

**Circular from the Council
of the Indies (August 19, 1808)**
denouncing the abuses of Napoleon Bonaparte
against Fernando VII, King of Spain

[A four-page *quarto* booklet, clearly printed and well preserved, containing an informational circular by which the Spanish Council of the Indies, in the absence of King Fernando VII, imprisoned in Bayonne (France), rejects the legitimacy of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain and its colonies, and confirms the loyalty of said Council and the Spanish people to their King Fernando. The text of this document was issued by the Council on August 12, 1808, and originally printed in Madrid seven days later, on August 19, and was in turn reprinted in several American colonies a couple of months later. The copy offered here is from the Buenos Aires reprint, made at the Real Imprenta de Niños Expósitos around October-November 1808 (the precise date of printing is not recorded in the document). This bibliographical research was only able to identify one copy of this printed work in the world, in addition to the one offered here.]

This extraordinary printed work is triply relevant, for very different reasons. First, its original publication in Madrid is a unique testimony to the desperate attempt by the aristocracy dependent on the Spanish crown to resist French domination during the Napoleonic invasion (1807-1812); second, its reprinting in Buenos Aires—during the political interregnum that made of Santiago de Liniers, a local hero as defender of Buenos Aires against the successive British invasions in 1806-1807, a *de facto* viceroy—reveals the effort of the local Spanish elites to curb the increasingly intense stirrings of an imminent Creole revolution, which finally took place in 1810; thirdly, it is a very rare piece, of which there are almost no known copies in the world, coming from the famous Real Imprenta de Niños Expósitos, the first printing press in Buenos Aires, from which fundamental texts, such as this one, came out. This and other similar pieces help to understand the transition of the old Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata towards the independent republics into which that political entity was fragmented.

The document centers on the political crisis generated by the so-called “Abdications of Bayonne,” which took place on May 5 and 6, 1808, in the French city of Bayonne, very close to the border with the Spanish Basque Country. During those days, a series of royal

abdications were forced at gunpoint, culminating a few weeks later with the coronation of Joseph I, Napoleon Bonaparte's brother, as the "legitimate" King of Spain. How was this possible? Quite simply. Napoleon managed to trick Fernando VII and his father, Carlos IV, into meeting with him in Bayonne to agree on "the happiness of both nations," as our document states, but instead of engaging in reasonable negotiations, he immediately imprisoned them. He then pressured them, under extreme threats, to first have Fernando VII return the throne of Spain to his father, Carlos IV, who had abdicated in favor of his son just two months earlier, and then to have Carlos IV abdicate in favor of Napoleon himself.

This strange succession of legal acts has its immediate antecedent in the Mutiny of Aranjuez (the town that housed the Royal Palace south of Madrid), a chaotic popular revolt between March 17 and 19, 1808, which culminated in a palace coup whereby the court aristocracy imposed the young Fernando, Prince of Asturias, as the new King of Spain, after forcing his father, Carlos IV, to abdicate in his favor. That *coup d'état* had a timid agenda of liberal reforms, which was never implemented, due to the unexpected French invasion, which immediately sought political control of the Iberian Peninsula. The first step in this process was the restoration of Carlos IV to the throne. From Napoleonic policy, this effectively closed the line of succession opened below the young Fernando, who, having no children at the time, would bequeath his throne to his brethren, also descendent of Carlos IV, who were then outside Napoleonic control. Thus, once Fernando VII "signed" his abdication, Napoleon pressured Carlos IV to cede the Spanish throne to him. A few weeks later, Napoleon, as King of Spain, abdicated the throne in favor of his brother Joseph, who was crowned on June 6, completing in this way the dispossession of the Bourbon dynasty.

