

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES INDEPENDENCE AND THE HISPANIC AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, AND THE ROLE PLAYED BY SOME KEY BOOKS PUBLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XIX CENTURY

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Interesting Official Documents Relating to the United Provinces of Venezuela, London 1812

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VENEZUELAN INDEPENDENCE IN 1810 AND THE CONSTITUTION MAKING PROCESS OF 1811

Of all Latin American countries, Venezuela was the first to declare its independence from Spain in 1811, subsequently establishing a new federal State, the first of its kind after the one established three decades before here in the United States of America. It was established by uniting seven of the nine of the former Spanish colonial Provinces then forming the General Captainty of Venezuela. This was a territorial division commonly used in colonial times for the organization of less important provinces, outside the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalties in which were included the rich and more important provinces.¹

Consequently, the Latin American revolution started, not in the opulent capitals of the Viceroyalties, but in those poor and marginal Provinces, particularly in the Province of Caracas, the capital of the Captainty. The revolution started with a civil insurrection or coup d'état against the colonial authorities that occurred on April 19, 1810,² when the *Ayuntamiento* or Municipal or City Council of the capital

¹ In the area of the Caribbean See there were two Viceroyalties: The Viceroyalty of Nueva España – México – and the Viceroyalty of Nueva Granada – Colombia –. The Provinces of the General Captainty of Venezuela not only were not politically subjected to any of those Viceroyalties, but lacking a uniform political and judicial government were subjected to two different *Audiencias*, which were the highest Colonial governmental bodies: the central provinces to the *Audiencia* of Santo Domingo, the oldest of all in Hispanic America; and the occidental provinces, those located in the Andes region, to the *Audiencia* of Santa Fe.

² See the relevant documents on the facts of April 19, 1811 in *El 19 de Abril de 1810*, Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, Caracas, 1957. See also Juan Garrido Rovira, *La Revolución de 1810*, Universidad Monteávila, Caracas 2009; Enrique Vilorio Vera and Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *La Revolución de Caracas de 1810*, Centro de Estudios Ibéricos y Americanos de Salamanca,

deposed the Governor and General Captain, and established a new autonomous government.³ The *Ayuntamiento* transformed itself, incorporating new members as representatives of the people into a *Junta* of government that at the beginning was called “for the Conservancy of the Rights of Ferdinand VII,” who was then the King of Spain despite being kidnapped by Napoleon.⁴

The *Junta* was formally organized two months later, in June 1810, following the general pattern of similar *Juntas* that since 1808 had been established in Spain during the war of independence against the French invasion,⁵ but in the

Caracas 2011. Several months before the Caracas events, in August 10, 1809, an insurrection took place in Quito in which a group of natives under the command of John Pius Montúfar, Marquis of Selva Alegre, also deposed the colonial authorities and established a Supreme Council also swearing loyalty to Ferdinand VII, in what has been regarded as the first sign for independence in the Spanish American colonies. However, the movement ended up not taking shape and three months later Peru’s Viceroy’s troops had taken over the capital and restored the Spanish government. See the documents of Montúfar and of Rodríguez de Quiroga, Grace and Justice Minister of the Quito Supreme Council in José Luis Romero y Luis Alberto Romero (Coord.), *Pensamiento Político de la Emancipación*, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Tomo I, Caracas 1985, pp.47–50.

³ The news of the Caracas revolution only reached London on June 1810, and it was Francisco de Miranda who sent the reports to the local press (*Morning Chronicle, Courier*). See Mario Rodríguez, “William Burke” and Francisco de Miranda. *The Word and the Deed in Spanish America’s Emancipation*, University Press of America, Lanham, New York, London 1994, p. 276. In the July 31, 1810 issue of *El Español*, published in London and directed by José Blanco-White, he made an important commentary on the Caracas Revolution, at the end of a comment referred to a book of Alexander Humboldt (*Ensayo político sobre el Reino de Nueva España*, Paris 1808-1809), verifying the provisional character of the new government, recognizing the rule of Ferdinand VII, giving some advice to the Council of Regency of Spain if they wanted to prevent to “universally excite the independent spirit of the Americans.” See the text in Juan Goytisolo, *Blanco White. El Español y la independencia de Hispanoamérica*, Taurus 2010, pp. 111 ss.

⁴ On July 28, 1808, a previous attempt was made in the *Ayuntamiento* of Caracas to establish a *Junta* following the pattern of the *Juntas* formed in Spain, but it failed because of the opposition of the Captain General. See the text in José Félix Blanco y Ramón Azpúrua, *Documentos para la Historia de la Vida Pública del Libertador de Colombia, Perú y Bolivia. Puestos por orden cronológico y con adiciones y notas que la ilustran*, Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, Caracas 1977, Tomo II, p. 171. Coincidentally, on July 20, 1808, Francisco de Miranda in a letter sent to the Marquis del Toro, member of the *Ayuntamiento* of Caracas, proposed to the municipal council to take charge of the government of the province. See the text in Francisco de Miranda, *Textos sobre la Independencia*, Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas 1959, pp. 100-101. See also Giovanni Meza Dorta, *Miranda y Bolívar*, bid&co. Editor, Caracas 2007 p. 43.

⁵ These initial constituent decisions, as immediate outcome of the political rebellion initiated on April 19 1810, had their motivations, among other factors, in the extreme political instability that since 1808 had been affecting the Spanish government, due to the absence of Ferdinand VII from Spain, who was held captive in France by Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte; the invasion of the Peninsula by the French Army; and the appointment of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain by the Emperor after enacting a new Constitution for the Realm, in Bayonne in 1808. This situation and the war of independence that spread all over the Spanish Peninsula originated a *de facto* political situation affecting the government of the Monarchy, provoking the creation of provisional local governments (*Juntas*) that were spontaneously established in all the capitals of the provinces during the war. By reuniting such provincial *Juntas*, a *Junta Suprema* or Central was established in Seville, which in 1810 was forced to settle in Cádiz, in the extreme south of Andalucía, where it appointed a Regency Council to govern the Realm, convening at the same time, the elections of representatives for the *Cortes Generales* (Parliament) in order to draft a new Constitution, which is known as the 1812 Cádiz Constitution. This situation, and the fear to be subjected to France, originated the political rebellion in the Spanish Colonies, in particular in the Province of Caracas, in which it was the *Ayuntamiento*, that is, the Municipal body of the capital, which was headed by the General Captain of Venezuela, the one that decided to ignore the Spanish colonial authorities, and to establish in substitution of the colonial Governor and of the same *Ayuntamiento*, a *Junta Suprema de Venezuela*

Venezuelan case, contrary to the Spanish model, they were established with additional inspiration in the new republican principles based on the sovereignty of the people and political representation derived from the North American and French Revolutions that had occurred only two and three decades before.

The first task assumed by the Caracas *Junta* was to promote the revolution among the other Provinces of America asking the respective municipal authorities to follow the same process, or the “example given by Caracas.”⁶ The immediate success of the spreading of the revolutionary ideas provoked the design of the second task of the Caracas Junta, which was to establish a well constituted central power by uniting the provinces. For such purpose, the *Junta* approved in the same month of June 1810, a General Regulation for the popular election of representatives of all the Provinces to form a General Congress,⁷ being such regulation the first electoral statute approved in Latin America.

The result was that representatives of seven of the nine provinces were elected during the last months of 1810, and once the Congress was installed in March 1811, between July and December of that same year, it sanctioned: *first*, on July 1, 1811, a very comprehensive Bill of Rights called “Declaration of the Rights of the People,” more in the trend of the 1789 French Declaration, but also influenced by the 1791 American Bill of Rights; *second*, on July 5, 1811, the formal Declaration of Independence of the Provinces of Venezuela from Spain, following the pattern of the North American Declaration of Independence; and *third*, on December 21, 1811, the “Federal Constitution of the United Provinces of Venezuela” also influenced by the North American and French modern constitutional principles; this being a very comprehensive constitutional text of 228 articles that since then, in one way or another, has influenced all the Venezuelan Constitutions up to the present.⁸ The provinces declared themselves as sovereign

Conservadora de los Derechos de Fernando VII, following in this regard, the same pattern of the *Juntas* that were established in almost all the provinces of Spain during the war of independence.

⁶ The example given by the Province of Caracas was immediately followed by almost all the Provinces of the General Captaincy of Venezuela. That is, following the Caracas decisions, “the example given by Caracas,” there were similar movements in seven of the nine provinces of the Captaincy General of Venezuela during the same year 1810, as well as those that occurred, for example, in other jurisdictions, like Buenos Aires on May 25, 1810, and Bogota, Nueva Granada on July 20, 1810. See for instance, *Actas de Independencia. Mérida, Trujillo y Táchira en 1810*, Halladas y publicadas por Tulio Febres Cordero, 450 Años de la Fundación de Mérida, 1558-2008, Mérida 2007; Angel F. Brice (Ed.), *Las Constituciones Provinciales*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas, 1959.

⁷ See Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *Las Constituciones de Venezuela*, Academia de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Tomo I, Caracas 2008, pp. 535-543.

⁸ Since the 1811 Constitution, and during the last two hundred years, the Venezuelan independent state has been subjected to twenty-six Constitutions sanctioned successively in 1811, 1819, 1821, 1830, 1857, 1858, 1864, 1874, 1881, 1891, 1893, 1901, 1904, 1909, 1914, 1922, 1925, 1928, 1929, 1931, 1936, 1945, 1947, 1953, 1961 and 1999. This excessive number of “constitutions” was the product of the absence of the “amendment” constitutional revision technique, so in their great majority they were mere partial and punctual reforms generally provoked by circumstantial political factors. That is, this number of constitutions does not correspond to similar number of fundamental political pacts originating new political regimes and forms of constitutional government. See the texts of all the

states, having each also adopted its own constitution or form of government (Provincial Constitutions) under the same principles of modern constitutionalism.⁹

With all these events, after the political and constitutional revolutions that a few decades before had taken place in North America and in France, this was the first time that a republican constitutional process of this kind had occurred in modern history,¹⁰ a process that occurred even before the sanctioning of the very important Constitution of the Spanish Monarchy of Cádiz, in March 1812, also following the same modern constitutional principles.¹¹

A BOOK PUBLISHED IN LONDON IN 1812 AS THE WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF THE INDEPENDENCE PROCESS

The most important written testimony of that Venezuelan 1811 constitutional process was a book, a real masterpiece edition reflecting the independence process by containing a collection of the most important official constitutional documents and other political papers produced during such year 1811, which was published during the following year, 1812.

This book was not published in Caracas but in London and in a bilingual Spanish-English edition titled: *Interesting Official Documents Relating to the United Provinces of Venezuela*.¹²

Venezuelan Constitutions since 1811, in Ulises Picón Rivas, *Índice Constitucional de Venezuela*, Caracas, 1944; Luis Mariñas Otero, *Las Constituciones de Venezuela*, Madrid, 1965; Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *Las Constituciones de Venezuela*, Academia de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, 2 Vols., Caracas 2008.

⁹ See *Las Constituciones Provinciales* (Estudio Preliminar por Ángel Francisco Bice), Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas 1959; Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *Historia Constitucional de Venezuela*, Tomo I, Editorial Alfa, Caracas 2008, pp. 239 ss.

¹⁰ On the constitutional aspects of the process of independence of Venezuela since 1810 see Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *Historia Constitucional de Venezuela*, Tomo I, Editorial Alfa, Caracas 2008, pp. 195-278.

¹¹ See Allan R. Brewer-Carías, “La Constitución de Cádiz de 1812 y los principios del constitucionalismo moderno: su vigencia en Europa y en América,” en *Anuario Jurídico Villanueva*, III, Año 2009, Villanueva Centro Universitario, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid 2009, pp. 107-127; “El paralelismo entre el constitucionalismo venezolano y el constitucionalismo de Cádiz (o de cómo el de Cádiz no influyó en el venezolano),” en *Libro Homenaje a Tomás Polanco Alcántara*, Estudios de Derecho Público, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Caracas 2005, pp. 101-189, y en *La Constitución de Cádiz. Hacia los orígenes del Constitucionalismo Iberoamericano y Latino*, Unión Latina-UCAB, Caracas 2004, pp. 223-331.

¹ The book was printed by W. Glidon, Rupert-Street, Haymarket, for Longman and Co. Paternoster-Row; Durlau, Soho-Square; Hartding, St. Jame’s Street; and W. Mason, no. 6, Holywell Street, Strand, & c. & c, London 1812. It was a work that included a double text, in Spanish and English, set in a parallel way along its pages, with the Spanish text on even pages, and the English text on odd pages. Its editorial presentation was described exactly by Carlos Pi Sunyer noting that: “The half title is an engraving of T. Wogeman; an allegory of contemporary taste, with a female figure representing America, another figure that symbolizes the republic and that has a tablet on which is written the word ‘Colombia’ and a cherub with a roll of parchment with the title ‘Constitution of Venezuela.’ The full title of the book is included in the cover, in English language, with many vignettes of good taste. A piece with a nice presentation and interesting content.” see Carlos Pi Sunyer. *Patriotas Americanos en Londres (Miranda, Bello y otras figuras)*, (Ed. y prólogo de Pedro Grases), Monteávila Editores, Caracas 1978, p.211.

