

Using Political Ephemera for the History of Hispanic America

by

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Upon his deathbed Simón Bolívar, *El Libertador* of Gran Colombia (composed of the present-day republics of Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia), decreed that all of his correspondence was to be burned. However, the assortment of foreign doctors and devoted aides-de-camp who accompanied him in the sweltering Caribbean heat of Santa Marta decided against following Bolívar's wishes when he passed away on 12 December 1830, and instead they handed over the collection of letters, speeches and drafts to Bolívar's most loyal and faithful friend, the Irish general Daniel Florencio O'Leary. O'Leary's fate was closely tied to that of Bolívar. He had followed him through victory and defeat, and was the principal figure in the suppression of the 1829 rebellion of El Santuario in 1829, in which he ordered the death on the battlefield of the wounded rebel José María Córdoba.¹

When political change swept Gran Colombia in 1831 O'Leary was forced into exile in Jamaica, from where he collected further correspondence from some of the principal players in the Wars of Independence, in particular his father-in-law and fellow Bolívar loyalist Carlos Soublotte. During his three years in Jamaica, O'Leary edited the many chests of correspondence, and wrote up his own memoirs – which were aimed at being a life of Bolívar, but which evolved into a more general history of the process of Independence – based on the documents in his possession. When O'Leary died in Bogotá in 1854 – by now he had joined the British diplomatic service and occupied a privileged

¹ The best of the many biographies of Bolívar is Tomás Polanco Alcántara, *Simón Bolívar: ensayo de una interpretación biográfica a través de sus documentos*, Caracas: IG, 1994. This however ends directly on his death (the discussion of Bolívar's last wishes comes on p.696); the story of the rehabilitation of his memory is told in Germán Carrera Damas, *El culto de Bolívar*, Caracas: Monte Avila, 1967.

position in high-status circles in the Colombian capital – he left the collection of papers and his own unpublished writings to his son, the evocatively named Simón Bolívar O’Leary. Simón Bolívar O’Leary continued the work of cataloguing and arranging the papers of his namesake, whilst at the same time in Venezuela the ‘Bolivarian cult’ slowly evolved from the recognition of Bolívar’s deeds during the Wars of Independence into a full-scale national religion, beginning with the repatriation of his remains from Santa Marta to Caracas in 1842, and leading to the election of the self-consciously ‘Bolivarian’ presidency of General Antonio Guzmán Blanco, ‘Illustrious American, Regenerator of the Republic’.

Guzmán Blanco began the task of rescuing Bolívar’s reputation from the mysteries and uncertainties of history, and commissioned the publication of O’Leary’s collection of correspondence. The result, *Memorias del General O’Leary publicadas por su hijo Simon B. O’Leary, por Orden del gobierno de Venezuela y bajo los auspicios de su Presidente, General Guzmán Blanco, Ilustre Americano, Regenerador de la República*, (Caracas: Imprenta de El Monitor, 1884-1888), in thirty-three volumes, was the culmination of over half a century of editing, selection, repression of unwanted documents and shaping of the basis of image of Bolívar that subsequent historians, using this unrivalled selection of documents, could hardly avoid carrying to its logical conclusion – a heroic Bolívar, untainted by scandal or mistakes, gracious in victory and humble in defeat, an example to the nation.² Subsequent generations of historians laboured to fill in the gaps of these publications, concentrating their efforts in constituting comprehensive archives to house the correspondence of Bolívar and other *heroes de la patria* such as Francisco de Miranda and Antonio José de Sucre.

In order to provide a counterpoint to this *historia patria* in the last four decades historians of Hispanic America have sought to develop innovative methods to paint a picture of societies that underwent painful transitions from colonial to republican rule, in which the brave feats of the Liberators have been relegated from their positions as the great

² An example of this interpretation, one among very many, is M.A. Osorio Jimenez, *Bolívar y sus detractores (Bibliografía crítica de la detracción bolivariana)*, Caracas: Librería Pinango, 1979.

catalysts of independence. As a result of these studies, economics, diplomacy, geopolitics, ideas and misfortunes have been highlighted as amongst the principal factors that brought about independence. Simón Bolívar's selective archive, whilst still an important source, has been increasingly sidelined by the efforts of these creative and imaginative researchers.³ The use of what we might regard as political ephemera has been at the forefront of these innovations.

