

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN USA AND CUBA IN TIMES OF PEACE AND WAR, 1803-1807¹

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AS A CONSEQUENCE of the war with Great Britain in December of 1804, the American merchant fleet's presence was overwhelming, controlling almost all of the Cuban foreign trade. This situation, partly circumstantial, was not fortuitous. The so-called Anglo-Americans had been trading with the Antilles and, in particular with Cuba, for many decades. They knew the main routes and had at their disposal a large fleet.² The conflicts between the European states that had colonies in the Antilles and the slaves' revolt in the French colonies had a two-fold effect: on one hand, a great part of the West Indies' foreign trade was monopolized by the neutral side, and on the other hand the French Caribbean production of colonial goods—especially sugar and coffee—sunk, leaving the world market short of products. Cuba owned many uncultivated lands and a good capacity for production which was enlarged with the immigration of a great number of French colonists that had fled from Santo Domingo, carrying with them capital and technological improvements. On their side, the United States had vessels, sailors and knowledge about the Atlantic routes. This two-fold convergence explains the important changes that affected the Cuban foreign trade between 1803 and 1807.

But English and French that had colonies in the Caribbean traded with Cuba legally and illegally, which meant selling manufactured items inexchange for silver. For the United States, towards the end of the XIXth century, Cuba could represent a market for some of its agricultural products, especially flour, as well as a source of colonial products that so far were not available in its land, and considering the balance of trade and that of utilities, it turned out to be positive for them: that is silver. With this item, the North American navigators could enter the Asian trade.

1. SOURCES

ONE OF THE MAIN sources that enable the reconstruction of the Cuban foreign trade are the statistics or trade balances. From the end of the XVIIIth century there are many references about the overseas trading traffic with the port of Havana, and even of all Cuba as stated by

¹ I have been able to write this paper thanks to the scholarship research from the Department of Education of the Gobierno Vasco.

² In 1766, Mr. Kelly, "a prominent New York merchant", stated that "New York had developed a profitable trade with the Spaniards in the Habana, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo". The "American colonists" interest would be placed in the "channels through which they could exchange their lumber and provisions for supplies of bullion and cheap molasses". A. CHRISTELLOW, "Contraband Trade between Jamaica and the Spanish Main, and the Free Port Act of 1766", *The Hispanic American Review*, vol. 22 (1942), pp.332 and 336.

different authors.³ Some of their testimonies are taken from the data provided by the Real Consulado de La Habana, created in 1794.⁴

However, other information is provided from data gathered by the Royal administration. The interest of the monarchy for knowing in detail the Cuban foreign trade is dated, at least, when the resolution took place the XVIIIth April 1794. In this resolution a trade secretary is created in order to verify the real state of the Commerce.⁵ Probably the origin of what can be called "balanzas de comercio de la Habana" lays in this Real Orden.

The first balance of which we have notice of, with fully details about imports and exports along a whole year, is that of 1794, published, supposedly only partly, in *Guía de Forasteros*.⁶ This balance of Havana of 1794 only reflects the products that had been exported and imported in alphabetical order, and with its weight and volume. However, its value is not shown in the original copy as the end of the document the items mentioned had been evaluated in 12,032,106 *pesos fuertes* and that the royal duties that were paid raised to 642,320 *pesos fuertes*. It indicates as well that the weapons, ammunitions neither war equipment that Havana and Arsenal requires, nor the construction woods consumed in the island, nor the ones sent to Spain are included and that 13,432,478 pesos 4 reales fuertes were drawn in silver coins, gold, jewelry and bars. In the Archivo Nacional de Cuba there exists a balance dated in the same year in detail which reflects the value of the products and its origin.⁷ It is quite possible that during subsequent years this kind of data was still compiled, but until nowadays no sources of this kind have appeared except the balances from 1803 to 1807.

The handwritten balances of the port of Havana of 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806 and 1807 are much more abundant⁸ than the one printed on 1794. The imports show in detail the merchandise, with its volume and value in pesos as well as the port of departure. The measures involve some difficulties, even when talking about the same product (the wine can be measured in *arrobos*, bottles, *cuarterolas*, cases...), and therefore sometimes the total amount of the goods can not be known with accuracy. When the equivalence⁹ has been obtained the relevant conversion to an homogenous measure is accomplished. In other occasions it has been

³ Some authors as J. DE LA PEZUELA, *Diccionario de la isla de Cuba*; R. DE LA SAGRA, *Historia económica, política y estadística de Cuba*; F. ARANGO Y PARRERO, *De la Factoría a la Colonia* and *Informe al rey sobre la condición de los esclavos en Cuba*; A. SACO, *Historia de la esclavitud*; A. VON HUMBOLDT, *Essai politique sur l'île de Cuba* and *Viaje a las regiones equinociales del Nuevo Continente*; R. GUERRA, *Manual de Historia de Cuba* and *Azúcar y población en las Antillas*; H. E. FRIEDLANDER, *Historia Económica de Cuba*; F. ERENCHUN, *Diccionario administrativo, económico, estadístico y legislativo*.

⁴ The Royal Consulate of La Habana (Real Consulado de La Habana) was formed by three sections: the Mercantile Register, the Mercantile Court and the Economic and Governmental Board. H. E. FRIEDLANDER, *Historia Económica de Cuba*, p.132.

⁵ The first reports were established monthly informing about current prices, crops, number of vessels, etc. We have found data for the first trade balance sent from Cuba for the months of November and December 1795, February, April and October 1796, but there is not much information: a lack of practice could be the reason.

⁶ *Guía de Forasteros de la isla de Cuba*, pp.129-163.

⁷ Various authors, *La colonia, evolución socioeconómica y formación nacional*. In annexes, table n.37, value of the import and export of Havana according to 1794. The value that is showed there is 12.806.694 *pesos fuertes*, amount that does not correspond exactly with the one presented in *Guía de Forasteros* previously mentioned, although the difference is not excessive. There is a summary of the years 1804, 1805, 1806 and 1807 in AGI, Ultramar, 197, according to L. MARRERO, *Cuba: economía y sociedad*, vol. IV, p.72.

⁸ The balances corresponding to years 1805, 1806 and 1807 are located in Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid and those of 1803 and 1804 in Archivo Nacional de Cuba (ANC), Havana.

⁹ For example: 1 *quinial* = 4 *arrobos*; 1 *arroba* = 25 *libras*; 1 *pipa de vino* = 24 *garraffones*...

used the value attributed for making homogeneous the measures, although, evidently, a mistake margin is introduced which is probably not very considerable.

Referring to the origin of the merchandises, it must be pointed out that the only certainty that the balances provide us is the last port¹⁰ of shipment and not the starting point. This is the reason why in many cases we see reexported items. Even though, the biggest inconvenience lies in the fact that the imports between Spanish and foreign products can not be distinguished and that the exports of Havana are not indicated when dealing with re-exports, as it can happen with cotton.

