

THE MILITARY REFORM IN THE  
VICEROYALTY OF NEW GRANADA, 1773-1796

By  
ALLAN JAMES KUETHE

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
August, 1967

© Copyright by  
Allan James Kuethe  
1968

**TO MY WIFE,**

**LOURDES**

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Lyle N. McAlister under whose supervision this dissertation was conducted. Dr. McAlister gave generously of both his time and personal resources. He served as an inspiration and assisted me in more ways than can be enumerated. A special note of thanks is also due Dr. David Bushnell, who not only rendered invaluable assistance in conducting this project, but also imparted to me his enthusiasm for the nations of the northern Andes.

I am also indebted to Drs. Carlos Restrepo Canal, director of the Archivo Nacional de Colombia; Galo Martfnez, director of the Archivo Nacional de Ecuador; and José María Arboleda Llorente, director of the Archivo Central del Cauca. In conjunction with their able assistants, all three extended to me the warmest hospitality and the fullest cooperation. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Guillermo Hernández de Alba of the Colombian Academy of History who most generously shared his personal library.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	iv
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	vii
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER	
I. A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRE-REFORM MILITARY ORGANIZATION . . . . .	10
II. THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORM: CARTAGENA AND PANAMA	38
III. THE REFORM IN GUAYAQUIL AND POPAYAN . . . . .	77
IV. THE IMPACT OF THE COMUNEROS . . . . .	101
V. THE MILITARY ON THE FRONTIER . . . . .	134
VI. THE DYNAMICS OF EXPANDED MILITARY PRIVILEGES . .	177
VII. REACTION AND READJUSTMENT . . . . .	211
CONCLUSION . . . . .	248
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	253

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. THE ARMY OF NEW GRANADA IN 1772 . . . . .	14
2. ARMY OF NEW GRANADA 1779 . . . . .	45
3. UNIT ORGANIZATION UNDER THE REGLAMENTO FOR THE DISCIPLINED MILITIA OF CUBA, 1769 . . . . .	50
4. ORGANIZATION OF A VETERAN INFANTRY REGIMENT . . . . .	54
5. THE MILITIA OF GUAYAQUIL AND QUITO IN 1783 . . . . .	120
6. ARMY OF NEW GRANADA 1789 . . . . .	127
7. STRENGTH OF THE RIOHACHA EXPEDITION . . . . .	147
8. DARIEN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, AUGUST, 1788 . . . . .	168
9. DISPUTES BETWEEN ORDINARY AND MILITARY JUSTICES . . . . .	196
10. ARMY OF NEW GRANADA 1794 . . . . .	224
11. UNIT ORGANIZATION UNDER THE REGLAMENTO FOR THE DISCIPLINED MILITIA OF NEW GRANADA, 1794 . . . . .	235
12. ARMY OF NEW GRANADA IN 1799 . . . . .	241
13. ARMY OF NEW GRANADA 1806 . . . . .	245

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In citing manuscript materials the following abbreviations have been employed for archives and their fondos:

Archivo Nacional de Colombia . . . . .	ANC
a) <u>Milicia y Marina</u> . . . . .	MM
Archivo Nacional de Ecuador . . . . .	ANE
a) <u>Presidencia</u> . . . . .	Pres.
Archivo Central del Cauca . . . . .	ACC
a) <u>Militares</u> . . . . .	MI

Other fondos were employed, but not with sufficient frequency to justify special abbreviation.

## INTRODUCTION

At the close of the Seven Years War the Spanish monarchy initiated a far-reaching colonial reorganization in its American empire. Until that conflict, the new Bourbon dynasty had been chiefly concerned with revitalizing the old Hapsburg system, but the serious reverses suffered at the hands of the British nation and the anticipation of further hostilities prompted the crown to undertake comprehensive reforms for strengthening its domains.<sup>1</sup> This reorganization consisted of programs designed to stimulate economic growth, to increase public revenues, and to develop an effective system of administration. More specifically, the Jesuits were expelled in 1767; trade restrictions were relaxed culminating in an edict of "free trade" in 1778 (except for Caracas and New Spain which waited until 1789); special technical missions and guilds were organized to modernize mining methods; new government monopolies were created and others expanded; and the intendent system of administration was introduced. Another aspect of the colonial reorganization was an empire-wide military revival intended to enhance colonial defense capability and self-reliance. The course of that reform in the Viceroyalty of New Granada is the subject of the present study. The administrative division "New Granada" will be taken in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Arthur S. Aiton, "Spanish Colonial Reorganization under the Family Compact," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XII (August, 1932), 269-280.

following text to exclude the Captaincy General of Caracas because that was a separate military jurisdiction.

The position of the Viceroyalty of New Granada in the Bourbon Reforms has to date remained obscure. Not only has there been a relative neglect of this region by historians from the United States, but the Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Panamanians themselves have hardly recognized the presence of this movement within their nations' histories. Rather, this period is almost exclusively treated as an era of precursors and preparations signaling the dawn of the Wars for Independence. This phenomenon cannot be attributed solely to a fascination with the independence movement. A more satisfactory explanation is likely to be found in the nature of the reforms themselves, for indications are that in many respects the Bourbon reorganization made only a moderate although far from negligible long-run impact in New Granada. The primary example is that the intendent system of administration was not installed except for a short-lived experiment in the province of Cuenca. Nor did endeavors to modernize silver mining methods in the viceroyalty bear appreciable results. Less clear-cut were the consequences of the relaxation of trade restrictions. On the negative side, both the Quito textile industry and the Panamanian crossroads suffered serious recessions dating from the opening of the more expedient Cape Horn route to licensed vessels.<sup>2</sup> On the positive side, a minor diversification of exports

<sup>2</sup>Pedro Messía de la Cerda, "Relación del estado del virreinato de Santa Fe . . . 1772," Relaciones de mando: memorias presentadas por los gobernantes del Nuevo Reino de Granada, eds. F. Posada and P. M. Ibáñez (Bogotá, 1910), p. 108; Francisco Antonio Moreno y Escandón,

did evolve by the end of the colonial period through the marketing of small quantities of cotton, quina (medicinal bark), indigo, and dye-wood; and a substantial expansion developed in cacao, chiefly from Guayaquil, but also to a lesser extent from the Cucuta district. Nevertheless, the preponderant item continued to be gold as it had always been.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, while substantial repercussions of varied sorts were evident in the Presidency of Quito and in Panama, the effect of "free trade" upon the main portion of New Granada was modest at the most. However, in some instances the colonial reorganization did produce unquestionable changes. Tobacco and aguardiente monopolies became major sources of royal income, and along with an overall rise in the aduana they were in a large measure responsible for a noteworthy growth of public revenues from roughly 950,000 pesos in 1772 (territories later transferred to Caracas not included) to just over 3,000,000 at the close of the colonial period, or nearly forty years later.<sup>4</sup>

---

"Estado del virreinato de Santafe, Nuevo Reino de Granada . . . 1772," Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXIII (September-October, 1936), 588; Manuel de Guirior, "Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada . . . 1776," Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 148-149; Francisco Silvestre, Descripción del reyno de Santa Fe de Bogotá, escrita en 1789 (Bogotá, 1950), pp. 44-45.

<sup>3</sup>Messía de la Cerda, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 105-106; Pedro Mendiñeta, "Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada . . . 1803," Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 507-508; Luis Eduardo Nieto Areta, Economía y cultura en la historia de Colombia (Bogotá, 1962), pp. 22-23; Luis Ospina Vásquez, Industria y protección en Colombia (1810-1930) (Medellín, 1955), pp. 38-39.

<sup>4</sup>Moreno y Escandón, Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXIII, 603-605; José Manuel Restrepo, Historia de la revolución de la república de Colombia en la América meridional (Bogotá, 1952), I, xxxi.

Because the number of systematic studies on the several aspects of the Bourbon Reforms in the history of New Granada is exceedingly limited, any explanation for their apparently moderate impact must necessarily be hazy and ought at this point to be regarded as tentative. Nevertheless, certain general observations can be made. The Granadine counterparts of the well-known missions of José de Gálvez in New Spain and José Antonio de Areche in Peru to organize the foundations for fiscal and administrative reforms were those of Juan Gutiérrez de Piñeres in New Granada and José García de León y Pizarro in its Presidency of Quito. However, efforts by Gutiérrez to reform the fiscal administration of the viceroyalty were met by the catastrophic Comunero Rebellion of 1781 which for an instant threatened to topple the regime in Santa Fe. As a consequence, although both the aguardiente and tobacco monopolies were eventually extended, as sought by Gutiérrez, plans to introduce the intendent system were postponed.<sup>5</sup> The uprising of 1781 did, however, elevate to prominence the archbishop of Santa Fe, Antonio Caballero y Góngora, who conducted the pacification of the realm, became viceroy in 1782, and then distinguished himself as the viceroyalty's leading reformer.

The seven-year administration of the Archbishop-Viceroy was by all indications the high point of the Bourbon Reforms in New Granada. He personally solicited the assistance of a technical mission to modernize silver mining and was granted the services of Juan José de Elhuyar, the older brother of the better known Fausto who later headed

---

<sup>5</sup>Antonio Caballero y Góngora, "Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada . . . 1789," Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 256-257.

the mining reform in New Spain. Juan José arrived in New Granada in 1784 and the following year opened operations in the province of Mariquita. In 1788 he was provided with eight German scientists to assist him in his labors.<sup>6</sup> Caballero y Góngora also sought to increase local production and exports by granting Brazil wood trade concessions to foreigners and by promoting the marketing of quina in Spain. Despite entrenched opposition, he expanded the government aguardiente and tobacco monopolies. And, after restoring domestic tranquility he formulated a general plan for the establishment of an intendent system.<sup>7</sup>

The Archbishop-Viceroy's administration was also noted for undertakings which if not precisely part of the reform movement were connected to the broader spirit of change. Under his auspices the famous botanical expedition of José Celestino Mutis first received official sanction.<sup>8</sup> An independently organized economic society for the advancement of applied learning was founded in Mémpés in 1784 and received viceregal approval the same year, and plans for another were initiated in Quito.<sup>9</sup> Large-scale, government-sponsored colonization enterprises were conducted on the coastal frontiers. And, in connection with the latter ventures, the local coast guard was greatly expanded.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Arthur P. Whitaker, "The Elhuyar Mining Missions and the Enlightenment," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXI (November, 1951), 573-585.

<sup>7</sup> Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 253-254, 257-259, 267-268.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>9</sup> R. J. Shafer, The Economic Societies in the Spanish World (1763-1821) (Syracuse, 1958), pp. 168-177, 154-156.

<sup>10</sup> Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 272-273.

Under the two immediate successors of Caballero y Góngora this commitment to reform declined. Both men were distrustful of the wisdom of his far-flung schemes and shared a common reluctance to press forward on such a grand scale. Indeed, the year 1789 when the Archbishop-Viceroy left office opened a period of decided reaction against many of the developing programs. The colonization endeavors, the Brazil wood concessions, the support of quina exports, and the mining reform were all suspended, and the enlarged coast guard was reduced.<sup>11</sup> The Elhuyer mining reform was later reactivated, but his mission, handicapped by the misfortune of having departed Europe prior to the discovery of the more advanced Born method of amalgamation and plagued by a poor choice of location, collapsed by 1795.<sup>12</sup> Although the Quito economic society was approved in 1791, it and that of Mompós soon disintegrated.<sup>13</sup> And, more important, the intendent project remained a scrap of paper. Thereafter, the surge of reform never regained its momentum.

A widely held concept of the Bourbon Reforms in Spanish America has been that in promoting change they also produced disruptive contingent

---

<sup>11</sup>Francisco Gil y Lemos, "Gil y Lemos y su memoria sobre el Nuevo Reino de Granada," ed. with introduction by Enrique Sánchez Pedrote, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII (1951), 185-187; José de Ezpeleta, "Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada . . . 1796," Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 281-282.

<sup>12</sup>Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 343-346; Mendiñeta, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 500, 502; Whitaker, Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXI, 578.

<sup>13</sup>Shafer, pp. 155, 176-177. In the early 1800's a society was planned for Sanía Fe, but it never became operative. Ibid., pp. 235-239.

results more important than those originally intended. The introduction of a more vigorous system of administration brought higher authority into an unwelcome contact with a people long accustomed to Hapsburg inefficiency and at the same time undercut the traditional governmental hierarchy; desired revisions clashed with vested interests, while for many they did not go far enough; and new economic and corporate bases for social prestige undermined the existing structure of society, alienating some, whetting the appetites of others. As a consequence, traditional loyalties were strained, and the ambitious attempt to regenerate the empire worked instead to hasten its dissolution.<sup>14</sup> For the Viceroyalty of New Granada the processes identified in this interpretation were all present but not always in the same degree, for there the progress of the colonial reorganization appears to have been less extensive than elsewhere in Spanish America. And, in at least several critical instances, notably the Comunero Rebellion, the conservative forces of discontent prevailed prior to the Wars for Independence.

The military aspect of the Bourbon Reforms in New Granada was introduced in 1773; and, accompanied by an amplification of military corporate privileges, it consisted of a strengthening of the regular army and a reorganization of the colonial militia. In the sphere of empire military reform, as with the reform movement to which it pertained, a case has been made that the most important consequences were to be found in side-effects which eventually obscured the program's

---

<sup>14</sup>See R. A. Humphreys and John Lynch (eds.), The Origins of the Latin American Revolutions, 1808-1826 (New York, 1965).

original purpose. Lyle N. McAlister in a study on expanded military privileges in New Spain found that the chief significance of the military reform there developed not so much in its greater contribution to defense as in the long-run implications of its unexpected disruptive impact upon existing civil institutions.

During the closing decades of Spanish dominion, the army, thus created, acquired prestige and power as the defender of the nation in the face of almost constant threats of war and invasion. By the very nature of its functions and constitution it was also a class apart and so regarded itself. The possession of special privileges enhanced its sense of uniqueness and superiority, and at the same time rendered it virtually immune from civil authority. Unfortunately, power and privilege were not accompanied by a commensurate sense of responsibility. A large proportion of officers and men regarded military service as an opportunity for the advancement of personal interests rather than as a civil obligation. Until the abdication of Ferdinand VII in 1808, the troublemaking potential of the military was held in check by a long tradition of loyalty to the crown. However, as the prestige of the monarchy declined in the following years, this limitation was removed and the army emerged as an autonomous and irresponsible institution. It was this army, under the banner of the Three Guarantees, that consummated independence and behind a facade of republican institutions made itself master of Mexico.<sup>15</sup>

The present study shall determine if New Granada's military reform worked in the same way, or if, as was apparently true of the broader colonial reorganization in that viceroyalty, there was a deviation from the standard experience attributed to the other parts of the empire. To accomplish this objective special emphasis will be placed upon the growth of the military corporation in size, function, and prestige in relation to the existing institutional structure. Thereby, it will be possible to determine if the reform appreciably altered the status of the military, and if so, to what extent. First,

---

<sup>15</sup>Lyle N. McAlister, The "Fuero Militar" in New Spain, 1764-1800 (Gainesville, Florida, 1957), p. 15.

however, it will be helpful to review the pre-reform defense system of the viceroyalty.

## CHAPTER I

### A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRE-REFORM MILITARY ORGANIZATION

The second establishment of the Viceroyalty of New Granada in 1739 fixed the jurisdiction of the viceroy as captain general of Santa Fe de Bogotá over most of the territory which now comprises the nations of Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. His authority extended from the province of Veragua bordering the Captaincy General of Guatemala in the north, to the province of Mainas on the Amazon River in the south, and from the Presidency of Quito in the west, to the province of Guayana across the Orinoco River on the Brazilian frontier. Within these perimeters, only Caracas was independent of his command. When the latter governorship was elevated to the rank of a captaincy general in 1777, the three eastern provinces of Guayana, Cumaná, and Maracaibo, as well as the islands of Margarita and Trinidad, were detached from Santa Fe and joined to the new military jurisdiction. Thereafter, the Captaincy General of Santa Fe remained territorially stable until just before the end of the colonial period, when the southern provinces of Mainas, Quijos, and Guayaquil were transferred to the Viceroyalty of Lima.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Royal cédula of July 15, 1802, and royal order of July 7, 1803, with related correspondence, Cornelio Escipión Vernaza (comp.), Recopilación de documentos oficiales de la época colonial, con un apéndice relativo a la independencia de Guayaquil . . . (Guayaquil, 1894), pp. 181-202.

When the military reorganization was initiated in 1773, the main defenses of the Viceroyalty of New Granada were concentrated within three subsidiary military jurisdictions, the Commandancy Generals of Cartagena, Panama, and Quito.<sup>2</sup> The office of commandant general corresponded to the governor of the province from which each of these units derived its name; in Quito this functionary was also the president of the royal audiencia. In addition to their immediate governorship, the commandant generals exercised military responsibilities in neighboring provinces. The Commandancy General of Cartagena extended east to include Santa Marta and Riohacha; Panama encompassed Veragua, Portobelo, and Darién; and Quito consisted of the seven governorships and seven corregimientos dependent on that region's audiencia.<sup>3</sup> While the governors of Cartagena and Panama had traditionally acted as commandant generals, the president of Quito did not enjoy that rank until the administration of Viceroy Messía de la Cerda.<sup>4</sup>

It is difficult to formulate a set of hard and fast principles defining the precise responsibilities of the commandant generals to their outlying provinces. These relationships were vague and varied considerably from one region to the next. Moreover, much depended upon the individual administration involved and upon the particular problems confronted. The commandant general of Cartagena exercised

<sup>2</sup>This excepts the areas later to be attached to Caracas.

<sup>3</sup>Governorships: Quito, Guayaquil, Popayán, Cuenca, Mainas, Quijos y Macas, Jaén de Bracamoros. Corregimientos: Quito, Loja y Zamora, Riobamba, Chimbo or Guaranda, Ibarra, Tacunga, Otavalo.

<sup>4</sup>Silvestre, pp. 17-18.

authority in Santa Marta and Riohacha mainly in matters of common defense involving his own governorship. The governor of Santa Marta had an independent troop allotment and provided detachments for use in Riohacha. In matters of local concern, he normally bypassed Cartagena, communicating directly with Santa Fe. In Quito, this was also the prevailing relationship between the governors of Guayaquil and Popayán on the one hand, and their commandant general on the other. However, the remaining provinces of that jurisdiction were directly dependent on Quito for their troops and equipment. Likewise, the provinces of Veragua, Portobelo, and Darién were dependent on Panama for their military outlays. Nevertheless, the officials ruling the dependent provinces within the jurisdiction of Panama and Quito, although more directly tied to their respective commandant general than their counterparts with independent troop allotments, often bypassed this officer in purely local affairs. Not until the last decade of the century did the functions of commandant generals assume more clearly defined proportions.

The regular army of the Spanish domains was divided functionally into two types of military units, rotating and fijo, or fixed. Fijo units were stationed in a particular locality on a permanent basis; rotating troops were moved about the empire as need be, usually in battalion strength. While the former depended largely upon local resources for their recruits, the latter were European based and manned mainly by Spaniards. In New Granada, where the population was small, roughly one and one-half million, European troops were an especially important asset since it was difficult to gather sufficient recruits to

allow fijo units to meet the region's extensive defense requirements. Members of the regular army, whether from fijo or rotating units, were also commonly called "veterans," and the latter usage shall be employed interchangeably with "regular" in the present study.

Before the reorganization initiated in 1773, the permanent armed forces of New Granada consisted of one battalion, eighteen companies, and a detachment (piquete) of infantry; three companies and two half companies of artillery; and a cavalry company (see Table 1). In time of war or crisis they were normally supplemented by at least two European battalions. For example, during the Seven Years War one battalion each from the Spanish Regiments of Cantabria and Navarre were dispatched to New Granada.<sup>5</sup> They remained until mid 1763, at which time they returned to Spain.<sup>6</sup> Thereafter, New Granada also became a frequent host to rotating units in time of peace. Two battalions from the Regiment of the Queen arrived in Portobelo in 1766 for distribution in Panama and Quito.<sup>7</sup> In 1769 they were replaced by two battalions, one each from the Regiments of Murcia and Naples.<sup>8</sup> A third battalion,

---

<sup>5</sup>Royal order, December 8, 1762, ANC: MM 83, fs. 316-322.

<sup>6</sup>Governor Gerardo Josef de la Sobrezza to Messsa de la Cerda, Portobelo, May 11, 1763, ANC: MM 90, fs. 58-60.

<sup>7</sup>Governor Blasco Oresco to Messsa de la Cerda, Panama, August 27, 1766, ANC: MM 92, fs. 750-757.

<sup>8</sup>Governor Manuel de Agreda to Messsa de la Cerda, Portobelo, April 25, 1769, ANC: MM 64, fs. 108-111; Governor Nicolás de Castro to Messsa de la Cerda, Panama, May 3, 1769, ANC: MM 90, fs. 825-826; Governor Vicente de Olazinegui to Messsa de la Cerda, Panama, August, 1769, *ibid.*, fs. 948-952; *id.* to *id.*, Panama, September 10, 1771, ANC: MM 92, fs. 527-529.

TABLE 1  
THE ARMY OF NEW GRANADA IN 1772

<u>Regulars*</u>	
<u>Fijo Infantry</u>	
Two companies of Santa Marta	154
Battalion of Cartagena	621
Detachment of Chagres	29
Company of Guayaquil	50
Three companies of Quito	150
Company of Popayán	50
Halberdier Guard of the Viceroy	75
Three companies of Maracaibo	231
Three companies of Cumaná (estimated)	231
Three companies of Guayana	231
Company of Margarita Island	<u>50</u>
Total	1872
<u>Artillery</u>	
Royal Corps (Panama)	100
Royal Corps (Cartagena)	100
Company of Cartagena (attached to infantry battalion)	79
Half company of Santa Marta	23
Half company of Guayana	<u>27</u>
Total	329
<u>Cavalry</u>	
Company of the Viceregal Guard	75
<u>Spanish Rotating Infantry</u>	
Battalion of Murcia (Panama)	679
Battalion of Naples (Panama)	679
Battalion of Savoy (Cartagena)	<u>679</u>
Total	2037
TOTAL REGULARS	4313

TABLE I (cont.)

Militia**	
Numerous Unorganized Units	---

\*The only available listing for the army at this time is Francisco Antonio Moreno y Escandón, "Estado del Nuevo Reino de Santa Fe, Nuevo Reino de Granada, Año de 1772," Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades, XXIII (September-October, 1936), 609-610. Unfortunately, Moreno's survey is far from systematic. For some units he lists authorized strength, for others he lists actual strength; for some he counts officers, for others he does not; and in some cases he appears to have simply guessed. I have attempted to systematize the list as much as possible basing my entries on authorized strengths, not the force of the moment. They do not include company officers and command and staff group personnel which normally averaged about 6 per cent. This system is also followed in the other tables in the text. For corroborative and corrective material for the Moreno list, see ANC: MM 51, fs. 601-602, MM 64, fs. 677-680, MM 65, fs. 370-372, MM 71, fs. 211-214, 587-590, 1041-1044, 1066-1069, 1087, MM 81, fs. 962, MM 85, fs. 230-233, 280-283, MM 89, fs. 585-596, MM 90, fs. 948-952, MM 92, fs. 76-, 766, MM 97, fs. 837-842, MM 99, fs. 57-75, MM 100, fs. 658-659, 665-666, MM 103, fs. 75-88, 104-105, and MM 105, fs. 481-486; ANC: Reales Ordenes 53, f. 188; ANC: Guerra y Marina 14, f. 148; and ANE: Pres. 43, fs. 55-56, and Pres. 134, f. 101.

\*\*Individual units and strengths have not been listed because no uniform data are available. In any event, such information could have little significance due to the erratic nature of company and battalion organization.

this time from the Regiment of Savoy, was sent to Cartagena in 1771.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to New Spain where this practice was abandoned in 1787, European units continued to serve in New Granada on into the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

In the Spanish Empire the regular army was supplemented by two varieties of militia, provincial and urban. Urban militia was normally sponsored by a municipality or a guild and was called into service only when its immediate area was threatened.<sup>11</sup> Provincial militia, on the other hand, could be, and often was, employed for duty outside its locality. In New Granada, the latter class was both numerous and geographically diversified, ranging into the interior as well as the coastal provinces. By contrast, urban militia seems to have been almost non-existent. The only company which acquired prominence in the records for the pre-reform period was that of the Merchant Guild of Cartagena; this was a small unit consisting of roughly fifty-four enlisted men and five officers.<sup>12</sup>

In Spain, the provincial militia underwent a major reform in 1734.<sup>13</sup> Thereafter, "this class also became known as 'disciplined' militia because the regiments had a standard organization, received

<sup>9</sup>Governor Gregorio de la Sierra to Messsa de la Cerda, Cartagena, October 11, 1771, ANC: MM 89, fs. 225-238.

<sup>10</sup>McAlister, The "Fuero Militar", . . . , p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Félix Colón y Larriategui, Juzgados militares de España y sus Indias, . . . (2a ed. corregida y aumentada; Madrid, 1788-89), II, 562.

<sup>12</sup>Governor Fernando Morillo Velarde to Messsa de la Cerda, Cartagena, 1767, ANC: MM 57, fs. 1049-1053.

<sup>13</sup>Colón, II, 469.

systematic training, and were provided with a cadre of regular officers and enlisted men."<sup>14</sup> Similar action was initiated in the colonial empire beginning with Cuba in 1763.<sup>15</sup> In New Granada, none of the provincial militia was placed on a disciplined footing until 1773. Prior to that time, they were badly neglected and generally in a state of shocking disarray.

Throughout New Granada the organizational structure of the provincial militia had decayed to a point where it had become more of a myth than a reality. Companies had few if any officers, lacked training and discipline, and rarely possessed adequate equipment. Drills were seldom held and membership rolls were outdated. On the occasions when drills were conducted, attendance was frequently very poor. For example, in 1761 a review was held in Riohacha to organize men for the important task of confronting the Guajiro Indians. Slightly more than 50 per cent of the membership appeared or had an excusable absence.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, in most cases drilling was of questionable value; little could be accomplished for want of competent professional advice. This was true in Neiva where the governor reported that the officers, sergeants, and corporals knew nothing of the principles of military procedure or of the art of warfare.<sup>17</sup> In some areas

---

<sup>14</sup>McAlister, The "Fuero Militar", . . . , p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>Lyle N. McAlister, "The Reorganization of the Army of New Spain, 1763-67," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXIII (February, 1953), 1-32.

<sup>16</sup>Governor of Riohacha to Messsa de la Cerda, Riohacha, ANC: MM 97, fs. 848-850.

<sup>17</sup>Miguel de Gálvez to Messsa de la Cerda, Neiva, March 19, 1766, ANC: MM 105, fs. 901-902.

the militia had almost totally disintegrated. Francisco Requena, an engineer commissioned to Guayaquil to initiate plans for fortifications, reported in 1771 that the militia of that important Pacific port "existed in name only."<sup>18</sup> In 1759 the governor of Maracaibo, a province also important for defense purposes, colorfully referred to the companies under his command as "ghost" militia.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, membership in the provincial militia seems to have signified little more than a commitment to come forward to fight in case of attack.

In 1766 an unusually thorough inventory of men and equipment was compiled for the forces of Ibaguè which clearly illustrates the characteristic weaknesses of the pre-reform militia. There were three companies nominally totaling 1,165 members. These units were segregated, at least superficially, on a racial basis and varied substantially in individual strength. There were 526 whites, 280 mestizos, and 274 mulattoes and Negroes. This left 85 unaccounted for, as they failed to appear for review. Of the 1,080 militiamen who attended, 33 were 60 years of age or older; two members had reached 80! The weaponry was far from adequate. There were only 69 firearms, including 61 rifles and 8 pistols, 200 swords, 9 daggers, 301 sabers, 164 machetes, and 109 lances. Most of the firearms belonged to members of the company of whites. For that matter, many of this unit possessed two weapons, leaving a third of the militiamen without

---

<sup>18</sup> Francisco Requena to Messía de la Cerda, Guayaquil, ANC: MM 100, fs. 328-333.

<sup>19</sup> Governor of Maracaibo to Messía de la Cerda, Maracaibo, ANC: MM 105 fs. 489-492.

as much as a machete.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the companies of Ibagué had no officers.<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to believe that militia so poorly prepared could have constituted a significant asset to the vice-royalty's defense establishment.

In spite of its neglected condition, the provincial militia was a needed adjunct to the small forces of the regular army and was relied upon as a source of reserve strength. From time to time these amateurs were called to active duty. During British Admiral Vernon's siege of Cartagena in 1741, for example, two companies of free pardos and Negroes, and 300 other militiamen formed part of the army which turned back the Anglo-Saxon invaders.<sup>22</sup> In the province of Riohacha, militia was frequently used to supplement regular troops employed in frontier duty against the Guajiro Indians.<sup>23</sup> And, during the Rebellion of the Barrios in Quito, 1765-66, 150 Spaniards, residents of the presidency's province of Guaranda, were enlisted to assist an expeditionary force sent from Panama to restore order.<sup>24</sup> In a sense, however, the last two examples were a discredit to the defense system. The militia from

---

<sup>20</sup>Governor Ignacio Nicolás Buenaventura to Messía de la Cerda, Ibagué, *ibid.*, fs. 903-928.

<sup>21</sup>Governor Agustín Zeferino Correa to Messía de la Cerda, Ibagué, October 27, 1765, *ibid.*, fs. 872-873.

<sup>22</sup>Diary of Viceroy Sebastián de Esclava, Roberto Arrázola (comp.), Historial de Cartagena (Cartagena, 1961), p. 333.

<sup>23</sup>See chapter V.

<sup>24</sup>Sargento Mayor Andrés Javier Arregui to Messía de la Cerda, Guaranda, May 25, 1766, ANC: MM 101, fs. 539-540.

Guaranda appears to have been enlisted extemporaneously without any prior military training. Moreover, when in 1770 the governor of Santa Marta, Manuel Herrera Leyba, was ordered by Viceroy Messía de la Cerda to mobilize fifty militiamen to supplement fifty regulars destined for frontier duty in Riohacha, he was unable to comply because the available men were so poorly trained that they were next to useless. Under the circumstances, he asked for authority to employ twenty-four additional regulars instead.<sup>25</sup> A defense system which in time of emergency was forced to call upon reserves of this caliber must have been anything but formidable.

On occasion, there were governors who took a lively interest in the condition of their provinces' militia, but they were the exception, not the rule. Most of the provincial leaders appear to have been more or less indifferent to the problem, an attitude which, if not shared at the viceregal level, was not vigorously discouraged. In any event, without intensified assistance from Spain in providing trained officers, adequate equipment, and proper incentives, sustained efforts toward maintaining a well-disciplined militia were bound to fail. Comprehensive reform was in order if the provincial militia was to become an effective component for the defense of the viceroyalty.

New Granada's main defenses were based on an extensive series of coastal strongholds and fortified cities. The most important were Guayana, Cumaná, Maracaibo, Santa Marta, Cartagena, Portobelo, Panama, and Guayaquil. With the exception of a small number of companies

---

<sup>25</sup>AHC: MM 97, fs. 499-500.

stationed in the interior, the regular army of the viceroyalty had traditionally been deployed among these coastal defense bases and in their respective provinces. A survey of these centers of military activity will illustrate the motives for reform, as well as disclose a number of special conditions which subsequently had a direct influence on the military reorganization.

Cartagena was by far the most important of the coastal defense bases and accordingly was allotted larger quantities of personnel, equipment, and fortifications. In conjunction with Santa Marta, it guarded the Magdalena Valley transportation route into the interior of the viceroyalty and was considered the key to the defenses of northern South America. Because of the importance of this stronghold, the office of governor and commandant general of Cartagena was one of the most prestigious in the viceroyalty. Indeed, in one instance, a governor moved directly from Cartagena to serve as interim viceroy.<sup>26</sup> The defense complex of Cartagena was built around an intricate system of fortifications.<sup>27</sup> The character of these installations, while generally only of marginal interest in this study, does tie directly into the reorganization in several important respects. One of these was the problem of military finance, the other was the question of manpower allocation.

The city of Cartagena was located on a narrow tract of land with its back to the open sea, and it faced a large deep bay to which

---

<sup>26</sup>This man was Juan Pimienta who briefly served following the resignation of Manuel Antonio Flores in 1782.

<sup>27</sup>The most exhaustive publication on Cartagena's fortifications is Enrique Marco Dorta, Cartagena de Indias: puerto y plaza fuerte (Cartagena, 1960).

it was connected by a small inlet, the Bay of Animas. The main bay of Cartagena had two channels opening into the ocean, Boca Grande and Boca Chica. Between them was situated a large island, Tierra Bomba. The mainland side of the bay was webbed with swamps and lakes making difficult movement from one end to the other by land.

During the period under consideration, four major installations constituted the exterior defenses of Cartagena: the fortresses of San Fernando and San Sebastián del Pastelillo, the battery of San José, and the castle of San Felipe de Barajas. San Fernando, a very formidable structure, and San José had been erected on either side of the channel of Boca Chica to prevent entrance into the main bay. San Sebastián, located on the mouth of the Bay of Animas, provided a second line of defense. Should entrance be forced into the main bay, this fortress would hamper penetration directly to the walls of the city. The largest and most formidable of all the fortifications was San Felipe. Dating from 1667, this massive structure was built on a small hill on the mainland side of Cartagena, dominating land approaches to the city. This installation was required due to two possibilities. First, an enemy once safely within the calm waters of the bay might choose to land his forces and maneuver toward the city through the swamps on the bay's mainland side. This strategy was applied by the Barón de Pointis in 1697 and by Admiral Vernon in 1741. The other possibility was that an aggressor might land his forces directly on the main beach to the back of the city. This was unlikely, however, because a strong undertow made such an operation extremely hazardous. This had been the original plan of Pointis, but his boats were unable to reach the

shore; he soon realized that his attack must be launched through the main bay. The last line of defense was the wall of the city itself, complete with built-in installations facing the sea, bay, and land approaches. In addition, many of the fortifications of the city and bay had small approach batteries to bolster the more vulnerable aspects of their individual defenses.

The one great weakness which imperiled the security of Cartagena was its vulnerability through the channel of Boca Grande. This opening had filled in with sand in the middle of the seventeenth century and the bay's defense installations had been built on the premise that it would remain closed. Just prior to the outbreak of the War of Jenkins' Ear, a small waterway was opened in the old channel for purposes of naval mobility; this triggered an unexpected wave of erosion which in time completely reopened the channel. Rather than construct a new series of fortresses on the location, it was decided to build a dike across the channel which would finally resolve the problem as well as limit manpower requirements. The project was begun in 1771 under the direction of Antonio de Arévalo and was concluded in 1778 at the cost of approximately one and a half million pesos.<sup>28</sup> Compared to the annual revenue of the Real Hacienda of New Granada at that time, placed by Antonio Moreno y Escandón in 1772 at one million pesos, this was a huge monetary outlay.<sup>29</sup> Moreover,

<sup>28</sup> Marco Dorta, pp. 273-276, 297-301; Silvestre, p. 64.

<sup>29</sup> In this sum, Moreno does not include revenues from the two mints in Santa Fe and Popayán or the small income derived from the royal fifth of pearls and emeralds. Part of New Granada's defense

Cartagena's fortifications were subject to constant damage at the hands of nature and required an almost continual process of reconstruction. These expenditures placed a hard strain on defense funds, a crisis which coincided with the early years of the military reform. The absence of adequate funds eventually had an important impact on the development of the reorganized military.

Manpower requirements for Cartagena were abnormally large, not only due to the size of her fortifications, but also because of their widely scattered locations. The defenses of Boca Chica were ten miles from the city making difficult if not impossible the rapid transfer of men from one part of the complex to another. Nevertheless, sufficient military forces were rarely, if ever, provided due to weaknesses inherent in the pre-reform defense mechanism. Cartagena did maintain a fixed battalion, but this unit was chronically understrength.

The glorious Spanish victory over the British forces of Admiral Vernon in 1741 is attributable to heroism, the deadly fortifications of Cartagena, and perhaps British tactical error, but not to personnel preparedness. At the time of the British attack, Cartagena's fixed battalion was supplemented by troops from two Spanish battalions dispatched to New Granada from the Regiments of Spain and Aragón, but the regular troops totaled only 1,100. Although these units

---

expenditures were defrayed by her neighboring viceroyalties. Peru was responsible for financing the maintenance of Panama's and Portobelo's fortifications and their garrisons. New Spain was obliged to assist with the expenses of the coast guard. Moreno y Escandón, Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXVI, 602-606.

were supplemented by militia and some 1,000 seamen, the defenders were badly outmanned by the invaders who possessed a landing force of some 9000 men.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the margin of victory was not great. The British forces broke through the defenses at Boca Chica, entered the bay, captured a secondary line of fortresses in operation at that time, and managed to drive all of the way to the Castle of San Felipe de Barajas (also known then as San Lázaro) before being repulsed.<sup>31</sup>

Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa in their Noticias secretas revealed precisely how fragile were the defenses of Cartagena.

The defense bases through which we traveled on the coasts of New Granada en route to Peru were Cartagena, Portobelo, and the fortress of Chagres which defends the entrance to the river of the same name. These three defense complexes, although strong in fortifications, did not possess in the essentials those capabilities which complement works of fortification for forming a rigorous resistance; and although the contrary was experienced in Cartagena when the English laid siege and were rejected with such great honor that the very ferocious defense made filled the arms of Spain with glory, it is common knowledge that the defense was bolstered by timely assistance afforded by the arrival in the port of the squadron of Lieutenant General Blas de Lezo, whose crew and munitions were employed against the enemy from the first attack against the castle of San Luis de Boca Chica, and although retreating to the base's interior fortifications when it became necessary, they did not quit the defense until the enemy withdrew in despair; the same applies for the troops that were sent from Spain for garrison duty, and the presence of two highly experienced leaders as were Don Sebastián de Eslava (viceroy) and Don Blas de Lezo, all of which were missing when we were there; and for that matter, the major portion of the garrison that belongs there by allotment is still missing.

They further reported that although the fixed battalion's ten companies should have totaled 770 men, a force which when aided by militia could probably have managed a passable defense, in practice the unit was so

<sup>30</sup>Diary of Viceroy Eslava, Arrázola, p. 333.

<sup>31</sup>Charles E. Nowell, "The Defense of Cartagena," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XLII (November, 1962), 491-501.

depleted that the majority of the sentry boxes was not staffed. It was also pointed out that discipline was exceedingly poor.<sup>32</sup>

It is apparent that at the time of Juan and Ulloa's visit, Cartagena would have been hard pressed to have offered suitable resistance without the aid of Spanish reinforcements. This was a risky situation as there was no absolute assurance that Spanish troops would be on hand in time of emergency. After the Seven Years War, during which time Spanish reinforcements were again dispatched to Cartagena, the crown began to assume a more vigorous attitude toward that defense base's security. The fixed battalion was maintained near full force and a company from the Royal Corps of Artillery was sent to Cartagena for permanent service.<sup>33</sup> The tenth company of the fixed battalion was also an artillery company. Furthermore, the almost continual presence of Spanish battalions in the viceroyalty during the post-war period provided added security. However, a major effort to solve the personnel problem was not made until 1773.

The remaining troops within the Commandancy General of Cartagena were maintained at Santa Marta. The city was fortified, but this defense center was of only secondary importance. Its forces consisted of two companies of Infantry and a half company of artillery. Often, part of this fixed contingent was employed in the sister province of

---

<sup>32</sup>Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, Noticias secretas de América (Siglo XVIII) (Madrid, 1918), I, 154-155.

<sup>33</sup>De la Sierra to Messsa de la Cerda, Cartagena, October 11, 1771, ANC: MM 89, fs. 225-238; Troop inspection reports, Cartagena, 1765-1768, ANC: MM 71, fs. 211-214, 587-590; 1041-1044, 1066-1069; 1087-1091.

Riohacha for frontier duty against the Guajiro Indians, a formidable nation posing a constant threat to the peace of the region.<sup>34</sup> In time of great need, Cartagena was relied upon for reinforcements.

Because of its strategical location, the Commandancy General of Panama's defense bases were the second most important group in New Granada. Both ports, Panama on the Pacific side of the isthmus and Portobelo on the Caribbean, were fortified, as was the entrance to the Chagres River, part of the main transportation artery for interocean crossings. However, Panama's military importance was not matched either by economic productivity or by population. An important commercial crossroads under the Galleon system, this region suffered a drastic decline in economic importance upon the legal opening of the Cape Horn route to licensed vessels. This recession was reflected by the reduction of Panama from the seat of an *audiencia* to a mere governorship in 1751. In addition, population was very sparse. According to Francisco Silvestre, a government functionary writing in 1789, the governorship of Panama had only 35,942 pacified inhabitants, Veragua 21,061, Portobelo 1,662, and Darién 1,266.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the last half of the eighteenth century, these characteristics made Panama and its dependencies an exceptional burden on the viceroyalty's defense resources.

The condition of Panama's *fijo* units was the worst in the viceroyalty. An attempt had been made to maintain a battalion of seven

---

<sup>34</sup>See chapter V.

<sup>35</sup>Silvestre, pp. 43-50.

companies which was the bare minimum required for adequate defense of the isthmus. However, apparently in order to reduce expenditures, this battalion in time of peace was maintained only at the level of a skeleton force. In 1759 its membership totaled only 119 enlisted men plus a small number of officers.<sup>36</sup> By recruiting from European rotating battalions returning to Spain after service in Panama during the Seven Years War, it was possible to increase the number of troops.<sup>37</sup> However, by 1769 the commandant general reported to the viceroy that battalion strength had decreased to the point where it existed only in name.<sup>38</sup>

The danger in failing to maintain a substantial permanent military force was amply demonstrated in 1739 by the attack of Admiral Vernon against Portobelo. Unpreparedness and indiscipline were so great that the British invaders encountered practically no resistance. England declared war on October 19; word reached Panama on November 8; and Vernon appeared in Portobelo harbor on December 2.<sup>39</sup> Although the British force was much smaller than that employed against Cartagena in 1741, its size made little difference because the attack followed the declaration of war so closely that emergency preparations were incomplete. The governor of Panama had not begun to organize the

---

<sup>36</sup>Governor Manuel de Montiano to Viceroy José de Solís, Panama, ANC: MM 103, fs. 709-712.

<sup>37</sup>Governor Josef de Arana to Messía de la Cerda, Panama, March 14, 1764, ANC: MM 90, fs. 43-47.

<sup>38</sup>Olaznigui to Messía de la Cerda, Panama, *ibid.*, fs. 948-952.

<sup>39</sup>James Furguson King (ed.), "Admiral Vernon at Portobelo: 1739," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXIII (May, 1943), 259-260.

defense of the isthmus; no Spanish reinforcements had arrived; and to make matters worse, the majority of the regulars stationed in Portobelo were sick in the hospital. The governor of Portobelo was forced to rely on the militia and about 175 combat troops sent ashore by the coast guard.<sup>40</sup>

Vernon began his attack at mid-day and after only an hour's combat had captured the first of Portobelo's major fortifications. By that evening most of the militia had deserted and resistance had disintegrated. With the cause being so obviously hopeless, the authorities capitulated the following day, terminating one of the most disgraceful episodes of Spanish military history.<sup>41</sup> After leveling Portobelo's fortifications, Vernon momentarily abandoned the port in favor of greater objectives elsewhere. He returned in April, 1742, contemplating an attack on Panama, but by that time the second battalion of the Regiment of Granada had arrived. Apparently believing that these reinforcements would make operations too difficult, he withdrew without attacking.<sup>42</sup>

In spite of Vernon's victory, no major changes were made in the defenses of the Commandancy General of Panama. The fixed units continued to languish; the militia remained disorganized and undisciplined; and European troops, if they could arrive on time, were

---

<sup>40</sup>Council of War of the Lieutenant Governor of Portobelo . . . , December 2, 1739, and Relación de lo executado en la defensa . . . , December 8, 1739, in King, The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXIII, 269-271, 275-280.

<sup>41</sup>ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Oidor Antonio Berestegui, "Relación sobre el gobierno del Virrey Eslava," Relaciones de Mando . . . , p. 20.

considered as the mainstay of the isthmus' war time defenses. During the Seven Years War, European troops were again dispatched to the commandancy general and they continued to serve on a regular basis in the peace that followed. In addition, one company from the Royal Corps of Artillery was placed in Panama.<sup>43</sup> With the total disintegration of the fixed battalion in 1769, the dependence on rotating combat units became complete.

