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**Trade, War and Empire:
British Merchants in Cuba, 1762-1796¹**

In the late afternoon of 4 March 1762 the British war fleet left the port of Spithead near Portsmouth with the order to attack and conquer “the Havanah”, Spain’s main port in the Caribbean. The decision for the conquest was taken after the new Spanish King, Charles III, had signed the Bourbon family pact with France in the summer of 1761. George III declared war on Spain on 2 January of the following year. The initiative for the campaign against Havana had been promoted by the British Prime Minister William Pitt, the idea, however, was not new.

During the “long eighteenth century” from the Glorious Revolution to the end of the Napoleonic era Great Britain was in war during 87 out of 127 years. Europe’s history stood under the sign of Britain’s aggression and determined struggle for hegemony. The main enemy was France, but Spain became her major ally, after the Bourbons had obtained the Spanish Crown in the War of the Spanish Succession. It was in this period, that America became an arena for the conflict between Spain, France and England for the political leadership in Europe and economic predominance in the colonial markets. In this conflict, Cuba played a decisive role due to its geographic location and commercial significance. To the Spaniards, the island was the “key of the Indies”, which served as the entry to their mainland colonies with their rich resources of precious metals and as the meeting-point for the Spanish homeward-bound fleet. The British were always aware of Cuba’s strategic importance, and throughout the eighteenth century the

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island was often programmatically referred to as the “Gibraltar of the West” (Callahan 1899: 42) and the “Shield of the West Indies”.

In spite of Admiral Vernon’s failure to conquer Cartagena de Indias, Spain’s main port in the *Tierra Firme*, in 1740, Britain’s plan to break open Spain’s trade system was not discarded. Only a year later, Sir Charles Knowles, Admiral of H. M.’s fleet and later governor of Jamaica, presented a plan to take Havana, in order to control all commercial activities in the Gulf of Mexico and in the Caribbean. “We should then command the whole West-Indies, and I may venture to add, carry on what trade we pleased to every post in it”, Knowles stated in his *Description of Havana*.²

Twenty Years later, the plan was put into practice. The British started the siege of Havana in June 1762. The campaign was the largest combined operation of the Seven Years War, the attacking forces consisting of more than 15.000 men from both sides of the Atlantic, from England and her North American and West Indian colonies. The capture of Cuba’s capital nearly failed completely because the siege took much longer than expected and the tropical climate had weakened and even decimated by disease a considerable number of the troops. After six weeks of siege the British Army fought more against the climate and time than against the Spaniards. When Havana capitulated the British forces had lost 3,000 men (Blanck 1962: 92-93). During the next months another 2,400 soldiers died, most of them of illnesses and 3,300 more fell sick.³ The belated and unexpected arrival of nearly 3,200 North American provincials from New York at the end of July was the turning point of the siege. Although large numbers of these troops also succumbed to the climate,⁴ the final conquest of the strategic centre piece of Havana’s fortifications, the Castle *El Morro*, could be

² Description of the Havannah by the Sea Coast for a league or two to the Eastward and as far as to the Westward may possibly prove useful if ever it should be judged proper to attack that place and war breaking out with Spain (BL, Add Ms 23.678, Remarks on the Siege of Havana, fol. 1-9).

³ PRO, ADM 1/237.

⁴ BL, Egerton Papers 520, fol. 323-327.

achieved shortly after.⁵ Once the *Morro* was in British hands, it took only six hours to conquer the rest of the town.⁶

During ten months British and North American forces held Cuba's capital until it was returned to Spain in exchange for the Floridas in the peace treaty signed in Paris on 10 February 1763. During this period strong commercial links between Cuba and the main ports of the British-dominated Atlantic World were established: British and North American merchants streamed into Havana and began trading directly with Liverpool, Bristol and London, as well as with New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Charleston. Cuba's most important products, sugar and coffee, were exchanged for slaves from West Africa and flour from North America transported by English and North American vessels.

Most specialists on Cuba's history have affirmed⁷ that the capture of Havana represented the watershed in the island's political and economic development, as the foundations were thereby laid for the transformation of Cuba's economy into a monoculture based on sugar cultivation. In order to assess this interpretation's validity one must define the political, economic and social consequences that arose after 1763. Such an attempt will be made here. Consequently, this article deals mainly with determining the role of the commercial interrelations be-

⁵ David Syrett points out that the heavy losses of the British Army had a later impact on the situation in the North American colonies, for Pontiac's Rebellion of 1763 could not be suppressed immediately, "because a large part of the Army was still suffering from diseases contracted at Havana" (Syrett 1970: xxxv). The following reorganisation of the British Army in America turned out to be a reinforcement of Britain's military power in the colonies and was felt as a provocation which eventually contributed to the outbreak of the American Revolution.

⁶ "[...] On the 11th of August about daybreak our batteries on La Cabaña of 44 guns and 8 mortars opened against the town, and in six hours silenced its fire, made several breaches in La Punta, destroyed the defences, disabled most of the guns in the north bastion and harbour flanks, and acquired such a superiority as obliged the besieged to propose terms of capitulation, which were signed the 13th, and full possession was taken of the city on the 14th [August]"; Lieutenant-General David Dundas's Memorandum on the Capture of Havana. Parts of the manuscript were published by Syrett (1970: 315-26).

⁷ Aimes (1907/1967), Donnan (1931, II: xlvi), Guiteras (1932), Foner (1962, I: 42), and lately Pérez (1988: 56-57) and Oostindie (1992: 375).

tween foreign merchants and local entrepreneurs in Havana. The significance of Anglo-American merchants and slave-traders will be put into the context of Cuba's history during the second half of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, the politics of the Spanish Crown concerning Cuba before and after the occupation will be examined.

For a short while after its occupation Havana was no longer the supplying port of Spain's monopolistic trade system but seemed to turn into a prosperous center of commerce within the Atlantic world market controlled by the British. There is no doubt that temporarily economic, social and even cultural interaction existed between Cuban creoles and British traders, who as a result of the Industrial Revolution sought to conquer new markets beyond the borders of the Empire and especially across the Atlantic. In Havana the demand for the slaves that were indispensable to the planters' ambitious plans to amplify Cuba's sugar production was met by these merchants as intermediaries and suppliers of the necessary working power. Very soon these months were referred to as the *prosperidad británica*, during which the influence and power of the local elites grew considerably.

Nevertheless, Cuba's economic history did not start with the arrival of the British. It therefore seems necessary to examine the decades before the British occupation in order to find out if the capture of Havana was indeed the turning point as so often has been argued.

The importance of the port town as a "crucial component of European expansion" and "fulcrum for European activity" (Liss/Knight 1991: 1) was evident even before the capture of Havana by the British. During the early colonial period Cuba served as a provisioning colony within the Habsburgs' overseas empire. As early as in the middle of the 17th century the providing sector of the Cuban economy was strengthened by promoting agriculture, cattle breeding and the ship-building industry in the Havana-area (Le Riverend 1972: 111). This slow process of economic transformation was accelerated by monopolising and reducing the cultivation of tobacco (1717) in order to augment the production of sugar. The Royal Decree of 8 August 1739 laid the control of the tobacco industry into the hands of the state-run *Real Compañía de La Habana*. Between 1740 and 1758 the production jumped from 2,000 to 5,500 tons (Moreno Fraguinals 1978, I: 19), whereas the tobacco export declined dramatically from 100,000 arro-

bas (1 *arroba* = 11.5 kg) in 1738 to 78,106 *arrobas* in 1740 and only 40,814 in 1761 (McNeill 1985: 269; Kuethe 1991: 29). During the brief period between 1754 and 1760 Cuban sugar-exports to Cádiz had nearly quadrupled from 108,402 *arrobas* to 378,346 *arrobas*. By 1760 the promotion of sugar had become the “first priority in Cuban affairs” (McNeill 1985: 130).

