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The 'Pardo Question'

Political struggles on Free Coloreds right to citizenship during the Revolution of Caracas, 1797-1813

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The mulattoes, the Pardos, the dark people were with him. The mulattoes fought like demons in Valencia. Even when the white people surrendered they fought on. I had five thousand men. The mulattoes fought on even when there were only five hundred of them. For them, as you say, the question of the revolution was: 'Who is going to rule over us?' And they simply didn't want to be ruled by the people on my side.

V.S. Naipaul, *A Way in the World*, 1994

- 1 In the early 19th century, the Free Colored population of the Province of Caracas most commonly known as Pardos reached nearly 45% of the total: some 190 thousand individuals between Mulattoes and Free Blacks. This unusual high percentage of Free Coloreds drove French voyager, François Depons, to write the following to describe the human landscape he observed when visiting Caracas in 1794: "*In proportion to other social classes, probably there is not in the West Indies a city with as much emancipated or descendents of emancipated.*"¹
- 2 As in other slave societies of the Greater Caribbean, Venezuelan Pardos were regarded by local Whites as the "worst" of all socio-ethnic groups, because of their African ascendance, their bastardized origin, their brown color, and the estate of bondage their ancestors had been subjected to. This stereotyped perception affected Pardos in everyday life through many forms of social, spatial and legal segregation. In late 18th century, this situation had turned intolerable for members of the pardo elite (the so called *Pardos Beneméritos*), who by that time had conformed a very small lighter-skinned and wealthy urban minority.
- 3 In order to better understand what would happen later during the Revolution of Caracas (1810-1812), it is important to point out how close members of that elite were in terms of skin values to white aristocrats (*Mantuanos*): They both despised those who were below them in the socio-ethnic 'quality' scale.²Therefore, the socio-ethnic tensions in the Venezuelan colonial society in the early stages of the Age of Revolutions cannot be understood merely in terms of white/brown opposition, but also through the tensions that existed between whiter and lesser whiter sectors amongst the Free Colored people.
- 4 Once the revolutionary winds began to affect the Coast of Caracas in mid-1790, another tension would develop this time amongst White Creoles, in regard to their position towards independence from Spain and on granting citizenship to Free Coloreds. In order to understand the ideological profile of those who favored the cause of the latter, it is important to take into consideration the sources of their ideological profile: the influence they got from the Jacobin-inspired Madrilenian conspiracy of San Blas (1795), from their connections with Victor Hugues' regime in Guadeloupe, and from the ideas of the White Creole Francisco de Miranda.

Province of Caracas' population, 1800-1810

Ethno-social groups	Undercategories	Totals	Percentage
<i>Whites</i>		99.642	25.62%
	Creoles Aristocracy	1.945	0.5%
	Spaniards	5.056	1.3%
	White Creoles	71.946	18.5%
	Lesser Whites	20.690	5.3%
<i>Tributary Indians</i>		47.605	12.24%
<i>Pardos</i>		147.136	37.83

Free Blacks		33.632	6.64%
Slaves		60.880	15.65%

The data for this table was taken from: Manuel LUCENA SALMORAL, "La Sociedad de la Provincia de Caracas a Comienzos del Siglo XIX", in *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, XXXVII, pp.8-11

I. The Guadalupean Connection

- 5 In December 1794, French republican troops reinforced with local colored people and led by the commissioner Victor Hugues, succeeded on expelling British forces from the island of Guadeloupe. Then he decided to set up a 'private navy' of corsairs, in order to harass British interests in the Caribbean and also to spread the *bonne parole* of the revolution throughout the region.³ He also committed himself on applying the National Convention's abolition decree of February the 4th, but in accordance to certain gradual principles by which former slaves that hadn't joined the republican forces were to remain working in the plantations.⁴
- 6 In the case of the Captaincy-General of Venezuela, we know that those corsairs encouraged a massive slave insurrection against the colonial government in mid-1795, at the surroundings of the northwestern city of Coro. On that occasion, a group of Free Blacks turned slaves against Whites claiming the application of the "law of the French."⁵ Although this insurrection failed and its leaders executed, the ideological influence of those corsairs on discontented sector of the Venezuelan society would not stop. But it was not the only source of revolutionary influence: In June 1797, another insurrection broke out in the coastal city of La Guaira, a few miles north from Caracas. This time it was led by some White Creoles, Manuel Gual and José María España, who had been encouraged to conspire against the Spanish colonial government by some prisoners (*Reos de Estado*) recently dispatched from Spain, because of their participation in a Jacobin-inspired plot that took place in Madrid in early 1795: the Conspiracy of San Blas.
- 7 Those prisoners began to arrive to La Guaira from December 1796. Almost immediately they sympathized with their Pardo guardians, who allowed them to contact local White Creoles willing to carry out a new conspiracy in Venezuelan soil. Shortly after, they were smuggling out texts of seditious nature, most of them written by the chieftain of the movement, the Mallorquian Juan Bautista Picornell. The principal aim of those texts was to gain the support of those they regarded as the local *sans culottes* or -as they rather call them- "shirtless" (*descamisados*): Pardos and Free Blacks. This intention becomes clear in the text addressed to the "Free Inhabitants of Spanish America", in which he qualifies as "...dreadful [the] distinctions applied to brown blood".⁶
- 8 Picornell also wrote some tales probably hoping that they would be read out loud to the people of color, most of whom were illiterate. Among these texts was the *Dialogue between a Black Lieutenant-Colonel of the French Republic and a Black Spaniard, his cousin*. In this work, he tells a story of what happened when both cousins came across each other: on that occasion, the latter was astonished when he saw his cousin dressed up as French officer, what he explained telling him that in his country (a French island) "...all men were equal and free, and as such they could attain both military and political positions".⁷
- 9 Another one of the San Blas conspirators imprisoned at La Guaira, was the young Madrilenian Manuel Cortés. He was responsible for composing or adapting lyrics from French revolutionary songs to the Venezuelan ethno-social reality. In one of those pieces entitled *The American Song*, he underlines the brotherhood that should prevail between the 'people' (*pueblo*) of the new republic they were about to build up, which from then on would be composed of Whites, Blacks, Indians and Pardos.⁸
- 10 The most radical measure proposed by the Spaniard-Venezuelan revolutionaries, can be found in one of the political works written by Picornell: the *Ordenanzas*. According to this text, once they had ousted the colonial government they intended to declare "...the abolition of slavery as

opposite to humanity”⁹. The nature of this first abolition attempt somehow recalls the measures introduced in Guadeloupe by Victor Hugues, because it also conditioned slaves their access to citizenship. In this case, the “price of freedom” was settled in article 36 of that text:

All Citizens will swear fidelity to our Motherland and capable males will oath to serve in the Militia until people’s freedom is assured as long as circumstances require from them; in the meantime, Slaves or Breeders will remain with their [former] masters so the agriculture won’t suffer any damage...¹⁰

- 11 How come those Spanish prisoners became aware so quickly of the French Revolution’s proposals on slavery abolition? Perhaps the answer to this question lies in some letters addressed to Victor Hugues by Manuel Gual as early as April 1797, in which he expressed his sympathies towards the French Revolution and its ideals.¹¹ Later on this relation would intensify, when in June 1797 the prisoners managed to escape to the island of Curacao. In this Dutch colony they were helped by the French agent Jean-Baptiste Tierce, who provided them means to move on to Guadeloupe. When they got there, they received all kinds of aid from Victor Hugues, despite the military alliance that was still on between France and Spain (Treaty of San Ildefonso, 1796).¹² Hugues allowed Piccornel to make use of the press machine he had brought from France so he could reproduce a Spanish version of the *Rights of Man and Citizen*.¹³ In the meantime, Manuel Cortés was allowed to join the French Republican Army units stationed in the island.
- 12 The Spaniard-Venezuelan revolutionaries’ efforts to gain Free Colored’s support for their cause paid off as they expected. According to a lists made by royalists officials afterwards, among the prisoners we found several members of the following garrisons: the Pardo Militia of Caracas, the Pardo Artillery Company of La Guaira, the Blacks Company of Carayaca and the Blacks Legion of the Coast.¹⁴ This situation frightened the White Creoles, whom in consequence offered to the Captain-General every mean they possessed in order to help controlling the revolutionary attempt.
- 13 In early July 1797, the movement was discovered and its main leaders (Manuel Gual and José María España) had to flee to the Antilles. From the exile, they all stayed in touch to plan another revolutionary attempt. Bearing this in mind, they got in touch with whom by that time was becoming the Venezuelan colonial authorities’ newest nightmare: Francisco de Miranda.

