

**El Libertador:
Writings of Simón
Bolívar**

*DAVID BUSHNELL,
Editor*

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EL LIBERTADOR

Writings of Simón Bolívar

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Writings of Simón Bolívar

Translated from the Spanish by

FREDERICK H. FORNOFF

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY DAVID BUSHNELL

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Contents

SERIES EDITORS' GENERAL INTRODUCTION	ix
CHRONOLOGY OF SIMÓN BOLÍVAR	xiii
AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOLIVARIAN SOURCES	xviii
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE	xxiii
INTRODUCTION	xxvii
I THE MAJOR POLITICAL STATEMENTS	
The Cartagena Manifesto: Memorial Addressed to the Citizens of New Granada by a Citizen from Caracas (15 December 1812)	3
The Jamaica Letter: Response from a South American to a Gentleman from This Island (6 September 1815)	12
The Angostura Address (15 February 1819)	31
The Bolivian Constitution (1826)	54
I. Address to the Constituent Congress (25 May 1826)	54
II. Draft of a Constitution for Bolivia	64
Message to the Convention of Ocaña (29 February 1828)	86

- A Glance at Spanish America (1829) 95
Address to the “Congreso Admirable”: Message to the
Constituent Congress of the Republic of Colombia
(20 January 1830) 103

II LESSER BOLIVARIAN TEXTS

1. *Political and Military*

- Oath Taken in Rome (15 August 1805) 113
Decree of War to the Death (15 June 1813) 115
Manifesto to the Nations of the World
(20 September 1813) 117
Manifesto of Carúpano (7 September 1814) 126
Manifesto on the Execution of General Manuel Piar
(17 October 1817) 130
Declaration of Angostura (20 November 1818) 132
My Delirium on Chimborazo (1822) 135
Letter to José Antonio Páez: “Nor Am I Napoleon”
(6 March 1826) 137
A Soldier’s Death Penalty Commuted (26 January 1828) 139
Manifesto Justifying the Dictatorship (27 August 1828) 141
Manifesto Concerning the Installation of the Constituent
Congress, the End of the Dictatorship, and Announcing
the End of His Political Career (20 January 1830) 143
Letter to General Juan José Flores: “Ploughing the Sea”
(9 November 1830) 145
Final Proclamation of the Liberator
(10 December 1830) 150

2. *International Affairs*

- Letter to Sir Richard Wellesley: An Appeal for Support
(27 May 1815) 153
Letter to Baptis Irvine, Agent of the United States of
America to Venezuela: Debating Neutral Rights
(20 August 1818) 156

- Invitation to the Governments of Colombia, Mexico, Río de la Plata, Chile, and Guatemala to Hold a Congress in Panama (7 December 1824) 159
- Letter to General Francisco de Paula Santander: The Brazilian Empire, Upper Peru, North Americans, and Other Problems (30 May 1825) 162
- Thoughts on the Congress to Be Held in Panama (1826) 169
- Letter to General Lafayette: On George Washington (20 March 1826) 171
- Letter to Colonel Patrick Campbell, British Chargé d’Affaires: “Plague America with Miseries” (5 August 1829) 172
3. *Social and Economic Affairs*
- Decree for the Emancipation of the Slaves (2 June 1816) 177
- Redistribution of Properties as Compensation for Officers and Soldiers (10 October 1817) 179
- Letter to General Francisco de Paula Santander: On Slave Recruitment (18 April 1820) 182
- Decrees on Indian Rights, Lands, and Tribute
- i. Decree Abolishing Personal Service Imposed on the Native Peoples: New Statute Governing Their Work (20 May 1820) 184
 - ii. Proclamation of the Civil Rights of Indians and Prohibition of Their Exploitation by Officials, Priests, Local Authorities, and Landowners (4 July 1825) 187
 - iii. Resolution on the Redistribution of Communal Lands (4 July 1825) 189
 - iv. Resolution That Colombian Indians Pay a Tax Called “a Personal Tribute from Indigenous Peoples” (15 October 1828) 191
- Application of Capital Punishment to Officials Who Have Taken Money from Public Funds (12 January 1824) 197
- Measures for the Protection and Wise Use of the Nation’s Forest Resources: Bolívar As Ecologist (31 July 1829) 199