Thus, assuming the legitimacy of these three abdications, the ascension of Joseph I attempted to appear before the middle strata of the Spanish and Indies government with a political legitimacy that, nevertheless, was rejected by the Council of the Indies, the regional councils, the municipalities, and, more broadly, by the Spanish people. Spontaneous militias and remnants of the imperial army rose up in arms here and there against the French, fighting successful battles, such as that of Bailén (July 19, 1808), and suffering as well many significant defeats. In any case, as a result of the resistance, and in step with the broader retreat of the French Empire across Europe, sealed at the Battle of Waterloo (June 18, 1815), the French were forced to withdraw from Spain, and Fernando VII finally returned to the Spanish throne in March 1814.

The events narrated in the document record the beginnings of Spain's war of independence against French rule, and were issued by the Council of the Indies, the body through which the Spanish Crown legislated and governed its colonies in America and the Philippines, an institution that never recognized Joseph I as its legitimate monarch. The tone, the chosen events, the manner in which they are narrated, the use of adjectives, etc., present a discourse of great interest to scholars of European politics and of the Political Theory behind the Old Regime, still rooted in the Medieval tradition of the Two Swords: the Temporal Sword and the Spiritual Sword. God was the ultimate source of power, and His free transfer of that power to the Emperor or King, on the one hand, and to the Pope and the Church, on the other, were the foundation of the balanced Christian civil order. This explains why the document begins

by stating that the Divine Providence has always protected the Spanish nation, and that recent events prove it.

In short, the document lists and disregards all the documents issued by the French to substantiate the legitimacy of their government, and traces Spanish political legitimacy and governmental authority back to the abdication of Carlos IV in favor of Fernando VII, following the events of Aranjuez. It is worth recalling, in this regard, that the imprisonment of Fernando, a prince much loved and longed for by his people at that time (though not two decades later!), raised the political problem, in the American colonies, of the legitimate authority of the viceroys. The creoles throughout Spanish America, understanding that, with the king imprisoned, his representatives—the viceroys—lacked legitimacy, initiated the Revolución de Mayo of 1810 in Buenos Aires, followed by the Venezuelan Revolution of 1811. These movements culminated in successful wars of independence across South America, led by generals José de San Martín from the south, liberating Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru, and Simón Bolívar from the north, who defeated the Spanish royalists in Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador. The Encuentro de Guayaquil (1822) between these two leaders is one of the most important milestones in Latin American history.

The Real Imprenta de Niños Expósitos, where our document was printed, was a printing press founded in Buenos Aires in 1780 by Viceroy Juan José de Vértiz. Its purpose was to serve as the official bulletin and a means of disseminating public information throughout the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. It was the first printing press established in Buenos Aires, although not the first in the current Argentine territory, as the Jesuits had previously operated printing presses in some of their houses. Furthermore, the Real Imprenta de Niños Expósitos was established by relocating a Jesuit printing press from the Colegio Mayor de Córdoba, which had been under the custody of the Franciscans since 1767, when the members of the Society of Jesus were expelled from the Americas by order of King Carlos III, father of Carlos IV. The transportation of the printing press to Buenos Aires and its repair at the Manzana de las Luces (then the city's intellectual center) was a slow process, taking place in 1780-1781, but once operational, the press experienced intense activity. Particularly in 1807, shortly before the publication of our pamphlet, the press received a significant boost from the transfer to Buenos Aires of a complete and brand-new English printing press. This printing press had been expropriated by the Creole forces from the British, who had occupied Montevideo between January and September 1807, after regaining control of the city, located on the eastern bank of the Río de la Plata, opposite Buenos Aires.

Of this same text offered here, we have only reliable knowledge of the existence of one copy in the Biblioteca Nacional “Mariano Moreno” of Argentina, that was once part of the Collection “Ángel Justiniano Carranza”. Beyond that, there are no other copies registered in the OCLC, nor could this research locate this pamphlet elsewhere. The Universidad de Buenos Aires libraries consortium does not register it, nor does the Biblioteca Mayor of the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. The piece is not mentioned either in the Índice cronológico de los trabajos ejecutados en la Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos de Buenos Aires, durante los siglos XVIII y XIX y que existen en la Biblioteca Pública Provincial de La Plata, published by Luis Ricardo Fors in La Plata in 1904. In short, the rarity of this piece is remarkable.