The state of Hispanic American archives for the nineteenth century is one of the principal factors that forces historians to develop creative attitudes to their sources. In contrast to the copious, comprehensive and wonderfully detailed resources available to the historians of Spain's colonies before 1800⁴, Hispanic American archives have been variously fragmented by political division, ravaged by fire, chronically under-funded, lost, corrupted or broken up for the benefit of private collectors. Recent efforts to stabilise and catalogue these archives, as has happened in the Archivo General de la Nación in Colombia, could be unfairly characterised as an elaborate endeavour in closing stable doors after the horse has bolted.

For these reasons, surviving political ephemera can provide unique insights into societies in transition that cannot be accessed through the methods that might seem 'conventional' to the historian of more comprehensively documented countries.⁵ In this paper I will use a deliberately broad interpretation of 'political ephemera' in order to look at some of the ways that the historian of Hispanic America can employ such sources. I take such a wide understanding of 'political' because my period of specialisation, the first half of the

³ I provide only a few bibliographical references to substantiate this argument. Interested readers are directed to the forthcoming appearance of my *Adventure in Colombia: the Birth of New Nations in the Atlantic World*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, forthcoming, 2006.

⁴ For an insightful attempt to read the history of the Spanish empire through the construction and development of these archives themselves, see Javier Morillo-Alicea, "'Aquel laberinto de oficinas": Ways of Knowing Empire in Late-Nineteenth Century Spain', in Mark Thurner and Andrés Guerrero, eds., *After Spanish Rule: Postcolonial Predicaments of the Americas*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003, pp.111-40.

⁵ Just two examples from many are Sarah Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens, Honor, Gender and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1854*, University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, and Peter M. Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001.

nineteenth century, was the time when formal political parties and associations were only just beginning to coalesce into their modern forms. Simón Bolívar is commonly regarded as being the founder of the Conservative party in Colombia – although he never gave any thought to such an institution, and would probably have been appalled by it – and his rival, Francisco de Paula Santander, is similarly seen as the founder of the Liberal party, which was not founded until a decade after his death.⁶ As such, a whole range of documents relating to public and institutional life can and must be categorised as ‘political’. I will illustrate these points by making reference to a collection of documents I have recently edited relating to foreign involvement in the Wars of Independence and their aftermath in Colombia.⁷ In my conclusions I will relate these findings forward to the twentieth century.

In the period 1810-1830 over six thousand men and women from Britain, Ireland, Germany, France, Poland, Portugal, the Caribbean, North America, the Netherlands, Africa and Asia enlisted in mercenary expeditions to join the cause of the Independence of Hispanic America. These mercenaries sought riches and glory, adventure and opportunity, of course, but European support for the rebels was also fuelled by political ideology; a belief in assisting the cause of liberty and global freedom. The rebellion against Spanish colonial rule led by the likes of Bolívar was influenced by the American and French Revolutions, by Enlightenment ideas and by a slowly developing sense of an ‘American’ identity separate from Spain. In Britain the conflict between the rebels and Spain was interpreted as a battle between ‘liberty’ and ‘tyranny’, and as such attracted the attention of many sectors of society including Romantics such as Byron. The British government chose to remain neutral in the conflict, mainly because it did not wish to endanger any possible trading advantages in the post-war period by backing the wrong horse. It still tolerated substantial private assistance to the Independents. Volunteer expeditions sailed from the Thames under the noses of the British authorities, infuriating the Spanish ambassador in London. Other expeditions sailed from Antwerp and Dublin

⁶ See Frank Safford and Marco Palacios, eds., *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, Oxford: OUP, 2003.

⁷ Matthew Brown and Martin Alonso Roa, eds., *Nuevas perspectivas sobre la influencia extranjera en la guerra de independencia*, Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2005. All the printed documents referred to in this paper are included in *Nuevas perspectivas*.

but London was the principal entrepôt for the expeditions, and the soldiers were mainly Irish. Because of the Foreign Enlistment Act of 1819 (brought in as a sop to continual Spanish diplomatic complaints at the numbers of mercenaries departing from under the noses of the ‘Houses of Parliament in London just as they are debating measures to prevent such expeditions’)⁸ the enlistment of mercenaries was illegal in Britain, and the Home Office even spied on the organisers in order to report on their activities.⁹ For this reason there are no neatly-filed records relating to the expeditions, and scholars of the period are forced to rely on fragmentary records scattered across the globe. Consequently the military aspects of the expeditions have been comprehensively documented (because of the relatively good condition of the military archives in Colombia and Venezuela) while the political, cultural and social aspects have been neglected.¹⁰ To summarise the conventional understanding: only traders had any economic impact, and only diplomats and newspapers had any political impact. Soldiers, essentially, only existed when fighting in battles. The use of political ephemera can remedy such one-dimensional interpretations. In the second half of this paper I will make direct reference to four pieces of political ephemera – in order to bring out the opportunities that are available to the creative historian seeking to understanding their subject through use of a diversity of sources.

