ELEMENTS OF NATIONBUILDING IN ARGENTINA: BUENOS AIRES, 1810-1828

By

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The May revolution of 1810 laid the foundations of the Argentine nation-state in two essential ways: it provided the means for natives and foreigners to become true Argentines, both emotionally and legally.

The independence revolution in Argentina brought to power a de-facto government faced with the immediate need to establish and keep political power. In the old viceregal capital, Buenos Aires, the revolution enjoyed initial popularity, but it was soon deemed necessary to cultivate public opinion. The government wanted to make sure that popular support stayed in its favor. Traditional means of written propaganda—government newspapers, handbills and
pamphlets--were used intensively. Police and administrative controls of the residents of the capital were intensified.

Concurrently, the organization of time was adapted to reflect the new political reality. Monarchist celebrations were abolished and the number of religious holidays was curtailed drastically. They were replaced by revolutionary festivals: the Fiestas Mayas and Fiestas Julias, and by spontaneous celebrations of victories on the battlefield. The new festivals also served as a litmus test of political loyalty.

The new celebrations--drawing heavily upon the Colonial festive tradition and on the new celebrations introduced after the victories over the British in 1806 and 1807--also enabled the inhabitants of the capital to express their growing patriotic feelings. At the same time, the thousands of foreign residents of Buenos Aires could assimilate emotionally through the new festivals.

But the government needed more than loyalty: it needed men with new skills and contacts to build up the country. Hence, it tried to stimulate immigration and naturalize newcomers from Europe. Naturalization was originally intended to purge the bureaucracy of counterrevolutionary peninsulars, but it gradually developed into an instrument to make Argentines of all foreigners.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Nationalism and its Interpreters

The building of nations has become a familiar phenomenon since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Some of the countries of the Old World had achieved nationhood during the Middle Ages. In medieval France, Paris had been the center of nationbuilding, in which the monarchy occupied a central place. The monks of the monastery of Saint Denis near Paris took care of the propaganda, and elaborated a national myth around the royal family and the sacred nature of the king. Official historiography thus emphasized the unity of the state, royal authority, religion, and historical consciousness.¹

But apart from France and England, few countries had been able to transform themselves into nations, rather compact structures with a single dominant language, a single religion, and more importantly, one single loyalty. In France and England, challenges to these pillars of national unity had been fought off with success, as for instance, during the wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During the Atlantic revolution (or democratic revolution, in the words of U.S historian Robert R. Palmer) between 1750
and 1850, "nations" proliferated on both sides of the Atlantic--nations, and countries pretending to be nations. Only after 1945 has the world seen a comparable sudden increase in new nations, or purported nations.

All nations face certain common problems, the most important one being the need to secure the loyalty of the citizens. In the words of Antonio Gramsci, new states needed to construct hegemony, and then maintain it with the help of loyal civil servants, bureaucrats, and intellectuals. The stronger the hegemony, the less brute force is required to perpetuate a particular political construction, state, or nation. It may even be said that as soon as a state has succeeded in having its citizens internalize loyalty and loyal behavior, the state becomes a nation-state, or nation. Nascent states need to assure themselves of a sufficiently broad popular base of support in order to survive. At least it seems that popularity is indispensable to young states. But what kind of popularity, and with whom? And how does a state go about establishing and securing popularity, and with it, hegemony? For that matter, what truly is a nation? None of the definitions offered in the past proves to be entirely satisfactory. Tautologically, one might argue that a nation exists as a result of nationalism, which according to the definition given by the British Royal Institute of International Affairs is:
a consciousness on the part of individuals or groups, of membership in a nation, or of a desire to forward, liberty, prosperity of a nation, whether one's own or another.

Unfortunately, such definitions do not tell us a lot about how a nation comes into being.

The literature dealing with nationalism and related subjects such as nation, national identity, nationbuilding, nationality, as well as with patriotism is exceedingly vast. Countless historians, anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists, and assorted non-specialists have devoted their time to the analysis of these topics. A few works, however, stand out, and they can be roughly divided according to the way in which the authors regard the process of national formation. Some see it as a natural and organic process spontaneously taking place at a certain stage of historical development in a particular country or general area. Others subscribe to the notion that a nation is artificial, and as such the product of a conscious nationbuilding effort on the part of a ruling class. One might call the former the *idealist*, or *romantic* school, the latter the *materialist* school. The latter assumes that first there is a state, a political entity, which then creates, or helps to create, a nation. This view is indissolubly linked with nationalism. The other line of reasoning maintains that first, there is
national feeling, or nationalism, which then leads to the formation of a separate nation. The nation in turn brings forth the state.

The romantic school traces its origins back to the sixteenth-century French philosopher Jean Bodin, and more notably to the German eighteenth-century romantic thinkers Gottfried von Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Herder taught that a people (Volk) possessed a character all its own, and that this special character had been shaped in primeval times. The purer such a Volk, the better. In Herder's eyes language was identical with the Volk. His ideas proved quite attractive for subject Central European peoples during the course of the nineteenth century, and in the beginning of our century, in their striving for national independence. Federico Chabod gives a good account of the way in which nationalism became connected with an increased awareness of nature and the individual. This is illustrated with the example of mid-eighteenth-century German-speaking Switzerland. In the nineteenth century the French historians Jules Michelet and Edgar Quinet felt attracted to Herder's thesis about the individuality of a people. Recently, one of the more eloquent advocates of this line of thought has argued that the tendency to identify a nation with a language was attractive because of general convenience. In the twentieth century, German emigre scholars have made significant contributions to the study of the problem of
nationalism. Frederick Hertz has redefined the debate by introducing more factors than just "natural" national identity. For him, national consciousness was the foremost criterion of nationality, but he regarded religion, economic interests, natural frontiers and historical rights as powerful elements. Hans Kohn gave his treatment of the topic an ideological twist. A romanticist, he divided nationalism into two basic varieties, a western and a non-western type. The western type was allegedly political, rational, pluralist, and freedom loving, whereas the other type was cultural in character, irrational, authoritarian, and collectivist. The former was to be found in the states bordering the Northern Atlantic, the latter in Central Europe, and everywhere else. Needless to say, Kohn's views clearly echoed World War II ideological struggles between democracy and fascism. Other important romanticists include Luigi Sturzo, who sees the collective personality of a nation as the reflection of the collective popular will, and Carlton J.H. Hayes, who thinks along lines similar to those of Kohn. Like Herder, Hayes considered language as the basic determinant of the nation.

As for "materialist" thought, it may be said to have originated with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his social contract. In itself, this was a continuation of the age-old idea, first put forward by Aristotle, about the voluntary
association of a group of persons and villages into a larger unit, so as to further the common cause. Outstanding among nineteenth-century expressions of this idea is the French historian Ernest Renan, who argued that the nation was intrinsically subjective, and that the members of a nation in fact carried out a "daily referendum," thus reinforcing the true bonds holding society and the state together. Among those who insist particularly on the artificial character of the nation the Marxists figure prominently. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels have often implicitly accepted the common nineteenth-century romantic opinion that the world was divided into nations, each with its own particular identity. For instance, Marx, in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* repeatedly refers to a French nation as opposed to the machinations of the bourgeoisie and Napoleon III. Nowhere is it clear, however, what Marx considered to be that nation. He argued that, eventually, nations and nationalism would come to an end due to the growth of the workers movement and international solidarity. Some Marxists like the Dutch astronomer Anton Pannekoek have intentionally downplayed and ignored obvious differences between European countries, while condemning nationalism altogether as an evil aberration. In general, however, Marxists tend to regard the nation as the conscious creation of a national bourgeoisie in order to further its own interests. Howard Davis realizes that nationalism is a force to be reckoned with and not
necessarily evil and reactionary. His review of existing literature is at the same time an attempt to come to terms with nationalism from the Marxist perspective. Marxist theory concerning nationbuilding has been applied most consistently by Margit Mayer and Magaret A. Fay. They argue that economic interests to create an integrated market impelled North American capitalists and the bourgeoisie to give more power, meaning and content to the weak and ineffective federal political framework as a result of the American Revolution. According to Samir Amin, nationalism is a constructive force, especially in the Third World. There, nationalism can be a tool in the anti-imperialist struggle. Thus Amin proves to be opposed to marxist ideology as it emanates from the Soviet Union.

Non-marxists as well have devoted their energies to show how a small elite may be instrumental in the process of nationbuilding. Robert R. Palmer argued that intellectuals (teachers, preachers and the like) helped spread an incipient revolutionary nationalist idea well before the French Revolution took place. More recently, Claude Mossé has shown how a ruling class may legitimate and safeguard its dominance, its hegemony, by creating historical myths. Peter Burke has analyzed a process whereby popular ideas were gradually pushed aside and replaced by an official culture imposed from above. Thus in Western Europe, traditional ideas
of localism and regionalism had to disappear because they interfered with the establishment of an effective state bureaucracy that could control the general allegiance of its subjects. Upon this solid base, modern governments could continue to build nation-states, as Eugene Weber has demonstrated. The latter-mentioned works by Burke, Mosse, and Weber, to which has to be added a most important recent contribution edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, are among a small but growing number of detailed studies on the formation of national states and nationbuilding. Thus there finally seems to be a departure from traditional theorizing about this problem, as well as from large pictures painted with broad general strokes.

It may be argued, finally, that a nation is consciously created by a group of leading citizens of a certain political entity, a country, so as to provide an emotional content for what might otherwise continue to be an institutional framework devoid of meaning to its members, the inhabitants. Most likely, the leading citizens would belong to an aristocracy or oligarchy, or in the marxist sense, a bourgeoisie. In fact, much of the work of nation-building, that is to say the formulation or production of nationalist ideas, and the production of artifacts supposedly representative of a "national spirit," would be carried out by intellectuals in the Gramscian sense, meaning university
graduates such as lawyers, doctors, judges, engineers and historians, but also students, poets, writers, and journalists.

Nationalism in Latin America

Latin American nationalism has long been regarded as one of the keys to the understanding of Latin American politics and history. Numerous authors, both Latin Americans and North Americans especially, have devoted their academic energies to studies of this topic. Unfortunately, however, much of the literature so far produced has been repetitive. Detailed studies of the formation of national states upon the ruins of the Spanish Empire are few and far between. The Chilean historian Gonzalo Vial Correa is one of the few who have written systematically about the colonial roots of modern Latin American nations.

The particular problems encountered by Latin Americans in building their nations and an appropriate national consciousness are ably discussed by Leopoldo Zea. The central problem for the creoles who had just shaken off the Spanish imperial yoke was the construction of a credible and useable national past. On the one hand they needed to take their distance from the Spanish cultural and political heritage--identifying to a degree with the native Americans, the Indians--while on the other hand they needed to ensure their
continued dominance over those very Indians. Thus there was an almost unbridgeable gap between two pillars of creole political thought and action. The creole mind had deep colonial roots. Creole relations with the native were the cornerstone of the colonial political and social establishment. In this respect, Latin American nations were indeed already constructed to a certain degree under the Empire. In Guatemala, for instance, the creoles willfully and very deliberately excluded Indians, mestizos, and Spanish peninsular newcomers from participating in colonial social, economic and ceremonial benefits.

In Argentina, nationalism sells well, literally. There is a steady and considerable market for profound and less profound analyses of the national character, the fate of the nation, its future, its grand past, its missed chances, its rightful place among the other nations of the world, national heroes, from Juan Manuel de Rosas to Juan Domingo Perón, heroic actions, and above all, the unique character of the Argentine people and its unique expressions, the gaucho and the tango. But the Argentine nation, whether real or imagined, was the creation of a number of influential citizens. The group of leading citizens, aristocrats, oligarchs, and intellectuals, in nineteenth-century Argentina was reasonably homogeneous, restricted and exclusive. The main branch of this group naturally resided in the capital,
Buenos Aires, living off the rents of their extensive cattle domains and profiting from international trade. In the nineteenth century, this group tried to recreate a European state in Argentina, ignoring existing social and economic realities in the country at large that were determined by the heritage of Spanish, Indian and Mestizo culture. These "native" cultural values were intentionally ignored and relegated to the background of Argentine cultural life. Domingo F. Sarmiento's *Facundo*, and Juan Bautista Alberdi's *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina*, both works published in the 1840s and early 1850s, have sought to denounce the native heritage and values and tried to impose non-Spanish European ideas upon their country. Subsequently, these new ideas were woven together in the general concept of an "Argentine nation," European in outlook, spirit and tradition. These new ideas were received eagerly by the Argentine upper classes, who were only too willing to construct a nation that would be consistent with their worldview and international businesses.

There is a national preoccupation with nationalism, dating from the golden years of Argentina, between 1880 and 1930, when it was undisputably the leader among the fellow nations of Latin America. That half-century saw the creation of Argentine national mythology. Works dealing with the
colonial past, for instance, clearly reflected contemporary notions of what Argentina was like, and what it should be like.

Ever since Bartolomé Mitre had published his Historia de Belgrano, it had become an established article of faith of the Argentine upper class, at least, that the Argentine people had its roots in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, especially. For Mitre, the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776 marks the beginning of the Argentine national state. Other gentleman-scholars, such as José María Ramos Mejía, were able to prove scientifically that the Argentine people had existed for a long time before the struggle for independence, and what is more, national feeling was already present among the masses before emancipation. Only a small spark was needed to ignite the volatile sentiments of the crowd and set them on a revolutionary course. That there was a small elite guiding the population of Buenos Aires at least, on the way to independence and beyond, has been another favorite belief among the upper classes of the country. Recently, modern scholarship has tended to affirm this belief, as for instance, Susan Socolow has done. The myth of an Argentine race, or distinct people, created by José Ingenieros, Ricardo Rojas, Roberto Levillier, to name just a few, was in part also a reaction against the massive waves of foreign immigrants that flooded the country.
in its golden years. Argentinians were told they were by nature cosmopolitan, democratic-minded, tolerant, virtuous, courageous, ready to sacrifice themselves in order to save their fatherland, and racially superior. The cultural and literary historian Ricardo Rojas coined the term argentinidad, "Argentinity," to denote the special set of virtues and qualities that supposedly characterized the Argentinian people. Rojas believed that literature reflected the inner soul and the political and social thought of the nation. Rojas himself was instrumental in laying bare for the Argentine public their own inner stirrings with his influential works on national literature.

Argentine historical convention has it that there have been at least two, or even three, different Argentinas, the first, from 1810 till about 1880, the second from 1880 till 1930, and the last, from about 1940 till the present. The underlying notion is that in each of these periods, the Argentine nation has had a different character. Thus, instead of historical continuity, national history is rather marked by abrupt breaks. For most contemporary authors, the real Argentina has only existed since the arrival of millions of immigrants and their slow integration and absorption into the preexisting Argentinian people. Real nationbuilding and the formation of a national community thus would be a new phenomenon. John J. Kennedy, for instance, agrees with many
Argentine liberals in taking the defeat of the dictator Rosas as the beginning of modern Argentina. However, the following pages will tend to show that efforts at nationbuilding were by no means limited to more recent periods, in fact dating form the very beginning of Argentina's existence as an independent country.

Methods, ideas and goals of the early nationbuilders were remarkably similar to later efforts. From the very beginning, the Argentinian revolution for independence presented itself to the population of Buenos Aires by means of propaganda. The Revolutionary Junta assured the porteños, as the citizens of Buenos Aires are usually referred to, that things had changed for the better, and that it was doing everything in its power to guarantee the citizens' well-being. But government propaganda claimed their loyalty in return. Concurrently, the revolutionary governments sought to change the physical and temporal world of the citizens. The city streets were given new names, while a revolutionary calendar replaced the old one dominated by religious holidays and an occasional monarchical celebration. The importance of revolutionary festivals as a yardstick of political loyalty was lost on few people. Dissenters and adversaries were reluctant to show up on national holidays, although in Buenos Aires dissent was not as important as, for instance, in Córdoba. The proximity of Montevideo, the nearest center of royalist opposition--at least until 1814--lent a particular
significance to local efforts at political control in Buenos Aires. The alcaldes de barrio, or neighborhood wardens and their deputies, were constantly busy supervising the population in their districts, mentally separating the good from the bad, the chosen from the damned. Spaniards, or peninsulars, were suspicious to begin with, as were the Portuguese during the 1820s. Many of these "damned," unhappy with their status and fearing for their possessions or positions, eventually sought salvation by means of naturalization. The following pages will take a closer look at the everyday implications of a revolutionary nascent state, or nation, fighting for survival against its colonial masters. What were the effects of wars and revolution--apart from death, hunger and economic hardship--upon the population of Buenos Aires, especially?
Notes to Chapter I


3 Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nationalism (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), xviii.


5 Federico Chabod, L'idea di nazione (Bari: Laterza, 1961).


9 Ernest Renan, Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?, an address given at the Sorbonne in 1882. In Oeuvres Completes vol. 1 (Paris: Calmann-Lévi, 1947).

10 Recently, Jacob Talmon has provided an in-depth analysis of marxism and nationalism, in which he reached the conclusion that Marx has been quite specific on the subject of nationalism. See, Jacob Leib Talmon, The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution (London: Secker and Warburg, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).


13 Samir Amin, Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), first published in French in 1979; For a Soviet work dealing with Latin America in particular, see A. F. Shul'govskij, ed., Natsionalizm v Latinskoy Amerike: politicheskiye y ideologicheskiye techeniya (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), which purports to provide arguments against Latin American nationalism, because it allegedly hinders the attainment of socialist ideals.


20 Leopoldo Zea, *The Latin American Mind* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970). The papers read at a conference held in 1983 at the University of Hamburg, in commemoration of the bicentenary of the birth of Simón Bolívar, have been published recently. Many familiar themes are discussed, and taken together, they provide a valuable contribution to the topic of Latin American nationalism and nationbuilding. See Inge Buisson, Günther Kahle, Hans-Joachim König and Horst Pietschmann, eds., *Problemas de la formación del estado y de la nación en Hispanoamérica* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1984).


CHAPTER II
NATION AND COUNTRY

Etymology

Generally, nationalism and patriotism are used interchangeably, denoting an unswerving loyalty to one's country in word and deed. Since etymological analysis of these terms—once quite popular—has proven rather unfruitful, it has become a custom to look at the things themselves ("signified") rather than at the words ("signifiers"). Yet, for the present purpose, reverting to tradition may shed light on the intellectual discourse at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Subjects of the King of Spain on both sides of the Atlantic made a distinction between nation (nación) and fatherland (patria). To most, the latter term denoted their hometown, its immediate surroundings, or region (país). According to the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy, nation meant "all the inhabitants of some province, country or kingdom," while fatherland was "the place, city or country where one was born."¹ The succinctness of these entries reflects the degree of attention for this particular segment of political debate in the Hispanic world at the moment the dictionary was being prepared. Indeed, if words and language
are any clue, the French were more advanced in political development. For them, both terms, fatherland and nation, already were emotionally charged, while the basic ideas were substantially the same as in Spanish.

In the dictionary of the French Academy, fatherland was also one's birthplace, but in a wider sense the examples given by the Academy suggest that in French, apparently, the fatherland belonged to the realm of the emotional or the subconscious. The nation, on the other hand, claimed the citizens' rational or political allegiance. In this sense, it was an "objective" phenomenon. As the dictionary says about "nation," it was "a collective term. All the inhabitants of the same state, the same country, who live under the same laws, speak the same language, etc." Seen in the light of the particular situation at this time in France and elsewhere, one cannot help but feel that this definition was more an idealization or a prescription than a definition of an existing state of affairs. The examples given to illustrate the usages of the word "nation" reveal the influence of contemporary power politics, prestige, war, and recent political developments.\(^2\) Besides, the French Académie recognized the existence of irredentism, and hence, of its opposite. In the second part of the article on nation, it explained that it also meant "the inhabitants of the same country, even if they are not living under the same laws, and
are subjects of different princes." The example was Italy, which was not yet unified, but it could also be taken to refer to the Spanish Empire that was just breaking up.

Thus, while the French Encyclopédie offers not a particularly inflammatory definition of the term "nation," as Elie Kedourie points out, the article on "patrie" is telling. The Chevalier de Jaucourt writes:

it expresses the sense we attach to those of family, society and free-state, of the latter of which we are members, and whose laws guarantee us our liberties and our happiness. There is no patrie under the yoke of despotism. . . . the love we feel for (the patrie) leads to elevated morals which in turn lead to a love for the patrie; this love is the love for the laws and the happiness of the state. . . . it is a political virtue through which one effaces oneself, preferring the public interest to one's own; it is a sentiment and not the result of knowledge; the lowliest man in the state can have this sentiment just like the very head of it.