Finally, it is worth bearing in mind the relationship of the events described in this document with the American independence, which is celebrating its 250th anniversary these days. Indeed, as is well known, Spain played a very significant role in the independence of the United States (1775-1783), since, in order to weaken England, it provided military and financial support to the American revolutionaries led by George Washington, without imagining that the autonomy of the confederated states would ultimately become the archetype for the independence movements of Central and South America. In fact, all the South American revolutionaries had two guiding lights for their actions: the French Revolution and the United Colonies of North America, whose organization, federal structure, and constitution served as a model for all South American nations, and especially for Argentina.

R. C. Scholars in Manuscripts
and Antiquarian Books

**Circular del Consejo de Indias inserta
en la *Gazeta de Madrid* del 19 de Agosto de 1808**

La Divina Providencia, que en tan repetidas ocasiones ha manifestado la singular protección que dispensa a la Nación Española y sus Indias, acaba de dar una sensible prueba de la continuación de esta gracia en la precipitada fuga que han hecho de esta Corte sus pérfidos opresores.

Con fecha de 10 de abril último se expidió a esos Dominios una Real Cédula en que se insertaron los dos Reales Decretos de 19 y 20 de marzo del mismo año: el primero del señor Rey padre don Carlos IV, en que de libre y espontánea voluntad y por los motivos que expresa, abdicó la corona en su hijo el señor don Fernando, príncipe de Asturias; y el segundo de este soberano, admitiéndola, y mandando se publicase y proclamase con las solemnidades acostumbradas en todos los Reinos de Indias.

Ya en esta época, a esfuerzos de la traición, del engaño y la perfidia, se hallaban ocupadas las principales fortalezas del Reino por las aguerridas tropas francesas, y a las inmediaciones de esta capital sesenta mil hombres de la propia nación, que bien pronto la ocuparon, introduciéndose en ella bajo el engañoso pretexto de un fingido tránsito a los puertos marítimos del mediodía. Desde este momento quedó sin libertad el desgraciado Rey Fernando, y verdaderamente prisionero; pero las repetidas y seductoras protestas del Emperador de los franceses, con las continuas falsas insinuaciones de su deseo de pasar a avistarse con nuestro soberano, su íntimo aliado, para tratar de la felicidad de ambas naciones, hasta el punto de enviar sus equipajes, hacer que se le preparase alojamiento, y señalar día para su entrada en esta corte, sorprendieron la inocente buena fe de su Majestad, que, deseoso de obsequiarle, hizo partir a su augusto hermano el señor Infante don Carlos para que le recibiera en Vitoria. No halló en esta ciudad al engañoso huésped; y con la misma buena fe, o por nueva pérfida insinuación de aquél se trasladó a Bayona, para volver de allí en su compañía.

Continuaba Napoleón desde aquella ciudad sus engaños, pretextando ocupaciones, y prometiendo de día en día verificar su tan anunciado viaje. El Rey, que lo deseaba con ansia para disipar los recelos que en globo se le presentaban y sacudir cuanto antes el yugo de las tropas que le oprimían, dispuso facilitar esta entrevista trasladándose a la ciudad de Burgos, y desde allí a la de Vitoria, persuadido, y tal vez asegurado, de que en cualquiera de estos puntos se presentaría el Emperador sin excusas, y con más facilidad que en la capital del Reino; pero le salieron vanas sus esperanzas, pues ni se trasladó aquél a las inmediaciones de Irún, para donde finalmente tuvo la falsa precaución de citarle, ni se movió de Bayona, a donde había resuelto sorprenderle. Con efecto, pretextando ocupaciones y la mayor facilidad que había en aquella ciudad para acordar los interesantes puntos que exigían la vista de ambos monarcas, instó al Rey con las más solemnes seguridades, pero con el más pérfido e inaudito engaño, a que pasase a Bayona, lo que ejecutó Su Majestad, llevado de la honradez y buena fe que le caracterizan, y con el deseo de poner fin a tantos males, habiendo antes desde Vitoria, por pura condescendencia a los deseos y empeños que le manifestó el Emperador, dado orden para la entrega a las tropas francesas de la persona de don Manuel Godoy, principal autor de tantos

males, y a quien Su Majestad había libertado del furor del pueblo, que le tuvo en su poder para asesinarle, ofreciendo que se le castigaría conforme a los delitos que resultasen de la causa que se le había de formar, a cuyo fin se le conservaba en segura custodia.