It is an extraordinary book, in a very beautiful edition, intended to explain in English and Spanish, when the facts were happening, the reasons and motives of the political actions that had taken place in Caracas for the independence of Venezuela that had initiated the independence of Spanish America from Spain.¹³

The book, *Interesting Official Documents*, had no authorship, being basically a collection of the documents written and approved by the representative of the people to secure the constitutional foundations of the new State. It was preceded by an introductory “*Preliminary Remarks*”¹⁴ and also contained a

2 On the constitutional aspects of the independence process of Venezuela since 1810 see: Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *Historia Constitucional de Venezuela*, Ed. Alfa, 2 vols, Caracas 2008.

13 Those reasons were explained in the London book, grouped as follows: *First*, by describing the general situation of America in connection with Spain “condemned for more than three centuries to have no other existence than to serve to increase the political preponderance of Spain, without the least influence or participation in her greatness;” *Second*, by specifying how the political crisis of the Spanish Crown was one of the immediate causes which led to the independence of Venezuela; i.e., from the events of El Escorial in 1807 (the betrayal of his father Charles IV by his son Ferdinand which was materialized in the events of Aranjuez in 1808) to the events of Bayonne in 1811 (the abdication of the Spanish Crown on behalf of the French Emperor and the transfer of that Crown to the Emperor’s brother as king of Spain and the Americas); *Third*, by the description on how the independence process took three years to develop, from 1808 when in the province of Venezuela upon learning the news of the events of Aranjuez and Bayona, a Supreme Council for the Preservation of the Rights of Ferdinand VII was attempted (following the pattern of those that proliferated in the Peninsula) and was rejected by the colonial officers until independence was declared in 1811; *Fourth*, by explaining the shortsightedness of the Regency, first in the late and misconceived reaction to the admission of the political existence of America within the frame of the Spanish monarchy; and then, in declaring war on the province of Venezuela, which declaration was seconded by the Courts of Cádiz and accomplished by the officials for the “peace process” established in Puerto Rico; *Fifth*, by also describing the senselessness of the Courts of Cádiz on keeping the state of war and blockade against the provinces of Venezuela, a policy with a specifically different outcome in Venezuela than in the rest of the countries of Latin America and which was that the provinces fired back against the very Courts of Cádiz and the Constitution of 1812, having the provinces already conceived their own constitution in 1811 according to all imaginable liberal principles in the mold of the American and French constitutionalism of the XVIII century. The Courts of Cádiz sought to impose itself militarily although with no effect; *Sixth*, by explaining the then already existing rationale that could have been put forward to disclaim the oath given on April 19. 1810 for the preservation of the rights of Ferdinand VI (sic), considered a “presumptive king, unfit to reign” (M); such a time was the one at which independence should have been declared; *Seventh*, by the fundamental questioning of the alleged belonging of America to the Spanish territory; and finally, *Eighth*, by explaining the meaning of the rights of the peoples to uprising against tyrannical governments as the basis for the independence process in Venezuela

14 The authorship of the “Preliminary Remarks” of the book published in London in 1812 had been attributed to Andrés Bello, among other factors, because a reference made at that time by Fray Servando María de Mier in the sense that the text on “the insurrection of Venezuela” would have been “a solid and eloquent booklet of the Secretary of the Commissioners. Andrés Bello was, in fact the secretary of the 1810 Venezuelan Commissioners to London. This is the view of Carlos Pi Sunyer, *Patriotas Americanos en Londres...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-223. See the comment in Ivan Jaskšić, *Andrés Bello. La pasión por el orden*, Editorial Universitaria, Imagen de Chile, Santiago de Chile 2001. On the other hand, Caracciolo Parra-Pérez considered that Sanz was probably the one who wrote the *Preliminary Remarks* of which he said “were undoubtedly reviewed by Bello.” See “Estudio Preliminar” in *La Constitución Federal de Venezuela de 1811 y Documentos Afines*, Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, Sesquicentenario de la Independencia, Caracas 1952, p. 12. In any case, it is enough to read the *Preliminary Remarks* all together with the *Manifiesto* also contained in the book, to appreciate the participation of many pens in the drafting, particularly of those who drafted the documents themselves. It is even possible to find the presence of the same pens that participated in the drafting of some writings signed by William Burke. See for instance regarding the use of the word “*patria*,” in William Burke, *Derechos de la América del Sur y México*, Vol. 1, Academia de la Historia, Caracas 1959, pp. 239, 243.

“Manifest made to the World by the Confederation of Venezuela in South America,” dated July 30, 1811, explaining “reasons on which she has founded her Absolute Independence of Spain, and of every other Foreign Power whatever.” These documents, all dated between July and December 1811, were sent by the new government to London in the first months of 1812, and in a very expeditious way, they were translated into English, edited and published in a matter of a few months.

The task was not an easy one. To sail between La Guaira that was the port of the Province, and Southampton in England, was quite a complicated journey that generally took several weeks or months; and copies of documents were generally handwritten, as was also the case of translations. In any case, printing books in general was also a major typographic enterprise. Nonetheless, despite all these factors, the publication of our book in London as planned, supported and financed by envoys of the newly independent Venezuelan government was made in record time.

But life not always follows the path designed by man, and books do not always get out of the printing press as planned by authors or editors. In this case, the book, conceived to serve as an written explanation of the independence process of Venezuela, due to the political events that occurred in the new State while the book was edited and being printed in London, resulted in a tragic sort of "post mortem" official publication, beginning to be available only when the newly born Republic had already crumbled and was disappearing as a consequence of the military invasion of the provinces made by the Spanish army.

It can be said that the book only began to circulate after the signing on July 25, 1812,¹⁵ of a Capitulation between the Venezuelan head of the Republican Army, Francisco de Miranda, and the Commander of the Spanish Army, Domingo Monteverde,¹⁶ which put an end to the First Republic.

¹⁵ The final printing format of the book was, undoubtedly completed after the date of the earthquake that devastated Caracas" that occurred on March 23, 1811 (and after the enactment of the Constitution of Cadiz of March 18, 1812), as evidenced by the note placed at the bottom of the page of the English text to Article 67 of the Constitution of 1811 (Art. 67 established that on February 15 of each year the Congress was to be installed in the Federal City, which was Caracas), in which was stated that "Valencia has been made, by a recent act of Congress, the Federal Capital wherein the deputies met." On the other hand, the final composition of the book was completed before the news of the Capitulation of Francisco de Miranda that occurred on July 25, 1811 made it to London. Otherwise some note would also had been added to the text, unless it had deliberately not been made to avoid the publishing project to crumble. In that sense, Carlos Pi Sunyer, assuming that the book had come off the press by the end of 1812, said: "It is likely that at the time to be published, Bello had already known about the events that led to the fall of the first republic of Venezuela; because on October 12, Lopez Mendez directs a communication to Lord Castlereagh, referring to them, written in Bello's handwriting, a time when it is believed that the book had been not yet issued or that it had just been issued." See Carlos Pi Sunyer. *Patriotas Americanos en Londres... op. cit.*, p. 222.

¹⁶ See the text of the capitulation in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera* (J.L Salcedo bsastardo, Ed), Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas 1982, pp. 465 ss).

Miranda, by that time, was by far, the most important person in the world related to the South American independence process, identified by William Spencer Robertson, his most important biographer, as:

“[...] Precursor, Knight-Errant, and Promoter of Spanish-American liberty. He was the first cultured South American to make a tour of either the United States or Europe. His life has a unique interest because he was the only personage of his time to participate in the struggle for the independence of the Thirteen Colonies, the French revolution, and the war for the liberation of Spanish America.”¹⁷

¹⁷ See Robertson, William Spence, *The Life of Miranda*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1929, vol. 1, p. ix. Miranda, born in 1750, left the country in 1776 (before the General Captaincy of Venezuela was created in 1777), and went to Spain, rejecting the bigotry and oppression that prevailed in the province, which had affected his father, who was born in the Canary Islands. Upon his arrival in Madrid, he enrolled in a military regiment of the Spanish Crown and went to Cádiz, at which time he met John Turnbull (1776) one of his main protectors and who years after would become one of his most important financial supporters, and even who prepared his failed escape from a Cadiz prison in 1816, the year of his death. Miranda named Turnbull as his executor (See his testament of August 1 1810 in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera* [Ed. J.L. Salcedo Bastardo], Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas 1892, pp. 329). His initial military actions were in Northern Africa and later, from its base in Cuba, in North America, in the taking of Pensacola and the Bahamas (1781), which gave him promotions, but also enemies. Since his first years in Spain, he had been accused and persecuted by the Inquisition Tribunal from 1778, among other motives, because having bought “prohibited books” (See the references to the decisions in Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Miranda*, Caracas 1997, pp. 22, 28 30), to which was added an accusation of supposedly smuggling goods from Jamaica to La Havana during a secret military mission assigned to him in 1781 (See in Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Miranda*, *cit.*, p. 27) charges from which he was declared not guilty in 1799 (*Idem*, p 160 ss). He managed to evade the order of detention that was issued against him on March 11, 1802 (*Idem*, p. 31), and made the decision to travel to North America, with the agreement of the Commander of the Spanish army in the Caribbean, Juan Manuel Cajigal, to whom he explained that it was not “prudent” to remain in Cuba, being a “indispensable precaution” to avoid detention (See his letter to Cajigal dated April 16, 1783 in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera*, *cit.* pp. 57-58). He spent one year in North America (1783-1784) where he personally met with the most important leaders of the American Revolution (Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, among others) with whom he began to discuss his liberation plans for “Colombia.” Knowing about the Spanish persecution deployed against him (See Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Miranda*, *cit.*, p. 62), he sailed to London (1785), where among others, he met Colonel William Steuben Smith, who was Aide de Camp to George Washington and with whom he began a military observation journey to Prussia (1785). The publications in London about Miranda alerted again the Spanish authorities of his presence in Europe, which prevented him from returning to London due to the danger of being seized (*Idem*, p. 115). Miranda then traveled to Saxony, Austria, Italy, Egypt, Trieste, Constantinople, the Black Sea and Crimea (1786), where, after meeting with Prince Gregory Potemkin of Russia, he traveled with him to Kiev as a guest of the Russian government. He was received by the Empress Catherine of Russia from whom he received effective support for his projects regarding Spanish America. With a Russian passport, he traveled from Petersburg to Sweden, Norway and Denmark, where, again, he heard of the Spanish government intent to detain him in Stockholm. He then proceeded to the Netherlands and Switzerland arriving in Paris via Marseilles, using another name (M. de Meroff). He managed to return to England on the eve of the French revolution, in June 1789, hoping to find support for his projects of freeing Spanish America. There he met with the Prime Minister, William Pitt (1790). Not finding the support he expected, he traveled back to Paris, with the same ideas and with the intention of going back to Russia (1792). In Paris, the Revolution was already installed, so the invasion of Champagne by the Prussian forces compelled him to accept a military command post in the French forces under the command of General Charles Dumouriez, with the rank of field marshal (1792). For his military actions, he was appointed Commander-In-Chief of the Northern Army. Nonetheless, the Neerwinden military disaster which forced the French army to evacuate the Netherlands and which resulted in treason charges against Dumouriez for wanting to restore the Monarchy, led to a trial against him in which he intended to involve Miranda in his performance. Miranda was persecuted by Robespierre, detained and submitted to the Revolutionary

His seal in the process of Venezuelan independence is of course indelible, even imprinted in the process of publication of our London book. Although Miranda was in Caracas from December 1810 until July 1812 during the writing process of all the documents published in the book and during its editing process, its publication in London was only possible due to the solid and tight set of political and editorial relations and contacts that he had established during his years of residence in London, particularly from 1799 until he began his journey of return to Caracas in October 1810.¹⁸

THE WRITERS OF THE *INTERESTING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF VENEZUELA*, THEIR IMPRISONMENT AND THE FALL OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC

All the *Interesting Official Documents* contained in the London book defining the constitutional framework of the new State were conceived and written by a formidable team of Venezuelan lawyers, who at that time, in addition to being fluent in English and French, and with access to all the new books that managed to get into the provinces, were the principal actors personally participating in the process of independence in a very active way since its beginnings on April 19, 1810.

Among them, mention must be made of Juan Germán Roscio (1763-1821), an experienced *pardo* attorney and theorist, who was one of the “representatives of the people” called to be incorporated in the Caracas *Junta* of 1810.¹⁹ He quickly

Tribunal of Paris, but was declared not guilty in the process that unfolded against him. In December 22, 1797 he signed, in Paris, with other “representative of the peoples and provinces of America” (José del Pozo y Sucre, José de Salas) the “Act of Paris” proclaiming the “independence” of the provinces (See in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera*, *cit.*, p. 195 ; Francisco de Miranda, *Textos sobre la Independencia*, Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas 1959, pp 49-57), returning to London, where the Prime Minister, William Pitt (1798), this time began to pay attention to his plans of Spanish American independence (See Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Miranda*, *cit.*, pp. 145 ss). During those years, Miranda was perhaps one of the most pursued and searched of all Spanish-Americans by the Spanish Crown, being in turn, one of the most important promoters and forerunners of the independence movement regarding Spanish America. After fixing his residence in London in 1799, he stayed until 1805 when he went back to New York, in order to organize, in 1806, an important expedition with independence purposes to the coast of Venezuela, where he came twice ashore, proclaiming independence and libertarian ideas (See the Proclams in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera*, *cit.* p. 356 ss); although eventually failing in his purposes (See his letter to Castlereagh explaining the reasons of the failure of the expedition in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera*, *cit.* p. 366 ss). He returned to London in 1808 only to reinforce his independence projects and to return to Venezuela, after three decades of absence in December 1810 once the independence revolution had started.

