

Al Redactor General:

Bogotá, 11 de agosto de 1987

He leído la reseña hecha por el señor J. Ignacio Méndez sobre el libro del profesor James William Park titulado *Rafael Núñez and the Politics of Colombian Regionalism (1863-1885)* y encuentro que ella es incompleta y, sobre todo, injusta, porque no reconoce el paciente trabajo investigativo del señor Park, que consultó más de noventa periódicos de una veintena de ciudades colombianas y numerosos archivos particulares, que no son siempre de fácil acceso, todo lo cual—que yo sepa—no se había realizado hasta el presente. No se analizan tampoco las tesis sostenidas por el profesor Park en su obra, que merecen por lo menos un comentario. Voy a tratar de hacerlo aquí.

La tesis central de Park es la de que Núñez encabezó en 1875 un movimiento de reivindicación de los tres estados de la Costa Atlántica, Bolívar, Magdalena y Panamá (apoyados por Cauca) enfrentados al monopolio político ejercido por los tres estados de la Cordillera Oriental (Santander, Boyacá y Cundinamarca) a través de mandatarios oriundos de esa zona, o fuertemente vinculados a ella como Manuel Murillo Toro, que fue presidente del estado soberano de Santander. Aquí cabe hacer la única observación de fondo que merece el estudio de Park, no para negar esta afirmación (respaldada por documentos poco conocidos), sino para precisar que no fue ésa la causa determinante de la irrupción de Núñez en el escenario nacional. Otros factores hubo, de carácter político y económico, registrados por Park a lo largo de su libro, que pesaron mucho más que la simple reivindicación regionalista. Tales factores, es cierto, jugaron un papel más decisivo en la segunda campaña de Núñez, que culminó con su elección como presidente de la unión para el período 1880-82.

Park hace además una sugestiva presentación de la guerra de 1876 y de sus consecuencias políticas. Cuesta trabajo no acompañarlo en su aseveración de que fue éste el episodio decisivo del período estudiado por él. En efecto: para asegurar la victoria, el gobierno radical debió llamar en su ayuda al sector independiente del liberalismo, cuyos jefes más connotados adquirieron entonces una notoria popularidad que habría de reflejarse en las urnas: Julián Trujillo, el vencedor de Los Chancos, alcanzó fácilmente, un año después de haber estallado la guerra, la presidencia de la república. Wilches y Otálora fueron elegidos posteriormente para presidir los estados de Santander y Boyacá, tradicionales baluartes del radicalismo. Los excesos de los radicales caucanos determinaron el triunfo de otro político independiente, Ezequiel Hurtado, en el más grande estado de la unión. Aunque derrotado, el conservatismo también derivó ventajas de la guerra, de la cual salió vigorosamente unido. Además, al resultar vencidos los conservadores antioqueños (ocasionales aliados políticos de los radicales en el período anterior) y perder el control de su estado, la dirección de este partido pasó a manos de otros líderes que, como Carlos Holguín, buscaron más bien el acercamiento a los independientes. En síntesis, y aunque resulte paradójico, los radicales ganaron la guerra de 1876 pero perdieron el poder. Al derrotar a los conservadores en 1877, el radicalismo controlaba ocho de los nueve estados. Dos años más tarde, sólo gobernaba en dos estados y los independientes en siete. El camino de Núñez estaba despejado, como bien lo muestra Park.

Al revés de lo que piensa el señor professor Méndez, yo creo que el trabajo del señor Park no sólo es un excelente análisis de las actuaciones de Rafael Núñez en una etapa decisiva de su vida, sino también una admirable síntesis de un período poco estudiado de la historia de Colombia, el de la vigencia de la Constitución de Rionegro, de 1863 a 1885.

Academia Colombiana de Historia

NICOLÁS DEL CASTILLO MATHIEU

To the Editor:

October 5, 1987

In reference to Nicolás del Castillo's letter concerning my review of James W. Park, *Rafael Núñez and the Politics of Colombian Regionalism, 1863-1886*, I would like to offer the following points.

My review had four parts: 1) a brief summary of the work's content; 2) an appraisal of the author's attainment of his intent, which, I wrote, Park did "methodically"; 3) a recognition of the author's "extensive research in public and private archives"; and 4) a critical analysis of what I considered the work's weaknesses, which I felt—and still do—is the basic reason for reviewing, i.e., offering to the academic community the benefit of our intellectual pursuits. That my critical remarks occupied more than half of the review was an indication of the seriousness of my reservations concerning Park's work.