The remaining regular troops in the Caribbean region of the Captaincy General of Santa Fe were those of the three eastern provinces of Guayana, Cumaná, and Maracaibo, and of the island of Margarita. These garrisons were the source of complaints similar to those already discussed for the other defense bases. Moreover, the island of Trinidad was without a fixed military establishment.<sup>44</sup> Each of the three mainland governorships maintained several infantry companies on a fixed basis, units which in the pre-reform tradition were chronically understaffed.<sup>45</sup> If anything, their condition was below par for New Granada due to their remoteness from the center of military activity.

A safe distance from the troubled waters of the Caribbean, the provinces of the Commandancy General of Quito were relatively late in obtaining fixed military establishments. Prior to 1764, the only permanent regular troops in this region were the audiencia's guard

---

<sup>43</sup>Sobrezza to Messía de la Cerda, Portobelo, May 11, 1763, ANC: MM 90, fs. 58-60; Agreda to Messía de la Cerda, Portobelo, July 27, 1766, ANC: MM 92, fs. 760-766.

<sup>44</sup>Messía de la Cerda, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 117.

<sup>45</sup>Governor Pedro José Urrutia to Messía de la Cerda, Cumaná, 1766, ANC: MM 61, fs. 413-414; Governor Alfonso del Río to Messía de la Cerda, Maracaibo, February 15, 1769, ANC: MM 15, fs. 774-795; Governor Manuel Centurión to Messía de la Cerda, Guayana, 1769, ANC: MM 64, fs. 677-680.

of twenty-five men.<sup>46</sup> In that year a request was made and authorization from the crown received for the augmentation of this company to fifty members.<sup>47</sup> The following year Viceroy Messisa de la Cerda formulated a proposal which would increase the number of regulars in the commandancy general to 200 men. These were to be distributed for service among Quito, Cuenca, and Guayaquil. The crown granted its approval on June 26, 1765.<sup>48</sup> However, this plan was interrupted and later altered due to the severe upheaval which began in Quito a month before the crown's action.

The Rebellion of the Barrios which erupted on the evening of May 22, 1765, was one of the strongest uprisings in the late colonial period. It began as a prearranged violent mass protest against the *aguardiente* monopoly and the *aduana*, and contained strong anti-Spanish undertones. Initially, the tax collection house was attacked and burned and *aguardiente* was dumped into the streets. As the evening progressed the temper of the mob grew meaner, ultimately compelling the *oidores* of the *audiencia* to take pacificatory measures through the mediation of the Jesuits. They agreed to suppress the monopoly and the *aduana*, and in addition, granted a general pardon to all involved in the disorders. With these assurances, the mob dispersed, ending serious disturbances for a month. In the meantime, however, sporadic violence was directed against Spaniards and their households.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Royal order, June 26, 1765, ANC: MM 51, f. 67.

<sup>47</sup>Royal order, September 26, 1764, ANC: MM 100, fs. 23-24.

<sup>48</sup>ANC: MM 51, f. 67.

<sup>49</sup>Federico González Suárez, Historia general de la República de Ecuador (Quito, 1890-1901), V, 213-216.

On the evening of June 24 rioting broke out again, this time stemming from an incident in the plaza of Santo Domingo. There, an alquacil accompanied by his assistants set upon a small group of men, whipping two of them. This deed, whether justified or not, again aroused the passions of the citizenry. The ensuing tumult became clearly directed against the city's Spanish elite, reportedly because of their haughty, abusive behavior. Some 200 were forced to take refuge in the palace of the royal audiencia where they held off the attacking mob with cannon and firearms; the oidores, abandoning honor, hid in a convent. By the evening of June 28, with ammunition and supplies depleted, there was little choice but to capitulate. Throughout this turmoil the meager guard of the audiencia was unable to play a significant role.<sup>50</sup>

In compliance with the wishes of the victors, the audiencia, which continued to remain in hiding for some time after the fall of the palace, finally agreed to the exile within eight days of all unmarried Spaniards. In addition, the suppression of the aguardiente monopoly and the aduana was reiterated. These terms were confirmed by the viceroy on September 17, including a general pardon for all participants. Thereafter, Quito was again at peace, but government officials felt compelled to exercise their authority only with the greatest discretion. Full governmental power was restored only after a military expedition of 600 militiamen and regulars, originating in Panama and Peru, marched into the troubled city in September of the following year under the command of Juan Antonio Zelaya, governor of

---

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 216-220.

Guayaquil.<sup>51</sup> With that the rebellion was dead, but it had succeeded in humiliating the Spanish regime, in undermining administration faith in the innocence of the vassals of Quito, and in demonstrating the deficiency of the small military establishment.

This series of events was considered additionally serious because the unrest spread into surrounding areas. In the governorship of Popayán direct repercussions were felt in the cities of Cali, Cartago, and Popayán. There also, the authorities had to temporarily heed the popular demand for the relaxation of taxes and government monopolies.<sup>52</sup> To make matters worse, out of all the uprisings the officials were able to apprehend only one suspected leader.<sup>53</sup> Everywhere, resources for effective riot control were proven badly defective.

The authorities were quick to perceive in this series of events a close connection between public order and military strength. Viceroy Messía de la Cerda expressed his thoughts on this subject in his relación to Don Manuel Guirior in 1772.

. . . let it be noted, that the obedience of the inhabitants in this kingdom has no other support, with the exception of the garrisons, than the free will and pleasure with which the inhabitants comply with orders; because, without their approval, there is no force, weapon, or authority which their superiors can use to gain respect and obedience; hence, command is very hazardous and the good success of measures taken is excessively provisional; by the same token, this lack of confidence requires treading lightly and, at times, without complete freedom, trying to be accommodating to the circumstances; and, according to this situation, it results that the enemy can be of two categories, the disobedient vassals and the rebellious barbarians who dwell in the interior of the provinces.

---

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 220-226.

<sup>52</sup>Gustavo Arboleda, Historia de Cali (Cali, 1928), p. 441.

<sup>53</sup>Messía de la Cerda, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 113.

The viceroy went on to report that he believed disloyal vassals to be the most dangerous of the two threats, citing the humiliating experience in Quito as evidence of the fact.<sup>54</sup>

Shortly after the rebellion was suppressed, Messía de la Cerda sent a communication to the president of Quito indicating his desire to establish a large fixed regular force in the troubled areas which would act as an agent for the preservation of domestic peace and order.<sup>55</sup> Such a program was not accomplished for several years, however. In the meantime, troop detachments usually numbering about 200 men were employed from Panama. For the most part these soldiers were drawn from the European battalions currently available.<sup>56</sup> The first new *fijo* company was established in Guayaquil in 1767.<sup>57</sup> Four years later a *fijo* contingent of three companies was organized for the city of Quito, as well as one unit for Popayán.<sup>58</sup> All five were infantry companies.

The troop commitment in Guayaquil was an outgrowth of efforts already in progress to build that port into a coastal defense base.

---

<sup>54</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>President Juan Antonio Zelaya to Messía de la Cerda, Quito, April, 1767, ANC: MM 101, fs. 555-556.

<sup>56</sup>Orosco to Messía de la Cerda, Panama, July 1766, ANC: MM 92, fs. 750-757; Captain Francisco Antonio Fernández to Messía de la Cerda, Quito, June 3, 1767, ANC: MM 100, fs. 745-754.

<sup>57</sup>Governor Francisco de Ugarte to Guirior, Guayaquil, August 2, 1773, ANE: Pres. 194, fs. 51-62.

<sup>58</sup>De la Sierra to Messía de la Cerda, Cartagena, February, 1771, ANC: MM 103, fs. 104-105; Report of Subinspector General Joaquín de Cañaveral, Cartagena, May, 1793, ANC: MM 92, fs. 1019-35.

By royal order of December 8, 1762, the corregimiento of Guayaquil was transformed into a governorship to be "served by a military subject."<sup>59</sup> In addition, plans for fortifications there were already underway. More significant were the companies of Quito and Popayán which were the first units of appreciable size employed for duty in the interior of the viceroyalty. This departure from the traditional pattern, while initiated prior to the rebellion, was certainly influenced by it. First, the 200 troops deployed in the interior of the commandancy general were a stronger force than that originally proposed. Furthermore, the distribution pattern was altered; three full companies for the city of Quito were more than formerly contemplated, and Cuenca remained without a fixed contingent. And, the company of Popayán was an innovation explicitly formed for the purpose of enforcing royal authority in response to unrest stimulated by tax collection.<sup>60</sup> While the new troop commitment in the interior of the Commandancy General of Quito was not a huge or a particularly impressive force in its own right, it was subsequently of primary importance in the evolution of the military reform.

Although the evidence is not conclusive, a possible additional consequence of the events in Quito and Popayán was a strengthening of the viceregal guard in Santa Fe de Bogotá in 1768. With the exception of a small number of men employed for mission escort duty, the

<sup>59</sup>Abel-Romero Castillo, Los Gobernadores de Guayaquil del Siglo XVIII (Madrid, 1931), pp. 48-49.

<sup>60</sup>Expediente sobre el despacho de la compañía fija de Popayán a Quito, 1777, ANC: MM 52, fs. 520-529.

guard had been the only regular troops stationed in the interior of the viceroyalty prior to the establishment in the Commandancy General of Quito. It was established in 1750 consisting of two companies, one of cavalry, the other of halberdiers. Although royal authorization for this act provided for 100 men in the first unit and sixty men in the second, Viceroy José Alonso Pizarro chose to limit the new companies to fifty men each.<sup>61</sup> However, shortly after the Rebellion of the Barrios in Quito, Viceroy Messía de la Cerda requested authorization to increase these companies by twenty-five men each and royal approval soon followed.<sup>62</sup> Although it is entirely possible that the strengthening of the Guard had no direct relationship to the events in the Presidency of Quito, circumstantial evidence indicates that this was indeed the case. In the first place, the position of the viceregal capital was similar to that of Quito in that the coastal armies, the nearest source of military aid, were a considerable distance away; second, Messía de la Cerda's previously quoted statements regarding the subject of domestic obedience indicated an appreciation for the role of the military in supporting governmental authority; and, last, the numerical upgrading of the viceroy's guard occurred simultaneously with the establishment of interior military forces in Quito and Popayán. Whatever the case, although the changes in the viceregal guard did represent a 50 per cent manpower increase, the resulting force was still far from formidable. And, in spite of all the alterations

<sup>61</sup>Royal order, July 17, 1751, ANC: Reales Ordenes 53, f. 188.

<sup>62</sup>Tribunal de Cuentas to Viceroy Messía de la Cerda, Santa Fe, August 9, 1768, ANC: MM 51, fs. 601-602.

and innovations incurred in the interior of the viceroyalty after 1765, the character of New Granada's military commitment remained primarily coastal.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORM: CARTAGENA AND PANAMA

The 1773 initiation of military reform in the Viceroyalty of New Granada featured both a strengthening of the regular army and the formation of new, "disciplined," militia. With New Granada's key defense bases badly undermanned and its militia in a chaotic condition, such action was imperative if the viceroyalty were to become reasonably capable of repelling foreign invasion. However, in undertaking preparations for the next phase of its struggle with Great Britain, the Spanish monarchy had first directed its attention to the more important and more vulnerable portions of its empire. In 1763 a military reorganization was started in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and in the following year efforts were extended to New Spain.<sup>1</sup> Before reaching New Granada, the military reform had also been introduced in Peru.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the year 1773 was a comparatively late date in the overall introductory process. With pioneering experiences already completed, New Granada was able to take advantage of a well-developed militia policy.

---

<sup>1</sup>McAlister, The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXIII, 9.

<sup>2</sup>Manuel de Amat y Junient, Memoria de gobierno, eds. Vicente Rodríguez Casado and Florentino Pérez Embid (Sevilla, 1947), pp. 716-717.

Military reform was introduced piecemeal into New Granada with no apparent comprehensive plan of dissemination from province to province. The only thing approaching such a norm was a negative accord by all parties concerned that endeavors should at first be restricted to only those areas most critically in need of an invigorated military establishment. The crown's initial reform plans were limited in scope to the two most important defense centers, Cartagena and Panama. Thereafter, the reorganization only gradually progressed to other parts of the viceroyalty. Moreover, once the reform advanced beyond Cartagena and Panama, little in the way of direct aid was extended from Spain; rather, local resources and talents were employed for the new programs.

Politically, the expansion of the military reform was conducted upon the initiative of the government in Santa Fe. And, although their measures required ultimate approval in Spain, the viceroys themselves soon became the reorganization's active policy makers. As a consequence of its piecemeal introduction, the reform movement assumed a decidedly federalist character; this was especially true in the sphere of organizing disciplined militia. The programs implemented were frequently responses to local problems and were in turn managed largely at the local level. This pattern of diffusion contrasted with the policy followed in New Spain where a special commission under the direction of Lieutenant General Juan de Villalba y Angulo was charged with implementing a comprehensive reform for the entire viceroyalty.<sup>3</sup> Only toward the end of the colonial period did

---

<sup>3</sup>McAlister, The "Fuero Militar", . . . , pp. 3-4.

the Viceroyalty of New Granada develop a militia institutional system of a more or less centralized nature.

The ability to conduct the militia aspect of the reform without the benefit of a special high-ranking commission was enhanced by the late date of New Granada's reform. By 1773 an extensive set of royal legislation had already been enacted which served as a guideline for disciplined militia organization. The most comprehensive crown policy statement was the Real declaración sobre puntos esenciales de la ordenanza de milicias provinciales de España que ínterin se regla la formal, que corresponde a estos cuerpos, se debe observar como tal en todas sus partes (Madrid, 1767), which was an up to date summary of crown legislation for the disciplined militia of Spain. In addition, a reglamento, which was an American appendix to the Real declaración and which contained provisions especially applicable to the Caribbean region, was issued for Cuba in 1769.<sup>4</sup> For the reform in New Granada, the royal instructions specified that the new militia was to be formed in accordance with the provisions of the Cuban reglamento; a number of copies were sent to Cartagena and Panama.<sup>5</sup>

The reform was initiated by a royal order of November 24, 1772, which commanded the expansion of Cartagena's fixed regular battalion into a regiment consisting of two battalions of nine companies each; a second order issued on January 11, 1773, reestablished the fixed

<sup>4</sup>Reglamento para las milicias de infantería y caballería de la isla de Cuba, aprobado por S.M. (Havana, 1769).

<sup>5</sup>Governor Roque de Quiroga to Guirior, Cartagena, June 11, 1773. ANC: MM 87, fs. 784-795.

battalion of Panama.<sup>6</sup> Orders for the establishment of disciplined militia came on February 12, 1773, for Panama, and on March 18, 1773, for Cartagena.<sup>7</sup> The Commandancy General of Panama was authorized to organize three battallions and twelve separate companies in the governorships of Panama and Portobelo. More flexibility was granted to Cartagena in that the instructions did not place a definite limitation on the number of units to be organized; the authorities were instructed to form a battalion at a time, confining recruitment to only the more worthy candidates. Enough equipment for four battalions was sent from Spain.<sup>8</sup>

For the implementation of these programs, existing institutions were employed. In both Cartagena and Panama reform direction was entrusted to the commandant generals; Roque de Quiroga occupied this office in Cartagena and Nicolás Quijano in Panama. The new responsibilities of the commandant generals regarding the regular army were consistent with their traditional functions as supra-provincial commanders just below the level of the viceroy in the chain of command. Moreover, their own governorships were those most involved. In the sphere of disciplined militia leadership the commandant generals assumed the duty of inspector, the most powerful militia post below the viceregal level. That function placed them in a position to control

<sup>6</sup>Quiroga to Secretary of the Viceroy Pedro de Ureta, Cartagena, February 8, 1773, ANC: MM 85, fs. 865-867; Governor Nicolás Quijano to Guirior, Panama, June, 1773, ANC: MM 90, fs. 1044-1049.

<sup>7</sup>Royal order, February 12, 1773, ANC: MM 98, f. 539; Royal order, March 18, 1773, ANC: MM 87, fs. 790-794.

<sup>8</sup>ibid.

officer appointments, to conduct inspections, to serve as intermediaries in correspondence between the leaders of the various units and the viceroy, and to maintain general supervision of militia affairs. For the initial formation, they were personally entrusted by the crown with raising the new units. The employment of the individual commandant generals for the implementation of the reform provided the advantage of on the spot direction uninhibited by the geographical separation of the two affected regions which were connected only by water.

The expansion of the regular army was rapidly terminated. In accord with royal provision, the new units were formed out of recruits drawn from the European battalions currently deployed in the viceroyalty. The Battalion of Savoy provided personnel for Cartagena's second battalion, the Battalions of Murcia and Naples for Panama.<sup>9</sup> The tenth company of Cartagena's original fixed battalion, the artillery company, was disbanded and replaced by a new unit pertaining to the Royal Corps of Artillery.<sup>10</sup> The remainder of the three European battalions then returned to Spain.<sup>11</sup> This expansion tripled the strength of the regular fixed contingent in the two commandancy generals, thereby drastically increasing the self-reliance of those

---

<sup>9</sup>Colonel Josef Bernet to Guirior, Cartagena, May 11, 1773, ANC: MM 87, fs. 739-745; Quijano to Guirior, Panama, June, 1773, ANC: MM 90, fs. 1044-1049.

<sup>10</sup>Quiroga to Guirior, July 11, 1773, ANC: MM 71, fs. 237-244.

<sup>11</sup>Quiroga to Ureta, Cartagena, June 11, 1773, ANC: MM 84, fs. 916-923; Quiroga to Guirior, Cartagena, June 24, 1773, ANC: MM 87, fs. 764-768; Quijano to Guirior, Panama, June, 1773, ANC: MM 90, fs. 1044-1049.

key strategic areas. Although future complications required further employment of Spanish troops in the viceroyalty, the main burden of defense from 1773 forward was borne by the newly strengthened local army.

The formation of disciplined militia was a tedious task entailing the creation of an officer corps, the enlistment of troops, and the provision of arms and other supplies; not until almost a year after the initiating royal orders did the new units emerge in semi-finished form prepared for drilling.<sup>12</sup> In Cartagena two battalions and fifty-eight separate infantry companies were raised; in the Commandancy General of Panama, three battalions and twelve separate companies were formed as specified by the royal order.<sup>13</sup> Two battalions and a company of Cartagena's militia were organized in the city of Cartagena and its immediate surroundings. Twenty-eight of the governorship's remaining fifty-seven companies were established in the outlying partido of Lorica, sixteen in the partido of Barranquilla, and thirteen in the partido of Mompós. All of the militia for the Commandancy General of Panama were established in the Governorship of Panama and its partido of Nata except six companies raised in Portobelo and on the margins of the Chagres River. Besides the infantry units, two cavalry companies were formed in the partido of Barranquilla; two artillery companies were raised in the city of Cartagena, a brigade

---

<sup>12</sup>Quijano to Guirior, Panama, November 20, 1773, ANC: MM 90, fs. 645-662; Commander Josef Pérez Dávila to Ureta, Cartagena, March, 1774, ANC: MM 88 f. 73.

<sup>13</sup>Quijano to Guirior, Panama, November 20, 1773, ANC: MM 90, fs. 645-662.

in Tolú of the partido of Lorica, and a company each in Portobelo and Panama. The artillery units were segregated from the regular militia command and were placed in care of the staff of the Royal Corps of Artillery<sup>14</sup> (see Table 2).

The disciplined militia of New Granada was segregated into two broad social divisions, blanco or white, and those with all or part Negro parentage. The latter class was subdivided into units composed of pardos, a collective grouping which included the various categories of mulattoes, and morenos, the offspring of free Negro parents. This system conformed with provisions made in the Cuban reglamento. However, New Granada added a new variety, the units of all colors; these contained a mixture of the various Negro classes and on rare occasions could contain whites.<sup>15</sup>

For the units comprised of the various Negro groupings, the same regulations applied except for a few minor details of which differentiation in salaries, the morenos receiving less than pardos, was the most important.<sup>16</sup> In the period under consideration, the term "pardo" was frequently employed in a general sense to include all of the various militia units containing members with all or partial Negro lineage; for expediency, the term will be so employed in this study

<sup>14</sup>Gálvez to Flores, Spain, March, 1777, ANC: MM 12, f. 423; Report on the militia of Cartagena, Governor Juan Pimienta, March 26, 1778, ANC: MM 40, fs. 152-165; Royal order, September 4, 1778, ANC: MM 9, f. 1061.

<sup>15</sup>Membership roll of the Company of All Colors of Sinú, Lorica, 1780, ANC: MM 21, fs. 373-374; Libretas de servicio . . . del Reglamento de Infantería de Todos Colores . . ., Santa Marta, 1788, ANC: MM 97, fs. 79-124.

<sup>16</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, relaciones 9-11.

TABLE 2  
ARMY OF NEW GRANADA 1779\*

Regulars	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Two companies of Santa Marta	154		
Half company of Santa Marta		25	
Regiment of Cartagena	1,358		
Royal Corps (two companies of Cartagena)		200	
(company of Panama)		100	
Battalion of Panama	679		
Detachment of Chagres	29		
Company of Guayaquil	100		
Three companies of Quito	225		
Detachment of Popayán	25		
Halberdier Viceregal Guard	75		
Cavalry Viceregal Guard			75
Totals	2,645	325	75
Total Regulars	3045		
Disciplined Militia	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Two companies of pardo dragoons, Riohacha			252
Battalion of whites, Cartagena	800		
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena	800		
Company of morenos, Cartagena	90		
Company of pardos, Cartagena		100	
Company of morenos, Cartagena		100	
Brigade of pardos, Tolú of the partido of Lórica (Cartagena)		30	
Two companies of whites, partido of Barranquilla (Cartagena)	180		
Four companies of pardos, partido of Barranquilla (Cartagena)	360		
Four companies of morenos, partido of Barranquilla (Cartagena)	360		
Six companies of all colors, partido of Barranquilla (Cartagena)	540		
Company of white cavalry, partido of Barranquilla (Cartagena)		90	

TABLE 2 (cont.)

Disciplined Militia	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Company of pardo cavalry, partido of Barranquilla (Cartagena)			90
Five companies of whites, partido of Mompós (Cartagena)	450		
Two companies of pardos, partido of Mompós (Cartagena)	180		
Six companies of all colors, partido of Mompós (Cartagena)	540		
Nine companies of whites, partido of Lorica (Cartagena)	810		
Nineteen companies of all colors, partido of Lorica (Cartagena)	1,710		
Battalion of whites, partido of Nata (Panama)	720		
Battalion of pardos, partido of Nata (Panama)	720		
Battalion of pardos, Panama	720		
Three companies of whites, Panama	270		
Two companies of morenos, Panama	100		
Company of pardos, Panama	90		
Company of pardos, Panama		100	
Two companies of whites, Portobelo and the margins of the Chagres River	100		
Two companies of pardos, Portobelo and the margins of the Chagres River	140		
Company of pardos, Portobelo		100	
Battalion of whites, Guayaquil	800		
Battalion of pardos, Guayaquil	800		
Regiment of white dragoons, Guayaquil, twelve companies			600
Five companies of whites, Guayaquil	250		
Company of pardos, Guayaquil	50		
Company of whites, Guayaquil		50	
Two companies of morenos, Guayaquil		100	
Eleven companies of whites, Popayán	1,100		
Company of pardos, Popayán	100		
Two companies all colors, Popayán	200		
Totals	12,980	580	1,032
Total Disciplined Militia	14,592		

\*The above table was compiled from reports and other correspondence. See Commander Diego Antonio Nieto to Viceroy Manuel Antonio Flores, Cartago, ANC: MM 52, fs. 332-348; report on the militia of Cartagena, Governor Juan Pimienta, Cartagena, March 26, 1778, ANC: MM 40, fs. 152-165; Estado de fuerza del ejército, Guayaquil, Commander Victor Salcedo y Somodevilla, October, 1779, ANC: MM 101, fs. 708-714; Estado de fuerza del ejército, Panama, Governor Ramón de Carvajal, August 1, 1781, ANC: MM 103, fs. 500-519; Estado de fuerza del ejército, Santa Marta and Riohacha, Governor Antonio de Narváez y la Torre, August, 1784, ANC: MM 101, fs. 445-446. Also see ANC: MM 89, f. 547, MM 90, fs. 600-608, 628-634, 645-662, 1040, MM 95, fs. 155-158, MM 106, fs. 885-890, MM 109, fs. 171-172, MM 110, fs. 367-375.

unless clarity demands group differentiation. With respect to the classification "blanco" or white, it cannot be presumed that all members of the group were of totally white racial stock. By the late eighteenth century miscegenation was at a relatively advanced stage, and that classification might be based on other than racial considerations, such as wealth or cultural habits. Moreover, for the purpose of the militia, mestizos were considered white.<sup>17</sup>

As specified by the Cuban reglamento, the structure of command in disciplined militia units consisted of a delicate balance between regular and volunteer personnel. At the head of each battalion was a command and staff group comprised of a colonel, who was a militia volunteer; a sargento mayor, who was a veteran plans and training officer; an ayudante, who was also a veteran and charged with assisting the sargento mayor in conducting his duties; and a group of non-commissioned officers and other personnel. The veteran positions of sargento mayor and ayudante were functions, not ranks, and they were normally performed by men who in the regular army held the offices of lieutenant or first sergeant. At the company level, the captain was a militia volunteer, but as with the command and staff group, the second in command, the lieutenant, was a veteran. The latter function would normally be performed by a man who held the rank of corporal or cadet in the regular army. In addition, the militia was provided with a cadre of veteran enlisted men who served as sergeants and corporals in the companies. By this method, the

---

<sup>17</sup>ibid., relación 1; Captain Diego Antonio Nieto to Flores, Buga, January 13, 1779, ANC: MM 52, fs. 443-444.

crowns entrusted command to volunteers, but insured proper discipline and training by placing veterans where they could enhance quality service and function as a check on the non-professionals (see Table 3).<sup>18</sup>

The militia colonel's position was considered equal to that of his counterpart in the regular army.<sup>19</sup> However, in relationships between the regular army and the militia, he was to obey the orders of veteran colonels and in effect was regarded as an officer of one grade less than colonel.<sup>20</sup> An illuminating example of this differentiation was a ruling made on burial laws. A deceased militia officer was entitled to the same honors in his funeral as those granted to his equivalent in the regular army provided that the rites were conducted by militiamen. On the other hand, if the ceremonies happened to be conducted by members of a regular unit the honors were to be those of one rank lower.<sup>21</sup>

The colonel's second in command was the veteran sargento mayor, who to be eligible for appointment must have at one time served in Spain. Aided by his ayudante he was the most active member of the command and staff group and was responsible for conducting inspections and supervising the affairs of the battalion. Should he believe that his superior the colonel was acting in violation of regulations, it

<sup>18</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, chaps. 1-111.

<sup>19</sup>Royal order, February 13, 1778, ANC: MM 100, fs. 165-172.

<sup>20</sup>Royal order, February 18, 1779, ANC: MM 88, f. 483.

<sup>21</sup>Gálvez to Flores, Spain, June 12, 1779, ANC: MM 9, fs. 870-892.

TABLE 3

UNIT ORGANIZATION UNDER THE REGLAMENTO FOR THE  
DISCIPLINED MILITIA OF CUBA, 1769

White Infantry Battalion											
Companies	Captains	Lieutenant, Veteran	Second Lieutenants	First, Veteran	Sergeants		First Corporals		Drummers, Veteran	Soldiers	Totals
					Second, Militia	Veteran	Militia	Second Corporals			
Grenadiers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	64	80
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Totals	9	9	9	9	18	18	36	54	9	656	800

Command and Staff Group

1 Colonel	1 Surgeon
1 Sargento Mayor (Veteran)	1 Drum Major (Veteran)
1 Ayudante (Veteran)	1 Corporal, Gastador
2 Standard-bearers	6 Gastadores
1 Chaplain	

TABLE 3 (cont.)

Pardo Infantry Battalion										
Companies	Captain	Lieutenants	Second Lieutenants	First Sergeant	Second Sergeant	First Corporal	Second Corporal	Drummers	Soldiers	Totals
Grenadiers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	64	80
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Totals	9	9	9	9	18	54	54	9	656	800

Command and Staff GroupWhite

- 1 Ayudante Mayor, Subinspector
- 4 Ayudantes
- 5 Garzones

Pardo

- 1 Commandant
- 2 Standard-bearers
- 1 Drum Major
- 1 Corporal, Gastador
- 6 Gastadores
- 3 Fifers

TABLE 3 (cont.)

Cavalry Regiment											
Squadrons	Companies	Captains	Lieutenants	Second Lieutenants	Ensigns	First Sergeants	Second Sergeants	First Corporals	Second Corporals	Soldiers	Totals
	Carabineers	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
1	First	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
	Second	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
	Third	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
2	Fourth	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
	Fifth	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
	Sixth	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
3	Seventh	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
	Eighth	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
	Ninth	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
4	Tenth	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
	Eleventh	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
	Twelfth	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	44	50
Totals	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	26	26	572	650

Command and Staff Group

1 Colonel	1 Chaplain
1 Lieutenant Colonel	1 Surgeon
1 Sargento Mayor (Veteran)	4 Buglers (Veteran or Militia)
1 Ayudante Mayor (Veteran)	

TABLE 3 (cont.)

Dragon Regiment												
Companies	Sergeants					First Corporals					Totals	
	Captains	Lieutenants	Second Lieutenants	First Veteran	Second Militia	Veteran	Militia	Second Corporals	Drummers Veteran	Soldiers		
Foot	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	84	100
	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	84	100
	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	84	100
Horse	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	3	3	0	42	50
	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	3	3	0	42	50
	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	3	3	0	42	50
Totals	6	6	6	3	12	6	21	27	3	378	450	

Command and Staff Group

1 Colonel  
 1 Ayudante Mayor (Veteran)  
 2 Standard Bearers

1 Chaplain  
 1 Surgeon

TABLE 4

## ORGANIZATION OF A VETERAN INFANTRY REGIMENT\*

Battalions		Companies	Captains	Lieutenants	Second Lieutenants	First Sergeants	Second Sergeants	First Corporals	Second Corporals	Drummers	Soldiers	Totals
First	Grenadiers	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	54	63
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
Second	Grenadiers	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	54	63
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	64	77
Totals		18	18	18	18	34	34	70	70	34	1132	1358

TABLE 4 (cont.)

Command and Staff GroupFirst Battalion

1 Colonel  
 1 Sargento Mayor  
 1 Ayudante Mayor  
 2 Standard Bearers  
 1 Chaplain  
 1 Surgeon  
 1 Corporal, Gastador  
 6 Gastadores  
 1 Master Armorer  
 1 Drum Major  
 2 Fifers

Second Battalion

1 Lieutenant Colonel  
 1 Ayudante Mayor  
 2 Flag Bearers  
 1 Chaplain  
 1 Surgeon  
 1 Corporal, Gastadores  
 6 Gastadores  
 1 Master Armorer  
 2 Fifers

---

\*Adapted from Ordenanzas de S.M. para el régimen, disciplina, subordinación, y servicio de sus ejércitos . . . (Madrid, 1768).

was his duty to inform the colonel of his error; if need be, he could appeal to the inspector, but only with the colonel's knowledge. In this manner, the integrity of the office of colonel was preserved, although he was prevented from wandering too far astray. A similar relationship existed between the captains and the veteran lieutenants.<sup>22</sup>

According to the reglamento and a clarifying order of August 6, 1773, the inspector of militias bore the main responsibility for the selection of personnel for the veteran positions in the militia and he also made proposals for the office of colonel. The colonel's chief appointive duty was suggesting candidates for the office of captain, as well as reviewing recommendations made for the lower company offices by the senior officers of the unit. In conducting this function the colonel's prerogatives were also effectively restricted. Unless there was compelling reason to do otherwise, he was obliged to make his selections from men of the next volunteer rank, and in doing so, to consult with the sargento mayor whose opinion he was to include along with his own report. Moreover, the inspector by his right of review provided another check. For all offices, recommendations were to consist of three nominations which were to be passed up the hierarchy of command, including the comments from each level, with the process eventually terminating in Santa Fe or Spain depending on the importance of the position.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, chaps. 1-111.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., chap. VI; José María Zamora y Coronado (comp.), Biblioteca de legislación ultramarina en forma de diccionario alfabético . . . (Madrid, 1844-46), III, 229.

A large portion of the veteran personnel for New Granada's new militia was provided directly from Spain including two special commanders, Félix Martínez Malo for Panama and Josef Pérez Dávila for Cartagena.<sup>24</sup> The two commanders acted as special technical assistants for the commandant generals and during the formative years of the militia assumed the roles normally reserved for colonels. They continued to serve until the militia was properly functioning, at which time they were replaced by bonafide volunteer colonels. This transition occurred in Cartagena in 1777, but not until the following decade in Panama where progress was slower.<sup>25</sup> The initial royal instructions for the formation of the militia provided that if the number of regulars from Spain proved insufficient, additional selections should be made from the veteran units corresponding to the involved areas. Such a shortage developed in Cartagena which was scheduled to receive three sargentos mayores, three ayudantes, and eleven lieutenants.<sup>26</sup> The allotment was too small to begin with, and to aggravate the situation, only eleven of the regulars had arrived by mid-December. Commandant General Roque de Quiroga informed Viceroy Guirior who immediately granted him authorization to initiate nominations from the fixed regiment's cadets and sergeants.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup>Quiroga to Guirior, Cartagena, June 11, 1773, ANC: MM 87, fs. 784-795; Quijano to Guirior, Panama, November 20, 1773, ANC: MM 90, fs. 645-662.

<sup>25</sup>Royal order, June 17, 1777, ANC: MM 56, fs. 933-937.

<sup>26</sup>Quiroga to Guirior, Cartagena, June 11, 1773, ANC: MM 87, fs. 784-795.

<sup>27</sup>Guirior to Quiroga, Santa Fe, January 30, 1774, ANC: MM 56, fs. 784-787.

For the volunteer officer positions, many candidates were selected from the original militia which had been dissolved with the inauguration of the new system; others were recruited from the community at large.<sup>28</sup> In all cases, special care was to be directed toward selecting men of the best social standing in the community, men who could maintain a prestigious position worthy of officership.<sup>29</sup> During the formative period, nominations for these positions normally would have originated from the special commanders acting as colonels; however, Dávila and Martínez Malo did not arrive from Spain until late in the year, and as a consequence, the commandant generals functioning as inspectors made the selections themselves.<sup>30</sup> This practice led to a dispute between newly appointed sargento mayor Nicolás Palazuelos, who was a recent arrival from Spain, and the commandant general of Panama, Nicolás Quijano. Palazuelos contended that in the absence of a functioning colonel, he as this officer's consultant for formulating appointments ought to exercise the prerogative of making the initial selections. Conversely, Quijano claimed that under the special conditions created by the reorganization's initial problems, and due to his special orders, it was his position to initiate appointments. The controversy was taken to

---

<sup>28</sup>Quijano to Guirior, Panama, October 8, 1773, ANC: MM 98, fs. 534-542.

<sup>29</sup>Reglamento, , , Cuba, chap. VI, art. 2.

<sup>30</sup>Quijano to Guirior, Panama, October 8, 1773, ANC: MM 98, fs. 534-542; Dávila to Guirior, Cartagena, December 9, 1773, ANC: MM 56, fs. 794-801.

Viceroy Guirior who upheld the commandant general.<sup>31</sup> However, once the special commanders arrived from Spain, they exercised power in filling the remainder of the volunteer company positions.<sup>32</sup>

The enlistment of soldiers for the militia was initiated shortly after the commandant generals received their royal orders of February and March. The Real declaración for the militia of Spain contained an elaborate classification system by which potential recruits were to be categorized into five groupings according to the severity of hardship their possible absence would cause to their families and other dependents. Under this scheme, first single men and widowers without children would be subject to selection by lottery, then married men without children, and so on down the list until the levy would be filled, with those supporting children the last to be called. In addition, a wide range of exemptions was granted for those holding critically important civilian positions, lest in time of mobilization they be removed from their communities.<sup>33</sup> Presumably because of a smaller pool of available manpower, the enlistment practices outlined in the Cuban reglamento employed in New Granada were less discriminatory.<sup>34</sup> Nothing was said about classification on a hardship basis which presumably made all in non-vital occupations equally liable if they were between the prescribed ages of 15 and 45; the only

---

<sup>31</sup>Guirior to Quljano, Santa Fe, ANC: MM 98, fs. 533.

<sup>32</sup>Officer proposals, militia of Cartagena, April, 1774, ANC: MM 30, fs. 963-964.

<sup>33</sup>Real declaración . . . , tits. II-III.

<sup>34</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, chap. II, arts. 25-32.

specification was that recruitment lists should indicate whether or not a man was married.<sup>35</sup> A subsequent royal order issued in 1779 did exempt the only sons of widows.<sup>36</sup> Occupational exemptions were granted to members of the clergy, medical personnel, school teachers, certain types of students, lawyers, scribes, notaries, tax collectors, and a number of other public functionaries. In 1779 this list was extended to include the maritime merchant class.<sup>37</sup>

There was little official commentary about the way recruitment was actually practiced in New Granada. It appears that if the lists indicated that there were enough useful men in a community to support a company, they were enlisted.<sup>38</sup> In such a process it is unlikely that fine distinctions such as having dependents would have made a great deal of difference. Indeed, the company membership rolls available for analysis reveal that a large share of the enlisted men were at least married, although it is impossible to determine the total number of dependents.<sup>39</sup> Juan Pimienta, governor and commandant general of Cartagena, complained in a 1778 report on the militia that in the localities supporting companies almost all of the men between the ages of 15 and 45 were enlisted, and that many of them were

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., chap. 1, art. 9, and relación 1.

<sup>36</sup>Royal order, February 18, 1779, ANC: MM 12, fs. 340-353.

<sup>37</sup>Royal order, June 18, 1779, ANC: MM 71, fs. 532-534.

<sup>38</sup>Orders for the formation of recruitment lists were sent to the commandant generals prior to the initiation of the actual reform. Quiroga to Guirior, Cartagena, June 11, 1773, ANC: MM 87, fs. 784-795.

<sup>39</sup>Lorica, 1780, ANC: MM 21, fs. 273-280.

fathers. He feared that if it became necessary to place the units on active duty, their communities would suffer great hardship.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, in spite of what seem to have been indiscriminatory recruitment practices, many units, especially in Panama, had constant problems in maintaining their full quotas; within several years of their creation two companies from the Portobelo region completely disintegrated, and several others were dangerously close to doing likewise.<sup>41</sup>

Indians, legally perpetual minors, were not permitted to serve in the militia. The question arose in New Granada when Pérez Dávila, Cartagena's special commander, enlisted Indians in Turbaco. He based his action on a special provision in the Cuban reglamento which allowed the enlistment of Indians to complete the white battalions of Cuba and Bayamo. Upon receiving word of this development, Commandant General Roque de Quiroga became concerned for he suspected that such recruitment was inconsistent with "the privileges and exemptions conceded to this group of people." Finding nothing in the regulations specifically prohibiting the practice, but believing the Cuban example to be an exception due to extenuating local circumstances rather than a precedent, he asked Viceroy Manuel Guirior for a ruling. Guirior replied confirming his suspicions; Indians indeed were not liable for military service. The viceroy then ordered the immediate

---

<sup>40</sup>ANC: MM 40, fs. 152-165.

<sup>41</sup>Estado de fuerza del ejército, Panama, Governor Ramón de Carvajal, August 1, 1781, ANC: MM 103, fs. 500-519.

termination of their enlistment.<sup>42</sup> Guirior's ruling was consistent with policy followed in New Spain where likewise Indians were not permitted to enter the military.<sup>43</sup>

Drills were initiated for most of the militia between December 1, 1773 and January 1, 1774.<sup>44</sup> Although initially conducted on a more frequent basis, exercises were to be held once a week with the selection of the day dependent upon the choice of the individual units. The practice site was normally the local community, even for the companies attached to battalions.<sup>45</sup> This was necessary because of their wide dispersal. For example, only six companies of the white battalion of Cartagena were from the city itself; two of the remaining companies were from Turbaco and Arjona both some 47 leagues from the capital city, the other from Barranquilla and Soledad some 30 leagues away.<sup>46</sup>

The responsibility for supervising the militia training program rested with the command and staff groups. In addition to three of the battalions, each of the three partidos of Cartagena sponsoring militia also had a command and staff group to manage that duty.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Quiroga to Guirior and reply, 1774, ANC: MM 88, fs. 1-4.

<sup>43</sup> McAlister, The "Fuero Militar" . . . , p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Quijano to Guirior, Panama, November 20, 1773, ANC: MM 90, fs. 645-662; Quiroga to Guirior, Cartagena, December 26, 1773, ANC: MM 57, fs. 482-490.

<sup>45</sup> Reglamento . . . , Cuba, chap. III.

<sup>46</sup> Report on the militia of Cartagena, Pimienta, March 26, 1778, ANC: MM 40, fs. 152-165.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

However, the immediate burden of forging suitable soldiers out of the volunteers rested with the veteran sergeants and corporals. They were obliged to reside in the communities supporting their units and be constantly available in the event their services might be required.<sup>48</sup> Once a month the weekly practice became a special exercise which all of the company officers were bound to attend; they were also encouraged to participate in as many of the regular weekly training sessions as possible. The veteran members of the command and staff groups were expected to at least assist at firing practice which was a bimonthly session. For the colonel, attendance was not obligatory. Enlisted men were required to participate in all exercises unless granted previous permission for absence because of a legitimate excuse. This training program, if conducted as prescribed, would be a great improvement over the former practices.

Over half of the disciplined militia of Panama and Cartagena was of the pardo category. This included three battalions, one from Cartagena and two from Panama, as well as fifty-four of the separate companies. Because of their lower station in life, pardos were considered less virtuous and less reliable than their white counterparts. The most noteworthy consequence of this assumption was the limitation of the authority delegated to pardos in the system of command. Their battalions were equipped with a dual command and staff group, including one of white regulars, the other of volunteer men of color, which was an extension of unit segregation. The head of the pardo section was entitled the "commandant." He was assisted by standard-bearers, a

---

<sup>48</sup> Reglamento . . . Cuba, chap. 11, arts. 15, 17.

drum major, and a number of non-commissioned personnel. The white command and staff group was headed by a subinspector who held the militia post of ayudante mayor. He was accompanied by four men of the militia position of lieutenant who served as ayudantes. Since the militia operated on a segregated basis, no veteran personnel were integrated into the company ranks; rather, a number of pardo officers were maintained on salary. In addition, the white staff and command group contained a large number of non-commissioned officers, garzones, available for the necessary technical advice. In contrast to pardo units, those with the all-color designation operated with only a white command and staff group in the same manner as the white units.

In pardo units the designation of commander for the colored chief was more pretense than reality. Supreme authority rested with the subinspector who was responsible for supervising the training, discipline, and general conduct of the battalion. In performing these comprehensive duties, he was to be obeyed by all, including the pardo commander. However, the subinspector was cautioned by the reglamento that this officer was to be considered of the same authority as other heads of battalions. Moreover, the commander had the power to arrest any battalion soldier or officer who did not comply with his commands. Here the precise lines of authority are very nebulous. It is inconceivable that the commander would have dared to arrest a subinspector, or for that matter, any other white official. In any event it would have taken an extremely creative mind to have produced such a confrontation because the supreme duties of subinspection, the key

loophole, were so broadly defined. Moreover, since the remainder of the white officers and non-commissioned personnel were specifically labelled by regulations as the subinspector's assistants for the conduct of his duty, they also for all practical purposes would be beyond the reach of pardo authority. In effect, the pardo commander was commander of pardos, and no more.<sup>49</sup>

In 1779 a serious dispute arose in Panama which reveals much concerning the relationship between pardo and white officers.<sup>50</sup> The issue was a matter of etiquette: when, and for what duration, pardo officers were to remove their hats in the presence of white officers. Although this issue may seem absurd today, it was anything but that at the time. The parties involved were unable to reach an agreement and the matter ultimately had to be taken to the viceroy for a decision. Unfortunately, the superior ruling, if ever made, has not been uncovered.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the range of discussion in this disagreement is most informative and clarifies much of what in fact was the position of pardos in the militia.

