

GUAYAQUIL IN GRAN COLOMBIA 1822-1830¹

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RESUMEN

Este trabajo pretende estudiar la historia política y económica de la ciudad de Guayaquil y su provincia durante el período de su incorporación en la República de Gran Colombia (1822-1830). Examina la política de la élite guayaquileña en su busca por maximizar su autonomía frente a las ambiciones de Colombia y Perú de dominar la región ecuatoriana, investiga el proceso económico y comercial en estos años y el impacto de la guerra de independencia, y establece la relación entre éstos y aquéllos.

ABSTRACT

An analysis of the social and economic polity developed by the elites of the city of Guayaquil and its province during the period 1822-1830, when this territory was a part of the *República de Gran Colombia*.

Guayaquil and its province on the Ecuadorean littoral became independent from Spain in October 1820. After a brief period as an independent state, in July 1822 it was absorbed into the Grancolombian Republic along with the other provinces of the old Presidency of Quito. The southern departments remained part of Gran Colombia until its break-up in 1830, when they emerged as the independent Republic of Ecuador.

This period has received less attention than it deserves from historians in spite of its obvious importance as a time of political experimentation and definition in the aftermath of independence², and a cursory reading of the history of Guayaquil and the Ecuadorean littoral during these years seems to offer a picture of almost unremitting confusion, a bewildering turmoil of riots, insurrections and factional struggles punctuated by the involvement of the southern provinces in Bolívar's campaigns against the residue of Spanish power in Peru, and then by the Peru-Colombia War of 1828-29. Because much of the

¹ A version of this paper was presented to the Conference 'Latin America in the Nineteenth Century', De Montfort University, Leicester, 1995.

² Some of the fullest accounts are also amongst the earliest histories. RESTREPO, José Manuel, *Historia de la Revolución de la República de Colombia* (Paris, 1827) is a classic written from a Colombian point of view by a participant in the events he describes. From a Peruvian perspective, there is BASADRE, Jorge, *Historia de la República del Perú* (6th edition, Lima, Editorial Universitaria, 1963-64). The outstanding modern account is BUSHNELL, David, *The Santander Regime in Gran Colombia* (Westport, Greenwood, 1970).

political, social and economic history of post-independence Ecuador has still to be adequately researched and written³, we do not yet have a clear and coherent picture of Guayaquil's Colombian period. The object of this paper is to offer some suggestions about what that picture might look like.

Reporting to London on the separation of the southern departments and the creation of Ecuador in June 1830, the British consul in Guayaquil - who took his views and information largely from the *guayaquileño* elite amongst whom he moved - offered the opinion that "the present measure is a very popular one. The union with the northern Districts distinguished here as "Colombia", has always been considered disadvantageous to the South, which only adhered to them through predilection for the Liberator..."⁴. As a summary rationalisation and justification for withdrawal from Colombia, it served its purpose, but the process which had led to this moment was a long and complex one. My argument is that the politics of the period can be understood as a process of definition in which the political desires and aspirations of the *guayaquileños* for local autonomy were tested in the crucible of regional power-politics and became a pragmatic search for whatever framework came nearest to satisfying their wishes. I want to suggest that this process of definition contained the following elements: (1) on a political level, doubt and perhaps disillusionment with the Colombian union almost from the start but which was counterbalanced until the middle of the decade by clear economic and commercial benefits, (2) a residual sentiment of friendship towards Peru which was not as strong as it might have seemed at the time and was frittered away by the Peruvians even before the war of 1828-29, (3) a growing consensus on the preference of the *guayaquileños* for a 'republiquita' and a nostalgia for the years 1820-22 when the province had been a sovereign state, combined with a recognition that a truly independent state of Guayaquil was in practice unattainable, (4) transmutation of the ideal of independence firstly into a struggle for federalism and municipal autonomy, then as the nearest feasible alternative to provincial independence, support for a separate state based on the old Presidency of Quito.

While giving a primarily political account of the period, I want also to draw in some economic dimensions that seem clearly to shape the ebb and flow of political life. This will be more in the nature of an economic commentary than an economic analysis. It only needs to be a commentary in the first half of the 1820s because the economy as a whole has been well-discussed and analysed by Bushnell. In the second half of the 1820s, it has to be a commentary because the data are so incomplete and unreliable that it is next

³ ANDRIEN, Kenneth J., *The Kingdom of Quito 1690-1830: The state and regional development* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995) is an excellent and up-to-date overview of the background to the emancipation period, and includes a useful discussion of the literature. At the regional level Guayaquil prior to and in this period is examined by HAMERLY, Michael T., *Historia Social y Económica de la Antigua Provincia de Guayaquil 1763-1842* (Guayaquil, Archivo Histórico del Guayas, 1973) and LAVIANA CUETOS, María Luísa, *Guayaquil en el siglo XVIII. Recursos naturales y desarrollo económico* (Sevilla, Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1987).

⁴ Public Record Office/Foreign Office (hereafter PRO/FO)/18/79). Walter Cope to John Bidwell, 12 June 1830.

to impossible in the current state of our knowledge to speak confidently about what was happening.

The Political Aftermath of Annexation 1822-23

Guayaquil was forcibly incorporated into the Grancolombian Republic in June and July 1822 by the Liberator Simón Bolívar⁵. At the time this may have seemed to be the most swift and convenient solution to the problem of Guayaquil's status but it is apparent that it soon created more problems than it resolved

Firstly, it was not a popular move at the time - popular admiration for Bolívar personally, which was widespread, should not be confused with popular desire for the Grancolombian union. The vote for union had to be pushed through the province's representative assembly by a mixture of behind-the-scenes manipulation and outright bullying by Bolívar's partisans. Although in November 1823 the new governor claimed that support for the Colombian government was growing, he admitted that it was largely based on the personality of Bolívar⁶.

Secondly, it weakened rather than strengthened the legitimacy of the Colombian claim to sovereignty over the region. The minutes of the meetings of the municipality of Guayaquil in the period following annexation record a continuing concern about the persistent public criticism and questioning of the way that the province was incorporated into the Republic, and on at least one occasion in 1823 felt it necessary to issue a public manifesto to denounce the perturbers of public order, defend the conduct of Bolívar and rehearse the arguments to justify the incorporation of Guayaquil into the Republic⁷. The efforts of the partisans of Colombia were not helped by the arrogant and high-handed attitude of some of the officers and bureaucrats of the Colombian army and government, who openly treated the *guayaquileños* with a contempt more appropriate to a conquered people than to fellow-citizens. Their arbitrary actions - ignoring, insulting and even assaulting magistrates, requisitioning livestock and goods without authority, causing affrays, billeting soldiers in churches - were the subject of continuous complaint but proved almost impossible for the government to control⁸.

