

# GERMAN AND U.S. AMERICAN COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH VENEZUELA, 1810-1830

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## I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND STATE OF RESEARCH

(1) German research into the history of Latin America has so far tended to severely neglect Venezuela. In this respect, the present study should be considered a first step.

(2) I draw attention to the previously little known sources in the general archive of the Foreign Office in Caracas, which houses considerable consular material (correspondence, etc.). For the historian of economics the importance of the material lies primarily in the fact that the consuls were all merchants. This meant, that they regularly supplied their respective governments with detailed information on trade, customs duties, financial aspects, shipping, etc., which was often accompanied by interesting statistical data.

(3) When examining bilateral or multilateral trade relations, such as those between Germany or North America and Venezuela, we cannot fail to include other regions which exerted a considerable influence on that trade. In the present case this means in particular the West Indies, which played an important role in the maintenance and supply of vital goods to Venezuela in times of war. Haiti, St. Thomas, Cuba, Santo Domingo and other islands were important relay stations or intermediary trading posts and places of refuge for the politically persecuted.

(4) Venezuela's most important trading partners between 1810 and 1830 were England, the United States, Germany, France, the Caribbean islands and Mexico. I would like to analyze two of these relationships more closely: those of Germany and the United States with Venezuela. I have already dealt with German-Venezuelan relations (Walter 1983) and those of Venezuela with St. Thomas (Walter 1982) in a book and an essay. For further detailed information I refer to the extensive studies of Hermann Kellenbenz (1982, 1979 y Ms.). Relations between Venezuela and England have been examined by several English historians as well as by the Vene-

zuelan scholar Lola Vetencourt Guerra. She limited her book mainly to the period after independence.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding my subject matter, I also refer to William M. Mathew and especially to Jacques A. Barbier in this volume. The latter drew attention to John Craig, merchant, from Philadelphia, who monopolized trade from late 1805 until 1807. Trade between Venezuela and France has been examined by Schneider.<sup>2</sup> Commerce between Venezuela and Spain diminished in importance during the course of the movement towards independence (Delgado 1950).

Before turning to commercial relations as such, I would like to comment briefly on certain general and political aspects. In this context we must, of course, recall Simón Bolívar whose bicentennial we celebrated in 1983. On completion of his penultimate voyage to Europe, the "liberator" sailed from Hamburg to the United States where, 15 years after the French Revolution, he became acquainted with the ideas and aspirations of the North American struggle for independence which had taken place earlier. Through his experiences in both countries, the terms "freedom" and "emancipation" acquired for him a tangible form. Bolívar thus gained, and preserved, a positive attitude towards the United States and Europe, which provided the best foundation for the establishment and intensification of political and commercial relations with these countries. It was also the North Americans who were first to recognize Colombia's independence in 1822, followed by the English in 1825 (Buisson and Schottelius 1980: 110-111). That was not all, however. The U.S. and Great Britain also provided considerable material support for the struggle for independence by sending, for example, arms and soldiers to Venezuela who in the wake of the peace treaty of 1815 were no longer needed in Europe. To a very large extent, trade also passed into North American and European hands, resulting in the increased importance of the islands of the Caribbean. The political and part of the economic background of my paper has been dealt by Rippy (1929) as well as Manning (1925), Bernstein (1945), Griffin (1937), Whitaker (1941), Rutter (1897), Parks (1935), Nichols (1933), Frankel (1977) Bushnell (1983), Chandler (1924), and Robertson (1923).

There also exists an important body of work on the mentality and influence of the Venezuelan upper class and the beginnings of political

1 Vetencourt Guerra (1981). Also, Kaufmann (1951), Webster (1938), and Rippy (1929).

2 Schneider (1981a). Also, Robertson (1939) and Temperley (1925).

relations between Venezuela and the United States (Mendoza 1962; Urrutia 1918), on British-American rivalry (Rippy 1929; Robertson 1939; Tatum 1936) as well as the role of the Venezuelan army during and after independence (Grases and Pérez Vila 1963-71, I-V). Regarding economic aspects and society and its changes in Venezuela reference should be made to Brito Figueroa (1966), Lombardi (1969, 1971, 1974), and Alvarez (1963).