For enlightenment thought, there could be no fatherland, country, patria or nation, without liberty from despotism. Loyalty to the country and its laws and government became a duty to the modern citizen, as is also clear from Jaucourt's comments on what a patriot ought to be:

he who, in a free state (gouvernement) cherishes his patrie, deriving his happiness and glory from supporting it with devotion, and in accordance with his financial and personal capabilities.

A true patriot would not hide his true intentions and motives behind an alleged loyalty to his country. That would be the
very opposite of patriotism indeed. As Samuel Johnson wrote: "A patriot is he whose public conduct is regulated by one single motive, the love of his country."\(^5\)

As for English usage, it conformed to French and Spanish, with the difference that "fatherland," although known, was not listed in the dictionaries. Instead, country was used as the equivalent of patria and patrie.\(^6\) When Argentina was fighting for its independence from Spain and Spain itself was resisting the French occupation, the Spanish language, like the French before it, adopted the frequent use of "nation" and "country," or "fatherland." As in France, the words became partial synonyms, though patria became more emotionally charged. For Argentina there was room for confusion, since nation could also be used to indicate the Spanish Empire. In the course of the revolution, however, it became stripped of this meaning, and came to indicate the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in its quest for political independence and eventually the present "Argentina." This initially created some additional confusion. Nation meant the Hispanic world under the rule of the king, while after the British invasions, especially, patria received a wider, less restricted meaning, while also becoming more emotionally charged.
The Growth of Porteño Identity

Bartolomé Mitre has argued that the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776 laid the basis for an independent Argentina. Indeed, a number of residents of the new viceroyalty, if only for economic reasons, seemed to welcome new business opportunities that the rise in political status and a short while later, free trade, brought about. In a very real sense, such men saw the viceroyalty as a single unit, however far from reality this idea might be. At any rate, they agreed upon the rough economic, political, and perhaps even sentimental boundaries of an area they would call their country, their patria. They had not yet found an expression for it other than the official designation. But they would soon find new terms in the course of the revolution for independence. During this struggle, the country for which they were fighting would be called patria, nación, and more abstractly, "our system," and "our holy," or "just cause."

The ground had been prepared in various ways for a change of meaning of the words nation and country. For one thing, there seems to have been in Buenos Aires at the end of the eighteenth century a marked increase in concern about and interest in agriculture. Partly, this resulted from the influence of French physiocrat ideas, holding that agriculture was the true source of national wealth and
happiness. Partly, the increased interest in agriculture may have resulted from a more general love of the land, as evidenced by literature and newspaper articles celebrating nature and agriculture. Elsewhere, a greater interest in nature has been shown to be connected with the growth of national identity or nationalism. Concurrently with an increased interest in economic matters both in the present and in the future, calls were issued for the study of the local past, another sign of a heightened national (or proto-national) awareness.

Literary treatment of agricultural themes reflected a marked growth of the economic region around Buenos Aires. The entire Viceroyalty grew economically in the second half of the eighteenth century, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that a rudimentary national market was taking shape. The environs of Buenos Aires had won a place among the top wheat growers in Spanish America, outproducing such notable wheat-growing regions as Chile's Central Valley and Guadalajara. There are indications that Buenos Aires farmers were thinking in terms of a single economic unit. They resented the unfavorable position of local wheatgrowers, unable like their Chilean counterparts, to export freely. Imports of wheat from Chile in 1777 for General Ceballos' army were unnecessary. Only in the unlikely event of a harvest failure, Buenos Aires would not be able to meet
demand, but in that case Tucumán and Cuyo would fill the gap. Actually, this had happened in 1772 and 1773, when none of the Buenos Aires farmers protested against imports from Cuyo, which then still formed part of Chile.\textsuperscript{10}

Apparently, merchants as well realized they could benefit from economic integration of the widely different regions composing the Viceroyalty. For instance, Luis de Gardeazábal, mayor of Buenos Aires in 1809, was opposed to granting the British permission to trade in the area, pointing out that it would be bad for "the nation, our metropolis, and ourselves." British commerce would cause economic disaster, "obliterate our factories, manufactures, and industry and undermine our power." Local artisans deserved protection from this fate.\textsuperscript{11}

Merchants in turn were connected with shipping interests, which enjoyed a healthy development at the end of the eighteenth century. The final days of the Spanish Empire saw the spectacular growth of a Platine merchant marine. Within just ten years, from 1796 till 1805, at least seventy foreign and native-built ships were brought under viceregal registry, while after free trade was allowed, Buenos Aires strengthened its independent commercial ties with Brazil, North America, and Africa.\textsuperscript{12}

Many in the Interior, on the other hand, had misgivings about having been forced to throw in their economic lot with that of Buenos Aires. Producers of textiles
and hardware in Tucumán, for instance, resented the growing competition of cheap imports from Europe finding their way to the interior markets, after entering the Viceroyalty through Buenos Aires. In Potosí, the miners had to work longer hours and produce higher quotas in order to fill the treasury requirements of the new viceregal capital, Buenos Aires. Taxes were increased, bureaucratic efficiency, or at least nuisance, was stepped up. Yet it was difficult to ignore the obvious geographical importance of Buenos Aires as a port of entry and gateway for the enormous viceregal hinterland. Practically all roads led to Buenos Aires, and it was the only practical outlet for all cities and regions of the Viceroyalty, except Upper Peru and the Banda Oriental, present-day Bolivia and Uruguay, respectively. These two regions could do without Buenos Aires, and indeed they did not join independent Argentina.

Naturally, the horizon of farmers, merchants and shipowners in Buenos Aires was determined by economic self-interest. But for others as well, the Viceroyalty was more than just the creation of political accident. The British invasions helped to crystallize patriotic feeling, not just among porteños, but among the inhabitants of the Interior as well. During the invasions everybody, both creoles and peninsulars, had a chance to resist the enemy and to demonstrate their patriotism, even though it remains
difficult to tell whether these two groups were fighting for Hispanic or for American patriotism, respectively. Mariano Moreno openly wept as the British occupied Buenos Aires in 1806. He was certainly not the only one to shed tears at this event. The Potosí cabildo sent a magnificent silver platter as a gift to Buenos Aires to express its gratitude for the delivery from the British threat. The Bishop of Charcas sent a large sum of money to be paid to the relatives of soldiers and militiamen killed in action against the foreign invaders. The gifts of money and silver from Upper Peru, the only area of the viceroyalty to express its gratitude in this way, point perhaps to the tenuous nature of ties with the capital. Perhaps also, Buenos Aires regarded these gifts as telling symbolic gestures and proof that Upper Peru had finally accepted the break with Lima caused by its incorporation into the new viceroyalty in 1776. The citizens of Salta regretted that they had not been called up to contribute to the final defeat of the British, but they realized that the "happiness of all of us" was threatened, and they had gone to church to pray for delivery from the attackers.

While Buenos Aires claimed to represent the new patria, or rather the old one finally liberated from peninsular domination, the royalists across the river denied its very existence. To them, the patria comprised more than just Buenos Aires or the Río de la Plata. Instead, they
continued to regard the entire Spanish Empire as the fatherland. Thus the patria, glorified in porteño revolutionary propaganda, was an object of scorn and derision for its political enemies. The Gaceta de Montevideo had already voiced its anger and irritation at the revolutionaries on the opposite bank, who were "abusing the holy name of the Patria," while they were in effect oppressing the city's inhabitants at the same time.¹⁶

But loyalty to the new country consisted of different layers, or concentric circles. First, the hometown and its immediate vicinity. This was the first patria, the main focus of loyalty, as befitted the place of birth and residence. Next in order came the larger region, or patria, such as Cuyo, or Upper Peru, and finally, the entire Viceroyalty.¹⁷

**Porteño Identity and Regional Differences**

In any form Argentine national identity might take, the regional identity of Buenos Aires was destined to play a key role. Porteño identity was more developed than many other Platine regional identities, certainly in the wake of successful military operations against the British, and the three decades of economic growth dating from the creation of the Viceroyalty.
The most notable characteristic of the Buenos Aires way of life was the pervasive mercantile spirit that was evident in practically all aspects of daily existence. Porteños were so interested in commercial pursuits that they hardly objected to natives from other provinces and even from outside the viceroyalty filling many civilian and military jobs in Buenos Aires itself.\(^{18}\) Even the children in their games imitated the business practices of their parents. Manuel de Elía, a friend of Tomás Guido, described the games of his young son, Augusto. "Every day he is getting more amusing. Now, he is playing businessman, selling kisses at seven reales per dozen, saying that he bought them at five, in order to earn two."\(^{19}\) In 1818, the French botanist, Aimé Bonpland complained that in Buenos Aires "everyone is a merchant." They "buy at two to sell at four, besides, there are no other ties."\(^{20}\) Indeed, a lot has been written about the importance of commerce in its various forms, including contraband, in Buenos Aires. Certainly the richest citizens tended to be merchants rather than big landholders, although it is true that in the years following independence, under Rosas, the estanciero class would rise to the dominant position in society. Yet if there was a shift in occupational emphasis, it was less pronounced on the personal level, since there was a tendency for merchants to shift their investments to the countryside as urban commercial opportunities became relatively less attractive.
Regional pride ran high, as is all too understandable. Moreover, it was believed, or people were led to believe, that Buenos Aires enjoyed special divine favor. Not only were the porteños good and brave fighters, but without God's help, or the intercession of saints, victory would not have been their share. Indeed, divine protection had been apparent in the near-disaster of 1779, when a large fire had failed to explode a munitions dump, thus sparing the city from annihilation. Henceforth, this miraculous event was celebrated each year in December, the so called Función de la pólvora, the gunpowder commemoration.

The double salvation of the city, once from a huge explosion and once from the British, was indeed miraculous. For was not Great Britain the world's foremost military power? And if it was not, it certainly appeared invincible to the handful of inexperienced colonial troops and militiamen in Buenos Aires. This double salvation capped a long development of porteño identity, formed in tough resistance against all forms of outside aggression and threats.

The town had long been somewhat of a forgotten outpost of empire, and awareness of precisely this fact became a central element in the local psychology. Porteños regarded their city as a stronghold of civilization set in a sea of barbarism. Thus, the major theme of civilization versus
barbarism, on which Sarmiento dwelt so eloquently, was already apparent in the porteño world view: respect for civilization as identified with things European, and disdain for the barbaric Interior. At one and the same time, the porteños felt inferior to Europeans, but regarded themselves as carriers of European civilization.

According to one foreign observer, the men in Buenos Aires were not religious at all, neither in reality, nor in appearance. Religious observances were only the concern of women. Portenos were fond of luxury and they loved everything that was new. The women especially loved to indulge in expensive clothes and jewelry, "certainly more than in any country in the world." If their husbands were unable to satisfy their expensive tastes, the women would take a lover who was willing to supply them with the desired luxuries.

However, this was essentially upper class behavior, and perhaps the same could have been said about upper class living in other cities of Spanish America or even the Interior. Perhaps, though, the erosion of religious sentiment among Portenos had not yet far progressed. From lists of books sent by Cádiz merchants to be sold in the Rio de la Plata and confiscated by the revolutionary authorities during the first years of the revolution, a different picture emerges. Most of the confiscated titles were of a religious nature: psalm books, catechisms, lives of Saints, prayer
books, and works of exegesis. Other books dealt with history, including ecclesiastical history, belles-lettres, and languages.23

If Buenos Aires was less religious than other cities in the period, it might not be a coincidence that a curious religious fanatic, Francisco Ramos Mexia, chose the pampas of Buenos Aires to preach the gospel. Ramos Mexia taught that the people of Buenos Aires needed to turn to the Lord, place their fate in his hands, and remember that true religion was on their side if they were repentant of their sins.24

Porteños were more inclined to push tradition aside when the situation called for it. Long after the French Revolution, they liked to compare themselves with the non-traditionalist and revolutionary French: porteños could be called, "with all justification, the Frenchmen of America." Like the French, they had been able to perform significant services to others in their efforts to liberate themselves, unhampered by hatred or jealousy.25

Unfortunately, Buenos Aires had made sacrifices for nothing, because no one in the Interior was even remotely able to grasp their significance. Disaffected by the behavior of the inhabitants of the Interior, "El Relator," writing in El Constitucional issued a strong appeal for the expulsion of all "Provincials" and "foreigners," urging the porteños to cast aside all acts of generosity because so
far, it had only been to their own detriment. Of course, these bitter remarks should also be seen in the light of the war between Argentina and the Brazilian Empire at that moment. The relationship between Buenos Aires and the Interior had soured because the capital felt it was single-handedly fighting the Brazilians, while other provinces benefited from this defense without sharing in its cost in human and financial resources.

Whereas the people from the Interior considered the porteños to be dangerously infected with heterodox ideas, the porteños themselves felt they were more sophisticated and civilized than anyone living in the Interior. In the practice of business, Buenos Aires acted as an intermediary between the industrial and "developed" world of Western Europe and the "underdeveloped" Interior provinces. In the consciousness of the citizens of Buenos Aires, this economic situation had a parallel on the cultural level. They were convinced that if Europeans came to Argentina and strayed much beyond the port city itself they would find, in the words of Tomás de Anchorena, "some settlements with scant buildings, separated by large deserts and dull inhabitants, seemingly apathetic, and with habits very similar to those...of primitive societies." Manuel Belgrano, to whom this letter with disdainful observations was directed, could not agree more with his friend. During his military adventures in the Interior he
had come to see the locals in a similar light. It was a place where people loved their horses and mules more than their own children, according to the liberal lawyer turned general. Of course, the information that Anchorena received from his business agents in Upper Peru could hardly have increased the prestige of the people there—the inhabitants of what would become Bolivia—in the eyes of the sophisticated porteño merchant. According to the report by Sebastián Caviedes from Chuquisaca to his partner in Buenos Aires, the Upper Peruvians generally preferred fabrics in bright garish colors. Indeed, as long as the colors were not subdued, they sold well in the mountains and high plains. Apparently, bright colors were not the established norm in the capital, but appealed to the "cruder" tastes of the Interior.

The inhabitants of the Interior and the porteños had different colonial backgrounds. The Interior, especially Cuyo, the Northwest (Salta and Jujuy) and Tucumán and Córdoba, had been settled from across the Andes and from Peru. The Interior had not been looking to Buenos Aires during most of the colonial period. Mendoza and most of Cuyo were within the cultural and economic influence of Santiago de Chile, while the Northwest was oriented economically towards Potosí, and culturally towards Chuquisaca, both Upper Peruvian cities. In addition, the
presence of reasonable numbers of Indians from whom to extract tribute and on whom to impose the encomienda made the Interior radically different from Buenos Aires. Of course, this has been pointed out before. Natives of places like Salta could still be very proud of their conquistador background. In outlining his services to the revolution, Salteño captain Juan Francisco Arias took care to mention his illustrious family: his forebears had been conquistadors and pobladores, and they had "pacified the kingdom." Few porteños would, or even could, point to such family backgrounds. For them, a family's financial fortune was more important.

Of course, there were notable cultural differences between porteños and the people of the Interior. These differences comprised more than the taste in fabrics and colors and the attachment to children or animals. The two groups shared a language and a religion and, initially, a formal allegiance to the same monarch. But they spoke the same language with different accents. Apparently the characteristic and distinctive, soft Rioplatense accent was already known in the early nineteenth century. Foreigners observed that the double "l" already was pronounced more or less as it is pronounced today. The Spanish of Buenos Aires and of the Banda Oriental, (whose language to this day is quite similar) was linguistically different from the Spanish spoken in the Interior, most notably in Upper Peru
and the Northwest. There was, of course, an even more notable difference with the Spanish spoken on the Peninsula. Francisco Llobet, a Spaniard who requested naturalization in 1826, noted that he could pass for a native of Montevideo, since he had lost all characteristics of "language and nationality."32

The Indian element was almost wholly absent from the porteño population, which was of European or African descent, or both. Except around Tucumán and in Montevideo, blacks were a rare sight in the rest of the country. Indian languages were still in use in the Interior—notably in Upper Peru and Paraguay—to such an extent that the revolutionary authorities in Buenos Aires frequently printed proclamations in Quechua, Aymara and Guaraní. However, in the areas that ultimately formed the Argentine Republic, and especially in the vicinity of Buenos Aires, Indian cultural and linguistic influence was definitely less. The disdain with which many a creole or Spaniard (the Indian population probably did not think there was much difference) regarded the Indians was the disdain of the conquistador. Indeed, Juan José Castelli behaved like one during his foray into Upper Peru. The Indians were more than reluctant to join a revolutionary movement whose universal ideals and appeals they distrusted.
and did not care to understand. To them, the porteños were foreigners, with no respect for religion and certainly not to be trusted.  

Buenos Aires, the porteños themselves claimed, was the only Argentine province where a "universal and uniform feeling for the peoples of the nation" was cultivated. In other words, only in Buenos Aires was there anything resembling a national sentiment that went beyond the narrow borders of the province. It must be doubted, however, whether Tucumanos, Cuyanos, or others agreed with assertions like the above. To them, it often seemed as if they were considered no more than useful appendixes of the capital, technically a part of the Argentine nation, but in reality a kind of inner colony, a province in the original, Roman sense of the word. On their part, the provincials deeply distrusted the lack of religiosity for which Buenos Aires had acquired such a negative reputation.

It should hardly come as a surprise, therefore, that the genuine concern about religious values in the Interior also cloaked these provinces' anxiety and fears of economic decay as a result of the policies of Buenos Aires.
1 Real Academia Española, Diccionario de la lengua castellana (Madrid: Viuda de Don Joaquín Ibarra, 1803), s.v. "nación" and "patria;" in Spanish, the definitions are as follows: (nación) "La coleccion de los habitadores en alguna provincia, país, ó reyno," and (patria) "El lugar, ciudad, ó país en que se ha nacido."

2 "A powerful nation. A warlike nation. A civilized nation. An organized nation. A not very notable nation. A barbarous nation. An evil nation. The Spanish nation. The French nation. The German nation. The English nation...." Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (Berlin: F. de Lagarde, 1800-1801) vol. 2, s.v. nation, 73-4. The examples for the word "patrie" are: "The love of the fatherland. For the good of the fatherland. To serve the fatherland. To defend his fatherland. It is sweet to die for the fatherland. The duty towards the fatherland is among our foremost duties...."


7 Federico Chabod, L'idea di nazione (Bari: Laterza, 1961); For example, Manuel José de Lavardén's poem Oda al Paraná, performed especially in connection with patriotic celebrations after 1813. See Rafael Alberto Arrieta, ed., Historia de la literatura argentina, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Peuser, 1958), 241-3; see also the Telégrafo Mercantil, rural, político, económico e historiográfico del Río de la Plata, facsimilar reprint by Junta de Historia y Numismática Argentina, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1914-1915), May 6, 7, and 30, 1801.
8. Telégrafo Mercantil May 10 and August 5, 1801.


10. Cedulario de la Real Audiencia de Buenos Aires, published by Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, vol. 1, (La Plata, 1929); Representación of November 11, 1793. A copy of it accompanied the Real Cedula of September 20, 1795, 204-6.

11. Acuerdos del Cabildo, August 31 and September 1, 1809, in Archivo General de la Nación, Acuerdos del Extinguido Cabildo de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires, 1907-34). All Acuerdos cited subsequently can be found, by date, in this same source.


16. Gaceta de Montevideo August 7, 1812.

17. A good discussion on these circles, or layers of loyalty and knowledge, or awareness, or "perception space," is provided by Peter Gould and Rodney White, Mental Maps, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974, especially 15-49; See also Simon Collier, "Nationality, Nationalism, and Supranationalism in the Writings of Simón Bolívar," HAHR 63:1 (February 1983), 37-64.

19. Manuel de Elía to Tomás Guido, Buenos Aires, August 1, 1817, in Archivo General de la Nación, (Buenos Aires) VII-16-2-17, Guido collection. Henceforth, Archivo General de la Nación will be abbreviated AGN.


21. E. Bradford Burns argues that this was the way in which most nineteenth-century Latin American reform-oriented elites liked to look at the world. The struggle between civilization and barbarism is also the struggle between modernization and tradition, between imported values and folk culture, between secularism and religion, see The Poverty of Progress.