II. Miranda and the *Gironde*

- 14 Miranda was a White Creole from Caracas descendant from Canary islanders, who migrated in 1771 to Spain when he couldn’t become White Militia officer because of the local aristocracy’s intolerance. Ten years later he enrolled the Spanish Army taking part in several campaigns against British forces, including that on Pensacola in 1781. In 1783 he began to travel: first he spent 18 months in the United States where he came up with the idea of independence for Spanish America. Afterwards he settled down in London when the British government offered him to support that enterprise. From 1786 to 1788 he traveled to Russia, where he probably met the Abbé Raynal. According to what Miranda wrote in his diary, it was on his way back from that country that he started developing some sensibility against slavery. This might have been encouraged by “his friend” Raynal, with whom he stayed in Marseille for a few months in early 1789.¹⁵
- 15 Once the British government denied Miranda to keep on supporting his plans, he turned to revolutionary France. In 1792, we found him in Paris among the acquaintances of some French pro-abolition politicians, many of whom belonged or were close to the Gironde party, such as Jacques-Pierre Brissot, Jérôme Pétion, and Armand Gensonné, Thomas Paine and Marie-Hélène Williams. When in august that year monarchy was abolished, he embraced the republican cause accepting an appointment to become General. In November, while fighting in the Netherlands learned he had been proposed by Brissot as governor for the colony of

Saint-Domingue. This Girondin leader believed that such a measure would be convenient for both controlling the chaotic state in which that colony was immersed in and for exporting the revolution to Spanish America. In December 1792, Brissot wrote the following to general Dumouriez (Miranda's superior), asking him to release the Venezuelan from his duties in the republican army:

Miranda will put an end to miserable fights in the colonies: through him the turbulent Whites will calm down; he will become the colored people's idol. And, right away, how easy it will be for him to upraise the Spanish islands or the continent Spain owns! Commanding twelve thousand regular army men who are now in Saint-Domingue [and] from ten to fifteen thousand brave mulattoes, it will be possible to invade the Spanish colonies.¹⁶

16 Eventually Miranda rejected this appointment alleging that he had never been to Saint-Domingue and that his presence there would endanger the potential success of the enterprise.
17 After the downfall of the Gironde in 1793, members and followers of this political party were hunted down and prosecuted. Miranda was amongst them, but after a few months imprisoned he was released. Nevertheless, the atrocities committed by the Mountain during the Terror, in which he lost many friends, raised his skepticism on the Revolution as a mean to achieve radical political changes. In a pamphlet he published in France in 1795 under the title *General Miranda's opinion about the current situation in France and convenient remedies to ease her diseases*, he expressed his frustration as he praised the Thermidorian Reaction of 1794 for having stopped to the "Reign of Terror".¹⁷

18 His lack on confidence in the revolution kept on growing afterwards. In 1798, when he learnt about French presence in the Northeastern coasts of Venezuela he told a friend: "May god protects us from Jacobin principles as from the plague!"¹⁸ Furthermore, the details of the conflicts in Saint-Domingue also nourished his doubts about carrying out a revolution in a multiracial society such as his homeland, as we can tell from a letter he wrote to another acquaintance of his that very year:

...I must confess to you that as much as I desire liberty and independence for the New World, as much I fear anarchy and revolutionary system. May God won't permit those beautiful territories to have Saint-Domingue's fate, a theatre of bloodshed and crimes, under the excuse to bring in liberty; before it would be better for them to remain for yet another century under the barbaric and imbecile Spanish oppression.¹⁹

19 Miranda's fears on triggering another Haitian Revolution in Spanish America influenced the political proposals he made from 1801 onwards. He now believed that the key to success "didn't rely on cutting down the tree, but on carefully pruning it instead"²⁰, for which slavery abolition was consciously excluded from his political agenda. According to him, the only way to succeed in carrying out a revolutionary project and to avoid the terrible consequences it had in France and Haiti, was to base it upon a doctrine of "rational liberties" in which government would be conducted by "virtuous and enlightened men" alone.²¹

20 In spite of this, he continued expressing himself in favor of granting full citizenship to Free Coloreds, only limiting this measure by censitary or material principles. This posture can be noticed in the papers he intended to smuggle into the Coast of Caracas in 1806, when a first British-supported attempt of invasion was carried out. In one of those texts he claimed for the end of the "...hateful distinctions between Spaniards, Creoles and Mulattoes."²² In other he tried to convince "...innocent Indians, as well as bizarre Pardos and Free Blacks that we are all citizens..."²³

21 After the failure of this military operation, Miranda went back to England where slave trade had just been abolished. There he got in touch with many prominent Englishmen including abolitionist William Wilberforce, with whom he established a short-lived intellectual relation: In 1810, Miranda undertook regular correspondence with this influential parliamentarian, lending him books of mutual interest and addressing him with "*friendship and affection*."

According to Wilberforce's diary, between January and July that year both men met at least five times, always in his place.²⁴

22 In 1808, Miranda was joined in London by Manuel Cortés, who was no longer in Guadeloupe serving in the French Army, to which he probably renounced in 1802 when Napoleonic forces reintroduced the Ancien Régime Colonial into that island. When in mid-1810 they heard the news that Colonial Government in Caracas had been ousted, they both took the decision to return to Venezuela.

III. Autonomy without equality

23 The final stage of the process that ended up with the overthrow of the Venezuelan Colonial Government has to be regarded considering the events that followed Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. In May 1808, the legitimate sovereign of Spain (Fernando VII) was forced to abdicate at Bayonne, what allowed the French Emperor to name his own brother (Joseph Bonaparte) as the new Monarch of the Kingdoms of Spain. In Madrid people rioted against this decision, which led to the break out of the Spanish War of Independence. Shortly after, a courts call was issued and a provisional assembly was established in the southern city of Cadiz. Despite the fact that most members gathered there were politically liberal, the proposals and reforms that came out of this assembly didn't fulfill the economic and social expectations of the American deputies.

24 As has been asserted by John Lynch, this situation raised the 'total orphanhood' dilemma to the Hispanic Americans: "They could not have the Bourbons; they did not want Napoleon; [and] they distrusted the [Spanish] liberals..."²⁵ For Venezuelan White Creoles, the best solution to that problem passed through setting up their own autonomic assembly, as happened on April 19th 1810. That day, the Captain-General of Venezuela was forced to resign by the population of Caracas, giving thus room to the birth of the Conservative Assembly of the King's Rights (*Asamblea Conservadora de los Derechos de Fernando VII*). Among the many problems the new government had to face, was how to deal with the equality aspirations of the largest ethno-social sector of the local population: the Pardos. They had been showing concern that Colonial Government would be handed over to a white-controlled assembly, ever since news of the Bayonne abdication reached Caracas in mid-1808.