## II. DEVELOPMENT BEFORE 1810

North American trade benefitted from the fact that from the late seventies of the 18th century until the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Spain, the mother country, was almost continuously in a state of war: 1779-1783 with Great Britain, 1793-1795 with France and in the years 1797-1801 and 1804-1808 again with England. This also naturally imposed restrictions on Spain's enemies, which constituted an advantage for North America, then enjoying a prolonged period of peace. Numerous factors caused South American countries to turn to North America and vice versa: the southern sub-continent needed arms and had to replace those goods which it was no longer able to produce itself due to the War of Independence (e.g. tobacco, foodstuffs), not to mention those articles which were not or could not be produced domestically. Furthermore, North America had a natural interest in closely located sources of supply and outlets for their own products, and also nurtured growing political ambitions.

According to Depons (1960, II: 134; also, Izard 1979a: 90), the English succeeded during their second conflict with Spain in decisively winning the support of the colonies (around 1800) and in obtaining corresponding commercial privileges. Even before 1783, neutral countries enjoyed good opportunities on the Venezuelan market. These included the Bremen merchants who traded via St. Thomas and whose sales outlets were improved due to their close commercial ties with North America. In particular, textiles manufactured by Silesian immigrants in the United States were exported to Venezuela. In 1797 merchants from Hamburg began trading directly with Venezuela (Izard 1979a: 91).

At the moment, it is not possible to provide a definite answer to the question of when direct trade between Venezuela and the United States was first established. However, it would appear that the first ship from a Venezuelan port (La Guaira) sailed to Philadelphia in 1798. Shipping

intensified visibly and as early as 1807 29 vessels arrived in North American ports from Venezuela. Ranking behind Cuba (138 ships), but above Puerto Rico (18) and Veracruz (7), the principal port of Mexico, Venezuela played the most important role in U.S. trade with countries in the north of South America and the Caribbean (Whitaker 1964: 12; Nichols 1933: 296 f., 310 f.).

### III. DIPLOMACY AND TRADE AT THE TIME OF UPHEAVAL, 1810-1830

#### 1. *The Americans*

From the very beginning, Venezuelan authorities recognized the importance of and their dependence on foreign aid, particularly from England and the United States (Rojas 1979, I: 33). This is evident from letters which were addressed to other nations before and immediately after Venezuela's first gaining independence. Thus the two Venezuelan "negotiators" in the USA, Juan Vicente Bolívar and Telésforo de Orea<sup>3</sup> wrote on April 25, 1810, a letter to the American President Madison expressing the desire "de estrechar más los vínculos de su alianza con los habitantes del Norte de América" (Mendoza 1962, II: 19). Orea and Simón Bolívar's brother were also attempting to provide their native country with a sufficient quantity of weapons, for which purpose they went on June 4, 1810, to Baltimore as agents and prospective buyers (Mendoza 1962, II: 21; Rojas 1979, I: 33-35). The Spanish authorities were, of course, not in agreement and lodged a protest with the State Department on September 6, 1810, through the first North American agent in Venezuela, Robert K. Lowry, in which they objected to the supply of ammunition from Philadelphia by Onís (Manning 1925, II: 1145). Philadelphia was, in fact, the centre of procurement par excellence, where together with Stephan Girard, Telésforo de Orea and Manuel Torres formed an extremely active triumvirate. Orea and Torres tried to obtain a credit from Girard for 20,000 carbines, in return, Orea and his associate J.V. Bolívar, who was, incidentally, replaced by José Rafael Revenga on March 18, 1811, had brought a cargo of coffee and indigo (Rojas 1979, I: 35; Whitaker 1964: 53). Girard requested Monroe's consent but received no answer, with the result that the transaction did not take place. Contrary to his usual com-

<sup>3</sup> More about Orea's mission in Yanes (1925).

mercial practice, Girard had apparently extended his credit to J.V. Bolívar and his interest in Latin American independence was even greater than his courage to take a commercial risk.