23. AGN VII-4-3-5, Archivo Anchorena, "Sobre entregas por D. Saturnino José Alvarez de pertenencias peninsulares y alcanzas sobre ellas." The total value of the 33 cases of books amounted to almost 2,500 pesos. Notable among the titles were ten titles of historical works, including a world history by Moreri, a history of the war in the Netherlands, and a Roman history. Literary works included 14 editions of Virgil--note that his epic poem is about the national foundation of Rome--and works by Quevedo, Palafox, Saavedra Fajardo, Horace and La Fontaine. Most of the non-religious books were quite expensive, costing up to 1400 reales vellón, about 80 pesos. On the other hand, most religious titles cost less than 50 reales vellón. Germán Tjarks has shown that resentment in the Interior against Buenos Aires concerned supposed political radicalism rather than apostasy. On account of their adherence to notorious Enlightenment prophets such as Rousseau, porteños were suspected of harboring unorthodox religious thoughts as well. See Germán O. E. Tjarks, "Juan Jacobo Rousseau en Corrientes en 1811," Cuarto Congreso Internacional de Historia de América, vol. 5, (Buenos Aires, 1966) 323-46.


26 Ibid.


28 Manuel Belgrano to Tomás Guido, Nacha October 22, 1813, in AGN VII-16-1-2, Guido collection.

29 Sebastián Toribio Caviedes to Tomás Manuel de Anchorena, Plata, September 25, 1813, in AGN VII-4-3-4, Anchorena collection.

30 AGN X-2-10-9, Guerra.

31 Alexander Caldcleugh, *Travels in South America*, (London, 1825), 173, wrote about this: "Cavallo is pronounced Cavadjo, Calle Cadje, and yo, jo."

32 AGN IX-35-3-3, Tribunales.


34 "La Bondad de Buenos Aires," in *El Constitucional* August 20, 1827.
CHAPTER III
A NEW HEGEMONY: UNITY, LOYALTY AND DISSENSION

The Quest for Unity

With the May Revolution and the ensuing antagonism between Buenos Aires and the royalists, porteño society began to crack at its seams. Gone were the unifying elements holding society together, as even Roman Catholicism began to lose its position as an indicator of loyalty. Revolutionaries and royalists were to be found among both creoles and peninsulars. Just as there were peninsular patriots, there were creole royalists. Seemingly trivial details of dress, speech, and behavior could become important clues regarding political preference. It could be important to be seen wearing the national colors or cockade. One needed to be careful with whom one associated, in choice of friends, to which café one went for coffee, and how one behaved during national holidays and celebrations. To be sure, such matters were nothing new to the inhabitants of the region. During colonial days, there were endless petty squabbles over precedence and seating arrangements in church. It was also a matter of prestige whose house was most lavishly decorated and illuminated during royal and religious festivities and holidays.
As royal government in the Río de la Plata was replaced with a purely local regime, new symbols and new loyalties were called for, and social and political unity had to be reestablished. Hence the frequent calls for unity from political and religious leaders, propagandists and military officers. Unity could not be brought about as long as dissensions continued to play their disintegrative role in society. Unity became a theme of overriding importance in practically all political writing of the period. Indeed, from the very beginning of the revolution, there had been a preoccupation if not an obsession with unity. Immediately after the May revolution of 1810, an anonymous author urged his fellow citizens not to abandon unity. It was remarkable, he wrote, that there had been no divisions in society as a result of the change of power, and that there had been no violence or bloodshed. Buenos Aires thus favorably compared with Rome and Greece, where party strife had led more than once to the destruction of private lives, fortunes and destinies. It was only the "great, heroic, and courageous people of Buenos Aires" that had been able to avoid the scenes of violence that had accompanied every social upheaval in history, thanks to their patriotism, moderation, and loyalty to their lawful sovereign, Ferdinand VII.¹

In the first place, unity was urged for the revolution's loyal supporters. In 1810, a catechism was published, used in the initiation of new members of the
Sociedad Patriótica, a revolutionary club that saw itself as a champion of civilization. To a question "Where do the good citizens go?" the answer was supposed to be: "to their haciendas and homes to rest with their families, defended and protected by those they have appointed to safeguard their rights, life and property." Bad citizens would be sent to the edge of civilization, meaning in those days, the Malvinas, Valdivia in Chile, or Juan Fernández Island, the island of Robinson Crusoe. For these early propagandists of the revolutionary cause, civilization was indissolubly linked with unity of society, and national unity. The catechism condemned all those not in favor of the new junta, calling them spreaders of anarchy and internal dissension.

In a flysheet from 1812, the "Argentine Americans" are urged to observe unity at all cost, and not let themselves be led astray by enemy propaganda. For it was the Spaniard, the royalist, the counterrevolutionary, unfamiliar with the true and noble character of the Argentines, who attempted to plant the seeds of discord in the heart of the revolution.

In 1816, Brazil was suspected of planning an invasion of Buenos Aires, but in the eyes of the revolutionary government, there was no certainty of the would be invaders meeting defeat, given the weakened state of national morale in the capital of the revolution. With the purpose of strengthening the domestic front, Director Juan Martín de
Pueyrredón issued a call for national unity. He explained that the present danger and the shortage of government funds would prevent the celebration of the declaration of independence in a really grand fashion. Instead, it was much more important to return to a general feeling of enthusiasm for the revolution. "Where are those public manifestations of enthusiasm and honor," Pueyrredón asked. "The liberty of peoples can only be sustained by the spontaneous, the always consistent and extraordinary efforts of the people who are supporting its cause."\

During the struggle for independence, governments changed frequently. There were deep divisions in the party that strove for independence. This strife greatly perturbed contemporaries and it made many despair of the movement's eventual success. Efforts have been made to indicate a division into two parties which remained basically the same, but whose members changed over time. Hence the widespread tendency to speak of a Saavedrista and Morenista faction, representing the conservative and progressive wings of the independence movement, respectively. These are often seen by Argentine historians of the liberal school as forerunners of the later federalist and unitarian parties. The peronist and ex-communist historian, Rodolfo Puiggrós, on the other hand, regarded Moreno as the patriarch of the federalist party. He also argued for the existence of more parties, such as the liberal and enlightenment-oriented Alvearista party,
consisting of Carlos de Alvear and his uncle Gervasio Antonio Posadas and their allies. These men were closely tied to the secret Lautaro Lodge, to which General José de San Martín and other influential army officers belonged; many of these officers served with the elite Granaderos a Caballo regiment. Finally, another important faction was headed by Gregorio Tagle, a religiously oriented conservative who attempted a coup and failed, in 1821.

There are indeed indications, as General José María Paz pointed out in his memoirs, that the basic division of Argentine politics into two opposing factions, which later were to be called federalist and unitarian, dated from the earliest days of the revolution. Very roughly, these factions correspond to the division between liberals and conservatives. Tomás de Anchorena was one of the principal leaders of the conservative faction that wanted a state in which liberalism was pushed back as far as possible. He is said to have been one of the main influence behind the "restorer" Rosas. These conservative men wanted a state that retained the flavor of the colonial era. In 1818, it was probably Tomás Manuel who aided Rosas in preparing a government program. It makes extensive reference to works by the main conservative thinkers of the day: Edmund Burke, Joseph de Maistre and de Bonald.
In spite of their mutual opposition, both liberal and conservative factions, or parties, affirmed their commitment to national and political unity. Both desired a state without deep political rifts. Yet on account of their equally strong commitment to exclude the opposing faction, both parties in fact contributed to the persistence of political turmoil. Among those most exasperated by the political struggle in Buenos Aires, military officers stand out. San Martín's attitude has been the subject of considerable attention, but his aide-de-camp, Tomás Guido, also deserves to be mentioned. Guido was saddened to see his efforts to liberate his country from the colonial yoke wasted by the country being attacked by its own sons.9

If Argentinians were often painfully aware of domestic dissension, foreign observers could have other impressions. The Robertson brothers remarked on the feelings of unity in the twenties, when natives and foreigners alike were "animated by one general national feeling."10 For the French botanist, Aimé Bonpland, however, the political divisions could make life quite unpleasant at times. Party strife destroyed "all charm of society."11

Of the leaders of the revolution, Manuel Belgrano was most reluctant to give way to cynical views about the political situation and the progress of national feeling. Belgrano understood the problems in creating a national identity, but was perhaps naive about the possibilities of
creating a national spirit overnight. Yet Belgrano also complained that people had no interest in the patria and rather preferred to solve their personal problems and pursue their private interests.

In fact, gloom and disillusionment eventually seemed to prevail among natives and foreigners alike. Miguel del Corro, a friend of General Paz, wrote him how pessimistic he was about the political progress of Argentina since the achievement of independence, and especially since the "year XX" (1820), when a political federation was forced upon Buenos Aires by the Interior, and national unity effectively dissolved. "The Peoples have seen that far from improving their situation with the system of Independence, it has only increased and strengthened the ambitions of those who, by luck or intrepidness, have managed to capture political power. I am totally convinced that this beautiful system does not suit us in the least and I also know that it requires so much perfection within ourselves that it can only be found in precious few people who make up our society."

John Murray Forbes, the United States consul in Buenos Aires, who knew Argentina well and who had a great sympathy for it, explained to John Quincy Adams, the U.S. Secretary of State in 1821 that he nurtured no high hopes for Argentina. Forbes wrote that the country was doomed, politically and commercially, that there was no sort of education among the
natives, and that consequently there was no public opinion. In Forbes' eyes, public opinion was an essential ingredient for the existence of a republic. Without it, as in Argentina, there would only be military despotism. Thus, political power would continue to pass from one dictator to another without any popular participation whatsoever. Of course, Forbes would change his mind about Argentina upon the coming to power of Bernardino Rivadavia.

Loyalty

The task of maintaining support and loyalty among the population for the cause of independence itself became increasingly less difficult. The longer independence lasted, first de facto and later proclaimed officially, the more secure the governments could feel as to the overall loyalty of the citizens. As domestic politics began to mature, however, general allegiance to the cause of the revolution did not necessarily entail loyalty to the particular party or faction occupying the fortress, the seat of government.

The first juntas, in their efforts to establish a new hegemony, felt obliged to take the strongest measures against real or imagined political enemies. Hence, the discriminatory measures against peninsulars. With the accession of Carlos de Alvear, especially, personalist motives came to determine the
maintenance of loyalty. No longer was adherence to abstract political ideas a litmus test of loyalty, but favor with the chief of state.16

Under Pueyrredón, stabilization appeared to set in, only to give way, with the close the first decade of nation building, to the break-up of Argentina into autonomous regions. Rivadavia resumed the tradition of equating personal loyalty to the leader of government with political loyalty, patriotism and nationalism. Thus, one might discern two political phases during the first two decades of independence. The phase till about 1814, was characterized by collective or collegiate governments, and attempts to achieve this type of government. The next phase saw a greater and more pronounced tendency to look for a strong leader. Perhaps, the tendency to equate political with personal loyalty resulted from the long duration of the revolution. After the initial revolutionary enthusiasm had disappeared, it was hard to bring it back. Revolutionary ideals were often vague, and the resulting insecurity made personal bonds more important than anything else. Under such circumstances, personal loyalty became the touchstone of political dependability.

While this was true of political life at the top, it also became important for the average resident of the capital. The daily life of the individual was thus influenced and politicized. A good citizen was expected to be loyal
toward the lawful authorities. Secondly, he should be a productive and useful member of society. According to the Iberian political tradition, one had to have a stake in society, a vested interest in it, in order to qualify for full membership. In the colonial era, only men who owned property had a right to take part in municipal council elections. These were the only people who could call themselves vecinos, (citizens), and the criteria of social utility remained in effect after 1810, even though suffrage was gradually broadened. To be sure, there had traditionally been a religious side to political dependability as well. One had to be a member of the Roman Catholic Church. Before 1810, faith was the principal yardstick of moral, political, and social loyalty. After 1810, while still important, religion gave way to political criteria as a parameter for loyalty to the state. Thus, in a way, secularization was established in practice from the moment the new revolutionary junta took office in the fortress.

Some revolutionary leaders believed there was a clear line of division between loyal citizens and disloyal elements on the basis of their place of birth. In their eyes, Americans were automatically revolutionaries and supporters of the new order and, hence, good citizens. Spaniards on the other hand, were suspected of being enemies and counterrevolutionaries. Mariano Moreno strongly believed in this clear dichotomy,
assuming simply that most Spaniards were antirevolutionary, and he therefore called upon all Americans to drive from their midst those who did not wish to see the land that sustained them prosper.\textsuperscript{17}

It is probable, of course, that Moreno exaggerated the divisions in the interest of influencing public opinion. It was good propaganda to charge all Spaniards with counterrevolutionary sympathies, if only because they were such an easy and obvious target. If Moreno exaggerated in order to make propaganda, the failed conspiracy of Alzaga and other peninsulars in 1812 seemed to justify rigid anti-peninsular measures. Yet from the beginning the division between creoles and peninsulars regarding their loyalty to the new regime was not as clear as revolutionary publicists often seemed to suggest. Even during the initial phase, when feelings ran high and nervousness about the possible role of the Spaniards was afoot, the Gaceta de Buenos Aires saw fit to publish a "military catechism," written by an "adoptive son of the nation." The anonymous Spanish author took care to explain his position to the public, making clear the differences between patriots and others and pointing out that a patriot was not necessarily someone born in the Río de la Plata. There was no reason why a Spaniard could not be as good a patriot, in the strict revolutionary sense of a person loyal to the Río de la Plata, as a creole. "The word patricio (patriot) does not mean creole: all those who make up this
community regard it as their patria." All those who "observe its laws and customs, respect its government, and serve it with their persons, fortunes and talents, are patricios. Those born here are patricios by nature, those from abroad settled here are patricios by adoption." 18

However, there had been clear-cut divisions between, as well as among, creoles and peninsulars before 1810, on the occasion of the British invasions. At that time, military units were formed, grouping natives of Buenos Aires in one regiment ("Patricios"), natives of the upriver Viceroyalty in another ("Arribenos"). Slaves and free blacks also formed their own units ("Pardos y Morenos"). Spaniards from different regions of the Iberian peninsula, finally, also formed their own regiments ("Gallegos," "Andaluces," "Cántabros" and "Catalanes"). 19 Even then there was a consciousness that inclusion in a particular regiment held a significance that went beyond the military meaning of the moment. When a Spaniard enlisted with a creole unit, he made a public statement of his sympathy for America, and this fact frequently appears in later naturalization requests. Applicants for naturalization would take care to mention that they had made a positive choice to be enlisted as a "Patricio," rather than as a "Gallego." They regarded their choice as already indicative of their pro-creole and pro-independence sympathies--hence they considered themselves to
be worthy of Argentine citizenship. Others realized when the May revolution took place that it was still not too late to make a choice by enlisting in a suitable military unit. The Spaniard Joaquín Ramírez did so in 1810, volunteering for the Patricios regiment as a way of proclaiming that he was willing if necessary to sacrifice himself in the struggle against peninsular oppression.

Indeed, Spaniards could feel a strong attachment to the Río de la Plata and to America. Thus Rafael Gomila explained that "by chance I was born in Cádiz but fortunately, fate brought me to this Capital. From the moment I set foot on its shores, I do not know what secret thing impelled my heart to regard it with more respect and love than the land where I first saw the light of day. Thus, I adopted it as my true patria, establishing myself in it forever." Juan José Bellido, a Dominican friar, had come to America as a young boy when he was only ten years old. Of Spain, he knew only what he had learned from books, and he did not even recall the streets of his native town. It was in America that he received his education, his "political birth," and the good fortune of having enough sense and discernment to know the Rights of Man.

While it may be understandable that Spaniards felt at home more readily in the Río de la Plata, especially if they had been living there from a tender age, it is perhaps less so where the Portuguese are concerned. Yet they as well
eventually proclaimed their allegiance to the new authorities, and in doing so they emphasized their overall loyalty to the country, to the land and the people. Antonio José Machado had been living in Buenos Aires for 18 years when he applied for citizenship in 1826. These years had helped him to form a "character similar to that of the American patriots," he asserted. The revolution in particular had shaped his ideas and loyalties. As a result, he had come to "love the country more, to remain there, to settle on a ranch in the Banda Oriental."\textsuperscript{24} Another Portuguese, Miguel López Chaves, had been living in Buenos Aires for over 29 years before deciding to become a citizen in 1826 as well. He had been married for 21 years, building up a considerable fortune. These circumstances had influenced his decision to remain in the country. He had "lost any hope of returning to his fatherland," among other reasons, because he said he loved the Río de la Plata so much.\textsuperscript{25}

However, it is obvious that applicants for naturalization would tend to make statements that were among the more nationalist. Their utterances were certainly personal in many cases, but they also reflect the way in which it was considered proper and advisable to think and speak about the country. What one also finds among the
statements of prospective citizens of the new nation is the idea of freedom, of liberation both from Spanish rule and from other outdated curbs on human endeavor.

In a place where there are good and bad people, there are also traitors. A traitor may be anyone who belongs to the other side. A subtler approach is to hold that only the leaders of the other side are traitors, who are misleading their innocent followers. In a strictly technical sense, there were of course traitors among both the revolutionaries and their adversaries. What were the numerous defectors from the Spanish army at Montevideo if not traitors? And on the side of the revolution, who could deny that Carlos de Alvear was a traitor when he offered to make an English colony of the country of which he had been appointed head of state? Treason was by no means rare. In the eyes of those who tried to achieve political independence from Spain, however, Goyeneche's behavior was the worst imaginable. It was an unforgivable sin for an American to forsake his birthright and his duties towards the Patria by choosing the side of the royalists. There was simply no comparison, in the eyes of ardent patriots, with General Antonio Alvarez de Arenales, the peninsular Spaniard who for some time commanded the army opposing Goyeneche and his Upper Peruvians.

However, treason was not always punished severely. In fact, leniency toward infractors of the rigid laws of the state and inconsistencies on the part of the authorities only
served to enhance confusion. It was small wonder that many preferred to remain neutral and aloof from political affairs for as long as they could. In the first place, as long as the revolutionary governments seemed to be shaky, it seemed the wisest political choice to have no choice. The day of reckoning could be near while Upper Peru, the Banda Oriental, Chile, and Peru were in royalist hands. As events unfolded and government followed upon government, as domestic confusion and turmoil increased, those who had stayed neutral could only be strengthened in the belief they had done the right thing.

The Enforcement of Unity and Loyalty: Surveillance and Control

While outspoken opponents of the Revolution were scarcer in Buenos Aires than elsewhere, an unknown number of secret opponents mingled daily with both revolutionaries and neutrals. The most dangerous categories for the revolutionary leaders were the undecided and the lukewarm supporters. It was with them in mind that the porteño government, of whatever persuasion it happened to be, sought to control public life and public opinion, and to influence it. It was important to keep a watchful eye on the behavior of the entire population.
In an effort to contain the spread of French revolutionary ideas, the Bourbon colonial authorities, as part of a reorganization of urban government, in 1790 officially reinstituted the office of alcalde de barrio, that had fallen into disuse. (The office of alcalde de barrio had been introduced as one of the Bourbon reforms in 1768, starting in Madrid.) Originally, Buenos Aires had been divided into four barrios, municipal districts, or wards. After the British invasions, the number of barrios was increased to twenty, each under an alcalde de barrio. These district wardens were expected to keep track of all movements in their area, to report all suspicious activity, to investigate when and where necessary, to preserve law and order, and to carry out nightly patrols. Besides, the alcaldes had to keep a file on all residents of their district, registering the bad behavior of any citizen.26

The political nature of the office became apparent already before the revolution. In 1809 a detailed manual with guidelines for the alcaldes was published. Time and again, the document stressed the role of the alcalde in preventing crime and disorders. Therefore, the highest authorities in the land deemed it necessary to point out exactly who were to be kept under close surveillance and scrutiny. These dangerous groups were "corrupted individuals" ("viciosos"), drunkards, persons without a proper occupation ("mal entretenidos"), gamblers, quarrelsome and restless persons,
and vagabonds without any purpose or occupation..."