25 There were reasons for Pardos to distrust White Creoles, because they traditionally had openly shown despise towards them. In recent years tensions had increased specially after White Creoles ferociously opposed the introduction of a Royal Edict (*Real Cédula de Gracias al Sacar*) which allowed wealthiest Pardos to acquire a very onerous "quality dispensation" (*Dispensa de Calidad*) that would grant them white's status. In November 1808, Pardo fears will prove justified when the most prominent White inhabitants of Caracas (*Principales Vecinos*) came together in order to convince the Captain-General to hand over the government to the local City Hall (*Cabildo*). As soon as the Pardo Militia officers became aware of this project²⁶ they got alarmed, and without delay sent a very emotive letter to the Captain-General offering their services to fight back if necessary. In this document they described themselves as "a brown beast" (*parda fiera*), which would bring "...into her claws as many preys as if they were the heads of those who by their own disgrace dared attempting against..." the colony's highest authority and his "wise dispositions".²⁷

26 The distressed Pardos initiative was soon supported by the many Canarians that lived in the colony and also by individuals from "all classes" (*de todas las clases*). The popular turmoil that broke out then would only be controlled when most of the implicated in the assembly proposal –now seen as a conspiracy– were arrested. According to a statement given by one of them afterwards (the White Creole, José Felix Ribas), the reason for such wave of agitation could be explained by the rumors that some had "maliciously spread", which asserted that the true intentions of White Creoles were to steal from the Canarians and to enslave the Pardos.²⁸ White

Creoles who were against the autonomous attempt accused the implicated of not knowing they were fostering an Haitian-like revolution. This was clearly stated by a member of the local Royal Consulate, the Valencian lawyer José Vicente Escorihuela:

...in Guarico [Saint-Domingue] the first riots broke out at instance of the wealthier and principals, and recently that country has been taken over by Blacks and the [White] promoters haven't just lost their commodities but also their lives.²⁹

- 27 One of the implicated (Miguel José Sanz) was even accused of having said that his movement had the support of nearly ten thousand Black slaves. This accusation was denied by one of his comrades (Mariano Montilla), who assured in the interrogatory he was submitted to that they were all fully aware of what had happened in Saint-Domingue, that's why they didn't dare asking the colored people for their support:

...Slave owners [said M. Montilla] would become the main victims of such an enterprise, as we know by experience for what happened in the island of Santo Domingo. From this we ought to assume that neither the confessor [M. J. Sanz] nor any of those who pretended an Assembly have considered what they are accused of, and even less those who own slaves as the confessor does.³⁰

- 28 These testimonies put into evidence the familiarity some Venezuelan White Creoles had about some details of what had happened to Whites during the Haitian Revolution. This awareness echoed on the fear they showed towards the huge quantity of Colored people that lived around them. This variable ought to be considered seriously when trying to understand what will happen during the revolutionary process that followed. It is also important to notice that those Pardos who complained before the Captain-General were all militia captains, a position reserved to those who belonged to the pardo elite.

IV. The Conservative Assembly and the Pardo elite

- 29 The movement that finally overthrew the colonial government on April 1810 was leaded mostly by the same White Creoles involved in 1808's conspiracy. However, after the fall of Andalucía before the French and the establishment of a Regency Council (*Consejo de Regencia*) in Spain, they were joined by other White Creoles whom so far were reluctant to support any autonomous attempt, because of the aristocratic profile of its promoters.³¹ As a result, the new assembly proposed in 1810 turned out to be more plural in both social and ethnic terms, so it could count with the support of other non-aristocrat Whites and the Pardo elite. According to what was seen on April the 19th, it seems like differences amongst creoles and with the Pardo elite had been left behind. That day Whites Creoles in general joined the pro-autonomist rebellion, while Pardo militians –mostly from the Aragua Valley's garrison-military supported the White rebels. The participation of the latter in that day events was described later in a report elaborated by the City Hall of Caracas in October 1812, after the capital of the province came again under royalist rule:

The Pardo battalion of Aragua valleys was the first to offer its services, because one of its officers, Pedro Arévalo, was amid the most intimate confidants of the revolution, [But] also (sic) because the benevolent promises of a chimerical equality so harmful for this country, [This] was the stallion used by those new Jacobins so they could gain this class [Pardos], on whom these promises have always proven to be more powerful than any other.³²

- 30 Though biased in favor of the royalist cause, this testimony suggests that previous to April the 19th there were negotiations between White Creoles and members of the Pardo elite; which, according to historian Clément Thibaud, might have taken place within the militia corps where military comradeship may have facilitated contacts between both sectors.³³ If there ever was an agreement its conditions unknown, but from the policies brought in from then on by the new government, we could figure out what may have been the request of the Pardos.

- 31 Once the Conservative Assembly (*Junta Suprema Conservadora de los Derechos de Fernando Séptimo*) was settled up its members brought in several measures in order to keep the Pardo militians faithful to the autonomists cause: They were allowed to have a representative amongst them (the White Creole, José Félix Ribas); their salaries were increased; some of them were promoted beyond the grade of captain contravening thus colonial laws³⁴; and those who took part in the events of April the 19th were decorated for the "...courage and patriotic enthusiasm" (*bizarría y entusiasmo patriótico*) they showed on that date. In the case of Pedro Arévalo, he was given a shield engraved with the words: "virtue and patriotism".³⁵
- 32 The Conservative Assembly also took measures in the area of traditions which segregated Pardos in the everyday life: On November 1810, it gave permission to the wife of a Pardo (Félix Salinas) who lived in the southern town of Calabozo, to make use of a carpet at the church, under the very 'enlightened' argument of "...preserving the hygiene and cleanness of her clothes."³⁶ Traditionally this was a privilege reserved to White ladies for what is understandable the scandal that followed, even though this measure was applied in region far away from Caracas. The reactions to it were described by an English traveler (Robert Semple), who was visiting Caracas during those agitated days:

Such an innovation, as insignificant as it may seem, troubled the most distinguished classes of Caracas, and in equal proportion, [it] was reason for hope and longing for the colored families.³⁷

- 33 Altogether, the policies in favor of the Pardo elite community continued to pay off, as it can be noticed by the numerous donations made by them in favor of the autonomist government from late 1810, which were regularly published in the local newspaper: the *Gaceta de Caracas*.³⁸ Some of those donations were very generous, such as the one made by a Pardo named José Luís Landaeta, who in January 1811 gave away "...a house which rent produced six pesos per month."³⁹ Others preferred to express their sympathies for the new political order more openly, publishing articles of political nature in that newspaper. That is the case of one of the Pardo officers promoted by the Conservative Assembly, in a text published on June 1810, which aimed, on the one hand, to convince White Creoles of the fidelity of the garrison he commanded; and, on the other hand, to refute some calumnies (*Falsas imposturas*) that were spreading, which intended to indicate otherwise:

Your Excellency [the Conservative Assembly] may dispose of my obedience as well as that of your [Pardo] subjects and despise the false impostures expressed during this time by some enemies of justice and lovers of oppression; and for public satisfaction's sake, as well as for that of many irresponsible and simple characters, they must all be satisfied of the loyalty of this Capital's Pardo Militia garrison, something that should set an example for their equals in the rest of the province to learn from.⁴⁰