⁵ For a detailed discussion and analysis of the bolivarian coup, see CUBITT, David, "La anexión de la provincia de Guayaquil 1822: Estudio del estilo político bolivariano", *Revista de Historia de América*, no 86 (1978), pp 193-219.

⁶ Archivo Histórico de la Biblioteca Municipal de Guayaquil (hereafter AHBM) vol 2, fol 39. Paz del Castillo to Interior Ministry, 29 November 1823.

⁷ Archivo del Cabildo de Guayaquil (hereafter ACG) vol 30. 3 January 1823.

⁸ AHBM vol 20 Causa contra Pedro Franco, 1823; AHBM vol 23, fol 170. Interior Ministry to Intendente, 21 February 1823; ACG vol 30. 28 June 1823, for examples of such behaviour.

Thirdly, it created a body of irreconcilables, some in the port itself and others in exile in Peru. The group in Peru, known locally as the 'partido de Guayaquil'⁹, enjoyed the support and patronage of general José de La Mar, himself Ecuadorean-born, and with the complaisance of Peruvian governments they continually agitated against the Colombian union¹⁰. They seem to have overlapped with residual royalism in Guayaquil or at least it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them. News of reverses suffered by the Colombian army in Peru were greeted with 'excessive jubilation' and 'celebrations in the drinking houses'¹¹. Opponents of the Colombian union were sufficiently numerous for the municipality to ask for the maintenance of additional troops in the city in October 1822 to overawe them¹². Their anxiety was not groundless - on the night of 8 January 1823 an anti-government riot took place which clearly exposed the fragility and insecurity of the new government¹³.

The Colombian union might nevertheless have settled and become popular or at least accepted, and the irreconcilables isolated and neutralised, if Bolívar had pursued a more conciliatory policy. The *guayaquileños* made the conditions on which they could accept wholeheartedly the Colombian union clear enough in the debates of June and July 1822 - they wanted the continuation of a broad measure of local political autonomy, protection of the province's trading and commercial interests, positive support for the cacao industry, no witch-hunting of the leaders of the pre-1822 regime nor of European-born Spaniards or suspected royalists who had not committed overt acts of treachery¹⁴. These aspirations were swiftly crushed by Bolívar. Although as a concession to local feeling he raised the province to the status of a Department and issued a number of decrees with the stated aim of improving the public administration and promoting prosperity¹⁵, within a matter of months any positive effects these measures might have had were undone by others almost guaranteed to offend and alienate the *guayaquileños*.

Firstly, although the constitution and laws of Colombia were promulgated in the south, Bolívar suspended most of them immediately on the grounds that the area was a theatre of war and only recently liberated, and the province was ruled until February 1825

⁹ Basadre, *Historia del Perú*, vol 1, pp 21-22.

¹⁰ Restrepo, *Historia*, IV, 425-26; ACG vol 30. 22 October 1822; ACG vol 30. 10 December 1823.

¹¹ ACG vol 30. 1 July 1823.

¹² ACG vol 30. 15 November 1822.

¹³ ACG vol 30. 10 January 1823; 17 January 1823.

¹⁴ Cubitt, *op.cit.*

¹⁵ Restrepo, *Historia*, IV, 366.

under a regime of special faculties by a succession of military governors¹⁶. Among other things, the regime of special faculties meant that the previous tax and commercial regulations of Guayaquil remained in effect¹⁷. It is generally argued that this arrangement was beneficial to the littoral economy and there is some evidence to support this. However, the continuance of the regime of special faculties by Bolívar well beyond the initial period after annexation, on however justifiable grounds of military necessity, disappointed those supporters of Colombia in July 1822 who had anticipated radical reforms in the province as a result of annexation.

Secondly, when at the end of October 1822 a royalist insurrection broke out in Pasto, Bolívar invoked his special faculties again to order the expulsion of all the European Spaniards and other 'suspect persons' from the southern provinces¹⁸ - a move which cut right across Guayaquil sentiment given that a substantial proportion of the merchant and landed population were European-born. In fact, a similar move by the first leaders of Guayaquil had caused a political crisis and the overthrow of the first independent government in the aftermath of the 1820 revolt¹⁹. The persecution and exile of Spanish-born *guayaquileños* was still continuing in 1825 although many of them "belong to numerous families who are among the most respectable in this country..."²⁰.

The Impact of War 1822-25

Between the beginning of 1823 and the end of 1825 i.e. for a period of nearly three years, Guayaquil was the base for the Colombian army operating in Peru. During 1823 there were seldom fewer than 3,000 Colombian soldiers billeted in the city and its environs, on their way to or from the Peruvian theatre of war²¹. In the latter part of 1824 there were upwards of 4,000 Colombians billeted there. At the beginning of 1825, in preparation for the final effort in Peru, there were more than 6,500 soldiers in and around

¹⁶ Restrepo, *Historia*, IV, 366-67.

¹⁷ The commercial code has been studied by CUBITT, David, "Economic nationalism in post-independence Ecuador: The Guayaquil commercial code of 1821-1825", *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv*, n.s., vol 11, no 1 (1985), pp 65-82.

¹⁸ Restrepo, *Historia*, IV, 424.

¹⁹ The events that surrounded the initial establishment of an independent government in Guayaquil in October 1820 are discussed in a forthcoming paper by David Cubitt on the activities of José María Roca, a member of the triumvirate which ruled the province from November 1820 to July 1822.

²⁰ AHBM vol 2, fol 51. Paz del Castillo to Interior Ministry, 14 March 1825.

²¹ Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 24, 29-30.

Guayaquil²².

What was the impact of the Colombian military presence in Guayaquil? The conventional view is that supporting the Colombian army imposed an intolerable economic and financial burden on Guayaquil - in 1823, for example, Bolívar exacted a forced loan of 100,000 pesos from the city towards military expenses²³, and in 1824 he imposed a monthly contribution of 16,000 pesos²⁴. Accommodation, victuals, livestock and clothing were routinely requisitioned throughout these years²⁵. The British consul reported that "The war in Peru was chiefly carried on by the forced loans and supplies from the southern provinces of Colombia"²⁶. By early 1825, the military governor Paz del Castillo was protesting that the public treasury and what he delicately called 'other resources' of Guayaquil were exhausted and that he could raise no more funds to feed and clothe the Colombian troops returning from Peru²⁷. Forcible recruitment of the population into the army was profoundly unpopular, too, and desertion and mutinies by soldiers and officers commonplace²⁸.