Furthermore, there were the politically suspect, those who believed in French ideas ("French slogans"), in so far as they spoke or wrote with hostility towards the "Spanish people," whether they were talking about overthrowing the government, or merely criticizing it. Anything against the "unity of sentiments" which was the true source of social harmony was dangerous. Hence, anonymous pamphlets, handbills, whether printed or handwritten, were suspect. Their authors were to be prosecuted, for what they seemed to be after was revolution, which the authorities saw as only a pretext to theft. Those who read handbills or pamphlets were to be considered just as guilty as their authors. The tasks of the alcaldes de barrio were thus formidable. In order to simplify his duties, the alcalde was to keep a detailed list of all the residents of his district. A census needed to be taken first, recording the names of heads of households and questioning them on the number of members of their households. Houseguests were to be kept track of in detail: who they were, whence they came, how long they stayed, where they were heading, why they came. This was supposed to be found out within twenty four hours of any stranger's arrival in Buenos Aires. Likewise, those who moved from one district to another needed to report their move to the alcaldes of
both districts. Each time an alcalde was succeeded, he was to hand over the list of residents and visitors to his successor.

What the government expected of the alcaldes de barrio was in fact the closest surveillance imaginable of all porteño residents. To prevent excesses, a warning was issued at the same time: the alcaldes should not let their duties degenerate into an inquisition whereby the private lives, personal freedoms, and civil liberties of citizens were abridged or violated. Above all, arbitrariness was to be avoided. Alcaldes were to be wary of unspecified and vague complaints and accusations, and for this reason they needed to have intimate knowledge of situations involving the accused and their accusers, so that the right decision could be taken. Clearly, the authorities understood there was room for neighbors' quarrels to escalate imperceptibly into political issues, with one side accusing the other of plotting against the government.27

Subsequent revolutionary governments retained the office of alcalde de barrio, preserving all his functions. Surveillance was even stepped up. In 1810, the revolutionary junta created a new office, that of deputy alcalde (teniente de alcalde de barrio), one for each manzana, or block. They were to assist the alcaldes in all their duties.28 Since there were hundreds of blocks in Buenos Aires, hundreds of new police officials were added to the force watching over
the citizens' safety and behavior. To say the least, the security measures of the revolutionary governments reflected a strong preoccupation with public safety and security. The viceregal government was chiefly concerned with social order. Political control came second. For the new authorities, political control was most important. In 1812, the alcaldes were given virtually the same instructions as in 1809 with respect to the registration of citizens, control of foreigners, and the making of night patrols. However, the foreigners after 1810 were citizens before 1810, that is to say, they were Spaniards.²⁹

For the nightly patrols the alcalde was empowered to enlist residents of his district. It was intended to have all adult male citizens take turns in making the patrols. There was room for abuse, however, as not infrequently residents would complain that they were being singled out unfairly for patrol duty and that this constituted too heavy a drain on their sleeping hours. Thus many residents found it difficult to do their daytime jobs effectively. In 1813, for example, a porteño artisan, Francisco Arancibar, was summoned for night patrol duty. He refused on the ground that he had done so frequently already, and that this time it should be somebody else's turn. Juan Tomás Ortiz, alcalde de barrio of the sixth district, was so incensed at Arancibar's refusal that he took a stick, and hit him with it on the arm and elbow. As a
result, Arancibar was unable to work for the next couple of weeks. Immediately, Ortiz charged Arancibar with insubordination, submitting false testimony from his associates and deputies. This he should not have done: the court ruled that Arancibar was innocent and Ortiz was sentenced to pay the steep fine of one hundred pesos. Of course, there was always another way out of this problem, other than openly resisting the Alcalde's decision. One observer tells how especially foreign residents would rather pay six reales, the standard "replacement fee," than do night patrol duty. Thus, those who most often were called up for night patrol duty tended to be the less wealthy residents of the city. At times, this could give rise to social frictions.

Late one evening in the fall of 1818 in district number 18, Pablo Lázaro Beruti saw a ragtag band of men walking in the street, "some barefoot, some wearing ponchos, and others wearing coats, all of different colors and countenances." This turned out to be the night patrol under the command of deputy Elías Aráoz that was approaching Beruti to ask him what he was doing so late at night in the street, carrying a small stick. The patrol proceeded to insult Beruti, who apparently belonged to the more privileged social strata, and eventually beat him up. The deputy, who apparently was guilty of more such excesses, was given a steep fine: fifty-five pesos.
While a certain rudeness and callousness could be imputed to a number of alcaldes, their behavior on the whole toward the citizens was reasonably within the bounds of decency. Whenever alcaldes behaved rudely or brutally, they could arouse the suspicions of the citizens, who were used to a more restrained and civilized behavior on the part of the alcaldes. In 1820, for example, Rufino Barbosa, who wanted to settle a dispute with Pablo Hernández, went to the home of the latter, accompanied by a couple of friends at two o'clock in the morning. Posing as alcalde de barrio, Barbosa summoned Hernández in the rudest of terms to open the door and let him in ("Abra Vmd. Carajo"). Unsure of what he was up to, Hernández slipped out the back door and ran.\(^{33}\)

While such incidents were unusual, doubtless many alcaldes and deputies abused their positions. Even so, the net effect on the population was probably beneficial from the government's point of view. Social and political control by the alcaldes was effective to the extent that since 1811, no anti-government political movement has met with any success. One might even compare the alcaldes and their supervision of the population with the system instituted by the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the so-called Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR's). Abuse of authority is inherent in the Cuban system of surveillance, just as it was inherent to the office of alcalde de barrio. This is no coincidence: a
limited dose of abuse only heightens the effectiveness of the surveillance, because it creates insecurity and, hence, intimidates the population.

Above all, the alcaldes were expected to maintain law and order in their districts, which in turn meant assuring the loyalty and subordination of the district residents. Loyalty to what? As already indicated before, nobody seems to have had very clear ideas about this. The alcaldes themselves probably did not know either. Loyalty therefore was a vague concept. For some, it meant loyalty and respect for the American soil, its sons, and everything even remotely connected with it. In the eyes of adherents to this point of view, anyone found "speaking badly of America" was guilty of disloyalty and hence was a danger to public order. For others, loyalty meant a general sympathy and support for the "American system," for the "sacred cause," or the "just cause," all really meaning sympathy for the revolution that started in 1810. Then there were those who defined loyalty in terms of loyalty for Morenistas, Saavedristas, Alvearistas, or any of the personal loyalty groups within each larger faction. Each alcalde or deputy might understand the task of maintaining public order in any of the senses, depending on their particular points of view. What was true of the alcaldes de barrio was likewise true of other political and legal authorities, the army, the police, the celadores, and
the judges. The upholders of public order separated the world into loyal and disloyal elements, but in doing so had in mind categories rather than individuals, and they did not always choose the same categories.

For some, all Spaniards were suspect, for others all non-naturalized Spaniards, for others, all opponents of their particular faction. Understandably, this inconsistency on the part of the defenders of law and order did not exactly make it easy for individuals to survive the period's turmoil.

Resistace and Clashes

The most consistent criticism of the revolutionary governments concerned their financial policies. The propaganda mouthpiece of the royalists, the Gaceta de Montevideo, accused the Junta of having exhausted the public funds of the entire Viceroyalty, in fact, of stealing money. This theme of stealing and of "illegal" expenditures continued to be prominent throughout the early independence years. Mateo Francisco Cabrera, a 64-year old Andalusian living in Areco, accused the commanders of the town, saying they "were thieves who only came to steal and therefore they did not last long." He supposedly added that all governments were thieves and therefore they, too, were changing all the time." Cabrera was accused of having made these remarks by the three Bustamante brothers, who had an account to settle
with Cabrera. The Andalusian denied having ever said anything bad about any authorities. But if Cabrera had said that all governments were thieves, he was in line with what other opponents of Buenos Aires regimes used to say. If he did not speak evil of the government and the accusation was false, the Bustamante brothers at least chose a good one, because it sounded so plausible.35

Father José Francisco de Belén Molina, one of Artigas' collaborators, was also convinced that all governments which came to power in Buenos Aires were corrupt. Father Molina accused, among others, interim Director Ignacio Alvarez and Director Juan Martín de Pueyrredón of being no more than ordinary thieves. Perhaps on account of these insults, but certainly more so because he was an associate and helper of the "Caudillo Oriental," the Bethlemite friar was sent into exile to Patagonia for five years.36

Most people probably did not have many complaints about the new revolutionary authorities that they did not already have at times about the viceregal government. Most of them would not, however, have considered the colonial authorities to be thieves. That these accusations were hurled with such frequency at the revolutionary leaders points to a problem of legitimacy. By all accounts, there may have been more thievery on the part of the revolutionary authorities who were, after all, composed of "new men" unaccustomed to
positions of power and perhaps unable to withstand, sometimes, the temptation to enrich themselves unlawfully. While there were complaints about colonial taxes, they were either paid or silently evaded. Matters would change somewhat after 1810. During colonial days, there had been taxes on all sorts of things. There were sales taxes, salt taxes, and import and export duties. If some people felt bad about paying these taxes, there was nevertheless the feeling that taxes were lawful. They were a standard fixture of everyday life in the colony. The revolutionary governments succeeding the viceregal order were in great need of money to finance military operations against the royalist opposition in Montevideo and Upper Peru. Therefore, they tried to raise money in every conceivable way: direct and indirect taxes were levied, and forced loans were imposed on specific categories of residents, such as peninsular Spaniards. Direct taxes a departure from accepted practice, and therefore clashed with the feelings of justice of the population.

In 1813, for example, the Constituent Assembly imposed a direct tax on all city merchants and retailers in Buenos Aires. The government itself had assessed the taxes to be paid by the merchants on the basis of an arbitrary estimate of the annual turnover of the retailers. Ranked by turnover, there were at least three categories of retailers. The lowest category comprised stores with an annual turnover of 1,000 pesos or less. Next there was a category consisting of
businesses making between 1,000 and 1,500 pesos, and above that, a group between 1,500 and 2,000 pesos. Taxes were considerable. The taxpayers-to-be were indignant, despite the often proclaimed willingness of porteños to make sacrifices in the interest of liberty and independence. The tax collectors found that a number of retailers had simply vanished into thin air. Where it came to paying taxes to the revolutionary government, there really was no difference between creoles and foreigner. In all, 44 individuals did not pay their taxes. A number left the city, feeling they could not pay the tax and continue in business. Some Portuguese and Brazilian sugar retailers simply sold out their stocks and left Buenos Aires without leaving a representative or an address. These men in all likelihood turned their backs on the revolution for ever. Others, including both creoles and peninsulars, left the city for Tucumán, Santa Fe, or some other city in the Interior. For porteño store owners, matters were somewhat different. Apparently, they did not want to pack their bags and leave. Some decided to hide, others protested aggressively and chose the way of open resistance. Pedro Leysola took the evasive way out: he was seen carrying all the merchandise from his store to his aunt's quinta in Recoleta square. He probably wanted to carry on the business from there, outside the direct scrutiny of the authorities. Fernando Díaz, on the other hand, when assessed for 21 pesos
tax on his small pulperia, wrote the tax collectors in big, aggressive letters: "I must say I never had a pulperia nor do I have one now-Díaz."

The first direct tax levied by the government was thus not a great success. This contrasts with the stated willingness of many residents of Buenos Aires to make financial contributions to the revolutionary cause or to the war effort. For instance, in 1812 Carlos de Alvear, then a Sargento Mayor of the Granaderos a Caballo, offered his pay to the fatherland. Soon afterward, a great number of rich merchants offered the government to buy rifles and have them put in store in the municipal armory. Whenever the fatherland was in danger, they suggested, they would take their guns out of the armory and defend the country. The government gratefully accepted the proposal, but indicated it preferred money instead of the guns. The list of names reads like a who is who of the porteño upper class: Escalada, Arana, Alzaga, Anchorena, Inzua, Riglos, Lezica, Thompson, Argerich, Lynch, Basavilbaso, Guido, Ortiz de Rozas. Like a true aristocracy they were, or said they were, in the front ranks to defend the country from enemy attacks. It is significant that the government was independent enough to bend the proposal in the direction it saw fit. There is also a possibility that the valiant merchants were really afraid of the social by-effects of the revolution, such as there had
been in 1811, at the time of the orillero rebellion, regarded by some as an early eruption of egalitarian revolutionary fervor on the part of the porteño lower class.  

It seems that on the whole, apart from occasional complaints and insults by drunkards, the porteños accepted the new regime without much resistance. To be sure, there are fairly numerous examples of drunken soldiers insulting the government, the leading politicians of the day, and the revolution, at night in streets and cafés. But this can be explained in various ways. First, soldiers tend to indulge in alcohol and are known to be given to strong language. What they say when drunk needs not to be taken too seriously. At the same time, soldiers are perhaps not as easily intimidated as many civilians, and therefore may speak their minds, especially when drunk. It may also be that military men tend to be more critical of any authorities when they are drunk, used as they are to the rigid discipline of military life. (Actually, civilians might have been drunk just as often as soldiers, but they may not have been taken to court for insulting the authorities as often as the soldiers.)

Celebrations and Loyalty

A subtle and effective instrument to gauge popularity and loyalty were the revolutionary festivities instituted soon after the May revolution. Participation in the Fiestas
Mayas, especially, could be a yardstick of political loyalty to the authorities. José María de Acevedo, for example, a Spaniard seeking naturalization in 1813, mentioned participation in such events as proof of his loyalty to the new order. In the words of Manuel García, who testified in his behalf during the naturalization procedure, Acevedo participated in the "festivities of the Patria, such as those of May 25, 1811, on which occasion he donated a whole bunch of flowers (ramillete)." Besides, Acevedo liberally gave refreshments to the citizens who participated in the dancing parties in his district. If presence during such activities was important, it was not sufficient in order to be known as a loyal supporter of the new order. One needed to show pleasure and satisfaction as well. Other witnesses, Domingo Hidalgo and Patricio Rivera, customs officers just as Acevedo, noted that he had "always shown his pleasure during patriotic celebrations." On another occasion, according to Acevedo's landlord Domingo Estanislao de Belgrano, he had given valuable gifts to the officer who brought the good news of General Belgrano's victory at Tucumán in 1812. Acevedo had likewise given presents to the musicians who had come to his house on that occasion, in celebration of the victory over the royalists.
While Acevedo did all he could to be a good citizen, there were others who apparently could not refrain from showing signs of discontent. Belgrano's victory at Salta in 1813 was the occasion of an outpouring of festive celebrations in Buenos Aires. The flags captured from the enemy were carried through the streets of the capital in procession. But not all onlookers and bystanders were happy with this victory parade and the following festivities. Felipe Martínez, a pulpero from Galicia who lived in barrio number nine, was overheard saying that the captured flags were really just some old rags. This was, of course, an ambiguous remark, but when the alcalde de barrio heard about it, he immediately had the legal authorities summon Martínez to court for an explanation. Witnesses were heard, but Martínez was able to convince the court that he was a loyal citizen and an adherent of the revolutionary cause.  

Mateo Pérez, another Spaniard, also made dangerous remarks. A freedman overheard him saying, during the first night of illumination in celebration of the Salta victory, that the creoles might be satisfied for the moment, but that there were few days of happiness left. Apparently, this was Pérez' answer to some patriotic vivas of another customer in the pulperia where they were at that moment. Once again, in their zeal to uncover conspiracies and plots and to seek out dissidents, the authorities were quick to investigate this trivial incident. As in the case of Martínez, however, Pérez
was absolved of any wrongdoing when he was able to prove that he really was a hardworking, loyal citizen, who had even been wounded while fighting the royalists. 44

Residents of Buenos Aires had to be careful with what they said and did, as the most insignificant remarks and details of behavior could result in a court summons and a conviction. Political consciousness was thus heightened, because even innocent remarks could be taken to have a political meaning. It was, perhaps, the conscious tactic of some people to make ambiguous remarks, on the premise that there was safety in ambiguity. Most people, however, changed their behavior to suit revolutionary standards, and became loyal citizens of the new revolutionary order.
Notes to Chapter III


8Juan José Sebreli, Apogeo y ocaso de los Anchorena, (Buenos Aires, Siglo Veinte, 1971), 73; 77.

9Tomás Guido to his wife Pilar, January 29, 1821, in AGN VII-16-2-17, Guido collection.


11Aimé Bonpland to M. Accard, Buenos Aires, 8 November 1818, in AGN X-29-10-5, Sumarios Militares.

12Manuel Belgrano to Ambrosio Funes, Governor of Córdoba, Tucumán February 24, 1817, in Epistolario Belgraniano (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1970)

13Belgrano to Funes, Tucumán, February 1, 1817, in Epistolario Belgraniano.
14 Miguel del Corro to José María Paz, Córdoba December 16, 1821, in AGN VII-1-7-3, Paz correspondence.


17 Mariano Moreno, "Con motivo del Movimiento Revolucionario de Chile," Gaceta de Buenos Aires October 25, 1810.

18 Gaceta de Buenos Aires September 17, 1810.

19 Spaniards tended to identify in the first place with their home town or region, rather than with Spain as a whole. For them it was the patria chica that counted, the small fatherland instead of the larger nation. Basque merchants would thus gladly contribute to the material progress of their native province by sending money home. See Socolow, Merchants of Buenos Aires, 112-3.

20 For instance, Domingo José Llano claimed to have identified with the creole cause long before 1810. We "were still living under tyranny," he said, "when in Buenos Aires were formed units of Gallegos and Patricios. My countrymen who wanted to preserve the perverse system of colonial domination enlisted with the Gallegos while I, taking pride in considering myself the equal of the creoles (honrandome con la igualdad) enlisted with the latter." AGN X-7-1-6, 1818.

21 AGN X-9-6-2, Ciudadanía, 1817.

22 AGN X-35-3-3, Tribunales, 1818.

23 AGN X-7-1-6, Ciudadanía, 1818.

24 AGN IX-35-3-3, Tribunales, 1826.

25 Ibid.

26 For instance, AGN IX-32-7-8, Criminales.


AGN IX-32-7-6, Criminales, 1813.

This was a lot of money: one peso was about the average daily wage. One peso had eight reales. Un inglés, i.e. George Love, Cinco años en Buenos Aires, 1820-1825, foreword by Alejo González Garaño (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Argentinas "Solar," 1942), 179.

AGN IX-32-7-8, Criminales, 1818.

AGN X-29-9-9, Sumarios Militares, 1820.

Gaceta de Montevideo July 7, 1812.

AGN IX-32-7-8, Criminales.

Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires 7.2.105.12, Cámara de Apelaciones, Buenos Aires. Subsequently, this source will be abbreviated as AHPBA.

The Spanish sounds even more direct: "Debo decir no tube pulpería nitengo-Díaz." This and all other material on this particular retailers' tax are to be found in AGN X-41-9-3, Varios.

Gaceta de Buenos Aires April 3, 1812.

Gaceta de Buenos Aires June 12, 1812.

For instance, AGN X-29-11-4, and X-30-3-1, Sumarios militares.

42 AGN IX-35-3-3, Tribunales.

43 AGN IX-32-7-6, Criminales.

44 Ibid.
CHAPTER IV
THE VARIETIES OF PROPAGANDA

The Need for Propaganda

The theme of renewal runs like a red thread through the years of revolutionary upheavals in the Río de la Plata. One common name of the revolution itself, "political regeneration," suggests renewal, a new beginning, a fresh start. It is significant that the word regeneration was used, thereby suggesting that something lost was being recovered. The revolutionaries tried to suggest that their ancestors in America and Spain had once enjoyed political rights and privileges that had subsequently been taken from them by the monarchy and its bureaucrats. Hence the allusion to the recovery of rights. It seems that thus from the outset, the outlook of the Argentinian revolution was different from that of the United States. There, emphasis was chiefly on a completely new civilization, a break with the Old World, old traditions, and the rise of a new society with new values. As it were, it was a new Eden cut out of the primeval forests of North America, conquered upon the wilderness, and introducing order where none had existed before.¹
What then were the main characteristics of the Argentine revolution, what place was accorded key concepts such a nationhood and nationality? To begin with, these had to be created. The Platine revolutionaries believed that the inhabitants of the viceroyalty were basically ignorant about politics and that, hence, they had to be taught these ideas. The revolutionaries were convinced that they needed to persuade the region's inhabitants with all possible means to do the things they believed were called for. The right path of the revolution had to be shown. Therefore, there was a continued need for propaganda at all levels and of all sorts.

