, September 20 of 1858, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-13, and Venezuela, Bosquejo, p. 45.

20. Rojas, n.p., 9 September /1863/, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-14. Edward B/ackhouse/ Eastwick, Venezuela, or Sketches of Life in a South American Republic, with the History of the Loan of 1864 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1868), pp. 102-103, includes the order from Falcón under which Guzmán Blanco went to Europe.

21. Rojas, London, 23 September 1863 (letter and telegram), London, July 10 and 13, Very Confidential, Liverpool, July 16, Confidential, Paris, July 20, Confidential, and Berlin, 4 August 1864, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-14, 15. For rather vituperative accounts of the Loan, see Marsland and Marsland, Venezuela, pp. 196-99, and Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, 490 ff. On p. 491 Díaz Sánchez, comparing the two Guzmáns, states that "si su padre ha sido un mago de la demagogia política, él es un brujo de las finanzas." Even more polemical is Felix E. Bigotte, El libro de oro. A la memoria del General Exequiel Zamora. Dícese asesinado en San Carlos por orden de los Generales Falcón y Guzmán el día 10 de enero del año de 1860, por haber mostrado más inteligencia, más heroicidad y más orden en todas las batallas que se dieron antes y después de Santa Inés, hasta San Carlos, en que del propio rifle del General Falcón salió la bala que el asesino traidoramente dirigió. (Caracas: En casa del autor y por medio de los agentes, 1868). In note 1, p. 194, Bigotte wondered why the name of Rojas instead of the name of someone known to the public was put to the letters having to do with the Loan.

22. It appears that Guzmán Blanco realized 176,580 out of the transaction, and it is safe to assume that Rojas shared in this. See Rondón Márquez, Guzmán Blanco, vol. 1, pp. 146-152, and Bigotte, El libro de oro, text and notes p. 175 and note, p. 194. Eastwick, Venezuela, p. 117, and Boulton MSS, "Actividades públicas: Empréstitos varios." Rojas later commented to Sanford that he had lost in business all the money he had made from the loan of 1864, Rojas, Caracas, 8 August 1865, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16.

23. Gil Fortoul, Historia, vol. 3, p. 90, relates how revolutions were unsuccessful between 1830 and 1857 but that they became successful in the years beginning with the latter date. See below for citation of the 1863 Rojas correspondence.

24. Rojas, Paris, 20 October 1863, Caracas, 8 August 1865, 22 November 1869, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-14, 16.

25. Rojas, Caracas, 7 December 1863, Paris, 19 October 1864, and Caracas, 17 December 1867, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-14, 15, 16.

26. Rojas, Caracas, 22 November 1869, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16.

27. "Pagares y vales," Boulton MSS, contains numerous entries indicating Rojas' activities in the late 1860's and early 1870's.

28. James Mudie Spence, The Land of Bolívar, or War, Peace, and Adventure in the Republic of Venezuela, 2 vols., 2d ed. (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1878), vol. 2, p. 116.

29. Picón-Salas et al., Venezuela, pp. 126-28, briefly describes the coming to power of Guzmán Blanco. See also relevant sections of such works as Rondón Márquez and Wise.

30. G.G., vol. 10, pp. 58-59, 106-107, 140-41. Rojas was involved in the capital construction perhaps, in part, by virtue of the fact that his firm, H. L. Boulton and Company, was one of the Caracas business houses tied into the Credit Company. The Credit Company actually constructed the capital. Guzmán Blanco created this company originally as a stop-gap company to provide income to the government while the Franco-Prussian War disturbed the normal international trade of Venezuela and, therefore, the customs income. See Recop., vol. 5, doc. 1731, 79-80, decree of 9 December 1870, establishing the Credit Company, and doc. 1731a, 80-81, decree of 24 December 1872, approving the government contract established with the company.

31. Grases, Investigaciones, vol. 2, p. 16.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE EARLY YEARS: ENGLISH BONDHOLDERS, VENEZUELAN RAILROADS, AND SPANISH CLAIMS

After years of thought on the matter, Rojas finally made the decision to leave Venezuela. He departed Caracas on 6 May 1873. While he went to Europe to educate his children, he also went in the service of the government he was, at least privately, forsaking. Perhaps the lure of the money and prestige was too great. Whatever the reason or reasons, he carried with him the portfolios of Fiscal Agent of the Republic in London and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic to Spain. Thus began a new career for Rojas.<sup>1</sup>

Even though Rojas graciously accepted the appointments, his later recollection implied that these two and subsequent government posts were not really attractive to him. There is no question that he was a reluctant diplomat for the positions conferred little to his personal temperament. "I love frankness and not simulation, and the hypocrisies and falsehoods of the career repel me."<sup>2</sup> Despite the distaste Rojas performed well for his government. Within three years he had negotiated a thorny reorganization of the Venezuelan foreign debt, signed a contract for the construction of a railroad from Caracas to the port of

La Guaira, and signed a claims convention with Spain.

Rojas' movements during these three years were rather complicated due to his own interests, the requirements of the Venezuelan government, and the conditions of the negotiations or the political circumstances of the countries where he bargained. Using Paris as his base of operations, he went back and forth to London and Madrid as necessary or prudent. In 1875 he spent some time in The Hague on a rather distinct problem with Holland.<sup>3</sup> His governmental services first began, however, as Fiscal Agent, or Special Commissioner of the Republic of Venezuela, to the English holders of Venezuelan bonds.

The background of the Venezuelan foreign debt, what Rojas began working with in the summer of 1873, was a tangled web of fiscal affairs. Born of Venezuela's 28.5 percent share of the Gran Colombian loans of 1822 and 1824, the debt was divided into two categories, internal or external, on the basis of the nationality of the original creditor. The external debt was next divided into Active and Deferred categories, but in an agreement with the English bondholders in 1859, the Deferred Foreign Debt had been made convertible at 50 percent to the Active Foreign Debt. In July 1862 Dr. Hilarión Nadal negotiated a further loan for £1,000,000 with the London firm of Baring Brothers and Company. The same year Venezuela issued additional bonds to cover the back interest owed on previous debts. Two years later the Loan of 1864, or of the Federation, in the amount of £1,500,000, was negotiated with the General Credit Company of

London. And, in 1872 the Venezuelan government, by a law-decree of November 30, specified how the revenues from the customs houses, the major source of government funds, were to be handled. Excepting that portion collected for the use of warehouses, 60 percent would be applied to the General Budget, and 40 percent would be applied to specific items. Within the 40 percent portion, 27 percent would be applied to the Interior Debt, 27 percent to the Exterior Debt, 33 percent for the internal development of the country, and the final 13 percent for foreign claims. In effect 10.8 percent of the customs receipts went to the Foreign Debt, 13.2 percent for internal development, and 5.2 percent for foreign claims.<sup>4</sup>

While at first glance it all seems rather neat and orderly, actually the Venezuelan financial picture was a shambles. The foreign debt was tremendous and did not seem to be getting any better. It had risen from V.26,188,130.45 in December 1859 to V.44,763,786.08 in June 1873. There had been considerable defaulting on the debt, even to the point of not servicing the interest payments due. Politico-military struggles within the country contributed greatly to the defaulting. Furthermore, the loan of 1862 had been issued at only 63 percent of its face value and the one of 1864, at 60 percent. Thus, the amount of money actually reaching the treasury on these recent loans was much less than the debts incurred. The deduction of service charges, commissions, etc., made it still less. And, for years venality and graft had been one of the characteristics of fiscal

life in Venezuela.<sup>5</sup> The picture was dour, but even before Rojas went to Europe, a new policy was emerging whereby the government might spend even more money and thereby, in the end, pay off its debts more readily.

The idea was that the Venezuelan government would be able to pay its debts if only the country were more developed; then, the general economic picture would improve and governmental revenues increase. The development of Venezuela was one of the stronger themes during the various administrations of Guzmán Blanco and one that Rojas himself pushed, both for Guzmán Blanco and Venezuela and for his own benefit. Debt payment through development was an idea shared by many. Spence, the British investor in Venezuela in 1871 and 1872, was of the opinion that investments in railroads, telegraph systems, etc., would have been more beneficial to everyone than the ordinary foreign loans. Furthermore, he felt that the development would come from outside investors readily if Venezuela would only service its debts. He expressed this opinion to Antonio L. Guzmán, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an interview in August 1872, shortly before leaving Venezuela.<sup>6</sup> While Spence seemed to advocate paying interest on the debt and then benefitting from new investments of various types, the Venezuelan approach seemed to be to develop and then to pay the debts, or do both simultaneously. At any rate, that was what José María Rojas tried to do for his government beginning in 1873, and the people he had to face were the holders of Venezuelan foreign bonds. The majority of these

people were English, and the bonds they held had little market value.

The British holders of foreign bonds were an important segment of the financial community in nineteenth-century Great Britain. Their investments in Latin America had begun with the various independence movements and, as was the case with Venezuela, defaults on loans to early independent governments had left an accumulation of bond issues that were often of dubious value. These bondholders, over the years, were highly independent investors. Whether as individuals, contractors, or partners in investment houses, they had made their loans abroad without regard for the government of Great Britain. It is a myth that they always called for and got the aid of their government when their investments were threatened. British government intervention was the exception rather than the rule. As early as 1823 Canning refused to intervene in the case of the default by Gran Colombia on a loan. This was the pattern for the entire century. Meanwhile, the holders organized themselves into committees for the separate debts in default. In late 1868 they established the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders to provide a focus for their activities.<sup>7</sup> In 1873 Rojas dealt specifically with the Council of Venezuelan Bondholders, one of several groups in the Corporation.

Rojas, having left Caracas on May 6 and presumably having settled his children in schools on the continent, was in London by July 1873. There, as fiscal agent of the Republic of

Venezuela, he proceeded to execute the orders given him by the Ministry of Public Credit and also personal orders given by Guzmán Blanco. While he already held the diplomatic portfolio to Spain, he would not go there until late in the year. His actions in London consisted primarily of negotiating with the Council of Venezuelan Bondholders by writing letters and memorandums and holding private conferences.

Rojas' first action was to circulate a letter written on 5 May 1873 by Guzmán Blanco. He addressed this letter to the Council and also to Baring Brothers, agents of the loan of 1862, and the General Credit Company, agents of the loan of 1864. President Guzmán Blanco urged a confidential negotiation that would be satisfactory to both Venezuela and its creditors. That is, he wanted to refinance the foreign debts of Venezuela, and José María Rojas would communicate his ideas on the matter to them. As an impetus to successful negotiations, Guzmán Blanco announced that funds currently being collected under the law of 30 November 1872 for payment of foreign debts were being held in trust in Caracas.<sup>8</sup>

Rojas supplemented the Guzmán Blanco letter with a memorandum dated July 5. In this memorandum he spelled out how the government hoped to refinance its foreign debts. He mentioned how twenty-five years of civil war had damaged the general richness of the country and affected the national income, and, thus, made necessary the law of 30 November 1872. Venezuela asked nothing more than the same kind of concessions given other coun-

tries so that its credit might be reestablished in a solid manner and the creditors might recoup their losses. Rojas then proposed "to the British creditors the cancellation of all the bonds of the present debt, substituting for them the emission of £2,000,000 (10,000,000 venezolanos) of bonds of the Exterior Debt of Venezuela that will draw interest from 1 February 1873 at the rate of 3 percent per year." The existing bonds would be converted at varying ratios to compensate for their different interest rates.<sup>9</sup> Now the bondholders had to respond.

The response that came, despite the good efforts of Rojas, was unfavorable to the cause of Venezuela. Baring Brothers wrote Guzmán Blanco in this light on July 16. They sympathized with him in his aim to restore credit to the Republic and wished him well in the effort. They also complimented Rojas on his effectiveness and courtesy in explaining the proposal in a conference. Still, according to information they had from some of the principal interested parties, the consideration of the Rojas propositions was not favorable. Rojas, meanwhile, before returning to Paris by the end of July, even met unofficially with a few members of the bondholders group. This small clique apparently had plans that ran counter to the plans of both the Council of Bondholders and Venezuela. Rojas, assuming such action would not be to his advantage in the long run, advised the Council of the meeting and squelched it. His position was that he could deal only with the three parties to whom the Guzmán Blanco letter of May 5 was addressed.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps this position stood Rojas well in the long run.

At any rate, activity intensified in October with a series of meetings held by the Council. The Council first met on October 17 in the London Tavern on Bishopsgate Street, London. By now the Council was working with a formal draft of a financial convention. Maxwell G. Turnbull, President of the Council, proposed a resolution that the terms as outlined by Rojas be accepted by the Council. However, the Council decided to defer a decision until October 31. In the interim, Turnbull and the other officers prepared a letter for the bondholders. They noted that the only disadvantage would be a reduction of dividends but that even this handicap would diminish as the credit of Venezuela improved and the country generally developed its industry and commerce.

They also solicited letters of assent from the bondholders if they were unable to attend the October 31 meeting.<sup>11</sup> Apparently, Rojas had done his work well, or the officers, out of desperation, felt anything would be an improvement, or both.

The Council approved the proposed convention at their meeting of October 31, but with a reservation. That reservation was that the Venezuelan government guarantee a minimum annual sum of £80,000 in case the collections allowed in the 30 November 1872 decree-law did not reach that amount. Rojas, advised of this in Paris by Frederick H. Hemming, the Venezuelan Consul in London, responded immediately that such a modification could not be made to the convention. He argued that the Venezuelan Congress had specifically determined how the proceeds of the national

income would be divided and that the President had been given full power to make an arrangement with the creditors without going back to the Congress. Accordingly, he suggested another meeting.<sup>12</sup>

The British creditors thus met for a third time on November 7. At this meeting they voted down a minority effort to gain stronger assurances from the Venezuelan Congress and approved the draft of the convention by a vote of almost four to one. Rojas either attended the meeting or was waiting in the wings, for he and Turnbull signed the formal convention the same day in London. Rojas left London shortly thereafter and proceeded to Madrid, via Paris, on purely diplomatic matters.<sup>13</sup> While he did not concern himself directly with the bondholders for the next few months, the Rojas-Turnbull Convention generated considerable action in Caracas and reaction in London.

It is better to consider the Rojas-Turnbull Convention of 7 November 1873 within the context of its adoption than flounder with its multiplicity of details, such as interest conversion, etc. What is important was that Venezuela had consolidated its foreign debt. Guzmán Blanco probably directed this action. Rojas had been his front man in London. The success of Rojas can be seen in that he persuasively convinced the bondholders that consolidation should be realized and also beat back attempts to get stronger guarantees of payment from Venezuela. The result was that Guzmán Blanco now had fiscal breathing room, it appeared, and could seriously begin the material development he so strongly

wanted for his country. But, the Convention came to be jeopardized by being tied too closely to a particular phase of the Illustrious American's development plans.

The main problem facing the Convention was a proposed railway between Caracas and that city's principal port, La Guaira. Serious railway endeavors had begun in Venezuela as early as 1853, with the concession for a line to be developed between Puerto Cabello and San Felipe. The government granted other contracts, including the one to Rojas in 1858 for a line to Petare, in the years that followed. A contract for a line from Caracas to the sea dated from 1857. But, the line had never materialized, and Guzmán Blanco included a renewed effort in his development plans for 1873. On January 31 he decreed the construction of a narrow-gauge railway from Caracas to the sea. This construction would be financed by the 33 percent of the forty units allotted to the interior development of the country as outlined in the decree-law of 30 November 1872. Furthermore, a special Development Committee of leading Caracas companies and individual businessmen would oversee the construction of the line. Among the participants was H. L. Boulton and Company, Rojas' primary business connection in Caracas. And, Rojas as an individual, also, was a member of the Committee.<sup>14</sup>

Later in the year when he went to London, Rojas did not deceive the bondholders about the railway and other plans. His correspondence with the English investors and their comments about the economic development of Venezuela were quite open.

They knew various economic projects would be afoot, and they endorsed them.<sup>15</sup> Rojas even spent part of the fall negotiating a railroad and related contracts in London. On October 14 and 15 he signed contracts with Lt. Colonel Alexander Strange, the President of the New Quebrada Company. New Quebrada controlled the Aroa copper mines west of Puerto Cabello and was in the process of linking the mines to the port of Tucacas. The October contracts concerned clarification of prior railroad agreements and the construction of a link of track from Palma Sola to San Felipe.<sup>16</sup> This action, however, unlike the railway from Caracas to the sea, did not affect the English bondholders as a group.

Meanwhile, action on the railroad to the sea continued in the wake of Guzmán Blanco's decree of 31 January 1873. Both English and Venezuelan engineers worked on the proposed line that year and the next. R. F. Farlie acted as the consulting engineer in London for the Venezuelan government. By March 1874 the chief engineer, F. A. B. Geneste, submitted a detailed report on the project. A minor flap developed in the months that followed over just how much work the Venezuelan engineers had done on the surveying, etc., but Guzmán Blanco smoothed this over. The important thing was to build the road. In line with this Rojas himself began the preliminaries of seeking a contractor in Europe in March. He was now back in Paris after his initial diplomatic trip to Madrid. He wrote his Yankee friend Sanford that while he was awaiting word to ratify the convention made with Turnbull the prior November, he also was interested in getting the road

under contract. He speculated that maybe this could be done in Belgium, and if such were the case, then he and Sanford both would profit personally.<sup>17</sup> Events in Caracas, however, would be delaying both the ratification of the Rojas-Turnbull Convention and the desired railroad contract.

What happened in Caracas was that a joint legislative decree of May 28, signed into law by Guzmán Blanco on 1 June 1874 tied foreign debts and railroad construction together. In the words of the decree, "The President of the Republic will ratify in all its parts the arrangement celebrated by the Fiscal Agent of the Republic, Doctor José María Rojas, with the British creditors as soon as he has assured the construction of the railroad from Caracas to the sea." The decree also contained the comment that the Convention had not been celebrated in accord with the bases proposed by Guzmán Blanco, bases held to be more equitable and advantageous to the Treasury and the national credit. Perhaps this was meant as a stimulus to Rojas to get the construction contract as quickly as possible, or it could have been because he did not follow the implication of his original orders. The legislators further offered this action as proof to the British creditors that, without abandoning the material development of the country, they only would do that which the resources of the Treasury would allow. The harsher words, though, were that if the President's plans to build the railroad failed, then the funds in the national budget destined for foreign credit would be used to realize the railroad.<sup>18</sup>

In fairness to Rojas, his activities in London and the response of the bondholders in the summer and fall of 1873 do not indicate that a specific contract to construct a railroad from Caracas to the sea was a prerequisite to the agreement signed by Turnbull. While the decree of May 28 dealt somewhat harshly with Rojas, a communication from the Minister of Public Credit, including citations from Guzmán Blanco, was rather frothy and complimentary of Rojas' capabilities.<sup>19</sup> Surely Rojas had not known that a particular condition would be attached to his agreement with Turnbull.

News of the congressional decree came as a real shock to the bondholders. Turnbull wrote Guzmán Blanco on July 1 and clearly stated that Rojas represented himself as having full authority to execute the original arrangement. Such was not the case, it appeared, and the Council knew nothing of railroad construction as a condition of the proposed convention. Turnbull ended his letter by observing that such action would certainly have adverse effects on any future Venezuelan attempt to gain funds in the London money market. Guzmán Blanco responded by pointing out that Rojas was acting at his request and that he did indeed have the authority to approve the arrangement. But, Guzmán Blanco insisted, the legislative power was greater than the executive power, and, thus, he had to defer to the conditions laid down by the national legislature. While, in reality, this last point probably was a fiction, the Illustrious American urged the Council to work things out with Rojas so that he could approve

the Convention with Turnbull.<sup>20</sup>

Rojas, meanwhile, received word of the congressional action in Paris in late June. He went to London early the next month, once again in pursuit of the British bondholders. On July 11 he addressed a letter to Turnbull, the Chairman of the Council of Bondholders. He spelled out very clearly the legislative decree of May 28, tied the hopes of the bondholders to the development of Venezuela, and mentioned that respectable business houses in London would be disposed to take on the construction of the rail line as outlined in the plans and budget of the chief engineer, Farlie. Rojas then sweetened the offering to the bondholders by stating that when they assured the construction of the railway, then the foreign credit funds collected by the government, a sum of £133,018 as of May 31, would be released to Baring Brothers for disposition to the creditors. The next day he met with the officials of the Council and outlined a plan whereby the bondholders themselves might finance the railroad. Very simply he asked the bondholders for authorization to use the foreign credit funds to construct the railroad. In return, they would receive mortgage certificates on the railroad at 8 percent annually and, meanwhile, an annual sum of £12,000 would be reserved to reduce portions of the current foreign debt.<sup>21</sup>

The bondholders rejected the plan. Turnbull embellished the point, in his letter of July 18 to Rojas, that he could not "express adequately the profound pain and disappointment of my committee in the result of these long negotiations, a result of

which it is in no manner responsible, but which ought to be attributed completely to the bad faith of Venezuela." Two days later Rojas declared the Convention of 7 November 1873 null and void and criticized the Council, in turn, for questioning the faith of Venezuela in the negotiations. These two strong communications of July 18 and 20 did not stand up. Rather, according to Rojas, the response of the Council to his declaration led to further negotiation. On the twenty-first both notes were changed so as to prevent a complete break, and softer versions were then published.<sup>22</sup> Fortunately, the line of negotiation between the two parties remained open, although an untimely incident temporarily threatened it.

The threat to this delicate negotiation came from a schemer named General Venancio Pulgar. Pulgar, a supporter of Guzmán Blanco in the liberal cause in Venezuela, had obtained heroic credentials by breaking out of a prison at Puerto Cabello in 1870. Now, four years later, this Zulian caudillo was in Europe, presumably enjoying the fruits of being on the winning side. He came to London on July 20 in the midst of the delicate Rojas-Turnbull negotiations. Carrying credentials as the Venezuelan Minister to France, Pulgar had interviews with the officials of Baring Brothers Company and Frederick C. Pawle, one of the most important holders of Venezuelan bonds. Pulgar advised these people that they should not make an arrangement with Rojas, because it would not be approved by Guzmán Blanco. Furthermore, within a few weeks he himself would have the necessary

powers to negotiate and would propose a new plan whereby the arrangement with the creditors would be independent of the railroad loan. While some of the bondholders might have found this proposal attractive, the influential ones chose to continue negotiating with Rojas. Pawle, for example, took the opportunity to compliment Rojas on the frankness with which he had always carried on the negotiations and viewed the entire Pulgar incident as an intrigue. Hemming, the Venezuelan Consul in London, after talking with the persons involved, was of the opinion that Pulgar acted without authority. Despite its illegality this Pulgar incident embarrassed all parties concerned; while it did not stop the negotiations, it did delay them, and the Venezuelan government still did not have its railroad money from its old creditors.<sup>23</sup>

Rojas, after an appropriate cooling-off period and perhaps private instructions from Guzmán Blanco, resumed his action with the bondholders in the fall of 1874 and simultaneously sought a railroad construction contract. Guzmán Blanco even did his part and sweetened Rojas' position by sending £6,000 to the Fiscal Agent's account in London. This money would be applied to the foreign debt if the bondholders signed the agreement; otherwise, it was to be applied to the expenses of building the cherished railroad to the sea. While this token offering did not produce results with the bondholders, Rojas did sign a convention for the construction of the railroad. This convention, executed in London on September 15 with George O. Budd and

William L. Holt, called for the line to be built within two years. Despite Rojas' optimism expressed to his friend Sanford, this convention did not get off the ground. Perhaps the major reason was that it called for the government of Venezuela to deposit £100,000 to the account of the contractors before the work began.<sup>24</sup>

As the fall of 1874 wore on, the Venezuelan position with the Council of Bondholders in London grew more difficult. Hemming, acting as both Consul of Venezuela and an individual bondholder, sought to counter this trend by writing the bondholders a special message. Rojas then submitted a soothing, detailed proposal for their consideration. Hemming succeeded in gaining the support of several bondholders whose bonds valued £150,000, but personalities then became part of the issue, and Hemming had to publish a tract containing certain of his letters to the Council so his position would be vindicated. The net result of all this, despite the good works of Rojas and Hemming, was that the Council, meeting on November 24, determined that the negotiations with Venezuela were completely interrupted.<sup>25</sup>

There the negotiations remained until the spring of 1876. Rojas, in this interim, spent much time in pursuit of purely diplomatic endeavors. From late May 1875 until the spring of 1876, he worked diligently on the diplomatic problems with Holland. During this time, also, he continued relations with Spain, an off-and-on situation due to the circumstances of Spanish politics. And, then, he also pursued his own private work in Paris and environs. It is certain that Guzmán Blanco

and his ministers continued to make plans to achieve that railroad from Caracas to the sea while simultaneously seeking a workable solution to the impasse with the English bondholders. Perhaps the only exception to the lack of visible activity during the sixteen months from November 1874 to March 1876 was the railroad equipment contract of 15 March 1875. Under this contract Gabor Naphegyi, a North American citizen, and Vicente Coronado, the Venezuelan Minister of Development, agreed that Naphegyi would introduce steam locomotives, cars, and other equipment for the Caracas-La Guaira railway.<sup>26</sup> Despite this contract there was yet no guarantee that the engines would have rails on which to run.

It appeared, though, that both the road itself and the refinanced foreign debt were in the making in the spring of 1876. Rojas went to London on March 9 and presented a proposal to modify the Convention of 7 November 1873. The officers of the Council of Bondholders accepted his proposal and sent it to the creditors of record for their approval. Essentially, the agreement was that overdue coupons or interest payments up to June 1876 would be converted to a "Passive Foreign Debt" and the government would pay £20,000 per year to amortize these particular bonds. Subsequent coupons up to 1 January 1879 would be replaced by first-mortgage bonds worth £200,000 at 8 percent interest and a 2 percent sinking fund, all on the Caracas-La Guaira railroad. After 1 January 1879 the creditors would receive all of the 27 percent of the forty units of the revenue of the customs houses,

as outlined in the decree of 30 November 1872. In essence, the main change was that now the bondholders would be allowing £200,000 of their future dividends to be applied to the railroad rather than the £405,752 anticipated total cost of the railroad construction.<sup>27</sup>

With the possible acceptance of the bondholders now in hand, Rojas pursued a construction contract. This contract would have to be self-financing, at least in part, for the immediate obligations would now only be half met by the English bondholders. In the days following his presentation in London, he feared that the group he had been dealing with in Paris might not agree to the contract proposed. To him, the French were "simple jobbers and humbuggers." Accordingly, he sought the aid of his friend Sanford in an attempt to acquire the contract from other financial sources in Europe. Naturally, Rojas expected to receive a personal commission if such an arrangement were made. But, as it turned out, the humbuggers of Paris accepted his proposal. It can be assumed that these people, too, were liable to pay him a personal commission for his services. At any rate, on 27 March 1876 Rojas signed, in Paris, a construction-financial contract with José María Antommarchi Herreros. The terms of this contract neatly brought it all together. Antommarchi H. and his associates would build the railroad. Fr.5,000,000 (£200,000) would be issued in preferred bearer bonds. The Council of Venezuelan Bondholders in London was to hold these bonds. Furthermore, the concessionaire would issue Fr.8,000,000 in bearer bonds,

and Venezuela would subscribe to seven-sixteenths of the issue (£140,000 of £320,000).<sup>28</sup> Now, only the agreement with the bondholders needed formalizing and the entire operation approved by the powers in Caracas.

Rojas completed the preliminary agreement with the bondholders in the Rojas-Turnbull Convention of 18 April 1876. This Convention followed Rojas' proposals of March 9, except that the government of Venezuela would pay £40,000 annually to the bondholders up to 1 January 1879, instead of £20,000 as initially proposed. Two days later the exultant Rojas shared his happiness with Sanford in a letter that began, "Gloria in excelsis Deo! I have signed, sealed, and remitted today to my government an agreement with the Venezuelan bondholders, and I have also contracted the construction of the La Guaira railway with a French comité in conjunction with the Venezuelan government, the first subscribing four and one-half million francs." Back in Caracas Guzmán Blanco and his ministers and national congressmen acted quickly on the agreement. He signed the resulting decree on 12 May 1876, approving both the Turnbull and Antommarchi Conventions.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, on June 16 Rojas met with the Council of Bondholders in London, and there, after explanations from both Rojas and the officers of the Council, the bondholders ratified the Convention approved by Guzmán Blanco the prior May. Meanwhile, Antommarchi H. reported that work had already begun on the railroad.<sup>30</sup> At this juncture it appeared that Venezuela would

realize its rail connection between the capital and the sea, and also the English bondholders would be tied to the successful completion of the railroad.

By now Rojas had been in Europe for three years. Diplomatically he had had appointments in Spain and Holland. But, he spent most of his time as Fiscal Agent of the Republic in London. Paris had been his base, but he had made several trips to London. The work seems to have been based on instructions from Guzmán Blanco, both directly to Rojas and through governmental intermediaries and, also, on Rojas' own initiative. At times the instructions were not clear or the circumstances at Caracas changed, as witnessed the insistence on tying the Rojas-Turnbull Convention of 1873 to financing a railroad to the sea. Even so, the work was profitable and satisfying, both to Rojas and to his government. It was a good finish to the seven-year "reign" of Guzmán Blanco, that period from 1870 to 1877 known as the "Septenio." Guzmán Blanco, greatly pleased with the successful work of Rojas, decreed on 15 May 1876 that Rojas be honored with a gold medal. The inscription read

Arreglo de la Deuda Exterior de Venezuela  
Ferrocarril de la Guaira a Caracas  
Año de 1876  
El General Guzmán Blanco, Presidente de  
Venezuela, al doctor José María Rojas.<sup>31</sup>

The success Rojas enjoyed with the foreign bondholders and railroad contractors by the spring of 1876 was not to be accompanied, though, by equal success in his negotiations with

the Spanish government. When he had left Caracas in May 1873, he had gone to Europe as both Fiscal Agent to London and Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain. He began his fiscal work in London, as described above, in July 1873 but did not seriously undertake his negotiations in Madrid until late the same year. While it is possible that Rojas was instructed by Guzmán Blanco to begin first the London phase of his work for Venezuela, there still was good reason for him to be in no hurry to get to Madrid.

The understatement is that Spain was in the midst of political convulsions. These convulsions had burst through the political veneer as early as the First Carlist War of 1834-1839 and were entering a phase of increased intensity in the summer of 1873. Labeling the political arena of nineteenth-century Spain a "labyrinth" is quite appropriate. Queen Isabella, the nymphomaniac, was deposed in the September Revolution of 1868. The next year Don Carlos VII, the young Pretender, launched the Second Carlist War. From 1871 to 12 February 1873, Amadeo of Savoy led a democratic monarchy in Spain. He abdicated in the face of the development of a republic. But, rather quickly, the republican adherents began to split among themselves, and this political confusion, compounded by the pressure of other events, made the entire situation untenable. The Carlists began a strong drive from the north of Spain in March. By August they controlled several provinces, and young Don Carlos even set his court in Estella and ruled as King of Spain. To the south the cantonal movement, a form of extreme federalism, threatened the

fragile republic. By June such principal southern cities as Cádiz, Córdoba, and Málaga had rebelled against the central government, formed local cantons, and ruled themselves through committees of public safety. As the year wore on, the republicans suppressed the cantonal movement, but the Carlists still held sway to the north. The rebellion in Cuba and the "Virginus" affair, the seizing of a United States ship bound for that troubled island, brought additional trauma to the shaky republic.<sup>32</sup>

The above being the political situation in Spain in 1873, the comment of the Venezuelan Consul in Madrid, in August, that "the lamentable interior condition of this unfortunate country" detained Rojas in Paris doubtless was accurate. Despite all this turmoil, however, and despite the rapid ministerial changes, Spanish diplomacy had continued at a rather intensive rate. It is not surprising, therefore, that Rojas finally did go to Madrid in November.<sup>33</sup> The Convention of 1873 had been signed with Turnbull, Rojas probably did not yet know that it would encounter difficulty in Caracas, and the threads of Venezuelan-Spanish diplomatic relations needed to be picked up.

The rather threadbare relations between Venezuela and Spain had begun as early as 1841 when the two nations initiated working commercial relations. The great Alejo Fortique signed the treaty of peace and recognition with Spain in 1845. In the years that followed, particularly under the Monagas brothers, these relations ran into numerous difficulties, especially over the issues of debts, nationality, and naturalization. The brief

treaty of 12 August 1861 lessened the problems somewhat by calling for renewed negotiations concerning damages done Spanish subjects, and a convention of 17 April 1865 specified how the amount of damages might be established. In the interim Guzmán Blanco made a trip to Europe. The then Vice President and Secretary of State for Finance and Foreign Relations went in 1863, as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, to Great Britain, France, and Spain. He carried abroad the good news about the Venezuelan brand of federalism but accomplished nothing concrete with Spain. Guillermo Tell Villegas enjoyed the appointment of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain in 1869, but nothing came of it.<sup>34</sup> In the early 1870's, when Rojas went to Europe, Venezuela and Spain had a rather haphazard diplomatic relationship, and both countries had domestic problems.

Despite the confusion and lack of contact, Rojas left Paris in November 1873 and went back to Madrid. The trip itself even seemed to be haphazard and full of problems. At the time there was cholera in France, so Rojas and his secretary had to pass through a fumigation process when they arrived at Santander. After this they spent the night in a railway coach and managed to get it for themselves by simulating the beginning stages of cholera, moans, etc., to keep other passengers out. They arrived in Madrid on November 24 and, once there, acquired suitable housing to serve as a base for the diplomatic mission.<sup>35</sup>

The original instructions of 5 May 1873 formed the basis

for Rojas' mission to Spain. They were, at once, a combination of the clear and the vague. For one thing, Rojas was to carry out the stipulations of Article 2 of the Convention of 17 April 1865. That is, he should examine scrupulously the Spanish claims against Venezuela and determine which of the claimants would become creditors. The limit on these claims was 2,000,000 pesos. Furthermore, the resultant debt would be paid from its proportionate share of the 13 percent of the forty units, as described in the decree-law of 30 November 1872. Rojas also was to seek a convention in which Spain would pay damages to Venezuelan citizens who had claims against the former mother country. Article 8 of the treaty of peace and recognition of 1845 stipulated that Venezuela would reimburse Spanish citizens who had lost both fixed and movable property in the wars of independence. Rojas should get the same treatment for the claims of Venezuelan citizens against Spain. Perhaps the vaguest point in the instructions was that on Cuba. Minister of Foreign Relations, Jesús María Blanco, the immediate author of the instructions, reminded Rojas that the conditions between Spain and Cuba affected relations between Spain and all the South American republics. Accordingly, Rojas was to use his good offices, etc., to get Spain to recognize the autonomy of Cuba.<sup>36</sup>

Prior to the working diplomacy, however, Rojas went through the formal phase of being received by the head of state and his cabinet. This was Rojas' first such experience, and surely he enjoyed every moment of it. The preliminary action was an

interview with José de Carvajal, the Spanish Minister of State, on the afternoon of December 7. The formal reception came on the tenth and, just as the trip to Spain, had its element of humor. Rojas understood that the Introducer of Ambassadors would come for him with coaches provided by the President. At the appointed time a benedaled groom presented himself at the door to Rojas' house and stated that the Introducer waited downstairs with the President's coaches. Rojas told the luckless man to tell the Introducer that the Minister of Venezuela awaited him in his dwelling so that they could go down together. On learning this, the Introducer dashed up the stairs like a buck and apologized for having forgotten. The two men then proceeded, accompanied in their coaches by flagmen and musicians, to the offices of Emilio Castelar, the President of the Executive Power, where the formal reception occurred. Rojas presented his credentials and mouthed the proper phrases of courtesy. Castelar received them and made the proper response. And thus ended the official reception. Rojas reported it in detail to Caracas. There, Guzmán Blanco, who appreciated a good show himself, was greatly pleased by it all.<sup>37</sup> Now it was time to go to work.

Rojas handled his diplomatic responsibilities just as he had his fiscal ones, through letters and interviews. On December 13 he wrote the Spanish Minister of State, Carvajal, and informed him rather specifically that he was in Spain in reference to the Convention of 1865. He wanted to settle the details of Venezuelan debts to Spanish subjects as quickly as possible,

cited the law of 30 November 1872 and hoped that Carvajal would soon appoint a plenipotentiary. A few days later, on Christmas Eve, he wrote the Minister of State again and broadened his approach. Now, he also made reference to Venezuelan citizens' claims against Spain, specifically from 5 July 1811 to 1823. This period dated from the Venezuelan Declaration of Independence to the end of effective Spanish rule in Venezuela. On December 29 Rojas conferred with the Minister of State about the Spanish claims against Venezuela. Carvajal reserved plenipotentiary rights for himself but, meanwhile, advised Rojas that he would appoint a special commissioner for the detailed work of the claims. Thus it stood at the end of 1873.<sup>38</sup>

Before Rojas could pursue the negotiations further, there was a coup in the Spanish government. The government of Emilio Castelar fell as a result of the in-fighting between the republican right and left, the latter being the extreme federalists who wanted nothing less than a cantonal federation. Rojas referred to them as radicals and communists. Castelar did not get the necessary vote of confidence on the night of 3 January 1874, and the deputies finally found themselves expelled by the military. Rojas saw the coup coming, as he had practice in these things in Venezuela. He was not surprised, therefore, to be invited to witness the coup. He declined and chose to await further results. It was all rather simple. Within a day or so, another republican government was formed, and now Rojas had to use different names in his letters.<sup>39</sup>

The diplomatic work continued apace. Rojas spent the next few weeks examining the various Spanish claims against Venezuela. He completed this work on February 24, and the agreed-upon list of approved creditors had a total claim against Venezuela of 1,540,891.53 fuertes venezolanos. Rojas then met on March 6 with the new Minister of State, Praxedes Mateo Sagasta, and signed the covering convention on 10 March 1874. The convention itself specified the total amount of the claims, referred to the list of claimants and individual amounts annexed, stated that Venezuela would issue certificates for the claims, provided for the Spanish legation in Caracas to receive its pro rata share of the 13 percent of the forty units as prescribed in the law of 30 November 1872, and protected Spain from any change that might be made to its detriment with other creditor nations. Both governments approved the convention, with only minor modifications, in the months that followed. Within a week of the signing of the convention, Rojas left Madrid and returned to Paris.<sup>40</sup>

Left incomplete with Rojas' departure were the issues of Cuba and the claims of Venezuelan citizens against Spain. Cuba presented problems from the beginning for Rojas did not understand the original instructions of 5 May 1873. He wrote the Ministry in Caracas and asked for clarification of the instructions to use his good offices to push for the autonomy of Cuba. He feared, understandably, that such action could complicate the other negotiations, for the Cuban issue, as seen from the Spanish

point of view, involved nothing less than the possible loss of Spanish territory overseas. The supplementary information from Caracas, though received too late to help Rojas before he left Madrid the first time, was just as vague as the original instructions. Blanco, writing on behalf of Guzmán Blanco, stated rather vaguely that Rojas was "explicitly authorized to work diligently in favor of the island of Cuba; therefore, nothing can be more opportune or proper in the case than to reiterate to you the content of the said instruction." Thus, Rojas had nothing to act on, and the supplementary instructions, quite apart from their lateness, did not help the matter of Cuba. For these reasons the Cuban action was deferred.<sup>41</sup>

The other issue, that of Venezuelan citizens' claims against Spain, did receive slight though inconclusive consideration before Rojas left Madrid. He mentioned, in his letter of 24 December 1873 to the Spanish Minister of State, how Venezuela had honored its debts as cited in the treaty of 1845 and a subsequent clarifying document of 1846. He also mentioned that the same treaty stated that the citizens of either nation might have claims and that either nation should not impede such claims. While the letter was rather straightforward, the Ministry in Caracas later characterized it as an extensive and vigorous note, proving the right of Venezuela to the indemnities demanded. These subsequent praises notwithstanding, the Minister of State in Madrid merely responded to Rojas that he was occupied in the study of this important subject so as to resolve it.<sup>42</sup> But,

Rojas did not stay in Madrid for an answer.

Rojas left Madrid in March 1874. He had come to Spain during a period of prolonged domestic turmoil. A coup occurred soon after his arrival. Doubtless all of this affected the Spanish capacity for diplomatic negotiations, particularly if they would cost Spain money. Accordingly, Rojas achieved the Convention of March 10, whereby Venezuela would pay debts to Spanish citizens, but he only scratched the surface on the issue of Spain paying debts to Venezuelan citizens. And the delicacy of the Cuban situation, plus insufficient instructions, precluded any action on that issue. Thus Rojas determined, as in his letter of March 9 to Foreign Minister Blanco in Caracas, that

for reasons that I give under separate cover to the Exemplary Mr. President of the Republic, I will not await here the result of this negotiation that, in the actual state of the country, appears to me slow and uncertain; and I will return within a week to Paris, where I hope to receive my letters of retirement.<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps there were other reasons in the separate letter to Guzmán Blanco. Even so, Rojas later recalled that the fall of the Castelar government and the successful signing of the Convention of 10 March 1874 determined his immediate return to Paris.<sup>44</sup>

Rojas return trip to Paris was perhaps even more exciting than the fumigation encounter of a few months before while on his way to Madrid. He and his secretary traveled by land through Pamplona in hope of avoiding the Carlist forces. Just beyond Pamplona they encountered a skirmish, and after watching

it for awhile, they tipped the coachman to cross the lines with the aid of a white flag. As they crossed no-man's land, they encountered a small group of regulars carrying a dead comrade on a stretcher. Then they met the Carlists, identified themselves, and reported that the group with the stretcher had set up an ambush for the Carlists. This fabrication was to halt the Carlist advance, at least temporarily, so the Rojas party would not be in danger of rear-guard fire from the regulars. Later in the same day, they had to pass a major Carlist checkpoint. They wished the Carlists well, went on to Bayonne, and then to Paris.<sup>45</sup>

Suffice it to say that the life of a diplomat in Europe in the 1870's was not necessarily dull, particularly if he traveled between Paris and Madrid.

Back in Paris Rojas waited for his letters of retirement to be forwarded to the Spanish government. He also devoted some time to the problems with the bondholders in London. Rojas reported to his friend Sanford that he had "passed a delicious time" in Spain. Still, he wanted his retirement, and it came from Caracas on 20 April 1874.<sup>46</sup> With other irons in the fire and with the uncertainty in Spain itself, the atmosphere was not conducive to the art of diplomacy, particularly if the issue was one of claims against Spain.

While Rojas' activities for most of the next two years were primarily in Paris, London, and The Hague, both he and the Caracas government spent some effort on the outstanding problems with Spain. Guzmán Blanco acted on the claims against Spain as

soon as he learned that Rojas had left Madrid. By his orders the Ministry of Foreign Relations published a resolution in the Gaceta oficial of 23 May 1874. Through this resolution the Ministry solicited claims and supporting documents that might be used in the negotiations with Spain. Rojas himself stated from Paris, in June, that he planned to return to Madrid to push the claims. These plans did not materialize in the near future, though. The following November Rojas received the list of Venezuelan claimants, but he still did not return to Madrid. The political situation in Spain continued too fluid for effective work.<sup>47</sup>

Republican Spain, preparatory to a restoration of the monarchy, was turning more conservative in its political structure. By December 1874 conservative officers completely surrounded General Francisco Serrano y Domínguez, the President of the Executive Power. Meanwhile, young Alfonso XII, the son of the deposed Isabella II, came of age on November 28 and marked the occasion by issuing his Sandhurst Manifesto. That is, Alfonso called for restoration of the monarchy with himself as king. This monarchy, furthermore, would maintain representative institutions and observe modern, rather than feudal, principles. The restoration of the Bourbons did, in fact, follow, and on 9 January 1875 Alfonso XII arrived in Spain.<sup>48</sup>

Rojas watched all of this from Paris with great interest. Personally, he was uncertain how long Alfonso would last, for the Carlists and republicans continued active in Spain. Still,

he planned to go to Spain again to press the claims of Venezuelan citizens as a final task before retiring definitely from the post of Minister to Spain. The prior April the Foreign Ministry in Caracas had sent him the necessary letters of retirement, but, apparently, he had not used them. Now, he needed new credentials for the monarchy had replaced the republic.<sup>49</sup>

As the spring and summer of 1875 progressed, Rojas found himself more and more involved in other diplomatic pursuits. In April he inquired about new credentials for Spain. Blanco promptly assured him they were on the way. By the end of July, he still had not received them. The Ministry assured him again, in early September, that they were on the way. By then he was fully involved in affairs with the Dutch, in The Hague, and the mission to Madrid had to wait. Even so, Rojas apparently received his new credentials in the fall of 1875, for he wrote the new Spanish Minister of State on 23 October 1875 and requested an answer to his old note of 24 December 1873.<sup>50</sup> Ministerial tardiness in Caracas surely delayed Rojas' return to Madrid, but it is doubtful that this really weakened his position. He did receive the credentials, though, and prepared to return to Madrid.

Rojas left Paris on 4 January 1876, on his second diplomatic mission to Madrid. Once again the trip had its dangerous and humorous aspects. He mistakenly got off the train at Badalona, because he misunderstood it to be Barcelona. A coach dash through the night got him back on the right connection at

the real Barcelona. Then a derailment, a pleasant walk through the snow, and time in an inn delayed him a full day in arriving in Madrid.<sup>51</sup> The difficult trip now completed, Rojas resumed his mission.

Once in Madrid Rojas had two things to do. First, and necessarily, he had to be received formally by the King so that Venezuela might reestablish relations with the restored monarchy. Also, he planned to pursue seriously the question of Venezuelan claims against Spain. The possible Cuban issue, already delicate and vague, remained just that. Rojas certainly had not ignored it. At that very time his personal correspondence with his friend Sanford reflected considerable concern over the question of Cuba. Rojas particularly liked the possibility of discriminatory tariffs against slave-grown Cuban sugar and the role the United States might play in such plans. All of this was extra-official, though, and nothing came of it. Thus, the official reception and Venezuelan claims were the main thrust.<sup>52</sup>

The ceremonial phase of Rojas' activities in Madrid probably went as expected. Alfonso XII received Rojas on January 17, a few days after his arrival. After the reception by the King, Rojas also was presented to the infanta Isabel. Despite the shortness of this visit of etiquette, the lady impressed Rojas greatly. A few days later the Minister of State, Calderón Collantes, invited Rojas to view the fiesta of the King's saint from the balconies of the palace. Rojas recalled that all the pretty girls at the fiesta thought Alfonso was "cute."

Rojas also attended an official banquet in the royal palace and greatly admired the good tone and distinction of that gathering. A final ceremonial note is that Rojas learned, the day after being received by the King, that the King had presented Guzmán Blanco with the Gran Cruz de Carlos III.<sup>53</sup> The high formalities now completed, Rojas got to work on the real issue.

Rojas' work in Madrid focused on the question of the claims of Venezuelan citizens against Spain. His long letter of 24 December 1873 and the follow-up note of 23 October 1875 remained unanswered. Rojas made a good effort on behalf of his government. He talked with Calderón Collantes, but to no avail.

He also visited with the President of the Council of Ministers. This gentleman advised Rojas he might get quicker answers if he consulted with the Minister of Finance. An interview there produced nothing. The Minister of Finance fell back on the principle of prescription and blocked Rojas once more. Prescription was relevant under the terms of the peace treaty of 1845, whose Article 10 specified that claims must be filed within four years of the signing of the treaty. In the years that followed, the claims issues between Spain and Venezuela always centered around Spain's claims against Venezuela, but never Venezuela's against Spain. The claims convention that Rojas signed in 1874 implied that the Spanish claims were in order. The Venezuelan claims, on the other hand, simply were not in order. All of this must have been very frustrating to Rojas.<sup>54</sup>

Frustration in Madrid and orders from Caracas prompted Rojas to ask for his passport on 5 February 1876. Rojas advised Calderón Collantes that his government had called him to go to Paris on a grave assignment. Perhaps he had orders from Guzmán Blanco to resume the railroad and bondholders negotiations, or perhaps he saw the futility of it all in Spain. Calderón assured Rojas that he and the Minister of Finance were studying the Venezuelan claims and even promised a reply. Rojas supplied his Paris address for such a reply, but he was not very optimistic. He advised Blanco that he would send his letters of retirement from Paris to Madrid if he had not received a reply within a reasonable time.<sup>55</sup>

Subsequent activity at this time was merely formal. Rojas left Madrid on February 8 and arrived in Paris four days later. He worried about the continuing anarchy in Spain and waited for a reply from Calderón. The reply did not come, not surprisingly, and on 14 June 1876 he sent his letters of retirement to the Spanish Minister of State. A month later Alfonso XII supplied the necessary lip service and advised Guzmán Blanco that he had been quite satisfied with the actions of Rojas in Spain. And, thus ended the first part of Rojas' diplomatic negotiations with Spain. More than three years later, toward the end of 1879, Rojas would resume formal negotiations with that country.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, there were other things to do for Venezuela.

Any review of Rojas' activities in Spain from 1873 to 1876 must take account of so many extenuating circumstances that

there is difficulty in reaching any firm judgment. His own government supplied many problems. For example, there were continuous demands on Rojas to attend to other, more important items, such as bondholders, railroads, and Holland. Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Caracas was lax in giving him both proper credentials to Spain and clear instructions on the issue of Cuba. Perhaps the greatest problem was that possible Venezuelan claims against Spain had been allowed to lapse because of inexcusable negligence over the years. Combine these handicaps with a Spain that was in terrible domestic and political straits, but had a firm claim to Spanish claims against Venezuela, and no Venezuelan minister would have accomplished much. Rojas probably did as well as the best, and better than most.

Despite the Spanish handicaps Rojas signed and negotiated, as instructed, the convention on Spanish claims, negotiated a troublesome refinancing of the Venezuelan foreign debt in London, and successfully achieved an important railroad contract in Paris. The other phase of his early years' service for his government focused on Holland, the subject of the following chapter.

## NOTES

1. Copies of the various documents appointing Rojas to the Spanish position, all executed by Jesús María Blanco, the Minister of Foreign Relations, and Guzmán Blanco, dated 5 May 1873, are in MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 177-78, 182, 184. Rojas, acknowledging receipt of the appointment on May 6, stated that he was leaving for Spain the same day, Caracas, May 6, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 186. Rojas, Tiempo perdido, p. 55. Much of Rojas' fiscal activity was based on private appointments and instructions from Guzmán Blanco. While such correspondence is not available to this writer, its results are, and they serve as the primary source of Rojas' role as Fiscal Agent of Venezuela.

2. Rojas, Tiempo perdido, p. 55.

3. The problem with The Netherlands, part of Rojas' early diplomatic experience, is treated in the following chapter, "The Dutch Interlude: Short and Sharp."

4. Venezuela, Bosquejo, pp. 35, 44-46. Foreign debts were obligations based on loans incurred by the revolutionary and subsequent governments, while foreign claims were obligations based on damages suffered by foreigners and recognized by the government.

5. G.G., vol. 7, p. 157 and vol. 9, p. 248. Venezuela, Ministerio de Hacienda, Memoria de Hacienda (1880), vol. 3, pp. 8-12, contains a section on the "Sistema fiscal de Venezuela" which is essentially a diatribe against all Hacienda personnel, before the coming of Guzmán Blanco, for poor management, speculation, fraud, smuggling, and all other fiscal sins. Venezuela, Bosquejo, p. 45. Rojas, himself, profited from the loan of 1864, p. 45, above. See also Wise, Caudillo, Ch. 9, "Aspects of a Caudillo Regime: Financial Chicanery," pp. 145-60. According to Spence, Land of Bolívar, vol. 1, p. 216, 1 was the "equivalent of 5.2 venezolanos or fuertes (hard dollars)." The symbol is the regular dollar sign, "\$," or the "V." That is, 1 equals \$5.2 or V.5.2."

6. Spence, Land of Bolívar, vol. 2, pp. 140-41, 145-46.

7. Desmond Christopher St. Martin Platt, Finance, Trade and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815-1914 (Oxford:

Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 25, 34-35, 398-401. Platt explains, p. 12, that government intervention in loans arose only in cases with a real national interest. In this respect, he mentions the Greek guaranteed loans of 1833 and 1898 and the Turkish guaranteed loan of 1855.

8. The Guzmán Blanco letter, Caracas, 5 May 1873, is printed in Mem. de C. P. (1874), pp. xix-xx. The date and nature of the letter imply that Rojas left Caracas as Fiscal Agent of the Republic.

9. "Memorandum presentado a los acreedores exteriores por el comisionado del gobierno de Venezuela," London, 5 July 1873, Mem. de C. P. (1874), pp. xxx-xxi.

10. Baring Brothers, London, 15 July 1873, to Guzmán Blanco and Rojas, Paris, 30 July 1873, to the Secretary of the Council of Venezuelan Bondholders, Mem. de C. P. (1874), pp. xxii-xxiii.