Without minimising the resentment and hostility caused by the high-handed behaviour of the Colombian military government, I want to suggest that it was counterbalanced by clear economic benefits which made such behaviour supportable and that the impact of the war was in the short-term positive. We can see this in some preliminary evidence of wages and prices during the period²⁹. The daily wage of labourers (*peones*) who constituted the majority of the workforce was around 2½ to 3 reales a day in 1820 and 1821. In 1823 they rose to 4 reales and in 1824 to 5 reales. In 1826 they rose briefly to 6 reales, then slipped back to around 4-4½ reales for the rest of the decade. A seaman who up to 1822 earned about 4½ reales, in 1823 saw it rise to 5 reales and by 1825 to 8 reales where it seems to have remained thereafter. An artisan who earned around 3 reales in 1821 earned 6½ in 1823, though in 1825 it slipped back to between 4 and 6

²² Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 189.

²³ ACG vol 30, 17 February 1823.

²⁴ ACG vol 30, 17 April 1824.

²⁵ Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 30.

²⁶ PRO/FO/18/37. Henry Wood to George Canning, Guayaquil, 28 February 1826.

²⁷ Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 191.

²⁸ Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 87.

²⁹ The following figures have been drawn from a large number of references scattered through the printed and manuscript records of the Archivo del Cabildo de Guayaquil, the Archivo Histórico de la Biblioteca Municipal de Guayaquil, the Archivo Histórico del Guayas, and contemporary newspapers.

reales. If we look at prices of articles of daily subsistence, it appears that rice had a variable price of between 3 and 8 pesos the quintal up to 1825, suddenly jumped to 20 pesos in 1826 and then fell back to between 8 and 11 pesos in 1828. Sugar was around 6 to 8 pesos the arroba up to 1824, jumped to 12 pesos in 1825, then settled back possibly as low as 6 pesos in 1828. Meat was at 8 reales the arroba in 1821, rose slightly to 10 reales in 1822, 11½ reales in 1824 and 12½ reales in 1825, then jumped to 18 to 20 reales in 1826 and 1827.

In short, the picture - admittedly sketchy and incomplete - suggests that wages rose quite strongly in the first half of the decade up to around 1825 or 1826 and then stabilised in the second half. Prices on the other hand remained relatively stable or rose only slightly up to the middle of the decade, rose very sharply in 1825 or 1826 then settled back somewhat in the second half of the decade. What caused these movements and in this way?

The fact is that the war made a considerable demand on manpower directly in terms of recruitment into the army and the despatch of men to fight in Peru and indirectly in terms of using labour for war-related activities ranging from the fabrication of uniforms and shoes to the refitting and repairing of warships to the transport and supply of troops. This created a shortage of labour which in turn drove labour costs (wages) up. The process started almost immediately - in November 1822 the merchant and shipowner Manuel Antonio Luzurraga reported that "Because of the small disorders which are the consequence of political changes, particularly when they emanate from the divergence of opinions, they have caused some alteration in the established customs in the shipyard to the notable prejudice of the public, as carpenters and shipwrights are making bold to demand an excess over their daily wage, and the same thing is happening with sawyers, ironsmiths, labourers... etc. I do not think their claims are just... the former arrangements work today much more in favour of the wage-earner because of the cheapness with which they can buy tools, clothes, food etc., by comparison with former times even though their work has not improved..."³⁰. This alteration, an official pointed out, was "general and spontaneous throughout the province"³¹. By late 1825 there was a growing chorus of complaints from employers of all kinds about the high cost of labour and the difficulty of finding workmen. Pay rates for stevedores in December 1825, complained a merchant, were 'excessive'³². In the countryside, a commentator claimed in January 1826, there was insufficient labour to work the cacao plantations³³. In early 1826 another merchant complained of the high cost

³⁰ AHBM vol 22, fol 107. Manuel Antonio Luzurraga to Intendente, 29 November 1822.

³¹ AHBM vol 23, fol 8. Pedro Santander to Intendente, 10 December 1822.

³² *El Patriota de Guayaquil*, 24 December 1825.

³³ *El Patriota de Guayaquil*, 28 January 1826.

and shortage of labour in the timber industry³⁴. British diplomatic and consular agents noted that "the price of labour is very high..."³⁵ and "at a most exorbitant price"³⁶. The sugar industry, it was claimed around the same time, was unable to compete with imports from Peru on account of the high cost of labour³⁷.

That prices did not rise at the same time as wages is, I think, due to the fact that the wealth and resources of the province were hardly more than tapped in this period, and the slack was being taken up that had been there since about 1817 when the disturbances of the closing years of the colony had brought on a recession³⁸.

There was another important war-related factor that influenced the direction of the economy and eventually impinged on politics. This was the effect of deficit financing in the context of heavy war costs. When Guayaquil became independent under the Junta de Gobierno of 1820, it inherited a debt from the previous Spanish government of 391,186 pesos of which all but 52,774 was repudiated by Bolívar in 1823. The war debt left by the government of the independent state of 1820-22 was 415,994 pesos and that for the province's contribution to suppressing the royalist revolt in Pasto was 75,272 pesos³⁹. This accumulated debt was virtually the equivalent of the whole cost of government in a normal year, and to it had to be added the cost of fitting out the Colombian army assembled for the passage to Peru in 1823. To meet the most urgent payments on the debt and to pay for the materials of war the government resorted to the wholesale issue of *vales* or credit notes which by early 1825 had become part of the circulating media in the province and was acknowledged as such by the government⁴⁰. My tentative estimate is that in 1823 alone, these added between 30 and 40 per cent to the media of exchange already in the province. The discount on them stood at a comparatively modest 15 per cent and they were the object of speculative investment by the richer merchants as well as being held by the landowners, artisans and shopkeepers to whom they had been originally given. So integral had they become to the functioning of the economy that the government dared not tamper with them

³⁴ *El Patriota de Guayaquil*, 8 April 1826.

³⁵ Ricketts' report on Peru in HUMPHREYS, R.A. (ed), *British Consular Reports on the Trade and Politics of Latin America, 1824-1826* (London, Royal Historical Society, 1940) p. 185.

³⁶ Wood's report on Guayaquil in Humphreys (ed), *British Consular Reports*, p. 245.

³⁷ *El Patriota de Guayaquil*, 4 February 1826.

³⁸ CUBITT, David, "The Government, the criollo elite and the Revolution of 1820 in Guayaquil", in *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv*, n.s., vol 8, no 3 (1982), pp 257-281.

³⁹ AHBM vol 37, fol 62. Intendente to Ministry of Hacienda, 18 August 1823; fol 78. Intendente to Ministry of Hacienda, 20 September 1824.

⁴⁰ AHBM vol 43. Acta de la Junta de Hacienda, 23 December 1825.

- an attempt in May 1825 to prohibit their use for payment of customs duties had to be hastily withdrawn in the face of local opposition⁴¹. The government, in other words, was pumping large amounts of credit into the local economy thus intensifying inflationary pressures. At the same time, the flood of *vales* had the effect of driving silver and gold coin out of circulation which exacerbated the problems of commercial exchange and made commerce increasingly dependent on the *vales* for its functioning⁴².