1) Recruitment Posters

Recruitment advertisements from 1819 and 1820 show how the expeditions were presented as an opportunity to gain fortune and freedom in the new world. One such printed sheet is preserved in the National Library of Ireland in Dublin:

‘The country is chiefly clear of wood, and immediately fit for the purposes of agriculture, or feeding of cattle; it abounds with game and livestock, such as cows, horses, mules, &, &, and grows sugar, cocoa, cotton, indigo, delicious fruits, &, and will produce all these articles of commerce grown in the United States, with one half the labour. The climate is salubrious, and may almost be said to possess perpetual spring.

...

⁸ Duque de San Carlos to Manuel Gonzalez Salmon, ‘Embajador en Londres sobre conferencia con Lord Castlereagh’, Londres, 30 July 1819, Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Estado 89 N.24.

⁹ Carlos Pi Sunyer, *Patriotas americanos en Londres*, Caracas: Monte Avila, 1978.

¹⁰ I hope that this state of affairs will be somewhat rectified by the publication of Brown, *Adventure in Colombia*.

NB To families and persons taking out settlers with them, liberal grants will be made, and every encouragement given.’¹¹

These printed bills of no more than one sheet give the historian an added depth to conventional stories of ‘push factors’ such as famine or unemployment, and ‘pull factors’ of subsidized travel. These handbills worked on existing imaginaries of South America as a land of ‘perpetual spring’ that harked back to Columbus’ diaries and other early travel narratives. Distributed on the streets of London, Dublin and Edinburgh they promised military adventure, good terms of service and dreams of fertile land and comfortable colonisation.

2) Printed Speeches

This land of almost perpetual spring was initially welcoming to the adventurers. Prominent rebel leaders publicly thanked the arrival of each expedition – the few surviving printed versions of the brief welcoming addresses are useful sources for histories of the Wars of Independence. The speeches were made to welcome the foreign adventurers to Venezuela, and they were speedily translated and distributed to the disembarking troops (who were probably still on board ship when the ceremonial speech was made, and thus failed to hear a single word of such encouragement). Among many things these documents can illustrate the ways in which, as a direct result of the mass incursion of foreigners into the Colombian army, ‘Colombian-ness’ was re-conceptualised into a broader identity based more around republican virtue than birth or descent,.

To use the most obvious example: Simón Bolívar’s Proclamation to the Irish Legion in 1819.¹²

‘TO THE IRISH LEGION

¹¹ Printed Sheet, ‘South America’, copy in Fundación John Boulton, Archivo Histórico, C-825, f.0281.

¹² Reproduced in Anon [Francisco Antonio Zea], *Colombia: Being a Geographical, Statistical, Agricultural, Commercial and Political Account of that Country, Adapted for the General Reader, the Merchant and the Colonist*, Vol.2, London: Baldwin, Craddock and Joy, 1822, pp.442-4. Bolívar’s ongoing influence in Venezuela and America is traced in Germán Carrera Damas, *El culto a Bolívar*, Bogotá: Planeta, 1987.

SIMON BOLIVAR, President of the State, Captain-General, &c. &c.

IRISHMEN! Having left your own country in order to follow the generous sentiments which have always distinguished you among the illustrious of Europe, I have the glory now to number you among the adopted children of Venezuela, and to esteem you as the defenders of the liberty of Colombia.

Irishmen! – Your sacrifices exceed all praise, and scarcely has Venezuela sufficient means to reward you according to your merits; but whatever Venezuela possesses, and can dispose of, shall with pleasure be consecrated to the use of distinguished foreigners, who come to offer their lives and services as a tribute to our infant Republic. The promises which the virtuous and brave General D’Evereux has made you, as the ground-work of your incorporation with the liberating army, shall be religiously fulfilled on the part of the Government and people of Venezuela. Be assured, that we will rather prefer the privation of all our property, than divest you of any of your most sacred rights.

Irishmen! – Your most just and sublime recompense is prepared for you in the page of history, and in the benedictions of the New World.