The balances of 1803 and 1804 reflect data referring to the period of peace that followed the Treaty of Amiens (25th March 1802) between France and Great Britain as well as these years were good from the commercial point of view. The agreement of Amiens was interrupted the 16th may 1803 but until then it did not affect negatively Spain although it did to the French trade with its colonies: the British blocked the French coasts and captured the position of French Santo Domingo. Spain only entered the war against Britain on the Napoleon's side towards the end of 1804. The year 1805 would have been a year of transition as ships that had just left before the outbreak of the conflict and the blockade still reached the port.¹¹ The defeat of the Spanish-French fleet in Trafalgar (the 21st October 1805) ended the commercial relationships between Spain and its American colonies. The years 1806 and 1807 clearly belong to a time of war and what is most interesting is that they are trading years by means of the so-called "neutrals". In this way, and by chance, we can analyze Havana foreign trade during years in which the commerce, according to the law, is made with the metropolis and other areas of the Spanish empire and during years in which the trade with Spain was interrupted and other links are established.

The fact that we are dealing with foreign trade to Havana¹² does not distort the vision of the island's commerce, as other ports, at the beginning of the XIXth century, had few commercial legal ties with the exterior, or simply because this traffic was forbidden.¹³ The international Cuban trade was the one established by Havana during these years.

2. A NEW ECONOMIC PERIOD

SOME AUTHORS, such as Francisco de Arango y Parreño, consider as a point of reference the assault of Havana¹⁴ when discussing a new period within economic development of the island of Cuba. For this landowner

el trágico suceso de su rendición al inglés le dio la vida de dos modos: el primero fue con las riquezas, con la gran porción de negros, utensilios y relas que derramó en sólo un año el

¹⁰ New Orleans has been classified as port of Hispano-America, even though in 1803 it is sold to the United States, because this is the way it has been grouped in the discovered balances.

¹¹ Since the 1st January to the 30 April reached Havana port 25 Spanish ships, 175 American, 1 English, 4 Danish and 2 French. Letter dated the 12 June 1805 at Havana, Dispatches from USA consuls in Havana, 1783-1807, National Archives of the United States (NAU), T-20, Washington, DC, roll 1, vol. 1. The documents have no page numbering. We refer to the document's date.

¹² "The annual value of its produce exported equal to \$12,000,000. That 8/10 to this value is exported from the Havana and its dependencies and about the same proportion of the population dependent on this city for their supplies." Letter of 1st of November 1805 in Havana, *ibid.*

¹³ According to the Regulation for the free trade between Spain and Indies, "puertos como el de Santiago de Cuba, Trinidad y Batabanó fueron incluidos en la categoría de puertos 'menores' y autorizados para el comercio libre con la Península y en ciertas ocasiones, con neutrales y aliados", O. ZANETTI LECUONA, *Caminos para el azúcar.*

¹⁴ The assault of Havana by English the 12 August 1762 ended only eleven months later.

comercio de Gran Bretaña; el segundo, demostrando a nuestra corte la importancia de aquel punto y llamando sobre él toda su atención y cuidado.¹⁵

Ramiro Guerra takes into account it is exaggerated to say that Havana before the arrival of the British was impoverished and that only and exclusively thanks to these the island economy had reached the summit. It is true that the opening of Havana to the foreign trade involved the rise of exchanges, in contrast with the relative isolation to which the metropolis had submitted the colony. Major changes affected, without any doubt, the slaves' trade, the most of them from the neighboring Jamaica island; it can be calculated that 10,000 *bozales* landed at Havana during the British occupation whilst the Real Compañía de La Habana only introduced 5,000 during the twenty years that its privileges lasted. These labor remittances had increased the plantation structure stimulating the economic growth of the island.

After the departure of the British, the Crown understood that it should centralize and strengthen the Spanish Antilles and especially the cities of Havana and Santiago de Cuba. For this purpose, all the State administration was reorganized, creating the Intendencia de Hacienda and Administración de Rentas accomplishing important works intended for the fortification of its main port, knowing the strategic situation of the island within Mexico Gulf. In the same way, the privileges granted to the Real Compañía de La Habana were eliminated and the monopoly of Cadiz and Seville ended (1765), opening to trade the ports of Barcelona, Alicante, Cartagena, Corunna, Gijón and Santander. These measures also affected the intercolonial trade as the number of ports of departure and arrival of exchanged goods between the different vice-reigns raised. From 1768 the products obtained in Campeche and a year later the meat of Campeche, Veracruz and Cumaná bound for Cuba were free of taxes; the Cuban wax from 1774 conquered markets in Nueva España,¹⁶ and in 1782 and 1784 the Mexican floor boarded from Veracruz with destination to the Windward Island got free of *alcabalas*.¹⁷ The colonial authorities also tried to encourage the sale of meat from Río de la Plata to Cuba. The Real Orden of 5th November 1787 approved an initial permit conceded by the superintendent delegated of the Real Hacienda de Buenos Aires to withdraw salted meat from this port with destination to Havana, free of taxes of extraction and *almojarifazgo*; tax exemption that at first was limited for six years. These changes run parallel to the ones that, for other reasons, were taking place as a result of the Independence of the United States.

When the Independence of Northern United States took place (1776), the British Antilles colonies were affected by different reasons. These colonies, on the one hand, could not receive anymore the wood and food-stuffs that earlier were supplied by the thirteen northern colonies; Jamaica and Barbados had to obtain products from that moment in Canada. More-

¹⁵ F. ARANGO Y PARREÑO, *De la factoría a la colonia*, p.27

¹⁶ A letter from Miguel José de Azanza to Floridablanca dated the 12th September 1786 indicated that the decadence of wax exports from Northern Europe via Hamburg partly assigned to the Hispanic colonies in America dated "del prodigioso y quasi repentino incremento que empezó a experimentar la cosecha de este fruto en la isla de Cuba hacia [sic] los de 1773 y 1774". VON HANS POHL, "Die Beziehungen Hamburgs zu Spanien und Dem Spanischen Amerika", *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial-und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Beiheft 45, p.287.

¹⁷ "La Nueva España tenía una abundante producción de trigo que exportaba en gruesas porciones para los dominios de la zona del Caribe, en donde contaba con importantes mercados hasta que fue desplazada, hacia los últimos años del siglo XVIII, por la americana". E. ARCILA FARIAS, *Comercio entre Venezuela y Méjico en los siglos XVII y XVIII*, p.96.

over, the USA as they had been separated themselves from the Sugar Island, needed another trading post in order to obtain products and therefore headed for the French colonies, and especially towards Santo Domingo, which "supplied United States imports with practically their whole stock of sugar and molasses".¹⁸ Having for neighbor Cuba, the USA maintained relations even before their independence¹⁹ sending important amount of slaves and implements for the ingenios for a low price in exchange for silver, sugar and honey.