In summary, I would argue that whatever the political difficulties posed by the Colombian union, and however popular or unpopular it may have been, the wartime period 1822-25 was one of comparative economic benefit for Guayaquil, when the economy was thriving and expanding and the popular classes were experiencing a real improvement in their employment possibilities and in their real wages. Business for merchants and retailers was good, too - during 1823, 1824 and 1825 the municipality processed literally dozens of applications for plots of land or premises to build on and open shops to operate directly or to let. There is some evidence that suggests that the acute shortage of especially skilled labour in Guayaquil had effects in other provinces, too⁴³. When the military governor lamented the difficulty in 1825 of raising funds to pay for the Colombian army⁴⁴, he was not making a statement about the capacity of the province to support it but about the willingness of the *guayaquileños* to do so. The municipality was able to raise funds for its favoured projects and indeed the years from 1820 to 1826 are a period of ambitious urban renewal and improvement in Guayaquil, with a new cemetery, bridges, municipal buildings, shops all being constructed, street lighting installed, roads paved, the commercial docks, the sewers and flood control improved. In January 1826 the British consul reported that "Guayaquil has every reason to be satisfied with the change of Government. Never was the Commerce of this port more flourishing, or has there ever been so many public works undertaken as are now in progress here..."⁴⁵.

During 1825 and 1826 four predictable and unpredictable factors came together to turn this positive situation into a negative one.

Firstly, as a result of weather conditions the cacao harvest of 1825 was exceptionally poor and only 89,020 cargases were exported. This was not far short of a fifth less than in the previous, also disappointing, year of 1824 and it was almost 40 per cent

⁴¹ *El Patriota de Guayaquil*, 24 December 1825.

⁴² *El Chispero*, 15 December 1825.

⁴³ AHBM vol 29, fol 117, Nicolás Bascones to Intendente, Ambato, 29 November 1823.

⁴⁴ Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 191.

⁴⁵ PRO/FO/18/37. Henry Wood, Disposition of Quito, Cuenca and Guayaquil toward the existing Government of Colombia, 30 January 1826.

down on the year before that. A smaller cacao harvest meant less employment in the countryside, less business for the ship-repairing and refitting industry, and a sharp fall in the revenues from customs duties.

Secondly, it is clear that the inflationary pressure created by the government's financial measures (the issue of *vales*) began to manifest itself in 1825 and 1826 as prices of basic foodstuffs suddenly moved sharply upwards. Meat increased by half as much again in 1826, rice by two and a half times in 1826⁴⁶. The British consul noted that "In Guayaquil we pay for many of the necessary articles of life 200 per cent more than is paid in Cuenca..."⁴⁷.

Thirdly, the end of the war in Peru meant a reduction in all the direct and indirect war-related activities.

Fourthly, there was the imposition of the Colombian tariff. Its immediately visible effect was a sharp fall in government revenues from the customs, the major source of its income. In the first three months after the application of the Colombian tariff, revenues were a mere 20,136 pesos. On an annualised basis, this would bring in barely more than 80,000 pesos a year, less than a fifth of what had been received in the previous year. While we know that this was a gross underestimate and that the revenue for 1825 was actually 302,750 pesos, nevertheless this still represented a decline of around 25 per cent over the previous year. At the time, the news caused something verging on a panic - the Intendente found himself besieged by the state's employees wanting to be paid and, more importantly, also by the holders of the *vales* or papers of credit which now threatened to become worthless. "The clamour over this matter", he reported, "is general" and he feared "the progress of the disgust which such a state of things must produce", especially as the end of the war in Peru left him with no justification for refusing to pay the public debts⁴⁸. In the capital the discount on *vales* fell to 20 per cent and in the countryside to 30 per cent by mid-1825⁴⁹. To conciliate the rich merchants who held the *vales*, the government earmarked half its revenues to payment of the public debt; unfortunately, as these were falling, it still did not mean that the creditors could be guaranteed to be paid, and in addition the government now had too few resources to discharge even its most minimal functions⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ AHBM vol 38, fol 114. Intendente to Ministry of the Interior, 14 February 1826; ACG vol 31. 14 February 1826.

⁴⁷ PRO/FO/18/37. Henry Wood, Public Roads and Communication with the Interior, 30 January 1826.

⁴⁸ AHBM vol 37, fol 108. Intendente to Ministry of Hacienda, 29 April 1825.

⁴⁹ AHBM vol 38, fol 98. Intendente to Ministry of Hacienda, 29 December 1825.

⁵⁰ AHBM vol 38, fol 28. Intendente to Ministry of Hacienda, 29 May 1826.

These circumstances, of worsening conditions for the popular classes and financial anxiety for holders of *vales*, are the background to the next stage in Guayaquil's political evolution.

The Federalist Movement 1826-27

In mid-1826, when news of Bolívar's proposals for a life presidency embodied in the Bolivian constitution arrived from Peru, a group of Bolívar's admirers in Guayaquil plotted to reject the authority of the Bogotá government; they were encouraged by the news of Paez's rebellion in Venezuela which arrived at the same time⁵¹. In coordinated public movements, on 6 July they issued a declaration authorising him to suspend the Colombian constitution and on 28 August they invested him with dictatorial powers⁵². These events, and the documents which reflect them, are susceptible of two different readings, in one of which we are observing a movement with strong popular support, in the other of which we are looking at a conspiracy largely orchestrated by Colombians and military men. For one reading we could note that the meetings were convened in the municipal chamber, that the declaration of 6 July was signed by 103 citizens drawn from the members of the municipality, "the greater part of the leading citizens" and "a large number of the people"⁵³, and that the declaration of 28 August was signed by 42 officials and "two thousand and more other employees and proprietors of this Capital"⁵⁴. Appearances, however, are deceptive, and for the other reading we could remind ourselves that there was a well-established technique of public opinion management of which Bolívar's supporters were past masters, and note that a close analysis of how the meetings were conducted and of the wording of the declarations reveals that they were without spontaneity or free-flowing debate and carefully stage-managed. The principal impression that emerges from them is that the Guayaquil civilians who had been so politically active only three or four years earlier either remained on the sidelines as the passive recipients of the views of the leaders of the pro-Bolívar conspiracy, or were manoeuvred by them into the appearance of support⁵⁵ and went along with the plan because they anticipated getting some benefit for their city from it rather than because they felt a concern for the wellbeing of the Republic from which they now considered themselves to be separated⁵⁶. Though they also applauded the news of Paez's rebellion, it was because it was a blow for independence from

⁵¹ AHBM vol 38, fol 120. Intendente to Ministry of Interior, 14 July 1826.