Dueño ya Napoleón de la sagrada persona del Rey y de la de su augusto hermano, dispuso aquél por medio del príncipe Murat, General en jefe de sus tropas, que se trasladasen igualmente a Bayona los reyes padres, bajo el especioso pretexto de componer y arreglar las diferencias que suponía entre éstos y Su Majestad; y finalmente hizo conducir al mismo paraje todas las demás personas reales, arrancándolas del seno de su nación, para asegurar el detestable fin que se proponía.

Prisioneros todos, y por efecto de la más inaudita y vergonzosa violencia, hizo que el Rey don Fernando renunciase en su padre la corona que éste libremente le había abdicado, y que Carlos IV la volviese a renunciar en el mismo Napoleón, obligando al Príncipe e Infantes don Carlos y don Antonio a que autorizasen esta inicua usurpación, con la absoluta cesión de sus respectivos derechos. Creyéndose ya dueño de la corona de España y sus Indias por tan detestable medio, la cedió a su hermano José, Rey de Nápoles, nombrándole e instituyéndole Rey y Soberano de esta vasta monarquía; y en seguida hizo y obligó a que pasase a Bayona una multitud de gentes de todas clases y estados bajo el pretexto de arreglar una nueva constitución, que ya anticipadamente había formado, sin haber dejado más arbitrio a los concurrentes, que el violento de firmarla.

Con anterioridad a estas últimas ocurrencias, y viéndose este leal pueblo privado por una parte de su amado soberano y demás personas reales, y oprimido por otra de las vejaciones e insolencias de las tropas francesas que lo dominaban, levantó el grito de su fidelidad en el día 2 de mayo; y acometiendo a aquéllas, a pesar de su desmedida superioridad, se trabó un sangriento combate, en que perecieron muchos honrados y beneméritos españoles, con otro sin comparación mayor número de inicuos opresores franceses, habiendo sido lo más sensible de este caso la bárbara inhumanidad con que en la noche del mismo día y los dos siguientes pasaron a sangre fría por las armas a una multitud de inocentes, a quienes, en el acto de la sublevación, y después de un perdón solemnemente concedido, encontraron con alguna pequeña navaja, tijeras u otro instrumento de sus respectivos oficios.

La triste nueva de esta crueldad voló en el momento por todas las Provincias del Reino, que unánimes hicieron causa común; declararon guerra a la Francia; y se prepararon con indecible celeridad a sacudir el yugo que las oprimía. Asturias, León, Galicia, Santander, Aragón, Valencia, Cataluña, las Andalucías, la Mancha, Murcia, Castilla, Extremadura y Cartagena formaron ejércitos numerosos, y tomaron tales providencias y medidas, que en el corto espacio de dos meses desbarataron todas las ideas de nuestros enemigos, vencióndolos y derrotándolos completamente en cuantos puntos fueron atacados.

A pesar de tan gloriosas y repetidas victorias, en que quedaron las fuerzas enemigas disminuidas en más de las dos terceras partes, con muy pocos arbitrios de reemplazo, se determinó José a trasladarse a esta Capital, persuadido, sin duda, de que su presencia calmaría las generales inquietudes, y se rendirían las provincias al yugo que trataba de imponerles, con cuyo objeto se hizo proclamar en ella el día 25 del pasado mes. Pero fue tan mal recibido de su leal vecindario, que, a pesar de sus esfuerzos y providencias, tuvo que sufrir el sonrojo