Palace of Government, Angostura, 14th December 1819

(Signed) BOLIVAR’.

As Catherine Davies has pointed out, in his more celebrated writings Bolívar often uses the metaphor of the patriarchal family in order to ground his conceptualization of the Colombian nation.¹³ Here we can see the ways in which foreigners were incorporated into this family. The Irish mercenaries were to be his ‘adopted children’, and once they had proved themselves as the ‘defenders of liberty’ they should be deserving of ‘whatever Venezuela possesses, and can dispose of’. It is the brave and chivalric offer of ‘their lives and services’ that elevates the Irish to this pedestal. Again, this example reveals the continuities in the ways that Hispanic America was thought about by Creoles and mercenaries alike – in a language of adventure and sacrifice that had its roots both in Enlightenment ideas of freedom and in the shared history of the *conquistadores*.

3) Advertisement for a Horse Race

Political activity in the Wars of Independence then, was not a stark new original manifestation of the Age of Atlantic Revolution, but rather had its roots in the region’s history of conquest, colonization and adventure. Foreign involvement continued to cast a long shadow over processes of change in Hispanic America. Yet this foreign involvement was not one-dimensional; it consisted of a diverse selection of groups who were often in

¹³ Catherine Davies, ‘Colonial Dependence and Sexual Difference: Reading for Gender in the Writings of Simón Bolívar (1783-1830)’, *Feminist Review*, 79 (Jan 2005), pp.5-19.

conflict amongst themselves. To illustrate this, I suggest that we read as political ephemera a poster advertising a horse race in the town of Angostura in April 1820.¹⁴

‘DESAFIO DE CABALLOS

Se correrán el sábado 29 del corriente, cerca de la Meza, a las 4 de la tarde, los dos caballos abajo mencionados, con sus respectivos Cabalgadores:

El de Mr. Monsanto

BARGAS, corrido por el Mayor Manby, del Batallón de Albion
CONTRA

El de Mr Brown

DEVEREUX, corrido por el General Power,
De la Legion Irlandesa.

Angostura, a 27 de abril de 1820’

A first analysis of this text reveals that this horse race was a closed event in which foreigners associated and gambled within quite a closely defined group (meaning that the money or credit risked at least stayed within the friendship group, and was still available for communal recreation). The document suggests that the British gambled amongst themselves, and the ‘native officers’ and their subalterns gambled separately (we know that they did gamble from a variety of other testimonies). In this sense the horse race was an arena for national honour to be explicitly disputed, as well as for competition between two military corps. One jockey, Major Thomas Manby ‘of the Albion battalion’, rode a horse named ‘Bargas’, commemorating the British Legion’s finest hour in the campaigning to date (the battle of Pantano de Vargas in 1819). The other, General Power ‘of the Irish Legion’, rode a horse named after the mythical leader of that Legion, ‘Devereux’, who was delayed in London arranging his uniform before joining his troops in battle.¹⁵

Yet we should be careful of using political ephemera without reference to other sources. In this case, a corroborating account published the following year in the *Dublin Evening Post*, shows that the activities surrounding the horse race were more inclusive than the

¹⁴ ‘Desafío de caballos’ in Museo Bolivariano, Caracas, reproduced in Pedro Grases, ed., *Impresos de Angostura 1817-1822: Facsimiles, Homenaje al Sesquicentenario del Congreso de Angostura*, Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1969, p.91.

¹⁵ John Devereux, expected for over a year, would not arrive on the mainland until August 1820.

advertisement at first suggests. In this account, an Irish officer Egan described the events in full. Egan had acted as the steward and judge on the ‘grand race’, and estimated that around four to five hundred dollars had been bet on the outcome. He observed, however, that ‘all the Native Officers and Respectable Inhabitants were there. There was another race immediately after – my groom rode for one of the Native Colonels, and won’.¹⁶ So although the main feature of the afternoon was the competition between the Irish Legion and Albion Battalion, the local population and military officers were not excluded from the occasion entirely, and they even staged a second race. The use of political ephemera in tandem with more traditional sources – in this case, newspapers held in the British Library – can cast new light on the relations between Hispanic Americans and foreigners in this period.¹⁷