The first years after Venezuela's independence were marked by strong rivalry between North America and England. The English were granted commercial privileges in 1810 by the Junta Patriótica de Caracas. This meant, in effect, that English ships which put into Venezuelan ports paid 25 percent less import duties than other nations. On the other hand, other sources also report that North American predominance persisted and letters dated 1811 to Robert Peel exist, in which complaints are made of American trade damaging that of England (Izard 1979a: 91, n. 7). On the other hand, Lowry reported to Monroe from La Guaira on August 21, 1811, on England's advantage with regard to the 25 percent lower duties (Manning 1925, I: 151). The North Americans also made a renewed protest two years later to the Departamento de Estado against privileges of this nature, since 5 percent higher charges (*derechos*) were levied on non-American goods which were imported to Venezuela by American ships.

American protests against the English privileges which undoubtedly existed in the field of commerce were, of course, justified, as complaints, and likewise money, are an integral part of business. It is, however, also certain that English trade at this time was considerably more impaired, since, unlike the United States, England was not at peace. American trade could expect a lower risk and therefore higher profits. This was later also the main reason for American recognition of Venezuelan independence and for supporting activities against Spain (Frankel 1977: 153).

England's privileges should not, however, obscure the fact that the English attacks on Buenos Aires and Montevideo were not yet forgotten. However, the Americans were not quick enough to profit from this psychological advantage, although the problem was clearly recognized, as shown by Lowry's letters dating from late 1811/early 1812 (Whitaker 1964: 61). Not until the forces of independence were demoralized by the earthquake of 1812 did the United States try to assist by way of "provisions" amounting to \$50,000. Instead of being used sensibly for reconstruction, these supplies were, however, sold off by the revolutionary government (Whitaker 1964: 65).

From then on the Americans tried to obtain advantages in two ways: (1) by claiming commercial privileges in proportion to their trading partner's need for ammunition and foodstuffs; (2) by "remunerating" (i.e. bribing) local authorities. These methods, while procuring fewer advan-

tages than in Cuba or Puerto Rico, proved successful in Venezuela (Whitaker 1964: 92).

In 1813 Bolívar defeated the Spanish in a military campaign which was later recorded in history as the *campana admirable*. On October 8 of the same year, his native town of Caracas bestowed upon him the title of *Liberador*. When, after a series of alternating victories and defeats, the liberator's armed forces were again successful in 1819, the United States tried all the more urgently to come to an agreement with him. A new diplomatic mission was therefore undertaken in May 1819: first to Venezuela and then to Buenos Aires. Perry's mission to Venezuela was, however, unsuccessful (Whitaker 1964: 216-218).

As the 1820s began, relations between the two countries appeared to have improved. The United States were thus not only the first nation to recognize Venezuela's independence in 1822, but also concluded with Great Colombia a treaty of peace, friendship, shipping and trade as early as October 3, 1823. They conferred the most-favoured nation status on each other and granted each other freedom in shipping and trade (Frisch 1853: 124). The treaty had a duration of 12 years and was renewed in 1836. In contrast, Germany for example still had to pay high differential duties at this time, since a treaty including most-favoured nation clause was not concluded until 1837. The result was that German goods were often shipped under a foreign flag – usually English – or else under the German flag as far as the relay station of St. Thomas and from there under Venezuelan colours.

According to the first official Venezuelan statistics, foreign trade began in 1823-24, i.e. during the course of the financial year from July 1, 1823, to June 30, 1824, as shown in Table 1<sup>4</sup> – at this time only listing imports and incoming ships.

It is conspicuous that over one third (34.4 percent) of all incoming ships sailed under the American flag and brought 35.7 percent of all imported goods. This high percentage can be explained to a certain extent by the indirect trade between Germany and Venezuela concealed by these figures, as illustrated by the following quotation originating from Hamburg: "Large shiploads of goods were not only sent to Vera Cruz, Buenos Aires, Havana, La Guayra, St. Thomas, etc., including some substantial cargoes for the Rhine West India Company, but large amounts were also shipped to the United States, where they are quickly sold, in order to be

<sup>4</sup> Walter (1983: 178), computed from the information of *El Colombiano*, 104 (Caracas, May 4, 1825).

