

An Overlooked Contributor to a Unique Colombian Periodical. Enrique Pérez and the journal *Hispania* (1912-1916)[♣]

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Abstract: *Hispania*, a cultural periodical published in London between 1912 and 1916, was an important Colombian endeavor that reflected widely-shared Latin American concerns before and during the outbreak of the First World War. After a brief review of the role of literary periodicals in Colombian humanities, this essay analyzes the numerous contributions published by Enrique Pérez Lleras in *Hispania*. It concludes that Pérez believed Hispanic America could have avoided the threat of United States and/or European imperialism by spurning despotic rule, educating a governing elite, developing a trained civil service, and establishing strict controls over foreign investment and immigration.

Keywords: *Thesaurus: periodicals, Colombia, England. Author keywords: Pérez Lleras, Hispania, twentieth century.*

El colaborador desapercibido de una publicación colombiana única. Enrique Pérez y la revista *Hispania* (1912-1916)

Resumen: La revista *Hispania*, una publicación de carácter cultural impresa en Londres entre 1912 y 1926, constituyó un esfuerzo colombiano importante, que reflejaba las preocupaciones compartidas por América Latina antes y durante el inicio de la Primera Guerra Mundial. Este artículo presenta una breve reseña del papel de las revistas literarias en el campo de las artes y letras en Colombia, así como un análisis de las numerosas contribuciones publicadas por Enrique Pérez Lleras en la revista *Hispania*. El artículo concluye que Pérez creía que Hispanoamérica podía evitar la amenaza del imperialismo de los Estados Unidos y/o Europa por medio del rechazo a los gobiernos despóticos, educando a una élite para gobernar, desarrollando un servicio civil entrenado y estableciendo controles estrictos sobre la inversión extranjera y la inmigración.

Palabras clave: *Thesaurus: Colombia, Inglaterra. Palabras clave autor: periódicos, Pérez Lleras, Hispania, siglo XX.*

Um colaborador subestimado de um periódico colombiano único. Enrique Pérez e a revista *Hispania* (1912-1916)

Resumo: A revista *Hispania*, um periódico cultural publicado em Londres entre 1912 e 1916, foi um importante empreendimento colombiano que refletiu preocupações latino-americanas amplamente partilhadas antes e durante a eclosão da Primeira Guerra Mundial. Após um breve resumo do papel das

♣ I have received no outside funding for the essay I am submitting. It is based on a careful analysis of the books written by Enrique Pérez Lleras and the articles he published in *Hispania*.

revistas literárias nas artes e letras da Colômbia, este ensaio analisa as numerosas contribuições publicadas por Enrique Pérez Lleras na *Hispania*. Conclui que Pérez acreditava que a América hispânica poderia evitar a ameaça do imperialismo norte-americano e/ou europeu ao rejeitar governos déspotas, educando uma elite para governar e desenvolver um serviço civil treinado, e estabelecendo controles rígidos sobre investimentos estrangeiros e imigração.

Palavras-chave: *Thesaurus: Colômbia, Inglaterra. Palavras-chave do autor: Hispania, periódicos, Pérez Lleras, século XX.*

Introduction

Since 2014 the publication of three analyses of the periodical *Hispania*, a cultural periodical published in London between 1912 and 1916, scholarly attention has focused on an important Colombian endeavor that reflected widely-shared Latin American concerns before and during the outbreak of the First World War. Gildardo Castaño Duque’s “Revista Hispania (1912-1915): presencia cultural Colombiana en la vida intelectual europea” provides an overview of the periodical —the product of the efforts of three Liberal Colombian intellectuals: Santiago Pérez Triana, Baldomiro Sanín Cano and Enrique Pérez Lleras. Rafael Rubiano Muñoz and Juan Guillermo Gómez García, in *Años de vértigo: Baldomero Sanín Cano y la revista Hispania (1912-1916)*, emphasize the significant contributions made to the publication by the Antioqueño’s intellectual, Sanín Cano, while Jane Rausch, in *Santiago Pérez Triana (1858-1916): Colombian Man of Letters and Crusader for Hemispheric Unity*, has recorded the efforts of Pérez Triana to finance and publish the journal that became a vehicle for promoting Latin American solidarity in a world menaced by renewed United States imperialism and the outbreak of the war between the Allied and Axis powers in Europe in 1914 that would open a new age in international relations.¹

While all three studies provide important insights about *Hispania*, none of them offer a detailed account of the contributions of the third Colombian collaborator, Enrique Pérez Lleras. The object of this study, after a brief examination of the impact of literary periodicals and especially *Hispania* in Colombian arts and letters, is to fill this gap by examining the life, work and contributions of Pérez Lleras, the son of former president Felipe Pérez and a cousin of Santiago Pérez Triana, to *Hispania*.

