Demobilization and Reintegration of the Defeated into National Life: Realists within the Conflict for the Independence of Venezuela

DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION OF THE DEFEATED INTO NATIONAL LIFE: REALISTS WITHIN THE CONFLICT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF VENEZUELA

La desmovilización y la reinserción de los vencidos a la vida nacional: los realistas en el conflicto por la independencia de Venezuela

A desmobilização e a reinserção dos vencidos à vida nacional: os realistas no conflito pela Independência da Venezuela

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a non-academic point of view of the conflicts of the independence of Venezuela: the process of forgiveness and reintegration of the defeated into national life. For this reason, I narrate, from peace history, the cases of five notable realists: one is an indigenous advocate of the King's cause; another one is a Spaniard, who has been pardoned twice; another, a Venezuelan military who greatly contributed to education in the Republic; another one, the last marquis of Venezuela who was in favor of realism and independence; and the other is Simón Bolívar's, The Liberator, older sister. Throughout the history of peace, the readers are part of our historic conscience with a balanced and conflictive understanding.

Keywords: Conflict, peace, violence, reintegration, realists, independence of Venezuela.

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RESUMEN

Este artículo busca ofrecer una mirada poco estudiada de los conflictos de la Independencia, que parte del caso de Venezuela: el proceso de perdón y reinserción de los vencidos en la vida nacional. Para ello, trato, desde la historia de la paz, los casos de cinco realistas notables: uno de ellos indígena defensor de la causa del rey; otro español, dos veces amnistiado; otro, un militar venezolano criollo que hizo una labor importante por la educación de la república; otro, último marqués de Venezuela en favor del realismo y luego de la independencia y, finalmente, la hermana mayor de El Libertador, Simón Bolívar. A lo largo de la historia de la paz los reincorporamos a nuestra conciencia histórica con una concepción equilibrada y conflictiva.

Palabras clave: Conflicto, paz, violencia, reinserción, realistas, independencia de Venezuela.

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RESUMO

Este artigo procura oferecer um olhar pouco estudado dos conflitos da Independência, que parte do caso da Venezuela: o processo de perdão e reinserção dos vencidos à vida nacional. Para isto, tento, desde a história da paz, os casos de cinco realistas notáveis: um deles indígena defensor da causa do rei; outro espanhol, duas vezes anistiado; outro, um militar venezuelano crioulo que fez uma labor importante pela educação da república; outro, último marquês da Venezuela em favor do realismo e logo após da independência e, finalmente, a irmã mais velha do Libertador, Simón Bolívar. Ao longo da história da paz os reincorporamos a nossa consciência histórica com uma concepção equilibrada e conflitiva.

Palavras chave: Conflito, paz, violência, reinserção, realistas, independencia da Venezuela.

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INTRODUCTION

As in much of Spanish America, the conflict for the independence of Venezuela divided patriots and royalists throughout its duration. However, and as stated by historian Tomás Straka (2007, p.4) only one side of the conflict has told its story and the losers, which in this case are the royalists, have been mostly ignored. Once the balance finally tipped in favor of the patriotic side, many of the royalists protected by the Treaty on the Regularization of War signed in 1820 (Castellanos, 1998, pp. 97 and 98) sailed to other destinations, returned to civilian life in Venezuela or, if they had been combatants were assimilated by the forces of the new Republic. However, the account of these processes where the capacities for peace prevailed remained hidden behind the curtain of the so-called War of Independence.

The so-called "official or national history" has made the word *conflict* equivalent to the word violence and, therefore violent interactions and their recreation -in epic discourse- equivalent to the entire conflict of the Independence as well. This process is mostly known as the War of Independence. Even though Venezuelan historian Germán Carrera Damas (1983, pp. 18-20) has argued that the conflict of independence is a political process of which war is only one of its expressions, he recognizes that the one-sided vision of the violence is a disruptive element of our historical consciousness (Carrera Damas, 2006, p 279). Therefore, independence must be defined as a "conflict" since it involved complex exchanges between peaceful and violent interactions (Alfaro Pareja, 2014b, pp. 191-193) throughout its duration.

As part of this interest the history of peace emerges as a transdisciplinary area of study, which seeks to enhance the recreation of past events such as peaceful interactions and moments and spaces of peace within our complex history. And that peace, according to historian and philosopher Francisco A. Muñoz (2001, p.39) is not a utopian objective that materializes with a treaty, but rather an experiential and dynamic process. In addition, it is an imperfect phenomenon to the extent it interacts with instances of violence on a permanent basis. With this, it is clear that the violence present in some conflicts cannot be disregarded but rather assumed in its complexity as a result of the relationship with peaceful interactions (Muñoz, 2004, p.165). Let us remember that one of the pillars of the history of peace is, according to Muñoz and López Martínez (2000, pp. 48 and 49) revealing instances where the relationships between peace and violence can take place as well as establishing their causal relationship and their interactions. One of them is the reintegration of the defeated.

The conflict for the independence of Venezuela began in 1810 and lasted until 1846, when Spain recognized Venezuela and ended the conflict through the Treaty of Reconciliation, Peace and Friendship. However, it implied the development of a peace process since 1833 through diplomatic relations between the two States since where the actors, some of whom had promoted violence in the past, now developed their capacities for peace (Alfaro Pareja, 2014a, p.193). These capacities were also supported within the territory thanks also, in part to the fact that royalists and patriots shared the ideological space of political liberalism in several points highlighted by Mateucci (1994,

p.879): appreciation of individuals and their rationality, the rejection of absolutism and the questioning of sacred truths. From there on respect for the capitulations, the lives of the prisoners and the wounded in battle and the principles established in the amnesties was a guarantee that led to the successful reintegration of a large number of royalists into national life.