⁵² Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 283-85.

⁵³ ACG vol 31. 6 July 1826.

⁵⁴ ACG vol 31. 28 August 1826.

⁵⁵ AHBM vol 38, fol 131. Intendente to Ministry of Interior, 2 September 1826.

⁵⁶ ACG vol 31. 31 August 1826.

Colombia⁵⁷. It is clear that they felt little or no enthusiasm for Colombia and indeed - though they gave Bolívar a respectful welcome when he passed through Guayaquil in September 1826 en route back to Bogotá⁵⁸ - with the exception of a dwindling minority of out-and-out admirers they did not especially relish being governed directly by him any longer. Opposition to the Republic was being aired openly, even within the municipality itself, by the beginning of 1826⁵⁹ and the Colombian governor recorded a persistent struggle during these months against the spread of federalist, separatist and 'anarchic' ideas⁶⁰.

There is a hint of racial and class struggle in this period as well which may be linked with the deteriorating economic conditions which were being experienced by the poorer classes. The authorities uncovered a club of coloured people styling itself the 'congresito' which met in secret, published an anti-Colombian pamphlet and agitated on the streets. The club seems to have centred on artisans connected with the dockyard. Their leader (*capataz*), one José Oyarvide, was said to be an "enemy of the whites [who] presents himself as having a large following...". Another, Diego Manrique, had said it was time to shoot the whites⁶¹.

Bolívar attempted to win the *guayaquileños* over towards him by creating a Junta de Beneficencia composed of citizens "notable for their talent, importance and patriotism" but the project came to nothing⁶² and his appointment of a new military governor of the south in 1827 expressly charged with establishing an administration more suited to the "habits, uses and customs" of the people was similarly too little too late⁶³. Indeed, just as in 1822, any beneficial effects such measures might have had were immediately undone by others such as the attempt to impose a *capitación* or poll-tax on all free males⁶⁴ and the reimposition of the *alcabala* or sales tax which had been abolished by the governing Junta in 1821⁶⁵. In March 1827 the Intendente Mosquera, noting that 'the greater part' of the

⁵⁷ AHBM vol 38, fol 120. Intendente to Ministry of Interior, 14 July 1826.

⁵⁸ ACG vol 31. 2 September 1826.

⁵⁹ ACG vol 31. 20 January 1826; 23 January 1826.

⁶⁰ AHBM vol 38, fol 131. Intendente to Ministry of Interior, 2 September 1826; fol 136. Intendente to Ministry of Interior, 11 December 1826.

⁶¹ AHBM vol 67. Intendente to Bolívar, 24 September 1826.

⁶² Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 307.

⁶³ Restrepo, *Historia*, V, 322-23.

⁶⁴ *Suplemento al Patriota de Guayaquil*, 27 January 1827.

⁶⁵ *El Patriota de Guayaquil*, 10 February 1827.

population have failed to pay the poll-tax, decreed that nobody should be allowed to go out of the city without a certificate of payment⁶⁶ - a move which succeeded in being both unenforceable and unpopular at the same time. Outside Guayaquil the tax was virtually impossible to collect⁶⁷. This was just an instance of a wider problem which was eating away at the capacity of government to carry out its functions, namely that the collection of taxes generally had become a major difficulty. As the British chargé in Bogotá noted, "these changes here in different parts, had the bad effect of giving to the people a pretext for not paying any taxes at all."⁶⁸

As support for Colombia declined, the struggle for power in Guayaquil now seemed to become one between proponents of union with Peru and advocates of local independence under the guise of federalism. By March 1827 it was being openly published that the province's representative bodies could express a view even on the basic principles of the constitution and that the sovereignty of the people could not be permanently alienated⁶⁹. Hostility to the Republic was becoming more widespread in the city and the surrounding countryside⁷⁰. Then in early 1827 Ecuadorean and Peruvian officers of the Colombian 3rd Division in Lima pronounced against Bolívar's proposals for a life presidency and in favour of the Constitution and, with the covert support of the new Peruvian president Santa Cruz, made their way back to the Ecuadorean coast with the declared objective of overthrowing the "seditious and rebellious" provincial government i.e. the bolivarian conspirators⁷¹. There is some suggestion that their concealed intention was in fact to expel all the Colombian authorities there and unite the southern departments with Peru⁷², and this was certainly believed by the Intendente in Guayaquil⁷³, but the evidence to support this claim is at best ambivalent.

When the rebels arrived in the province in April 1827 they declared that only the municipalities had legitimate authority and that Bolívar was a tyrant seeking the dictatorship. This approach struck a sympathetic chord - "from the impression I have of the

⁶⁶ *El Patriota de Guayaquil*, 10 March 1827.

⁶⁷ AHBM vol 68. Vicente Ramón Roca to Intendente, 16 May 1827.

⁶⁸ PRO/BT/6/38. Patrick Campbell to George Canning, 2 April 1827.

⁶⁹ *El Patriota de Guayaquil*, 10 March 1827.

⁷⁰ AHBM vol 73. Vicente Ramón Roca to Intendente, 24 (October?) 1827.

⁷¹ *Gaceta Extraordinaria*, Bogotá, 11 March 1827.

⁷² Restrepo, *Historia*, VI, 27-28.

⁷³ PRO/FO/18/48. Informe Dirigido al Poder Ejecutivo, 20 April 1827.

sentiments of the people," the British consul reported, "I believe they will submit to the dictates of the invading party"⁷⁴ - and militia officers in various parts of the province refused to mobilise their troops against the Peruvians⁷⁵. The same happened in the capital where collaborators seized control of the place on the night of 15 April and arrested the Colombian officials⁷⁶. This move was clearly concerted with the municipality, which in short order declared the place to be now "acephalous", convened a "popular assembly" and elected the Ecuadorean-born Peruvian general José de La Mar as civil and military chief at the head of a Junta de Gobierno⁷⁷. According to La Mar, the movement in the city was prompted by the resentment of the *guayaquileños* of the oppression of the officials of the government, and a demand that the public administration should be entrusted to "the sons of Guayaquil"⁷⁸.

Over the next few weeks the Colombian government slowly assembled forces under the command of Juan José Flores to restore control, and La Mar attempted to negotiate a surrender, but was blocked by the municipality which, though it clearly did not trust him not to betray their interests and the confidence they had placed in him⁷⁹, staunchly refused to accept back the authorities they had expelled⁸⁰. Their suspicions of La Mar proved well-founded; on 6 June 1827 he announced that the movement of 16 April had been a "mutiny" of which he wanted no part⁸¹, and shortly afterwards, on 24 July, left to return to Peru where he had just been elected to the presidency. With the flimsy protection he had afforded them now gone, the *guayaquileños* were faced with the equally unpalatable options of sustaining their *de facto* independence against Flores's military measures or negotiating the return of Colombian authority. The city's leaders played their weak hand with considerable skill over the following weeks, arguing that the city had been peaceful and orderly at all times, that the constitution and laws had been respected, that they should therefore be left in peace and that any attempt to subdue it by force would be inappropriate

⁷⁴ PRO/FO/18/48. Charles Wootton to George Canning, 11 April 1827.