1. Literary Periodicals in Colombian History

Beginning in the late 18th century, literary journals played an important role in Colombia, not only in the literary domain but also in political developments. As Jorge Orlando Melo has explained, after the achievement of independence, many significant Colombian leaders owed their influence “not to wealth or family, but to the periodicals that displayed their fame as intellectuals, writers and

1 Gildardo Castaño Duque, “Revista Hispania (1912-1916): presencia cultural colombiana en la vida intelectual europea,” in Selnich Vivas Hurtado, coordinated by *Utopías móviles: nuevos caminos para la Historia intelectual en América Latina* (Medellín: Diente de León/Universidad de Antioquia, 2014), 32-63; Rafael Rubiano Muñoz and Juan Guillermo Gómez, *Años de vértigo: Baldomero Sanín Cano y la revista Hispania (1912-1916)* (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2016); Jane Rausch, *Santiago Pérez Triana (1858-1916): Colombian Man of Letters and Crusader for Hemispheric Unity* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2017).

politicians.”² In the 19th century, due to the small number of literate readers, the survival of these periodicals largely depended on the energy of the editors. The most successful of these numerous endeavors might produce from 50 to 100 issues and last two or three years before being abandoned for lack of readership or finances for publication.

By the early twentieth century, however, the growing literate middle class created a larger demand for this type of newspaper. Between 1890 and 1920 some 33 cultural journals were launched with greater or lesser degree of success. One of the best indicators for a periodical’s success was that its editor had a serious idea of what he wanted to create and that he was willing to put in the effort to find supporters and appropriate financial and literary contributions in order to achieve his goal.³ During this period, would-be publishers had three potential financial sources. In some cases, a group of intellectuals, some of whom were more or less rich, would invest funds from their other incomes to maintain the periodicals. In others, editors would include a literary supplement in which journalists might pay in order to have his/her piece included. The third possibility was for the editor was to appeal for funds from public officers, potential patrons, friends, and/or other publishers, but whatever strategy chosen, subscriptions proved insufficient to sustain the journal for more than two or three years.

Overcoming many difficulties, for nearly two hundred years Colombian literary journals published thousands of poems, stories and novels. They reproduced works by French and English authors translated into Spanish, and they offered a platform for local intellectuals to promote their various causes and to invite discussion (although in Melo’s view, “in Colombia very little is discussed,” and there should have been more debates and more discussion).⁴

Hispania, the inspiration of Santiago Pérez Triana, unlike other Colombian journals published in the early twentieth century such as *Revista Contemporáneo* (1904-1905), *Alpha* (1906-1916), or *Trofeos* (1906-1916), was unique in that it was based in London and aspired to represent not just Colombia but the Hispanic American region as a whole. In this respect it echoed the *Biblioteca América* (1823) and *El Repertorio Americano* (1826-1827), both published in London by Andrés Bello. As early as 1892, while living in Bogotá, Pérez Triana had dreamed of starting a literary periodical, but he had to abandon his plans when threat of imprisonment due to alleged improprieties in his business dealings in Antioquia forced him to flee Colombia in 1893 to seek refuge in Europe.⁵

After settling first in London, Pérez Triana moved on to Madrid, where he did actually edit a short-lived weekly magazine, *América* —an enterprise that attracted some high quality essays but brought in little revenue. When *América* failed, he fell back to writing essays for important English and American journals —piece work that paid him in pounds and dollars.⁶ In 1906 he returned to London where he soon established the broad contacts with public financiers and politicians

2 Jorge Orlando Melo, “Las revistas literarias en Colombia e Hispanoamérica: una aproximación a su historia,” *Colombia es un tema. Jorge Orlando Melo*, Consulted May 17, 2016 <www.jorgeorlandomelo.com>.

3 Melo, “Las revistas literarias en Colombia,” 8-13.

4 Melo, “Las revistas literarias en Colombia,” 13.

5 Rausch, *Santiago Pérez Triana*, 33.

6 Rausch, *Santiago Pérez Triana*, 57.

that by 1912 enabled him to amass the funding needed to fulfill his lifelong dream.⁷ With the aid of a group of colleagues that included Sanín Cano, Enrique Pérez, Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham and Miguel de Unamuno, he declared his editorial objectives in the first issue of *Hispania* dated January 1, 1912:

“*Hispania* wants to carry to people who speak Spanish some *aliento* [breath, inspiration] that will awaken their lives...We will all win if we know what our people are saying. I would like *Hispania*, also — within the reduced range of its forces— to bring to Spanish peoples and to others a message that is worthy of them, that illuminates minds or moves consciences. As the gold standard in commercial exchanges, *Hispania* would like to help establish the golden discernment of serene logic and of common sense in the life of our peoples.”⁸



Source: “Reproduced below is the first issue of *Hispania*,” *Hispania* [vol. 1, n. ° 1], January 1, 1912.

7 In 1896 Pérez Triana married Gertrude O’Day, the daughter of Daniel O’Day, a wealthy manager of Standard Oil. PérezThe couple had one son, Santiago Pérez Triana, known as “Sonny” born on February 4, 1898. On his death in 1906 O’Day left a large legacy to Gertrude and the management of this wealth enabled Pérez Triana to establish a permanent residence in London. See: Rausch, *Santiago Pérez Triana*, 56-63.

8 La Redacción, “Hispania,” *Hispania* [vol. I], January 1, 1912, 1.

In accordance with these goals, the 28 pages of each monthly issue of the journal contained articles dealing with economy, sociology and the rights of nations —topics then being debated in parliaments, political circles and other publications. *Hispania* had a marked Liberal spirit that characterized the political thinking of its founder and associate editors. After an exhaustive review of the 52 issues published between 1912 and 1916, Castaño Duque has suggested that the editorials focused on six major themes: first, the causes of the decadence of Latin American nations as an effect of inadequate policies of politicians in contracting external debt; second, denouncing the profound social problems of Latin American nations as well as the European continent; third, warning of the imminent dangers of European and North American imperialism; fourth, lamenting the abuses of capitalism on vital human forces; fifth, the massacres caused by colonialism; and sixth, political swindles and border disputes settled by violence.⁹ To this list should be added, *Hispania*'s drumbeat for Hispanic and Hemispheric unity —a theme that received increasing emphasis after the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914.