This article examines the reinsertion process of some of these royalists following the consolidation of Venezuela's independence. All of them were individuals who participated in the conflict of independence and whose voices were silenced by the "official history". Dionisio Cisneros, indigenous defender of the King's cause who fiercely defended absolutism through guerrilla warfare and who benefited from an amnesty promoted directly by José Antonio Páez, president of Venezuela and also the godfather of his son by accident. José Arizábalo y Orobio, a professional soldier who returned to Venezuela after having set sail during the capitulation and amnesty following the royalist defeat at the battle of Lake Maracaibo, conspired in arms through guerrilla warfare and was again amnestied by the national government after a very long and difficult process. Feliciano Montenegro y Colón, Venezuelan New-World born military officer who held positions of military relevance until 1821 at the service of the royalist cause and returned from exile to Venezuela in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century a defender of the liberal cause to conduct important work for the education of young people in Caracas. Francisco Rodríguez del Toro, New-World born and last marquis of Venezuela who supported different political causes ranging between absolutism, the ideals of the *juntas* and republican independence and returned more or less successfully to political life. Finally, the case of María Antonia Bolívar was perhaps the most controversial because it implied, on the one hand her condition as a woman and an active defender of the King's cause and, on the other being the sister of Simón Bolívar, the main leader of the rebel movement and later a cult and almost mythical figure.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE CONFLICT OF VENEZUELAN INDEPENDENCE TOLD FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE HISTORY OF PEACE

There has been practically no analysis in Venezuela in particular and in Spanish America in general regarding the peaceful interactions between patriots and royalists in the conflict for the independence of Venezuela from the standpoint of the history of peace and the few studies that have been carried out barely scratch the surface. The history of peace is an area with almost non-existent progress due to the enormous influence of the "official history" made more powerful today by political power and, in addition by the poor development of its parent area: peace and conflict studies.

The analysis of the political conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries in Venezuela has been fundamentally conducted from the field of history. Furthermore, the conflict for the independence of Venezuela is without a doubt the most analyzed subject in historiography and the most manipulated by the "official history". However, if there is something in common between both perspectives it is that the

studies of this conflict are proposed for the most part based on a perspective of violence[1]. One of the aspects identified by the "official or national history" is an exaggerated interest in the "war" of Independence with a romantic vision of political ideas and the epic of the story, as well as with an approach that has traditionally been uniformly interpreted. According to Venezuelan historian Inés Quintero, this approach accounts for a series of deviations, deficiencies or omissions due to

> an excessive narrative burden and an almost exclusive attention to the subject of battles and the performance and prowess of the patriots; the persistence of a linear, chronological and descriptive historiography lacking a legitimate analysis that privileges the episodes and neglects the problems; and the Manichean and simplistic presentation of the facts as a confrontation between irreconcilable camps (2003, p.374).

In addition, the "official history" mainly accounts for the political-military aspect of the event and its protagonists and fails to study other areas, sides and characters of the process; it overstates the facts and characters of the conflict as the foundations of our history and ignores or distorts the pre-Columbian and colonial past; it vilifies or omits royalists and Spaniards from the conflict of Independence instead of studying them in their proper measure; the story is told "from above" instead of being a story told from "all sides"; it distorts the immediate past to justify the present, its political-cultural structures and the actors that brought them about. Carrera Damas believes that this last item is the most dangerous because we have reached the point where historical moments that have already been rigorously studied by historiography are being manipulated. The best example is the so-called cult of Simón Bolívar (Carrera Damas, 2005, pp. 108-113), which is an indispensible component to explain the feasibility of events that in theory could not have been carried forward by ordinary human beings. Political discourse then became historiographical discourse and thus entered history textbooks and became an unalterable paradigm of national history from the 19th century to the present day.

For its part historiography has been considered for the past several years as a solid tool for the analysis of past events. However, when it comes to studying the conflict of independence of Venezuela, while it does not incur in deviations, omissions or distortions of the "official history" and even raises new problems in the same subject it does have its shortcomings in that it continues to address the process mostly based on the violence of the conflict approach, that is, based on the War of Independence. This is one of the great limitations of Venezuelan political historiography today. In this regard Carrera Damas stated the following in one of his books of the late 1960s, entitled *La crisis de la sociedad colonial venezolana:* "The conflict of independence is a political process of which war is one of its expressions" (Carrera Damas, 1983, pp. 18). This is based on the justified criticism of historian José Gil Fortul in the first edition of *Historia Constitucional de Venezuela:* "The history of the Independence and of Colombia has been written from an almost exclusively military point of view" (cited by Carrera Damas, 1983, p.20). Therefore, analyzing the conflict of independence of Venezuela from the standpoint of peace is a challenge that involves treating it based on the

[1] This trend in the field of history also formed part of the area of peace studies until a few decades ago, which focused in their beginnings on the violent aspects of the conflicts and on how to avoid them. It is from books like Anatol Rapoport's, entitled *Peace: An idea whose time has come* and published in 1992 by Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, that peace studies started to be understood from a perspective of peace.

history of peace as an area of the discipline of peace studies, which seeks to analyze the conflicts that have been peacefully regulated by human beings.

The history of peace, as proposed by historians Francisco A. Muñoz and Beatriz Molina Rueda allows us to recognize, recover and highlight peaceful interactions and the transformation of conflicts, as well as all the factors and actors involved. The history of peace is in charge of recovering and chronicling the worldviews of peace within society, that is the real contributions made by peace to "order, organize and build harmonious relations between the individuals and groups that make up a society" (Muñoz and Molina Rueda, 1998, p.13). There is talk of a new recognition of the role of peace in history because in the depths of our conscience we recognize peace because it is and has been a component of our daily lives and, sometimes acting as a positive or negative force has transformed or regulated conflicts of medium and high intensity. In short, the history of imperfect peace seeks to be, on the one hand a history of the spaces, moments, activities and actors that have fostered or foster coexistence, recognition, friendship, understanding, interdependence and saving energy in its most general sense from the standpoint of everyday life and, on the other a history of the peaceful interactions and transformation of extraordinary conflicts of greater complexity and magnitude.