de verse casi solo en todos los parajes de su tránsito, y aún en su propio palacio, habiéndose ausentado con anticipación a su llegada casi toda la grandeza, oficialidad y otro sinnúmero de personas de todas clases, estados y condiciones. y finalmente, habiendo recibido en el día 28 la positiva noticia de la rendición en las Andalucías del general Dupont con diecisiete mil hombres de las mejores tropas francesas, resolvió José la retirada o fuga de esta Corte, que verificó precipitadamente con todo el resto del ejército, dirigiéndose hacia la frontera, y cometiendo éste en su tránsito los más execrables excesos de robos, violencias, sacrilegios y asesinatos, habiéndole seguido por desgracia (a excepción del señor don Pedro Cevallos) los ministros don Mariano Luis de Urquijo, don Miguel José de Azanza, don Gonzalo O'Farril, don José Mazarredo y el conde de Cabarrus. Todos los supremos Tribunales de la Nación que tienen su residencia en esta corte han vivido hasta este momento oprimidos, sin libertad ni acción, bajo el más duro yugo que les impuso la perfidia y la traición; pero desde el instante en que han podido hacer que resuene la voz de su autorizada fidelidad se han dado prisa a declarar nulo y de ningún valor ni efecto cuanto se ha ejecutado con violencia, contra el legítimo derecho de la Casa de Borbón a la Corona de España, debiendo, en consecuencia, todas las clases del Estado volver al libre ejercicio de sus obligaciones, que no son otras que las comprendidas en el solemne juramento hecho a nuestro augusto soberano Fernando VII, siendo príncipe de Asturias, reconociéndole por Rey de España y de las Indias en el caso, que ya se ha verificado, de muerte o formal abdicación de su augusto padre, el señor don Carlos IV.

Consiguiente a esta formal declaración, ha resuelto igualmente el Consejo que en todos los parajes de esos dominios donde no estuviere proclamado, y fuere costumbre, se ejecute la proclamación de nuestro amado señor don Fernando VII con arreglo al ejemplar de la Real Cédula de 10 de abril, que se dirigió a este fin, quedando sin efecto las de 20 de mayo, 14 y 17 de junio últimos, en que se comunicó la renuncia a la Corona hecha por dicho señor, don Fernando VII, en su padre, el señor don Carlos IV, la de éste en el Emperador de los franceses, la proclama del mismo Emperador declarando por Rey de España y de las Indias a su hermano José Bonaparte, y la aceptación de éste, cuyos actos, como dictados por la opresión y violencia, son absurdos, ilegales, y de ningún valor y efecto, debiendo igualmente incluirse en esta nulidad todas las disposiciones de libranzas o entrega de caudales que en este tiempo se hubiesen dado contra las reales cajas de esos dominios.

Y últimamente, es la voluntad del Consejo que haga V.[uestra Señoría] publicar esta su declaración, comunicándola a quienes corresponda para su observancia y cumplimiento, cuidando con el mayor esmero (como lo espera dicho Supremo Tribunal de la acendrada fidelidad a Su Majestad y amor a la patria de V.[uestra Señoría]) de la tranquilidad pública, y de que se conserven esos importantes dominios en la debida sujeción y obediencia a nuestro legítimo soberano, el señor don Fernando VII, en la inteligencia de que sucesivamente irá comunicando a V.[uestra Señoría] cuanto ocurra para su noticia y gobierno, como lo ejecuto ahora de acuerdo del Consejo.

Dios guarde a V.[uestra Señoría] muchos años. Madrid, 12 de agosto de 1808.

Circular from the Council of the Indies inserted in the *Gazeta de Madrid* of August 19 of 1808

The Divine Providence, which, on so many occasions, has shown singular protection upon Spain and our Indies, has just given a clear proof of the continuation of this grace in the hasty flight from this Court by its treacherous oppressors.

On last April 10, a superior Royal Decree was issued to these domains, in which the two previous Royal Decrees of March 19 and 20 of the same year were inserted: the first from the King Father Don Carlos IV, in which of his free and spontaneous will and for the reasons he expressed, he abdicated the crown in favor of his son Don Fernando, Prince of Asturias; and the second from this sovereign, accepting it, and ordering that it be published and proclaimed with the customary solemnities in all the extension of the Indies.