Table 1  
Imports Registered in La Guaira 1823-24

From	Frigates	Brigs	Schooners	Privateers	Total	Imports (Pesos; Reales)	%	Import Duties (Pesos; Reales)
England	1	12	-	-	13	642,756.7½	22.3	114,138.0½
Hamburg	1	3	-	-	4	221,331.5	7.7	42,873.3
France	-	2	2	-	4	67,804.0½	2.4	16,609.1
United States	-	37	28	-	65	1,026,372.6½	35.7	234,584.0½
Colonies	-	11	68	-	79	712,869.7½	24.8	173,391.0
Privateers (booty)	-	-	-	24	24	204,173.4	7.1	27,252.2
Total	2	65	98	24	189	2,875,308.7	100	608,847.7

likewise used for shipment to the new Republics.<sup>5</sup> In other words, German products were also carried on North American ships bound for La Guaira and Puerto Cabello.

When examining the shipping and exports originating from Venezuela, it may be noted that the percentage of U.S. ships was, as for imports, 36 percent, whereas exports amounted to 44.4 percent, as shown in Table 2 (Walter 1983: 179)

The final figure mentioned in this table most probably included cocoa which was exported from Venezuela to Spain via North America.

Table 2  
Exports Registered in La Guaira 1823-24

Destination	Brigs	Schooners	Total	Exports (Pesos; Reales)	%	Export Duties (Pesos; Reales)
England	9	3	12	385,882.0	25.6	38,586.7
Hamburg	2	-	2	52,375.3	3.5	5,229.6
France	2	1	3	86,310.2	5.7	8,624.3
Genua	-	1	1	2,250.0	0.2	225.0½
United States	28	18	46	669,039.6	44.4	67,362.3
Colombian ports	-	1	1	5,439.2	0.4	543.7
Colonies	6	56	62	305,391.1	20.2	28,403.1½
Total	47	80	127	1,506,687.6	100	148,975.4

5 Ms. Gaedechens, Otto Christian, Monatsberichte-Jahresberichte über den hamburgischen Handel, Hamburg 1814 ff., Jahresbericht 1823, Commerzbibliothek, Hamburg.

Official Venezuelan statistics for the financial year 1824-25 again list North America as the leading shipper, as illustrated in Table 3 (Walter 1983: 127).

Table 3  
Imports Registered in La Guaira 1824-25

From	Vessels	Brigs	Schooners
England	1	11	5
France	0	7	1
Hanseatic towns	0	6	1
United States	0	36	37
Colonies	1	6	37
Value of imported freights			2,090,011 Dollars
Duties			416,084 Dollars
Value of exported freights			1,363,415 Dollars
Duties			126,027 Dollars

Of the 149 vessels which put in at Venezuela's main port of La Guaira during the year in question, 73 (49 percent) were North American. In the case of Puerto Cabello, it was 30 out of 113, i.e. 26.6 percent.<sup>6</sup> Although one may speak of North American predominance in Venezuela's shipping, this does not mean, however, as stated, that vessels were always carrying U.S. goods, though this was true in most cases. The most important merchandise was flour, which, except for very small quantities from France and Spain, was almost exclusively supplied by the United States (Vetencourt Guerra 1981: 173). Freight per barrel of flour (1 barrel = 196 pounds) from the United States amounted to 1.35 pesos and also import duties per barrel amounted to 4.57 pesos in Venezuela, American flour was still cheaper than the domestic Venezuelan product, for which transport costs from the respective production areas to the centres of consumption would have been very much higher. In addition to flour, soap, as well as fat, pickled vegetables, tar, turpentine and small quantities of basic foodstuffs<sup>7</sup> played an important role. Tobacco occupied a predominant place in Venezuelan trade with North America. For a long time, Venezuela was a classical tobacco producing country. But due to the destruction of the plantations during the War of Independence, it had to

<sup>6</sup> Computed from: Anonymus (1827: 162).