- 34 An even more significant signal of the Conservative Assembly's determination to grant equality to the Pardo elite, can be found in the electoral code published in parts from mid-June 1810 on. It was addressed to "all classes of free men" (*clases de hombres libres*) for the election of the members who would conform the very first General Congress of Venezuela.⁴¹ In the foreword his author (the White Creole, Juan Germán Roscio⁴²) insisted on the importance that "...every free neighbor [*vecino*] of Venezuela..." should take part in the first stage of the election, in which one parochial elector would be chosen by each 500 voters and another one by each surplus of 250. Then, in a second stage, the elected would gather in order to appoint the deputies: 1 deputy for each 20 thousand inhabitants and another one for each surplus of 10 thousand.⁴³
- 35 In order to establish who could and who could not become parochial elector, previously a population census had to be made, in which would be noted, among other aspects, the 'quality' of those allowed to vote (White, Pardo, Free Black, etc.) and whether or not he was property owner (*Propietario*). Once done this, the civil authorities in charge of making the census (the

First-Election Mayors and the Major-Justice Lieutenants) would make a list of those allowed to vote, following article number 4 of the electoral code, according to which were excluded from the right to vote

...women, youngsters under twenty-five unless married and candled [*velados?*], the mentally insane, the deaf-mute, those who had criminal cause pendent, transient travelers, public known vagabonds, those who had been applied afflictive or inflammatory physical punishment, and those who hadn't got a home opened and occupied; which means, that those living in other neighbor's home under the wage and responsibility of the latter, or currently under the latter's service; [won't be allowed to vote] unless they were known as proprietors owning at least two thousand pesos in free assets...⁴⁴

36 Although we are certain that members of the Pardo elite voted in this election, none of them ran for the Parochial Elector's office. This is rather strange if we consider that many of them (like Pedro Arévalo, Lino Gallardo, Carlos Sánchez, and Juan José Landaeta) were wealthy enough and had publicly manifested their support for the autonomist project. Had they reach an agreement with White Creoles on this matter as well? Perhaps they were just pleased with their success on attaining a new status nearer to white's, while the rest of the colored population of 'lesser quality' remained excluded from the right to vote for not complying with the "two thousand pesos" requirement.⁴⁵ The deliberate usage of material-based censitary principles to exclude the vast majority of 'lesser quality' Free Coloreds from voting, turned out to be the spark that would grant a class struggle dimension to the debate around the margins of pardo citizenship.

V. The Friends of the Pardos

37 From the beginning, 'lesser quality' Free Coloreds had also shown enthusiasm about the reforms the new autonomous regime may bring into their favor. On November 1810 during the public acts honoring the victims of the Massacre of Quito, they gathered in the surroundings of the Temple of Altagracia (Church of the Pardos) to cry out their discontent against Spain and its monarchy. This behavior was apparently encouraged by their representative before the Conservative Assembly, the White Creole José Félix Ribas. For this reason he was expelled from the Province, along with many of his White and Pardo collaborators.⁴⁶ The agitation that reigned among 'lesser quality' Free Coloreds would be profited later by the most radical sectors of the autonomist movement, particularly after the arrival of Francisco de Miranda.

38 Still in London in mid-1808, when Miranda was informed about the failure of the White Creole conspiracy, he got disturbed because he believed that the Pardo Militia reaction was promoted by the colonial authorities in Caracas. For him using colored armed men in favor of any cause would be a risky play, because it could trigger another 'dreadful' revolution such as the French or the Haitian.⁴⁷ That's why as soon as he heard the news about that conspiracy he immediately warned its leaders about the dangers they would expose themselves, if "...the [common] people (and not the capable and virtuous men) would take over government." Thus he was retaking the idea he had developed from 1795, about the need to conform republican governments conducted by "virtuous and enlightened men" alone.

39 In December 1810, Miranda was arriving in Caracas. A few months later so did the surviving leaders of the 1797's conspiracy: Juan Bautista Picornell and Manuel Cortés. Once in Caracas, the former French general made use of his prestige in order to gain the support of those who represented the most radical wing of the revolution. Many of them were youngsters related to local White Aristocracy families, such as the Bolívar, Montilla, Ribas, etc. They came together to form a Jacobin-inspired club they named The Patriotic Society (*La Sociedad Patriótica*), which almost immediately became a public tribune for those whose interests had not been considered by the local autonomist leadership. According to one of its members, there the words of "...equality and liberty among men" were regularly spoken, and the entrance

was allowed to men from "...all the classes, status and conditions" (*de todas las clases, estados y condiciones*) and even to women.⁴⁸ From the balcony of the house where the society was established hanged a banner with the Taurus Constellation painted on, representing the symbolic date of April the 19th. At each side two shrines had been placed both devoted to the cause of Justice (represented by a balance and a sword) "...demonstrating thus the equality before the law for everyone."⁴⁹

40 In order to divulge their ideas and to have an effect on policy makers, The Patriotic Society began to publish a journal, *The Venezuelan Patriot (El Patriota de Venezuela)*, named probably after its girondinian equivalent, *The French Patriot (Le Patriote Français)*. The Venezuelan Patriot was imprinted in the press machine of a Lesser White (*Petit Blanc*) from Haiti named Juan Bailló (the young), who had just settled down in Caracas.⁵⁰ In the few issues that have survived until today of that newspaper, there is not a single article in defense of Free Coloreds aspiration to equality. Perhaps this could be explained by the philanthropic ideals that The Patriotic Society members shared. Therefore, they may have preferred to assume for granted their citizenship rather than making ethno-social distinctions in their political writings. To them, the universal rights of men was among their most cherished principles as it can be noticed in the following article published in July 1811, under the very philanthropic title of *Speech through which the true origin of the political virtues is manifested*:

...all citizens are equal between each other, sharing equal rights, prerogatives and civil representation, they must consider themselves as true brothers so it can come out among them that sort of virtue which consolidate Republics; unfortunately, that is almost unknown by the rest of governments.⁵¹

41 *The Venezuelan Patriot* was distributed throughout the Captaincy-General of Venezuela, something which permitted The Patriotic Society to gain supporters beyond the boundaries of Caracas. This can be measurable by the appearance of similar political assemblies in other cities such as Barcelona, Barinas, Puerto Cabello, Trujillo and even Valencia. An inquiry made by the royalists in late 1812, shows that this support was particularly strong in the small towns of the Aragua valleys up to the surroundings of the city of Valencia. According to its author, the Marquis of Casa León, those regions had become a "...seed-plot for the revolution" (*semillero de la revolución*).⁵²

42 Ever since his arrival, Miranda aroused the free colored's enthusiasm. They cheered him when entering for the first time through the main gate of Caracas (*Puerta de Caracas*).⁵³ From then on –as Jacques-Pierre Brissot had foreseen– Miranda succeeded on maintaining their support for the republican cause. It was him who opened the doors of The Patriotic Society to everybody ('lesser quality' Pardos and Whites alike), for which its numbers quickly began to rise until reaching more than 100 members.⁵⁴ If we are to believe the testimony of one of them (the White Creole, Francisco-Javier Yáñez), this increment was due to "...the heated and enthusiastic way they spoke there about liberty and equality among men..."⁵⁵

43 Nevertheless, according to Semple's testimony only four mulattoes had the formal status of member of The Patriotic Society, and had been only accepted after Miranda became its president in May 1811.⁵⁶ This coincides with the information provided in Casa de León's inquiry, in which he provides further information about the 'quality' of those members: two of them were not mulattoes but Pardos (one named Romana and the other Lino Gallardo, a musician member of the Pardo elite), and the other two were Free Blacks (one of them was Francisco de Paula Camacho, an officer from a Free Blacks battalion).⁵⁷

44 The presence of Free Blacks amongst members of The Patriotic Society, might be understood as a sign which indicates that Miranda's followers were in favor of broader equality policies, which could consider Colored people as a whole (Blacks and Pardos alike), and not only limited to the Pardo elite. This political posture may have made them clash with more

conservative White and Pardo sectors, whom from early 1811 began to accuse Miranda of promoting *sansculotism* amongst 'lesser quality' people. According to Yáñez, by that time they started to appreciate The Patriotic Society as an extremist-Jacobin club, for this reason they proposed transferring their site of their meetings off Caracas and even its total suppression.⁵⁸