¹⁸ These relations involved many persons not only interested in the emancipation of South America from Spain, and deeply involved in the political process for independence, but also in the intellectual life of London. In that group, no doubt, Francisco de Miranda was the key person, whose contacts and organization made possible the publication of the book, although at the time of the editing process he was in Venezuela, as Commander in Chief or *Generalísimo* of the Republican Army defending the Republic against the invasion by the Spanish military forces.

¹⁹ See Luis Ugalde s.j., *El pensamiento teológico-político de Juan Germán Roscio*, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, bid & co. Editor, Caracas 2007, p. 39.

became Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs) of the new *Junta*, and editor of the *Gaceta de Caracas*, which was not only the journal of the government, but the main journal of the country. From those positions, he maintained close relations with Andrés Bello, the first editor of the *Gaceta* and who worked with him in the Department of Foreign Affairs until he traveled to London in July 1810, as Secretary of the Commissioners sent by the *Junta* to London seeking support from the British government.²⁰ Bello, as we all know was as a prolific writer, considered as the most prominent intellectual or the First Humanist of Spanish America,²¹ who developed his main intellectual activities in Chile where he settled some decades later. The Commissioners with whom Bello went to London were Simón Bolívar, the future Liberator of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú and Bolivia, and Luis López Méndez.

Roscio, who was a close friend of Bello, not only supervised through him the edition of the *Interesting Official Documents* book, but he himself was perhaps the main co-drafter of the documents, as well as of other documents like the already mentioned Regulation for the Election of Representatives of the Provinces of Venezuela to the General Congress, and the very important Manifest made to the World explaining reasons of the independence process.

The other co-drafters of the *Interesting Official Documents* were Francisco Javier Ustáriz, Francisco Isnardy, and Miguel José Sanz, all active members of the General Congress in Caracas, and all of them considered by Monteverde, the Spanish invator, after the Capitulation signed by Miranda, as ones of the “monsters of America” responsible for all the evils of the former colonies. They were all captured after Miranda’s Capitulation in July 1812, and sent to prison. Roscio, himself, was sent to Cádiz, as well as Miranda, who resulted to be the most prominent victim of betrayal by his own people and subordinates, particularly by Simón Bolívar, Manuel María de las Casas, military chief of the Port of la Guaira, and Miguel Peña, civil chief of said Port.²² After such events, Bolívar obtained a passport from Monteverde, and managed to escape from possible persecution to Cartagena, in the provinces of Nueva Granada.²³ Of all,

²⁰ Andrés Bello delivered José M. Blanco White, the editor in London of the journal named “*El Español*,” a letter of Roscio dated January 28, 1811, which was answered by the latter on July 11, 1811. Both letters were published in *El Español*. See the text in José Félix Blanco and Ramón Azpúrua, *Documentos para la Historia de la Vida Pública del Libertador...*, *op. cit.*, Tomo III, pp. 14-19.

²¹ See Pedro Grases, *Andrés Bello: El primer Humanista de América*, Ediciones El Tridente, Buenos Aires 1946; *Escritos Selectos*, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas 1988, p. 119.

²² See Giovanni Meza Dorta, *Miranda y Bolívar, Dos visiones*, 3a ed., bid & co. Editor, Caracas 2011, pp. 143 ss., 153 ss.; Mario Rodríguez, *William Burke” and Francisco de Miranda*, *cit.* p. 488.

²³ As Monteverde himself wrote on August 26, 1812 in a letter sent to the Spanish authorities: “I cannot forget the interesting services of Casas, nor of Bolívar and Peña, and because of their persons have not been touched, giving only to the second his passport to foreign countries, due to that in these circumstances, his influence and connection could be dangerous.” See the text of the letter in

Miranda, the Precursor, resulted to be the most prominent victim of the new rule of conquest imposed by the new Spanish conquerors in the provinces of Venezuela; precisely at the same time that in London our book was beginning to be available; a book that he never got to see.

After being detained in Puerto Cabello in later, in the prison of San Felipe El Morro in Puerto Rico, he died in Cádiz in 1816 without being subjected to any sort of trial.²⁴ Roscio managed to be released the previous year, in 1815, traveling to Philadelphia where he published, in 1817, another very important book with his late reflections of the independence process titled: “*El triunfo de la libertad sobre el despotismo, En la confesión de un pecador arrepentido de sus errores políticos, y dedicado a desagraviar en esta parte a la religión ofendida con el sistema de la tiranía* [The Triumph of Freedom over Despotism in the Confession of a Repentant Sinner from his Political Mistakes and Dedicated to make Amends in this Part, of the Offended Religion with the System of Tyranny].²⁵

This “System of Tyranny” argued by Roscio was no other than the one developed by Spain after the independence of Venezuela was declared, in order to achieve the “pacification” of the Venezuelan provinces. For such purpose, the *Junta Suprema* of Spain, and later the Council of *Regencia* created by the latter due to the imprisonment of the King by Napoleon, reacting in a very aggressive way against the independence processes, assigned the pacification military task to a force located in Puerto Rico, from where the Spanish Commander, Domingo de Monteverde, sailed, arriving in the coasts of Venezuela in February of 1812.²⁶ One month later, on March 25, 1812, Monteverde managed to take the town of Carora, on the eve of a terrible earthquake (March 26, 1812) that devastated Caracas,²⁷

Giovanni Meza Dorta, *Miranda y Bolívar, Dos visiones*, 3a ed., bid & co. Editor, Caracas 2011, Appendix 18, pp. 204-206.143 ss.

²⁴ See the letters he sent from the prisons in Puerto Cabello, Rico and Cádiz to all Spanish authorities, including the *Cortes Generales* and even King Ferdinand VII, dated March 8, 1813, June 6, 1813, June 30, 1814 and September 25, 1814 helplessly claiming for justice, in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera*, cit., pp. 474, 480, 484, 487, 491. See specifically the first letter he sent to the Audiencia of Caracas on March 8, 1813 where he argues on the violation of the new Cádiz Constitution of 1812 and on the terms of the capitulation, in Francisco de Miranda, *Textos sobre la Independencia*, cit., pp. 163-172.

²⁵ In the press of Thomas H. Palmer. The second edition of 1821 was also made in Philadelphia in the Press of M. Carey & Sons.

²⁶ See the documents at the *Archivo del General Miranda*, La Habana, 1950, tomo XXIV, pp. 509 a 530. Also in José Félix Blanco y Ramón Azpúrua, *Documentos para la Historia de la Vida Pública del Libertador de Colombia, Perú y Bolivia. Puestos por orden cronológico y con adiciones y notas que la ilustran*, La Opinión Nacional, Vol. III, Caracas 1877, Edición facsimilar: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, Caracas 1977, 1983, pp. 679 y ss. Also in José de Austria, *Bosquejo de la Historia Militar de Venezuela*, Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, Tomo I, Caracas 1960, pp. 340 ss.

²⁷ See on the earthquake, the description of Louis Delpéch published in *Le Journal de Paris*, in May 1813. See the text in Jesús Rosas Marcano, *La independencia de Venezuela y los periódicos de París, 1808-1825*, Caracas 1964, pp. 135-140. See an English version of the letter in Mario Rodríguez, “*William Burke*” and Francisco de Miranda. *The Word and the Deed of the Spanish America’s Independence*, University Press of America, 1994, pp. 451-454. See also the important Message of

producing also devastating effects in the institutions of the new State. The result was that the physical and moral destruction of the province originated a terrible political and social crisis that was followed by the entire institutional destruction of the Republic. With the republican order eliminated, and after the Capitulation was signed four months later, the Federal Constitution of 1811 was substituted by the military rule "of Conquest," which produced, among other facts, the destruction of the historical memory of the new Republic. The Archives of the Province were sacked, provoking the disappearance of the original manuscript of the *Interesting Official Documents* of Independence, copies of which were precisely saved by being previously sent to London for its publication in our book. Consequently, the documents managed to be published in London at the same time that their original manuscripts were disappearing.

THE AUTHENTIC CHARACTER OF THE DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED IN THE LONDON BOOK

In the particular case of the original manuscript of the Declaration of Independence of July 5, 1811, after the Spanish invasion of 1812 it remained disappeared for almost one hundred years, to the point that in 1903, on the eve of the celebration of the centenary of the Independence, the Venezuelan government, in absence of the original text, officially declared that the only real and authentic copy of the Declaration of Independence was precisely the one published in our London book of 1812, hence, its historical importance. For such purpose, the Venezuelan Academy of History gave a formal opinion, which was followed by the official decision to publish in Caracas the texts of the *Interested Official Documents* although only in their Spanish version.²⁸ Consequently, the 1812 bilingual edition of the *Interesting Official Documents*, was completely ignored, and never again was republished.

the Legislature of the Province of Caracas of April 9, 1812, *Idem.*, p. 436; and the comments on the events of Miguel José Sanz, "Bases para un gobierno provisional en Venezuela," in Pedro Grases (Ed.), *Pensamiento Político de la Emancipación Venezolana*, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas 1988, pp. 111 ss.

²⁸ The then President of the Republic, Cipriano Castro, so declared through a Decree published al *Official Gazette* No. 8863 of May 28, 1903, stating that since the book was out of print and there was only one copy existing in Venezuela which had been acquired by the National Academy of History, the publication of the original edition comprising only the Spanish version of the documents was ordered. See *Prólogo a los Anales de Venezuela*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas, 1903. The Spanish version of the *Observaciones Preliminares* that precedes the book's various documents was published in J.F. Blanco y R. Azpúrua, *Documentos para la Historia de la Vida Pública del Libertador...*, *op. cit.*, Tomo III, pp. 391-395. The complete text of the Spanish version of the documents were also published in 1959 in the book headed: *La Constitución Federal de Venezuela de 1811 y Documentos Afines* ("Estudio Preliminar" por Caracciolo Parra-Pérez), Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, Sesquicentenario de la Independencia, Caracas 1952, 238 pp. It was reprinted by Fundación Polar in Caracas, 2009.

It was four years after the official decision of the government regarding the authentic copy of the Declaration of Independence, in 1907, that the lost original manuscript, as well as all the text of the 1811 *Interesting Official documents* were found with the casual discovery of the binding volumes of the Minutes of the sessions of the General Congress of 1811. They were found by chance, as almost all discoveries occur, in the city of Valencia, where the Federal Capital of the Republic began to function in March 1812. In that city, the two big volumes containing such precious documents had remained for a century in private hands, being used without noticing their content, as hard cushions placed upon a bench in order for young pupils to sit high for the purpose of playing the piano.²⁹

In any case, the documents published two hundred years ago in our very important London book were and still are the most important documents ever published in English regarding the process of the independence of Spanish America.

THE INSPIRATION ON THE IDEAS OF THE FRENCH AND AMERICAN REVOLUTIONS IN THE *INTERESTING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS* DESPITE THE INQUISITION TRIBUNAL PROHIBITION

But the importance of the book, in addition to its editorial ups and downs, is that the documents it contains are the most conspicuous evidence of the effective impact that the modern principles of constitutionalism derived from the American and French Revolutions, produced in the constitution making process of Venezuela and Hispanic America in 1811,³⁰ where for the first time in history those principles were conjointly applied and developed.³¹

According to those principles, two hundred years ago, a new constitutional State was created in Venezuela following the general trends of the constitutional

²⁹ The Books containing the manuscripts of the Minutes of the Congress were in possession of two families in Valencia, and the historical Francisco González Guinand participated in their rescue in 1907. See Ramón Díaz Sánchez, "Estudio Preliminar" in *Libro de Actas del Supremo Congreso de Venezuela 1811-1812*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas 1959, pp. 11-13.

³⁰ See Allan R. Brewer-Carias, *Reflexiones sobre la Revolución Norteamericana (1776), la Revolución Francesa (1789) y la Revolución Hispanoamericana (1810-1830) y sus aportes al Constitucionalismo Moderno*, 2ª Edición Ampliada Universidad Externado de Colombia, Editorial Jurídica Venezolana, Bogotá 2008.

³¹ The Venezuelan 1811 Constituent Assembly, as reported by Juan Garrido Rovira "assumed the challenge of the times and check marked the political-cultural ideals of the centuries, among others: Political independence; special consecration of the freedom of thought; separation of powers; suffrage, representation and participation of the citizens in the government; social fairness; consecration and respect of the rights and duties of the man; limitation and control of power; political and civil equality of free men; recognition and protection of the rights of the indigenous towns; prohibition of the traffic of slaves; popular, responsible and alternative government; autonomy of the judicial power on moral basis; the nation over the factions." See Juan Garrido Rovira, *El Congreso Constituyente de Venezuela*, Bicentenario del 5 de julio de 1811, Universidad Monteávila, Caracas 2010, p.12.

process of the United States. In Venezuela, also a General Congress³² integrated by elected representatives of the “United Provinces,” of the former General Captaincy of Venezuela, not only declared Independence in 1811, but also sanctioned a “Federal Constitution for the United States of Venezuela;”³³ being Venezuela the first country in modern constitutional history to adopt the federal form of State after the United States of America.