<sup>7</sup> J. Riddel, Jan. 21, 1847, PRO, FO 199, vol. 15, fol. 891, quoted after Vetencourt Guerra (1981: 173 f.).

import more and more tobacco from abroad, in particular from Cuba and Virginia. In 1822 for example, it imported 10,157 pounds at a price of 13 pesos (100 pounds per quintal) from Virginia and 14,175 pounds at 25 pesos from Cuba. The difference in price clearly illustrates the esteem in which Cuban tobacco was held (Arcila Farías 1977: 277 f.).

The fact that in comparison with the European industrial countries North America had a very large domestic market produced the following two effects. On the one hand, exports were less important for the Americans, since they found it difficult to satisfy their own market. On the other, the capacity of the North American market for absorbing foreign goods, such as Venezuelan colonial products, was sufficiently great to ensure a bilateral trade balance, which from Venezuela's point of view, was primarily favourable. This is indicated in Table 4.<sup>8</sup>

Table 4  
Balance of Trade between Venezuela and USA (in Pesos)

Years	Imports	Exports	Balance
1823-24	1,026,373	669,040	- 357,333
1824-25	1,021,798	834,874	- 186,924
1827	735,830	617,409	- 118,421
1828	568,098	501,805	- 66,293
1829	514,506	562,367	+ 47,861
1831-32	872,568	921,567	+ 48,999
1832-33	1,025,447	998,768	- 26,679
1833-34	783,061	1,115,490	+ 332,429
1834-35	1,052,825	1,280,571	+ 227,746
1835-36	833,987	1,104,883	+ 270,869
1836-37	1,214,263	1,425,670	+ 211,407
1837-38	707,872	1,145,260	+ 437,388
1838-39	1,217,227	2,006,987	+ 789,760
1839-40	963,210	1,309,933	+ 346,723

The trade balance remained thus favourable until 1862-63. The sharp decline in the figures in Table 4 during the late 1820s was almost certainly due to Bolívar's protectionist measures. Through his stringent tariff policy he hoped for higher revenues (Bushnell 1983: 94) of which he was in urgent need (in this respect I refer to Mr. Mathew's contribution). In

8 Vetencourt Guerra (1981: 175) and computations from Walter (1983: 178-182) and from Schneider (1981a, I: 210 f., 213).

March 1827 he instigated a general reform of tariffs for Venezuelan ports, whereby the previous *ad valorem* customs duties were replaced by a system of special charges, most of which were levied as a percentage of the theoretical value. The result was that merchant ships unloaded elsewhere in order to avoid paying the higher customs duties. In March 1828 this system was extended to cover the whole nation. Charges on flour were doubled in May 1829, which was a particularly severe blow to North American imports, while at the same time other customs duties were lowered and the additional discriminating duties on goods from the West Indies or on direct imports from Europe abolished. In fact, smuggling was thereby encouraged. The American consul in La Guaira noted that from early 1828 until mid-1829 trade between his country and Venezuela decreased by half.

Whereas in the mid-1820s the United States had still been Venezuela's main trading partner, this situation changed temporarily as a result of the reasons listed above and which are reflected in the table. Towards the end of the 1820s and in the early 1830s, in other words during the decline of North American trade with Venezuela, predominance was enjoyed by Denmark and St. Thomas, which until 1831-32 had a higher share in overall shipping than the United States. However, by 1834-35 America had once again reassumed its position as the number one trading partner, before Great Britain took over the lead at the end of the 1830s. By the mid-1840s, the United States relieved England of its leading position once and for all until in the 1870s Germany proceeded to become Venezuela's most important commercial partner, even surpassing the North Americans (Walter 1983: 183-185).

## 2. *The Germans*

The question is how did Germany's commercial relations with Venezuela develop during the period before final independence in 1830? Who promoted political and economic relations?