⁷⁵ AHBM vol 24. Causa contra Juan Aviles y Pedro María Santistevan. 1827; Causa contra Juan Alvarez, 1827.

⁷⁶ PRO/FO/18/48. Charles Wootton to George Canning, 17 April 1827.

⁷⁷ ACG vol 31. 16 April 1827.

⁷⁸ Restrepo, *Historia*, VI, 35.

⁷⁹ ACG vol 31. 16 May 1827; 31 May 1827.

⁸⁰ Restrepo, *Historia*, VI, 41-42.

⁸¹ ACG vol 31. 6 June 1827.

and a reflection on Flores⁸². They also defined afresh their political agenda; most significantly it made explicit for the first time the possibility of an Ecuadorean state when a public meeting on 25 July, the day after La Mar's departure, called for "the urgent precision that the southern departments should unite themselves... forming a common centre"⁸³. They also reiterated the demand that had been a constant pole of their political ideals since 1820, that "this Department should not be governed by anyone other than its own sons"⁸⁴.

Persistent rumours had begun to circulate by June 1827 of a plot by some of the officers of the 3rd Division to annex Guayaquil to Peru⁸⁵ and in September a conspiracy duly surfaced to unite the province with Peru; significantly it attracted no popular support and collapsed⁸⁶. Indeed, the municipality, bruised by what it saw as La Mar's betrayal of the city, had by now expressly ruled out any union with that country⁸⁷. Finally, at the end of September Flores at the head of Colombian troops re-established control forcing more than 50 of the conspirators of the previous April to flee, mostly to Peru⁸⁸.

What this short-lived episode made very clear was that to all intents and purposes the union with Colombia was dead as a political project; opposition to remaining in the Republic was being expressed quite openly and the union could only persist as long as it was backed by military force. In fact, from 1827 onwards the Colombian administration openly treated the Department of Guayas as if it were a conquered province whose inhabitants were not to be trusted with any responsible office or any local autonomy⁸⁹. However, the episode also showed that the project of recreating an effectively autonomous state in Guayaquil, the 'republicuita' of 1820-22, was also no longer feasible; politically it was simply too weak to sustain itself against the threat of subversion or military conquest by its more powerful neighbours, and financially it was not viable - the regime of municipal autonomy in power from April to September 1827 had to support itself by loans and forced contributions and the returning Colombians found 'not a single piece of eight' in the

⁸² ACG vol 31. 7 June 1827.

⁸³ ACG vol 31. 25 July 1827.

⁸⁴ ACG vol 31. 20 September 1827.

⁸⁵ PRO/FO/18/48. Charles Wootton to George Canning, 12 July 1827.

⁸⁶ CEVALLOS, Pedro Fermín. *Resumen de la Historia del Ecuador desde su origen hasta 1845* (Lima, Imprenta del Estado, 1873), vol 4, pp 218-219.

⁸⁷ ACG vol 31. 5 July 1827.

⁸⁸ Restrepo, *Historia*, VI, 69-70.

⁸⁹ PRO/FO/135/13. Walter Cope to Colonel Campbell, 14 May 1830.

treasury and a further debt based on *vales* of 77,144 pesos⁹⁰.

In commercial terms the re-establishment of Colombian authority seems to have aggravated the difficulties of the Guayaquil merchants who found themselves shouldered aside by foreign importers who traded directly with consumers in the city and in the interior. This had become a problem within a short time of incorporation in 1822 and in 1824 the municipality had tried to raise the issue with the central government to tighten controls on foreign merchants and limit their activities⁹¹. By early 1828 the margin between wholesale and retail prices of imported goods had fallen to about 8 per cent and it was no longer possible, they alleged, for native merchants to compete with foreigners who were exempted from some of the taxes and duties to which they were subjected⁹². The persistent refusal of the Bogotá government to protect native Ecuadorean commerce, trade and industry against foreign imports was a continuing source of complaint and dissatisfaction in the south where, a group of merchants declared in 1828 in tones reminiscent of the incipient nationalism of the provisional government of 1820-22, "it would be no surprise if those [foreigners] who have monopolized every branch of utility... finished up in possession of the country"⁹³. The state monopolies (*estancos*) of salt and tobacco were also persistent causes of complaint, on economic grounds because they pushed up the prices of these articles to excessive levels while at the same time depriving entrepreneurs of the opportunity to engage in the trades, on political grounds because they created a small class of favoured individuals with privileged access to the government. The parlous financial state of the government because of its inability to collect taxes meant that it was pushed into ever-growing dependence on the financiers of the *estancos*. In "this system of favouritism", as the British consul described it, "by degrees the Government finds itself surrounded with a class of persons too useful to be shaken off - who absorb much of its patronage, and obtain privileges over their fellow citizens tending materially to increase the public discontent"⁹⁴. When Bogotá did finally concede to Ecuadorean producers' demands in August 1829, the time had long since passed when it might have had some beneficial political or economic effect.

The intrusion of foreign traders was undoubtedly injurious to the interests of some Guayaquil merchants, and the existence of the *estancos* may well have inhibited the development of some productions and kept prices of some basic articles artificially high. Important political consequences were to flow from these circumstances, however they are

⁹⁰ *Gaceta de Colombia*, 11 November 1827.

⁹¹ ACG vol 30. 14 September 1824.

⁹² *La Miscelánea*, no 13. 8 May 1828.

⁹³ *Gaceta de Colombia*, 1 April 1827; AHBM vol 80. Proposicion que hacen varios vecinos.... 21 June 1828.

⁹⁴ PRO/FO/135/13. Walter Cope to Colonel Campbell, 14 May 1830.

not in themselves continuing evidence of a declining or crisis-ridden economy. In the second half of the 1820s, as the authority and effectiveness of government declined, contraband trade became more widespread along the coast. It had certainly been growing in the closing decades of the colony, but the impression I have is that it became much less widespread between 1820 and 1825 either because of the more liberal commercial policy of the independent governments or because in those years they commanded the means to control and limit it. It was clearly growing again however, in the second half of the 1820s. Foreign merchants, who were supposed only to ship their goods through Guayaquil as a *puerto mayor*, increasingly used a variety of small coastal ports instead, with the open permission of local officials who sometimes levied their own taxes, or else with special licences conceded by the customs administrator in Guayaquil⁹⁵. While almost by definition we cannot quantify the scale of this commerce, what it indicates is that we cannot regard any measure of the trade recorded through Guayaquil after about 1826 as being a very trustworthy indicator of the extent of economic activity generally. This is a point of some importance if the suggestion that is being made here - that though the financial situation of government was deteriorating, the economic situation of the province was one of moderate recovery from the crisis of 1825-26 - is correct.