4. *Education and Culture*

Method to Be Employed in the Education of My Nephew
Fernando Bolívar (1822?) 205

Decree on the Installation of Several Normal Schools Based
on the Lancasterian System (31 January 1825) 207

Letters to José Joaquín de Olmedo: Critique of the
“Victoria de Junín”

I. 27 June 1825 209

II. 12 July 1825 211

Circular on Educational Reform: Bentham Treatises
Banned from All Colombian Universities
(12 March 1828) 214

Prohibition of Secret Societies (8 November 1828) 216

NOTES 219

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 233

Series Editors'
General Introduction

The Library of Latin America series makes available in translation major nineteenth-century authors whose work has been neglected in the English-speaking world. The titles for the translations from the Spanish and Portuguese were suggested by an editorial committee that included Jean Franco (general editor responsible for works in Spanish), Richard Graham (series editor responsible for works in Portuguese), Tulio Halperín Donghi (at the University of California, Berkeley), Iván Jaksic (at the University of Notre Dame), Naomi Lindstrom (at the University of Texas at Austin), Eduardo Lozano of the Library at the University of Pittsburgh, and Francine Masiello (at the University of California, Berkeley). The late Antonio Cornejo Polar of the University of California, Berkeley, was also one of the founding members of the committee. The translations have been funded thanks to the generosity of the Lapidia Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

During the period of national formation between 1810 and into the early years of the twentieth century, the new nations of Latin America fashioned their identities, drew up constitutions, engaged in bitter struggles over territory, and debated questions of education, government, ethnicity, and culture. This was a unique period unlike the process of nation formation in Europe and one that should be more familiar than it is to students of comparative politics, history, and literature.

The image of the nation was envisioned by the lettered classes—a

minority in countries in which indigenous, mestizo, black, or mulatto peasants and slaves predominated—although there were also alternative nationalisms at the grassroots level. The cultural elite were well educated in European thought and letters, but as statesmen, journalists, poets, and academics, they confronted the problem of the racial and linguistic heterogeneity of the continent and the difficulties of integrating the population into a modern nation-state. Some of the writers whose works will be translated in the Library of Latin America series played leading roles in politics. Fray Servando Teresa de Mier, a friar who translated Rousseau's *The Social Contract* and was one of the most colorful characters of the independence period, was faced with imprisonment and expulsion from Mexico for his heterodox beliefs; on his return, after independence, he was elected to the congress. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, exiled from his native Argentina under the dictatorship of Rosas, wrote *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie*, a stinging denunciation of that government. He returned after Rosas' overthrow and was elected president in 1868. Andrés Bello was born in Venezuela, lived in London, where he published poetry during the independence period, settled in Chile, where he founded the University, wrote his grammar of the Spanish language, and drew up the country's legal code.

These post-independence intelligentsia were not simply dreaming castles in the air, but vitally contributed to the founding of nations and the shaping of culture. The advantage of hindsight may make us aware of problems they themselves did not foresee, but this should not affect our assessment of their truly astonishing energies and achievements. It is still surprising that the writing of Andrés Bello, who contributed fundamental works to so many different fields, has never been translated into English. Although there is a recent translation of Sarmiento's celebrated *Facundo*, there is no translation of his memoirs, *Recuerdos de provincia* (*Provincial Recollections*). The predominance of memoirs in the Library of Latin America series is no accident—many of these offer entertaining insights into a vast and complex continent.

Nor have we neglected the novel. The series includes new translations of the outstanding Brazilian writer Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis' work, including *Dom Casmurro* and *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*. There is no reason why other novels and writers who are not so well known outside Latin America—the Peruvian novelist Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido*, Nataniel Aguirre's *Juan de la Rosa*, José de Alencar's *Iracema*, Juana Manuela Gorriti's short stories—should not be read with as much interest as the political novels of Anthony Trollope.

A series on nineteenth-century Latin America cannot, however, be limited to literary genres such as the novel, the poem, and the short story. The literature of independent Latin America was eclectic and strongly influenced by the periodical press newly liberated from scrutiny by colonial authorities and the Inquisition. Newspapers were miscellanies of fiction, essays, poems, and translations from all manner of European writing. The novels written on the eve of Mexican Independence by José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi included disquisitions on secular education and law, and denunciations of the evils of gaming and idleness. Other works, such as a well-known poem by Andrés Bello, "Ode to Tropical Agriculture," and novels such as *Amalia* by José Mármol and the Bolivian Nataniel Aguirre's *Juan de la Rosa*, were openly partisan. By the end of the century, sophisticated scholars were beginning to address the history of their countries, as did João Capistrano de Abreu in his *Capítulos de história colonial*.