Indirect commercial relations — usually via England and the United States — existed as early as the 18th century. Wars in Europe and the continental blockade thereafter prevented direct traffic to and from Venezuela. Initial contacts in the 19th century were in no way economically motivated. They date back to the year 1818, when Bolívar urgently needed European support in the form of supplies and soldiers. Volunteers were enlisted in

regular recruiting offices. In Germany, in addition to the Hanoverians whose country was linked with England, these volunteers included young adventurers and veterans from the Hanseatic towns as well as from Baden and Hesse. All together at least 300 men were recruited by Strenowitz in Brussels, Friedrich von Clauditz and Friedrich von Eben in Hamburg and by Knitter in Ritzebüttel.<sup>9</sup> Among the German soldiers were several who became famous and now stand in honour in the Caracas Pantheon. One German who was very close to Simón Bolívar was Otto Philipp Braun. Others of particular note are Heinrich von Lützow (Enrique Luzón), Meinicke (Minecke), Seybold (Sibel) and von Grabenhorst. One of those who actually recorded their experiences was Carl Richard. Too little is known in order to say how many of these soldiers later became merchants. In this respect, we still depend on isolated examples such as that of Heinrich Meyer (Schöffner 1920: 8) who started a business in Caracas in 1821 or that of the soldier who absconded with the leather supplies of the army and established a leather shop in the capital. During the 1820s, others came via the Caribbean or went directly to Venezuela as pioneer tradesmen, as happened in the case of Gramlich, Strohm, Sprotto, Overmann, Oppenheimer, Mooyer, Moller and others (Walter 1983: 219, 226). Between 1817 and 1821, Augusto Alfred, Juan Johannes and Juan Teófilo Benjamín Siegert (Tavera-Acosta 1954: 392-394) were mentioned as inhabitants of the Venezuelan province of Guyana.

The trading company of Juan F. Strohm in La Guaira<sup>10</sup> dates back at least to mid-1823. Between July and October 1823 he and Georg Gramlich founded together in Caracas the company of Strohm and Gramlich. Both collaborated with John C. King, an American living in La Guaira, with their activities concentrating on the sale, freight or charter of ships and ships' cargoes. This is confirmed by the following quotation from *El Colombiano*: "For Sale, Freight or Charter, the new elegant copper fastened and coppered Schooner 'John of Baltimore', Beverly Diggs, Master, of 150 tons or 800 barrels. She would be sold in barter of produce, and take Freight or Charter to any part of the world. St. Thomas or a port in the United States would be preferred. For further particulars, apply to the Master on board; to John C. King, La Guayra, or to Strohm & Gramlich, Caracas."<sup>11</sup> Strohm had contacts with the American Company Barry and

9 Kahle (1980: 56 f.); complementary to this: Kahle (1983). See also Hasbrouck (1928).

10 *El Colombiano* (Caracas, July 30, 1823).

11 *El Colombiano* (Caracas, Oct. 29, 1823).

Co. in La Guaira from as early as 1823. This is borne out by the following quotation: "Para San Thomas. La Goleta Americana CADUCEO, su capitán J.T. Harte, muy velera sale pronto, por flete, se ocurría en casa de J.F. Strohm, en Caracas, o en casa de Barry y Compania in La Guayra".<sup>12</sup> However, the German and the American company also advertised separately which suggests that they simultaneously engaged in separate and joint business activities.<sup>13</sup> On January 1, 1826, Gramlich joined the company Overmann, Oppenheimer and Co. in La Guaira.<sup>14</sup> Overmann, Oppenheimer and Gramlich then acted as international traders, freighters and as middlemen.<sup>15</sup>

In 1825, the German company Schwartz, Sprotto and Co. imported snuff boxes, paintings, combs, silks, ribbons, Chinese tea sets, etc. from Hamburg to La Guaira. The above articles were on sale in their store in the Calle de Comercio No. 45.<sup>16</sup> In the same year, the German Luis Stahl opened the well-known "City Hotel" in Caracas which gained, however, a bad reputation. A far better example was set by the German physician and subsequent manufacturer of Angostura Bitter, Johann Theophil Benjamin Siegert, who was enlisted by Venezuelan rebels on a Caribbean island and who came to Angostura in 1820. In 1823, this Prussian became a subject of Great Colombia and several years later was appointed medical director of a military hospital. In accordance with his importance, he occupies a place of honour in the Caracas Pantheon, together with Uslar, Lützow and Braun.