Venezuela was also, after the United States, the first country to follow all the general principles of modern constitutionalism in its Constitution, namely, the principles of constitutional supremacy, sovereignty of the people, political representation and republicanism; including a declaration of fundamental rights or bill of rights;³⁴ the organization of the State according to the principle of separation of power with a system of checks and balances, and the superiority of the law as expression of the general will; the establishment of a presidential system of government and elected representatives to the senate and the representatives chamber (*diputados*); the organization, within the federation, of a complete system of local governments; and the provision of a Judicial Power integrated by judges imparting justice in the name of the nation with judicial review powers.³⁵

The main question related to this inspiration, of course, relates to the way through which all these ideas and principles managed to enter in the provinces and could pass through the strict Spanish colonial control of the Inquisition, influencing the elites of the country, and being embodied precisely in the *Interesting Official Documents* published in the London book.

The fact is that during Spanish colonial times, as it happens nowadays in all authoritarian systems of government, books, as well as pens and pencils, were and are considered dangerous weapons, and could not spread freely throughout the provinces. This was and is particularly true about books related to ideas such as liberty, freedom, rights of the people, political representation, and peoples’ sovereignty, separation of powers and control of political power.

³² See Ramón Díaz Sánchez (Editor), *Libro de Actas del Supremo Congreso de Venezuela 1811–1812*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas, 1959; Pedro Grases (Compilador), *El pensamiento político de la Emancipación Venezolana*, Ediciones Congreso de la República, Caracas 1988; Tulio Chiossone, *Formación Jurídica de Venezuela en la Colonia y la República*, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Caracas, 1980.

³³ See Caraccciolo Parra Pérez (Editor), *La Constitución Federal de Venezuela de 1811 y Documentos afines*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas, 1959, pp. 79 ff.; and Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *Las Constituciones de Venezuela*, Academia de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Vol. I, Caracas 2008, pp. 553-581.

³⁴ See Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *Las declaraciones de derechos del pueblo y del hombre de 1811*, Academia de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Caracas 2011.

³⁵ See Allan R. Brewer-Carías, *Reflexiones sobre la Revolución Norteamericana (1776), la Revolución Francesa (1789) y la Revolución Hispanoamericana (1810-1830) y sus aportes al constitucionalismo moderno*, Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogotá 2008, pp. 204 ff; Allan R. Brewer-Carías, “El paralelismo entre el constitucionalismo venezolano y el constitucionalismo de Cádiz (o de cómo el de Cádiz no influyó en el venezolano),” in *Libro Homenaje a Tomás Polanco Alcántara*, Estudios de Derecho Público, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Caracas 2005, pp. 101-189.

At the beginning of the 19th century, those books were considered very dangerous and forbidden in Hispanic America, and their introduction, trafficking and possession were persecuted by the Inquisition Tribunal.

But as always happens with books, and in spite of all prohibitions, they always manage to be available, as was also the case in such times, despite the Inquisition; being the consequences of such clandestine diffusion, also persecution and punishment. This was the case, for instance, of books and pamphlets related to the 1789 French Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizens. They were of course formally prohibited by the Inquisition Tribunal of Cartagena de Indias,³⁶ as well as by the Viceroy of Peru, Nueva España and Santa Fe and by the President of the *Audiencia* of Quito. That is why, despite the prohibition and having spread to the provinces of Venezuela at the end of the 18th century, the General Captain informed the Crown about the fact that “principles of liberty and independence so dangerous to the sovereignty of Spain are beginning to brew in the heads of the Americans.”³⁷

The text of the French 1789 Declaration of Rights was even published in a clandestine way in the colonies, as was the case of the translation made by Antonio Nariño in Santa Fe de Bogotá in 1792. That was a grave crime to the point that in 1794,³⁸ it originated a very famous judicial process in which the Inquisition Tribunal condemned Nariño to 10 years in prison in Africa, in addition to the confiscation of all his properties, his perpetual expulsion from the Americas, and the burning, by the hands of the executioner, of the book containing the Rights of Man.³⁹

In those same years, the Secretary of the Royal and Supreme Council of Cartagena de Indias also directed a note to the General Captain of Venezuela dated June 7, 1793, asking him to be aware of the intention of the French Government and of some French revolutionaries, as well as some promoters of subversions in the Spanish domains in the new World, that - it was said - “Send there books and documents damaging the purity of the religion, the public peace and the due subordination of the colonies.”⁴⁰

But it was a casual fact that occurred in Spain in 1796, which would be the one that was going to have the most important impact in the independence process in the provinces of Venezuela. A conspiracy, called of San Blas, was supposed to take place in Madrid that same year in order to establish a Republic inspired by the French Revolution in substitution of the Monarchy. The conspiracy failed, and

³⁶ See. Grases, *La Conspiración de Gual y España y el Ideario de la Independencia*, cit., p. 13.

³⁷ See in J. F. Blanco y R. Azpúrua, *Documentos para la historia de la vida pública del Libertador*, cit., Tomo I, p. 177.

³⁸ *Id.*, Tomo I p. 286.

³⁹ *Id.*, Tomo I, pp. 257-259.

⁴⁰ *Id.*, Tomo I, p. 247.

the conspirators, among them, Juan Bautista Mariano Picornell y Gomilla and Manuel Cortés de Campomares, after being condemned to death, due to the intervention of the French Agent, had their sentence commuted into life imprisonment in the unhealthy dungeons of Puerto Cabello, Portobello and Panama.⁴¹ They were then sent to the Caribbean prisons, being transitorily placed in the prison of La Guaira, the main port of the province of Venezuela.

The conspirators managed to escaped the following year, 1797,⁴² and began to get in touch with the local elite in the Port, encouraging the conspiracy headed by Manuel Gual and José María España, considered to be the “most serious liberation intent of Hispanic America before the Miranda intent in 1806.”⁴³ The conspiracy also failed,⁴⁴ but the product resulting from the intent were a group of papers which were to have enormous importance in the constitutional process of Hispanic America, among them, a book titled *Derechos del Hombre y del Ciudadano con varias máximas Republicanas, y un Discurso Preliminar dirigido a los Americanos*, which of course, was subsequently prohibited by the *Real Audiencia* of Caracas on December 11, 1797. The Tribunal considered that:

“it had all the intention of corrupting the habits and of making hateful the royal name of his Majesty and of his just government; that for the purpose of corrupting the habits, its authors follow the rules of conduct covered by a multitude of vices, disfigured by a few humanitarian appearances.”⁴⁵

The book, probably printed in Guadalupe in 1797,⁴⁶ contained the translation of the French declaration that preceded the Constitution of 1793,⁴⁷ that is, the one of the epoch of the Terror, more violent and openly inviting active revolution.⁴⁸

After the Gual and España Conspiracy, and despite its failure and the fierce persecution that followed against all those that had participated in it, the other important event considered as a direct antecedent of the Venezuelan independence was the disembarkment of the expedition commanded by Francisco de Miranda in the Venezuelan coast (Puerto Cabello y Coro) in 1806, considered to be the most important event regarding the independence that occurred before the abdication of Charles IV and the subsequent abdication of Ferdinand VII in Bayonne in favor of

⁴¹ See P. Grases, *La Conspiración de Gual y España.. cit*, pp. 14, 17, 20.

⁴² See in J.F. Blanco y R. Azpúrua, *Documentos para la historia de la vida pública del Libertador. cit.*, Tomo I, p. 287; P. Grases, *La Conspiración de Gual y España... cit.*, p. 26.

⁴³ P. Grases, *La Conspiración de Gual y España. op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁴⁴ See in J. F. Blanco y R. Azpúrua, *Documentos para la historia de la vida pública del Libertador. cit.*, Tomo I, p. 332.

⁴⁵ P. Grases, *La Conspiración de Gual y España..., cit.*, p. 30.

⁴⁶ Despite that in the front page it appears as published in Madrid, in the printing press of la Verdad, year 1797. See Pedro Grases, “Estudio sobre los ‘Derechos del Hombre y del Ciudadano’,” in the book *Derechos del Hombre y del Ciudadano* (Estudio Preliminar by Pablo Ruggeri Parra and Estudio histórico-crítico by Pedro Grases), Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas 1959, pp. 147, 335.

⁴⁷ *Id.*, pp. 37 ss.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

Napoleon.⁴⁹ That is why, as mentioned, Miranda has been considered the Precursor of the Independence of the American Columbian Continent, his ideas materialized in the libertarian proclamations he wrote and published in the printing press he bought in New York and that he had in his ship, the *Leander*, the vessel he contracted in order to lead the invasion of Venezuela, proposing the independence through the formation of a federation of Free Municipal Councils⁵⁰ based on some French and North American constitutional principles.

That printing press was going to be, precisely and by chance, the first printing press ever introduced in the Provinces of Venezuela, This occurred two years after the failed Miranda invasion, in 1808, when the colonial government of Venezuela decided to authorize its acquisition in Trinidad, where Miranda left it before returning to London, being acquired by Matthew Gallagher,⁵¹ the editor of *Trinidad Weekly Courant*.

In that way was how printing was introduced in Venezuela, being the *Gazeta de Caracas* the first periodical publication in Caracas, beginning on October 24, 1808 at the workshop of Matthew Gallagher and James Lamb.⁵² Regarding this printing press, in addition to being the one brought by Miranda to the Caribbean, in the first book edited in Venezuela was published, titled *Resumen de la Historia de Venezuela* (Summary of the History of Venezuela), a book of Andrés Bello who was then a very high and distinguished official of the General Captaincy and as mentioned, later played an important role in the editing of our book, ***Interesting Official Documents***, in London. Bello himself, as already mentioned, was the first editor of the *Gaceta de Caracas*.

But not only was printing before 1808 a belated matter in the marginal provinces of Venezuela, particularly compared to the introduction of printing press decades before in the main Viceroyalties in America, but since its introduction, it was subjected to strict censure. This was recorded in the same *Preliminary Remarks* preceding our London book, in which references are made to “the public prints...branded with censure and reprobation,” and in general, to the fact that in the Colonial provinces:

“under the most severe threats of punishment, a political inquisition with all its horrors, was established against those who should read, possess, or

⁴⁹ See O.C. Stoetzer, *Las Raíces Escolásticas de la Emancipación de la América Española*, Madrid, 1982, p. 252.

⁵⁰ See Francisco de Miranda, *Textos sobre la Independencia*, Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas, 1959, pp. 95 ss., y 115 ss.

⁵¹ See Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Miranda*, cit, pp. 208, 227.

⁵² The printing press was brought to Caracas by its owners along with Francisco Gonzales de Linares who acted on behalf of the Captain General Juan de Casas. The Royal Treasury granted a mortgage loan for the printing operations with the Government as its main customer. See “Introducción de la imprenta en Venezuela” in Pedro Grases, *Escritos Selectos*, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas 1988, pp. 97 ss.

receive other papers, not only foreign, but even Spanish, that were not out of the Regency's manufacture.”⁵³

Nonetheless, and despite the prohibition, the French and the American revolutionary ideas extensively spread in Spanish America, thanks to some books that were introduced in a clandestine way, whose content is the only explanation of the basic principles that influenced the constitution making process of 1810-1811 imbued in the *Interested Official Documents* published in the London book.

THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL IDEAS AND THE BOOKS ALLOWING THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THE PROVINCES OF VENEZUELA

The ideas resulting from the revolution and independence process of the United States of America were introduced in Venezuela, not due to the work of North Americans citizens, but to the work of a group of Venezuelans residing in Philadelphia, who translated and published American texts, or who served as links for their publication in Venezuela.

The first book that has to be mentioned is one published in Philadelphia in 1810 by Joseph Manuel Villavicencio, a native of the Province of Caracas, when the revolution was in its first stages in Caracas, containing the Spanish version of the Constitution of the United States of America, titled *Constitución de los Estados Unidos de América*.⁵⁴ This was, without doubt, the first translation into Spanish of the American Constitution. It was widely distributed in Spanish America despite the ban imposed by the Inquisition to such kind of publications; and was even reprinted in Bogotá in 1811, and in Cádiz in 1811 during the discussion of the 1812 Constitution.

The second book to be mentioned, also published in Philadelphia and in Spanish, contained the translation of the most important works of Thomas Paine,⁵⁵ which also had extensive diffusion in Spanish America. It contained the text in Spanish of "Common Sense" (Philadelphia, 1776), and the text of two of Paine's "Dissertations on the Principles of Government." It also contained the Spanish version of the Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776), the Articles of the Confederation (1778), the text of the Constitution of the United States and Perpetual Union (July 8, 1778), and its first twelve Amendments (1791, 1798,

⁵³ In the letter Miranda sent to Richard Wellesley Jr. in January 7, 1810, he expresses the same: "There were no printing press in the provinces, and the Spanish government always excluded from the countries all the publications not sent by itself." See in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera* (Ed. J.L. Salcedo Bastardo), Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas 1892, p. 445.

⁵⁴ *Constitución de los Estados Unidos de América. Traducida del inglés al español por don Jph. Manuel Villavicencio*, Filadelfia, Imprenta de Smith y M'Kenzie, 1810.

⁵⁵ On the significance of Paine's work in the Independence of the United States see, for example, Joseph Lewis, *Thomas Paine. Author of the Declaration of Independence*, Freethought Press, New York 1947.