2. Enrique Pérez

Enrique Pérez was born in 1874, the son of Felipe Pérez and Susana Lleras Triana who had married in 1855. The couple had four other children: Susana, Liboria, María, and Alejandro, and in spite of the fact that Enrique published a biography of his father in 1911, his book reveals virtually nothing about the family's personal life.¹⁰ Felipe Pérez (1836-1891) and his brother, Santiago Pérez (1838-1900), were prominent public figures. Both were fervent Radical Liberals who enjoyed impressive careers: Santiago was president of Colombia between 1874-1876 while Felipe excelled as a writer, journalist, geographer and politician.

In 1851 at the age of fifteen, Felipe received the title of Doctor of Laws from the Colegio del Espíritu Santo. Two years later he entered politics having been named governor of the Province of Zipaquirá. After the death Agustín Codazzi, the founder of the Comisión Corográfica in 1859, President Tomás Cipriano Mosquera assigned Pérez the task of preparing a volume compiling the commission's findings. The result was his first important book, *Geografía física y política de los Estados Unidos de Colombia*, published in 1862 and 1863.¹¹ In 1869 he served as President of the State of Boyacá. Later he became the principal editor of *El Tiempo*, a newspaper started by José María Samper and Manuel Murillo Toro, and in 1877 he founded with his cousin, Diego Mendoza, another important Liberal newspaper, *El Relator*. With the fall of the Radicals in the war of 1885 and the advent of Regeneration under Rafael Núñez, Felipe Pérez focused his energies on publishing articles critical of the new regime in *El Relator*. Unfortunately, in 1891, at the age of 55 and the height of his intellectual powers, he was killed in a tragic highway accident.¹²

That Enrique Pérez greatly admired his father is clear, for in his biography of Pérez he explained that the book was not just a work of "filial homage" but one of "justice." By recounting the actions of his father he aspired to open the eyes of younger generations to the patriotic efforts

9 Castaño Duque, "Revista Hispania," 37.

10 Enrique Pérez, *Vida de Felipe Pérez* (Bogotá: Imprenta de la Luz, 1911).

11 Felipe Pérez, *Geografía física y política de los Estados Unidos de Colombia* (Bogotá: Imprenta de Echavarría Hermanos, 1862-1863).

12 Pérez, *Vida*, 48.

of the nineteenth-century Radical Liberals who, despite being denounced as intransigent and proud, nevertheless chose their leaders based on talent and science and were men who did not squander public finances. “In these pages,” he wrote, “Colombian youth will find much to learn and to imitate,” and they will understand that they must reject the hatreds of the past whatever may be their political affiliation.¹³

In the last decade of the 19th century Pérez focused his energies on fighting Regeneration policies. He was a frequent contributor to *El Relator*, revived in 1893 by his uncle and former president Santiago Pérez. Just as the War of a Thousand Days (1899-1903) was reaching an end, he went into business, establishing in Bogotá the Banco de Agricultores in 1901 and the Sociedad Nacional de Seguros in 1902.¹⁴ According to the passenger list of the ocean liner, *Sarnia*, Pérez travelled to New York City in September 1904 listing his occupation as a merchant. Accompanying him were his wife, Matilda, and children: Olga aged 6; Isabelle aged 3, and Philip aged 2.¹⁵ He was still residing in New York in May 1906 when, during the *Quinquenio* regime of Rafael Reyes (1904-1909) in Colombia, he organized with English capital two large petroleum exploratory companies headquartered in Toronto (Canada). The object of the first company, financed by a million dollars, was to explore potential oil fields located in Carmen (Tolima), while the second backed by two million dollars was to search for petroleum in Tubará (Atlántico).¹⁶

By 1909, in the aftermath of Reyes’s fall, Pérez and family returned to Colombia where he served as a deputy for the Department of Barranquilla. While in this capacity he spoke in favor of a proposed law dealing with administrative decentralization, arguing that the measure would help to alleviate the economic crisis engulfing Colombia.¹⁷ A year later, on March 10, 1910 as a member of the Comisión Especial de Relaciones Exteriores of the National Assembly in Bogotá, he spoke against the ratification of the Root-Cortés-Arosemena treaties —newly signed pacts between Colombia, Panama and the United States by which Colombia would recognize Panama’s independence and normalize relations with the United States. Pérez stated that during his recent residence in the United States, he had read U.S. newspapers and became familiar with the general culture.

Based on this knowledge he concluded that, in resolving the diplomatic crisis, the Taft administration was not acting in Colombia’s best interests. He particularly objected to Article IX of the Treaty with Panama, which left unresolved the boundary between Colombia and Panama, leaving the possibility open of greater loss of Colombian territory to the newly independent republic. Pérez was not the only member of the Assembly to raise objections to the treaties, and by the end of the debate the pacts failed to gain its approval.¹⁸

13 Pérez, *Vida*, 331-332.

14 Francisco García Calderón, Prólogo to *Vicios Políticos de América* (Paris: Librería Paul Ollendorff, 1913), IX.

15 Passenger Lists, 1820-1957, in *Ancestry.com* [database on-line], Consulted July 15, 2017, <https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/7488/NYT715_4960091?pid=4031460022&backurl=http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv%3D1%26dbid%3D7488%26h>.