The subject had originally been raised by special Commander Félix Martínez Malo shortly after the pardo units were organized.

---

<sup>49</sup> ibid., chap. I, art. 13; chap. II, arts. 13, 22, 34; chap. IV, art. 13.

<sup>50</sup> Expediente formado por queja del comandante de milicias contra el teniente del Rey de esta plaza, 1779, ANC: MM 40, fs. 669-687.

<sup>51</sup> It is possible that a superior ruling was never made. Flores left Santa Fe to assume command in Cartagena when war broke out that year. This transfer was soon followed by the Comunero Rebellion and then a rapid turnover of viceroys in 1782; hence, it is not unlikely that the issue simply became lost.

In consultations with both Viceroy Guirior and Colonel Josef Bernet of the Fixed Regiment of Cartagena, who had previously served as sargento mayor during the formation of the disciplined militia of Cuba, he inquired whether pardos in conformity with their inferior birthright should be obliged to remove their hats in the presence of white officers, as must white enlisted men, even though these men of color held positions as officers in the militia. Both authorities answered in the affirmative. Guirior's ruling, which also placed certain limitations on the decorative aspects of pardo uniforms, received crown approval.<sup>52</sup> Colonel Bernet elaborated:

If there was a pardo or moreno in Havana who dared behave disrespectfully to an officer (white) he would be made to ride a rail, and . . . during a grave dispute between the commander of morenos, Vicente Martfnez, and his subinspector, the former quarreling with the subinspector, he was thrown into a dungeon in irons, and after a detention of two months he was informed that if he did not restrain himself, and respect his superiors, he would be discharged from his office and would be sent off to Royal Labors.

The resurrection of the question in 1779 followed a series of complaints by the pardo officers from the battalion of Panama. They protested that white officers, out of malice and desire for amusement, had begun approaching them without cause merely to force the removal of their hats; these affairs sometimes endured in excess of a half an hour. Moreover, some pardos charged that for alleged want of punctuality in complying with this courtesy, they had been arrested and maltreated by word. Knowledge of these abuses reached the governor's office at a time when Commandant General Ramón de Carvajal was

---

<sup>52</sup>Julián de Arriaga to Guirior, Spain, October 21, 1775, ANC: MM 92, fs. 197-201.

seriously ill. José Pérez Dávila, promoted in 1777 from his position with Cartagena's militia to lieutenant governor (teniente del Rey) of Panama, was acting governor.

Dávila responded to the pardo complaint by issuing an order stipulating that white officers should approach pardos only in the line of duty, and that, when doing so, they must confine the subject of conversation to the business at hand. Moreover, to limit possible contacts, he specified that pardo officers should receive their instructions from white officers only through their commander. When legitimate contact did occur, pardo officers were to remain with hat in hand. However, if at the time they happened to be discharging duties with their unit, they could immediately replace their hats, continuing with their work. If by chance white and pardo officers should meet on the street, or under similar conditions, the pardos were to greet the whites first, but the white officers were then to return the greeting with equal courtesy (con la misma atención y política). Dávila's measures might have passed without incident had not the pardos concluded that the ruling freed them from the duty of removing their hats when not specifically discussing militia affairs. With this development the white officers believed their honor and prestige to be threatened by what seemed to them an obvious breach, not only of military etiquette, but of the very laws of hierarchy.

José de Matos, subinspector of the pardo battalion, immediately filed a vigorous complaint which he sent to Militia Commander Martínez Malo. Martínez in turn sent a strongly worded protest, accompanied by Matos' petition, to Governor Carvajal asking for a nullification

of Dávila's order. Martínez was incensed with the stipulations that pardo officers could under some circumstances replace their hats in the presence of white officers, and that, in exchanging greetings, the whites were obliged to demonstrate equal courtesy. The former ruling, he claimed, was

violating the natural order of mankind and fomenting the unjust pretensions of the pardos who aspire to leave the condition of their birth to which they should be subject. Subordination, courtesy, and respect are the fundamental bases with which the good order of these militias must be preserved to prevent the pardos from becoming impudent with their respective superiors, which defect has been experienced on various occasions because of a lack of correction that would have taught them the difference that exists between peoples.

With regard to the latter ruling, Martínez claimed that there was no law in the realm, in military regulations, or in the reglamento making obligatory the exhibition of courtesy toward pardos, although doing so was a matter of good breeding. He added that there was a great deal of difference in quality between the soldiers of the regular army and pardo officers, but the regulations contained no mention that regular officers need return courtesies to the veteran soldiers. Yet, under Dávila's ruling white officers were obliged to return a mandatory greeting to mere pardos.

Matos in his petition singled out an inconsistency in military policy resulting from Dávila's ruling. As matters stood, in the event of a shortage of ayudantes, the garzones of the white command and staff group were to assume the former's responsibilities, which placed them in a position to render orders to the pardo officers. However, militia garzones as non-commissioned personnel were obliged to remove their hats in the presence of officers. Yet now, with the

latest ruling by Dávila, men to whom they could give orders were granted greater liberties with their hats than were they themselves, the garzones.

To these entreaties, Governor Carvajal replied that he was too ill to conduct the investigation which would be necessary before he could issue a judgment; in the meantime, Dávila's order stood unless specifically contradicting a previous superior ruling. Shortly thereafter, Dávila presented his case to the governor. He pointed out that his action was based on precedents established in Cartagena where unnecessary friction was avoided by simply forbidding white officers from "fraternizing" with the pardos. Preventing discord, he maintained, was in the best interest of royal service, especially because the empire was at war. Dávila then asked Carvajal to refer the question to the viceroy which the governor did.

For general policy, it made little difference what the viceroy's ruling might have been; the differences of opinion were essentially over details. It occurred to no one, for example, to suggest that white enlisted men remove their hats for pardo officers. All parties concerned, unless possibly some pardos, agreed that under at least some conditions officers of color by penalty of their undistinguished birth ought to stand before white officers with hats removed. Dávila's rulings certainly were not intended to promote a social revolution, but rather, simply intended to prevent unnecessary humiliation for a class of men who at least in number bore a large share of the isthmus' defense responsibilities. To this end he attempted to remove all possible temptations from the white officers, but in doing so perhaps went

farther than the viceregency would have wished. Moreover, in Panama and presumably in Cartagena it was customary for the commander of militia to deal solely with the white command and staff group and therefore completely bypass the pardo staff members, reducing them in consequence to mere errand boys for their white counterparts. Pardo officership appears to have been of meaningful consequences only within the pardo group itself.

Prior to Spain's entry into the War of American Independence in 1779, the extent of the reform in the Commandancy Generals of Cartagena and Panama remained confined to the provinces specifically singled out in the royal instructions. An exception to this generalization was the organization of two companies of dragoons in the province of Riohacha which, however, is part of another story related later in this study. This left the provinces of Veragua and Santa Marta momentarily without disciplined militia, while the regime in Santa Fe set about expanding the reform into the provinces of Guayaquil and Popayán, both of which possessed disciplined militia before the outbreak of the war. It would seem to have been more logical for the government to have pressed for expansion of the reform into the two remaining important Caribbean provinces, rather than to extend it to the back country, particularly to Popayán in the interior; but, the province of Santa Marta was embroiled in a major Indian war, disrupting any hopes of gaining the time necessary to establish disciplined militia, while Veragua lost its chance due to an administrative snarl resulting in an extensive delay.

The failure of Veragua to produce disciplined militia is important not only because it represented a momentary check on the progress of the reform, but also because the entanglement which produced the delay elucidates the institutional structure of the Commandancy General of Panama. The dilemma began in September, 1773, at which time Commandant General Quijano in reporting on the progress of the reform mentioned for the viceroy's consideration the possibility of organizing disciplined militia in the governorship of Veragua, where in addition to an ample supply of manpower, there were some 525 available firearms.<sup>53</sup> Viceroy Guirior's response was highly enthusiastic. He soon sent orders to both the commandant general and to the governor of Veragua expressing his desire to proceed. He instructed Quijano to select a capable officer, to place him temporarily in command of the project, and to send him to Veragua. In the meantime, he should initiate formal appointment procedures by sending a report on his candidate to Santa Fe. He was also ordered to appoint some corporals from the fixed battalion to assist with the project. The governor of Veragua, Félix Francisco Bexarano, was asked to extend full cooperation to the officer being sent from Panama.

Bexarano, who had been governor for twenty years and was a long-time advocate of a strong militia, immediately began work on the project. He welcomed the viceroy's decision because of a profound fear he had developed of the Mosquito Indians, a tribe which prompted by British Interlopers conducted periodic raids in his province from

<sup>53</sup>Expediente sobre la Insubordinación del gobernador de Veragua, 1773-75, ANC: MM 16, fs. 949-971, MM 77, fs. 653-655, 847-850, 973-979, and MM 92, fs. 882-883.

the adjoining Captalncy General of Guatemala. Commandant General Quijano, however, soon had serious misgivings about the project due to information brought to his attention by an aide who had been ill when the plan was originally conceived. This man pointed out that in 1768, during the early planning stage of the militia reform, Veragua's potential was included in a survey report sent to Spain; but, the crown excluded the province from its reform plans with the given reason being that funds were too limited to organize a large militia, and that if too many battalions were formed it would create an imbalance in the proper ratio between regular and militia units. Now fearful that the planned program in Veragua might be a violation of the royal will, Quijano notified the viceroy of the new information which had come to his attention and announced that he was delaying further action until he had received a reconfirmation of his instructions. Guirior decided to go ahead anyway and in September, 1774, while answering Governor Bexarano's first progress report, which had been sent to him directly rather than through Panama, authorized the governor to communicate with the commandant general asking him for the needed veteran personnel. This Bexarano did not do, but instead proceeded on his own.

Meanwhile, Nicolás Quijano was replaced by Pedro Carbonell who did not receive word of what was happening in his dependent province until July, 1775. To make matters worse, he did not obtain this information through official channels. The new commandant general immediately wrote to Bexarano demanding to know upon what authority he was acting, and pointed out that the royal orders for the formation

of militia said nothing about organizing units in Veragua. Obviously resenting his military dependence on Panama, Governor Bexarano, who appears to have been an independent, vitriolic sort of individual, replied in a curt fashion including with his communication the vice-regal letters. He informed Carbonell that he had already formed a battalion of whites as well as four separate pardo companies, and that he had every intention of further expanding his efforts as soon as weather would permit. Flatly stating that due to the Mosquito-English menace his region was more critically in need of disciplined militia than any other province, he announced that his program was to form as many units as possible. Moreover, he declared that not to form disciplined militia in view of Veragua's defense problems would be a disservice to the king, against royal intentions, and a grave injustice to the province's inhabitants, as he well knew from his long years of experience.

Needless to say, Carbonell was taken ~~back~~ by the whole affair, for it seemed evident to him that his prerogatives as commandant general had been seriously violated. He refused to send the needed corporals on the grounds that he had none to spare, but was careful to point out that had Bexarano originally informed him of the vice-roy's intentions, as he should have, things might have been different. Moreover, he ordered the suspension of further expansion endeavors until he would have an opportunity to review the situation. Last, Carbonell took issue with the contention that the Mosquito Indians were a serious threat, pointing out that in the past six years the Panama office had been informed of only one incursion. He added,

that if what he, Bexarano, had said was true, the incidents should have been reported.

At this point the breach between the two officials still might have been healed by an apologetic letter from Governor Bexarano; however, such a response was not forthcoming. Bexarano answered his superior with one of the harshest communications produced during the era of the reform. In this reply the governor made a wide range of insulting allegations: he charged that the danger of the Mosquito Indians was common knowledge, and indeed was able to produce several royal orders demonstrating that the crown had been concerned about the problem for some time; he intimated that the reorganization in Panama had been grossly mismanaged; he contended that such a large number of units was not necessary there, especially since Panama was the place in the isthmus in which they were least needed; and he claimed, and quite correctly, that most of Panama's units were far understrength and that by merely combining some of them the commandant general would have enough veteran officers left over for Veragua. The deepest cut of all was a threat consisting of a blunt statement that he had other objections to Carbonell's work, but that they were reserved for a report to the crown of whose sympathy he was certain due to his many years of service in the region; this was in addition to a report he was sending to the viceroy which would also include the present communication.

That was more than Commandant General Carbonell, whose authority at this point was clearly under attack, could take. Not panicked by Bexarano's attempt at blackmail, he took decisive action. For the

record, he first replied to Bexarano that he was out of line, and that corrective measures would be required if he did not immediately mend his ways. Then, he sent complete records of the dispute to Viceroy Guirior. In his accompanying report he emphasized to the viceroy that he had suffered a serious affront to his position as commandant general of Panama and asked the viceroy to correct the governor's insolence. Moreover, he re-emphasized his contention that disciplined militia in Veragua were not a necessity and insisted that he did not have sufficient veteran personnel at his disposal to staff such militia. His recommendation was that Bexarano's units merely be maintained on a pre-reform basis.

In his decision, December 15, 1775, Viceroy Guirior upheld the commandant general's position, sternly rebuked Governor Bexarano, but said little specifically about terminating the project in question. Probably, he would have preferred to have gone ahead with his aspirations for the establishment of disciplined militia in Veragua, but for the time being had little choice. The matter had become a contest of will between the two governors, and if the position of commandant general was to be meaningful, Carbonell would have to be backed. Actually, it was not so much what Bexarano had said, as most of it was true, but how he said it. He had displayed no respect for the position of his superior, and he had degraded him in word by impudent statements and in deed by bypassing him as he saw fit without regard for the established chain of military hierarchy. Thus, according to Carbonell's wishes, the Veraguan militia remained on a non-disciplined basis. As for Bexarano, being duly humiliated he complied in future dealings

with the established chain of command. He benefited thereby, for Carbonell softened and found some expendable veterans after all.<sup>54</sup> In consequence to this series of events, the sphere of disciplined militia in the Commandancy General of Panama remained restricted for the sake of harmony to the provinces of Portobelo and Panama until the following decade. For, although the new units in Veragua did by and large meet the criteria for disciplined militia, they technically were not classified in that category.

---

<sup>54</sup>Carbonell to Flores, Panama, December 12, 1776, ANC: MM 75, fs. 710-714.

## CHAPTER III

### THE REFORM IN GUAYAQUIL AND POPAYAN

After the conclusion of the initial reorganization in Panama and Cartagena, the military reform was extended to the province of Guayaquil, and shortly thereafter to Popayán. Conducted with an almost total absence of direct royal assistance, this step marked the initiation of a severe modification of militia policy at the hands of Viceroy Manuel Guirior, 1772-76, and José Antonio Flores, 1776-82. The changes effectuated were born out of necessity because, at least for the immediate future, specified militia regulations were in several important respects unworkable on a broad scope in New Granada. Both Guirior and Flores were leaders whose aspirations for the rapid expansion of the reform throughout the viceroyalty were more ambitious than those of the crown. They boldly pushed ahead, scored major accomplishments, but failed to fully realize their aspirations.

With the viceroyalty left to its own resources, the key problems in following the letter of the law stemmed from an inability to provide the specified veteran components for the militia. The veteran cadre of an infantry battalion required eighteen corporals, nine first sergeants, and nine lieutenants, personnel which in the cases of Cartagena and Panama were drawn from veteran sergeants, corporals and enlisted men. In addition, two men of the veteran officer category, or at least the rank of first sergeant, were

required for each battalion's command and staff group. To the regular army units, the provision of such veteran cadres meant a manpower loss of almost a half company per each militia battalion formed. Considering that a difficult time was had by all concerned in maintaining the fixed units near their full allotted strength, this was a severe manpower drain, especially since it meant the loss to regular service of the army's best men. If the various provinces of New Granada were to each establish several battalions of disciplined militia in rapid succession, the veteran unit would soon be totally depleted.

The corollary to this problem was rising costs to the extent that the veteran personnel assigned to militia units was replaced in the regular army. On a unit basis, the cost of supporting the salaried personnel of one white battalion maintained at proper veteran advisory strength would come to 11,952 pesos a year.<sup>1</sup> In practice, the payroll of Cartagena's disciplined militia presented an annual expense of roughly 51,000 pesos. Moreover, units were supposed to be uniformed and armed.<sup>2</sup> While the responsibility for providing uniforms rested with the local communities, the royal treasury was to defray the cost of arms and the payroll. However, always a poor source of royal revenue, New Granada at this time found the treasury especially depleted because of the huge expenditures currently being lavished upon the new dike under construction in Cartagena's bay. The impact of this burden was harshly felt in the poverty-stricken Presidency of Quito where a large

---

<sup>1</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, relación 8.

<sup>2</sup>Report on the militia of Cartagena, Governor Juan Pimienta, Merch 26, 1778, ANC: MM 40 fs. 152-165.

share of the revenue collections was especially earmarked for sustaining this construction. The outflow of currency surpassed 700,000 pesos during the eleven-year administration of President José Diguja and topped the 1,000,000 mark for the four-year rule of the vigorous tax collector, José García de León y Pizarro.<sup>3</sup> The Governorship of Popayán was also among those included for the provision of the special funds.<sup>4</sup> Under these conditions, if the reform was to be expanded, as Guirior believed it must, either major assistance had to be rendered directly from Spain, new revenues devised, or important modifications would be required in the structure of newly planned units. Since the former was not forthcoming and revenue reform just beginning, Guirior, who abided by the rule in his work in Panama and Cartagena, had little choice but to strike out on his own, to formulate policy which would be workable in New Granada.

After Cartagena and Panama, the province of Guayaquil, whose city of the same name was the most important Pacific port of the viceroyalty, was the next logical objective for the reform. Guirior solicited approval from the crown for the raising of disciplined militia in that locality on May 15, 1774, and was granted this authorization on August 26.<sup>5</sup> Prior to this time, the viceroy had ordered Governor Francisco de Ugarte to formulate lists of potential

---

<sup>3</sup>González Suárez, V. 295.

<sup>4</sup>Flores to the royal officials of Popayán, Santa Fe, October 2, 1776, ACC: Colonia, MI 1, sig. 5493.

<sup>5</sup>Arriaga to Guirior, Spain, August 26, 1774, ANC: MM 97, fs. 807-808; Guirior to Julián de Arriaga, Santa Fe, December 15, 1775, ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820.

recruits.<sup>6</sup> On March 17, 1775, Guirior commissioned Captain Vctor Salcedo y Somodevilla of Guayaquil's fixed company to function as special commander in the raising of the province's planned disciplined militia.<sup>7</sup> Salcedo's dual function, at one time acting as both captain of the regular company and commander of militia, was both an innovation and an economization of personnel, distinct from practice both in Cartagena and Panama where the special commanders sent from Spain were employed solely in militia duty.

The sharpest policy break came in the provision of the new militia's contingent of veteran advisors. Guirior limited this cadre to only a first sergeant, who was a former member of the Regiment of Murcia and who acted as ayudante, and to two corporals selected from the veteran garrison of Panama.<sup>8</sup> Guirior had wanted an officer instead of a sergeant, but in response to his request the governor of Panama stated that compliance was impossible because his battalion was already five lieutenants short, and that his second lieutenants were for the most part too inexperienced or otherwise unsuited for the task at hand.<sup>9</sup> This allotment was radically below specifications,

<sup>6</sup>Expediente de quejas del gobernador de Guayaquil de las facultades que se han conferido con perjuicio suyo, 1774-75, ANC: MM 108, fs. 727-746.

<sup>7</sup>ANC: MM 100, fs. 187-193.

<sup>8</sup>Guirior to Arrlega, Santa Fe, December 15, 1775, ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820. All things equal, it would have been more feasible to have selected these men from the fixed regiment of Cartagena since it was larger; however, at this time the fixed unit's services were actively engaged in an Indian war in Riohacha (see chapter V).

<sup>9</sup>July 10, 1774, ANC: MM 74, fs. 18-19.

especially since two infantry battalions, one of whites and the other of pardos, a regiment of dragoons, and three artillery companies were raised.<sup>10</sup> The plan was to employ the regulars for intensive instruction of volunteer officers, so that they would become capable of imparting suitable training to their troops, while the veterans would continue to serve in a general advisory capacity as personal assistants to Commander Salcedo y Somodevilla.<sup>11</sup>

The third innovation was in uniforming the new units. Monetary expenditure was eliminated by conferring the rank of captain only on those volunteers who would in advance agree to provide their companies with uniforms at their own expense.<sup>12</sup> This violated the reglamento which specified that appointments to officership should be granted without charge, and that they should be made only on an interim basis until the crown could give its final approval.<sup>13</sup> Under these circumstances the crown's freedom of action was somewhat impaired by obligation to those who provided uniforms. Although the appointments could still have been rejected, no vassals are on record as having lost their investments. From a practical point of view, this method, or something similar to it, was probably the only possible system of providing uniforms for the militia of Guayaquil. Moreover, there

---

<sup>10</sup>After the initial reorganization six more infantry companies were raised (see Table 2).

<sup>11</sup>Salcedo y Somodevilla to Guirior, Guayaquil, June 2, 1775, ANC: MM 51, fs. 55-56; Guirior to Arriaga, Santa Fe, December 15, 1775, ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820.

<sup>12</sup>Salcedo y Somodevilla to Guirior, Guayaquil, June 2, 1775, ANC: MM 51, fs. 55-56.

<sup>13</sup>Reglamento, . . . Cuba, chap. II, art. 1; chap. VI, arts. 8-9.

proved to be an ample number of citizens who were willing to follow this route to the prestige of officership.<sup>14</sup> However, many of those committed to providing uniforms failed to honor their promises, leaving by 1780 only twelve companies fully clothed in the proper fashion.<sup>15</sup> In its subtler aspect, this policy created an opportunity for advancement for those of the community who were not among the most distinguished families in terms of lineage but who were of financial means, although Viceroy Guirior testified that only men otherwise qualified were appointed.<sup>16</sup> Actually, most of the volunteer officer positions were obtained by men who had served in the previous militia units now disbanded with the reform.<sup>17</sup> With regard to firearms, there was a considerable number already in Guayaquil, although not enough for all of the militia at this time.<sup>18</sup>

Administratively, Viceroy Guirior's actions were a bold stroke conducted in open violation of the expressed royal will. Wisely, he did not inform the crown of his practices until after the militia had already been organized. This was done in a communication of December 15, 1775, in which he justified each of his departures from

<sup>14</sup>Guirior to Arriaga, Santa Fe, December 15, 1775, ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820.

<sup>15</sup>Salcedo y Somodevilla to Flores, Guayaquil, January 7, 1780, ANC: MM 108, fs. 653-669.

<sup>16</sup>Guirior to Arriaga, Santa Fe, December 15, 1775, ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820.

<sup>17</sup>Salcedo y Somodevilla to Guirior, Guayaquil, October 5, 1775, ANC: MM 107, fs. 742-743.

<sup>18</sup>Gálvez to Flores, Spain, March 17, 1776, ANC: MM 106, fs. 398-405.

official policy, asked for royal approval, and in the case of the abbreviated veteran cadre, openly expressed his belief that the group he had selected was adequate for the task.<sup>19</sup> The crown replied on November 18, 1776, expressing displeasure at the inadequacy of the veteran contingent, but did not present any solution to the problem of where to recruit, or how to finance the required officers and enlisted men. Instead, a re-evaluation of the militia membership itself was suggested with the stipulation that it would be better to maintain fewer units well trained rather than a large but poorly disciplined militia. In essence, the crown was returning to its original posture of limiting substantial implementation of the reform to Cartagena and Panama. Nevertheless, Guirior achieved an important victory, for the crown specified that the militia should remain as it was while the possibility of reducing the number of units was under consideration. And, although a decision was eventually made, it came during wartime with the militia remaining at an inflated size. Apparently, wishing to leave well enough alone,<sup>20</sup> the crown said nothing about the method employed in providing uniforms. The essence of what occurred in Guayaquil was that for the time being the viceregency moved out from under the direct hand of the crown in determining militia policy. In subsequent endeavors, Guirior and his successors largely ignored Spain's displeasure and continued the reform under the new guidelines. The crown, if truly displeased, did

---

<sup>19</sup>ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820.

<sup>20</sup>ANC: MM 110, fs. 745-747.

not act decisively to halt the trend until the last decade of the century.

Commander Víctor Salcedo y Somodevilla functioned in much the same way as had his counterparts in Cartagena and Panama, although under extreme harassment from Francisco de Ugarte, the province's governor. Ugarte, described by Ecuadorian historian Abel-Romeo Castillo as "brusk, violent, and despotic," was not a popular figure in his province and was party to an intense factionalism among the local dignitaries. Prior to Salcedo's arrival he counted among his enemies three members of the military: engineer Francisco Requena, Captain of the Fixed Company Francisco Gómez Miró, and Lieutenant Rulz Romero. Upon the captain's death, the governor attempted to undercut this faction of his opposition by opposing the promotion of Lieutenant Romero who was next in line for the captain's position. He appealed to Guirior for the appointment of an outsider and the viceroy complied with his wishes.<sup>21</sup> Salcedo was selected for the position from the staff of Cartagena. However, this appointment developed into more than Ugarte had bargained for; not only did the newcomer assume the captainship, but shortly after his arrival in Guayaquil obtained appointment to the special commandship for the organization of the new militia as well. The governor had assumed that he, the holder of a colonel's commission in the regular army, would be personally entrusted with the reorganization.

---

<sup>21</sup>Castillo, pp. 153-155.

The appointment of Salcedo as commander of militia was by all indications an afterthought on the part of Guirior who had originally intended to permit the governor to assume direct responsibility. But the viceroy became dissatisfied with Ugarte's slow rate of progress, which he attributed to the governor's other extensive duties, and in consequence decided to delegate the burden to the captain.<sup>22</sup> Probably, he was also aware that Ugarte was old and in bad health. Salcedo, for his part, was an energetic, fast-rising young officer who had the additional qualification of having witnessed the implementation of the reform in Cartagena.<sup>23</sup> He began his military career as a cadet in the Regiment of Savoy, secured appointment as second lieutenant three years later, and was promoted to lieutenant upon his incorporation into the fixed regiment, May, 1773. He was only twenty-two years of age when appointed by Guirior to the captainship of the company of Guayaquil in late 1774.<sup>24</sup>

Ugarte was dismayed to discover that he had been denied first-hand participation in the conduct of the reform, although he was empowered to act in the higher capacity of inspector. Salcedo aggravated this resentment by working independently of the unpleasant governor wherever possible, a snub which led him to believe that his

<sup>22</sup>Ugarte to Guirior, Guayaquil, July 19, 1775, ANC: MM 110, fs. 353-362.

<sup>23</sup>Guirior to Arriaga, Santa Fe, December 15, 1775, ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820.

<sup>24</sup>Service record of Captain Victor Salcedo y Somodevilla, July 19, 1776, ANC: MM 107, f. 189.

military authority was being undermined.<sup>25</sup> To make matters worse, Salcedo soon sided with his enemies in the province's local disputes.<sup>26</sup> A vendetta ensued which included public insults, charges and countercharges of misconduct, threatened resignations by both parties, as well as the monetary imprisonment of Salcedo by the governor.<sup>27</sup>

Such friction between inspector and special commander was the exception, not the rule in New Granada; normally the rapport between these officers was surprisingly good. Since the clashes in Guayaquil stemmed out of unusually intense personal animosity, they were handled as such by Viceroy Guirior. He normally answered the complaints presented to him by confining himself to restating militia regulations and by formulating statements intended to soothe heated tempers. However, on occasion he did indicate annoyance with Governor Ugarte either by word, or by simply ignoring his complaints.<sup>28</sup> Ugarte's most effective

<sup>25</sup>Ugarte to Guirior, Guayaquil, April 19, 1775, ANC: MM 105, fs. 302-312; *id.* to *id.*, Guayaquil, June 2, 1775, ANC: MM 58, fs. 205-209; *id.* to *id.*, Guayaquil, July 19, 1775, ANC: MM 110, fs. 353-362.

<sup>26</sup>Castillo, pp. 153-155; Ugarte to Guirior, Guayaquil, July 19, 1775, ANC: MM 110, fs. 253-362.

<sup>27</sup>Salcedo y Somodevilla to Guirior, Guayaquil, November 19, 1774, ANC: MM 106, fs. 699-701; *id.* to *id.*, Guayaquil, April 19, 1775, ANC: MM 101, fs. 233-235; Ugarte to Guirior, Guayaquil, April 19, 1775, ANC: MM 105, fs. 302-312; *id.* to *id.*, Guayaquil, June 2, 1775, ANC: MM 58, fs. 205-209; *id.* to *id.*, Guayaquil, July 19, 1775, ANC: MM 110, fs. 353-362; Salcedo y Somodevilla to Guirior, Guayaquil, October 5, 1775, ANC: MM 107, fs. 742-743; *id.* to *id.*, Guayaquil, December 2, 1775, ANC: MM 107, fs. 135-136.

<sup>28</sup>Expediente de quejas del gobernador de Guayaquil de las facultades que se han conferido con perjuicio suyo, 1774-75, ANC: MM 108, fs. 727-746.

weapon against Salcedo was in rejecting officer proposals which he was entitled to review as inspector. In the face of this tactic, it is unlikely that Salcedo could have ever completed his task had not Guirior as a matter of course merely overridden Ugarte's vetos, explaining to the crown that the governor's objections stemmed from personal vindictiveness directed toward obstructing the progress of the reform.<sup>29</sup> Remarkably, Salcedo managed to terminate the formation of the new units by June, 1775. This was a feat for which he won lavish praise from Viceroy Guirior who was eager to see the program executed successfully.<sup>30</sup>

In structuring the chain of command for the new militia of Guayaquil, Guirior bypassed the office of commandant general of Quito by working directly with the governor of Guayaquil, who was directed to function as inspector. This arrangement did not represent a break with established precedent, but rather, conformity to it. Since the establishment of the governorship, the governors of Guayaquil had operated largely on an independent basis in military affairs. The commandant general of Quito was likewise excluded from direct participation in the next area of reform, Popayán, as was the commandant general of Cartagena when endeavors were finally extended to Santa Marta. The common factor in all three cases was that the

<sup>29</sup>Ugarte to Guirior, Guayaquil, July 19, 1775, and Guirior to Ugarte, Santa Fe, December 17, 1775, ANC: MM 105, fs. 313-326; Guirior to Arriaga, Santa Fe, December 15, 1775, ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820.

<sup>30</sup>Salcedo y Somodevilla to Guirior, Guayaquil, June 2, 1775, ANC: MM 51, fs. 55-56; Guirior to Arriaga, Santa Fe, December 15, 1775, ANC: MM 10, fs. 812-820.

local governor had an independent local regular troop authorization, was a military man himself, and in consequence had traditionally acted with a large measure of local autonomy. This system tended to reconfirm the federalist character of the military establishment in New Granada.

Guirior's modifications on the structure and procedures of disciplined militia create problems with respect to classification. The militia of Guayaquil, although referred to as "disciplined," was obviously not of the same military stature as the better of the new units of Cartagena and Panama; due to a want of veteran advisers it only partly met established standards and in consequence was most certainly less thoroughly trained and disciplined. In effect, the disciplined militia established in Guayaquil was second class. For that matter, the militia of Cartagena and Panama which was not part of battalions, the units of the outlying regions, also frequently languished for lack of proper attention and in that respect was not far different from that of Guayaquil.<sup>31</sup> It is difficult to determine in concrete terms any significant difference between those second class units and the militia of Veragua which came just as close to meeting specifications, but which was not given the higher rating; the distinction was largely bureaucratic. The primary difference was that the "disciplined" militia should have enjoyed a full veteran cadre as well as full complement of equipment, while there was no such pressing obligation in the case of non-disciplined militia. Or to

---

<sup>31</sup>Report on the militia of Cartagena, Governor Juan Pimienta, March 26, 1778, ANC: MM 40, fs. 152-165.

state the distinction another way, classification was based not so much on fact as on aspiration.

Another development in militia terminology was a broadening of the usage of the urban classification. Because the new type of militia classified as disciplined was in fact a new variety of provincial militia, the functionaries of the reform period began to lump the non-disciplined provincial militia into the urban category to distinguish it from its reformed counterpart. Hence, all non-disciplined soon were generally referred to as "urban." For the remainder of this study, in conformity with contemporary terminology, non-disciplined militia will also be referred to as urban.

The most concrete consequence of distinctions in formal classification was in the application of the fuero de guerra militar.<sup>32</sup> The fuero militar was a body of judicial privileges enjoyed in varying degrees by the several branches of the military. Holders of the fuero were entitled to have their cases brought before military rather than civil or ordinary tribunals. This was a highly valued privilege which set the possessor apart and above his neighbors. Members of the regular army were entitled to this protection in both civil and criminal causes. Those disciplined militia units of the empire formed under terms of the Cuban reglamento were also so privileged. By contrast, the fuero of urban militia was normally restricted to officers and then limited to only criminal hearings. Only in case of mobilization would the members be entitled to the complete fuero.

---

<sup>32</sup>For a complete description see chapter VI.

Because of this differentiation in privilege, it was of great consequence to the membership whether or not their militia unit was formally classified as disciplined.

Viceroy Guirior was pleased with his accomplishment in Guayaquil and in his relación de mando to his successor Manuel de Flores recommended that the incoming viceroy follow the system he had devised.<sup>33</sup> This Flores did, expanding the reform to Popayán in a manner not far different from that followed in Guayaquil. Popayán was the first province in the interior of the viceroyalty to raise disciplined militia. The reason for this distinction was essentially the same as for the establishment of the fixed company in 1771 and was one of the long-run consequences of the disorders of 1765. In fact, domestic peace with corresponding obedience to functionaries of the crown still had not been totally achieved in spite of the presence of the company of regular troops. Ruling circles continued to harbor a fear of lurking sedition, and this wariness intensified due to word of royal intentions to revitalize the tax system. Moreover, unrest in Buga in 1778 required the sending of a detachment of regular troops.<sup>34</sup> Expediency likewise in part determined this choice of location; the presence of a company of regular troops provided an immediate source of personnel

<sup>33</sup>Guirior, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 186-187.

<sup>34</sup>Ureta to Zelaya, Santa Fe, October 17, 1774, ANC: MM 74, fs. 754-761; royal officials of Popayán to Flores, Popayán, August 2, and November 17, 1778, *ibid.*, fs. 926-927, 947-954; Nieto to Flores, Popayán, April 2, May 17, and May 24, 1779, ANC: MM 52, fs. 767-778; Flores to the royal officials of Popayán, Santa Fe, August 26, 1778, ACC: Colonia, Gobierno, sig. 5553.

for the formation of the cadre of regular officers. Indeed, it is significant that in the implementation of the reform in New Granada, disciplined militia was formed only in those areas which already had a fixed contingent of regulars, or one within close proximity.

Based on recommendations by Captain Diego Antonio Nieto of Popayán's fixed company, Flores issued the initiating order on February 17, 1777, with royal approval following on July 18.<sup>35</sup> As in Guayaquil, the special command of the militia was entrusted to the captain of the local fixed company with the governor acting as inspector. Militia was to be established on the basis of separate companies of which the majority were planned for the cities of the Cauca Valley, but with geographical dimensions ranging as far southwest as Barbacoas near the Pacific Ocean.

In contrast to Guayaquil, the relationship between the governor, Pedro de Becaría y Espinosa, and the special commander, Diego Antonio Nieto, was relatively harmonious. Out of consideration for the huge geographical scope of the enterprise, duties in the formation of the companies were split between the two men. The governor himself raised the new companies in Pasto and Barbacoas while Nieto handled the project in the city of Popayán and regions to the north.<sup>36</sup> Since Becaría while working in the southwest was for practical purposes out

<sup>35</sup>Flores to the royal officials of Popayán, Santa Fe, April 26, 1777, ACC: Colonia, MI-5P, sig. 7086; Royal order, July 18, 1777, and Nieto to the Cabildo, 1778, ACC: Cabildo 29, f. 7; Nieto to Flores, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 822-831.

<sup>36</sup>Nieto to Flores, Cartago, February 2 and February 9, 1777, ANC: MM 52, fs. 332-348; *id.* to *id.*, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 822-831.

of the range of immediate communication with the special commander, Nieto at times sent his officer proposals directly to the viceroy, although he also sent a duplicate list to the governor. This system preserved the technical chain of command, but bent it enough to provide the viceroy with an advanced start toward making his own decision before receiving Becaria's opinion.<sup>37</sup> Such cooperation would have been impossible in Guayaquil.

Good will at the upper level of activity was only part of the story. At the local level government functionaries, particularly the deputy governors, met the reform with a cool reception. Opposition was based on a genuine fear that the militia, rather than strengthen royal authority, might instead undermine it. The most pressing concern was that the militia, once trained and armed, might not be reliable. It was contended that in view of the unsettled state of domestic affairs arming large portions of the citizenry was a dangerous risk, for in time of need they might well turn their newly acquired skills against royal authority instead of supporting it. Moreover, local justices assumed a decidedly hostile attitude toward the prospect of contending with the *fuero militar* within their respective jurisdictions. This body of privilege would remove many of the most active members of the communities from the scope of their authority and in consequence would tend to weaken the prestige of local government. In many communities, there was already much left to be desired on that account. Neither Viceroy Flores, Governor Becaria, nor Commander

---

<sup>37</sup>Nieto to Flores, Cartago, February 2 and February 9, 1777, ANC: MM 52, fs. 332-348.

Salcedo shared these fears and the reorganization proceeded in spite of the objections, although much more was to be heard of them at a later date.<sup>38</sup>

By 1779 a new militia of fourteen companies had taken shape, of which two each were established in the cities of Cartago, Buga, Cali, Pasto, and Barbacoa, with four organized in the capital city (see Table 2). Plans called for a cadre of veteran personnel which in addition to Nieto would consist of two ayudantes mayores for the command and staff group, and a veteran sergeant acting as ayudante in each city. However, in his initial efforts Nieto was aided only by one ayudante mayor and two sergeants, all three drawn from the fixed unit. As time passed, the list was completed, but not fully so until the middle of the next decade which was too late to be of appreciable initial assistance. By the end of 1779, for example, at which time company formation was complete, only three sergeants and two ayudantes mayores were functioning. The second ayudante mayor, a cadet sent to Popayán from the viceroy's halberdiers, had just arrived.<sup>39</sup>

The veteran staff members were to journey periodically from one part of the establishment to another to provide required professional

---

<sup>38</sup>Becaria to Flores, Popayán, January 2 and June 2, 1778, ANC: MM 74, fs. 780-793, 932-935; Nieto to Flores, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 822-831; Becaria to Flores, Popayán, 1780, ANC: MM 98, fs. 815-816.

<sup>39</sup>Militia salary lists, November, 1778, August, 1779, and January, 1785, ACC: Colonia, MI-5P, sig. 5562, sig. 6027, and sig. 5932; Flores to Becaria, Santa Fe, June 23, 1778, *ibid.*, sig. 7086; Nieto to Flores, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 822-831.

advice; local volunteer officers trained by the veterans were relied upon heavily for the proper maintenance of their respective companies.<sup>40</sup> The provision of uniforms was in some instances, as in Guayaquil, the price of officership; but more often than not, the enlisted men themselves were obliged to provide their own. Some, but not all, of the volunteer officers were members of the original militia. Nieto in formulating proposals for these offices at times did not bother with the formality of submitting three candidates for each position, but instead sent only one, a procedure exemplifying the localistic fashion in which the reform was conducted.<sup>41</sup> A serious handicap in training the new militia was a grave shortage of weapons; the viceregency was able to send only 200 rifles from Santa Fe of which a sizeable portion were useless by the time of their arrival.<sup>42</sup> It was left to the *cabildos* to find financial provision for the remaining required weaponry, which as a result left most of the militiamen without permanent access to firearms.<sup>43</sup> In consequence to its many shortcomings, the disciplined militia of Popayán, although formed by 1779, was still far from an effective fighting force.

<sup>40</sup>Nieto to Flores, Cartago, February 2 and February 9, 1777, ANC: MM 52, fs. 332-348; *id.* to *id.*, Popayán, April 2, May 17, and May 24, 1779, *ibid.*, fs. 767-778; *id.* to *id.*, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 822-831.

<sup>41</sup>Becaria to Flores, Popayán, January 2, 1778, ANC: MM 74, fs. 932-935; Nieto to Flores, Buga, September 13, 1778, ANC: MM 52, fs. 423-438; *id.* to *id.*, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 822-831.

<sup>42</sup>Flores to the royal officials of Popayán, Santa Fe, January 2, 1779, ACC: Colonia, MI 1, sig. 5671; Nieto to Flores, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 822-831.

<sup>43</sup>Nieto to Flores, Popayán, April 2, May 17, and May 24, 1779, ANC: MM 52, fs. 767-778.

Adjustments made in the regular army for the Commandancy General of Quito were much more limited in scope than those of Cartagena and Panama, but considering the small size of the original garrisons, the modifications made were relatively substantial (see Table 2). The first area of change was Popayán where the fixed company was reduced to a detachment of twenty-five men. The rationale for this action was that a decrease of full-time salaried personnel would balance the cost of the new militia, which in turn would far more than compensate for the disbanded regulars. Flores ordered this reduction simultaneously with his command to raise the new militia, and royal approval accompanied the militia confirmation.<sup>44</sup> Conversely, the regular garrison of Guayaquil was augmented in addition to the establishment of new militia. For a port defense base, the original meager allotment of fifty men could hardly have been regarded as more than a beginning. The subject of an increase first came up in 1773 at which time the governor recommended an expansion of the garrison to three seventy-seven man companies and a half artillery company as minimal for the base's requirements.<sup>45</sup> The founding of militia was in part an answer to Guayaquil's needs, but in 1776 the question came up again. This time temporary Governor Domingo Guerrero Marnara, prompted by Captain Salcedo, informed the viceroy that defense commitments required the presence of at least

---

<sup>44</sup>Royal order, July 18, 1777, ACC: Colonia, MI-5P, sig. 7086; Expediente sobre el despacho de la compañía fija de Popayán a Quito, 1777, ANC: MM 52, fs. 520-529; Nieto to Flores, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 767-778.

<sup>45</sup>Ugarte to Gulrior, Guayaquil, August 17, 1773, ANC: MM 100, fs. 665-666.

100 full-time troops.<sup>46</sup> Final action, however, was not taken until 1779. Meanwhile, a crisis in New Granada's borderlands added weight to demands for the enhancement of the Presidency of Quito's military capabilities.

In 1776 Portuguese incursions against settlements in the Amazon Governorship of Mainas induced Viceroy Flores to order the organization of a military expedition which would be sent to the troubled area from Quito. He placed President and Commandant General Diguja in charge of preparing the expeditionary force and instructed the governors of Guayaquil and Popayán in orders of September and October of 1776 to render whatever assistance the Quito office might deem necessary. Diguja began organizing the expedition with men from the fixed units of Guayaquil and Quito; but for want of sufficient numbers, and convinced that the regulars of Popayán were a useless expense anyway, he ordered on July 29, 1777, the company of Popayán to join the main body of regulars in Quito. Wanting no part in such a venture, Captain Diego Antonio Nieto, whose main concern at this time was his work with the militia, raised several formidable objections. He protested to Viceroy Flores that Popayán's participation would be ridiculously impractical because Quito was an exhausting, expensive forty-day march away. He also expressed fear that the regulars would be needed locally due to coming tax reform and possible unrest. Moreover, meaningful compliance with the president's order was impossible for by this time only a detachment remained of the former company. Flores, who had ordered the reduction of the

---

<sup>46</sup>ANC: MM 51, fs. 202-212.

fixed company a bit prematurely, did not concur with Nieto's reservations, but, rather, ordered him to reactivate the disbanded portion of the unit. In executing that duty Nieto was most uncooperative and managed to reenlist few, if any, of the former soldiers. As a consequence, the force which ultimately marched forth from Popayán, September 4, 1777, consisted of only twenty-three enlisted men and a lieutenant; Captain Nieto through a number of pretexts excused himself from going, and ultimately, upon the recommendation of the governor, was granted viceregal permission to remain in Popayán. It made little difference in the end, for the expedition to Mainas was cancelled in early 1778 and the detachment returned to Popayán.<sup>47</sup>

This farcical episode clearly demonstrated the feeble capacity of the armed forces of the Presidency of Quito and was rapidly followed by corrective measures. On March 12, 1779, in response to pleas from both Regent-Visitor of Quito José García León y Pizarro and Viceroy Flores, the crown approved an increase of twenty-five men per company for Quito's garrison. In this order, specific reference was made to the boundary question and to a current uprising in the village of Guano.<sup>48</sup> Acting on royal authorization of March 20, 1779, Flores ordered the increase of the company of Guayaquil to 100 men in the following June.<sup>49</sup> The fixed unit of

<sup>47</sup>Expediente sobre el despacho de la compañía fija de Popayán a Quito, 1777, ANC: MM 52, fs. 520-529; Diguja to the royal officials of Popayán, Quito, July 29, 1777, *ibid.*, fs. 508-511; Diguja to Flores, Quito, September 3, 1777, ANC: MM 110, fs. 82-85.