Already by the 1730s Havana’s planter class had pushed through an important reduction of export taxes on Cuba’s main products, in order to facilitate the Island’s participation in the competitive Caribbean market.⁸ In spite of the depression caused by the War of Jenkins’ Ear (1739-48), by 1760 legal commerce had increased 34% compared to the first two decades after the Peace of Utrecht (McNeill 1985: 190). Commercial interchange intensified especially with the New Spanish emporia Mexico City, Veracruz and Campeche, but also with ports on the South American mainland such as Cartagena de Indias, Santa Marta, Maracaibo, Caracas, Trinidad and Portobelo (which was connected with Guayaquil and Lima). Even more important were the links with Spain, after the old system of the convoy fleet had been replaced by individually registered merchant ships. Although far from a cosmopolitan trade centre, Havana had become the clearing house of Spain’s *comercio con las Indias*, its production had grown steadily, and capital had been accumulated. The Crown cooperated with the planters and merchants in response to the market boom. This shift in the Cuban economy was a result of the Spanish politics which had acted on the demands of Cuba’s lobby of agricultural producers and merchants since the middle of the century. The birth of Cuba’s ‘sacarocracia’ preceded the British domination.

Therefore, the importance of the British interlude lies in having accelerated and catalysed an ongoing process. As main factor within this process for the prospective economic development, the commercial links with the British and later North American merchants, especially the slave trade, need to be stressed: “[...] los ingleses rompieron en sólo un año el equilibrio productor cubano y aceleraron el tránsito hacia la plantación” (Moreno Friginals 1978, I: 36). After Havana had been

⁸ Import taxes were lowered from 25% to 5% and sale taxes (*millones*) from 45 *reales/arroba* to 3 *reales/arroba* (McNeill 1985: 128).

returned to Spain, its creole oligarchy sought to increase the production of its most lucrative goods and hence demanded more economic freedom. The Spanish Crown conceded them. The slave trade increased dramatically during the next decades as a result of the reforms established by the Crown in order to boost the colonial economy. This trade remained a monopoly – given once more to the very same entrepreneurs as before: the British slave traders.

Cuban Trade with Britain during the Occupation

After the peace of Utrecht in 1714 the British South Sea Company was given permission to establish trading posts in Cartagena de Indias, Vera Cruz, Buenos Aires, Panama, Portobelo, Caracas and Havana.⁹ It was the first time that Cuban merchants acted as legal agents of British traders, but the results were not satisfactory¹⁰ and legal trade remained an exception. During the decades before the events of 1762, commercial links between Spanish Cuban and British subjects existed mainly on an illegal basis. As everywhere else in the Spanish colonial empire, smuggling flourished, but especially in the Caribbean, the most active area of inter- and intracontinental trade.

When the English took Havana they found a large quantity of rotting sugar in the port of Havana awaiting its transport to Spain. Meanwhile, in Europe sugar-prices had increased due to the irregular supply from the Caribbean Sugar Islands during the war (Moreno Fraginals 1978, I: 19). The *habaneros* must have been impressed by the quick solution of their problems, as the new merchants managed to immediately transport the goods to Europe and import considerable quantities of slaves and merchandise. Therefore, one should not underestimate the psychological

⁹ Minutes of the Court of Directors, South Sea Company, London, 28 October 1713 (see Donnan 1930/31, II: 168-169).

¹⁰ Within the hierarchy of these trading posts Havana was of secondary importance. From October 1716 to August 1717 Jamaican slave-traders transported 648 slaves to Portobelo, 376 to Cartagena and only 130 slaves to Havana (Account of Negroes from Jamaica to the Spanish West Indies, South Sea Company, 1717 (Donnan 1930/31, II: 212).

importance of Havana's brief encounter with England's merchant class. Cooperation with the *ingleses* became intense, and only a small fraction of Spanish loyalists removed to the interior.

A group of 20 to 25 British and North American merchants established close commercial relations with Havana's population. Apart from slaves, manufactured goods and textiles were sold in exchange for Cuban sugar, tobacco, coffee and hides. The British merchants in Havana were exclusively private entrepreneurs, who worked either as commissioners for merchant houses in London or Bristol, or maintained commercial ties with partners of equal status in Britain and Jamaica. Since the second half of the eighteenth century these private merchants had achieved the control of the Atlantic slave trade by suppressing the influence of the state-run African Company.¹¹ Independent traders replaced the monopoly companies.

One of these merchants, the Liverpudlian John Kennion,¹² resident in Kingston (Jamaica) and a participant in the Havana campaign, acquired the monopoly for the slave trade in the British controlled part of North Cuba by a concession of Lord Albemarle, the commander-in-chief of the expedition and newly appointed *gobernador* of Havana.¹³ According to this concession, the number of slaves to be introduced could not exceed 2,000.¹⁴ During the campaign Kennion held the

¹¹ Donnan (1930/31, II: XLI) mentions the petition of the merchant Samuel Touchet, one of the first private entrepreneurs from London who tried to break the state monopoly of the African Company after Senegal had been taken from France in 1758. Touchet was later active in the trade with Havana during and after the British occupation. In 1764 he signed a "Memorandum of merchants concerned in the trade with Havana" who tried to recover their debts and effects after Havana was returned to Spain (see note 21).

¹² Kennion had experience in the trade with Havana. In 1752 he joined in a partnership of British slave traders who sent 88 vessels from Liverpool to Africa in order to transport a total of 24,730 slaves to Cuba (Donnan 1930/31, II: 496-498).

¹³ The monopoly concession was signed in October 1762 (BL, Add Ms 38.201, fol. 301, as an appendix quoted in Thomas (1971: 1530).

¹⁴ "Negro slaves are wanted to support the annual decrease of this island and to maintain the plantation and settlement in the same way and tradition as they were before ([...]) to prevent many evils and abuses that would arise from an unrestrained importation it is absolutely necessary to limit the number annually to be introduced" (BL, Add Ms 38.201, Liverpool Papers, Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, fol. 299).

contract for the victualling of the British fleet. He had bought a sugar plantation in Jamaica in the 1750s, and between 1748 and 1758 he had sent several ships from Liverpool to the West Indies, some of them in partnership with Samuel Touchet, a British merchant of Havana (Thomas 1971: 3).

Havana was surrendered according to the capitulation by the town council (*cabildo*). Inventories of artillery, ammunition, public property, warehouses and ships in the harbour of Havana were drawn up and assigned to the victor. The Spanish system of colonial administration was retained while Havana formally was incorporated in the British empire (Guiteras 1962: 97). Lord Albemarle became *gobernador* and *capitán general* and reconstituted the *cabildo*, whose members were chosen from the town's patriciate, mostly sugar planters, tobacco *vegueros* and cattle breeders.¹⁵ On 8 August 1762 the *cabildo* swore obedience to the King of Great Britain; Sebastián de Peñalver, a member of the *cabildo*, was appointed deputy (*teniente*) of the *gobernador*. The Catholic Church retained its predominance and the Bishop of Cuba kept his rights and privileges. The tobacco monopoly passed into the hands of the King of Great Britain. Havana was declared a neutral port¹⁶

¹⁵ The *cabildo* continued their work in the same way as before and the functions of the different offices did not change. There were two *alcaldes* (magistrates), an *alguacil mayor* (chief constable), a *corredor mayor* (postmaster), two *receptores de penas de cámara* (receiver of fines), an *alférez mayor* (herald), three *regidores* (aldermen), a *síndico procurador* (attorney-general), a *depositario general* (public trustee) and an *escribano* (secretary). Cf. Libro de Cavildos del tiempo que la Nación Ynglesa dominó a esta ciudad el año 1762-63, 15 August 1762, AOH, lib. 30. Nearly all these individuals belonged to Havana's elite before, during and after the British occupation. The Spanish crown acknowledged the necessity of cooperation with Havana's social and economic elite and therefore refrained from accusing or punishing them for their presumed conspiracy with the *ingleses*. It was the first sign of the will for reform on part of the Bourbons after 1763.