45 The clash hypothesis seems to make sense when focusing into the debate that took place as a result of an article published later in 1811 at *The Venezuelan Patriot*, it was written by someone who nicknamed himself as John Landful (*Juan Contierra*), whose real identity is attributed to a The Patriotic Society member if not Miranda himself.⁵⁹ This anonymous author assumes in his text the cause of the poorest people of the Venezuelan society, who, according to him, are despicably called by others using "...epithets such as shirtless, sans culottes, and Jacobins". He also denounces the hypocrite attitude of those he critically name as "aristocratic patriots":

...they believe that they alone were born to possess decorations [*galones*], to enjoy honors, to exploit the substance of the motherland and to showoff in the Republic whilst most part of the people must, in their concept, tolerate their whims...⁶⁰

46 In one of the three replies to this article which appeared in the *Gaceta de Caracas*, its author warns the readers against those who pretend to be "...friends of the People, [and] defenders of their rights." To prove his point, he made use of examples taken out from contemporary and ancient history, and ends up his text warning about the Jacobin-like revolutions⁶¹:

How was that people deceived by them? They made use of writings which presented misbehavior [*licencia*] as liberty and turmoil as patriotism, with speeches pronounced at Jacobin Societies filled up with calumnies made-up to destroy the founders of the Republic, and proclaiming a liberty that they alone desired or could preserve...⁶²

47 The next round of this debate took place on March the 2nd 1811, the same day the first General Congress of Venezuela was installed. On that occasion six Pardos were arrested at one of Miranda followers' place (the White Creole, Fernando Galindo), for the sole reason of being discussing topics regarding government and equality. According to a private letter written by the White Creole conservative, Juan Germán Roscio, their leader was caught in possession of a "subversive text" (*escrito incendiario*) to which Miranda had added a "flattering apostrophe" (*apóstrofe lisonjero*).⁶³

48 This event most have affected the trust White Creole population of Caracas had towards the colored community, because two days later the General Congress issued a pronouncement stating that they still believed in the "...generous reliance on the rest of the Pardos" (*generosa confianza en el resto de los Pardos*).⁶⁴ Pardo elite members also tried to emend the damage made to their image: The day after of that pronouncement, the pardo colonel, Pedro Arévalo published a letter in the *Gaceta de Caracas* criticizing the attitude of those Pardos who had been arrested, and publicly assuring that the position of the people of his 'quality' was still in favor of the autonomous government:

...a few individuals of my class, wrongly advised by two factionaries spiritually anxious, have affected the confidence that everyone generally had towards the straight feelings of honor and fair union, whereupon we [Pardos] have tried to support and improve the great enterprise we have begun in agreement with all our [White] compatriots.⁶⁵

49 In their texts, both Roscio and Arévalo blame Miranda for being the one responsible for the agitation among 'lesser quality' Free Coloreds. This could be interpreted as a sign of the political divisions that were starting to take shape from mid-1811, on the matter of granting full citizenship to Free Coloreds without any material limitations. We can have a good idea of what was happening then, thanks to the testimony of a Scottish officer (Gregor McGregor) who came to Caracas in 1811 to support the revolution. He says in a letter he wrote to a relative back in Scotland, that by the end of that year a "mulatto party" was starting to take shape,

which was being regarded with growing fear by White Creoles, republicans and royalists alike, whose political differences were starting to narrow because of this development:

...the mulattoes [said MacGregor] (...) outnumber Whites fourteen to one, they are not aware of their real strength yet, but the light is quickly reaching them each day, and when it gets complete their force will increase. The discussions that are taking place in The Patriotic Society have very much contributed to give them self-confidence and to develop an idea of rights and privileges equivalent to White's. (...) Miranda's support has immediately made them formidable and the Mantuanos [White Aristocrats] and the Spaniards (named Godos), facing the growing power [of that faction], are starting to get together (...) and perhaps they will soon form a single party...⁶⁶

50 The young Scotsman was also getting concerned for what he was observing in Caracas, given that in case the "mulatto party" became any stronger "...a revolution that so far have been received in a soft manner and without bloodshed, probably may end up turning into civil war."⁶⁷

VI. The debate of July 31st

51 By mid-1811, the members of The Patriotic Society who had been elected as deputies to make part of the General Congress of Venezuela were pushing to accomplish another of their political objectives: a declaration of total independence. That moment came on the session of July the 5th, after which the members of that society were joined by colored people to celebrate this achievement in the streets of Caracas.⁶⁸ In the beginning of that session, they proposed that previous to any debate on independence the deputies should discuss "...the fate and condition of the Pardos". They eventually agreed on putting off this matter under the condition that it should be "...the first thing to be considered after Independence".⁶⁹

52 While waiting for that debate to come, the General Congress proclaimed a local version of the *Rights of Men and Citizen*, which was published on July the 23rd in the *Gaceta de Caracas*. This fact created a favorable political ambience for those deputies who were in favor of a declaration that at last would allow all Pardos to become citizens.⁷⁰ The debate took place eight days latter (July the 31st) in a private session specially held to discuss this matter. When the debate began, it became clear that it was not going to be a discussion merely on Pardo rights, but rather about the aspiration of some provinces other than Caracas to maintain some autonomy within the newly born Venezuelan Federation.

53 The first to intervene was the White Creole deputy from Caracas, Martín Tovar Ponte, who belonged to the local aristocracy. In his intervention he expressed his will that the new republic follows the example of the United States, where, according to him, "...each province establishes the government system and qualify her citizens as she pleases..." In this sense, he also proposed that there shouldn't be any "...especial declaration" (*declaración expresa*) on the matter of Pardo equality. He proposed instead a gradual policy which could begin to build down "...certain odious treatments that other classes detest."⁷¹ This proposal was immediately refuted by a member of The Patriotic Society, the delegate from the city of Barquisimeto, José Ángel Álamo. He qualified it as "superfluous and inopportune", because, to him, that proposal contradicted "...one of the articles of the Rights of Men that had just been published."⁷²

54 The position assumed by many deputies from the interior provinces was to keep on defending their regions, for which they supported the proposal made by Tovar Ponte, adding that the Pardo Question should be solved by each "Provincial Assembly" (*Legislativas Provinciales*). The representative from the city of Cumaná (Juan Bermudez), alleged that in his province "...there is security and civil subordination, and that the class [of Pardos] is not preponderant there, therefore is no need to declare anything for the time being." He also supported Tovar Ponte's proposal, saying that it was "...convenient to introduce it step by step, without making a general rule of it that could subvert the order."⁷³

55 The interior provinces representatives also feared that if Caracas unilaterally declared Pardo equality it could cause revolts among people of this 'quality' living in their regions, and that it may even foster massive migratory waves of towards the capital city, what would ruin the local economies. In consequence, they drove the debate to the possibility of using Federal Forces to intervene in such cases; otherwise -as it was asserted by the delegate from the city of Barcelona- there was a serious risk of loosing the "federative system".⁷⁴

56 In the meantime, mirandian radicals as well other independent representatives who also supported the cause of the Pardos, focused their allegations on pointing out the advantages of granting them legal equality, and on showing that they were as qualified as Whites to exercise citizenship. Perhaps the most eloquent of them all was Francisco-Xavier Yáñez', who alleged the following in his first intervention:

...the Pardos are instructed, they are aware of their rights, they know that by birth, by property, by marriage and by other reasons they are children of this land [and] that they have a Mother country who they are committed to defend...⁷⁵