Once the initial fire of the revolution was spent, it became necessary to sustain public enthusiasm. The leaders of the revolution used several methods to achieve this purpose, and to build and foster new loyalties. Holidays and celebrations, imagery and symbols, and printed materials proved useful instruments to spread the revolutionary ideas. The means of propaganda employed during the early days of independence in Buenos Aires and the Río de la Plata can be divided according to sensory perception. The basic level is what the eyes can see, hence the visual level. This category includes everyday items such as coins, symbols, flag colors and festivals. Rallies and celebrations constitute a different subcategory which one could call participatory. However, they can only partly be classified as overt propaganda, since they tended to contain a strong element of
spontaneity. The names of streets and plazas can also be considered as a part of the visual category, although, again, they are not always propaganda in a strict sense: the organization and nomenclature of urban geography stand rather apart. The next level is the sonic level, comprising music (military bands, popular songs, the national anthem and similar hymns) and the sound aspects of festivals and such. Another level, containing elements of both of those mentioned, is that of printed materials (newspapers, propaganda leaflets, handbills, posters) which were often read aloud to those unable to read. On the whole these printed materials were an important means of propaganda, in view of the high literacy rate in Buenos Aires. There are no hard data on literacy as such, but a good deal is being unearthed about primary education in the capital. Many children from poor families attended schools, run by convents and monasteries. In 1822, almost 2500 children, half of them girls, are known to have been attending primary schools. The actual number was probably higher.  

Visual Propaganda

As far as visual political propaganda is concerned, the colonial period ended not in 1810, but immediately after the British invasions. Whereas before, the names of streets
and plazas in Buenos Aires had been known chiefly by informal names--although many had official names--the military successes against the British inspired viceregal officials to carry through a thorough reorganization of urban nomenclature. Prior to 1808, most streets carried the names of saints. A few were named after abstract ideas, such as merced, mercy, or piedad, piety, or else obvious indications, such as Cabildo street. After the name change of June, 1808, the saints were replaced by the names of both living and fallen heroes of the struggle against the invaders. Streets running North-South received the names of military officers, beginning with Viceroy Liniers himself. Streets running East-West were renamed after the members of the cabildo at the time of the invasions. Appropriately, here the names of Lezica and Alzaga, Alcaldes de Primer Voto in 1806 and 1807, respectively, preceded their colleagues and some minor military officers. The Main Square, the Plaza principal, was changed to Victory Square, Plaza de la Victoria. Of course, the abandonment of relatively neutral street nomenclature for the names of ephemeral political figures, prepared the way for subsequent name changes. When Liniers and Alzaga fell out of favor with the revolutionaries and were executed, the streets carrying their names had to be renamed after more appropriate figures so as to obliterate their memory. Likewise, the imprint of religion upon festivities and ceremonies was eroded after the British invasions. Public
celebrations changed their content, became more politicized, and tended to replace religious ceremonies. (See Chapters V and VI)

**Printed Propaganda**

From the very beginning of the revolution, the Junta made its ideas known by way of an official publication, the *Gazeta de Buenos Aires*. It continued to serve the governments at Buenos Aires under various names until it was closed in 1821. Early Argentine governments also made extensive use of printed handbills and pamphlets. The former were nailed to billboards and trees so that everybody could know their content. For both handbills and pamphlets, a single recognizable style was used. The vocabulary had clear and distinctive characteristics, as did organization and content. These propaganda materials may be classified according to their target audiences into two or three categories. Thus, there was general propaganda, Buenos Aires propaganda, army propaganda, propaganda targeted to one or more of the Interior provinces of the Union, and foreign propaganda. This classification seems the more convenient one, as divisions according to content would yield either one large imprecise category or too many small ones. The content of propaganda materials tended to be rather fixed. As befits propaganda in
times of war and revolution, there was little conceptual subtlety. Most materials presented matters according to a rigid dichotomy of good and bad, or us against them. If the volumes of facsimilar reprints of documents published by Augusto Mallie are any indication, propaganda quickly evolved from appeals to rather imprecise ideals directed at people in Buenos Aires and the Interior, to specific directives restricted to the population of Buenos Aires.5

During the opening stages of the revolution, especially, the revolutionary Junta made a strong effort to clarify its political objectives and motives to the population of the interior provinces. The Upper Peruvians were assured that they were "beloved brothers" and "compatriots" of the porteños. The soldiers of the auxiliary army sent to the area came as brothers, not as conquerors, so propaganda said. It was in the interest of "America's happiness" to preserve political unity and with that, the happiness of future generations would be assured.6 In a similar style, Francisco Javier Iturri Patiño, chaplain of the dragoons regiment, urged the citizens of Cochabamba in Upper Peru to rally to the revolutionary cause. Under the motto of "viva la patria, viva la unión" the proclamation, in both Spanish and Quechua, asked the Cochabambinos to welcome the generous porteños with open arms.7 Indeed, speaking on behalf of the Buenos Aires junta, Juan José Castelli tried to assure the Peruvian Indians that the porteños saw them as
brothers and equals. Castelli emphatically asked the Indians not to believe any of the promises of equality, education and jobs the Spanish Viceroy at Lima had recently made them. The Indians' only hopes for salvation, liberation and happiness were to be found in the opposite direction. Castelli himself affirmed that he was interested in the Indians' happiness, "not only by temperament, but also by conviction (sistema), birth and after much thought."\(^8\)

A short while later, Castelli continued his efforts to woo the Peruvian Indians away from their allegiance to the royalist cause. As a member of the government of the Río de la Plata, Castelli told the Indians he "loved every American." If the Indians would only reject Lima's propaganda and rally to the cause of the revolution, "all of South America would henceforth be one big family, which by means of fraternity could equal the most respectable nations of the Old World."\(^9\) Manuel Belgrano, in two later proclamations directed at the same people, refrained from addressing them as brothers, preferring "compatriots" instead.\(^10\)

Perhaps the title "brothers" was reserved for those people with whom porteño revolutionaries did not feel any affinity, such as Upper Peruvian Indians and Brazilians. On at least two occasions the revolutionaries tried to export their revolution to Brazil. In a propaganda leaflet from 1810 or 1811, the Junta, "in the name of all America," addressed
itself to the "Portuguese Americans." The Brazilians were
told how the people of Buenos Aires had come to know and
enjoy all the benefits of liberty while despotism continued
to determine the lives of their Brazilian brothers. "Break
those fragile ties" with Portugal, so the document went, and
"united with all of America you will be invincible with
us."¹¹ At the same time, another pamphlet invited the
Brazilian "brothers" to revolt, and urged the Brazilian
soldiers to desert, offering them financial rewards if they
did. Thus, "like our brothers in Mexico, Caracas, Santa Fe,
Quito and Peru," the Brazilians would enjoy the fruits of
freedom.¹² However, in a message of Supreme Director Ignacio
Alvarez Thomas to the Chilean people, the Chileans are not
referred to as brothers a single time. And yet the message is
not devoid of understanding or sympathy: in fact it announces
to the Chileans that help from Buenos Aires is coming their
way to put an end to Spanish colonial rule.¹³

For instance, in 1815 a massive campaign was waged
against José Artigas, the caudillo of the Banda Oriental. In
1818 and 1819 the Carrera brothers, Chilean exiles who had
fraternized with the Indians and with Creole malcontents,
were the target. Finally, the year 1820 one of "anarchy," saw
an outpouring of propaganda from all sides over the issues of
national organization and unity.
When Carlos de Alvear was Director Supremo del Estado in 1815, he released a number of eloquent proclamations explaining the serious danger facing the country. In one message, Alvear declared that it was his purpose to terminate the civil war and to reconstruct the state. If it were not for the actions of Artigas, this could be accomplished. In the Banda Oriental countryside, prisoners of war had been brutally murdered by order of Artigas, so Alvear asserted. Within Buenos Aires itself, Artigas was trying to incite party strife, misleading the citizens, promoting desertion, and spreading rumors against the government. One had only to look at the results of Artigas' rule in the territories he had penetrated, in order to understand one's fate at his hands if he was allowed to continue his march. The benefits that Artigas held in store included a "deserted countryside, sacked villages, burnt down farms, roaming families, the destruction of the citizens' private fortunes, the desecration of our forebears' holy faith, rule by assassins, the legalization of the most horrendous crimes, and the most beautiful country in the world would be converted into a scene of blood and desolation." Within a week of publication of this proclamation, Alvear addressed himself to the citizens of Buenos Aires in particular. In this instance, Alvear defined the issue as one of Civilization versus Barbarism, a recurrent theme in Argentina. A caudillo, supported by "bands of assassins," threatened the honorable
and hardworking citizens of the capital. The end of this man's ambitions was not in sight, Alvear argued. He said that Artigas would go on coveting one territory after another if he was not stopped. Then Alvear made a brief reference to the past, to similar occasions when daredevils had trampled liberty with false promises. Particularly troublesome was the social hatred of Artigas: he robbed entire families of their possessions, their only crime being their fortunes. In order to counter this threat, firm realism was called for. Alvear repudiated false idealism. All Artigas was offering, after all, was "hopes for an imaginary happiness." Presumably, this is a reference to--among other things--the unattainability of the aims of Artigas' land reform program. Alvear's vocabulary appears quite effective: Artigas is said to "penetrate" peaceful territory, his followers are "soldadesca" and the "new vandals of the South." Artigas was attacking a "Great People" which had made sacrifices for the political and social existence of the Province of the Banda Oriental. Artigas was also the target of some remarkable verbal violence, but Alvear left the name-calling to others. Nicolás Herrera, governor of Buenos Aires province, said: "Under his feet, the fool has opened an abyss in which he shall have to be buried." Artigas was said to be "obsessed to the point of lunacy with the shameful spirit of provincialism," as he tried to subvert national unity.
While Alvear maintained a semblance of national sentiment in his leaflets, the Buenos Aires cabildo appealed overtly to local patriotism. It depicted Artigas as an "adventurer," a "nobody" (desconocido), and a "rustic" who showed no gratitude to Buenos Aires, the "cradle of freedom."

The porteños were called upon "to remember that (they) were the Great People where the sun of May 25 was first born, never to be eclipsed again." It was all right if Artigas exerted power in his own province and the two others he had conquered, but "the territory that belongs to the Great People must be respected, and the hardworking farmer who sustains it, protected." 17

While Artigas' threat to law and order, to prosperity, to democracy and to national unity was confined to the Banda Oriental, Santa Fe and Entre Ríos, there later was a similar threat within Buenos Aires province itself. Some Chilean officers, led by José Miguel Carrera, had made common cause with the local Indian tribes. In the eyes of the porteño government, they were a threat to civilization. The barbarism of Indians and Chileans alike was regarded as particularly dangerous: they had kidnapped over three hundred women and children, dragging them out of churches, thereby also desecrating religion. The government reacted with a full barrage of verbal violence against these men, and Carrera in particular. Carrera was branded a "horrible monster," a "deadly parricide," "traitor," "depraved man," "evil genius,"
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a "fury designed by hell itself," a "barbarian," and "perverted Hottentot." This avalanche of insults may have had something to do with deeply engrained hatred against and fear of Indians, but perhaps also with Carrera's being a Chilean. Compared to this outburst, considerable reticence was observed with respect to Artigas, who was, after all, a fellow rioplatense. The language thrown at Carrera is also an indication of the weakness and insecurity of the Buenos Aires government: no government can engage in this sort of vilification without doing harm to its credibility and respectability. On the other hand, verbal violence may also serve a clear political purpose: that of creating an environment of fear and insecurity beneficial to the government.

The tone used to convey the government's worries about the fate of the country to its citizens during the turbulent events of the 1820s was much more subdued. However, the underlying theme was more fearsome: treason and subversion from within. In a proclamation to his fellow citizens in March 1820, Governor Manuel de Sarratea warned of the enemies of freedom that the porteños sheltered in their midst without knowing who they were. These were spies, informers and agents of foreign tyrants. These were royalist conspirators, perverted Americans threatening "this Great People."
Propaganda targeted at the people of Buenos Aires was more varied in theme than the propaganda destined for audiences in the Interior. The former offered multiple variations of the good/bad dichotomy, the latter emphasized above all national unity and a common destiny. The porteños were told they were upholding civilization against barbarism, freedom against tyranny, law and order against anarchy. It was suggested that Buenos Aires was basically "loyal," while danger lurked beyond the borders of the province. If for some reason there were bad elements among the citizens, they did not themselves realize it. Civil conflict was also a matter of the city pitted against the countryside. After all, Artigas was called a rustic. Finally, Buenos Aires represented the purest idealism, and the provinces something quite different. Long before civil wars broke out, tearing Argentina apart, the inhabitants of Buenos Aires were constantly reminded that they were "the Great People," or the "Great Nation." The other provinces were considered mere hangers on, useful for their manpower, horses and produce but little else.

Of all porteño leaders of the first decade of independence, Juan Martín de Pueyrredón had a marked habit of addressing himself to all the citizens of the United Provinces. Yet neither could he hide his underlying sentiments of local patriotism. In his eyes, Buenos Aires was generous: it gave while the other provinces received and were
protected. Not long after the Declaration of Independence in 1816, Pueyrredón made it clear that the new nation was willing and able to defend its independence. He extended the virtues and accomplishments of Buenos Aires to the whole nation, referring to the whole as the "beloved fatherland." "Any foreign nation," he continued, "will find itself facing the heroes of August 12 and the victors of July." Thus Pueyrredón avoided references to the early victories of the War of Independence--references which might offend local sensibilities--while allowing the Interior provinces to share in the glories of the porteño victories over the British. All belong to the "people that has never been vanquished." 21

In fact, however, it was made clear repeatedly that the interior provinces themselves were helpless and unable to solve their internal problems. In 1817, Pueyrredón sent an armed force to Entre Ríos to restore order. In 1818, he announced the despatch of another force to the "region (comarca) of Santa Fe," so as to fight anarchy. An appeal was made to the Santafecinos to conduct themselves in such a manner as to earn the right to rejoin "the Great family," that is to say, the United Provinces under the leadership of Buenos Aires. 22

The soldiers who came to restore order to the turbulent regions by and large shared their government's condescending attitude toward the interior provinces. Therefore, they
needed to be reminded time and again not to treat the interior peoples as their enemies. If the officers and men of the "observation army" sent in 1815 under the command of Colonel Juan José Viamonte to restore law and order in the Province of Santa Fe did not regard the Santafecinos as their enemies, they did see them as foreigners of a sort. Viamonte urged his comrades-in-arms to observe the strictest discipline and certainly to avoid causing any complaint whatsoever among the local population. Infractors would be punished severely, the commander warned. Finally, he urged his men to cover themselves with honor, and only leave "this beloved soil" in order to return and receive public approval and acknowledgement for their actions in Santa Fe province. The troops of the Auxiliary Expedition sent to Entre Ríos in 1817 were urged to observe discipline so that it might not be said that "those who come to the aid of the friends of order, are the ones who least respect it themselves."

The Entrerrianos were, after all, the fellow citizens of the soldiers: "consider that the territory where you are going is the land of friends, of brothers, of your compatriots." Therefore, the soldiers had an obligation to protect the rights of the people of Entre Ríos and to have the fullest respect for "their wives, daughters, fortunes, in a word their possessions of any kind." It is almost superfluous to
point out that this is not exactly what one should have to impress upon the soldiers of an army that is about to enter friendly territory. 24

Most of the soldiers were from the capital and its environs; for them, everything beyond the Buenos Aires district was foreign country. The commander of the cavalry with the expedition of Montes de Oca in December 1817, Domingo Sáez, also the expedition's second in command, further simplified the commander-in chief's exhortations to observe restraint. Sáez told the mounted troops: "Comrades, we are going in to protect, not to destroy." The language confirms the traditional jokes and prejudices about the intellectual level of the cavalry always and everywhere: "This expedition has very lofty goals: to help the good people, and to destroy the bad people." (favorecer a los buenos, exterminar a los malos) 25

Imagery and Symbols

For some time after the May revolution, the symbols of the ancien regime continued to serve the new government. Some of the new symbols that were adopted subsequently were rooted in the monarchic tradition of Spain. Thus the distinctive blue-white-blue that later became the Argentinian national flag had Bourbon antecedents. Bourbon kings and Viceroyos can
be seen wearing sashes in these colors on portraits and paintings of the period. Various apocryphal stories circulate about these colors.  

Many were reluctant to introduce new symbols for the revolution when independence was not yet a formal fact. Pueyrredón himself in March 1812 warned against moving too fast in substituting new symbols for the old. He suspected that the inhabitants of the Río de la Plata were not yet ready to appreciate the attributes of independence and that they would resist their introduction. However, a little before this, the *paseo del estandarte*, the parading of the royal flag through the city streets, was abolished by the revolutionary government. It was considered a "humiliating ceremony, introduced by tyranny, and incompatible with the prerogatives of freedom." The authorities clearly took the lead in banning the monarchy's symbols from public life. The Constituent Assembly decreed that wherever the royal coat of arms was displayed, it had to be taken down and replaced with the emblem of the Assembly. An exception was made for the army: only those military units who already had their flags with the royal coat of arms were allowed to go on using them. All new flags issued were to have a different design, however.

Even earlier, in 1812, the government announced to the army general staff that it should order the blue and white cockade to be worn by officers and soldiers, and that the
color red that earlier served to distinguish revolutionary forces, be abolished. The colors of the cockade were also used as decorations during celebrations of the revolution's anniversary and other festivities. In 1813, General Belgrano wanted to paint the gun-carriages of his artillery blue and white. It was General Belgrano who for the first time worked the colors blue and white into the national flag, presenting the product to the troops under his command in what is now the city of Rosario, Santa Fe. The Assembly reprimanded Belgrano for thus infringing upon its authority. However, on July 25, 1816, the Congress of Tucumán, the successor to the Assembly, officially adopted the flag designed by Belgrano as the national flag. Although there is no hard evidence to support it, it is perhaps no coincidence that the Congress made Belgrano's flag official on that particular date. In Spain, the 25th of July was traditionally the major holiday, the day of the national patron, Saint James (Santiago). Moreover, Santiago is venerated with special devotion in Galicia, the region from which so many peninsulars settling in Buenos Aires originated. In choosing this date, the Congress both symbolized and emphasized the radical break with Spain and its traditions.

Although the flag of Spain disappeared from the Río de la Plata altogether, it did not mean that the flags of all foreign countries vanished. The Union Jack, flown from
British ships, was a regular sight, and so were the flags of Portugal and the United States. There is evidence that on Sundays and holidays the flags of the United States and Britain were flown atop the consulates of the respective countries in Buenos Aires. This does not mean that the porteños appreciated what they saw. The American consul, Colonel Forbes, cleverly avoided hurting local sensibilities. Knowing the preferences of the population, Forbes had the good taste to fly the the blue-white-blue of Buenos Aires as well. During the 1820s, the Argentine government itself even promoted the display of foreign national symbols, flags and imagery at its own patriotic celebrations. Such a display was intended to demonstrate to the population the prestige of the government among foreigners, and the recognition and support of foreign powers. In a country still striving for recognition by the former colonial ruler, Spain, it was especially important to give the public evidence of diplomatic success. On July 9, 1824, the crowds assembled on the Plaza de la Victoria to celebrate Independence day were to be regaled with a grand spectacle. At noon, a "magentuoso globo aerostatico," a balloon, measuring 30 feet in diameter and 90 in circumference, would be launched. On one side, the balloon would carry the national coat of arms, but on the other the national emblem of the United States. When the balloon was in the air, a gondola adorned with beautiful flags would be cut loose from it and descend slowly on a
parachute. The balloon launch was a resounding success. It "went up with unspeakable majesty, crossing the river, and it has probably reminded the Brazilians on the other bank of the great event, so worthy of emulation." At the time this was perhaps the most spectacular political propaganda money could buy. In this case, it reached out for miles beyond Argentina's frontier with its northern neighbor.