¹⁶ "En consideración a que este Puerto se halla situado oportunamente para alivio de los que navegan a esta parte de America tanto española como Inglesa sera reputado para los vasallos de S. M. C. [Su Magestad Católica] como Puerto neutral, y les sera permitido entrar y salir libremente, tomar los refrescos que nezesitasen y reparar sus embarcaciones pagando todo por los precios corrientes, y no podran ser insultados ni perturbados en su navegación por las embarcaciones de S. M. B. [Su Magesta Británica] ni de sus vasallos y aliados desde los cavos de Catoche en la costa de Campeche de San Antonio al Oeste de esta Ysla y de la Tortuga hasta este

in order to permit Spanish merchant vessels to land in Havana for refreshments, supply of water or in case of sea average. Finally, the property of merchants from Cádiz was delivered to its owners.¹⁷

On 24 December 1762 Albemarle established the regulations for opening the Port of Havana.¹⁸ All merchant vessels had to be registered at the duty office near *La Punta*, where landing permits had to be presented, entries of goods were controlled by Her Majesty's custom officers and duties were paid. Illegal merchandise were to be confiscated and sold in auction. A "Collector of His Majesty's Customs in Havanah" was appointed in order to guarantee that the taxes levied by the Spanish Government were "continued upon the same footing".¹⁹ The lists of the Spanish collectors of customs from 1749-60 were revised in order to obtain the average amount of duties paid.²⁰ But in reality the high export and import taxes of the Spanish, the *almojarifazgo*, *avería* and *alcabala*, were abolished: "Goods ship'd for Europe paid no Duty". Instead, an extra duty on imported slaves was introduced by Lord Albemarle, but turned out to be illegal as it was not imposed according to Spanish law. One year after the restitution of Havana, two law officers decided that it did not comply with the capitulation to impose duties on goods imported into the conquered territory and that merchants were entitled to recover the money.²¹ Albemarle had to return

Puerto, y desde el hasta ponerse en la altura de 33 grados Norte hasta que ambas Magestades catholica y Britanica acuerden otra cosa" (AOH, lib. 30, fol. 8).

¹⁷ "Los caudales que se hallan detenidos en esta ciudad pertenecientes a comerciantes de Cádiz de los Registros que han ido llegando en que son interesadas todas las naciones de a Europa se les facilite a los Maestres encargados de ellos el Passaporte corresp.te para hazer libremente su reunión con dichos Registros sin el riesgo de ser insultados en su viage" (AOH, lib. 30, fol. 10vto-11r).

¹⁸ BL, Add Ms 38.201, Liverpool Papers, fol. 294-95 and PRO, CO 117/1, fol. 254-255.

¹⁹ Albemarle to William Keppel, Second commander of the landing forces (14 May 1764), BL, Add Ms 38.201, Liverpool Papers, fol. 301-303 and Add Ms 36.223.

²⁰ BL, Add Ms 45.928, Keppel Papers, fol. 1-68. See also: Branches under the charge of the Royal Officers of the Havana (BL, Add Ms 38.201, Liverpool Papers, fol. 304-308 and PRO, CO 117/1, fol. 262-265).

²¹ "[...] we apprehend that the extension of the duties to his Maj.s subjects and commodities imported into the Havannah by them cannot be supported in point of law; because if they are to be considered with regard to His Maj.s subjects as

considerable sums to the merchants. But after the British occupation new problems arose from the question of payable duties. British merchants that had traded with Havana asked for passports, vessels and a convoy from the Secretary of State, the Earl of Halifax, in order to to recover their goods from Havana.²² Spain permitted only one single convoy to reimport the British goods according to the peace treaty.²³ But John Kennion, an expert on these matters, assumed that the *Real Compañía de la Habana* had forced the Governor to inhibit the sale of their goods to the Spanish inhabitants by imposing duties on them.²⁴ As

original duties imported by the Royal authority delegated to Lord Albemarle, we think that his commission does not warrant the exercise of such powers; if they are considered as the ([...]) Spanish Laws established in the Island of Cuba and as operating upon HM subjects importing commodities there, we humbly conceive that by the Laws of England a country conquered by his HM arms remains under the government of its own laws ([...]) by the articles of capitulation upon the Reduction of the Havannah it was stipulated that the inhabitants should be governed in HM Name by the same laws and under the same conditions to which they had been subject when under the dominion of Spain. Yet that law of the Spanish Government could not operate upon HM subjects importing commodities there and not by the authority of those laws but under the protection of an English Governor. Nor that duties could be collected upon the English subjects by force of Spanish laws appropriated as we conceive solely to the subjects of Spain and in exclusion of Foreign nations. Nor that HM subjects if they had withheld such duties so demanded for goods which they had imported could have been exposed to the arbitrary mode of collection that might have been exercised by the power of the former government upon the subjects of Spain” (Lord Commissioner of His M’s Treasury, F. Norton and W. Delysley, Attorney & Solicitor General, 14 May 1764, BL, Add Ms 36.223, fol. 424-425).

²² Memorial of British Merchants to the Earl of Halifax, 17 November 1763 (PRO, CO 117/1 fol. 295). The Memorial was signed by the most important merchants in the Havana trade: Samuel Touchet, John Kennion, Alexander & Robert Grant, Charles Ogilvie, James Christie, Maltby & Dyers, Alexander Anderson, and Davidson, William Wright & Co., John Gregg, Hutchinson & Mure, Richard Atkinson, William Bond.

²³ Grimaldi to Rochefort, 4 March 1764 (PRO, SP 94/166, fol. 136).

²⁴ “They imagine that number of vessels absolutely necessary as they have advices that the Governor of Havana had taken every possible measure of to obstruct the Sale of British Merchandise to the Spanish Inhabitants in Cuba, being urged to this Measure by the unwearied Sollicitations of the Royal Havana Company: and they are not without just grounds of Apprehension that Duties may have been imposed upon their Goods, or demanded upon their Return at Exportation” (Kennion to Halifax, London, 25 November 1763, PRO, CO 117/1, fol. 297).

a matter of fact, Halifax reaffirmed “that the Spanish governor of the Havana has demanded a duty of 9% in a quantity of bullion which has been shipped there since the restitution of that place to the Spaniards”.²⁵ The merchants tried to force the Secretary of State to help them recover their property. But Halifax argued that the governor in Havana was right from the legal point of view, because they had not paid the legal Spanish duties. Although the British customs collector had alleged to guarantee their imposition, the merchants had paid only a so called *composición* which was imposed on goods introduced accidentally after the restitution on vessels without passports. The opinion of Halifax was confirmed by a statement of the Spanish ambassador in London, the Marqués de Grimaldi, who pointed out that British merchants had to pay in case they had obtained winnings after the restitution when trade was no longer legal.²⁶ That was obviously the case and in the end these goods worth 80,000²⁷ could neither be sold nor re-exported. For most of the merchants who had tried to continue the trade with Havana after the departure of the British troops it turned out to be a lost business.

²⁵ Halifax to Rocheford, 13 March 1764 (PRO, SP 94/166, fol. 115-117). There is another memorial added dated from 2 March 1764 and signed by further merchants, some of them already mentioned in the memorial dated 17 November 1764 (quoted in note 21): H. Bigger; Wilkinson & Wilson; Boyle & Scott; Richard Tidswall; Walter and John Ewer; Simon Fraser; Hutchinson & Mure; Richard Atkinson; Richard Allnut; W. String; Richard Oswald & Co.; Charles Ogelvie; Haynward & Rose; M. Crichton; Bayne & Addams; Thomas Bell; Charles Ferguson; William Foger; S. Dickinson.