There is really no major disagreement between Mr. del Castillo's recognition of James Park's accomplishments and mine, except that taking into consideration the *HAHR*'s limit on a review's length, I pithily recognized Park's work—"[he] fulfilled his goal"—whereas del Castillo chose to offer a lengthier explanation. However, the core of my reservations—i.e., disputable interpretive points—was left untouched.

I am looking forward to having with both Park and del Castillo a tinto so that we may continue probing the Regenerador's fascinating political life.

Northeastern Illinois University

J. IGNACIO MÉNDEZ

To the Editor:

August 13, 1987

I refer to a review of my book *La primera vuelta al mundo* (Plaza y Janés, Bogotá, 1984) which appeared in *HAHR* last November. The reviewer, Paul E. Hoffman of Louisiana State University, begins by objecting to the title, "El libro de la nao *Victoria*," which I use in my "Table of Contents" for the document from the Magellan-Elcano voyage that I published in facsimile and in transcription as Annexes 4 and 5 of my book. I must remind him that the document itself begins with the words "El libro que trajo la nao *Victoria*. . . ." Hoffman then emphasizes that excerpts from the document have been published before, especially by Navarrete (after Muñoz). Again I must remind him that this is clearly stated on p. 24 of my book (note 3), and that Navarrete's excerpt contains just over 1,000 words, whereas the document I publish contains over 12,000, so that the comparison is quite uncalled for.

Hoffman goes on to say that my book is done in the style of Samuel Eliot Morison—high praise indeed. I worked with Morison for more than 12 years until his death, and have always been proud to consider him my mentor. But Hoffman adds that nothing will be found in my book which is not in Morison's *The European Discovery of America*, vol. II, *The Southern Voyages*. I believe that in my analysis of the documents I publish, I make a few modest contributions which did not fit the scope of Morison's book: my chapter II attempts a resume of how Magellan and Elcano navigated; my chapter III attempts a reconstruction of Magellan's world view; and my chapters IV to IX make several changes in the route which Morison and I retraced in 1972-73, changes which I base on the aforementioned documents and on the New World voyage which I undertook after studying them. These changes may seem minor to someone who has not physically followed the first circumnavigation, and perhaps Hoffman has found my navigational calculations difficult to digest. If so, I apologize for not having simplified them further.

Finally, I am grateful that Hoffman ends by admitting that my book is "a useful addition to the literature on the Magellan-Elcano voyage because it publishes a complete transcription of the 'libro' [de la nao *Victoria*] for the first time." Better late than never!

Bogotá, Colombia

MAURICIO OBREGÓN

To the Editor:

September 21, 1987

Señor Obregón is quite right that I let the overwhelming similarity between his reconstruction of the Magellan-El Cano route and that of Samuel E. Morison lull me into not noting or evaluating the few points on which he differs from Morison. I apologize to him and your readers for this oversight.

That matter aside, Obregón does not address the heart of my critique of his book, which is that he makes claims for the "libro de la nao *Victoria*" in his subtitle and prolog (pp. 23-24), as well as table of contents, that suggest that this is the long-lost ship's log. I can well understand Obregón's hopes when he heard about this "libro"; I do not understand why, once the document was in hand and its true nature was clear, he did not tell his readers that this was not what he thought it would be (i.e., not the *Victoria*'s log book) but was in fact "El libro que trajo la Nao *Victoria* de las amistades que hizieron con los Reyes de Maluco" (pp. 267-68, 300), a rather different and less important document, at least for the reconstruction of the voyage route. Admiral Morison, by the way, mentions the "libro" in his own book, and correctly evaluates its content and relative importance to the history of the Magellan-El Cano voyage.

Obregón will find that I did credit him with knowledge of the Navarrete excerpts ("In addition to the extracts printed in Navarrete's . . . that were known to the editor. . ."; i.e., to Obregón). I faulted him for not giving us a complete account of the publication of the extracts, and, more importantly in light of his claims in his prolog (p. 24, "se publica aquí por primera vez en facsímile y en transcripción"), for not telling us that the text had been published in facsimile (although admittedly not in *both* facsimile and transcription).

A final note. The editors of the *HADR* omitted the section of my review that listed the correct order of the facsimile pages, which are printed out of order.

Louisiana State University

PAUL E. HOFFMAN