<sup>48</sup>ANC: MM 106, fs. 685-690.

<sup>49</sup>Gálvez to Flores, Spain, March 20, 1779, ANC: MM 12, f. 417; J. García de León y Pizarro to Flores, Quito, August 18, 1779, ANC: MM 106, fs. 925-926.

Popayán, proven useless for service outside its immediate locality and supported by a new militia, remained reduced to twenty-five men.

Throughout the conduct of the various aspects of the reform in Guayaquil and Popayán, both special commanders, Victor Salcedo y Somodevilla and Diego Antonio Nieto, were dominant figures on the local scenes. In due time each was rewarded for his distinguished accomplishments in improving the defense status of his respective province. In the meantime, Nieto was transferred to Cartagena upon the outbreak of war in 1779, and Salcedo shortly thereafter went to Quito. Eventually, both returned to the province of their reform activity to become governors, Salcedo only on an interim basis. In 1795, however, he was appointed to the full governorship of Antioquia. For his part, Nieto during the closing years of the colonial regime rose to serve as interim president of the Royal Audiencia of Quito.

The establishment of the Captaincy General of Caracas in 1777 relieved Santa Fe of direct responsibility for the three eastern provinces and the islands of Margarita and Trinidad. Prior to that date, only feeble efforts were made to improve the region's defense: In 1776 Margarita's regular infantry company was reinforced; in the same year several officers from Cartagena were sent to Maracaibo to rehabilitate its three companies; and also in the same year crown approval was received for a 1769 plan for reorganizing the garrison of Cumaná into two companies of infantry and one of artillery, and for the establishment in Trinidad of an artillery company. Local efforts at strengthening the militia were also made, although disciplined units still had not been organized in any of the provinces

by the time of separation. The fact that officers from Cartagena were obtained to upgrade the proficiency of Maracaibo's regulars is in itself a comment on the neglected condition of this segment of the Caribbean's defenses. Prior to the official reshuffling of military administration in the region, personnel from the fixed battalion of Caracas were also already conducting limited efforts in upgrading neighboring defenses.<sup>50</sup> All in all, however, the forces of these provinces at the time of their detachment from the Captaincy General of Santa Fe were pitiful. Shortly after his arrival, Viceroy Flores, painfully aware of their neglected condition, had recommended their incorporation into Caracas, a jurisdiction which hopefully could provide greater assistance. This proposal was immediately approved by the crown.<sup>51</sup>

As the decade drew to its close, plans were already underway to extend the reform to much of the remaining interior of the viceroyalty. In May, 1777, acting on a royal request, Flores ordered the governor of Antioquia to explore the possibilities for the formation of disciplined militia in that province. And, in August of the same year he sent to Spain a plan for the expansion of the reform to the provinces of Pamplona, Tunja, and Mariquita. The

---

<sup>50</sup> Governor of Maracaibo to Guirior, Maracaibo, June 6, 1773, ANC: MM 72, fs. 48-50; Governor of Margarita to Guirior, Margarita, November 18, 1774, ANC: MM 61, fs. 859-860; Governor of Maracaibo to Secretar, of the Viceroy Francisco Iturrate, Maracaibo, June 21, 1776, *ibid.*, fs. 478-480; Pimienta to Flores, Cartagena, June 26, 1776, ANC: MM 65, fs. 1033-1035; Governor of Cumaná to Flores, Cumaná, 1776, ANC: MM 15, fs. 910-913; Gálvez to Flores, Spain, November 4, 1776, *ibid.*, fs. 882-883; Governor of Maracaibo to Flores, Maracaibo, May, 1777, ANC: MM 68, fs. 569-571.

<sup>51</sup> Caballero y Góngora, *Relaciones de mando . . .*, p. 199.

crowns granted its approval to this proposal, but ordered the viceroy to delay further action until Regent-Visitor Juan Francisco Gutiérrez de Piñerez, commissioned to New Granada to effectuate fiscal reform, would have an opportunity to complete his work. The Court was evidently skeptical of the low cost results in Guayaquil and wished to wait until sufficient funds were available before going any farther. Fearing discontent would accompany the regent-visitor's efforts, Viceroy Flores contended that before tax innovations dare be attempted militia ought to be organized to sustain royal justice should trouble arise. In view of the viceroyalty's past experiences, Flores' arguments should have deserved careful consideration, but he spoke in vain.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202; Flores to the governor of Antioquia, Santa Fe, May 31, 1777, ANC: MM 3, fs. 81-87; Gálvez to Flores, Spain, February 13, 1778, ANC: MM 30, fs. 937-939.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE IMPACT OF THE COMUNEROS

As the military reform entered the decade of the eighties, past experience and planned projects indicated that it would continue to follow a slow but steady course of expansion and eventually reach all of the remaining provinces of New Granada; but because of the Comunero Rebellion of 1781, this pattern of diffusion was soon profoundly altered, never again to be the same. The upheaval began on March 16, 1781, in the town of Socorro, province of Tunja, and soon engulfed much of the interior of the viceroyalty. Before domestic peace was restored, the rebellion had reached unprecedented heights of severity, humiliated the regime in Santa Fe, and demonstrated in no uncertain terms an alarming weakness in royal control in New Granada. Because of its importance to the subsequent history of the military reform, pause must be given to briefly sketch the course of this rebellion.

The nearly unanimous judgment of historians has been that the immediate cause of the Comunero Rebellion was an ambitious royal attempt to reform revenue collection. For this endeavor, the crown's chief agent was Juan Francisco Gutiérrez de Piñeres, commissioned to New Granada as both regent of the royal audiencia and visitor-general, with extraordinary powers over the royal exchequer superceding those of the viceroy. The immediate task before Gutiérrez was to convert an annual deficit of some 170,000 pesos into a surplus in the royal

coffers. He arrived in Santa Fe in January of 1778 and initially addressed himself to the strict enforcement of tax and monopoly laws, the reduction of inefficiency and waste, and the elimination of fraud and other forms of corruption. Viceroy Flores, who was a cautious administrator in the area of taxation, soon feared that the regent-visitor was over zealous in completing his commission. Flores believed that substantial revenue increases could only safely follow additional economic growth and anticipated that an attempt to firmly squeeze more funds from the viceroyalty's inhabitants was likely to produce unfavorable consequences. He expressed his concern to the crown, but was sharply rebuked and advised to support Gutiérrez's measures. When in the summer of 1779 word reached Santa Fe that Spain had entered the War of American Independence, Flores turned over his remaining civil powers to the regent-visitor and then abandoned the capital for Cartagena where he assumed personal military command.<sup>1</sup>

With the outbreak of hostilities, the endeavors of Gutiérrez de Piñeres were at once complicated by the problem of war finance. In Cartagena, Flores vigorously executed emergency defense preparations for New Granada's coastal strongholds which might be subject to British attack: the governors of the maritime provinces were ordered to place their garrisons on alert; much of the coastal militia was mobilized; and additional fortifications were constructed.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the urban

<sup>1</sup>David Phelps Leonard, "The Comunero Rebellion of New Granada in 1781 . . ." (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of Michigan, 1951), pp. 72-76.

<sup>2</sup>Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 200.

militia of Quito, by this time well developed, was reclassified as disciplined.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, an expedition was raised and outfitted in Cartagena for the Captaincy General of Guatemala to assist in resisting possible British adventurism on the Mosquito Coast.<sup>4</sup> With Cartagena alone now consuming over 50,000 pesos a month, these measures drastically increased military expenditures and thereby immediately intensified the demand for additional revenues.<sup>5</sup> The crisis was momentarily alleviated by procurement of a 200,000 pesos loan from the merchants of Cartagena and by the withdrawal of a comparable sum from the royal mints of Santa Fe and Popayán, but these were only stop-gap measures.<sup>6</sup>

In late 1779, the crown authorized Gutiérrez de Piñeres to raise additional revenue by increasing both royal monopoly prices and taxes. The visitor-general acted in the following year by issuing a series of controversial edicts. Among these measures, the alcabala list was extended to include almost all goods except bread; the Armada de Barlovento, an excise tax long combined with the alcabala for payment and by this date largely forgotten and uncollected, was revived on a separate basis; and the prices of tobacco and aguardiente, both royal monopolies, were doubled. Increases in tax rates were always unpopular, but feelings ran especially high against such an extensive expansion of

<sup>3</sup>Flores to J. García de León y Pizarro, Cartagena, January 5, 1780, ANE: Pres. 134, f. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Caballero y Góngora, Relación de mando . . ., pp. 200-201.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>6</sup>Leonard, p. 75.

the alcabala list, and particularly against the resurrection of the Armada de Barlovento which it was believed, and logically so, was a new tax. To make matters worse, the enforcement of the laws was entrusted to an extensive array of thoroughly hated royal agents, mostly Spanish-born, who reportedly had little sympathy for the people, and who were accused of arrogant and abusive behavior.<sup>7</sup> Probably, this would have been the judgment upon any revenue agent, no matter how urbane, who efficiently attempted to collect the new taxes.

The sector of Tunja province in which the upheaval began was most adversely affected by the Gutiérrez edicts because cotton, the basis for a spinning industry of the poor, was placed on the tax list, and the cultivation of tobacco, the region's traditional main cash crop, had been restricted to a zone near the city of Girón shortly after Gutiérrez's arrival, thereby depriving many of their means of livelihood. A loud chorus of complaints followed the promulgation of the measures, but the regent-visitor would not be dissuaded from making every possible effort to replenish the exhausted royal coffers.<sup>8</sup> Whether more sympathy and understanding might have averted the uprising, or perhaps mitigated its intensity, is anyone's guess; certainly once under way, its energy was directed with full wrath upon the agents and devices employed in implementing the fiscal reform.

Proclaiming allegiance to the crown, but demanding an end to unjust taxes, the insurgents of Socorro destroyed and pilfered government

---

<sup>7</sup>ibid., p. 7.

<sup>8</sup>ibid., pp. 78-84.

monopoly property, chased revenue agents through the streets, and defied the local authorities.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes prompted by outside agitators, similar upheavals soon followed in the surrounding settlements. Containing members from all of the native-born classes, the movement enjoyed deep-rooted support among the inhabitants; rather than subsiding, it continued to gain momentum and within a short time had enveloped much of the province of Tunja. The local authorities stood helplessly by, either unable or unwilling to act, and frequently were swept into the insurgency themselves. As time passed, the movement began to institutionalize and on April 18, 1781, over 4,000 insurgents gathered in Socorro to select a council of leaders to direct their endeavors. Command was bestowed upon four creoles, with Juan Francisco Berbeo soon emerging as commander. Although the various municipalities participating in the rebellion each selected their own chiefs to manage local government, the leaders chosen at Socorro, apparently because the rebellion began there, acted as the supreme directorate.<sup>10</sup>

When finally comprehending the serious nature of the unrest, the regent-visitor met with the royal audiencia in early April, at which time it was resolved to crush the sedition by military force; Oidor José Osorio was selected to personally supervise the action, with military command entrusted to Captain Joaquín de la Barrera of Santa

<sup>9</sup>Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, Los grandes conflictos sociales y económicos de nuestra historia (Bogotá, n.d.), II, 20-22.

<sup>10</sup>Leonard, chap. V; Pablo E. Cárdenas Acosta, El movimiento comunal de 1781 en el Nuevo Reino de Granada (Bogotá, 1960), I, chap. III.

Fe's company of halberdiers.<sup>11</sup> Short of capitulation, this was the only avenue of action open at this time, although the troops available for the venture were hopelessly inadequate. The garrison of Santa Fe had always been feeble at best, but at the moment it was even weaker because Viceroy Flores had taken the company of vice-regal cavalry with him to Cartagena to insure his personal safety. This left the capital with only one company of regulars, the seventy-five halberdiers.<sup>12</sup>

Not daring to leave Santa Fe totally undefended, the authorities chose to divide the company, forming the core of the expedition with fifty of the men and leaving the remainder behind in the capital. In addition to the regulars, 22 revenue guards, a small number of volunteers, and 100 extra firearms with ample ammunition were incorporated into the endeavor. It was hoped that many additional loyal vassals could be recruited along the way to the confrontation, but efforts at enlistment were met with little enthusiasm and the force was not appreciably strengthened.<sup>13</sup> On April 22, the first elements of the tiny force arrived at Puente Real, an important transportation crossroads, where it was decided to entrench and make a stand. The rebels on May 7 took positions on the heights surrounding the town with a force believed by the defenders to have been at least 4,000 strong. Although the Comuneros were armed with only rudimentary weapons,

---

<sup>11</sup>Leonard, p. 122.

<sup>12</sup>Cárdenas Acosta, I, 116.

<sup>13</sup>ibid., p. 151.

resistance in the confrontation the next day was obviously hopeless, especially since the new recruits broke ranks at the first serious threat of combat and went over to the insurgents while the revenue guards took refuge in a nearby church. The remaining forces were then surrendered without a fight, and Oidor Osorio, Captain Barrera, and all of the weapons and supplies fell captive to the Comuneros. The captured men were later permitted to return to Santa Fe.<sup>14</sup>

As minimal as were the normal forces of Santa Fe, it is quite possible that had the cavalry company still been available the outcome at Puente Real might have been different. The strength of the Comunero army was grossly overestimated by the defenders, for subsequent testimony revealed that it comprised no more than 500 men.<sup>15</sup> In all likelihood, this poorly armed group would have been hard pressed to have defeated two regular companies equipped with firearms and backed by militia. Indeed, a solid regular troop commitment, even if not too large, might have stemmed the tide of the Comunero Rebellion. As matters stood, the victory of the Comuneros inspired further insurgency. Within the next several weeks, the authorities of the provincial capital of Tunja had given way to Comunero pressure, Pamplona in the far northeast had incorporated itself into the movement, and the insurrection had spread into the province of Los Llanos.<sup>16</sup> On May 29, the loyalist city of Girón, favored

---

<sup>14</sup>Leonard, pp. 126-131.

<sup>15</sup>*ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup>Cárdenas Acosta, I, 240-248, 250-255.

in the cultivation of tobacco and a possible base for use by counter insurgency forces from the coast, was occupied by Comunero forces.<sup>17</sup> Soon, the ranks of the rebel army, now firmly resolved to drive on Santa Fe, had swelled beyond 15,000 men.<sup>18</sup>

Back in Santa Fe the authorities attempted to mobilize existing urban militia and enlist new trustworthy personnel in order to organize a defense for the city. The various units should have totaled 678 men, but in typical pre-reform tradition the militia when faced with crisis quickly melted away. Consequently, Santa Fe's commander in chief of arms, Oidor Pedro Catani, realized that an effective defense was impossible.<sup>19</sup> The only remaining hope of preventing the entrance of the Comuneros into the city was negotiation, possibly capitulation. At this point the archbishop of Santa Fe, Antonio Caballero y Góngora, offered his services to mediate with the rebels. He addressed his offer to the Junta General de Tribunales, an emergency body composed of the royal audiencia acting in real acuerdo and other leading officials in the city. His offer was accepted, with Oidor Joaquín Vasco y Vargas and Alcalde Ordinario Eustaquio Galavis selected to accompany him on the bold venture. This commission set out for the nearby town of Zipaquirá on May 13, in an attempt to meet with the insurgents. Gutiérrez de Piñeres left Santa Fe the same day fleeing toward Honda, which was the departure point for the Magdalena River descent to

---

<sup>17</sup> ibid., I, 221-224, and II, 340.

<sup>18</sup> ibid., I, 288-292.

<sup>19</sup> ibid., pp. 211-213.

Cartagena.<sup>20</sup> On May 25 Berbeo dispatched Joseph Antonio Galán, a deserter from Cartagena's fixed regiment, to intercept the regent-visitor and capture arms on their way to Santa Fe from Cartagena.<sup>21</sup> Galán failed to apprehend Gutiérrez who fled to Cartagena, but carried the standard of rebellion into the province of Mariquita which had already experienced major upheavals, including one in the important city of Ibagué.<sup>22</sup>

On May 14 the archbishop's commission directed a communication to the insurgent forces advancing on Santa Fe inviting them to concur in discussions at Zipaquirá.<sup>23</sup> In a following exchange of communications, it was resolved that the meeting should take place in a small settlement several leagues from Zipaquirá, Nemocón, a site selected by the Comunero chief, Berbeo.<sup>24</sup> The first meeting occurred on May 26, and there followed a lengthy series of further meetings, consultations, and diplomatic maneuverings.<sup>25</sup> Events climaxed on June 5, when Berbeo in the name of the Comuneros presented a list of thirty-five articles, known as the Capitulations, which demanded an end to the new revenue measures as well as remedies for many long-standing grievances.

---

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 203-208. Gutiérrez returned to Santa Fe after the rebellion ended, but this time was subordinated to the viceroy. His stay was shortlived for on February 25, 1783, he was appointed to the Council of the Indies. *Ibid.*, II, 192, 362, 221.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 266-268, and II, 176.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 75-89.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 255-256.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 256-258, 265.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 269-302, and II, 8-17.

The commission immediately relayed the document to Santa Fe where the authorities labelled it preposterous and outrageous, returning it without approval. Rumbings in the ranks of the Comuneros caused the commission after obtaining some minor concessions to return the list to Santa Fe with the recommendation that it be immediately approved, lest the Comuneros enter the city; this was no time to raise objections! The Junta General de Tribunales ratified the capitulations that evening, May 7. The following day in Zipaquirá, the agreement was promulgated after a solemn mass celebrated by the archbishop; the commission swore to comply with the terms of the capitulations; and a Te Deum was sung. The Comuneros then disbanded their forces and returned to their homes. Meanwhile, in Santa Fe the Junta General in a secret ceremony declared the capitulations null and void by reason of duress.<sup>26</sup>

Even after the Zipaquirá accord, shock waves continued to roll outward from the area of insurgency. On June 19, in the south of the viceroyalty, the capital city of the Governorship of Neiva arose in violent rebellion resulting in the assassination of Governor Policarpo Fernández, but resistance on the part of local government functionaries dealt death to two rebel leaders and won the day.<sup>27</sup> In the far northeast Insurgents from Pamplona carried the rebellion into the backlands of the province of Maracaibo, now of the Captainty General of Caracas,

---

<sup>26</sup>ibid., 11, 17-49.

<sup>27</sup>ibid., pp. 95-96.

In the months of June, July, and early August.<sup>28</sup> And in September upheavals in response to the introduction of the tobacco monopoly erupted in the province of Antioquia. There, serious violence was averted when the governor delivered rapid concessions to the insurgents, including the free cultivation of tobacco and a general pardon. Viceroy Flores, who granted a pardon to the Comuneros on October 20, also confirmed the action of the Antioquian governor.<sup>29</sup>

In Cartagena, Viceroy Flores had been notified of the trouble in the backlands shortly after it began, but like the authorities in Santa Fe initially underestimated its magnitude and expressed confidence that the company of halberdiers could cope with the problem.<sup>30</sup> After the disaster at Puente Real, he comprehended the need for a major relief expedition, but was unable to respond immediately because British naval forces had been sighted off Maracaibo and Santa Marta, which led him to believe Cartagena was in grave danger of attack. Moreover, he was fearful that the *fijo*, mainly comprised of recruits from the troubled areas, might not be reliable if sent to confront the Comuneros, and for a time contemplated dispatching a force of all militiamen.<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, he decided to employ a force of 250

<sup>28</sup> ibid., pp. 129-135.

<sup>29</sup> ibid., pp. 163, 166-171; Roberto Marfa Tisnes, Movimientos pre-independientes Grancolombianos (Bogotá, 1962), pp. 61-69.

<sup>30</sup> Cárdenas Acosta, I, 154-155.

<sup>31</sup> Narváez to Flores, Santa Marta, October 19, 1779, ANC: MM 99, fs. 790-797; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 204, 206-207.

militiamen, half from the battalion of whites and half from the battalion of pardos, and 250 regulars, all of which he placed under the command of Colonel Josef Bernet of the fixed regiment.<sup>32</sup> The employment of so many militiamen on this delicate mission, while partly motivated by a reluctance to weaken Cartagena by withdrawing too many regulars, and by a fear that natives of the rebellious provinces might not perform well against their brethren, does at least in part reflect a measure of confidence in the ability of the militia to perform. However, the expedition did not leave Cartagena until July 1, reaching Santa Fe on August 6, by which time the main crisis had already passed.<sup>33</sup> Although the capitulations were not officially nullified until March 18, 1782, the government in Santa Fe as soon as sufficient military forces were available began violating the accord.<sup>34</sup>

When the behavior of the authorities in the late summer indicated they did not intend to honor the terms of the capitulations, Josef Antonio Galán, the man Berbeo had dispatched to capture the fleeing

---

<sup>32</sup>Most historians have incorrectly stated the composition of this expedition, probably because Caballero y Góngora himself was very nebulous on the subject in his relación de mando. José Manuel Groot in his 1889 Historia eclesiástica y civil de Nueva Granada, Vol. 11, page 240, stated the force consisted of 500 militiamen; more recently Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, Los grandes conflictos sociales y económicos de nuestra historia, Vol. 111, page 65, quoted Caballero's statement that Flores intended to send 500 militiamen, thereby creating the impression he actually did so; and Roberto Marfa Tisnes, Movimientos pre-independientes grancoombianos, page 59, indicated the component consisted of 500 regulars. Pablo E. Cárdenas Acosta, El movimiento comunal de 1781 en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, Vol. 1, page 293, set the record straight. Corroboration can be found in Bernet to Flores, Santa Fe, August 31, 1781, ANC: MM 10, fs. 246-280.

<sup>33</sup>Cárdenas Acosta, 11, 110-112.

<sup>34</sup>ibid., pp. 162, 193-194.

regent-visitor, attempted to regenerate the movement in hopes of making another march on Santa Fe. Although operating in the heart of former rebel territory, his endeavors were met with little enthusiasm. Viceroy Flores, when informed of the new insurgency, ordered Colonel Bernet to employ the forces under his command to apprehend the new leader, but this did not prove to be necessary. Salvador Plata, a noble of Socorro, one of the men selected along with Berbeo to lead the original movement, always a personality with nebulous designs, and now firmly committed to royal service, succeeded in capturing Galán with his personal force on October 13.<sup>35</sup> The prisoner was taken to Santa Fe where he was tried by the royal audiencia, found guilty of sedition, and sentenced to die by hanging. Death was administered on February 1, 1782. The body was then partitioned with the various members distributed for public display in former insurgent cities and villages.<sup>36</sup> With that, the Comunero Rebellion was dead.

Curiously, the insurgent movement did not take firm hold in any of the provinces which possessed strong military establishments, although it spread everywhere else except the Chocó province. If the dimensions of the Comunero Rebellion were to be thoroughly considered, something thus far still not attempted by historians, it would also be necessary to take into account many diverse non-military factors. Among these are the coast being a separate geographical, cultural and ethnic region; the Presidency of Quito having had a separate regent-visitor to reform revenues; the relationship between

---

<sup>35</sup>ibid., pp. 149-166.

<sup>36</sup>ibid., pp. 175-192.

an unsuccessful rebellion in 1765 and peace in 1781; and the implicit assumption in most writings on the subject, that the rebellion's core movement was halted before it had a full chance to sweep any farther.

But there is reason to believe that the correlation between domestic peace and the presence of military establishments was more than a coincidence. Not only was military force available to waylay any possible thoughts of defying royal authority, but also in the key cities many of the active members of the community, men to whom leadership in seditious movements presumably would be most likely to fall, were enlisted in the militia and subject to military discipline. Moreover, there are several incidents where the military did directly act as a deterrent or halt insurgency before it had a chance to spread. The outstanding example of this was in the province of Maracaibo. Upon receiving word that the rebellion had overflowed into his jurisdiction, Governor Manuel de Ayala dispatched an expedition of 125 regulars which was reinforced by additional troops from Caracas. In the face of this opposition, the Comuneros dispersed.<sup>37</sup> At this time, Viceroy Flores in Cartagena, fearful that the insurgency would spread into Riohacha and Santa Marta, dispatched an expedition of 200 regulars and militiamen to take position in Chiriguáná, a strategically located city in Santa Marta's backlands.<sup>38</sup> Notified of the pending trouble, Governor Antonio de Narváez of Riohacha and Santa Marta also sent 150 of Riohacha's militia cavalrymen to Chiriguáná, and then went on to Santa Marta to

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175-192.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

mobilize additional forces.<sup>39</sup> In the southwest of the viceroyalty, the governor of Popayán mobilized part of the capital city's militia to patrol against possible sedition.<sup>40</sup> When on November 7, 1781, the inhabitants of Tumaco, a small settlement on the Pacific coast, somewhat belatedly arose in rebellion, seizing the royal revenue house, freeing prisoners from jail, and imprisoning the lieutenant governor, the governor of Popayán dispatched his forces whose arrival in late November dispersed the rebels.<sup>41</sup>

An exception to the generalization under consideration occurred in the city of Pasto which possessed two of the province of Popayán's fourteen companies of militia. There, on June 22, the inhabitants were joined by Indians from surrounding villages in a violent protest against the endeavors of Deputy Governor Josef Ignacio Peredo to introduce a number of revenue measures including the aguardiente monopoly. Peredo, who had a small military escort at his disposal, was forced to take refuge in a public building, but not before his men had killed and wounded several insurgents. The following day, however, his enemies succeeded in capturing him, and he and four of his escort were beaten to death by Indians. Gabriel Valdés, the veteran sergeant of Pasto's militia and commander of the escort, managed to escape by taking refuge in a monastery. He was later

---

<sup>39</sup>Narváez to Flores, Santa Marta, August 26, 1781, ANC: MM 124, fs. 638-642.

<sup>40</sup>This force at one time comprised as many as 93 men. Becaría to Flores, Popayán, July 2 and July 6, 1781, ANC: MM 19, fs. 908-915.

<sup>41</sup>Cárdenas Acosta, II, 171-172.

tried for cowardice in the face of the enemy, but claimed his escort found itself without cartridges for their weapons and in consequence could do nothing. Subsequently, Valdés was reinstated to duty, but this time with the militia of Buga. The tumult in Pasto was ultimately quieted by action in Santa Fe rescinding the revenue measures, and, perhaps significantly, the insurrection did not spread.<sup>42</sup> The importance of the Pasto exception with regard to the peace keeping role of the military is somewhat mitigated by the consideration that its militia along with those of Barbacoas were the most neglected of the province of Popayán, and that the city, located about half way between Quito and Popayán, was remote from any strong military center; Pasto's military capability was not far different from that of any of the other regions overrun by the Comuneros.

The fact that Quito remained at peace is of special interest since the presidency was flanked by revolutionary activity, not only on the one side by the Comuneros, but on the other by the insurgent Tupac Amaru. Regent-Visitor José García de León y Pizarro, who also became president of the royal audiencia, shared Flores' belief that military reform was a necessary adjunct to fiscal reform. Apparently aware of Flores' desire to see the military reform extended, and of the crown's reluctance to do so until the royal exchequer was replenished, and also fully realizing that Quito was impoverished, he approached the problem of strengthening his military forces by indirect, but effective means. His requests for military concessions

---

<sup>42</sup>ibid., pp. 97-98; Sergio Elías Ortíz, Agustín Aqualongo y su tiempo (Bogotá, 1958), pp. 37-43; Militia salary list, January 1, 1785, ACC: Colonia, M1-5P, sig. 5932.

were always moderate and were invariably cloaked with proper and extensive professed desires to avoid expenditures, but his deeds were highly ambitious. His first petition was for merely three urban companies, two of these infantry, the other cavalry, for which only authorization from Santa Fe was sufficient. He submitted this request on May 18, 1779, expressing concern for the potential problem of sedition. In the plan submitted he specified that the members would for the most part be obliged to provide their own equipment and would deserve at least the criminal fuero.<sup>43</sup> A sympathetic Flores granted his approval on July 16, for which he received a warm letter of thanks.<sup>44</sup> Pizarro then proceeded to establish a militia similar in character to those of Guayaquil and Popayán. Moreover, instead of the three companies proposed, he raised two regiments, one of infantry, the other of dragoons, as well as a company of artillery. The volunteer positions of captain went to those who would uniform their own companies, with the president assuming the role of inspector. To supervise the formation of the new units and later train the volunteer officers, he selected from the city's regular companies Antonio Citeli, a veteran ayudante who would act as sargento mayor of infantry, and Alonso Arles, a veteran captain, for the dragoons.<sup>45</sup> Again terminology is a problem: the president's militia, while not of a fully

<sup>43</sup>ANE: Pres. 134, fs. 1-3.

<sup>44</sup>*ibid.*, fs. 4-5.

<sup>45</sup>J. García de León y Pizarro to Flores, Quito, November 3, 1779, *ibid.*, fs. 9-10; Estado de fuerza de las milicias, Quito, August 17, 1783, ANE: Pres. 194, fs. 55-58.

disciplined character, was certainly superior to the average urban unit, including those of Santa Fe at this time.

The outbreak of war with Great Britain provided the president with an opportunity to press for additional concessions. In a letter of November 3, 1779, he expressed concern over an alleged weakness of the forces of Guayaquil and emphasized the advantage of having a strong military force in the backlands to provide reserve strength should Guayaquil come under attack.<sup>46</sup> Although not specifically asking for the reclassification of his units to disciplined, he requested authorization from the viceroy to select from the regular companies a cadre of veteran sergeants (one for each company) and as many corporals as possible to staff the militia. In addition, he hoped for firearms and sabers to equip them.<sup>47</sup> Flores replied on January 5, 1780, that although he did not have the authority to raise disciplined militia without the consent of Spain, he would, in view of the outbreak of war and emergency considerations, consent to the establishment on a provisional basis under the method proposed by the president. He added, however, that for the time being he could not provide any additional weapons.<sup>48</sup> Without further ado, the president then expanded the militia to the outlying provinces of Cuenca, Riobamba,

<sup>46</sup>This argument was by appearance sincere since at a later date he did dispatch detachments from Quito's militia to Guayaquil. García de León y Pizarro to Flores, Quito, March 13, 1780, ANE: Pres. 134, fs. 12-13.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, fs. 9-10.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, f. 11.

Ibarra, Ambato, Guaranda, and Loja (see Table 5).<sup>49</sup> In consequence, by the time the Comunero Rebellion swept through the undefended provinces of the interior, Quito and its dependencies already possessed a militia of at least partial combat capability. Whether the units of these and the other provinces with reformed militia were a decisive factor in containing the geographical scope of the great insurgency of 1781 will probably never fully be determined; but, the correlation does exist.

With the restoration of domestic peace, Viceroy Flores immediately initiated military measures to insure that should there be a repetition of the rebellion, the capital would be defended. The first step was the formation of a competent battalion of militia infantry, a task which was entrusted to Colonel Bernet, head of the relief expedition from Cartagena. Bernet was an experienced hand in militia affairs, having served as sargento mayor in the reorganization of Cuba and having been present in Cartagena during that province's reform. Flores ruled that the new militia must remain on an urban footing until approval for the higher rating was received from the crown; but, Bernet was instructed to form and develop this component along lines specified by the Cuban reglamento so that once royal authorization did come, all that would remain to be done would be the nomination of veteran officers.<sup>50</sup> Bernet issued a call for volunteers to come forward on

<sup>49</sup>Estado de fuerza de las milicias, Quito, August 17, 1783, ANE: Pres. 194, fs. 55-53; J. García de León y Pizarro to Flores, Quito, March 18, 1780, ANE: Pres. 134, fs. 12-13.

<sup>50</sup>Bernet to Flores, Santa Fe, December 31, 1781; ANC: MM 31, f. 699.

TABLE 5

THE MILITIA OF GUAYAQUIL AND QUITO IN 1783\*

Militia of Quito and its Dependencies

Regiment of infantry, Quito	900
Regiment of dragoons, Quito	360
Company of artillery, Quito	50
Battalion of infantry, Rio Bamba	450
Battalion of infantry, Cuenca	450
Three companies of infantry, Guaranda	150
Two companies of infantry, Ibarra	100
Two companies of infantry, Loja	100
Company of infantry, Ambato	<u>50</u>

Total 2,610

Militia of Guayaquil

Battalion of white infantry	585
Battalion of pardo infantry	585
Four companies of white dragoons	240
Company of white artillery	65
Company of pardo artillery	<u>65</u>

Total 1,540

\*The above table was adapted from Estado de fuerza de las milicias de Guayaquil, July 30, 1783, and Estado de fuerza de las milicias de Quito, August 17, 1783, ANE: Pres. 194, fs. 51-62.

September 3 and was pleased by a very large turnout, surpassing 900 in number. Those of this group whom he found suitable he enlisted and weekly training was begun.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, in 1783 a regiment of cavalry was also raised.<sup>52</sup> Royal provision for a disciplined classification for these units came on March 6, 1784, after the close of Spain's participation in the war.<sup>53</sup>

The creation of militia for the explicit purpose of riot control was a hazardous maneuver recognized as such by all. A militarily capable citizenry was a double-edged sword which in time of domestic crisis might be turned either way. The question had first arisen in Popayán where, as matters turned out, favorable results were achieved; Viceroy Flores took every precaution to insure such would be the case in Santa Fe. Bernet was instructed to proceed with utmost caution in the selection of enlisted men so that only those whose loyalty was above suspicion were chosen. Equally important, only Spaniards were to be entrusted with officership.<sup>54</sup> Flores' concern is illustrated in the following passage from his September instructions to Colonel Bernet.

it is indispensable that you (as ordered in the original instructions and as repeated in those of August and here again) have exact information about the character of the men that are enlisted and of the confidence that can be had in them before

---

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*; *id.* to *id.*, Santa Fe, September 15, 1781, ANC: MM 12, fs. 1042-1045.

<sup>52</sup>Colonel Anastasio Zejudo to Caballero y Góngora, Santa Fe, September, 1783, ANC: MM 12, fs. 103-114.

<sup>53</sup>Royal order, March 6, 1784, ANC: MM 10, fs. 743-744.

<sup>54</sup>Cartagena, September 27, 1781, ANC: MM 49, f. 103.

proceeding with their training, in order to avoid the peril of augmenting the number of the enemy who will with instruction in the handling of arms become skillful; because as I have been reminded by the cabildo of this city, the conspiracy that was discovered in this city and past events necessitate examining this matter with intense scrupulosity and circumspection; and with this knowledge, I once again reiterate that you must know who are the people of distinction and the city's loyal vassals, and who are the type of people which should be rejected with the end of preventing the grave inconveniences which could develop by enlisting some who will be difficult to dispense with later.<sup>55</sup>

Once the militia was classified as disciplined, it received a full complement of veteran officers to insure maximum military discipline.<sup>56</sup>

The cabildo of Santa Fe took a dim view of the prospect of Santa Fe's maintaining an armed local citizenry, the loyalty of which in their opinion was suspect. Their main objection was that Colonel Bernet drilled the battalion every Sunday like disciplined rather than urban militia. Here, their concern was not that these exercises might be burdensome, but rather that the membership might become too militarily proficient for the security of the city. This objection was voiced to Viceroy Flores and reinforced by citing as questionable incidents which reportedly occurred after the training sessions disbanded. The enlisted men, it seems, held musical celebrations in honor of their captains, which were characterized by loud shouting that tended to disrupt the city's newly acquired tranquility. To make matters worse, militiamen had been known on occasion to utter irreverent remarks reflecting on the character of various functionaries of the crown, including one clearly seditious shout of "Long live the King, down

<sup>55</sup>Cartagena, September 27, 1781, *ibid.*, f. 71.

<sup>56</sup>Estado de fuerza de las milicias, Santa Fe, September, 1784, ANC: MM 2, fs. 481-489.

with his bad government." Such proclamations were most likely merely tasteless jokes rising out of too much celebrating and perhaps a desire to harass the local magistrates, but the cabildo interpreted the incidents as proof of a new and very real menace to the security of the capital. It is difficult to determine whether the cabildo was truly fearful of the militia's loyalty or whether their report to Flores was merely a pretext to discredit it because of the unwelcome prospect of contending with the militia's prerogatives within their jurisdiction.<sup>57</sup>

Apparently trustful of Bernet's judgment in selecting his men, Viceroy Flores did not take the report seriously and seemingly was more annoyed with the cabildo than concerned with the story they told. Indeed, he replied to their petition by accusing them of obstructionism and bad faith, but did instruct Bernet to direct the militiamen back to their homes after drills in order to prevent unnecessary congregations in the city streets.<sup>58</sup> The viceregal reply, however, did not quiet the cabildo which again petitioned Flores, this time assuming a wounded attitude and professing only the best of intentions. Stating a preference for a fixed regular contingent, the magistrates reiterated their suspicions of the militia and added more evidence to their case. It was pointed out that when the city was under threat hardly a soul was found who would raise a hand to defend it; yet now, large numbers of inhabitants eagerly sought membership in the militia,

<sup>57</sup>November 30, 1781, ANC: MM 31, f. 711.

<sup>58</sup>Flores to Bernet, Santa Fe, January 16, 1782, *ibid.*, f. 703.

many of whom were related to people believed to have been conspirators.<sup>59</sup> The training went on anyway, but in subsequent years the cabildo continued to harbor a deep hostility toward the militia.

In the midst of such suspicion and fear, completion of Flores' pre-rebellion plan for the raising of militia in the provinces of Mariquita, Tunja, and Pamplona could hardly have been practicable, and indeed it was never attempted. However, the new cavalry regiment did contain components from Tunja and Sogamoso as well as from several small settlements near Santa Fe including Zipaquirá.<sup>60</sup> At first appearance, this would seem to have been a contradictory and dangerous move because of the course of the Comunero Rebellion, but actually the viceregal authorities said little about possible sedition in cavalry ranks.

While the precise motives for raising units in those districts are not known, the exhibited trust is consistent with events which occurred during the course of the negotiations at Zipaquirá. There, when a crisis occurred in the peace talks because a radical element led by forces from the Comunero center of Socorro indicated a strong desire to seize Santa Fe in spite of the leadership's desire to avoid extremes in reaching an accord, the Comuneros from Tunja and Sogamoso, together representing about one-third of the rebel army, physically

<sup>59</sup>February 28, 1782, *ibid.*, fs. 720, 722-724.

<sup>60</sup>The others were Boza, Caqueza, and Choconta. Zejudo to Caballero y Góngora, Santa Fe, September, 1783, ANC: MM 12, fs. 103-114.

maneuvered themselves into a position between the mass of the troops and the capital to block any attempted advance.<sup>61</sup>

The motive for this action is not entirely clear, but the Tunjans had always claimed to be acting in the interest of the crown. When Tunja was first swept into the insurgency, the cabildo, speaking for their city's inhabitants with whom they had met in open session, emphasized in a proclamation for the crown authorities that they had acquiesced to the movement only because of coercion, and that they hoped in so doing they could function in the royal interest.<sup>62</sup> A similar proclamation was also issued by Tunja's council of Comunero leaders.<sup>63</sup> Such professions of loyalty were commonplace throughout the expanse of the upheaval; the distinction of Tunja and Sogamoso was that they acted accordingly, or seemingly so, at Zipaquirá.

There was also in this chain of events an element of pure self interest. The Tunjans and Sogamosans entertained a profound fear that if the Socorrans seized the capital, provincial political control might shift from their cities, both major administrative centers, in favor of Socorran supremacy.<sup>64</sup> This jealousy between the provincial capitals and Socorro was observed by Archbishop Caballero y Góngora and exploited by him in the course of the Zipaquirá negotiations.

<sup>61</sup>Cárdenas Acosta, II, 8-12.

<sup>62</sup>Acta del cabildo abierto, Tunja, May 23, 1781, in Cárdenas Acosta, I, 245-248.

<sup>63</sup>Instrumento de exclamación, Tunja, May 17, 1781; ibid., pp. 242-244.

<sup>64</sup>Liévano Aguirre, III, 48.

Indeed, the Tunjans and Sogamosans were acting upon his request when they moved to protect the capital, and were given much credit by him for their deed.<sup>65</sup> In the words of Caballero:

Those of the districts of Tunja, Sogamoso, and San Gil, which comprised the considerable number of from five to six thousand men, adhered to my stipulation with Berbeo, and they performed this task against the sentiment of the opposition; for although the latter group outnumbered them, they possessed other advantages in as much as their troops were the finest of that army, the most formidable, and the most subordinate to their leaders. These assisted me vastly in my enterprise, either because the village of Socorro intended to promote itself at their expense in government, or because the most of them, especially those of Tunja and Sogamoso, came (to Zipaquir ) under coercion.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps significantly, Caballero y G ngora was viceroy in 1783 when the cavalry regiment was organized.

To make way for the extension of the disciplined militia system into the interior in 1784, the massive militia establishment of the province of Cartagena was reduced accordingly (see Table 6). The numerous separate companies in the outlying partido of Barranquilla were eliminated, and those of the partidos of Momp s and Lorica were condensed into an infantry battalion of all colors and two companies of dragoons (compare Table 2 and Table 6). The veteran cadres pertaining to the extinguished militia were then transferred to the new units.<sup>67</sup> This reshuffling decidedly diminished the preponderant position of the province of Cartagena in the distribution of the

<sup>65</sup>C rdenas Acosta, II, 8.

<sup>66</sup>Account of the happenings at Zipaquir  by Caballero y G ngora, June, 1781, in C rdenas Acosta, II, 9.

<sup>67</sup>Caballero y G ngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 269.

TABLE 6  
ARMY OF NEW GRANADA 1789\*

Regulars <sup>a</sup>	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Two companies of Santa Marta	154		
Half company of Santa Marta		24	
Regiment of Cartagena	900		
Royal Corps (two companies of Cartagena) (company of Panama)		200	
		100	
Battalion of Panama	679		
Parties of light infantry of all colors of Chimán (Panama)	80		
Detachment of Chagres	29		
Company of pardos of South Darién	109		
Company of Guayaquil	100		
Three companies of Quito	225		
Detachment of Popayán	25		
Auxiliary Regiment of Santa Fe	1,200	100	
Cavalry Viceregal Guard			34
Totals	3,501	424	34

Total Regulars 3,959

<sup>a</sup>The Regiment of the Princess which departed in 1789 has not been included.

Disciplined Militia <sup>b</sup>	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Regiment of all colors, Riohacha (ten companies)	850		
Two companies of pardo dragoons, Riohacha			252
Regiment of all colors, Santa Marta (ten companies)	890		
Regiment of whites, Cartagena	800		
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena	800		
Regiment of all colors, Mompós and the Savannahs of Tolú (Cartagena)	800		
Two companies of white dragoons, Corozal (Cartagena)			200
Company of pardos, Cartagena		100	
Company of morenos, Cartagena		100	

TABLE 6 (cont.)

Disciplined Militia <sup>b</sup>	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Brigade of Pardos, Tolú (Cartagena)		20	
Regiment of whites, Panama and Nata	900		
Battalion of pardos, Panama and Nata	900		
Company of pardos, Panama		100	
Four company corps of light infantry, Portobelo and the margins of the Chagres River	360		
Seven company corps of whites, Veragua and Alange	700		
Regiment of whites, Guayaquil (ten companies)	890	100	
Squadron of white dragoons, Guayaquil		180	
Regiment of whites, Quito (ten companies)	900	50	
Regiment of white dragoons, Quito			500
Regiment of whites, Rfo Bamba (Quito)	900		
Regiment of whites, Cuenca (ten companies)	900		100
Regiment of all colors, Popayán (ten companies)	1,000		
Squadron of white dragoons, Popayán			300
Regiment of whites, Santa Fe	800		
Regiment of white cavalry, Santa Fe (twelve companies)			600
Totals	12,430	470	2,132

Total Disciplined Militia 15,032

<sup>b</sup>For reasons unknown to this writer many nine and ten company militia units which were in fact battalions were classified at this time as regiments.