11. Mem. de C. P. (1874), pp. xxxiii-xxvi.

12. Mem. de C. P. (1874), p. xxvi, and Rojas, Paris, 2 November 1873, to Turnbull, Mem. de C. P. (1874), pp. xxvii-xxviii.

13. Mem. de C. P. (1874), pp. xxvii-xxviii. On p. xxix there is a reference to Dutch bondholders, but apparently the primary action occurred in London. Texts of the Rojas-Turnbull Convention of 7 November 1873 may be found in ibid., pp. xxxi-xxxii, and in Recop., vol. 7, doc. 2032, 487-88. The early Spanish activities of Rojas begin on page 52, below.

14. G.G., vol. 5, p. 285, vol. 6, pp. 77, 329, vol. 10, 131-32. The decree is printed in C.O., no. 40 (1 February 1873), p. 173, and Recop., vol. 5, doc. 1813, 238. It can be assumed that there was some predatory overtone to this action. The reader will recall that Rojas profited from his role in the Loan of 1864.

15. Rojas stated in his memorandum of 5 July 1873 to the bondholders that Guzmán Blanco aspired to "dejar consolidado el orden, restablecido el crédito y desarrollada la riqueza pública por medio del fomento material del país. . ." Mem. de C. P. (1874), p. xx. The letter of the officers of the bondholders of 24 October 1873 refers to railroads and other work of public utility to be constructed to augment the great scale of commerce in Venezuela, ibid., p. xxiv.

16. Spence, Land of Bolívar, vol. 2, pp. 136-38, contains a description, including a map, of the Aroa mines. The complete text of the Strange contracts and the enabling decree of 6 June 1874 are in Recop., vol. 7, no. 1904, pp. 212-15. They are also

contained collectively in the following issues of G.o.: No. 168 (25 December 1873), pp. 298-99; no. 170 (30 December 1873), p. 307; and no. 353 (16 September 1874), p. 1007. G.o., no. 2886 (15 February 1883), pp. 1-2, contains further activities, without the involvement of Rojas, about these railroads. It appears that many Venezuelans were quite excited about the development of their country, particularly railroad building. G.G., vol. 10, pp. 233-34, mentions that the publication of the San Felipe-Palma Sola contract coincided with the inauguration of the first locomotive for the line. The engine bore the name "Guzmán Blanco."

17. The Geneste report, dated 24 March 1874, is printed in G.o., no. 270 (9 June 1874), pp. 672-73, and Venezuela, Ministerio de Obras Públicas, Memoria (1875), pp. 48-60. G.o., no. 324 (12 August 1874), 892-93. Rojas, Private, Paris, 9 May 1874, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16.

18. G.o., no. 265 (2 June 1874), p. 652, and no. 843 (26 May 1876), p. 2974. Recop., vol. 7, doc. 1881, 56.

19. J. G. Ochoa, Ministry of Public Works, 2 June 1874, to Rojas, Mem. de C. P. (1875), pp. 144-45.

20. G.o., no. 314 (31 July 1874), p. 851.

21. Rojas, Paris, 27 June 1874, to J. R. Tello, Minister of Public Credit, Mem. de C. P. (1875), p. 145. Rojas, London, 11 July 1874, to Turnbull, copy encl. in Rojas, London, 16 July 1874, to Tello; both printed in Mem. de C. P. (1875), pp. 145-47; and G.o., no. 322 (10 August 1874), pp. 883-84. See also Rojas, Paris, 31 July 1874, to Tello, Mem. de C. P. (1875), pp. 148-49; and G.o., no. 336 (26 August 1874), p. 939.

22. Turnbull, London, 18 July 1874, to Rojas; Mem. de C. P. (1875), pp. 150-52; and G.o., no. 336 (26 August 1874), pp. 939-40. Rojas, London, 20 July 1874, to Turnbull, Mem. de C. P. (1875), pp. 152-53; and G.o., no. 336 (26 August 1874), p. 940. Both versions of the Turnbull letter of July 18 are printed in the sources cited above. Interestingly, the strong Rojas letter of July 20 is printed in the Venezuelan sources, but not his moderated one of July 22. Rojas, London (two letters) 31 July 1874, to Tello, Mem. de C. P. (1875), pp. 148-49; and G.o., no. 336 (26 August 1874), p. 939.

23. The activities of Pulgar can be found in Juan Besson, Historia del Estado Zulia, 5 vols. (Maracaibo: Editorial Hermanos Belloso Rossell, 1943-1957), vol. 3, 130 ff., and passim. Rojas, Paris, 31 July 1874, to Ministry of Foreign Relations, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 246. Enclosed with this letter are Hemming, London, July 24, and Pawle, London, July 25, 1874, both to Rojas, MRE/GB/CLVL,

vol. 3, fols. 11, 13. The Pawle letter, exclusive of the Pulgar information, is printed in G.o., no. 336 (24 August 1874), p. 940. The archives of the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Relations do not indicate a Pulgar portfolio for London.

24. Tello, Ministry of Public Credit, 4 September 1874, to Rojas; to Santiago Goiticoa, Minister of Hacienda; and Goiticoa, 4 September 1874, to Tello, Mem. de C. P. (1875), pp. 155-56. The Rojas-Budd and Holt Convention is in Venezuela, Ministerio de Obras Públicas, Memoria (1875), pp. 62-70. Rojas, Paris, 18 September 1874, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16.

25. The Rojas proposal, "Deuda de Venezuela;" Rojas, Paris, 28 November 1874, to Tello; encl. "A los tenedores de bonos venezolanos. . . Fred. H. Hemming. . . noviembre 20 de 1874;" Mem. de C. P. (1875), pp. 159-70. Rojas also wrote the President of the Amsterdam Stock Market, offering a partial settlement to the Dutch bondholders on the same basis as that offered the British counterparts; Paris, 2 October 1874, ibid., pp. 157-58. It does not appear that the number of Dutch bondholders was very large.

26. G.o., no. 498 (18 March 1875), p. 1594. See p. 77 below for Rojas' other activities in 1875.

27. "Proposiciones que hizo. . . José María Rojas. . . al Comité. . . el 11 de marzo próximo pasado," G.o., no. 843 (26 May 1876), p. 2975, and Rojas, Confidential, Paris, 17 March 1876, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16.

28. Rojas, Confidential, Paris, 17 March 1856, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16, which includes "---Very Confidential--- To give the concession, I believe it very natural to demand a sum---." The Rojas-Antommarchi H. Contract is printed in G.o., no. 843 (26 May 1876), p. 2974, and Recop., vol. 7, doc. 2060, 511-13.

29. The Rojas-Turnbull Convention of 18 April 1876 is in Venezuela, Ministerio de Hacienda, Memoria (1880), vol. 3, pp. 115-16. The other information relevant to the successful completion of this construction-fiscal effort, including an agreement extending the construction time for the railroad from two to two and one-half years, and one specifying equipment for the road, is located in G.o., no. 843 (26 May 1876), p. 2974-75, and Recop., vol. 7, doc. 1881(b), 57-58.

30. Printed working copy of the proposed convention, London, 16 June 1876; Maxwell G. Turnbull, Chairman of the Committee, "To the Venezuelan Bondholders," /London/, 17 June 1876; and "The Venezuelan Bondholders," clipping from Money Market Review, London, 17 June 1876; in MRE/CB/TC, vol. 5, fols. 173-75.

Antonmarchi H., Caracas, 22 May 1876, to Jesús Muñoz Tébar, Minister of Public Works; G.o., no. 843 (26 May 1876), p. 2975. The indefatigable Rojas also met with representatives of the Bolívar Railway Company and the New Quebrada Company, in Boulogne, to clarify certain contractual misunderstandings in July; Rojas, Paris, 19 July 1876, to Muñoz Tébar. The clarifying document is dated 14 July 1876; G.o., no. 973 (23 October 1876), p. 3493. See also G.G., vol. 11, p. 139.

31. G.o., no. 833 (15 May 1876), p. 2933, and G.G., vol. 11, p. 70.

32. Gerald Brenan's The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960) is aptly titled and gives a good idea of the religious, political, and sectional turmoil in that unfortunate land in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Joseph August Brandt, Toward the New Spain (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), pp. 170, 73, 86, 202, 214-16, 302-303. Brandt sympathetically ties his study to the Spanish Republic of 1931, in that he sees the experiences of 1873 as a necessary preliminary. See also the older study of Edward Henry Strobel, The Spanish Revolution, 1868-1875 (Boston: Small, Maynard, and Co., 1898).

33. F. Barrie y Agüero, Madrid, 5 August 1873, to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 194. Jerónimo Bécker, Historia de las relaciones exteriores de España durante el siglo XIX (Apuntes para una historia diplomática), 3 vols. (Madrid: Estab. Tip. de J. Ratés, 1924-1926), vol. 3, pp. 194-95.

34. Bécker, Historia, vol. 2, pp. 696-700. Tratados. vol. 1, pp. 157-63, 169, 177, 243-44, contains the referred conventions or treaties. This source does not contain the convention of 17 April 1865. It may be found in Spain, Colección de los tratados de paz, alianza, comercio, etc., ajustados por la corona de España con las potencias extranjeras, desde el reynado del señor don Felipe Quinto hasta el presente (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1796-1890), vol. 4, pp. 173-74. The convention of 12 August 1861 is labeled one of "reclamaciones" in the Venezuelan source, p. 243, while the Spanish source refers to it as a convention "para reanudar las relaciones interrumpidas," p. 241. "G. F. V.," Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 and 6 August 1863, to Guzmán Blanco, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 1, fols. 207, 213. J. P. Rojas Paul, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 30 March 1869, to G. Tell Villegas, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 166.

35. José María Rojas, Recuerdos de la patria, Colección "Venezuela peregrina," vol. 5 (Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1963), pp. 47-48, and Rojas, Madrid, 11 December 1873, to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 201.

36. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 May 1873, to Rojas, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 184.
37. Carvajal, copy, Ministry of State, 7 December 1873, to Rojas, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 200. Copies of the formal documents Rojas presented to Castelar are in MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 177-78. Rojas, Recuerdos, pp. 48-49; Rojas commented, p. 49, that with this exception the Introducers were very skillful and distinguished. The reception itself is described in detail in L.a. (1874), pp. 60-61. Rojas, Madrid, 11 December 1873, to Blanco, and Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 20 January 1874, to Rojas; MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 201, 216.
38. Rojas, Madrid, 13 December 1873, to Blanco; copy, December 24, to Carvajal; December 26, to Blanco; December 31, to Blanco; and Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 31 January 1874, to Rojas; MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 203, 205, 210, 211, 224. The Rojas letter of December 24 is printed in L.a. (1875), pp. 39-43.
39. Práxedes Mateo Sagasta, new Minister of State, copy, Ministry of State, January 5, to Rojas; Rojas, copy, Madrid, January 7, to Sagasta, January 8 and 29, to Blanco; Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 2 March 1874, to Rojas; MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 213, 222, 223, 229. Brandt, Toward the New Spain, pp. 316-28; Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 49; and Brenan, Spanish Labyrinth, p. 152.
40. Rojas, Madrid, March 9, to Blanco; Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, June 20, entry note, June 20, to Rojas; and Rojas, Paris, 31 July 1874, to Blanco; MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 230, 239-40, 245. Copies of the convention are found in Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 287-88, and Recop., vol. 7, doc. 1897, 200-201. See also comments under the heading of "España," and Dionisio Roberts, Legation of Spain in Caracas, 30 November 1874, to the Minister of Foreign Relations, L.a. (1875), pp. xxii-xxiii and 33; L.a. (1876), xxxvii ff., and G.G., vol. 10, pp. 289-90.
41. Rojas, Paris, 2 November 1873, to Blanco; Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 March 1874, to Rojas; MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 198, 231.
42. Rojas, copy, Madrid, 24 December 1873, to Carvajal, and Rojas, Madrid, 9 March 1874, to Blanco; MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 205, 230. L.a. (1875), p. xxiii. Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 162-63, contains an agreement of 7 August 1846 between Venezuela and Spain in which all financial obligations to Spain terminated as of 5 July 1811, the formal date of Venezuelan independence.
43. Rojas, Madrid, 9 March 1874, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 230. On several occasions, Rojas referred to pri-

vate correspondence with Guzmán Blanco, correspondence that was quite relevant to diplomatic and fiscal activities.

44. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 49.

45. Ibid., pp. 49-51.

46. Rojas, Private, Paris, 9 May 1874, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16, and Guzmán Blanco, copy, Caracas, 20 April 1874, to Spanish President of the Executive Power, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 236. There is no record of the Spanish acceptance of the letter of retirement from Guzmán Blanco. Therefore, it is assumed that Rojas probably held the letter.

47. L.a. (1875), p. xxiii; Rojas, Paris, 26 June 1874, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 243; and Blanco, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 November 1874, to Rojas, printed in L.a. (1875), pp. 43-44.

48. Brandt, Toward the New Spain, pp. 336-39, 344.

49. Rojas, Paris, 16 January 1875, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 248. The Marquis of Molins, Minister of Marine and Interim Minister of State of the restored monarchy, sent a packet of current political information on Spain to General Venancio Pulgar, the then Venezuelan Minister to France. Pulgar sent it to Caracas. From there the information went back to Rojas in Paris. The time delay notwithstanding, Rojas probably knew more about what was going on in Spain than he could learn from the official pamphlets. Pulgar, Paris, 25 February 1875, to Blanco, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 107, and Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 3 April 1875, to Rojas, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 249.

50. Rojas, Paris, 30 April 1875, July 31, to Blanco, October 23, to Spanish Minister of State, and Blanco, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 22 May 1875, September 3, to Rojas; MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 254, 256, 257, 259. See also L.a. (1876), p. xxxvi. The writer has been unable to locate the new credentials for Rojas in the Ministerial archives in Caracas.

51. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 52.

52. Many of Rojas' letters to Sanford refer to Cuba. See, for example, Rojas, Paris, 4 November 1875, February 27, 23 April 1876, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17, 16. (The letter of November 4 is misfiled in the Sanford MSS, hence, the incorrect sequence in the citation.)

53. Rojas, Madrid, 31 January 1876, to Blanco, and clipping from Gaceta de Madrid, 18 January 1876; MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 262, clipping between 262 and 263. Rojas, Recuerdos, pp. 52-53.

54. Rojas, Madrid, January 30, Paris, 19 February 1876, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 262, 264. See also Tratados., vol. 1, p. 160, and L.a. (1877), p. lvi. A Congressional decree, signed by José Tadeo Monagas on 8 May 1850 called for a convention or additional treaty to clarify Venezuelan claims against Spain, but nothing came of it; Recop., vol. 2, doc. 748, 512.

55. Rojas, copy, Madrid, February 5, to Calderón; Calderón, copy, Ministry of State, February 7, to Rojas; and Rojas, Paris, 19 February 1876, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 260, 264.

56. Rojas, Paris, 20 February 1876, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16, and Rojas, Paris, 18 June 1876, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 274. Alfonso XII, Royal Palace, Madrid, 17 July 1876, to Guzmán Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 247, 277 (two formal notes of the same date). See below, 238 ff., for the details of Rojas' second assignment to Spain.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DUTCH INTERLUDE: SHORT AND SHARP

One of the tasks that occupied much of Rojas' time during 1875 and 1876, and probably a handicap to his simultaneous negotiations with Spain, was his work in The Hague. Beginning in June 1875 he made several trips from Paris to The Hague as Venezuelan Minister to The Netherlands. In this particular case, the issues were clear, the instructions were clear, and Rojas did exactly what he should have done under the circumstances. He broke diplomatic relations with The Netherlands, and his superiors in Caracas approved his action.

The break was neither the first nor the last between the two countries, and all of them have had their roots in the peculiarities of Caribbean area politics and geography. Very briefly, Venezuela had a rather turbulent political history until the rise to power of Guzmán Blanco in 1870. And, even in the years that followed, there were numerous attempts to overthrow him. Just off the coast of western Venezuela are the three Dutch islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao. These islands, particularly Curaçao with its excellent harbor, have been focal points of trade in the Caribbean. Having no natural resources of their own, they depended on trade as the single source of income. It developed that

much of this trade came to be in armaments, particularly with Venezuelans. A common sequence of events was that political exiles would regroup and resupply on Curaçao for an attempt to overthrow the mainland government, be it de facto or de jure. Over the years members of just about every faction in Venezuela had traded at Curaçao. And the government in power at a particular time might purchase arms on the Dutch islands. Understandably, there were many incidents between mainland Venezuelan authorities and the Dutch colonial officials on Curaçao.<sup>1</sup>

While it is neither necessary nor desirable to give a detailed accounting of the many incidents in the relations between Venezuela and Curaçao, a sampling will set the stage, as it were, for the final incident which prompted the Venezuelan decision to break relations if The Netherlands did not meet specific demands. In 1835 the government of José Antonio Páez purchased "piezas de artillería" on the island. Thirteen years later Antonio Leocadio Guzmán himself, acting as representative of the Venezuelan government, executed an agreement with the merchants Jacobo A. and D. A. Jesurun to buy various arms and goods. The next year The Netherlands made a naval demonstration against Venezuela in protest over certain indignities. In 1855 the Dutch complained about mistreatment of Dutch nationals in Coro. Three years later, in 1858, after Abraham Jesurun had sent arms to Santo Domingo, the Dutch authorities published an island regulation prohibiting the shipment of arms to regions in rebellion. The vague point with this law was how one defines these regions. Furthermore, the entire

law might be circumvented by shipping arms to a port intermediate to their final destination. Still, The Hague was not completely insensitive to what the island merchants were doing.<sup>2</sup>

The action continued in the same vein for the next few years. Venezuelan authorities, for example, imprisoned two Dutch nationals in Coro in 1862 for political activities. In 1866 Guzmán Blanco himself instructed the Minister of Foreign Relations to write the Dutch representative in Caracas about the bad circumstances that had befallen General Venancio Pulgar in Curaçao. Two years later Minister of Foreign Relations Guillermo Tell Villegas wrote a long letter of complaint to The Netherlands Consul General in Caracas. In this letter of 28 August 1868, Tell Villegas cited the recent parallel of the United States Civil War. He mentioned how the Dutch had become strictly neutral as far as Confederate ships were concerned and felt the same should be the case with ships from the rebellious western portion of Venezuela. A broader problem treated in the late sixties centered around Venezuelan representation in Curaçao. Dutch policy was that regular consuls were not allowed at overseas colonies unless the country in question had a treaty of amity and commerce with The Netherlands on this specific point. The lack of such a treaty clouded the relations between Venezuela and The Netherlands, particularly over the island colony of Curaçao. Commercial agents rather than consuls fulfilled Venezuela's role on this and other islands. At the end of the decade, in 1869, Venezuelan authorities caught The Netherlands' ship *Mara* unloading weapons in the port of

La Vela, Coro, but this still was not the end of the troubles.<sup>3</sup>

The period beginning in 1870 was one of extremes, both good and bad. The Netherlands Chargé was declared persona non grata in Venezuela in 1870. The next year The Netherlands changed its policy on the arms trade. A decree of 27 February 1871 prohibited the export of weaponry until 1 April 1872. Meanwhile, Lucio Pulido went to The Hague in the spring of 1872 to begin the formalities of reestablishing full diplomatic relations with Holland. He and Baron Gericke van Herwynen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed a preliminary protocol on March 21. The protocol formalized an agreement that M. Rolandus, the Chargé in Caracas, would not be reassigned, even temporarily. Pulido enjoyed a very nice reception by the King, William III, on March 27 and recommended a few days later that since conditions in Venezuela were stable, there should be no objections to arms coming out of Curaçao. Of course the Dutch embargo expired in the meantime.<sup>4</sup>

Venezuelan-Dutch relations seemed definitely improved after the protocol between Pulido and Gericke. J. Brakel replaced Rolandus and received his appointment as Chargé d'Affaires and Consul General to the Republics of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador in May. His formal reception in September 1872 marked the return to normal relations in Caracas. Actually a Captain and Quartermaster in the Dutch army, it is doubtful that Brakel was the right man in the right place at the proper time. Furthermore, he did not find the appointment an attractive one and commented to

a friend that he had not accepted it gladly.<sup>5</sup> While he was not a prime diplomat, the fact does remain that Brakel was in Caracas, and the business of diplomacy could proceed.

Despite the optimism, there was trouble ahead. Clandestine commerce remained a nagging problem in spite of the temporarily successful efforts in the winter of 1872-1873 of the Venezuelan government to crack down on that undesirable part of foreign trade. Then the Foreign Ministry in Caracas sought to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce and consular conventions with The Netherlands. Brakel responded that he would pass the request on to The Hague. Meanwhile, continued Brakel, would Venezuela please look into the various Dutch claims against Venezuela? The response, in turn, from Minister of Foreign Affairs D. B. Barrios was that Dutch claims were under consideration along with those of other nations. Brakel still wanted special attention, however, as he wrote Barrios on 24 February 1873 that his understanding from prior correspondence was that the Dutch claims would be settled promptly. The issue continued unresolved, however, as a year later Alexandro Goiticoa found himself serving as Special Plenipotentiary for Venezuela on the issue of the Dutch claims.<sup>6</sup> Still other problems were in the future, though, and the ingredients were an abortive revolution in western Venezuela, the seizure by Venezuelan authorities of a ship of Dutch registry, perhaps bull-headedness on the part of both countries, and a good dash of assertive Venezuelan nationalism.

Smuggling and its parallel activity, the use of Curaçao

as a base of operations for the enemies of the current regime in Caracas, caused the tension to rise in 1874. One Luís María Díaz, a Venezuelan resident in Curaçao, was one of the leaders of a revolutionary junta on the island. The new Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Relations, Jesus María Blanco, wanted the activities of Díaz stopped. Blanco presented proof of these activities to Bra-kel who, in turn, passed them on to Curaçao. The result was that Díaz was put under close watch, and The Netherlands government gave the Governor of Curaçao additional authority to crack down on the exportation of munitions from the island.<sup>7</sup>

While the Díaz issue seemed to be somewhat controlled, other incidents in late 1874 broadened the base of Venezuelan complaints. These incidents also centered around the activities of the revolutionary junta, or committee, headed by Díaz. Other members of the committee were Abraham T. Jesurun, a Curaçao merchant, and his son. The Jesuruns, in the eyes of the Venezuelan authorities, had been plotting against the mainland since 1858. Meanwhile, in October 1874 a revolution against the central government in Caracas broke out in Coro, in the western state of Falcón. Jesurun's ships supplied the rebellion by transporting arms from Curaçao to the port of La Vela de Coro. Other Jesurun ships presumably went to such places as Santo Domingo or Trinidad or St. Thomas but never seemed to arrive at their destinations. These ships carried arms and munitions as they made their rounds. Perhaps the best known of the Jesurun ships was the Midas.<sup>8</sup>

The voyages of the Midas in October 1874 have a touch of

both intrigue and humor. From the seventh to the fourteenth, according to the Venezuelan sources, the ship sailed from Curaçao to St. Thomas, picked up a cargo of powder, and returned to Curaçao. Later this powder was transferred to the Julieta for shipment to Coro. On the twenty-third the Midas sailed from Curaçao to Trinidad. The schooner was under charter to a Mr. Waldemar Worm, also a passenger on the ship. On 30 October 1874 Venezuelan authorities detained the Midas in the port of Sucre, Cumaná. What happened during the intervening seven days in October is debatable. The Dutch Captain's version was that the ship ran out of water, made one or two unsuccessful stops on islands for water, and finally came into Sucre for a fresh supply. The Venezuelan version was that Worm was an agent for the Jesurun interests and that the Midas carried arms for insurgents. The Midas was to meet the schooner Mary and tranship some of the arms to the Mary. Instead, the encounter did not occur, and the Midas dropped arms and munitions off to rebels on the islands of Tortuga and Coche. Then the ship went to Cumaná to inform certain conspirators to go to the islands to get the arms.

There were several items that tended to discredit the version of the Dutch crewmen of the Midas. While the Captain usually kept a log of the movements of his ship, he had no log when detained in Cumaná. And, for some curious reason, there was not enough fresh water on the ship for the voyage to Trinidad when it left Curaçao. Yet, there was ample water on the ship when the Venezuelans detained it. The implication is that the Captain did

not contemplate a direct voyage to Trinidad. Furthermore, the Dutch crewmen could not get their stories straight when they made depositions--which, in fact, are quite humorous--to the Venezuelan authorities. Suffice it to say that both the Midas and the crew were detained, and the entire incident became one of the main rallying points for both sides.<sup>9</sup>

In the wake of the ship movements to La Vela de Coro and the erratic voyage of the Midas, the authorities of both nations took quick steps. Venezuela, as has been seen, seized the Midas and jailed its crew. Furthermore, the Caracas authorities specifically advised Brakel that compensation for damages in Coro would be sought, for the Governor of Curaçao had the authority to stop the activity of Dutch subjects who were aiding the revolution there. And, perhaps most damaging of all to the Dutch, Venezuela closed the ports of La Vela de Coro and Maracaibo to Dutch trade until such time as payment might be made for the damages. The Governor of Curaçao, meanwhile, on October 26 reinstated the royal decree of 1871 which stated that everyone, particularly merchants and shippers, should avoid any political activities involving Venezuela. Brakel, understandably, sought the release of the Midas and its crew and the reopening of the ports. Blanco responded from the Venezuelan position that the closure of the ports was an internal affair, and compensation must be made for the damage in Coro. Blanco pointed out, furthermore, that the damage had been done before the Governor of Curaçao acted and that, despite his embargo on munitions exports, they continued to

come from the island. He noted that various rebel leaders found sanctuary there and continued their activities. Also, it irritated Blanco that the Curaçao authorities tended to equate Venezuelan rebels and Venezuelan authorities.<sup>10</sup>

By May 1875 the situation was that Foreign Minister Blanco and Chargé d'Affaires Brakel were exchanging letters in Caracas about the problems between Curaçao and Venezuela, and that was about all. The Venezuelan authorities apparently saw no profit in dealing with Brakel. Perhaps more could be accomplished in The Hague by a fully accredited Venezuelan Minister before the government of William III. Guzmán Blanco, accordingly, called on his friend José María Rojas to take the post. At the time Rojas was in a state of suspended negotiations both with his Venezuelan claims in Spain and with the bondholders in London. In addition to his proximity, Rojas might have been the only qualified person available. At any rate, the call went out on 4 May 1875. Guzmán Blanco specifically offered Rojas the job, named him Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, and appealed to Rojas' patriotism to accept the position.<sup>11</sup>

Guzmán Blanco and his Foreign Minister, Blanco, did all of this with a certain amount of secrecy. They wanted to get Rojas accredited to The Hague before Brakel could notify his own government. Presumably, the idea was to get in the first diplomatic thrust unopposed. In this respect Blanco urged Rojas to hurry to The Hague with his mission. Also, he sent a box of letters and supporting documents to Rojas by way of the Consuls at Saint

Nazaire and Paris with instructions to expedite them on to Rojas. Later, when Brakel complained about not being informed of the appointment of Rojas, Blanco rather lamely replied that Rojas had been expected home, and the Ministry did not believe he would receive the appointment before leaving Europe for Venezuela. While there was a certain amount of truth to this, Rojas did receive the box in Europe and was in The Hague shortly.<sup>12</sup>

The instructions Rojas received from Blanco this time were clear enough for him to pursue a definite course of action. Rather specifically, he was to claim indemnity for damages and injury suffered by Venezuela in the October 1874 revolution. The reasoning was that a group of Dutch subjects and Venezuelans resident in Curaçao had promised and sustained the revolution. Also, Rojas was to demand security measures so that Dutch colonies no longer would be a threat to the peace of Venezuela. In each case Rojas was to seek a treaty or convention. Blanco advised Rojas that he would be supplied with a chart of the damages suffered in the rebellion. They would come to a little more than 2,000,000 pesos, but Rojas could lower the amount if necessary, for the important point was to get the claim recognized. Rojas also was to seek the removal of the Governor of Curaçao and the expulsion of seven enemies of the government of Venezuela presently in refuge in Curaçao. Finally, Rojas was to seek an effective ban on the introduction of armaments and munitions of war into the colonies of The Netherlands that might affect Venezuela. This last demand, hopefully, would impede the

business of the arms speculators. Rojas felt the claims of Venezuela were proper, but, since it was a question of a weak nation dealing with a less-weak nation, he doubted the success of the venture.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, his analysis proved to be correct.

Rojas arrived in The Hague on June 1 and proceeded to prepare for his diplomatic mission. He lodged in the Hotel Paulus, also the residence of the Marqués de Arcicóllar, the Spanish Minister to Holland. Rojas found this relationship very helpful, for Arcicóllar knew the situation in Holland and was, in the words of Rojas, a very skillful diplomat. And Rojas would need all the help he could get. Rojas took as his secretary Antonio Parra Bolívar, the Venezuelan consul in Le Havre. While Parra B. now worked for Rojas, later he would work against him.<sup>14</sup>

Rojas' first step was to contact the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs about being received by the King, a necessary formality to the mission. Accordingly, on June 1, probably the same day he arrived in The Hague, Rojas wrote the Minister, der van der DoesWillebois, enclosed copies of his credentials, and asked when he might be received. On the third he received a verbal invitation from Willebois to meet in the latter's chambers the following afternoon.<sup>15</sup> Now the real action would begin.

The meeting between Rojas and Willebois on the afternoon of 4 June 1875 was one, figuratively, of steel fists under velvet gloves. At one point the two men smoked fine Havana cigars; at other points they came close to removing their velvet gloves. The first issue, basic to the entire mission, was Rojas' presence

at all at The Hague. Willebois first learned of Rojas' mission from the press and from other diplomats. This he did not like. Furthermore, Lucio Pulido, the Venezuelan Minister to Holland in 1871 and 1872, had never been recalled. Under those circumstances Willebois could hardly receive Rojas. And then, Brakel had complete instructions in Caracas and could handle any problems there. Rojas replied that he was the new Minister and that all dealings would be with him. In reality it was a delicate situation, for the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry had not sent a letter recalling Pulido. Rojas probably assured Willebois that this problem would be cleared shortly. The very next day, Pulido, doubtless at Rojas' instigation, wrote Willebois from Paris and announced that Venezuela had terminated his mission. He rather weakly stated that since his mission in 1872 had been only to reestablish diplomatic relations, his government did not think it necessary to send a letter of recall. A postscript to this issue is that Pulido later wrote Blanco that he had never received the letter of recall and wanted to know what was going on. But, Rojas survived this initial problem, and the meeting of June 4 proceeded to other items.<sup>16</sup>

The two men engaged in considerably sparring over the problem of Curaçao. Willebois commented that Venezuelan ports were closed to Dutch trade. Rojas countered that they were only closed to contraband and that Curaçao was a center of contraband. Willebois responded that a Dutch ship had been seized. This reference to the Midas brought Rojas' rejoinder that the ship had

contained war contraband.<sup>17</sup>

This rather perfunctory sparring, however, led to a much more critical item, one basic to the mission itself, which was whether or not the King would receive Rojas. Though Rojas was ready to begin formal relations, Willebois understandably would do nothing officially until the reception by the King. Willebois told Rojas that he did not know if the King would see him. William, according to Willebois, was very indignant with Guzmán Blanco, because in a message to the Venezuelan Congress, he had referred to Curaçao "la cruel." Rojas responded that he did not feel the indignation was well founded for the King had never been to Curaçao, while he himself had been there several times! Then he proceeded to explain to Willebois the Venezuelan view of Curaçao, how it had grown from a simple fishing island to one of grand edifices. These edifices had been built with the blood and bones of the Venezuelans, and thus the term "cruel" was exceedingly moderate. After this commentary the two diplomats exchanged cigars, and Rojas girded himself for the final onslaught, for Willebois still had not said that the King would see Rojas.<sup>18</sup>

Rojas now determined to put the question in proper perspective. He felt that Willebois was wavering and that he also had to protect the honor and dignity of Venezuela. Very simply, either the King would or would not receive him. At present the King was out of the city but was coming shortly, and Rojas wanted to be received when he came. Rojas told Willebois that he wanted the reception shortly after the King arrived. If the King would

not see him, then he wanted it in writing without delay. Rojas now removed his velvet gloves. He advised Willebois that if such were the case, Venezuela, in order to save its dignity, would expel Brakel and all the Dutch consuls in Venezuela. This, according to the Venezuelan diplomat, would lead to a situation not far from a war unjustly provoked by Holland. And, history had proved the inefficacy of wars made by European nations in America. Citing France in Mexico and Spain in the Pacific, Rojas predicted the same for Holland in Venezuela. Willebois, apparently hesitant, commented that while he did not know the feelings of the King, he did feel that pretentious indemnity demands would make Rojas' mission interminable. Rojas parried with a neat thrust that Dutch governmental rectitude would lead to an indemnity. Finally, Willebois advised Rojas that he would give him the King's decision in a few days, and the interview was over. Rojas now returned to his hotel to make notes of the interview and await Willebois' message. A few days later he sent all this information to the Ministry in Caracas and described the situation in The Hague as grave.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Rojas had, on the whole, handled himself well with Willebois.

By June 11 Rojas had a favorable response from Willebois that the King would receive him on the afternoon of the fourteenth. Rojas, understandably so, was very pleased by this first victory. He felt his victory came from the discussion held the day before by the Dutch Council of State. The Council had met expressly for the purpose of considering the Venezuelan question, and Rojas'

interpretation was that the position of Willebois had not prevailed.<sup>20</sup>

Even more important to Rojas' assessment of the domestic political situation in The Netherlands was the matter of ministerial responsibility. As Holland became a minor country during the course of the nineteenth century, the government adopted a policy of avoiding involvement in great power politics. Thus, the Minister of Foreign Affairs came to play a less important role in Dutch politics. Constitutional revisions in 1848 and after also reduced the power of the King over foreign relations and enhanced that of the States-General through the medium of ministerial responsibility. Rather recently, when King William III, as the Duke of Luxembourg, offered to sell Luxembourg to France in the face of the rise to power of Prussia in 1867, the States-General had exercised its supremacy over the Cabinet in foreign affairs.<sup>21</sup> Surely Rojas knew that while he had to go through the formalities of dealing with Willebois, the States-General would make the final decision. Meanwhile, Rojas prepared to meet the ultimate demands of formality by being received by the King.

Rojas saw King William III at 5:30 on the afternoon of 16 June 1875. The Introducer of Ambassadors took him to the royal salon at the prescribed time. Rojas felt the coach was rather funereal, particularly when compared with the splendid carriages of the Spanish court. The actual encounter in the royal salon was very formal and very cold. Perhaps it was the time of day.

Rojas' Spanish friend Arcicóllar had advised Rojas that William was very friendly but that after five in the afternoon, he was only half-and-half. Rojas presented his credentials, and the King expressed surprise. The Venezuelan Minister then explained how he had been detached from his Madrid post to The Hague post. The King said he did not know what Rojas' intentions were. Rojas replied that his intentions were the best and that he intended to smooth the differences between the two governments. The King then accepted the credentials and Rojas, without opening his mouth, made such an expressive curtsy to the King that he almost broke his back. And thus ended the formal reception by the King of Holland. Rojas rode back to his quarters in the drab state coach and reflected that the King was probably three-quarters and three-quarters rather than half-and-half. Rojas was now ready to begin the real negotiations with Willebois directly and the Estates-General indirectly, but he had the opinion that the King already was determined to refuse the Venezuelan claims.<sup>22</sup>

The formal reception out of the way, Rojas now began almost four months of hard bargaining in The Hague. Actually, it was little more than a change of scene from the correspondence between Blanco and Brakel in Caracas to the negotiation of Rojas and Willebois in The Hague. In either case, Guzmán Blanco held the real power for final decisions by Venezuela, while the States-General held the power of ministerial responsibility in The Hague. Rojas, acting on the instructions of May 4, and within this political framework, began his diplomatic campaign on June 18.

The first exchange of notes occurred on June 18 and 19. Rojas' letter to Willebois of the eighteenth was very short itself but contained extensive enclosures. Writing Willebois in French, he enclosed a letter from Blanco to Willebois of May 4, a 53-page exposition concerning the questions raised in the Blanco note, and a dossier of 202 pages containing supporting documents. Rojas also reserved the right to send supplementary information later. The Blanco note was a long commentary about the recent events between Curaçao and Venezuela and a reasoning for the Venezuelan claim for indemnities. The supporting documents lent credence to the appeal of Blanco. In effect, Rojas had begun the negotiations strictly within the bounds of the instructions and material prepared for him in Caracas on May 4.<sup>23</sup>

Willebois responded to the Rojas note immediately. His note of June 19 contained several important points. For one thing he chastized Rojas for presenting the enclosed documentation in Spanish. This would delay the proceedings. Furthermore, it had already been determined before Rojas came to handle the negotiations through Brakel in Caracas. After all, there were both old and new Dutch claims, too. And again Willebois wanted to know specifically what was the object of Rojas' mission. Willebois did not terminate the exchange, however, for he did state that he would be happy to see Rojas on the afternoon of the twenty-first.<sup>24</sup>

Two days after the Willebois letter, Rojas sent a letter to the Dutch Foreign Minister and also had a lengthy interview with him. Rojas' letter of June 21 was an extensive effort to

answer the Dutch inquiry as to what was the purpose of his mission to The Hague. He wrote that he was in complete accord with the letter of Blanco of May 4 and would explain it further for the edification of Willebois. Then he rather briefly chronicled the activities of the revolutionary committee in Curaçao, noted the movement of their ships, laid heavy blame on the Governor of Curaçao for letting it happen when he had the authority to stop it, cited further activity even after the Governor's decree of 27 October 1874 stopping the exportation of war weapons, and stated that because of this Venezuela was asking for damages caused by the incipient revolution. In a supplement to the letter, Rojas included the names of the members of the committee and the ships involved in the clandestine activities.<sup>25</sup>

Later the same day Rojas had an interview for an hour and a half with Willebois. The thrust of Willebois' remark was that he wanted some solution to the then pending Dutch claims in Caracas and complained about the seizure of the *Midas* and its crew. He said this had all been done without justice. Furthermore, probably having digested the information in the Rojas letter earlier in the day, Willebois said the Venezuelan government had not presented evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the Governor of Curaçao and that Holland was not going to remove him just to please Venezuela. Despite these comments, Rojas generally felt the interview was very friendly and agreeable and liked the way Willebois treated him but, probably correctly, viewed the entire proceeding as one of delay while the Dutch Foreign Ministry had the Vene-

zuelan documents translated.<sup>26</sup>

The day after the interview, Rojas wrote Willebois again. This letter apparently was based on one of May 26 from Blanco to Rojas. In this letter Blanco advised Rojas that the Venezuelan revolutionaries in Curaçao were active again. He cited the individuals involved, both Dutch and Venezuelan, and advised Rojas that attempts to get Brakel to solve the problem had been useless. Accordingly, at the behest of Guzmán Blanco, Rojas was to ask the Dutch government to exile the Venezuelans involved and bring to justice the Dutch citizens involved. Rojas softened the instruction somewhat and asked Willebois that the Venezuelans be expelled and that the Dutch authorities prosecute anyone fomenting revolution against a friendly nation. He did not ask that specified Dutchmen be punished.<sup>27</sup> After this letter Rojas turned his attention to reporting his activities to Blanco, waiting for Willebois to have the translation of the Venezuelan documents completed, and preparing for the next round of negotiations with Willebois. Rojas now reported his activities to Blanco. He prefaced his letter of June 25 with the comment that the negotiation was not satisfactory thus far and that he did not have grand hopes for the future. For one thing, he needed more proof of the connivance of the Governor of Curaçao in the revolutionary activities on the island if he were to be removed. Also, Rojas felt the documents presented to Willebois thus far did not have enough specific dates to make them as effective as they should be. In other words, Rojas thought the preparation in Caracas had been sloppy.<sup>28</sup>

While perhaps the work in Caracas had not been satisfactory for Rojas in The Hague, that did not mean that Foreign Minister Blanco and his staff had been idle. On 14 June 1875, for example, two days before Rojas met the King, Blanco had a broadside sent to the representatives of various friendly nations in Caracas, with the conspicuous exception of Holland. This circular, listing the grievances and claims of Venezuela against Holland, solicited the good offices of the friendly governments in the claims. Lord Derby's response from the Foreign Office in London, stating that Great Britain could not interfere in a question between two independent states, probably was typical of the responses. Another activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Caracas, more popularly known locally as "La Casa Amarilla", was the gathering of intelligence. Willem Ernst Boye, the Commercial Agent in Curaçao, reported in detail the comings and goings of various personalities and even lists of passengers leaving Curaçao. There also was a confidential agent in Curaçao, and at times during 1875 there were reports from individuals either stationed on, or passing through, Aruba and Bonaire. Thus, there was a semblance of a Venezuelan intelligence operation on the Dutch islands.<sup>29</sup>

Work in the Ministry in Caracas also included keeping Rojas informed generally and clarifying any misunderstandings or doubts he might have. It will be recalled that in the summer of 1875, he was having difficulties getting the necessary credentials from the Ministry for his work in Spain. Perhaps the reason was

that Blanco and his subordinates, even Guzmán Blanco himself, were all swept up in the Dutch affair, for Rojas did not have any difficulty in getting whatever information he wanted for his work in The Hague. Perhaps what helped Rojas as much as anything in the Dutch interlude, particularly when compared with his other diplomatic work, was his complete belief in the justice of the Venezuelan claim against Holland. This did not mean, however, that he was slavish to the instructions that emanated from the Casa Amarilla.

Rojas' response to the original instructions of 4 May 1875 and the response, in turn, of the Ministry and Guzmán Blanco illustrate both Rojas' imagination and flexibility and also the preoccupation of high officials in Caracas with the Dutch affair. Rojas had begun his campaign with the Dutch in early June, as soon as he received the call to go to The Hague. He did this on the basis of instructions, but he rather quickly had a number of questions about them. Accordingly, about the first of July, Blanco was faced with the issues brought up in Rojas' letter of June 3, written prior to his first meeting with Willebois. Rojas started off by asking authorization to propose to the Dutch government that Curaçao and its adjacent islands be transferred to Venezuela for Guayana territory adjacent to Dutch Guiana. If this could be done, then, of course, he needed the figures for the sum to be offered for public buildings, etc., in Curaçao. Rojas also pointed out that many of the bondholders of the Venezuelan foreign debt lived in Amsterdam. If The Netherlands

recognized the Venezuelan claim, these people might attach any sum to be received by Venezuela. He wanted specific instructions on this major point.

Rojas also noted the power of the press, both in The Hague and in Brussels. He wanted money so he could deal with this problem. He observed that some people who could be very useful to the Venezuelan cause might not want gold, but a cross instead. Accordingly, he requested a dozen signed blank diplomas granting the Venezuelan honor "Busto del Libertador." Of course, he would be discreet in using them. Rojas also wanted specific instructions as to what course to follow if The Netherlands refused the claim and Venezuela broke relations. And, he wanted to know what choice his government would make if the negotiations led to a third power as arbitrator. Finally, Rojas wanted permission to use the submarine cable and a code key to use with any telegrams sent. Asking that all these questions be sent on to Guzmán Blanco, Rojas requested that a quick reply be sent him in care of the Paris consul.<sup>30</sup>

The reply, dated July 11 and written by Blanco in consultation with Guzmán Blanco, was a mixture of strong nationalism, a slight willingness to negotiate, and honest fear of the unknown quantity of the Dutch bondholders. With reference to swapping eastern Venezuelan lands for Curaçao, the answer was a flat "no." The Venezuelan claim was so just, according to Guzmán Blanco and Blanco, that no swap could be considered. Furthermore, the Constitution gave the territory of the Republic to the states,

and the Venezuelan Congress would never allow eastern lands to be taken. With reference to suborning the press, Blanco gave Rojas the authority to proceed in that direction, but not actually to use it, unless the negotiations went against Venezuela. If there were to be an arbitration, then the preference would be the Emperor of Germany, first, and the King of Italy, as a second choice. Blanco acknowledged that the Amsterdam bondholders were most-powerful men, particularly in conjunction with their London counterparts, but hoped this possible aspect of the problem might be settled in the London stock exchange. He supplied Rojas with a code key and authorized him to use the telegraph when necessary. Finally, Guzmán Blanco recommended strongly to Rojas that he use his good offices to get Brakel appointed as the Governor of Curaçao.<sup>31</sup> This slightly helpful supplementary instruction would not reach Rojas until the end of July.

On balance, it appears that Rojas did a better job of planning and providing for contingencies than his superiors in the Casa Amarilla. The plan to pursue the Venezuelan claims in The Hague apparently was a quick decision. All of the documents initiating the mission--the letter asking Rojas to undertake it, the credentials to King William III, the instructions, and the supporting documents--were dated May 4. Rojas acted immediately when he received the bulky package of letters, not only by approaching the Dutch government, but also by writing for clarification of the instructions and for contingencies. Meanwhile, the mission continued in The Hague.

Rojas resumed his campaign in The Hague on July 7 when he wrote Willebois and inquired about an interview. Willebois replied the same day that he could receive Rojas any afternoon between two and four. The next day Rojas sent Willebois two issues of El imparcial, a Curaçao paper published by José Ramón Henríquez. Henríquez, in the eyes of both Rojas and the Ministry in Caracas, was nothing more than a fomenter of war against Venezuela. Furthermore, Rojas felt the articles reflected the complicity of the Governor of Curaçao. Rojas advised Willebois that it appeared there was another revolution building in Curaçao. Almost simultaneously with this communication in The Hague, Blanco wrote Brakel in Caracas and asked that Henríquez be expelled from Curaçao. Blanco also sent supplementary information on the Midas to Brakel on July 13. Thus the Venezuelan activities continued on both fronts.<sup>32</sup>

And, the front in The Hague, as the month of July progressed, was not particularly good for the Venezuelan cause. Rojas had an interview on the afternoon of the thirteenth with Willebois and also received a letter from the Dutch Foreign Minister on the seventeenth. The letter was essentially a reflection of the interview. There was a beautiful verbiage in both instances. Stripped of this, however, the Dutch position was adamant. Before any serious negotiations could take place, Venezuela must return the Midas, release its crew, and revoke the decree closing the ports of Maracaibo and La Vela de Coro. Citing international law, Willebois said it was quite impossible for the

Dutch to expell from their territory people who were refugees from Venezuela. Willebois also resented the utterance by Guzmán Blanco in a congressional message that he would strike the life from the commerce of Curaçao. He did state that Holland would show its good will by continuing an embargo on munitions shipped out of Curaçao until the first of the coming October.<sup>33</sup>

While the Dutch position smacked of an ultimatum of sorts, Rojas did get the assurances of Willebois that such was not the case. Even so, as Rojas saw it, the Dutch were resolved to refuse the Venezuelan claims if Venezuela did not give in to the Dutch demands. Under the circumstances Rojas felt it best merely to advise Willebois of the receipt of the letter of the seventeenth and its passage on to the Ministry in Caracas for specific instructions. In his covering letter to Blanco, Rojas discussed the possibility of war between Holland and Venezuela but did not consider this at all likely, as at present Holland was involved in the Achinese war in the Far East. It had been very expensive, and the Dutch army and navy were seriously compromised by it. Thus, Rojas expected, at the most, theatrical behavior by the Dutch in the Caribbean if a stalemate with Venezuela did develop.<sup>34</sup>

By the end of July, Rojas had several considerations on his mind in addition to the near-ultimatum expressed in the Willebois letter of the seventeenth. For one thing, he did not trust the mail system in Holland. His letter of the eighteenth to Blanco had missed the necessary connections to make a steamer leaving for La Guaira. He had mailed the letter himself on the

afternoon of the eighteenth and had not received satisfactory explanations from the Dutch postal authorities as to why the letter had not reached Paris the next day. He did admit on this point that the eighteenth being a Sunday might be relevant. Still, Rojas was suspicious enough of the Dutch mailing system that he went to Paris on July 21 and apparently was there for the balance of the month. He stated rather clearly that he did not like to receive communications in The Hague and again requested that he receive instructions in Paris. Rojas also was concerned with Dutch naval preparations. He had confidential information from a good source that a strong squadron destined for Curaçao was being prepared. He did not know the intentions of the squadron but supposed that the Dutch wanted to be ready for any eventuality. As it turned out, the squadron of two ironclads sailed for Curaçao on October 1. Rojas understood their motive merely to be a show of force but urged precaution.<sup>35</sup>

The month of August 1875 was a busy one for the parties concerned. There were exchanges between Blanco and Brakel in Caracas, the Second Chamber of the Dutch Estates-General met in The Hague and considered the Venezuelan situation, and Rojas apparently waited in Paris for further instructions from Caracas and spent his time completing propaganda favorable to the Venezuelan cause. In Caracas, on August 18, Brakel informed Blanco that General León Colina, one of the Venezuelan agitators based in Curaçao, had indeed been expelled from the island. This seemed favorable to the Venezuelan cause until Blanco received the

Brakel letter of August 31. This letter was nothing more than a rewording of the Willebois letter of July 17 to Rojas. Briefly, he wanted the Midas returned and the ports of Maracaibo and La Vela reopened to Dutch trade as a preliminary to any negotiations on the Venezuelan claims. Brakel also mentioned the expulsion of Colina and the temporary embargo on munitions being shipped from Curaçao as indications of Dutch good will. Even so, Blanco responded to Brakel that Guzmán Blanco preferred to negotiate in The Hague.<sup>36</sup>

In The Hague the August activity centered around the meeting of the Second House of the Dutch Estates-General. This meeting, on August 16, included discussion on the question of Curaçao and Venezuela. Nor was all of the discussion against Venezuela. There was some feeling that perhaps Guzmán Blanco had closed the Venezuelan ports to Curaçao trade because speculators were favored in their pursuits in Curaçao or because the presence of a Dutch fleet might have disturbed Guzmán Blanco. Furthermore, Curaçao authorities should have acted to prevent military activities, and some representatives felt penalties should be increased for such cases. A motion favorable to the Venezuelan position was defeated by a margin of only thirty-one to twenty-eight. In effect, the Estates-General was showing its independence of the government, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Furthermore, and an important point for Rojas and the Venezuelan cause, there obviously was support for the Venezuelan viewpoint. The margin was slight--perhaps with some work the Second Chamber

might be swung over.<sup>37</sup>

One possible way to influence the Dutch Estates-General was to issue publications favorable to the Venezuelan position. Rojas began such a campaign in August with the publication of Het Nederlandsch Venezuelaansch Incident 1875 (The Dutch-Venezuelan Incident 1875). This thirty-nine page tract was published in Amsterdam by Typographia Belgica. The author was "Amigo de las Antillas." If Rojas did not write the entire tract, he was certainly the guiding light behind it, for he reported to Blanco in the middle of August that he was having a pamphlet prepared in Holland on behalf of the Venezuelan claims. The pamphlet was highly critical of Wagner, the Governor of Curaçao, described in detail how he must have known about the arms shipments out of the island in October 1874, etc. It also advocated stronger penal laws for actions such as those on Curaçao at the time and put in a good word for Rojas as the Venezuelan Minister to The Hague. The pamphlet was the opening gun in Rojas' publicity campaign. He hoped that it would overcome the narrow margin in the Second Chamber. Unfortunately, it did not prove the difference.<sup>38</sup>

As August wore into September, the lines became clearer between the two nations. It will be recalled that the Willebois note of July 17 demanded a return of the Midas and the reopening of the ports of Coro and Maracaibo as a precondition to considering the Venezuelan claim for indemnity. An inducement to Venezuela was that the embargo on arms shipments from Curaçao would continue until October 1875. After receiving this note and having diffi-

culty transmitting it to Caracas, Rojas retired to Paris to await further instructions. There he continued his work by preparing polemics for publication and reporting on the meeting of the Dutch Estates-General. Meanwhile, as a preliminary to the final position, Blanco twice during August advised Rojas to stall for time so that the Venezuelan ports of Puerto Cabello and La Guaira could be fortified in case of war.<sup>39</sup> In early September the final Venezuelan position came out.

Blanco's dual instructions of 6 September 1875 set the stage for the final negotiations between Venezuela and Holland. Taken together these two lengthy notes covered many points and reflected the feelings of Guzmán Blanco and his cabinet. In effect, they supplied Rojas with information sufficient to reply to the Willebois letter of July 17. In them Blanco gave Rojas additional details of the movement of the Midas and gave detailed arguments as to why the closing of the two ports was a purely domestic, fiscal, and defensive matter. Venezuela did give in on one point. As a gesture of good will, the Midas would be returned. But, Venezuela remained adamant on the demand for monetary damages as a result of the October 1874 revolution in Coro. Also, Blanco instructed Rojas to return to The Hague and pursue the claim diligently. If he could not get Holland to acknowledge the claim or, as a last resort, agree to submit the question to arbitration, then Rojas was to ask for his passport and diplomatic relations between the two nations were to be suspended. Stripped of all its verbiage, the issue from the Venezuelan perspective had two points.