16 Jorge Villegas and José Yunis, eds., *Sucesos colombianos 1900-1924* (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 1976), 96. The fate of these companies is unclear.

17 Enrique Pérez, *Discurso en segundo debate el proyecto de ley sobre descentralización administrativa* (Bogotá: Imp. De El Nuevo Tiempo, 1909).

18 Enrique Pérez, *Tratados con Panamá y Estados Unidos: discurso del diputado Enrique Pérez en la Asamblea Nacional, el día 10 de marzo* (Bogotá: Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, 1910), 1-16.

Despite these ventures into business and government, Pérez was primarily an author. Between 1910-1911, in addition to the previously mentioned *Vida de Felipe Pérez*, he published three other books: *Causa y Efecto*, *Plumadas Políticas* and *Los Mediocres*.¹⁹

He and his family returned to the United States but soon after departed from New York City via the passenger ship, *Oruba* arriving in Southampton, England on October 2, 1911.²⁰ After establishing their residence in London, Enrique joined Santiago Pérez Triana and Baldomiro Sanín Cano to launch the periodical *Hispania*. He published two more books: *Vicios Políticos de América* with a prologue by Francisco García Calderón and *Cirugía Política* with a prologue written by Miguel de Unamuno.²¹ In 1919 President Marco Fidel Suárez appointed him secretary to the Colombian delegation to Great Britain.²² Enrique Pérez died in London on May 28, 1922 at the age of 48.²³

The prologues written by García Calderón and Unamuno for Lleras' last two books provide further insight into his personality. The Peruvian author and diplomat, Francisco García Calderón, suggested that Pérez "united the writer with the man of action." A determined patriot, he had battled in the press, suffered from exile and prison, travelled to Europe, and returned to Colombia to join the political campaign.²⁴ Fearing that European countries would eventually take over Hispanic America, Pérez stressed the importance of superimposing love of country over party passions and religious fanaticism to avoid such a catastrophe. Calderón asserted that Pérez's ideas were not "the enthusiasm of a rebellious youth nor merely rhetoric," but were based on practical activity condensed over long experience. He valued economic development, held the ideal of an industrialized republic created by realistic businessmen, and he had proposed reforms and concrete solutions:

"Crusader and businessman, journalist and politician of race [...] Enrique Pérez seems to me not only a high Colombian figure, but a rare example of men that we need to multiply in our sleeping and lazy lands where action is converted into selfish empiricism and ideals into sterile utopias."²⁵

The Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno emphasized that Pérez, as revealed in his writings, was "one of those Hispanic Americans, who far from seeing everything rosy in the so-called young America, seems to see only the negative." In this respect, De Unamuno observed that many Spaniards of his era were the same, and that Pérez especially shared the views of the Aragonese

19 Pérez published: *Vida de Felipe Pérez* (Bogotá: Imprenta de la Luz, 1911); *Causa y Efecto* (Bogotá: Imprenta Eléctrica, 1911); *Causa y Efecto* (Bogotá: Imprenta Eléctrica, 1910); *Plumadas Políticas* (Bogotá: Imprenta Eléctrica, 1911); and *Los Mediocres* (Bogotá: Imprenta de la Luz, 1911).

20 The Pérez family now included four children, Olga, Isabel, Cecilia and Felipe, "Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960," in *Ancestry.com*, [online database], Consulted July 26, 2017, <https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1518/30807_A00050400070?pid=30981442&backurl=http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv%3D1%26dbid%3D1518%2>.

21 Both of these books were longer versions of short articles that he wrote for *Hispania*. Pérez, *Vicios Políticos de América*, and Miguel de Unamuno, "Prólogo" to *Cirurgía Política* (Paris: Casa Editorial Garnier Hermanos, 1913).

22 Colombia, "Memoria de 1919 del Ministro de Relaciones Exterior al Congreso de 1919," in José Antonio Uribe, *Anales diplomáticos y consulares de Colombia*, 7 vols. (Bogotá: Empresa Nacional, 1957), VII, 560.

23 "Colombia y el Mundo 1922." *Credencial Historia* n. ° 194 (2006).

24 Calderón does not mention Pérez's stay in the United States, and there is no evidence that he had travelled to Europe before 1911.

25 García Calderón, "Prólogo," i-vii.

intellectual, Joaquín Costa, a convinced pessimist.²⁶ De Unamuno remarked, “I don’t know if it is true in other parts, but in Spain at least, the mania to complain and slander ones own country, is very old and well-rooted.” In this sense de Unamuno suggested that while Pérez wrote with the devotion and fervor against European immigration to Latin America, these arrivals from the Old World could bring about positive change without the need for “political surgery.” Nevertheless, he concluded that “Pérez has identified many problems, and that those who have already thought about them should think about them again.”²⁷