4) Political Pamphlets – Thomas Manby

Although in the first half of the nineteenth century there were few established political parties in Hispanic America, these were slowly developing as bonds of kinship, ideology and friendship forged amongst political elites during the Wars of Independence and their aftermath slowly coalesced into more formal structures. One of the ways that this happened was through individuals issuing their own political pamphlets in order to publicly set out their stance on certain issues or in response to key events. The pamphlets published by Thomas Manby, an English mercenary who settled in Colombia (he died in Bogotá in 1881) reveal how the adventurers’ initial personal attachment to Simón Bolívar upon their arrival in Colombia slowly developed into a unique political outlook based on their experiences in the region. Like many others, Manby experienced periods of political and military authority in the 1820s, a period of exile after Bolívar’s death, followed by strong friendship with prestigious Colombian leaders during the 1830s, and finally in the 1840s marriage into medium-to-high status social and economic networks that allowed him to reflect on being a loyal son of Colombia.

¹⁶ D.G. Egan to Anon, 20th May 1820, reproduced in *Dublin Evening Post*, 29th July 1820.

¹⁷ For a good discussion of these themes see Karen Racine, ‘A Community of Purpose: British Cultural influence during the Wars of Independence’, in Oliver Marshall, ed., *English Speaking Communities in Latin America*, London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1998, pp.3-32.

Manby's pamphlets bring to the fore the uncomfortable nature of the foreigners' slow incorporation into Hispanic American society – which is completely neglected by more conventional sources for the period. Manby regretted that he 'had the misfortune not to die' for the Colombia during the wars, and that he had to struggle to protect his honour against unfair charges of political partisanship. When Manby left Bogotá amidst the disturbances of 1840 (which culminated in civil war), he worried that his military service could in the future be used against his honourable reputation. He therefore published a proclamation titled 'To my dear friends in the capital' (re-produced below) that demonstrated where defence of his political and public reputation intersected with his personal honour.¹⁸ Manby made clear and public the key constituents of his honour at this time. They lay in his being a loving father with children, a wife and servant [*padre de familia*], a loyal friend, and a patriotic officer in the service of the [New Granadan] nation, not any political faction. By printing and publishing the proclamation, Manby revealed the value that he placed on his public reputation. He portrayed himself as honest, brave, and efficient, believing that these attributes were worthy of the nation that he had adopted as his own. He contrasted himself with those who disregarded the traditional merits of 'old patriots and well-born men'. As such, this long-forgotten piece of political ephemera reveals the degree to which the 'adopted sons' of the new republics had taken its ideals and indeed, its very existence, to heart.

'La Plata 16 de setiembre de 1840

A MIS APRECIADOS AMIGOS DE LA CAPITAL.

Como estoi acercándome a los enemigos de mi patria adoptiva y del orden legal, tengo el gusto de despedirme de vosotros por no haber tenido tiempo de corresponder a las visitas que varias personas me hicieron después de mi regreso de las provincias del Norte. Los militares pertenecen al Gobierno, y cuando se necesita de sus servicios deben prestarlos con preferencia a las atenciones de sus amistades particulares, y dejando abandonados hasta sus asuntos domésticos.

Ruego a mis excelentes amigos y amigas que me han honrado con su amistad por largos años, que dirijan sus cariñosas atenciones a aquella persona de mi corazon y a los cuatro pedacitos de mi alma que lamentan mi ausencia.

¹⁸ Manby, *A Mis Apreciados Amigos de la Capital*, Popayán: Imprenta de la Universidad por Manuel G Cordova, 1840, Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, Fondo Pineda, Sala Primera 12.113, pza.104. This collection contains a wealth of political pamphlets seldom used by historians because of the archaic and confusing nature of the catalogue (which can of course be a joy rather than a hindrance for the historian).

¡Triste cosa es ser padre de familia en tales circunstancias! Pero mas triste seria que este padre no supiese cumplir con sus obligaciones.

A los buenos ciudadanos y personas pacificas interesados en el sostenimiento de la constitución y de las leyes, me parece mui oportuno el decirles lo que me ha sucedido en el cumplimiento de mis deberes hasta aquí; y creo firmemente que no habrá persona alguna, sean cuales fuesen sus opiniones políticas, capaz de dudar de mi veracidad.

De los reclutas que salieron de Bogota a mis ordenes murió uno, y quedaron dos enfermos en la Meza, y se desertaron quince: de modo que, con ciento mas que se agregaron en Neiva, tengo actualmente a mis ordenes mas de 600 defensores de las leyes que nos rijen. En el tránsito se me han presentado oficiales, clases y soldados licenciados para servir a mis ordenes, y todos van con un entusiasmo casi increíble.