First, Venezuela felt it had a justifiable claim against Holland for the behavior of the Dutch authorities on Curaçao in October 1874. Second, the Dutch demand for the return of the Midas and the reopening of the ports of La Vela de Coro and Maracaibo impinged upon Venezuelan sovereignty, and sovereignty was non-negotiable. Rojas now had his orders for the final round.<sup>40</sup>

As he prepared for the resumption of negotiations, Rojas was quite pessimistic. This was evident from his prior correspondence to Blanco. Now, as he prepared to leave Paris for The Hague, he guardedly wrote his friend Sanford on the subject. "Our relations with Holland are in a very delicate state, and I think that if the Dutch government insist in their stupid demands, I will not stay in The Hague more than two weeks. More I cannot say in writing." At any rate, Rojas probably received the September 6 instructions from Blanco on the twenty-sixth and left for The Hague on the twenty-eighth.<sup>41</sup>

As he returned to The Hague on the twenty-eighth, Rojas not only brought potential problems because of the instructions from Blanco, but also encountered problems in fact on his arrival. Just before his arrival, two incidents disturbing to the Venezuelan position occurred. King William III, installing the Estates-General on September 20, referred to the effect disturbances in Venezuela had on the commerce of Curaçao and hoped that negotiations would soon clear this up. The response from the Estates-General was that the problem would be overcome through negotiations. Rojas did not accept this reasoning. To him Venezuela was

not the cause of the problems of Curaçao, but the reverse. And, he did not feel in this respect that the Dutch position offered any basis for negotiation. Apparently, his earlier attempts to sway enough members of the Estates-General to the Venezuelan viewpoint had not been sufficient. The other problem had to do specifically with the Midas. The crew, led by the Captain, R. Schoonewolff, had, not surprisingly, petitioned the Estates-General for relief. An account of their 137-day detainment, including references to general barbarity by the Venezuelan authorities, the supposed torture of one of the crew, and rather strong criticism of Guzmán Blanco, got into the local press. Now, it might be said, Rojas had to take a dose of his own publicity medicine. On October 1 he wrote Willebois in very strong terms about this unfavorable publicity, rejected it categorically, and enclosed copies of the decisions of the naval station at Puerto Cabello and the confirmation of the sentences by the Venezuelan High Federal Court to indicate the legality and justice of the Venezuelan position.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, Rojas held two interviews with Willebois. These talks of September 30 and October 2 did nothing to allay Rojas' feeling that Willebois would insist on not only the return of the Midas, but also the opening of the two ports to Dutch trade. And, he felt that the Dutch considered the Venezuelan pecuniary demands ridiculous. Part of the discussion of the second visit centered around the possibility of war in the event the two parties achieved no workable conclusion. Willebois assured

Rojas that he did not want things to go that far. Rojas rather bravely responded that if they did, Venezuela had friends in both Europe and America. Rojas later confided to Blanco that he did not fear war, for the present condition of Europe would mean that The Netherlands would be isolated, and the government of The Hague already was involved in the costly war in Aceh. Even if Rojas could logically minimize the threat of war in case he did break relations, he saw no way to avoid breaking relations as prescribed in the Blanco instructions of September 6.<sup>43</sup>

Proceeding according to instructions, Rojas wrote Willebois on October 6 and gave him the essence of the Blanco note of September 6. He cited the return of the Midas as evidence of Venezuelan good faith but stated categorically that his country would not reopen the ports of La Vela and Maracaibo, as demanded by Holland as a precondition to discussing the Venezuelan claims. Probably correct in realizing that more time would not help the matter, Rojas advised Willebois that if after three days Holland still insisted on the port openings as a precondition, then he would have no alternative but to ask for his credentials and break relations. Willebois responded to this ultimatum on the eighth, citing how there had been an arms embargo imposed on Curaçao, etc., but he did not lift the precondition of reopening the ports. Accordingly, on 9 October 1875 Rojas wrote Willebois for the final time and broke relations between Venezuela and Holland.<sup>44</sup>

The shocked Rojas left The Hague that same day and

returned to Paris. There he prepared final reports to the Ministry in Caracas in explanation of what had transpired. Using the code supplied him earlier by Blanco, he wired a short message on the eleventh announcing the actual break. Then he remained in Paris for further instructions.<sup>45</sup> He must have contemplated deeply the action he had taken on October 9.

Actually, Rojas had done little more than follow instructions up to the break date. The instructions had been hastily conceived, it will be recalled, and he wrote for clarification and elaboration. He seemed to be ahead of the Ministry in Caracas in the matter of contingency planning. Still, the instructions were clear enough, and their scope and his options were narrowed on September 6, after which he had to follow them to the logical conclusion of breaking relations. Perhaps the single most important factor that controlled his behavior, though, was his complete agreement with the Venezuelan position. Several times, in his private correspondence with his Yankee friend Sanford, he referred to the rightness of the Venezuelan position and the stupidity of the Dutch demands.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, the flexibility and imagination of Rojas were somewhat limited in the events leading up to the actual break. Moreover, Guzmán Blanco and those under him approved Rojas' actions, because he had followed the instructions properly. As evidence of this approval, they immediately gave Brakel his passport. This action in Caracas on 19 October 1875 completed the formalities of the diplomatic break between Venezuela and Holland.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the fact that Rojas broke relations with Holland and left The Hague the same day, 9 October 1875, he did not simply terminate his activities with reference to the Dutch government. The result was that he spent several more months, primarily from his base in Paris, rather actively in the pursuit of post-break activities. These activities, reflective primarily of instructions from Caracas, were on a broader front than had been the case before the break.

Two immediate activities concerned Rojas' relations with the diplomatic corps in The Hague and another meeting of the Dutch Estates-General. Rojas took it upon himself to inform the members of the diplomatic corps of the break between Venezuela and Holland. Accordingly, on the day of his departure, he prepared a rather straightforward account of the circumstances leading to the break and sent it to E. A. T. Harris, the British Minister to Holland and the dean of the diplomatic corps in The Hague. He asked Harris to give his highest considerations to his colleagues and to tell them that Venezuela could not give up the custody of its national honor by giving in to the Dutch demands. Harris responded to Rojas that it would be contrary to diplomatic usage for him to act as an intermediary for the transmittal of documents concerning the differences between countries and graciously declined. Harris' response was very similar to Derby's response to the Venezuelan broadside of Blanco in June 1875. Rojas preferred to liken his action to that of a businessman leaving a company and addressing a note to his associates explaining his departure.

He considered it a courtesy. Reporting the incident to Blanco, he asked Blanco's indulgence in the matter, as he had done what he thought right.<sup>48</sup>

The other immediate activity of Rojas had to do with the meeting of the Second Chamber of the Dutch Estates-General on 11 October 1875. By then, of course, the break had been made, but the inquiries within the Chamber were rather extensive. The main issue was Willebois' response to the Chamber's request for information on the issue of Curaçao and Venezuela. Some of the discussion could be interpreted as sympathetic to the Venezuelan position. Still, Willebois survived the inquisition, and a study commission was agreed upon to examine the correspondence Willebois did not want to submit to the entire Chamber. Rojas merely passed on to Caracas a translation of the minutes of the meeting with little comment.<sup>49</sup>

Longer-range activities by Rojas after the break in October 1875 lasted well into the spring of 1876 and did not end until August of that year. Rojas concerned himself with preparations in case war did result between Venezuela and Holland, publicizing the Venezuelan position and passing on to Caracas whatever tidbits of information he might glean from Holland. Again, he followed scrupulously the instructions emanating from Caracas, though it might be added that he continued to anticipate the Foreign Ministry on occasion.

Perhaps the most obvious threat facing Venezuela in the wake of the diplomatic rupture was the possibility of war with

Holland. Rojas and Willebois had even explored this theme before the break, and Rojas, because of Willebois' protestations of peace and his own knowledge of the war in Acheh, minimized this fear. Still, as early as August 4, over two months before the actual break, Blanco had urged Rojas to stall for time so Venezuela could make the necessary fortifications in case war did come. By October 4 specific instructions for the fortification of the ports of La Guaira and Puerto Cabello had been prepared.<sup>50</sup>

Rojas intensified the war scare with his telegram of October 11 to Blanco. In addition to announcing the break with The Netherlands and his retirement from The Hague, Rojas also informed Blanco that a Dutch squadron would sail in two weeks and rather pungently mentioned "threats of war." The next day, in a follow-up letter, he described the squadron as consisting of five ships, two of them armor plated. He wrote that they could be expected in Venezuelan waters by the middle of November. On the war issue he became impassioned. He distrusted the intentions of the Dutch government and urged his own government to prepare for war, hasten the defense of the two principal Venezuelan ports, and "with the serenity that will be inspired in the justice and valor that the holy love of the fatherland infuses, await the coming of the Dutch squadron, which still may not be called an enemy squadron, but differs very little from being one."<sup>51</sup>

In the weeks that followed, Rojas continued to pass detailed information to Blanco about the squadron and the Dutch scene generally. He determined the names of the five ships and

advised Blanco that one of them sailed for Curaçao on October 16. As his information improved, Rojas determined that the balance of the squadron would sail by the end of November. They would proceed to St. Thomas and await information there. Unless needed immediately they probably would not arrive at Curaçao until the first of the year. As he changed his estimates of fleet movements, Rojas also revamped his estimates of just how dire was the threat of war. By October 19 he advised Blanco that the Dutch government had given the lie to the hostility reflected in the Dutch press. He still did not write off the possibility, though he did dismiss any threat of aggression before January.<sup>52</sup> And, his private pugnacity was quite evident. He wrote his Yankee friend Sanford on November 4 that he did not expect war but that "if, unfortunately, we are provoked, we will prove to Holland that we are not Achenise, but descendants of El Cid and Pelayo."<sup>53</sup>

The response in Caracas to the threat of war rather quickly had the result of casting Rojas in the role of arms merchant in Europe. Blanco, writing Rojas on the strength of the war-scare telegram of October 11, feared a declaration of war might come from The Hague or Caracas. In either case, Venezuela would use letters of marque, or patents of privateering, against the flag and property of The Netherlands in all lands and seas. Meanwhile, Rojas should secretly feel out armaments suppliers, check on the construction of armed ships, etc., in case war did develop. Rojas was willing to do this but urged proceeding with caution as the termination of relations has been peaceful.

Furthermore, if war did develop, then Blanco would have to supply him with signed blank patents and letters of naturalization.<sup>54</sup>

Meanwhile, Rojas would seek arms.

Rojas sought arms in Brussels. It is not definite if he went there personally, but he did establish contact with one J. M. de Losada. Losada was the publisher of Gaceta internacional, a journal that espoused the Latin American cause in Europe.

Losada also was a weapons merchant. Complimenting Rojas on how he had a way with people, Losada rather bluntly advised Rojas on 26 November 1875 that there were arms available in Brussels. Two days later he got down to the specifics and advised Rojas that he had two ships, perfectly armed, with two captains that were "sea wolves." Each captain wanted a deposit of Fr.50,000 until such time as the necessary papers were received. Losada offered these ships to be pressed into the service of Venezuela as mercenary corsairs. Rojas, understandably, hesitated. Meanwhile, he paid Fr.1,000 to one sea captain, more or less to keep him available, and sought advice from Caracas. The response from Caracas was that the Fr.1,000 expenditure had been approved, but not the large deposit demanded by the two sea wolves. Foreign Minister Blanco, reflecting the views of Guzmán Blanco, advised Rojas to tell the two captains to get their own loans. Ultimately, Rojas did no business with Losada but was ready to if the occasion demanded.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile, there was another war scare. Rojas based it on information received from The Hague. The Dutch Estates-General held secret sessions on 30 November and 1 December 1875.

At first, the impression was that these sessions were completely peaceful in intent. A few days later a Dutch newspaper revealed that Willebois had informed the Estates-General that he would send an ultimatum to Venezuela to reopen the ports of La Vela and Maracaibo. Hostilities would follow if Venezuela did not open the ports. When the Dutch government did not contradict the reports of the press, Rojas sent a telegram, on December 16, to Caracas. The message, passed through H. L. Boulton and Company in Caracas, was "Tell Boulton immediately for President Guzmán Holland will pass ultimatum and if denied will declare war." Again, Rojas had cried wolf.<sup>56</sup>

The response from Caracas was twofold. Blanco replied to Rojas on January 5 that the possibility of hostilities was very remote. Port defenses had already been prepared, and the intelligence from St. Thomas as of December 23 was that the Dutch squadron there had no instructions. Guzmán Blanco also responded to Rojas in the wake of this fright. On December 23 he wired Rojas that "it is easier that a star fall than that I open the ports of La Vela and Maracaibo on account of the ultimatum of the foreigner." The eloquent nationalism continued in another wire a few weeks later, "Nothing yet has happened. Dutch squadron [in?] Curaçao. Venezuela waiting enthusiastic and united as one man from the lake [Maracaibo] to the Orinoco, as a nation of patriots awaits the moment to vindicate the inviolability of its independence." And, thus the response. Rojas, meanwhile, apparently convinced himself that his scare was not justified,

left Paris on 4 January 1876 for Madrid, where he spent several weeks in pursuit of the Venezuelan claims against Spain.<sup>57</sup>

Rojas returned to Paris from Madrid on February 12 and resumed his activities on the Dutch question. He did such minor things as acknowledge the receipt from Caracas of the signed blank letters of marque and nationality, which had been sent just in case they might be needed.<sup>58</sup> He also informed his friend Sanford about the situation as he saw it. The Dutch portion of his letter of February 20 is as follows:

We are ready in Venezuela to fight, and, not only our principal ports are in the best state of defense, but we have put thousands of torpedos under the sea in our harbors to receive the Dutch vessels; and, we have bought in the U.S. a great monitor which is considered sufficient to destroy the whole fleet in five hours! Never mind, as you know, the matter has been submitted to the mediation of the U.S. government, but under the condition of keeping our ports of Coro and Maracaibo closed, and as this is the point which torments Holland, I suppose she will not accept the terms proposed by the Cabinet of Washington, and at last we shall fight. In this case, you will see that Holland will lose the three islands of Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire in a few weeks and, afterwards, the Dutch colony of Guayana.<sup>59</sup>

It should be remembered that Rojas had endured two war scares. In both cases he had been proven wrong, but after the second scare, Guzmán Blanco himself sent inspiring, patriotic utterances. From the beginning Rojas had completely endorsed the Venezuelan position. Thus, a militant, ultranationalistic position such as that expressed to Sanford is hardly surprising.

As the late winter and then spring of 1876 wore on, Rojas found himself once again acting on several fronts. After the

diplomatic trip to Madrid in January and February, he still had lingering Dutch problems, while his railroad contract activities and his fiscal campaign in London were renewed. The last of these Dutch problems had to do with the completion of the publicity phase of the Dutch campaign that had begun the prior summer. It will be recalled that he had prepared a brochure on the Venezuelan-Dutch situation which, hopefully, would gain sympathy for the Venezuelan position, particularly among the members of the Dutch Estates-General. But, the publication of Het Nederlandsch Venezuelaansch Incident 1875 did not have the desired effect. In the wake of the break itself, both Blanco and Guzmán Blanco himself advised Rojas to take the Venezuelan cause to the people of Europe through the press. Within a month after the break, Rojas had begun arranging for the publication of the official correspondence between himself and Willebois. He also had an anonymous print made at Liège in late November or early December. His friend Losada gave Venezuela a sympathetic outlet in an article in the Gaceta internacional of Brussels. And, at least one Dutch pacifist published an article advocating peaceful settlement of the Curaçao problem in late 1875. It is not known if Rojas inspired the article. After all of this, Rojas and his secretary prepared all the official correspondence between himself and Willebois and also the relevant correspondence from Blanco to Willebois in French. Then, having worked on this campaign presumably off-and-on since November 1875, he finally published the official correspondence in the spring of 1876 under the title

Venezuela et les Pays-Bas. Essentially the same material also was published in Caracas as Venezuela y Holanda.<sup>61</sup>

The Dutch activities for Rojas finally came to an end in the summer of 1876. In June he learned that the Dutch government had given orders to its fleet in the Caribbean to go to the Mediterranean Sea. This certainly terminated the threat of an incident to be prompted by Dutch naval units. He also learned from the Dutch press that the government at The Hague had given up the demand that Venezuela reopen the ports of Maracaibo and Coro. The situation eased further in early August when the Dutch Consul at St. Thomas took receipt of the Midas. Finally, on 29 August 1876 Rojas wrote his last official communication on Holland to his superiors in Caracas. He returned the Midas material and the signed, blank letters of marque and nationality, presented a statement for expenses incurred in the Dutch mission, and asked for his pay.<sup>62</sup>

While Rojas' mission to The Netherlands ended in a break in diplomatic relations between that country and Venezuela, it cannot be held that his efforts were a failure, at least in the eyes of his superiors in Caracas. While there was a rupture, it was peaceful. Neither side wanted war, though certain bellicose utterances came from the Venezuelans. With neither side willing to make major concessions to the other, Rojas simply followed his instructions and made the best of a bad bargain. He put forth a good defense of the Venezuelan rights as he saw them, and that was all he could do. When the stalemate developed, he asked for his passport.

While Rojas held various diplomatic posts for seven years after the end of his Dutch mission, none of them involved relations with Holland, either directly or indirectly. Even after Rojas, there was little successful high-level activity between Venezuela and Holland for a number of years. Guzmán Blanco later attempted to reestablish diplomatic relations through the medium of the Dutch Minister in Paris, but to no avail. Then, Rafael Seijas, Consultant to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, negotiated with N. F. Hellmund, the Dutch Consul in Caracas, but in vain. Finally, on 20 August 1894 Special Commissioner Francisco Tosta García and Jonkheer Jean Røell, Dutch Minister of Foreign Relations, signed a protocol for the reestablishment of relations between the two countries. Even after this, though, the two countries continued to have problems from time to time.<sup>63</sup>

Rojas' role as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Venezuela to Holland actually was a rather fleeting moment of his total diplomatic experience. It came at a time when his other activities, notably in Madrid, Paris, and London, were at a temporary standstill. The call for his services went out in early May 1875, and he responded promptly the next month when he received the instructions. He made a trip to The Hague in June and another one, in late September. Each time, he was in The Hague only two or three weeks. He was in complete accord with the Venezuelan position, as reflected in the instructions from Foreign Minister Blanco, and asked only for clarification or supplemental information on a few points. It all became rather

cut and dried, and he did as ordered. Perhaps he thrilled to the possibility of war after the break and the dealing with arms merchants in Brussels. Still, it was a rather brief and direct period of his diplomatic career and may properly be called a short and sharp Dutch interlude.

## NOTES

1. Amry Vandenbosch, Dutch Foreign Policy Since 1815: A Study in Small Power Politics (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1959), p. 213.

2. Karel H. Corporaal, De Internationaalrechtelijke Betrekkingen Tusschen Nederland en Venezuela, 1816-1920 (Leiden, 1920), p. 266. MRE/H/SP, vol. 1, fols. 1-6. The Guzmán agreement, signed in Curaçao on 19 June 1848, is in Caracas, Librería Historia, Castellanos manuscripts (Jónas and Luís Castellanos), lote 12, folder 5. Hereinafter cited as Castellanos MSS, plus appropriate lote and folder numbers. Vandenbosch, Dutch Foreign Policy, p. 214, and L.a. (1856), pp. 31-32, as cited in Francisco J. Parra, Doctrinas de la cancillería venezolana: Digesto, 5 vols. (New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1952-1961), vol. 1, pp. 298-300.

3. MRE/H/SP, vol. 3, fols. 69-71. Guzmán Blanco, Paris, 29 August 1866, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 15. See also MRE/H/SP, vol. 3, fols. 92-95. The Tell Villegas letter is in L.a. (1868), pp. 45-50. See also Parra, Doctrinas, vol. 1, pp. 261-62, 360-61. MRE/H/CV, fols. 166-78, and Parra, Doctrinas, vol. 1, pp. 53-54. Gran Colombia and The Netherlands executed a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation on 1 May 1829. The Venezuelan government, after its separation from Colombia, subsequently approved this treaty on 15 June 1831, Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 53-59. Notice also the note on p. 53. Apparently this treaty was not in force as far as Venezuela was concerned in the 1860's. Articles 23 and 24 of the treaty dealt with consular representation between the two countries, but they did not apply to the Dutch colonies.

4. MRE/H/IRD, fols. 1-9, and Corporaal, De Internationaalrechtelijke, 273 ff. The original of the Protocol is in MRE/H/TC, vol. 2, fol. 107. Pulido, The Hague, Paris, 29 March and 13 April 1872, to A. L. Guzmán, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 106, 124.

5. The exchange of letters appointing Brakel is in MRE/H/FDEV, fols. 94, 96. The reception of Brakel is described in La opinión nacional, 14 September 1872, p. 4, clipping in MRE/H/FDEV, fol. 101. Corporaal, De Internationaalrechtelijke, pp. 286, 324-25.

6. Resolution, Ministry of Hacienda, 13 February 1873, G.o., no. 46 (15 February 1873), p. 196. D. B. Barrios, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11 February 1873, to Brakel, MRE/H/TC, vol. 2, fol. 112; Brakel, Caracas, 17 February 1873, to Barrios, MRE/H/CD, vol. 1, fol. 29; Barrios, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 February 1873, to Brakel, MRE/H/CD, vol. 1, fol. 31; Brakel, Caracas, 24 February 1873, to Barrios, MRE/H/CD, vol. 1, fol. 32; and Guzmán Blanco, copy, Caracas, 19 January 1874, appointing Goiticoa, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 152.

7. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, February 21, July 1, August 27, to Brakel, and Brakel, Caracas, 17 August 1874, to Blanco; G.o., no. 686 (16 November 1875), p. 2349-50. Brakel did advise Guzmán Blanco, Caracas, 7 August 1874, G.o., no. 686 (16 November 1875), p. 2349, that the Netherlands government, acceding to his desires, had given the Governor of Curaçao additional authority to crack down on the exportation of munitions from that island.

8. A good account of the entire Midas incident and the surrounding incidents and circumstances is located in Blanco's "Resumen de pruebas que fundan y legitiman la reclamación de gastos, costos y perjuicios que el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos de Venezuela entabla ante el Gobierno de S. M. el Rei de los Países Bajos, Caracas, 4 de mayo de 1875," G.o., nos. 689-91 (November 19, 20, 22 of 1875), pp. 2361-2363, 2365-67, 2369-71. See also the justification for the seizure of the Midas by the Venezuelan Federal High Court, 26 January 1875, G.o., no. 467 (30 January 1875), p. 1465.

9. The depositions and reports surrounding the Midas and related incidents are quite extensive. They may be found particularly in MRE/H/SP, vol. 5, fol. 6. The deposition of the young Juan Rodríguez, age twelve, one of the people aboard the Midas, was quite important to the Venezuelan case; 4 November 1874, ibid., vol. 5, fol. 83. Diplomatic niceties being what they are, the visiting crewmen of a squadron of Dutch ships in La Guaira, 10 and 12 March 1875, were readily supplied with passports, etc., during their short stay, despite the then mounting tension between Brakel and Blanco; MRE/H/CI, fol. 17.

10. Blanco, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 9, 18, 20, 23, and 27 November and 3 December 1874, 23 January and 20 March 1875, to Brakel; G.o., nos. 686-87 (16 and 17 November 1875), pp. 2350-51, 2353-55. Brakel, Caracas, 12 and 14 November 1874, to Blanco; G.o., no. 686 (16 November 1875), p. 2351. The dialogue between Brakel and Blanco about the release of the Midas and its crew, beginning on 9 November 1874, is in MRE/H/SP, vol. 5, 218 ff. See Brakel, Caracas, 6 March 1875, to Blanco, and Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11 March 1875, to Brakel, MRE/H/GH, vol. 12, fols. 134, 138, for the basic correspondence on the closing of the ports of Maracaibo and La Vela de Coro.

11. Blanco, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 May 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 162, 283.
12. Blanco, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, May 4, to Rojas; May 6, to Consul of Saint Nazaire and Eugenio Thirion, Consul in Paris; and 26 June 1875, to Brakel; MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 163, 177-78, 230. Rojas, The Hague, 7 June 1875, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16.
13. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 May 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 164. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 55.
14. Rojas, The Hague, 7 June 1875, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 55. Rojas, The Hague, 3 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 185. For the later, hostile relations between Rojas and Parra B., see p. 300, below.
15. Rojas, copy, The Hague, 1 June 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 182. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 55. See also Rojas, The Hague, 3 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 183. Copies of Rojas' credentials, dated 4 May 1875, are in MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 160-61. Guzmán Blanco's letter to the king is also printed in G.o., no. 688 (18 November 1875), p. 2358.
16. Rojas, "Minuta de la conferencia celebrada hoy 4 de junio a las cuatro de la tarde con el Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores en su despacho," The Hague, 4 June 1875, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 188. Corporaal, De Internationaalrechtelijke, p. 317. Pulido, copy, Paris, 5 June 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 204, and Pulido, copy, Paris, 12 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 201. Interestingly, Rojas does not mention this phase of his discussion with Willebois in his Recuerdos.
17. Rojas, "Minuta de la conferencia. . .," The Hague, 4 June 1875, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 188.
18. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 56. Rojas' "Minuta," above, does not refer to the issue of "la cruel."
19. Rojas, "Minuta de la conferencia. . .," The Hague, 4 June 1875, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 188. Rojas, Recuerdos, pp. 55-57. Rojas, The Hague, 10 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 194.
20. Rojas, The Hague, 11 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 200. Guzmán Blanco was quite happy about the state of affairs thus far; Blanco, telegram, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 9 July 1875, as cited in Rojas, Paris, 6 August 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 17.

21. Vandenbosch, Dutch Foreign Policy, pp. 6, 32-33, 68, 273-74.

22. Rojas, The Hague, 16 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 203. Rojas, Recuerdos, pp. 57-58. The play on words of Arcicóllar was that while William III was a most pleasant man during the day, in the evening he was only half pleasant. Rojas found him less than half pleasant. In the days that followed, Rojas also visited Queen Sofia, then separated several months from the King, Prince Henry, and Prince Frederick; Recuerdos, pp. 58-59.

23. Rojas, copy, The Hague, 18 June 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 220. Spanish versions of the letter are in G.o., no. 691 (22 November 1875), p. 2370, and L.a. (1876), p. 115. Copies and originals of the information contained in the two enclosures accompanying the Blanco letter may be found in MRE/H/SP, vols. 5 and 6, passim. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 May 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 166. Printed in G.o., no. 688 (18 November 1875), pp. 2357-58, and L.a. (1876), pp. 80-87.

24. Willebois, copy, The Hague, 19 June 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 220 (back). Printed in G.o., no. 691 (22 November 1875), pp. 2370, and L.a. (1876), pp. 116-17.

25. Rojas, copy, The Hague, 21 June 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 221 (beginning on the back). Printed in G.o., no. 691 (22 November 1875), pp. 2370-71, and L.a. (1876), pp. 117-21.

26. Rojas, The Hague, 25 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 228.

27. Blanco (not signed, even by scribe, but presumably sent to Rojas), copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 May 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 179. Rojas, copy, The Hague, 22 June 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 225. Printed in G.o., no. 692 (23 November 1875), p. 2373, and L.a. (1876), pp. 122-23. On March 20 and May 3 of 1875, Blanco requested Brakel to have specific Venezuelans expelled from Curaçao. Brakel responded verbally to the first letter and wrote, on May 22, that he felt everything possible was being done to keep revolutionary activities under control on Curaçao and that he would need more proof to specifically ask for the expulsion of the individuals; G.o., no. 687 (17 November 1875), pp. 2354-55.

28. Rojas, The Hague, 25 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 228. This letter, understandably, was not printed in the Gaceta oficial or the Libro amarillo. Another point in the letter of June 25 concerned the commercial agent of Venezuela

in Curaçao. Apparently there was some question in Rojas' mind about the man's loyalty, and he wanted adequate information to prove that the man was not a traitor to Venezuela. Doubtless Rojas was referring to Ernesto Boye, the Venezuelan commercial agent in Curaçao. It was Boye who reported the outbreak of a new revolutionary activity on Curaçao in the spring of 1875. See Boye, Curaçao, 25 May 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/CVH, vol. 7, fol. 28.

29. The circular, dated 10 June 1875 and sent out on June 14, was directed to the Foreign Ministers of the United States of North America, German Empire, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Spain, through their representatives in Caracas; MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 195, 206. Acknowledgments are on fols. 212-16, 218, and 227. The Derby response is on fol. 259. Boye, beginning in February, was active in all of 1875, MRE/H/CVH, vol. 7, fol. 25-96. Blanco refers to Dr. Eduardo Ortiz as Confidential Agent in Curaçao; Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 12 February 1875, to Boye, MRE/H/CVH, vol. 7, fol. 28. See also Juan B. Capriles, Aruba, 2 October 1875, to Ortiz, MRE/H/CVH, vol. 10, fol. 84. Cornelio Boye was named Commercial Agent in Bonaire in April 1875 but died in December, MRE/H/CVH, vol. 14, fols. 19-27. Capriles later experienced difficulties when diplomatic relations between The Netherlands and Venezuela ruptured; Capriles, copy, Aruba, 3 November 1875, to Boye, MRE/H/CCV, vol. 2, fol. 13.

30. Rojas, The Hague, 3 June 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 186. The offering of Guiana territory does not make sense to the writer, but then the boundaries in that remote part of the world were quite vague.

31. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 7 July 1876, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 233. The key is in ibid., vol. 1, fol. 239.

32. Rojas, copies, The Hague, 7 and 8 July 1875, to Willebois, and Willebois, copy, The Hague, 7 July 1875, to Rojas; MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 240. Blanco, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 10 July 1875, to Brakel, G.o., no. 688 (18 November 1875), p. 2357. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 13 July 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 246.

33. Willebois, French copy, The Hague, 17 July 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 4; Spanish version printed in G.o., no. 692 (23 November 1875), pp. 2373-74, and L.a. (1876), pp. 123-27.

34. Rojas, The Hague, 18 July 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 2. Rojas, copy, The Hague, 19 July 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 9. Printed in G.o., no. 692 (23 November 1875), p. 2374, and L.a. (1876), p. 127. The Achinese war was the prolonged effort of Dutch colonial authorities to put down the

Moslem state of Acheh in northern Sumatra. A Dutch naval and military expedition arrived in Acheh in March 1873. The war lasted for thirty years. Vandenbosch, Dutch Foreign Policy, pp. 194-201.

35. Rojas, The Hague, 18 July 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 2. Rojas, Paris, 31 July 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 8. Printed in G.o., no. 693 (24 November 1875), p. 2377, and L.a. (1876), pp. 128-29. These printed sources do not contain the entire text of the Rojas letter. See also Rojas, copy, Paris, 31 July 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 249. This letter contains the information on Dutch naval activities. Rojas also sent duplicates of the correspondence of July 17 and 18 on August 6, Paris, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 17. Rojas, Paris, 6 September 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 262.

36. Brakel, Caracas, 18 August 1875, to Blanco, G.o., no. 688 (18 November 1875), pp. 2357-58. Brakel, Caracas, 31 August 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 18. Printed in G.o., no. 693 (24 November 1875), p. 2378. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 6 September 1875, to Brakel, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 37.

37. Rojas' extract of the 93rd Session of the Second House of the Estates General, 16 August 1875, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 258, 269. Rojas, Paris, 19 August and 6 September 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 256, 262.

38. Rojas, Paris, 19 August and 6 September 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 256, 252. Amigo de las Antillas / José María Rojas /, Het Nederlandsch Venezuelaansch Incident 1875 (Amsterdam: Typ. Belgica, 1875).

39. Blanco, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 and 12 August 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 250, 252.

40. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 6 September 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 22. Printed in G.o., no. 693 (24 November 1875), pp. 2377-78, and L.a. (1876), pp. 129-32. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 6 September 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 29. Almost simultaneously, Blanco advised Brakel in Caracas that a demand for the return of the Midas and the reopening of the ports were nonnegotiable and that broken relations might result. Furthermore, and as before, Guzmán Blanco preferred to negotiate through the Venezuelan representative in The Hague. Blanco, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 6 September 1875, to Brakel, G.o., no. 694 (25 November 1875), p. 2381.

41. Rojas, Paris, 26 September 1875, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16. Rojas, The Hague, 4 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 50.

42. Rojas, The Hague, 4 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 50. Rojas, copy, The Hague, 1 October 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 41 (fol. 43 contains the Spanish translation). Spanish translation of the relevant article in the Dutch journal, Nieuws van den Dag, 25 September 1875, is contained in MRE/H/PHV, fol. 47 (Dutch version is in fol. 45). Rojas, The Hague, 3 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 40.

43. Rojas, The Hague, 3 and 4 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 39, 50.

44. Rojas, copies, The Hague, 6 and 9 October 1875, to Willebois, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 55, 69. Printed in G.o., no. 694 (25 November 1875), pp. 2381-82, and L.a. (1876), pp. 135-37, 140-41. Willebois, copy, The Hague, 8 October 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 67. Printed in G.o., no. 694 (25 November 1875), pp. 2381-82, and L.a. (1876), pp. 137-40. Years later, Rojas recalled writing the ultimatum on October 8; Recuerdos, p. 60. The fact that The Netherlands decided to extend its embargo on the exportation of arms and munitions from Curaçao beyond the cutoff date of 1 October 1875 became a moot point. Venezuela would negotiate items but not its sovereignty. Brakel, Caracas, 8 and 9 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 58, 61, and Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 13 October 1875, to Brakel, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 73.

45. Rojas, Paris, 12 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 65. The coded telegram went to St. Thomas by wire. From there it went by chartered schooner to La Guaira and then by wire to Caracas; MRE/H/PHV, fols. 74-76.

46. Rojas, The Hague, June 7, Paris, 26 September and 11 October 1875, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16.

47. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 October 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 80. Copy also in MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 273. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 October 1875, to Brakel, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 85. Printed in G.o., Extra, 20 October 1875, p. 2273, and G.o., no. 694 (25 November 1875), p. 2382. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 October 1875, instructions to expedite the departure of Brakel, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 88. Printed in G.o., Extra, 20 October 1875, p. 2273, and G.o., no. 694 (25 November 1875), p. 2383. Brakel, Caracas, 20 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 90. Printed in G.o., no. 694 (25 November 1875), p. 2383.

48. Rojas, copy, The Hague, 9 October 1875, to Harris, and Harris, copy, The Hague, 9 October 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 63-64. Rojas, Paris, 12 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 62. Rojas also wrote Sanford on this matter; Paris, 11 October 1875, Sanford MSS, 35-16.

49. "Sesión de la 2nda Cámara de 11 de octubre de 1875," MRE/H/PHV, fol. 97. Corporaal, De Internationaalrechtelijke, 330 ff. Curiously, Corporaal does not mention the Chamber meeting of 16 August 1875. Apparently, the Dutch body politic took more interest in Venezuela after the break than before. Rojas forwarded the lengthy summary of the meeting in his note of 6 November 1875, Paris, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 104.

50. Blanco, copies, 4 and 12 August and 4 October 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fols. 250, 252, vol. 2, fol. 6.

51. Rojas, Paris, 12 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 65. This note also contains the text of the telegram of October 11.

52. Rojas, Paris, 19 October and 6 November 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 79, 104.

53. Rojas, Paris, 4 November 1875, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. This letter should be in 35-16, but the writer, when helping prepare the Sanford Archive several years ago, misread the date of the letter as 1879 instead of 1875. In this letter Rojas gave Sanford an example of his wry humor, to wit, "In regard to my friends the Dutch, I believe that on account of the winter, they are becoming colder every day."

54. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 October 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 1, fol. 273. Copy also in MRE/H/PHV, fol. 80. Rojas, Paris, 19 November 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 138.

55. Losada, Brussels, 26 and 28 November, 4 and 9 December 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 139, 140, 146, 148. Rojas usually sent copies of relevant correspondence to the Ministry and kept the originals for his own file. In this case the original Losada letters are in the Ministry archives. Perhaps the delicacy of the subject prompted Rojas to send the originals rather than keep them. On the other hand, Losada wrote his letters on stationery of the Caceta internacional. Rojas, Paris, 6 and 19 December 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 168, 173. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 13 January 1876, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 187. The man who received the Fr.1,000 was a Captain Faleck.

56. Rojas, Paris, 6 and 19 December 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 168, 173. The wire, sent through St. Thomas, is in MRE/H/PHV, fol. 171.

57. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 January 1876, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 181. Guzmán Blanco, copies, wires, Caracas, 23 December 1875, 12 January 1876, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 174, 182. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 52.

58. Rojas, Paris, 20 February 1876, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 January 1876, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 191. Rojas, Paris, 19 February 1876, to Blanco, MRE/H/SP, vol. 7, fol. 53.

59. Rojas, Paris, 20 February 1876, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-15. There was a serious effort on the part of Venezuela to get the United States to act as an arbitrator in the dispute with The Netherlands. Rojas was only marginally involved in this action. See, for example, Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 October 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/FDDV, vol. 2, fol. 6; Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 3 December 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 165; Juan Bautista Dalla Costa, Venezuelan Minister to the United States, wire, Washington, 10 January 1876, to Guzmán Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 284; Hamilton Fish, United States Secretary of State, copy, Department of State, 14 March 1876, to Dalla Costa, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 326; Rojas, Paris, 5 April 1876, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 271; and Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 May 1876, to Rojas, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 273. Nothing came of this effort.

60. These activities are covered in Chapter III, above.

61. Blanco, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 October, to Rojas, Resolution reflecting the desires of Guzmán Blanco, 19 October 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 80, 84. Rojas, Paris, 19 November and 6 December 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fols. 138, 168. The second letter enclosed the Leige publication, but it is not available in the Ministerial archives. Gaceta internacional, Brussels, 16 December 1875; clipping located in MRE/H/PHV, fol. 154. Earlier, Losada received Fr.4,000 at the instructions of Guzmán Blanco, perhaps for services rendered or to be rendered in the future; Losada, Brussels, 16 December 1875, to Blanco, MRE/H/PHV, fol. 152, in response to Blanco's letter to Losada of 21 October 1875. Corporaal, De Internationaalrechtelijke, p. 332, cites articles critical of Dutch proceedings in the Revista hispanoamericano of Brussels and the Dutch pacifist's article. Rojas, Paris, 27 February and 23 April 1876, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-16. José María Rojas, Venezuela et les Pays-Bas. Documents relatifs a la rupture des rapports officiels entre les gouvernements de Venezuela et des Pays-Bas (Paris: Jouby et Roger, 1875). The

French version of the correspondence was not completed until the spring of 1876, according to the Rojas to Sanford correspondence above. Venezuela, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Venezuela y Holanda (Caracas: Imprenta de "La Opinión Nacional," /1875/). A refutation of this last work came from the pen of J. R. Henriquez in Curaçao, Holanda y Venezuela. Refutación del folleto "Venezuela y Holanda," publicado por orden del gobierno de Venezuela. Primeros antecedentes de la cuestión. El General Guzmán Blanco juzgado por sus propios hechos (Curaçao: Imp. del Comercio, 1876), as cited in Manuel Segundo Sánchez, Bibliografía venezolana, Obras, vol. 1 (Caracas: Banco Central de Venezuela, 1964), pp. 155-56.

62. Rojas, Paris, 18 June 1876, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 274. George A. Phillips, copy, Consul of Venezuela at St. Thomas, 5 July 1876, to I. Cappe, Consul of The Netherlands at St. Thomas, MRE/H/SP, vol. 5, fol. 290. Receipt of Midas and inventory, signed by Cappe, St. Thomas, 3 August 1876, MRE/H/SP, vol. 5, fol. 304. Rojas, Caracas, 29 August 1876, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 275.

63. The filibustering and smuggling problems with Curaçao continued as evidenced in MRE/H/SP, vols. 6-9, fols. 1874-, 908. The Guzmán Blanco activity in 1889 is contained in MRE/H/RRD, fols. 1-86. MRE/H/TC, vol. 2, 133 ff. An original copy of the "Protocolo para el restablecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas," 20 August 1894, is in MRE/H/TC, vol. 2, fol. 145. The Protocol is printed in Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 539-41. Further relevant correspondence is found in MRE/H/AV, fols. 3, 10.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MANY PROBLEMS WITH GREAT BRITAIN: THE SETTING AND THE GULIANA BOUNDARY

Rojas, having ended all his current fiscal and diplomatic activities for the government of Venezuela, returned to Caracas in late August 1876. Apparently he came back to his native city to clear up certain business details that had been in suspense for the past three years. The most notable item of this nature during his visit to Caracas was the termination of the partnership with the firm of H. L. Boulton and Company. By an amicable letter dated 30 September 1876, the company formally advised Rojas of his separation from the firm and specified a continuing income Rojas would receive. While this action terminated Rojas' role as a representative of the company, it did not end the association as such. In subsequent years Boulton acted as agent for Rojas in receiving sums and making transactions on his behalf. Rojas probably also used the latter part of 1876 in Caracas to clean up the details of his governmental work, particularly for the Ministry of Foreign Relations, and to visit friends and family.<sup>1</sup>

Rojas did not have a pleasant visit in Caracas. He remained there only seventy days and commented to his Yankee friend Henry Sanford that the time "reminded me of the seventy weeks of

Daniel." Perhaps he knew that the salad days of what would be known as the "Septenio" of Guzmán Blanco were coming to an end. Certainly the candidates for the succession were active, and their adherents were already fighting in the streets. Furthermore, filibusters in Port of Spain were conspiring against the peace of the Republic. Rojas' private correspondence about the political stability of Venezuela years before probably still stood in his mind. At any rate, he gathered his family together and left Caracas on 7 November 1876 to return to Paris.<sup>2</sup>

Rojas arrived in Paris on 26 November 1876 without any official character and resumed his life as a private citizen. While that was the way he wanted it, the very next month he was "surprised to know by the cable and afterward, by mail" that he had been appointed Resident Minister to Great Britain. Thus, the reluctant diplomat began a second round of service for Guzmán Blanco and Venezuela, which lasted from late 1876 to the summer of 1883. In addition to the British appointment, he had simultaneous diplomatic posts to France and Spain and once again acted as fiscal agent for the Republic.<sup>3</sup> His work with the British government covered almost the entire period and a variety of serious problems, while the French and Spanish projects were somewhat more circumscribed in both time and complication.

The actual appointment of Rojas as Resident Minister and the accompanying instructions clearly indicate the intricacy of the assignment. Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduardo Calcaño wrote Rojas on 11 December 1876 and asked him if he would take

the appointment at the behest of Guzmán Blanco. The President wanted to maintain and strengthen the friendly relations between the two countries and, trusting in the patriotism, intelligence, and well-known suitability of Rojas, deemed it wise to name him to the mission. Perhaps equally important, it is doubtful if anyone else was available. Calcaño hoped that Rojas would accept the position and proceed to London without delay. This was what greeted Rojas, the private citizen, in Paris in December 1876. While it is possible that Rojas and Guzmán Blanco talked of Venezuelan diplomacy when the latter had been in Caracas, the appointment still came as a surprise. Furthermore, all the supporting documents of the appointment were dated either the eleventh or the twelfth of December, after Rojas' departure from Caracas. Rojas was given a package deal, as it were.<sup>4</sup>

The diplomatic instructions to Rojas, also under date of December 11, were part of this package deal. They revealed to Rojas that his would be a multi-faceted negotiation with the British Foreign Office. Calcaño instructed Rojas to press for the removal and replacement of Middleton, the British Minister Resident in Caracas, take steps to insure that exiled enemies of the Republic on Trinidad be prevented from hostile acts against Venezuela, verify the ownership of the island of Patos and the boundary with British Guiana, and negotiate a new treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation with Great Britain.<sup>5</sup> This was a broad instruction for any diplomat, particularly a reluctant one such as Rojas. And its broadness thrust Rojas into a

thicket of problems both old and new.

The problems with Great Britain went all the way back to the wars of independence early in the nineteenth century. They had begun under admirable circumstances. Simón Bolívar, the great liberator, received much help from Great Britain, in both manpower and money, in his revolution against Spain. Accordingly, many British subjects entered the lexicon of the heroes of Venezuelan independence. Many also became foreign creditors of Venezuela. They had loaned their money for the independence movement, and the Venezuelan repayment rate had been very slow. Rojas already knew these people and their heirs through his prior financial work in London. Furthermore, a variety of British claims subsequent to the independence movement had been lodged against the Venezuelan government. Venezuela simply had not serviced these debts for two reasons--actual inability to pay and the compounding factor of political unrest after 1848.<sup>6</sup> These conditions alone would have strained the diplomatic relations between the two countries. As it was, however, there were other circumstances, both British and Venezuelan.

The British circumstances were merely part of the overall policy of fostering and protecting foreign trade. What England wanted was fair and equal treatment in the Latin American market and adequate protection of British subjects and their property. The central ingredient to this policy was *laissez faire*. British policy toward Latin America, furthermore, changed very little between 1815 and 1914. One important change, though, was that

Great Britain came to be more and more on the defensive after 1870 as other nations offered greater competition in the world market. Thus, when Rojas became Venezuelan Minister to Great Britain in 1876, the British were most sensitive to any demands he might make.<sup>7</sup>

Venezuela had several demands of its own which added to the general complications of the relations between the two countries. The Venezuelan authorities, for example, were greatly concerned about the smuggling in eastern Venezuela from Trinidad and the tiny island of Patos.<sup>8</sup> Also, the frontier with British Guiana needed to be clearly defined. Venezuela further wanted a new treaty of commerce with Great Britain. And then there were problems with the British Chargé d'Affaires in Caracas. All of these problems--the British demands for claims payments, the Venezuelan problems in meeting them, a British foreign policy somewhat on the defensive, and the various Venezuelan demands for smuggling control, frontier definitions, and a commercial treaty--meant that Rojas would be working in a very intricate set of diplomatic circumstances.

The way Rojas operated with the British Foreign Office, beginning in 1877, was somewhat characteristic of how Venezuelan diplomacy in general seemed to be conducted. It was a diplomacy of fits and starts and numerous goals being sought simultaneously. Perhaps the basic causes for such fitful operations can be reduced to two. For one thing, Venezuela had been going through a very turbulent political process before the ascent of Guzmán Blanco in

1870, and despite the seeming stability of what would come to be known as the Septenio, there was still considerable political disturbance, both within the Republic and without. All of this, plus the vanity of Guzmán Blanco, affected the Ministry of Foreign Relations as much as it affected any other arm of the government. The other cause for fitful diplomacy may be found in the population of Venezuela. This small country, at the time primarily agricultural and pastoral and with a population of only two million, would hardly be as likely to have a nucleus of well-trained and available potential diplomats, particularly at the ministerial level, as a larger, more stable country. The impression is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had difficulty filling ministerial posts, and even then some of the appointments were ones of expediency.<sup>9</sup>

Expediency or not, Rojas took his appointment seriously, paid the proper lip service to Guzmán Blanco by way of Calcaño, and went to work quickly. He left Paris on 7 January 1877 for London. On the tenth he advised the Earl of Derby, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, of his arrival and then sat back to wait for a response. A week later, not having yet received a response from Derby, he speculated to Calcaño that this hardly indicated a good start. Furthermore, Rojas felt the instructions in hand did not help an already difficult assignment, for while they told him what was desired, they did not advise him how to achieve his ends. So, from the beginning, Rojas had his doubts about success with Great Britain and was critical of the instruc-

tions from Caracas. Meanwhile, Derby acknowledged Rojas' letter of the tenth and informed Rojas that he would arrange an audience with Queen Victoria. Rojas acknowledged the Derby communication, in turn, and requested a personal audience even before the personal reception by the Queen. Derby stated that this was not possible, so Rojas had to wait until after the official reception.<sup>10</sup>

Queen Victoria's reception of Rojas on February 7 merely confirmed his fears of difficult days ahead. Two days before the reception, he had written Calcaño about how "the South American ministers in this court are treated with the greatest disdain. One from Colombia had to wait three months and another from Peru, six, to be received." To Rojas "the blame is on the respective governments which tolerate such discourtesy." While Rojas could not complain about the wait, less than a month, the circumstances of the reception did not please him. To him it was very cold, and he had to wait almost half an hour for the Queen. Furthermore, Rojas was not invited to the opening of Parliament even though the Minister of China and his retinue, received just minutes before by Victoria, merited such an invitation. Finally, either through neglect or error, Rojas was presented to the Prince of Wales after, not before, some *chargés d'affaires*. In Rojas mind, and perhaps correctly so, he was not getting off to a very good start with Great Britain.<sup>11</sup>

Rojas began preliminary negotiations with Derby on several fronts in the wake of the reception but became ill. Afflicted with a severe and lingering winter cold and throat infection in

February, he returned to Paris by the first of April. In early May he received orders from Caracas to go back to London as soon as he could. He obeyed these orders but got sick once again and returned to Paris once more. Finally, on 6 June 1877 he submitted his resignation to the Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Relations. Perhaps it was just as well that Rojas did resign, for the presidential term of his friend Antonio Guzmán Blanco had ended in February 1877, and Francisco Linares Alcántara had become the new chief executive. While speculative, it is logical that Rojas, quite apart from his sickness, felt he could not serve under Alcántara as well as he could under Guzmán Blanco. Whatever the reason or reasons, the bulk of Rojas' diplomatic work in London would be deferred until 1879 when Rojas accepted the call once again, this time from Guzmán Blanco who had regained his power in the wake of the death of Alcántara in late 1878.<sup>12</sup>

It took almost a year for Rojas' 1877 resignation to be acted upon and to handle such subsequent details as disposing of archives, etc. Meanwhile, he bided his time by living the private life, going to spas to regain his health, watching his children grow up and leave the family home, and seeking solace with members of the opposite sex. On this last point he spent "many happy days at Frouville in the company of a nice Italian young lady." Meanwhile, the time did pass, and Rojas resumed his diplomatic career in London in early 1879.<sup>13</sup>

Rojas' second diplomatic appointment to Great Britain began much more favorably than the first. On 27 February 1879 Guzmán

Blanco appointed him Minister Plenipotentiary to the government of Queen Victoria. This in itself was a step up from his prior appointment of Minister Resident. A month later, now ensconced in the St. James Hotel in Picadilly, Rojas requested a formal audience with the Queen. This time, Rojas negotiated with the new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Marquis of Salisbury. Salisbury was much easier to deal with than Derby had been, and Queen Victoria saw the new Minister Plenipotentiary on May 17. The reception this time was vastly different from that of 1877. He went to the palace in a royal coach, was received by the Queen, and then invited to luncheon with the Queen's ladies of honor and other personalities. At this point Rojas well might have been optimistic; that certainly was the case back in Caracas.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout both his truncated first appointment and his longer second one, Rojas negotiated with Great Britain in a rather dexterous manner by pursuing the various goals simultaneously. The Patos and Trinidad affairs were, at least temporarily, settled or deferred during Rojas' British period and, therefore, are not considered in this study. The issue of replacing the Minister in Caracas, Middleton, can be placed in the category of service to Guzmán Blanco and thus is treated below in the chapter on the fringes of Rojas' diplomatic activities. Perhaps the most involved and important negotiations concerned the Guiana boundary and the proposed new treaty of commerce. Accordingly, the brunt of Rojas' British experience in this chapter and the next is centered around Guiana, certain fiscal postscripts to earlier dealings,

and the treaty of commerce.

A major phase of Rojas' diplomatic career in Great Britain between 1877 and 1883 concerned the determination of the boundary between eastern Venezuela and the colony of British Guiana. Perhaps time was the greatest single handicap Rojas faced in this pursuit. While there were minor diplomatic concerns over the boundary immediately prior to his appointment, there had been no serious discussion on the issue for over thirty years. Once appointed, Rojas did not take up permanent residence in London due to health and personal reasons. Rather, he continued to reside in Paris and made the necessary trips to London.

While Rojas' prior experience in London had dealt with loans, railroad contracts, and debt refinancing, the Guiana boundary dispute was a new departure. The question was whether Venezuela or Great Britain owned what portion of some of the wildest, least-settled land in the world. The issues that brought it to the fore were scientific and map-making expeditions, a resurgence of Venezuelan nationalism under Guzmán Blanco, and evidence of enough gold to fire the beliefs of both sides that there were almost unlimited amounts in the area.