These slow changes were going to be hasten from 1791 as slave revolts broke out in the French colony Haiti—which was the greatest producer of sugar²⁰ and coffee²¹—and as the wars between France, Britain and Spain were taking place. The recent disorder of the French colonies²² provoked in the worldwide market a shortage of colonial products, and the warlike disturbances between the European powers with colonies in America favored the neutrals dealers and above all the shipowners of USA. So, Cuba discovered a privileged situation in the sugar market. The production of sugar had started to blunt from the late XVIIIth century and "simultáneo al hundimiento de la producción en las colonias antillanas francesas derivado de la revolución negra de Haití, permitió a la gran Antilla convertirse en uno de los principales centros azucareros mundiales".²³

The Spanish Caribbean was not going to waste this opportunity, taking into account that the price of the sugar and the coffee shot up. Cuba not only had been favored by the fact of having lost a rival but this was especially caused because the island was the place where 30,000 Frenchmen went to. These Frenchmen had fled from Santo Domingo and were mainly planters and administrators of wide properties that mastered not only the techniques of the sugar crop but also those of coffee and cotton. The transfer of technical knowledge about agricultural matters and especially about coffee, produced a really spectacular growth of the coffee plantations in the eastern and central side of the island of Cuba. From this moment the struggle between the tobacco²⁴ (monopolized by the metropolis, where monopoly exists) and the sugar cane will be increased including the coffee fields in the search for the best lands.

In 1780 a Real Orden was dictated (12th October) allowing Cuba to trade with USA for the supply of goods.²⁵ This order was successively revoked and renewed as long as the peace treaties were signed, leaving the island at the mercy of the orders that the metropolis was promulgating, taking no care of the needs of the moment. Facing this situation, the authorities of the island, in many occasions, decided to act by their own account and allowed the landing of foreign neutrals ships for supplies. The interest of the colonial administration

¹⁸ R. T. ELY, "The Old Cuba Trade", *Business History Review*, 38 (1964), p.457.

¹⁹ A. PRESTON WHITAKER, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800-1839*, pp.5-6.

²⁰ "(...) las colonias francesas abastecían el 65% del mercado libre". M. FRAGINALS, *El ingenio*, vol. 2, p.98.

²¹ "la colonie française qui exportait annuellement en Europe au delà des 60 millions de livres de café." Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Paris. CCC. Santiago de Cuba, 1836, vol 3, folio 230.

²² La Martinica was invaded by the English in the year 1793, whilst in the same date in the neighboring island Guadalupe there were suffering from conflicts between the English and the former slaves.

²³ J. MALUQUER DE MOTES BENET, "El mercado colonial antillano en el siglo XIX", in J. NADAL and G. TORTUELLA (eds.), *Agricultura, comercio colonial y crecimiento económico en la España contemporánea*, p.323.

²⁴ See L. A. ÁLVAREZ, *La modernización de la industria del tabaco en España*.

²⁵ "By the end of 1780, military and exchequer officials in Havana had no choice but to turn to the rebellions English colonies for flour and other stuffs. For the next four years, the Anglo-Americans poured into Havana in unprecedented numbers." J.A. LEWIS, "Anglo-American entrepreneurs in Havana" in J. BARBIER and A. J. KEUTHE (eds.), *The North American role in the Spanish imperial economy*, p.115.

and mainly those of the Cuban landowners with great surplus but without transport, coincided with those of the neutral North American shipowners that had at their disposal the necessary tonnage and knowledge about the Atlantic routes and markets.²⁶

The trade between USA and Cuba²⁷ was suspended by a Real Orden dated 21st of January 1796 and at the same time the duties were cut down to 25% on products from Nueva España exported to the Antilles, Guatemala, Santa Fe and Perú. Furthermore, the Mexican silver sent to Cuba was exempted of taxes as a result of the sale of Cuban products.²⁸ This Real Orden must have had little practical effects and when the conflict against Great Britain began (the 7th October 1796), the trading relations with the neutrals²⁹ started again in a legal way.³⁰ A text, that comes from a Spaniard living in Philadelphia, summarizes the problems of Cuba and those of its metropolis during war times:

The Havana was the deposit of the valuable produce of numerous sugar works established in its vicinity. The riches and prosperity of the island of Cuba depended on its exportation, and the provisions, clothing and other necessary articles for its inhabitants were, according to the regulations of free trade, to be imported in Spanish bottoms; but the very same difficulties which will hereafter interrupt our navigation, did even the obstruct and render it impracticable: the trade of Spain could not supply the wants of the island of Cuba; the collected crops were damaging in their deposit; this capital, without action, produced real loss; the in-

²⁷ John Fisher states "el comercio [era] prácticamente libre con los Estados Unidos a partir de 1793", J. R. FISHER, *Relaciones económicas entre España y América*, p. 211.

"It is interesting that US exports to the Spanish colonies continued to increase even during the years 1795 and 1796, when Spain was not an active belligerent, despite royal decrees designed to restore the colonial monopoly." J. H. COATSWORTH, "American Trade with European Colonies" in *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 24, 2, p. 252.

²⁸ Eduardo Arcila Fariás, *Comercio entre Venezuela y México en los siglos XVII y XVIII*, pp.93,96 and 97; and Javier Ortiz de la Tabla, *Comercio exterior de Veracruz 1778-1821*, pp.173, 174 and 415. The R.O. of 25th June 1793 had allowed the Anglo-Americans the introduction of goods and mainly of flour in Cuba, paying the corresponding duties of the products that were brought in as well as those that were taken out; with the arrival of peace, it was ordained that "se restablezca el comercio exclusivo de España y América".

²⁹ But the King revoke the permission to neutrals (April 18, 1799); but an important exception was made in favor of foodstuffs, some of the colonial officials refused, on the ground of urgent necessity, to enforce the order of revocation at all, and from every quarter the clamor of protest was so great that in 1801 the court instated a system of special licenses which were sold to neutrals and which permitted them to enter Spanish American ports for purposes of general trade. With the restoration of peace in 1802 this system was abolished and the old Spanish monopoly restored—that is to say, the monopoly as regulated by the Ordinance of Free Commerce of 1778. In A. PRESTON WHITAKER, *The United States and the independence of Latin America*, pp.8-9.

³⁰ By the Royal Decree of 18th November 1797, Spaniards were permitted to make shipments to our colonies from neutral ports in neutral bottoms, but they were in no manner prohibited this trade from Spanish ports." *Id.*, p.38. This Real Cédula allowed the trading in neutrals ships with the condition of carrying out the returns of such expeditions to the Spanish ports.

The defeat at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent (February 14, 1797) guaranteed the effectiveness of the British blockade and Havana soon was thrown open to neutral ships, by local action, long before the Crown agreed to the neutral flag trade as a general principle. In fact, of course, the Consulado of Havana asked for this wartime measure in September of 1796, the month before war was declared. J. BARBIER, "Imperial policy towards the port of Veracruz" in N. JACOBSEN and H.-J. Puhl (eds.), *The economics of Mexico and Peru during the late colonial period*, p.248.