Este cuerpo no es todavía el batallón de Albion, pero mui pronto sabrá cuales son las obligaciones de los defensores del orden, y sus deberes como soldados. Su jefe es del pais de los heroes; y por adopción un granadino tan resuelto como el que mas a sostener a todo trance el Gobierno, y a morir o vencer mientras que exista un miserable faccioso armado en contra de la constitución de su patria. Puede ser que tal resolución no esté de acuerdo con las opiniones de algunas personas de mi aprecio, y será sensible para mi el perder su amistad: sin embargo prefiero semejante perdida a la de mi honor y reputación. Mañana marcharé con un escuadron de caballería, de voluntarios a la villa de Purificación, que sirve de escolta a las ordenes del comandante Francisco Caicedo, siendo capitan en la misma tropa su hermano Domingo. Que lástima, mis amigos, que los jóvenes chisperos y ociosos de la capital no tengan el patriotismo de los apreciables hijos de nuestro digno vicepresidente, ofreciendo como estos sus servicios contra los trastornadores del orden público, en lugar de entregarse a vicios ruinosos de su salud e intereses.

Ya sabeis que Sarriá ha sido derrotado y perdido su hijo; y os ofrezco que los demas cabecillas tendrán bien pronto la misma suerte, porque la Divina Providencia no podrá dejar por mas tiempo tantos crímenes impunes.

Siempre seré de vosotros invariable amigo y compatriota.

T. MANBY

Popayán 30 de setiembre de 1840'

Conclusions

Taken as a whole, I hope that I have been able to show that this diversity of ephemera can provide new insights into the varied and diverse experiences of foreign adventurers and the societies they encountered in Gran Colombia. They suggest the existence of sources for reflection upon the formation of nascent national identities in this period, and the consequences that this had for notions of masculinity, adventure, religion, race and patriotism. The Wars of Independence in Gran Colombia had a profound effect on concepts of community, allegiance and liberty – and as I hope these sources have been able to show, the involvement of foreigners in these changes can no longer be ignored. In

this, there were substantial examples of continuity with the colonial period, suggesting that we might be wise to reconsider the traditional periodisation of the 'Independence' period.¹⁹ Similarly, Irish and British imperial identities were affected by Hispanic American experience, as shown by the tensions inherent in the horse race advertisement. At the very least this shows the need for Latin America to be incorporated into narratives of British engagement with the wider world in the nineteenth century, in which at present the region is either completely absent (Niall Ferguson's *Empire*) or presented as a shoddy re-hash of old stereotypes and outdated interpretations (as in C.A. Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World*).²⁰ Given the absence of comprehensive archives for this period, the use of political ephemera is one way to get to the heart of these questions. Allied to this, innovation and creativity are the only way for the historian to get around problems of fragmentary and inconclusive sources.

The nearer we get to the present day, more and more sources become available for the Hispanic American historian. Nevertheless, issues of availability of sources remain, and the lessons learned for the early nineteenth-century can be applied in the twentieth. Just the example of Cipriano Castro, President of Venezuela in 1902 when British and German gunboats blockaded Venezuelan ports can serve to illustrate these points. The portrayal of the (in reality extremely white) President Castro in a French political magazine as a black hairy monkey clinging to trees while he insults European-looking civilised gentlemen, says as much about European-Hispanic American relations in the first half of the twentieth century as any scholarly thesis. Similarly, in the football programmes printed in 1978 for the football World Cup held in Argentina we can read the evolution of Argentinian national identity during the time of dictatorship, evoking a footballing-world of solidarity and equality to which the regime aspired to form a part.

¹⁹ A good start has been made in this project by Eric Van Young, 'Was there an Age of Revolution in Spanish America?', in Victor Manuel Uribe Urán, ed., *State and Society in Spanish America during the Age of Revolution*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001, pp.224-239.

²⁰ C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Oxford: Blackwells, 2004; Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, London: Penguin, 2003. For a critique of these approaches see Matthew Brown, 'The Birth of the Modern World, and Latin America?' in *Anuario de Estudios Bolivarianos*, forthcoming 2005.

It is here that I will end, however, on a note of caution. While I have stressed throughout this paper that political ephemera and a diversity of unexpected and unconventional sources can be of great benefit to the historian of Hispanic America, the value of these sources still remains in the eye of the beholder. They must be used to supplement traditional sources such as newspapers, correspondence, and memoirs, rather than to replace them entirely.