Even at this time, through the efforts of treachery, deceit, and perfidy, the main fortresses of the Spanish kingdom were occupied by the French troops, and the vicinity of this capital was occupied by sixty thousand invaders, who soon seized it, entering under the deceptive pretext of a feigned transit to the southern seaports. From this moment, the unfortunate King Fernando was deprived of his freedom and became a prisoner; but the repeated and seductive pleas of the Emperor of the French, with the continuous false insinuations of his desire to visit our Sovereign, his close ally, to discuss the happiness of both nations, to the point of sending his baggage, having lodgings prepared for him, and setting a date for his arrival at this court, took advantage of His Majesty's innocent good faith, who, eager to honor him, sent his august brother, the Infante Don Carlos, to receive him in Vitoria. Don Carlos did not find the deceitful guest in this city; and with the same good faith, or perhaps due to a new treacherous insinuation from Napoleon, he moved to Bayonne, hoping to return with Napoleon and his entourage when he deigned to visit King Fernando in a Spanish town.

From Bayonne, Napoleon continued his deceptions, feigning commitments and promising daily to make his much-heralded journey. King Fernando, who eagerly desired it to dispel the growing suspicions and shake off the yoke of the oppressing troops as soon as possible, resolved to facilitate this meeting by traveling to Burgos and from there to Vitoria. He was persuaded, and perhaps even assured, that the Emperor would appear at either of these locations without excuses, and more readily than in the capital. But his hopes proved in vain, for Napoleon neither traveled to the vicinity of Irún, where the King had ultimately taken the misguided precaution of summoning him, nor did he move from Bayonne, where he had intended to surprise him. Indeed, using the pretext of occupations and the greater ease in that city for agreeing on the important points that required the presence of both monarchs, he urged our King with solemn assurances, but with the most perfidious and unheard-of fraud, to go to Bayonne, which His Majesty did, driven by the honesty and good faith that characterize him, and with the desire to put an end to so many evils, having before from Vitoria, out of pure condescension to the wishes and efforts shown to him by the Emperor, given orders for the delivery to the French troops of the person of Don Manuel Godoy, principal author of so many evils, and whom His Majesty had freed from the fury of the people, who were about to

assassinate him, offering that he would be punished according to the crimes attributed to him, for which purpose he was kept in safe custody.

Having already seized control of the sacred person of the King and that of his august brother, Napoleon, through Prince Murat, Commander-in-Chief of his troops, arranged for the former King Carlos IV and his wife Queen María Luisa to move to Bayonne as well, under the specious pretext of settling and resolving the differences he perceived between them and His Majesty; and finally, he had other royal persons brought to the same place, tearing them from the bosom of their nation, to ensure the detestable end he intended.

All taken prisoner, and through the most unprecedented and shameful violence, he forced King Fernando to renounce in favor of his father the crown that the latter had freely abdicated, and then forced Carlos IV to renounce it again in favor of Napoleon himself, compelling Prince Carlos and the Infante Antonio to authorize this iniquitous usurpation by completely surrendering their respective rights. Believing himself now master of the crown of Spain and its Indies by such a detestable means, he ceded it to his brother Joseph, King of Naples, naming and establishing him King and Sovereign of this our vast monarchy; and immediately he summoned and compelled a multitude of people of all classes and ranks to Bayonne under the pretext of drafting a new constitution, which he had already prepared, leaving the attendees no choice but to sign it.

Prior to these recent events, and seeing this loyal people deprived on one side of their beloved sovereign and other royal persons, and oppressed, on the other side, by the vexations and insolence of the French troops that dominated them, they raised the cry of their loyalty on May 2; and attacking those troops, despite their overwhelming superiority, a bloody battle ensued, in which many honorable and meritorious Spaniards perished, along with an incomparably greater number of wicked French oppressors. The most deplorable aspect of this case was the barbaric inhumanity with which, on the night of that same day and the two following days, the French officers coldly slaughtered a multitude of innocent people, whom, in the act of the uprising, and after a solemnly granted pardon, they found with some small knife, scissors, or other instrument of their respective trades.