Ramiro Guerra designates as "neutrals" a group of nations from which are excluded the European ones, as they had little importance within the commerce with Cuba. "Los únicos que tuvieron vínculos continuos y real importancia para el comercio de Cuba fueron los norteamericanos, razón por la cual el nombre de neutrales se les aplica exclusivamente", R. GUERRA, *Manual de Historia de Cuba*, p.210. M. MORENO FRAGINALS, *El ingenio*, II, p.109.

habitants were in want of every thing, and the Council very wifely took upon themselves to open the port to neutral for a limited time.³¹

When Spain entered the war and joined the French side against the British in December 1804, the United States took charge of exporting the Spanish merchandises bound for the Hispanic colonies in America. Loaded with products in Spanish ports, they alighted them in a city on the Atlantic coast of the United States. The corresponding duties were paid and they loaded them again, this time directly to Cuba, as they justified them as goods of a neutral country.³² In addition, the Real Gracia of 24th December 1804 and that of the 1st of May 1805 allowed certain counting houses of Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Baltimore to send any kind of goods in neutral ships to Spanish colonies, stressing its hegemony.³³ They also got hold of flour market³⁴ towards Cuba that initially was provided by Mexico³⁵ and that of wood and³⁶ as well as partially the reexports of European products and, also, monopolized the Cuban exports of sugar and derivatives.

3. THE INTERLOPER

THE TRADE of the neutrals, when permitted, acquired a sudden importance because there had previously existed a prosperous interloper or a trade in the limits of legality. Generally the neutrals behaved according to the Reales Órdenes or Cédulas dictated by the king³⁷ but they not always arrived on time or if they did, it was for an short period according to the islanders. This was one of the main complaints of the Cuban traders but not those of the Peninsula that defended the interests of the metropolis.³⁸ The authorities of Havana, faced with the successive licenses for trading with the neutrals and with the repeals of these, decided to act on their account, ignoring the orders that come from Spain allowing the entrance of the North Americans in the island whenever they believed it to be appropriate,³⁹ which was almost always. This was one of the ways of legalizing the contraband.

If Spain was not able to supply the island by its own means, then it was not going to go through more shortages than the ones needed. The interloper in Cuba was favored not only because of its advantageous geographical location, sited only few days travel from Britain, French, Danish and Dutch colonies and from the United States, but also by its own administration. One must have in mind that the only port entitled to trade for long periods was

³¹ *Observations on the commerce of Spain with her colonies*, p.33.

³² Hans Keiler, "American Shipping", in *Probleme der Weltwirtschaft*, 14, p.39.

³³ J. M. DELGADO RIBAS, "El impacto de las crisis coloniales en la economía catalana (1787-1807)", in *La economía española al final del Antiguo Régimen*, III, pp.165 and 169.

³⁴ The Real Orden of 25 June 1793 permits the arrival of flour and provisions for the United States, paying the same royal duties than the ones for ships of free trade. Afterwards, this order was revoked without much success.

³⁵ R. GUERRA, *op. cit.*, p.214.

³⁶ Mientras se destruían los bosques cubanos, la isla era la primera importadora de madera de EEUU, que se utilizaba para construir las cajas en las que se exportaba el azúcar, la madera preparada estadounidense resultaba más barata que la que podía aserrarse en la isla. M. MARTÍN y A. MALPICA, *El azúcar en el encuentro entre dos mundos*, pp.97-98.

³⁷ The Real Orden of 18 November of 1797 authorized the trade with the neutrals, and the Real Orden of 20 April of 1799 banned it but Havana opposed its observance and the neutrals carried on.

³⁸ Document from merchants and craftsmen of Catalonia, against neutrals trading in 1797. It is signed by *galoneros*, veil weavers, tights makers, hat makers and *tunidores*. AGI, Santo Domingo, leg. 2177.

³⁹ In 1783 the port of Havana allowed the arrival of ships from U.S. The Reales Órdenes accepting this trade existed since 1790 (R.O. of 21st January) until 1804.

Havana.⁴⁰ Also, as there were bad communications by land on the island, it was a logical thing to believe that from the other occidental end (Santiago de Cuba, Puerto Príncipe...), unable legally to foreign trade, it was going to be an illicit commerce. So that, it is surprising to know how, during warlike (1805, 1806, 1807), a great number of textiles were arriving to the island but not in times of peace (1803, 1804). The explanation more likely would be that the lack of a legal foreign trade provoked smuggling in peace periods. The imports of textiles were quite relevant. During the war time the imports grew spectacularly as we can see in table I.

TABLE I. IMPORTS OF TEXTILES (ONLY LENCERÍA) IN PESOS REALES BETWEEN 1803 AND 1807.

FROM	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807
Spain	556,899	695,944	107,969	0	0
Hispanic-America	57,435	80,845	20,751	65,414	15,640
“Colonias”	35,544	0	1,947,747	1,757,038	875,046
<i>Total</i>	<i>629,879</i>	<i>776,789</i>	<i>2,076,468</i>	<i>1,813,453</i>	<i>890,506</i>

Source: own elaboration

It must also be pointed out that the Spanish government conferred special permits or licenses to private dealers which, initially, were conceded for the introduction of African slaves (*bozales*) but were extended to other products, as in the case of flour. For example, the Real Orden of 20th July 1802 allowed the Count of Santa Cruz de Mopox⁴¹ to introduce 100,000 North American barrels of flour for a period of two years arguing that “la Junta está íntimamente convencida de que ni el comercio de la Península ni el de ambas Américas españolas (Nueva España y Buenos Aires) pueden competir en harinas con la del Norte de América ...”.⁴² Another similar example is the permit granted by the king the same year to Francisco Figueroa y Vargas (honorary judge of the Real Audiencia of Caracas) as compensation for the losses caused by its forced emigration from Santo Domingo. The permit allowed loading on Spanish ships 50,000 honey *bocoyes* (*miel de purga*) from the ports of the Cuban island to others that were foreign returning with utensils and farm tools in the same

⁴⁰ The 3rd December 1793, the Matanzas port was set up for foreign national trade and until the 9th March 1809 it was proclaimed free for commerce with natives and overseas allied people. J. DE LA PEZUELA, *Diccionario geográfico estadístico histórico de la isla de Cuba*, IV, p.47 (voz Matanzas).

⁴¹ “The privilege had been transferred by Francisco Arango, síndico of the town de Alzadas of this city and island, and agent for Jaruco to Francisco Hernández H^o of this city, merchant who are to import the flour from the United States on his account and make the remittances therefore throw Spain. This House advances Jaruco, in consequence of his putting the privilege into their hands the sums of 100.000 \$ in cash and sugar, and 100 negroes, for what advance they are to reimburse themselves out of the profits arising from the flour and are to be allowed full commissions on the purchase ...It is suppose her that this privilege will give Jaruco 500.000 \$ and to Hernández H^o about 150.000 \$”.