3. Pérez’ Contributions to *Hispania*

Santiago Pérez Triana was the founder and principal editor of *Hispania*. His essays and articles, signed with his own name or with the pseudonyms of “A. Manos-Albas” or “Hispano,” appeared in nearly every issue. Baldomiro Sanín Cano was also an active collaborator who published, during the four and a half years of the periodical’s existence, 39 articles and 14 book reviews either under his own name or signed by the initial β. By contrast, Enrique Pérez wrote just 22 articles signed with his own name and 8 with the pseudonym Hugo de Rauzán.²⁸ The pieces signed by Pérez generally dealt with more serious topics, while those by “Hugo de Rauzán” were either lighter essays such as “Abolición del infierno” and “Frasas odiosas,” or comments on developments in Europe.²⁹

In the first year of *Hispania* Pérez contributed 13 essays or at least one article in every issue. In the second year (1913) he published eight articles (including three by Hugo de Rauzán), by the third year (1914) he wrote just 7 articles (3 of them by Hugo de Rauzán) that were published between February and September. Unlike his uncle Pérez Triana, he seems to have been barely engaged by the outbreak of the European conflict in August 1914. In his only article related to the Great War published in September, “La Resurrección de Polonia,” Pérez argued that Tsar Nicholas’ proclamation that Poland would be reunited as an autonomous country under Russian hegemony might be a harbinger of possibilities for the reunification of other nationalities currently divided by Germany and Austria.³⁰

26 Joaquín Costa (1846-1911) was a Spanish politician, lawyer, economist and historian who rose to prominent after Spain’s defeat in the Spanish-American War as the leader of “Regenerationism” —the scientific study of Spain’s decline as a nation.

27 De Unamuno, “Prólogo,” v-xii.

28 Rauzán is a commune in the Gironde department in Nouvelle-Aquitaine in Southwestern France. Lleras may have chosen it because his father, Felipe, published in 1887 a novel entitled, *El caballero de Rauzán*.

29 “Abolición del infierno,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n.º 9], 1912, 283. In this article Rauzán reported that at a congress recently held in Washington D.C., the International Association of Bible Students had passed a resolution declaring that evil persons would not be punished with torture in the afterlife, but would be totally and absolutely destroyed. The good, detached from corporeal form would continue living while bad people once dead, would never wake up again. “Frasas odiosas,” *Hispania* [vol. III, n.º 2], February 1, 1914, 932, was a humorous piece that suggested that common phrases such as “¿Cómo se ha conservado?” and “¿Qué más hecho?” left the respondent perplexed while other such phrases even “more antipathetic” were hateful and “vulgar.” Other articles by Hugo de Rauzán included “El voto feminia” supporting the campaign in England to award women the right to vote (April 1, 1913), and “Encumbramientos ministeriales” (April 1, 1914), a comment about England’s first Lord of the Admiralty whose predilection to take trips in airplanes had been criticized in the Conservative press.

30 Enrique Pérez, “La Resurrección de Polonia,” *Hispania* [vol. III, n.º 9], September 1, 1914, 1204.

During the fourth year (1915) he contributed only one bibliographic article by Hugo de Ruzán that appeared in the March 1 issue, and he wrote nothing for the last six issues of the periodicals published in 1916. He did not pen a tribute to Pérez Triana in the final number June 1, 1916, and his very limited contributions during 1915 and 1916 suggest that he had may have become busy with other activities, but no information is currently available as to what these might have been. Three years later in 1919, Colombian president Marco Fidel Suárez appointed Pérez to the post of Secretary of the Colombian Legation.³¹

Pérez's signed articles fall in three general categories: first, a call for unified action between Hispanic countries; second, opposition to imperialism; and third, commentary addressing political, economic and social problems that have existed in Hispanic America ever since independence from Spain.

4. Hispanic Solidarity

The object of his first essay, "Fraternity between the Spanish-speaking World" (*Fraternidad del mundo hispano-parlante*) published in the inaugural issue of *Hispania* was to "state explicitly some ideas about the union and fraternity that should rule all transcendental acts of the countries of Latin America." First, after reviewing the seven treaties agreed upon at the South American Congreso de Derecho Internacional Privado held in Montevideo in 1889, he suggested that internal political disturbances in the South American countries were preventing them from building upon these pacts. Pérez did not call for some sort of political union, but he did believe that the countries should continue to work together as the best way to avoid foreign depredations. In addition, he argued that there should be a greater interchange of products and artistic and intellectual ideas between Hispanic America and "Mother Spain, the cradle of our ancestors" —countries united by language, religious and race. Then Latin America, "strong in the interior; respectable and respected abroad will be a fertile field for the seeds of progress and liberty."³²

A follow-up article, "Ámerica y España: La Fraternidad-Las Palabras-Los Hechos-Un congreso de Estudiantes Hispano-parlantes" published April 1, 1912 reported that his call for a stronger union between Hispanic America and Spain had received a mixed reaction from Spaniards. For example, Ramiro de Maetzu wrote in *Nuevo Mundo* that fraternity between Spain and Spanish American did not exist.³³ The memory of the war that had been fought was too strong, and there were "mountains of printed paper that separate us more than the battle. That ink is not only passion but also concept." Another contributor to *Nuevo Mundo* stated that Hispanic Americans did not want to be

31 In October 1919 Pérez, as first secretary of the Colombian Legation published an article, "Britain and Latin America" in *Sperling's Journal*, a British monthly magazine, in which he surveyed the historical relations between England and Spanish America, and suggested that the decline of German influence due to its defeat in the Great War offered British bankers and financial houses enormous opportunities to increase their activities in the region and especially in Colombia. Summarizing his argument, he wrote: "We stand ready to welcome and to assist every legitimate form of commercial enterprise that promises to reinforce the bonds of interest and attachment which have existed between Great Britain and the Republics of South America from the first days of their independence." "Britain and Latin America," *Sperling's Journal* [n. ° 4] 1919, 8-20.