Official, institutionalized relations between the Hanseatic towns of Hamburg and Bremen and Venezuela existed from 1827 onwards. The merchant Georg Gramlich was appointed as the first Consul General of Hamburg by the Hamburg Senate on June 11, 1827, followed soon after by the first Consul General of Bremen, Johann Friedrich Strohm on July 10. In 1828, Hamburg also tried to nominate the merchant Carl August Geller as Vice Consul in Puerto Cabello and in June 1828 Bremen wanted to appoint the 29-year-old merchant Bernhard Staegemann as Vice Consul (Walter 1983: 237-284). These consuls, who were of course also merchants, reported in detail on the development of trade in Venezuela and ensured a brisk trade. For reasons of space, I restrict myself to includ-

12 *El Colombiano* (Caracas, July 30, 1823 and Jan. 14, 1824).

13 *El Colombiano* (Caracas, Feb. 18, 1824).

14 *El Colombiano* (Caracas, Jan. 4, 1826).

15 *El Colombiano* (Caracas, July 26, 1826).

16 *El Colombiano* (Caracas, Aug. 10 and Dec. 14, 1825).

ing a numerical extract from the latter in Table 5 (Walter 1983: 352-366 and particulars there).

Table 5  
Balance of Trade between Venezuela and Germany (in Pesos)

Years	Imports	Exports	Balance
1823-24 <sup>1</sup>	221,331	52,375	- 168,956
1824-25 <sup>2</sup>	324,783	141,928	- 182,855
1827	601,151	274,206	- 326,945
1828	1,092,224	290,429	- 801,795
1829	658,756	227,619	- 431,137
1831-32	230,292	218,052	- 12,240
1832-33	261,247	342,834	+ 81,587
1833-34	325,430	384,527	+ 59,097
1834-35	354,466	291,752	- 62,714
1835-36	275,233	710,369	+ 435,136
1836-37	532,141	651,757	+ 119,616
1837-38	442,064	559,370	+ 117,306
1838-39	465,504	775,623	+ 310,119
1839-40	1,019,577	786,463	- 233,114

1 La Guaira only. 2 La Guaira and Puerto Cabello.

Thereafter, the only deficit was recorded for the year 1840-41, after which the balance was always favourable. If the figures are to be believed, Venezuela had a favourable balance of trade with Germany for the first time in 1832-33. The deficit in the year 1828 was particularly striking and was undoubtedly the result of numerous trial shipments by German trading companies once political relations had been consolidated in 1827 by the establishment of the consulates.

Table 6 partly answers the final question of what part was played by Ger-

Table 6  
Share of Germany and the United States in Venezuela's Foreign Trade

Financial year	Share in Venezuelan Imports		Share in Venezuelan Exports	
	Germany	USA	Germany	USA
1823-24 (La Guaira only)	7.7	35.7	3.5	44.4
1824-25 (LG and PC)	10.4	32.7	7.5	43.8
1827 (LG and PC)	22.0	23.4	15.8	22.5
1828 (LG only)	36.4	21.2	18.0	38.0
1829 (LG only)	27.3	23.8	13.4	40.3

many and North America in Venezuela's foreign trade.<sup>17</sup> The trend indicated here is striking: namely that imports from the United States of America in 1828 and 1829 (21.2 and 23.8 percent) were considerably lower than in 1823-24 (35.7 percent), whereas the percentage of German imports rose from 7.7 percent (1823-24) to 27.3 percent (1829). Development during subsequent years has already been outlined (see Tables 4 and 5).

17 Computed from Walter (1983: 178 f., 352 f.) and Schneider (1981a, I: 210 f.).