Letter signed the 29 October 1802 by the American agent Vincent Gray in La Havana. Dispatches from USA consuls in Havana, 1783-1807. NAU, T-20, Washington, DC, roll I, vol. 1. The documents have no page numbering. We refer to the document's date.

⁴² ANC, Real Consulado, dossier 73.

ships.⁴³ This system of license and favors generated a market of false permits (with Americans and Danish) issued from the island.

But Britain also devised its own system through the so-called "free ports" in the West Indies and Caribbean Islands for promoting the interloper with the Spanish and Portuguese colonies.⁴⁴ This commercial system relied on the fact that some ports, among them Kingston, Nassau, Trinidad, Port of Spain, could perform transactions with other nations (even with those that were at war) not only to and from the United Kingdom. Therefore from Jamaica,⁴⁵ cargoes, with commodities of diverse origin obtained in these "free ports", left for other colonies. This was the way to increase smuggling. "Between the Bahamas and the ports of St. Doming, Cuba and Veracruz the licenses carried valuable cargoes, and Nassau became important as a distributing point for British manufactures to the Spanish colonies".⁴⁶ Cuba was supplied mainly with textiles and slaves.

4. CUBA-USA IMPORTS AND EXPORTS (1803-1807) AND TRADE DEFICIT

THE ENGLISH blockade of the French coasts from May 1803, the assault of French Santo Domingo by the British, the defeat at Trafalgar and the closure by Napoleon of the continental ports, left the United States as the only neutral country with the means for commerce among both shores of the Atlantic. The United States profited from the war between the European powers by acting as the re-distributors of merchandises and carriers, damaging especially the British.⁴⁷ From 1805 to 1807, the Americans of the North were the only ones able to provide supplies⁴⁸ (especially flour) and other goods that Cuba needed, thereby becoming the first worldwide re-exporters of sugar, displacing the British from the sugar market.⁴⁹ Indeed, in the balances herein, the United States are identified as "Colonias".

⁴³ Besides tools it could be introduced: "jarcias, arboladuras, tablas de madera, arcos, duelas y muebles de casa, cajas de azúcar y bocois de miel, aguardiente de caña, manteca de puerco y vaca, alquitrán, brca, sebo, velas de este y de esperma de ballena, arroz, carne y pescado salado, cebollas y cualquier otros víveres, satisfaciendo por los que sean libres de derechos el 10%, como solicitó".

Letter dated the 4th October 1802 in Barcelona. Dispatches from USA consuls in Havana, 1783-1807, NAU, T-20, Washington, DC, roll 1. The documents have no page numbering. We refer to the document's date.

⁴⁴ J. CUENCA ESTEBAN, "Comercio y Hacienda en la caída del imperio español, 1778-1826" in *La economía española al final del Antiguo Régimen*, III, p.410.

⁴⁵ "The vessel that are licensed from the Bahamas Islands are all from New Providence and mostly belong to British subjects. The license runs in this way-the collector who is now the Governor grants those licenses from the terms of three months, and at the expiration, the license is renewed and security taken for them, the cost to obtain them amounts to sixty dollars. The license passes all British men of war and privateers of it at nation. On entering the port of Havana, they hoist the flag of our nation or that of the Danes, declaring either from some southern port of the United States of Danish Island (...). They make their traffic secure, and return to the Bahamas with same security, always hoisting the Spanish flag in the English ports(...). At Jamaica, the same transaction are in practice, not only to Cuba, but to most of the ports of South America, that are open to our commerce". New York, 21 may 1802. Dispatches from USA consuls in Havana, 1783-1807, NAU, T-20, Washington, DC, roll 1, vol. 1. The documents are not paginated. We note down the date from the document.

⁴⁶ P. B. GOEBEL, "British Trade to the Spanish colonies 1796-1823" in *American Historical Review*, XLIII, (1938), p.212.

⁴⁷ P. B. GOEBEL, *op. cit.*, p.290.

⁴⁸ Between 1804 and 1807, foreign re-exports [from US] to Spanish America increased 839,3 per cent, while domestic exports grew only 143,2 per cent. In other words, the re-export trade grew six times faster than the trade in articles in domestic production. In J. H. COATSWORTH, "American Trade with European Colonies", *op. cit.*, p.258.

⁴⁹ M. MORENO FRAGINALS, *El ingenio*, II, p.116.

TABLE 2. VALUE IN PESOS REALES OF THE MERCHANDISES EXPORTED AND IMPORTED FROM THE PORT OF HAVANA (1803-1807), EXCLUDING THE PRECIOUS METALS.

	IMP.	EXP.	DIFFERENCE	IMP.+EXP.
1803	9,849,560	6,487,175	-3,362,385	16,336,736
1804	8,244,161	7,333,814	-910,347	15,577,976
1805	11,558,043	5,134,107	-6,424,476	16,692,150
1806	10,608,192	6,463,755	-4,173,549	17,071,948
1807	7,303,280	5,497,584	-1,805,696	12,800,864
Total	47,563,236	30,916,438	-16,676,453	78,479,674

Note: within the value of the merchandises, the 'king's tobacco' is not reflected even when its quantity is included in the balance. The data included in page 72 from the work of Levi Marrero, Cuba, economía y sociedad, vol. XII, taken from AGI, Ultramar, 197, do not coincide with mines, since they include precious metals.

Source: own elaboration.

TABLE 3. VALUE OF THE MERCHANDISES EXPORTED AND IMPORTED FROM THE PORT OF HAVANA (1803-1807) IN INDEX NUMBERS: 1803=100

	IMP.	EXP.	IMP.+EXP.
1803	100	100	100
1804	83.7	113	95.3
1805	117.3	79.1	102.2
1806	107.7	99.6	104.5
1807	74.1	84.7	78.3

Source: own elaboration.

Throughout this period it can be noted the way in which a slight decline of the foreign trade of the island has taken place, stressed in 1807 by the worsening of the British and French blockade. But we must point out that until 1807 we can not talk about a serious commercial crisis (see tables 2 and 3). In fact the average volume of commerce (import + export) between 1803-1804 reached nearly 16 million pesos (15,957,356, index 100) and the mean between 1805 to 1807 was established 15 millions (15,521,654, index 97).