Gold in Guiana can be traced back to the great legend of El Dorado, a mysterious lake, or place, of fabulous wealth, always seemingly just over the next horizon. This legend, apparently gained from the Indians of present-day Colombia and passed on primarily by the Spanish explorers and settlers and their European rivals, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

is generally confined to the northern half of the continent of South America. Guiana became famous as a supposedly rich, gold-bearing area through the explorations and publications of Sir Walter Raleigh in the seventeenth century. Raleigh explored the Orinoco River, and one of his lieutenants supposedly found a gold mine in Guiana.<sup>15</sup>

Gold was not forthcoming in great quantities, however, and this vast area of wilderness south of the Orinoco River on the eastern coast of South America remained lightly inhabited up to the time of Rojas in the nineteenth century. Several small Dutch settlements developed along the coast, and in the treaty of Munster, 1648, the Dutch boundary to the north was determined to be the Essequibo River. In the Treaty of London, 1814, the area that became known as British Guiana passed to Great Britain. The best-known British settlement in the area was Georgetown, near the mouth of the Demerara River, parallel to and about forty miles east of the Essequibo. To the west and north lay the great interior, rugged grassland, highlands, and mountains, an area that gradually merged into the drainage basin of the Orinoco to the north. There was no fixed boundary between the Spanish and British holdings. By virtue of its independence, Venezuela claimed Spain's prior holdings of the old Captaincy General of Caracas down to the Essequibo, but there were practically no settlements between the Venezuelan town of Angostura, later known as Ciudad Bolívar, on the Orinoco and Georgetown on the Demerara.<sup>16</sup>

Into this void, in 1835, came a representative of the

Royal Geographical Society of London. Robert H. Schomburgk, a Saxon botanist, received a commission from the Society in 1834 to explore the interior of British Guiana. From 1835 to 1843, with a fourteen-month break spent in London, Schomburgk explored the area, first for the Royal Geographical Society and then for the British government. From these efforts came a tentative or proposed frontier line between Venezuelan and British Guiana. This Schomburgk Line came to be a bone of contention with Venezuela when British authorities put permanent markers along its route.<sup>17</sup>

The Venezuelan publicist of this British action was the journalist Rafael María Baralt. Excited by the location of the British markers along Point Barima and the channel of the Amacuro River, on the southern side of the mouth of the Orinoco, Baralt prepared a "Memoria sobre los límites entre las Guayanas Inglesa y Venezolana." In this memorial, dated Caracas, 30 August 1841, Baralt made a lengthy argument about how the original Essequibo River boundary had been violated over the years.<sup>18</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Relations accepted the arguments of Baralt and prepared to pursue the matter further.

The scene now shifted to Great Britain and Spain. Alejo Fortique, the Venezuelan Minister in London, sought a treaty to settle the boundary issue, while Baralt forwarded him documentary information from the Spanish archives. Finally, in 1844, Fortique and Lord Aberdeen began negotiations. The Venezuelan Minister proposed the Essequibo River boundary, and the British Foreign

Minister countered with a line that would begin at the mouth of the Moroco River and go inland generally west-south-west until it joined the original Schomburgk Line. Neither government would accept the line proposed by the representative of the other, however, and with the death of Fortique in late 1844, diplomatic action on the issue slowed down except for a few isolated events until Rojas resumed the campaign in 1877.<sup>19</sup>

The isolated events in this interim, while worthy of mention and adding somewhat to the tension, did not substantially change the situation. In 1850 there was a rather tacit agreement between the two governments that neither would occupy any of the disputed territory. Several years later, in 1857 and 1858, British requests for the entry of a scientific expedition and mining equipment into the disputed area brought some fright to the Venezuelan government, but nothing came of it. The Venezuelan position was that in both cases they would have to enter the area through a proper post, a provincial capital. In 1863 a Georgetown mining company made plans to establish diggings on the Cuyuni River, two days' travel above where its mouth empties into the Essequibo. Four years later the British governor of Guiana informed the company that its operations in the territory would not be entitled to British protection. Thus it seemed that the 1850 agreement remained intact. Actually, however, by 1866 there were British hamlets along the coast north of the Moroco, along the channel of the Amacuro, and all the way up the Curuni to the mouth of the Yurari River. In other words, the British settlements

and interests went up to the original Schomburgk line and possibly beyond it.<sup>20</sup>

There was reason for Venezuela to be concerned about the frontier area because of not only the British settlements, but also the prevailing lawlessness and ferment. The entire eastern part of Venezuela was a smuggler's paradise. One foreign visitor to the area in the early 1870's, just before Rojas took the assignment in London, described it succinctly. To him the high customs duties led to a systematic evasion by smuggling. "The officers of customs add to their salaries by a percentage on the goods smuggled, with their connivance, into the country." And while he did not specifically mention Ciudad Bolívar as the center of Guiana smuggling, his description of the port leaves ample opportunity for such activity. "Ships from almost all parts of the world throng the pier, and the flags of all the civilized nations float gaily before the city."<sup>21</sup> This Orinoco port, additionally, often came to be the base of political factions operating against the government in Caracas, as witness the blockade of 1871-72 "in consequence of the occupation of Ciudad Bolívar by the rebels."<sup>22</sup> Suffice it to say that there were problems in the lower Orinoco and Guiana.

Spread over all of this was tangible proof of gold in the area disputed by Venezuela and Great Britain. The reality of the situation was somewhere between the fantastic accounts of Raleigh in the seventeenth century and Schomburgk's opinion of 1840 that "Guiana is not likely to possess mineral riches."

Twenty years before Schomburgk's position, gold had been discovered in French Guiana to the south, but little was done with it for several decades. Then, in 1849, an important gold strike was made on the Yuruari River, west of the original Schomburgk line. Further up the Yuruari, and further west, a gold-mining settlement developed in 1856-1857, and this area became famous as the New Providence mining enterprise. Further to the south, on the Cuyuni River, the British mining operation had developed in 1863, but, as cited above, the British authorities refused to protect it as it was in the disputed area.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, the Yuruari activities continued and became a very important segment of the economy of Venezuelan Guiana. Ten years before Rojas resumed the boundary discussions, the Yuruari operations appeared thus to one observer,

The quantity of melted gold from the mines to Ciudad Bolívar, during the months of December 1866, January, February, March, and April 1867, was about 4,000 ounces of gold per month, and I may well say that all the gold extracted was not exported. During the time spoken of, the number of the miners, I mean people at the diggings, was between 600 and 700.<sup>24</sup>

Publicists of the time did a good job of informing the western world of the gold activities in the Guiana country. The description above, for example, is from the second edition of Venezuela, or Sketches of Life in a South American Republic, with the History of the Loan of 1864. The author, Edward B. Eastwick, had gone to Venezuela as a representative of the London financial group floating the Loan of 1864.<sup>25</sup> He wrote of both his own and others' experiences in Venezuela, and the publicity, indicated by

the appearance of a second edition, must have been considerable. Another publicist was James Mudie Spence, a British subject resident in Venezuela from 1871 to 1872. Spence published a two-volume account of his trip to Venezuela in 1873, and the gold theme is strong again. Furthermore, he brought back examples of gold-bearing rocks and put them on display. The description of them, as read before the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, doubtless was reason for excitement on the part of possible gold investors.

The gold quartz of the richest kind came from the province of Guayana, where vast regions of auriferous rocks occur and where also gold is found in small grains, flakes, and nuggets of all sizes, from an ounce to many pounds' weight, in a clay from two to eight inches thick, as well as in a red peroxidated iron earth, both probably alluvial drifts.<sup>26</sup>

Guiana and its gold were becoming better-known, particularly to the British. And this publicity presented a dilemma to Venezuela, for while it meant increased opportunities for mining investments and, therefore, increased opportunities for government revenue, it also meant a potential increase in problems over the yet unsettled boundary dispute.

In an effort to solve this dilemma, the government of Guzmán Blanco resumed boundary negotiations with that of Great Britain in late 1876. On November 14, after much study and work on the part of his clerks, Foreign Minister Eduardo Calcaño wrote a lengthy letter to Lord Derby. He stated that Guzmán Blanco wanted to resume this long-delayed boundary question and had

ordered the Ministry to set forth the Venezuelan rights in the matter. There followed a long exposition tracing the Spanish and then the Venezuelan claims to the mouth of the Essequibo River, both before and after the Treaty of Munster and the Treaty of London. Calcaño hoped for a quick and cordial solution to this question, already detained for so many years.<sup>27</sup> Now, somewhat after the immediate fact, it was time to appoint a minister to settle the question.

Rojas' instructions on the boundary question were very vague and general. "It is important that these matters, which in the future can be a cause of discord, have a definitive solution, and with the expressed object, it is recommended to you that you promote discussion over them." That is, there had been a problem for over at least thirty-five years, and now Rojas, after a lapse of thirty-two years, was to reopen the discussion.<sup>28</sup> Surely Guzmán Blanco had much faith in his friend, for he left the matter up to him completely. Later the vagueness of the instructions would create serious problems in the Venezuelan campaign to settle the boundary.

Rojas acted quickly but got nowhere in 1877 due to his sickness and his desire to retire from the position given him in December 1876. Furthermore, while Derby was initially willing to discuss the issues, he rather quickly found an excuse for delays, at least in the eyes of the Venezuelans. The sequence of events in the 1877 Guiana negotiations went somewhat as follows. Rojas began by writing Lord Derby on 13 February 1877, shortly after his

arrival in London and his formal reception by Queen Victoria. Improvising because of the vagueness of the instructions of the prior December 11, he first noted why Venezuela had not accepted Lord Aberdeen's offer of 30 March 1844. The Aberdeen Line would be prejudicial to some Venezuelan settlements in the area, and it had been proposed as a concession of friendly regard, not a right. Furthermore, alienation of territory to any foreign power would be detrimental to Venezuelan sovereignty. Rojas, acknowledging that there were many riches in the area contested, suggested to Lord Derby that titles to the territories be cleared or that perhaps a mixed commission might be used to settle the differences. Meanwhile, he claimed Venezuelan sovereignty down to the Essequibo River.<sup>29</sup>

Derby rather quickly acknowledged receipt of the Rojas letter and promised that he would consider Rojas' suggestion. A few weeks later, however, on March 24, he advised Rojas that the Governor of British Guiana, Sir James Longden, was expected in London and suggested that any further communication take place after Longden's arrival. For all practical purposes, that ended Rojas' negotiations with Derby during 1877 and the first part of the former's negotiations with Great Britain on this and other topics. Rojas reported to the Ministry in Caracas at the end of the year that he was still awaiting a communication from the Foreign Office pending conferences with the Governor of Demarara.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps it was just as well that the negotiations had bogged down due to the delay of the arrival of the Governor, for

the relations between Rojas and the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Caracas were not completely ideal for effective action with Great Britain. While Rojas got sick in London during the winter of 1877 and ultimately asked to be relieved in June, there were other problems as well that had a bearing on the boundary dispute. Even though Rojas kept the Ministry informed of his actions, it appears that the reverse was not the case. For example, when he first wrote Derby on February 13 and claimed Guiana to the Essequibo River, Palacio, the new Minister of Foreign Relations under Alcántara, advised him that he should not have done it. According to Palacio, the communication from Calcaño to Derby on 14 November 1876 made it impossible for Venezuela to claim the Essequibo as its boundary. Rojas informed Palacio, in turn, that he did not know of the letter of November 14. Either the copy of the letter intended for Rojas' information had never been sent or had been lost. Furthermore, the Ministry did not respond to Rojas' request for new instructions. On 9 November 1877 Seijas rather curtly advised Rojas that he did not need new instructions. Perhaps the delay at this particular juncture, then, did little harm.<sup>31</sup>

Rojas resumed activity on the boundary issue in the spring of 1879. Alcántara had died, and Guzmán Blanco had regained his power in the meantime and apparently was ready for Rojas to resume the various Venezuelan diplomatic issues with Great Britain. The formalities of reestablishing contact with the Foreign Office, particularly the necessary reception by Queen Victoria, came easier this second time. Still, Rojas was plagued with weak

instructions. "Dr. Rojas will continue with the Government of Her British Majesty the discussion on limits in the region of Guiana, in conformity with the rights we have claimed and the instructions he received in his previous mission." Hopefully, Rojas would achieve some sort of treaty, some definitive settlement, to this long question. Rojas complained about these vague instructions but, meanwhile, went to work.<sup>32</sup>

Rojas began his 1879 campaign by writing the new British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Salisbury, on May 19. Harking back to the legal arguments of Venezuela's claim to the Essequibo, the Aberdeen-Fortique negotiations of the 1840's, and the delay in 1877 while waiting for the arrival of the Governor of Demerara, Rojas advised Salisbury that nothing had come of all this activity and waiting. Further, he informed Salisbury that Venezuela wanted to settle the boundary issue with a treaty and that he had been ordered to ask that a plenipotentiary be named to enter into conferences with him to that end. The problem was now thirty-eight years old, Guiana was becoming increasingly important, and Rojas felt it should be settled.<sup>33</sup>

While the opening letter for 1879 seemed to be a good beginning, it actually was the only formal negotiation between Rojas and Salisbury during the year, except for the latter's letter acknowledging receipt of the former's. The delay this time came from the British Foreign Office, for Salisbury did not respond to Rojas' letter of May 19 until January of the following year. Meanwhile, Rojas communicated with the Ministry in Caracas, rather

imaginatively suggested that Venezuela send its own "scientific" expedition to the disputed Guiana area, and reported that maps in London showed British Guiana extending all the way north to the Orinoco River. The Ministry took all of this in stride but had no particular suggestions except to order Rojas to keep Guzmán Blanco informed of the negotiations while the Illustrious American was in Europe during the summer.<sup>34</sup> The obvious conclusion is that all important decisions came from Guzmán Blanco.

As it turned out, Rojas spent much of his time that summer handling the details of Guzmán Blanco's visit and also taking on the responsibility of Minister of Venezuela to France. In late June, for example, he not only was saddled with the visiting executive, but also had to pay official calls to the French authorities and the other ambassadors in the French capital. Writing his American friend Sanford, on July 13, he began his letter with these words,

Excuse me if I have been unable to write you before.  
I am excessively busy: two legations without a secretary, and the Illustrious over my shoulders.

Thus went the summer of 1879, and while the basic delay was due to Salisbury's slow response to Rojas' letter of May 19, the Venezuelan side of the work also suffered.<sup>35</sup>

Venezuela could ill afford the delay, however, from whatever the source, as mining activities in Guiana were on the increase. A new Venezuelan mining combine, for example, published the list of its first subscribers in May. Government action

pushed mining on July 30 with a resolution that exempted goods imported for mining purposes from the import tariff. By October numerous items were coming into the port of Ciudad Bolívar under this franking privilege. The next summer even Rojas himself had launched a mining company.<sup>36</sup> Before this happened, however, Salisbury had finally answered the Rojas note.

Salisbury's response, dated 10 January 1880, to the Rojas note of May 19 of the prior year, while a neat parry to the Venezuelan boundary claim down to the Essequibo, still left the issue open to negotiation. He felt that a formal treaty might be too difficult to arrive at as there were so many ambiguities in old claims, old fofts, etc. Rather, he recommended a frontier of accommodation. Salisbury claimed even the Orinoco by virtue of treaties with the Indians and took note of the Venezuelan claim to the Essequibo. With these vastly different claims, Great Britain and Venezuela would have to settle the difference through accommodation. In effect, Salisbury had passed the diplomatic ball back to Rojas and Venezuela.<sup>37</sup>

Rojas received the response in London. He had gone there on the seventh specifically to talk with Salisbury. Perhaps his presence prompted the letter. Whatever the case, he did not talk with Salisbury just then, for the Secretary of State was in the country. Rather, on January 12 he talked with Sir Julian Pauncefote, the Subsecretary of State. From this interview he learned that Pauncefote had written the letter of the tenth and listened to such "ridiculous things" as the neutralization of the Orinoco, etc.

Rojas came away from the interview convinced that conditions were difficult but that there might be a ray of hope as found in the old Aberdeen proposal of 1844. He was of the opinion that Great Britain would still accept that proposed line which originated at the mouth of the Moroco River and then generally went west to join with the Schomburgk line. Rojas felt he could negotiate this line with Salisbury and urgently asked the Ministry in Caracas for instructions to that end.<sup>38</sup>

Before these specific instructions came, however, Rojas made another trip to London. He talked with Pouncefote once again and came to the conclusion that Great Britain wanted to dominate the mouth of the Orinoco. Such domination would not be acceptable to any Venezuelan government, however, and Rojas advised Pouncefote that the current government had plans to settle the Orinoco issue by sending a military column south to Demerara. Surely this was a bluff, and while Pouncefote responded that Her Majesty's government would not look kindly on such activity, Rojas won his point, for Pouncefote finally admitted during the interview that Great Britain was not thinking of going into the Orinoco area. Once again Rojas, advising his Ministry of this second interview with Pouncefote, felt that arbitration would certainly lead to a line beginning at the mouth of the Moroco, essentially the old Aberdeen Line of 1844. Furthermore, he suggested that a mixed commission might be the best means of getting the decision.<sup>39</sup> Full action on the mixed commission would have to wait for several years, but, meanwhile, there was action on the Aberdeen Line.

On February 25 the instructions that Rojas specifically asked for the prior month finally came out of Caracas. Foreign Minister Julian Viso, following the Aberdeen proposal of 1844, wrote Rojas as follows: "You will insist upon and support the line indicated to Sr. Fortique, namely, from the mouth of the Moroco River, by its waters to its origin in the sierra of Imataca." Presumably from there it would tie into the old Schomburgk line and go southward, thus cancelling the prior claim to the Essequibo. The timing of this instruction might have been more than just a prompt reply to the Rojas note of January 20. It could have been brought about by the continuing turbulence in Venezuelan Guiana. Just two days before the note to Rojas, Guzmán Blanco had signed a decree blockading the mouth of the Orinoco because of rebellious activity in Ciudad Bolívar. Things were tense in the area, and Guzmán Blanco wanted to clear them up. In a supplemental note of February 26, for example, Viso advised Rojas that the Illustrious American himself would be sending instructions under separate cover. Now Rojas had something to work with, and it fit into what he felt was negotiable, the old Aberdeen Line.<sup>40</sup>

The Aberdeen Line negotiations took place in April 1880. Rojas began by advising Salisbury that he was authorized to sign a boundary agreement between the two countries on the basis of the Aberdeen offer of 1844. Any optimism he might have had, however, was dashed by Salisbury's response, a few days later, that it was advisable to wait for the arrival of the Attorney General

of Guiana before proceeding further. Rather despairingly, Rojas informed Caracas that "this answer appears to be a species of subterfuge identical to that Lord Derby used in the same case in 1877, with only the difference that this gentleman was awaiting on that date the governor of the colony, and, now, the one awaited is the attorney general." Rojas could only conclude that the British authorities were not serious about negotiating the boundary, and the same opinion prevailed in Caracas.<sup>41</sup> The diplomatic game of cat-and-mouse now ground to a halt because of the action of the British cat. Rojas had to content himself again with waiting.

Rojas waited throughout the summer of 1880 for the arrival of the Attorney General and occupied himself with French affairs until he resumed the British effort in late September. This time he would be negotiating with a new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Granville. Later he described his relations with Granville as clearer and more cordial than those with Derby and Salisbury. He felt that Granville must have had some French atavism, because to Rojas he appeared the most amiable and agreeable of the three.<sup>42</sup> It was doubtful, however, if Granville would be as diplomatically agreeable as Rojas might have hoped.

On September 27 Rojas wrote Granville in hopes of resuming the Guiana boundary negotiation. He saw no reason in waiting for the arrival of the Attorney General of British Guiana. Furthermore, he informed Granville that Venezuela was preparing an official map of the country and wanted to determine the exact

eastern boundary. Again he suggested the mouth of the Moroco River as the beginning point. No response came to the Rojas letter until late November when Pauncefote responded, with pleasure, that the Attorney General had finally arrived in London. Pauncefote advised Rojas that he would be in touch with him shortly. Thus, the delay continued, and the rather frustrating word from Caracas to Rojas was that time was costly but that surely Rojas was doing his best. And then the Ministry instructed Rojas, on December 19, to ask for a special and urgent interview with Granville on the matter.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps current happenings in Venezuela made such a recommendation worthwhile.

One current cause of excitement might have been the presence of one or more British ships in the mouth of the Orinoco River in the winter of 1880-1881. The Venezuelan authorities ultimately learned the single ship apparently was a cable repair vessel. The anxiety of the situation, however, prompted a long report from the Guiana legislature the next February and a rather curt suggestion from the elder Guzmán that the Ministry get on with the business of investigating those armed British ships. Another cause of excitement might have been the increased gold production in Guiana and the resultant gold rush. Between the last half of 1879, for example, and the first six months of 1880, the amount of gold exported through Ciudad Bolívar had increased from over 1,642 to over 1,825 kilograms. Rojas, meanwhile, informed Caracas of the spread of the boom by reporting new gold company stock issues in London. In December he reported

how a stock subscription had been covered three times over and speculated that another would be organized for approximately £2,000,000. The following February he reported the organization of three more gold-mining companies in London.<sup>44</sup>

That same February of 1881, there was an important exchange of notes between Granville and Rojas. The British Foreign Secretary, after months of delay, finally answered the Rojas notes of April 12 and September 23 of the prior year. Granville advised Rojas on February 12 that Great Britain could not accept the mouth of the Moroco River as the beginning point of the boundary. The point would have to be farther north up the coast. Then he asked Rojas what Venezuela thought of such a position. Rojas had a quick response. He presented his counterproposal to Granville on February 21. This so-called Rojas Line began at a point one mile north of the mouth of the Moroco, went west to the 60th Meridian, and then south. If Granville could not accept this line, then Rojas planned to return to the strict law of the matter, presumably prior historical and treaty claims. The Rojas Line was well within the prior British claims of the Schomburgk Line and also the Aberdeen Line except for a small area north of the Barama River. The Rojas Line, in effect, gave a little to the north but took a lot to the east.<sup>45</sup>

The giving, as small as it was, caused considerable controversy in Caracas. Old A. L. Guzmán, the resident Liberal watchdog, minced few words in his reaction to the Rojas Line. Simply, Rojas had exceeded his orders in proposing the line a mile north

of the Moroco River. Rather passionately he wrote the Foreign Minister, Saavedra, and referred to "the case of treason committed by a plenipotentiary, allying himself with the enemies of the fatherland. . . ." What went to Rojas, however, was a note from Saavedra that Guzmán Blanco was surprised with this unauthorized movement and wanted an explanation. Rojas wrote his reasons for the proposal, but they were not accepted by the Illustrious American. Be that as it may, Rojas survived the incident and continued to serve as Minister to Great Britain. The outburst of the elder Guzmán, however, might have been the beginning incident within the Ministry of Foreign Relations which ultimately led to Rojas' resignation. Meanwhile, the Venezuelans waited for Granville to respond to the Rojas proposal.<sup>46</sup>

Granville finally wrote Rojas the following September. Enclosed with his letter was a memorandum of the situation as it then stood. Not surprisingly, he rejected the proposed Rojas Line. The straight lines of the Venezuelan Minister did not take into account existing British interests and settlements and would be very hard to mark as they did not follow geographical landmarks. Then Granville rather curiously offered to give complete control of the mouth of the Orinoco to Venezuela while, at the same time, attaching the condition that such a gift did not surrender Great Britain's real claim to the area. The meat of the Granville communication, however, was his own line. This Granville Line began at a point twenty-five miles east of the mouth of the Barima River, the most southerly and easterly river mouth in the

Orinoco delta, and went due south to the eighth parallel. From there it proceeded due west until it reached the Amacuro River and then followed the old Schomburgk and Aberdeen lines. Rojas might have argued with Granville that he, too, was making rather arbitrary, nongeographical lines, especially in the northern portion of his proposal, but he did not. Rather, he meekly acknowledged receipt of the letter and stated that he was awaiting instructions from Caracas. The response to Rojas from that city was that things were grave and required much mediation.<sup>47</sup>

The mediation in Caracas took place in an increased atmosphere of urgency because of continued development in gold undertakings. The Ministry of the Treasury annual report of 1883, citing accounts of 1882, referred to the inexhaustible gold riches of the Yuruary River region and the establishment of successful mining operations there. This area is west of the Schomburgk Line and was probably considered to be Venezuelan. Generally on the other side of the Line, there was considerable development of the gold fields in the Puruni River, a branch of the Mazaruni. Doubtless both developments pricked the interests of British investors and the sensibilities of Venezuelan diplomats.<sup>48</sup>

The mediation itself had both public and private aspects. In his congressional message of 20 February 1882, for example, Guzmán Blanco stated that the Guiana boundary line and other issues were pursued in firm and discrete discussion, always with the hope of gaining the proper solutions. Privately, Foreign Minister Seijas sent all the proper information to A. L. Guzmán for the

elder statesman to make a study of the issues. Guzmán responded to Seijas in the spring of 1882 with a long "Memorandum on the Fluvial Navigation of the South American Continent," a study that would give Venezuela the major river networks in the disputed Guiana area. Rojas during this time generally was pessimistic and saw no reason to continue the discussions. He felt the best course of action was to press for an international arbitration, a move that Great Britain could not block.<sup>49</sup> Before too long, however, Rojas was grasping at straws of optimism once again.

The optimism this time came from an exchange of letters between Granville and Rojas in March 1882. Granville first wrote Rojas and stated that he would be glad to receive a reply to his note of the prior September. This was the letter that contained the memorandum specifying the Granville Line. Rojas, somewhat excited by this, passed it on to the Ministry in Caracas and noted that for the first time in forty years, the British were ready to solve the Guiana limit question. But, the only thing Rojas could do at that time was advise Granville that he was still awaiting instructions from Caracas. Granville even kept the hopes alive in June by advising Rojas that the Foreign Office was "receptive" to a Venezuelan response.<sup>50</sup>

The Venezuelan response would not be forthcoming during the summer of 1882, though, and it is safe to say that the optimism of Rojas faded and the impatience of Granville grew. Some time, probably in June, Rojas visited the Foreign Office and talked with the Subsecretary there. The main problem in the discussion

that followed was that Rojas did not yet have a response from Caracas. Rojas did make it clear, however, that the Granville Line was not acceptable to him and that if no solution could be arrived at, then, perhaps, legal arbitration might be the answer. He did not feel that the British liked this idea. Reporting it to Caracas, Rojas was of the opinion that such a move, even though Great Britain would try to slow it down, was the only thing that would save Guiana from British "claws." Still the answer did not come from Caracas, though Rojas continued to forward reminders from Granville.<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps the reason for the delay in Caracas was a combination of confusion and second thoughts. In early August Seijas advised Rojas that Guzmán Blanco was very disturbed by the Granville proposal and that the case still required much reflection. Then, rather amazingly, he instructed Rojas to request an audience with Granville and hold out for a Venezuelan claim to the Essequibo River--though without offering more specific instructions. There is good reason to believe that the influence of the elder Guzmán brought about such an action. Whatever the source, Seijas was proposing to Rojas that Venezuela negate its own offer from the mouth of the Moroco and also the unauthorized offer of Rojas one mile north of that point. Rojas accepted the note and said he would do what Seijas instructed but offered to give argument as to why he felt the true limit between the two Guianas was the Moroco.<sup>52</sup>

As it turned out, Rojas did what he wanted to do--nothing.

While he might have talked with Granville and other British officials about the instructions to return to the Essequibo claim, there is no reference to this in later Granville correspondence. Rather, the stalemate continued throughout the year and into 1883. Doubtless the Rojas frustration flared anew as he passed a Granville inquiry of February 1 on to Caracas and added thoughts of his own.

As many times as I have been asked by word or letter about this, I have answered that I still have not received instructions. And now it will be the same, but perhaps it would be more convenient to take a definitive resolution in this matter or at least say to Great Britain that her proposition is unacceptable.<sup>53</sup>

That is, there were no instructions satisfactory to Rojas. A few days later, in his annual report to the Ministry, Rojas again sought an answer to "this annoying question." He himself felt arbitration was the only answer and suggested that if Great Britain tried to block such action, then Venezuela should send out a scientific expedition to determine the boundary and mark it suitably.<sup>54</sup>

The response from Caracas was what it had been before. Seijas advised Rojas that Guzmán Blanco was working on some schemes and hoping for a favorable result shortly. Meanwhile, Rojas could inform Her Majesty's government that Venezuela had been and was occupied with this grave question and would not be long in presenting its views. When C. E. Mansfield, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Caracas, made inquiries in March 1883, Seijas

informed him that Rojas would have the necessary instructions shortly. All Rojas and Mansfield could do was rather lamely pass the information on to the British officials.<sup>55</sup> And, soon it was June, both in Caracas and London. Meanwhile, Rojas had gone to a very important party.

In late May Rojas attended the birthday party of Queen Victoria in London, and before the evening was over, he had received, as he saw it, a new injection of frustration. After the banquet, sponsored by the Foreign Office, he had a long conversation with Julian Pauncefote, the permanent Subsecretary. Rojas understood Pauncefote offered to settle all the outstanding issues between Great Britain and Venezuela, a new treaty of commerce, title to the island of Patos, and a thorny problem of differential tariffs, if Venezuela would settle the Guiana boundary. In effect, Pauncefote tied all the problems between the two countries together and proposed a settlement to all with the boundary dispute being the basic settlement. All Rojas could do, however, was urgently and vainly ask for instructions to cover the matter. One contributing factor to the great delay of 1882 and 1883 in Caracas well might have been the preoccupation there with the upcoming centennial of the birth of Simón Bolívar.<sup>56</sup>

In Caracas, meanwhile, there were fitful attempts to send instructions to Rojas. The clerks in the Ministry of Foreign Relations drafted two different letters to Rojas, both on behalf of Guzmán Blanco, on June 18. The first letter, citing the original titles derived from Spain, ordered Rojas to maintain the

Venezuelan claim to the Essequibo River. The second, somewhat more elaborate, declined the British offer of September 1881, the Granville Line, and offered to submit the matter to the decision of a third power. The elaborate reasoning was that the Granville Line gave Great Britain control of part of the Orinoco delta; it was less favorable than the Aberdeen line of 1844, and the Venezuelan constitution prohibited the giving away of any territory inherited from Spain. Furthermore, the third party possibility had recently been used with success in a boundary dispute with Colombia. (The elder Guzmán had handled this matter.<sup>57</sup>) Thus, the drafts were made in the Ministry, and a decision seemed close at hand, but neither one was sent to Rojas.

The reason neither draft of June 18 was sent to Rojas was that Guzmán Blanco had decided to dispense with the diplomatic services of Rojas and accepted a prior Rojas resignation. This came about because of growing animosity between Rojas and A. L. Guzmán and, immediately, because Rojas had published a book that contained material highly critical of Guzmán. The net result was that Venezuela was not ready to submit to arbitration of any form. Though the immediate cause was one of spite, it should be added that there was spite on both sides.<sup>58</sup>

In the case of Rojas and the Guiana boundary dispute, there were several ingredients that prevented a successful outcome. For one, he was assigned to a mission that had lain dormant for over thirty years. Then, he had continuous troubles getting clear and definitive instructions on what to do. The one time

he barely exceeded his instructions and offered his own line, the reaction from Caracas was awesome. The entire mission also was characterized by fits and starts on the part of Rojas himself, brought about by his health problems and delays in official correspondence on the part of both Venezuela and Great Britain. Finally, personal animosity led to a termination of his appointment, though the problem with the elder Guzmán does not seem to have influenced Rojas' own attempts to arrive at a settlement. All things considered, success was unlikely in any event.

The mere fact that Rojas was taken off the case in 1883 did not mean that action to obtain a settlement stopped. That same year, for example, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Rafael Seijas sent a feeler out to the United States for its good offices and exchanged notes with the British Minister in Caracas. In 1884 Guzmán Blanco himself made extensive and fruitless efforts in London to achieve a settlement. In 1887 there was a break in diplomatic relations between the two countries over British encroachment at the mouth of the Barima River. Meanwhile, United States publications picked up the cry against the aggressiveness of Great Britain. Finally, when the dispute did go to the arbitrating tables at the end of the century, several years after the death of Guzmán Blanco, Rojas himself ended up as the "Agent of Venezuela" in the preparation of the Venezuelan arguments for the boundary settlement.<sup>59</sup>

## NOTES

1. Rojas, London, 23 January 1877, To Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. A copy of the Boulton letter to Rojas and its certification by the Caracas Registrar, 16 October 1876, are in the Boulton MSS, "Personal y privado, José María Rojas." A good example of Rojas' subsequent relations with Boulton is in 1883 when he acted as agent for Boulton in the Venezuelan Copper Company in London; Boulton MSS, "Negociaciones industriales y mineras, José María Rojas-Cia Ven. del Cobre, Londres."

2. Rojas, London, 23 January 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. The biblical allusion is to Daniel 9:24. A liberal paraphrasing of Gabriel's message to Daniel might read, "The Lord has commanded seventy weeks of further punishment upon Jerusalem and your people. Then at last they will learn to stay away from sin, and their guilt will be cleansed. . . ." See the citation in both the King James version of the Holy Bible and The Living Bible Paraphrased (Wheaton, IL.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1972), p. 686. G.G., vol. 11, pp. 140-41.

3. Rojas, London, 23 January 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. The French and Spanish activities during this period are treated in Chapter VII, below.

4. Calcaño, copies, Caracas, 11 December 1876, to Rojas, R. T. C. Middleton, British Resident Minister in Caracas, and Lord Derby, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 35, 42, 43. See also L.a. (1877), p. 77. Guzmán Blanco, copy, Caracas, 11 December 1876, to Queen Victoria, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 37. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 12 December 1876, circular to the Venezuelan consuls in Europe, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 50. Lord Salisbury acknowledged the appointment of Rojas in his letter of 10 April 1877, Foreign Office, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 112. Possibly Rojas did exchange telegrams with Calcaño or Guzmán Blanco immediately prior to or right after the appointment of December 11. In either case, the surprise element is present. Unfortunately, the records of the Ministry of Foreign Relations do not contain such correspondence.

5. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11 December 1876, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 38.

6. See the chapter titled "Foreign Legion" in Gerhard

Masur's outstanding Simón Bolívar (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948), pp. 323-43, for an idea of the importance of British personnel to the independence of Venezuela. See also Venezuela, Bosquejo, passim, and Arcaya, Historia de las reclamaciones, passim.

7. Platt, Finance, pp. xv, 349-51, 357.

8. Correspondence on Trinidad and Patos is found primarily in MRE/GB/FDGB, SP, and IP. The writer anticipates a later study of the problems with these islands off the eastern coast of Venezuela.

9. The relevant portions of G.G. reveal the turbulence in Venezuela, even during the Septenio, and the small population base of the time.

10. Rojas, Paris, January 6, to Calcaño, copies, London, January 10, to Derby, January 18, to Calcaño, and 29 January 1877, to Derby, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 51, 53, 52, 55. Derby, copies, Foreign Office, 26 January and 5 February 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 55, 59.

11. Rojas, London, 5 and 17 February 1877, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 59, 65.

12. For purposes of continuity, the details of Rojas' preliminary negotiations with Derby will be treated below with the body of his negotiations beginning in 1879. Rojas, Paris, 3 April and 6 June 1877, to Ramón Andueza Palacio, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Relations, MRE/GB/FDV; vol. 2, fols. 75, 82. Palacio, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 3 May 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, fol. 80. Rojas still suffered from his throat condition as late as May 1877; Rojas, Paris, 9 May 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. Wise, Caudillo, pp. 93-95.

13. Rafael Seijas, Alcántara's Minister of Foreign Relations, advised Rojas to maintain his position as Minister until a replacement arrived; Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 9 November 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/IP, fol. 211. Seijas, who would also be in the service of Guzmán Blanco, later wrote El derecho internacional hispano-americano (público y privado), 6 vols. (Caracas: Imprenta de "El Monitor," 1884), and El derecho internacional venezolano, límites británicos de Guayana (con un mapa que circulara separadamente) (Caracas: Imprenta y Litografía del Gobierno Nacional, 1888). The formal notification of the resignation of Rojas is noted in Alcántara, copy, Caracas, 19 February 1878, to Victoria, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 86. Rojas and Derby exchanged correspondence on the former's resignation; copies, London and Foreign Office, 27 March 1878, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 88. For details of Rojas' family and health spa

activities, see Rojas, Paris, 20 June and 3 August 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. The liaison with the young Italian lady is in Rojas, private, Paris, 22 July 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17.

14. Copies of the official correspondence, all dated Ministry of Foreign Relations, 27 February 1879, relative to the appointment of Rojas, are in MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 91-96. Rojas, copies, London, 27 March 1879, to Salisbury, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 101, 107, and Salisbury, copies, Foreign Office, 1 and 2 April 1879, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 101. Rojas, London, May 3, to Calcaño; copy, 6 May 1879, to Salisbury, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 120, 123. Salisbury, copy, Foreign Office, 7 May 1879, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 126. Rojas, London, 8 and 22 May 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 128, 129. Barbarii, Dirección de Derecho Público Exterior (Caracas), 20 June 1879, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 131. Printed in G.o., no. 1684 (23 June 1879), p. 6409.

15. The Gold Museum in Bogotá, operated by the Banco de la República, contains over 14,000 pieces of pre-Columbian golden Indian artifacts, ample testimony to gold in America. One of the most fascinating artifacts is the Muisca rendering of a chieftan on a raft. Perhaps this was the original gilded one being conducted to the center of the lake where he would wash the gold dust off his body and put golden objects into the lake in a religious ceremony. Walter Raleigh, "The Discovery of Guayana," in Voyages and Travels, Ancient and Modern, edited by Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, c. 1910), pp. 309-94. See also Rafael María Baralt, Historia, Obras completas de Rafael María Baralt, edited by Guillermo Díaz-Plaza, vols. 1 and 2 (Maracaibo: La Universidad de Zulia, 1960), vol. 1, 324 ff.

16. Gil Fortoul, Historia, vol. 2, p. 117, and José María Rojas et al., Venezuela-British Guyana Boundary Arbitration. The Printed Argument on Behalf of the United States of Venezuela before the Tribunal of Arbitration, 2 vols. (New York: The Evening Post Job Printing House, 1898), vol. 1, p. 3, hereinafter cited as Rojas et al., Printed Argument. The claim of Gran Colombia in 1824 extended to the Essequibo River, "Memorandum presentado por el Ministro Plenipotenciario de Gran Colombia, José Manuel Hurtado, al Gobierno de Su Majestad Británica. Londres, 16-VII-1824," Public Record Office, F. O. 18.10, quoted in Pablo Ojer, Robert H. Schomburgk, explorador de Guayana y sus líneas de frontera (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1969), p. 7.

17. In the forward to his work A Description of British Guiana, Geographical and Statistical: Exhibiting Its Resources and Capabilities, Together with the Present and Future Condition and Prospects of the Colony (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.,

1840), Schomburgk stated that the pursuit of science alone led him to Guiana. Additionally, he wrote that the enclosed map "will show how important it is to the colony that its boundaries should be more clearly defined than at present, and freed from the encroaching claims of the adjacent states, which, if admitted, would deprive British Guiana of the greater part of her most valuable territory." Perhaps the clearest map indicating both the original Schomburgk Line and subsequent proposed lines, both Venezuelan and British, is the "Mapa esquemático de la Guayana Británica para ilustrar las propuestas que en varias ocasiones han sido hechas para arreglar la cuestión de límites con Venezuela," in the back of Gil Fortoul, Historia, vol. 3. See also Gil Fortoul, Historia, vol. 2, p. 117, and Ojer, Schomburgk, 14 ff., 81 ff.

18. Baralt, a Maracucho, passed the last twenty years of his life in Spain where he had the distinction of being the only Spanish American writer to be elected a numbered member of the Royal Spanish Academy. See Baralt, Historia, vol. 1, note, p. xiii. The complete text of the "Memoria" is in Baralt, Historia, vol. 2, pp. 815-38. The "Memoria" contains many factual errors. See the excellent "Estudio preliminar" by Hermann González O. in Baralt, Historia, vol. 2, 791 ff.

19. Gil Fortoul, Historia, vol. 2, pp. 119-20. For a summary of the Baralt activities in Spain, see Baralt, Historia, vol. 2, p. 804. The relevant correspondence between Baralt and Fortique is found in Baralt, Historia, vol. 2, pp. 840-910, and Fortique, Papeles, pp. 253-72. The Fortique correspondence with the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Relations and Lord Aberdeen is in Fortique, Papeles, pp. 165-250. Thus far, three possible boundary lines had been put forth, the Schomburgk, Fortique, and Aberdeen Lines. See the map in Gil Fortoul, Historia, vol. 3, back leaf. By shifting the proposed northern boundary of the line to the mouth of the Moroco, rather than the channel of the Amacuro, Aberdeen threw a sop to Fortique by commenting on how the possession of the mouth of the Orinoco was an "object most important for the interests of Venezuela," Aberdeen, Foreign Office, 30 March 1844, to Fortique; Rojas et al., Printed Argument, vol. 1, p. 84. The mouth of the Moroco is about 150 to 200 miles down the Atlantic coast from the mouth of the Amacuro where the latter empties into the mouth of the Orinoco.

20. Rojas et al., Printed Argument, vol. 1, pp. 24, 60-61, 97, and Parra, Doctrinas, vol. 1, pp. 168-69, vol. 2, 146 ff. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 7 June 1866, to Guzmán Blanco, MRE/CB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 31.

21. Charles Daniel Dance, Recollections of Four Years in Venezuela (London: Henry S. King and Co., 1876), pp. 17-18, 283.

22. Recop., vol. 5, doc. 1739a, 102-103, "Decreto de 2 de octubre de 1871 declarando el bloqueo de la extensión de costa que abrazan las bocas del Río Orinoco," and "Decreto de 4 de mayo de 1872 derogando el No. 1739a."

23. Schomburgk, Description, pp. 92-93. James Rodway, Guayana: British, Dutch, and French (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912), p. 129. Eastwick, Venezuela, pp. 373-75.

24. Eastwick, Venezuela, p. 377.

25. Ibid., preface.

26. Spence, Land of Bolívar, vol. 1, preface, vol. 2, p. 185, "Description of Minerals and Ores from Venezuela. By John Plant, F. G. S. (Read before the Microscopical Section of the Literary and Philosophical Society, Manchester, 27 January 1873. Professor W. C. Williamson, F. R. S., President of the Section, in the Chair.)."

27. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 14 November 1876, to Derby, MRE/PV, vol. 7, 1 ff. Printed in Venezuela, Historia oficial de la discusión entre Venezuela y la Gran Bretaña sobre sus límites en La Guayana (New York: L. Weiss and Co., 1896), pp. 35-43. Derby acknowledged receipt of the note of 14 November 1876 on February 16 of the following year, Foreign Office, 16 February 1877, to Calcaño, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 26. Derby also acknowledged receipt of communications from Venezuela under dates of 2, 9, and 11 December in the same letter. Excepting the communication of December 11, treated below, copies of these letters are not in the Ministerial archives.

28. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11 December 1876, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 38.

29. Rojas, copy, London, 13 February 1877, to Derby, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 21. Rojas makes reference to the Aberdeen correspondence of 30 March 1844 in this letter, while the letter itself, unfortunately, is not in Fortique, Papeles, though it doubtless is in one of the earlier volumes of the "Pasta verde" series.

30. Derby, copy, Foreign Office, 17 February 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 68; Derby, copy, Foreign Office, 24 March 1877, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 30. Derby refers to a Rojas communication of February 17 in this letter, but it has not been located in the Ministerial archives; Rojas, Paris, 2 January 1878, to Foreign Minister Ramón Andueza Palacio, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 83.

31. Rojas generally was excellent in advising the Ministry in Caracas in detail about every move he made and always forwarded copies of all correspondence both ways between himself and the governments to which he was accredited. Palacio, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 May 1877, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 34, in response to Rojas, London, 17 February 1877, to Calcaño, not found in the MRE. Rojas, Paris, 5 June 1877, to Palacio, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 35. There is some confusion in the mind of the author as to the interpretation of the Calcaño note of 14 November 1876, to Derby. For very clearly, after a lengthy argument on the validity of the Essequibo River as the proper boundary, Calcaño refers to "Este robusto cimientto en que apoya Venezuela su derecho para poner el límite de sus posesiones por la costa de la Guayana en la embocadura del río Essequibo." Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 9 November 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/IP, vol. 1, fol. 211.

32. The instructions to Rojas are found in an undated, unsigned fragment in MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 95. Rojas, Paris, 23 April 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 40.

33. Rojas, copy, London, 19 May 1879, to Salisbury, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 41. Rojas was in London in his capacity as Fiscal Agent of Venezuela as early as 2 April 1879 but returned to Paris for a period of time between then and May. Rojas, London, 2 April 1879, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17.

34. In his letter of 10 January 1880 to Rojas, copy, Foreign Office, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 49, Salisbury refers to letters to Rojas under date of 2 and 4 June 1879. Rojas, London, 22 May 1879, to Calcaño; Barberii, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 20 June 1879, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fols., 44, 45. Rojas, Paris, 4 August 1879, to Barberii, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 134.

35. Rojas, Paris, 28 June and 13 July 1879, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. On August 3 Rojas described his plight thus: "I am exceedingly busy with my mail for Venezuela and with all the exigencies of the Illustrious," Paris, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17.

36. An editorial in the 1 May 1879 Gaceta oficial, no. 1602, p. 6073, wished the new enterprise, "La Alianza," abundant fruits in its undertaking. Four resolutions by the Ministry of Development, dated 8 October 1879, provided for the free importation of goods and supplies to the Nueva Hansa and Potosí mining companies, G.o., no. 1868 (11 October 1879), p. 8035. Rojas makes reference to his company, "Callao Bis," in his letter of Paris, 24 August 1880, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. While there was considerable mining activity in Venezuelan Guiana, there was much fear late in 1879 that many of them were undercapitalized, G.o., no. 1955 (13 December 1879), p. 2.

37. Salisbury, copy, Foreign Office, 10 January 1880, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 49. Printed in Venezuela, Historia oficial, pp. 43-45.

38. Rojas, Paris, 20 January 1880, to Viso, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 53.

39. Rojas, Paris, 23 February 1880, to Viso, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 55. Surely Rojas must have had instructions on the bluff of the military column. Perhaps a note from the Ministry, dated January 26 referred to in the letter above but not found in the Ministerial archives, contained such a suggestion. Or maybe Rojas had received separate instructions from Guzmán Blanco himself. See also L.a. (1886), pp. 9-18.

40. Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 58. Viso also instructed Rojas that this was on the condition that Venezuela would not give up any territory between the mouths of the Amacuro and the Moroco, but that did not change the overall plan. The blockade prohibited navigation of the Orinoco River and its delta; Recop., vol. 8, doc. 2196, 364-65, 23 February 1880. Guiana was pacified rather quickly, and Guzmán Blanco lifted the blockade on 12 April 1880; ibid., doc. 2196a, 365.

41. Rojas, copy, Paris, April 12, to Salisbury; Paris, April 28, to Viso; MRE/PV, vol. 7, fols. 64, 68. Salisbury, copy, Foreign Office, 23 April 1880, to Rojas, and Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 23 May 1880, to Rojas, MRE/PV; vol. 7, fols. 68, 70.

42. For the French activities, see p. 266, below. Rojas, Recuerdos, pp. 61, 63.

43. Rojas, copy, Paris, 27 September 1880, to Granville, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 72. Printed in Venezuela, Historia oficial, pp. 45-46. Poncefote, copy, Foreign Office, 29 November 1880, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 77. Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 12 November and 19 December 1880, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fols. 76, 85.

44. V. K. Mathison, British Vice Consul, Ciudad Bolívar, 1 February 1881, to General A. Sarria, Harbor Master, Ciudad Bolívar, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 104, and Rojas, Paris, 4 January 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 91. Venezuela, Estado Guayana, Memoria que la legislatura ordinaria de Guayana eleva al secretario del gobierno (Ciudad Bolívar: Imprenta de Juan M. Sucre, Hijo, 1881), pp. 1-19, 47-49. Guzmán, Caracas, 28 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 122. Venezuela, Memoria de Hacienda (1881), p. liii. Rojas, Paris, 19 December 1880, 21 February 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 167, 184.

Saavedra's responses to these two letters were very noncommittal, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 January and 21 March 1881, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 180, 190. See also Rojas et al., Printed Argument, vol. 1, pp. 95, 97.

45. Granville, copy, Foreign Office, 12 February 1881, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 108; printed in Venezuela, Historia oficial, pp. 46-47. Rojas, copy, Paris, 21 February 1881, to Granville, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 110; printed in Venezuela, Historia oficial, pp. 47-49.

46. Guzmán, Caracas, 24 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 115. In this communication Guzmán also refers to an oral conference he had with Saavedra. Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 March 1881, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 121. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 May 1881, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 123. Here Seijas refers to an Rojas communication of April 22, but it does not seem to be in the Ministerial archives. For the details of the infighting between Rojas and both the Guzmáns, see Chapter IX, below.

47. Granville, copy, Foreign Office, 19 September 1881, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 126. A copy of the confidential printed "Memorandum on the Question of Boundaries between British Guiana and Venezuela" is also in ibid., fol. 130. Spanish versions of both the letter and the memorandum are in Venezuela, Historia oficial, pp. 49-52. Rojas, London, 21 September 1881, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 143, and Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 22 November 1881, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 145. See also Venezuela, Printed Argument, pp. 94-96, and Edward D. Mathews, The Frontier Question between British Guiana and Venezuela (London: Dunlop and Co., 1891), p. 8.

48. Venezuela, Memoria de Hacienda (1883), p. xlix, and Rojas et al., Printed Argument, vol. 1, pp. 97-98.

49. The relevant portion of Guzmán Blanco's message is found in G.o., no. 2620 (8 March 1882), p. 4. A. L. Guzmán, Caracas, 15 April 1882, referring to Seijas correspondence of February 24, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 25, fol. 145. Guzmán's "Memorandum" is in ibid., fol. 147. Rojas, Paris, 23 January 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/SP, vol. 3, fol. 250.

50. Granville, copy, Foreign Office, 18 March 1882, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 191. Granville made reference to a Rojas note of 1 October 1881 in this letter, but the writer has not located a copy of it in the MRE. Rojas, Paris, 22 March 1882, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 193. Granville, copy, Foreign Office, 30 June 1882, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 194. Here Granville referred to a Rojas note of March 25, but it is not located in the MRE.

51. Rojas, Paris, 1 July 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 321. Rojas suggested what ultimately would be the conditions for the settlement of the Guiana boundary dispute several years later when he stated there should be three juriconsults to serve on a commission, one named by each side and the third, by the King of Spain. He suggested Julian Viso as the Venezuelan choice. Rojas, Paris, 4 July 1882, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 195. In this note Rojas made reference to a recent Granville note inquiring about a Venezuelan response. The Granville note has not been located in the MRE.

52. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 August 1882, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 197. Rojas, Biarritz, 28 August 1882, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 198. Perhaps the "fluvial" study of Guzmán, note 49 above, plus other actions of the elder liberal were influencing Guzmán Blanco and those around him. See the chapter on the Great Break, below, for the details of the latter pressure of the elder Guzmán.

53. Granville, copy, Foreign Office, 1 February 1883, to Rojas, and Rojas, Paris, 5 February 1883, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fols. 200, 202.

54. Rojas, Paris, 23 February 1883, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 203.

55. Seijas, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 28 February, to Rojas, 31 March 1883, to Mansfield, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fols. 207, 208. Mansfield, copy, Caracas, 8 March 1883, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 208. Rojas, copy, Paris, March 28, to Granville, and Paris, 2 April 1883, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fols. 213, 212, respectively. See also Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 June 1883, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 217.

56. Rojas, Paris, 4 June 1883, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 216. Years later, writing of the incident in his Recuerdos, pp. 63-64, Rojas described the situation somewhat differently. Granville always used the occasion of the Queen's birthday to make a friendly gesture to his guests, the various diplomats, and Pauncefote approached Rojas in that manner. Pauncefote offered to settle the Guiana limits problem within twenty-four hours whenever Rojas received his necessary instructions from Caracas. This is all rather vague, for Rojas could not have known specifically what instructions he might receive. See also Mathews, Frontier Question, p. 8.

57. Drafts, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 18 June 1883, to Rojas, not sent, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fols. 218, 230. For the constitutional issue, see, for example, L.a. (1887), pt. 2, pp. 6-62; for the role of Guzmán in the boundary settlement with Colombia

see his Límites entre Venezuela y Nueva Colombia (Caracas: Imprenta de Vapor de "La Opinión Nacional," 1880).

58. Rojas felt the delay in his getting instructions on the Guiana boundary issue was "because the government of Caracas was particularly occupied with the motive of the celebration of the centennial of Bolívar," Recuerdos, p. 64. For justification of this reasoning, see the Chapters on "The Fringes of Diplomacy" and "The Great Break," below.

59. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 July 1882, to John Baker, United States Minister Resident in Caracas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 220. Just prior to this letter, and apparently before the acceptance of Rojas' resignation, the elder Guzmán advised Seijas that the Minister in London should be advised of possible U.S. help, Guzmán, Caracas, 27 June 1883, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 232. Mansfield, Caracas, 2 July 1883, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 234. Mansfield, Caracas, 15 October 1883, to Seijas, MRE/GB/LG, vol. 1, fol. 146; printed in Venezuela, Historia oficial, pp. 53-54. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 24 October 1883, to Mansfield, MRE/GB/LG, vol. 1, fol. 143. Seijas, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 15 November 1883, to Mansfield; printed in Venezuela, Historia oficial, pp. 55-58. Guzmán Blanco's activities are found in MRE/PV, vol. 7, 242 ff. For comments on the diplomatic break, see Rojas et al., Printed Argument, p. 97. A good example of a rather polemical treatment of the Guiana boundary situation by the United States press is found in The Financial Examiner (New York), 18 February 1888, "British Aggression in Venezuela," pp. 104-105, clipping in MRE/PV, vol. 14, fols. 274-75. Guzmán Blanco himself wrote a small polemical treatment of the issues in his Límites Guayaneses (Paris: Imprimerie de I. Lanure, 1891). The title page of Printed Argument cites Rojas, the Agent of Venezuela, along with the various counsels for Venezuela. A brief treatment of the current Guiana boundary dispute is found in Leslie B. Rout, Which Way Out? A Study of the Guayana-Venezuela Boundary Dispute, Latin American Studies Monograph, no. 4 (East Lansing, Mi.: Michigan State University Press, 1971).

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MANY PROBLEMS WITH GREAT BRITAIN: FISCAL POSTSCRIPTS AND A COMMERCIAL TREATY

The fiscal and commercial aspects of Rojas' tenure in London, beginning in 1877, were even more complicated than those concerning the boundary with British Guiana. First as Minister of Venezuela, then as Fiscal Agent, he sought a refinancing of the enormous debt his government owed in London. As Minister alone he sought the negotiation of a new treaty of commerce with Great Britain. The chronological setting approximated that of the Guiana boundary negotiations. The problems he encountered in both London and Caracas were similar to those he had with other projects, except that he faced a greater degree of British condescension. Before he enjoyed even partial success, however, Rojas was forced to witness the undoing of his prior work as Fiscal Agent of the Republic of Venezuela.

Not long after his first appointment as Minister to Great Britain, Rojas watched the cancellation of his earlier work as Fiscal Agent of the Republic by the administration of Francisco Linares Alcántara. Apparently it was a reflection of the political shift from Guzmán Blanco to Alcántara and did not seem to involve Rojas personally. The movement for cancellation was directed against the contract Rojas had signed with José María Antommarchi

H. This contract, signed a year earlier and part of the fruition of Rojas' early years abroad, called for the construction of the all-important railroad from Caracas to the sea. Preliminary work already was in progress by early 1877 when the attack came.<sup>1</sup>

The articulation of the attack came in the form of a book published less than a month after the transfer of executive power from Guzmán Blanco to Alcántara. Modesto Urbaneja, the uncle of Guzmán Blanco, published his criticisms in Apuntamientos sobre el contrato celebrado en París, por los señores Doctor José María Rojas y José María Antommarchi Herreros, para la construcción de un ferrocarril de La Guaira a Caracas. Urbaneja's complaints about the contract ranged from resentment of the official draft being in French, through doubts about the estimated costs of construction, to fear that Venezuela would not get title to the railroad at the end of the ninety-nine-year lease to Antommarchi H. This attack, not surprisingly, prompted responses from the supporters of the contract.<sup>2</sup>

The defense of the contract came from a variety of sources. Jesús Muñoz Tebar, both an engineer and ratifier of the contract as the Minister of Public Works, extensively defended his actions in approving it. Other engineers held similar opinions, and a memorial even went from the Ministry of Public Credit to the Congress in defense of the contract. In May 1877 General J. C. de Castro, a partisan of Guzmán Blanco, published a lengthy refutation of the Urbaneja attack.<sup>3</sup> But this was to no avail for the enemies of Guzmán Blanco had the power to cancel the contract.

The cancellation of the contract came on 26 June 1877. While apparently there was considerable general opposition to the contract as representative of the Guzmán Blanco regime, Alcántara and his lieutenants threw it out on several technicalities. They found the contract illegal, because it was not mentioned in prior decrees having to do with the building of a railroad and because it was not clearly defined in the financial agreement executed between Rojas and Turnbull on 18 April 1876. This was the agreement whereby a refinancing of the Venezuelan foreign debt was directly tied to the construction of the railroad. Furthermore, the subsequent Guzmán Blanco enabling decree of the construction contract had slightly altered it, and Antommarchi H. had not acted on the alteration. Accordingly, Alcántara cancelled the contract and made other arrangements to pay the holders of Venezuelan bonds. On this latter point the bondholders would be paid from the regular share of the national budget applied to foreign debts. And to completely block further action on the Rojas-Turnbull agreement, Alcántara cancelled the decree allowing the Fiscal Agent of the Republic to issue new bonds under the terms of the agreement. Thus, the Rojas fiscal success of 1876 in London and Paris came to naught by the change of the government in Caracas.<sup>4</sup>

By the time the railroad contract was cancelled, Rojas was more or less plagued with a chronic respiratory infection and had asked for his release as Minister to Great Britain. Accordingly, he did nothing of an official fiscal nature for the

next two years. There were relevant actions by others, though. For example, Frederick H. Hemming, the Venezuelan Consul in London, saw fit to protect certain business interests that would be affected by the cancellation of the railroad contract. In late July, barely a month after the cancellation, he advised the Ministry of Foreign Relations that certain rail equipment he had made available for the Antonmarchi undertaking would work suitably well on other lines under construction in Venezuela. By November, the work of the rail line now completely suspended, the Ministry of Public Works offered for sale "six fine saddle mules; five burros, and two yoke of oxen." The construction was truly stopped, but even more serious actions of the Alcántara regime were to come.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most serious action taken by the Alcántara government was one that affected the foreign credit of Venezuela. On 7 December 1877 the government began to take V.800 (approximately £154) daily from the fund from which the government was supposed to pay its foreign creditors. This money, instead, was now used to establish new banks in Venezuela. Not surprisingly, inquiries began to come in. On February 4 of the following year, Turnbull, the Chairman of the Committee of Venezuelan Bondholders, inquired as to when the government of Venezuela would begin the details of the new bonds to be delivered under the agreement with Rojas of 1876. There was no response forthcoming to this inquiry, however, and Turnbull wrote urgently, once more, on May 16, just a few days before the Venezuelan Congress definitively disapproved

the Antommarchi H. contract of 1876. It was all to no avail, however, and by the end of August, the Venezuelan government was making no payments at all to British creditors, and the crisis seemed to be in the wings.<sup>6</sup>

The Venezuelan crisis that came in the winter of 1878-1879, however, was more than merely a fiscal one having to do with the payment of foreign debts. It began with the death of the President, Francisco Linares Alcántara, on November 30. The interim government that then followed succumbed to the supporters of Guzmán Blanco who called themselves the "Reinvindicadores." Within three months they were militarily successful, and Guzmán Blanco had returned to Venezuela from Paris.<sup>7</sup> On the basis of his future acts, it might be said that the returning caudillo was anxious to resume his civilizing efforts in Venezuela.

High on Guzmán Blanco's list of priorities was a resumption of the construction of the railroad from Caracas to the sea. Very quickly, on 11 March 1879, the government executed a new contract to replace the cancelled one with Antommarchi H. The signatories to the contract were Charles J. Bandman, a New York businessman resident in Caracas, and José Cecilio de Castro, the new Minister of Public Works. This was the same Castro who had defended the Antommarchi H. contract two years earlier against the depredations of Urbaneja and others.<sup>8</sup> Rojas had no direct part in the Bandman contract, for he was in Europe at the time, but he would shortly be involved in related matters in London.

These related matters were part of the overall mission of

Rojas as he returned to the foreign and fiscal service of Venezuela with the resumption of power by Guzmán Blanco in February 1879. Rather quickly, as has been noted above, Rojas had resumed his role as Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain. Furthermore, coming to London early that spring, he also carried the credentials of Fiscal Agent of the Republic. In the former role alone, he pursued, in vain, the new treaty of commerce and a settlement of the Guiana boundary dispute. Wearing both diplomatic and fiscal hats, he pursued some sort of fiscal arrangement with the British government. This was necessary because the Alcántara government had cancelled the Antommarchi H. railroad contract, had taken money from railroad funds supposedly to be paid to British bondholders, and, finally, had stopped servicing debts to Great Britain entirely. Guzmán Blanco, furthermore, did not help matters when he provided that a great sum of money be made available for the Reinvidicadores.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, there were fiscal things to be done by Rojas, and Guzmán Blanco had him begin by soliciting a "diplomatic debt" arrangement with Great Britain. The proposed agreement was one that directly involved the governments of foreign creditors in the servicing of a reduced Venezuelan debt. Venezuela would offer to insure greater security of collection of funds for foreign debt payment on two bases. The first was that the foreign debt would be lessened, and the second was that the foreign government would then collect the periodic payments through its diplomatic representatives in Caracas. The payments owed would be looked

upon as money of the foreign government. The virtue to such an action was that Venezuela's foreign debt, in the short run, would be greatly reduced, and Venezuela probably would be better able to service the smaller debt. Better servicing would mean a better credit standing for Venezuela. On the side of the creditors, while their claims might be lessened, there was greater assurance of collection than on their larger, original claims. The Congress of Venezuela passed, to this effect, a law, on 26 May 1879, and implemented it by decree on July 21. It created a new category of debt known as the National Debt of 13 Percent  $\sqrt{13}$  percent of the forty units of the fiscal distribution of 1872 $\sqrt{7}$  for Diplomatic Conventions and paid 3 percent annual interest.<sup>10</sup>

By the time this law had come into existence, Rojas had already run his course in pursuit of a diplomatic debt arrangement with Great Britain. Actually, Rojas had made reference to such an arrangement as early as January 1877. Writing his Yankee friend Sanford about the latter's claims against the Venezuelan government and after commenting on the little likelihood of any government loan in the future due to the currently poor credit rating of Venezuela, he felt that Sanford's claims would be enhanced if Venezuela issued a diplomatic debt with the United States. Meanwhile, though he was both an accredited Venezuelan minister and fiscal agent to Great Britain, he had no specific instructions to pursue a diplomatic debt arrangement with Her Majesty's government.<sup>11</sup> Such conditions changed, however, when Guzmán Blanco reappointed Rojas to the British government in 1879.

Under the new instructions of 1879, Rojas was "authorized to accept the intervention of the British government in the arrangement that, as Fiscal Agent, you celebrated on the English debt, in conformity with the instructions that were withdrawn by the Ministry of Public Credit." That is, Rojas would issue the bonds called for in the Rojas-Turnbull agreement of 1876 and ask the British government to become a party to the agreement, thus making a diplomatic debt. By early April Rojas was in London, checking with the British holders of Venezuelan bonds and also preparing to solicit the intervention of the British government. The Committee of Venezuelan Bondholders accepted his proposal, not surprisingly, and the next step was to get it accepted by the government.<sup>12</sup>

Rojas now prepared an elaborate printed memorandum under date of 4 April 1879 to Lord Salisbury. Briefly, he proposed lowering Venezuela's total national debt, two-thirds of it being foreign, from £15,000,000 to £4,000,000. A convention concerning the lesser amount would be drawn up, and the funds thus owed would be considered British property. If Great Britain would agree, then Venezuela's credit would vastly improve, and the creditors "would gain in security more than they nominally lose by the conversion."<sup>13</sup> This was the thrust of the Rojas proposal, but there were problems ahead in both London and Caracas.

In Caracas, for example, Foreign Minister Eduardo Calcaño advised British Minister Resident Robert Bunch of the proposal and added that the appointment of a special commissioner to handle

the debt collection would add even greater security to the proposal. Bunch replied to Calcaño rather directly, "As Your Excellency is already aware, my opinion is not the same as that of His Excellency, the Supreme Director of the Republic, as to the applicability of the plan to what is commonly called the "Diplomatic Debt." Still, he advised Calcaño that he would pass the Venezuelan note on to Salisbury and that it would be discussed.<sup>14</sup>

The discussion of the diplomatic debt issue provided in Bunch's covering note of 28 April 1879 to Salisbury clearly presented the problem from the British perspective. There were two types of British bondholders. The first were ordinary investors, or speculators, in the Venezuelan external debt. The second were subjects who had accepted bonds from Venezuela in settlement of their legitimate claims for injury or damages. These bonds usually had been gained as the result of a claims convention. Writing Salisbury, Bunch stated that

the first have no right to expect anything beyond the usual treatment of contributors to foreign loans, viz., reasonable honesty and such payments as the circumstances of the debtor may warrant; the second having a distinct right to be paid in cash, with proper interest and within a given time. It would scarcely be fair to put them into the same category as their fellow-sufferers. The one may be entitled to good offices; the others have a right to efficient protection.<sup>15</sup>

Very simply, Bunch did not want all the British holders of Venezuelan bonds, whatever the origin of the bonds, lumped together in a proposed Venezuelan refinancing scheme.

In addition to the British correspondence, there also was correspondence between Calcaño and Rojas in late April 1879. When he advised Bunch of the proposal of a commissioner to increase the security of the proposed diplomatic debt, Calcaño also instructed Rojas that he so advise Salisbury. Furthermore, on receipt of the printed Rojas memorandum of April 3 to Salisbury, Calcaño, acting on instructions from Guzmán Blanco, advised Rojas that supplementary instructions on certain points in the memorandum would be coming to Rojas from the Ministry of Public Credit.<sup>16</sup>

Such correspondence was useless, though, for Salisbury would not accept the Rojas proposal of 3 April 1879. The reason is not found specifically in the Bunch position. However, it was simply against British policy to accept a merging of all bondholding classifications. Salisbury did not feel that Great Britain could accept "responsibilities which it would not be in accordance with the interests of this country to undertake." It appears that while the government certainly offered its good offices to all bondholders, it was not interested in offering special service to home-based bondholders of loans for which they were responsible and which diverted investment abroad.<sup>17</sup>

Rojas probably was not surprised at the reaction of Salisbury to his proposal for the combined diplomatic debt. He knew, for example, that Bunch did not sympathize with the Guzmán Blanco government and understood that the British minister had written against the fiscal plan proposed by Venezuela at this time. Perhaps he had gotten this information from either Salisbury or a

lesser official in the Foreign Office. Rojas feared, however, that the immediate cause for the British rejection was Egypt. He blamed it on the Khedive affair, a situation somewhat analogous to the Venezuelan financial experience. The Khedive Ismail of Egypt had run up a tremendous debt in European financial circles and, by 1875, could only get a quarter of the face value of short-term bonds, and that at 20 percent. Great Britain became involved in the supervision of Egyptian finances and surely did not want a similar situation with Venezuela. But, whatever the cause, general policy or the immediate Khedive problems, Great Britain did not accept the Rojas overtures of April 1879.<sup>18</sup>

Despite this British rejection of the diplomatic debt proposal, the plans in Venezuela were to seek another avenue. They came quickly in the wake of the knowledge of the British rejection. This time, Guzmán Blanco himself would be closer to the actual negotiations. On 12 May 1879, just a few days after the Salisbury rejection, the Venezuelan Congress of Plenipotentiaries consented to a voyage to Europe by the Illustrious American. The purpose of this trip was to bring his family back to Venezuela, seek commercial agreements with France and Spain, and "to bring about the reduction of the debt of the Republic to a maximum of £4,000,000." Guzmán Blanco departed for Europe the following month.<sup>19</sup>

In Paris, in the summer of 1879, Guzmán Blanco and Rojas formulated an alternate plan for the reduction of the foreign debt. In the words of Rojas, the two men "conferred at length

on the matter, and after several days of study and discussion, "we agreed" on a plan "to submit to the creditors in London."<sup>20</sup> It is not known whether the plan came more from the fertile mind of Guzmán Blanco or the equally imaginative one of Rojas. Whatever the case, Guzmán Blanco returned to Caracas the next fall and later took credit for the plan, while Rojas returned to London to sell it to the British bondholders.

Rojas probably presented the plan he and Guzmán Blanco had agreed on and did the bulk of his negotiating with the British bondholders in the latter part of 1879 and early 1880. Since the British government would only offer its good services and not include the holders of bonds given under specific claims conventions, as hoped for by the diplomatic debt proposal, Rojas once again sought out the same Committee of Venezuelan Bondholders. This time, however, he did not negotiate with Maxwell G. Turnbull, President of the Committee. Instead, he negotiated with Eduard Pleydell Bouverie, President of the overall Council of Foreign Bondholders, representing, in this specific negotiation, the Committee of Venezuelan Bondholders.<sup>21</sup>

Rojas sought out Bouverie in a very cautious manner. This time he was dealing with the top man of all the holders of foreign bonds in Great Britain, an intelligent and distinguished figure, who enjoyed an enviable reputation in London. Despite the handicap of Salisbury's rejection of the prior spring, it must be remembered that the Committee of Venezuelan Bondholders had been agreeable to Rojas' proposal. Thus, it must be assumed that they

already knew what he planned to pursue, this time, however, without British government sanction. Rojas felt the best approach to Bouverie would be indirect. That is, he would not make a direct proposition, but, rather, explain the fiscal circumstances of Venezuela and ask Bouverie what he would do, or could offer, in such a case. The two men met in the offices of the Bondholders' Committee, but there were so many interruptions by people wanting to see Bouverie that Rojas suggested that they have a business dinner in the evening in his hotel.<sup>22</sup>

On the appointed evening Rojas had an excellent meal prepared for his guest in his salon. It is uncertain if after the meal Rojas offered his guest fine Havana cigars, or puros, as he had done on one occasion with the Dutch Minister of Foreign Relations. Cigars, or not, Bouverie asked Rojas about Venezuela, and Rojas proceeded to describe the economy in detail. Each time he made a point, he would pull out the necessary supporting documentation from his portfolio. Writing later about the business dinner, Rojas recalled stating,

We owe England, in capital and interest of the loans of old Colombia and the modern ones of Venezuela, more than £10,000,000, that draw 6 percent annual interest. Our debt is completely discredited, not valuing 10 percent in the market, and the actual income of the Republic today does not even produce £1,000,000. What can be done, Mr. Bouverie, with such an enormous quantity of debt and such meager resources?

Bouverie replied, "The only thing that can be done is to reduce considerably the capital." Rojas, meanwhile, presenting the proper

documentation at the proper time, now saw a glimmer of hope and proceeded to lay the proposal before Bouverie. The proposal was in essence what he and Guzmán Blanco had earlier agreed upon.<sup>23</sup> Bouverie accepted it, for there was not much more he could do as long as the British government only offered its good offices to the holders of regular Venezuelan government bonds. Bouverie then presented the proposal to the Committee, and they accepted it. He and Rojas signed the resultant convention on 24 January 1880.<sup>24</sup>

The Rojas-Bouverie Convention brought forth still another version of the Venezuelan national debt. This time it was given the name of the Consolidated Debt of the United States of Venezuela. Very simply, it consolidated all the regular external debts, excepting those credits due under particular claims conventions. The reduction was from £10,000,000 to £4,000,000. New replacement bonds would be issued by a schedule over the next few years, and these bonds would pay 4 percent interest. A committee, composed of two members chosen by Venezuela and three chosen by the bondholders, would direct the transition to the new debt and also handle the details of the collection. Rojas, understandably, was exultant over the triumph and so informed Guzmán Blanco personally. The Illustrious American, in turn, recommended the Rojas-Bouverie Convention very strongly to the Venezuelan Congress. It was truly a sweeping financial success for both Guzmán Blanco and his fiscal leg man, Rojas.<sup>25</sup>

The Venezuelan Congress spent the month of May 1880

debating the merits of the Rojas-Bouverie Convention. Interestingly, one of Guzmán Blanco's former antagonists, Félix Bigotte, supported the Illustrious American in the senate debates. This time, said Bigotte, the arrangement was no Libro de oro as in 1864. Rather, it was a real benefit for Venezuela and not a money grab by individuals. The main opposition seemed to come from Eusebio Baptista, a senator from Trujillo. Baptista's principal objection was based on the nature of the foreign debt of Venezuela going all the way back to the debt of Gran Colombia. He felt the original British moneylenders had been speculators and that Venezuela should not seek out its creditors. Instead, the burden should be on them. The government's answer to all of this was a series of eight lengthy articles on the "National Credit" in the Gaceta oficial, from May 3 to May 18. These articles contain an impassioned defense of the Convention and ridicule of Baptista. In one, for example, he is accused of calling black, white. Not surprisingly and despite the relatively brief delay, the government did gain approval of the Convention.<sup>26</sup>

The approving decree, dated and signed by Guzmán Blanco on May 29, contained several slight modifications. Among them was a lowering of the interest rate from 4 to 3 percent during the first two years of the new fiscal agreement. Another modification directly concerned the role of Rojas in the conversion. Rojas, knowing he would be involved in the process, had advised Guzmán Blanco that he would have to resign as Fiscal Agent unless the government absolved him of any personal financial responsibility

incurred in the application, as prescribed by Article 7 of the Convention, of £250,000 worth of the new bonds to meeting the conversion expenses. In reality, it appears that Rojas also might have been easing the possibility of making personal profits on the deal. Whatever the issue, the approving decree met this demand, and it was now necessary for the bondholders in London to approve the modified Venezuelan approval.<sup>27</sup>

Approval from London of the modified Rojas-Bouverie Convention came in the fall of 1880. The British bondholders, meeting on September 2, accepted a clarifying memorandum presented by Rojas. This memorandum contained the modifications imposed by Caracas, particularly the affirmation of the role of Rojas in the handling of the new bonds issued to cover the expenses of converting the debt. Article 4 of the memorandum, referring to Article 7 of the original Convention, stated that "the conversion of the bonds destined for the expenses remains referred to the Fiscal Agent of the Republic in London." Thus, the bondholders, as well as the government in Caracas, assured the position of Rojas in the details of the transfer.<sup>28</sup>

In the years that followed, it appears that Venezuelan fiscal experience, at least with reference to the British bondholders, worked rather well. Rojas probably played out his assigned role in the conversion of the debt. And surely he was influential in the selection of his old firm, H. L. Boulton and Company, as the collection agent in Caracas for the bondholders. It is not known if this portion of the arrangement had profitable

overtones for Rojas. Be that as it may, Venezuela did pay this portion of its foreign debts rather punctually for the next few years.<sup>29</sup>

After the fall of Guzmán Blanco and in the near anarchy that characterized Venezuelan politics near the end of the nineteenth century, the fiscal scene became critical again. Rojas regretted that "the great edifice of national credit that was founded in 1880 was destroyed so sadly afterward," but the blame was not his. Ultimately, the British and German governments took Cipriano Castro and his government to task for fiscal irresponsibility, but Rojas was out of the picture by then.<sup>30</sup>

Rojas, understandably, was proud of his role in the reduction of the Venezuelan foreign debt. Writing later about the fiscal coup of 1880, he commented that "there does not exist another similar case in the archives of the Committee of Foreign Bondholders, and I was surprised myself at having obtained such a brilliant result."<sup>31</sup> The brilliance, of course, was that a debt of £10,000 had been reduced to £2,750,000. Rojas had done the leg work twice for his country. In 1876 he obtained an agreement with Turnbull to refinance the foreign debt. This agreement had run afoul of the Alcántara government and came to naught. Then, beginning in 1879, he had pursued a diplomatic debt arrangement with the British government for all monies owed British subjects by Venezuela. This project being rejected, he then approached the bondholders again and successfully achieved the 1880 agreement with Bouverie. Rojas truly had done important

fiscal work for Venezuela.

While Rojas is due much credit for his fiscal successes in London, it is probably true that the British bondholders would not have helped their own cause if they had rejected the Venezuelan proposals, since these were about as favorable as could realistically be expected. Hence, whoever presented the proposals, whether Rojas or someone else, had the advantage. The same was not necessarily true, however, in the case of the Venezuelan desire to renegotiate the treaty of commerce with Great Britain, another project, this time more diplomatic than fiscal, that Rojas pursued simultaneously in London.

The problems Rojas faced in the proposed negotiation of a new treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation with Great Britain were multitudinous. Perhaps the single greatest problem was the existence of the original treaty itself. This treaty, executed by the representatives of Colombia and Great Britain on 18 April 1825, was also adopted by Venezuela in 1834. At first glance it seems to be a rather standard treaty providing for friendship, reciprocal freedom of commerce, and protection of rights of importation. On closer examination, however, there are several articles of special interest and at least one vital omission. In Article 13, for example, Colombia is required to cooperate with Great Britain in the total abolition of the slave trade. Article 14, referring to the then present lack of time and pressure of circumstances, provides that articles missing from the treaty may be added through mutual accord. The vital omission is that

there is no article in the original treaty which provides for either signatory power to cancel the treaty. And, there is no time element indicated at all in the treaty.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps the second great problem that Rojas faced in the negotiation of the new treaty was that so little had been done over the intervening years, from 1834 to his appointment in 1876. There was only one burst of activity, from 1841 to 1844, when Alejo Fortique sought to negotiate a new treaty. Fortique, one of the great figures of nineteenth-century Venezuelan diplomacy, began his task in an interview on 20 January 1841 with Viscount Palmerston, the British Secretary of Foreign Relations. Noting that the original treaty did not indicate a term of duration and that Article 14 allowed for alterations, Fortique sought the same from Palmerston. Palmerston would not negotiate at all. He felt that such terms would have been included in the original treaty if the original negotiators had wanted such. Fortique had better luck with Lord Aberdeen two years later when the British Foreign Secretary agreed to negotiations. Unfortunately, the instructions he received from Caracas were unclear. Before this could be resolved, Fortique died in London the following year, and the Venezuelan desire to clarify the treaty languished in the face of domestic political turmoil and negligence until the appointment of Rojas in 1876.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, Rojas had his problems when he proceeded to resume the negotiations in 1876. He had a defective treaty to work with, a background of several decades during which little had been done

to improve the situation, a missed opportunity with Aberdeen thirty years before his appointment, and a continuing British policy in the style of Palmerston, that is, of no negotiation at all. And, the instructions to Rojas of 11 December 1876 did not make his position any easier. That portion having to do with the treaty of commerce read as follows:

The treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, celebrated in 1825 between old Colombia and Great Britain, that is in force between Venezuela and that power, does not have terms for its expiration, and it being convenient for the development of commercial relations, and all other matters, to substitute for it another, more conformable with the progress and interests of both countries, as the English government recognized in virtue of the measures of Sr. Fortique, it is recommended that you further the prosecution of this matter initiated by him in order to obtain an agreement to fix the duration of the mentioned treaty.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, Rojas was to pick up the strings after over thirty years and continue the job almost as if no time had elapsed.

Rojas wasted little time in pursuing a new treaty. He wrote Derby on 14 February 1877, a week after his rather frosty reception by Queen Victoria. Citing Fortique's negotiations with Palmerston in 1841 and Aberdeen in 1843, he did not mention the confusion which prevented Fortique from completing the assignment once Aberdeen was willing. Rather, perhaps taking liberty with the facts, Rojas cited the thirty-four-year interval of non-activity as proof of Venezuela's desire to maintain good relations and meet its international obligations. He expressed to Derby that Venezuela should be able to modify its international

obligations as did all civilized nations. Then he requested that a termination date on the existing treaty be set so that a new one, more in conformity with Venezuelan interests, might be prepared. Rojas suggested a termination date of 1882. Then he reported to Caracas his uncertainty of the British acceptance of his proposal and lamented the lack of action in 1843. The feeling of the Foreign Ministry in Caracas, however, was one of guarded optimism, and more instructions were promised to Rojas. Derby, meanwhile, acknowledged receipt of the Rojas note and promised to look into the matter.<sup>35</sup>

Derby's response to Rojas was very straightforward. He wished to know specifically why Venezuela desired a new treaty and also wanted a draft of the proposed new treaty. Otherwise, Her Majesty's government could not consider terminating the present treaty. Rojas, leaving London the day after Derby's response of March 16, ostensibly because of another assignment, replied from Paris a few days later in a manner that begged the question. He took it that Derby was inclined to consider a new treaty at once and not wait until 1882. He was also sure that his government would submit the draft of such a new treaty. But, he advised Derby that if the British position was that the existing treaty had a perpetual character, then his instructions were to protest such an understanding. Derby merely responded that the British opinion as to the duration of a new treaty was reserved until the text of the new treaty was at hand. Reporting all of this to Caracas, Rojas correctly interpreted it as an

indication that Great Britain considered the existing treaty one in perpetuity. Thus, he recommended a draft treaty for a limited time, at the end of which either country could continue it or not.<sup>36</sup>

This was all that Rojas accomplished for the Alcántara administration in 1877. In June he resigned his position, but the Minister of Foreign Relations asked him to remain in his position until a replacement was named. The replacement never materialized, and Rojas dragged on as a sick and inactive minister until his retirement in 1878. The Ministry in Caracas compounded the tragedy of this half-start by never sending a working draft of the proposed new treaty as requested by Derby and relayed on by Rojas.<sup>37</sup> There was nothing for Rojas to do even if he had been inclined to act. Once again, the Venezuelan diplomatic campaign with Great Britain had reached a pause. This time, however, there would not be an interim of over three decades.

Rather, the interim lasted only until the early spring of 1879. During this period, Alcántara died of natural causes, and Guzmán Blanco regained the presidency of Venezuela. Perhaps now, with his old friend Antonio back in the driver's seat and with Rojas presumably cured from that lingering cold of 1877, things could be accomplished. And, doubtless Rojas had more confidence in a Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Guzmán Blanco, for the Alcántara Ministry had not produced for him. At any rate, both Rojas and the Ministry resumed the campaign to obtain a new treaty as if nothing had happened at all since the spring of 1877. The only difference might have been one of intensity.<sup>38</sup>

Guzmán Blanco's Minister of Foreign Relations, Eduardo Calcaño, began his letter of 22 March 1879 to Rojas in the following manner: "The Illustrious American has ordered me to say. . . ." And then followed the argument of Guzmán Blanco for a new treaty. The initial contracting parties did not expressly state that the treaty would be forever. No country in the world had, nor is able to have, immutable legislation. Venezuela is not what it was thirty-five years ago; the circumstances of celebrating a treaty have changed. Guzmán Blanco has ordered that Rojas make it clear to the British government that Venezuela could not agree to continue the existing treaty in force and that, in effect, Rojas should denounce it completely. The greatest concession Venezuela could make on this point was to fix a term of six or eight months until the treaty would terminate, and during that time a new treaty would be drawn up.<sup>39</sup>

Rojas received this letter with relish and prepared to carry out the second part of his commercial treaty mission to Great Britain with great pleasure. By the end of April, he planned to go to London to be received by the Queen and to resume negotiations with the Foreign Office. Earlier, he had had to deal with Derby, a man whom Rojas never saw smile a single time or reveal any emotion in his physiognomy. This time he would be dealing with Lord Salisbury, a man he later described as more expansive and communicative.<sup>40</sup>

Two days after his reception by Queen Victoria, Rojas wrote Lord Salisbury a definitive letter based on the instructions

from Guzmán Blanco as related through Calcaño. He reviewed the past actions of both Fortique and himself and stated that even though both parties to the original treaty had identical rights to interpret it, the British government had reserved the exclusive right to interpret the term of duration of the treaty. Venezuela now was exercising its right, as outlined in Article 14 of the treaty, to propose a new clause to complete the original treaty. None of this was intended to hurt the good relations between the two governments. Rather, it was merely to get a new treaty. Then, informing Salisbury that he was carrying out the instructions of his government, Rojas formally denounced the treaty and said that Venezuela would consider it in force only until 31 December 1879. Rojas reported all of this to the Ministry in Caracas, and while he felt the Venezuelan position was uncontested, he advised Calcaño that he would not be surprised if Great Britain, because of its greater strength, would seek to assume perpetuity. Back in Caracas they cheered his actions and reported that Guzmán Blanco, in particular, greatly liked his note of denouncement.<sup>41</sup> But cheers did not come from the British Foreign Office.

While Salisbury, in the mind of Rojas, might have been more personable than Derby, he outstripped the latter in providing definitive nays. His June 3 reply to the Rojas denunciation of 19 May 1879 may be a minor classic in an insulting way of saying "no." The text of this brief note, excepting the initial acknowledgment, is

I have the honor to inform you in reply that a reference to the treaty itself will show that its language does not fix any limit to its duration and that Her Majesty's Government see no ground for making a change which they have no reason to believe would be in accordance with the interests of Great Britain.

Her Majesty's Government are, therefore, of the opinion that the notice of termination, to which you express the hope that they will assent, is one which the Government of Venezuela are not competent to give and which Her Majesty's Government, therefore, regret that they must decline to accept.

The Venezuelan argument of using Article 14 did not even receive an acknowledgment from Salisbury. And, Venezuela was not "competent" to give a notice of termination of the treaty.<sup>42</sup>

Rojas, having anticipated such a response, now described the negotiations as having entered a new and dangerous phase if Venezuela should insist on carrying out the negotiations. Rather than ask for new instructions from Caracas, he deferred to the imminent arrival of Guzmán Blanco in Paris. At that time he would talk with the Illustrious American for instructions to continue or stop the negotiations. Guzmán Blanco was in Europe the summer of 1879, and he and Rojas spent much of that time together. Obviously the negative position of Salisbury achieved the desired result from the British standpoint, for Rojas busied himself with other activities and did not resume commercial treaty negotiations with Great Britain for almost two years.<sup>43</sup>

Thus far the Venezuelan campaign to negotiate a new treaty had achieved nothing. Guzmán Blanco remained a tenacious man on the subject, however, and Rojas, while he still agreed with him,

was not quite as optimistic as the President. Maybe this was because Rojas was closer to the situation than Guzmán Blanco, or perhaps he did not have the drive the other man had. At any rate, the campaign resumed on 16 March 1881 when Foreign Minister Saavedra wrote Rojas on behalf of Guzmán Blanco. Specifically, "The Illustrious American cannot deceive himself of the necessity of terminating the treaty of commerce of 1825! It is absurd to him that a treaty such as this would be permanent." Saavedra thus instructed Rojas to pursue a new treaty vigorously. His letter also contained extensive legal arguments that Rojas might use to buttress the Venezuelan position.<sup>44</sup>

But the campaign resumed haltingly. At first Rojas was guardedly optimistic and prepared to go to London, but he then changed his mind because of Spanish problems. He had signed a new treaty of commerce with Spain and then learned that the original was being modified in Caracas. He felt it wise to defer his approach to the British government until the details of the Spanish treaty were fully known so that any possible British treaty would be acceptable in Caracas. Accordingly, the British campaign lagged, while the Spanish treaty went through modification during 1881 and on into 1882. Rojas' initial optimism that the problem would be cleared up by the end of 1881 was in vain. Meanwhile, in November, Rafael Seijas exchanged notes with British Resident Minister in Caracas, Robert Mansfield, to ascertain if negotiations might take place in that city. Mansfield responded that he could communicate only informally on the subject without

instructions from the Foreign Office and that it would be "more in diplomatic harmony" if the matter were pursued in London by the Venezuelan Minister there. Furthermore, Mansfield did not feel the treaty could be agreed upon as quickly as Seijas desired.<sup>45</sup>

The stalemate continued into 1882. Early that year Rojas advised the Ministry that he had little hope over the grave question of the treaty of commerce. To him it was useless to continue discussions. But, Guzmán Blanco, in his congressional message of 20 February 1882, specified that the treaty, as well as other issues outstanding with Great Britain, was in a state of continuing firm and discrete discussion, always with the hope of obtaining reciprocal justice. Thus the facade of public optimism. But, the time was near at hand for Rojas to return actively to work on the treaty of commerce. In April he received communications both from the Ministry and directly from Guzmán Blanco that the revised treaty with Spain was almost completed. Thus, he prepared to go to London once again.<sup>46</sup>

Before going to London, however, Rojas determined to prepare the ground in advance so the hoped for interview would not be sterile. Accordingly, he wrote a long, explanatory letter on May 1 to the new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Granville. Once again he reviewed the facts from the beginning. This time he cited the death of Fortique in 1844 as one of the reasons for lack of action on the Aberdeen proposal of the prior year. To Rojas the entire affair was an exceptional thing in the history of nations. He noted how Venezuela had signed

five-year treaties with other nations which continued on a year-to-year basis after the initial period. He hoped that Granville would be receptive to burying forever such an arduous difference between the two countries.<sup>47</sup>

But Granville was not negotiating, except on his own terms. He wrote Rojas the middle of May and responded in a manner that devastated part of Rojas' arguments on the basis of past negotiations and presented Great Britain as the party ready to negotiate. He did it by noting that Fortique responded to Aberdeen's agreement to modify the original treaty by stating that his government had compelled him to suspend proceedings. And, the Derby and Salisbury correspondence indicated that there had been no reply to the British request for the text of a new treaty as a precondition to negotiations. "It is thus evident that we are ready to negotiate, but we cannot consent to any terminating date until we have the proposed draft." The British terms thus remained the same as they had for the past few years.<sup>48</sup>

There is no question that Rojas was both frustrated and furious over the Granville reply. Even though he later described Granville as more amiable and agreeable than Derby and Salisbury, feeling that he must have some French atavism, the reality was that Granville continued in the same vein as Derby--consider a new treaty before setting any time limit on the old one. At least there was no total block as from Salisbury. The only thing Rojas could do was submit the new Spanish treaty as a model. Now the past sins of a lax Venezuelan foreign policy were bearing

fruit. Rather caustically he wrote the Ministry on June 2 that "the regrettable thing is that our administrative errors have come out shining." Granville was absolutely right. The negligence of the Soublette administration had stopped Fortique, and the Alcántara administration had not sent Rojas a new treaty draft as requested. Rojas now rather lamely asked for further instructions.<sup>49</sup>

Before further instructions came, however, Rojas offered his own suggestions. The only thing to do was present to the British government the articles to complete the original treaty, such as duration, arbitration, etc., and, these having been accepted, propose any further changes through editing to meet the necessities of Venezuelan nationalism. He did not think the British government would be difficult but pointed out the great danger of neglecting the matter lest Palmerston, the most bitter enemy the South American nations had had, should be born again. Guzmán Blanco liked this idea, so Seijas advised Rojas to pursue it quickly. Rojas, replying from Biarritz in late August, informed Seijas that he would get on it as soon as he returned to Paris.<sup>50</sup>

Rojas now began what would be his final effort to obtain a new treaty of commerce with the British government. He wrote Granville from Paris on September 21 and, stating that he was complying with the desires of the British government, submitted three articles to be added to the original treaty, citing Article 14 as a means whereby further articles might be added.

He proposed a five-year time limit to the treaty and a year-to-year basis after that, a means of arbitration through a mutually acceptable third party in case there were differences the two parties could not amicably settle, the mutual protection of trade marks, merchandising labels, industrial designs and models, etc., and an agreement by both parties to execute an extradition convention as soon as possible. Reporting all of this to the Ministry in Caracas, he laid emphasis on the humiliating feature of perpetuity in the existing treaty, promised to begin drafting the new treaty if Granville accepted his proposals, and asked for a special power of plenipotentiary to sign the new treaty in case Granville wanted it.<sup>51</sup>

Rojas received the plenipotentiary appointment but did not get to use it, for Granville refused to accept the most important of the added articles. The main portion of the refusal, dated October 30, read as follows:

I now have the honour to inform you, Monsieur le Ministre, that as regards the proposal to substitute for the present treaty a new one which shall remain in force for five years only, Her Majesty's Government, while anxious to meet the wishes of the Government of Venezuela as far as possible, do not see that any advantage is to be gained from such an arrangement, and they, therefore, regret that they are unable to comply with the proposal of the Venezuelan Government on this point.

Granville also advised Rojas that he would be glad to enter into separate negotiations on the issues of the extradition of criminals and property in trade marks.<sup>52</sup> Simply, the main point was that

Great Britain held Venezuela to the original treaty, and there was nothing that could be done about it.

Rojas received the note in Paris on the first of November and wrote Seijas the very next day.

You will see with displeasure, but not with surprise, by the said note, that the British government does not accept the modifications proposed to set a limit to the treaty of commerce between both countries, nor the arbitration clause, in the case of differences.

Rojas suggested that the problem be turned over to the Venezuelan Congress so that the dignity of the Republic might be saved by some discrete accord. Rojas closed this unhappy note by observing that in the final analysis only force decides the point.<sup>53</sup>

The Granville note of 30 October 1882 effectively ended the Venezuelan campaign through Rojas to obtain a new or rewritten treaty of commerce with Great Britain. Subsequent action on the part of Rojas came only in the form of fitful suggestions. He suggested in his annual report for 1882, for example, that the original treaty and all the negotiations since then be printed and circulated in the Venezuelan Congress. He also would translate the booklet into English and circulate it in the British Parliament and to the public generally. Rojas hoped to use world opinion against Great Britain. Nothing came of this, however. In the spring of 1883, Rojas had correspondence with Granville on Venezuelan problems generally and felt that the British Foreign Secretary might be working toward a new treaty, but nothing came of this either.<sup>54</sup>

In the years that followed, there were attempts by both Venezuela and Great Britain to achieve a new treaty of commerce. Guzmán Blanco vainly attempted to get a new treaty in the spring of 1885. There was a British attempt in 1911-1912 to add a protocol to the original treaty to include the members of the Commonwealth. The Venezuelan position, not surprisingly, was that an entirely new treaty was in order. Great Britain then countered by offering to negotiate a new treaty if Venezuela would drop the additional 30 percent tax she had imposed on Antillian trade. This Venezuela would not do. During World War I, Great Britain sought to get the treaty modified for the benefit of her allies. Again, Venezuela would not negotiate. Rather incredibly, the treaty, in its original form, is still on the books between Venezuela and Great Britain despite the numerous efforts to replace it or modify it.<sup>55</sup>

The Rojas efforts to obtain a new treaty of commerce with Great Britain can be seen as part of the total treaty renewal effort by the Venezuelan government. He followed essentially the same tack as had his distant predecessor, Alejo Fortique. He had much the same problems as did Fortique, deriving, in Rojas' case, chiefly from administrative shortcomings of the Ministry of Alcántara. When these problems were solved with the return to power of Guzmán Blanco, the intransigence of the British Foreign Office became the primary stumbling block. Simply, there was nothing that Rojas personally or his entire government could do to dislodge the British desire to keep the original treaty in force. The bulk of Rojas' work for a new treaty centered around

a series of letters between himself and the relevant officials in both London and Caracas. It must have been a frustrating effort overall for Rojas.

The fiscal and commercial aspects of Rojas' projects in London between 1877 and 1883 can thus be seen as marginally successful at best. As Minister of Venezuela he did not succeed in his attempt to get the British government to subscribe to a diplomatic debt arrangement. As Fiscal Agent, he had a resounding success with the British bondholders in the negotiations with Bouverie. As has been pointed out above, however, the bondholders did not have much choice in the matter. Rojas enjoyed no success at all on the issue of renegotiating the treaty of commerce, though it was not for lack of trying on his part. It is possible, however, that his efficiency in London was lessened by his simultaneous commercial treaty endeavors with the governments of both France and Spain, the subject of the following chapter.

## NOTES

1. For the details of the contract, see p. 24, above. Later in 1877 the Ministry of Public Works would offer for sale the draft animals acquired for the construction of the railroad, G.o., no. 1259 (5 November 1877), p. 4634.

2. G.G., vol. 11, p. 273. The Urbaneja work was published in Caracás by Imprenta Americana, 1877. On p. 48 of the copy examined by the author, the printed date and signature of Urbaneja at the end of his argument reads "Caracas, Marzo de 1877." By pen the "marzo" has been changed to "abril."

3. G.G., vol. 11, pp. 273-74. Venezuela, Memoria de Hacienda (1880), vol. 3, pp. 106-19, contains a study of "Impugnación al manifiesto ejecutivo de 27 de julio de 1877 en la parte que trata del contrato sobre el ferrocarril de Caracas a La Guaira." The text of this article, p. 109, cites the Castro response as of 12 March 1877, while the response itself is signed 12 May 1877, p. 114.

4. G.o., no. 1157 (26 June 1877), p. 4229, and Recop., vol. 7, doc. 2060, 511-15, vol. 8, doc. 2106, 145. See G.o., no. 1181 (30 July 1877), p. 4328, for a relevant comment by Alcántara in his message of 27 July 1877. See also Mem. de C. P. (1880), p. xxx; Venezuela, Memoria de Hacienda (1880), vol. 3, p. 106, and G.G., vol. 11, pp. 300, 305.

5. Hemming, London, 31 July 1877, to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, G.o., no. 1216 (13 September 1877), pp. 4465-66. The beasts offered for sale had originally been bought by the Antommarchi interests; G.o., no. 1259 (5 November 1877), p. 4634.

6. Mem. de C. P. (1880), p. xxx. Turnbull, London, 16 May 1878, to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 15, fol. 160. Turnbull referred to earlier correspondence of 4 February, which "has neither been replied to nor acknowledged." G.o., no. 1424 (10 July 1879), p. 5294. Robert Bunch, British Chargé, Caracas, 6 March 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 16, fol. 279, in which Bunch refers to no payments under the old arrangement since 31 August 1878. At this particular juncture, Lord Salisbury, the new British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, wanted to help the British holders of Peruvian bonds,

an exception to the normal policy of official nonintervention in such affairs, but he soon dropped the issue as he merged into the regular flow of British Foreign Affairs. See Platt, Finance, p. 39.

7. G.G., vol. 11, pp. 426-27, vol. 12, p. 20, and Wise, Caudillo, pp. 94-95.

8. Bandman also signed a contract on 3 March 1879 for the construction of a railroad from Valencia to Puerto Cabello. A year after the first Bandman contract for the railroad to La Guaira, a replacement contract was negotiated between Bandman and the new Minister of Public Works, Jesus Muñoz Tebar. The end result was the same, however, a rail link from Caracas to the sea. For copies of the various contracts and enabling legislation, see G.o., no. 2052 (14 April 1880), p. 5, and Recop., vol. 8, docs. 2156, 2157, 2197, 2198, pp. 195-97, 365-68. See also G.G., vol. 12, pp. 61, 203.

9. Rojas, London, 2 April 1879 to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. Recop., vol. 8, doc. 2170, 224, "Acuerdo de 20 de mayo de 1879, en que se dispone la manera de pagar los gastos de la Revolución Reivindicadora  $\sqrt{V.800,000}$ ."

10. For a detailed description of what Venezuela proposed, see the printed memorandum of Rojas, dated London, 4 April 1879, to Salisbury, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 108. See also Venezuela, Bosquejo, p. 46; Venezuela, G.o., no. 899 (28 July 1876), p. 3197; and Platt, Finance, pp. 52-53.

11. Rojas, London, 23 January 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. The instructions of 11 December 1876 to Rojas contain no reference to financial negotiations; Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11 December 1876, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 38. Subsequent Rojas correspondence for the next two years, both public and private, does not indicate action with reference to a diplomatic debt arrangement with Great Britain.

12. The instructions to Rojas are found in a draft, Ministry of Foreign Relations /February 1879/, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 95. Rojas, London, 2 April 1879, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. Rojas, printed memorandum, London, 4 April 1879, to Lord Salisbury, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 108.

13. Rojas, printed memorandum, London, 4 April 1879, to Lord Salisbury, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 108.

14. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, April 25, to Bunch; and Bunch, Caracas, 28 April 1879, to Calcaño; MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 114-15.

15. Platt, Finance, pp. 52-53. The quoted portion of the Bunch letter is cited in Platt from British Foreign Office Records, "No. 8, Correspondence Relating to Venezuela, F. O., C. P. 4055." In note 55, p. 52, Platt cites the article of Victor Dahl, "British Influence in the Anglo-Mexican Reconciliation of 1884," Inter-American Economic Affairs, 15 (1961-62), pp. 33-51, as being invalid, because Dahl did not distinguish between the varieties of creditor. Under the circumstances of different types of bondholders, it is not surprising that the Committee of Venezuelan Bondholders, probably holders of regular bonds and not specific claims bonds, was favorable to a refinancing as proposed by Rojas.
16. Calcaño, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 25, 30 April 1879, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols.113, 118.
17. Salisbury, copy, Foreign Office, 2 May 1879, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 121. See also Platt, Finance, p. 53.
18. Rojas, London, 3 May 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 119. For a brief summary of the Khedive affair and the resultant financial involvement of Great Britain, see Carlton J. H. Hayes, A Generation of Materialism, The Rise of Modern Europe, edited by William L. Langer, vol. 16 (New York: Harper and Row, c. 1941), p. 227.
19. Recop., vol. 8, doc. 2166, 220-21. The details of the natural products negotiations with France and Spain are in the following chapter, while those having to do with the visit of Guzmán Blanco are in the next one.
20. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 69.
21. See p. 38 for the Turnbull negotiations.
22. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 69.
23. Ibid., p. 70.
24. Ibid., pp. 70-71.
25. The Rojas-Bouverie Convention is reproduced in the Gaceta oficial several times in the spring and summer of 1880. The first such publication, including the strong recommendation of Guzmán Blanco, is in no. 2065 (1 May 1880), pp. 1-2.
26. On Bigotte and El libro de oro, se n. 21, p. 30. The "National Credit" articles are in G.o., nos. 2066-70, 74-75, 78 (3-5, 7-8, 13-14, 18 May 1880), 1 ff., in each case. See also G.G., vol. 12, pp. 193-96.

27. The Venezuelan Senate approved the Convention on 15 May 1880; G.o., no. 2078 (18 May 1880), pp. 4-5. The full Convention and modifying decree are found in G.o., no. 2088 (31 May 1880), pp. 1-2, and Recop., vol. 8, doc. 2208, 374-77. See also Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 71, and G.C., vol. 12, p. 204.

28. The clarifying memorandum, approved by Guzmán Blanco on 2 October 1880, is found in G.o., no. 2194 (5 October 1880), p. 1, and Recop., vol. 8, doc. 2208a, 377-78.

29. The writer has not encountered the details of Rojas' handling of the conversion process, but other sources imply that he completed the job. Julio Sabas García, Minister of Public Credit, verified on 12 December 1880 the naming of the Boulton firm; G.o., no. 2266 (3 January 1881), p. 1.

30. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 72, and Platt, Finance, pp. 40, 339-46. A good account of the period of Cipriano Castro is Mariano Picón-Salas, Los días de Cipriano Castro (Lima: Organización Continental Festival del Libro, 1960).

31. Rojas, Recuerdos, pp. 71-72.

32. Copies of the original treaty and the convention for the Venezuelan and British adoption of the treaty are in Tratados, vol. 1, pp. 45-51, 71-73. The pressure of time and circumstances cited in the 1825 treaty naturally had to do with Colombia's eagerness to obtain diplomatic recognition from Great Britain and the latter's desire to put relations with the new nations of Latin America on a regular basis as quickly as possible, once the decision to recognize was taken.

33. Armando Rojas, the editor of Los papeles de Alejo Fortique, p. 7, ranks Fortique along with such Venezuelan diplomatic greats as Fermin Toro and Pedro Gual. See Fortique, London, 22 January 1841, to Palmerston, in ibid., p. 117. Reference to the Aberdeen agreement to negotiation of a new treaty, dated 27 July 1843, is ibid., p. 30. Platt, Finance, pp. 91-92, cites Palmerston's "utterly uncompromising" position on a new treaty but fails to mention the Aberdeen proposal. A brief but meaty study of the entire treaty problem is the typescript study of Salvador Limos, "Memorandum que contiene la recapitulación o extracto de las negociaciones para procurar un nuevo tratado entre Venezuela y la Gran Bretaña en sustitución del de 1825-1834; Memorandum relativo a las gestiones del gobierno de Venezuela para obtener la rescisión del tratado de amistad, comercio y navegación con la Gran Bretaña, o su sustitución por otro, en reemplazo del celebrado con la Gran Colombia en 1825 y adoptado por Venezuela en 1834" (Caracas, 17 April 1937), MRE/CB/IP.

34. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11 December 1876, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 38.

35. Rojas, copy, London, 14 February, to Derby; London, 17 February, to Calcaño; and Palacio, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 May 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fols. 261, 260, 273, respectively. Derby, copy, 20 February 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 68.

36. Derby, copy, Foreign Office, 16 March 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 267. Rojas, copy, London, 12 March 1877, to Derby, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 265 (back). Rojas, copy, Paris, March 23, to Derby, and Paris, 5 April 1877, to Calcaño; MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fols. 267 (back), 271. Derby, copy, Foreign Office, May 9, to Rojas, and Rojas, Paris, 18 May 1877, to Calcaño; MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fols. 276 (back), 278.

37. The circumstances of Rojas' resignation are described on 138 ff., above. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 9 November 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/IP, vol. 1, fol. 211. In his year-end report, Paris, 2 January 1878, to Seijas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 83, Rojas noted that he still had not received the treaty draft. At the end of the report, Rojas rather pitifully renewed his request to be relieved. While the Alcántara regime did not supply Rojas with the treaty draft, the clerks of the Ministry of Foreign Relations were not completely idle, for there is a working draft of a decree naming Rojas as a special plenipotentiary for purposes of negotiating a new treaty of commerce, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 275. Rojas made reference to such a document being supplied him in his letter of Paris, 21 September 1882, to Seijas, *ibid.*, fol. 327.