Likewise, Muñoz highlights the fact that this history of peace is imperfect because it leads to the identification of spaces and instances where we can detect actions that generate peace, even though they are found in contexts of conflict and violence. The history of peace and its transdisciplinary vocation allow it to interact with, make and receive contributions to and from different branches of knowledge to generate and feed on a knowledge that is necessarily complex and interrelated. Muñoz speaks of the need to start studying peace from a transdisciplinary approach as a response to the complexity of social dynamics.

From a methodological standpoint the approach to the history of the independences would start from the unified matrix developed by Muñoz et al. (2005, pp. 127-129), which implies understanding these processes as conflicts in their entirety and with their complexity; deconstructing the stories that have elevated certain violent events; making visible and highlighting peaceful actions promoted and conducted by different actors throughout the conflict; identifying mediations that resulted in the start of negotiations and dialogue processes, a reduction of violence and the achievement of armistices, the regularization of war, capitulations and treaties.

We have identified the complex and permanent interaction of various forms of peace and violence throughout the history of peace during the period of the conflict for independence in Venezuela. Some of these forms arise within the conflict, while others do so after its completion and beyond. This makes it possible without a doubt to recognize new instances and spaces for peace in history from the development of capacities for peace by different actors (Alfaro Pareja, 2013, pp. 35-36). In the case of the present study, it would imply the analysis of the capacities that led to the demobilization or the reinsertion of iconic royalists into the national life in the post-conflict period.

THE REINSERTION OF DIONISIO CISNEROS AND JOSÉ ARIZÁBALO AND

OROBIO: ROYALISTS OF THE LAST ARMED OFFENSIVE

After the battle of Carabobo in June 1821 which entailed an important victory for the Liberation Army and which practically consolidated the independence of Venezuela, there were no capitulations due to the escape of most of the royalists. However, the regularization of the war involved respect for the defeated, wounded and prisoners of the King's Army as told by the head of the Royalist Army in Venezuela, Miguel de la Torre to Simón Bolívar, and where he states that said side has acted "by giving unequivocal evidence of the revival of social virtues that had disappeared due to the arousal of passions that have ravaged these fertile countries" (De Armas Chitty, 1971, p.92). However, some fighters were left astray.

By 1823 the patriots had secured their victory under a horizon of optimism with the victory in the naval battle of Lake Maracaibo, where once again and based on the Treaty on the Regularization of the War of 1820 the rights of the defeated, prisoners and wounded in combat were respected. Francisco Tomás Morales himself, the last head of the royalist forces in Venezuela acknowledged that they were ending the conflict with "the most honorable capitulation obtained by any Royal Army overseas" (Lemmo and Carrera Damas, 1971, pp. 1142 and 1143).

The port of Cabello was taken that same year and the flag of the last royalist stronghold was lowered from the fort. Historian Rafael María Baralt points out that it was just after that action that "the War of Independence effectively ended. From then on the arms of the republic would not be used except against the guerrilla groups of outlaws armed and fed for some time by peninsular stubbornness" (Páez, 1990, p.226). One of the members of those guerrilla groups was Cisneros, who had been acting in the valleys near Caracas since he was left leaderless after the Carabobo defeat of 1821. Cisneros led armed bands in favor of the royal cause and terrorized the landowners of Tuy, Santa Lucía, Baruta and Petare with pillage, murder, forced recruitment and looting (Palacios Herrera, 1989, pp. 12 and 95).

But who was José Dionisio Cisneros? He was a Venezuelan native who had contact with white men. According to Herrera Palacios (1995, pp. 19 and 29) he was an "Indian of quality", an exclusively social rank conferred by way of inheritance, position or services. A barely literate muleteer and later a soldier, he served in the royalist ranks and specialized in guerrilla warfare. His knowledge of the forests and its demands, as well his adoration of King Ferdinand VII and syncretic Catholic beliefs made him become the strongest bastion of royalist resistance in Venezuela.

After one of the most violent attacks against the population of Petare and Baruta in December 1824, a detachment of the Apure army surprised the group and killed eight of its members. However, General José Antonio Páez, making use of the powers conferred by the State of Assembly or Martial Law pardoned Cisneros' followers as long as they turned themselves in to the republican authorities within a month. This measure would not be enforced, however. On August 15, 1825 General Santiago Mariño informed the Secretary of War that the Cisneros faction had been destroyed but that its leader had escaped (Bencomo Barrios, 1997b, pp. 831 and 832).

With Cisneros on the run, the royalist reaction would see its greatest splendor and coordination with the arrival of a Spanish officer to its shores: José Arizábalo and Orobio. With the excuse that he was a fugitive from Spain, he asked for refuge in Venezuela and arrived at the port of the city of La Guaira in 1826. This soldier, who was under the command of royalist commander Tomas Morales at the battle of Maracaibo had to set sail for Cuba as a result of the royalist capitulation of August 4, 1823 with the promise not to raise arms again against the Republic of Colombia.

At the beginning of 1827 Arizábalo received the offer of a post in the Republican Army from Simón Bolívar, who had returned to Venezuela after five years leading the independence in South America and was currently the president of Colombia. However Arizábalo and Orobio only accepted to return to civilian life. Months later, the Spaniard left Caracas for the Cordillera de la Costa and travelled through the villages of Villa de Cura, Parapara, San Sebastián, and Ortiz. There he takes an unexpected turn and begins to publish signed proclamations, write letters to various officers, award military degrees in the name of the King of Spain and contacts some of the most well-known members of the guerrilla groups (Bencomo Barrios, 1997a, 225).

The strengthening of these royalist movements probably arose from the inefficiency of the republican army as a result of the internal struggles of the department of Venezuela and its differences with the Central Government of Colombia in Bogota since 1825.