The balance of trade during all these years turned out to be loss-making for the island which indicates that legal, or illegally, Cuba must have exported precious metals in a far from negligible amount. As noted above, the fact that it is no included among the exports the tobacco of the king's value stresses the deficit but taking into account the peculiarities of the purchase of tobacco by the state monopoly of the metropolis and the quantities, the calculations are not altered.⁵⁰

A great part of this trade deficit could be covered by the arrival of Mexican silver through the *situados*. These are sums that the Spanish Crown sent from the treasury of Nueva España to Cuba for the payment of the troops, the construction of ships and the purchase of

⁵⁰ "Hacia 1806 llegó a La Habana el último *situado*", J. LE RIVEREND, *Historia económica de Cuba*, p.144.

tobacco that later was sent to the metropolis and other colonies in America.⁵¹ This way of coping with the deficit of the Cuban trade balance was very attractive for those powers that needed silver for their transactions with China.⁵²

It must be pointed out that, except in 1807, the commercial deficit was lower during peaceful years (1803 and 1804) than in the war periods (1805 and 1806), as the imports increased in these last years as contrasted with exports that tended to drop (see table 2). This phenomenon can be explained by smuggling, stimulated by the high duties of the manufactured products. In peace times, the official sums obviously do not include that which was illegally introduced. On the contrary, when the trade between neutrals was authorized, what beforehand was entering by contraband, now was appearing as legal loads. In the case of exports (sugar, coffee, tobacco...), the low custom rights and the weight of items did not encourage the smuggling in times of peace.

Within this relatively optimistic viewpoint, the role played by the United States stands out. Therefore during these years (1803-1807) the Cuban foreign trade did not undergo substantial changes inasmuch volume. On the other hand, as it can be seen in table 4, the origin and destination of the merchandises did suffer a noteworthy modification.

TABLE 4. VALUE IN PESOS REALES OF THE MERCHANDISES IMPORTED AND EXPORTED VIA HAVANA COMING TO AND FROM THE COLONIAS (USA), EXCLUDING THE PRECIOUS METALS, 1803-1807.

	IMP.	EXP.	DIFFERENCE	IMP. + EXP.
1803	3,744,198	1,899,565	-1,844,633	5,643,763
1804	2,471,065	1,424,245	-1,046,820	3,895,310
1805	10,505,858	4,429,976	-6,075,882	14,935,834
1806	9,759,276	5,174,641	-4,584,635	14,933,917
1807	6,841,403	4,654,139	2,187,264	11,495,542
<i>Total</i>	<i>33,321,801</i>	<i>17,582,567</i>	<i>-15,739,234</i>	<i>50,904,368</i>

Source: own elaboration.

The United States imported and exported during the peace years (1803-1804) a mean of 5 million pesos worth (4,769,537 pesos, index 100) and in war times (1805-1807) worth nearly 14 millions (13,788,431 pesos, index 289); its activity would have been multiplied almost three times. As trading links were intensifying, the balance was becoming adverse for the island, at least as reflected in the official estimates, although that may not be the truth. It is

⁵¹ Cuba, Puerto Rico, St. Domingo, or the Philipines, which over centuries were unable to produce sufficient internal fiscal resources to meet the total civil military costs of their own territories were obliged to rely on remittances of silver from other parts of the empire most particularly from New Spain. In C. MARICHAL y M. SOUTO MANTECÓN, "Silver and Situatedos", *Hispano-American Historical Review*, 74-4 (1994), p. 590.

"Tres millones y medio de pesos pasan anualmente a otras colonias españolas, en calidad de socorros indispensables para su administración interior. Por término medio desde 1788 a 1792, a la isla de Cuba le corresponderían 1.826.000. De esta cantidad 700.000 pesos iban destinados para el puerto y el astillero de La Habana, y 500.000 para la compra de tabaco de la isla de Cuba que pasaba luego a España". A. VON HUMBOLDT, *Ensayo político sobre el reino de la Nueva España*, p. 549.

⁵² "En China se compra una onza de oro con 12 ó 13 onzas de plata. En México la proporción de estos dos metales es como 15-5/8 a 1; y así es más útil llevar plata que oro a Manila, Cantón y a Nagasaki". *Id.*, p. 423.

very likely, that part of the products legally imported while free trade was accepted, with the neutrals, were arriving through illicit way earlier on.

TABLE 5. VALUE IN PERCENTAGE OF THE IMPORTED AND EXPORTED MERCHANDISES BOUND FOR THE COLONIES (1803-1807), IN RELATION TO THE TOTAL VALUE.

	IMP.%	EXP.%	IMP.+EXP.%
1803	38.1	35.2	37
1804	92.3	19.4	26.3
1805	94.1	86.7	91.8
1806	93	80	88
1807	97.2	84.6	91.8

Source: own elaboration.

Therefore, within a situation of slight declining in the Cuban foreign relations, the commerce controlled by the neutrals⁵³ grew in a remarkable way. This peculiarity can be clearly perceived in table 5: "neutrals" went from controlling a third of the Cuban foreign trade to 90%. In 1805 the 88% of the wine imported by Cuba was carried in USA bottoms. The wine came from Spain (Barcelona, Málaga, Canarias) and France (Bordeaux); see table 6.

TABLE 6. WINE (IN PESOS REALES) IMPORTED FROM THE PORT OF HAVANA BETWEEN 1803 AND 1807.

FROM	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807
Spain	604,837	691,705	86,436	0	0
Hispanic-America	22,187	5,450	8,751	0	830
"Colonias"	875	9,825	731,394	373,391	561,994
Total	627,900	706,980	826,581	373,791	562,824

Source: own elaboration.

In view of the sudden control of the Cuban foreign trade by the United States, the French and British⁵⁴ reacted by seizing not only the vessels of the belligerent countries, but also the ships of the neutrals. These actions explain the difficulties of the Cuban foreign commerce in 1807. The North Americans did not take time in answering back, and the 22nd of December, the United States's Congress decided to block its own ports and to ban the trading under American flag with any other foreign port⁵⁵ by means of the Embargo Act. The Non-Intercourse Act (1st of March 1809) was proclaimed two years later. It allowed the commerce with all the nations excepting France and Great Britain.

⁵³ "The war years were the ones with more prosperity for the US", D. C. NORTH, *The Economic Growth of the US, 1790-1860*, p.37.

⁵⁴ The 11th November 1807 "Great Britain prohibited neutral vessels from trading with any port belonging to France or her allies", and after that, the 11th December 1807 "Napoleon directing the confiscation of all neutral ships which accepted British protection and paid British duties". Hans Keller, *American shipping*, p.41.

⁵⁵ *Id.*, p.43.

Even though the USA acted mainly as redistributors, they also sent to Cuba some of its own products. During the peace years, the main exports⁵⁶ of USA for Havana port consisted on flour, slaves, rice, cod and lumber. We have chosen as an example the flour within the supplies introduced in Havana as it was a product of great consumption (it is equivalent to 12'6 % of the imports throughout the studied period).

TABLE 7. IMPORTED FLOUR TO HAVANA PORT, IN PESOS REALES.

FROM	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807
Spain	575,424	151,362	9,396	0	0
Colonial America	375,438	451,810	36,508	643	985
“Colonias”	640,026	731,628	1,736,571	1,004,207	1,010,760
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,590,888</i>	<i>1,334,800</i>	<i>1,782,476</i>	<i>1,004,850</i>	<i>1,011,744</i>

Source: own elaboration.