The sad news of this cruelty spread at once throughout all the provinces of the kingdom, which unanimously joined forces, and declared war on France, preparing immediately with unspeakable speed to shake off the yoke that oppressed them. Asturias, León, Galicia, Santander, Aragón, Valencia, Catalonia, Andalusia, La Mancha, Murcia, Castilla, Extremadura, and Cartagena formed numerous armies and took such measures and precautions that, in the short space of two months, they thwarted all the plans of our enemies, completely defeating and routing them at every point of attack.

Despite such glorious and repeated victories, in which the enemy forces were reduced by more than two-thirds, with very few means of replacement, Joseph resolved to move to this capital, Madrid, undoubtedly persuaded that his presence would calm the general unrest, and that the provinces would submit to the yoke he sought to impose upon them, for which purpose he had himself proclaimed King there on the 25th of the previous month [July]. But he was so poorly received by his loyal neighbors that, despite his efforts and precautions, he had to endure the embarrassment of finding himself almost alone in every place he visited, and

even in his own palace, since almost all the nobility, officers, and countless other people of all classes, ranks, and conditions had departed before his arrival. And finally, having received on the 28th [of July] the news of the surrender in Andalusia of General Dupont with seventeen thousand men of the best French troops, Joseph resolved the retreat or flight from this Court, which he carried out precipitously with the rest of the army, heading towards the border, and committing in its passage the most execrable excesses of robbery, violence, sacrilege and murder, having unfortunately followed him (with the exception of Don Pedro Cevallos) the ministers Don Mariano Luis de Urquijo, Don Miguel José de Azanza, Don Gonzalo O'Farril, Don José Mazarredo and the Conde de Cabarrus. All the supreme strata of the Nation that have their residence in this court have lived until this moment oppressed, without freedom or action, under the harshest yoke imposed upon them by perfidy and treason; but from the moment they were able to make their authoritative fidelity resound, they hastened to declare null and void all that was done by violence against the legitimate right of the House of Bourbon to the Crown of Spain, and consequently all classes of the State must return to the free exercise of their obligations, which are none other than those included in the solemn oath made to our august sovereign Fernando VII, when he was Prince of Asturias, recognizing him as King of Spain and the Indies in the event, which has already occurred, of the death or, in fact, formal abdication of his august father, Don Carlos IV.

Following this formal declaration, the Council has also resolved that in all places of these domains where it has not been proclaimed, and where it is customary, the proclamation of our beloved lord Don Fernando VII shall be executed in accordance with the copy of the Royal Decree of April 10, which was addressed for this purpose, rendering ineffective that of May 20, 1808, as well as those of June 14 and 17, 1808, in which the renunciation to the Crown made by our lord, Don Fernando VII, to his father, Don Carlos IV, that of the latter to the Emperor of the French, the proclamation of the same Emperor declaring his brother Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain and the Indies, and the acceptance of the latter, whose acts, as dictated by oppression and violence, are absurd, illegal, and of no value or effect, and all provisions of drafts or delivery of funds that may have been given at this time against the royal treasuries of these domains must also be included in this nullity.

And lastly, it is the will of the Council that Your Honor publish this declaration, communicating it to those concerned for its observance and compliance, taking the utmost care to maintain public tranquility (as the said Supreme Court expects from Your Honor the unwavering loyalty to our Majesty and love for our homeland), and to ensure that these important domains remain in due subjection and obedience to our legitimate sovereign, King Fernando VII. Your Honor can be assured that I will successively keep you informed of everything that happens, so that you may be aware and exercise good governance, just as I am doing now following the recommendations of the Council of the Indies.

May God grant Your Honor many years. Madrid, August 12, 1808.

Reprinted in Buenos Aires, at the Imprenta de Niños Expósitos