\*The above table was adapted from Antonio Caballero y Góngora, "Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada . . . 1789," Relaciones de mando: memorias presentadas por los gobernantes del Nuevo Reino de Granada, eds. F. Posada and P. M. Ibáñez (Bogotá, 1910), pp. 268-272; Francisco Gil y Lemos, "Gil y Lemos y su memoria sobre el Nuevo Reino de Granada," ed. with introduction by Enrique Sánchez Pedrote, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII (1951), 205-212; report of Subinspector General Anastasio Zejudo, Quito, 1788, ANE: Pres. 249, fs. 218-226; report of Subinspector General Joaquín de Cañaverl, Cartagena, May, 1793, ANC: MM 92, fs. 1019-1035. The unit strengths listed by these sources vary somewhat and are within themselves

inconsistent. At times company extras were counted as well as command and staff group members; other times they were not. To make the data in this chart consistent with the other tables, it has been necessary to revise these deviations to the same common denominator. It might also be noted that Zejudo in his review and reorganization from Popayán to Panama deviated from the unit strengths advanced in the Cuban reglamento by frequently organizing 100-man companies within the battalions, sometimes including the grenadiers. Also see ANC: MM 64, fs. 1035-1038, MM 66, fs. 442-444, MM 71, fs. 24-54, MM 100, fs. 199-205, MM 107, fs. 112-116.

viceroyalty's reformed militia, but the core units of the city itself remained in place.

The regular army was subject to an equally profound readjustment in deployment. After the arrival in Cartagena of long-awaited Spanish reinforcements, the Regiment of the Crown, a large share of its personnel were transferred to Santa Fe to relieve the expeditionary force.<sup>68</sup> This contingent was in turn replaced by a new fixed regiment of Infantry, known as the Auxiliary, created upon the recommendation of Caballero y Góngora by royal order in 1784.<sup>69</sup> For the initial formation, many members of the Regiment of the Crown and the *fijo* of Cartagena were incorporated into the new unit. To balance costs, the regiment of Cartagena was then reduced to a battalion.<sup>70</sup> In the early post rebellion period, the Auxiliary Regiment provided detachments for Honda, the all-important Magdalena river port; Tunja, the provincial capital; and Socorro, the fountainhead of the insurgency.<sup>71</sup> Of less

<sup>68</sup> Colonel Basilio Gascón to Caballero y Góngora, Cartagena, October 26, 1783, ANC: MM 30, fs. 477-484; *id.* to *id.*, Cartagena, November 19, 1783, and Quiroga to Caballero y Góngora, Cartagena, November 24, 1783, *ibid.*, fs. 387-422.

<sup>69</sup> Caballero y Góngora to Gálvez, Santa Fe, October 19, 1783, in Tisnes, pp. 83-87; Captain Joaquín del Valle to Quiroga, Cartagena, December 16, 1785, ANC: MM 2, fs. 709-711; Report of Subinspector General Joaquín de Cañaverál, Cartagena, May, 1793, ANC: MM 92, fs. 1019-1035.

<sup>70</sup> Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando, p. 269; Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando, pp. 387-388; Caballero y Góngora to the Commander of the Regiment of the Crown, Santa Fe, March 25, 1784, ANC: MM 56, f. 199.

<sup>71</sup> Estado de fuerza del Regimiento Auxiliar, Santa Fe, November 1784, ANC: MM 2, fs. 475-479.

consequence, the halberdier guard was disbanded and the cavalry company was reduced to a mere ceremonial force.<sup>72</sup>

These readjustments in the deployment of military resources constituted a drastic reshaping of the military's role in the vice-royalty. Large components were now for the first time directly employed as a domestic police force. True, such duty had always been implicit, and had become explicit after the Quito rebellion of 1765, but the commitment represented a major shift in emphasis, and by far surpassed in scope everything that preceded it. Moreover, on November 15, 1783, the crown approved the action that had been taken to organize disciplined militia in the various provinces of Quito.<sup>73</sup> Whereas the character of New Granada's military establishment had traditionally been coastal, it was now almost evenly balanced, and whereas royal authority had traditionally rested upon the fidelity of its vassals, it now rested squarely upon military force. Archbishop Caballero y Góngora summed up the transition very well in his relación de mando.

In the past, when the policing of the interior provinces, the administration of justice, and the authority of the King's Ministers, lay in the fidelity of the people, the military forces were concentrated in the maritime provinces. But, once the inestimable original innocence was lost, the government needed and the loyal vassals--which eventually came to include all of them--desired the establishment of military bodies in order to perpetuate order and tranquility.<sup>74</sup>

Upon his own request, Viceroy Flores was relieved of his position by royal order of November 26, 1781, to be succeeded by

<sup>72</sup>Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 270.

<sup>73</sup>Gálvez to Caballero y Góngora, Spain, ANC: MM 51, fs. 81-85.

<sup>74</sup>Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 268-269.

Juan Pimienta, governor of Cartagena. Pimienta, however, died shortly after taking office and the viceregency was assumed by the next in line for emergency succession, Archbishop Antonio Caballero y Góngora, who received full appointment the following year. There was nearly complete continuity between the regimes of Flores and Caballero y Góngora with respect to their views on the need for and function of the militia, and with respect to their outlook on the military in general. Although the large-scale movement of armed forces to the interior of the viceroyalty was initiated under Flores, it was terminated in the administration of Caballero y Góngora, and in his relación de mando, he left little doubt that he would have handled the entire transition had the task befallen him. Both men were keenly aware of a weakening in the fabric of royal control, and saw the emerging military as at least a temporary solution to the problem of state power.

Since Flores left no relación, Caballero y Góngora summarized his predecessor's activities during the Comunero Rebellion and did so with deep sympathy and understanding.<sup>75</sup> It is evident that he believed Flores correct in his wish to establish a military force in the interior prior to tax reform, and that in a large measure he held the failure to do so responsible for the government's inability to control the events of 1781.<sup>76</sup> Caballero y Góngora, who went naked of power to Zipaquirá to capitulate to the Comuneros, who saw the

<sup>75</sup>ibid., pp. 197-208.

<sup>76</sup>ibid., pp. 202-208.

regime in Santa Fe forced to abandon honor for trickery and treachery, and who on several occasions suffered personal insults at the hands of the Comuneros, keenly felt the absence of a powerful military to support government authority.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, of all of the viceroys who ruled in New Granada, Caballero y Góngora was the greatest exponent of military strength and the staunchest supporter of the military establishment.

Under the Archbishop-Viceroy's regime, the military reform reached its climax, and the armed forces enjoyed their greatest prestige. In addition to the new units of Santa Fe and Quito, disciplined militia units were also organized in Santa Marta and Riohacha, and those of Veragua, upon viceregal request, were finally reclassified by royal order of March 27, 1784.<sup>78</sup> All of this came in a mere two-year period, 1783-1784, with the crown expressing what might even be called enthusiasm. While the development of the additional coastal militia cannot be tied directly to the reaction to the Comunero Rebellion, it certainly flourished in the subsequent heyday of the reform. Indeed, insurgency from within, far more than had ever any menace from without, stimulated the fastest and most comprehensive military reorganization in the history of the viceroyalty.

---

<sup>77</sup>Cárdenas Acosta, I, 277, and II, 8, 41-42, 60-61.

<sup>78</sup>Royal order, March 27, 1784, ANC: MM 75, fs. 307-311.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MILITARY ON THE FRONTIER

The expansion of the military into the interior of New Granada to preserve the internal security of the state was paralleled by a simultaneous employment of armed forces in major pacification-colonization actions on the viceroyalty's coastal frontiers, first in the province of Riohacha beginning in 1772, then in Darién beginning in 1785. Both campaigns were intended to subdue savage Indians and to incorporate their lands into the effective territory of the viceroyalty. In them, the military acted in concert with missionaries who propagated the Catholic faith and Spanish culture, and colonists who served as the civilized basis for populating the land and promoting its economic development. The duty of the armed forces was to occupy strategic locations within hostile territory, construct and garrison fortified towns, and then from these bases coerce the Indians into an acceptable pattern of life. Behind this protective shield functioned the missionaries and colonists. The vital position occupied by the armed forces in these enterprises represented a shift in emphasis away from the traditional mission-oriented approach to the frontier toward a more secularized policy. Then, the priest, although at times provided with military assistance, was the chief actor; now, in Darién and Riohacha, the soldier occupied the foreground. The winning of souls, previously an important consideration along with extending

government control, became relegated almost to an afterthought. The primary goal was rapid and effective occupation, through mass extermination if necessary. As with the assumption of domestic police duties, the military's frontier role slightly preceded the reform, but once that rejuvenation was under way became inseparable from the course of its development.

The two pacification-colonization campaigns were directed against the Guajiro Indians, who occupied almost all of the province of Riohacha, and the Cunus, who dwelt along the inland rivers and Caribbean coast of Darién. Although savage Indians who disrupted commerce, inhibited trade, and took the lives of loyal vassals were common to almost all provinces of New Granada, the Guajiros and Cunus were special problems to the authorities because of the coastal nature of their holdings, and especially because of their close relationships with citizens of the arch-enemy of the crown, Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> So limited was government control in the two provinces, that in effect the Indians were sovereign. They maintained a thriving commerce with English and Dutch merchants, received from them ample quantities of firearms, and defied the Spanish authorities at will. Worse, during the Seven Years War the Guajiros were known to have provided some 600 head of beef to the British Caribbean fleet.<sup>2</sup> These practices distinguished the Guajiros and the Cunus from the other

---

<sup>1</sup>Moreno y Escandón, Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXII, 564-657, 572-577.

<sup>2</sup>Narváez to Flores, Riohacha, August 26, 1779, José Félix Blanco and Ramón Azpurúa (comps.), Documentos para la historia de la vida del libertador . . . (Caracas, 1875-78), I, 187-188.

non-pacified Indians of the realm as a special menace and came to constitute the main rationale for military punishment. Indeed, both provinces were dangerous soft spots in the line of coastal defenses stretching from Guayana to Portobelo.

Although without permanent effect, the government had from time to time made small inroads into the two regions. In Riohacha, a Capuchin missionary effort to subdue the Indians by conversion was initiated just prior to the turn of the eighteenth century. However, the missionaries themselves came to entertain few illusions about the extent of their success and frequently lamented that they served no other purpose than bearing witness to Guajiro insolence and mischief.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, they and a small number of settlers who also managed to enter the region were there only upon the sufferance of the Guajiros and were constantly in danger of some day falling victim of their wrath. The only certain government stronghold in the area was the city of Riohacha on the western fringe of the province; the remainder, and especially the Guajira Peninsula which juts northeastward from that city, was dominated by the Guajiros.

For its part, the province of Darién during the eighteenth century suffered a decline in civilized inhabitants from 20,000 in 1712 to a mere 1,000 in 1780. These were scattered in small settlements in the south central and Pacific portions of the Isthmus. The depopulation was caused by a steady battering from

<sup>3</sup>Antonio de Alcacer, Las misiones Capuchinas en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, hoy Colombia (1648-1820) (Bogotá, 1959), pp. 44, 52, 56-59, 138-139.

British invaders, pirates, and Indians, including the sacking of the capital, Santa Cruz de Cuna, in 1712. A peaceful interlude followed the War of Jenkin's Ear, but by 1760 hostilities were renewed.<sup>4</sup> To contain new Cuna invasions, a series of four forts was constructed along the southern Pacific frontier, beginning in 1762 at Yaviza, newly named provincial capital, and continuing into the following decade with establishments at Cuna, Chapinga, and Boca Chica. Initially, these strongholds were garrisoned by twenty regulars from Panama supplemented by roughly ninety local pardos. A similar company was maintained under the jurisdiction of Panama along Darien's western frontier to garrison three populated outposts at Chepo, Terable, and Chimán.<sup>5</sup> These units eventually emerged as separate pardo segments of the regular army. The precise time at which this transition occurred is obscure, but they appeared in formal military reports during the 1780's.<sup>6</sup> The Cunas, however, remained secure in their population centers on the Caribbean side of the isthmus, and by 1772 were reported conducting raids beyond the Gulf of Darién as far east as the Sinú River and on into the province of Cartagena.<sup>7</sup> The latter development was an important consideration behind the

---

<sup>4</sup>Manuel Luengo Muñoz, "Génesis de las expediciones militares al Darién en 1785-86," Anuario de estudios americanos, XVIII (1961), 345-356, 361-368.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 344-345.

<sup>6</sup>Estado de fuerza del ejército, Panama, July 5, 1783, ANC: MM 64, fs. 1035-1038. In this study they are first entered on the 1789 table.

<sup>7</sup>Moreno y Escandón, Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXIII, 572.

formation of numerous companies of disciplined militia in the partido of Lorica during the 1773 reform.<sup>8</sup>

The pacification-colonization venture in Riohacha was initiated at a time when the viceregal authorities had become disillusioned with the traditional mission system for subduing frontier areas. In his *relación de mando*, 1772, Viceroy Messfa de la Cerda lamented that for the past century the missions of New Granada had remained stagnant, neither expanding nor producing lasting results, and further noted that catechized Indians were prone to fleeing back into the wilderness and reverting to their savage pagan ways. He blamed this failure not on any want of government fiscal or moral support, but rather on a lack of evangelical fervor and vocational dedication on the part of the missionaries themselves. Consequently, he advised his successor, Manuel Guírior, to observe utmost precaution if wishing to initiate new endeavors.<sup>9</sup>

Messfa de la Cerda's pessimistic judgment was based on harsh experience, for it followed a scandalous total collapse of mission endeavors in Riohacha. There, in 1769, a band of Guajiro warriors, selected by Governor Gerónimo Mendoza from mission villages to punish a troublesome neighboring Cocino tribe, turned their wrath instead against their mentors and precipitated a general uprising. With mission Indians in the vanguard, the Guajiros cleansed their lands of intruders. The Capuchins were expelled; all but two of

<sup>8</sup>Report on the militia of Cartagena, Governor Juan Pimienta, March 26, 1778, ANC: MM 40, fs. 152-165.

<sup>9</sup>Messfa de la Cerda, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 97-98.

eight missions were destroyed; and many loyal vassals were murdered with neither woman nor child spared. Shortly, full Guajiro hegemony over the province was re-established and the stronghold of Riohacha was itself subject to threat.<sup>10</sup>

The fiscal protector de indios of the royal audiencia, Francisco Moreno y Escandón, was among those impatient with frontier stagnation. In a 1772 report on the state of the viceroyalty, he agreed point by point with the viceroy's evaluation of the missions.<sup>11</sup> He advocated a larger role for military force in contending with savage Indians, although recognizing that recourse to arms as a general frontier policy was unacceptable because of restrictions contained in the laws of the Indies.

Because of the experience that the gentle leniency of admonishments, far from producing the desired end of conversion, serves rather as cause for insolence to these barbarians and to those whom they shelter, the gravity of these evils so deeply rooted in the body politic of the viceroyalty does not admit to any solution other than the chastisement of arms. I cannot deny that on the many occasions which have arisen during your excellency's administration to deal judicially with this subject I have spoken without latitude. The responsibility vested in me by my position as protector of the aboriginals, and the repeated dictates of the Laws of the Indies which permit no deviation from their maxims, and which prohibit advocating or resorting to the force of arms (for the 8th, title 4, book 3 with the same measures repeated in title 4, book 4 of the same Recopilación, commands that attempts be made to pacify gently and without war those raised in rebellion) have been powerful, just, and

---

<sup>10</sup>Alcacer, pp. 166-168; Moreno y Escandón, Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXIII, 562; Mendoza to Messsa de la Cerda, Riohacha, May 27, 1769, June 8, 1769, June 10, 1769, July 9, 1769, August, 1769, January 27, 1770, and March 26, 1770, ANC: MM 138, fs. 839-844, 868-869, 871-872, 968-972, 974-980, 1046-1068, and 1072-1082; Herrera Leyba to Messsa de la Cerda, Santa Marta, July 19, 1769, ibid., fs. 982-983.

<sup>11</sup>Moreno y Escandón, Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXIII, 559-560.

constraining; because of this it is precarious to alter the procedures prescribed by the cited laws without consulting the King, although there are substantial motives worthy of royal consideration: the realization through the continual experience of almost three centuries that admonitions and leniency with which their pacification has been sought through preaching and cooling have produced fruitless results, the consequence being not only the frustration of the goal, but greater difficulty in achieving those ends due to the reason that many even after having been baptized and after having been instructed in the customs of the Spaniards take advantage of their learning to elude our enterprises and even to attack and commit hostilities.<sup>12</sup>

He went on to postulate that "fortunately" against the Cunas and the Guajiros military rigor could be invoked with good conscience because of the heinous nature of their crimes. These included: rebellion and forsaking the faith; corrupting innocent Indians; usurping the property of loyal vassals; and especially, consorting with foreign enemies of the crown.<sup>13</sup> Significantly, military punishment was not applied as a general instrument of frontier policy in the following years. It was restricted to the Guajiros and Cunas whose crimes were most grievous and who posed a genuine threat to the state. The mission in its traditional form continued to function on the inland frontiers of the viceroyalty.

The utility of military conquest as a pacification technique was also under serious doubt in 1772 because of an unsuccessful attempt at mass invasion of the Guajiro territory in the previous year. At the onset of hostilities in 1769, reinforcements had been sent to Riohacha from the neighboring provinces of Santa Marta and Maracaibo

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 575-577.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

to bolster a local citizens' militia defending the capital; and when the Guajiro menace displayed no indication of abating, a detachment of 100 regulars was dispatched from Cartagena.<sup>14</sup> Initially, these troops were designated for defensive action while peaceful persuasion was attempted to convince the Guajiros to desist from their belligerence.<sup>5</sup> Much to the consternation of the authorities, these endeavors were unsuccessful, and the state of hostility endured into the year 1771.

Governor Gerónimo de Mendoza, his successor Francisco de Baraya, and the governor of Santa Marta, Manuel Herrera Leyba, all advised Viceroy Messfa de la Cerda that recourse to military action was the only plausible solution to the dilemma.<sup>16</sup> However, with Cartagena garrisoned by only a battalion of regulars, the viceroy did not have adequate forces at his disposal to attempt such action. The Battalion of Savoy arrived early in 1771, but these reinforcements had been dispatched to New Granada during a war scare with alerts having been sent to both Cartagena and Santa Fe. Therefore, although preparations for a major expedition were initiated, the viceroy was unable to

---

<sup>14</sup>Mendoza to Messfa de la Cerda, Riohacha, May 27, 1769, June 8, 1769, June 10, 1769, July 9, 1769, July 19, 1769, and August, 1769, ANC: MM 138, fs. 839-844, 868-869, 871-872, 968-972, 974-980, 982-983; Morillo Velarde to Messfa de la Cerda, Cartagena, October 11, 1769, and June 7, 1770, ANC: MM 65, fs. 576-582, 759-762.

<sup>15</sup>Mendoza to Messfa de la Cerda, Riohacha, August, 1769, ANC: MM 138, fs. 968-972; Governor Francisco de Baraya to de la Sierra, Riohacha, June 26, 1771, ANC: MM 124, f. 644.

<sup>16</sup>Mendoza to Messfa de la Cerda, Riohacha, June 8, 1769, ANC: MM 138, fs. 839-844; Herrera Leyba to Messfa de la Cerda, Santa Marta, July 19, 1769, *ibid.*, fs. 982-983; Baraya to de la Sierra, Riohacha, June 26, 1771, ANC: MM 124, f. 644.

authorize an immediate departure.<sup>17</sup> Finally, on August 30, 1771, he ordered to Riohacha an expedition of 500 regulars, 400 of these from the newly arrived battalion, the remainder from the fixed garrison of Cartagena.<sup>18</sup> Command of the enterprise was vested in Colonel Benito Encio from the Battalion of Savoy. Although Messfa de la Cerda instructed Encio first to seek peaceful solutions, he dispatched the force on the assumption that it would be required to administer a sound beating to the Guajiros, and that in so doing it would teach them respect for Spanish arms and authority as well as the value of peaceful habits.<sup>19</sup> The troops left Cartagena by sea on November 3 and arrived in Riohacha two weeks later.<sup>20</sup>

By standards of the time, the assemblage of military power which gathered in Riohacha in the autumn of 1771 was impressive. In addition to the main expeditionary force, Encio had at his disposal 200 regulars already there, 150 from Cartagena, the remainder from Santa Marta, as well as roughly 340 activated militia men.<sup>21</sup> The Guajiros, however, were impressive in their own right. Contemporary estimates placed their number between 30,000 and 40,000, approximately 10,000 of these

<sup>17</sup>Baraya to de la Sierra, Riohacha, June 26, 1771, ANC: MM 124, f. 644; De la Sierra to Messfa de la Cerda, Cartagena, August 11, 1771, ANC: MM 124, fs. 643, 646.

<sup>18</sup>Instructions for Colonel Benito Encio by de la Sierra, Cartagena, October 30-31, 1771, ANC: MM 9, fs. 186-203.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, Guirior, *Relaciones de mando . . .*, p. 177.

<sup>20</sup>Respuestas que da el coronel del Regimiento de Savoya Josef Benito Encio a las interrogaciones, Riohacha, October 12, 1772, ANC: MM 124, fs. 508-511.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

warriors armed with British weapons.<sup>22</sup> Prior to the arrival of the expedition, discussions had dwelt mainly with whether drastic military action was indeed necessary; now, and somewhat belatedly, the question shifted to whether the expeditionary force, for all of its size, was actually capable of accomplishing its mission.

To the dismay of Viceroy Messsa, Colonel Encio after a preliminary appraisal concluded that an offensive was impossible. This judgment was due both to the difficult nature of the terrain and to the size of the Guajiro opposition. He estimated that at least 2,000 first-class troops would be required to effectively invade the grasslands of the peninsula, and that this maneuver would in itself accomplish nothing if retreat routes into the backland mountains were not blocked beforehand. That was a task for which there were not sufficient military forces in the viceroyalty. An invasion with a smaller force would pose an unacceptable danger because the Guajiros would in all likelihood cut off its own avenues of retreat and probably destroy it. Therefore, Colonel Encio resolved to take no action. Subsequent urgings, including a scathing denunciation from the commandant general of Cartagena, Gregorio de la Sierra, who in effect accused the colonel of ineptitude, cowardice, and dereliction of duty, were unable to change his decision.<sup>23</sup> Events were at this juncture when

<sup>22</sup>Silvestre, p. 60; Antonio de Maryñez y la Torre, "Relación, o Informe de la provincia de Santa Marta, y Riohacha . . .," Escritos de dos economistas coloniales, ed. Sergio Elías Ortiz (Bogotá, 1965), p. 36.

<sup>23</sup>De la Sierra to Messsa de la Cerda, Cartagena, April 11, 1772, ANC: MM 70, fs. 227-236; Respuestas que da el coronel del Regimiento de Savoya Josef Benito Encio a las interrogaciones, Riohacha, October 12, 1772, ANC: MM 70, fs. 227-236; Guirior, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 177.

Manuel Guirior arrived in Cartagena in June, 1772, and was advised by his embarrassed predecessor that the viceroyalty did not possess sufficient strength to conquer the Guajiros.<sup>24</sup> It was left to Guirior to find a workable solution.

Discovering from preliminary investigations that the Guajiros had by the middle of 1772 begun to desist from their hostilities, the new viceroy at the outset of his administration sought new accommodations with them. He replaced Colonel Encio with Antonio Arévalo, colonel of engineers and one of the most capable public servants in the viceroyalty, and in November dispatched him to Riohacha.<sup>25</sup> In compliance with viceregal instructions, Commander Arévalo issued a general pardon, presented gifts as peace offerings, and upon finding that these measures were having the desired effect, disbanded the bulk of the expeditionary force.<sup>26</sup> He also conducted an investigation into the causes for the 1769 uprising and concluded that a large portion of blame was due former Governor Gerónimo Mendoza and several henchmen who were guilty of corruption and abuse of authority. They were fined accordingly.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Messfa de la Cerda, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 114-115.

<sup>25</sup>This was the same man who was the architect of the great dike at Boca Grande, Cartagena.

<sup>26</sup>Arévalo to Guirior, Riohacha, December 26, 1772, ANC: MM 93, f. 190; id. to id., Riohacha, January 26, 1773, ANC: MM 124, fs. 836-838; id. to id., Riohacha, April 12, 1773, ANC: MM 97, f. 248; Estado de fuerza de la tropa al regresar, Riohacha, May 4, 1773, ibid., f. 257; Guirior, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 178; Alcacer, p. 202.

<sup>27</sup>Arévalo to Guirior, Riohacha, May 26, 1773, ANC: MM 97, fs. 235; 242; Ureta to Arévalo, Santa Fe, August 15, 1773, ANC: MM 124, f. 721; Guirior, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 176-177.

With outright military conquest impossible, and the mission technique uncertain, Gurior took advantage of the lull to inaugurate a fresh pacification approach which assigned a role to the armed forces commensurate to their limited potential, and which afforded the friars a surer basis for operations. Under the supervision of Arévalo three fortified towns garrisoned by troops were initially established: Bahfa Honda, on the northern point of the peninsula, former center of Guajirol trade, and because of good port facilities, a departure point for activities east; Sinamaica, on the eastern side of the peninsula just inland from Maracaibo Bay; and Pedraza, in the interior of the province east of Riohacha. For each of these, colonists were recruited to serve as a counterbalance to the Indian population, to assist in the defense of the locality, and to form the basis for a new society. By 1775 these three locations possessed a total of 231 families.<sup>28</sup> For the Indians, four mission villages were rebuilt and four new centers were founded.<sup>29</sup> In 1775, twenty Capuchin missionaries arrived to staff these and several other settlements remaining from the pre-1769 era.<sup>30</sup> The military function was intended to be largely a holding action, or what might be referred to as a "defensive-offense." The method was to occupy a strategic location, fortify it, wait until

<sup>28</sup>Estado que manifiesta la tropa, milicias, y fundadores que existen en las nuevas fundaciones, Riohacha, September 11, 1775, ANC: MM 138, f. 1051.

<sup>29</sup>Gurior, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 176, 178-179.

<sup>30</sup>Informe a S.M. del P. Pedro de Altea, Prefecto de las Misiones, 1788, in Alcacer, pp. 210-213; Alcacer, p. 226.

any opposition which might develop had grown weary, and then gradually assert the authority of arms. This system envisioned punishing only specific individuals or groups committing misdeeds; any hope of chastising the Guajiro nation as a whole was abandoned. A primary aim was to divorce the Indians from foreign influence and by so doing eventually sway them to their rightful ruler. Military detachments were also provided for the missions, where in addition to taking charge of general security they assisted in conducting entradas to lure Indians into the missions.<sup>31</sup> With the character of operations essentially defensive, the number of troops required to staff these undertakings was much smaller than originally allotted for all-out conquest, although subsequent events were to prove that the authorities went too far in military cutbacks (see Table 7).

Although relations remained uneasy, the Guajiros for their part seemed inclined toward giving the government another chance. Their motive for doing so is not clear. They may have merely grown weary of perpetuating hostilities; they may have been seduced by government promises; or they may have been intimidated by the military buildup under Encio. In view of the local power ratio, the latter possibility would seem unlikely except that throughout this period the Guajiros, unless they were in an overwhelmingly superior position, consistently elected to back down in the face of opposition rather than risk casualties. Whatever the explanation, many had already indicated a willingness to return to their villages prior to Arévalo's

---

<sup>31</sup>Guirior, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 179.

TABLE 7  
STRENGTH OF THE RIOHACHA EXPEDITION

September 11, 1775*			
<u>Location</u>	<u>Regulars</u> <sup>a</sup>	<u>Militia</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Riohacha	40	9	49
Bahfa Honda	73	22	95
Pedraza	32	11	43
Sinamaica	36	56	92
Miscellaneous	<u>7</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>133</u>
Totals	188	224	412

<sup>a</sup> Of these, 143 were from the regiment of Cartagena, and 45 from the companies of Santa Marta.

July 26, 1777**			
<u>Location</u>	<u>Regulars</u> <sup>b</sup>	<u>Militia</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Riohacha	56	41	97
Bahia Honda	44	46	90
Pedraza	24	66	90
Sinamaica	36	54	90
Sabana del Valle	90	0	90
Miscellaneous	<u>0</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>108</u>
Totals	250	315	565

<sup>b</sup> Of these 200 were from the regiment of Cartagena, and 50 from the companies of Santa Marta.

June 12, 1789***				
<u>Units</u>	<u>Riohacha</u>	<u>Pedraza</u>	<u>Sinamaica</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Regular artillery companies of Santa Marta and Cartagena	11	4	1	16
Regular Infantry companies of Santa Marta	7	0	0	7

TABLE 7 (cont.)

<u>Units</u>	<u>Riohacha</u>	<u>Pedraza</u>	<u>Sinamaica</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Regular infantry regiment of Cartagena	0	78	0	78
Disciplined militia dragoons of Riohacha	47	118	82	247
Disciplined militia infantry regiment of Riohacha	<u>48</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>48</u>
Totals	113	200	83	396

\*Adapted from Estado de la tropa de las nuevas fundaciones, Governor Josef Galluzo, Riohacha, September 11, 1775, ANC: MM 88, f. 1051.

\*\*Adapted from Estado de la tropa de las nuevas fundaciones, Governor Ramón de García de León y Pizarro, Riohacha, July 26, 1777, ANC: MM 99, f. 299.

\*\*\*Adapted from Estado de fuerza de la plaza y las fundaciones, Governor Juan Alvarez de Verina, Riohacha, June 12, 1789, ANC: MM 64, f. 822.

arrival. Recalling that Viceroy Messía de la Cerda had admonished him to first seek peaceful solutions, Colonel Encio shortly before being relieved dared claim to have accomplished his mission by such means.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently Guirior and Arévalo claimed for themselves the credit for the pacification. This was apparently done on the pretense that their peace initiative had produced sincerer pledges from the Indians than those obtained by Encio. They were both duly congratulated by the crown for their achievement.<sup>33</sup>

In spite of apparent successes in establishing a government foothold, the commanding authorities during the Guirior administration were not sufficiently confident of the military position to activate corrective measures. When in 1774 newly appointed Governor Josef Galluzo requested authority to eradicate persistent Guajiro insolence and smuggling, Commander of the Expedition Arévalo, who had returned to his duties in Cartagena but retained his Riohacha appointment with authority over the governor, severely admonished him to exercise forbearance. He reminded Galluzo that disciplinary measures might provoke retaliation and consequently endanger the entire enterprise. Until a tight grip on the region had been assured, the military must act primarily to protect the various agents of the crown. Meanwhile, the Guajiros would have to be permitted to continue

---

<sup>32</sup>Encio to Guirior, Riohacha, July 26, 1772, ANC: MM 93, fs. 154-155; *id.* to *id.*, Riohacha, September 28, 1772, ANC: MM 124, fs. 767-768.

<sup>33</sup>Arriaga to Guirior, Spain, December 18, 1773, ANC: MM 124, fs. 422-425.

their abominations. This directive was emphatically sustained by Viceroy Guirior.<sup>34</sup>

The exercise of forbearance at the outset was a realistic measure. A military presence in the province was the key to the conduct of the whole venture, and with its destiny went that of the colonists and missionaries. The Guajiros, if uniformly aroused, would be more than the armed forces could handle, and premature engagements, if unsuccessful, might discredit the military as a deterrent and possibly precipitate a reenactment of 1769. One of the major advantages for the enterprise was that the Guajiros seldom if ever acted in concert. With time, tribal divisions might be widened with the isolation of hostile groups. Such a point, however, was never reached. Before the authorities were able to substantially extend their influence and win the confidence of significant portions of the Guajiros, the expeditionary force did suffer a serious defeat, and from it the pacification-colonization effort never recovered.

The military reverse arose out of an attempt in late 1775 to establish a fourth fortified town at a site called Apiesi, located on the eastern side of the peninsula between Bahía Honda and Sinauíca. There, efforts to persuade the local Indians to accept missionaries had been unsuccessful, and it was hoped that a new stronghold in their midst might induce them to reconsider.<sup>35</sup> Commander

---

<sup>34</sup>Galluzo to Arévalo, Riohacha, January 30, 1774, ANC: MM 119, fs. 40-42; Arévalo to Galluzo, Cartagena, February 11, 1774, ibid., fs. 36-37; Arévalo to Guirior, Cartagena, February 11, 1774, ibid., f. 43; Ureta to Arévalo, Santa Fe, March 15, 1774, ibid., f. 35.

<sup>35</sup>Arévalo to Guirior, Riohacha, September 10, 1775, ANC: MM 138, fs. 1048-1055.

Arévalo personally journeyed to Riohacha to supervise plans for the enterprise, and when all had been made ready, returned to Cartagena with immediate command reverting to Governor Galluzo.<sup>36</sup> Accompanied by some 300 troops, forty-three of whom were regulars, Galluzo began his march from Bahfa Honda to Apiesi on December 3. Ominous warnings, however, soon reached him that hostile warriors were waiting in ambush along the trail, and that because they feared he was coming to seize their lands he would be made the special target of their weapons. As a precautionary measure, the governor changed the march to an alternate route, but to no avail. On December 6 the expedition found its advance blocked by felled trees. Some 1,000 warriors appeared on a nearby hill-top.<sup>37</sup> So confronted, Galluzo elected to pursue a policy of firm resolve. He ordered his troops to reopen the trail and dispatched a message to the Guajiros inquiring into their motives for the harassment. The following morning, two chiefs, one each from the gathered factions of the Guajiro people, those of Apiesi and nearby Macuira, personally came forward to explain their position. They responded to his queries that they had been advised by English and Dutch friends that the purpose of his mission was to establish a stronghold which would be employed to halt their foreign trade, eventually disarm them, and then dominate them. This information had been corroborated by counsel received from Indians dwelling within pacified localities. Unable to deny the charges, Galluzo

<sup>36</sup>Informe a S.M. del P. Pedro de Altea, Prefecto de las Misiones, 1788, in Alcacer, p. 213.

<sup>37</sup>This estimate could well have been exaggerated.

responded that he was determined to proceed in spite of their opposition, and that he had brought military forces in anticipation of just such an eventuality. The warriors, choosing not to risk battle, receded. The march was then continued, and a suitable location for an establishment was found on the same day. Although several more warnings were received of Guajiro displeasure, construction was initiated immediately.

The following morning, the Indian leadership further tested the governor's resolve. Through a messenger, Galluzo was warned to give up his quest; if not, the trails would be blocked and hostilities initiated. In spite of the threat he remained undaunted and in turn cautioned that they had best accept the fact that the Spaniards were there to stay. He warned that the government could continue to fight for years, and that in such an eventuality the Indians would suffer greater losses than the Spaniards. Later that morning, Galluzo received a second message announcing that the Guajiro leadership had decided on war, but once again he refused to panic. He coolly replied that Guajiros would be received as they came whether in war or in peace. Having gained nothing by their threats, the Guajiros at this juncture of the exchange elected momentarily to back down. In a complete reversal of tactics, the chiefs proclaimed that they now understood that war would accomplish nothing because the Spaniards could not be prevented from ultimately establishing themselves as masters. Moreover, they went so far as to offer their services in constructing the stronghold. Although skeptical of their motives, Galluzo accepted their labor, and without incident the

construction, including a wall, church, and interior buildings, was completed on December 15. His mission apparently accomplished, the governor assigned ninety men including the regulars to the stronghold as well as a missionary to care for their spiritual well being. He, himself, departed with the bulk of his forces for Bahfa Honda and from there proceeded to Riohacha. Then, the Guajiros attacked.<sup>38</sup>

Although not evident at the moment, the Apiesi episode was the beginning of the end for the Riohacha pacification-colonization venture. The Guajiros demolished the new establishment, decimated the garrison, and murdered the missionary. Only twelve regulars and twenty-one militiamen made their way back to Bahfa Honda.<sup>39</sup> The reputation of Spanish arms was severely diminished, and consequently the whole fragile structure began to collapse. Throughout the province Guajiros displayed a new arrogance and hostility. In the missionary settlements, threats were made to kill the priests and burn their churches.<sup>40</sup> Fearful for the missionaries' safety, the local director of the Capuchin order permitted those in danger to seek refuge in the city of Riohacha.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Arévalo again returned. In anticipation of a general uprising, additional batteries

<sup>38</sup>Diary of Galluzo, November 20-December 16, 1775, ANC: MM 140, fs. 402-411; Informe a S.M. del P. Pedro de Altea, Prefecto de las Misiones, 1788, Alcacer, pp. 213-214.

<sup>39</sup>Informe a S.M. del P. Pedro de Altea, Prefecto de las Misiones, 1788, Alcacer, pp. 213-214; Galluzo to Arévalo, Riohacha, February 12, 1776, ANC: MM 124, fs. 387-391.

<sup>40</sup>Fral Miguel de Pamplona to Flores, Maracaibo, April 11, 1776, in Alcacer, p. 218.

<sup>41</sup>ibid.; Alcacer, p. 215.

and fortifications were constructed in the strongholds, and replacements and reinforcements were sent from Santa Marta and Cartagena.<sup>42</sup>

In June, 1776, an expedition of 325 men was dispatched to punish the Indians responsible for the Apiesi disaster, but the action produced little reason for satisfaction. As Colonel Encio had predicted, the Indians when confronted by strength merely faded into the backlands. The whole venture netted only twenty-five victims. This time, a fortified city was successfully established north of Apiesi at Sabana del Valle, but this accomplishment did little to restore confidence.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, fears were enhanced by horrifying accounts of the fate of deserters fallen victim to roving Guajiro bands.<sup>44</sup> Colonists began fleeing their settlements, and in view of the continuing danger, the Capuchin missionaries sharply curtailed the scope of their endeavors. Only a short time after their arrival, most of the priests transferred to other localities never again to return.<sup>45</sup> Thereafter, in addition

<sup>42</sup>Arévalo to Flores, Riohacha, March 17, and March 26, 1776, ANC: MM 140, fs. 415-435; Governor Nicolás Dfaz de Perea to Flores, Santa Marta, March 19, 1776, ANC: MM 96, fs. 335-337; Pimienta to Flores, Cartagena, March 26, 1776, ANC: MM 65, fs. 1115-1120.

<sup>43</sup>Arévalo to Flores, Riohacha, April 7, 1776, ANC: MM 140, fs. 388-389; Pimienta to Flores, Cartagena, April 12, April 26, and May 11, 1776, ANC: MM 119, fs. 45-51; Arévalo to Pimienta, Riohacha, June 26, 1776, ANC: MM 119, fs. 145-146; Informe a S.M. del P. Pedro de Altea, Prefecto de las Misiones, 1788, Alcacer, pp. 214-215.

<sup>44</sup>Narváez, Escritos de los economistas coloniales, pp. 39-40; Arévalo to Flores, Cartagena, September 11, 1776, ANC: MM 140, fs. 659-661.

<sup>45</sup>Estado Actual de las Misiones . . . año de 1788, in Alcacer, p. 229; Alcacer, pp. 219-226; Dfaz Perea to Flores, Santa Marta, January 4, 1777, ANC: MM 99, fs. 531-532.

to the fortified cities, missionaries staffed only two settlements, Boronato and Camarones, both of which were relatively advanced centers, neither of which was burned in 1769, and both of which were directly supported by the military.<sup>46</sup>

The attempts to cope with the new Guajiro hostility underscored what had always been a serious manpower crisis in the military operations of Riohacha. Had a more substantial number of troops been available, the newest crisis might have been averted. However, the authorities were always reluctant to commit for a prolonged period of time large numbers of regulars from the key base of Cartagena. When the 1771 expedition under Colonel Encio was sent, it was done so with the understanding that it was to act with all dispatch to insure a prompt return.<sup>47</sup> Although the number of troops in operation from Cartagena fluctuated during the colonization-pacification campaign, it seldom surpassed 200. Furthermore, these were usually the poorest Cartagena had to offer.<sup>48</sup>

The militia involved was far from satisfactory because of both a low performance rate and recruitment difficulty. Although lists were maintained of able-bodied men, the method of raising companies in time of need from Santa Marta and Riohacha appears

<sup>46</sup>Estado de fuerza del ejército, Riohacha, July 26, 1777, ANC: MM 99, f. 299; Informe a S.M. del P. Pedro de Altea, Prefecto de las Misiones, 1788, in Alcacer, pp. 211-212.

<sup>47</sup>Instructions for Colonel Benito Encio by de la Sierra, Cartagena, October 30-31, 1771, ANC: MM 9, fs. 186-203.

<sup>48</sup>Respuestas que da el coronel del Regimiento de Savoya Josef Benito Encio a las interrogaciones, Riohacha, October 12, 1772, ANC: MM 124, fs. 508-511; R. García de León y Pizarro, Riohacha, July 26, 1777, ANC: MM 99, fs. 298, 301.

to have been outright impressment since the men were untrained, had no inclination for service, and fled at the first sign of a new levy. In 1776, when called upon to deliver 100 men for the post-Apíese buildup, the governor of Santa Marta was able to produce only fifty-five of his quota. In the south of that province, in the jurisdiction of Valle Dupar, the authorities met with even less success.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, this contingent, subsequently assigned to Sabana del Valle, behaved so viciously that it constituted a permanent source of disruption. It was feared that its members would all desert with the slightest provocation, something which many had done upon arrival.<sup>50</sup> This unhappy group was soon relieved but without replacements because further efforts to recruit militia in the province of Santa Marta were unsuccessful. Moreover, most of the militia-men from Riohacha itself had served without relief from the initiation of the colonization enterprise, and consequently, in addition to normal difficulties, officials were besieged with a constant barrage of petitions for their release from irate wives and relatives.<sup>51</sup> These problems were not unique to the endeavors of 1776 but characterized the past phases of the venture as well. In 1769 almost the entire militia sent from Santa Marta and Maracalbo allegedly deserted within

<sup>49</sup>Díaz de Perea to Flores, Santa Marta, March 19, 1776, ANC: MM 95, fs. 332-337.

<sup>50</sup>Arévalo to Messía de la Cerda, Cartagena, September 11, 1776, ANC: MM 140, f. 659.

<sup>51</sup>Díaz de Perea to Flores, Santa Marta, December 4, 1776, ANC: MM 99, fs. 912-914; Narváez to Flores, Santa Marta, April 19, 1777, ANC: MM 95, fs. 276-282; R. García de León y Pizarro to Flores, Riohacha, July 12 and July 26, 1777, ANC: MM 99, fs. 294-296, 298, 301.

two months of arrival, although perhaps such reports were exaggerated with the intent of stimulating greater assistance from Cartagena.<sup>52</sup>

In pleas to the viceroy the invariable proposal to solve this dilemma offered by local officials was that a larger complement of regular troops was needed, but Flores firmly placed the troop limit from Cartagena at 200 (see Table 7).<sup>53</sup> For a solution he turned instead to a formalization of the militia structure. Apparently such action had not been taken sooner because most of the able-bodied men were on duty anyway, and consequently it would have appeared to have been an after the fact measure. However, Antonio de Narváez y la Torre, who in early 1777 became governor of Santa Marta to which Riohacha was joined under his common governorship by royal order of November 18 of the same year, called for a reassessment of the system.<sup>54</sup> He postulated that an arrangement in which conscripts received quality preparation and professional assurances within a formalized structure, if conducted among those who had a direct stake in the future of the province, would produce better results than the practice of merely dragging people from their homes.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup>Mendoza to Messía de la Cerda, Riohacha, June 10, 1769, ANC: MM 138, fs. 868-869; *id.* to *id.*, Riohacha, August, 1769, *ibid.*, fs. 968-972.

<sup>53</sup>R. García de León y Pizarro to Flores, Riohacha, July 12, and July 26, 1777, ANC: MM 99, fs. 294-296, 298-301.

<sup>54</sup>Antonio Caballero y Góngora, "Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada . . .," in José Manuel Pérez Ayala, Antonio Caballero y Góngora, virrey y arzobispo de Santa Fe, 1723-96 (Bogotá, 1951), pp. 369-388.

<sup>55</sup>Narváez to Flores, Santa Marta, April 19, 1777, ANC: MM 95, fs. 276-282.