38. The circumstances and death of Alcántara and the resumption of power of Guzmán Blanco are at the end of vol. 11 and the beginning of vol. 12 in G.G.

39. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 22 March 1879, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 279.

40. Rojas, Paris, 23 April 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 272, and Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 61.

41. Rojas, copy, London, May 19, to Salisbury; London, May 22, to Calcaño; Barberii, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 20 June 1879, to Rojas; MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fols. 282, 281, 285, respectively.

42. Salisbury, copy, Foreign Office, 3 June 1879, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 287.

43. Rojas, Paris, 23 June 1879, to Barberii, MRE/GB/TC,

vol. 1, fol. 286. There is no material in the Ministerial archives relevant to the specifics of the information exchanged between Rojas and Guzmán Blanco during the summer of 1879 on the matter of the treaty with Great Britain. For details of the time Rojas spent with Guzmán Blanco that summer, see the chapter below on "The Fringes of Diplomacy." Rojas also spent much time between the springs of 1879 and 1881 on French and Spanish affairs as seen in the following chapter on "Natural Products and Commercial Treaties."

44. Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 16 March 1881, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 297. Legal arguments explored the concept of the permanency of international treaties as found in the writings of John Stuart Mill and others.

45. Rojas, Paris, 19 April 1881, to Seijas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 302. See MRE/E/N, vol. 2, 48 ff. on the Spanish treaty. Rojas, Paris, 23 April, to Seijas; Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 25 November, to Mansfield; and Mansfield, Caracas, 30 November 1881, to Seijas; MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fols. 304, 305, 306.

46. Rojas, Paris, 23 January 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/SP, vol. 3, fol. 250. For the relevant portion of Guzmán Blanco's message, see G.O., no. 2620 (8 March 1882), p. 4. Rojas, Paris, 24 April 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 309, in which he refers to communications from both the Ministry and Guzmán Blanco.

47. Rojas, copy, Paris, 1 May 1882, to Granville, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 312. See also the copy of the Rojas note to Seijas of 4 May 1882 on the same folio.

48. Granville, copy, Foreign Office, 15 May 1882, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 317.

49. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 61, and Rojas, Paris, 2 June 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 315.

50. Rojas, Paris, July 1, to Seijas; Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, August 5, to Rojas; and Rojas, Biarritz, 28 August 1882, to Seijas; MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fols. 321, 325, 326.

51. Rojas, Paris, September 21, to Seijas, and copy, Paris, September 21, to Granville; MRE/GB/TC, fols. 327, 328. See also Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 24 October 1882, to Rojas, ibid., vol. 1, fol. 330. A copy of the plenary powers to Rojas, dated 29 October 1882 and executed by Seijas, is in MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 331.

52. Granville, copy, Foreign Office, 30 October 1882, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 334. Rojas acknowledged receipt of the plenary powers in his letter of Paris, 22 November 1882, to Seijas, ibid., vol. 1, fol. 338.

53. Rojas, Paris, 2 November 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 332.

54. Rojas, Paris, 23 February 1883, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 203, and Rojas, Paris, 21 May 1883, to Seijas, MRE/GB/LG, vol. 1, fol. 142.

55. The Guzmán Blanco material is found in MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, 340 ff. The British Commonwealth attempt is found in ibid., 455 ff. See also Limos, "Memorandum," pp. 10-11, for summary information on the above and subsequent actions on the treaty issue. The writer searched the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Relations during the summer of 1971 and did not find a subsequent treaty of commerce.

## CHAPTER VII

### NATURAL PRODUCTS AND COMMERCIAL TREATIES: FRANCE AND SPAIN

Rojas, if nothing else, was both a durable and a loyal diplomat for Venezuela, particularly if Guzmán Blanco held the reins of power. This certainly was the case in the year 1879. For one thing, Guzmán Blanco resumed power in Venezuela after the death of Alcántara late the prior year. The government jobs for Rojas now increased dramatically. He resumed his diplomatic post in London and continued seeking solutions to the many problems with Great Britain. That same year, Rojas also received appointments to France and Spain. Thus, for a period of time, he held three diplomatic portfolios simultaneously. His work as Fiscal Agent of the Republic, furthermore, meant that for several years he actually had the responsibility of four governmental appointments on behalf of Venezuela in Europe.

Unlike the multi-faceted approach to various problems with Great Britain, those with France and Spain, at least in the beginning, were narrower in scope. Rather specifically, though within the framework of the general economic development of Venezuela, the motive was to obtain reciprocal trade conventions on "natural products" between Venezuela and France and Spain. As

the two projects developed, Rojas, in effect, sought full-scale treaties of commerce. Rojas' prior experience, in the main, generally had involved both direct and indirect instructions from Guzmán Blanco, the latter being via the Ministry of Foreign Relations. This time, however, the two campaigns began with Rojas working in close conjunction with Guzmán Blanco in Paris. The two men spent the summer of 1879 together in that city and other points in Europe. After much preliminary planning and work between them, Guzmán Blanco returned to Caracas and left Rojas to finish the jobs.

The roots of the appointments of Rojas are found in the Congressional accord of 12 May 1879. This accord gave permission to Guzmán Blanco, then the provisional President of Venezuela, to make a trip to Europe. Item two of this accord authorized the President

To celebrate a convention with the French government and another with the Spanish government, in order that our natural products be received in both nations, free of importation rights and of all other encumbrance of that kind, binding the Republic to receive in like terms the natural products of the said nations with identical reciprocity.

In other words, Guzmán Blanco wanted a reciprocal trade agreement on "natural products" with both France and Spain. Three days later, Foreign Minister Calcaño, at the behest of Guzmán Blanco, designated Rojas Minister Plenipotentiary of Venezuela to seek such a convention. Toward the end of the year, on December 5, Calcaño's successor, Saavedra, named Rojas as

Special Plenipotentiary to Spain for the negotiations of a treaty of commerce.<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising that Rojas received the appointments. He and Guzmán Blanco were friends of long standing and had worked together for many years. Perhaps more importantly, he had been living in Paris for six years and had been the Venezuelan troubleshooter in western Europe for some time. Rojas himself was most pleased with the new positions. Years later he recalled that "the French mission was exceedingly agreeable for me, because I have always had my private residence in Paris. . . so that I consider France my adopted fatherland."<sup>2</sup> This time he would pursue his diplomatic work at home and then later, in Madrid. While the goals were similar, the backgrounds, Rojas' negotiations, and the end results were quite different in the French and Spanish capitals. Accordingly, each appointment must be examined separately.

The diplomatic relations between France and Venezuela before the assignment of Rojas in 1879 were, at best, spotty. Beginning with a preliminary convention of commerce and navigation in 1833, there had been a series of treaties and conventions on mail, extradition, indemnity, etc. While there generally was a French diplomat in Caracas, seldom was there a Venezuelan diplomat in Paris. Guzmán Blanco had credentials to France and other European nations in 1863. The primary result of this assignment seems to have been a claims treaty signed in Caracas in 1864.<sup>3</sup> The presence of French troops in Mexico probably contributed to

the completion of this particular treaty.

Once the Maximilian episode was over, Guzmán Blanco approached France on a basis that hopefully would not end in claims payments. He went to France late in 1867 to seek economic aid. Specifically, he was to seek out opportunities for developing mining and railroad interests, and generally he was to do whatever he could to promote the fiscal and material development of Venezuela. Guzmán Blanco got to Paris in time for Christmas 1867 and made formal contact with the government there the last day of the year. Venezuelan President Juan C. Falcón and his Minister of Foreign Relations, Jacinto Guitérrez, did everything in their power to make the mission of Guzmán Blanco successful. As standard operating procedure, they informed him that funds to pay off French claims were building up in Caracas. This hopefully could be used as a wedge to get French concurrence in the Venezuelan plan. So that the plan could be presented under the best of circumstances, Falcón wrote Napoleon III a long letter on 28 January 1869 and urged him to hear directly from Guzmán Blanco the envisioned plan for the development of Venezuela. The main thrust of the plan was, hopefully, that France, with its great resources and its outlook on the world, would help in the development of Venezuela, with its virgin soul.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the merits of the plan, it bore no fruition at that time. Guzmán Blanco, having expressed optimism in December, did not see the economic situation of France as good by early February 1868. He noted that the French had lost much money on

railroads in Italy and Spain. Furthermore, as the year progressed, he planned to return to Venezuela to participate in the upcoming activities of the Senate in Caracas. On April 10 he sent in his letter of retirement to the French government and went to Italy to regain his health before the return voyage to the current political confusion of Venezuela.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of this confusion and the rise to power of Guzmán Blanco, Venezuelan payment of French claims stopped in 1868. The next year France denounced the commercial, consular, and extradition treaties with Venezuela. Meanwhile, conditions in Venezuela were so uncertain that there was little Guzmán Blanco could do about the problems with France except perhaps hire a private stringer in Paris. This was the case from 1872 to 1874 with one Hector F. Varela acting as Confidential Agent of the Republic of Venezuela in Paris. Varela, a publicist and friend of both the Guzmáns, seemed to be more interested in developing his paper, El Americano, than stringing for Venezuela and resigned after two years. The next year General Venancio Pulgar, the perpetrator of confusion in Rojas' fiscal activities in London, held the position of Minister Plenipotentiary to France but suddenly quit his position and moved to Martinique without advising the Ministry of Foreign Relations.<sup>6</sup>

While incredible acts such as that of Pulgar did not repeat themselves, the relations with France showed no great improvement. In 1877 and 1878, during the term of President Alcántara, the French legation in Caracas complained about claims

owed by Venezuela, and the issue even came up on the floor of the French House of Representatives. At this point, on 3 July 1878, Minister of Foreign Relations Rafael Seijas wrote a long circular in which he contested the French claims. He hoped that Venezuelan consuls and others who received his note would arrange to have it published so as to counter the bad press Venezuela suffered over the incident. About the only exception to these troublesome incidents and circumstances in the decade before Rojas received his appointment was the rather routine brand names convention signed in Caracas on 3 May 1879. Despite this exception, the general background of Franco-Venezuelan diplomatic relations in the years just prior to the appointment of Rojas was one of confusion and little action on the part of Venezuela.<sup>7</sup>

The France that Rojas dealt with was a nation somewhat rising as a phoenix from defeat at the hands of Germany a few years before. The Franco-Prussian War also spelled the end of the monarchy of Napoleon III. Accordingly, France in the 1870's was both licking its diplomatic wounds of military defeat and expending great amounts of energy on its domestic politics. France seemed to be so concerned with the internal politics of the Third Republic that the nation was somewhat isolationist. France did not fully get back into the heady affairs of European diplomacy until the entente of 1891 with Russia. Thereafter, the role of France in Europe increased in the years leading to World War I. This all came after Rojas' campaign, however; he dealt primarily with the isolationist France.<sup>8</sup>

The instructions to Rojas on his French assignment were rather simple. Calcaño informed him that Guzmán Blanco had designated him Minister Plenipotentiary to France. The assumption, and correctly so, was that Rojas would accept the position. The Foreign Minister then advised Rojas that the Illustrious American would be coming to Paris for the purpose of negotiating the reciprocal trade convention on natural products. Rojas, accordingly, should arrange to be received officially as soon as possible so there would be no problems or points of awkwardness with the coming of Guzmán Blanco.<sup>9</sup> This is quite understandable in view of the rather hit-and-miss Venezuelan policy in Paris. It also rather clearly cast Rojas in the role of lackey. His subservience to Guzmán Blanco in prior assignments had been evident, but generally he did the actual work alone. That would not be the case this time, and the lackey aspect came out very clearly.

Lackey, nor not, Rojas received his assignment and credentials on 18 June 1879 and went to work immediately. The next day he had an interview with the French Introducer of Ambassadors and prepared the formal reception. The following day, June 20, President Jules Grévy formally received Rojas in the Elysian Palace. Rojas, rather pleased that everything had been done within forty-eight hours, felt that the real reason for the promptness was that the French government thus avoided a full-blown reception of Guzmán Blanco in Paris. Instead, two commissioners would formally receive the Illustrious American at St. Nazaire.<sup>10</sup>

The speed with which Rojas began his French assignment was indicative of his activities through the summer of 1879. Much of his time and effort focused on the day-to-day details of handling the trip of the Illustrious American. Furthermore, he had much diplomatic work thrust upon him directly and with no escape, even temporarily, because of the presence of Guzmán Blanco. Just a few days after receiving his official appointment and with Guzmán Blanco already at hand, he wrote his American friend Sanford thus: "I am exceedingly busy, not only on account of the arrival of the Illustrious American, but also because of having been appointed Minister in Paris. I am paying all my official visits and attending to the audiences granted me by the Ambassadors." But while Rojas had his hands full with many details, he and Guzmán Blanco still rather quickly got to the real purpose of the visit, a treaty for the exchange of natural products.<sup>11</sup>

Probably after much private discussion between the two Venezuelans, Rojas began the formalities of seeking a treaty on July 10. That day he wrote William H. Waddington, the French Minister of Foreign Relations, and proposed a treaty of commerce with the free exchange of natural goods between the two countries as the focal point. Rojas was particularly interested in getting such Venezuelan products as coffee, cacao, cotton, and indigo into France, free of tariffs. Of course, he offered the same free entry to comparable French goods into Venezuela. Rojas also advised Waddington that a new treaty could easily be negotiated

as the old treaty of commerce of 1843 might be cancelled with a one-year notice. If the French were willing, Rojas would present the project of a new treaty to Waddington's office.

Assuming this, President Guzmán Blanco, "who finds himself in transit in this city," would be greatly pleased if Waddington would deign to give him a private audience. In other words, Guzmán Blanco had come to negotiate and Rojas wrote the necessary supporting letters.<sup>12</sup>

The reply from Waddington came the end of the month. He advised Rojas that it was impossible to negotiate such a treaty at present, for the French government was working on a general tariff law that would take months to complete. Furthermore, Waddington objected to any exclusive concession for Venezuela. All of this meant that France did not want to negotiate any commercial treaty with Venezuela then or in the near future.<sup>13</sup>

The rebuff from Waddington did not, however, completely close down all Venezuelan activities with respect to a commercial treaty with France. For the balance of the summer of 1879, Rojas spent his time on another Guzmán Blanco project aimed at essentially the same good end, the economic development of Venezuela. He did not send the report of his exchange of letters with Waddington to Caracas until the latter part of November, ostensibly because he had acted under the directions of Guzmán Blanco in Paris himself, and the documents would not be needed in Caracas until the illustrious American returned there.<sup>14</sup>

The implication is, however, that any material that might detract

from the capabilities of Guzmán Blanco, such as information that he had been unable to negotiate a treaty, should not be sent to Caracas until he was there to handle it himself.

For the next fifteen months, there was fitful action both in Caracas and Paris on the issue of the treaty of commerce. Julian Viso, the new Minister of Foreign Relations, advised Rojas early in 1880 that the old treaty of commerce of 1843 had been terminated in 1870 and then reinstated in 1876. The next month Rojas acknowledged receipt of Viso's letter and voiced one of his frequent complaints about working for the Ministry of Foreign Relations. This valid complaint, found throughout his correspondence with the Ministry, was that he did not have enough information. He wanted concrete ideas about the various clauses for a new treaty and commented that he needed such information not only for France but also for Great Britain and the possible treaty of commerce there. In the spring of 1880, the French Chargé in Caracas, the Marquis de Tallenay, informed the Ministry that he could help negotiate a treaty of commerce and even talked with Guzmán Blanco about it. Rojas did not put much faith in such information, however. He felt that Tallenay was exaggerating his own importance and doubted that his government would entrust such negotiations to him. Meanwhile, Rojas kept abreast of the treaty situation as well as he could by studying other treaties, and the relevant points of international law. In February 1881 he talked with a French official in a position to pass on valid information and learned that France had suspended the celebration

of all treaties of commerce while concluding the tariff study then underway. Nothing would be possible before the end of the year. This was the same reason Waddington had given almost two years before.<sup>15</sup>

The stalemate continued for several years. Rojas' rather incidental studying of the fine points of commercial treaty making became somewhat moot, however, when France broke diplomatic relations with Venezuela over faulty debt payments in April 1881. Finally, after other problems not within the scope of this study, Venezuela realized a new commercial treaty with France in 1902 but with no drastic changes.<sup>16</sup>

That subsequent action was still in the future, however, and Guzmán Blanco and Rojas had not taken the negative Waddington response of 30 July 1879 in a passive manner. Waddington had negated the immediate possibility of a new treaty of commerce with France, and that was all. This did not mean that the two Venezuelans might not seek out alternate means for achieving the same end. If the public sector in France did not go along with a plan to develop Venezuela through a favorable treaty on the exchange of natural products, then perhaps the private sector might be willing to enter into a contract for the general economic development of Venezuela. Guzmán Blanco and Rojas gave it a serious try in the wake of defeat at the hands of Waddington.

Accordingly, the two men worked out a grandiose scheme with a Parisian financial combine for the industrial and agricul-

tural development of Venezuela. The immediate idea for the plan, as stated by both Guzmán Blanco and Rojas, came from Guzmán Blanco. In reality, however, the basis of the plan might be found in the proposals of Spence, the British entrepreneur who visited Venezuela in 1872. Even earlier, when the Illustrious American went to Europe in 1867, he had instructions from the Falcón government to work for the economic development of Venezuela.<sup>17</sup> However the credit for the idea might be given, whether to one or more individuals, it was Rojas who did the leg work.

Presumably, after close consultation with Provisional President Guzmán Blanco, Rojas sought out the Paris business community. It is probable that he had this project under way before the Waddington negotiation of 30 July 1879. Rojas had a series of interviews with a French financier and President of the General Transatlantic Company, Eugene Pereire. The result of these meetings was a protocol, signed by the two men on 18 August 1879.<sup>18</sup>

The Rojas-Pereire Protocol of 1879 began with a series of concessions to Pereire as an individual. Some of the more important were gratuitous public lands for colonization purposes, all coal veins on public lands with a royalty to be paid the state, all guano and phosphate operations, again with a royalty to be paid the state, exclusive authorization to establish a mint with the government prohibiting the exportation of silver or gold bullion, preferential treatment for all types of mineral undertakings within the country, exclusive rights for coastal

and lake steam navigation service, preferential authorization for railroad construction with allied land grants, exclusive rights of exploitation of the woods of Amazonas Territory, exclusive right to manufacture dynamite and other explosives, exclusive control of planned colonization projects, exemption from import duties, and the right of Pereire to cede all or any of the cessions to other concessionaires as long as he made such cessions responsibly.<sup>19</sup>

This awesome grant of concessions to Pereire entailed certain conditions on his part. After having ascertained the importance and value of the concessions, he obligated himself to establish in Paris an anonymous society. This company, to be called the Agricultural and Industrial Society of Venezuela, had the following obligations: to exploit the concessions given Pereire, establish and operate large facilities for the fabrication of sugar, cigars, etc., create steam operated sawmills, brick factories, etc., provide various types of mortgage loans, operate a commission bank, and generally exploit agricultural, commercial, and industrial developments in the country. The financing for this fiscal juggernaut for the economic development of Venezuela would be provided through the issuance of Fr. 10,000,000 in stock. There were other detailed provisions regarding the stock issuance. There is no place in the Protocol, however, where Venezuela retained control of its economic destiny, except that it might be outlined in subsequent specific contracts or concessions.<sup>20</sup>

Rojas sent his copy of the Protocol to Caracas the day after he signed it. In his covering letter he pointed out at length how the whole idea was that of the Illustrious American and that he himself had only the sacred honor of signing the documentation of this great point in Venezuelan civilization. Rojas also viewed the Protocol as marking the first time since Venezuela's existence as a nation that foreign capital had entered generously to enrich Venezuela without demanding, in turn, money from a meager treasury. It was also the first time the country had a truly positive means to develop its richness, up to now developed in a disconsolate manner. To Rojas, the entire scheme was a marvelous opportunity for Venezuela, and, at the time, he was proud to be a part of it.<sup>21</sup>

It appears that all the parties concerned in Europe, Rojas, Guzmán Blanco, and Pereire, wanted to get the information to Caracas as quickly as possible. There was good reason for this, too. Pereire wanted to check the details of his potential concessions and begin drawing up specific plans. For this purpose, he sent a study mission to protect his interests. The chief of the mission, Theodore Delort, actually carried to Caracas the copy of the Protocol and the covering Rojas letter. Guzmán Blanco, knowing that the success of the mission rested, in part, on its acceptance by both the government and the general public of Venezuela, was most anxious to publicize the Protocol favorably and get it generally accepted. He advised the Caracas officials, through Rojas, to publicize the Protocol heavily and

let all interests, both agricultural and industrial, know the advantages it offered them.<sup>22</sup>

Delort arrived in Caracas with the Protocol about 20 September 1879, and the sequence of events that followed spelled the doom of the Rojas-Pereire Protocol. The problems arose immediately, even before it could be publicized as Guzmán Blanco wished. Barberii, the Minister of Foreign Relations, questioned the authority of Rojas to sign such a protocol. The Ministerial archivist supplied the necessary information to satisfy Barberii on this point. Then, on September 27 Dr. Diego Urbaneja, the President's representative, and the various ministers signed a formal statement to the effect that Guzmán Blanco had authorized Rojas to sign the Protocol. This self-serving out of the way, the government published the Rojas letter of August 19 and the enclosed Protocol in the Gaceta oficial of 27 September 1879.

This journalistic bombshell came in the midst of already hostile press activity against Guzmán Blanco. The reactionary press in Valencia, for example, had reported that Guzmán Blanco was gravely ill in Paris and that there were fiscal irregularities in the government. Delort liked the first press release and even so advised Dr. Urbaneja, but he quickly realized the hostile atmosphere within which the release came. Accordingly, on the twenty-ninth, only two days after the first release, he published an elaborate explanation of the Protocol and attempted to show how it would benefit everyone. He stated that everything would be done within the law and that the Protocol had to be drawn up

as it was so Pereire could get the necessary backing in Paris for such a broad base of development.<sup>24</sup>

All of this was to no avail. The hostility continued to the point that the opponents of Guzmán Blanco referred to the Protocol as a variation of the colonial Guipuzcoan Company of the prior century. They viewed Venezuela as becoming nothing more than a factory for the house of Pereire. Even Antonio L. Guzmán objected to the Protocol. While he liked the idea behind it, he objected to its form. (Two years later he would again be objecting to the form, not the essence, of a treaty of commerce Rojas negotiated with Spain.) Others took the Protocol simply as an occasion to strike out at Guzmán Blanco. Aristides Garbiras, Provisional President of the State of Táchira, for example, sent Barberii a copy of the broadside he addressed to the citizens of Táchira. To Barberii, it was not so much the Protocol itself that was objectionable as its principal author, Guzmán Blanco. Some other publications, however, put the entire blame on Rojas because he had signed the Protocol.<sup>25</sup>

Guzmán Blanco learned of the opposition in Venezuela to the Rojas-Pereire Protocol and his response was one of uncontrolled fury. He particularly disliked the criticism aimed at Rojas as the executor. This was not because he wished to protect Rojas. Rather, it was because he specifically wanted the Venezuelan public to know that the Protocol was good for Venezuela and that he, the Illustrious American, not Rojas, was the proper person with whom it should be identified. Noting all of this in a

letter of October 23 to his father, Guzmán Blanco continued that Rojas had not even known Pereire until the first of the year, while he had been working on the project with Pereire for fifteen years. Guzmán Blanco saw it all as an indirect attack on himself and dismissed the attacks on Rojas as acts of cowardice for he, not Rojas, was the one with the real power. This emotional letter was published in an attempt to rectify the flow of criticisms against the Protocol.<sup>26</sup>

Other efforts in defense of the Rojas-Pereire Protocol appeared in late 1879 and early the following year. A long letter in support of the Protocol appeared, for example, in the Gaceta oficial of December 30. The writer, Isidro Espinosa, explained in minute detail to his friend Francisco González Guinán that the Protocol would be good for the country. Furthermore, as its provisions went no further than other concessions already in existence, there was no reason to object to it. In January 1880 Delort began preliminary steps toward fulfilling portions of the Protocol, and the government gave them full coverage. One of the arguments, an exceedingly candid one, used in favor of the Protocol and Guzmán Blanco was that he was the only dictator Venezuela ever had who always exposed his plans in published form.<sup>27</sup>

Be these good intentions as they may, the Rojas-Pereire Protocol was, for all practical purposes, dead. Delort advised the government, when he presented his project on January 7, that he was returning to Paris to present the project also to Pereire

and solicit his approval. In reality, Delort perceived the hostility, even at high governmental levels, and despite the patriotic views of Guzmán Blanco, he probably realized the risks involved in bringing in immigrants in great numbers and foreign capital in great amounts. Delort returned to Paris, had his conference with Pereire, and then Pereire wrote Rojas. Rojas, in turn, wrote the new Minister of Foreign Relations, Julián Viso, that Pereire had rejected ten of the articles in the Protocol. Furthermore, the financial combine that Pereire needed for the undertaking had not materialized. Rojas still grasped at straws, as when he advised Viso that Pereire planned to send a group to study alternate plans. Nothing came of this, however, and the Rojas-Pereire Protocol of 1879 was stillborn.<sup>28</sup>

That winter of 1879-1880, while the Rojas-Pereire Protocol spun out its death both in Caracas and Paris, Rojas was greatly occupied on a variety of fronts. Surely he knew of the difficulties the Protocol encountered in Caracas, but there was not much he could do about it. He spent a considerable amount of time in pursuit of the Bouverie fiscal agreement in London, the various diplomatic questions with Great Britain, and the preliminaries of a treaty of commerce with Spain.<sup>29</sup>

Subsequent action by Rojas in the spring of 1880 was rather routine. Tallenay, the French Chargé in Caracas, became furious over Venezuelan suspension of claims negotiations about 1 May. An ad hoc claims commission was then functioning in Caracas, and the issue was over a particular claim that the

Venezuelan commissioner maintained was unjust. Rojas received information on the matter and advised Viso that he would give an explanation to Charles Freycenet, Waddington's successor, when it came up.<sup>30</sup> What Rojas proposed in June, however, was hardly routine, particularly when the response is considered.

On 22 June 1880 Rojas wrote the Ministry in Caracas and proposed a consolidation and refinancing of the various foreign claims against Venezuela. He advocated a loan of Fr.25,000,000 at 4 percent interest and issued at 90 percent of its face value. The guarantee for this loan would be the total 13 percent of government income applicable to foreign claims as outlined in the law of 1872. Hopefully, this loan would be sanctioned by either the French or British government, or both. The funds collected would then be turned over to the government, or governments, involved or to a suitable agent for distribution to claimants. Rojas reasoned that it would be the same for Venezuela to amortize either a loan or claims and that the country be freed from the sheer annoyance of the latter.<sup>31</sup>

The response in Caracas to this version of a diplomatic debt was initially favorable. Viso advised Rojas that Guzmán Blanco had the authority to arrange all the external debt and that Rojas was his agent in such matters. Hence, Rojas should go ahead with his plan. However, Viso shortly afterward left office and the new Minister of Foreign Relations, Pedro J. Saavedra, informed Rojas that Guzmán Blanco rejected completely the idea of such a loan as ruinous to the country. Viso, further-

more, had not been authorized to make such a decision. On August 4, therefore, Rojas backtracked and advised Saavedra that he hoped that "in view of the good wish that we had, Dr. Viso as much as I, in initiating this point, you will excuse us." Saavedra responded to this by informing Rojas that the Illustrious American hoped that not another word on loans would cross between the legation and the Ministry.<sup>32</sup> And this seemed to be the end of it, although the observation might be made that perhaps Guzmán Blanco was simply lying low after the recent controversy over the Rojas-Pereire Protocol.

The plan to refinance the foreign claims against Venezuela, as outlined above, and another one, presented by Rojas in January 1881, were manifestations of the problems Venezuela had in paying off its debts, particularly French claims. The government had stopped the regular payment of debts in August 1878, for example, and not quite a year later, Foreign Minister Barberii, in response to an inquiry of Tallenay, found himself offering excuses. The one this time was that Rojas had been attempting to negotiate a particular arrangement in London, probably a reference to the possible diplomatic debt with Great Britain, and that the result had not been as expected. Accordingly, new instructions had been sent out, and they had yet to be heard from. Meanwhile, Barberii assured Tallenay that Venezuela was not ignoring its debts.<sup>33</sup>

While Venezuela did not ignore its debts, neither did it pay them. Thus, when no payment came, the French government

laid down an ultimatum. If Venezuela did not resume payments by 30 March 1881 on the basis of a quota established in 1873, then France would recall its chargé in Caracas and eliminate the legation there. Guzmán Blanco did not give in to the French demand, because it was based on questionable claims, at least from the Venezuelan point of view. It had to do rather specifically with the claims acknowledged by Venezuela in 1864, during the period of Maximilian in Mexico. Furthermore, at least one of the outstanding claimants was a Venezuelan and member of the Venezuelan army. Venezuela would not pay under such cloudy circumstances, plus the fact that the economy generally was still in disarray. Accordingly, France broke relations with Venezuela in April 1881.<sup>34</sup>

Venezuela tried several tacks in the confusion after the break. An elaborate circular supporting the Venezuelan position made the rounds of the diplomatic corps in Caracas and elsewhere. There were serious, but fruitless, efforts, also, to use the good offices of the United States to achieve a reconciliation with France. The elder Guzmán, a consultant to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, pattered with the problem for a couple of years, but found no concrete solution, and finally was reduced to writing about that "irritable French vanity." Nothing seemed to work, either in Caracas or through the good offices of Washington.<sup>35</sup>

There was very little that Rojas could do about it all in Paris. He asked the United States Minister there to take care of any problems that Venezuelan citizens might have in France.

And, on occasion he and the Minister discussed the Venezuelan problem. It is possible that Rojas also published a small piece of propaganda on the issue of the relations between Venezuela and France. A little pamphlet published in Brussels titled Le Différend Franco-Vénézuélien de 1881 attempted to show how some of the French claims against Venezuela were false and, also, how much money Venezuela had already paid France on claims. While its tone is softer, the similarity between this pamphlet and the one published a few years earlier over the diplomatic break with Holland indicates that Rojas probably prepared it.<sup>36</sup>

Rojas continued to live in Paris after the break. There certainly was no reason for him to leave his home of the past eight years. It is likely that he occasionally helped Venezuela in an unofficial manner, particularly until the summer of 1883 when he ceased all functions for the government at Caracas and turned his archives over to the United States Minister in Paris. Finally, Guzmán Blanco executed a convention reestablishing diplomatic relations with France in 1885. At that time, however, the Illustrious American and Rojas were not on speaking terms and the latter played no role in the action.<sup>37</sup>

At the exact time of the break with France, Rojas was most involved in seeking a commercial treaty with Spain. The justification for seeking the Spanish treaty was the Congressional accord of 12 May 1879, which instructed Guzmán Blanco to obtain reciprocal trade agreements on natural products with both France and Spain. Rojas' experience with France was anything but

successful, as witness the rebuff to his treaty overtures and the failure, both in Venezuela and France, of the Rojas-Pereire Protocol. Perhaps the lack of success with France and, also, nagging trade problems with Spain prompted the assignment of Rojas as Special Plenipotentiary to Spain in December 1879 to seek a treaty of commerce.

Article 15 of the treaty of peace and recognition of 1845 had called for the two nations to arrange a treaty of commerce as quickly as possible. While Spain and Venezuela signed various treaties and agreements on such topics as claims and rights of nationals, they never had gotten around to signing a treaty of commerce.<sup>38</sup> Political anarchy, in both Spain and Venezuela, probably was one of the factors contributing to the lack of action on a commercial treaty.

Rojas' first diplomatic assignment to Spain, between 1873 and 1875, roughly coincided with the end of the period of anarchy there. By the end of 1874, the monarchists had restored Alfonso XII, and the domestic political situation stabilized.<sup>39</sup> Spanish foreign policy of the first six years of the restoration, from 1874 to 1881, was very level and unaggressive. Cánovas, the Minister of State, expressed it in this manner: "It is definite that we have no commitment with any specific nation, but we do have a commitment with the entire universe, because that is our policy since before. . . the restoration, and everyone knows what he ought to expect from us."<sup>40</sup> That is, Cánovas would treat everyone alike, and this meant no special alliances. It did not

mean, however, that Spain avoided negotiations of any kind. The Venezuelan drive for a treaty of commerce with Spain came in the middle of a period of European economic history marked by rather turbulent tariff negotiations. A period of comparatively free trade relations, marked by the bilateral Cobden Treaty of 1860, had come to an end in the depression of the middle seventies. Thereafter, protectionism was the theme, and while industrialists initially led the drive, agricultural interests did not lag far behind. Spain spent the period 1877-1882 constructing a laborious treaty of commerce with France, and much of the work concerned agricultural goods.<sup>41</sup> Some effort during this time, however, went to Venezuela.

The immediate impulse for a treaty of commerce between Venezuela and Spain might have come from a Venezuelan consul in Spain. Evilasio Echegaray, Consul in Santander, wrote a long letter to the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Caracas in September 1877. Perhaps the importance of the letter can be seen from its publication in the Gaceta oficial of 6 November 1877. Echegaray noted several things of importance to Venezuela. The Cobden Treaty between France and Great Britain had hurt the Spanish wine business. A subsequent treaty between France and Italy had also hurt the vintners. Additionally, a Spanish tariff law of 1869, which was still in force, had a sliding-scale arrangement that was presently favorable to nations that had full diplomatic and commercial relations with Spain. Thus, the Consul in Santander felt it would be to Venezuela's advantage to

negotiate a full treaty of commerce with Spain.<sup>42</sup>

While Echegaray rather directly suggested a treaty of commerce, other factors also led Venezuela in that direction. In October 1877 the Treasury Ministry had given Bordeaux wines an exemption from import duties, and, probably in retaliation, certain Venezuelan products had been burdened with additional taxes in Spain. The opinion in the Ministry of Foreign Relations was that a diplomatic agent should be sent to Spain to clear up the matter. Venezuelan cacao, apparently one of the natural products so burdened, particularly felt the Spanish onus. There also was some thought given in Venezuela to imposing a retaliatory tariff, but this would not happen for several years. Furthermore, the prevailing opinion in the Ministry was that Venezuela should have a most-favored-nation arrangement with Spain on natural products. These were the thoughts and actions that probably prompted the natural products accord of 12 May 1879, under which Guzmán Blanco was to seek an agreement with Spain.<sup>43</sup>

With the arrival of Guzmán Blanco in Paris in June, the action now shifted to Europe. While the first thrust of commercial negotiations was with France, as Rojas unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a treaty of commerce with that nation, there also was action with Spain. The initial action apparently did not come at the direct instigation of either Guzmán Blanco or Rojas; rather, it was a Venezuelan consul in Spain again. This time it was José Pérez y Sánchez, the Consul in Málaga. Pérez, apparently acting on his own, sought out his friends in the local

taxpayers' league, an association of farmers, industrialists, and businessmen. These businessmen, feeling the pinch of reduced trade with Venezuela and receptive to Pérez's solicitation on behalf of a treaty of commerce with Venezuela, wrote the Spanish government in support of such a treaty. Barberii, the Foreign Minister in Caracas, profusely thanked Pérez for his action.<sup>44</sup> Surely word of support in Málaga for the Venezuelan position got to Guzmán Blanco in Paris.

There is no doubt that Guzmán Blanco and Rojas spent some of their time in Paris and elsewhere in Europe that summer on the issue of the Spanish commercial treaty. When the Illustrious American returned to Caracas in the fall of 1879, for example, Rojas reported to the Minister of Foreign Relations that he was fully informed of the current state of negotiations for the proposed treaty. The negotiations seemed to be interrupted, however, over a specific item. The focal point was Venezuelan cacao. Rojas reported that Spain would not allow most-favored-nation status to Venezuelan cacao as it would damage the current trade in cacao from Ecuador. The reason, according to Rojas, was that Venezuelan cacao was so much better than that from Ecuador. In response to this barrier, Rojas suggested that the Venezuelan congress might consider a conditional blockage of Spanish goods coming into Venezuela.<sup>45</sup> This information, based on correspondence with the Spanish ambassador in Paris and perhaps other sources, plus the aggressiveness of Guzmán Blanco who was now back in Caracas, set the stage for direct action on the subject.

Rojas now received his appointment as Special Plenipotentiary to Spain for the negotiation of a treaty of commerce. Shortly thereafter, Minister of Foreign Relations Viso advised Rojas that he should go to Madrid and start negotiations. On the issue of cacao, he opined that Venezuelan cacao should be treated the same as that of Ecuador and laid down the threat of a retaliatory tariff if Spain would not negotiate, particularly since Venezuela was ready to reciprocate in granting most-favored-nation status.<sup>46</sup>

Rojas began formal work on the treaty of commerce with Spain as soon as he received word of his appointment. Communication with the Spanish ambassador in Paris led to a hostile response. The hostility, as Rojas understood it, was because Spaniards were speculating in the cacao from Guayaquil, and a treaty of commerce with Venezuela would disturb their profitable operation. Rojas then decided to have the Venezuelan Consul in Madrid, Juan Barrie y Agüero, approach the Spanish authorities on the treaty issue. He did this because of the hostility evident in Paris and because Barrie y Agüero was a personal friend of the Spanish Minister of State. Thus, on 24 January 1880 he forwarded all the information to the Consul and urged him to seek the treaty of commerce with Spain.<sup>47</sup>

In Caracas, meanwhile, Guzmán Blanco changed the designation of Rojas. Effective February 5, Rojas was the Minister Plenipotentiary of Venezuela to Spain. Also, Viso, not yet knowing of Rojas' actions in late January, instructed Rojas to

go to Madrid to negotiate the treaty. When he learned of Rojas' assessment of the situation, however, he passed the information on to Guzmán Blanco, and the Illustrious American approved of Rojas' decision not to go to Madrid.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps it was just as well that Rojas did not go to Madrid, for the news from that city was not good. Barrie y Agüero reported in detail an interview with the Spanish Director of Commerce. The interview centered chiefly around cacao. Barrie y Agüero maintained that in view of the difference in quality between the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian products, the price of each cacao would seek its own level in commerce if the tariff were the same. The Spanish position was that this would still represent a hardship for the owners of cacao of lesser value. About the only thing the Consul in Madrid could report to Rojas, thus, was that negotiations were not definitely closed as the Spanish official at least agreed to continue studying the issue. Rojas now informed Viso that it was just as well that he had not gone to Madrid, considering the negative Spanish position on Venezuelan cacao. He saw no reason to go unless there was a preliminary promise from Minister of State Cánovas that Venezuela could get complete reciprocity. Later in March, he reported that Cánovas had been replaced, and it definitely would not be wise to negotiate with his replacement, a Sr. Elduayen, in Rojas' opinion a man of less capacity and more pretension.<sup>49</sup>

The negotiations in Madrid and Paris apparently frustrated, the action now shifted to Caracas. Viso informed Rojas that he

had indicated to the Venezuelan Congress the advisability of preparing a memorandum on the subject. Furthermore, he felt that Guzmán Blanco might authorize an extra charge on the natural fruits of Spain entering Venezuela, a charge that would be comparable to the discrimination Venezuelan cacao had suffered in Spain. And, that is exactly what happened after several more weeks of study. On 30 July 1880 Minister of the Treasury J. P. Rojas-Paúl decreed that Spanish wines, a derivative of fruits, no matter what their mode of bottling, would be appraised as class-six items, and thus subject to higher duty.<sup>50</sup> This had the effect of stopping the importation of Spanish wines into Venezuela, and the Spanish response was predictable.

The Spanish response to the discriminatory Venezuelan tariff was one of anguish. Immediately in the wake of the publication of the tariff, the Spanish Minister Resident in Caracas, Nicolás Ballesteros, inquired as to the motives of the action. The Ministry informed him of the motives and doubtless he wrote immediately to Madrid for instructions. The response in Spain was one of alarm in some cities and concern over cancelled orders. The Spanish press blamed the government there, and some organizations began to push for a resolution of the problem. Rojas did what he could with his friends in Madrid but was not optimistic. He wanted even more pressure applied to Spain and suggested that a tariff five times greater than normal be applied to all Spanish goods coming into Venezuela. In his view the Catalonia press would first shout loudly, and then the government would have to

act.<sup>51</sup> As the year continued, however, it was not necessary to take such strong measures, for the pressure already was sufficient for Spain to seek negotiations seriously.

The Spanish offer to negotiate came in December 1880 when Ballesteros solicited the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Saavedra, on the point. While laying all the blame on Venezuela, the Minister stated that he was ready to negotiate and that he hoped Venezuela would show good faith by cancelling the decree of July 30 before beginning negotiations. Saavedra, acting on the instructions of Guzmán Blanco, refused to cancel the decree without a treaty in hand. A few days after responding to Ballesteros, Saavedra wrote Rojas. Acting again on the orders of Guzmán Blanco, he instructed Rojas to proceed with the necessary negotiations. Specifically, Rojas was to follow the verbal instructions Guzmán Blanco had given him earlier. Rojas now had the authority from Guzmán Blanco, via Saavedra, to pursue the treaty with Spain.<sup>52</sup>

In reality, Rojas already was working on the treaty in Paris. Word of the Spanish change in policy, as a reflection of the Venezuelan tariff of 30 July 1880, came to Paris as well as Caracas. While Ballesteros sought out Saavedra in Caracas late that year, his counterpart simultaneously sought out Rojas in Paris. The Spanish Minister to France at that time was the Marquis of Molíns. Molíns had initially accepted the Marine Ministry after the restoration of Alfonso XII. Then he resigned that position to accept the prestigious ambassadorship to Paris. Molíns circulated among such friends in Paris as Adolphe Thiers,

the Duke of Broglie, and the Duke of Decazes.<sup>53</sup> It can be assumed that the paths of Rojas and Molíns crossed frequently at official functions and that Rojas probably was complimented to be in the company of the Spanish ambassador, for there is no indication that Rojas traveled in the same social circles as did Molíns.

The formal intercourse between Rojas and Molíns began in Paris about the middle of December 1880. Rojas reported that he encountered Molíns in the dining room of the President of the French Council of Ministers. One night, perhaps after dinner, the two men talked of the proposed treaty of commerce between Venezuela and Spain. Molíns rather audaciously suggested that they sign the treaty in Paris the same day they received a cable from Caracas that the decree blocking the importation of Spanish wines had been cancelled. Rojas wisely declined this conditional offer.<sup>54</sup> Not surprisingly, both Molíns and Ballesteros were following the same tack. Spain was prepared to break the wine decree in either Caracas or Paris if the opportunity presented itself.

Rojas next saw Molíns at the New Year's day reception, and the two men made plans to get together shortly. They had conferences the first week in January, and to Rojas the treaty seemed assured. On the fourth he felt that perhaps the treaty might be signed in Madrid and asked the Ministry in Caracas to cable him to go to Madrid, present his credentials, and sign the treaty there if it was felt best.<sup>55</sup> The situation was rather curious in a diplomatic sense, for while Rojas had the necessary

credentials, he had not yet been received by the King of Spain.

While Rojas waited for the order to go to Madrid, he and Molíns continued their negotiation in Paris. As Molíns had received specific instructions to celebrate the treaty with Rojas and Rojas had oral instructions from Guzmán Blanco, the two men proceeded to negotiate the treaty during the balance of January. The issue of whether Ballesteros, in Caracas, or Molíns, in Paris, would negotiate the treaty was resolved in favor of Molíns. Judging from the dispatches from the Ministry of State in Madrid that Molíns confidentially showed him, Rojas was of the opinion that Ballesteros was excluded from negotiating the treaty in Caracas due to his carelessness in handling the preliminary groundwork. And, Guzmán Blanco had already determined that the treaty would be handled in Europe, though Rojas might not yet have known that. At any rate, Rojas advised Saavedra on February 3 that he and Molíns were ready to sign the treaty and they would do it in Paris. He would not go to Madrid unless so ordered for reasons of protocol and also to promote the settlement of Venezuelan claims against Spain.<sup>56</sup>

The negotiations between Rojas and Molíns bore fruition on 7 and 8 February 1881. On the seventh the two men signed the protocol of the treaty of commerce and navigation between Venezuela and Spain. In addition to the listing of credentials and instructions of both signatories and citing the provision of the treaty of recognition of 1845 that called for such a pact, the two ministers referred to the specific problems at hand,

Venezuelan cacao and Spanish wine. The protocol also called for both countries to rescind their respective discriminatory tariffs on April 1 of that year.<sup>57</sup> The next day Rojas and Molíns signed the full treaty of commerce and navigation.

The treaty of commerce and navigation of 8 February 1881 was a rather straightforward, all-inclusive treaty. The seventeen articles called for reciprocal trade, covered the details of the ships of each country going into the ports of the other, provided for broken voyages, precluded excessive taxation at the state level, anticipated the problems of damage on the high seas and naval salvage, protected trade marks, and defined in detail the rights, privileges, and obligations of consuls. Perhaps most important of all, Article 4 specified that goods of all types going from either nation to the other "will enjoy the treatment of the most-favored nation."<sup>58</sup>

Rojas, not surprisingly, was elated with the signing of the treaty. He was particularly pleased with the most-favored-nation article and viewed it as a death stroke for the cacao of Ecuador and a stroke of fortune for Venezuelan cacao. He hoped, in particular, as he wrote his covering letter to Saavedra, that Guzmán Blanco would be pleased with the completion of the treaty for he knew all the difficulties involved in reaching the agreement.<sup>59</sup> The response from Caracas must have been gratifying to Rojas. Saavedra, anticipating approval by both governments, wrote Rojas that "the government expects that thanks to your ability, it will soon finish the treaty of commerce."<sup>60</sup> At this

juncture Rojas had no intimation that there was trouble ahead for his treaty of commerce.

Rojas now planned to complete his diplomatic transaction with Spain. It will be recalled that he had planned on going to Madrid several months before and had even asked for specific instructions to that effect. As the events turned out, however, it was better to negotiate in Paris and, hence, the delay until he left for Madrid on February 26. Rojas went to the Spanish capital to present his credentials to the King, complete the necessary international courtesies, and check on the possibility of the old convention on Venezuelan claims against Spain.<sup>61</sup>

The visit to Spain in late February and early March 1881 centered around protocol and Spanish political complications. On March 9 Rojas presented his new credentials to Alfonso XII, and the King received him "with the same goodness as always." Rojas also enjoyed being received by the Queen. The protocol aside, Rojas considered the realities of the political situation in Spain and how they might affect the treaty of commerce. Soon after he and the Marquis of Molíns had signed the treaty in Paris, the Conservative government in Madrid had fallen. Fortunately, the treaty received ratification before the fall, but a new Cortes was to be selected, and this meant delay in implementing the treaty. Rojas got these details worked out, however, although the rescinding of discriminatory tariffs was postponed from April, as called for in the treaty protocol, to the fall of 1881. While there was opposition to the treaty in some circles in Spain,

this did not affect the ratification of the treaty, which was already accepted.<sup>62</sup>

Rojas was so pleased with the entire turn of events with Spain, despite the delay caused by the change in government, that he planned a victory celebration. Desiring to offer a banquet to the members of the Spanish government, he sought a proper place to hold it. For various reasons he was unable to obtain space in a public building. Frustrated in this proposed courtesy, he held a great banquet instead in the Lhardy restaurant and invited the literary and journalistic community of Madrid. Seventy-five people attended the feast. Among them were all the members of the Spanish Academy and such notables as Cánovas and Castelar. Rojas reported that Castelar even had a special toast for Guzmán Blanco.<sup>63</sup> And thus Rojas ended his last official visit to Madrid on this very high note.

Rojas now returned to Paris, presumably to wait out the delay in the implementation of the treaty of commerce with Spain. His optimism was short lived, however, for the events of the next fourteen months proved to be anything but simple waiting. Opposition to the treaty built up in both Venezuela and Spain. Subsequently, the proper officials executed a replacement treaty in Caracas in the spring of 1882. But the events that led to the signing of the replacement treaty, particularly those in Caracas, were quite relevant also to the termination of Rojas' career as diplomat for Venezuela.

While the initial response from Caracas to Rojas' signing

of the treaty of commerce and navigation with Spain was favorable, the second response was not. It came indirectly from the elder Guzmán, Antonio Leocadio, in his role as consultant to the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Saavedra, on receipt of the treaty, quickly sent it to Guzmán, who kept it only four days and returned it with a lengthy, eleven-page commentary. Suffice it to say that he found fault with fourteen of the seventeen articles of the original treaty. Since Guzmán was the father of the President, in addition to being a consultant, this meant that the treaty must be renegotiated. Accordingly, Foreign Minister Saavedra wrote Rojas that it needed modifications. To save time and if Ballesteros were authorized, he proposed to negotiate the modifications in Caracas. While it is debatable if time was the only factor, Saavedra, Guzmán, and Ballesteros prepared to carry out the negotiations in Caracas.<sup>64</sup>

Rojas received the news of the proposed treaty modifications about April 20, and this information merely added to a confusing and difficult situation developing in Paris. What Rojas encountered in Paris was the Spanish side of the complaints against the treaty of commerce and navigation. While in Caracas the Venezuelan position was one of negotiation with Ballesteros, the Spanish position in Paris was, initially, one of worrying Rojas with details and then, finally, seeking annulment of the treaty itself. It began on 29 March 1881 when the new Spanish Minister to Spain, the Duke of Fernán Núñez, advised Rojas of the obvious, that the treaty could not go into effect on the

date planned, April 1. The Duke also advised Rojas that the Spanish government was faced with the problem of trying to be equitable with both Venezuelan and Ecuadorian cacao until the definitive treaty might be achieved. While Rojas responded to Fernán Núñez that he appreciated his ardent interest, he described the Spanish dilemma to his own ministry as merely an internal Spanish problem and not one to cause concern. Seijas, writing as the new Minister of Foreign Relations, concurred in this judgment and stated that Venezuela was prepared to handle any import differential problems concerning Spanish wines in a similar manner.<sup>65</sup>

The tariff jockeying, however, was not as important to Rojas as was the interview he had with the Duke of Fernán Núñez on April 16. That day the Spanish Minister to France, accompanied by his secretary, called on Rojas. The Duke suggested that a new protocol be drawn up for submission to the Cortes of the next fall. As the conference proceeded, Rojas treated it as an unmasking of sorts. Finally, he got to the root of the matter and discovered that the Spanish ambassador wanted to annul the treaty and sign a new one. At this point Rojas still did not know that there were plans to negotiate the treaty in Caracas, so he advised Fernán Núñez that annulment was impossible unless the Marquis of Molíns had acted without instructions. Since this was not the case, Rojas offered to leave things as they were and then talk with Fernán Núñez when he received instructions from Caracas.<sup>66</sup>

The instructions would not be coming, however, as the negotiations

themselves shifted to Caracas.

In May Rojas definitely learned that the negotiations would be in Caracas. His prior information from that city had been that they probably would be shifted from Paris to Caracas for purposes of saving time. On May 8, however, he learned rather definitely from Spanish sources that the negotiations would, in fact, take place in Caracas. He read Ballesteros' letter of April 4 to his government. In this letter the Spanish Minister in Caracas asked for instructions on entering into treaty negotiations with the ad hoc Venezuelan Plenipotentiary, Antonio Leocadio Guzmán. With this information in hand, Rojas informed Seijas in a confidential note of his opinion of the situation. He had reason to believe that the Spanish government was disgusted with the behavior of Ballesteros in the matter. But, he did not know whether the government would instruct him to negotiate or recall him. It is likely that Fernán Núñez, for whatever reason, let Rojas see a copy of the Ballesteros note. And Rojas, either because he felt Ballesteros would not be in the best interests of Venezuela or because he resented Guzmán stealing his diplomatic thunder, or both, passed his opinion on to Caracas.<sup>67</sup>

Seijas received Rojas' confidential note late in May and proceeded to act on it. He showed it to both President Guzmán Blanco and the consultant to the Ministry, the elder Guzmán. The latter disagreed with Rojas. Guzmán knew that there was a new government in Madrid and that it might replace Ballesteros. Even so, he did not think such action would jeopardize the treaty.<sup>68</sup>

Guzmán's opinion carried more weight than did that of Rojas, and the treaty thus underwent negotiation in Caracas between Guzmán and Ballesteros.

For the next year the Venezuelan and Spanish representatives negotiated the new treaty of commerce and navigation in Caracas. Often, Seijas and Guzmán Blanco consulted among themselves and with others on the details of the treaty. Finally, on 20 May 1882 Guzmán and Ballesteros signed in Caracas the new treaty.<sup>69</sup> Rojas, meanwhile, continued to hold the post of Venezuelan Minister to Spain. He had no duties with that country, however, and spent his time and efforts shuttling between Paris and London as he worked on the many problems with Great Britain.