²⁶ “[...] han de pagar los caudales que se verificase haber adquirido los ingleses por negocio ú de otra manera despues que la Plaza es de España y todo el territorio de la isla; pero desde aquel instante cesó el tiempo habil para traficar ellos en ella” (PRO, SP 94/166, fol. 136 (4 March 1764).

²⁷ Beeston Long, merchant of London, Memorial to the Earl of Egremont, 20 September 1764 (PRO, SP 94/165, fol. 70-73).

Reforms and further trade with Britain

The British left Havana in June 1763 and the Count of Riela became the new *gobernador* and *capitán general* of Cuba.²⁸ Riela had a difficult task: to re-establish the authority of the Spanish Crown and to push forward the overdue reforms. But first he needed to raise money in order to finance the reconstruction of Havana's fortifications and to strengthen the defence system. Surprisingly, he came to terms with the local elites and managed to impose higher taxes by promising political and economic concessions to the oligarchy. On 15 March 1764 Riela sent a noteworthy report to Madrid²⁹ that attributed the economic underdevelopment and low royal revenues to the colonial government's inefficiency, the commercial restrictions and the shortage of labour. Soon after, Havana's oligarchy demanded several reforms such as the establishment of an *Audiencia* (court of appeal) in Cuba, the lowering of taxes and opening of more ports (Bayamo, Trinidad, Santiago de Cuba and Puerto Príncipe) for trade with Spanish port towns like Barcelona, Málaga, La Coruña and Bilbao. They also argued that the interamerican trade with Louisiana, Yucatán, and Cartagena de Indias should be boosted. Direct contracts with the British slave traders in Jamaica were to be signed in order to stimulate the import of slaves as early as possible.³⁰ The months of the *prosperidad británica* were glorified and exaggerated tremendously (Kuethe 1985: 66) in order to stress the necessity of these measures.³¹

²⁸ AGI, SD leg. 1211.

²⁹ AGI, SD leg. 1509.

³⁰ AGI, SD leg. 2188.

³¹ Instead of the 1,000 merchant ships mentioned by the petitioners from Havana and by the jesuit Thomas Butler ("El número de embarcaciones que entraron en todo este tiempo se hace increíble, por los apuntes de la contaduría se conocen que pasaron de mil: cuyo importe á excepción de alguna azúcar que sacaron llevaban todo el dinero" (BN, CM Pérez Beato 26, p. 29), Christelow (1942: 314) estimates the far more probable number of 96. At that time the port of Havana was not in conditions to shelter a larger quantity of vessels; furthermore, Cuba's production for export goods could not have experienced such a dramatic economic boom in only 10 months (for the introduction of slaves during these months see note 46).

There was no immediate response. The state of commerce was deplorable after the British left. Diego Joseph de Cosa, Secretary of the *Real Compañía*, complained that the demand for slaves had not been satisfied by the *asentista*, Villanueva Pico from Cádiz and his agent in Havana, Joseph Uque Osorio.³²

It was Ricla who took the initiative. In reaction to de Cosa's criticism, he terminated the contract with Villanueva Pico and Uque Osorio³³ and conceded special licences to foreign merchants such as Cornelius Coppinger³⁴ to at least guarantee Havana's supply of basic foodstuffs. Coppinger had come to Havana from Jamaica in 1762; he married the daughter of the *fiscal de la Real Hacienda*, the head of the board of Finance. In 1765 he obtained full citizenship.³⁵ As the Cuban market did not turn out to be a commercial paradise for slave traders many merchants avoided Havana (Thomas 1971: 50). But others like Coppinger managed to provide the town with manufactured products and modern tools for the production of sugar instead of African slaves.

³² Villanueva Pico was in charge of the slave trade before and after the British occupation. Cf. *Cartas de la Administración de la Real Compañía de La Habana*. Diego Joseph de Cosa, Secretario de la Junta de Comisión de la Real Compañía de la Habana, 27 July 1763 (ANH, MdL 1435, fol. 2 vto).

³³ *Contrato de Villanueva Pico*, 30 November 1763 (ANH, GSC 450/18574).

³⁴ Out of seven merchants five were french (Fernando Salvador, Juan Luis Caisergas, Juan Blanc, Juan Montano, Pedro Barral), one was from Havana (Joseph Mondo-tegui) and one was British (Cornelius Coppinger, "asentista para la provisión de negros"). According to this contract Coppinger introduced 1,000 barrils of flour, 1,500 barrils of salted pork and beef, 1,000 barrils of rice, 500 small barrils of butter, 500 *arrobas* and 3,000 *arrobas* of corn (*Contratas admitas por el Exmo Sr Conde de Ricla para proveer el público en el año 1764 después del sitio*, AN, AP 99/53, fol. 85r-91r). Coppinger was still in business in 1787 (*Testimonio de obligación y contrato que D. Cornelio Coppinger y otros hicieron con José de Alegría como Administrador de la Real Cía de esta Isla sobre proveerla de negros esclavos*, ANH, IGH 663/9).

³⁵ AGI, SD leg. 1215 and 1254. Citizenship was conceded by the *Consejo de Castilla* in the *Carta de naturaleza* of 23 March 1765. He was a fairly rich man with a possession of 110,000 Pesos ("en créditos y bienes raíces"). Other British merchants he had partnerships with in 1764 were J. Wilmont, W. Fogot, P. Barrall, N. Napleton and J. Paplay & Co. from Jamaica and the Spaniard J. Uque Osorio (AGI, SD leg. 1212-1213).

After the initial boom in exports, importing goods from Jamaica and Britain to Cuba became much more lucrative (see Table 1).

Table 1: Trade of Great Britain with Havana

Year	Imports (in £)	Exports (in £)
1762	-	116,777
1763	249,387	6,643
1764	5,735	-
1765	6,451	-
1766	1,511	-

Source: Whitworth (1762, I: 89).

These merchants had managed to establish good relations with the new government in Havana and Coppinger in particular enjoyed the reputation of a well-capitalized and reliable merchant. Like others, he retained merchandise in Havana's warehouses when the British handed over the town. As Cuban buyers were mainly small producers or shopkeepers, they had bought most articles on credit. Many fell into debt and problems arose between the British and local merchants such as delayed payments or total bankruptcy.³⁶ Therefore it seemed easier to both

³⁶ "Proclamation about English and Spanish Traders: Whereas on the part of Several English Merchants and Traders in this city, His Ex.y has received diverse Complaints setting forth, that many Spaniards having agreed with said Merchants for parcel of Goods, have revolted from the agreement afterwards, and denied the due Compliance to the great Prejudice of the Sellers; wherefore it is hereby commanded by His Excellency that it be known to those of both nations, that any bargain determined & verified, must be absolutely and punctually comply'd, with underly[ing] penalty of being imprisoned, and there compel'd to a strict observance: and must likewise be answerable for all losses arising from the failure and that it should reach every bodys knowledge, this will be published by beat of drum, and fixed up at the usual places" (William Keppel, Havana 6 April 1763, PRO, CO 117/1, fol. 267). See also: "Proclamation for the Spanish and English Merchants to settle their accounts: Whereas any delay in settling all accounts, subsisting between the English and Spanish Merchants, and others of this place, may be productive of bad consequences, His Excellency the Governor hereby orders that all accounts and Engagements whatsoever now depending may be properly stated and the Balances settled on or before the 15th of this month and carried to Mr Biggleston Notary Public in order to be lodged and registered in the Secretarys Office and it is hereby

parties, the Spanish and the English, to come to terms in a different, more convenient way. In the treaty of Paris it had been agreed that British merchants in Cuba – fourteen at the time – who were about to return to Britain should be given permission to remain in Havana for eighteen months and to re-export their goods from Cuba to England.³⁷ Merchants who acted as agents for absent British merchants were allowed to sell their goods in Havana. Riela assured the British authorities that the fourteen British merchants that had remained in Havana, would be under his personal protection: “Any other Merchant whose business shall oblige [him] to remain here some time will find me ready to favour them as far as may be required: And I shall always be carefull that the provision made in the 19th article of the Definitive Treaty shall be kept upon every of them”.³⁸