57 In a second intervention, Yáñez refuted his counterpart's allegations one by one. He was particularly keen on attacking the proposal of delegating the decision of Pardo status to provincial assemblies. He insisted on that this was a matter that should be solved by the General Congress instead, because -according to him- this institution was the only one with the authority to shape the republic's most fundamental laws.⁷⁶ Other deputies not related to The Patriotic Society also came up to defend the cause of the Pardos. Among them was Antonio Nicolás Briceño, who rejected the proposal on following the United States federal example, as he criticized the aristocratic posture some of his colleagues were assuming:

The provinces of Venezuela find themselves in circumstances very different [from those in the United States], as the quantities of Pardos and Blacks here excessively outnumber the Whites (...) [Furthermore, considering that] it is necessary to remove the Europeans who oppose the current system, and White Creoles who do not know their interests and whose concerns are based upon aristocratic and nobiliary ideas.⁷⁷

58 In his interventions, Yáñez also tried to dissipate fears of an eventual Pardo rebellion in case a reform was unilaterally introduced by the provincial government of Caracas. Instead he tried to turn this argument over to his favor, alleging that it was precisely because of the egalitarian spirit that had spread in Caracas that the royalists have not been able to gain further supporters; whereas in other cities such as Valencia, the lack of that spirit had encouraged Pardos to embrace the contra-revolutionary cause. This was a very sensible issue, since rebellion had broken out in this city forcing the General Congress to dispatch a republican army to bring it back to the Venezuelan Federation.

59 In order to prove his point, Yáñez made mention of the case of a pardo officer named Francisco Colón⁷⁸, who had been promoted by valencia's royalists to command the pardo garrison of that city. According to that deputy, they had done this emulating the initiative taken in early 1810 by the Conservative Assembly, in an attempt to gain valencian Pardos to the royalist cause. Therefore, concluded Yáñez,

...denying equality of rights to Pardos is a manifest injustice, an usurpation and an harmful policy that will lead us to our ruin. I believe that the (...) misfortunes of Valencia do not know other origin than this one, and I base my allegation on having seen [Francisco Colón] gained by the appointment those traitors have granted him, [following] something that we had done long before according to justice with [Carlos] Sanchez and [Pedro] Arévalo. So, it must be because the liberalism of Caracas that our enemies have not been able to attract a single Pardo from the revolution we are living in.⁷⁹

60 All in all, at the end of the session the deputies couldn't get to an agreement for which the voting on any resolution concerning the pardo question was postponed. For what happened latter we know that the pro-pardo deputies ended up imposing their position, as we can notice

by the ninth chapter of the Federal Constitution sanctioned on December 1811 by the General Congress of Venezuela:

[The] laws that imposed civil degradation to a fraction of the free population of Venezuela known until now by the denomination of Pardos are from now on revoked and annulated in all its parts. They will remain in possession of their natural and civil estimation, but brought back into the imprescriptible rights which belong to them as well as to the rest of citizens.⁸⁰

VII. The downfall of the egalitarian Republic

61 Pardos from Caracas didn't just join the republican army, they also spontaneously defended the cause of the republic. On July 11th 1811, six days after the declaration of independence; many Canarians secretly planned a conspiracy against the republican government. They gathered in the high grounds at the North of the city, in the "...suburbs of Los Teques which overlook the San Carlos fort which they intended to take over by surprise." From this spot they opened fire over some Pardos who were working in a plain below located between them and their objective.⁸¹ The republican reaction was headed by a 49-years old lieutenant from the pardo militia: Antonio Caballero (alias *Bonoso*).⁸² According to the file the royalists put together about him afterwards, when he became aware of the Canarians plot he cried out for reinforcements shouting: "gentlemen take your weapons that Islanders are trying to take over the city to deliver it to Fernando VII!"

62 Shortly after, Antonio Caballero joined the republican forces that campaigned against Valencia, along with other pardo officers such as Pedro Arévalo and Carlos Sanchez. Once the battle was over, he came back to Caracas where he beheaded a white at the Holy Trinity Square assuming that this man had sympathies for the royalists.⁸³ It seems like this kind of actions were by that time common in Caracas. According to a testimony published in a British newspaper (*The Morning Chronicle*), there were even taking place summary executions of White royalists⁸⁴, while in Valencia royalist Pardos were doing the same to White republicans on behalf of the Spanish Crown.

63 Therefore, widespread violence amongst Pardos against whites didn't seem to respond to ideological principles as Francisco Xavier Yánes had alleged, but to a rather older hatred against all Whites for so long constrained under the colonial rule. This became clearer in Valencia where when pardo royalist fighters heard the news that White valencians had reached an agreement with Miranda to surrender the city, they turned against them and their properties without asking who was for or against the monarchy. Then they turned their anger against churches to tear up the evidence of their stigma: the acts of baptism.

... [Valencia] has fallen into anarchy [wrote in his *Memoirs* the archbishop of Caracas, Narciso Coll y Prat], the *Castas* [Free Coloreds] have given themselves to drink and pillage. [They] came together (...) claiming for the defense of equality and liberty, they have set fire to parochial books in which everyone was classified by class. They made Whites run away and carried on with their pointless defense [of the city] (...) until they surrendered at will, leaving behind amongst the many dead twenty-five hundred men.⁸⁵

64 Although the insurrection in Valencia was defeated, from then on it was clear that Free Coloreds from beyond the outskirts of Caracas and its immediate surroundings were not willing to fight for the republic. This attitude was due to many reasons: The hatred they felt for the White aristocracy (*Mantuanos*), the preaching of some bishops against the many French that were around Miranda, and that the royalists were also taking liberal measures as it was seen in Valencia. But the royalist went even farther, being the first to offer to emancipate black slaves if they joined their forces. The effects of this measure were apparently very successful in the region of Barlovento, located at the Northeastern coast of Venezuela where most of the cacao plantations were located.⁸⁶

65 Although, we don't know for certain the real extension of the pro-royalist slave and maroon that broke out in Barlovento, by the confusing reports sent to Miranda (who had become General-in-Chief of the Republican Army in May 1812) by his subordinates we realize that it magnified by the fact of the terror it produced among republicans. One of those reports written in early July 1811 by the White officer in command of the republican troops stationed at the eastern limits of the Caracas valley (Miguel José Sanz), convinced of the imminence of a Black's invasion, so he urged his Commander-in-Chief to do something about it:

If they [blacks] dared to make an irruption or invasion on Caracas, these valleys of Guatire, Guarenas and Petare would surely get desolated and even that city could be at stake. Evils must be wiped out in time, because if this gets any stronger, we may suffer a great deal. The clergymen will breathe farther and the public spirit will end up getting corrupted.⁸⁷

66 Other reports, though less alarming on the royalist nature of the revolt, tended to confirm that something was very wrong in that region. That is the case one written by Nicolás Ascanio from the town Santa Lucía (to the southeast of Caracas). On July the 2nd, this White officer affirmed that there was not "...a single black in these valleys who doesn't say something about their wish to be freed..." For this reason, and because "...blacks from Curiepe had taken control over the valleys of Capaya and Caucagua", the patriot farmers (*hacendados*) have manifested their will to

...enfranchise their slaves as long as they take arms on behalf of our system [the Republic] (...) so they can be useful to the State and later on to themselves and yet to extinguish the fire of those from Curiepe who, besides proclaiming for Fernando VII, are also claiming for their freedom.⁸⁸