The formal termination of Rojas' diplomatic relations with Spain came in the spring of 1882, concurrently with the signing of the new treaty of commerce and navigation. Not surprisingly under the circumstances, Rojas was the last to know that he was being replaced. Guzmán Blanco named Eduardo Calcaño Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain on 2 May 1882, even before Guzmán and Ballesteros had signed their treaty. A month later Seijas advised Rojas of his replacement. Rojas then wrote the Spanish Minister of State on June 28, enclosed the proper credentials of his retirement, and advised him that he was giving up the position. On 7 July 1882 Alfonso XII responded with the appropriate lip-service document that Rojas had done a good job while representing Venezuela before the Spanish throne.<sup>70</sup>

While the closing out of Rojas' diplomatic career with

Spain appeared rather straightforward, such was not the case, at least in the eyes of Rojas. There is no doubt that Rojas resented the modification of the treaty he and Molíns signed in Paris in February of 1881. This can be seen in his attacks on Ballesteros. At this particular point he was not quite ready to attack publicly the elder Guzmán, though he appeared to be building in that direction. Years later, however, he made his feelings on this point crystal clear. He felt that the treaty of 1881 "was disapproved by the government of Caracas because of the intrigues of the elder Guzmán." When the second treaty, negotiated by Guzmán and Ballesteros in Caracas, came before the Spanish Senate for approval, Molíns, who had signed the first one, stood up and, according to Rojas, "declared that he would vote in favor of approval, because this was almost textually the same that he had signed with me in Paris." There is no question that Rojas was unhappy with the turn of events in 1881 and 1882.<sup>71</sup>

In a broad sense Rojas had reason to be unhappy over the entire issue of the Venezuelan project to establish working relations with Spain and France on the exchange of natural products. In all fairness to Rojas, the lack of total success was not his fault. In the case of France, that government simply refused to negotiate a treaty of commerce in 1879. The reason given was one of the entire French tariff program being reworked. On the heels of this official rebuff, Rojas then executed the protocol with Eugene Pereire, as a representative of the private sector of the French economy. This protocol encountered stiff opposition

in Caracas, particularly from the enemies of Guzmán Blanco, and Pereire wisely cancelled it. Rojas and Guzmán Blanco both staunchly maintained that the entire idea behind the Rojas-Pereire Protocol came from Guzmán Blanco himself. In this case, then, Rojas simply had done his duty for his President. Finally, when France broke diplomatic relations with Venezuela in 1881, the reason was lack of Venezuelan payment of acknowledged French claims. This was not Rojas' doing, though the argument might be made that a more skillfull diplomat would have avoided the break itself.

In the case of Spain, Rojas achieved better results in seeking a treaty of commerce and navigation. At his suggestion, though not necessarily his alone, Venezuela instituted punitive tariffs against Spain when that country refused to treat Venezuelan cacao fairly. The result was that he signed a treaty of commerce and navigation with the Marquis of Molíns in Paris in early 1881. Then, the elder Guzmán recommended that the treaty needed certain modifications. He negotiated these into a new treaty in Caracas with Ballesteros. While Venezuela achieved a workable treaty of commerce and navigation with Spain and it can therefore be said that the diplomatic effort was successful, Rojas was excluded from the final success. He had good reason for personal resentment.

## NOTES

1. Recop., vol. 8, doc. 2166, 220-21. The formal notes designating the appointment of Rojas, dated 15 and 16 May, are in MRE/F/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 129-32. The acknowledging note of the French Chargé d'Affaires in Caracas, Tallanay, dated 20 May 1879, is in MRE/GB/CLVL, vol. 3, fol. 25. For the Spanish appointment, see Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 December 1879, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 4. A copy of the Guzmán Blanco proclamation of 3 December 1879, naming Rojas to the post, is in fol. 5, above.
2. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 65.
3. The various treaties and conventions may be found in Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 69-70, 148-53, 137-53, 168, 171-74, 176-77, 184-91, 258-61. For the instructions to Guzmán Blanco, see MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 1, fols. 207, 213, and L.a. (1882), p. xlvi.
4. Gutiérrez, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 29 November 1867, 23 January 1868, to Guzmán Blanco, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 44, 56; Guzmán Blanco, Caracas, 2 December 1867, Paris, 7 January 1868, to Gutiérrez, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 50, 68; and Falcón, copy, Caracas, 28 January 1869, to Napoleon III, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 58.
5. Guzmán Blanco, Paris, 7 February, 15 April 1868, to Gutiérrez, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 67, 79.
6. L.a. (1882), p. xlvi, and (1881), p. cv. The Varela and Pulgar correspondence is located in MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 88-117. See also L.a. (1876), p. xxxix. Fol. 117 of the cited Ministerial archival source contains the unusual letter of 29 September 1875 by Jesus María Blanco of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, in which the Minister is reduced to asking his Minister to France why he left France and moved to Martinique without any resignation or explanation. The archives do not contain Pulgar's reply.
7. See the heading "Francia" in Alcántara's congressional report of 27 July 1877, G.o., no. 1181 (30 July 1877), p. 4327. The Seijas circular, dated 3 July 1878, is printed in G.o., no. 1425 (11 July 1878), pp. 5299-301. The entry of the brand names convention in Recop., vol. 8, doc. 2209, 378-79, notes that as of 10 July 1884, the French government had not ratified it; therefore,

it was not yet law. Still, the convention is printed in Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 332-33.

8. Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times: 1760 to the Present (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., c. 1960), pp. 295, 377, 380. The final citation of this delightful work contains the quotation, "For the first twenty years after 1871, French diplomatic isolation remained complete, and no leader or group made any real effort to break out of that isolation."

9. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 16 May 1879, to Rojas, MRE/F/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 130.

10. Rojas, Paris, 23 June 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 118.

11. The details of Rojas' necessary corollary work due to the presence of Guzmán Blanco in Paris is treated in Chapter VIII, "The Fringes of Diplomacy," below. Rojas, Paris, 28 June 1879, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. See also L.a. (1880), p. vi.

12. Rojas, copy, Paris, 10 July 1879, to Waddington, MRE/F/TC, vol. 7, fol. 30.

13. Waddington, copy, Paris, 30 July 1879, to Rojas, MRE/F/TC, vol. 7, fol. 31.

14. Rojas, Paris, 21 November 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/F/TC, vol. 7, fol. 29.

15. Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 January 1880, to Rojas, MRE/F/TC, vol. 7, fol. 33; Rojas, Paris, 2 February 1880, to Viso, ibid., fol. 34; Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 15 April 1880, ibid., fol. 36; Rojas, Paris, 18 May 1880, to Viso, ibid., fol. 38; Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 18 June 1880, to Rojas, ibid., fol. 39; Rojas, Paris, 30 October 1880, to Saavedra, ibid., fol. 42; and Rojas, Paris, 19 February 1880, to Saavedra, ibid., fol. 44.

16. See p. 236, below, for the details of the break of 1881. The treaty of commerce and navigation of 19 February 1902 is printed in Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 707-708.

17. On Spence, see p. 69, above, and p. 219, above, on Guzmán Blanco. The question of who took credit for the scheme is developed below.

18. L.a. (1880), pp. ix, 26.

19. The original of the Protocol is located in MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fols. 240-48.

20. Ibid.

21. Rojas, Paris, 19 August 1879, to Barberii, Minister of Foreign Relations, MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fol. 238. Printed in L.a. (1880), pp. 28-29, and G.o., no. 1845 (27 September 1879), p. 7043. Rojas makes no mention of the Protocol with Pereire in his Recuerdos. The assumption is that perhaps he was not too proud of it. And, it can be assumed that he would profit privately from the Protocol if it were successful.

22. Rojas, Paris, 19 August 1879, to Barberii, MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fol. 238, and G.G., vol. 12, p. 108. Lino Duarte Level, Caracas, 1 October 1879, to Barberii, MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fol. 259; this note, written on the stationery of the Presidential Secretary, advises Barberii to give all good services to Delort, the "apoderado" of Pereire.

23. The notations on Barberii's doubts, dated 22 September 1879, are found in MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, back of fol. 248 through 255. "Presidencia de la República," Caracas, 27 September 1879, MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fol. 257; printed in L.a. (1880), pp. 26-27. G.o., no. 1845 (27 September 1879), pp. 7043-44. Wise, Caudillo, p. 159, states that Rojas went to Caracas with Delort in September to present the Protocol. This is not true. Rojas was in Brussels with Guzmán Blanco on 22 September, for example. See G.o., no. 1842 (14 October 1879), p. 8051.

24. Delort, Caracas, n.d., to Barberii, MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fol. 260, and G.G., vol. 12, pp. 106, 109.

25. G.G., vol. 12, p. 110, and Garbiras, San Cristobal, 7 November 1879, to Barberii, MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fols. 265-66. The classical work on the Royal Guipuzcoan Company is Roland D. Hussey, The Caracas Company (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934).

26. The Guzmán Blanco letter is extensively quoted in both G.G., vol. 12, pp. 119-21, and Rondón Marquez, Guzmán Blanco, vol. 1, p. 343. Rondón Marquez, Guzmán Blanco, vol. 1, p. 343, felt that the mental faculties of Guzmán Blanco were not in equilibrium at this particular time.

27. Isidro Espinoza, Bordeaux, 14 November 1879, to González Guinán; printed in G.o., no. 1968 (30 December 1879), pp. 6-8. Espinoza apparently was from Valencia as he made reference to receiving his mail and papers from that city. "Progreso de Venezuela," G.o., no. 1977 (12 January 1880), pp. 1-2. The Delort project and covering letter of 7 January 1880 are in G.o., no. 1978 (13 January 1880); subsequent editions of the G.o., no. 1993 (30 January), p. 3, and no. 1997 (5 February 1880), p. 3, indicate publicized distribution of the project to the proper ministries. González Guinán became Minister of Development (Fomento) on 1 December 1879, Rondón Marquez, Guzmán Blanco, vol. 1, p. 344.

28. Delort, Caracas, 7 January 1880, to L. Duarte Level, General Secretary of the Presidency, G.o., no. 1987 (13 January 1880), p. 1; G.G., vol. 12, pp. 142-43; and Rojas, Paris, 3 March 1880, to Viso, MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fols. 268-72.

29. The Bouverie agreement and the diplomatic activities with Great Britain are covered in the two prior chapters, while the treaty of commerce with Spain is treated later in this chapter.

30. Viso, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 May, 17 June 1880, to Rojas, and Rojas, Paris, 2 July 1880, to Viso; MRE/F/CM, vol. 1, fols. 69, 90, 91. The records of this particular claims commission are in fols. 58-106.

31. Rojas, Paris, 22 June 1880, to Viso, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 147.

32. Rojas, Paris, 22 June 1880, to Viso, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 147; Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 24 June 1880, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 150; Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 21 July 1880, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 149; Rojas, Paris, 2 August 1880, to Saavedra, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 153; and Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 28 August 1880, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 155. The idea of the loan might have come purely from French sources or from Rojas and Viso simultaneously. The Viso letter of 24 June makes reference to an enclosed letter about the possibility of a loan from the French government.

33. Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 February 1881, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 181, in which he refers to a Rojas letter of 2 January 1881. The writer has not located the Rojas letter in the Ministerial archives. Barberii, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 12 July 1879, to Tallenay, MRE/F/FDEV, vol. 2, fol. 65.

34. The Ministerial archives in Caracas contain very little of the material relevant to the break itself. The writer knows that a considerable amount of it passed through the hands of the senior Guzmán, as evidenced in the holdings of the Castellanos MSS. Still, Guzmán generally returned the material to the Ministry. Wherever it is, the documentation does not appear to be in the Ministerial archives. Accordingly, much of the source material for this section is drawn from comments in what material is available in the archives and the official publications of the time. Seijas, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 22 June 1881, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, 8-10; Guzmán Blanco, Message of 20 February 1882, G.o., no. 2620 (8 March 1882), p. 4; L.a. (1882), xlv ff.; and Arcaya, Historia de las reclamaciones, 297 ff.

35. The essence of this circular is probably contained in

L.a. (1882), pp. xlv-li, and might be credited, at least indirectly, to Guzmán. See draft note, 22 June 1881, Castellanos MSS, 8-10, and passim. Guzmán, Caracas, 12 December 1882, to Seijas, MRE/F/IRR, vol. 2, fol. 26, and MRE/F/IRR, vol. 2, fols. 24-61, passim. Seijas, draft, 20 March 1881, to John Baker, United States Minister in Caracas, MRE/F/TC, vol. 7, fol. 45.

36. James G. Blaine, copy, Department of State, Washington, 2 May 1881, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 191; Rojas, Paris, 4 November 1881, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 215; and Rojas, Paris, 23 January 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/SP, vol. 3, fol. 250. See also Guzmán Blanco's message of 20 February 1882, G.o., no. 2620 (8 March 1882), p. 4. [José María Rojas], Le différend Franco-Vénézuélien de 1881 (Brussels: Impr. et Lit. Xavier Havermans, [1881/]); see p. 117, above, for the Dutch related pamphlet.

37. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 6 July 1883, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 178. The original of the protocol reestablishing relations between Venezuela and France is in MRE/F/TC, vol. 7, fol. 45. See also Recop., vol. 12, docs. 3323, 3333; 460-61, 464-66. France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Traités et conventions en vigueur entre la France et les puissances étrangères, recueil préparé par J. Basdevant, 4 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie National, 1918-1922), vol. 3, p. 617; Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 419-22. See Chapter IX, "The Great Break: Rojas and the Guzmáns," for the reasons why the two men were not speaking in 1885.

38. Tratados., vol. 1, 161 ff.

39. See 52 ff., below, for Rojas' prior experiences in Spain.

40. Bécker, Historia, vol. 3, p. 382.

41. Robert C. Binkley, Realism and Nationalism, 1852-1871, edited by William L. Langer, vol. 16 (New York: Harper and Row, c. 1935), 98 ff.; Hayes, A Generation of Materialism, 206 ff.; and Bécker, Historia, vol. 3, 387 ff.

42. Echegaray, Santander, 25 September 1877, to Seijas; printed in G.o., no. 1260 (6 November 1877), p. 4637.

43. L.a. (1878), p. xli, and (1880), p. cxv, and "Impuesto diferencial," G.o., no. 2071 (10 May 1880), pp. 1-2. Fol. 240, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, contains a clipping from Las novedades (New York), 18 July 1882, which comments that the precipitating factor that led to the new treaty of commerce between Spain and Venezuela was the change in the Spanish tariff which began to tax cacao on a basis different from that on which it had been taxed.

44. José Pérez y Sánchez, Málaga, 24 July 1879, to Barberii, and Barberii, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 6 September 1879, to Pérez; both printed in G.o., no. 1815 (10 September 1879), p. 6923.
45. Rojas, Paris, 21 November 1879, to Barberii, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 2. Fol. 3 of this series contains a copy of a note of the Spanish Ambassador, dated 9 November 1879, on the issue of the treaty of commerce.
46. See p. 257, above, and Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 January 1880, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 6.
47. Rojas, Paris, 5, 24 January 1880, to Viso, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fols. 7, 8, and Rojas, copy, Paris, 24 January 1880, to Juan Barrie y Agüero, ibid., fol. 9.
48. Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 February 1880, to Rojas, and Guzmán Blanco, copy, Caracas, 5 February 1880, to Alfonso XII; both in MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fols. 11-12. Viso, copy, 17 February 1880, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 14.
49. Rojas, Paris, 17 February 1880, to Viso, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 15; Barrie y Agüero, copy, Madrid, 13 February 1880, to Rojas, ibid., fol. 16; and Rojas, Paris, 4, 22 March 1880, to Viso, ibid., fols. 20, 18 (entered in reverse chronological order in the volume).
50. Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 15 April 1880, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 25, and G.o., no. 2110 (3 August 1880), p. 1. See also L.a. (1881), p. ciii, which apparently erroneously makes reference to a decree of 3 July 1880 increasing the tariff.
51. L.a. (1881), pp. ciii-civ, and Rojas, Paris, 28 August 1880, to Viso, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 28.
52. Ballasteros, Caracas, 29 December 1880, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 31; Saavedra, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 29 December 1880, 18 January 1881, to Ballesteros, ibid., fols. 34-35; and Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 27 January 1881, to Rojas, ibid., fol. 39. See also L.a. (1881), p. civ.
53. Bécker, Historia, vol. 3, 208, 226 ff.
54. Rojas, Paris, 4 January 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 37.
55. Ibid.

56. Rojas, Paris, 3 February 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 41, and L.a. (1881), p. civ.
57. Rojas, Paris, 19 February 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 45. The originals of the protocol and treaty are in fols. 49-70.
58. MRE/E/N, vol. 2, 49 ff.
59. Rojas, Paris, 19 February 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 45.
60. Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 8 March 1881, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 89.
61. Rojas, Paris, 19 February 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 45, and Rojas, Paris, 17 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 187.
62. Rojas, Paris, 17 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 187, and Saavedra, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 7, 8 March 1881, to Simón Camacho, Minister to the United States, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fols. 87, 88. Rojas recalled his impressions of the reception by Alfonso XII in his Recuerdos, p. 53.
63. Rojas, Paris, 17 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 187, and Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 53.
64. Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 18 March 1881, to Guzmán, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 91; Guzmán, Caracas, 22 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 92; Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 28 March 1881, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 99; Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 28 March 1881, to Ballesteros, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 100; Ballesteros, Caracas, 29 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 103; and Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 102. See also L.a. (1882), pp. xliii-xliv.
65. Rojas, Paris, 19, 22 April 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fols. 120, 124; Fernán Núñez, copy, Paris, 29 March 1881, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 111; Rojas, Paris, 2 April 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 109; Rojas, copy, Paris, 8 April 1881, to Fernán Núñez, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 113; and Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 9 May 1881, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 126.
66. Rojas, Paris, 19 April 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 120. The capriciousness of diplomatic intelligence gathering is well illustrated in the issue of the treaty of commerce with Spain. According to his correspondence, Rojas did not actually

know that Fernán Núñez wanted to negotiate a new treaty until 16 April and, then, after rather exhaustingly unmasking the Spanish diplomat. On the other hand, Simón Camacho, the Venezuelan Ambassador to the United States, reported to Caracas on 30 March that the news from Spain indicated that Alfonso XII had signed an order authorizing Fernán Núñez to seek a more favorable treaty. Camacho, New York, 30 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 105.

67. Rojas, confidential, Paris, 9 May 1881, to Seijas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 125. It is reasonable to assume that Rojas, resentful of his treaty being taken from under him, would not encourage the renegotiation in Caracas between Ballesteros and Guzmán. For the friction between Rojas and the Guzmáns, both father and son, see Chapter IX, "The Great Break: Rojas and the Guzmáns," below.

68. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 May 1881, to Rojas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 128, and Guzmán, Caracas, 27 May 1881, to Seijas, MRE/E/N, vol. 2, fol. 129.

69. Examples of the interplay among Guzmán, Guzmán Blanco, and Seijas on the treaty can be found in Seijas, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11, 21 April, 19 May 1881, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, lote 23, groups 10-11. Lote 21, group 6 of the Castellanos MSS contains an "Informe" on the Rojas-Molíns treaty of 1881. This unsigned commentary is probably an early draft of the Guzmán critique of 22 March 1881; see note 64, above. The originals of the protocol and the treaty, dated 19 and 20 May 1882, are in MRE/E/N, vol. 2, 217 ff., 273 ff. The treaty was published in Caracas on 18 September 1882, concurrently with the rollback of the discriminatory decree on Spanish wines, G.o., Extra (19 September 1882), pp. 1-3, supplement to Extra, p. 1. The relevant Venezuelan government approval of the treaty is found in Recop., vol. 10, docs. 2434, 2436, 2458; 135, 137-140, 224-227. The treaty is published in Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 339-43, and Spain, Colección de los tratados de paz, alianza, comercio, etc., ajustados por la corona de España con las potencias extranjeras desde el reinado del señor don Felipe Quinto hasta el presente, 14 vols. (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1796-1890), vol. 8, pp. 221-25.

70. Seijas, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 2, 28 May, to the Venezuelan Federal Council, 30 May 1882, to Calcaño, MRE/E/F, vol. 6, fols. 2, 6, 15; Nicanor Borges, Venezuelan Federal Council, 26 May 1882, to Seijas, MRE/E/F, vol. 6, fol. 7; Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 June 1882, to Rojas, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 280; Guzmán Blanco, copy, Caracas, 3 June 1882, to Alfonso XII, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 281; Rojas, copy, Paris, 28 June 1882, to the Marquis de la Vega de Armizo, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 282; Rojas, Paris, 1 July 1882, to Seijas, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 283; and Alfonso, Madrid, 7 July 1882, to Guzmán Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 293. See also G.o., no. 2773 (4 October 1882), p. 2, and G.G., vol. 12, p. 416.

71. Rojas, Recuerdos, p. 54. The Marquis of Molíns was right about the two treaties being "almost textually the same." Large parts of them are identical, word for word. Then there are such piddling changes as "ambas" for "las dos" and "naturales del país" for "nacionales." Of greater importance are the changes "islas adyacentes" for "provincias de ultramar", and then a qualification for the overseas provinces in that they had different laws from those of peninsular Spain. But, in the main, the most-favored-nation clauses remained intact, and the changes in the details about consuls were not significant.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FRINGES OF DIPLOMACY

The variety of diplomatic and fiscal positions that Rojas held for the government of Venezuela between 1873 and 1883 must be considered within a frame of reference broader than the diplomatic or fiscal agreements he achieved or failed to achieve. His major successes and failures merely were the best known of his actions. The life of a diplomat included other actions, however, which might be termed the fringes of Rojas' diplomacy. Among these were, for example, the particular circumstances of Rojas' relation with Guzmán Blanco, the routine problems and responsibilities he encountered in his diplomatic positions, the miscellaneous and odd related experiences he had, and the semblance of a private and literary life he led during the entire decade of government service.

The concept of servicing Guzmán Blanco and his sensitivities is particularly true with reference to Rojas' second round of diplomatic and fiscal service for Venezuela. The circumstances of his appointment to Great Britain in late 1876 and the nature of the first instructions to him indicate that it was based on vengeance on the part of Guzmán Blanco. Vengeance did not apply to the issues of the Guiana boundary, the treaty of commerce, the Patos issue, and the smuggling problems with Trinidad. These

issues, all old but admittedly current problems, were more or less tacked onto the root causes of the appointment of Rojas. After all, Venezuela had done nothing of significance with Great Britain on the problems of Guiana and the treaty of commerce since the death of Alejo Fortique in 1845. Surely Guzmán Blanco did not come to the broad, startling conclusion late in 1876 that there were several outstanding problems with Great Britain and they had to be all solved right then. Rather, they were tacked onto the root cause of the assignment of Rojas, a cause having to do with personalities and vengeance.

That cause, very simply, revolved around the friction between Guzmán Blanco and the British Minister Resident in Caracas, Robert Thomas Charles Middleton. It almost suffices to say that Middleton was a most zealous advocate of British interests in Venezuela. The focal point of Middleton's work with Venezuela at the time was protecting British claims against Venezuela. As early as the summer of 1873, for example, he and Minister of Foreign Relations Jacinto Gutiérrez were debating what share of the 13 percent of the decree-law of 1872 should be applied to British claims. Subsequently, Middleton argued during 1875 with another Minister of Foreign Relations, Jesus María Blanco, about essentially the same issue, the payment of debts owed British subjects. This time, however, the issue was whether the Venezuelan Congress should have intervention rights in already agreed-upon claims conventions. The intensity of this debate continued into 1876 and probably set the stage for the appointment of Rojas.<sup>1</sup>

The immediate cause in 1876 seemed to be an exchange of letters between Blanco and Middleton over the continuing problem of payment of debts due Great Britain and, also, the Venezuelan closing of the ports of Maracaibo and La Vela de Coro in the wake of the problems with Curaçao. On May 18 Blanco rather curtly informed Middleton that the act of closing the ports to foreign trade was one of Venezuelan sovereignty and not to be questioned. Middleton wrote the Foreign Office for instructions and, having received them, responded on August 12 with what can only be described as an insult. Specifically, the Blanco note was "not expressed with that courtesy which is generally used by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of a Civilized State in addressing the Representative of a friendly power." The British Minister Resident also saw a Venezuelan tendency to deal arbitrarily with obligations to Great Britain and warned that a continuation of this line of conduct might lead to "an interruption of friendly relations." Twelve days later, with his note still not answered, Middleton sought a response with another blast along the same lines of the behavior of civilized states.<sup>2</sup>

The response from the Casa Amarilla was predictable. C. Garcia, the successor to Blanco, did not waste time with Middleton. Instead, he wrote Lord Derby in the Foreign Office directly. Citing the recent Middleton notes, he informed Derby that a long time before the style and tone of Middleton were seen to stand out and had become "gradually more and more terse and haughty." And no few times the tone of Middleton had caused Guzmán Blanco

to register "just and profound disgust." Garcia did not know why Middleton behaved the way he did, but, on behalf of Guzmán Blanco, he hoped that Middleton would change the style and tone of his notes. In other words, Middleton irritated Guzmán Blanco, and he and his government surely resented his mocking comment about civilized nations.<sup>3</sup>

The response from Derby, not surprisingly, supported Middleton. He differed with Venezuela over the interpretation of the claims conventions, the issue which apparently had first provoked Middleton, and also stated that Middleton was careful to disclaim an intention of interfering with the internal affairs of Venezuela on the inquiry about the closing of the western ports. And then, right in line with the Middleton comment, Derby stated that the matters at hand "are of such a nature as to render it difficult to preserve the courteous and friendly tone which usually characterizes correspondence between the governments of civilized countries."<sup>4</sup>

Middleton forwarded Derby's note to the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry on 10 December 1876, and the naming of Rojas to the post in London and the specific instructions on Middleton and other matters went out to him the very next day. While considering that Venezuela needed a regular minister assigned to London and that there were outstanding problems between the two countries, the sequence of events on December 10 and 11 clearly indicates that the immediate cause was Derby's support of the behavior of Middleton. Calcaño, the new Minister of Foreign Relations, accordingly,

sent the instructions out to Rojas. While the instructions touched on the problems concerning the treaty of commerce, Guiana, Trinidad, and Patos, the greatest emphasis was on Middleton. Calcaño advised Rojas of the problems with Middleton and instructed him to seek the removal of the British Minister Resident.<sup>5</sup>

In the next few months, Rojas began his off-and-on six-year association with the British government. Foremost in his mind was the Middleton situation. He described it in this manner to his friend Sanford on 23 January 1877: "I have not been received by the Queen, and the relations between the two governments are not in a good state, owing exclusively to the discourtesy and bad temper of the British Minister at Caracas, old Middleton." On February 28 Rojas had a long discussion with Derby on the matter of Middleton, but to no avail. Then the Middleton affair became a moot point in the wake of the resignation of Guzmán Blanco as President and Rojas as Minister Resident to Great Britain. The next year a spokesman for the Alcántara administration reversed the official opinion of Middleton. It seems that despite the opinion of the prior administration, Middleton was a man "well known and appreciated in this society." But Middleton, "judged completely honest" by Alcántara, had been a great irritant to Guzmán Blanco and, to that extent, the immediate cause for Rojas' return to Venezuelan diplomacy.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of Rojas' servicing Guzmán Blanco also clearly applied to his incidental work for the Illustrious American during the summer and fall of 1879 in Europe. Rojas' reassignment to

Great Britain came in April, and his first assignment to France came in May, both prior to Guzmán Blanco's departure for Europe. His second assignment to Spain came after Guzmán Blanco had returned to Caracas. In the midst of all of this, the two men worked on the plans for the various assignments while both were together in Paris and elsewhere in Europe. Additionally, Rojas handled the many details of his leader's trip. These details were clearly part of the fringes of Rojas' diplomacy.

The details of the visit began when Rojas presented his credentials on June 20, with Guzmán Blanco already en route, having left Caracas on June 6. Rojas arranged for an official reception at St. Nazaire, to be followed by a reception by French President Grévy. These two events occurred in late June. The hectic pace continued for Rojas through July and August as he managed two legations, the British and French, and had Guzmán Blanco looking over his shoulder as he did it. In September they prepared for the Illustrious American to attend the International Congress of Americanists to be held in Brussels. Rojas naturally went along on that trip as a member of the official retinue. In early November, as the visit of Guzmán Blanco drew to an end, the crescendo picked up once again. President Grévy presented the Venezuelan dignitary with the Legion of Honor, and Rojas had a gigantic ball for the Illustrious American on the eve of his departure. Suffice it to say that the wine flowed freely and the toasts were most flattering.<sup>7</sup>

While there was no doubt that Rojas was in the service of

Guzmán Blanco, both generally and specifically, some of the inner details of his formal diplomacy give one pause over the life of a Venezuelan diplomat in the nineteenth century. Consider, for example, the issue of Rojas' pay. In the early years his pay was V.3,2000 (approximately £615) for the Spanish post and V.8,000 for the Dutch post (approximately £1,539). Perhaps the latter was greater because of the urgency attached to the Dutch situation in the spring of 1875. Though these were the salaries indicated for Rojas, the Treasury did not pay them promptly. In August 1876, when tidying up the Dutch and Spanish missions, Rojas submitted an expense account for the Dutch mission of V.952.13 and also requested his back pay for three years, including both missions. While it can be presumed that Rojas profited, either in the present or in the future, on the bond and railroad issues negotiated during his early years, the fact remains that his pay was slow in coming.<sup>8</sup>

Questions of pay and expenses plagued Rojas throughout his entire diplomatic career. He received a salary of V.8,000 when assigned to the British position in late 1876, but the problem of pay was relatively moot as he quit the position when Alcántara assumed power in Caracas. In the spring of 1879, when reassigned to that post by Guzmán Blanco, Rojas asked for a travel allowance, as he had to maintain his home in Paris, but Guzmán Blanco would not allow it. Rojas' salary in December 1879 increased to V.16,000 perhaps reflective of his multiple assignments by that time. He asked for V.20,000, however, on the basis of living in Paris, traveling to London, maintaining writers and secretaries, and the

general high expense of life in Europe. When he wrote this particular letter in January 1880, he still had not received any pay for his London work of the prior year. The next month Rojas applied more pressure. Learning that his Caracas agents, H. L. Boulton and Company, the permanent receiving intermediary for all his funds, had received only part of what he expected, he wrote Foreign Minister Viso a very strong letter. Rojas pointed out that the record indicated that ministers plenipotentiary never received less than V.40,000 and that while it was a delicate matter, it had been personally sworn to him, presumably by Guzmán Blanco, that he should get this sum. Rojas received his wish. Viso, acting on the authority of the Illustrious American, advised the Treasury Ministry to pay Rojas the prescribed amount for the past year and informed Rojas that, considering the importance of his position, he would receive a salary of V.50,000. Rojas' response was one of jubilation. Venezuela now would be properly represented, and he planned a big party to so inaugurate the event.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the promise to pay and the presumed party in celebration of it, Rojas continued to have salary problems. Somewhat more than a year later, in the summer of 1881, he wrote for back pay again. Foreign Minister Seijas advised him that the Illustrious American said that the government had always been liberal with its good and faithful servants. Accordingly, Rojas would receive his pay from a government that was just as generous as had been that of the Septenio. While this might have been cool comfort to Rojas, considering his past experience, it appeared that he did receive

funds, for the next complaint did not come from him until early 1882. Seijas read his letter to Guzmán Blanco, and the Illustrious American advised that he would insist on the pay being forwarded. Perhaps Rojas did receive some of the pay due him. Even so, the government still owed him money when he left its service in 1883. Rojas received a final salary payment for his services in Spain, in March 1891, almost ten years after his last work with that country.<sup>10</sup>

Another off-and-on problem Rojas encountered with the Ministry in Caracas concerned the use of the Spanish language. Rojas' flexibility with languages began even before he departed Caracas in 1873 with his study of German under Professor Ernst. Surely he had some familiarity with English due to his work with H. L. Boulton and Company. Once he began living in Paris and spending part of his time in London, his French and English capabilities increased greatly. This flexibility, perhaps coupled with absent-mindedness on Rojas' part and a trace of nationalism on the part of the various Foreign Ministers in Caracas, often raised rather humorous problems on the issue of language. In April 1877, for example, Rojas received advice from Caracas that he should always use Spanish in his communications. He had written a long note to Lord Derby in English and had merely enclosed a copy of it in his covering letter to the Ministry in Caracas. Again, in April 1879 Rojas responded to a reminder from Caracas that he would use Spanish in his letters.<sup>11</sup>

The most amusing language incident concerned France. It

clearly shows the diplomatic dominance of France at the time. In late 1879 Rojas advised the Ministry in Caracas that the French government had informed him that he was the only diplomat in Paris not using French in his correspondence. Citing French as the universal language, he rather plaintively stated that he did not want his to be the only mission out of thirty-five in Paris that did not use French. Viso inquired of the French Minister in Caracas about such language customs but received no satisfactory answer. Meanwhile, Rojas should use Spanish. But Rojas pressed the subject and said that France disclaimed responsibility in delaying negotiations while non-French correspondence was being translated. He preferred to write in French and then forward Spanish translations to Caracas. It is certain that the best argument Rojas used with Caracas was that even the Minister of the German Empire, France's chief rival in Europe, used French in his correspondence. Rojas suggested that when the German Empire stopped using French, then Venezuela should consider it. Viso finally acquiesced but insisted that Rojas always be sure to include translations of the correspondence he used.<sup>12</sup>

Another in-house responsibility that Rojas had while holding his various diplomatic posts in Europe was the selection and supervision of the various Venezuelan consuls in Europe. As early as 1875, for example, he was handling the details of the appointment of a new consul at Santa Cruz de Tenerife and planned to send a recommendation for one at Bilbao. In the years that followed, he handled the details of recommending and appointing consuls in

Trinidad, Kingston, London, Cardiff, Stockholm, and Dunquerque. Of these, the consular positions in London and Stockholm are of particular interest. The London Consul during most of Rojas' official work was Frederick H. Hemming. This English gentleman, a long-term employee of the Venezuelan government, had served as Consul from 1856 to 1858. Then he received a new appointment in 1870, concurrent with the beginning of the Septenio. Great Britain regarded this appointment as provisional until elections might be held in Venezuela. Rojas finally obtained the proper exequator for Hemming in the early spring of 1877. When Hemming died in late 1880, Rojas wrote a warm and touching letter announcing his death to the Ministry in Caracas. The consular position in Stockholm presented a potentially serious problem to Rojas late in his diplomatic career. It seems that in the winter of 1881-1882, there were two men who pretended to be in charge of a Venezuelan consulate in that city. It was purely a pretension, however, and on instructions from Caracas, Rojas wrote the Swedish Minister in Paris, the source of information on the pretenders, and asked for his recommendations of a consul in Stockholm. The only consul with whom Rojas had serious problems was Antonio Parra Bolívar of Le Havre. The nature and seriousness of this particular relationship, however, are better treated elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>

Among the strictly public diplomatic responsibilities that befell Rojas was prescribed attendance at certain meetings, conferences, and conventions. Rojas probably found these meetings at once dull and fascinating, in the sense that they were tiresome

but that they also were informative. Whatever his reaction might have been, Rojas did attend a number of these meetings as the official representative of Venezuela and helped handle the details of others. Rojas, for example, was one of several Venezuelan commissioners to the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1878. It appears that he did most of his work on this project somewhat after the fact, however, in that he sent back to Caracas the books published in conjunction with the exposition and forwarded the medals won by Venezuelans. Shortly thereafter, Rojas spent much time forwarding various publications from the French Secretariat of Public Instruction. These books were available as a result of an international exchange convention of 1879-1880.<sup>14</sup>

It seemed that the French might be sponsoring something for everyone at the time. As evidence of this rather tart observation, it is interesting to note that Rojas attended in Paris, in November 1880, an international conference on the protection of industrial property. While Rojas was spared attending the International Electrical Congress in Paris of 1881, he did have to arrange the forwarding to Caracas of certain materials after the conference. The same year the Minister of Foreign Relations designated Rojas to represent Venezuela at a proposed Spanish congress of maritime powers to consider the boarding rights of ships in free waters. It does not appear that this congress materialized, however. And while Rojas did not participate in the Metric Convention in Paris in 1875, he did devote some of his time between 1879 and 1883 on the details of paying Venezuela's share of the costs.<sup>15</sup> As tedious

as these functions must have been, it is probable that Rojas may have found other aspects of diplomatic protocol more distasteful.

One of these aspects might be termed "high protocol." That is, Rojas spent a certain amount of his time and effort in forwarding and otherwise handling details of a purely formal nature among the heads of the various nations with which he worked. For example, early during his tenure with Great Britain, he forwarded a letter from Guzmán Blanco to Queen Victoria congratulating her on the birth of a royal princess. In 1879 he forwarded letters congratulating the Queen on two recent marriages in the royal household. Notes of a similar nature followed in the next few years. Rojas exhibited his own feelings and probably those of others on these matters in 1882 when he reacted to a very prompt high-protocol response from Granville. Passing the necessary information on to Caracas, he ended his note by stating, "God grant that the British government display the same activity in expediting the matters that interest us!" Great Britain was quick on the matter of royal births, deaths, marriages, and even engagements, but not on such issues as a treaty of commerce and the Guiana boundary. Somber aspects of high protocol, on the other hand, included Rojas' handling of the necessary correspondence relevant to the death, in 1881, of Robert Bunch, the British Minister to Venezuela, and the unsuccessful assassination attempts on Alfonso XII, in 1879, and Queen Victoria, in 1882.<sup>16</sup>

At a different social and political level, Rojas also spent time and energy on what might be termed "low protocol."

He handled the details of the issuance of the bust of the Liberator, Simón Bolívar, for example, to certain individuals in Europe. When in Caracas in late 1876, he received the certificates for seven such honors to be distributed to various individuals on his return to Europe. Several years later Rojas faced the problem of those who sought the decoration or trafficked in an illegal version of it. In the fall of 1880, a Mr. Vallat solicited the honor in Paris. Rojas did not know the man personally but knew of him and described him in a derogatory manner as a "boursicotia." Rojas also spent time in early 1881 trying to track down certain unauthorized copies of the honor. Apparently, the decoration was desirable enough in Paris society that there was an underground traffic in it. Another example of low protocol was the forwarding of autographed pictures of Guzmán Blanco to the heads of various states. In 1881 Rojas received and presumably forwarded such a picture to the King of the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). The next year his secretary acknowledged receipt of a similar illustration for the King of Serbia.<sup>17</sup>

One unusual fringe obligation of Rojas that fits no particular category, except perhaps that of minor nationalism, was his concern over scurrilous publications about Venezuela. There were at least two such instances during his diplomatic career. The first one occurred during his first formal visit to Spain in the winter of 1873-1874. It seems that a Spaniard named Cristóbal M. González de Soto had lived in Venezuela for many years, then returned to Spain and wrote his impressions in a publication titled Noticia histórica de la República de Venezuela. This work was

highly critical of Guzmán Blanco, and Rojas sought relief from the Spanish government. He succeeded to the extent that González had to post a bond to cover any expenses that might be incurred in the Spanish courts. Several years later, in 1882, the government in Caracas prohibited the sale and circulation of a small Cortambert atlas edited by Hachette because of boundary errors in its map of Venezuela. On learning of this Rojas observed that the publishing company probably meant no harm. He suggested that the government itself might supply a new map. As long as this might be done, Rojas suggested a sketch for himself, as even he did not know the accurate boundaries of Venezuela.<sup>18</sup> This slight needle of hard humor was most timely as the Guiana boundary dispute was one of the current problems.

Other aspects of Rojas' diplomacy, some humorous and some poignant, can only be classified as miscellaneous and odd. Among them were the Phoenix Park murders. An apparent fugitive from the prosecution of this double murder in Great Britain, a demented Irishman by the name of William Westgate, alias Michael O'Brien, shipped to Venezuela early in 1882. Once there he confessed to participating in the murders, and Venezuelan authorities held him for extradition to Great Britain. It became a delicate issue, however, as Venezuela did not have capital punishment. Rojas spent considerable time and effort during 1882 on the matter, until it became moot when the British authorities determined that Westgate was innocent. Another incident concerned the Colombian youth with a great sum of money. On a trip from La Guaira to St. Nazaire in

1880, the young man entrusted his treasure of Fr.20,000 to the Venezuelan, General Natividad Solórzano. On arrival at the French port, Solórzano stated he had lost the money and advised the lad against going to the police. Whatever the truth in the matter, the advice from Caracas to Rojas was that it was unlikely that Solórzano had the money.<sup>19</sup>

One of the oddest and, in a sense, most humorous diplomatic experiences Rojas had concerned the case of the smuggled cigars. In December 1881 the French police visited him at his Paris home and inquired about his large shipment of cigars recently arrived in that country. Rojas learned that almost 500 pounds of cigars, 218 kilograms with a count of 32,875, had been shipped into France in his name. While he did not have a formal relationship with France in the wake of the French break of the year before, it is presumed that his position as Venezuelan Ambassador to Great Britain and his unofficial character with France made his name a possible cover for smugglers. Rojas satisfied the French authorities that the cigars were not his and that was the end of the case. It was not an isolated experience, however, as Rojas reported to Seijas that the same thing had happened recently to the Russian Ambassador to France.<sup>20</sup>

Through all of this, both the primary formal diplomacy and its fringes, Rojas still maintained at least a semblance of a private life while living in Paris and visiting elsewhere in Europe. Of necessity, however, his position thrust him into the public sector of European society. And, it is only truthful to state

that he probably enjoyed the fringe benefits of his diplomatic position. Such benefits might have been his membership in the Cercle de France in Paris and his nonvoting access to the English St. James Club. Rojas also frequented such places as the dining room of the French Minister of Foreign Relations and various spas in Europe. His activity along these lines probably increased whenever Guzmán Blanco happened to be in Europe. Another fringe benefit Rojas received during these years of diplomatic service was a title from Pope Leo XIII. From 1881 he was known also as the Marquis of Rojas.<sup>21</sup>

Rojas' private life was just that, private. He had come to Europe in 1873 to educate his children, and it can be assumed that he did what he wanted in that area. He took two of his daughters with him on his first diplomatic trip to London in 1877, and he may have done so again on other occasions. Later that year, however, with his eldest daughter married and his youngest in college, he described his position to his North American friend Sanford as "all alone, personally." Barely a month after this written comment to Sanford, he reported his apparent liaison in Austria with the young Italian lady. While Rojas' love life, hopefully, was no concern of the Ministry in Caracas, other personal items were. Four years later, for example, official expressions of sympathy came from Caracas in the wake of the accidental death of his eldest son.<sup>22</sup>

Another aspect of Rojas' private life, though admittedly not as private as his family and his love life, was his business

and legal career. It has already been established that he was in a position to profit personally in the financial schemes he handled for his government. While this was semi-private business, other business was strictly private. Rojas negotiated some of this private business through his old partnership in Caracas, H. L. Boulton and Company. For example, in 1877 and 1878 the company handled stock transfers for the Venezuelan while he was, in the interim, between Alcántara and Guzmán Blanco. Rojas received stock in the New Providence gold and the New Hanse copper mining enterprises. Later, Rojas and the Boulton firm worked together in 1883 to establish the Venezuelan Copper Company, with Rojas being the agent in London. That same year, Boulton handled the transfer of 10,000 in stock of the old Ferrocarril del Este to Rojas. Rojas also spent considerable time and effort as the counsel of his North American friend Sanford in the lingering Aves Island claims. Thus, the Venezuelan diplomat spent some of his time in purely private business affairs while representing his country.<sup>23</sup>

On top of his diplomacy and its fringes, both official and extraofficial, Rojas still found time to pursue his literary career. The distinct impression, however, is that he somewhat let it slide, depending on his other commitments of the time. In 1875 he published the well-received Biblioteca de escritores venezolanos contemporáneos. Surely this comprehensive work must have been conceived and even partially completed before Rojas left Caracas in 1873. Even so, the joint publishing of this work by Rojas Hermanos, in Caracas, and Jouby et Roger, in Paris, is evidence that Rojas

did considerable study and writing as a diplomat from the beginning. Toward the end of his diplomatic decade, he published his famous Simón Bolívar. Surely considerable time and effort had gone into this work before the actual publication date. And, doubtless he already was at work on his 1884 publication, a study of El General Miranda.<sup>24</sup>

These, then, were the fringes of Rojas' diplomatic career in Europe. They add perspective to the more serious and formal aspects of his negotiations on behalf of Venezuela and indicate that his diplomacy covered both the large and the small, the major treaty and the Presidential portrait for the King of exotic islands in the Pacific Ocean. Rojas' obligations ranged from the frothy, such as the going-away party for Guzmán Blanco, to the comical, at least in retrospect, such as his being accused of smuggling cigars into France. Within this broad spectrum of obligatory governmental service, Rojas also maintained a private and personal life, engaged in certain business activities, and pursued literary endeavors, too. His literary endeavors, particularly in 1883, also became a visible manifestation of his break with the Guzmáns and the immediate cause of the termination of his diplomatic career.

## NOTES

1. For a brief background to the problem Middleton had, see L.a. (1874), pp. xl-xli. Notice also the exchange of letters of 29 July, 1 August 1873, between Gutiérrez and Middleton, respectively in ibid., pp. 70-71. The Middleton correspondence of 1875, dated 26 May, 31, 22 September, 14, 18 October, and 17 December, is in MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fols. 97, 100, 103, 105, 108, 111. Another relevant Middleton letter to Blanco, dated 28 May 1875, is in MRE/GB/CR, fol. 248. Copies of the Blanco rejoinders are 21 July 1875, in MRE/GB/CR, fol. 248, and 12 October, 17 December 1875, in MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fols. 101, 112.
2. Middleton, Caracas, 16 May 1876, to Blanco, and Blanco, copy, 18 May 1876, to Middleton, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fols. 206, 208. While this correspondence centers around the closing of the two ports, there is some indication that there might have been another Blanco letter of 18 May which is not located in the Ministerial archives; Middleton, Caracas, 12, 24 August 1876, to C. Garcia, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Relations, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fols. 209, 216.
3. Garcia, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 24 August 1876, to Derby, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fol. 212 (mismarked 112).
4. Derby, Foreign Office, 7 November 1876, to Garcia, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fol. 224.
5. Middleton, Caracas, 10 December 1876, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fol. 235, and Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11 December 1876, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 38. There is a rough draft, dated 11 December 1876, of a note from Calcaño to Derby marked "se pasó" in MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fol. 237, but it is doubtful if this strong response to the Derby note of 11 November was sent. Rather, on 19 February 1877, Calcaño responded to the Derby note by stating that the Illustrious American could not accept it, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fol. 240.
6. Rojas, London, 23 January 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17; Rojas, London, 5 March 1877, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/GR, vol. 39, fol. 244; and T. Célis Avila, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 October 1878, to Lord Derby, printed in G.o., no. 1498 (7 October 1878), p. 5621.

7. The various sources for this most brief description of Guzmán Blanco's visit to Paris are Rojas, Paris, 23 June 1879, to Barberii, MRE/F/CLVP, vol. 3, fol. 118; Rojas, Paris, 28 June, 13 July, 3 August 1879, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17; G.o., nos 1872, 1873, 1892, 1839 (14, 25 October, 27 November 1879), pp. 8051-52, 8055-56, 9022-23; and G.G., vol. 12, pp. 72-73, 97-98, 125.
8. Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 5 March 1874, to the Minister of the Treasury, MRE/E/FDV, vol. 5, fol. 233; Blanco, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 May 1875, to Rojas, MRE/H/F, vol. 1, fol. 163; and Rojas, Caracas, 29 August 1876, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 275.
9. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 11 December 1876, to Treasury Ministry, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 47; Rojas, London, 3 April 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 104; and Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 30 April 1879, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 105. Fols. 133-35 of MRE/F/FDV, vol. 2, dated 13 December 1879, make provision for Rojas to be paid V.16,000 annually through H. L. Boulton and Company. Rojas, Paris, 2 January 1881, to Viso, MRE/F/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 137; Rojas, Paris, 2 February 1880, to Viso, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 132; Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 17 February 1880, to Treasury Ministry, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 135; Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 17 February 1880, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 136; and Rojas, Paris, 22 March 1880, to Viso, MRE/F/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 141. A communication from Viso to the Ministry of the Treasury, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 4 May 1880, MRE/F/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 139, made provision for Rojas to be paid his new V.50,000 salary on a monthly basis through H. L. Boulton and Company.
10. Rojas, Paris, 20 July 1881, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 201; Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 24 August 1881, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 212; Rojas, Paris, 24 February 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 136; Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 31 March 1883, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 138; and Carlos F. Grisanti, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 24 February, 13 November 1891, to Ministry of the Treasury, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 300, 302.
11. Raimundo Andueza Palacio, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 6 April 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 76; Rojas, copy, Paris, 17 April 1877, to Derby, MRE/GB/SP, vol. 3, fol. 13; and Rojas, Paris, 2 April 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 102.
12. Rojas, Paris, 4 December 1879, to Viso; Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 31 December 1879, to Tallenay; Tallenay, Caracas, 3 January 1880, to Viso; Viso, copy, Ministry

of Foreign Relations, 5 February 1880, to Rojas; Rojas, Paris, 20 March 1880, to Viso; and Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 14 April 1880, to Rojas; MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 126-28, 134, 139, 143.

13. Rojas, The Hague, 3 October 1875, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 258; Derby, copy, Foreign Office, 5 May 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 276; Rojas, Paris, 5 June 1879, to Barberii, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 131; Rojas, Paris, 4 May 1881, to Seijas, MRE/GB/CI, vol. 1, fol. 166; and Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 2 June 1883, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 256. The relevant correspondence on Hemming is Rojas, copy, London 26 February 1877, to Derby, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 71; Derby, copy, Foreign Office, 9 March 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 265; Derby, copy, Foreign Office, 14 March 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 266; Rojas, copy, London, 16 March 1877, to Derby, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 266 (back); and Rojas, Paris, 19 December 1880, to Saavedra, MRE/GB/CVGB, vol. 6, fol. 108. The Swedish flap is contained in Rojas, Paris, 30 January, 2 March 1882, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 222, 224. In September 1881 a detailed, twelve-page study of the powers of Venezuelan consuls came forth in the Ministry of Foreign Relations. This study is located in MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, 206 ff. The author, J. M. Manrique, paid extensive credit in the study to the "luminous report" of A. L. Guzmán on the matter. Perhaps fortunately for Rojas, the report did not affect his consular efforts.

14. G.o., no. 984 (8 September 1876), p. 3538, and no. 1142 (8 June 1877), p. 4169; and Rojas, Paris, 29 May 1882, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 231. Subsequent correspondence on the forwarding of diplomas and medals awarded at the Universal Exposition is in MRE/F/IE, vol. 2, fols. 1-16. In his role as commissioner to the Exposition, Rojas apparently furthered the career of the Venezuelan artist Martín Tovar y Tovar by buying a painting preliminary to the one of "5 July 1811" that the artist rendered under commission to Guzmán Blanco; see Arístides Rojas, Estudio histórico, el constituyente de Venezuela y el cuadro de Martín Tovar y Tovar que representa el 5 de julio de 1811 (Caracas: Tipografía de Vapor de "El Cojo," 1884), pp. 58-59.

15. Complete details of the Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, attended by twenty nations, are in MRE/F/IE, vol. 2, fols. 17-210. G.o., no. 2560 (28 December 1881), p. 2, and MRE/F/IE, vol. 2, fols. 212-23; see also Rojas, Paris, 23 February 1883, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 249. The pertinent information on the boarding rights congress is found in Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 21 May 1880, to Rojas, and Rojas, Paris, 22 June 1880, to Viso, MRE/E/I, 10-11. Rojas' handling of the Metric Convention details is in MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fols. 58-146.