Shortly thereafter, a voluminous register of British goods in Havana’s warehouses was compiled and the goods were to be sold in a public auction. This *Inventario de Almacenes*,³⁹ although not complete, gives the only extant detailed information about merchandise imported by the British. The vast majority of the goods consisted of spirits, mostly transported directly from Jamaica, and luxury articles from Britain’s booming textile industry both manufactured goods – such as hats, stockings, gloves, shoes, laces and shirts – and unfabricated cloth – mostly camlet, cotton, chintz, damask, taffeta and different sorts of linen. It was, however, the first time that such a wide assortment of goods was offered in Cuba. In addition, prices were relatively low and some of these articles had never arrived in greater quantities.⁴⁰

further ordered that all future dealings after the said 15th day of May, shall be for ready Money only, or such securities as may be satisfactory to the parties and that will not admit of any further dispute” (William Keppel, Havana, 3 May 1763, PRO, CO 117/1, fol. 269).

³⁷ For the original text of the XIXth article see Almon (1763: 96-97) and Guiteras (116-117).

³⁸ Riela to William Keppel, Havana, 6 July 1763 (PRO, CO 117/1, fol. 287).

³⁹ Sobre géneros de extranjeros, 23 November 1763 (ANH, GSC 450/18754).

⁴⁰ “La introducción de generos ha sido Cuantiosissima, de modo que no es posible se consuman aqui en muchos años, particularmente lienzos, paños, Listados ordinarios, zarasas de todas calidades ([...]) siendo la intención continuar la venta aquí, introducirlos en el resto de la Ysla, y si pueden en la Nueva España, y en otras provincias de esta America”. El Fiscal Don Juan López Gamarra da cuenta de la

One of the fourteen merchants who remained in Havana after the handover was Alexander Monroe who stayed there until 1766 as a private merchant with licences from both governments. Monroe became consul general in Madrid five years later and entered a partnership with John and Francis Baring.⁴¹ In 1765 he signed a contract with Ricla to supply Havana with bricks for the reparation and amplification of the fortresses *El Morro* and *La Punta* and the construction of *La Cabaña*. According to the contract 600,000 bricks were to be transported to Cuba from the ports of New York, Charleston and Pensacola.⁴²

The following years saw the restructuring of commerce and administration as well as the military and political reorganisation of Cuba which turned the island into a testing ground for the Bourbons' attempt to match British power in the colonies (Kuethe 1991: 22). Finally, Madrid introduced the first reform. Instead of establishing an appeal court,⁴³ an *intendente de guerra* was installed in Havana who was in charge of military affairs and the collection of revenues. The holder of this office was José Pablo Valiente, a peninsular-born representative of Spanish interests in the colony.

As a first step towards reorganising the commercial links with the mother country a regular packetboat service between Havana and La Coruña was established in 1764. The commercial operations with the mother country were decentralized and the monopoly of Cádiz was replaced by a more open system of Cuban trade through other Spanish ports. With the introduction of the so-called "free trade system" (*comercio libre*) in February 1765, Havana was permitted to trade directly with eight Spanish ports – Barcelona, Alicante, Cartagena, Se-

Introducción de negros, y Generos hecha por los yngleses y los depravados yntentos con que procuran venderlos todos, Havana 21 April 1763 (AGI, SD 2210, quoted from Aimes (1967: 33).

⁴¹ PRO, SP 94/189.

⁴² As the arrival of the vessels was delayed Ricla refused to accept the merchandise and the bricks had to be returned to the North American ports. Monroe sued Ricla at the Supreme Court in Madrid, but the verdict is not known (Memorial Letter from Colonel Hector Munro to the Duke of Richmond, concerning his brother Alexander Munro in Havana, 4 July 1766, PRO, SP 94/189).

⁴³ The *Audiencia* was in Santo Domingo and was transferred to Cuba in 1797 as a consequence of the Haitian Revolution (Zeuske/Munford 1992: 92).

villa, Málaga, La Coruña, Santander and Bilbao as well as with the Caribbean ports on Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Margarita.⁴⁴ Taxes on imported slaves were lowered, the *ad valorem* duties were fixed, and a royal decree allowed direct trade with Louisiana in March 1768. The next steps consisted in increasing sugar production and exporting hides as well as fighting contraband by lowering prices. These measures were the consequence of the reformatory spirit of the new governor who represented the politics of good will on behalf of the Spanish Crown. They were also a reaction to Cuba's demands at a moment when local discontent was at its peak after the British had left. Havana's elite had experienced economic changes and had profited from them. Unlike the British and French planters, the Cubans had built up their plantation system by the use of internal capital and not that of the mercantile-manufacturing bourgeoisie of the mother country. Their increased power entitled them to present what they considered their claims. It was the beginning of Cuba's particular development within the Spanish colonial empire and of a period which Hugh Thomas appropriately called Cuba's first industrial revolution: an aristocratic, non-absentee revolution that was led by the local elite of planters and merchants. The formation of this new and powerful oligarchy conditioned Spain's reaction. It was also inspired by the economic improvements achieved during the British occupation and led to a much stronger cooperation with the creoles.

Slave trade

The increasing demand for African slaves required reorganisation of current practices, but the system did not change substantially. Until 1789 individual contracts, special licences and the state-controlled companies were the only possible legal forms to obtain slaves, as there were no Spanish possessions in Africa until 1778.

After the concession of the slave monopoly to the South Sea Company had been called off in 1739, neither the *Real Compañía de la*

⁴⁴ Esquilache to Arriaga, AHN, Estado, leg. 2342.

Habana nor individual Spanish *asentistas* could replicate the efficiency of the British Company. From 1739 to 1761 less than 5,000 slaves were imported legally to Cuba (Donnan 1931, II: XLV).

The quantity of slaves increased during the British occupation, but former historiographical exaggerations need to be corrected. During the ten months the number of slaves introduced by Anglo-American traders was obviously much lower than the number implied by the Ricla-report or later stated by Aimes in his pioneering and influential “History of Slavery in Cuba”, first published in 1907.⁴⁵ A maximum of between 3,200 and 4,000 Africans⁴⁶ were introduced, a number which did not even reach half the Jamaican rate, but it was a fair number compared to the modest amount of 60,000 (an annual average of 222) slaves imported to Cuba during the entire colonial period up to 1762. The experience of the *prosperidad británica* brought a taste of the advantages Britain’s “free trade” had to offer, such as quick transport of goods and reliable supply of labour.

During the next two years after Havana had been returned to Spain, British merchants sold 5,037 slaves to the *Real Compañía* (Marrero 1984, IX: 6). In 1765 the Count of Ricla signed a contract with Cop-pinger, Wilmont & Fogot for the introduction of 7,000 Negroes and 14,000 barrils of flour.⁴⁷ The King of Spain finally prohibited this trade “to prevent the English commerce from taking root in this area”.⁴⁸ It

⁴⁵ Aimes (1967: 33) by mistake gives the number of 10,700 Africans instead of 1,700 (Thomas 1971: 50). McNeill (1985: 167) stresses that British trade of slaves and goods during the occupation has been overestimated in general: “[...] rather than radically increasing the volume of trade, the occupation merely made visible what had formerly been covert commerce”. During the eighteenth century at least two third of imports entered Cuba via contraband. Out of 75,000 slaves that were brought to the Island between 1700 and 1765 only 16,000 were registered (McNeill 1985: 168-170).