In a tone aimed at restoring the peace throughout Venezuela, Bolívar, as Páez did years before pardoned the royalist Cisneros and those who accompanied him in a decree dated January 12, 1827 in exchange for laying down their arms, leaving their wandering life and refraining from carrying out hostile actions against the troops and the country's inhabitants. But these attempts would fail. Thus, peace negotiations would be replaced by pacification by force. Bolívar would order the creation of a special task force in the month of May 1827 composed of 806 soldiers to confront Cisneros (Palacios Herrera, 1989, page 148).

Arizábalo and Orobio, who had been appointed His Majesty's head of arms in Venezuela wrote to Dionisio Cisneros with a proposal to join forces, avoid dialogue with the patriots, undertake military actions only against military forces and not the civilian population (as stated in the principles of the regularization of the war) and to inform Cisneros that a royalist insurrection was being directed and supported from Puerto Rico. However, according to Palacios Herrera (1989, pp. 155-168) Cisneros did not accept any authority except for his own. Soon, Arizábalo would declare Dionisio Cisneros an "enemy of the King" and dismiss him from his position as "second chief of His Majesty's forces in Venezuela".

The long-awaited fleet of Spanish ships from Puerto Rico, consisting of a 64-gun frigate, a 50-gun brig and a 20-gun brig arrived at the port of La Guaira on January 11, 1828. However, Arizábalo and his followers never managed to meet the warships that sailed back to the island on February 22. Historian Tomás Straka recreates his situation and that of his followers as follows:

> In fact, he seems like a prophet driving through the mountains of Tuy and Guatopo to reach a group of miserable men; a Moses looking for the promise of an

> unlikely salvation [...] Arizábalo knows that this is how things are in Venezuela, that people will support anyone who can get them something and that, in 1828 when there is only misery, that has to count for something (2009, pp. 25).

After two years of hardship, suffering, death, waiting and futile efforts, on June 12, 1829 José Arizábalo y Orobio proposed an interview to General Lorenzo Bustillo to avoid further bloodshed. It is interesting to highlight the treatment received by the royalist military forces from the republicans. Lieutenant José María Machado, commander during the temporary absence of patriot General Bustillos, offered his friendship and appreciation.

In his memoirs, José Arizábalo y Orobio wrote that the lieutenant went out to meet him with a large delegation, assembled the troops and honored him:

> Everyone helped me get off [...] someone introduced me to the barber and hairdresser; someone else washed my feet with his hands; and yet someone else tore at my miserable rags and covered my body with something decent. And everyone would say things like: "This is an extraordinary man of our century" (Palacios Herrera, 1989, p.183).

After a few hours of rest, republicans and royalists sat down for coffee and the hosts toasted Bolívar and Páez. Arizábalo, faithful to his monarch said he could only toast King Ferdinand VII, and he did. To his surprise, everyone answered with a "Long live!" He described his feelings as follows: "I felt more pleasure in hearing his Majesty be hailed by his own enemies than in winning a battle" (Palacios Herrera, 1989, p.183).

The capitulation signed would represent another challenge for the Treaty on the Regularization of the War of 1820 because it was not a Spanish soldier who was waging war against Colombia but rather an amnestied military man who had promised never to raise arms against the Republic in 1823 and had sworn to the Constitution of Colombia to take on a civilian life in 1827. Two months would have to pass for José Arizábalo and Orobio to finally sign his capitulation with the republican General Lorenzo Bustillos on August 18, 1829.

In part of its articles this document established the possibility of reinsertion into national life (or in some Spanish territory) in freedom, liberated the prisoners of war and offered perpetual oblivion and equal protection before the law. The term "perpetual oblivion" is present in article 4 of the capitulation. However, the capitulation of Arizábalo and his followers goes even further. They are given the possibility of returning to national life, or in other words the defeated were offered inclusion and fair treatment before the law without resentment. This is one of the measures that guarantees the sustainability of a peace process over time. In article 6 amnesty is offered to anyone who has supported or collaborated with the royalist cause undertaken by Arizábalo and his soldiers, including extending it to Cisneros and his supporters within two months after they turned themselves in (Páez, 1990, pp. 400 and 401). Disillusioned, José Arizábalo y Orobio set sail towards Spanish American lands, once again amnestied and alive. Arizábalo, the twice forgiven.

Once Colombia broke up, General Páez as the maximum civil and military authority of Venezuela used a progressive approach towards Cisneros as a strategy, and he would even become godfather to one of his children, captured during an armed operation and ensured he received a good

education. This relationship brought about by the baptism of Cisnero's child became an "intermediation" between Cisneros and Páez for the start of direct peace talks with the aim of ending the violent interactions.

At the beginning of 1831 Cisneros already had very little support and strength. Many of his supporters had deserted or welcomed the pardons given by Congress in June of 1830. On August 9, 1831 Cisneros suddenly sent a letter to Páez to seek to regularize and resolve the conflict through peaceful means. Recognizing Páez's peaceful gesture in adopting and taking care of his captured son, he said: "Please have mercy on my beloved son who is in your hands, I will be forever thankful, your Excellency. I know that his Excellency also has a son" (Páez, 1990, pp. 201 and 202). On August 21 during an extraordinary session, the Governing Council authorized the executive branch to grant Cisneros and his companions an absolute pardon or an overseas passport if they preferred to leave Venezuela, provided they abandoned their violent actions. General Páez was convinced that the only way to resolve this conflict was through means other than violence.

Finally, Páez states his intention to go to see Cisneros personally in the Tuy valleys to talk on September 29, 1831. However, the trip would be for nothing as Cisneros would not show up for the appointment. A few weeks later, in a letter sent by the royalist to Colonel Stopford, he apologized for his absence since he had assumed it would be trap. However, he did state his intention to negotiate directly with Páez. The general immediately resumed his trip from the capital and on November 17 of the same year, along with a few officers, he made his way through the mountains to Dionisio Cisneros' stronghold. That is to say, the President of the Republic, in the purest style of a Latin American leader, takes charge of this matter in person in an action that would surprise Edward Stopford, the British commander of the Republican Army and assigned to lead the special taskforce against Cisneros (Palacios Herrera, 1989, pp. 213 and 214).