In the field of coins as well, the new authorities soon moved to assert their independence. Besides money, coins are also a convenient and practical form of propaganda. In 1818 Vicente Francisco, a gallego (Galician) who had been living in Buenos Aires since before 1800, could make a point in a political discussion with some creoles. Why, he wondered, if the Americans did not like Ferdinand VII, did they like the peso coins that carried his image? Thus, apparently, the use of coins struck by the revolutionary authorities had by no means superseded those of the colonial regime, even after the Declaration of Independence. As early as 1813, the Constituent Assembly had taken steps to have its own gold and silver coins struck at the Royal Mint of Potosí, in Upper Peru. For this act of sovereignty, new coins were to be designed to illustrate the break with Spain. However, the revolutionaries did not invent a new design from scratch. They rather preferred to turn to historic examples. The most natural choice was, of course, the Dutch revolt against the
Spaniards in the 16th and 17th centuries. Since the revolutionaries of the Río de la Plata were seeking to sever the ties of dependence with Spain, they obviously found inspiration in those who had succeeded in doing so before them. Hence the coins of the United Provinces (of the Netherlands) were a model for the designers of the first Argentine coins, who adopted emblems that were to be essential to subsequent Argentine official imagery and symbolism. These symbols were derived directly from Dutch examples: the phrygian cap held up on a stick as a symbol of liberty was only a slight modification from the hat on a stick on Dutch revolutionary coins. The two clasped hands were taken from the sign of the Sea Beggars, who first used it to distinguish themselves. The sun with 32 rays, instead of the 16 customary in other places, was also taken from Dutch examples. It may be assumed that translations of a well-known Dutch handbook on numismatics circulated in the Río de la Plata in the latter half of the eighteenth century. This would help to explain the imagery on the coins of the revolution.37

The sun appearing on the first coins of the new nation also figured prominently in other forms of revolutionary imagery in the Río de la Plata. It has been suggested that this veneration of the sun was borrowed from the Incas, whose sun-deity, symbolizing pre-Columbian civilization, had been eclipsed by the Spaniards. In adopting as a revolutionary
symbol the sun of the conquered races, the insurgents gave the Spaniards to understand that their colonial rule had come to an end. Often during revolutionary celebrations, people would assemble on the central square of Buenos Aires, the Plaza de la Victoria—named after the victories over the British in 1806 and 1807—to pay tribute to the sun. Thus, too, the term "May Sun" (el Sol de Mayo) became a standard expression in the Río de la Plata. In 1827 and 1828, a newspaper was published with the title El Sol de Mayo de 1810 en la Atalaya (The May Sun of 1810 on the Vantage Point). Next to the title on the front page, this paper printed a picture overflowing with symbolic imagery. In a small frame on the left, the Cabildo was shown, its bells ringing "Libertad, Libertad, Libertad (Freedom, which is also one of the refrains in the Argentine national anthem). On the horizon, partly hidden behind a cloud, the Sun of May was just rising. The cloud symbolized that there were still some threats to the revolutionary process. In left foreground, a stick held up a phrygian cap. In right foreground, there were two stone tablets, of the kind familiar from biblical imagery. But instead of the ten commandments, they were inscribed with a text alluding to the struggle against Spain: "May 25, 1810. Its image has behind it the dark night of our servitude and before it, the immense light of our freedom."
Their subordinate and dependent status had prevented Americans from making a brilliant political career in their own country. In politics, few individuals ever rose above their fellow men. The king was, of course, born that way, but he was in a sense above and beyond history, at least to his subjects in America. The only way most of them ever saw their king was on the coins of the realm. The King's representative, the Viceroy, derived his position only from the King himself, as did the colonial aparatchiks, the oidores and other bureaucrats. Thus the principal ways in which a man, whether or not a native American, could make a career for himself in America, were probably trade or business and the Church, which also provided career opportunities for ambitious Americans. The revolution made an end to this traditional system by suddenly creating new opportunities and career avenues. But traditional careers had often been military, and military were the new opportunities the revolutionary environment offered.39

It is an old idea that men play a decisive role in the shaping of events. The actions of the leaders of national liberation movements and revolutionary struggles seem to prove this. Many such leaders have gained a place in their country's pantheon as patres patriae, fathers of the fatherland, or founding fathers. Many have already become
legends in their own lifetime, their actions an inspiring example for the young. A strong popular leader of flesh and blood may be more effective as a rallying point than the very ideals of the revolution. Perhaps only ideas with an able, charismatic advocate can gain wide acceptance and serve as the basis for new nations. Without one, the ideas themselves, such as freedom and independence, are destined to fall short of their goals. The revolution in the Río de la Plata lacked a leader who was consistently popular and who was able to stay in the center of the stage while the revolution ran its course. No leader towered above his contemporaries like Simón Bolívar in Gran Colombia. No one in the Río de la Plata could serve as the living heart and visible center of its revolution.

The lack of strong personal leadership made it difficult for the revolution and its participants to gain a sense of direction. Moreover, there were few historical examples to provide guidance. Perhaps, though, the example of the Dutch Revolt against Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a source of some inspiration. Certainly the successful revolution of the North Americans had a powerful appeal for those Americans with a desire to end Spanish colonial rule. A comparison comes to mind with the
To be sure, there were a handful of military leaders who had all or most of the requirements to serve as models of revolutionary behavior and patriotism. Among them were generals Belgrano, San Martín, Balcarce, and Pueyrredón, as well as admiral Brown. General Belgrano was extremely popular in his lifetime for his disinterested service to the country and the revolution. There was a general sense that he was a true patriot, perhaps the only one in the nation. His military career was marred by about as many failures as successes, however, and unfortunately, he died in 1821. Another example to be held up for imitation and inspiration was General José de San Martín, but he was the enemy of some influential political groups in Buenos Aires who distrusted him on account of his military ambitions and even questioned his abilities as a commander. Few if any of his contemporaries could match San Martín's ability as a field commander and strategist. The successes he was able to accumulate in Chile and Peru only served to emphasize his qualities, but they were achieved, of course, outside Argentina. San Martín felt a keen distaste for politics, moreover, to the extent that he refused to settle in Buenos Aires once the Spaniards had been defeated, choosing instead to live in exile in Belgium and France.
The two exemplary freedom fighters and patriots thus were not wholly satisfactory as role models and sources of inspiration to serve the political authorities in Buenos Aires to capture the popular imagination. There were a few other models, to be sure, but their distinctions were purely military. Besides, they were porteños pure and simple, and without any appeal to the residents of the Interior. This is not to say that they did not enjoy a genuine popularity among the people of Buenos Aires. Generals Balcarce and Lavalle were military heroes whose popularity was largely limited to the province of Buenos Aires. Admiral Guillermo Brown was no porteño, but an Irish adventurer who never learned to speak Spanish properly. A foreign-born fire-eater could hardly serve as an example of disinterested patriotism, despite the advantage of having no sentimental ties with any particular province and standing above the parties. Brown's usefulness rather lay in helping prove the attraction of the fatherland for foreign fortune seekers and immigrants.

All things considered, the Revolution in Buenos Aires had no heroes to speak of, at last none with a lasting impartial appeal. There were only ideals, projects and abstract goals. This made it difficult for the political leadership of the revolution to set standards of behavior. There was no leader who stood out and around whom people could rally. Instead, the revolution was left with ephemeral
leaders who undermined it by coming in and going out of office. Yet the search for a suitable national hero did not abate, and if the official authorities could not agree on a human symbol of veneration and a rallying point for revolutionary fervor, private initiative came up with a variety of heroes that sold well, literally.

During the 1820s, a new type of propaganda came into fashion. This time, there was no official initiative. Some clever entrepreneurs realized that there was a market for portraits of national heroes. Curiously foreigners, especially, entered the specialized business of printing and selling portraits of national heroes. The Gaceta Mercantil carried announcements in both Spanish and English to that effect: "on the 25th of May will be published an Engraved Portrait of Admiral Brown with allegorical embellishment..."41 The firm of Douville and Laboissière, the printers of Brown's portrait, announced that it would issue a portrait of General Balcarce on the 24th of May, no doubt spurred on by the sales success of the likeness of the naval hero of the republic.42 Douville relates how he discovered this profitable business. Shortly upon his arrival he noticed a general enthusiasm for victorious generals and admirals, and that Admiral Brown in particular had become a popular idol. When Douville saw an engraving in the store of an English friend, he immediately decided to follow the example. He found a French associate, an artist who happened
to be in Buenos Aires. Together, they set up shop, making Brown portraits first. These sold at two pesos apiece, but soon the entire edition of 2,000 copies was sold out. The portrait proved so popular that people jammed the store, asking for a copy. Then Douville and his associate decided to print portraits of other popular Argentine heroes of the period, such as Alvear, Soler, Lavalleja, Mansilla, and Balcarce.43

Music and Song

Another symbol of the new state, the national anthem "Oid Mortales," also was created during the opening years of the insurgency. Written by Vicente López y Planes, it was set to music by Blas Parera, a Catalan who came to the Rio de la Plata in 1797 and returned to Spain in 1817. As befits a national anthem and in line with the vogue of martial revolutionary songs touched off by the Marseillaise, the Argentine national anthem evoked the Spanish tyranny and gradual liberation by "Argentine warriors." The anthem preceded the Tucumán Declaration of Independence when it asserted that "a new and glorious Nation" had appeared on the face of the earth. Argentina, in 1813 the lone stronghold of the continental independence movement, would lead the other regions to victory against Spanish colonial oppression. According to the anthem, "the free men of the world" would
answer the Argentines' call to hear their story with "hail the Great Argentinian People!" Significantly, the anthem echoed the prevailing idea that the Argentines were reviving the "old splendor" of their fatherland.44

Music and songs were an integral part of daily life in Buenos Aires, quite apart from the national anthem. There were popular songs as well as folk music, and there were songs containing veiled references to the political situation or to certain individuals. It was customary to sing songs about topical events in the city streets. Then there were patriotic songs of all kinds, sung especially by boys and young men. The authorities, on their part, tried to regulate and direct the musical expressions of the population. In 1812, the Cabildo had received a complaint from the government that boys and young men would sing versions of patriotic songs in the streets, whereby they sometimes insulted people and institutions, thus hurting the national interest. This practice had to be contained without thereby extinguishing the "commendable effervescence of public sentiment in favor of Freedom and the civil independence of the American People." Therefore schoolmasters and alcaldes de barrio were to see to it that songs containing insults were not sung.45 What the government was, of course, seeking to prevent was the spread of party strife and the use of
politics to solve personal differences and quarrels. In 1814 therefore, the Cabildo outlawed the singing of songs that did not explicitly benefit the new political system.46

The government rather preferred to have boys perform on set dates, such as national holidays and celebrations, and in school they received training to make them well suited as performers of patriotic songs. A writing excercise from a primary school, dated 1818, illustrates how indoctrination started at the earliest levels. Young Martín Galarza wrote in large letters: "Every man must love his country and strive to make it better..."47 The line was taken from a standard school text, written by a Spanish priest, Juan Escóiquiz (1762-1820): Tratado de las obligaciones del hombre. This textbook on civil education was used in Buenos Aires schools from 1810 till the 1870s.48 In 1812 a Franciscan friar, Cayetano Rodríguez, composed a patriotic song for the schoolboys to sing each week. It was also to be performed prior to stage plays "to fire up the public spirit."49 It was only one of the songs the boys were to sing weekly, assembled around the May monument on the Plaza de la Victoria.50 Less than a year later, the provisional government considered it sufficient to have them pay a lyrical tribute to the fatherland only once a month. But it also made it obligatory to sing the national anthem in the theater prior to stage plays.51
The Reception of Propaganda

Before independence was declared in 1816, the new state had already been adopting many of the symbols, attributes and attitudes of an independent nation. Their introduction was not so much the result of interaction between the government and the population as it was the product of conscious government action. The authorities decreed and issued orders that fell, however, on fertile ground, given the overall supportive attitude of the citizens and their desire to end colonial rule. Yet it appears that the wearing of the national cockade, or escarapela, became a popular way to express loyalty to the revolution. Some were proud to wear it and cited this fact as proof of their allegiance, as did Domingo José Llano, a Spaniard seeking naturalization. In 1815, anticipating the decrees of Juan Manuel de Rosas making it compulsory to wear red, the State Director ordered all citizens to wear blue and white as a sign of loyalty. On September 24 of that year, the government decreed that "any American who does not wear the blue and white cockade will be considered a criminal." It was not a wholly effective measure, for many did not bother to wear the cockade, "either because they wanted to stand out, or because they refused to wear a patriotic emblem." On November 27, therefore, considering it had to inculcate respect for the
authorities, the government decreed that "Every American 12 years and older, naturalized Spaniard and foreigner with 4 years' residence" should wear the cockade. If after the first of December anyone was caught not wearing the national emblem on his hat, he could be arrested by any citizen.\[^{53}\] Note that these decrees were issued during the southern summer, when most residents of Buenos Aires could be found outdoors in the city streets and plazas. It was soon realized that the decrees were impossible to enforce: within a week, the order was overturned by the Director himself.\[^{54}\]

Even without a specific decree, the wearing or not of an escarapela could cause incidents among the population. On Sunday, March 14, 1815--that is, before it was briefly made obligatory to wear the national cockade--four young men, Manuel Fernández, Vicente Ferreyra, Silvestre Pérez, and Cayetano de Rivarola went to the village of Las Conchas to have lunch in the house of Miguel Fernández. There they were joined by a militia officer stationed in the village. Table talk soon centered on the lack of patriotism in the place, "because they did not see any men wearing the cockade in compliance with the decree (bando)." (It is not known which bando was meant here; none making it compulsory to wear an escarapela could be identified for the early part of 1815, or the latter part of 1814.) They thought the major cause was the presence of Spaniards who were allowed to ply their trade in Las Conchas. After lunch, the four friends went out for a
walk. On their way, they met a Spaniard who apparently noticed their conversation about the lack of patriotism and the wearing of cockades. Pedro Prieto, a 27-year-old ferry owner and operator from Gijón in Asturias asserted in his testimony that he was insulted by the four men. He overheard one saying to his companion: "What kind of a Saracen place is this, there are no cockades to be seen. This man must be either a Saracen or a Gozo." (Both terms were standard insults for Spaniards.) Then, in the words of the four friends, Prieto brought both hands to his crotch saying: "Here I have the cockade of the Father and for all of you." From this exchange of words, a fight resulted, Prieto defending himself with a carved stick, the four friends using whips and their bare hands. One of them dashed away to a nearby pulpería to get a knife. Before things really got out of hand, a naval officer who happened by broke up the fight and arrested Prieto; subsequently the governor of Buenos Aires province ordered Prieto's imprisonment in the capital. The four friends declared they were not anxious to avenge the alleged insults against their persons. But they could impossibly ignore the "serious insults against the Fatherland, its authorities and the American Nation in whose bosom (Prieto) lives, which feeds him, and where he enjoys benefits he could never enjoy in his own country." Prieto received a speedy trial: a few days after his arrest he was sentenced to a 200 peso fine and
to four months in jail. For the duration of the prison term, he was put at the disposal of the Public Works Department, meaning he had to do forced labor.55

Aggressive behavior as that of Prieto was by no means rare, so that one might assume the authorities wished to make a well-publicized case out of an incident in order to intimidate all those with unsteady loyalties. In this case, a peninsular was found guilty of lesa patria, an offense against the dignity of the state, and the equivalent of lese-majesty under a monarchy. However, creoles as well could on occasion express attitudes similar to those of Prieto. Thus in 1814 José Ramón López, a 21-year-old soldier from the Lorca regiment stationed at Luján, disturbed the weekly homage to the patria by the town's schoolboys. Every Saturday afternoon, the boys would march through the streets in two neat rows, with little national flags in their hands, singing patriotic songs. López was sitting outside his house with two comrades when the boys passed by, shouting "viva la patria." At that point, López got up, walked towards them making wild gestures, and shouted "viva el carajo, viva el carajo." His comrades quickly persuaded him to stop this dangerous behavior, but it was too late. The Ayudante General of the garrison, José de la Peña y Zazueta, a peninsular, had seen and heard it all. He was so incensed that he immediately ordered López arrested. Perhaps the officer was genuinely indignant, but possibly he grasped the opportunity to prove
his unwavering loyalty to the revolution, notwithstanding his peninsular background. Six witnesses were heard, among them the schoolteacher, Pedro José Pallavicini, an Italian Immigrant. López made a full confession, and the sentence was light: he was ordered to appear before all the schoolchildren and ask them forgiveness for his error and misbehavior. Possibly it had irritated López that the children were being indoctrinated, or perhaps the scene had merely appeared ridiculous to him. He was himself not without some schooling since he could write his name legibly and without mistakes. However, all this might be reading too much into a trivial event. A skeptic might argue that it would not be altogether unusual for a bored soldier in a sleepy provincial town on a warm Saturday afternoon in November to act the way López did. Whatever his motivation, López did vent some degree of dissatisfaction with the revolutionary regime, its emphasis on propaganda, and its language and symbols.

It is noteworthy that clear examples of contestatory behavior were to take place outside Buenos Aires, the main focus and theater of revolutionary politics. Of course, Las Conchas and Luján were quite small communities where no kind of unusual or defiant behavior could pass unnoticed. Moreover, it appears that if outside Buenos Aires, antirevolutionary sentiment was not stronger, it was perhaps somewhat more conspicuous. In Córdoba, for instance, Father
Grenón has unearthed a wealth of material about antirevolutionary behavior. Perhaps there was no lack of such behavior in Buenos Aires itself, but it made no sense to pay attention to it, either because it would exacerbate political conflicts in a volatile community, or because there was so much resistance against revolutionary politics that it was impossible to take actions against it. The short-lived decree concerning the cockade is proof that there was real concern about the loyalty of the porteños, but its repeal may be an indication of the impossibility to control their political allegiance in any direct way.
Notes to Chapter IV


3 "Manifestación de los nombres con que vulgarmente se conocen las calles y plazas de esta ciudad, y su correspondencia con los que le son propios desde su traza, y los que se les ponen nuevamente, alusivos a las gloriosas acciones de su reconquista y defensa, conseguidas contra las armas Británicas, la primera en 12 de Agosto de 1806, y la segunda en 7 de Julio de 1807," June 30, 1808, in AGN VII-20-2-10.

4 Names under which it operated were also: Gazeta Ministerial, and Gazeta de Gobierno. The paper published numerous special editions, called Gazeta Extraordinaria when no regular issue of the paper was scheduled to appear. The pages of the Gazeta contained official proclamations, decrees and orders, items of general interest, long continuing series of articles about all sorts of topics, and excerpts and articles taken from other papers. Circulation was small by modern standards. In August 1814, 500 copies of each edition of the Gazeta were printed. Of these, 200 were sent to government ministries, 13 to the Buenos Aires cabildo, and only eight to private subscribers. The rest were sold separately. Of the four August editions, a total of 506 copies were sold to the public, earning 63 pesos and 2 reales. Thus, more than 600 copies were unsold, or to put it differently, 30% of each week's edition. AGN X-8-2-5, hacienda.


6 "Los Comandantes de la Expedicion militar Auxiliadora de las Provincias Interiores A los habitantes de los Pueblos de este Vireynato," Buenos Aires, June 1810, in Mallié, Impresos, vol 1, 377-80.


9"Manifiesto que dirige a los pueblos interiores del vireynato del Peru el Excmo. Dr. D. Juan Jose Castelli representante del Superior gobierno de la capital del Río de la Plata sobre las actuales ocurrencias," Oruro April 3, 1811, Buenos Aires, Niños Expósitos, in Mallié, Impresos, vol. 1, 443-6.


11"Las Provincias del Río de la Plata a los Portugueses Americanos," 1810 or 1811, Mallié, Impresos vol. 1, 421-3.

12"Falla aos Americanos Brazilianos em nome d'America, Por sus Irmaos os habitantes das vastas Provincias do Rio da Prata," 1810 or 1811, Mallié, Impresos vol. 1, 467-8.


19 See Emilio P. Corbière, El terrorismo en la revolución de mayo (Buenos Aires: "La Facultad," 1937), 215.


21 "El Supremo Director de las Provincias Unidas del Rio de la Plata etc. etc. etc," Buenos Aires, January 31, 1817. In AGN, Lamas collection, legajo 65.


23 "Don Juan José Viamont, Coronel Mayor de los Exercitos de la Patria, etc. a los señores oficiales, y demás individuos del Exercito de su mando," 22 July 1815. Mallié, Impresos, vol. 2, 529.


26 One of them links Juan Martín de Pueyrredón with the origins of the national colors. According to this version, Pueyrredón supplied the cavalry under his command with blue and white ribbons to make for easy identification during the British attacks on Buenos Aires. Moreover, blue and white are also the colors of the Virgin of Luján, the Patron saint of Argentina. The conspirators who plotted the revolution of April 5 and 6, 1811, directed against the Junta and in support of Cornelio de Saavedra identified themselves in their meetings with the same blue and white colors, see Gazeta de Montevideo April 23, 1811.