Flores responded with an order, July 15, 1778, for the creation of a disciplined 126 man company of pardo dragoons. With the outbreak of war in the following year, he ordered the formation of a second company.<sup>56</sup> Subsequently, the record of these units appears to have been surprisingly good although they were maintained on active duty on an almost continual basis. Significantly, on two occasions in which they were called upon for service outside of their immediate locality, once for border action against the Comuneros in 1781, and later for action in Darién, they responded by mass desertion.<sup>57</sup>

Although by the eve of the War for American Independence the condition of the pacification-colonization enterprise was little better than in 1776, it was certainly no worse. Indeed, Governor Narváez de la Torre had sufficient faith in the future of the region to compose an extensive treatise on the resources of the two provinces; the possibilities for, and obstacles to economic development; and possible remedies.<sup>58</sup> However, the outbreak of war precipitated a reduction of military commitments in Riohacha with a corresponding curtailment of the entire frontier project. Upon viceregal order, the detachment from Cartagena was withdrawn in 1779, leaving only forty regulars from Santa Marta. Without the core forces, there was little hope that all of the establishments could be defended

---

<sup>56</sup>Estado de fuerza del ejército, Santa Marta and Riohacha, Narváez, August, 1784, ANC: MM 101, fs. 445-446; Narváez to Flores, Santa Marta, October 26, 1784, ANC: MM 124, fs. 229-230.

<sup>57</sup>Narváez to Caballero y Góngora, Riohacha, November 22, 1785, ANC: MM 93, fs. 653-656.

<sup>58</sup>Narváez, Escritos de dos economistas, pp. 17-65.

and indeed a very real danger that they might fall into enemy hands. In consequence, the provincial defense line was tightened to run from Sinamaica to Pedraza to Riohacha across the base of the peninsula; both Bahía Honda and Sabana del Valle were totally abandoned and destroyed.<sup>59</sup> The colonists of the two evacuated settlements along with those of Pedraza were discharged, and Sinamaica retained only a reduced number.<sup>60</sup> Although during the duration of the war the disciplined dragoons conducted patrolling actions to hamper British extraction of beef supplies, the upland peninsula largely regressed to unabated Guajirol activity and foreign influence.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, under the crisis of war, additional disciplined militia was rapidly organized on a separate company basis in both Riohacha and Santa Marta under the special commandership of Francisco Pérez Dávila, ayudante of militias from Cartagena.<sup>62</sup>

In the postwar era Riohacha never regained the prominent position it had occupied during the previous decade in the frontier policy of the viceroyalty. Rather, attention turned toward the Isthmus of Darién where in response to a worsening situation and its vital geographical position a colonization-pacification campaign almost identical to that of Riohacha was conducted. While this

---

<sup>59</sup> Narváez to Flores, Santa Marta, October 6, 1779, and May 26, 1780, ANC: MM 117, fs. 943-964; *id.* to *id.*, Santa Marta, December 29, 1780, ANC: MM 101, fs. 823, 826.

<sup>60</sup> *Id.* to *id.*, Santa Marta, May 26, 1780, ANC: MM 117, fs. 951-952.

<sup>61</sup> *Id.* to *id.*, Santa Marta, March, 1781, ANC: MM 49, f. 681.

<sup>62</sup> F. Pérez Dávila to Flores, Santa Marta, September 19, 1780, ANC: MM 99, fs. 779-781; Narváez to Flores, Santa Marta, January 27, 1780, ANC: MM 76, fs. 846-847.

action was in progress, Riohacha fell into the background and was allowed to stagnate, although initially one unsuccessful effort had been made to re-establish the government position. This came in 1783 when a 100-man force was dispatched to reclaim Bahfa Honda and Sabana del Valle only to be decimated by Indian attack. Again out of fear of a general uprising, a punitive and security expedition of 300 men, similar to those of the preceding decade, was dispatched.<sup>63</sup> It, however, was withdrawn without significant accomplishment in 1785 when plans for operations in Darién were activated.<sup>64</sup> Thereafter, the eastern frontier of the viceroyalty was guarded mainly by local disciplined militia which staffed the defense line along the base of the peninsula from Sinamaica to the city of Riohacha (see Table 7). In that respect, the separate infantry companies raised during the war in Santa Marta and Riohacha were formally organized into regiments by viceregal order of June 12, 1784.<sup>65</sup>

In Darién, the number of Indian aggressions in the preceding decade had continued to mount, and during the war events turned from bad to worse.<sup>66</sup> In the past, the Cunas had seldom massed in greater force than small raiding parties, but in 1780 they mustered sufficient strength to besiege a fortified military detachment which was one of

<sup>63</sup> Zejudo to Caballero y Góngora, Riohacha, January 23, 1785, ANC: MM 30, f. 222; Alcacer, p. 227.

<sup>64</sup> Narváez to Caballero y Góngora, Santa Marta, November 24, 1785, ANC: MM 120, fs. 263, 275.

<sup>65</sup> Estado de fuerza del ejército, Santa Marta and Riohacha, Narváez, August, 1784, ANC: MM 101, fs. 445-446.

<sup>66</sup> Luengo Muñoz, Anuario de estudios americanos, XVIII, 371-377.

several conducting patrols in the region to frustrate anticipated British penetration.<sup>67</sup> This was followed by the total massacre in 1782 of over two companies of regulars, members of the Regiment of the Crown, who shipwrecked on the Darién coast en route to New Granada from Havana. That brutal outrage inflamed the ire of the viceroyalty's leadership. Moreover, in 1783 a raiding party crossed the Sinú River and dared attack San Gerónimo de Buena Vista, which was an important western frontier settlement in the province of Cartagena. Serious enough in its own right, the implications of this new boldness were compounded by intelligence reports that the British were once again planning the occupation of the Bay of Caledonia, which had been the site of an unsuccessful venture by the Scotch Merchant Company in 1697-99.<sup>68</sup>

The crown had long been concerned about the Darién problem and throughout the century had issued a long list of orders commanding various sorts of remedial action. Among these was one in 1729, repeated in 1731, for a colonization project along the coast; another in 1761 for the construction of a fortress on the Caimán River in the Gulf of Darién; another in 1762 for the fortification of the Bay of Caledonia; and most recently, an order in 1778 commanding Viceroy Flores to conduct investigations and preparations for an armed expedition to the region. None of these was executed. However, in response to a royal order of 1760, Viceroy

<sup>67</sup> Carvajal to Flores, Panama, November 22, 1780, ANC: MM 118, fs. 154-160.

<sup>68</sup> Luengo Muñoz, *Anuario de estudios americanos*, XVIII, 351, 359-360, 378-379; Caballero y Góngora, *Relaciones de mando*, . . . , p. 752.

Messía de la Cerda did dispatch Antonio de Arévalo to map the coast of Darién. In view of the alarming developments during the War for American Independence, the crown issued another order dated August 15, 1783, that the Darién coast must be positively occupied through either the reduction or the extinction of the Cuna Indians. This decree came when the viceroyalty was occupied by Archbishop-Viceroy Antonio Caballero y Góngora.<sup>69</sup>

In retrospect, despite genuine concern and perhaps the best of intentions, the actual possibility of major sustained action in Darién was remote until the fulfillment of the military reform. Because of the small size of the pre-reform establishment, nearly all of the armed forces would have had to come from Spain and on a scale which never occurred. Furthermore, when reinforcements were sent to the viceroyalty, they were immediately siphoned off to the established coastal strongholds to bolster sagging defenses. In any case, local armed forces would be required to sustain any venture which entailed prolonged action. Riohacha did contain a small non-Indian population which could and did function as a militia to complement the forces which could be spared from Cartagena, but in the case of Darién such an immediate reserve was almost non-existent. And because the reform had hardly taken effect prior to the War of American Independence, major action by Guirior or Flores drawing on the viceroyalty's new disciplined militia would have been premature. Moreover, although both viceroys did display a profound concern with

---

<sup>69</sup>Luengo Muñoz, Anuario de estudios americanos, XVIII, 369, 375-376; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 752-754.

Darién, they fell heir to the Riohacha dilemma with a commitment already made. But by 1783 circumstances had changed. The Cunas' bold hostility, newly anticipated British aggression, and the latest royal order, all combined to project Darién in precedence over Riohacha. With a reformed military force now capable of meeting the challenge, the Archbishop-Viceroy responded accordingly.

To comply with the 1783 royal order for the occupation of Darién, Caballero y Góngora first solicited advisory reports from the military and political personnel of the viceroyalty who possessed specialized knowledge relating to the problem. These included Sargento Mayor Antonio Vázquez, currently serving in the Chocó province; Ramón de Carvajal, commandant general of Panama; Félix Martínez Malo, governor of Portobelo; Andrés de Ariza, governor of Darién; Captain Antonio de la Torre, a man with an exceptionally distinguished record in conducting pacification and colonization projects in the Chocó; and Antonio de Arévalo, who since his commandership in Riohacha had briefly served as governor of Cartagena, and who had the additional qualification of personally having charted the region in question. The viceroy issued the inquiries on January 8, 1784, himself expressing a preference for all-out invasion. Replies were formulated almost immediately, the last dated April 8.<sup>70</sup> All of the formulated plans of operations envisioned an extensive need for military force; they differed on how

<sup>70</sup>Luego Muñoz, Anuario de estudios americanos, XVIII, 360-381.

best to apply it. In that respect the opinions voiced fell into two groups: those advocating an all out extermination and removal of the Guanas by massive military sweeps through the isthmus, and those favoring the establishment of strongholds staffed with troops and colonists with the assertion of pacificatory pressure from those bases. All representatives of the major defense centers, Carvajal, Martínez Malo, and Arévalo were of the former mind. This probably reflected a desire to insure a prompt return of their garrisons through rapid rather than gradual action. Arévalo's declaration departed from his advocacy of gentle forbearance made some ten years beforehand for the Guajiros and indicated a deep disillusionment and bitterness from that experience. Actually, he first became converted to extreme action after the Apiesi massacre. At that time, he suggested a systematic extermination and dislocation to be conducted village by village through Guajira with the precaution that none should escape to spread the alarm.<sup>71</sup> For Darién, he now proposed invasions from both ends of the isthmus converging toward the center to obtain unconditional surrender. All resisting elements should be annihilated, the remainder taken away in chains. For mop-up operations he advocated the use of Chocó Indians to systematically dispose of those who might have escaped the invasion net. Once all aboriginals were eliminated, he concluded, the region could be settled and its wealth developed. A fourth proponent of mass invasion was Sargento Mayor Vázquez, who differed in that he did not believe that the regular army could operate effectively in the jungle.

---

<sup>71</sup>Alcacer, pp. 215-216.

He urged an extensive employment of Chocó Indians adept at jungle maneuvering, who in the dark of night could creep up to Cuna settlements to accomplish their goals.

Ariza and de la Torre were those in favor of more gradual approaches. In effect, their proposals were similar to the program attempted in Riohacha. As governor of Darién, Ariza had supervised the patrols conducted through Cuna country during the war. From that experience he concluded that any mass invasion could easily be eluded by the Indians because of the sheer impossibility of effectively advancing troops on large-scale sweeps through the jungle.<sup>72</sup> Consequently, he advocated the establishment of colonies at strategical points both in the interior of the isthmus and along the coast, and particularly where potential transisthmian crossings existed. These establishments would be supported by fortified garrisons to combat the Indians. De la Torre proposed a vague but similar plan whose distinguishing characteristic was the restriction of fortified settlements to nine enclaves, all on the coast, which would simplify logistics. Patrols conducted from these bases, he believed, could divorce the Indians from their foreign contacts, the main sources of their corruption, and simultaneously work toward their reduction.<sup>73</sup>

Caballero y Góngora submitted these plans to the Junta Superior de Tribunales. It selected the proposal of de la Torre, and the

<sup>72</sup>Governor Andrés de Ariza to Carvajal, Yavisa, October 28, 1780, ANC: MM 118, fs. 15-52; Ariza to Caballero y Góngora, Yavisa, March 27, 1784, *ibid.*, fs. 15-19.

<sup>73</sup>Luengo Muñoz, *Anuario de estudios americanos*, XVIII, 386-397.

viceroy approved, although he did narrow its scope to four potential sites. These were the mouths of the Caimán River in the Gulf of Darién and of the Mandinga River below the Punta de San Blas in the west; the Bay of Caledonia situated midway along the coast which had been the site of the former Scotch colony; and the Bay of Concepción, located roughly halfway between Caledonia Bay and the Mandinga River mouth.<sup>74</sup> The selected proposal was then forwarded to the crown for a final decision. However, due to an incredible communication snarl with inquiries, orders, reports, and replies crisscrossing each other to and from Spain, the viceroy was forced to proceed on his own if action were ever to be taken. Indeed, he had not received final word when the expedition was finally launched.<sup>75</sup>

The first choice for commander of the expedition was Captain de la Torre, author of the chosen plan. In the preparatory operations, however, he proved more of a liability than an asset. Apparently seeking promotion to a higher rank before proceeding, his execution of the office was fraught with excuses and delays. Finally, annoyed and impatient, Caballero y Góngora himself journeyed to Cartagena to expedite matters and remained there until 1787. Finding that little had been accomplished, he dismissed de la Torre and appointed Arévalo head of the expedition, although retaining the agreed-upon plan of operations.<sup>76</sup> Under their joint leadership all was made

<sup>74</sup>ibid., pp. 298-299.

<sup>75</sup>ibid., pp. 381-384.

<sup>76</sup>ibid., pp. 399-404.

ready by January, 1785, at which time the first of two expeditionary forces was dispatched from Cartagena. It made amphibious landings at Caimán, Concepción, and Mandinga. The second left in July and occupied Caledonia, which was rechristened "Carolina del Darién."<sup>77</sup>

The armed forces employed in the campaign were almost exclusively of a reformed character. Normally totaling roughly 1,000 men, the garrisons of the four fortified settlements were much larger than their counterparts in Riohacha during the preceding decade, although the number of regulars employed was about the same (see Table 8). The increment came from the disciplined militia of the coastal provinces from which all districts, excepting Santa Marta, contributed components. Pardo units bore a disproportionate share of the burden, assuredly because they were regarded as more expendable than vassals of superior castes, but probably also because of a prevailing view that members of the Negro race were more resistant to jungle conditions than whites, and a belief that their known propensity for machetes would be a valuable asset. Although there was some overlapping, normally units from the Commandancy General of Cartagena provided most of the personnel for Caimán and Carolina while Panama assumed responsibility for staffing Concepción and Mandinga.<sup>78</sup>

The extensive employment of militia in Darién can be construed as evidence of confidence in their military capacity, and to some

<sup>77</sup>ibid., pp. 414-415; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando, pp. 754-755.

<sup>78</sup>Arévalo to Caballero y Góngora, Cartagena, October 2, 1788, ANC: MM 136, fs. 708-709.

TABLE 8

DARIEN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, AUGUST, 1788\*

---

**Calmán**


---

Regulars

Royal Corps of Artillery	6
Total	<u>6</u>

Militia

Regiment of whites, Cartagena	53
Regiment of all colors, Mompós	32
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena	<u>83</u>
Total	168

Total Strength 174

---

**Carolina**Regulars

Royal Corps of Artillery	23
Regiment of Cartagena	48
Regiment of the Princess	<u>50</u>
Total	121

Militia

Volunteers of Carolina <sup>a</sup>	48
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena	48
Regiment of all colors, Mompós	50
Light Infantry of Nata <sup>b</sup>	40
First company of Nata <sup>b</sup>	38
Second company of Nata <sup>b</sup>	<u>44</u>
Total	268

Total Strength 389

<sup>a</sup>These were apparently activated colonists.

<sup>b</sup>No color was listed for these units.

TABLE 8 (cont.)

---

 Concepción
 

---

Regulars

Battalion of Panama		<u>19</u>
	Total	19

Militia

Company of whites, Nata		58
Battalion of pardos, Panama		19
Battalion of pardos, Nata		66
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena		26
Company of moreno artillery, Portobelo		<u>8</u>
	Total	177

---

 Total Strength 196
 

---



---

 Mandinga
 

---

Regulars

Royal Corps of Artillery, Panama		3
Battalion of Panama		<u>7</u>
	Total	10

Militia

First company of whites of Veragua		51
Pardos of Panama		70
Pardos of Nata		33
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena		15
Company of moreno artillery, Panama		<u>31</u>
	Total	200

---

 Total Strength 210
 

---

TABLE 8 (cont.)

---

 Units Which Served in Darién at Other Times
 

---

Battalion of whites, Panama and Nata  
 Separate company of whites, Panama  
 Separate company of whites, Portobelo  
 Company of pardo artillery, Cartagena  
 White dragoons of Lorica  
 Pardo dragoons of Riohacha  
 Urban company of Novita (Chocó)  
 Urban company of Zitara (Chocó)  
 Volunteers of Mandinga  
 Company of French Volunteers

---

\*Adapted from Estado de la tropa de las fundaciones, Commander of the Expedition Antonio de Arevalo, Carolina, August 27, 1788, ANC: MM 120, fs. 414-415; also see ANC: MM 122, fs. 31-32, 314-315, 381-382.

extent this was probably true. But more to the point, it signifies a persistence by the authorities in retaining maximum regular forces in the key defense bases of Panama and Cartagena which continued to take priority over all other concerns except Santa Fe. Indeed, the crown increased the capability of the regular army at this time by dispatching to New Granada two battalions from the Regiment of the Princess. However, these troops were largely retained by Cartagena to compensate for the previous transfer of a battalion to Santa Fe and to defray the drain of regulars to Darién and Riohacha. Panama was also allotted three companies to compensate for its component in Darién.<sup>79</sup> In effect, the Spanish troops, normally regarded as being of a higher professional caliber, were retained in the defense bases while the burden of combat was passed on to the sons of the realm. Because of a high casualty rate due more to disease than battle, because of the inconvenience caused to their homes by their absence, and in the interest of maintaining fresh troops, the authorities endeavored to relieve the garrisons on a frequent basis.<sup>80</sup> Caballero y Góngora formally limited the term of active duty to three months in 1788.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup>Estado de fuerza del ejército de Cartagena y del Regimiento de la Princesa, 1787, ANC: MM 71, fs. 24-54.

<sup>80</sup>Petition of the component from Mompós, Caimán, October 3, 1788, ANC: MM 116, fs. 319-322.

<sup>81</sup>Arévalo to Caballero y Góngora, Cartagena, October 2, 1788, ANC: MM 136, fs. 708-709.

Carolina served as the local command and supply headquarters for this expedition. In addition to being centrally located, it had the additional geographical asset of having to its rear a potential trans-isthmus route discovered in 1781. Shortly after its establishment, a colony was also founded on the Pacific side of this link on the Sabana River at Puerto Príncipe.<sup>82</sup> In addition to colonists, the civilian personnel for the establishments included an array of technicians, particularly carpenters and bureaucrats, as well as Chocó Indian laborers. During the course of the campaign, as new homes were constructed, additional colonists were transferred to Darién. By April, 1787, the civilian personnel for the establishments of Caimán and Carolina totaled 169 individuals and 256 families.<sup>83</sup> Initially missionary activity was not an important aspect of the enterprise, although a handful of Capuchin missionaries did go to Darién to work within the fortified cities, and several also worked directly with the Indians outside of Concepción.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup>Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando, . . . , p. 755.

<sup>83</sup>Estado de la fundación, Carolina, April 1, 1787, ANC: MM 122, f. 314; Estado de la fundación, Caimán, April 1, 1787, ibid., f. 316. Data on the civilians of the other two establishments have not come to the attention of this writer. Perhaps this information was siphoned off through Panama and never reached Santa Fe, or perhaps large-scale settlement was not advanced to these localities.

<sup>84</sup>Estado de la fundación, Concepción, 1787, ANC: MM 123, fs. 352-357; Alcacer, pp. 230-231.

There was an extraordinarily large demand on the viceroyalty's resources to sustain this enterprise.<sup>85</sup> To merely cope with the problem of logistics, which included the supply of foodstuffs, other necessities, and the movement of troops, the Archbishop-Viceroy was compelled to augment an almost non-existent local fleet up to thirty-two serviceable vessels by repairing old ships, purchasing and constructing new ones, and chartering others.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, because local production was inadequate to meet food requirements, the port of Cartagena was opened to merchants from the United States and neighboring colonies for the importation of flour. Part of the expenses was defrayed through special concessions granted to these foreigners for the extraction of Brazil wood from Santa Marta and Riohacha.<sup>87</sup>

Until the summer of 1787, a state of war existed between the Cuna Indians and the expeditionary forces. The initial January landings met sporadic resistance on the beaches and the ensuing period was characterized by mutual harassment, including a number of limited offensive thrusts from the fortified bases.<sup>88</sup> Events climaxed with an unsuccessful attack on Carolina in the summer of 1786, followed

<sup>85</sup> Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 756.

<sup>86</sup> ibid., p. 273.

<sup>87</sup> Ezpeleta, Relación de mando . . ., pp. 279-280; Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 186-187.

<sup>88</sup> Diario de las expediciones, March 12-April 26, 1785, ANC: MM 123, fs. 1-16; Commander of Carolina Francisco de Fersen to Caballero y Góngora, Carolina, March 29, 1786, ANC: MM 122, fs. 679-682; id. to id., Carolina, April 7, 1786, ANC: MM 140, fs. 324-348; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 755.

by harsh retaliatory assaults on Indian settlements which were systematically destroyed along with crops, boats, and other means of livelihood.<sup>89</sup> By the middle of 1787, the military pressure produced the desired effect; Cuna leadership through the mediation of Henrique Hooper, an English merchant of some twenty years in the region whose services were solicited by the authorities, expressed a desire to come to terms.<sup>90</sup> After a preliminary conference with Commander Arévalo in Carolina, five local leaders and General Chief Bernardo, together representing almost all of the Cuna nation, journeyed to Cartagena to meet with Viceroy Caballero y Góngora in the nearby town of Turbaco. There, on July 21, 1787, after a preliminary display of firepower by the local military establishment, a treaty of peace was signed.<sup>91</sup>

The Treaty of Turbaco opened the province of Darién to free colonization and development. In the agreement, the Cunas recognized the sovereignty of the crown, asked pardon for their past errors, vowed to live as loyal vassals, and promised to discontinue relations with foreigners. They in turn were promised protection for their

<sup>89</sup>Fersen to Caballero y Góngora, Carolina, September 5, 1786, ANC: MM 118, fs. 267-271; Commander of Carolina Antonio Vázquez to Caballero y Góngora, Carolina, December 29, 1786, ANC: MM 122, fs. 606-610; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 755.

<sup>90</sup>Governor José Carrión y Andrada to Caballero y Góngora, Cartagena, June 28, 1787, ANC: MM 118, f. 294; Diario del comandante de Darién, Carolina, June, 1787, ANC: MM 122, fs. 495-509; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 755-756.

<sup>91</sup>"Pacificación general de los Indios del Darién, celebrada el 21 de Julio, 1787," Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XIII (June, 1920), 197-202; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 756; Silvestre, p. 121.

homes, property, and persons. The Spanish right to dispense justice was formally recognized with the Cunas agreeing to deliver accused Indians to the local authorities. All vassals of the crown, now including the Cunas, had the right of free settlement on unoccupied land and the right to open movement throughout the region.<sup>92</sup> To enforce the treaty, the expeditionary force was maintained at full strength in the region.

After the peace treaty, relations with the Cunas appear to have improved somewhat.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, the Archbishop-Viceroy was so encouraged by progress in Darién that he created a commission for the recruitment of North Americans to advance colonization of the region. Roughly 1,500 were obtained from the non-Spanish West Indies and the United States. However, few of them ever advanced beyond Cartagena because of a serious epidemic which broke out in Darién, causing the viceroy to suspend their transfer.<sup>94</sup> Affairs were in this state when Caballero y Góngora was replaced by Francisco Gil y Lemos in January, 1789. He was satisfied that he had successfully achieved the desired conquest and indeed in his relación de mando suggested that Riohacha be reopened as the next arena of conquest and colonization.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup>"Pacificación general de los Indios del Darién, celebrada el 21 de Julio, 1787," Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XIII (June, 1920), pp. 197-202.

<sup>93</sup>Andrés de Ariza to Caballero y Góngora, Yavisa, October 24, 1788, ANC: MM 120, fs. 402-403.

<sup>94</sup>Silvestre, p. 122; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 756-757.

<sup>95</sup>Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 759.

When viewed as a whole, the Riohacha and Darién campaign signified a further expansion of major military activity and responsibility. Large numbers of personnel were drawn into active duty, and new militia units were raised to assist in meeting the challenge. Frontier activity was just one more aspect of the general growth of the military's role in the changing scene of the late eighteenth century. By 1789, the army had emerged as a major entity. Of all the organs of the state, it was the single largest consumer of royal revenues which in itself is a profound indication of the change produced by the reform.<sup>96</sup> Compared to the anemic little force which clung to the defense bases of the vice-royalty in 1772, the reformed army of 1789 was a thriving giant. It had now moved beyond its original geographical confines up into the interior and out onto the coastal frontiers. It now acted not only as a defender against foreigners, but as an agent in the interior for the preservation of the state and on the frontiers for the pacification of savage Indians.

---

<sup>96</sup>ibid., p. 268.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DYNAMICS OF EXPANDED MILITARY PRIVILEGES

Another important aspect of the military reform was the impact of military corporate privileges upon existing civil institutions. These rights consisted in part of preeminencias, or special prerogatives which included immunity from certain municipal taxes, levies, and responsibilities as well as exemptions from the obligation to quarter troops and the payment of prison cell fees.<sup>1</sup> More important was the highly prized fuero de guerra militar, a judicial prerogative, which conveyed the right to present causes before military tribunals as contrasted to royal, or ordinary, tribunals. The granting of these corporate privileges was regarded as a vital aspect of implementing the military reform in the Viceroyalty of New Granada, but it came to be a major source of controversy which brought the wisdom of the reform itself under question.

The fuero de guerra militar, or simply the fuero militar as it was commonly known, dated as a distinct legal code from the sixteenth century, and subsequently developed into a complex body of law. By the eighteenth century, it was subdivided into the fuero militar privilegiado for special corps including the artillery, engineers, and provincial militia, and the fuero de guerra ordinario for the

---

<sup>1</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, chap. II, art. 40, chap. IV, arts. 2, 6-7.

regular army. As codified by the Ordenanzas of 1768, the judicial privileges of the regular army encompassed both civil and criminal causes for officers, men, and their families and other dependents. The fuero militar privilegiado as defined for provincial militia in the Real declaración of 1767 did likewise for officers, but the enlisted men were granted only the criminal fuero unless they were mobilized at which time they would also enjoy full privileges.<sup>2</sup> The military fuero was only one of some thirty-four privileged jurisdictions found within the Spanish Empire, including those of the church, mining guilds, and various commercial corporations.

Such privileged fueros, or jurisdictions were the judicial expression of a society in which the state was regarded not as a community of citizens enjoying equal rights and responsibilities, but as a structure built of classes and corporations, each with a unique and peculiar function to perform.<sup>3</sup>

The fuero militar was regarded by the crown, many high government officials, and much of the military as an essential device to promote morale, instill love for duty, and enhance professional pride. It conveyed prestige and distinction, and in effect set the holder above and apart from the remainder of society.

Before the reform, military privileges were only of minor influence in New Granada. The regular army was small in size, largely confined to the coast, and by the nature of its duties isolated from daily community life. The pre-reform militia was of

---

<sup>2</sup>McAllister, The "Fuero Militar", . . . , pp. 6-8. For a complete description of the fuero de guerra militar and its workings, see the above cited work.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., pp. 5-6.

even less consequence in this connection because the fuero was conceded only to officers, if at all. The more numerous enlisted men were granted no immunities unless mobilized.<sup>4</sup> The reform radically altered this situation by expanding the size of the regular army and therefore the number of people exercising the fuero militar, and by creating a large disciplined militia entitled to more comprehensive judicial privileges than was its predecessor. In fact, the fuero granted to the reorganized militia surpassed in amplitude that of its disciplined counterpart of Spain. Under terms of the Cuban reglamento, the full fuero, both civil and criminal, was conceded to all of the membership including enlisted personnel.<sup>5</sup> In addition, by a special concession of April 15, 1771, the fuero of officers and sergeants was made "active"; that is, not only was judicial privilege applicable in causes in which the holder was the defendant, but also in those in which he was the plaintiff.<sup>6</sup> The fuero militar of the disciplined militia of Spain, and also that of the empire's regular army appears by contrast to have been only regarded as passive.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, with

<sup>4</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Mompós, 1757; ANC: Competencias Bolívar and Panama 2, fs. 137-142; Expediente sobre una competencia de jurisdicción, Cartagena, 1763, ANC: MM 93, fs. 558-574; Expediente sobre una competencia de jurisdicción, Cartagena, 1767, ANC: MM 93, fs. 558-574; Expediente sobre una competencia de jurisdicción, Santa Marta, 1777, ANC: MM 76, fs. 294-314.

<sup>5</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, chap. X, art. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Zamora, III, 325-326.

<sup>7</sup>McAlister, The "Fuero Militar" . . ., pp. 7-8.

the extension of the full fuero to the militia, who were in effect citizen soldiers, the distribution of military privileges was also altered by bringing them into the mainstream of daily community life, an exceptionally important consideration because the reformed units were predominantly raised in the main population centers and seats of government of the viceroyalty.

By provision of the Cuban reglamento, the court of first instance in cases under military jurisdiction was formed by the provincial governor or his deputy with appeal to the captain general. In outlying regions where neither of these officers was available, this duty was delegated to the highest ranking unit commanders.<sup>8</sup> However, while these officers were authorized to hear most actions, there were a number of exceptions, known as cases of "desafuero," for which competency was reserved for ordinary justice or other privileged jurisdictions. Among them were: resistance to ordinary justice or abuse of its officers, crimes committed prior to enlistment, sedition, gambling, defrauding the royal treasury, counterfeiting, smuggling, the succession to entailed estates, and the execution of contracts entered into before enlistment.<sup>9</sup> Most of these were not initially enumerated in the Cuban reglamento, but the omission was remedied by a subsequent amendment of April 15, 1771.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, chap. X, arts. 1-5.

<sup>9</sup>Colón, I, 24-136.

<sup>10</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Panama, 1774, ANC: MM 79, fs. 672-692.

On the other hand, not to invoke the fuero when entitled to it was regarded as a serious offense.<sup>11</sup>

The boundary between the ordinary and military jurisdiction was not always clear to those administering justice. This problem frequently derived from ambiguities existing within the regulatory texts themselves and from what often appears to have been an inability to understand them, or in some instances to read them. In anticipation of jurisdictional controversies, the crown did prescribe procedures to be followed in case of error or when doubts occurred. If ordinary justices apprehended a man possessing the military fuero, he was to inform them of his privilege. To correct the error they were obliged to transfer the action to military authorities. In the event that they did not do so, it was the responsibility of the illegally arrested individual to send word to his superior officers so that appropriate legal measures might be taken to bring him under military custody. Appeal in such cases could be launched to the captain general and from there be carried to the consejo supremo de guerra in Spain. Pending the outcome of such appeals, the man was to remain in military custody. However, if ordinary justice refused to cooperate, it was never legitimate to employ remedial force. Rather, the violation would be noted in the appeal so that the viceroy could correct the mistake. The reglamento sternly admonished the militia leadership to insure that their men displayed no disrespect for ordinary justice. On the contrary, they were to be accorded

---

<sup>11</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, chap. XI, art. 22.

honor, respect, and full cooperation in the pursuit of their duties.<sup>12</sup> For all the good intentions of the crown, such ideals were seldom realized in practice.

The implantation of such comprehensive privileges, enjoyed by so many, created conditions conducive to the erosion of existing political and social patterns. On the one hand, the authority of the cabildo as the executor of ordinary justice tended to be undermined because of the exemption from its jurisdiction of large portions of the communities' most active citizenry. On the other hand, many of those so excepted as members of the new military organization were drawn from the lower classes. This circumstance tended to subvert the traditional order of society by removing them from the authority of the cabildos, normally comprised of members from the upper classes, and placing them under that of officers who might be inclined to regard military interests first and social origins second. Indeed, preferential treatment was often sought and sometimes received at the hands of military justices more concerned with promoting esprit de corps within their units than in impartial justice. Consequently, as the reform spread throughout the viceroyalty, local authorities bitterly contested the introduction of military privileges into their jurisdictional domains.

The most visible consequence of civil-military rivalry was a series of jurisdictional conflicts which raged throughout the period of the reform. Although ambiguities existing with regard to judicial boundaries contributed to this development, in all likelihood a spirit

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., chap. II, art. 24, chap. IV, art. 1, and chap. XI, arts. 17, 20.

of patience, prudence, good will, and cooperation could have forestalled most of the controversies without serious difficulty. Under the circumstances, the exercise of such virtues was precluded. Instead, the problem was approached with pride, jealousy, emotion, and a spirit of revenge. Indeed, to presume that in most confrontations the participants were seriously concerned with either the letter or the spirit of the law would be taking far too much for granted. Rather, the cause of justice was frequently obscured by the more immediate concern of winning whatever prestige might accrue from a momentary advantage over the rival jurisdiction. Although the precise issue at hand might differ, the fundamental arguments recurred with dull monotony. Ordinary justices complained that their power was diminished by the exemption from their authority of so many people, and that they were humiliated by contempt and arrogance displayed by the immune lower classes as well as by a general military disregard and disrespect for the dignity of their office. Conversely, the military jealously defended its privileges as just compensation for the highest order of service to the state and regarded any incursion by ordinary justice into the military domain as a menace to the promotion of pride and dedication to duty. In the remaining portion of this chapter a number of controversies will be discussed, three of them in detail, to illustrate the type of inter-jurisdictional rivalry that developed. At the outset, however, it is necessary to denote certain regional differences in the manner with which localities received the fuero militar.

On the whole, the Caribbean coastal regions demonstrated a greater capacity to accept military prerogatives than did the interior of the realm. Cartagena and Panama had always been exposed to military privileges through the historic presence of the regular army, and to some extent a slightly functional militia added to this experience. Moreover, the very nature of the coastal cities, walled and fortified, with a history and continued danger of foreign invasion, served as a daily reminder of the usefulness of the reform. And the militia of the coastal region was from time to time called upon to assume active military responsibility. By contrast, in the interior, where the menaces of British invasion and savage Indians were comparatively remote, the militia appeared more decorative than functional. True, the units had been created on the supposition that they would serve to preserve internal peace, but the prevailing view among local officials was that with their *fuero* they would do more to disrupt domestic tranquility than to preserve it. Moreover, from the beginning, as noted in chapters III and IV, there existed a school of thought which regarded the arming of the local citizenry as a dangerous risk in itself. Consequently, not only military privileges, but in many instances the militia units themselves, were unwelcome.

There was one important exception to the relative civil-military harmony of the coastal regions: discord over *pardo* privileges. By law *pardos* were conceded rights equal to those of their white counterparts. In view of the lowly social position of that class and its extensive membership in the militia, this was an

inherently explosive situation. To make matters worse, the crisis was deeply aggravated by pardo over-reaction to their newly acquired immunities. Long subject to the arrogance of the superior classes, the men of color, once free from the authority of ordinary justice, responded with pent-up resentment and boldly defied and harassed the local magistrates. To the cabildos this placed a special alarming emphasis on what was already an obvious erosion of their authority, and a rash of clashes ensued between military and ordinary authorities. The first major test case to reach Santa Fe came from Cartagena in 1773. It is particularly interesting because it illustrates not only the fear with which local magistrates regarded pardo privileges and immunities, but also the high-handed manner with which the military quite typically responded to civil interference--all in the good interest of corporate pride and integrity--and consequently subverted the credibility of royal justice.

The dispute began on August 7 when Alcalde José Dfaz de Escandón dispatched Alguacil José García de Olea to arrest a militiaman from the Second Pardo Artillery Company for debt. It was in fact a case of *desafuero* because the liability was incurred prior to his acquisition of the *fuero*. Alcalde Dfaz, however, chose not to invoke that provision but rather acted on the basis that the militiamen had no *fuero* at all. Consequently, he did not fulfill the courtesy of informing the man's senior officer, Domingo Esquiaqui, commander of the Royal Corps of Artillery, before dispatching the *alguacil*. The conduct of the case in this manner might have been due to confusion, but this is unlikely. The artillery companies were not part of

Dávila's special mission in reorganizing the province's militia, but rather were administratively set apart from the infantry and mounted units by being directly attached to the Royal Corps of Artillery. Consequently, the fuero of these companies was not an explicit part of the reorganization. Moreover, no one had ever bothered to define it. On the other hand, it was obviously the intention of the crown, which had approved the formation of these companies, that they, as the rest of the new militia, should enjoy full privileges, and this appears to have been a widely held assumption. A justice himself, Alcalde Dfaz must have been aware of this; if he were indeed in doubt, which is the most that can be assumed, a simple inquiry could have solved the problem, since prosecution for debt was not precisely an urgent matter. In effect, it appears that he was taking advantage of the existing ambiguity to launch a test case where the pardo fuero was most vulnerable, thereby bringing up the whole question for review. In subsequent correspondence with the viceroy, he expressed a very real fear that the pardo community from which he had experienced abuse was getting out of hand. As he described it, the pardos armed with the fuero militar "ridicule and mock the royal justices with manifest contempt and shameless disdain for their esteemed authority and prestige." Presumably, a successful arrest would demonstrate that he was still an authority to be reckoned with in the community, even though subsequent military court action might extract the man from his custody. And, in any case, such action would bring the pardo question before viceregal officers.

At the time of his apprehension, the militiaman believed that his fuero was being violated. Shrewdly, he persuaded arresting officer Garcia to allow him consultation, first with his pardo captain, then with Commander Esquiaqui, for the alleged purpose of procuring the funds required to satisfy the debt. Garcia, who was less than astute throughout the entire episode, was apparently unaware that he was being led into a trap. When confronted with the invasion of his jurisdiction, Commander Esquiaqui took immediate and decisive action. He separated the alguacil from his prisoner and sent the latter off to obtain his uniform so that ordinary justices would not dare tamper with him. Next, he gave Garcia a lengthy lecture on the fuero militar, and then directed him to relate what had happened to the alcalde with specific instructions to inform him that he had no jurisdiction in the case.

No matter whether the prisoner in question was entitled to the fuero militar or not, the action of Commander Esquiaqui constituted the illicit removal of a prisoner from ordinary custody. The proper method was appeal to higher authority, not to extricate a prisoner under what was at least implied physical threat. Under the circumstances, however, Esquiaqui's response is understandable. From his point of view the alcalde was openly defying the fuero militar. Because military privilege was regarded as the basis for building corporate pride and a corresponding dedication to duty, both very essential for promoting a functional militia, its integrity had to be stoutly defended. Moreover, at this time the pardo companies were responding well to training and already constituted a valuable asset for Cartagena's artillery

defenses. If the leadership would not act to defend the membership's corporate rights, it followed that their dedication to duty might correspondingly diminish. In short, resolute action was a predictable response.

The affair was complicated through additional blunders by Garcfa. Rather than proceed directly to the alcalde's residence to inform him of the artillery commander's intervention, he first went to the militiaman's shop to confer with him about the situation and perhaps to try to persuade him to report with him to the alcalde. Garcfa intimated that he did not understand the commander's lecture, which was probably true, but it is also likely that he hoped to produce the prisoner as ordered. The artilleryman, however, confounded him by directing a companion, who by curious coincidence happened to have a copy of the reglamento, to read aloud the sections on the fuero. That was more than the alguacil could bear, so he abandoned the effort and somewhat belatedly set out alone for the alcalde's residence. By the time Garcfa arrived, Dfaz had already begun his afternoon siesta which the alguacil prudently chose not to interrupt. Instead, he departed not to return until evening. Meanwhile, the artilleryman returned to his commander's residence in uniform to await word from the alcalde, but after several hours was given leave to return home by Esquiaqui.

When Alguacil Garcfa finally ceased vacillating and appeared at the residence of Alcalde Dfaz, he was fearful of punishment for having allowed a prisoner to elude him. Consequently, he exaggerated the events of the day to obscure his blunders. The main features of

the story he told were that the pardo captain had intercepted him in the street and had forced him by threat to proceed from there with the prisoner to Commander Esquiaqui's home. He further asserted that Esquiaqui when denying the jurisdiction of ordinary justice had also promised corporal punishment in the event of further meddling in military affairs. The precise extent to which these most serious allegations were true is impossible to determine because Garcfa in this instance, and in the furor of subsequent events, gave three different versions of his conversation with Esquiaqui, all of them under oath. Later investigation proved conclusively that Garcfa's explanation of how the prisoner came to arrive at the commander's residence was false, but the threat of reprisal for any further interference could have been and in all likelihood was true.

Alcalde Dfaz was outraged. He dispatched Garcfa, a deputy alguacil, and the cabildo's escribano, along with a corporal and four men from the fixed regiment, to make the arrest, uniform or no uniform. This time, it was successfully accomplished, but not before the artilleryman in a loud voice fearlessly boasted that the arresting officers had no jurisdiction and that his commander had proven the fact by extricating him from ordinary justice that morning. Indeed, upon the request of those present he twice repeated the incriminating statement. The following morning Alcalde Dfaz informed Governor and Commandant General Roque de Quiroga of the incident, and charged Commander Esquiaqui with interfering in the administration of justice, violently seizing a prisoner, and intimidating royal officials. Esquiaqui, who was unaware that the man

had been re-arrested until he failed to appear that day for Sunday drill, also filed a spirited complaint. However, when informed that he had been accused of employing force, he denied the charge, contending that he had behaved urbanely throughout the incident.

To settle the affair Quiroga summoned Alguacil Garcia. Upon questioning, again under oath, he changed his story completely. He admitted that he had been peacefully persuaded to go to the commander's home and now testified that Esquiaqui's message contained no threat whatever. This still left the violation of having removed a prisoner, but Quiroga urged Dfaz to drop the matter in the interest of harmony. He also imprisoned the alguacil for perjury but hinted to Dfaz that he would release him as soon as the furor had died down. To Dfaz, it appeared that he was being made the victim of a military conspiracy to frustrate ordinary justice, and this may well have been true. He believed that Quiroga had intimidated the alguacil into changing his testimony in order to conceal a flagrant abuse of authority by Esquiaqui, and that he, the commandant general, was merely compounding the offense. However, Alcalde Dfaz was unable to act because Quiroga possessed the key prisoner, Garcia, who had knowledge of those who could be called upon to act as witnesses. Hence, when the mail left for Santa Fe several days later, Dfaz had not succeeded in compiling testimony to sustain his charges. He did, however, send a communication to Viceroy Guirior informing him of his intentions and complaining of his frustration at the hands of Quiroga. The commandant general also sent a report expressing consternation that Dfaz would not accept his judgment and asking that the viceroy personally inform him of the artillery

companies' fuero. Esquiaqui filed a statement denying misconduct and warning that unless the integrity of the fuero were upheld his endeavors with the artillery companies would become useless.

During the following month Dfaz compiled a massive collection of testimony which, if not precisely proving that a pronounced threat had been made against ordinary justice, did at least demonstrate that Esquiaqui had violated the code of procedure. It included a sworn statement by Garca which this time confirmed that he had reached the commander's house peacefully, but re-asserted that a threat of physical violence had indeed been made. The most important information contained, however, was that Quiroga was wantonly suppressing evidence. Of several examples, the most flagrant was a sudden inaccessibility of the military personnel who had assisted with the second arrest and had heard the artilleryman's loud boasts concerning his extrication. In spite of numerous written requests by Dfaz for access to the men, Quiroga stalled. And, although testimony was finally obtained from the corporal, the other four men never appeared.