32 Enrique Pérez, "Fraternidad del mundo hispano-parlante," *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° I], January 1, 1912, 8-9.

33 *Nuevo Mundo* was a weekly illustrated periodical published in Madrid between 1894 and 1933. Collaborators with that publication included Miguel de Unamuno, José Sánchez Rojas, Ramiro de Maetzu, Emilio Bobadilla and Mariano de Cavia.

like Spaniards of the past but preferred to march into the future with their own personality. Pérez countered these objections by denying that there were “mountains of paper” dividing the Hispanic world and maintaining that there was no antipathy to Spain in Hispanic America. One strategy, he suggested, to further mutual understanding would be to hold an international congress of students in Madrid. International congresses between the former countries of Gran Colombia (Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela) had already taken place with great success in Bogotá (July 20, 1910), Caracas (July 1911) and Quito (August 1911). Pérez wrote, “We must broaden this idea...Today’s students [in Hispanic America] are men of the future. They should meet with students of the Mother Country.”³⁴

On February 1, 1913, Pérez published, “La paz americana y el litigio colombo-peruano.” In a lengthy essay he decried the warlike preparations taking place in both countries over boundary disputes and suggested that rather than fighting one another, the two governments should take their demands for justice to the International Tribunal at The Hague.³⁵ Colombia’s effort to win United States support for a treaty resolving the status of an independent Panama was another concern that prompted Pérez to call for Latin American support. In “Un llamamiento a la solidaridad ibero-americana,” published on July 1, 1914, he reported that the Colombian congress had approved on April 6 a treaty with the United States resolving the Panama question. Although the treaty was not likely to reach the U.S. Senate in time to be considered before the summer recess, Pérez asked Latin American countries to support Colombia and to urge the U.S. Senate to pass it as a “high example of solidarity, because the crime that Washington had committed against Colombia was a crime that effected the whole Ibero-American continent.” Such support would be a “beautiful spectacle” that justice in our America is backed by all peoples from Mexico to Cape Horn and that “solidarity has crystallized already in Iberian American consciousness.”³⁶

5. Threat of Imperialism

Pérez was deeply concerned by the threat posed to Latin America by U.S. and/or European imperialism. On February 1, 1912 in “El simiente de la libertad” he reviewed the expansion of the British Empire into Canada, Australia, the Transvaal, and other autonomous colonies. Pérez noted the inherent racism in the British system remarking, “In the United States men of color are treated as inferior due to the days of slavery, but that does not explain why England seizes the argument of ethnic inferiority to deny some of its colonies an autonomy that it itself has taught them to desire.” England has sowed the seed of liberty without thinking that the seed will give fruit. “Who seeds the winds will harvest the storm, and these peoples [now under British rule] will eventually revolt.” Pérez’s implication was that the Hispanic American republics should do everything possible to protect themselves from a similar fate.³⁷ On March 1, 1912 in “Chile y la cultura militar en la

34 Enrique Pérez, “América y España: La Fraternidad-Las Palabras-Los Hechos-Un Congreso de Estudiantes Hispanoparlantes,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 4] Abril, 1912, 99-100.

35 Enrique Pérez, “La paz americana y el litigio colombo-peruano,” *Hispania* [vol. II, n. ° 2], February, 1913, 451.

36 Enrique Pérez, “Un llamamiento a la solidaridad ibero-americana,” *Hispania* [vol. III, n. ° 7], July 1, 1914, 1122. The U.S. Senate refused to consider the treaty primarily because it included an “apology” for its action in aiding Panama’s separation. Soon afterward, the outbreak of the European war postponed further consideration. Not until 1922 did the Senate approve the agreement, and that action occurred only after the “apology clause had been eliminated from the text.

37 Enrique Pérez, “El simiente de la libertad,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 2], February, 1912, 34.

America Hispana” Pérez praised the efforts of Chile, who with the collaboration of German officers, was modernizing its military. Pérez argued that by strengthening its ability to repel outside invaders, Chile was providing an inspiration to other peoples in Hispanic America.³⁸

In “La doctrina de la dignidad” published in August, 1912, Pérez underscored that the growing expansion of U.S. political and economic interests in Caribbean and Central America constituted a serious threat to the sovereignty of the South American republics, and that there was reason to regard these developments not only with distrust but with patriotic fear. Equally dangerous were Germany’s aspirations for expansion. These threats, he continued, can best be fought by forming an atmosphere of civic life that will be impressive by its seriousness, by its dignity, and by its conduct. The sanitation of unhealthy port cities as well as the sanitation of the political and fiscal economy of the republic would be the “best bulwark, the most formidable way to fight imperialism.”³⁹ No doctrine, no confederation, no alliance would accomplish anything if ungovernable peoples did not respect themselves. The tropical American republics should be concerned about these problems. They must maintain at a very high level the principal of equality —the fundamental basis of democracies— and preserve the uniformity of languages and ties of international friendship. Our best defense against imperialism, Pérez concluded, is “to oppose its voracity with the strength of the doctrine of dignity and honor of the weak.”⁴⁰