During peace years, the Spanish flour came from the ports of Cadiz and Santander,⁵⁷ and to a smaller extent, from Corunna, Canary Islands and Málaga. In 1803 as well as in 1804, half of the exported flour via Spain came from Cadiz (283,800 and 80,964 pesos). Within the ports of colonial America, it is Veracruz the port that sends larger amounts of wheat flour with 171,136 pesos in 1803 and 300,400 in 1804, followed by New Orleans. But as we can see, table 7 reflects the preeminence of the flour from the Colonias, even before the conflict. In peace times, Cuba imported from USA 47% of its flour, 25% of Spain and 28% of colonial America (mainly from Mexico). However, during conflict, the departures from the metropolis and from its American colonies were insignificant whilst the USA reached 99%. They had turned into the only suppliers of the product. Once communications were cut due to European wars, the flour that was sold in Havana⁵⁸ (7,000 barrels were consumed monthly, excluding the surrounding area of the city) came from Baltimore and Philadelphia.

The USA possessed as domestic products, not only flour, but also wood.⁵⁹ Contrary, other types of goods were re-exported, as it is indicated by the fact that in some of the registers it figures “listado de Flandes”, “manto de China”, “tasajo de Montevideo” or “pimienta de Castilla”. The British and German textiles constituted the main European products that were re-exported.

With regards to the matter of the Cuban exports, the United States had also played an im-

⁵⁶ After its releasing from England, the United States specialized, on one side, in the maritime traffic and on the other, in a manufacture industry in the north of this young nation. New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore became the main shipyards centers and therefore the subsidiaries industries. D. C. NORTH, *op.cit.*, p.49.

⁵⁷ Great part of the flours sent from Spain during this period were foreign, refer to I. MIGUEL LÓPEZ, “Guerra y comercio marítimo” in *Economía y empresa en el norte de España*, pp.71-74.

⁵⁸ Letter dated the 9th February 1808, NAU, T-55, Washington, DC, roll 2, vol. 2. The documents have not page numbering. We refer to the document's date.

⁵⁹ “The quantity of lumbar consumed here per annum is estimate at millions of feet, but I do suppose that the consumption for some years to come, will exceed that quantity—in consequence of the number of Houses consumed at the late dreadful conflagration, as well as account of the increase of sugar (...).” Letter dated 29 October 1802 in Havana, Dispatches from U.S.A consuls in Havana, 1783-1807, NAU, T-20, Washington, DC, roll 1, vol. 1. The documents are not paginated. We refer to the date.

portant role before the conflict at least in relation to a basic product, sugar, and in another with a brilliant future, coffee. The export of sugar in *arrobas* does not seem to have suffered great changes as a consequence of the conflict. During the peace years, an average of 2,734,014 *arrobas* were exported via the port of Havana. During war years it was of a similar amount, 2,723,221 *arrobas*; see table 10⁽¹⁾.

TABLE 8. EXPORTED WHITE SUGAR⁶⁰ BY THE PORT OF HAVANA, IN PESOS.

FROM	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807
Spain	1,851,572	2,389,271	10,516	14,945	2,046
Hipanic-America	62,714	50,186	12,003	11,696	15,708
“Colonias”	744,566	840,324	2,115,155	1,937,328	1,864,851
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,658,852</i>	<i>3,279,781</i>	<i>2,137,672</i>	<i>1,963,969</i>	<i>1,882,605</i>

Source: own elaboration.

The complaints of the Cuban planters and merchants in this time were due to a fall in price. This had probably more to do with the excess of production than with a closing of the overseas demand. Or, may be, because the North American carriers made the islander producers cope with a rise in the cost of transaction caused by the war. It was from 1807 that the complaints had ground:

Las órdenes contra el comercio de los neutrales dadas en consejo por lo ingleses, los decretos de Bonaparte conocidos con el nombre de Berlín y de Milán y la cerradura de los puertos de los EEUU aún para sus propias embarcaciones han sido trabas que han impedido la exportación de nuestros azúcares y la falta de exportación ha debido abaratar su precio.⁶¹

Tables 8 and 9 reflect that during the war years the income obtained from exports were lower than the ones during peace years, even though the amounts were practically as the same level.

TABLE 9. EXPORT OF QUEBRADO SUGAR BY THE PORT OF HAVANA, IN PESOS.

FROM	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807*
Spain	971,461	1,260,685	3,333	3,150	979
Hipanic-America	105,890	76,513	12,484	16,877	14,040
“Colonias”	558,232	241,240	1,404,466	1,507,923	1,122,273
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,635,584</i>	<i>3,279,781</i>	<i>1,420,283</i>	<i>1,527,951</i>	<i>1,137,292</i>

*In the year 1807, 1,312 pesos concerning to sugar in *cucurucho* and 24,568 pesos of *mascabado* sugar are missing.

Source: own elaboration.

⁶⁰ The white sugar is “el de la base del pan, blanqueada durante la operación de purga” and the *quebrado* sugar is that it appears in “la zona intermedia del pan, entre el blanco y la punta”, M. MORENO FRAGINALS, *El ingenio*, III, p.108.

⁶¹ F. ERFENCHUN, *Diccionario administrativo, económico, estadístico y legislativo*, p.265.

The destination of sugar suffered a great change. In peace times, the majority of the sugar, white and *quebrado*, was bound for the metropolis (71%) and secondarily to the *Colonias* (26%); during warlike conflict, little sugar was destined to Spain and its American territories. Indeed, 99% of the sugar bound for the *Colonias*.

TABLE 10. EXPORT OF SUGAR VIA THE PORT OF HAVANA IN ARROBAS (1803-1807), ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT SOURCES.

	Sugar in <i>arrobas</i> ⁽¹⁾	Sugar in <i>arrobas</i> ⁽²⁾	Sugar in TM ⁽³⁾
1800		2,387,688	28,761
1801		2,671,592	33,352
1802		3,384,600	41,371
1803	2,428,169	2,642,824	331,944
1804	3,039,859	3,271,416	39,235
1805	2,845,398	2,906,838	35,238
1806	2,344,630	2,618,296	38,192
1807	2,979,653	3,014,488	41,165
1808	2,005,976	2,120,136	28,591
1809		4,081,112	51,609
1810		3,267,168	39,286

(1) It includes white, *quebrado*, *mascabado* and *cucurucho*.

Source: own elaboration, based on the Balanzas de la Habana during the years 1803 and 1807. According to the summary of the balance of the year 1808 (NAU, T-55, Washington, DC, roll 2, vol. 2), 125,373, 1/2 sugar cases left from Havana. Being 16 *arrobas* per case, there would be a result of 2,005,976 *arrobas* of sugar.

(2) Source: "Estado político de la Isla de Cuba en 1851", in *Diario de la Marina*, 1852.