Presumably, Governor Roque de Quiroga, in whom both civil and military authority was vested, would have been the ideal figure to mediate the dispute and perhaps soothe the alcalde's ruffled feelings and injured pride. However, not only in this instance, but generally, when military governors were confronted with such circumstances, they reacted first as members of the military corporation. Hence, Alcalde Dfaz stood alone and frustrated. Moreover, knowledge of the affront to his authority could have only worsened the crisis in local government. The last blow came from the viceroy himself. In spite of

knowledge that Dfaz was gathering evidence to demonstrate a need for corrective measures against the local military leadership, and a second communication complaining that he was still being delayed by Quiroga in making his investigations, Guirior ruled before he had seen the alcalde's case. In his decision, Guirior took action against no one, but merely confined himself to confirming the contention of Quiroga and Esquiaqui that the artillery companies did possess the fuero militar. By remaining silent on the plight of Alcalde Dfaz, he was in effect condoning the high-handed actions taken by Esquiaqui and Quiroga. Dfaz did attempt to re-open the matter, this time on the basis that the case was an instance of desafuero, but if Guirior issued a reply, it has not come to the attention of this writer.<sup>13</sup>

Extensive feuding between the militia and the cabildos, similar to that in Cartagena, and chiefly stemming from the pardo question, was reported in 1774 in both Panama and its partido of Nata. Deputy Governor Joaquín Cabrejo, himself a civilian, petitioned Santa Fe in 1774 on behalf of ordinary justice asking for a clarification of the cases of desafuero, and particularly for a firm statement emphasizing the occurrence of desafuero in instances of abuse of ordinary justice. As at Cartagena, the cabildo of Panama had complained of recurrent humiliation chiefly at the hands of unruly pardos. Again, the vice-regency declined to take decisive action, although a clarification

---

<sup>13</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Cartagena, 1773, ANC: MM 10, fs. 750-754, MM 12, fs. 329-337, 354, MM 28, fs. 282-335, MM 30, 199-201, MM 59, fs. 37-38, MM 65, fs. 391-393, MM 87, fs. 620-622.

was provided on the items of *desafuero*. However, a bold military effort to displace the deputy governor as the court of first instance in preference for immediate unit commanders failed.<sup>14</sup> An almost identical effort was launched in Guayaquil by Commander Salcedo y Somodevilla to bypass Deputy Governor José Gabriel de Icaza, who like Cabrejo was a civilian, but it also failed.<sup>15</sup>

In the interior, local government adopted an obstructionist policy against the militia and its *fuero* while the new units were still in the embryo stage, and showed a decidedly hostile attitude throughout the decade of the eighties. As discussed in chapter IV, the *cabildo* of Santa Fe vociferously protested the formation of disciplined militia within its jurisdiction. The *cabildo* of Popayán earlier did likewise and carried its petition all the way to Spain. The crown, however, declined to take action, but rather referred the question back to the viceroy.<sup>16</sup>

*Cabildo* opposition was also manifest on the immediate scene. In conducting the initial formation in the city of Popayán, Antonio Diego Nieto complained of a visible hostility among his recruits toward military service and of continued harassment and meddling from the *cabildo*. According to him, the local justices reacted so

<sup>14</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Panama, 1774, ANC: MM 79, fs. 672-692; Expediente sobre una competencia de jurisdicción, Panama, 1774, ANC: MM 90, fs. 336-338.

<sup>15</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Guayaquil, 1776, ANC: MM 104, fs. 286-301, MM 106, fs. 225-227, 262-263.

<sup>16</sup>Gálvez to Caballero y Góngora, Spain, April 16, 1783, ANC: MM 50, fs. 20-24.

viciously to the fuero that during a period in which both he and the governor were absent from the capital his new recruits were forced to conceal their jurisdictional status for fear of persecuton.<sup>17</sup>

Governor Becaria himself in a 1780 report to Viceroy Flores confessed frustration in his military duties because of widespread hatred and resentment throughout the province against the profession. He suspected that much of this stemmed from the cabildos themselves.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, two years earlier the local magistrates of Popayán had succeeded in humiliating the newly created militia. The occasion was a debate over lodging facilities for a militia detachment assigned by Governor Becaria to guard the coffers of the local treasury in the absence of the regular garrison which at this time was off to Quito. The quarters reserved for the detachment were located in a room adjoining the coffers and situated just across an interior patio from quarters for women prisoners. The cabildo protested to Viceroy Flores that considering the type of riff-raff attracted to the militia the room could not be safely employed because the wall separating it from the treasury was low and easily scaled. Moreover, they predicted that the easy accessibility of women prisoners would create no end to scandal. Becaria regarded this objection as an unforgivable affront to military honor and dignity. However,

---

<sup>17</sup>Nieto to Flores, Mompós, April 6, 1780, ANC: MM 87, fs. 822-831.

<sup>18</sup>ANC: MM 98, fs. 815-816.

Viceroy Flores sided with the cabildo and ruled that the detachment would best be discontinued until the return of the regulars.<sup>19</sup>

Confronted with such deep-seated hostility, military reformers were particularly hard pressed to educate their new recruits and the citizenry to the honor, glory, and advantages of military life. Vain efforts to assert military prestige ranged from a petty claim in Cartago to a right to free papel sellado, to a bold attempt in Santa Fe to prosecute an alcalde in military court for abusing an officer by word.<sup>20</sup> But, much to its frustration, the military found that little forthright assistance was to come from above. Indeed, with respect to civil-military relations in the interior of the realm, the viceregency itself was generally less inclined to support military pretensions than it was for the coast (see Table 9). In that respect a colorful dispute which arose in 1785 in Zipaquirá, the location of a cavalry company belonging to the Regiment of Santa Fe, offers a contrasting example to the course of military-civil conflict described for Cartagena. Moreover, it illustrates that the vengeful attitude of ordinary justice penetrated to the royal audiencia. The natural propensity of the rival jurisdiction to come into conflict, their deep-seated rivalry, and their mutual vindictiveness reinforce the supposition that harmony was the exception not the rule.

<sup>19</sup>Expediente de una disputa entre el cabildo y el gobernador, Popayán, 1778, ANC: Cabildos 2, fs. 73-105.

<sup>20</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Santa Fe, 1785, ANC: MM 6, fs. 750-763; Representación de los alcaldes ordinarios de Cartago sobre el establecimiento de dos compañías de milicias, 1780, ANC: Virreyes 16, fs. 212-218.

TABLE 9  
DISPUTES BETWEEN ORDINARY AND  
MILITARY JUSTICES:<sup>a</sup>

Date	Location	Antagonists	Military Aggression against Ordinary Jurisdiction and (or) Affront to Royal Officials	Ordinary Aggression against Military Jurisdiction and (or) Affront to Military Honor	Decisions		
					Underlying Pardo Social Issue	Favorable to Military Justice	Favorable to Ordinary Justice Neither
1773	Cartagena	Alcalde-Commander of Artillery	X	X	X	X	
1774	Panama	Cabildo-Local Militia Leadership	X	X	X	X	
1774	Panama	Deputy Governor-Local Militia Leadership	X		X		X
1774	Nata (Panama)	Alcalde-Ayudante Mayor de Pardos	X	X	X		X
1775- 76	Guayaquil	Deputy Governor- Commander of Militia	X		X		X
1777	Mompós (Cartagena)	Alcalde-Sargento Mayor of Militia	X	X	X	X	
1778	Popayán	Cabildo-Governor		X			X
1780	Cartago (Popayán)	Cabildo-Local Militia Leadership	X				X

TABLE 9 (cont.)

Date	Location	Antagonists	Decisions					
			Military Aggression against Ordinary Jurisdiction and (or) Affront to Royal Officials	Ordinary Aggression against Military Jurisdiction and (or) Affront to Military Honor	Underlying Pardo Social Issue	Favorable to Military Justice	Favorable to Ordinary Justice	Neither
1780-84	Cartagena	Colonel of Militia-Ordinary Jurisdiction	X			X		
1782	Popayán	Alcalde-Military Justice	X	X			X	
1782-83	Pasto (Popayán)	Alcalde-Ayudante of Militia	X				X	
1784-85	Barbacoas (Popayán)	Cabildo-Captain of Militia	X	X				X
1784-85	Cogua (Santa Fe)	Alcalde-Distinguished Soldier of Militia	X				X	
1785	Zipaquirá (Santa Fe)	Alcalde-Second Lieutenant of Militia	X				X	
1785	Santa Fe	Alcalde-Lieutenant of Militia		X			X	
1785-86	Zipaquirá (Santa Fe)	Alcalde-Sergeant of Militia	X	X			X	
1788-89	Pasto (Popayán)	Deputy Governor-Governor	X	X			Unknown <sup>b</sup>	
1788-89	Barbacoas (Popayán)	Cabildo-Governor	X	X			Unknown <sup>b</sup>	

<sup>a</sup>It is normally impossible to determine a primary antagonist in the controversies between military and ordinary justices; rather, these disputes developed against a backdrop of deep-seated ill will, endless bickering, and mutual reprisals, and that is the chief significance of that aspect of the table. If the military appears in a slightly more aggressive light, this was probably because it had to establish its sphere of prestige while ordinary justice merely had to hold the line. It is also difficult to determine the outcome of the cases because the rulings were fraught with vacillation or could not be clear-cut because of the clouded nature of the particular issue. In this table, if the decision seemed to lean more toward one side than the other it has been so indicated. General conclusions can nevertheless be reached. First, jurisdictional conflicts were widespread throughout the several districts of the viceroyalty, but on the coast these chiefly stemmed from the pardo question. And second, the coastal militia enjoyed a much higher ratio of favorable decisions than did the establishment of the interior. This pattern does not necessarily indicate that the interior military leadership was more frequently "wrong" than that of the coast, but rather that the vice-regal leadership was less inclined to support its pretenses.

<sup>b</sup>Probably, no individual rulings were ever made for these disputes. Both were appealed to Spain when the crown was on the verge of making a decision on the entire interior militia.

<sup>c</sup>The above table was adapted from files of jurisdictional disputes as follows: Cartagena, 1773, ANC: MM 10, fs. 750-754, MM 12, fs. 329-337, 354, MM 28, fs. 282-335, MM 30, fs. 199-201, MM 59, fs. 37-38, MM 65, fs. 391-393, MM 87, fs. 620-622; Panama, 1774, MM 79, fs. 672-692; Nata, 1774, MM 90, fs. 336-338; Guayaquil, 1775-1776, MM 104, fs. 286-321, MM 106, fs. 225-227, 262-263; Mompós, 1777, ANC: MM 21, fs. 520-532; Popayán, 1778, ANC: Cabildo 2, fs. 73-105; Cartago, 1780, ANC: MM 16, fs. 212-218; Cartagena, 1780-1784, ANC: MM 13, fs. 814-823, MM 17, fs. 781-785; Pasto, 1782-83, ANC: MM 43, fs. 944-967; Barbacoas, 1784-85, ANC: Cabildo 10, fs. 958-974; Cagua, 1784-85, ANC: MM 53, fs. 575-597; Santa Fe, 1785, ANC: MM 6, fs. 750-763; Zipaquirá, 1785-86, ANC: MM 24, fs. 35-70, MM 34, fs. 48-130; Pasto, 1788-89, ANC: Virreyes 13, fs. 528-530.

The immediate source of conflict was acts perpetrated against Alcalde Juan de Dios Ramfrez, who was also a corporal of the local militia company. As a soldier, Ramfrez was most unsatisfactory. He was a chronic complainer and a frequent absentee from both Sunday drills and from special training sessions held on market days for sergeants and corporals. Such behavior not only precluded proper military discipline for himself, but set a bad example for the ranks as well. As a consequence of reports concerning this misconduct, acting regimental commander Josef Marfa Lozano issued a written order on January 9, 1785, for the disciplinary confinement of the corporal in military prison. Residing in Santa Fe, Lozano acted without knowledge that Ramfrez had recently acquired the position of alcalde ordinario of Zipaquirá. The officer charged with conducting the arrest was Second Lieutenant Francisco de Moros, a personal enemy of Ramfrez and the chief source of complaints against his military behavior.

Moros proceeded against Ramfrez on January 12, a market day, at which time he was again absent from the special training session. By what appears to have been a total coincidence, both the corregidor of Zipaquirá, Carlos Burgos, and his assistant had gone to the nearby settlement of Nemocón. Consequently, the dispensation of justice during the day's business transactions reverted to the new alcalde. It was while he was conducting the duties of this office in the central plaza that he was apprehended by two cavalymen acting under orders from Second Lieutenant Moros. Pointing to the insignia that he was bearing--cape, hat, and staff--as proof that

at the moment he personified royal justice, Alcalde Ramirez vigorously protested, but to no avail. With typical disregard for the dignity of ordinary justice, the militiamen roughly escorted him to Moros who was waiting in a nearby store. There, a violent shouting match ensued which included language so vile from Moros that in subsequent examination one witness to the occasion declined to repeat it out of deference for modesty. Soon, the scandalous spectacle had attracted a large crowd of onlookers. To their astonishment, they witnessed Second Lieutenant Moros strip Alcalde-Corporal Ramirez of his insignia and throw it to the ground. Indeed, for a moment it appeared that the military delegation might go so far as to bind him with ropes, but the timely intervention of Moros' own mother prevented that excess. Nevertheless, an even greater humiliation followed, for the alcalde was dragged off to the military jail and there placed in stocks where he remained in public shame.

A serious infraction had occurred against ordinary justice regardless of the validity of the military charges against Ramirez. Not only had an alcalde been abused by word and deed during the execution of his duties, but royal insignia had been desecrated. These were direct violations of the Cuban reglamento which, in addition to provisions regarding interference with ordinary justice, stipulated that alcaldes, if members of the militia, were not subject to military jurisdiction.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the gravity of these abuses was compounded by the fact that they occurred before the public.

---

<sup>21</sup>Reglamento . . . Cuba, chap. II, art. 26.

Upon his return Corregidor Burgos immediately filed a protest with the royal audiencia. For his part, Commander Lozano upon receiving word of the incident ordered the release of the prisoner and thereby seemingly extricated himself from what was certain to be a dangerous entanglement.

The audiencia initiated procedures by instructing Burgos to gather evidence to substantiate his complaint. This done, it directed him to obtain a statement from Moros explaining his actions. Contrary to expectations, the second lieutenant lengthened the list of complaints against him by refusing to testify on the grounds that the audiencia had no jurisdiction in matters pertaining to military personnel. No friend of military privilege, the audiencia was duly incensed at the disobedience of the second lieutenant. In a communication to the viceroy on April 30, 1785, it demanded punitive measures with a warning that if insubordination of this kind were not stifled there would be no end to jurisdictional conflicts which would undermine the administration of justice. By this time Viceroy Caballero y Góngora was on the coast directing the Darién Indian campaign and consequently was unable to respond until June. He ordered Moros to comply with the audiencia's directive and asked for clarifying material from Lozano as well. Moros complied but noted he was submitting to the audiencia only upon orders of the viceroy as captain general. He was unable to justify satisfactorily his excesses, offering only the explanation that the arrest had been ordered by his superior officer and that he had gone to extremes because Alcalde Ramirez had offered resistance. Commander Lozano

contributed nothing more than proving that Ramirez was a discipline case for the militia, thereby justifying his action in ordering the arrest. In August, by which time all evidence was before him, and agreeing with the audiencia that the new evidence in no way altered the nature of Moros' offenses, Caballero y Góngora sentenced the second lieutenant to a term of four months in prison. At the end of that time he was obliged to report to the audiencia to give satisfaction that he had repented for his defiance of royal justice.

Meanwhile, the fiscal of the audiencia attempted to press for further satisfaction. Claiming that the part of Commander Lozano in producing the humiliation of royal justice was far from clear, he asked that the officer be ordered to exonerate himself. Responding in September, Lozano did so conclusively but failed to produce a specifically requested letter from Moros which as matters stood was irrelevant. Vengefully seizing upon this omission, the fiscal sought to reopen the entire incident by strongly recommending that the cavalry commander be severely punished for his failure to comply with superior orders. In so doing he also issued the warning that unless a strict policy was followed, the creation of the new militia would bring the downfall of the viceroyalty. Realistically, Caballero y Góngora declined to pursue the matter, although he did issue a mild rebuke to Lozano for failing to maintain proper records.

The episode was still not finished, for a sequel developed in the meantime. Although in the Ramirez-Moros case justice appears to have been dispensed fairly, the decision could not and indeed did not instantly soothe all ruffled sentiments. Local friction continued,

and to aggravate matters Alcalde Ramírez, apparently hoping to regain face after his humiliation, reportedly persisted in treating the militia in a high-handed fashion. Events climaxed in early August, 1785, when Sergeant Ygnacio Nieto threatened to break the alcalde's staff over his head. Legal action similar to that of the previous case ensued and persisted into the following year before reaching a conclusion. On June 26, 1786, Viceroy Caballero y Góngora sentenced Sergeant Nieto, like Second Lieutenant Moros before him, to imprisonment for disrespect to ordinary justice, although for the lesser term of three months.<sup>22</sup>

The significance of the Zipaquirá cases could easily be underestimated because in both instances the offense was of a relatively clear-cut nature and hence presumably would allow for nothing less than an adverse verdict to the military. Actually, this need not have been the result. The jurisdictional feud in Cartagena also involved a clear-cut violation of the prerogatives of royal justice and perhaps abuse by word as well. The latter possibility was not even investigated by higher authorities, and the extrication of a prisoner from ordinary custody under implied physical threat was dismissed as an issue in spite of all the efforts and protests of Alcalde Díaz. Admittedly, the abuse in Zipaquirá was of a much graver nature, but the fact that the violation in Cartagena was utterly disregarded is indicative of a very real differentiation

---

<sup>22</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Zipaquirá, 1785-86, ANC: MM 26, fs. 35-70, MM 34, fs. 48-130.

regarding the leeway given to military privileges on the coast as contrasted to the interior.

Coolness toward military privilege took an even more decided form in the southwestern sector of the viceroyalty, including portions of the province of Popayán, where the militia was strictly "second class" in quality. If military privilege was difficult to accept where the new units were more or less "disciplined," it was especially hard where there seemed to be no other justification for the fuero than aspirations for future excellence. This attitude is exemplified by a confused controversy over the privileges of the Pasto militia. The debate originated out of a clash between ordinary and military justice over the settlement of an estate left by Juan Córdova, a civilian. In addition to a wife, Córdova was survived by two sons and a son-in-law, all three of whom were militiamen. One of the sons, Nicolás, was by a former wife with whom the deceased Córdova had acquired a ranch. When the other heirs maintained possession of this property after his father's death, Nicolás Córdova filed suit in the cabildo which awarded him title in February, 1782. This was the tribunal of competency because the deceased was a civilian, and in such cases, even though the heirs might be members of the militia, military justice did not have jurisdiction.

A dispute arose when the other parties, dissatisfied with the cabildo's decision, presented the case to military justice in the following September. Veteran First Sergeant Joaquín Vélez, ayudante of militia, being the highest ranking officer in the locality acted as the court of first instance. Either in ignorance of the law or

In disregard for it, he assumed unauthorized jurisdiction. Nicolás Córdova, however, refused to cooperate, contending that the case had already been settled. Vélez regarded his response as insubordination and countered by imprisoning Córdova for a term of three months on the basis that he had denied military jurisdiction to which he was subject as a militiaman. The cabildo immediately appealed the case to the audiencia of Quito which emphatically sustained the position that the action pertained to ordinary justice.

In making its decision, however, the audiencia went farther than resolving the immediate issue. It also stated that Vélez had no authority whatsoever to dispense military justice because the Pasto militia was not entitled to the fuero militar. The rationale for this ruling was that the militia was provisional and had never been approved as disciplined. To complete the action, the audiencia forwarded the case to Santa Fe for a determination on appropriate disciplinary measures for ayudante Vélez. In his decision of January 28, 1783, Caballero y Góngora issued a stern warning to Vélez to conduct himself with greater moderation but refrained from commenting on the most important aspect of the decision, the nullification of the fuero.

The ruling of the Quito audiencia threw the provincial leadership of the Popayán militia into a furor. An appeal was made to Caballero y Góngora by Governor Becaria which reached Santa Fe just after his action on the case. In it and in two subsequent petitions, the position of the militia leadership was clearly expressed. It was pointed out that the audiencia was mistaken in its assumption that the

militia was provisional. As proof, the February 17, 1777, viceregal order which provided for the establishment of fourteen disciplined companies in the province of Popayán, two of these in Pasto, and the Royal Order of July 18, 1777, which approved Flores' program, were cited. Becharia also argued for the fuero on practical grounds. As he described it, the citizenry of that locality displayed a pronounced aversion to things military and especially to the discipline of military life. The only compensation for those who in the midst of such hostility did display an inclination for service was the fuero militar. If that incentive were removed, the militia units, whose feebleness he blamed on an existing prestige gap, would surely disintegrate. Furthermore, Becharia expressed uncertainty--in the event that the Quito decision should stand--about the status of the other twelve companies of the province all of which were formed under the same plan and operated under the same staff leadership as those of Pasto.

The governor's arguments concerning the terms under which the Pasto militia was founded, and concerning the original intent with regard to its status, were well grounded. The fact was, however, that the companies were a farce, and there could be little doubt that they did not deserve the disciplined status. The question was whether they should be allowed to exercise the fuero on the basis of possible brighter days to come, or whether it should be largely denied them as with the urban militia of the realm. Moreover, their undistinguished performance in the 1781 Comunero uprising could have done little to enlist the sympathy of the viceroyalty's leadership.

Perhaps out of the latter consideration, Caballero y Góngora refrained from an explicit decision. In his replies to Beccaria's many petitions he merely referred him to his January 28 decision which said nothing concrete about the question at hand. It appears that by so doing he was allowing the Quito decision to stand but forestalling an explicit declaration in view of the consequences which would certainly befall the remaining companies of the province. Whatever Caballero y Góngora's intent, the cabildo of Pasto gleefully embraced his vacillation as approval for the audiencia's decision and thenceforward assumed competency over the areas formerly reserved for military jurisdiction.<sup>23</sup>

The Pasto incident was only one episode of a much broader uncertainty over the status of the militia formed under the initiative of Guirior and Flores. Indeed, within the provinces directly subject to the commandant general of Quito, the fuero was not implemented.<sup>24</sup> As will be recalled, their militia was organized in 1780, on a provisional disciplined basis, and royal approval for that action followed in 1783. The crown, however, did not define the precise permanent status of these units, but instead specifically referred that question back to Caballero y Góngora.<sup>25</sup> He did not take decisive action on the matter until just before the end of his administration, so during most of the eighties their jurisdictional status was left up

---

<sup>23</sup> Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Pasto, 1782-83, ANC: MM 43, fs. 944-967.

<sup>24</sup> Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Pasto, 1784, ANC: MM 52, fs. 749-762.

<sup>25</sup> Gálvez to Caballero y Góngora, Spain, November 15, 1783, ibid., fs. 81-85.

to the local authorities. Meanwhile, on February 13, 1786, the crown issued a royal order declaring absolutely that the urban militia of the empire no longer enjoyed the fuero militar unless mobilized.<sup>26</sup> The governor of Guayaquil, apparently also uncertain of the status of his militia, issued an inquiry through the audiencia of Quito to the viceregency asking for a clarification. Records of the terms of the original reorganization were uncovered, and it was decided that these units were indeed disciplined militia and entitled to the fuero.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps because of the new royal order, Caballero y Góngora on April 16, 1787, finally explicitly ruled on the status of the Pasto militia, declaring them disciplined and therefore entitled to full military privilege.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, in the following year a formalization of the Quito militia structure and organization was undertaken through a special mission headed by Colonel Anastasio Zejudo. In conjunction with this endeavor the militia was conceded the fuero militar, a decision confirmed by viceregal order of February, 1789.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of the new rulings the feud over the jurisdictional status of the southwestern sector's militia continued. For its part, the audiencia of Quito remained unwilling to recognize privileged

<sup>26</sup>Royal order, February 13, 1786, ANC: MM 2, fs. 332-336.

<sup>27</sup>Notations of June 25, 1787, recorded on Arriaga to Guirior communication of August 26, 1774, ANC: MM 97, fs. 807-808.

<sup>28</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Pasto, 1788-89, ANC: Virreyes 13, fs. 528-550.

<sup>29</sup>Presidente Juan José Villalengua to Caballero y Góngora, Quito, August 18, 1788, ANC: MM 36, fs. 786-791; Villalengua to Gil y Lemos, Quito, April 18, 1789, ANC: MM 106, fs. 196-198.

military status and expressed its opposition by appealing to the crown.<sup>30</sup> In Pasto, another dispute arose with the cabildo refusing to recognize the fuero militar unless specifically directed to do so by Spain. A plea was sent to the audiencia, and it in turn appealed the issue to the crown. Moreover, by this time the ordinary justices of Barbacoas, imitating the example of their neighbors, likewise declined to recognize military privilege within their jurisdiction.<sup>31</sup>

In marked contrast to the plight of the fuero militar in the interior, military privilege gained even greater advantages in Cartagena. There, Colonel Juan Fernández de Moure of the white regiment, complaining that the fuero was not sufficiently supple, appealed for a re-interpretation to the effect that crimes, commercial contracts, and other obligations consummated prior to enlistment would be included under military competency. The viceregency refused to take such an initiative on its own but suggested that Fernández petition Spain. In response, the crown ruled that for military justice a newly promulgated reglamento for the militia of Campeche should take effect. Although somewhat vague, the term "all" was employed in reference to the cases which pertained to military jurisdiction. Fernández asked for a literal interpretation of the clause and was granted this concession by a viceregal decision of June 12, 1784. Caballero

<sup>30</sup>Villalengua to Gil y Lemos, Quito, April 18, 1789, ANC: MM 106, fs. 196-198.

<sup>31</sup>Expediente de una competencia de jurisdicción, Pasto, 1788-89, ANC: Virreyes 13, fs. 528-550.

y Góngora also stipulated that the royal ruling should be generalized for the realm, but the innovation appears not to have reached the interior. There, cases continued to be argued with exclusive reference to the Cuban reglamento, and in any event, the more elementary question of the implementation of the fuero was still the main issue under dispute. Perhaps significantly, the cabildo of Cartagena was not on record as opposing this amplification of military privilege.<sup>32</sup>

As the last decade of the century approached, the fuero militar, as intensified by the reform, had during its brief history produced a varied but noticeable effect. On the coast it had transformed large segments of the population, both white and pardo, into a revitalized class apart, divorced from the regular channels of governmental authority and answerable only unto itself. In the interior the new privileges appear to have been less successful in developing thriving corporation but more prolific in producing contests of authority. And, behind the more spectacular jurisdictional controversies, lay in almost all instances endless bickering, mutual reprisals, and other indignities. Under such conditions the military became a highly disruptive force. Rather than function as a foundation for royal authority as intended, the reformed armed forces by challenging ordinary justice--the most visible representative of royal sovereignty--actually served to undermine its prestige. This phenomenon lent credibility to the continuing arguments that an interior militia was an impracticable and undesirable innovation.

<sup>32</sup>Expediente de una instancia del coronel del Batallón de Voluntarios Blancos, Cartagena, 1780-84, ANC: MM 13, fs. 814-823, MM 17, fs. 781-785.

## CHAPTER VII

### REACTION AND READJUSTMENT

The accession of Francisco Gil y Lemos to the viceregency on January 8, 1789, severed the continuity of military development and expansion spanning the administrations of Guirior, Flores, and Caballero y Góngora. During his rule, which endured slightly less than seven months before his promotion to the viceregency of Peru, and during that of his successor, José de Ezpeleta, 1789-96, the scope of military function was sharply curtailed and readjusted. With astonishing suddenness the military was contracted to the coast; it was shorn of its extended functions, reduced in personnel, and consequently diminished in influence. The structure of higher command was tightened, and unit organization was rationalized and solidified. In a large measure the readjustments executed during the period 1789-96 are attributable to inherent weaknesses stemming from the haphazard, piecemeal manner in which the reform was conducted; but equally important, they derived from a changing scene in which the assumptions of a decade before were reassessed, and about which new conclusions were reached. Most of the revisions were first recommended by Viceroy Gil y Lemos, and after subsequent royal approval, carried out under the rule of his successor, José Ezpeleta. Together, their administrations blend to form a period

of reassessment and reaction, and mark the culmination of the expansion and development of the reformed military in the viceroyalty of New Granada.

The immediate occasion for curtailing the military was a growth of the viceregal debt under Caballero y Góngora from nearly 900,000 pesos to just under 2,000,000.<sup>1</sup> Confronted by what appeared to be financial chaos, Gil y Lemos responded by suspending those of his predecessor's far-flung projects which did not have specific royal approval. By order of April 2, the crown approved his actions and extended authorization to formulate recommendations for expenditure reductions within approved programs.<sup>2</sup> The expanded military, as the largest single consumer of revenues, was a primary target. In addition to the lavish frontier programs, the salaries of the fixed regular army and the veteran cadres assigned to the disciplined militia, according to Gil y Lemos, reached 727,315 pesos annually, this counting the permanently activated dragoons of Riohacha.<sup>3</sup> That total did not include the salaries of the personnel of the Regiment of the Princess which was returned to Spain in 1789 leaving behind a manpower deficit of at least a battalion in Cartagena. The creation of a battalion to fill the gap would add over 100,000 pesos a year to the military payroll. Consequently, Gil y Lemos recommended that the frontiers he abandoned, that the interior disciplined militia program

<sup>1</sup>Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando, . . . , p. 263; Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando, . . . , p. 279.

<sup>2</sup>Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 185.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 205-212.

be discontinued, and that a battalion from the Auxiliary Regiment of Santa Fe be transferred to Cartagena.<sup>4</sup> Both the garrisoning of the interior and the conquest of the frontiers were regarded by Gil y Lemos as enterprises of marginal and in some ways negative utility, not justifying the required investment.

With regard to the frontiers, expressly the Darién expedition, there were a number of reasons for specific objections. The most alarming aspect of Caballero y Góngora's program was the colonization of conquered territory with North Americans, a measure which had never received express approval from the crown.<sup>5</sup> In the words of Francisco Silvestre, who was one of the harshest contemporary critics of the Archbishop-Viceroy:

Under the administration of Mr. Góngora an attempt has been made to open a road from north to south, and to populate (Darién) with Anglo-Saxon colonists and other foreigners. God has not permitted this to take effect because it was the same as placing the region in the hands of our enemies and making them masters of both seas.<sup>6</sup>

Gil y Lemos emphatically concurred in this judgment.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the special commercial concessions granted to foreign merchants in connection with the support of the expedition were regarded as the source of intolerable contraband trade.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the importation of flour adversely affected interior grain output. During the administration of José de

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-192, 202-203.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>6</sup>Silvestre, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup>Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 191.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 186-187.

Solís, 1753-1760, a road had been cleared from Vélez to the Magdalena River to facilitate the marketing of wheat from the Tunja district and thereby stimulate its production, but because of the opening of Cartagena to foreign carriers during wartime, and now again during the Darién campaign, local growers were undersold and production remained stagnant, with the road falling into disuse. Grain commerce from the Santa Fe area was likewise injured.<sup>9</sup> Gil y Lemos supported the interests of the local producers by protesting that the flour concession worked at cross purposes with the desire to develop the interior.<sup>10</sup>

The assumption that a crash program of frontier penetration would work, and if so that the results would justify the investment, was also under question. In later commenting on the subject, Viceroy Ezpeleta, who threw his wholehearted support behind Gil y Lemos, postulated that a more gradual approach consisting of a push by settlers from the peripheries, with military forces employed only in specific, limited missions rather than on a grand scale, would work just as well with less expense.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the patience required for this approach will not satisfy fiery temperaments imbued with martial spirit; but, when it is considered that military forces cannot operate against Indians concealed in highly rugged, impervious mountains as with cultured nations dwelling in open country, and when the futility of the endeavors of the Archbishop-Viceroy is comprehended--as

---

<sup>9</sup>Pedro Fermín de Vargas, Pensamientos políticos y memoria sobre la población del Nuevo Reino de Granada, intr. Alberto Miramón (Bogotá, 1944), pp. 21-26, 38-39.

<sup>10</sup>Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 194.

<sup>11</sup>Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 361-362.

it too clearly is already--it will be understood that these slower but surer methods are preferable. They cannot bear results in one administration; they are works of time and constancy which in the end will conquer all.<sup>12</sup>

Another important consideration was that a curtailment of the frontier enterprises would relieve the manpower drain on the central defense bases.<sup>13</sup>

Initially, Gil y Lemos recommended in a special communication to the crown that only three of the four Darién settlements be abandoned. Caimán in the Gulf of Darién would be retained as a base for the protection of transportation down the Atrato River which had just been opened to commerce. Royal approval for this action reached New Granada as the viceroy was making preparations for his departure to Lima. While awaiting transportation from Cartagena, he convoked a junta, including Antonio Arévalo, to discuss implementation of the withdrawal. On that occasion it was also resolved to transfer the Caimán establishment to a nearby but healthier and more convenient site. The crown approved the plan by order of October, 1790.<sup>14</sup> Before allotting funds, however, the new viceroy, José de Ezpeleta, stipulated that military support would be provided for only one year, and that thereafter the defense of the base would become the responsibility of the colonists. They, however, were unwilling to face that prospect. Because of this and other difficulties, a

<sup>12</sup>ibid., p. 362.

<sup>13</sup>Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 192.

<sup>14</sup>Lerena to Ezpeleta, Spain, May 23, 1791, ANC: MM 117, fs. 82-86.

a subsequent junta convoked in October, 1791, recommended that this project be scuttled as well in favor of coast guard protection. Ezpeleta approved on November 19.<sup>15</sup>

Consequently, all of the Darién fortified cities were destroyed and their garrisons returned to their home bases. Before leaving office Gil y Lemos himself had ended the special trade concessions. He had also begun relocating the foreign colonists, most of whom were still waiting on the coast of Cartagena, and Ezpeleta finished that task.<sup>16</sup> All were given an option of settlement in safe, suitable locations in the interior or of transportation back to the United States. Most of them chose the latter alternative and were provided passage to Charleston and Philadelphia.<sup>17</sup> The foreigners included at least thirty-two individuals who under the tolerant regime of the Archbishop-Viceroy had managed to find their way into the Auxiliary Regiment of Santa Fe where they had created much scandal because of their heretical religious beliefs.<sup>18</sup> To compensate for the withdrawal from the Darién coast a new defense line was established back along the Sinú River with the formation of two new

<sup>15</sup>Cañaveral to Ezpeleta including a copy of Junta proceedings of December 2, Cartagena, December 9, 1791, ANCO: MM 136, fs. 953-957; Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 353-362; Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 191-192.

<sup>16</sup>Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 360-361; Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 186-187, 191.

<sup>17</sup>Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 191; Allan James Kuethe, "Un interesante caso de tolerancia religiosa en la época colonial," Boletín de historia y antigüedades, LIII (January-February-March, 1966), pp. 153-159.

<sup>18</sup>Kuethe, Boletín de historia y antigüedades, LIII, 153-159.

disciplined militia companies in the frontier outposts of San Gerónimo and San Bernardo, province of Cartagena, and some of the colonists from Caimán, most assuredly native-born, were resettled in the latter location. The new companies received royal approval as disciplined on August 28, 1792.<sup>19</sup> As for Riohacha, the fortified city of Pedraza was abandoned and destroyed in 1790, and by a royal order of August 13 of the same year, in response to a recommendation by Ezpeleta, Sinauca was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Captaincy General of Caracas.<sup>20</sup> The withdrawal from Pedraza amounted to the last step in returning the Guajira Peninsula to the aboriginals and their British allies. Thereafter, the city of Riohacha with its disciplined militia became the western barrier against Guajiro penetration.<sup>21</sup>

In the ensuing years, the army of New Granada never again assumed an offensive posture on the frontiers of either Riohacha or Darién but, rather, functioned to achieve containment. After the withdrawals, both regions regressed to full Indian sovereignty under heavy British influence. As early as 1792 southern Darién from Chimán to Boca Chica began experiencing heavy attacks.<sup>22</sup> By 1803 the hope that a gradual approach based on understanding and commercial development might achieve a measure of Spanish influence in the areas was all but

<sup>19</sup>Zejudo to Mendinueta, Cartagena, November 19, 1798, ANC: MM 12, f. 757; Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 362.

<sup>20</sup>Narváez to the governor of Maracaibo, Riohacha, March 15, 1791, Blanco, I, 233; Alcacer, p. 236.

<sup>21</sup>Mendinueta, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 559.

<sup>22</sup>Governor of Panama to Ezpeleta, Panama, March 8, 1792, ANC: MM 136, fs. 988, 1007-1011.

dismissed.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, so strong was the influence of the British among the Guajiros that they not only dominated trade but also posed a serious military menace during the Anglo-Spanish hostilities of 1796-1802. Out of fear of possible British invasion through Riohacha, a mixed disciplined militia regiment of infantry and dragoons was organized in the district of Valle Dupar, province of Santa Marta, in 1799 to further seal off Guajiro territory from the main body of the viceroyalty, and this unit was sustained in the postwar era.<sup>24</sup> Whether the maintenance of a permanent military presence within the hostile regions, as attempted in the two preceding decades, might have produced more favorable results is a matter of conjecture. It is certain that as events developed all of the endeavors of the two preceding decades were for naught.

With regard to the interior, Gil y Lemos seriously doubted that the military establishment was worth the expense, effort, and problems it posed. For one thing, the militia's ineffectiveness remained a dilemma. During the last years of his regime, Caballero y Góngora had initiated an effort to remedy the situation by attempting to bring the militia of the southwest to higher standards. The first step in the endeavor was a tightening of unit organization. This was done through the services of Colonel Anastasio Zejudo of the Auxiliary Regiment who was appointed subinspector general of the viceroyalty.<sup>25</sup> The

<sup>23</sup>Mendinueta, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 559-560, 563-566.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 560-561; Report of Subinspector General Anastasio Zejudo, Cartagena, 1805, ANC: MM 43, fs. 976-994.

<sup>25</sup>Caballero y Góngora to the Royal Audiencia of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, February 6, 1787, ANC: MM 43, fs. 995-997.

subinspector generalship was a new position created to bring some measure of central coordination and control to the various military establishments. Formerly, the only officer with viceroyalty-wide authority was the viceroy as captain general, but due to the nature of his office, it was impossible for him personally to review the troops of the realm. Zejudo's mission began in Popayán in 1788, continued through Quito, Cuenca, and Guayaquil, and terminated in Panama in 1789. His main efforts were directed toward revising unit organization and eliminating those which were non-functional or of marginal importance.<sup>26</sup> The separate companies of Popayán were merged into a ten-company regiment but supplemented by a new squadron of dragoons; the assorted conglomeration of Quito and its immediate dependencies was reduced to two infantry regiments and one of dragoons; Guayaquil's establishment was condensed into an infantry regiment and a squadron of dragoons; and the various units of the Commandancy General of Panama were consolidated into two battalions and a seven-company corps of infantry, a four-company corps of light infantry, and an artillery company (compare charts 1779 and 1783 with 1789). In spite of this reorganization, Caballero y Góngora was forced to admit major shortages of veteran personnel for the entire southwestern militia establishment.<sup>27</sup> To follow through on

<sup>26</sup>Report of Subinspector General Anastasio Zejudo, Quito, July 8, 1788, ANE: Pres. 249, fs. 218-226; Zejudo to the governor of Popayán, October 10, 1788, ACC: Colonia, Hl 1, sig. 12150; Governor Manuel de Guevara to Caballero y Góngora, Guayaquil, December 4, 1788, ANC: MM 100, fs. 199-205; Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 272.

<sup>27</sup>Caballero y Góngora, Relaciones de mando . . . , pp. 271-272. This condition is confirmed by the reports of Zejudo. Although, in

the Zejudo mission, this gap would have to be filled, additional armaments provided, and at least from the military point of view, corporate privileges upheld. Neither Gil y Lemos nor his successor believed that such an endeavor would be justified.<sup>28</sup>

Gil y Lemos not only objected to the interior militia on the basis that it was ineffective, but also denied that it, as well as most of the inland regulars, were necessary and significantly joined those who had long contended that the arming of interior vassals was in itself a dangerous risk. Now a safe distance from the mass uprising which his predecessor had witnessed, Gil y Lemos emphasized in his recommendations to Ezpeleta that the implications of the Comunero movement had been exaggerated and that a prudent, humane leader could rely on the fidelity of the people. He indicated that after a careful investigation he had found them to be docile; without seditious intentions; and even if by chance there were some

---

addition to their special commanders, who were still retained, each regiment possessed a number of veteran first sergeants acting in the militia capacity of adjutant, there was almost a total void of veteran cadres to serve as militia corporals and sergeants. The data provided by Gil y Lemos in his relación de mando contradicts this finding because he listed an ample quantity of veteran militia sergeants for the Popayán, Quito, Cuenca, and Guayaquil militia. One can only conclude that in so doing he was attempting to indicate potential costs. Salary reports into 1750 are available for the Popayán militia and they clearly indicate that no such personnel were in fact collecting salaries, hence ruling out the unlikely possibility that a rapid transfer of veteran advisors occurred in these districts after the Zejudo inspection. Militia salary lists, Popayán, 1789, ACC: Colonia, MI-5P, sig. 6092.

<sup>28</sup>Ezpeleta, *Relaciones de mando* . . . , p. 394; Gil y Lemos, *Anuario de estudios americanos*, VIII, 201-203.

exceptions, without the means to be dangerous.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, there was no imperative reason for maintaining either a large regular force or a disciplined militia in the interior. Significantly, Colonel Juan Antonio Mata, commander of the Auxiliary Regiment, himself recommended in July, 1789, that his unit be reduced in size because it was larger than current circumstances demanded.<sup>30</sup> Other voices at the time also expressed doubt about the wisdom of the existing arrangement. Francisco Silvestre believed that the resources consumed for the defense of Santa Fe could more wisely be expended in Cartagena, and physiocrat Pedro Fermín de Vargas when discussing ways to enhance the productivity of the viceroyalty suggested that the Auxiliary Regiment be assigned to road building projects where its services could be better utilized.<sup>31</sup>

Gil y Lemos, however, carried the argument much farther. He postulated that the interior militia program, if continued, might in itself become a menace, for although the local citizenry was not yet dangerous, providing it with arms and military training might make it so.

To have them live among professionals, fortify the capital, and be maintained in a constant state of war, is to teach them what they do not know; it is to make them think about that which otherwise would not occur to them; it is to force upon them an appreciation for their own power, and on the occasion in which they employ it, they may perceive their advantage. Therefore,

<sup>29</sup>Gil y Lemos, *Anuario de estudios americanos*, VIII, 201-202.

<sup>30</sup>ANC: MH 31, f. 395.

<sup>31</sup>Vargas, pp. 36-37; Silvestre, p. 116.

if in addition to the indispensable appropriations which the King must make for the security of these domains against the exterior enemy, the interior defense is placed on a comparable footing, its maintenance will not only become useless but dangerous.<sup>32</sup>

This line of thought had always been entertained by the cabildos, whose opposition after six years in Santa Fe and over a decade in Popayán remained as strong if not stronger than ever.

It is difficult to measure the precise extent to which the disruptive impact of military privileges contributed to the desire to disband the militia. Viceroy Pedro Mendinueta, 1797-1803, when reflecting upon the question of an interior militia attributed to the fuero a large measure of responsibility for the hostility that existed toward the system.<sup>33</sup> Certainly, military privilege did not win friends for the militia within the sponsoring communities, but rather, alienated local leadership. Indeed, the circumstantial evidence derived from the bitter debate described in the preceding chapter suggests that the crisis it created must have been one more factor weighing against the continuation of the interior defense program, although in fact Gil y Lemos appears to have been more concerned about what the militia might become than about what it had been.

All things considered, then, it is evident that the recommendations for the reduction of the regular garrison and for the extinction of the disciplined militia involved not only financial questions but a general reappraisal of the state of the interior. Had conditions

<sup>32</sup>Gil y Lemos, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII, 202.

<sup>33</sup>Mendinueta, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 543.

remained inflamed as in 1781, and had assumptions regarding the best method to cope with the situation remained the same, the question of expenses would in all likelihood have appeared less imperative. Under the present circumstances, Ezpeleta followed his predecessor's advice by immediately presenting his proposals to the crown.<sup>34</sup>

Relying on the newly discovered innocence of its vassals, which had been described as lost only a short time before by Caballero y Góngora, the crown reclassified the militia of Popayán, Quito, Cuenca, and Santa Fe as urban, reduced the Auxiliary Regiment to a five-company battalion, and authorized the re-establishment of the fixed garrison of Cartagena at two battalions. Moreover, to compensate for the void left by demoting Popayán's militia, the regular detachment was once again increased to company strength, this time at eighty men. The latter development further reinforced the evidence indicating a disenchantment with the militia system, for the cost of this new company of regulars was roughly 14,000 pesos a year in salaries—the same expense presented by the previous arrangement.<sup>35</sup> In Santa Fe, finally, the company of halberdier guards, extinguished after its disgraceful performance against the Comuneros, was recreated at the ceremonial level of twenty-four men (see Table 10).