That day, after great efforts and years of suggestion, General Páez finally managed to make Cisneros surrender, not by force but through persuasion, and not with violence but through dialogue. On November 22, 1831, the capitulation between Colonel Dionisio Cisneros and General José Antonio Páez was signed in Lagartijo.

On this occasion Páez not only offered amnesty to Cisneros, but also gave him his sword as an symbol of brotherhood. And as a sign of trust not only was Cisneros incorporated into the Republican Army while retaining the same rank, but also he and his troops were appointed custodians of the valleys of the Tuy, the same area they had ravaged for years. However, many patriotic officers and members of the Government were not satisfied with this last measure of incorporating him into the Republican Army. The violence generated by Cisneros had made him the royalist Fra Diavolo and at the same time the propaganda against him had turned him into a dehumanized being that had to be eliminated. This qualifier, according to historian Anne Morelli (Koch, 2007, pp. 290-291) is given to enemies to turn them into some kind of super-villains. It is for this reason that his reinsertion would be extremely difficult.

The absence of repentance and rectification on the part of the now colonel of the Republic would

strengthen the resentment of the military forces around him instead of their forgiveness. Cisneros' reinsertion would not be successful because he continued to commit crimes. Finally, after fifteen years, tolerance ended on December 1846 when Cisneros committed an act of serious military insubordination. He was arrested and on January 8, 1847, he was sentenced to death by a War Council of the Republic of Venezuela under the charges of sedition, insubordination and robbery and executed on January 13. In this regard, Páez claimed: "I was forced to turn him over to a War Council, which sentenced him to death by arms with the unanimous approval of all citizens, who never had much faith in his conversion" (Palacios Herrera, 1989, p.164).

This confession shows us that the reconciliation between Cisneros and the Republic never materialized. Forgiveness must be accompanied not only by the inclusion of the perpetrator, but also by the recognition of his or her mistakes, a change of attitude and justice for the victims. As stated by Fisas (1998), cited by París Albert (2009, p.72), recognition necessarily implies dealing with the past, but not to return to it to wallow in pain but rather to remember it and see the future from that standpoint. It took Páez years to realize this.

THE REINSERTION OF MARÍA ANTONIA BOLÍVAR, FELICIANO MONTENEGRO Y COLÓN AND MARQUIS FRANCISCO RODRÍGUEZ DEL TORO

In addition to the peaceful reinsertions of royalists that took place in the political and military spheres, there are others that occurred in other spheres of society that are worth mentioning. Three of them refer to illustrious citizens of Caracas who knew how to leave behind old lost convictions and move forward to return to national life and even make important contributions to Venezuela. This is the case of María Antonia Bolívar, Feliciano Montenegro y Colón and Marquis Francisco Rodríguez del Toro, three prominent royalists of the conflict of independence who also had very sudden endings.

María Antonia Bolívar was the older sister of Simón Bolívar (for the royalists, the main leader of the factions, and for the patriots, The Liberator). She was born on November 1, 1777 in Caracas and had been forced to emigrate to the Caribbean by her own younger brother, Simón, when in 1814 the royalist offensive led by José Tomás Boves and Francisco Rosete was about to retake the capital (De Sola Ricardo, 1997, p.494).

María Antonia believed that her departure from the capital was unnecessary since her defense of royalist ideas was public and well-known and she would have not have any problems being welcomed by the new authorities. However, the fact that she was sister of the main leader of the factions of Venezuela and Nueva Granada put her life and that of her family in danger. In addition, by 1814 the "war to the death" proclaimed by his brother against Spaniards and Canary Islanders and the "war against the whites" or "war of colors" proclaimed by caudillo José Tomás Boves against the New-World born *Mantuanos* had intensified the violence to its highest levels of the conflict between patriots and royalists.

From Curacao to Havana María Antonia could not believe the sudden uprooting of her four minor

children and the loss of all her properties due to the occurrences of a group of people that included her brother as the main leader. In addition, she was worried about her honor and the fact that her irreproachable royalist position would be doubted just because she was Bolívar's sister according to historian Ines Quintero, who has studied the life of the oldest Bolívar sibling. In a letter to the Royal Audience of Caracas dated August 28, 1816, María Antonia Bolívar explained her actions in the face of the conflict in Venezuela and stated: "My weak efforts were used to save a group of Spaniards who currently live in the capital and its surroundings, exposing my own security to the violent fury of the insolent populace" (Quintero, 2008, pp. 40).

In 1823 when Venezuela was finally in patriotic hands, she returned to the country under the protection of her own brother. It could be said that María Antonia quickly made herself at home in this new republican life as soon as she returned to Caracas. In a short time, and after leaving behind the differences with Simón she became the one in charge of recovering the assets lost by the family, paying back what the family owed and collecting debts from the family's debtors. According to Quintero, with the power granted to María Antonia by her brother as eldest daughter and with a higher rank than other successors, she became the owner of almost all the properties that belonged to the Bolívar family estate.

Returning to national life under the protection of Bolívar was not so difficult at first. Her brother was The Liberator of five nations after all. However, life became complicated once again for María Antonia not because she was a royalist but because she was Bolívar's sister. When Venezuela separated from Colombia and his brother Simón became an outlaw in 1830, María Antonia had to face a rather uncomfortable situation because she was Bolívar's sister. In Caracas and Bogotá there was animosity towards Bolívar after he installed a dictatorial government because he was being accused of wanting to become King of the Andes.

María Antonia went from being the eldest sister of The Liberator's to being the sister of the usurper of Colombia or the relative of the tyrant overnight. With Bolívar dead in December 1830 and dismissed from the history of the young Republic of Venezuela, María Antonia's actions were fundamentally based on her intent to recover the family's possessions. From then on, her fierce temperament, her motivations to recover what belonged to her by right and the disputes with her brothers to distribute Bolívar's assets were her main allies to navigate a social environment relatively hostile to her surname.