16. Calcaño, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 19 February 1877, to Rojas, and Rojas, Paris, 31 March 1877, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/CG, vol. 2, fols. 232-33; Derby, copy, Foreign Office, 11 April 1877, to Rojas, MRE/GB/SP, vol. 3, fol. 13; Rojas, Paris, 9 July 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/CG, vol. 1, fol. 198; Rojas, Paris, 29 May 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/CG, vol. 2, fol. 272; Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 March 1881, to Rojas, and Granville, copy, Foreign Office, 10 May 1881, to Rojas, MRE/GB/CI, vol. 1, fols. 163, 168; and Viso, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 12 February 1880, to Ballesteros, MRE/E/CG, fol. 244. The exchange between Guzmán Blanco and Alfonso was published in G.o., no. 2100 (14 June 1880), p. 1. Rojas, Paris, 3 March, 24 April 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/CI, vol. 1, fol. 182, 187. See also L.a. (1883), p. lxxiii.
17. Rojas, Caracas, 4 November 1876, to Calcaño, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 272; Rojas, Paris, 30 October 1880, to Barberii, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 158; and Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 22 January 1881, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 176. Rojas, Paris, 20 December 1881, 31 August 1882, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fols. 218, 243; "boursicotía" is a derogatory idiom which loosely approximates financial wheeler-dealer.
18. Rojas, copies, Madrid, 24 January, 4 February 1874, to Sagasta, Spanish Minister of State, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fol. 221, 226, and Rojas, Madrid, 29 January, 10 February, Paris, 27 March, 26 June 1874, to Blanco, MRE/E/F, vol. 5, fols. 223, 227, 235, 244. The writer has not had access to the Spanish court records of the time to determine if Gonzáles de Soto had to forfeit his bond. Rojas, Paris, 22 June 1882, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 234; see also G.G., vol. 12, p. 399, and Parra, Doctrinas, vol. 1, pp. 34-35.
19. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 29 March 1882, to Rojas, MRE/GB/CI, vol. 1, fol. 179; MRE/GB/E, vol. 2, fols. 187-232; see also L.a. (1883), pp. lxxiii-lxiv, and G.G., vol. 12, fol. 430. Rojas, Paris, 19 December 1880, to Saavedra, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 168; see also Wise, Caudillo, p. 143 for brief information on Solórzano.
20. Rojas, Paris, 19 January 1882, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 223. Fols. 225-228 contain the details of the smuggled cigars.
21. Rojas, Paris, 29 June 1879, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. Rojas also apparently was a member of the "most select of Venezuelan society" among the Spanish-speaking community in Paris. See Luís Bonafoux y Quintero, Los Españoles en Paris (Paris: Louis Michaud, 1913), p. 15, and Espasa Calpe, vol. 51, p. 1398. The Vatican sources in the archives of the Ministry

of Foreign Relations are singularly lacking. The little correspondence there merely indicates that more should be. On 10 July 1876 Rojas wrote Sanford from Paris that Guzmán Blanco might send him to Rome to deal with the Vatican, but nothing apparently came of it; Sanford MSS, 35-16.

22. The copy of a nondated note to Lord Derby indicates that Rojas had his two daughters Dolores and Caroline with him in London in early 1877, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fol. 56. Rojas, Paris, 20 June, 22 July 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17, and Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 18 February 1881, to Rojas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 182.

23. Boulton MSS, "Negociaciones industriales y minadoras" and "Actividades públicas," *passim*. The bulk of the letters Rojas wrote Sanford contain references to the Aves Island claims, Sanford MSS, 35-13 through 18, *passim*.

24. Simón Bolívar (Paris: Librería de Garnier Hermanos, 1883), and El General Miranda (Paris: Librería de Garnier Hermanos, 1884). The Miranda work has been republished as vol. 24 of Archivo del General Miranda (Havana: Editorial Lex, 1950).

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GREAT BREAK: ROJAS AND THE GUZMÁNS

Rojas' break with the Guzmáns had much deeper roots than literary differences. It really is not surprising when considering his entire life up to 1883. That year Rojas was fifty-five years old, had been in the diplomatic service of his country, with the exception of a brief period in 1877 and 1878, for ten years, and, most important, had been a life-long friend of the President of Venezuela, Guzmán Blanco. Yet, despite the enduring friendship, the two men were quite different. Both were vain, but Guzmán Blanco was much more outgoing than Rojas. Each man had his own system of behavior, each had his own way to practice the art of political persuasion, and this relationship of unlikes was set within a framework of both Venezuelan national policy and other personal relationships. Their own relationship was a political one supplemented by personal friendship and finally destroyed by a breakdown in the latter.

It is obvious, at least during the early years of his diplomatic career, that Rojas had established a good reputation in Caracas before his departure and pleased Guzmán Blanco with his work for the government. For three straight years, beginning in 1875, he received medals for his service to Venezuela. The first

year, Guzmán Blanco awarded him a special medal for the publication of his Biblioteca de autores venezolanos. The next year, he received a special medal for his service to the Republic in renegotiating the foreign debt and contracting for the construction of the railroad from Caracas to the sea. Finally, in 1877 he received a medal for earlier fiscal work he had done in Caracas as the Director of the Credit Company, a developmental firm working on behalf of Guzmán Blanco's desire to improve Caracas. These items were tangible proof of the close relationship between the two men and particularly of Guzmán Blanco's high esteem of Rojas.<sup>1</sup>

In a leader-retainer relationship such as that between Guzmán Blanco and Rojas, the compliments flowed in both directions, and there was considerable public lip service. Rojas always profusely thanked the Illustrious American for his various diplomatic appointments. When appointed to Great Britain in 1876, for example, he wrote Foreign Minister Calcaño the following acknowledgment: "Please manifest to the Illustrious American that I greatly thank him for the new proof of confidence with which he has honored me. . . ." Two years later, when reassigned to the same post, his message was, "Please, Mr. Minister, manifest to the Illustrious American my gratitude for the confidence that he has entrusted in me. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Taken alone, these expressions of gratitude for the appointments do not appear unusual.

Other expressions of humility and constant seeking for Guzmán Blanco's approval of various ideas proposed by Rojas

seemed to be the rule rather than the exception. Reporting a meeting with Julian Pauncefote in early 1880 on the issue of the Guiana boundary, for example, he asked the Foreign Minister to pass the information on to the President and assure him that Rojas was defending Venezuelan interests. It might be observed that such a request indicates, too, both the personalistic character of Venezuelan politics of the time and the long-time intimacy between Rojas and Guzmán Blanco. Later the same year, when presenting a plan for the development of western Venezuela, Rojas urged that the Minister of Foreign Relations pass back to him the opinion of Guzmán Blanco on the matter. Still another example of lip service, this time in an extremely public manner, was the Rojas-Pereire Protocol. Guzmán Blanco particularly wanted this arrangement and let it be clearly known that the idea was strictly his. Rojas echoed this sentiment strongly in his extremely public letter to Foreign Minister Barberii and stated that the President wanted the matter to be given the widest publicity in Venezuela.<sup>3</sup>

Thus far, the relationship between Rojas and Guzmán Blanco, even if the correspondence sometimes went beyond routine courtesies, did not seem very unusual. It probably was the way most members of the coterie of Guzmán Blanco, whether liberal or conservative, acted in relation to their aristocratic caudillo. In the case of Rojas, however, the life-long friendship, the difference in personalities, and particularly the role of the elder Guzmán, Antonio Leocadio, led to a termination not only of Rojas' diplo-

matic career but also of the friendship itself.

It is most probable that the elder Guzmán was the basic cause for many problems Rojas had toward the end of his diplomatic career. The role that old Antonio Leocadio played in nineteenth-century Venezuelan politics might be likened to that of a gadfly with the sting of a horsefly. He had an abrasive, self-righteous personality. If he was not running the show, he was always trying to run it. Before Rojas became a diplomat, Guzmán and his father, José María de Rojas, had been on different sides of the political fence in their journalistic efforts. Considering this background, it is not surprising that Rojas rather quickly learned he had serious problems when Guzmán, now an elderly but spirited man, turned his attention to Rojas' brand of diplomacy. Guzmán did this on the basis of being a consultant to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, a position his son the President gave him in 1880.<sup>4</sup>

Guzmán had several fields of activity in his role as consultant. He pursued and negotiated a boundary treaty with Colombia and wrote a study on Venezuelan consuls. These undertakings did not concern Rojas. Other fields did, however, and they can be seen as a definite contributing factor to Rojas' determination to quit the diplomatic service of Venezuela. Specifically, Guzmán concerned himself with Rojas' efforts to settle the boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana and obtain a treaty of commerce with Spain. Guzmán consulted with the Ministry in the following manner. The Minister would forward Rojas' correspondence to him. He would study it, at times seek additional information, and then

write his recommendations back to the Ministry. These recommendations might then be reflected in new instructions forwarded to Rojas. While the influence was indirect and the Minister never wrote Rojas that "A. L. Guzmán recommends. . . ," surely Rojas knew that Guzmán was taking a keen interest in his activities.<sup>5</sup>

Guzmán's interest formally began right after his appointment as consultant. By the end of September 1880, Foreign Minister Saavedra forwarded him the latest Rojas correspondence on British issues. From this correspondence came the temporary crisis in March and April 1881 about Rojas exceeding his authority in the Guiana boundary negotiations. Rojas had orders to accept the mouth of the Moroco River, the old British offer to Fortique in 1844, as the eastern point of a proposed new boundary line in 1880. The negotiations had dragged on during the entire year, and Rojas probably was quite impatient with British delays, ostensibly for the arrival of an official from British Guiana. In February 1881 Rojas made the offer of an eastern boundary point beginning one mile north of the Moroco River mouth, and this action prompted the charges of treason from Guzmán to the Ministry. A more moderate version of Guzmán's charge had then been sent on to Rojas. Rojas wrote an explanatory letter on 22 April 1881, but Guzmán Blanco or his father, or both, found it unsatisfactory. Even so, Rojas survived the incident and continued in the service of his country.<sup>6</sup>

Simultaneously with his accusation of treason in the case of the Guiana boundary, Guzmán also found extensive fault with

the new treaty of commerce and navigation Rojas had signed with the Spanish Minister to France on 8 February 1881. Guzmán found fault with fourteen of the seventeen articles of the treaty. It is not surprising that Rojas resented this action and considered it a questioning of his judgment. Despite this he did not attack Guzmán but, rather, spent his time attempting to discredit the Spanish Minister in Caracas, Ballesteros, who would negotiate a new treaty with Guzmán. This tactic did not work, however, and the two men ultimately signed the new treaty in Caracas the following year. Rojas' resentment of the Spanish affair probably was compounded by the fact that while he had learned from Caracas that a new treaty might be negotiated there in an effort to save time, he learned from the Spanish Minister in Paris that definite plans called for Guzmán and Ballesteros to do the work in Caracas. Put simply, in this case he received better information from outside his normal chain of command than within it.<sup>7</sup>

It is a reasonable assumption that Rojas had been proud of his diplomatic accomplishments in early 1881. It appeared that he might be on the verge of realizing a settlement or, at least, realistic negotiation of the Guiana boundary dispute, and he had actually signed a treaty of commerce with a Spanish representative. To have these two successes struck down by the Ministry in Caracas must have been very disheartening. And, when the root cause of the Ministerial displeasure with his actions was the elder Guzmán, Rojas probably had reason to be even more disheartened. At the least, it meant that Guzmán Blanco and his

Ministry of Foreign Relations sanctioned the views of Guzmán in his role as consultant to the Ministry. At the most, it meant that Guzmán still had tremendous influence on his son the President.

While it is not evident that Guzmán was behind it, the next move came from Guzmán Blanco. On 27 May 1881, in the midst of a depressing period for Rojas, the Illustrious American sent him an unusual telegram from Caracas. "I prohibit all official or confidential negotiation and even the prospect of persons of the official world. I insist strongly that you go to London and await my orders." Rojas was not certain that he understood the orders, but he did know that he could not disobey an order of the President. He also maintained that he could not live in London because of health problems within his family. Accordingly, he advised Minister of Foreign Affairs Seijas on June 4 that perhaps he should cease his functions and formally asked that he be relieved of his positions as Minister and Fiscal Agent in London and Minister in Spain.<sup>8</sup>

Rojas was sincere in his desire to be relieved. Still, his request prompted no action from Caracas. The main reason was probably that there was no one available to replace him at the time. So Rojas continued to function diplomatically for two more years. But the circumstances were now different, and while he did more important diplomatic work, particularly in the case of Great Britain, the sense of patriotism and personal pride must not have been as great as they had been before the spring of 1881. Toward the end of the year, Rojas' disenchantment came closer to

the surface. On December 22, writing Seijas in answer to a query about certain diplomatic archives, Rojas stated that he had finally decided to remain definitively in France. Rojas' bond with Venezuela, already fragile and even broken privately, now had become partially suspect in official circles.<sup>9</sup>

Rojas continued his work under this cloud during 1882. While there were not as many confrontations, direct or indirect, with the Guzmáns as before, very clearly the relationship no longer was the same. During the year Rojas heard directly from Guzmán Blanco on both the Guiana boundary and the Spanish treaty of commerce. This was not particularly unusual, for the Illustrious American often wrote directly to Rojas on various matters. A. L. Guzmán, on the other hand, while involving himself only in the Guiana boundary issue, the Spanish treaty of commerce now being moot, certainly made Rojas' job more difficult and his standing both in Caracas and London probably more tenuous. On 25 April 1882 he submitted his "Memorandum sobre la navegación fluvial del continente Sur Americano" to Seijas. This study probably was the contributing factor in the Ministerial decision to negate the boundary claim at the Moroco River and return it to the original Venezuelan claim of the Essequibo River. This had the effect of undoing all Rojas' recent negotiations with Great Britain, over and above the earlier disallowance of his unauthorized offer one mile north of the mouth of the Moroco.<sup>10</sup>

There was a subtlety in Guzmán's letters to the Ministry, furthermore, that clearly showed how he felt about Rojas. Writing

Seijas on 15 April 1882, he referred to several personalities who had been involved in the Guiana issue. Guzmán cited "Don A. Fortique" and "Sr. Dr. Eduardo Calcaño." He treated Rojas, on the other hand, merely as "J. M. Rojas," apparently not worthy of a "Sr." or "Dr." Since a copy of this letter probably went to Rojas, it is not surprising that his resentment of Guzmán increased even more. By December 1882 he probably felt trapped by Guzmán and his machinations and wanted out more than ever. That he took the problem personally is reflected in his letter of the twelfth to his friend Sanford, "My personal question with Mr. Guzmán is not yet decided." The personal issue had a chance to become completely open that month when Guzmán wrote a letter to Rojas on the issues with Great Britain, but for some reason it did not leave the Ministry.<sup>11</sup>

Instead, for a brief period of time in early 1883, Guzmán seriously courted the British Minister in Caracas, Mansfield, and tried to shift the Guiana negotiations from London to that city. This would have been a final undercutting of Rojas' negotiations in London, at least in the eyes of Rojas, and would have resulted in another takeaway of Rojas' functions, as in the case of the Spanish treaty of commerce. Despite serious efforts on his part, Guzmán came to the conclusion that Mansfield could not negotiate in Caracas. He so informed his son, Guzmán Blanco, and resumed contributing to instructions for Rojas.<sup>12</sup> By the spring of 1883, however, issues other than who would settle the Guiana boundary, if it could be settled at all, were becoming more impor-

tant to Rojas' relationship with the government in Caracas.

The focal point for these primarily nondiplomatic issues was the upcoming celebration of the centennial of the birth of the Liberator, Simón Bolívar. Guzmán Blanco began planning for the centennial in a decree of 3 September 1881 by establishing a commission of distinguished citizens to do the work. Two notable members of the commission were Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, the chairman, and Aristides Rojas, respectively the father of the President and the brother of Rojas.<sup>13</sup> As the commission began its work, Rojas became involved on several fronts, and the ultimate result was the termination of his diplomatic career.

Rojas' first action in this respect was harmless enough. The original decree had included a special invitation to Great Britain because of its role in the independence of Venezuela. Rojas merely acted as an intermediary between Seijas and Granville on the details of the invitation. As it turned out, Mansfield was selected to represent both the British nation and also Queen Victoria.<sup>14</sup> Rojas' further involvements in the centennial would not be as harmless, however, as was this one.

The next centennial episode, while harmless on its face, led to complications. It centered around a crystal chandelier and other accessories for the centennial. Guzmán Blanco ordered Rojas to purchase the various items and send them to Caracas so they might be mounted in appropriate places to grace the city and buildings during the centennial celebration. Rojas ordered the items, had them packed into thirty-two cases, and sent them to

the Venezuelan Consul in Le Havre for transshipment to Caracas.<sup>15</sup>  
And that, apparently, is where the centennial problems became serious.

The Venezuelan Consul in Le Havre was Antonio Parra Bolívar. Parra B. had been in the diplomatic service of Venezuela for twenty years or more, was a generally accomplished, well-established consul, and played his Venezuelan politics with consummate skill. As early as 1877 he was doing little favors for Guzmán and currying his support. He had no love for Rojas, on the other hand, due to an incident in 1881. That year, after France had broken relations with Venezuela and the diplomatic scene was in temporary disarray, Parra B. left an official Venezuelan seal in the care of the Argentine Consul. Rojas had criticized him strongly and frankly for this illegal action. The Le Havre Vice Consul, apparently also involved, had saved his honor at this point by retiring. Parra B. had not retired, however, and Rojas was of the opinion that this 1881 affair caused a lingering resentment on the part of Parra B. and explained his recalcitrance in 1883.<sup>16</sup>

Parra B.'s recalcitrance in 1883 centered around the forwarding of the thirty-two cases of centennial goods to Caracas. Rojas wrote the Consul on April 18, described the contents of the cases, noted that they were being sent free by the Transatlantic Shipping Company, observed that they had been ordered through him by the Illustrious American, and ordered Parra B. to expedite the transshipment of the items without the formality of a diplomatic invoice. Parra B. refused to carry out the order. Rojas then

reminded him that even though he had ceased his Ministerial functions in 1881 when France broke relations, he still retained them in a confidential manner. He hoped that the Le Havre Consul would reconsider his position and expedite the shipment. Otherwise, it would be his responsibility in delaying the goods that the President awaited with impatience. Apparently Rojas had his way, for there was no official comment from Caracas about the lateness of the shipment. Despite the acquiescence of Parra B. in this instance, he was a source of criticism of Rojas for Guzmán.<sup>17</sup>

There are generally two sides to human relations, and that seemed to be the case in the Rojas-Parra Bolívar situation. Rojas viewed the friction as coming from the official stamp incident of 1881. Parra B., on the other hand, maintained to Guzmán that Rojas' "bad will against me dates from the time when I contributed to the edition of your learned writings, in which there is something which does not square with that señor. . . ."<sup>18</sup> Parra B. probably was referring to the four-volume publication of Guzmán's Datos históricos sur americanos (Brussels: Typ. V. C. Vanderauwera, 1878-1882). This collection of Guzmán's writings centered chiefly around the history and politics of Venezuela and Colombia. Whichever interpretation was the correct one, or possibly both were accurate, the tension was building in early 1883.

The main fomenter of the tension, it appears, was Parra B. He wrote Guzmán numerous times on Rojas and generally in a secretive and critical mood. The bronze and marble monument was a case in point. All the Venezuelan consuls in Europe had generally

agreed to provide an appropriate monument as their contribution to the upcoming centennial celebration in Caracas. Parra B. informed Guzmán that the plan was "attacked by people who are only inspired, it is true, by stingy sentiments, but who try to harm consular work." One of these people, according to Parra B., was Rojas.<sup>19</sup> While such action seems rather petty, but not below Rojas, his main thrust against Guzmán, while perhaps unintentional, was something of a more sophisticated nature.

The thrust with which Rojas attacked Guzmán came in the form of a book he published under his title, Marquis of Rojas, in that spring of 1883. It is doubtful that malicious intent against Guzmán was the basic cause of his writing the book. Rojas reflected his innocence in the first written comment to his friend Sanford about the book. Writing the North American on May 8, he commented, "In a couple of weeks I will send you a book which I have written this winter, say in six weeks, for the centenary of Bolívar. My book, entitled Simón Bolívar, contains the history of Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia from 1810 to 1830." Rojas gave no indication at this particular juncture that he wrote the book for any reason other than as an offering in celebration of the centennial of Bolívar's birth. After all, his brother Aristides was a member of the centennial commission and was writing his own literary offering to the celebration. It seemed to be the thing to do. But the book contained material damaging to Guzmán, and Parra B. saw to it that Guzmán and others got an early copy. Parra B. believed that Rojas had even written and published the

book, including the damaging information on Guzmán, because of the elder man's prior publication that irritated him. He saw it, moreover, as an attack on both Guzmán and Guzmán Blanco.<sup>20</sup>

The book itself was not an overt attack on either of the Guzmáns. Rather, Rojas began the preface, dated Paris, 15 May 1883, in the following manner:

The celebration of the centennial of Bolívar is a testimonial which honors the fatherland of the Liberator of five nations and the government which renders it with such fervent enthusiasm.

The glorification of the man who completed the work of the discoverer of a world will be presided over by General Guzmán Blanco, who, dominating the spirit of civil revolts and reestablishing the peace of the Republic, has maintained the independence of Venezuela and with the authority of its government, as high as that of Bolívar, has given it a place in the council of nations.<sup>21</sup>

This opening can hardly be criticized unless it is because Rojas does not mention Guzmán Blanco again a single time in the preface.

Within the text of the work, however, Rojas warmed up to his subject and provided information damaging to Guzmán. Guzmán had been a young man in the Turbulent period of the 1820's when the newly independent Latin American nations were going through their formative stage, as it were, and grasping at various types of political straws. One of the political themes during the period was that of monarchy. Guzmán, meanwhile, found himself in the service of both José Antonio Páez, the great llanero chieftain of Venezuelan independence, and Bolívar himself. In the fall of 1825, Páez wrote Bolívar and suggested that the

Liberator become the Bonaparte of South America. Guzmán delivered the letter to Bolívar in Peru. The following year he went back to Gran Colombia on a mysterious mission for Bolívar. Rojas clearly implied that this meant Guzmán might have been involved in the monarchical plans of the time.<sup>22</sup>

When Páez wrote his autobiography in 1865, he made reference to the letter he supposedly had written to Bolívar and that Guzmán supposedly had delivered. He noted that Guzmán was still living but boasted of being his enemy. Páez appealed to Guzmán to set the record straight on both the issue of the Páez letter and the later mission from Peru. Rojas cited all of this in his study of Bolívar in 1883 and made the following observation:

Sr. Guzmán would certainly do a service for contemporary history by revealing the truth of the occurrence, since the principal actors do not now exist, nor is it a question of blemishing their memory.

This sad mission [denial of the monarchical urge] was entrusted to General Páez, who fulfilled it completely and to the satisfaction of his admirers.<sup>23</sup>

Rojas thus threw the historical gauntlet at Guzmán and urged him to set the record straight.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the above, Rojas' study of Bolívar also included a document that could be seen as damaging to Guzmán. The time in the narrative was 1830, and Páez had led Venezuela in its breakaway from Colombia. Guzmán had opted to go with Páez, and there was a sense of implacable hatred of Bolívar in Venezuela. Guzmán came to be the Interim Secretary of the Interior under Páez.

In this capacity he countersigned a decree of 10 September 1830 which referred to the "insidious" conduct of Bolívar against the now independent Venezuelan government. And thus the comments and citations relevant to Guzmán in the 1883 study of Simón Bolívar by Rojas.<sup>25</sup>

The effect of this publication on reaching Caracas was awesome. While it can be argued that Rojas merely was relating the facts and supplementing them with speculation, it also can be argued that his speculation about the monarchical role of Guzmán fell into the realm of the indiscreet. In either case, the important factor was the timing of the publication of Simón Bolívar. The book was published in late May or early June 1883, not more than two months before the date, July 24, of the centennial of the birth of the great Simón Bolívar, the Liberator of Venezuela and four other nations. While Bolívar had been a despised figure in Venezuela in 1830, the feeling about him had shifted over the years, and love and adoration for the Liberator were prevalent as his hundredth birthday approached. Guzmán Blanco had planned a huge celebration for the event. His father was an active member of the commission to plan the celebration. Guzmán, furthermore, was the resident liberal in all of Venezuela and an honored elder statesman in the republic. To have Rojas imply, just before the great celebration, that he had been in a monarchical scheme years ago and urge him to set the record straight, was truly galling.<sup>26</sup>

What happened in the wake of the knowledge of Rojas' book

was predictable. The book first arrived in Caracas on June 25. The setting, then, was that the father of the President had been insulted under very harsh and ill-timed circumstances. The President, furthermore, controlled both his Congress and his Ministry of Foreign Relations. The action began in the Chamber of Deputies on July 6 with Deputy Francisco González Guinán one of the discussion leaders. The harshness of the work toward Guzmán and his fine service on the centennial commission became part of the discussion. The members of the Chamber then decided to make sure they had the right man with the right book. They wanted to know if the Marquis of Rojas was indeed the José María Rojas employed by the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Accordingly, they called Minister of Foreign Relations Seijas to appear before their body the following day.<sup>27</sup>

Seijas did not wait until the next day to do the obvious. He knew who Rojas was. At the time, Rojas held the British portfolio and a sub rosa portfolio in France. He had already resigned from the Spanish position the year before. On 6 July 1883, the same day he received the call to appear before the Chamber of Deputies, Seijas terminated Rojas' functions with the government of Venezuela. He acted on the basis of accepting Rojas' earlier request to be relieved of his duties. Seijas so informed Rojas in the case of Great Britain and enclosed the proper letter of retirement for Queen Victoria. No such retirement letter accompanied the note terminating the unofficial French position Rojas held. Rather, Seijas merely advised him of the termination and

instructed him to pass the Ministerial archives on to the proper person. Seijas now could appear before the Chamber of Deputies with a clear conscience.<sup>28</sup>

Seijas appeared before the Chamber of Deputies on July 7. He informed the legislators that Rojas had been an employee of the Ministry, that there was a resignation by Rojas in the Ministry, but it had not been accepted because there were some pending settlements. Now, since his book Simón Bolívar had arrived in Caracas, the government believed it would activate the resignation. Accordingly, acceptance of the resignation was being sent aboard the ship that would weigh anchor in La Guaira that afternoon. And thus ended the diplomatic career of Rojas over what Deputy González Guinán called a politico-literary incident.<sup>29</sup>

While Rojas' diplomatic career was over, the details of the break between him and the two Guzmáns were not ended with the mere sending by Seijas of the necessary letters of retirement. While maliciousness can easily be read into Rojas' Simón Bolívar, his response indicated that it might not have been premeditated. Writing his friend Sanford, after having presented his retirement letter to Lord Granville, Rojas described the end of his career in this manner,

Open now the mouth my friend! Since the 29 July I sent to Lord Granville my letters of rappel. I am no more Venezuelan Minister nor personal friend of Mr. Guzmán /Guzmán Blanco/. The cause of this rupture has been my book which has not been allowed to circulate. It appears his father was very angry on the publication of certain historical facts connected with him.

In the very next paragraph, however, Rojas clearly implied future vengeance, "I don't care much about this. My next book (General Miranda) will appear in December and will contain many important things (some of them refuting allegations of old Guzmán), and my third book (History of Venezuela) will give le coup de grace to all their canallas."<sup>30</sup> Rojas did not wait for the Miranda publication, however, to implement his vengeance against both the Guzmáns.

The medium for Rojas' vengeance was the Venezuelan Corresponding Academy of the Royal Spanish Academy. The Spanish Academy was, and is, the keeper of the Spanish language. As early as 1870 the Academy had allowed the formation of corresponding academies in Spanish America. Venezuela's turn came in October 1882 when the Spanish Academy designated the Venezuelan members of the new Corresponding Academy and named Guzmán Blanco as the permanent Director. On April 10 of the following year, Guzmán Blanco signed the decree that formally established the Venezuelan Corresponding Academy, provided it with government funds, and put it under the direction of the Ministry of Public Instruction.<sup>31</sup>

The establishment of the Venezuelan Corresponding Academy fitted in with the celebration of the centennial that year and became one of its focal points. The members of the new Academy and their retainers gathered together on July 27, four days after the birthdate of Bolívar, for their opening meeting and inauguration. Guzmán Blanco, the President of Venezuela and permanent Director of the new Academy, delivered the inaugural address. Under such

circumstances, Guzmán Blanco felt it best to deliver a speech that would "compendiously embrace the origin of the language of our mother country, its transformations and advances, its present excellencies, its future improvement," etc. In other words, the Illustrious American delivered a general, wide-ranging speech on the Spanish language.<sup>32</sup>

Rojas quickly received a copy of the Guzmán Blanco speech at his home in Paris. His reaction to it smacked of pure vengeance. After all, he had only known of the termination of his diplomatic services for a few weeks, he blamed the Guzmáns for this, and he believed that they were prohibiting the circulation of his book in Venezuela. The break with the Guzmáns was now absolute, and Rojas used the inaugural address of Guzmán Blanco to attack him in a most vicious manner. The friendship of fifty years went completely by the board.

From his home in Paris, in August and September 1883, Rojas penned a critique of the Guzmán Blanco speech. There was nothing subtle or impersonal about it. It began in this manner,

To restore to our fatherland the brilliance of its glorious literature, blemished by General Guzmán Blanco, such is today our purpose in making the critique of the discourse that, as the Director of the Venezuelan Academy, he delivered in Caracas last July 27.

After this brutal opening, Rojas proceeded to pick apart the text of the speech on both large and small points. He first attacked Guzmán Blanco's vanity. Guzmán Blanco had observed that his dis-

course would have thousands of readers, both in Venezuela and beyond, and many more in the years to come. To Rojas these expressions

demonstrate that General Guzmán Blanco holds himself in such high esteem that, in his delirium, he hopes that the generations to come will have to consult it as a rare book of science, of art, or maybe for pure recreation. It is a brilliant display of modesty!

From this he worked his way through the entire discourse, even to the extent of pointing out grammatical errors. Rojas dated his critique 25 September 1883 and had it published.<sup>33</sup>

Copies of the Rojas critique reached Caracas quickly, and Guzmán Blanco prepared a defense before the end of 1883. The Illustrious American responded to the Rojas critique at the same level, that of personality. After reminding his readers of that which he had pointed out in his discourse, that he was not worthy of the position of Director of the Venezuelan Corresponding Academy, he launched into Rojas.

Dr. Rojas, my personal friend for half a century, Spaniard, American, and Venezuelan, is the only person who officiously wanted not only to deny me his indulgence but also to castigate me bitterly with his conceited, as much as capricious, competence.

In the pages that followed, Guzmán Blanco referred to Rojas as a "person so incompetent in literature. . . because of the lack of the talent it requires. . . ." Also, "Sr. Rojas is a neophyte in literature. . . ." And, on and on it went.<sup>34</sup>

The defense continued on several fronts. Guzmán Blanco

countered Rojas on several specific items in the inaugural address. Then, he worked on a larger scale in response to Rojas' contention that there was moral decadence and corruption in Venezuela. The Illustrious American refuted these charges and criticized Rojas for living in the plush surroundings of Paris for the past ten years while he had been yoked to work day and night in the uncertain atmosphere of Venezuela. Shifting to the relationship between his father and Rojas, he found the latter wanting. He cited his father as one of the great publicists, speakers, and diplomats of America for the past half century. To him this was so much more than the ridiculous situation of Rojas and the even greater ridiculousness of his marquisate. The Venezuelan Corresponding Academy then published the defense and the prior papers in its 211-page volume, Discurso inaugural, su crítica y su defensa.<sup>35</sup>

Even more publicity in favor of Guzmán Blanco came early in 1884. The source this time was not Guzmán Blanco himself and his Academy. Rather, it came from Spain and the pen of a Latin American publicist who operated on the continent. The ally was Héctor F. Varela, an Argentine who had operated American-oriented publications in Paris and Rome. Varela had established contact with the Guzmáns in 1873, and his exuberance for things Latin American had impressed them to the point that Minister of Foreign Affairs Jacinto Gutiérrez had sent all Venezuelan Consuls a copy of a letter of introduction for Varela by A. L. Guzmán. That same year, Varela had written the flattering La République du Vénézuéla et son Président Guzmán Blanco. Now, ten years later,

Varela became another source of flattery.<sup>36</sup>

Varela published a small book on behalf of Guzmán Blanco on 10 February 1884. The complete title told the story: Homenaje de un amigo a Guzmán Blanco. Defensa de una crítica, algunas palabras. In his short preface Varela commented that he had received a copy of Rojas' Crítica and was quite shocked by it. He then gave his version as to why Rojas was wrong. Following this, Varela reproduced Guzmán Blanco's defense. He also mentioned that this booklet was a preliminary to another, more lengthy one in preparation.<sup>37</sup>

The next month Varela published his full study. This elaborate Homenaje de España contained 134 pages of articles by Varela, letters from interested parties, and articles from the Spanish press. All of them justified Guzmán Blanco and criticized Rojas, the friend of half a century, now turned vicious. Varela dedicated his book to Guzmán Blanco's wife, Doña Ana Teresa Ibarra de Guzmán. He also included an interesting sketch of his first meeting with the Guzmáns in 1873 and justified the book on that basis. The bulk of the book, however, contained the letters and articles in support of the Illustrious American.<sup>38</sup>

The exaltation and justification of Guzmán Blanco in relation to Rojas now shifted back to the Venezuelan Corresponding Academy. In late March the Academy published its Discurso inaugural, su crítica, su defensa--juicios varios. The cumulative weight of praise for Guzmán Blanco to date made up this 447-page volume. It contained the inaugural address, the critique, the

defense, the material supplied from Spain by Varela, and a mass of articles and letters in support of Guzmán Blanco from various papers and individuals primarily in Caracas.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps fortunately for the reader of the time, this heavy, lip-service volume was the last of the major thrusts in behalf of Guzmán Blanco, but one particular third party was yet to have his say.

The third party was Víctor Antonio Zerpa, who wrote from Curaçao, a refuge for enemies of Guzmán Blanco. And Zerpa was an enemy. He chose to attack the Illustrious American on his inaugural address of the prior July. The attack apparently began with a small pamphlet titled Por la honra de Venezuela. Zerpa then penned a series of twenty-four articles for El imparcial, a Spanish language paper published on the Dutch island. Later in 1884 Zerpa combined the articles and published them under the title Refutación y mentís. Algunas reflexiones sobre el discurso inaugural de la Academia Venezolana Correspondiente. Zerpa described his work as "a refutation, . . . a denial proposed on different points of the person of the author, a catalog of deserved censures, and a collection of those foolish remarks. . . not a critique." Zerpa then proceeded to critique the inaugural address.<sup>40</sup>

Zerpa's critique was on a much broader and more polemical scale than that of Rojas. He saw the address as an insult to the honor of Venezuelan letters and attacked many specific literary points in it. But, he viewed the circumstances of the inaugural address as indicative of the techniques of Guzmán Blanco and thus broadly criticized the entire government operation of the Illus-

trious American. His main criticism of the Rojas critique was that it lacked this broadness. "What Doctor José María Rojas should have strived for in the beginning, and he still can and ought to now, is to examine the true history, the intimate history of that discourse, and to probe in a definitive manner as to how many and who were those who took part in its formation." And again, "It is a shame. . . that it was limited to the literary expression under the grammatical point of view." But the public pen of Rojas remained silent at the time.<sup>41</sup>

It is not surprising that Rojas remained silent at this time. Despite the urgings of Zepa from his refuge in Curaçao, Rojas lived in Paris, and Guzmán Blanco himself came there in 1884. It was probably not so much that Rojas was fearful as that the reaction from Caracas and Madrid, in the person of Varela, was so voluminous that Rojas may have felt he was a voice in the wilderness. After all, Rojas was the retainer who had broken with the caudillo, the President of the Republic, and all the other retainers remained loyal at that particular time. But Rojas did express himself privately to his friend Sanford in the fall of 1884.

Guzmán Blanco is a very ungrateful man. I have not seen him yet, nor do I intend to see him. I am the man of the future; he is the man of the past!! He is played out, and you will have the proofs of this assertion next year. The whole country en masse will appeal to arms and will offset his power.<sup>42</sup>

The denial of power to Guzmán Blanco did not happen in 1885, as

Rojas predicted. Rather, it came four years later.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, the diplomatic career of Rojas had ended in 1883.

Very simply, the end of Rojas' diplomatic career was almost lost in the spate of charges, countercharges, books, speeches, comments from afar, etc., that all concerned his attack on the Guzmáns and the response from Guzmán Blanco himself and his retainers. The diplomatic career, which Rojas neither sought initially nor really wanted for its last two years, ended in a swirl of conflicting personalities. It seemed that the fifty-year friendship of José María Rojas and Antonio Guzmán Blanco had truly come to an end.

## NOTES

1. Citations of the three medals are in G.o., no. 573 (1 July 1875), pp. 1895-96, no. 833 (15 May 1876), p. 2933, and Extra (20 February 1877), p. 2. See Domingo B. Castillo, Memorias de mano lobo: La cuestión monetaria en Venezuela, Colección "Venezuela peregrina," vol. 1 (Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1962), 365 ff.
2. Rojas, Paris, 6 January 1877, London, 3 April 1879, to Calcaño, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 77, 103.
3. Rojas, Paris, 23 February 1880, to Viso, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 55; Rojas, Paris, 2 December 1880, to Saavedra, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 170; and Rojas, Paris, 19 August 1879, to Barberii, MRE/F/TC, vol. 6, fol. 238.
4. The details of the relationship between the elder Rojas and Guzmán are in Chapter II, "Introducing José María Rojas," above, along with the Guzmán-Quintero problems. Guzmán Blanco also appointed Rafael Seijas as a consultant, G.o., no. 2190 (30 September 1880), p. 2.
5. Guzmán set the stage for his Colombian negotiations with the publication in 1880 of his Límites entre Venezuela y Nueva Colombia. He advertised his study, on p. 2, as a refutation of writings "ignorante o maligna," on the question of limits between the two countries. The various treaties and protocols that Guzmán signed on behalf of Venezuela between 1881 and 1882 are in Tratados., vol. 1, pp. 334-45.
6. Saavedra, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 29 September, 11 October 1880, and 26 March 1881, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, 23-2; Guzmán, Caracas, 24 March 1881, to Saavedra, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 115; Saavedra, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 March 1881, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 121; and Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 May 1881, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 123. The Seijas letter makes reference to an explanatory Rojas letter of 22 April 1881, but the letter is not found in the Ministerial archives. Also, see above, pp. 158.
7. The details of this phase of Rojas' diplomacy are described beginning on p. 251, above.

8. Rojas, Paris, 4 June 1881, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 196; Rojas quotes the French text of the Guzmán Blanco telegram in this letter. Rojas himself had health problems earlier in London. One of Rojas' daughters died in 1887 after an extended illness. Perhaps her health already was a consideration in 1881. See Rojas, Paris, 22 February, 18 July 1877, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-18.
9. Rojas, Paris, 22 December 1881, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 220.
10. Seijas, copy, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 26 February 1882, to Rojas, MRE/PV, vol. 7, fol. 62, in which he refers to Guzmán Blanco sending instructions to Rojas under separate cover, and Rojas, Paris, 24 April 1882, to Seijas, MRE/GB/TC, vol. 1, fol. 309, in which Rojas refers to specific correspondence from Guzmán Blanco. See above, 242 ff., for additional details on the Venezuelan reversion to the Essequibo.
11. Guzmán, Caracas, 15 April 1882, to Seijas, MRE/PV, vol. 25, fol. 145; a marginal note on this letter indicates it was to be passed on to London, i.e., Rojas. Guzmán's "Memorandum. . ." is located in MRE/PV, vol. 25, fol. 147. Rojas, Paris, 12 December 1882, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17, and Guzmán, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 23 December 1882, to Rojas, marked "No se mandó," MRE/GB/LG, vol. 1, fol. 131.
12. S. B. O'Leary acted as the intermediary between Guzmán and Mansfield and arranged meetings, reported back and forth, etc., O'Leary, Caracas, 3, 7, 10, 12 January 1883, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, 16-5; O'Leary "reservada," Caracas, 28 January 1883, to Guzmán Blanco, Castellanos MSS, 16-5; Guzmán, copy, Caracas, 8 January 1883, to Guzmán Blanco, Castellanos MSS, 37, "Límites Guayana"; Seijas, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 14 February 1883, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, 23-10; and Guzmán, copy, Caracas, 5 May 1883, to Seijas, Castellanos MSS, 37, "Límites Guayana". In 1881 O'Leary had been Venezuelan Minister to Colombia, G.G., vol. 12, p. 311; he and Guzmán probably had become closely acquainted while working on the Colombian boundary issue.
13. The decree of 3 September 1881 is printed in G.O., no. 2799 (20 July 1882), p. 1. See also G.G., vol. 12, pp. 310-11.
14. Granville, Foreign Office, 22 December 1882, to Seijas, and Rojas, Paris, 5 January 1883, to Seijas, MRE/GB/CI, vol. 1, fols. 196, 202. See also L.a. (1883), p. lxiii.
15. Rojas, Paris, 20 April 1883, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 253.
16. Parra B. was in the consular service of Venezuela at

least as early as 1863; L.a. (1863), p. 55, and Rojas, Paris, 20 April 1883, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 253.

17. Rojas, copies, Paris, 18 April 1883 (two letters), to Parra B., and 20 April 1883, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 251-53.

18. Parra B., El Havre, 23 July 1883, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, 18-5; the writer does not know what portion of the Guzmán work Parra B. felt Rojas might have resented.

19. Parra B. wrote Guzmán numerous times on Rojas but apparently never mentioned his name in the letters. While there are only two letters to Guzmán in 1883 extant in the Castellanos MSS, the clear implication is that there were many more. These lines, for example, are very revealing, "El autor de esa campaña contra mí, o mejor dicho el fomentador de ella, es el mismo sujeto de que hablo a Vd. en mis últimas cartas." Parra B., Le Havre, 23 July 1883, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, 18-5. In the following sentence, still without using Rojas' name, he clearly identifies him as the author of the current book on Simón Bolívar, on which see below. The bronze and marble monument incident is found in Parra B., Le Havre, 3 July 1883, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, 18-6.

20. Rojas, Paris, 8 May 1883, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 37-16. Aristides Rojas, Orígenes de la revolución venezolana (Caracas: La Opinión Nacional, 1883); the page before the title page is inscribed "Ofrenda al Libertador en su primer centenario. Impresa por disposición del Ilustre Americano, Regenerador, Pacificador y Presidente de los Estados Unidos de Venezuela, General Guzmán Blanco." Brother Aristides, who apparently got along well with everyone, is the subject of the appropriately titled study by Juan Saturno Canelón, Aristides Rojas: Mensajero de la tolerancia (Caracas: Lit. del Comercio, 1944). Writing Guzmán on 23 July 1883 from Le Havre, Parra B. referred to having already sent Guzmán a copy of the Bolívar study "por el correo pasado," Castellanos MSS, 18-5. See also Parra B., Le Havre, 3 July 1883, to Guzmán, Castellanos MSS, 18-6.

21. Rojas, Bolívar, pp. v-vi.

22. There are numerous works on Páez; perhaps the best known is his Autobiografía de José Antonio Páez, of which there are several editions. The writer has used a 1960 edition published in Lima by Organización Continental Festivales del Libro. Rojas, Bolívar, p. 280.

23. Rojas, Bolívar, pp. 281-82.

24. The issue of who wrote what letter to whom is confusing at best. Páez denied writing the monarchically inclined letter of

1825, but his denial is not acceptable in the face of more recent study. And, the nature of the Guzmán trip in 1826 is still debatable. When Rojas made his study, Paéz's denial already was known, but there were skeptics. See Masur, Simón Bolívar, pp. 569-70.

25. Rojas, Bolívar, pp. 340-44.

26. The writer has cited such works as Díaz Sánchez, Rondón Márquez, and Wise on the Guzmáns. Opposite p. 587 in Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, is a reproduction of the medal celebrating the centennial. It contains two profiles, that of Guzmán Blanco and behind it, one of Bolívar. The centennial was Bolívar's, the celebration was Guzmán Blanco's.

27. G.G. (the Deputy González Guinán cited above), vol. 12, pp. 460-61, and J. Nicomédes Ramírez, Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies, Caracas, 6 July 1883, to Seijas, MRE/F/CLP, vol. 3, fol. 257.

28. Seijas, copies, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 6 July 1883 (two letters), to Rojas, MRE/GB/FDV, vol. 2, fols. 176, 178.

29. G.G., vol. 12, pp. 460-61.

30. Rojas, Paris, 21 August 1883, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-17. With reference to prohibiting the circulation of Simón Bolívar in Caracas, it might be said that the wise bookseller did not have the volume on his shelves in 1883 and 1884. Officially, there could be no prohibition of circulation. See Venezuela, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Ramo I del Archivo: Objetos nacionales, Expediente no. 59: Avisos, noticias, etc., Legajo no. 53: Sobre la supuesta prohibición del libro "Simón Bolívar" del Señor Doctor J. M. Rojas.

31. Spence, Land of Bolívar, vol. 1, pp. 322-23; G.G., vol. 12, p. 421; and Recop., vol. 10, doc. 2486, 270-71.

32. Academia Venezolana, Discurso de instalación de la Academia Venezolana, pronunciado por su director el General Guzmán Blanco, el día 27 de julio de 1883 (Caracas: Imprenta de "La Opinión Nacional," 1883), contains the entire text of the inaugural address.

33. José María Rojas, Crítica del discurso académico del General Guzmán Blanco (Paris: Imprenta de Pablo Du Pont, 1883). The quotations above are from p. 5. An example of the pickiness of the critique is on p. 11, in which Rojas chides Guzmán Blanco for using "todos" when he should have used "a todos."

34. Academia Venezolana, Discurso inaugural, su crítica y su defensa (Caracas: Imprenta de "La Opinión Nacional," 1883), 150-51 ff.

35. Ibid., pp. 210-11, 199 ff.

36. There is a brief sketch of Varela in José Domingo Cortes, Diccionario biográfico americano, 2d ed. (Paris: Lahure, 1876), p. 512. Gutiérrez, Ministry of Foreign Relations, 3 November 1873, to all Consuls, printed in G.O., no. 161 (9 December 1873), p. 271. Varela, La République du Vénézuéla et son Président Guzmán Blanco (Havre: Imprimerie F. Santallier et Co., /1873/).

37. Varela, Homenaje (Madrid: Imprenta de Moreno y Rojas, 1884).

38. Varela, Homenaje de España a Guzmán Blanco. Cartas, artículos de la prensa, dos palabras (Madrid: Moreno y Rojas, 1884).

39. Academia, Discurso (Caracas: Imprenta Sanz, 1884). The preface bears the date of 24 March 1884.

40. Zerpa, Por la honra de Venezuela (Curaçao), n.p., 1884), and Zerpa, Refutación y mentís. . . (Curaçao: Imprenta del Comercio, 1884), preface.

41. Zerpa, Por la honra de Venezuela, passim, treats the question of literary honor. Zerpa, Refutación y mentís. The quotations are from pp. 6-7; the entire work is polemical. In 1884 Rojas did publish his El General Miranda (Paris: Librería de Garnier Hermanos, 1884), but this work is primarily a compendium of documents.

42. Rojas, Paris, 29 September 1884, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-18.

43. A brief, succinct description of the fall of Guzmán Blanco in 1889 is found in Wise, Caudillo, pp. 107-110.

## CHAPTER X

### EPILOGUE

With his days of public service now behind him, Rojas resumed the private life completely. He continued to live in Paris, apparently had various political and business schemes in the years to come, continued to write and study, kept in touch with his children, and remained up-to-date on Venezuelan affairs.<sup>1</sup> After the break of 1883, it appeared unlikely that he would enter government service again. This was particularly true as long as his ex-friend Guzmán Blanco controlled the presidential power in Venezuela. Within the next decade, however, Guzmán Blanco lost his power, Rojas reentered the public service, and the two old ex-friends finally had a tender reconciliation.

Before all of this happened, however, Rojas apparently made a serious bid to topple Guzmán Blanco from power. Writing Sanford in September 1884 about the ungratefulness of the illustrious American, Rojas commented that "He is played out, and you will have the proof of this assertion next year. The whole country en masse will appeal to arms and will offset his power." The following month he sought from Sanford the address of someone from whom he might borrow money "for my patriotic scheme. I am almost ready. I only want at present a little help to be per-

fectly sure of success." Sanford's recommended source could not produce the necessary money, however, and Rojas had to consider other alternatives. While acknowledging the difficulty he was in, he felt he would "be able to complete the expedition if I apply to the purchase of the steamer the money which I have in deposit for arms and if I can get the latter on credit in Belgium." By March of 1855 Rojas and unknown associates had given money to one adventurer who would supply them with the necessary equipment, but he reneged and Rojas had difficulty getting back the money already deposited with the man. Meanwhile,

I have found a friend who offers to supply me a fine ship and equipment, everything in ten days if I get that money back; but I don't know yet if we will be so happy as to see again our money. Meanwhile, the country there is anxious and waiting with greater impatience. Helas! I don't see my way if that man refuses to return the money! I will let you know the result.<sup>2</sup>

Rojas' filibustering plans did not bear fruition, however, and the ex-Venezuelan Minister had to content himself with private denunciations of the Illustrious American and historical studies that promised to be critical of both the Guzmáns. In October 1886, for example, he answered a Sanford query about how to negotiate with Guzmán Blanco.

It is a very difficult thing to give advice in Venezuelan matters, because you are dealing with a man like G.B. who is a type! a bad man! . . . With such a rascal, the best way is to go through love and confidence, but always armed to kill him on the way if he becomes a traitor.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, Rojas supplemented his 1883 work on Bolívar by publishing, in 1884, his edition of the letters of the Venezuelan leader, Miranda.<sup>4</sup>

In 1888 Rojas branched into general Venezuelan history with the publication of his Bosquejo histórico de Venezuela: Primera parte (desde 1830 hasta 1836 /1863/). This historical outline was rather straightforward but ended with a promise to set the record, as viewed by Rojas, straight on Guzmán Blanco. Ending his study with the termination of the Federal War in 1863 and the beginning of the Federation period, Rojas summed it up in this manner,

Perhaps the Federation would have been able to heal so many wounds and galvanize that political organism if General Guzmán Blanco had not arisen from among its leaders to found cunningly the most ignominious autocracy that is known in the history of nations, autocracy which has degraded and prostituted the country with the support and concurrence of the accommodating faction of the liberal party and the mercenary one of the oligarchical party, both traitors to republican institutions.<sup>5</sup>

With this, Rojas ended his first volume but promised the sequel which would detail "the sad and sterile fight to which two generations of free and independent Venezuelans have succumbed."<sup>6</sup>

Rojas never published the vindictive sequel, however, and the reason might have been because he and Guzmán Blanco reconciled their differences in 1893. By then, the Illustrious American had become a political outcast himself, while Rojas had returned to the service of his government as Fiscal Agent once again. Even so, the two old friends had lived in Paris for several years without speaking to one another. Finally, at the suggestion of a mutual

friend of many years, an Italian tailor, the two men held a private dinner for a personal reconciliation. Later, at a dinner in the Guzmán Blanco home, Rojas made an allegorical speech about two streams running down to the sea. At one point their courses had diverged, but then they had come back together. He and Guzmán Blanco were the two streams.<sup>7</sup>

Thereafter, for a brief period until the death of Guzmán Blanco in 1899, the two men became fast friends again, shared business ventures, and were a common sight together on the streets of Paris. Rojas, Guzmán Blanco's reluctant diplomat for ten years, survived in the French capital until 1907.<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. The Sanford MSS, 35-18, contains thirty-four letters from Rojas to Sanford between 1884 and 1890, shortly before Sanford's death. These letters are rich in the business and personal details of Rojas' life during the period.
2. The rather vague details of this "patriotic scheme" of Rojas are found in the following Rojas letters to Sanford: Paris, 29 September, 14 October, London, 24 October 1884, Paris, private, 19 March 1885; Sanford MSS, 35-13, 18.
3. Rojas, Paris, 4 October 1886, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-18.
4. Rojas, El General Miranda.
5. Rojas, Bosquejo histórico. . . (Paris: Librería de Garnier Hermanos, 1888), pp. 306-307.
6. Ibid., p. 307. In 1891 Rojas also wrote his brief Las fronteras de Venezuela (Paris: Librería de Garnier Hermanos, 1884).
7. Grases, Investigaciones, vol. 2, p. 35, and Rojas, London, 8 January 1890, to Sanford, Sanford MSS, 35-18. Rojas' touching recollection of the reunion is found in his Tiempo perdido, 56 ff.
8. For examples of Rojas and Guzmán Blanco consulting in business after the reconciliation, see F. J. de la Madriz, Paris, 15, 19 April 1895, to Guzmán Blanco, Castellanos MSS, 15-7. Writing in September 1894, in his work En defensa de la historia contemporánea de Venezuela, política y militar (Barcelona: Imprenta y Litografía de José Cunill Sala, 1894), p. 51, Luís Level de Goda described how Rojas was frequently at the side of Guzmán Blanco in Paris. A recent edition of the work Level de Goda was defending is Historia contemporánea de Venezuela, política y militar (1858-1886) (Caracas: Imprenta Nacional, 1954).

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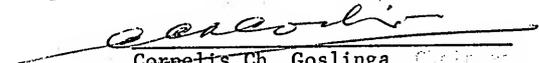
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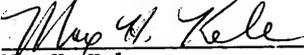
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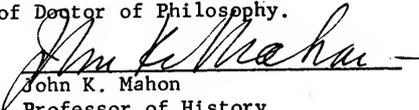
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