⁴⁶ Official sources give the number of 3,262 (López to Arriaga, 21 April 1763, AGI, SD 2210). The entrance of these slaves was legalized by imposing the *alcabala* (4%) on the price of each slave; see Tornero (1996: 35), Thomas (1971: 50) and McNeill (1985: 167).

⁴⁷ ANH, MdL 1435, fol. 37 and ANH, Reales Cédulas 3/218 (17 April 1764): Carta aprobando la contrata de negros con la Cía.

⁴⁸ “[...] para evitar que el comercio inglés se arraigue en estos parajes” (Altarriba to Arriaga, 4 July 1765, AGI, SD 2210).

seems, thus, that the Cuban economy was in danger of becoming dependent on the British merchants and slave traders, for Cuba had a permanent demand for labour. In the meantime, fourteen new sugar mills with a constantly growing production were established (Tornero 1996: 37). When the Crown decided to contract with the *Compañía gaditana de negros* (Torres Ramírez 1973) from November 1766 to March 1771 for the introduction of 9,143 slaves,⁴⁹ it was not even a compromise, for this company had bought these slaves from British merchant houses from London and Barbados through agents in Havana (Tornero 1996: 37). Juan de Miralles was the agent of the Cádiz-Company in Havana and the Marqués de Enrile became its president. Enrile had excellent contacts with North America, Great Britain and Cádiz. Years later he became one of the wealthiest landowners and merchants of Havana. By then he had established a company with the British merchants Ludlow and Philip Alwood⁵⁰ in Havana. They had partners in Charleston, London (Peyerin Hoof & Demiere) and Bordeaux (Figues & Sobrinos). In 1783 Enrile embarked on a business trip to Cádiz and Genoa to meet his brother who acted as his agent and dealt with other European commercial houses in London, Lisbon, Lyon and Marseille for the export of sugar, coffee and cocoa from Cuba, Venezuela (Caracas) and Ecuador (Guayaquil). Enrile also imported silks and cloth from the Provence as well as olive oil and taffeta from Florence.⁵¹ The slave trader, merchant, landowner and nobleman Enrile had succeeded in creating his commercial network, because Spain finally loosened the trade restrictions on Cuba. It admitted exchange, especially with the

⁴⁹ 7,663 Africans through Havana, 1,228 through Santiago, 142 through Trinidad and 110 through Puerto Príncipe.

⁵⁰ Fifteen years later Alwood would become a key figure of Havana's slave trade as the agent of the British Company Baker & Dawson. See note 60.

⁵¹ "[...] me parece que se podría establecer un comercio ventajoso con esta Isla sacando estos frutos en derecho. Para los retornos además de lo que a mi respecta siempre tendré fondos en la Havana con que proveer y seguram.te no faltaran ocasiones pa hacerlo. Está inmediato a dha ciudad de Genova el Puerto de Marsella de donde se puede sacar todos los frutos que produce la provenza y las sedas y tejidos de Leon, ([...]) aceytes y tafetanes de Florencia sedas y otros tejidos segun lo que Vds me avisen" (Enrile to Alwood and Ludlow, 10 July 1783, Egerton Papers 520, fol. 323-327). Enrile's partners in Havana were in charge to organize the transport on North American or British vessels via Jamaica.

nearby, vast North American market through direct shipping or via Louisiana. Even when it became clear that the slave trade encouraged smuggling via New Orleans, the commerce on this route was restricted only temporarily.⁵² A new era began, when Spain finally permitted Cuba direct trade with neutral nations. The spectacular growth of Cuba's sugar industry⁵³ led to the amplification of the trade system: Between September 1773 and 1779 13,747 slaves were introduced from the North American market.⁵⁴

Spanish slave traders imported slaves directly from African markets for the first time in 1778 after the acquisition of the islands of Fernando Poo⁵⁵ and Annobón.⁵⁶ But in the long run the *negreros* failed because they lacked experience, vessels and crews.⁵⁷ Subsequently foreign merchants gained the contract when Spain entered into war with Britain.⁵⁸ Between 1781 and 1786 French slave traders were temporarily in charge of the slave trade to Cuba and special licences were given to locals, who were prominent members of Havana's oligarchy and who acted as front men for the foreigners in the Caribbean (Torneró 1996: 40). In 1782 French slave traders from Paris, Le Havre and San Maló transported a total of 16,750 slaves from Saint-Domingue to Cuba in cooperation with their partners.⁵⁹

⁵² ANH, Reales Cédulas 7/188 (18 July 1775): Para que no se conceda licencia ni se permita comerciar con negros a ningún particular a no ser por cuenta del asiento general, see also ANH, Reales Cédulas 8/175 (8 March 1776): Carta relativa a la prohibición de transportar y vender negros por los vecinos de Nueva Orleans.

⁵³ During the 1750s around 300 tons of sugar were exported per year; between 1764-69 the average was 2000 tons and had increased to more than 10,000 tons per year at the beginning of the 1770s (Thomas 1971: 61).

⁵⁴ AGI, SD 2516.

⁵⁵ In the Gulf of Biafra, 35 km off Camerun.

⁵⁶ In the Gulf of Guinea, 180 km South West of São Tomé (BL, Add Ms 13.984, Papers relating to Spanish Possessions in America, "Noticias reflexiones para la formación de los establecimientos en las islas de Annobon y de Fernando del Pó para subsistir en ellas, y para hacer el trafico de esclavos", fol. 175-178).

⁵⁷ The French slave trader Luis Rey in his *informe* of 12 October 1781 (AGI, IG 2820).

⁵⁸ ANH, Reales Cédulas 17/40 (16 March 1781): Carta ampliando a las colonias neutrales la compra de negros por el comercio español mientras dure la pres.te guerra.

⁵⁹ Reales Cédulas 17/116 (24 October 1781): Carta autorizando al Sr. Luis Rey para conducir negros bozales de la costa de Guinea a la Havana. Luis Rey from Saint Domingue had branches in Madrid and Cádiz and was also an advisor to the

After the French interlude the *asiento* was given to Baker & Dawson⁶⁰ from Liverpool whose agent in Havana, Philip Alwood,⁶¹

Spanish Crown concerning matters of slave trade [see note 56]; other French merchants were Bomballe Delepinay, José Laserra, Leconteul and Company of Pais, Romberg of Ghent, Chauvel and Sons of Le Havre, Marion of San Maló; their partners in Havana were Francisco de Sierra, Juan López, Miguel Antonio de Herrera, Tomás Domingo de Sotolongo, Francisco de Guerra, José Gato, José Zequeira, Javier de Matienzo, Marqués del Real Agrado, Marqués de Enrile, Eusebio de la Luz, Marquesa Viuda de Cardenas de Monte Hermoso, Vicente Espón and Fernando de Tolosa (ANH, Reales Cédulas, leg. 18-20).

⁶⁰ ANH, Reales Cédulas 3/218 (27 March 1786): Carta acompañando copia de la contrata con la casa de Backer y Dawson para proveer de negros la Isla de Cuba y la provincia de Caracas; Reales Cédulas 21/153 (29 March 1786): Carta para que se vendan todas las cargazonas de negros que entran en plaza a consecuencia de la contrata con la casa inglesa de Backer y Dawson; Reales Cédulas 22/35 (20 July 1786): Carta sobre abono de importe de los negros que con arreglo a la contrata de Backer y Dawson se reciban en Cuba, Puerto Rico y Santo Domingo; Reales Cédulas 22/98 (7 October 1786): Carta relacionada con la distribución de la armazón primera de negros de la contrata de Backer y Dawson; Reales Cédulas 22/112 (8.11.1786): Carta declarando libres de derechos los negros que se introduzcan por la contrata de Backer y Dawson; Reales Cédulas 23/63 (31.8.1787): Carta sobre concesión de prórroga de seis meses a los S.res Backer y Dawson para la introducción de negros en la Isla de Cuba; Reales Cédulas 24/1 (10 May 1788): Carta autorizando a los S.res Backer y Dawson para importar negros fuera de su contrata.