What is known today as the cult of Bolívar would only begin with the repatriation of Bolívar's mortal remains from Colombia to Venezuela ordered by the now president José Antonio Páez in 1842. However, the Caracas woman would not get to experience the period that would have benefited her from the point of view of reconciliation – to the extent "the people" had reconciled with Bolívar and, consequently, with the Bolívar family – since she died that year, on October 7. In fact, we could say that the rigorous reintegration of María Antonia Bolívar into national historiography only begun in 2003, when Inés Quintero published her controversial work *La criolla principal: María Antonia Bolívar*, *hermana de El Libertador*, precisely at a time when Bolívar's immaculate cult has been resurrected through a new version of the "official history". And, perhaps, one of the reasons of the

lateness of this historiographical reinsertion is the political position assumed by the *caraqueña* with regards to Simón Bolívar. According to Quintero: "How can you solve the inconvenience of The Liberator's own sister being an enemy of the patriots? How can you interpret the fact that The Liberator's older sister was a supporter of the King of Spain?" (2008, p.185).

Feliciano Montenegro y Colón was another of those renowned Venezuelan royalists who managed to return to republican life after the conflict of Venezuelan independence. Montenegro y Colón was born in Caracas on June 9, 1781 into a privileged home, for his father was a Spanish political official in the capital and his mother came from a Mantuano family in Caracas. In other words, he was half peninsular white and half New-born white. Montenegro y Colón was able to take advantage of his condition to study literature and start a military career in the period when the conflict for the independence of Venezuela began to take hold. In 1798 he joined the Venezuelan Battalion of Veterans as a cadet and a year later he entered the Queen's Regiment. From here on he continued his military career in Spain and participated in several missions, including in the fight against the Napoleonic troops that invaded the peninsula.

In 1810, Montenegro y Colón, who was already a First Captain is sent on a mission to Venezuela to work with the Secretary of War. Nevertheless, given the unstable political situation in terms of the defense of the rights of Fernando VII and the independence, he decides to return secretly to Spain. This event, known as the "flight of Montenegro" will pursue him the rest of his life, as he will be accused of the alleged extraction of resources and documents from that office. The truth is that Montenegro y Colón, committed royalist, would only return to Venezuela in an official capacity in 1816 once he heard that the revolts had been pacified by the expeditionary army of Pablo Morillo.

In Venezuela he presided the Caracas War Council, acted as Commander of the Tuy Valleys, led the military and governmental headquarters of Barcelona, served as Governor of Maracaibo and, finally, as Chief of Staff of the royalist forces that fought in the battle of Carabobo (Bencomo Barrios, 1997c, pp. 233 and 234). He was undoubtedly one of the most important royalist leaders in Venezuela during the conflict of independence.

After the royalist defeat in Carabobo, Montenegro y Colón left Venezuela for Puerto Cabello, and would ultimately migrate from the island to Spain, Cuba, Mexico, the United States, Curacao, Santo Domingo and Haiti. Even though he was a royalist, this *caraqueño* was a liberal and not an absolutist; he was actually an institutionalist who respected the law of nations and was very critical of the soldiers who violated it with unnecessary excesses. In Spain, he suffered reprisals once absolutism was reinstated, while in the Spanish colonies he would be viewed with suspicion by the royalist military who carried out cruel, criminal, and arbitrary actions of war (even after the end of the so-called "war to the death"). Finally, despite the fact that he was able to return to national life in Venezuela, he would always be labeled "*godo*" or "royalist" by many who constantly reminded him of his past. For this purpose and throughout his life he published articles that clarified his behavior and justified his defense against accusations of being dubious, a

hypocrite, an upstart, a turncoat, a royalist or a *godo* (Franceschi, 1994, p.25).

In 1831, after many trips escaping from Spanish spies, and even after planning a failed attempt to make Cuba independent with the help of Mexico or Colombia, he returns to Venezuela taking advantage of the amnesty decreed by the government of José Antonio Páez. Upon his arrival in Caracas in 1831, Montenegro y Colón sought to return to the republican life of a country where their leaders we also seeking support. On January 3, 1832 he wrote to Francisco Javier Yanes in the following terms:

> I will never tire of admiring the fact that you as an American dared to talk about the iniquities of (the royalist soldiers) Morillo, Moxó, Morales, Aldama and other evildoers with so much courage and firmness in Madrid: I had my doubts and almost failed to believe what (Felipe Fermín) Paúl told me about the merit of your memorable relationship; but the persecutions you have suffered will only serve as witness to the fact that you have served this country as few others have and will also immortalize the memory of your unfeigned intermediation in favor of humanity and in testimony of your good heart (Franceschi, 1994, p.27).

However, and beyond the numerous documents with which he sought to justify his conduct as an ex-royalist respectful of the law and the law of nations, the most important work carried out by Montenegro y Colón was his devotion to education and humanistic sciences in Venezuela. In 1836, Montenegro founded the *Colegio Independencia* in Caracas, which sought to provide quality education to young people of the nascent Republic. The school provided education to disadvantaged youth who showed interest in studying and food and books for day students free of charge. He was also the author of several papers on geography, good customs, education, Christian doctrine and history.

The fourth volume of his book *Geografía venezolana*, titled *Apuntes históricos* refers to the history of Venezuela. Regarding this book, Franceschi (1994, pp. 83-85) recognizes that Montenegro y Colón addressed the contemporary history of his time in a way that seeks to ensure a balance in the judgments and in the treatment of highly controversial issues (including to this day). All this taking into account that many of the main characters of these events had a public life in Venezuela and immense power as well.