(3) Source: "Cuban export of sugar", in M. MORENO FRAGINALS, *El ingenio*, III, pp.43-44.

Facing the stagnation of the sugar exports, the coffee exports increased noticeably, without an important rise in the price (see tables 11 and 12). The amount of coffee exported during war was 3.51 times that exported during peace and its value underwent a similar increase (3.69).

TABLE 11. EXPORTS OF COFFEE VIA THE PORT OF HAVANA, IN PESOS.*

To	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807
Spain	10,735	67,025	10,060	9,702	63
Hipanic-America	56,803	25,705	12,712	9,705	3,112
"Colonias"	26,628	32,900	260,116	509,218	404,437
<i>Total</i>	<i>94,166</i>	<i>125,630</i>	<i>282,888</i>	<i>528,625</i>	<i>407,612</i>

*Grounded and coffee bean are included.

Source: own elaboration.

TABLE 12. EXPORTS OF COFFEE VIA THE PORT OF HAVANA, IN POUNDS.

	Coffe in pounds ⁽¹⁾
1803	539,725
1804	621,425 ⁽²⁾
1805	1,767,825
1806	2,117,650
1807	2,262,755

⁽¹⁾ Grounded coffee and coffee bean are included.

⁽²⁾ 83.5 barrels of coffee should be added.

Source: own elaboration.

In order to understand a sudden rise as demonstrated in table 11, several factors must be taken into account: the slave rebellions taking place in the French colonies and the emigration of colonists towards Cuba. It is also worth mentioning that the coffee plantations take a period of five years to mature and that there was an English blockade (from January 1804) of the French ports of Martinica and Guadalupe. The French that settled on the island were the ones that promoted the crop⁶² of coffee and cotton,⁶³ thanks to their technical knowledge and availability of capital. The coffee was also monopolized in terms of transport by the Anglo-Americans (see table 11) during war.

5. CONCLUSIONS

CUBA, AT THE beginning of the XIXth century, could be seen as an agricultural colony with a tendency for monoculture of sugar, with few other subsidiary goods, such as coffee and tobacco. As it dedicated the greatest part of its resources of lands, human labor and capital to these products, the island depended on the foreign trade not only for the sale of what it produced but also for meeting its food needs (wine, flour, jerked beef...). Lacking a qualified craft industry, it will also have to import manufactures, especially textiles. The Cuban economy grew binding itself more and more to the exterior.

The commercial regulations of the Hispanic monarchy gave great importance to the relations between the metropolis and its colonies. But the incapacity, above all in war times, of maintaining the imperial communications forced the Spanish government to open its ports to the neutrals. The neutral condition of the Anglo-Americans permitted them to strengthen its trade relations and from the end of the XVIIIth century, they have "consuls agents"⁶⁴ in Havana (1797), Santiago de Cuba (1799), New Orleans (1797) and La Guaira

⁶² "The Napoleon invasion of Spain affected Cuba in a way such as the expulsion of the French, in 1808 put a stop to the first efforts of agriculture enterprise, and the activity what has been exected in this branch of industry, may be to date no further back than 1815 (...)"

Letter dated the 23rd February 1820, NAU, T-55, Despatches from USA, Consuls in Santiago de Cuba, Washington, DC, 1836, roll 1, vol. 1. The documents have no page numbering. We refer to the document's date.

⁶³ The cotton was cultivated in the area of Guantánamo by the French emigrants, engaging as well a considerable number of slaves for its crops. Its production will be more important towards 1820.

⁶⁴ The Spanish government do not allow by law in any of its Indies dominions a consul, although the president of the United States had appointed an agent in Cuba to establish better trading relations between the two nations. Nobody will exercise as an agent until the King of Spain give the approval:

(1800). These countries and those that possessed colonies in the Antilles already practiced an illicit trade during peace times. But their interests did not reside only in selling manufactured products and to obtain colonial products in the island, that they have in their own colonies but also in collecting, thanks to a Cuban unfavorable commercial balance, part of the silver that via *situados*,⁶⁵ come to Havana. Silver was already essential during this period for trading with the Far East, from where textiles of silk, porcelain and tea were procured. The North Americans, once independence was gained, headed for the Antilles and Río de la Plata to provide themselves with certain colonial goods and probably, above all, with precious metals, thanks to the sell of services and foodstuffs. The wars between the main European colonial powers facilitated its immediate control of the exports of flour bound for Cuba, of the re-exports and of the cargoes. Thanks to the sale of its flour, its transport services and its intermediary role, they got hold of part of the silver—the deficit of the Cuban trade balance reveals this situation—that coming from New Spain, was accumulated in Cuba. Having this silver, they tried to compete in China with the British.⁶⁶ Indeed, the United States followed the routes⁶⁷ and guidelines that the British and, to a smaller extent, the French had been practicing for years, but not having colonies in the Caribbean neither an important textile industry, interests in commercial relations with Cuba were quite different.

“It is more than two years since I arrived in this port, with a commission of consul of the United States who permitted to reside, to give certificates, protests and to the citizens of my nation I have not been by the Spanish government a recognised as consul of the United States”.

Letter from Josiah Berkeley, the 14th May 1801 in Santiago de Cuba. Despatches from USA consuls in Santiago de Cuba, 1799-1836, NAU, T-55, Washington, DC, roll 1. The documents have not page numbering. We refer to the document's date. R. F. NICHOLS, “Trade Relations and the establishment of the United States consulates in Spanish America”, in *The Hispano-American Historical Review*, vol. XIII, 3, (August 1933), p.299.

⁶⁵ Mexican silver helped pay for a great number of powerful battleships built in Havana shipyards—and supported the royal tobacco monopolies in Cuba and Louisiana. C. MARICHAL y M. SOUTO MANTECÓN, “Silver and Situados”, *Hispano-American Review*, 74.4 (1994), p. 598.

“Durante el siglo XVIII, además de las atenciones militares, los situados estaban destinados a cubrir las compras de tabaco por cuenta de la Real Hacienda, la construcción de las murallas de La Habana y los gastos de la construcción de navíos en el Astillero de La Habana”. J. LE RIVEREND, *Historia Económica de Cuba*, p.143.

⁶⁶ In fact, a commercial practice of the North Americans consisted of transporting flour to Montevideo, come back with jerked beef bound for Havana and leather for the shoemaker industry of Philadelphia. A. PRESTON WHITAKER, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America*. p.15.

⁶⁷ This circuit facilitated the first contacts of USA with Río de la Plata and Chili quite early, having direct access to the valuable silver. From the South Pacific, the North Americans established trade relations with the Dutch Indies and China, having free admission to the tea, chinas and silks in a direct way. W. E. CHEONG, “Trade and Finance in China” in *Les grandes voies maritimes dans le monde XV-XIX siècle*. pp.283-284. Also A. Preston Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p.6, and J. COATSWORTH, “American Trade with European Colonies”, p.255.

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