67 Although there was no solid evidence that Black slaves and maroons from Barlovento had joined the royalist army, Miranda –as Sonthonax did in Saint-Domingue 20 years earlier– decided to take no chances and in mid-July 1811 made public a Conscription Act (*Acto sobre la Conscripción de los Esclavos*) through which he expected not only to avoid the risk of a Black royalist army marching over Caracas, but also to reinforce his own by "...conscripting a thousand slaves, who the State would buy [later], paying for them when possible". On this occasion, the 'price of liberty' for those slaves who wished to be freed, was settled at four years of service in the republican army or less if they showed courage in the battlefields.⁸⁹ This measure was not welcomed by members of the White and Pardos elites, as noticed the White officer Juan Paz del Castillo:

The general emancipation of slaves declared through that decree [the Conscription Act] has electrified the Pardos, infuriated the Godos [White Creole royalists] and enraged the Mantuanos [White aristocrats], but it has become a counter-fire for the revolution in the valleys of Capaya [at Barlovento]...⁹⁰

68 However, it seems like from an economic perspective this measure didn't worked out as expected. As it had happened in Guadeloupe nearly 17 years earlier when similar measures were introduced, slaves preferred to run away from plantations (*haciendas*) instead of proudly joining a republican army. This worsened the condition of the republic's economy, which by that time was already critical because many plantation owners and its managers (*mayordomos*) were fighting in the conflict and due to the siege royalist troops were starting to set up around Caracas. We can therefore figure out why in mid-July 1811 a patriot (Francisco Paul) described the situation of the Republic as a "painful picture" (*cuadro doloroso*), in which it couldn't even "...establish the slightest commerce because of the lack of land products..."⁹¹

69 In the last days of the republic, while the royalist army marched inexorably towards Caracas, a desperate message was published in the *Gaceta de Caracas*, in which Pardos were reminded of the despicable way they were treated under the former system, and the countless achievements (*innumerables beneficios*) they had accomplished during the two years of republican regime:

She [Venezuela] has recognized and put into effect equality rights [for its citizens] formerly usurped by the satellites of tyranny. She is pleased to regard man without color distinctions, free and willing to take part in the election of those he wishes to choose, and exercise government, and expose himself to the difficulties and risks of a motherland, sure that because of his merit he can obtain the prize, the esteem, and the appreciation of his fellow citizens, from what he was excluded of by a tyrannical system, invented and sustained for the profit of the ambitious who exploited man as a bug, and regarded him with the same despise and disgust one regard a worm. Finally she is in the domain of the nations of the world, and that sublime idea or hard-to-accomplish enterprise puts Venezuelans in the honored position to defend her freedom, her equality, and [her] independence.⁹²

70 But it was useless, bad news kept on coming in, especially from the Eastern front. Years later, the White Creole officer (José de Austria) wrote the following in a chronicle, to describe the situation as the black insurgents approached the Valley of Caracas:

That inhumane and atrocious people [the Blacks], nourishing with patriot's blood and properties (...) as they marched against Caracas they committed the most dreadful murders, robberies, violences and devastations, particularly in the town of Guatire. Those who surrendered, the pacific land workers, the most honest men, the innocents, they all were killed by gunfire or stabbed to death, or were brutally whipped (...) There was blood everywhere...⁹³

71 Once Miranda realized he would not count with the support of the colored people (Free or enslaved) beyond the limits of Caracas, and when he got convinced that there was taking place a massive slave insurrection in Barlovento, and probably bearing in mind the images of Saint-Domingue, he took the decision to give up. Consequently, on July 25th 1810 he surrendered before the Spanish general, Domingo de Monteverde, at the town of La Victoria. His decision was perceived by many Pardo militians as a betrayal, for which they tried to murder him twice while he was coming back to Caracas after the signing of the capitulation act. In the first attempt against Miranda's live took part the colonel Pedro Arévalo, the very same who had been promoted and decorated in 1810 by the Conservative Assembly.⁹⁴

72 Miranda managed to escape both attempts on his life, but shortly after he was detained at the port city of La Guaira when trying to sail away to the Caribbean. The arrest wasn't executed by royalist forces, but by some of his closest followers including the White Creole Simon Bolivar and the Spaniard Manuel Cortés⁹⁵, the same who 15 years before, along with Juan Bautista Picornell, had contributed to bring into Venezuela the egalitarian principles concerning colored people developed during the French Revolution.

Notas

1 François Depons, *Viaje a la Parte Oriental de Tierra Firme en la América Meridional*, II. Caracas: Banco Central de Venezuela, 1960 (1806), p.233

2 One of the documents that better pictures this behavior is a complaint rose before the Captain-General in 1792 by many members of a Pardo Militia of Caracas, a garrison composed almost entirely by members of the elite. In this document they rejected the admission amongst them of an applicant arguing that he didn't have enough 'quality' as to join them, because he was either *zambo* (Black + Indian) or, even "worst", a *salto atrás* (Mulatto + Black). "Los diputados del Batallón de Pardos pidiendo se excluya de él a Juan Bautista Arias. 1774", in Santos R. Cortés, *El régimen de las 'Gracias al Sacar' en Venezuela durante el Período Hispánico*. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1983, p.20

3 Anne Pérotin-Dumon, *La ville aux Iles, la ville dans l'île*(Basse-Terre et Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, 1650-1820). Paris: Karthala, 2000, p.229

4 Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens* (Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804). Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 2004, pp.180-182

5 "Sobre insurrección de los negros bandidos de la jurisdicción de Coro" [Valle de Curimagua, 02/06/1795], *Archivo General de la Nación de Venezuela*, sección Diversos, vol. LXIX, f.130

6 Cf. P. Grases, "200 Años: Conspiración de Gual y España y el ideario de la Independencia", in *200 Años, Conspiración Gual y España*. Caracas: Archivo General de la Nación, 1997, CD ROM