The Peru-Colombia War 1828-29

By 1828 the only remaining question of importance in the process of definition to which I have referred was whether a union with Peru was possible, feasible or likely to have much support. I have already noted one attempt to bring this about by a conspiracy in 1827 which failed; the events of the next two years ensured and demonstrated that a Peruvian union was not an option for Guayaquil.

The Peru-Colombia War in practice started in August 1828 when Peruvian warships imposed a blockade off the mouth of the Guayas river and began disrupting the maritime commerce of the port. On the land frontier the Peruvian and Colombian armies started to square up to each other in September; the Colombian army of the south of around 4,000 men was kept in being despite "the almost general aversion which they [the *guayaquileños*] had to a war with Peru..."⁹⁶ and the acute shortage of funds which meant that once more a forced loan - this time for 30,000 pesos - was imposed on the city⁹⁷. The maritime blockade of Guayaquil was tightened, Peruvian troops raided the coastal areas of the province, and in November the Peruvian warships came right up to the port and

⁹⁵ AHBM vol 81. José Antonio Roca to Intendente, 10 January 1828; AHBM vol 84. J.A. Izquierdo to Prefect of Portoviejo, 23 September 1829.

⁹⁶ Restrepo. *Historia*, VI, 154.

⁹⁷ AHBM vol 75. Juan Rodríguez Coello to Intendente, 21 August 1828; AHBM vol 78, fol 5. Nicolás Tanco to Intendente, 15 September 1828.

bombarded the city at close range for four hours causing much damage⁹⁸.

The conventional view is that the maritime blockade of Guayaquil, which lasted from September 1828 to January 1829, seriously affected the economy of the port. For almost five months no ships could get in or out of the Guayas and commerce almost came to a standstill⁹⁹. While broadly it is true that a disruptive effect of the war was felt on commerce, I am not sure that we can agree that it was paralysed. The tonnage of ships going through the port of Guayaquil in the second half of 1828, at 4,177 tons was, it is true, sharply down from the corresponding periods in earlier or later years for which we have information (9,657 tons in 1825; 10,989 tons in 1826; 6,720 in 1829; 8,037 tons in 1830). However, it has already been suggested that, while official and officially-recorded and taxed commerce languished, contraband trading - unofficial, illegal, unrecorded and untaxed - flourished. It is worth noting that at this very time a group of four Guayaquil merchants were proposing to the government that they should take on the franchise for the customs of the port for an annual sum of 240,000 pesos¹⁰⁰. This clearly suggests (a) that irrespective of which government was in power there was still a considerable amount of activity going through Guayaquil, and (b) that provided the commerce of the port was properly monitored and regulated, the customs revenues could not have been much below 300,000 pesos i.e. still around the level of three years earlier, if they were to make a profit on the deal (though the proposers rather disingenuously suggested that the average annual income would be only 250,000 pesos, and the proposal was turned down by Bogotá where it was thought the customs was worth at least 300,000 pesos). It is also striking that the municipality of Guayaquil, in which the interests of the city's merchants were well represented, seemed quite unperturbed by the Peruvian blockade and hardly devoted any time in its meetings during this period to any effect it might be having on commerce. The clear inference is that the blockade only marginally affected them.

This is not, of course, to suggest that all sectors of the economy were in good shape. The cacao industry towards the end of the decade was unquestionably in difficulties because of the falling price of the product. Government began to worry about the decline in price as early as 1826 because of its consequences for tax revenues¹⁰¹, however complaints by the producers about the effect of the continuing decline of the price of this

⁹⁸ Restrepo, *Historia*, VI, 155.

⁹⁹ Restrepo, *Historia*, VI, 155.

¹⁰⁰ AHBM vol 43. Junta de Hacienda, 1 October 1828; AHBM vol 80. Francisco Bernal to Intendente, 5 November 1828; AHBM vol 80. Proposición que hacen varios vecinos..., 21 June 1828.

¹⁰¹ AHBM vol 62. Tomás Mosquera, decreto, 25 November 1826.

product on the industry do not start to become evident until 1827¹⁰² and do not become widespread until 1828¹⁰³ when it fell sharply from about 28 reales to about barely more than 4 reales the *carga*. The official view from Bogotá was complacent and unsympathetic. If the Guayaquil cacao producers were finding things difficult in their industry, the Colombian foreign minister insisted in early 1828, it was largely their own fault; they should be more active themselves in fomenting exports, they should try and produce a better quality of product to compete with that produced elsewhere in the Republic, and they should obtain or build locally the ships they need to carry it abroad¹⁰⁴. What actually seems to be the case is that sometime in 1827 or 1828 the cost of production of cacao started to exceed the price obtainable at the port and it ceased to be profitable for the *hacendados* to produce it. They reduced or abandoned production, leaving their *peons* to fend for themselves, and unemployment and impoverishment spread amongst the rural workforce who were the majority of the population¹⁰⁵. Rural workers had been accustomed to eat meat most days of the week in the early 1820s; by mid-1828 they could no longer afford to eat it at all¹⁰⁶. Although the price of cacao partially recovered in 1829, rising to between 8 and 12 reales the *carga*, this was still insufficient, it was claimed, to make it profitable to produce. It is probable that in 1829 only about half as much cacao was harvested as in the previous year and the rural population continued into a second year of unemployment and impoverishment¹⁰⁷. In sharp contrast to the situation three or four years earlier, unemployment in the province was now widespread and attributed in part to the effects of the blockade on exports.

The problems in the cacao industry were of concern to the provincial government because of the effect on revenues, however the reality is that the issue of resourcing government did not simply arise from the difficulties of the cacao industry in 1828 and 1829. Although government revenue from customs duties - its main source of income - fell from a peak of 572,571 pesos in 1823 to a low of 302,750 in the difficult year 1825, it seems to have stabilised thereafter a little above this floor, and cocoa production and exports were certainly buoyant - even if the price was declining - at least up to 1827. However, the residual effects of the war of 1822-25, the disturbances of 1827 and the war of 1828-29 meant that in the second half of the decade government could not cover its costs

¹⁰² AHBM vol 68 Mariano Franco to Intendente, 4 March 1827.

¹⁰³ AHBM vol 38, fol 89. Intendente to Ministry of Interior, 15 November 1828.

¹⁰⁴ AHBM vol 77, fol 88. José Rafael Revenga to José María Restrepo, 11 January 1828.