Even though the reception of this work was lukewarm at most in Venezuela not only because the author was a colonel of the royalist army but because many of his contemporaries had a terrible fear of certain truths that could reveal the imperfect and varied conduct of each one of the political and military characters during a turbulent time of continuous changes of authorities, parties, leaders and tendencies, some people would ultimately recognize the work's merits. One of them was General Páez, the strong man of Venezuela and former adversary who had already demonstrated a conciliatory approach with Arizábalo and Orobio and with Cisneros, entrusted him with the education of his own children. In his autobiography, Páez points out that Montenegro y Colón "presented a work that was never recognized as it should have been, which he modestly called *Compendio de Geografía* and added a complete account of the revolutionary struggle; a book that is the best authority on the events of that time" (Páez, 1990, p. 175).

The fact that General Páez himself described that work as something that should be recognized is worth noting. Likewise, his *Colegio Independencia*, for which he received so many reproaches, was a

project that at the end of his life caused him and his family more worries than satisfactions. Again, General Páez recognized the merits of this *caraqueño* in his autobiography during the construction of the school and its innovative educational model to deal with "an unruly youth, whose very parents did not understand the value of the service that he proposed to offer them and the homeland" (Páez, 1990, p. 177). Montenegro y Colón would die forgotten and in relative poverty due to the financial problems generated by his school on September 6, 1853 at age 72.

Finally, another prominent case of reintegration was that of Francisco Rodríguez del Toro, IV Marquis del Toro. Born in Caracas in 1761, and as eldest son of the III Marquis, he inherited a noble title that placed him in the highest sphere of colonial society, forced to fulfill duties and obligations inherent to his position. Since the death of his father in 1787, Del Toro always stood out as an unrestricted defender of the monarchy, good order, the Catholic religion and status-based society as a member of the main institutions and orders of the Colony. However, with the Napoleonic invasion of Spain and the pronouncement of the Mantuanos of Caracas, the life of the Marquis would begin a winding journey between both the sides in conflict.

Faithful to his position, in 1806 he participated in the military deployment against the invasion attempts carried out by Francisco de Miranda under the orders of Captain General Manuel Guevara Vasconcelos. Later, he participated in the so-called Conspiracy of the Mantuanos in 1808, for which he was charged with house arrest until 1809, when he was pardoned (Naranjo de Castillo, 1997, p.997). When the events of April 19, 1810, which led to establishment of the *junta* for the defense of the rights of Fernando VII the Marquis becomes its first Commander with the unsuccessful mission to end the empire of tyranny and turn the inhabitants of Coro to the April cause. Even more surprising is the new turn in the Marquis's life when he becomes deputy of the new Venezuelan Congress and among the signatories of the declaration of independence in July 1811.

Later, during the first days of May 1812 and before the imminent failure of the first republican project and the royalist reaction of Domingo de Monteverde, the Marquis defected while commanding a mission to raise a body of cavalry in the southern plains ordered by General Francisco de Miranda. Del Toro and his brother Fernando went to Cumaná as refugees and soon after fled in anguish to the Antilles in a journey that took them to Trinidad (Quintero, 2005, pp. 107-143).

The rectification process begins at this point, where the Marquis and his brother sought through different ways, both directly and through the good offices of their brothers and his wife in Cumaná, Caracas and Madrid, to explain their behavior and request the pardon of His Majesty and the return of his properties in Venezuela. Between 1812 and 1820, not very hopeful in obtaining the royal pardon and with no intention to return to the revolts in Venezuela, the Marquis had settled in Trinidad, where he acquired some properties and a cocoa plantation outside of Port of Spain with the economic support of his brother Pedro, who had married a wealthy woman in Madrid and had inherited an important fortune when she died. However, the arrival of the liberal government in Spain in 1820, the publication of the Constitution of 1812 and the order to negotiate the peace with

the rebels, as well as the news of Carabobo in 1821 changed the Marquis' situation, who then decided to go back to Venezuela in 1822 where all his properties were and where "his friend" Simón Bolívar, had asked him to return since 1817, a plea that was never answered. As Quintero (2005, pp. 173-175) points out, the Marquis should have obtained some benefits for having been part of the glorious revolution of April of 1810.

However, Marquis Del Toro knew that he could face harsh criticism for his desertion and flight in 1812 upon his arrival, which could call into question his commitment to the cause of the independence. How could he erase that scene from the minds of the inhabitants of Caracas? Fortunately, the conflict in terms of deaths and forced migrations was so traumatic, and so close was Bolívar's affection for Del Toro that at least at the beginning he did not have to overcome that obstacle. He would have to face the same challenge as María Antonia Bolívar, which was the impact of the progressive dismemberment of the status-based society that had been established with the Colombian Constitution of 1821 that did not recognize any jurisdiction, had endorsed freedom of expression, the legal equality of Colombians, armed virtue and the gradual elimination of slavery.

In 1823 he is appointed mayor of Venezuela, the highest responsibility of the executive power, in charge of ensuring tranquility, security and good order, as well as enforcing the laws in the department. Although his term in office was rather difficult, the action in favor of peace he undertook when faced with the difficult situation arising in July of that year when the Colombian Congress passes a law designed to repress without appeal the ingratitude and audacity of those who insisted on opposing independence, disturbing public order and destroying institutions should be well noted. The Marquis faced General Carlos Soublette, who was in charge of applying the measure. However, despite their efforts and regardless of what their motivations were, Soublette's judgment would ultimately prevail and the measure was applied (Quintero, 2005, pp. 189-191).

After his resignation in June 1824 he became the target of public accusations for at least two years that questioned the Marquis' commitment to the cause of the independence, recalled his noble background and his denunciation of 1808 against Francisco de Miranda, made him responsible for the failure of the Coro campaign, condemned his desertion and treason in 1812, questioned his indifference until the end of the conflict in 1822 and accused him of corruption. Fortunately for him Rafael Diego de Mérida, the person attributed with the accusations, and the main republican leaders and generals were not aware of the series of petitions for pardon to the King sent by Rodríguez del Toro from Trinidad. In his defense, the Marquis will not only publish brochures or ask for testimonies of acquaintances to clean up his image, but he was also able to make General Páez, the first authority of Venezuela and with whom he would strike up a friendship, give a statement in support of his actions as mayor.