27 Pueyrredón to the Provisional government, March 19, 1812. In AGN, X-44-8-30.
28 Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 13, 1812. For some time before, the inhabitants of Buenos Aires had been irritated at the sight of the royal flag being paraded through the city streets. They realized full well the importance and symbolism of such ceremonies. In 1808, José Ramón Milá de la Roca and Nicolás Herrera formally requested the King of Spain, then under arrest by the French at Bayonne, to suppress both the holidays and the flag parade: "The equality of rights of that country with those of the metropolis...demands that these holidays be replaced by others, and that those public and humiliating ceremonies be prohibited." "Memoria presentada en Bayona sobre el virreinato del Río de la Plata para lograr su progreso," Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Instituto de Historia Argentina "Doctor Emilio Ravignani," Mayo Documental, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires, 1962), doc. 130, 17-22.

29 Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 7, 1813.

30 Feliciano Antonio Chiclana, Manuel de Sarratea, Juan José Passo, and Bernardino Rivadavia to the Chief of the General Staff, February 18, 1812, in AGN X-44-8-30.

31 Belgrano to Feliciano Antonio Chiclana, then governor of Salta province. Jujuy, April 7, 1813, in Epistolario Belgraniano.


33 Un inglés, Cinco años en Buenos Aires, 63.


35 El Argos July 10, 1824.

36 AGN IX-32-7-8, Criminales.

37 Julio Marc, "El escudo argentino en la moneda," Revista de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, Comerciales y Políticas, (Rosario 1934), 3rd series, vol. 3, number 3, 3-54. It is not unlikely that even the name of the new state was also inspired in part by Dutch example: The United Provinces of the Río de la Plata.
This newspaper was anti-Unitarian and identified with the Dorrego government. Its editor in chief was José María Márquez. From December 1827 till March 1828, 36 editions were published. The Biblioteca Nacional in Buenos Aires has a complete collection of the paper. See also Oscar R. Beltrán, Historia del periodismo argentino (Buenos Aires: Sopena, 1943), 165-6, and C. Galván Moreno, El periodismo argentino (Buenos Aires: Claridad, 1944), 124.

In Argentina, most revolutionary leaders had both civilian and military careers. Mariano Moreno forms a notable exception, but had he lived longer—he died in 1811—he might have held military office as did most of his colleagues.

It has already been pointed out how the Argentines followed Dutch examples in their coins. In 1817, a major point of discussion within the Argentine leadership was whether to seek foreign aid to fight the royalists. Manuel José García, Argentine envoy at the court of Rio de Janeiro, believed there was full justification for foreign aid in the light of historical precedents, noting that here had been at least three historical examples of a foreign nations helping a struggle for independence. These were 1) the Dutch Revolt of 1568-1648 and Queen Elizabeth's aid to the insurgents, 2) the Thirty-Years' War, when Bohemia received foreign aid against Ferdinand II, and 3) the American Revolution of 1776 when Spain and France helped the Anglo-Americans against George III. See letter of Manuel José García, Rio de Janeiro 20 October 1817, AGN VII-10-2-6.

La Gaceta Mercantil May 15, 1827; it was further announced that subscribers could direct themselves to Mr. Hargreaves,' Mess. Hesses,' and Mr. Ristorini.

La Gaceta Mercantil May 23, 1827.

See Douville, Viajes, 71-2.

See Símbolos de la Nación Argentina, a pamphlet published by the Argentine Ministry of the Interior in 1968.

Also, the boys should not be allowed into pulperias, neighborhood bars, in view of the evil things they learned in such places. Acuerdos del Cabildo, August 12, 1812.

See José María Sáenz Valiente, Bajo la campana del cabildo; organización y funcionamiento del Cabildo de Buenos Aires después de la Revolución de Mayo (1810-1821) (Buenos Aires: Kraft, 1952), 307-8.
47 "Todo hombre debe amar a su patria y procurar su mayor bien...," AGN X-6-1-1, Instrucción Pública, 1812-1835.

48 Reprinted in: Augusto Mallié, ed., Impresos, vol. 4, 1-152; see also the explanatory note in the Index, on page 495. The complete paragraph from which the writing exercise was taken was as follows: "Todo hombre debe amar a su patria y procurar su mayor bien. Por consiguiente debe, cuando la vea invadida por los enemigos, defenderla con todas sus fuerzas aunque sea a costa de su vida, y en tiempo de paz cuidar no deshonrarla, o turbarla con acciones malas antes si tirar a darla mayor lustre con sus virtudes y meritos, y a serle utiles con sus fatigas."

49 Acuerdos del Cabildo, August 4, 1812.
50 Gazeta de Buenos Aires July 24, 1812.
51 Acuerdos del Cabildo, March 20, 1813.
52 AGN X-7-1-6.
53 AGN X-8-10-3.
54 Repeal was issued, December 5, 1815. AGN X-8-10-3.
55 AGN X-29-11-3, Sumarios Militares.
56 AGN X-30-1-1, Sumarios Militares; In 1812, Pallavicini had played a key role in uncovering the Alzaga conspiracy, but he had subsequently passed into oblivion. Later, he reminded the government of his accomplishments and services, which in 1819 caused Supreme Director José Rondeau to give him a silver medal with the inscription: "Por fiel a la Patria," for loyalty to the fatherland. See, Vicente O. Cutolo, Nuevo diccionario biográfico argentino, vol. 5, 288; José de la Peña y Zazueta was a Spanish naval officer and cartographer, among the most respected of his time. In 1778 he came to the Río de la Plata, naturalizing in 1813, ibid., 400.

57 Pedro Grenón, "Episodios de la resistencia española íntima a la Revolución de Mayo," Investigaciones y Ensayos 19 (July-December 1975), 367-422.
CHAPTER V
FESTIVITIES

The Colonial Background

Festivities and celebrations are a part of practically every society. In the modern world, the state has played an increasingly important role in the organization and staging of public festivities. At the same time, in many cases the state itself has become the object of orchestrated rejoicing. Examples spring to mind of coronations in monarchies, inaugurations of presidents, and celebrations of successful revolutions and major battles deciding the fate of nations. Commemorations of revolutions such as in the United States (Fourth of July), France (July 14), and Argentina (May 25), go back some two hundred years, and besides being commemorations, they have an eventful history of their own. In Argentina, as in the United States and France, the commemorated event represented a decisive break with previous political traditions, ending monarchical forms and structures. Moreover, in the United States and Argentina, it ended an extended period of colonial rule. Partly because of genuine popular enthusiasm for the new order of things,
partly because they have been promoted by the new authorities for reasons of political expediency, these celebrations have since taken root deeply in the community.

The celebrations of the colonial period in the Río de la Plata, as well as in other Spanish colonies in the Americas, were chiefly of a religious nature. Even during the few political celebrations, for example on the occasion of the accession to the throne of a new monarch, religion was an integral part of festivities. The crown was well aware that festivities connected with the name day of patron saints of the king and his family could serve political purposes. Towards the end of the colonial period this was evident from a royal cedula, ordering public manifestations to be held "in order that my subjects shall understand, or be reminded of, the respectability of my Royal Sovereignty." On a regular basis, the major celebrations in colonial Buenos Aires were Corpus Christi, the celebration of Saint Martin of Tours, the city's patron, on November 11, and carnival, in February or March. The former two celebrations were the occasion of sumptuous processions through the major streets of the town in which many citizens took part. San Martín's day was celebrated at "the nicest moment of our spring," as indeed November is the Southern Hemisphere equivalent of May. In 1580, Saint Martin, the saint of early Christian frontier Gaul, had been elected Buenos Aires' own by means of drawing lots.
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<td>Nuestra Señora de la 0.</td>
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Movable feasts were: Ash Wednesday, Corpus Christi, Easter. (source: Torre Revello, "Fiestas," in Academia Nacional de la Historia, *Historia de la nación argentina*, vol. 4, part 1, 596-7, note)
On the day of Saint Martin, the *Alférez Real*, the royal standard-bearer, carried the royal flag in the procession, thus symbolizing the city's allegiance to the King of Spain. Carnival was a more frivolous event during which it was custom to throw water at unsuspecting passers-by, but it too was a function of the church calendar. The number and the dates of holidays and festivities to be observed in the Río de la Plata were established by Royal Cedula of March 3, 1756. At least forty-five holidays were to be celebrated.

Saint Martin's day was the special holiday of Buenos Aires, but it was far from a purely religious holiday. Moreover, on the Christian calendar it was not nearly as important as Corpus Christi or Easter, for instance. On the eve of Saint Martin's day, the cabildo used to open its doors for the general public, but this increasingly gave rise to incidents and disturbances. There would be musicians playing lively music on the town hall balcony, while the cabildo and other public buildings as well as streets and squares would be illuminated.

Soon after the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776, its capital could add a new holiday to its calendar: Buenos Aires miraculously escaped devastation on December 19, 1779, when a storehouse filled with gunpowder exploded during a fire, damaging only windows and ears. It was decided to commemorate this portentous salvation with an
annual church service on the 19th of December, the función de la pólvora, or gunpowder service. In itself it is significant that Buenos Aires acquired a new religious holiday of its own so soon after becoming a full-fledged viceregal capital. Other landmarks in the city's history, such as the victory over the Portuguese a few years before, had not led to the creation of new festive occasions. The Church, by instituting the gunpowder service, contributed to the elaboration of a more pronounced regional sentiment. Whether or not the Church may have consciously tried to foster this regionalism, the second half of the eighteenth century saw an increase in official ceremonies and celebrations that were both better attended and more sumptuous than before.

On the eve of independence, new celebrations highlighting the city's heroic deeds were added to the calendar, the victories over the British in 1806 and 1807 providing the occasion. Despite the clearly secular character of the fighting, Buenos Aires remained faithful to its festive tradition, instituting celebrations that were essentially religious. The first victory was attributed to the intercession of the Virgen del Rosario, Our Lady of the Rosary. Therefore, this date was made into another holiday, with the virgin joining San Martín as the city's patron.
There were special commemorations and thanksgiving ceremonies and services in churches for the different participating military units, thus reflecting the fragmented character of Buenos Aires society just prior to the May Revolution. The Galicians, Andalusians, Biscayans, Catalans and Arribenos (soldiers from upriver Argentina), for instance, each organized their own private ceremonies in different churches. However, these fragmented celebrations seem to have taken place only in 1807. Afterward, there was one big celebration for all military units and civilians.

That same year, in order to celebrate a splendid gift from the cabildo of Oruro in Upper Peru, the Buenos Aires cabildo staged lavish festivities. The gift consisted of a large silver platter with inscriptions, to thank Buenos Aires for having saved the country from the British. Many residents participated in these celebrations on December 24. Several songs and poems composed and sung for the occasion retained their popularity and were heard frequently in Buenos Aires prior to the 1810 revolution. One made mention of the glories earned by the early inhabitants of Buenos Aires. It talked about the patrio suelo, the soil of the fatherland, and of the defeated enemies who would be trustworthy witnesses in an unbelieving London.

In 1808, the first anniversary of the victory over the British invasion force of 12,000 troops under General Whitelocke was the occasion for splendid celebrations all
over Buenos Aires. For three consecutive nights beginning on the second of July, the town was illuminated. Next day, a company of every military regiment was present on the main square, each with its own flag. Gun salutes were fired. All ecclesiastical, government and military authorities, including Viceroy Santiago Liniers, assembled in the Cathedral to hear mass on July 5. The cathedral was decorated with colorful banners and flags. After mass, all volunteer troops of the colonial army lined up on the plaza in front of the cabildo, the town hall, for inspection.¹² Observances were not limited to mere outward manifestations of feeling. The archbishop of Chuquisaca, Benito María de Moxó y Francoli, had donated 8,200 pesos to be divided among widows and orphans of combatants who had given their lives in defense of the city against the British and against Protestant heresy. It was decided to divide these funds by means of a lottery among eight individuals. Two widows thus received 350 pesos each, two others each 150 pesos. Four orphans, all young boys, were given 1,500 pesos each to pay for an education at Córdoba. The cabildo contributed to these noble works by dividing, also by lottery, 1,000 pesos among five other widows. A priest, Juan María Zavalía, divided 125 pesos of his own money among five other widows, again by lottery. The drawings took place on July 3, 1808, on the main square of the city, in the presence of all authorities
including the Viceroy. Afterward, there was a band concert. By publicly dealing out benefits to the weaker members of society, the state and the church demonstrated to all how well people were cared for. It was made clear also that if one sacrificed one's life for the state, one's family could count on official aid. The new secular festivities reflected a desire on the part of porteños to curtail political celebrations associated with the colonial order. In 1808, José Ramón Milá de la Roca and Nicolás Herrera, the latter a future head of state of the nascent state, asked the king to abolish the parading of the royal standard on public holidays. The two emissaries explained that the formal equality of the Río de la Plata with Spain required that "these holidays be replaced by others, and that those public and humiliating ceremonies be prohibited."  

Coincidently with the victories over the British, religious celebrations were expanded as well. Thus in 1809 the cabildo spent money not only for the celebrations of Corpus Christi and Saint Martin, as was the custom, but also for the celebration of Holy Trinity. Since the official name of Buenos Aires is "Ciudad de Nuestra Señora de la Santísima Trinidad de Buenos Aires," municipal financial contributions to this ostensibly religious holiday may point to a heightened awareness of local patriotism.
The festivities in commemoration of the victories over the British introduced a new form of celebration into the Río de la Plata. During the years prior to 1806, celebrations as a rule had no direct relationship with any political event. When they did, it was to celebrate an event that had occurred far away. Beginning in 1806, the nature of celebrations and festivities changed along with the political reality itself of the Río de la Plata. From then on, there were two kinds of political festivities. On the one hand, there were "spontaneous" celebrations, taking place at the same time as the event itself or immediately afterward. On the other hand, there were annually recurring festivities, commemorating certain historical events.

Spontaneity was not lacking even in the recurring festive events, but at the same time the desire on the part of public and private participants to recapture the spirit of the commemorated event made for tighter forms and structures. Attempts were made to relive, to retain if only for a short while, the essence of liberation, and later, of the revolution. In this way, political celebrations came to play an important role in the formation of the collective memory. The state, as it were, presented itself to its citizens during these celebrations, and in doing so attempted to strengthen their loyalties. Of course, by retaining the form of pre-revolutionary celebrations, the revolutionary leadership after 1810 could demonstrate its legitimacy in a
subtle way. The commemoration and celebration of the Reconquista and the Defensa, as the victories over the British are known, in their turn provided the model and the example for subsequent celebrations. However, the "British invasion holidays" were virtually replaced by the post-May 1810 celebrations. For instance, George Love noted that it had been the custom to fire gun salutes from the fortress on the fourth of July, the anniversary of Whitelocke's ill-fated expedition. Love was relieved that the British community was of late being spared this painful memory. Indeed, after 1810, the Reconquista and Defensa celebrations were brought back to mere religious events, celebrated with no more than a church service. Santa Clara day, the anniversary of the Reconquista, for instance, was celebrated by the Capuchin nuns, for which they received an annual subsidy of 200 pesos. In 1812, it was decided to do the same for the Defensa anniversary, on the first Sunday of July. The monastery of Santo Domingo would receive 200 pesos for taking care of its celebration.

Revolutionary Celebrations: the First Fiestas Mayas

The festival of May 25, celebrating the May Revolution of 1810, was the most important of revolutionary festivities. The Fiestas Mayas, as they came to be called, went through
three consecutive stages from 1811 till 1828. At least until 1813, they clearly continued the traditions and the form of the Reconquista and Defensa celebrations. After 1814, especially, budget cuts were imperative for the entire state bureaucracy, thus necessarily affecting the pomp and circumstance of revolutionary festivities as well. Lotteries were abolished as too expensive, only to return during the third, or Rivadavian phase of the May celebrations.18

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<td>1580</td>
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<tr>
<td>Función de la Pólvora</td>
<td>December 19</td>
<td>1779</td>
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<td>Reconquista (Santa Clara)</td>
<td>August 12</td>
<td>1806</td>
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<td>Defensa</td>
<td>1st July Sunday</td>
<td>1807</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiestas Mayas</td>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>1810</td>
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<td>Fiestas Julias</td>
<td>July 9</td>
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The first celebrations of the new order in Buenos Aires took place in May 1810. The city was illuminated, church bells were rung, guns were fired in salute. A central part of the celebrations was the oath of allegiance to the Junta. A crowd estimated at 20,000 was assembled on the Plaza de la Victoria, the main square. If this figure is correct, more than one third of the total population of Buenos Aires was present. All were conscious of witnessing a crucial event in history: the young were elated, while old men were weeping. Even the British ships riding at anchor in the river
joined in the gun salutes, thus providing a significant international dimension to the celebration. However, there was also a certain reservedness about the celebration. The chronicler Beruti remarked that it was not possible for any similar event to have taken place anywhere else with the same quiet and order. In no small part, Beruti assures us, this was thanks to the strict security measures taken by the authorities. As with all major events in Buenos Aires, the revolution and its outcome were likewise celebrated with a solemn mass in the cathedral, where a Te Deum was performed. As if to symbolize the transition of power, the members of the provisional Junta took the place usually reserved for the Viceroy during the religious ceremony.

Later that same year, on December 7, Buenos Aires saw the first massive spontaneous outpouring of popular support and enthusiasm for the revolution, when the banners taken from the royalists at Suipacha ("the troops of Chuquisaca") were brought in triumph to the city. Surrounded by a huge crowd, the Junta escorted the flags from the fortress, the seat of government, to the town hall, across Victory Square. Everyone was overjoyed. Vivas were shouted and tears flowed abundantly. The flags were put on display on the cabildo balcony, a reminder of the first military victory over a
moribund despotism. That night, the city was illuminated, there was music, and people sang patriotic songs, enjoying the warm summer evening.

It was only to be expected that revolutionary celebrations would embody elements of festivities from the preceding colonial period. The local and Hispanic festive tradition determined to a great extent the shape of new celebrations instituted by the revolutionaries. Public festivities were considered incomplete if they did not include gun salutes, fireworks, illumination of the principal buildings, streets and plazas, the attendance of the high and mighty, as well as music, dancing, and eating and drinking. As a rule, further public amusements were provided by bullfights, a necessary element of celebrations in the Hispanic tradition. If there was an obvious difference between revolutionary and colonial celebrations, it was cost: the former tended to be more expensive than the most lavish of colonial religious and political celebrations.

Festivities during the first year of the revolution were really spontaneous, and innocent in so far as spontaneity can be equated with innocence. When the revolution celebrated its first year of existence, the festivities underscored the Junta's ambition to stay in power, while at the same time they were a demonstration of the new regime's popularity and a challenge to real and potential enemies. The cost of the first anniversary
celebrations in 1811 was well over the 2,000-peso mark. While the celebrations lasted, Buenos Aires was illuminated. Indeed, never before had illumination been so complete and varied: it was the most expensive up to that date. The general exuberance of the population manifested itself in dances, balls, the wearing of masks, in the fireworks, and also in the music that was played on the cabildo balcony and could be heard everywhere. It was surprising that there were no incidents, in spite of the great numbers of festival participants. Apparently, this stood in noticeable contrast with other occasions in Buenos Aires when large crowds assembled. The citizens were just elated, and presumably all they wanted was to entertain themselves in a fraternal manner. Another explanation of the absence of false notes and unpleasant events, as Beruti indicates, could be that all bars had been closed by public order, and that patrolling by the police and alcaldes de barrio was stepped up.23

In all likelihood, the first anniversary celebrations were still quite spontaneous, as Beruti suggests, although it was clear that the government wished to control and direct them. Preparations had been initiated two months in advance upon the instigation of the ruling Junta, which sought "to remind the public of the great day, the first of its political rebirth." The Junta believed that only the municipal authorities, the cabildo, should stage and organize
the festivities, "which must impress profoundly on the hearts of our compatriots that they should preserve at any cost the freedom of these lands."

In order to provide the public with a tangible proof of the events of May 1810, the cabildo decided to earmark 6,000 pesos for the erection of a monument on the Plaza de la Victoria. This needle ("pirámide"), according to the suggestions of the city fathers, should make mention not only of the events of May 25 but also of the Reconquista and Defensa, of August 12, 1806, and July 5, 1807, respectively. The needle should further bear the city's coat of arms. But the Junta would not go along with this proposal. No doubt it had in mind the Viceroyalty as a whole, and thus it wanted the new monument to be a symbol not just for Buenos Aires, but for the Interior as well. Hence it only wanted to have an inscription referring to the "glory of May 25." The Junta had its way. In doing so, the Junta made clear that it reconsidered the importance of the victories over the British. At least it did not want to see them unduly emphasized, thus possibly injuring sensibilities of the Interior or detracting from the importance of the May Revolution itself.