1804); and the text of the Constitutions of Massachusetts (1780), New Jersey (1776), Virginia (1776), and Pennsylvania (1790), and Connecticut.⁵⁶ This book was the work of another Venezuelan, Manuel García de Sena,⁵⁷ and was published with the title: *La Independencia de la Costa Firme justificada por Thomas Paine treinta años ha. Extracto de sus obras*⁵⁸ [“The Independence of the Mainland as Justified by Thomas Paine, Thirty Years Ago. An Excerpt of His Works.”]

In 1811, therefore, these books, published in Philadelphia, in Spanish, were conceived as instruments in order to explain to South Americans the meaning and scope of the American Revolution and its constitutional foundations, being used for the writing of several of the *Interesting Official Documents* published in our London book,⁵⁹ in which it is possible to find direct influence for instance of Paine’s work. That is why, among the first actions that Domingo Monteverde took after occupying Caracas in 1812 was to order the seizure of all copies of that “dangerous” translation of North American materials.⁶⁰

The fact is that despite all the prohibition and persecutions, all these papers had an important impact in Venezuela and generally in Latin America,⁶¹ so at the time of the Independence they were passing from hand to hand, and even part of

⁵⁶ A modern edition of this work is *La Independencia de la Costa Firme, justificada por Thomas Paine treinta años ha*. Translated from English into Spanish by Manuel García de Sena. Foreword by Pedro Grases, Comité de Orígenes de la Emancipación, núm. 5. Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, Caracas, 1949. In addition, it must be mentioned that the same Manuel García de Sena also published in 1812 -with the same house of T. and J. Palmer in Philadelphia- the Spanish translation of the third edition (1808) of John M'Culloch’s book *Concise History of the United States, from the Discovery of America, till 1807*, under the title of *Historia Concisa de los Estados Unidos desde el descubrimiento de la America hasta el año 1807*.

⁵⁷ He was the brother of Ramón García de Sena who was very active in the independence process in Venezuela, acting as a military and as a constituent, in the drafting of the Constitution of the “Sovereign Republic of Barcelona Colombiana, one of the States-provinces of the new State in Venezuela, of January 12, 1812.

⁵⁸ The book was published by the press of T. and J. Palmer, 288 pp. A reprint of this work was carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela in 1987, as a Commemorating Edition of the Bicentennial Anniversary of the Constitution of the United States of America, Caracas 1987.

⁵⁹ For instance, in the book, the expression “rights of the people” was used by Paine (for instance “representative system founded upon the rights of the people”), and was reproduced in many of the *Interesting Official Documents*. See in Manuel García de Sena, *La Independencia de Costa Firme justificada por Thomas Paine treinta años ha*, Edición del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Caracas 1987, pp. 90, 111, 112, 118, 119.

⁶⁰ This translation of Antonio García de Sena, as he himself explained in the Introduction of his book, was intended to “primarily illustrate his fellow citizens about the legitimacy of the Independence and the benefit that should come from it based on the social, political and economic situation of the United States.”

⁶¹ See generally, Pedro Grases, *Libros y Libertad*, Caracas 1974; and “Traducción de interés político cultural en la época de la Independencia de Venezuela” en *El Movimiento Emancipador de Hispano América, Actas y Ponencias*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas 1961, Tomo II, pp. 105 y ss.; Ernesto de la Torre Villas y Jorge Mario Laguardia, *Desarrollo Histórico del Constitucionalismo Hispanoamericano*, UNAM, México 1976, pp. 38–39. See in contrary sense Jaime E. Rodríguez O., “La influencia de la emancipación de Estados Unidos en la independencia de Hispanoamérica,” in *Procesos. Revista Ecuatoriana de Historia*, No. 31, Quito 2010, pp. 25–43; and “Independencia de los Estados Unidos en las independencias hispanoamericanas,” in *Revista de Indias*, vol. LXX, No. 250, Madrid 2010, pp. 691–714.

them were published in the *Gazeta de Caracas*,⁶² which since 1810 had resulted to be the most important source of information about the North American constitutional system, and particularly about the functioning of its federal system of government.

On the other hand, and more important, from November 1810 until March 1812, a series of editorials and articles were regularly published in the *Gaceta de Caracas* related to the functioning of the North American constitutional system, precisely during the same months of the constitution-making process in Caracas, influencing in an extremely important way the Venezuelan drafters of the *Interesting Official Documents*.

Almost all these articles and editorials were published under the name of a certain “William Burke,” who at that time had already authored during the previous years, particularly between 1806 and 1808, three books published in London, two of them directly related to South American Independence highlighting the role that Francisco de Miranda needed to play in it. That is why, as it has been said by Mario Rodríguez, the historian and researcher who has most studied this prolific writer William Burke and his relation with Miranda:

“The First Venezuelan Republic, perhaps more than any other Spanish American country had within its reach unquestionably more information on the U.S. model than others in South America, thanks to the presence of “William Burke.”⁶³

Rodríguez concluded his assertion affirming that “many of Burke’s ideas were reflected in the Constitution of December, 1811,” his articles in the *Gaceta de Caracas* being the most important source reflecting the influence of the North American constitutional principles in the new Venezuelan Republic.

THE WRITINGS OF “WILLIAM BURKE”

But who was this very distinguished and prolific writer with a unique and extraordinary encyclopedic knowledge who eventually was only known through his writings?

There are no exact answers to this question, his existence still being nowadays a matter of conjecture. Only one thing is absolutely certain about this extraordinary personage: Between 1806 and 1810 he authored books and articles published in England, even in the *Edinburgh Review*, precisely while Miranda was in London. After Miranda traveled to Venezuela in 1810 and up to 1812, he supposedly also went to Caracas and authored articles and books, but this time in Spanish, and

⁶² Part of the book by García de Serna -including in it the translation of Paine's works – were published the issues of January 14 and 17, 1812. See Pedro Grases “Manual García de Sena y la Independencia de Hispanoamérica” in the edition of García de Sena made by the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, Caracas 1987, p. 39.

⁶³ See Mario Rodríguez, “William Burke” and Francisco de Miranda, cit., p. 529.

published exclusively in the *Gaceta de Caracas*. After the imprisonment of Miranda and Roscio in 1812, our William Burke just vanished.

All these are, without doubt, elements for suspicion. Nonetheless Venezuelan historiography explains that William Burke “arrived” in Caracas, supposedly in December 1810,⁶⁴ together with Miranda, remaining in Venezuela until the 30th of July 1812,⁶⁵ that is, up to the debacle that occurred the night of that day in the port of La Guaira when Miranda was imprisoned. This William Burke has been identified as a Irishmen, and initially in 1806 as a “late Army Surgeon” as it is stated in his first book published in London, entitled *History of the Campaign of 1805 in Germany, Italy, Tyrol, etc.*⁶⁶ This book is about the Napoleonic wars of that year developed after the reaction of the European Allied against France, whose armies had occupied most of Europe and had threatened to invade England.⁶⁷

This book was forwarded that same year, 1806, by another book which referred to an entirely different subject, also published in London by the same author, with the title: *South American Independence: or the Emancipation of South America, the Glory and Interest of England.*⁶⁸ Despite being quite a different subject, in the front page of the book, the same William Burke appears as its author, although without any reference to the veterinarian profession of the author, being nonetheless the manifest intention of the editor to establish a clear link between the

⁶⁴ In fact, who actually traveled with Miranda to Caracas were two of his most important aides, Manuel Cortés Campomares and José María Antepará, who remained with him until his imprisonment in July 1812.

⁶⁵ In the Venezuelan historiography it is told that Burke, "an Irish publisher" and "friend" of Miranda, had traveled from London to New York and then to Caracas by the end of 1810 "possibly encouraged by fellow countrymen living in London" (See "Nota de la Comisión Editora", William Burke, *Derechos de la América del Sur y México*, Vol. 1, Academia de la Historia, Caracas 1959, p. xi.); that during his stay in Caracas he participated as one of the "important instigators of the moment" (See Elías Pino Iturrieta, *Simón Bolívar*, Colección Biografías de El Nacional No.100, Editora El Nacional, Caracas, 2009, p. 34) along with other patriots in the process of independence. By the end of the republic, Burke had allegedly fled to Curacao in July 1812 and would have died by the end of that year in Jamaica.

⁶⁶ By *William Burke, Late Army Surgeon, London*, Printed for James Ridgway, No. 170, Opposite Bond Street, Picadilly, 1806. See references in Joseph Sabin, *Bibliotheca Americana. A Dictionary of Books relating to America, from its Discovery to the Present Time* (continued by Wilberforce Eames, and completed by Robert William Glenroie Vail), New York, 1868-1976. In the copy of this book commented by Mario Rodríguez, he noted that in a some sort of advertising, the editor Ridgway also refers to a work by William Burke (*The Armed Briton: or, the Invaders Vanquished. A Play in Four Acts*), and to another work: *The Veterinary Tablet, or, a Concise View of all the Diseases of the Horse; with their Causes, Symptoms, and most approved Modes of Cure, By a Veterinarian Surgeon*. See Mario Rodríguez, "William Burke" and Miranda, cit., pp. 129, 546.

⁶⁷ It is a detailed account on military policy of the Napoleonic Wars during 1805, and on the reaction of the great European powers against France. The book contained particular references to the battle of Trafalgar held in October 1805 between the combined fleets of France and Spain and the British navy, which would end Napoleon's attempts to invade England. In the book's appendix there were included important documents and treaties signed between the Allied powers as well as various proclamations of Napoleon. On the cover of the book our Burke was identified as a "Late Army Surgeon." As mentioned, Burke is identified in the book as a former military doctor. See the reference in *Annual Review and History of Literature for 1806*, Arthur Aikin, Ed., Longman etc, Ridgway, London 1807, p. 162.

⁶⁸ By *William Burke, the author of the Campaign of 1805*, J. Ridgway, London 1806.

author of this book with the previous one on the *Campaign of 1805*. The editor's idea was, without doubt, to consolidate a name in the publishing world, using in this case a very well known and "familiar" name like "Burke," at a time in which it did not actually correspond to any living person in the United Kingdom.⁶⁹

Real persons with that name of William Burke, in effect, can be found in the British Islands before and after the years in which our William Burke wrote his books. It was the case, for instance, a few decades before, of the William Burke (1729-1797) who was the co-author with his cousin, Edmund Burke – both Irish - of a book published in London in 1760, entitled: *An Account of the European Settlements in America, in six Parts*.⁷⁰ Edmond Burke, on the other hand, was also the very well renowned author of the book: *Reflections on the Revolution in France. And on the Proceeding in Certain Societies in London Relative to That Event in a Letter Intended to Have Been Sent to a Gentleman in Paris*, 1790. By the end of the 18th century, therefore, Burke was a very well established name in the editorial world, of course, those Irish authors not having any relation with our Burke of the beginning of the 19th century.

The other real William Burke (1792-1829), who can be traced in history during those times, younger than our William Burke, acted in quite a different world than books, although also a publicized world, which was the world of crime. Years after the publication of our William Burke's books in London, in effect, another William Burke became notorious as a criminal who along with an accomplice, William Hare (both of them also Irish), began to plunder graves and to trade in human corpses. For such crimes, he was tried and hanged in 1829; and his body was stuffed before 2000 medical students at the University of Edinburgh. His skeleton can still be seen at the Edinburgh University Museum.⁷¹ This Burke, of course, had no relation to our William Burke.

As mentioned, our William Burke was a febrile intellectual and writer, editor and publisher, who, in addition to the two already mentioned books, wrote and published in London in 1807 another book with the title: *Additional Reasons for our Immediately Emancipating Spanish America: deducted from the New and Extraordinary Circumstances of the Present Crisis: and containing valuable information respecting the Important Events, both at Buenos Ayres and Caracas: as well as with respect to the Present Disposition and Views of the Spanish Americans: being intended to Supplement to "South American Independence,"* by

⁶⁹ There are no biographical references in the United Kingdom on William Burke who allegedly wrote between 1805 and 1810, for what can be said that there was no such person except in the covers of the books that bear the name.

⁷⁰ Published by Rand J. Dodsey, (London 1760)

⁷¹ See reference in R Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1987 and <<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/people/burkehare.aspx>>.

*William Burke, Author of that work.*⁷² This new book was intended to complement the previous one, with references to two particular and important events that occurred in South America precisely after its appearance, in 1806 and 1807.

These events were: first, the expedition organized by Francisco de Miranda for the purpose of initiating the process of independence of Hispanic America that sailed from New York and disembarked in the Province of Venezuela in 1806, failing in his attempt;⁷³ and second, the invasion by General John Whitelocke, Commander-In-Chief of the British forces in the *Río de la Plata*, of Buenos Aires in 1807, who also failed in his attempt.⁷⁴ It was precisely the analysis of these two important events that this third book of William Burk was dedicated, ending with a criticism of the idea of any attempt to liberate Hispanic America by foreign or British invasion and promoting the idea of invasion led by Hispanic Americans themselves, promoting the role that Francisco de Miranda needed to have in that

⁷² Published by F. Ridgway, London 1807. In this book, again, it is noticeable the bond that continues to develop in the sequence between the author of this work and the author of the previous work of 1806. The "Letter to the Spanish Americans" by Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán (whom Miranda had published in London in French, on 1799, and in Spanish, in 1801), was included in the book in the "Second Edition Enlarged, pp. 95-124 (Ridoway, London 1808)".