⁶¹ Alwood, like Coppinger, had been conceded a *carta de naturaleza*. He was protected by the governor and well acquainted with Enrile; this friendship brought him commercial advantages as well as the envy of the local merchants and landowners which nearly cost him his permit of residence. On 12 August 1788 Merchant Manuel de Zulueta, a resident of Havana, wrote in the name of other *hacendados* a protest letter to the Crown because Alwood's contract was about to be prolonged: "Habiendo hecho la casa inglesa Baker y Dawson de Liverpool una representación proponiendo celebrar una contrata para introducir negros en la isla de Cuba por espacio de seis u ocho años, exponen que se deja ver claramente la coligación y amistad del apoderado de la casa inglesa con el Gobernador de La Habana y resultando de ella un perjuicio a toda la nación y un dao irreparable al comercio i a la navegación, hacendados y menestrales, suplican se digne despreciar la referida contrata y el acuerdo celebrado en su virtud, declarando se haga este comercio por nacionales y en naves españolas y si esto no pudiese conseguirse permitir la libertad de hacerlo a todas las naciones que quieran como se verifica en las demás colonias extranjerias, a fin de que con la concurrencia se introduzcan la abundancia y por consiguiente las ventajas del precio y de elección, por ser éste el único medio de evitar todos los inconvenientes del monopolio" (AGI, SD 1249) quoted from Tornero (1996: 43). Alwood answered immediately in view of the menacing

achieved a solid cooperation with the Governor Ezpeleta and his father-in-law Enrile, former president of the *Compañía gaditana*. Baker & Dawson imported 5,233 slaves between July 1786 and April 1789 (Tornero 1996: 41). After the protests of the Hispanic merchants and planters against this monopoly contract the Spanish Crown signed the Royal Decree of 28 February 1789 opening the new era of “free slave trade”.⁶² From the end of the English occupation to 1789, approximately 41,000 slaves had been transported to Cuba. Even during the following years, when the United States became Cuba’s most important trading partner, Britain maintained its position as the island’s main supplier of slaves (Tornero 1996: 64-65).

Economic institutions, technical innovations and mental change

Cuba’s transition from a colony of entry and provisioning to a sugar giant involved drastic changes in political, administrative and economic organisation and in social life in general. The significance of the *gobernador* increased for he had to create the political framework for the economic transition. But new institutions were also needed that

expulsion and underlined his merits in trade with Cuba (Expediente promovido por Dn. Felipe Alwood solicitando que esta corporación represente a S.M. recomendándole para que no se le expulse de esta Isla, por ser extranjero, 8 Julio 1795: “El que representa, aunque extranjero, ha procurado contribuir siempre con sus proporciones y facultades al mayor adelanto y prosperidad de estos habitantes ya con la numerosa introducción de negros ya facilitando a sus Hacendados. A mas de esto, se ha empeñado en traer de la Ysla de Jamayca, arboles de frutos exquisitos y particulares de la Yndia Oriental conducidos a aquella [=Jamaica] con demasiado costo por el Gobierno Británico, porque siempre ha dado las más relevantes pruebas de su particular afecto a la Nación Española, con especialidad a los vecinos y moradores de esta Ysla, confiándoles quantiosos caudales para su fomento” (ANH, Reales Cédulas 201/8913).

⁶² ANH, Reales Cédulas 24/165 (28 February 1789): Concediendo libertad para el comercio de negros con las islas de Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico y provincia de Caracas; see also Reales Cédulas 27/161 (24 November 1791): Concediendo libertad al comercio de negros con los virreinos de Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, Caracas, Islas de Santo Domingo, Cuba y Puerto Rico a españoles y extranjeros bajo las reglas que expresa.

would regulate and coordinate agriculture and trade. Production and export had to be connected. Spain could only offer the transfer of its own conservative trade boards and Cubans questioned the usefulness of the copy in light of the limited success of the original. The following years saw the establishment of new commercial institutions following the example of both Spanish and foreign trade centers in order to modernize the economy and especially facilitate the interchange with neutral ports.

The *Real Consulado de Agricultura y Comercio*, founded in 1795, was a body representing the political leaders and the Cuban commercial elite. Current matters of commerce and agriculture were discussed; especially the slave trade with foreign partners was controlled⁶³ in order to improve the local economy and weaken the monopoly of Cádiz as well as the competition from Mexico.⁶⁴ In 1794 Francisco Arango y Parreño, Cuba's mastermind of economic progress, travelled to Britain, Portugal and Jamaica in order to investigate and copy methods and practices of international sugar production and sale.⁶⁵ He returned from England with the idea of an autonomous institution that would be controlled by the producers of sugar (Moreno Friginals 1978, I: 106). Thus, a *Junta de Fomento* was created and officially subordinated to the *Real Consulado*. The *Junta* became a sort of a creole ministry and initiated the administrative shift towards monoculture in Cuba.

⁶³ “[...] los dos consules han de ser o haver sido comerciantes de gran reputación y concepto y de los conciliarios habrá cinco de la clase de agricultores recomendables y quatro de la de comerciantes de merito a fin de que nunca quede preponderante en la Junta una de las dos clases porque en un país agricultor son inseparables los intereses de la agricultura y del comercio” (Reglamento para el establecimiento del Consulado, 30 January 1792, BN, CM Pérez Beato No. 802).

⁶⁴ Expediente relativo a la oposición profesada por el Consulado de Veracruz á todo cuanto se ha obrado por este de La Habana tanto sobre el comercio con neutrales como sobre la remisión de caudales y fondos preciosos, 19 March 1800 (ANH, RC 72/2788).

⁶⁵ ANH, RC 92/3923 (30 September 1795): Expediente sobre las noticias comunicadas por el Sindico Don Francisco Arango y Parreño, adquiridas en el viage por encargo de S.M. ha hecho a Inglaterra, Portugal, Barbada [sic] y Jamayca; RC 93/3924 (28 October 1795): Expediente relativo a las noticias adquiridas por el Sr Sindico de este cuerpo [Junta de Fomento] en Inglaterra y Jamayca, sobre refinerías de azucar.

In view of the growing export sector new warehouses were built,⁶⁶ an *Escuela de Pilotos* for the formation of professional harbour pilots was opened in 1797 and in 1800 the first insurance company was founded.⁶⁷ Following the examples of London, Amsterdam, Hamburg and towns in Germany and France, an auction and coinage house as well as a stock exchange were opened during the following years.⁶⁸

Some technical innovations were introduced in the sugar sector, but the system of manufacture did not alter substantially (Moreno Friginals 1978, I: 74). Agustín de Batancourt was moved from London to Cuba and appointed *Director del Gabinete de Máquinas*. But this board's attempt to promote steam power in place of animal power did not succeed. Transport and communication were improved mainly in the Havana area especially with the construction of the *Güines Canal* with elementary technical help from England.⁶⁹

Education was extended with the foundation of the *Instituto de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales* where English and French were taught (Tornero 1996: 186). Nevertheless, rich families preferred to send their children to schools in the United States. Spain disapproved of such practise as maintaining the old system guaranteed the mother country's political control against liberal and revolutionary influences.

⁶⁶ ANH, RC 72/2787 (30 October 1799): Expediente sobre promover el aumento de almacenes en esta plaza.