It is often in memoirs such as those by Fray Servando Teresa de Mier or Sarmiento that we find the descriptions of everyday life that in Europe were incorporated into the realist novel. Latin American literature at this time was seen largely as a pedagogical tool, a "light" alternative to speeches, sermons, and philosophical tracts—though, in fact, especially in the early part of the century, even the readership for novels was quite small because of the high rate of illiteracy. Nevertheless, the vigorous orally transmitted culture of the gaucho and the urban underclasses became the linguistic repertoire of some of the most interesting nineteenth-century writers—most notably José Hernández, author of the "gauchesque" poem "Martín Fierro," which enjoyed an unparalleled popularity. But for many writers the task was not to appropriate popular language but to civilize, and their literary works were strongly influenced by the high style of political oratory.

The editorial committee has not attempted to limit its selection to the better-known writers such as Machado de Assis; it has also selected many works that have never appeared in translation or writers whose work has not been translated recently. The series now makes these works available to the English-speaking public.

Because of the preferences of funding organizations, the series initially focuses on writing from Brazil, the Southern Cone, the Andean region, and Mexico. Each of our editions will have an introduction that places the work in its appropriate context and includes explanatory notes.

We owe special thanks to the late Robert Glynn of the Lampadia Foundation, whose initiative gave the project a jump start, and to Richard

Ekman of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which also generously supported the project. We also thank the Rockefeller Foundation for funding the 1996 symposium "Culture and Nation in Iberoamerica," organized by the editorial board of the Library of Latin America. We received substantial institutional support and personal encouragement from the Institute of Latin American Studies of the University of Texas at Austin. The support of Edward Barry of Oxford University Press has been crucial, as has the advice and help of Ellen Chodosh of Oxford University Press. The first volumes of the series were published after the untimely death, on July 3, 1997, of Maria C. Bulle, who, as an associate of the Lampadia Foundation, supported the idea from its beginning.

—*Jean Franco*
—*Richard Graham*

Chronology of Simón Bolívar

- 1783 24 July. Simón Bolívar is born at Caracas, the youngest of two brothers and two sisters.
- 1786 Death of his father, Juan Vicente Bolívar y Ponte, wealthy creole planter and militia colonel and heir to the title of marquis of San Luis, although he never used it.
- 1792 Death of his mother, María de la Concepción Palacios y Blanco, whose family also formed part of the colonial aristocracy. Primary responsibility for Simón's upbringing passes to a maternal uncle, Esteban Palacios, but as he is living in Spain, it is exercised in practice by another uncle, Carlos Palacios.
- 1795 Bolívar goes to live in the house of Simón Rodríguez, the most influential of his teachers.
- 1798 Bolívar is commissioned *subteniente* in the colonial militia.
- 1799–1802 Bolívar's first visit to Europe. He stays principally in Spain but makes an excursion to France early in 1802.

- 1802 26 May. In Madrid, Bolívar marries María Teresa Rodríguez del Toro, daughter of a noble family of Caracas. Shortly afterward, the couple returns to Venezuela.
- 1803 22 January. Death of Bolívar's wife.
- 1803–1806 Bolívar's second stay in Europe. He travels more widely but spends most of his time in Paris, where he meets Alexander von Humboldt and other notables and renews his acquaintance with Simón Rodríguez.
- 1805 15 August. Accompanied by Rodríguez, Bolívar makes a vow at Rome to liberate Spanish America.
- 1807 1 January (apparently). Bolívar lands in Charleston, South Carolina, on his return from Europe. He visits other major cities before finally sailing from Philadelphia back to Venezuela.
- 1807–1810 Living in Venezuela and occupied with agricultural and commercial activities, Bolívar takes part, as still a relatively minor figure, in the revolutionary ferment that arose in Spanish America following the Napoleonic invasion of Spain and the overthrow of the legitimate monarch, Fernando VII.
- 1810 On 19 April Caracas revolutionists depose the Spanish captain-general and establish a junta to govern ostensibly in the name of Fernando VII, but in practice autonomous. The junta names Bolívar commissioner to London to seek the sympathy and support of Great Britain for the new regime.
- 1811 On 5 July an elected Venezuelan congress formally declares independence. Shortly afterward, Bolívar receives his baptism of fire in the campaign to suppress a counterrevolutionary outbreak at Valencia.
- 1812 Bolívar helps to rally a demoralized populace after the disastrous Holy Thursday earthquake in Caracas, but on 6 July he is forced to evacuate the strategic position of Puerto Cabello, which had been entrusted to his command. On 31 July, embittered at the surrender agreed to by Francisco de Miranda as dictator of Venezuela's "First Republic," Bolívar is one of the leaders who arrest him and thereby prevent his escape from Venezuela. Bolívar