In connection with his doctrine of dignity, Pérez entered into a discussion with his colleague Baldomiro Sanín Cano over the best form of government to rule a nation. Sanín Cano raised this issue in his first article published in the third number of *Hispania*, “El parlamentarismo.” In this essay Sanín Cano analyzed the problems of citizen representation, participation and decision making under a parliamentary form of government. The very nature of this form imposed quantity over quality. The self interests of capitalists tended to dominate such governments, a situation enhanced by government corruption. Moreover, he argued, “I don’t see the logic that half plus one is more intelligent, more generous, more appropriate than the half minus one.” Majority rule drowns out the voices of the minorities and thus diminishes the responsibility of the citizen. The democratic system accepts that the reason and sentiment of the largest number incarnates truth and justice. Yet questions of government are often more complicated. Resolving them supposes talent, impartiality, modesty and discretion —qualities that rarely occur in multitudes. Deciding which route is best to build a railroad is not an issue that can be decided by a majority of votes but should be made by an expert skilled in such matters. Reviewing activities of the English parliaments, Sanín Cano concluded that parliament was a centuries old tradition that would disappear because of its inherent inadequacies.⁴¹

In two articles, “El parlamentarismo” published in May 1912 and “Entre dos despotismos” in July 1912, Pérez took issue with Sanín Cano’s conclusion. In “El parlamentarismo,” he posed the question, “Do ideas value because of the number of people that believe them or because they enclose the truth?” It is evident, he responded, and “that we cannot submit questions of scientific or philosophical nature to majority rule. And yet parlamentarismo, filled as it is with imperfections,

38 Enrique Pérez, “Chile y la cultura militar en la America Hispana,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 3], March 1, 1912, 64.

39 Enrique Pérez, “La doctrina de la dignidad,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 8], August, 1, 1912, 244.

40 Enrique Pérez, “La doctrina de la dignidad,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 7], July, 1912, 244-246.

41 Baldomiro Sanín Cano, “El parlamentarismo,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 3], March, 1912, 59-62; Rubiano Muñoz and Gómez García, *Años de vértigo*, 96-97.

is the only possible way.” The failures of parliament are evident i.e. the slowness of its work and the scant interest it takes in many important problems, but alternative forms of government are far worse. For example, without the aid of Parliament, English miners would not have gained the right to a minimum wage. In order to triumph, ideas do not require a plebiscite. “The masses may have to see an idea put in action in order to be persuaded that it is the best way.”⁴² In “Entre dos despotismos,” Pérez challenged Sanín Cano’s assertion that “To find an acceptable despot is very difficult, but it is possible. Experience has shown that to find an honorable parliamentary majority is impossible.” Conceding that he was not unaware of the defects and vices of parliamentary rule, Pérez questioned how one was to find an “acceptable despot?” He suggested that while Sanín Cano’s loss of faith in parliaments undoubtedly derived from the failure of Hispanic American republics to create workable governments, rather than dismissing parliaments completely, he would provide a greater service by facing the question fully and revealing, with many points and signs, a doctrine for these countries that might be more effective than parliament. On this matter, Pérez concluded:

“In the dilemma of choosing between a despot [who would be] inevitably ominous, because that is what the word means, and the collective effort, that in spite of all the inconveniences pointed out by Sanín Cano, thanks to education and by force of circumstances, which sooner or latter will level out toward the good as so many times has happened and will continue to happen, I will choose the second”.⁴³

6. Hispanic America’s Political, Economic and Social Ills

Closely linked to Enrique Pérez’s fear of U.S. and European imperialism in Hispanic America was his keen awareness of the political, economic and social ills that weakened the republics.⁴⁴ In October 1912 he published, “El consejo de Costa.” Here he drew upon the ideas of Joaquín Costa (1896-1911), a major figure in the movement of Spanish Regeneration that developed after Spain’s loss in the war of 1898. Having previously proposed “the doctrine of dignity” as the best way for the Hispanic American republics to avoid their loss of sovereignty, he added here that in order to develop “dignity”, the republics would have to root out illiteracy and such political vices as caudillaje and oligarchy rule, while at the same time encouraging civic responsibility. Citizens, he continued, are created by education, and the best hope for achieving these changes lay in the development of universities for “when the tropical American university youth have had the will to reform, they have broken the inertia of the masses.” Entrenched oligarchies make laws they do not enforce, and clerical voices subject souls through fear. It is necessary to drown those voices through education, and until education is intensely developed, we will not win spiritual independence. For us “the question of life or death is to renovate our national soul...because if we do not proceed to civilize ourselves,

42 Enrique Pérez, “El parlamentarismo,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 5], May 1, 1912, 136-137.

43 Enrique Pérez, “Entre dos despotismos,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 7], July 1, 1912, 206-208.