In addition to recovering his assets, Francisco Rodriguez del Toro managed to emerge victorious from the various accusations against him until his death in 1851. His reinsertion had been complex but more successful than those of María Antonia Bolívar and Feliciano Montenegro y Colón. His image during his time, as well as for history, would remain as that of a hero of independence, even

though the facts are very different from the conceptions about his actions. The reason for these changes are unknown, but they speak of the way in which humans deal with complexity in extreme situations.

In this regard, Straka emphasizes that these types of micro-histories:

> show the virtues and miseries of men and women of flesh and blood; they change, they doubt, they come back, they contradict themselves, they feel fear, anger, love and above all much sadness. They lie to save their skin, their own and that of their kin. They think about the motherland or the king, but also about their children and cousins. They do not hesitate to risk it all for an ideal, but can also give up for family reasons. They have values, yes, but also feel anguish (Straka, 2015, p.142).

The history of the defeated that returns to national life after the conflict of independence entails a reassessment of the studies on this process from a more complex and plural approach.

CONCLUSIONS

In Venezuela, as in the rest of Spanish America the Independence has been the conflict with the greatest impact in shaping the historical consciousness of the Republic. Like any other conflict of this nature, it involved an exchange between peaceful and violent interactions throughout its development. The task of recovering the importance of peaceful interactions represents an academic challenge due to the excessive manipulation of official history in each of the countries and the incomplete account of the historiography available on the subject. Recreating these processes from a history of imperfect peace can decisively influence the pacifist empowerment of people.

In this article we have dealt with a small part of this conflict: the demobilization and reintegration of a group of notable royalists into national life in Venezuela. The cases analyzed here represent only a small sample of the large number of royalists who had to return to national life once the conflict was resolved in favor of patriotic forces. Although no deductions can be made, it is to be assumed that these processes were quite complex and those of people who fought in one of the sides and then defended the opposite banners were even more so.

In all the cases analyzed here we must highlight the victors' mistrust of the defeated, notwithstanding the attitude they assumed in their reintegration into national life. This was even more difficult due to the fierce and polarized nature of the conflict of the independence in certain stages. However, the liberal values shared by patriots and royalists, embodied in the Treaty on the Regularization of the War of 1820 facilitated not only the peace process between Venezuela and Spain that ended in 1846 with the treaty, but also the imperfect processes of forgiveness, oblivion and reinsertion of royalists into national life within Venezuelan territory.

It is important to note that at the time of the reintegration processes of Cisneros, Arizábalo and Orobio, Montenegro y Colón, Bolívar and Rodríguez del Toro the main premises for a successful process were forgiveness and oblivion for both parties based on the liberal principles of the time. Guédez points out (2004, pp. 58 and 59) that the end of a conflict requires the commitment of winners and losers to a superior purpose. Forgiveness and oblivion are required to overcome the past and conquer the future. The first is an

effort not to remember and the commitment to rebuild, while the second is deeper and leaves no trace. Nowadays reference is made rather to memory and reconciliation, which imply a shared responsibility. These are not considered as post-conflict experiences, but rather as explicit factors of condemnation and affirmation of differences, as well as the application of justice, and have been included in the proposals of the negotiating committee in the peace process for the Colombian conflict (National Center for Historical Memory, 2013, page 18).

In the case of the troops of Arizábalo and Orobio and of Dionisio Cisneros, it is interesting to highlight the will to resolve the conflict peacefully mainly because many of these actors may have had thousands of reasons to use violence as a last resort. Instead however, they intensified their capacity to make peace and acted accordingly. Not without first, of course, overcoming the distrust and fear between the parties.

Although Arizábalo and Orobio did not return to Venezuelan national life, he made the decision on his own. He was allowed to travel to Spain with all the guarantees entailed by the internalization of the liberal values of the Treaty on the Regularization of War. On the other hand, Dionisio Cisneros' reinsertion is much more complex. Although Cisneros was incorporated into the republican army while retaining his rank, he could never fully reconcile with the Republic or its victims. According to Larrañaga (2006, pp. 194 and 195) to forgive is to suppress the feelings of hatred for others, to extinguish the flame. Inner peace and social peace only come with forgiveness. In the case of Cisneros his reinsertion process was not supported by feelings of repentance and a change of attitude. For his part, Páez made the mistake of giving him the task to protect the same populations he had committed crimes against. In the end, the application of justice would come, albeit belatedly and violently.

The cases of Feliciano Montenegro y Colón, Francisco Rodríguez del Toro and María Antonia Bolívar allow us to see only a sample of the complexity of the political conflicts and how it was possible to obtain successful but imperfect results in reintegration processes of the defeated into national life. In Montenegro y Colón we see how a high-ranking ex-military royalist, active in the conflict of the Independence, is favored by an amnesty and returns to national life through important pedagogical work and contributions in the field of social sciences. Many saw him with suspicion; but others, including the top levels of the patriotic army, would recognize his exemplary attitude and his merits.

The case of María Antonia Bolívar is even more complex because the existence of an active defender of the royalist cause will always be overshadowed by the story of Simón Bolívar, who could not accept contradictions of this caliber. María Antonia's process will be traumatic due to the actions of her brother and the actions against him in different stages of the conflict. Finally, the case of Francisco Rodríguez del Toro shows how the complexity of the conflict caused a member of the Caracas nobility to embark on a journey that would lead him to defend the two opposite sides at different stages to end up hailed as a hero of the Independence and the Republic of Venezuela.

However, today's biggest historiographical challenge beyond rescuing and accounting for the

history of the defeated and their reintegration processes is to promote the insertion of their histories into national historical consciousness in a complex, imperfect, conflictive and plural manner. This is a task of the history of Independence from the standpoint of peace: to recognize the capacity that we have had in the past to resolve our differences peacefully and despite our imperfections.

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