⁷³ The second part of the book is devoted to analyzing Francisco de Miranda's expedition the previous year, 1806, that with the understanding of the British authorities and that of the United States authorities -although without their official support- sailed on February 3, 1806 with a group of men from New York to invade the province of Venezuela. Miranda arrived in New York in November 1805, where his friend William Steuben Smith helped him mount the expedition and where President Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of State James Madison were duly informed about the project (See Miranda's letter to Thomas Jefferson and James Madison dated January 22, 1806 on the secrecy of the expedition, in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera*, cit. p. 340). After a trial was developed in New York against those who helped Miranda (Smith), Jefferson and Madison argued that it was false that they would have supported the expedition of Miranda (See the reference in Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Miranda*, cit., p. 194). The expedition arrived to the port of Jacmel in Haiti, on February 17, 1806 (where the emperor Jean Jacques Dessalines had just been assassinated and the Petion was in the process of consolidating his power in the South of the Island), Miranda came to the islands of Curacao, Aruba and Bonaire. From there, on April 25, he landed in Puerto Cabello failing in his first invasion undertaking. He then put in at the port of Grenada on May 27, where he met with Admiral Alexander Cochrane -commander of the British fleet in the Caribbean- getting his help with boats and supplies. Subsequently, Miranda arrived in Trinidad on June 2, from where on July 23, he sailed to the Vela de Coro where he landed in early August 1806. The expedition found no echo in the population which had already been warned by the colonial authorities, remaining as its results, the very rich set of papers with the proclamations of independence written by Miranda in Trinidad and Coro, in its capacity as "Commander General of the Colombian Army to the People Residing in the American-Colombian Continent." See Francisco de Miranda, *Textos sobre la Independencia*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas 1959, pp. 93-99.

⁷⁴ The first part of this work was dedicated to analyzing and criticizing the failed British invasion of the city of Buenos Aires in June 1807, with an army of about 10,000 men, after having occupied Montevideo in April of that year. The resistance of the people of Buenos Aires was definitive, beating the British forces and bringing about the capitulation of Whitelocke in humiliating conditions (which was ratified in July 1807), Whitelocke being forced to evacuate the southern border of the Río de la Plata in 48 hours, and to release the city of Montevideo in the two subsequent months. All this occurred on September 1 when Whitelocke left the estuary along with all his army. Upon his arrival in England in January 1808, Whitelocke was subjected to a martial court that found him guilty of all charges put to him, discharging and declaring him "unfit and unworthy to serve His Majesty in any military class." With these events, as recorded in the book, the British generals and admirals became convinced that South America would never be British.

process of the independence of South America,⁷⁵ with a direct petition directed to the British government seeking economic support "with precise figures corresponding to the Miranda projects."⁷⁶

Another fact is clear about our William Burke and this third book, and it is that by the time it appeared in London, in 1807, Miranda was still in the Caribbean (Barbados) waiting to return to London after his failed invasion of the Province of Caracas. Nonetheless, from the recount of his expedition published in Burke's book,⁷⁷ it is possible to conclude that it was written by Miranda himself or under his direction. The fact is that the papers related to his expedition used for the book were sent to London by Miranda with his personal representative, Colonel Count Gabriel de Rouvray, who traveled from Barbados with the complete documentation of the expedition in order to seek British support for a new invasion. Rouvray arrived in London in December 1806 and immediately got in contact with two very distinguished authors and intellectuals that were the most important friends of Miranda in London, no others than James Mill and Jeremy Bentham. At that time, James Mill was already a renowned Scottish writer and columnist,⁷⁸ and Jeremy Bentham a distinguished lawyer and philosopher, who

⁷⁵ The book, *Additional Reasons*, after the brief biography of Miranda, goes on directly to make a defense of the Precursor against the slanders that were spread about him about his intentions over the expedition to Venezuela, describing Miranda as the "South America's Washington", and then goes on to make the proposition that Miranda be immediately aided with a military force comprising 6,000 to 8,000 men in order to achieve the independence of its own country, Caracas, and from there the independence of the rest of Spanish America. Miranda, it was argued, could achieve in that way what no British military could claim directly for it would be rejected as it had just been the case in Buenos Aires. In this way, the project of Spanish American independence -the book read- should not be delayed one more day.

⁷⁶ See Georges L. Bastin, "Francisco de Miranda, "precursor" de traducciones," in *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia de Venezuela*, No.354, Caracas 2006, pp.167-197 and also at <<http://www.histal.umontreal.ca/pdfs/FranciscoMirandaPrecursorDeTraducciones.pdf>>.

⁷⁷ Of this undertaking and in addition to the story in Burke's book, there was published in New York a critical book (probably written by one of the Americans involved in the venture): *The History of Don Francisco de Miranda's Attempt to Effect a revolution in South America in a Series of Letters*, Boston 1808, London 1809. See Mario Rodríguez, "*William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda. The Word and the Deed in Spanish America's Emancipation*, University Press of America, Lanham, New York, London 1994, p. 108.

⁷⁸ James Mill: a prominent Scottish philosopher and historian (1773-1836) and father of John Stuart Mill. He was a prolific writer, his best known works being: *British History of India* (1818), *Elements of Political Economy* (1821), *Essay on Government* (1828) and *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (1829). As an editor and before the publication of these works, he reviewed every imaginable topic and on many occasions he turned to issues relating to Spanish American independence, for example, citing documents of Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán. The article "Pensamientos de un inglés sobre el estado y crisis presente de los asuntos en Sudamérica" (An Englishman's thoughts over the situation and present crisis of affairs in South America) -published in 1810 in *El Colombiano*, which was the newspaper edited by Miranda in London that year- should correspond to Mill, as evidenced by the references made therein to Mill's works on Spanish America published years before in the *Edinburgh Review* (January and July, 1809). This article was also reproduced in the *Gazeta de Caracas*, January 25, 1811 and was taken by Miranda to Venezuela, along with many others papers, on December 1810. v Mario Rodríguez, "*William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda. The Word and the Deed in Spanish America's Emancipation*, University Press of America, Lanham, New York, London 1994, pp. 267-268.

from among the universe of matters of their interest, were becoming concerned with the Spanish American affairs

In addition, Miranda must have left them, before his departure for his expedition, important documents related to the Hispanic American independence process, including his own biography that was also published in Burke's book. Leaving James Mill in London as Miranda's representative, Rouvray returned to Barbados in early 1808, with copies of Burke's new book, *Additional Reasons*, with the recount of the expedition.⁷⁹

It is evident that this alliance between Miranda, Mill and Bentham, is one of the key factor to identify our prolific writer "William Burke" and his editing venture, as a pen name or a pseudonym, which resulted not only from the editorial design of all his books on the Spanish American independence, but also from the promotion it was made in the books of Francisco de Miranda -including the references to the Napoleonic Wars of 1805 -. All this suggests that this books were of a "collaborative nature,"⁸⁰ actually published with the participation of Francisco de Miranda himself, and of his London friends, Mill and Bentham,⁸¹ who became familiar with the Archives of Miranda. They all were devoted to encourage the process of Spanish American independence, compelling a quick action on the part of England.⁸²

⁷⁹ See Mario Rodríguez, "*William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda. The Word and the and the Deed in Spanish America's Emancipation*, University Press of America, Lanham, New York, London 1994, p. 153. In Burke's book *Additional Reasons* of 1807, it was finally argued that if Britain would have given Miranda effective support, his expedition would have not failed; the second half of the text being devoted to promote General Miranda as the most capable person to lead the task of freeing Spanish America with British support. In order to support such proposal, as mentioned, the book included a brief biography of Miranda, undoubtedly written by himself, or under his immediate direction, and which summarizes his life since his birth in Caracas in 1750.

⁸⁰ See Eugenia Roldán Vera, *The British Book Trade and Spanish American Independence. Education and Knowledge Transmission in Transcontinental Perspective*, Ashgate Publishing, London 2003, p. 47. Mario Rodríguez is the author that has studied "William Burke" more accurately and comprehensively as the pseudonym under which James Mill and Jeremy Bentham had written several articles on Spanish America. See Mario Rodríguez, *William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda: The World and Deed in Spanish America's Emancipation*, University Press of America, Lanham, New York, London 1994, pp. 123 ss., 509 ss., 519 See also Ivan Jasksic, *Andrés Bello. La pasión por el orden*, Editorial Universitaria, Imagen de Chile, Santiago de Chile 2001, p. 96, p. 133.

⁸¹ In the group were other supposed friends of Miranda, like Dr. F.S. Constancio, perhaps another penname. Christopher Dominguez Michael says the initials FSM was altogether used by José Francisco Fegorara and Fray Servando de Mier. See in *Vida de Fray Servando*, Ed. Era, México 2004, pp. 394, 447 ss. Mario Rodríguez thought it was a real person guessing that he could have also travelled to Caracas with the Miranda group, where he would have been a stand-in for "William Burke." See Mario Rodríguez, *William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda*, cit. pp. 248, 318, 514, 555.

⁸² For instance, Georges Bastin, in his "Francisco de Miranda, 'precursor' de traducciones" explains that it is very clear to see Miranda's intervention in the publication of Burke's book: *South American Independence: or, the Emancipation of South America, the Glory and Interest of England*, in 1807, saying also that, as aforementioned, in this document "in its last part he requests the government monetary support including precise numbers corresponding to Miranda's project"; and also that "In 1808, Miranda again prepares much of the other Burke's book titled *Additional Reasons for our immediately emancipating Spanish America...*" made in two editions in London. In the extended second edition, as stated above, Miranda includes his English translation of the *Lettre aux Espagnols Américains* (Letter to the Spanish Americans) by Viscardo y Guzman, as well as five documents with

James Mill and Jeremy Bentham were so involved in the Spanish American independence process that they had the purpose of accompanying Miranda in his return to Caracas in 1810.⁸³ In the end, they failed to travel, but their studies, works and papers did effectively travel in the valued Archives of Miranda, of course, altogether with “William Burke,” who began to publish his editorials in the *Gaceta de Caracas* even before his supposed “travel” to Caracas.

The result was that after publishing three books in London between 1806 and 1808, William Burke published in one year and a half (1810-1812) more than eighty editorials in the *Gaceta de Caracas* which referred to the all imaginable important matters of those times, including the political situation in Spain, discussions on religious tolerance and mainly, analysis of the government and the Constitution of the United States. No doubts exist in my opinion that all those works were based on papers written by Mill, Bentham and Miranda, and in many cases using Miranda’s documents contained in his Archives. Also, even Juan German Roscio, himself as editor of the *Gaceta de Caracas*, Francisco Xavier Ustáriz and Miguel José Sanz published some works as Burke’s editorials in the *Gaceta*.⁸⁴

In the end, seventy of the important set of editorials and articles published by Burke between November 1810 and March 1812 in the *Gaceta*, some of which even gave rise to important debates such as the one on religious tolerance, a

the heading “Cartas y Proclamas del General Miranda” (Letters and Proclamations of General Miranda). Then Miranda and Mill contributing, continued as William Burke, writing articles for the *Annual Register and the Edinburgh Review*. Particularly, on January 1809, James Mill, with the help of Miranda, published an article on “Emancipation of Spanish America” for the *Edinburgh Review*, 1809, No. 13, pp. 277-311. See Georges Bastin, “Francisco de Miranda, ‘precursor’ de traducciones” in *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia de Venezuela*, No. 354, Caracas 2006, pp. 167-197; and also at <<http://www.histal.umontreal.ca/pdfs/FranciscoMirandaPrecursorDeTraducciones.pdf>>.

⁸³ See Mario Rodríguez, *William Burke” and Francisco de Miranda*, cit. pp. 242, 315.

⁸⁴ Not surprisingly, Augusto Mijares says that Burke’s recommendations “immediately bring to mind some of Miranda’s projects where the terminology is sometimes followed by Burke.” See Augusto Mijares, “Estudio Preliminar,” William Burke, *Derechos de la América del Sur y México*, Vol. 1, Academia de la Historia, Caracas 1959, p. 21. On the other hand, in the letter from Roscio to Bello of June 9, 1811, Miranda was accused of having excused Burke to the Archbishop in the controversy over the religious matter, stating that the specific letter that caused it had been authored by “Ustáriz, Tovar and Roscio”, *Idem*, p. 26. It must be mentioned, that the “clash between Miranda and Burke” was mentioned in the letter that on June 9, 1811, Juan German Roscio addressed to Andres Bello (who was in London) and where Roscio exhibited his entire grudge against the Precursor. Indeed, if in that crucial year Roscio was against the positions of Miranda, “Burke” had also to be included because “Burke” was the name by which Roscio, as editor of the *Gaceta de Caracas*, also wrote, at times translating Mill’s work, at times writing directly himself. The editorials of the *Gaceta de Caracas* dated January 11, 15 and 18, 1811 were analyzed by Mario Rodríguez, who concluded that they were written by an Hispanic who clearly was Roscio. The same occurred regarding the essay published in the issue of November 19, 1811, written by Ustáriz, and another essay written by Miguel José Sanz.. See Mario Rodríguez, *William Burke” and Francisco de Miranda*, cit. pp. 334, 337, 338, 417, 418. The name of Burke was also used by Roscio as the subscriber to *La Bagatela*, edited by Antonio Nariño in Santa Fe. *Idem*, p. 394.

matter that has been already treated by Bentham in London,⁸⁵ were collected in a new book of William Burke, the fourth published in six years, this time edited in two volumes in Caracas, titled *Derechos de la America del Sur y Mexico*, [The Rights of South America and Mexico] by *William Burke, el author of "La Independencia del Sur de América, la gloria e interés de Inglaterra," Caracas, printed by Gallagher and Lamb, printers for the Supreme Government, 1811.*⁸⁶ This book, in fact was published before the new Federal Constitution of December 21, 1811 was sanctioned: the first volume in July 1811, and the second volume in October 1811,⁸⁷ the latter nonetheless already containing some of the texts of the essays that were subsequently to be published in the *Gaceta de Caracas* up to March 20, 1811, when the last article appeared just before the terrible earthquake that occurred in Venezuela (March 26, 1812).