44 It should be noted that Pérez was also critical of inequities in the non-Hispanic world. For example, in the March 1, 1914 issue of *Hispania*, he published “Justicia?”—an essay castigating the “stupid and brutal” practice in the United States of condemning a ten-year-old child to solitary confinement in prison for life without taking into account his mental state at the time of his alleged crime.

foreign imperialism —on pretext of diffusing civilization— will impose it by cannon on us, and each discharge will carry, with a girón of our flags, a piece of our souls.”⁴⁵

In December 1912 Pérez published *Cirugía Política*, an article drawn from his volume of the same name published in 1913.⁴⁶ This piece was a response to *Pueblo Enfermo* (1909), a book recently published by the Bolivian author, Alcides Argüedas (1879-1946). In the aftermath of Bolivia’s defeat in the War of the Pacific in 1879, Argüedas ascribed Bolivia’s weakness to the inferior racial makeup of its population dominated by Native Americans. Coining the term “radical pessimism,” Argüedas explained that “his stance on indigenous issues came from a mixture of fatal biological laws, historical reasons and environmental circumstances [that] have made the indigenous an atrophied or infirm race.”⁴⁷ Pérez rejected Argüedas’ implied characterization of South America as a “sick continent.” He clarified that the title of his essay (and his book), *Cirugía Política* had nothing to do with medicine but was referring to society. It was not necessary to extirpate entire races to resolve the problems that faced the republics. Political life in the republics was as “false as it can be; a caricature of what it should be. What was necessary was to use the scalpel of social, political and moral surgery to cut out the “gangrene of caciquismo, or oligarchies that impeded democratic development and the tumors of clericalism.”⁴⁸

In his article “El superhombre americano” published on June 1, 1914, Pérez returned to the issue of race in tropical America with a review of the writings of Francisco García Calderón focusing especially on his *Creación de un continente* and *Latin America: its Rise and Progress*, published in 1912. In both books, García Calderón argued that Latin America’s dependency on Europe and the U.S. was inevitable, stating that without the help of foreign investments, it would not have been possible to build railroads, or ports, or to stabilize the governments. What interested Pérez most was García’s discussion of the influx of different races into the Western Hemisphere, and he agreed that all the arrivals should be termed “Americans.” Pérez pointed out, however, that when he was in New York City, he saw that immigrants arriving from many different countries quickly adapted from their previous origins to become completely assimilated into U.S. culture. In South America, he continued, this rapid process did not occur because the recently arrived clung to their original identities. The English and Italians that went to Argentina, Chile, and Brazil tended to keep their original nationality. Argentine law permitted immigrants, if they were nationalized, to vote, but under Italian law, such individuals were still considered citizens of Italy. This retention of dual nationality was dangerous for the republics, since, although “the foreigners say that they have been conquering Argentina, but in reality they have created a new Italy.” Despite this criticism, Pérez believed that the mixture of races in South America would ultimately strengthen the republics, and stated that one of his greatest hopes was that the process would produce the “Superhombre americano.”⁴⁹

On March 1, 1913 with his article “La política y el servicio civil,” Pérez offered another approach to resolving tropical America’s political economic and social problems: replacing politics as usual

45 Enrique Pérez, “El consejo de Costa,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. °10], 1912, 312-313.

46 De Unamuno, “Prólogo,” v-xii.

47 José Miguel Oviedo, *Historia de la literatura Hispanoamérica*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2001), 3: 115

48 Enrique Pérez, “Cirugía Política,” *Hispania* [vol. I, n. ° 12], December, 1912, 386-388.

49 Enrique Pérez, “El superhombre americano,” *Hispania* [vol. III, n. ° 6], June 1, 1914, 1081-1082.

with a trained public administration. Pointing out that England had passed a law in 1870 requiring prospective government workers to pass an examination, and that the U.S. Congress had followed suit by passing Law of 1883 creating the Office of Civil Service, he asserted that until the Spanish American republics adopted similar measures, politics based on contrary notions of liberty and repression would continue as usual. The regeneration that we need, he continued, is social, and politics has to be the way, but one must begin by taking it away from the oligarchy. Up to now “public service has been a toy passed from hand to hand...political intrigue is a science. If someone truly qualified happens to be elected, he will not be given liberty of action. Things will remain as they have been until we have a law regulating and establishing career public servants.”⁵⁰

Conclusion

The object of this essay has been to awaken awareness of the contributions of Enrique Pérez to *Hispania* and to highlight his place in Colombian intellectual history in the early 20th century. It is curious that, despite his numerous publications and the prestige of his father Felipe, so little has been recorded concerning Pérez’s personal life. Despite this lacuna, much can be learned from his writings about his concerns for the future of Colombia and Hispanic America.

Like his colleagues Pérez Triana and Sanín Cano, Pérez was an enthusiastic member of the group of exiled Hispanic intellectuals living in London who debated ideas with his English, French and Spanish counterparts in formal and informal social gatherings often hosted by Pérez Triana. Pérez Lleras supported solidarity of the Hispanic world as a buffer to counter the enormous power wielded by Europe and the United States in world affairs in the early 20th century. His fear of European and/or U.S. imperialism was amply justified given the wave of immigrants flowing into the Southern Cone republics and the meddling of the U.S. in Mexican, Central American and Caribbean affairs even before the outbreak of the Great War, and he suggested solutions. Rejecting the racial analysis offered by Alcides Argüedas as an explanation for Hispanic America’s weakness, he argued that the social and political ills of the republics could be resolved through the spurning of despotic rule, establishing the formal education of a governing elite, developing a trained civil service, and cautiously welcoming foreign investment and European immigration. Pérez did not attain the intellectual stature of Sanín Cano nor replicate Pérez Triana’s unconditional support for the allied cause in the Great War, but his articles published in *Hispania* certainly added to the high quality and unique role in Colombian arts and letters enjoyed by that periodical.

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