⁶⁷ ANH, RC 72/2790 (28 May 1800): Expediente sobre la importancia de sostener en esta plaza la cía de seguros. In 1814 Lloyd's of London tried to open a branch in Havana. See: RC 201/8922 (27 October 1814): Expediente sobre la tentativa de la Asociación de Seguros Marítimos de Lloyd's en Londres para tener aquí un agente reconocido por el Consulado.

⁶⁸ ANH, RC 72/2783 (15 July 1801): Expediente promovido por D. Agustín Rodríguez y Dn. Santiago Drake sobre establecimiento de una venduta en esta plaza. Drake was agent for the British banker Kleinwort (Ely 1963: 343). The permission to open a *venduta* was conceded in 1805: Reglamento para gobierno de dos Almonedas Mercantiles o sean Vendutas establecidas en esta ciudad. La Habana 1805, Imprenta de la Capitanía General; RC 73/2811 (1804-1809): Expediente relativo al establecimiento de una lonja mercantil.

⁶⁹ ANH, Realingos 76/1 (1796-98): Documentos relacionados con la comisión que le fue confinada a Sr Conde de Mopox y de Jaruco sobre el descubrimiento de terrenos; BN, CM Folleto 305/3 (1796-1802): Documentos relativos a la expedición del Conde de Mopox a la Isla de Cuba.

In the decades after the British occupation a change of mentality within Havana's oligarchy took place. The old concept of the *patria chica* waned in favour of a new feeling of *hispanidad* due to the growing political links with Spain. In spite of the positive experience with the British trade system, England was considered the main enemy because of her military strength and menacing presence in the Caribbean. It was not until the sugar revolution that a mental shift occurred. The need for commercial interchange brought a new orientation towards the North Atlantic Anglo-American world. A new feeling of *cubanidad* arose and the colonial past was suddenly addressed as the *tiempos primitivos* (Arango y Parreño 1952, II: 6), whereas the beginning of Cuban history was set in 1762-63.⁷⁰ At the same time the Catholic Church lost much of its former influence due to the increasingly secularized planter class. With the introduction of steam power and railroads, the presence of the Church on the plantations vanished (Moreno Fraginals 1978, I: 115-116; 126). The *Junta de Fomento* succeeded in abolishing holidays on the sugar plantations and the payment of the tithe; chaplains were allowed to say mass on big plantations and cemeteries were integrated on the premises.⁷¹

⁷⁰ "Alexemos nuestra consideración de aquellos oscuros días que corrieron desde su descubrimiento hasta el año 1763 y fixandola en el período que ha seguido desde entonces hasta el presente, conoceremos el efecto de las providencias que adoptó nuestra España para mejorar la suerte de estos vasallos" (Junta de Fomento, 25 September 1798, ANH, RC 93/3938).

⁷¹ ANH, RC 93/3938 (25 September 1798): Expediente sobre abolición de días festivos en fomento de las labores del campo y sobre facultar a los capellanes de los Ingenios para que puedan decir Misa en ellos aun en los días exceptuados, administrar los sacramentos y sepultar los cadaveres en cementerios hechos al propósito; ANH, RC 101/4330 (8 April 1796): Expediente sobre eximir del pago de diezmos á los primeros ingenios que se establezcan según el metodo extranjero. Symptomatically, the names given to plantations and sugar mills changed during these years. New installations instead of "Purísima", "Concepción" or "Santísima Trinidad" were named "Buen Suceso", "Anfititre" or "Amistad" (Moreno Fraginals 1978, I: 115).

Conclusion

Although significant commercial interrelations were established after the capture of Havana, this event did not signify Cuba's complete incorporation into the transatlantic trade system that connected North America, the Caribbean and Great Britain. Havana was returned to Spain after a mere ten months and legal trade on a large scale was interrupted immediately afterwards. The introduction of slaves during the occupation was noteworthy and much higher than in the previous decades, but Cuba's economic structure did not change fundamentally. The success of the British and North American merchants was based on the productivity, capital and spending power in Cuba that were created by the early Bourbon reforms in the decades before the occupation. The growth of Cuba's domestic economy was the result of the increased export trade to Spain and the promotion of sugar after the cultivation of tobacco had been monopolized. "The English did nothing that the Cubans were not already doing before they arrived on the scene" (Knight 1970: 7). These achievements together with the experience of joining the North Atlantic trade system temporarily during the British time and the subsequent reforms of Charles III. were the conditions Cuba's radical transformation into a plantation society.

The history of Cuba did not begin in 1762. Havana's oligarchy grew constantly during the early colonial period and became a considerable power in economic and political life in the course of the eighteenth century (Torneró 1996: 12). Economic diversification and the integration into international commerce, albeit illegal, were parallel processes and intensified strongly after the British occupation. The slave trade boomed and British merchants who remained in Havana after the end of the occupation helped re-establish commercial activities. The formerly gradual process towards monoculture was now accelerated. The main consequence was underdevelopment and growing dependency on foreign merchants and markets. This dependency was complete by the end of the century. The trade with North America determined the volume of Cuba's output. Its beginning can be traced back to the British occupation of Havana. Therefore, in contrast to the Anglo-Cuban trade, the short period of 1762/63 can be considered as a turning point in the

relations between North American entrepreneurs and Cuban creole planters.

During the process in which the colonies were integrated into world trade,⁷² the Anglo-American entrepreneurs sought the cooperation of the economically inferior and rather inexperienced Cuban elites which depended on slaves and credit funds provided by the Anglo-American entrepreneurs. Neither was a national network of investments shaped nor an expansion of a diversified production achieved. Consequently Cuba did not engender a bourgeoisie nor an interior market. Her growth depended on the North Atlantic trade circuits. The Cuban landowner sought to increase his immediate production by importing slaves and subordinated himself to the slave trader and merchant. The import system conditioned the outflow of Cuban exports and capital towards America and England. Historians such as Tornero (1996: 58; 145) have applied the theory of dependence to Cuba. Nevertheless, two results of the Bourbon Reforms should be stressed: on the one hand, they helped to accelerate ongoing processes, on the other hand, they managed to maintain Spanish political control over Cuba. Spain, without industry, banks or a commercial network, could neither offer processing industries nor redistribution, but by transforming Cuba into a plantation society, Spain increased the power and wealth of the Cuban planter class, thus winning its loyalty, the foundation for a Cuba "semper fidel".⁷³ Neither Great Britain nor the United States realized further plans of territorial expansion. Politics had changed since the era of

⁷² See for example Harlow (1952, I: 166) and Wallerstein (1986, II: 258) who interpret the end of the Seven Years War as the "watershed" from mercantilism to industrial capitalism under British rule. As a matter of fact, the significance of that period lies in the drastic changes that occurred as a result of demographic changes, increase of productivity and commercial activity, the extension towards colonial markets and concentration of benefits in the hands of the new privileged entrepreneurial class that managed to profit from technical innovations in the revolutionary era between 1760 and 1815. As Pierre Vilar (1982) in his monumental *History of Catalonia* stresses: "L'activité commerciale sans cesse élargie, en interaction constante avec l'exploitation coloniale mieux assurée, la hausse des prix généralisée, en interaction constante avec l'extraction de l'argent à meilleur marché et avec la multiplication de signes monétaires nouveaux le jeu même [...]" (Vilar 1982, II: 9).

⁷³ This play on words has been taken from Magarr (1988).

mercantilism, and military force was not seen as absolutely necessary to obtain influence and supremacy. While in the early eighteenth century pirates and the admirals of the Royal Navy aggressively represented British interests in the Spanish colonial empire, a new type of protagonist appeared on the scene and silently took their turn: It was the merchant who did business independently of political circumstances – even with Cuba, that remained a Spanish colony.

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