- subsequently goes to Cartagena in New Granada to resume the struggle and on 15 December issues the Cartagena Manifesto, his first major political text.
- 1813 With backing from the revolutionary government of New Granada, Bolívar conducts the “Admirable Campaign,” which again delivers most of Venezuela into patriot hands.
- 1814 The “Second Republic,” in which Bolívar held supreme civil and military power, proves unable to gain wide popular backing and is defeated, in large part by the action of royalist irregulars.
- 1814–1815 Again a fugitive in New Granada, Bolívar helps the federal authorities subdue the recalcitrant state of Cundinamarca (Bogotá), but in the face of continuing internal dissensions he withdraws to the West Indies, where on 6 September 1815 he publishes the Jamaica Letter.
- 1816 With help from Haiti, Bolívar in the second of two attempts reestablishes a foothold in Venezuela. At Carúpano on 2 June he issues his first decree against slavery.
- 1817 Bolívar establishes a provisional government at Angostura on the lower Orinoco River.
- 1818 Bolívar joins forces with the chief of Venezuela’s *llaneros* (plainsmen), José Antonio Páez, and with him consolidates control over much of the interior Orinoco Basin.
- 1819 On 15 February at Angostura, Bolívar inaugurates a new Venezuelan congress and delivers another of his key political statements, the Angostura Address. Later in the year he launches a campaign for the liberation of New Granada, crowned with success at the Battle of Boyacá (7 August). On 17 December the Congress of Angostura votes to establish the Republic of Colombia, comprising both Venezuela and New Granada as well as Quito (modern Ecuador).
- 1821 24 June. Bolívar defeats royalist forces in the Battle of Carabobo, the last major engagement of the war in Venezuela. The Colombian constituent congress, meeting at Cúcuta, adopts a formal constitution and elects Bolívar first president to serve under it, with Francisco de

Paula Santander as vice president. Santander is left as acting chief executive in Bogotá, the national capital, when Bolívar leaves to continue directing the military struggle against Spain.

- 1822 The Battle of Pichincha on 24 May, won by Bolívar's lieutenant, Antonio José de Sucre, seals the liberation of Ecuador and paves the way for Bolívar's entry to Quito three weeks later. On 26–27 July, at Guayaquil, Bolívar meets the Argentine Liberator, José de San Martín, and fails to reach agreement on plans for completing the liberation of Peru or on the future political order of Spanish America.
- 1823 1 September. At the invitation of Peruvian authorities, Bolívar lands in Callao to assume leadership of the independence struggle in Peru.
- 1824 On 6 August, at the Battle of Junín, Bolívar scores a major victory in the Peruvian highlands. On 7 December, from Lima, Bolívar invites other Spanish American nations to a conference at Panama City for the purpose of creating a permanent alliance. Two days later, in the Battle of Ayacucho, Sucre defeats the Peruvian viceroy and for all practical purposes completes the war of independence in Spanish South America.
- 1825 The former territory of Upper Peru, where royalist resistance crumbled before the advance of Sucre following the Battle of Ayacucho, takes the name of Bolivia and invites Bolívar, who proceeded there from Lima, to write its first constitution.
- 1826 On 25 May Bolívar submits his draft constitution for Bolivia. Its central feature is a president serving for life. In June–July the Congress of Panama meets but fails to produce lasting results. On 3 September Bolívar finally leaves Peru to return to Colombia.
- 1827 Bolívar makes a peaceful arrangement with Páez to end the revolt that he had begun in Venezuela the year before. However, he is increasingly estranged from Vice President Santander and the liberals of New Granada, who object both to his leniency toward Páez and to the seeming

betrayal of republican principles in his constitution for Bolivia.