¹⁰⁵ AHBM vol 80. José Arrian and José Cipriano Santos to Intendente, 16 October 1828; Manuel de los Rios to Intendente, 4 November 1828.

¹⁰⁶ AHBM vol 83. Francisco Rodríguez Plaza to Intendente, 26 June 1828.

¹⁰⁷ AHBM vol 84. Guillermo Franco to Intendente, 2 May 1829.

by ordinary revenue, and as we have seen was persistently compelled to resort to more or less arbitrary and illegal forced loans and other exactions. The evidence suggests that by the end of 1827 revenues were falling short of expenses by between 19 and 23 per cent¹⁰⁸. By February 1830 the public debt for the department stood at 502,851 pesos¹⁰⁹ and was effectively unpayable. An attempt by the provincial government in October 1827 to suspend payment of the *vales*, like its earlier attempt in May 1825, met with fierce opposition by the holders of papers of credit and had to be substantially rescinded soon afterwards¹¹⁰.

From their perspective, then, as the war proceeded, the *guayaquileños* were between two warring governments in one of whom (Colombia) they had long since lost any confidence, in the other of whom (Peru) they had no grounds to confide.

After the Peruvian attack in November 1828 a substantial number of people had already left the city for the comparatively greater safety of the countryside¹¹¹; in January 1829 the Colombian governor eventually abandoned the place as well and withdrew to the interior, and Guayaquil fell into the hands of the Peruvians. La Mar endeavoured to use his possession of the place not just as a bargaining counter in his subsequent negotiations with the Colombians but as an opportunity to realise his ambition to incorporate it into Peru, demanding that any peace treaty should include a clause returning Guayaquil to the position it was in before its annexation to Colombia "leaving it free to express its opinion"¹¹². This plan was undone almost immediately when the Peruvians sustained a crushing defeat at Portete de Tarqui in February, which put paid to Peruvian ambitions to bring the Ecuadorean provinces under their control. Nevertheless, they hung on in Guayaquil - the key to commercial dominance of southern Ecuador - until June 1829 when a combination of Colombian military reconquest of the littoral and revolution in Peru brought the war to an end. The usual exemplary expulsions of citizens and officials who had collaborated with the Peruvians followed¹¹³.

By this time the Peruvian option for Guayaquil's future was dead, killed off by the perceived economic effects of the commercial blockade and the political effects of the Peruvian naval attack and subsequent occupation of the city. According to the British consul

¹⁰⁸ *Gaceta de Colombia*, 20 January 1828; *Gaceta de Colombia*, 9 March 1828.

¹⁰⁹ *El Colombiano de Guayas*, 15 March 1830.

¹¹⁰ AHBM vol 38, fol 43. Intendente to Ministry of Hacienda, 2 October 1827; AHBM vol 81. José Antonio Roca to Intendente, 10 May 1828.

¹¹¹ *El Colombiano de Guayas*, 27 December 1828.

¹¹² Basadre, *Historia del Perú*, vol 1, pp 21-22.

¹¹³ AHBM vol 87. Prefect to Bolívar's Secretary, 22 August 1829.

Walter Cope, La Mar had possessed a party of supporters in Guayaquil second only to Bolívar's up to the time of the Peruvian occupation, but as a result of "the calamities his invasion drew on the people at large... his party is now nearly extinguished"¹¹⁴. It is noticeable that during the five months of Peruvian occupation of Guayaquil between January and June 1829, support and assistance for them was minimal except in the southern part of the province, towards the Peruvian frontier¹¹⁵. The *guayaquileños* remained on the sidelines, treating the Peruvian garrison as an occupying force and making little or no effort to help them defend the city against the Colombian army. In fact, it became clear in the aftermath of the war that nostalgia for the time of the first independent government of 1820-22 was stronger than ever and that "the reestablishment of the Republic is a secret wish in every bosom". Inasmuch as the Peruvian invasion had been welcomed at all, it was only because the *guayaquileños* saw it as the only means of expelling the Colombians; once that had been accomplished, "not a voice was heard in favour of a union with Peru" in spite of the presence of the Peruvian garrison and the activities of La Mar's partisans¹¹⁶. The Peruvian party was exposed as being merely the ambitions of a small group around La Mar and some of his kinfolk, without real or widespread local support.

At the same time the *guayaquileños* felt no desire for the return of the Colombian administration - "they find that since the Republic has been established, under all the shapes it has hitherto assumed, towards them the Executive is always a Tyrant", although the Liberator himself continued to enjoy their personal esteem¹¹⁷. They waited on events and as the Grancolombian Republic visibly disintegrated in 1829 and 1830 took their chance. In May 1830 Juan José Flores in Quito declared for a separate Ecuadorean state, the southern provinces came out in support, and the Colombian union was finally severed. By an irony of history the shadowy Bogotá government had just confirmed in post as Prefect of Guayaquil José Joaquín Olmedo, the poet and politician who had headed the governing Junta which was overthrown by Bolívar in June 1822¹¹⁸. The wheel had come full circle and Olmedo must have profoundly relished the discomfiture of the Colombians and the realisation - albeit in a slightly modified form - of his dream of independence and autonomy. In Guayaquil the act of 19 May 1830 which called for an independent Ecuadorean state was resolved at a mass meeting of the city's civil and military leaders,

¹¹⁴ PRO/FO/135/13. Walter Cope to Colonel Campbell, 14 May 1830.

¹¹⁵ *Alforja Extraordinaria*, 16 July 1829; AHBM vol 90. Mariano Franco and José Calixto Alcívar to Intendente, 13 April 1829; Manuel Alvarez to (Prefect?), 6 October 1829.

¹¹⁶ PRO/FO/135/13. Walter Cope to Colonel Campbell, 14 May 1830.

¹¹⁷ PRO/FO/135/13. Walter Cope to Colonel Campbell, 14 May 1830.

¹¹⁸ AHBM vol 97, fol 17. Alejandro Osorio to José Joaquín Olmedo, 15 May 1830.

churchmen, heads of households and leading merchants and landowners¹¹⁹ - the first genuine expression of opinion since the events of April-September 1827. Political factionalism was submerged in a mood of optimism and renewal, and even the people of colour ("not the least to be mistrusted"), if not contented at least were tranquil¹²⁰. A last-ditch attempt by one of Bolívar's lieutenants, Luís Urdaneta, to recover the south for Colombia at the end of the year came to an end with the death of the Liberator in December and served only to remind the *guayaquileños* of what they were escaping when he attempted to levy a forced contribution of 50,000 pesos from the city.

¹¹⁹ *El Colombiano*, 20 May 1830.

¹²⁰ PRO/FO/135/13. Walter Cope to William Turner, 21 May 1830.