The demotion of the interior militia establishments to an urban status deprived them of their veteran personnel, removed any hope of

<sup>34</sup>Ezpeleta, *Relaciones de mando*, . . . , p. 358.

<sup>35</sup>Gil y Lemos, *Anuario de estudios americanos*, VIII, 209-212.

TABLE 10  
ARMY OF NEW GRANADA 1794<sup>c</sup>

Regulars	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Regiment of Cartagena	1,358		
Royal Corps (two companies and a brigade of Cartagena) (company of Panama)		232	100
Battalion of Panama	679		
Parties of light infantry of all colors of Chimán (Panama)	80		
Detachment of Chagres	50		
Company of pardos of South Darién	109		
Company of Guayaquil	100		
Three companies of Quito	231		
Company of Popayán	80		
Auxiliary Battalion of Santa Fe	543		
Halberdier Viceregal Guard	24		34
Cavalry Viceregal Guard			
Totals	3,254	332	34

Total Regulars 3,620

Disciplined Militia <sup>a</sup>	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Corps of light infantry and cavalry, Riohacha <sup>b</sup>	200		200
Battalion of Santa Marta	800	100	
Regiment of Cartagena	1,600		
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena	800		
Two companies of pardos, Cartagena		200	
Squadron of dragoons, Corozal (Cartagena)			200
Two separate companies of San Bernardo and San Gerónimo (Cartagena)	200		
Battalion of Panama and Nata	800		
Battalion of pardos, Panama and Nata	800		
Company of pardos, Panama		100	
Corps of light infantry of Portobelo and the margins of the Chagres River <sup>b</sup>	400		
Battalion of Guayaquil	800	100	
Squadron of dragoons, Guayaquil			200

TABLE 10 (cont.)

Disciplined Militia <sup>a</sup>	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Two separate companies of Jaén de Bracamoros	180		
Two separate companies of Loja	180		
Two separate infantry companies of Barbacoas	200		
Totals	6,960	500	600
Total Disciplined Militia 8,060			

<sup>a</sup>Class designations were discontinued for all but pardo units.

<sup>b</sup>Twenty-five men of each of these units were also to be trained in the skills of artillery.

<sup>c</sup>This table was adapted from Reglamento para las milicias disciplinadas de infantería y dragones del Nuevo Reino de Granada, provincias agregadas a este virreynato (Madrid, 1794); Joaquín Durán y Díaz, Estado general de todo el virreynato de Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1794 (Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1794), pp. 391-408; José de Ezpeleta, "Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada . . . 1796," Relaciones de mando: memorias presentadas por los gobernantes del Nuevo Reino de Granada, eds. F. Posada and P. M. Ibáñez (Bogotá, 1913), pp. 386-395.

attaining further armaments and denied them military privileges. Both advisors and equipment were to be transferred to other units or re-incorporated into the regular army.<sup>36</sup> Under terms of the Royal Order of February 13, 1786, urban militia could not enjoy the *fuero militar*; therefore, the question of privileged jurisdiction was eliminated. The crown did specify that volunteer officers who had received royal approval for their commissions could still enjoy the *fuero*, but this would not affect a large number of people.<sup>37</sup> The demotion of these units to the urban status was in effect a legal recognition of what most of them had always been in fact and symbolized the end to aspirations for a higher level of service. The crown had always been cool toward the diluted "disciplined" militia organized under the initiative of Guirior and Flores, but its action here was also part of an empire-wide hardening line on militia classification. In two circular orders issued in 1791, it first ruled that units formed by viceroys but not receiving express royal approval did not enjoy the *fuero militar*; and second, that all militia units be definitely classified as either urban or disciplined, the latter being those with veteran cadres, systematic training, and the corresponding equipment. The second order went on to clarify ambiguities existing in militia terminology by specifying that the term "provincial" not to be considered synonymous with either classification. Those units

---

<sup>36</sup>Subinspector General Cañaverl to the President of Quito, Cartagena, May 30, 1791, ANE: Pres. 284, fs. 153-154.

<sup>37</sup>Ezpeleta to the Royal Audiencia of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, April 28, 1791, ANC: Virreyes 5, f. 167.

which had acquired the label provincial but which did not meet specifications for the disciplined classification must have their urban condition included in their title. Likewise, provincial militia units which did meet the standards for the higher classification were obliged to indicate as much along with their provincial title.<sup>38</sup>

The royal decision to demote the interior militia was forwarded to the provinces in early 1791, and Viceroy Ezpeleta duly instructed the royal audiencia that unless otherwise specified only the coastal militia enjoyed the *fuero militar*.<sup>39</sup> From that time the interior units rapidly began to disappear from the records, evidently indicating their disintegration from organized form. As units they last appeared listed in 1793.<sup>40</sup> By 1796 Ezpeleta informed his successor that the only type of militia actually existing within the viceroyalty was of the disciplined category.<sup>41</sup>

Due to special local circumstances, there were a number of small units which did retain their identities. In the Presidency of Quito four disciplined infantry companies were re-established in 1792 at

<sup>38</sup>Royal Orders, April 8, 1791, and August 22, 1791, Colón, II, 252-255.

<sup>39</sup>Ezpeleta to the Royal Audiencia of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, April 28, 1791, ANC: Virreyes 5, f. 167; Cañaveral to the President of Quito, Cartagena, May 30, 1791, ANE: Pres. 284, fs. 153-154.

<sup>40</sup>Report of Subinspector General Joaquin de Cañaveral, Cartagena, May, 1793, ANC: MM 92, fs. 1019-1035.

<sup>41</sup>Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . . , p. 393.

Jaén and Loja on the southern Indian frontier.<sup>42</sup> This area had been included within the district of the Regiment of Cuenca in the 1788 reorganization by Zejudo.<sup>43</sup> And the two companies of Barbacoas were resurrected on a disciplined footing with royal approval in 1793, ironically following a local uprising against the establishment of the aguardiente monopoly for which in the preceding year it had been necessary to dispatch a detachment of twenty-five men from Popayán.<sup>44</sup> This action would seem to run counter to the idea behind disbanding the interior militia, but Barbacoas was so far from any center maintaining regulars that a militia was actually the only option available for instant recourse, although the same rebellion was the pretext upon which the regular company of Popayán was re-established.<sup>45</sup> In any case, because of proximity to the South Sea, it was customary to organize large numbers of emergency urban units in the general area of Barbacoas during time of war, so the continuance of a small disciplined force there had broader implications than the immediate problem at hand.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup>President Luis Muñoz de Guzmán to Ezpeleta, August 3, 1792, ANC: MM 105, fs. 707-708.

<sup>43</sup>Estado de fuerza de las milicias, Cuenca, March 11, 1789, ANC: MM 107, fs. 112-116.

<sup>44</sup>Expediente de una sublevación en Barbacoas, 1792-93, ANC: MM 52, fs. 71-126; Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 390.

<sup>45</sup>Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 390.

<sup>46</sup>Becaria to Caballero y Góngora, Popayán, 1782, ANC: Virreyes.16, fs. 22-30.

Soon, when symptoms of new revolutionary unrest appeared in New Granada, faith in the innocence of the inhabitants as expressed by Gil y Lemos disappeared, and by the same token the belief was reinforced that arming native-born vassals was undesirable. Pedro Fermín de Vargas, an intimate of higher government officials, who had formed part of the Archbishop-Viceroy's staff on the coast during the Darién campaign, and who more recently had been appointed corregidor of Zapaquirá by Ezpeleta, suddenly in late 1791 slipped out of the viceroyalty with the apparent intention of soliciting resources for the liberation of his homeland.<sup>47</sup> In December, 1793, Antonio Nariño, alcalde of Santa Fe, printed a copy of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, which he had translated from a history of the French Constituent Assembly by Salart de Montjoie. This work had been obtained from a captain of the viceregal guard. Worse, its publication coincided with the appearance of several seditious lampoons in Santa Fe. Moreover, rumors of conspiracies swept the capital including one entailing a plot to seize the arms and munitions of the military barracks. Arrests were made and followed by harsh sentences which included a ten-year term for Narino in Africa.<sup>48</sup> In the following year, the director of the Public Library of Quito, Francisco de Santa Cruz y Espejo, was arrested for plotting the independence of America from Spain.<sup>49</sup> And in the city of Coro,

---

<sup>47</sup>Tisnes, pp. 97-115.

<sup>48</sup>ibid., pp. 126-136, 147-161.

<sup>49</sup>ibid., pp. 312-319.

Captaincy General of Caracas, a bloody Negro uprising exploded.<sup>50</sup> Collectively, these incidents were serious enough in nature to provoke a further discussion of the potential of the army of New Granada for meeting possible armed rebellion.

In a communication to Spain dated May 13, 1796, Viceroy Ezpeleta expressed a deep concern over the rash of unrest. After expounding upon evident friction between the Spanish and native-born segments of society, and upon the small number of European vassals dwelling in the viceroyalty, he postulated that the uncertainty of viceregal government and of royal authority could best be resolved by filling the Auxiliary Battalion with crack Spanish troops. He deplored with alarm that only a small number of European soldiers remained in the viceroyalty, and in particular that the ratio in the garrison of Santa Fe was decidedly in favor of local recruits and former Spanish prisoners. As matters stood, he doubted that the Auxiliary Battalion could be trusted with the defense of viceregal government. Consequently, he recommended that the crown immediately send replacements.<sup>51</sup> Ezpeleta's recommendation was reinforced by an earlier statement from the audiencia that expressed essentially the same idea with a special emphasis on the observation that reliable military forces were absolutely necessary to achieve obedience for the crown's representatives.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup>ibid., pp. 237-245.

<sup>51</sup>Blanco, I, 282-284.

<sup>52</sup>Royal Audiencia of Santa Fe to the Prince of Peace, Santa Fe, March 30, 1796, Blanco, I, 275-282.

The crown responded to the viceroy's plea by providing for the recruitment of a 1,000-man force of replacements to be drawn from various Spanish peninsular regiments. Under the additional pressure of renewed hostilities with Great Britain, 700 were dispatched as soon as possible but were retained by the governor of Trinidad during a stop there out of fear of possible British attack on his island. His suspicions were well founded, but to no avail: the troops fell victim to the British Caribbean fleet commanded by Admiral Harvey who captured the island on February 18, 1797.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, Antonio Nariño escaped his captors and returned to New Granada. He was taken into custody on July 20, but not before provoking a new wave of official panic. Citing the return of Nariño, a fear that Vargas had done likewise, and the continuing danger of British invasion, Viceroy Mendinueta, on July 19 filed a new petition to the crown for Spanish reinforcements. In spite of the crisis, his distrust of the local citizenry would not permit the raising of emergency interior units to defend against possible internal revolution, although he did place the regular army on alert.

. . . I have advanced lists (of loyal vassals) that because this is a delicate affair have been made and are being made in secrecy; in this sort of situation most people hide their true convictions and one runs as much risk of arming an enemy as attracting those who would be loyal, or by excluding the latter making them hostile; that is why I have not proceeded to make an enlistment and a formal organization, but am waiting for time and events to throw more light on the subject.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup>Mendinueta, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 534.

<sup>54</sup>José Manuel Pérez Sarmiento (comp.), Causas célebres a los precursores (Bogotá, 1939), I, 170-173.

Part of a battalion from the Regiment of the Queen did eventually arrive, and thirty of its members were sent in 1801 to reinforce the defenses of the capital.<sup>55</sup> At the war's end in 1802 this unit was returned to Spain leaving only eighty men behind, but in the interlude until the renewal of hostilities in late 1804, Spain did send reinforcements to be directly incorporated into the existing fixed units.<sup>56</sup> These included some 190 men who arrived in June, 1803, of whom 118 were destined to the Auxiliary Battalion, the rest to Cartagena; a second group of 350-400 men were scheduled to be dispatched in 1804 and probably were sent.<sup>57</sup> The effect of these developments was to further exclude, at least by intention, the defense of the capital from the domain of the local citizenry, and they may be regarded as the last step in the process which began with the reduction of the militia units of the interior. The regular companies of Popayán and Quito, however, continued to be filled as a matter of policy by recruits from their own districts.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup>Zejudo to Mendinueta, Cartagena, January, 1799, ANC: MM 3, fs. 987-990; *id.* to *id.*, Cartagena, October 9, 1801, ANC: MM 88, fs. 110-121.

<sup>56</sup>Mendinueta, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 533-534.

<sup>57</sup>Zejudo to Mendinueta, Cartagena, June 19, 1803, ANC: MM 102, fs. 1027-1029; Spain to Amar y Borbón, June, 1804, ANC: MM 50, fs. 134-138.

<sup>58</sup>Report of Subinspector General Anastasio Zejudo, Cartagena, 1805, ANC: MM 43, fs. 976-994; Mendinueta, Relaciones de mando . . ., p. 541.

A less spectacular aspect of the revisions conducted under Gil y Lemos and Ezpeleta was their place in the broader concept of military development. The reduction of the interior units formed part of an already evident trend toward a rationalized, clearly defined militia system. Originally, in almost every province the initial reform mushroomed beyond what could be realistically sustained at desired proficiency and also beyond the limit of immediate necessity. This was a result of its haphazard, piecemeal introduction, conducted in the absence of an overall coordinated program. The militia so organized gave way in time to fewer but better organized units, an arrangement which had always been the desire of the crown. The first major instance of consolidation occurred in the province of Cartagena in 1784 to make way for the expansion of the militia into the interior. The Zujardo mission into the southwest and Panama was the second phase in that process. A comparison of the militia establishment of 1779 with that of a decade later reveals only a slight increase in total strengths, but a definite shift away from separate companies in favor of battalions and regiments. Within this context the reduction of the interior disciplined militia can be regarded as one more step in the elimination of units of marginal utility. The difference which distinguished this reduction from those which preceded it was that the result entailed a total dependence on the reshaped interior regular garrisons. In short, the long run conduct of reform in New Granada was not an uninhibited expansion upon all that preceded, but rather, it was a continual process of cutting and recasting.

The culmination of the movement toward a rationalized militia system came in 1794 with the promulgation of a special reglamento for the militia of New Granada. Although mainly a repetition of its Cuban predecessor in matters of unit organization and command, it did contain some significant departures. The veteran position of lieutenant was eliminated, thereby relieving part of the manpower drain on the regular army, but the number of ayudantes was increased from one to three per battalion. In pardo units, the pretense regarding command by pardo officers was dropped with the head of the white command and staff group being duly awarded the title of commander (see Table II). The greatest significance of the new reglamento, though, is not to be found in changes in organizational structure, but rather, in its place as the first royal endeavor to define a viceroyalty-wide militia system for New Granada. As such, it represented an end to the previous piecemeal, localized approach, with the modifications introduced by Guirrier and Flores, and instead gave to New Granada a general, coordinated plan demanding for all units a uniform and standard organization. The militia establishment itself was trimmed in size to a level which could be adequately maintained. Under the new plan, reductions were carried farther than the revisions of early in the decade by the elimination of the regiment of Veragua, the reduction of the establishment of Riohacha to a four-company corps of light infantry and cavalry, and the replacement of the militia of Mompos with an additional nine companies for the infantry regiment of Cartagena.

TABLE 11

UNIT ORGANIZATION UNDER THE REGLAMENTO FOR THE  
DISCIPLINED MILITIA OF NEW GRANADA, 1794

		Infantry Regiment of Cartagena										
Battalions	Districts	Companies	Captains	Lieutenants	Second Lieutenants	Sergeants		First Corporals		Drummers, Veterans	Soldiers	Totals
						First Veteran	Second Militia	Veteran	Militia			
First	From All	Grenadiers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	64	80
	Cartagena	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Cartagena	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Cartagena	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Turbaco, Fronja & Villa Nueva	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Palmar & Santa Catalina	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Sabanalarga	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Santo Tomé & Sabanagrande	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Soledad & Barranquilla	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	From All	Grenadiers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	64	80
	Tolú	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Tolú	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
Second	Chima & Pinchorroy	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Momil & Concepción	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Lorica	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Lorica	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Chinó, Corzabal & Sincelejo	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Chinó, Corzabal & Sincelejo	Fusileers	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	74	90
	Totals	18	18	18	18	18	36	36	72	108	18	1312

TABLE 11 (cont.)

<u>Command and Staff Group</u>	
<u>First Battalion</u>	<u>Second Battalion</u>
1 Colonel	1 Lieutenant Colonel
1 Sargento Mayor (Veteran)	3 Ayudantes (Veterans)
3 Ayudantes (Veterans)	2 Standard Bearers
2 Standard Bearers	1 Chaplain
1 Chaplain	1 Surgeon
1 Surgeon	1 Corporal, Gastador
1 Drum Major (Veteran)	6 Gastadores
1 Corporal, Gastador	
6 Gastadores	

<u>Parish Battalion of Cartagena</u>											
Districts	Companies	Captains	Lieutenants	Second Lieutenants	First Sergeants	Second Sergeants	First Corporals	Second Corporals	Drummers	Soldiers	Totals
From AIT	Grenadiers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	64	80
Cartagena	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Cartagena	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Sabana Larga											
Ponedera & Santo Tomás	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Mahates & San Estanislao	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Candelaria, Mantú & Real de la Cruz	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Sabanagrande, Baranca & Pueblo Nuevo	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Soledad & Galapa	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
Barranquilla	Fusileers	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	1	74	90
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>800</b>

TABLE II (cont.)

<u>Command and Staff Group</u>	
<u>White</u>	<u>Pardo</u>
1 Ayudante Mayor, Commander in Chief (Veteran)	2 Standard Bearers
4 Ayudantes (Veteran)	1 Corporal, Gastador
4 Garzones (Veteran)	6 Gastadores

Dragoon Squadron of Guayaquil

Districts	Companies	Sergeants Corporals										Total
		Captain	Lieutenant	Ensign	First Veteran	Second Militia	First Veteran	Second Militia	Drummer Veteran	Grenadiers	Soldiers	
Samborodon & Baba	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	4	39	50
Samborodon & Baba	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	4	39	50
Samborodon & Baba	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	4	39	50
Daule	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	4	39	50
Totals	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	13	4	16	150	230

Command and Staff Group

1 Sargento Mayor (Veteran)  
 1 Ayudante (Veteran)  
 1 Standard Bearer

This left the militia with a total of only 8,060 men, hardly larger than the original 1779 sum of all militia units in the province of Cartagena (see table 10). Separate companies remained eliminated except for those previously mentioned which had been continued in isolated outposts due to special circumstances. All other units were provided with their own command and staff group to care for their professional development. In cases where these units comprised less than a battalion, a modified team was authorized consisting of a sargento mayor and an ayudante.<sup>59</sup> Such a tightly knit structure could have been accomplished under the Cuban reglamento, but the haphazard nature with which the reform had spread throughout New Granada almost precluded that possibility.

The transition away from localized arrangements toward a broader supra-provincial, coordinated approach was accompanied by a rationalization and centralization of the military structure of higher command. It will be recalled that under the Cuban reglamento, as interpreted in New Granada, the duty of militia inspection had been delegated to the respective provincial governors, excepting Panama where the commandant general exercised direct responsibility for his subsidiary provinces. And, in the continued arrangement for the regular army, the various fixed garrisons had also been under the direct command of the local governors. The appointment of Colonel Anastasio Zejudo as subinspector general in 1787 was the

---

<sup>59</sup>Reglamento para las milicias disciplinadas de infantería y dragones del Nuevo Reino de Granada, y provincias agregadas a este virreynato (Madrid, 1794), chap. 1, arts. 16-17.

first move to bring a measure of supra-provincial coordination below the viceregal level itself. This function was subsequently clarified by a royal order of February 19, 1790, which specified that the sub-inspector generalship should exclusively be performed by the governor of Cartagena. Under the terms of the new order, the various military governors and commandant generals, although remaining inspectors, were to render absolute submission to his authority.<sup>60</sup> This ruling was consistent with the traditional prestige of the Cartagena governorship. In the sphere of militia, the reglamento of 1794 further clarified the command structure. Under its specifications all three commandant generals--Cartagena, Panama, and Quito--would act as supra-provincial inspectors within their immediate and dependent jurisdictions. In effect, this now altered the arrangement only in Quito, where the president-commandant general would enjoy direct authority over the remaining units of Guayaquil, Loja, Jaén, and Barbacoas. The commandant generals of Quito and Panama were conceded the title of sub-inspector particular; the governor of Cartagena retained his title of subinspector general. The two subinspectores particulares remained subject to his authority, and most matters of militia administration, including the regulation of units, the correction of illicit practices, and the proposal of volunteer officer appointments, were to be channeled through his office.<sup>61</sup> The subinspector general himself was charged with making initial proposals for all veteran and other

---

<sup>60</sup>ANC: MM 83, fs. 798-802.

<sup>61</sup>Reglamento . . . , Nuevo Reino de Granada, chap. II, arts. 1, 6, 8, 13, 48, and chap. VI, arts. 3-7.

salaried positions in the militia.<sup>62</sup> Significantly, the royal order demoting the interior militia had been distributed to the provinces by the governor of Cartagena in his capacity of sub-inspector general.<sup>63</sup>

A smaller but similar reshuffling in the regular army consolidated the authority of the commandant generals. In imitation of the existing arrangement in Panama, the separate companies of both Santa Marta and Guayaquil, which had remained outside of the direct authority of their regions' commandant generals, were removed from a fixed basis upon the recommendation of Viceroy Ezpeleta. Those of Santa Marta were combined with the surplus personnel from the Auxiliary Regiment to form the new second battalion of Cartagena. Thereafter, the garrison of Santa Marta was regarded as a detachment from Cartagena and was scheduled to be relieved every year in an arrangement identical with that pertaining to Panama and Portobelo. The rationale for this innovation was that by alternating troops destined to that remote center a higher level of morale could be maintained.<sup>64</sup> Just before the end of Ezpeleta's administration, the company of Guayaquil was joined to the three of Quito under the immediate authority of the commandant general. Thereafter, the four companies were alternated by pairs between the two locations.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup>ibid., chap. VI, art. 13.

<sup>63</sup>Subinspector General Cañaveral to the President of Quito, Cartagena, May 30, 1791, ANE: Pres. 284, fs. 153-154.

<sup>64</sup>Ezpeleta, Relaciones de mando . . ., pp. 388-391.

<sup>65</sup>ibid., p. 390.

TABLE 12  
ARMY OF NEW GRANADA IN 1799

Regulars <sup>a</sup>	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Regiment of Cartagena	1,358		
Royal Corps (two companies and a brigade of Cartagena) (company of Panama)		232	100
Battalion of Panama	679		
Parties of light infantry of all colors of Chimán (Panama)	80		
Detachment of Chagres	29		
Company of pardos of South Darién	109		
Four-company corps of Quito	308		
Company of Popayán	80		
Auxiliary Battalion of Santa Fe	543		
Halberdier Viceregal Guard	24		
Cavalry Viceregal Guard			34
Totals	3,210	332	34

Total Regulars 3576

Disciplined Militia	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Corps of light infantry and cavalry, Riohacha <sup>b</sup>	200		200
Battalion of Santa Marta	800	100	
Regiment of Valle Dupar (Santa Marta)	400		200
Regiment of Cartagena	1,600		
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena	800		
Two companies of pardos, Cartagena		200	
Squadron of dragoons, Corozal (Cartagena)			200
Two separate companies of San Bernardo and San Gerónimo (Cartagena)	200		
Battalion of Panama and Nata	800		
Battalion of pardos, Panama and Nata	800		
Company of pardos, Panama		100	
Corps of light infantry of Portobelo and the margins of the Chagres River <sup>b</sup>	400		

TABLE 12 (cont.)

Disciplined Militia	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Battalion of Guayaquil	800	100	
Squadron of dragoons, Guayaquil			200
Two separate companies of Jaén de Bracamoros	180		
Two separate companies of Loja	180		
Two separate companies of Barbacoas	200		
Totals	7,360	500	800

Total Disciplined Militia 8660

<sup>a</sup>This table does not include some 400 men from the Regiment of the Queen who arrived in early 1799.

<sup>b</sup>Twenty-five men from these units were to be trained also in artillery skills.

\*This table was adapted from Estado militar de España (Madrid, 1799); Pedro Mendinueta, "Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada . . . 1803," Relaciones de campo: memorias presentadas por los gobernantes del Nuevo Reino de Granada, eds. F. Posada and P. M. Ibáñez (Bogotá, 1913), pp. 532-52.

Seen in the context of the demilitarization of the interior, this change signified a reduction of the regular commitment in Quito. The consequence of these changes was to further consolidate the authority of the three supra-provincial military commands in New Granada. This left only the troops of the viceroy's personal domain, Santa Fe, and the company of Popayán, which remained under the command of the local governor, outside of the three core jurisdictions. However, both of these districts fell under the governor of Cartagena's subinspection generalship.

The effect of the command reorganization was to immensely enhance the power of the governor of Cartagena. As subinspector general he was responsible for conducting reviews of the army of New Granada and for formulating reports and recommendations. This might be done either through a personal tour such as that conducted by Anastasio Zejudo in 1788-89, or by delegating inspectional responsibility to the regional commandant generals, a system followed in 1793 by Governor Joaquín de Cañaveral.<sup>66</sup> Should the subinspector general conduct the reviews personally, his duties as governor were to be assumed by the lieutenant governor.<sup>67</sup> The new system was a laudable attempt to stimulate the various local military establishments to a greater proficiency, but the function was destined to come into conflict with the viceregency. Although the viceroy himself could not have personally attended to the inspection of the

<sup>66</sup>Report of Subinspector General Joaquín de Cañaveral, Cartagena, May, 1793, ANC: MM 92, fs. 1019-1035.

<sup>67</sup>Royal order, February 19, 1750, ANC: MM 83, fs. 798-802.

army, the broad authority enjoyed by the subinspector general was a menace to his own powers. This was particularly true after a 1798 disposition by the crown, arising out of a dispute between Ezpeleta and the governor of Cartagena, which declared the function of subinspection to be independent of viceregal authority. Viceroy Mendinueta bitterly contested this provision as an erosion of his own powers as captain general, and the crown rescinded its ruling in 1805.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, the governorship of Cartagena remained a most powerful office.

The system of military command; the strengths, distribution, and numbers of militia and regular units; and the diminished scope of military endeavor and influence which emerged from the Gil y Lemos and Ezpeleta administrations remained with little change until the end of the colonial period (see Table 13). The extent of the reduction subsequently came under harsh criticism from Viceroy Mendinueta who, experiencing the stress of foreign war and several serious Indian uprisings in the presidency of Quito, believed that the revisions had gone too far, but his endeavors produced few lasting results in spite of a strong desire to effectuate a general strengthening of the army. Recovering from the panic of 1797, he even contemplated restoring the interior militia system and in fact authorized the creation of an urban regiment of dragoons in Quito to suppress Indian unrest. For the province of Cartagena, he created a four-company corps of light

---

<sup>68</sup>Mendinueta, Relaciones de mando, . . . , pp. 550-552; Royal order, April 20, 1805, ANC: MM 111, fs. 609-614.

TABLE 13  
ARMY OF NEW GRANADA 1806\*

Regulars	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Regiment of Cartagena	1,358		
Royal Corps (three companies of Cartagena) (company of Panama)		315 150	
Battalion of Panama	679		
Parties of light infantry of all colors of Chimán (Panama)	82		
Detachment of Chagres	29		
Company of pardos of South Darién	109		
Two companies of Quito	154		
Company of Popayán	80		
Auxiliary Battalion of Santa Fe	543		
Halberdier Viceregal Guard	24		
Cavalry Viceregal Guard			34
Totals	3,058	465	34

Total Regulars 3557

Disciplined Militia <sup>a</sup>	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Corps of light infantry and cavalry, Riohacha	200		200
Company of pardos, Riohacha		70	
Battalion of Santa Marta	800		
Company of pardos, Santa Marta		70	
Regiment of Valle Dupar (Santa Marta)	400		200
Regiment of Cartagena	1,600		
Battalion of pardos, Cartagena	800		
Two companies of pardos, Cartagena		200	
Company of pardos, Tolú (Cartagena)		70	
Squadron of dragoons, Corozal (Cartagena)			200
Two separate companies of San Bernardo and San Gerónimo	200		
Battalion of Panama and Nata	800		

TABLE 13 (cont.)

Disciplined Militia <sup>a</sup>	Infantry	Artillery	Mounted
Battalion of pardos, Panama and Nata	800		
Company of pardos, Panama		100	
Corps of light infantry of Portobelo and the margins of the Chagres River	400		
Company of pardos, Portobelo		70	
Two separate companies of Jaén de Bracamoros	180		
Two separate companies of Loja	180		
Two separate companies of Barbacoas	200		
Totals	6,560	580	600
Total Disciplined Militia 7740			

<sup>a</sup>Guayaquil is not included in these reports because it was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of Peru in 1803 for military matters.

\*This table was adapted from Antonio Josef García, Kalendario manual y guía de forasteros en Santa Fe de Bogotá, capital del Nuevo Reino de Granada para el año de 1806 (Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1806), pp. 334-346; Report of Subinspector General Anastasio Zejudo, Cartagena, 1805, ANC: MM 43, fs, 976-94. These sources also contain listings for the urban militia remaining from the endeavors of Viceroy Mendinueta. They were as follows: Veragua, an 800-man infantry battalion; Mompós, a four company corps of light infantry totaling 480; Las Tablas (Cartagena), one 50-man infantry company; and Barranca and Mahates (Cartagena), three 60-man companies of dragoons.

infantry in Mompós and established three companies of dragoons and two companies of artillerymen on the coast. He also created a battalion of infantry in the province of Veragua. The crown, however, remained faithful to the revisions it had already approved and resolute in its commitment to a reduced force. Perhaps also hesitant to see the defense system altered by the whim of every passing viceroy, it refused to follow up Mendinueta's initiative and consequently refrained from authorizing the disciplined classification for any of the new units except the already discussed regiment of Valle Dupar.<sup>69</sup> There are indications that the crown was about to expand the army of New Granada on the eve of the Wars for Independence, but these endeavors were interrupted by the French invasion of Spain.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup>Mendinueta, Relaciones de mando . . . ., pp. 532-552.

<sup>70</sup>Salcedo y Somodevilla to Amar y Borbón, Santa Marta, March 25, 1808, ANC: MM 76, fs. 619-622; Governor Miguel Falcón to Amar y Borbón, Popayán, April 20 and July 4, 1808, ANC: MM 83, fs. 689-694.

## CONCLUSION

In retrospect, the course of the military reform in the Viceroyalty of New Granada was similar to that of the broader organization to which it related. After limited initial implementation, it was extended rapidly in the post-Comunero era, reaching its greatest development in the decade of the eighties under the administration of the Archbishop-Viceroy. The reformed colonial army which emerged at that time was not only strengthened to meet the external enemy, but more significantly, also became a powerful institution on the changing domestic scene. On the one hand, it came to fill a vacuum in confidence which evolved from the waning of the traditional obedience of the citizenry to the crown, and as such, during the troubled times immediately preceding and following the Comunero Rebellion, it was converted into a major instrument for the preservation of the internal security of the state. Moreover, within a context of hardening attitudes toward unpacified Indians on the coastal frontiers, it became a primary actor in large government-sponsored pacification-colonization ventures. On the other hand, the prestige and influence of the armed forces were enhanced through the concession of extensive corporate privileges which with few exceptions made the military answerable only to itself and thereby converted it into a powerful, autonomous class. Intended solely to enhance morale, these rights produced contingent results which threatened to obscure the original purpose of the reform program. Because of its immunities, the

military emerged as a new social elite, reinforcing the status of its members from the upper classes and subverting the traditional order of society by offering new prestige to its vast membership from the lower classes. And new military authority intruded into the communities, challenged ordinary justice, and by so doing eroded the dignity and authority of local government.

All things considered, by 1789 the reformed army was one of the most powerful if not the most powerful of entities within the state. But the emerging military, perhaps more than any other aspect of the colonial reorganization, was profoundly weakened by the reaction which cut across the reform movement in 1789. Within five years the army of New Granada was stripped of its extended functions and responsibilities, reduced in size, and correspondingly diminished in potency and influence. It never again recaptured the power, prestige, and glory that it had once enjoyed.

Because of the reduced position of the armed forces in the remaining portion of the colonial period, the long-run implications of the military reform in the Viceroyalty of New Granada are modest. From the vantage point of the closing years of the Bourbon era, the intrusion of the reform into the institutional, cultural, and demographic heartland of the viceroyalty appears as only a brief interlude, varying from some fourteen years in Popayán to a span of roughly six years in Santa Fe; and, the reorganization never did reach many of the inland provinces. True, the Auxiliary Battalion remained a lasting scar from the Comunero Rebellion and its aftermath, but by the turn of the century it had come to resemble more

a foreign force of occupation than a part of the reorganized local establishment. In any event, when that battalion is averaged along with the other interior garrisons, it becomes evident that by the end of the eighteenth century the pattern of unit distribution from the regular army had completed a full cycle; for although it showed an overall increase of some 137 per cent from 1772 to 1796, there was a remarkable similarity in geographical emphasis. In 1772 the interior forces comprised 23.2 per cent of the projected strength of the fixed regular army; in 1796 they counted for 23.4 per cent. Finally, with the innovation of disciplined militia added to the growth of the regular army, military expansion on the coast decidedly outdistanced that of the interior.

The coast, however, had long been accustomed to an active military presence and appears to have absorbed the reform well. Moreover, with the evolution toward a smaller militia establishment, even the explosive issue of pardo privileges diminished. By 1796 only two battalions specifically bore the pardo label, and although it would be an error to presume that none of the remaining units without class designation contained men of color, the total number who could seek military service and the fuero militar as an avenue of relief and a route to prestige had substantially declined. It need only be recalled that the entire armed forces of 1799 were hardly larger than those of the province of Cartagena twenty years earlier.

Certainly, the reform did produce some important changes. The army which emerged had been appreciably strengthened both in first line defense strength and in reserve potential; and a successful

invasion of the viceroyalty would have no doubt been more difficult than before. The precise extent to which that was true is, of course, impossible to calculate because no foreign invasion was attempted, but perhaps that is in itself a tribute to the success of the reform in accomplishing its original goal. In addition, there are consequences implicit in the history of the military reorganization which are less tangible and which will only become clearer when further study is completed on other aspects of the late eighteenth century. The primary instance is that the reformed military, particularly in the decade of the eighties, devoured immense quantities not only of public revenues but of man hours and other resources including much of the attention of the viceregal leadership. This drain was definitely linked to the financial crisis unveiled in 1763 and was bound to have produced contingent consequences for which the implications are still uncertain.

But with the final impact of the military reorganization largely restricted to the coast and there cushioned by a long standing tradition of military eminence, the dynamic potential inherent in the reform was eased. Consequently, it did not produce the same havoc as its counterpart in New Spain. It did not in the long run tear asunder existing civil institutions, subvert more than moderately the existing order of society, or mark a decisive departure point for the development of anything like a praetorian tradition. Rather, the history of the military reform in New Granada stands in contrast to the experience in New Spain and provides further evidence that

widespread diversity existed in the histories of the several kingdoms of colonial Spanish America. The reform in New Granada was only a halting stop toward the creation of the modern military. For the further development and consumation of that process one must look ahead to the Wars for Independence.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Manuscript Materials

Manuscript material was consulted in the Archivo Nacional de Colombia, the Archivo Central del Cauca, and the Archivo Nacional de Ecuador. In the Archivo Nacional de Colombia, six fondos were employed: Cabildos, Competencias, Guerra y Marina, Milicia y Marina, Reales Ordenes, and Virreyes. In the Archivo Central del Cauca three fondos were employed: Cabildos, Gobiernos, and Militares. And, in the Archivo Nacional de Ecuador one fondo, Presidencia, was employed. The author does not regard any of the individual documents to be of sufficient importance to merit special mention.

### Printed Materials

#### Official Documents and Contemporary Works

- Amat y Junient, Manuel de. Memoria de gobierno. Eds. Vicente Rodríguez Casado and Florentino Pérez Embid. Sevilla, 1947.
- Arrazola, Roberto (comp.). Historial de Cartagena. Cartagena, 1961.
- Blanco, José Félix, and Ramón Azpurua (comps.). Documentos para la historia de la vida pública del Libertador . . . 14 vols. Caracas, 1875-78.
- Cabrer, Carlos Francisco (ed.). "Proyecto de defensa militar de Bogotá (1797)," Boletín de historia y antigüedades, II (December, 1903), 230-232.
- Colón y Larreategui Ximénez de Embun, Félix. Juzgados militares de España y sus Indias . . . 2a ed. corregida y aumentada. 4 vols. Madrid, 1786-96.

- Cuervo, Antonio B. Colección de documentos inéditos sobre la geografía y la historia de Colombia. 3 vols. Bogotá, 1891-93.
- Duran y Diaz, Joaquín. Estado general de todo el virreynato de Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1794. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1794.
- Estado militar de España. Madrid, 1799.
- Fermín de Vargas, Pedro. Pensamientos políticos y memoria sobre la población del Nuevo Reino de Granada. Bogotá, 1944.
- García de la Guardia, Antonio Josef. Kalendario manual y guía de forasteros en Santa Fe de Bogotá, capital del Nuevo Reino de Granada para el año de 1806. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1806.
- Gil y Lemos, Francisco. "Gil y Lemos y su memoria sobre el Nuevo Reino de Granada," ed. with introduction by Enrique Sánchez Pedrote, Anuario de estudios americanos, VIII (1951), 169-212.
- Juan, Jorge, and Antonio de Ulloa. Noticias secretas de América (Siglo XVIII). 2 vols. Madrid, 1918.
- King, James Furguson (ed.). "Admiral Vernon at Portobelo: 1739." The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXIII (May 1943), 258-282.
- Moreno y Escandón, Francisco Antonio. "Estado del virreynato de Santafe, Nuevo Reino de Granada, . . . año de 1772." Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXIII (September-October, 1936), 547-616.
- Narváez y la Torre, Antonio de. "Relación, o informe de la provincia de Santa Marta y Rio Hacha . . ." Escrito de dos economistas coloniales. Ed. Sergio Elías Ortiz (Bogotá, 1965), 17-65.
- Ordenanzas de S.M. para el regimen, disciplina, subordinación, y servicio de sus ejércitos. . . ., 2 vols. Madrid, 1708.
- "Pacificación general de los Indios del Darién, celebrada el 21 de Julio, 1787," Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XIII (June, 1920), 197-202.
- Pérez Sarmiento, José Manuel (comp.). Causas célebres a los precursores. 2 vols. Bogotá, 1939.
- Posada, F. and P. M. Ibáñez (eds.). Relaciones de mando: memorias presentadas por los gobernantes del Nuevo Reino de Granada. Bogotá, 1913.

Real declaración sobre puntos esenciales de la ordenanza de milicias provinciales de España. Su interin se regla la formal, que corresponde a estos cuerpos, se debe observar como tal en todas sus partes. Madrid, 1767.

Reglamento para las milicias de infantería y caballería de la Isla de Cuba, aprobado por S.M. Havana, 1769.

Reglamento para las milicias disciplinadas de infantería y dragones del Nuevo Reino de Granada, y provincias agregadas a este virreynato. Madrid, 1794.

Silvestre, Francisco. Descripción del Reino de Santa Fe Bogotá, escrita en 1789. Bogotá, 1950.

Vernaza, Cornelio Escipión (comp.). Recopilación de documentos oficiales de la época colonial, con un apéndice relativo a la independencia de Guayaquil. . . . Guayaquil, 1937.

Zamora y Coronado, José María (comp.). Biblioteca de legislación ultramarina en forma de diccionario alfabético. . . . 6 vols. in 3. Madrid, 1844-46.

#### Books and Articles

Aiton, Arthur S. "Spanish Colonial Reorganization under the Family Compact," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XII (August, 1932), 269-280.

Alcacer, Antonio de. Las misiones Capuchinas en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, hoy Colombia (1643-1820). Bogotá, 1959.

Arboleda, Gustavo. Historia de Cali. Cali, 1928.

Cárdenas Acosta, Pablo E. El movimiento comunal de 1781 en el Nuevo Reino de Granada. 2 vols. Bogotá, 1960.

Castillo, Abel-Romero. Los gobernadores de Guayaquil del Siglo XVIII. Madrid, 1931.

González Suárez, Federico. Historia general de la República de Ecuador. 7 vols. Quito, 1890-1901.

Groot, José Manuel. Historia eclesiástica y civil de Nueva Granada. 3a ed. 5 vols. Bogotá, 1953.

Haring, C. H. The Spanish Empire in America. New York, 1947.

Henao, Jesús María, and Gerardo Arrubla. Historia de Colombia. . . . 2 vols. in 1. Bogotá, 1929.

- Humphreys, R. A., and John Lynch (eds.). The Origins of the Latin American Revolutions, 1808-1826. New York, 1965.
- Ibáñez, Pedro M. Crónicas de Bogotá. 2a ed. 3 vols. 1913-23.
- Kuethé, Allan James. "Un interesante caso de tolerancia religiosa en la época colonial," Boletín de historia y antigüedades, LIII (January-February-March, 1966), 153-59.
- Lievano Aguirre, Indalecio. Los grandes conflictos sociales y económicos de nuestra historia. 4 vols. Bogotá, n.d.
- Luengo Muñoz, Manuel. "Genesis de las expediciones militares al Darien en 1785-6," Anuario de estudios Americanos, XVIII (1961), 333-416.
- Marce Dorta, Enrique. Cartagena o: Indias: puerto y plaza fuerte. Cartagena, 1950.
- McAlister, Lyle N. The "Fuero Militar" in New Spain, 1764-1800. Gainesville, 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Reorganization of the Army of New Spain, 1763-1767," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXIII (February, 1953), 1-32.
- Navarro García, Luis. Intendencias de Indias. Sevilla, 1959.
- Nieto Arteta, Luis Eduardo. Economía y cultura en la historia de Colombia. Bogotá, 1962.
- Nowell, Charles E. "The Defense of Cartagena," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XLII (November, 1962), 477-501.
- Ortiz, Sergio Elias. Agustín Agualongo y su tiempo. Bogotá, 1958.
- Ospina Vasquez, Luis. Industria y protección en Colombia, 1810-1930. Medellín, 1955.
- Ots Capdequí, José María. Instituciones de gobierno del Nuevo Reino de Granada durante el siglo XVIII. Bogotá, 1950.
- Plaza, José Antonio de. Memorias para la historia de la Nueva Granada desde su descubrimiento hasta el 22 de Julio de 1810. Bogotá, 1850.
- Restrepo, José Manuel. Historia de la revolución de la República de Colombia en la América meridional. 8 vols. Bogotá, 1942-50.

- Restrepo, Vicente. Estudio sobre las minas de oro y plata de Colombia. Bogota, 1952.
- Restrepo Saenz, José Marfa. Biografías de los mandatorios y ministros de la Real Audiencia (1671-1819). Bogota, 1951.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Los secretarios del virreinato," Boletín de historia y antigüedades, XXXIII (January-February, 1946). 52-59.
- Shafer, R. J. The Economic Societies in the Spanish World (1763-1821). Syracuse, 1958.
- Tisnes, Roberta Marfa. Movimientos pra-independientes Grancolombianos. Bogota, 1962.
- Whitaker, Arthur P. "The Elhuyar Mining Missions and the Enlightenment," The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXI (November, 1951), 557-85.

Other

- Leonard, David Phelps. "The Comunero Rebellion of New Granada in 1781 . . ." Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, University of Michigan, 1951.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Allan James Kuethe was born February 1, 1940, in Bremer County, Iowa. In 1958 he graduated from Sumner Public High School and then entered Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa. Mr. Kuethe transferred to the State University of Iowa the following year where he majored in history and graduated in June, 1962. In September, 1962, he entered the University of Florida as a graduate student in history where he has remained enrolled until the present time. His studies at the University of Florida have been supported by a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, three NDEA Language Fellowships, and an NDEA-related Fulbright-Hays Fellowship. Mr. Kuethe is married to the former Lourdes Ramos y Gabiero. They have one child, John Charles, born July 5, 1963.

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the chairman of the candidate's supervisory committee and has been approved by all members of that committee. It was submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August, 1967

Ernest H. Cox  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

John D. Hunter  
Dean, Graduate School

Supervisory Committee:

S. H. McAlister  
Chairman

J. Bushnell  
M. L. Fisher  
Reginald E. Cress

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



3 1262 08666 258 1