- 1828 Failure of the Convention of Ocaña, called to reform the Colombian constitution, leads Bolívar to establish a conservative military dictatorship in a desperate attempt to maintain internal stability and, if possible, the unity of Colombia. On 25 September he survives an assassination attempt in Bogotá; believing Santander responsible, even in the absence of clear-cut proof, he sends the former vice president into exile.
- 1829 While Bolívar is in Ecuador, primarily to deal with a conflict between Colombia and Peru, a monarchist scheme floated by his supporters in Bogotá arouses widespread hostility, especially in Venezuela.
- 1830 Faced with the secession of Venezuela from the Colombian union and the unrelenting opposition of New Granadan liberals, Bolívar resigns the presidency and on 8 May leaves Bogotá, intending to go into foreign exile. However, he dies on 17 December at Santa Marta on the coast.

An Overview of the Bolivarian Sources

The extant private and official writings of Simón Bolívar are voluminous, and virtually all have found their way into print, but new items of generally minor significance still turn up from time to time.¹ Bolívar conscientiously accumulated an archive that eventually filled ten trunks; it included messages received, copybooks of outgoing orders and messages, and other items as well. In his will, he gave instructions that this archive be burned, but at the time of his death it was already on its way to Jamaica in the care of a trusted friend, the Frenchman Jean Pavageau. There the documents were ultimately divided into three sections. Most of the papers relating to the years 1813–18 were sent to Pedro Briceño Méndez, a close military collaborator of Bolívar who proposed to write a history of the period in question; those from 1819 to 1830 were mainly consigned to Bolívar's former aide, Daniel F. O'Leary, who intended to write the history of the later period; and the remainder stayed with Juan de Francisco Martín, a New Granadan who had been a fervent civilian supporter of Bolívar and was one of his executors.²

The portions of Bolívar's archive consigned to Briceño Méndez and O'Leary would become the nuclei of two major printed compilations that appeared in Venezuela in the second half of the nineteenth century, in combination with other documents collected by the two original cus-

todians and others who collaborated in or continued their work. The papers kept by Juan de Francisco Martín ended up in Paris, where he lived for many years, part of the time in diplomatic service. They returned to Venezuela in the early twentieth century and along with the other two sections of Bolívar's archive and much else of related significance became part of the present Archivo del Libertador, located in the Casa Natal in Caracas. This repository, whose principal creator was the indefatigable Bolivarianist Vicente Lecuna, contains the most important collection anywhere in the world of documents generated by or concerned in some way with Simón Bolívar. It was directed by Lecuna himself until his death in 1954 and over the years has been steadily enriched through further acquisitions. But it is not, of course, the only archive holding Bolivarian materials, whether in Venezuela or in other countries. No doubt the most important of the other repositories is Colombia's Archivo Histórico Nacional in Bogotá, although the Fundación John Boulton in Caracas microfilmed most of its documents of Bolivarian interest, which can thus be consulted—in that form—at the office of the Fundación in the Venezuelan capital.³

Even though there is still much material relating to Bolívar and his associates that has not been published, there can be little surviving documentation signed or dictated by Bolívar himself that has not appeared in print. Indeed, most of his major texts and many lesser ones were quickly circulated in printed form in the press of the period or in pamphlet form. Not only that, but in his own lifetime a first multivolume compilation of Bolivarian materials had already been published by the Venezuelan patriots Francisco Javier Yanes and Cristóbal Mendoza, under the title *Colección de documentos relativos a la vida pública del Libertador de Colombia y del Perú, Simón Bolívar para servir a la historia de la Independencia de Sur América*. It comprised twenty-two small volumes, printed in Caracas from 1826 to 1829, with an appendix volume appearing in 1833. This was, in the words of Manuel Pérez Vila, "the point of departure" for all subsequent collections of documents concerning independence of the Bolivarian nations.⁴ In the second half of the century, two more major compilations were added. The first of these, compiled by the patriot warrior-priest José Félix Blanco and Ramón Azpurúa, was published in Caracas in 1875 as *Documentos para la historia de la vida pública del Libertador de Colombia, Perú y Bolivia*, in fourteen large volumes of double-column format. Its nucleus was the part of Bolívar's original archive that had been given to Briceño Méndez, but it incorporated other documents already included in the Yanes-Mendoza series,