If William Burke had in fact been a real person, he would have been one of the most distinguished writers of his time, which would have been known in the intellectuals circles of London and later of Caracas. But the fact is that nothing is known about this personage whom the Venezuelan historiography identifies only as an Irishman, a friend of Francisco de Miranda during his last years in London, and who supposedly went to Venezuela, encouraged by Miranda himself, contributing with his writing to the ideas that conformed the constitutional basis of the Venezuelan constitution making process of 1811. In the chronicles of life in Caracas during those days of the independence, nonetheless, he is only mentioned because of his writings and not in any personal character.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ See the text of Burke's article in the *Gaceta de Caracas* No. 20, de 19 de febrero de 1811, in Pedro Grases (Ed.), *Pensamiento Político de la Emancipación Venezolana*, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas 1988, pp. 90-95ss. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that John Mill specifically addressed the issue of religious tolerance between 1807 and 1809 in collaboration with Jeremy Bentham.

⁸⁶ See in the edition of the Academy of History, William Burke, *Derechos de la América del Sur y México*, 2 vols, Caracas 1959. Perhaps for that reason, Joseph M. Portillo Valdés observed that "William Burke" would rather have been, at least according to the writings published in Caracas, a "collective pen" used by James Mill, Francisco de Miranda and John German Roscio. See José M. Portillo Valdés, *Crisis Atlántica: Autonomía e Independencia en la crisis de la Monarquía Española*, Marcial Pons 2006, p 272, nota 60. Contra Karen Racine, *Francisco de Miranda: A Transatlantic Life in the Age of Revolution*, SRBooks, Wilmington, 2003, p 318.

⁸⁷ See Mario Rodríguez, *William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda*, cit. pp. 399, 400, 510, 519.

⁸⁸ It is interesting to note that after the March 1812 earthquake, a Scotsman named John Semple, in a letter he wrote to his brother Mathew Semple, mentioned a few "Americans" that had survived the earthquake, among them one named Burke. See the letter dated April 3, 1811 in *Tres testigos europeos de la Primera República*, Caracas 1934, pp. 86-87. This "American" Burke would have been the Burke that in June 1812 Miranda thought of sending on a mission to negotiate military and political support with the United States. See Mario Rodríguez, *William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda*, cit. pp. 399, 400, 455, 456, 474, 568, 570. It must be mentioned that Augusto Mijares refers to this fact, but in another way, indicating that because a supposed disagreement between Burke (Burke's editorials) and Miranda, he prevented Burke "from leaving the country, even when apparently he had Government submissions for the United States of the North." See the references in Augusto Mijares, "Estudio Preliminar," William Burke, *Derechos de la América del Sur y México*, Vol. 1, Academia de la Historia, Caracas 1959, pp. 25.

In any case, it was through Burke's writings referring to the constitutional system of North America and to the functioning of the federal system of government that these ideas influenced the drafting of the Venezuelan 1811 Federal Constitution and of the other *Interesting Official Documents* contained in the 1812 London book. Among many other elements, this can be corroborated, for instance, in the use of the North American expression "rights of the people" and sovereign of the people instead of the French expressions: "rights of man and the citizens" or "sovereignty of the Nation," contained in the declaration of the Rights of the People of July 1, 1811.⁸⁹

FRANCISCO DE MIRANDA AND THE LONDON HEADQUARTERS FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF SOUTH AMERICA

William Burke, or better, the writings of William Burke, and through them the influence of the North American principles of government in the process of independence of South America, undoubtedly was possible because of the presence of Miranda in London at the beginning of the 19th century, which was the most formidable instrument for the establishment of an extended circle comprising all those living or visiting London with interest in such process.⁹⁰ Among those relations, were those established with the editing world, the writers and intellectuals, specialized booksellers, printing houses, and the editors of journals related to Spanish American matters. It was due to those relations that the publication of our *Interesting Official Documents* was possible, being such book, indirectly, the last editorial venture encouraged by Miranda; a book that as mentioned, he never managed to see, being already imprisoned when it began to be available in London.

While Miranda and his aides were in Caracas, the editing process of the book in London resulted in the hands of Andrés Bello, who never again went back to Caracas.⁹¹ He managed to accommodate himself in Miranda's own house, on his capacity as Secretary of the Venezuelan delegation to the British government,

⁸⁹ See William Burke, *Derechos de la América del Sur y México, cit.*, Tomo I, pp. 113, 118, 119, 120, 123, 127, 141, 157, 162, 182, 202, 205, 241.

⁹⁰ Miranda also had contact with persons all over South America, and with all South Americans staying in London. It is worth highlighting his letter of advice to Bernardo O'Higgins, the Liberator of Chile, before he left London to return to Santiago, in which he advised him "Not to trust men that had passed 40 years of age, except if you know for sure that they like to read, and particularly those books that had been prohibited by the Inquisition," concluding with his advice "Not to forget the Inquisition, nor its spies, its cassocks, nor its tortures." See in Francisco de Miranda, *América Espera, cit.*, pag. 242-244.

⁹¹ For such task, Bello had all the needed skills: not only had he been the editor for the *Gaceta de Caracas* from 1808 to 1810, but previously he had had an important governmental experience in Venezuela, as *Oficial Mayor* of the Captaincy General, having been in the months prior to his trip to London, a close collaborator of Juan German Roscio, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Supreme Council.

a position that allowed him to continue with the contact and relations constructed by Miranda with the Spanish speaking community in London. Among its members, particular reference must be made of José María Blanco y Crespo, better known as Blanco-White, a distinguished Spanish exiled from Seville, editor in 1810 of the newspaper *El Español*, published in Spanish in London, by the French bookseller Durlau.⁹² Blanco-White was one of the first Europeans to have defended the independence process in Spanish America,⁹³ and as he was linked to the London publishing world, he must have been, no doubt, the vehicle through which Bello (who had been in close epistolary contact with Roscio) took care of the book's edition⁹⁴ using the same French bookseller, Durlau, who had its headquarter at Soho Square, London.

From all these facts, it can be said that our *Interesting Official Documents* book, no doubt was the last indirect publishing adventure of Miranda in London, which had begun more than a decade before, in 1794 regarding his French wartime experience,⁹⁵ and later, in 1799, upon his arrival in London after having commanded the French Army of the North, with the publication of the letter written in Paris in 1791 by Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzman Nait, an ex-Jesuit and remarkable intellectual precursor of Spanish American independence, titled *Letter to the Spanish Americans*.⁹⁶ The manuscript of this letter with all his papers were left by Viscardo before his death to the American Minister in London, Rufus King, who decided to give them to Miranda. He then, with the help of King, published in London the Viscardo letter in 1799 as a book with the imprint of Philadelphia. The book entitled *Lettre aux espagnols américaines par un de leurs*

⁹² See *The Life of the Reverend Joseph Blanco White, written by himself with portions of his correspondence*, John Hamilton Thom, London 1845 (Sevilla 1988), p. 22.

⁹³ The Independence Act was published in *El Español*, No. XVI, London, October 30, 1811, p. 44. See the text in Juan Goytisolo, *Blanco White. El Español y la independencia de Hispanoamérica*, Taurus 2010, pp. 197 ss. For this reason, among others, the Regency Council prohibited its diffusion in America.

⁹⁴ This is the same impression of Carlos Pi Sunyer, *Patriotas Americanos en Londres. Miranda, Bello y otras figuras*, Monteavila Editores, Caracas 1978, pp. 217-218.

⁹⁵ See Francisco de Miranda, *Correspondence du général Miranda avec le general Doumoriez, les ministres de la guerre, Pache et Beumonville*, Paris 1794. This book was translated into English and published by Miranda in London in 1796. According to Mario Rodríguez, this publication was motivated by the criticism made against Miranda, considering him an “adventurer” when joining the French Armies, in a book published by Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville, *Letter to his Constituents*, which was translated by William Burke with the Preface of Edmond Burke, London 1794. See Mario Rodríguez, “William Burke” and *Miranda*, cit, pp. 128, 545-546. As Rodríguez pointed out, this was the only indirect contact of Miranda with the Irish writers who died before the end of the century. *Idem*, p. 128.

⁹⁶ Miranda would have used only some of the papers because almost all of those which were never in Miranda's files were found in the files of the leading American politician, Rufus King, who had originally received them. See Merle E. Simmons, *Los escritos de Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán. Precursor de la Independencia Hispanoamericana*, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Caracas, pp. 15-19.

compatriots,⁹⁷ indicated in the "Advertisement" that the author was Viscardo y Guzman. Two years later in 1801, Miranda had the letter translated into Spanish and published it again, this time with London in the imprint, as *Carta dirigida a los españoles americanos por uno de sus compatriotas*.⁹⁸ This letter, thanks to the publicity given to it by Miranda, had a huge influence on the independence movement in Spanish America, its contents being reflected, for example, in the very Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of Venezuela of 1811.⁹⁹

Among the multiple relations and acquaintances Miranda made in London, mention must be made of a French young aid that he met at the Durlau Bookseller, Pedro Antonio Leleux, who has to become his personal secretary; and of Manuel Cortés Campomanes, who had participated with Picornell y Gomilla in the failed Conspiracy of San Blas in Madrid to change the Monarchy for a republican government (1796). Once detained and condemned, he was sent to prison in the Caribbean dungeon, arriving at the Port of La Guaira. After escaping, he participated in 1797 in the Conspiracy of Gual and España against the colonial government. He got in touch with Miranda in London in 1809,¹⁰⁰ and introduced him to another person that must be mentioned, who also played a special role as an aide of Miranda. It was José María Antepara, who later would edit an important book of and on Miranda titled *South American Emancipation*, to which I will refer later. Both collaborated with Miranda in the editing of the journal *El Colombiano* that he founded and published in London in 1810; and both traveled with Miranda to Caracas in 1810; and both managed to escape from La Guaira the night of July 30, in 1812, on the HRM Sapphire, with Miranda's Archives, while Miranda was imprisoned.¹⁰¹

In July 1810, Miranda received the members of the Official Delegation sent to London by the new government of the Province, composed, as already mentioned, by Simón Bolívar and Luis López Mendez and Andrés Bello. Miranda introduced them to the British authorities putting them in contact with the community of intellectuals and British politician friends of Miranda, including Mill and Bentham, as well as with the Hispanics and Americans residing in Great Britain, who disagreed with the Cádiz process in Spain and supported the Spanish American revolution, such as Cortés de Campomares, Antepara and Blanco-

⁹⁷ Philadelphie, MDCCXCIX. The letter was also published in *The Edinburgh Review*. See Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Miranda*, cit. p. 248.

⁹⁸ P. Boyle, London 1801.

⁹⁹ See Georges L. Bastin, "Francisco de Miranda, "precursor" de traducciones," en *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia de Venezuela*, No.354, Caracas 2006, pp.167-197, and also at <<http://www.histal.umontreal.ca/pdfs/FranciscoMirandaPrecursorDeTraducciones.pdf>>.

¹⁰⁰ See Mario Rodríguez, *William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda*, cit. pp. 248, 555.

¹⁰¹ See Giovanni Meza Dorta, *Miranda y Bolívar, Dos Visiones*, bid & co, editors, 3a ed., Caracas 2011, pp. 24-27.

White. They all formed the important editorial circle that was used at the time to spread their ideas on the independence of Spanish America. It was during those months, with the aid of Mill and Bentham, and the translations made by Bello, that Miranda prepared all the documents, articles and editorials that a few months later would appear published in the *Gaceta de Caracas* under the name of William Burke.¹⁰²

Nonetheless, the first article of Mill himself and of William Burke was published even before the return of Miranda to Venezuela through Andres Bello who sent them directly to Juan Germán Roscio, the editor of the *Gaceta*.¹⁰³

So it was during those same days when the Venezuelan visitors were getting used to life in London, that Miranda himself edited in September 1810, the already mentioned book that appeared under the name of Jose Maria Antepara, titled *South American Emancipation. Documents, Historical and Explanatory Showing the Designs which have been in Progress and the Exertions made by General Miranda for the South American Emancipation, during the last twenty five years*.¹⁰⁴ For its publishing, he received substantial financial support from some Hispanic American exiles,¹⁰⁵ and if it is true that his name did not appear as its author, the book contained a collection of documents, most of Miranda or about himself, all coming from his precious Archives, including the Letter of Viscardo y Guzman, and James Mill's article on the "Emancipation of South America"¹⁰⁶ in which he made comments to said letter.