- 7 Cf. Casto Fulgencio López, *Picornell y la Conspiración de Gual y España*. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1997, pp.78-79
- 8 “Soneto Americano”, 1797. Cf. *Ibidem*, pp.375, 381
- 9 “Ordenanzas” [La Guaira, 1797] Cf. Pedro Grases, “La Conspiración de Gual y España y el Ideario de la Independencia”, in P. Grases, *Obras*, tomo III (Preindependencia y Emancipación). Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1981, pp.173-176
- 10 Cf. *Idem*
- 11 Gual to Hugues [30 germinal, año V] Cf. A. Pérotin-Dumon, “Les jacobins des Antilles, ou l’esprit de liberté dans les Iles-du-Vent”, in *Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, XXXV, p.298
- 12 Gual a Hugues [30 germinal, año V] Cf. *Idem*
- 13 Cf. Pedro Grases, “200 Años: Conspiración de Gual y España y el ideario de la Independencia”, en *200 Años, Conspiración Gual y España*. Caracas: Archivo General de la Nación(CD ROM), 1997 (1948)
- 14 C. F. López, *op.cit.*, pp.91-92, 110; “Listas de las personas presas en La Guaira y Caracas” [s/f], “Lista de personas acogidas al indulto...” [Caracas, 8/8/1797] Cf. *Documentos relativos a la Revolución de Gual y España*. Caracas: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1949, pp.99-100, 105
- 15 “Viajes por Suiza, Norte de Italia y Francia”, in *Archivo del General Miranda*, IV. Caracas: Tipografía Americana, 1938, pp.129-130
- 16 Brissot to Dumouriez[Paris, 28/11/1792], en Francisco de Miranda, *Archivo del General Miranda* [AGM], Vol. XV. Caracas: Tipografía Americana, 1938, p.151
- 17 Carmen López Bohórquez, *Francisco de Miranda* (Precursor de las independencias de la América Latina). Caracas: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, 2001, pp.297, 311-312; “Opinion du général Miranda sur la situation actuelle de la France et les remèdes convenables à ses maux” [1795], in *Archivo del General Miranda*, XIV. Caracas: Tipografía Americana, 1938, pp.389
- 18 Miranda to Oquendo y Atuey [Londres, 8/12/1798], in *Archivo del General Miranda*, XIV. Caracas: Tipografía Americana, 1938, p.408
- 19 Miranda to Turnbull [Dover, 12/6/1798], in *Ibidem*, p.207
- 20 According to his experience, in historical terms this meant: discretely emulate the American Revolution, “carefully avoiding the fatal effects” of the French Revolution. Miranda to Caro [Londres, 31/12/1799], in *Ibidem*, p.404
- 21 C. López Bohórquez, *op.cit.*, p.312; Cartas dirigidas al ilustre Cabildo de la Ciudad de Caracas [Londres, 6/10/1808] in *Archivo del General Miranda*, XXI. Caracas: Tipografía Americana, 1938, pp.368, 370
- 22 “A los pueblos del Continente Colombiano, alias Hispanoamérica” (artículo tres), in *América Espera*. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1982, pp.262, 271
- 23 “Proclama a los Pueblos del Continente Américo-Colombiano” [Coro, 2/8/1806], en *América Espera*, p.356; El fragmento citado corresponde al borrador de la proclama anterior, fechada en New York el 10 de enero de 1806, in *Archivo del General Miranda*, XVII. La Habana: Editorial Lex, 1950, p.339
- 24 Miranda a Wilberforce, Londres, 10/1/1810, in *Archivo del General Miranda*, XXIII, p.269; *The Wilberforce Papers*, Series I, The Bodleian Library (Oxford), Microfilm reel 1, d.54, ff.47, 48, 55, 63, 66. The position Miranda had towards slavery as well as the contacts he established with abolitionists in Britain and France will be more largely exposed in an article I am working on, derived from a paper I presented at the conference “Abolitions, 1807-2007”, held in the University of York (England) in April 2007, under the title: *My friends Raynal, Brissot and Wilberforce*.
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- 26 See: C. Leal Curiel, “Juntistes, tertulianos et congressistes”, in *Histoire et sociétés de l’Amérique latine*, VI
- 27 Cf. Inés Quintero, *La Conjura de los Mantuanos*. Caracas: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, 2002, p.149
- 28 C. Leal Curiel, “Del Antiguo Régimen a la “Modernidad Política””, in *Anuario de Estudios Bolivarianos*, X, p.81n
- 29 Declaración de Don José Vicente Escorihuela[Caracas, 01/12/1808], in *Conjuración de 1808 en Caracas para la Formación de una Junta Suprema Gubernativa*. Caracas: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1949, p.27
- 30 Confesión de Don Mariano Montilla[Caracas, 01/03/1809], in *ibidem*, pp.205-206

- 31 C. Leal Curiel, "Del Antiguo Régimen a la 'Modernidad Política'", in *Anuario de Estudios Bolivarianos*, X, p.87
- 32 Cf. Clément Thibaud, *Repúblicas en Armas* (Los ejércitos bolivarianos en la guerra de Independencia en Colombia y Venezuela). Bogotá: Planeta / IFEA, 2003, p.49
- 33 *Ibidem*, pp.48-53
- 34 According to a law which dated from 1643, Pardos couldn't surpass the grade of captain. Cf. Frédérique Langue, "La pardocratie ou l'itinéraire d'une "classe dangereuse" dans le Venezuela des XVIIIe et XIXe siècles", in *Caravelle*, LXII, p.65
- 35 "Organización Militar" [18/5/1810], in *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, 98 (18/5/1810), p.3
- 36 "Decreto"[Caracas, 26/11/1810], in *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, 16 (22/1/1811), p.3
- 37 Robert Semple, *Bosquejo del Estado Actual de Caracas incluyendo un viaje por La Victoria y Valencia hasta Puerto Cabello*. Caracas: Ediciones del Grupo Montana, 1969 (1812), p.56
- 38 "Sigue el donativo de dinero en los Pardos" and "Donativos hechos a la patria por los vecinos del pueblo San Francisco de Tiznados..." in *Gaceta de Caracas*, I, 48 (3/9/1811), p.4
- 39 "Donativos hechos últimamente a la causa pública", in *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, 129 (26/11/1810), p.4
- 40 "Representación de un buen patriota", in *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, 102 (8/6/1810), p.3
- 41 "Habitantes de Venezuela", in *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, 103 (15/6/1810), p.4
- 42 In *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, (2/6/1810), p.2
- 43 In *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, 103 (15/6/1810), pp.3-4
- 44 "Continuación del Reglamento de Diputados, Capítulo I, Nombramiento de los electores parroquiales", in *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, 107 (18/7/1810), p.3
- 45 "Continuación del reglamento de diputados", in *Gaceta de Caracas*, II, 106 (6/7/1810), p.2
- 46 . Ribas left for the island of Curazao along with some of his collaborators, among who was a Pardo: the surgeon José María Gallegos. M. A. Rodríguez, "Los Pardos Libres en la Colonia". In *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia*, 299, p.51; Carraciolo Parra Pérez, *Historia de la primera república de Venezuela*, I. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1959, p.470-471
- 47 Nota de Miranda [23/5/1809], in *Archivo del General Miranda*, XXII, pp.349-350
- 48 Cf. C. Parra Pérez, *Historia de la Primera República de Venezuela*, II. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1959, p.27n
- 49 Carole Leal Curiel, "Tertulia de dos ciudades", in François Xavier-Guerra, Annick Lamperrière, et al. (Eds.), *Los Espacios Públicos en Iberoamérica*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998, p.190
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- 52 Requisa levantada por el Marqués de Casa León [Caracas, 4/12/1812], in *Archivo General de Indias* [Seville], Pacificación de Caracas, 437^a – Exp. 9, doc.3
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- 55 Francisco-Xavier Yáñez, *Compendio de la Historia de Venezuela*. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1944 (1840), pp. 191-192
- 56 Roscio to Bello [Caracas, 9/6/1811] Juan Germán Roscio, *Obras*, III, n/a, pp.26-27
- 57 Requisa levantada por el Marqués de Casa León [Caracas, 4/12/1812], in *Archivo General de Indias*, Pacificación de Caracas, 437^a – Exp. 9, Doc.3; Gabriel A. Muñoz, *Monteverde: cuatro años de historia Patria*, I. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia. Fuentes para la Historia Republicana de Venezuela, 1987, p.148
- 58 F. X. Yáñez, *op.cit.*, pp. 191-192
- 59 Karen Racine, *Francisco de Miranda* (A Transatlantic Life in the Age of Revolution). Wilmington: SR Books, 2002, p.234n
- 60 Cf. C. Leal Curiel, "El árbol de la discordia", in *Anuario de Estudios Bolivarianos*, VI, 6, p.160
- 61 C. Leal Curiel, "Tertulia de dos ciudades", in François Xavier-Guerra, Annick Lamperrière, et al. (Eds.), *Los Espacios Públicos en Iberoamérica*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998, pp.192-193; "Artículo Comunicado", in *Gaceta de Caracas*, III, (17/1/1812), p.4

- 62 “Concluye el Artículo Comunicado”, in *Gaceta de Caracas*, III, (24/1/1812), p.4; Roscio a Bello [Caracas, 9/6/1811] J. G. Roscio, *op.cit.*, pp.26-27
- 63 *Idem*
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- 65 *Idem*
- 66 Cf. Tulio Arends, *Sir Gregor McGregor* (Un escocés tras la Aventura de América). Caracas: Monte Ávila Editores, 1988, pp.42-43
- 67 Cf. *Ibidem*, p.43
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- 81 “Insurrección del día 11”, in *Gaceta de Caracas*, I, 41 (16/7/1811), p.3
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