¹⁰² See Mario Rodriguez, *William Burke” and Francisco de Miranda, cit.* pp. 271, 316, 318, 518, 522. Those documents basically traveled in the archives of Miranda, although some of them must have been sent before by Bello to Roscio, the Editor of the *Gaceta de Caracas*.

¹⁰³ The first editorial of Burke appeared in the issue of the *Gaceta de Caracas* of November 23, 1810, before the arrival of Miranda, which were sent probably together with some supplies brought in London for the printing press of the *Gaceta*. See Mario Rodriguez, *William Burke” and Francisco de Miranda, cit.*, pp. 296, 297, 311.

¹⁰⁴ Edited by R. Juigné, London 1810. See the first Spanish edition in the book: José María Antepara, *Miranda y la emancipación suramericana, Documentos, históricos y explicativos, que muestran los proyectos que están en curso y los esfuerzos hechos por el general Miranda durante los últimos veinticinco años para la consecución de este objetivo* (Carmen Bohórquez, Prólogo; Amelia Hernández y Andrés Cardinale, Traducción y Notas), Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Noticeable are, for example, the contributions of Mexico's prominent Fagoaga family to the Miranda's publishing activity since the arrival in London, in 1809, of the second Marquis of Apartado, José Francisco Fagoaga y Villaurrutia, his brother Francisco and cousin Wenceslao de Villaurrutia after the autonomy movement led by the City of Mexico Council in 1808. Among the mutual friends of the Fagoaga family and Miranda there was José María Antepara, who was associated with Miranda editorial projects, in books, like the republication of the Viscado y Guzmán letter and in the newspaper *El Colombiano*, which appeared in London every fifteen days, between March and May 1810. In the design and publication of the books with the funding from the Fagoagas, there contributed Manuel Cortés Campomanes, Gould Francis Leckie, James Mill and Joseph Blanco White before the latter founded his own newspaper *El Español*. See Salvador Méndez Reyes. v. Salvador Méndez Reyes, “La familia Fagoaga y la Independencia” Ponencia al 49 Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Quito 1997, published at <<http://www.naya.org.ar/congresos/contenido/49CAI/Reyes.htm>>.

¹⁰⁶ See Salvador Méndez Reyes, “La familia Fagoaga y la Independencia,” Ponencia al 49 Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Quito 1997, publicado en <<http://www.naya.org.ar/congresos/contenido/49CAI/Reyes.htm>>.

This was, therefore, the last of Miranda's direct editorial ventures in London,¹⁰⁷ having received a copy of the book once in Caracas, because the following month -in October 1810- he travelled to Venezuela, accompanied by his two friends Manuel Cortes de Campomanes and José María Antepara, his personal secretary Pedro Antonio Leleux, his Archives, and no doubt, our William Burke.

It was, therefore, in this Spanish American vibrant environment in Britain where the 1810 Venezuelan delegation operated in London. Bolivar only remained in the city a few months returning to Venezuela in December of the same year, 1810. He sailed in the sloop of war, the HRM Sapphire of the Royal Navy, but Miranda had to sail in another vessel (Avon), due to the request of the British authorities based on political motives, to not to travel with the Venezuelan Official delegation. Nonetheless, his precious Archives of 62 volumes actually sailed in the Sapphire under the custody of Bolivar,¹⁰⁸ arriving in La Guaira a few days before Miranda's arrival on December 10, 1810.

By the time the travelers returned to Caracas, the Council of Regency in Spain had already (August 1810) decreed the blockade of the coasts of Venezuela,¹⁰⁹ which was followed by the appointment, in January 1811, of Antonio Ignacio de Cortavarría as Royal Commissioner to "pacify" the Venezuelans. He was the one in charge of organizing the invasion of Venezuela from the colonial headquarters located on the island of Puerto Rico, commanded by Domingo de Monteverde, who in such character landed in Coro the following year, in February 1812, on the same coast where six years earlier Francisco de Miranda had landed for a brief time (1806). A few months later, on July 25, 1812, as aforementioned, the Capitulation was signed between the two military commanders, which once ignored by Monteverde, provoked the detention of all the so-called "monsters" of America," Roscio and Miranda included. In addition, the persecution of patriots was generalized and the dependencies of the Republic

¹⁰⁷ Again, the aim of this work was trying to pressure the British Government by persuading the public opinion about the need to support Francisco de Miranda in the process of the liberation of Spanish America and the great potential that it meant for long term English prosperity. For this publishing project, Miranda had possibly received a major funding from the Fagoagas by allowing the name of José María Antepara to appear as the editor and that the latter to write the foreword to the book. See, for instance, the citation to the "Manifiesto de Venezuela" in José Guerra (pseudonym for Brother Servando Teresa de Mier), *Historia de la revolución de Nueva España o antiguamente Anahuac o Verdadero origen y causas con la relación de sus progresos hasta el presenta año 1813*, Guillermo Glindon, Londres 1813, Vol II, p. 241, nota. See the citation in Carlos Pi Sunyer. *Patriotas Americanos en Londres (Miranda, Bello y otras figuras)*, (Ed. y prólogo de Pedro Grases), Monteávila Editores, Caracas 1978, p.218.

¹⁰⁸ See William Spence Robertson, *Diary of Francisco De Miranda: Tour of the United States 1783-1784*, The Hispanic Society of America, New York, 1928, p. xx.

¹⁰⁹ José Blanco White commented on this "stupidity action of the Regency," in an article published in the *Morning Chronicle* of London on September 5, 1810: "Letter of a Cádiz Spaniard to a friend of his in London", which was reproduced by Roscio in the *Gaceta de Caracas*, in the October 30th, 1810 issue. See Mario Rodríguez, "*William Burke*" and *Francisco de Miranda*, cit. pp. 313-313.

and files were ransacked, its territories occupied by Spanish troops and all its leaders imprisoned or exiled

One month before the Capitulation was signed, on June 26, 1812, Miranda had called an embargo of the port of La Guardia, preventing the free departures of ships, particularly those American ones that had arrived a few weeks earlier with aid for the victims of the earthquake. He thought that all those ships could be used for a possible political evacuation of men and officers, including those that according to his plans could be headed to Cartagena de Indias in order to continue with the war. After the Capitulation, Miranda arrived at La Guaira on July 30, 1812, lifting the embargo with the clear intention of leaving the country.

Previously, he had instructed his aide and secretary, Pedro Antonio Leleux, to place his archives in a British ship, which he did, consigning them for greater safety to an English merchant named George Robertson of the firm Robertson & Belt, of Curacao;¹¹⁰ so they were effectively shipped precisely in the same sloop of war, the HRM Sapphire, commanded by the British Captain Henry Haynes, in which coincidentally the same archives had travelled from London to Caracas with all the papers and documents that were later to be published in the *Gaceta de Caracas* under the name of William Burke.

The most interesting fact in all this story is that, as officially reported by Captain Haynes in Curacao two days later, on August 1, 1812, in the same HRM Sapphire that sailed from the Port of La Guaira on the 30 of July 1812, among its 37 passengers, in addition to the two aides of Miranda, Lieutenant General Cortes, without doubt, Cortes de Campomares, identified as a Spanish European, profession "Artillery," and Captain José María Antepara, identified as a South American, profession "Infantry"; there were two persons identified under the name of Burke: one "William Burke," identified as British, profession "Surgeon," "previously in the British Service," and another "Lieutenant Burke," also identified as British, profession "Cavalry," "previously in the British Service."¹¹¹

Who were these Burkes? No doubt that due to the debacle of the night of July 30, 1812, the prohibition issued to foreigners to sail and the imprisonment of many patriots, other persons not listed by Captain Haynes must have been on board, probably covering their real names by using the Burke denomination that nobody was going to question. Perhaps one of them was precisely Pedro Antonio Leleux, the personal secretary and aide of Miranda to whom he charged the task of embarking his archives in a British vessel, which he did in the Sapphire, a fact

¹¹⁰ See William Spence Robertson, *Diary of Francisco De Miranda: Tour of the United States 1783-1784*, The Hispanic Society of America, New York, 1928, p. xxi.

¹¹¹ See W.O.1/112- Curacao. 1812. Vol 2nd. Folios 45 and 46 C.O.T Gov'Hodgson. In *Documentos relativos a la Independencia. Copiados y traducidos en el Record Office de Londres por el doctor Carlos Urdaneta Carrillo*. Año de 1811-1812. Fol. 478-479.

the Captain Haynes testified.¹¹² Nonetheless, the name of Leleux, who also escaped that same night from La Guaira,¹¹³ as he reported,¹¹⁴ was not included in the list made by Captain Haynes in Curacao.

Did he sail in fact in the Sapphire under the name of William Burke, a name that he perfectly knew? Leloux, in addition, knew very well the Sapphire, because he had already sailed in it from London to La Guaira in December 1810, where he arrived precisely with the same archives of Miranda, altogether with José María Antepara and Simón Bolívar.¹¹⁵

The fact is that following the debacle of La Guaira and the fall of the First Republic of Venezuela, our prolific writer, William Burke, listed as passenger of the Sapphire, simply disappeared. No other news about him is recorded in history except a reference in Venezuelan Historiography that he died in Jamaica that same year, 1812. As for the precious archives of Miranda, they also disappeared and were only found more than a century later in England.¹¹⁶ The Archives were eventually sent in 1814 from Curaçao to London, in the same HM Shapphire, via Jamaica, to Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, and remained in his office until he ceased to serve the Crown in 1830 as President of the Privy Council. Since 1830 they were transferred to his personal residence in Cirencester, as his personal property, where they were “discovered” in 1922, precisely by the biographer of Miranda: William Spence Robertson.¹¹⁷

In those same days of 1812, precisely, the copies of our book, *Interesting Official Documents*, began to be available in London, even being the subject of

¹¹² See Giovanni Meza Dorta, *Miranda y Bolívar, Dos visiones*, 3a ed., bid & co. Editor, Caracas 2011, p. 21.

¹¹³ See the letter of Leleux to Chancellor Nicholas Vansittart of August 26, 1812, in Giovanni Meza Dorta, *Miranda y Bolívar, Dos visiones*, 3a ed., bid & co. Editor, Caracas 2011, Appendix 15, pp. 194-197. See on the testimony of Captain Haynes, in Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Mianda*, cit. p. 322.

¹¹⁴ Leleux himself, only explained in his letter sent to Chancellor Vanisttart, probably from Curacao dated August 26, 1812, that “he managed to escape and boarded a British ship where he remained hidden in a bunch of straw for mules until after having wandered for ten days I arrived in Curacao to the house of Mss Robinson & Belt.” See Giovanni Meza Dorta, *Miranda y Bolívar, Dos visiones*, 3a ed., bid & co. Editor, Caracas 2011, p. 197.

¹¹⁵ See Mario Rodríguez, “*William Burke*” and *Miranda*, cit, p. 317. Miranda had met Pedro Antonio Leleux in the Durlau Bookseller in Soho Square, London, where among others, Burke’s books and the *Interesting Official Documents* were distributed. See Paúl Verna, *Pedro Leleux, el francés edecán secretario y amigo de confianza de Miranda y Bolívar*, Comité Ejecutivo del Bicentenario de Simón Bolívar, Caracas 1982.

¹¹⁶ The archives were eventually sent from Curaçao to London, in the same HM Shapphire, via Jamaica, 1814 to Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, and remained in his office until he ceased to serve the Crown in 1830 as President of the Privy Council. Since 1830 they were transferred to his personal residence in Cirencester, as his personal property, where they were “discovered” in 1922, precisely by the biographer of Miranda: William Spence Robertson. See William Spence Robertson, *Diary of Francisco De Miranda: Tour of the United States 1783-1784*, The Hispanic Society of America, New York, 1928, p. xxvi.

¹¹⁷ See William Spence Robertson, *Diary of Francisco De Miranda: Tour of the United States 1783-1784*, The Hispanic Society of America, New York, 1928, p. xxvi.

quotes and comments,¹¹⁸ in which the causes of the independence and the construction of a new Republic that already had disappeared was officially explained. By that time, the provinces of Venezuela were already occupied by the Spanish army, and subjected to the military rule of conquest that was established with profound disdain regarding the constitutional republican framework that had been constructed in the Provinces.

Nonetheless, our precious book, *Interesting Official Documents relating to the provinces of Venezuela*, will always remain as the most extraordinary testimony of the first experiment of building a democratic Republic applying the modern principles of constitutionalism derived from the French and American Revolutions. Those principles, two hundred years later, still remain today as the basic principles to establish modern democracies, so it is hardly surprising that in the near future they will again be brandished in order to reconstruct the institutions that have been demolished in Venezuela by the authoritarian government that during the past decade has assaulted its government.

Washington, November 22, 2011

¹¹⁸ See, for instance, the quotation of the “Manifiesto de Venezuela” in José Guerra (pseudonym for Brother Servando Teresa de Mier), *Historia de la revolución de Nueva España o antiguamente Anahuac o Verdadero origen y causas con la relación de sus progresos hasta el presente año 1813*, Guillermo Glindon, Londres 1813, Vol II, p. 241, nota. See the citation in Carlos Pi Sunyer. *Patriotas Americanos en Londres (Miranda, Bello y otras figuras)*, (Ed. y prólogo de Pedro Grases), Monteávila Editores, Caracas 1978, p.218.