In 1812 the revolutionary government, rather than the municipal authorities, took the initiative for the organization of the Fiestas Mayas. It set aside 9,000 pesos to that effect, most of which was earmarked for "pious and
charitable purposes." Like the viceregal authorities a few years before, the revolutionary leaders wanted to make it clear to the population that the weaker members of society could count on their protection and aid, and that sacrifices made for the country were not in vain. All but one thousand pesos set aside for the May celebrations were earmarked for a lottery benefiting widows and orphans. Six girls were to receive a dowry of 500 pesos each; there were five cash payments to widows, mothers, and sisters of soldiers killed in action against the royalists (200 pesos each); sixteen income supplements for poor and honest families (100 pesos each); and 1,200 pesos for six soldiers who had lost limbs during the fighting. Significantly four slaves, two women and two men, were to be manumitted at government expense with 1,200 pesos.26

Although lotteries were discontinued for a number of years after 1813, subsequent celebrations essentially reproduced those of 1812, which thus became the model for the Fiestas Mayas. On the evening of the 24th of May, four council members left the town hall for the fortress where the government resided, in order to meet the members of the latter and accompany them to the Plaza de la Victoria. There, a magnificent podium had been set up. On the plaza, they met with other cabildo members as well as civil, religious, and military authorities. All dignitaries then took their places
on the podium to watch a parade accompanied by military bands and shouts of *viva la patria*. Thereafter, council member Dr. Antonio Alvarez de Jonte made a speech fit for the occasion. He stressed that the changes brought about by the revolution should take root firmly in the hearts and minds of the citizens: "such a memorable epoch should, of course, not be inscribed in mute marble, but in hearts capable of preserving these noble forces which tyranny was unable to subdue." The speaker further made it clear that the new order should distinguish itself from the old by the very nature of its public festivities. A people that had found its freedom and was deserving of it should thus fulfill its duties toward those portions of mankind still living in bondage. This was the reason, so Alvarez Jonte explained, for using public funds to help people in slavery or other dire circumstances. He called such charity a "specifically republican act" (operación propiamente republicana). The state held a responsibility for its weaker members. Therefore, it ought to give benefits to young girls of nuptiable age who were "poor but honest and decent;" in this way the state would also contribute to national wealth and the "strengthening of the state" (aumento del estado). Other beneficiaries, too, would come to recognize "that their fortunes were one with fortunes of a country in which the insolent and overbearing dominance of an opulent class had been destroyed," and where "the people and the sovereign are one and the same person." These
benefits and charities were to constitute the real monument to the revolution. Besides these demagogic words--it should have been abundantly clear that "the dominance of an opulent class" had not come to an end--Alvarez pointed out that this concern with the wellbeing of the citizens stood in sharp contrast with the treatment that ancient Greece accorded its liberators, or even with ancient Rome, which continued its ordinary festivities while under the threat of an enemy attack. Buenos Aires, the speaker went on, was "always great, always generous," and therefore it chose to spend its money on its less fortunate citizens. After these inspiring words, the lottery took place, with cheers rising from the large crowd every time the name of a beneficiary was announced. Next day, the lottery would continue. After the first installment of the lottery, all dignitaries and officials went to the fortress for refreshments. Then the councilmen returned to the cabildo, and in the evening there were dances, balls, fireworks and concerts.  

All authorities who had graced the opening of the festivities with their presence on the evening of the 24th assembled in the cathedral the next morning at 9:30 to hear mass. The officiating priest, Fray Valentín San Martín, emphasized in his sermon "the holy and just character of the cause we are supporting," as well as the "obligation of all inhabitants to obey, to unite, to stand firm, and to make
sacrifices." The prayers that were said were for "the preservation of the holy faith of our fathers, for the consolidation of our just system," and for successes in war. After mass, the guns on the fortress were fired in a triple salute, and his excellency the President of the Junta then went to his palace in the fortress to receive the congratulations of the ecclesiastical, military and civil authorities. In the palace, several individuals made brief speeches. They included the President of the Court of Appeals (the former Audiencia), the Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, the President of the Cabildo, and in the name of the provincial clergy, the provisor and governor of the bishopric. Then, the center of celebrations shifted back to the Plaza de la Victoria, where the lottery was continued, followed by fireworks and masked balls. At night, plays and shows were staged at the coliseo, the municipal theater, with the revolution as a subject. To top off the festivities of that day, a pardon was extended to a number of criminals who had shown remorse for their acts.28

People tried outdo each other in proofs of patriotism, and the authorities, appreciating their revolutionary zeal, were ready to reward outstanding contributions to the celebrations. The musical drama entitled Veinticinco de Mayo (May 25), written by Ambrosio Morantes, met with a resounding success. The city fathers wanted to reward the author for his patriotism and "his ardent wishes for the public to share his
feelings." Next day, the 26th, the cabildo had invited three boys to come and sing what then passed for a national anthem ("the patriotic song") in the main hall of its building for an audience made up of the government, the Court of Appeals, the city council, and the other "corporations." The youthful performers were each given 25 pesos to buy new clothes, and the council voted to have the song printed for the greater glory of the nation. While the boys were glad to take a financial reward for their patriotic zeal, Father San Martín declined to take his for having said mass on the 25th. He turned down the hundred pesos, because "he wanted to give a small token of his patriotism and his adherence to the cause that the nation so justifiably supports."

The official Gaceta de Buenos Aires gave a euphoric account and glowing comments about the May celebrations. The paper noted that the festivities were highlighted by the arrival of good tidings from across the continent. Good news reached Buenos Aires from the battlefront in Upper Peru as well as about the revolution in Mexico. It was also good news that the Portuguese envoy, captain Rademaker, had arrived in Buenos Aires from Brazil with the purpose of establishing friendly relations with the revolutionary government. At the same time, an important shipment of arms reached the capital, at the very moment the enemy had imposed a sharp blockade of the harbor. Finally, Juan Martín de
Pueyrredón returned from a trip abroad. The fall weather was beautiful and evenings were pleasant. It appeared as though "the God of freedom" had done everything to provide for a suitable setting for the celebration of the 25th of May, and to "show the despots that even nature takes pleasure from the happiness of mortals." The way the city had decked itself out in festive attire was worthy of note, as was the illumination of buildings and streets. The people were singing hymns to the fatherland, while cursing the tyrants: often they would shout "Viva la patria; viva la libertad; viva la independencia; viva la America del Sud; odio eterno a los tiranos."30

If one is to believe General Manuel Belgrano, patriotic zeal in 1812 in the Interior was actually rather poor. Belgrano had noted to his dismay that "the flame of 1810 had left the hearts" of the citizens of Northwestern Argentina, where he was stationed with his army. In the hope of rekindling this flame, Belgrano decided to celebrate the anniversary of the May revolution in a grand manner, and Ricardo Rojas considered this celebration by Belgrano to be the first real anniversary celebration of the revolution—as well as the model for subsequent festivities all over the country.31 In effect, several hundred kilometers to the Northwest of Buenos Aires, the 25th of May was celebrated by the Army of Upper Peru then stationed at Jujuy under Belgrano's command. In a patriotic speech to the troops, the
General presented the national flag, in the colors blue-white-blue, emphasizing the moral values and duties the soldiers ought to nurture in order to defend the revolution. Even so, it is not clear that this can be regarded as a model for similar events elsewhere. Nor was Belgrano the only one to be idealistic and patriotic at the same time.

Some patriots even took their idealism so far as to question the need for elaborate celebrations. Just prior to the third anniversary of the revolution, at a time when the independence movement was more under threat than the year before, a pamphlet was published with reflections upon the state of affairs of the country, on the revolution, and on the reasons for celebration. Its author did not show any modesty with respect to his country, asserting that "the eyes of the whole world" were watching the actions of Argentina's revolutionaries. The single most important thing to be kept in mind was the "firm patriotism" of all citizens in order to secure national independence. Unity was crucial, for without it the ultimate goals of security, happiness, and comfort could never be achieved. In a tone reminiscent of a puritan mindset, the author added that "work comes before pleasure." In other words: there was no need to indulge in festivities at a time when the very survival of the independence movement was threatened. This admonition did not prevent the
compatriots of the "Americano" from celebrating the revolution's anniversary as they had done the preceding years, though with a little less splendor.

The 1813 anniversary celebrations followed the established pattern. Expenditures, however, were only a third of the previous year's Fiestas Mayas. Times were a little more difficult, and apparently there was also less eagerness to make a symbolic gesture by refusing money for one's own participation: the officiating priest during mass in the cathedral, Doctor Domingo Achega, gladly took his hundred peso fee. Whereas in 1811 the Cabildo had been in charge of organizing the festivities, and in 1812 it was the revolutionary government, in 1813 the recently convened Constituent Assembly--the Asamblea del año XIII--had an important say in the staging of the event. In spite of this organizational discontinuity, the basic liberal flavor of the celebrations was maintained. The Assembly approved plans for a lottery giving freedom to slaves, indicating it wanted to extend manumission to six instead of four slaves. There were fewer dowries for poor but honest girls, but this time the lottery significantly included cash payments to enable impoverished artisans to set up shop. 34

As in 1812, the festivities of 1813 were highlighted by good news from the battle front, announcing the victories over the royalists at Tucumán and Salta. All streetcorners had been decorated with triumphal arches and other temporary
monuments, all ingeniously illuminated. Poetic lines to fit the occasion were affixed to these structures, and people everywhere sang their joy. Seated on the many benches placed around the main square, the citizens could listen to music played by a band on the town hall balcony. During the festivities, plays were performed in the theater, one of which, concerning the dictatorship of Julius Caesar, contained vivid "lessons on eternal hatred against tyranny." The audience identified with the Brutuses and Cassiuses, repudiating "the tyranny of the Caesars and Mark Anthonies." The 28th of May, some amateur players--mostly army officers and young private citizens--staged the play "Siripó," in a theater decked out in national flags as designed by Manuel Belgrano. If in most respects the 1813 celebrations followed the young revolutionary festive tradition, they also introduced a wholly new element that was not to be repeated. On the morning of the 25th, Buenos Aires witnessed a scene that must have struck many observers as a pagan provocation: before daybreak a large crowd, made up of men and women, soldiers and officers, assembled on the Plaza de la Victoria to await the rising of the sun. When it came up, a gun was fired in salute, and the crowd cheered, shouting vivas. All were said to have felt deep emotions which were difficult to
This salute to the Sun of May—which also appears in the Argentine national flag—was reminiscent of the Inca devotion for the sun, their god.35

**Ups and Downs: 1814-1820**

After 1814, the tight financial situation of the revolutionary governments increasingly made for sober celebrations. With the exception of 1814 and 1817, the Fiestas Mayas were celebrated rather soberly during this period. Besides, the revolution's fortunes on the battlefield seemed to change: until San Martín crossed the Andes to defeat the royalists in Chile, victories were scarcer than previously. As early as April 1814, express orders had come down from the executive to do so.36 There was very little money indeed: as of May 13, the Cabildo had barely more than 134 pesos in cash. Therefore, expenditures were curtailed severely. The number of neighborhood balls, to be organized by the alcaldes de barrio in their districts, was reduced. On the other hand, recognizing the general poverty of the population, the authorities decided not to request entrance fees for attending the scheduled bullfights. What was saved in one area thus was used for subsidizing another. Even the prisoners in jail were not to be forgotten: 50 pesos were set aside to provide them with a good meal during the festivities. But in spite of efforts at cutting the budget,
the opposite happened: total expenditures amounted to about 5,000 pesos. Patriotism in the shape of financial disinterestedness was not to be found: Gregorio Funes, the dean from Córdoba, took his six ounces of gold (about a hundred pesos) for the sermon on the morning of the 25th. He was indeed paid handsomely for the patriotic content of his sermon, despite the fact that he was a notorious plagiarist, or perhaps, precisely because of it. His addresses were often literal translations of French orators.

Financial worries were offset to some extent by considerable military successes. The public mood was greatly lifted by pleasant news. Admiral Guillermo Brown returned to the capital after his victory over a squadron of royalist ships in sight of the enemy stronghold of Montevideo. Brown brought back a number of prisoners of war, taken during the engagement. A huge crowd had assembled at the waterfront to watch the captured enemies disembark and to cheer the naval hero. With satisfaction, the government paper noted that Brown's victory had checked the "cowardly attacks" by the Spaniards on the banks of the great river, "over whose horizon the American sun is just now rising."

In 1815 there were persistent rumors that a large Spanish expeditionary force was getting underway to attack the Río de la Plata. Money was needed more for the actual defense of the fatherland than for celebrations. The public
was emphatically assured that naval defenses were in the able hands of Brown, but they were told as well that private donations of money were needed in order to get all the defenses in proper shape. It was announced that starting May 23, two cabildo members would be receiving voluntary contributions for defense purposes from the citizens. On the eve of the 1815 anniversary an anonymous author offered some appropriate reflections on the state of affairs. He noted that the 25th of May would always be the favorite festival of true patriots, since it marked the beginning of freedom. At the same time it meant the transition from "the degrading situation of obscure colony to the rank of a nation." Despite the important military successes, the most significant achievements of the revolution were the spreading of liberal ideas and revolutionary zeal in all directions of the United Provinces, and the raising of so many troops and fine officers in such a short period of time.

General Belgrano believed that festivities ought to be celebrated with more emphasis and splendor at a time of crisis. Indeed, one might have expected the revolutionary authorities, in an effort to consolidate domestic and internal loyalty, to have increased expenditures on all sorts of propaganda activities, including festivities. Paradoxically, however, the Fiestas Mayas were allotted an ever smaller budget. Precisely at a time of outside military threats, it would have been important to measure the extent
of public loyalty and support by participation in revolutionary activities; yet in 1816, 1818, 1819, and 1820, the Fiestas Mayas were lackluster and uneventful. In 1820, the government would not even attend mass in the cathedral. That year, there were no celebrations to speak of, despite of the fact that it was the first anniversary of the revolution to take place when no fighting was occurring in most of the nation, which in itself should have been reason enough for jubilation.  

Propaganda writers tried to convince porteños of the need to save money on celebrations. In 1817 one propagandist argued that, all things considered, elaborate festivities were not really necessary, since the "public spirit" had already been formed. True happiness resided in the hearts of all good people. The real "great day of the patria," according to another, was the 13th of September, because on that day in 1816 Independence had been sworn and celebrated in the capital. The Fiestas Mayas ought to be moved to that date as well. What the author did not say was that this move would save a considerable amount of money. He went on to say that the total number of holidays in the year ought to be reduced, calculating that every holiday represented a loss of income to the laboring classes of a total of 4,000 pesos (a figure he based on the assumption that there were 4,000 workers of all kinds in the capital, earning an average of
one peso per day). If, for instance, only twenty holidays could be abolished, or moved to the nearest Sunday, the "industrious class" could earn 80,000 pesos more every year. 44 Possibly, the above proposition was intended to illustrate a shift of the revolution towards a more conservative course, and more in line with the character of the Pueyrredón regime.

Curiously, these advocates of festive sobriety raised their voices during the one year between 1813 and 1821 when the Fiestas Mayas had been celebrated with massive popular enthusiasm. To begin with, the fine fall weather augured well for the anniversary: "it looked as if nature had decided to participate in our joys." Never before had there been so many good reasons to celebrate. Independence had recently been declared, the Spaniards and royalists had met defeat in Chile at the hands of José de San Martín. Never before had there been so many people out to take part in the celebration. All classes participated, and it seemed that not even the poorer residents showed any signs of their customary plight: everyone was well dressed. Most importantly, General San Martín himself lent an added festive note to the celebrations with his presence. Together with some members of the National Congress, he attended a banquet in the barracks of the Granaderos a Caballo, the elite cavalry regiment. 45 Perhaps there were worries that the victorious general might attempt to take political advantage of his popularity among the
population. Therefore, the Pueyrredón regime may have tried to prevent henceforth assemblies of large crowds in order to safeguard its own position.

Return to Normalcy

In terms of festivities at least, 1821 represented a return to normalcy. In 1821, public enthusiasm over the end of "anarchy" was intense and widespread, and from that point until the end of the decade, official celebrations once more became stabilized as they had been before 1806. According to a British resident of the capital, the anniversary celebrations of 1822 and 1824, especially, were among the most pleasant, most memorable ever to be held—in no small part thanks to the excellent weather. Of course, the political situation had a great impact on the nature of revolutionary festivities. Gradually, the more convinced counterrevolutionaries, many of them peninsular Spaniards, had left the Río de la Plata, and their presence no longer stood in the way of unhampered joy; while other creole or peninsular foes of the revolution had come to accept the inevitable and were readily accepted in turn as members of the new nation. The festivities of 1823 were a turning point in this respect. The liberal newspaper El Centinela was happy to note that, prior to 1823, only families and individuals of
known patriotic persuasion had participated in the celebrations. Never were there any Spaniards to be seen, although they still made up a considerable part of the city population. Everything had changed in 1823, however: "Americans, Spaniards, foreigners, all seemed brothers, and doubtless they are friends already." No doubt this change in the nature of the celebrations marked a change in their significance as a political event. They were less charged with revolutionary partisanship and ideology, and became a general festival, open to the entire population. Politics was less important as participants expected to have a good time and divert themselves.

The return of the lottery is illustrative, for it was no longer a sorteo, where slaves were manumitted and dowries given out, but a rifa, where the prizes were trinkets. Since slavery in Argentina was not abolished until 1853, the discontinuation of the custom to manumit slaves on the anniversary of the May revolution suggests a decline in libertarian zeal, in keeping with the tendencies just mentioned. In any case, the lottery (rifa) now became a standard fixture of celebrations. In 1827, lottery prizes comprised articles with a total book value of 100,000 pesos. Along with the hundreds of items of clothing there were also, quite patriotically, 36 adorned mates with matching bombillas, and twelve silver mates with silver bombillas. The other major element of the celebrations were the popular
diversions scheduled to take place on the plaza. These amusements included ring throwing (juegos de sortija), slingshot games (rompecabezas), and greased poles (cucañas).\textsuperscript{49}

In 1827, the war with Brazil colored the May celebrations as well. The citizens of Buenos Aires were to be regaled with a grand spectacle reenacting the struggle between the republic and the empire:\textsuperscript{50}

all three nights, a gun salute will announce the beginning of the fireworks to be let off from the roof of the recova. At the conclusion, there will be another gun salute. The first night, thirteen pieces of a special and pleasant appearance will be lit alternatively and symmetrically, interspersed with rockets, followed by the sudden lighting of other pieces. The second night, on the northern part of the recova a castle with ramparts, guarded by troops and representing the Argentine Republic, will be shown; on the southern portion, a large town protected by a fortress with a garrison will depict the Empire of Brazil. A war will be enacted during which troops of the latter will attack the former after crossing a bridge connecting the two states. After a fierce battle fought by the two fortresses, the former will be pursued by the latter, and after some resistance the portion representing Brazil will be set afire and will explode. Therafter, the flags of the Republic will be hoisted on its ruins as a sign of victory.

As far as is known, a similar symbolic destruction of Spain had never taken place during the Fiestas Mayas. Apparently, particular hatred was reserved for Brazil, whose annihilation was advocated. The 1827 Fiestas Mayas were, however, doubly
or even triply festive, so to speak. That year, they coincided with Corpus Christi, and the recent victory over the Imperial army at Ituzaingó was an added reason for celebration. Brazilian flags captured during that battle were displayed prominently on the cathedral, together with the flags taken from the Spaniards since 1810.51

The Fiestas Mayas of 1828 had none of the symbolism in fireworks of the preceding year, but they brought some elements reminiscent of early celebrations. On the morning of the 25th, all primary school students were to assemble around the commemorative needle on the main square to sing the national anthem, accompanied by a military band, and followed by gun salutes and the ringing of church bells. Next day, the country was to pay homage to the young girls in the city's schools in a ceremony in the Church of San Ignacio. The Sociedad de Beneficencia would hand out prizes for notable behavior in the categories of ethics (moral), work (industria), daughterly love (amor filial), and dedication (aplicación) to as many girls.52 This element brought back memories of the first years of the May festive tradition, when young boys and girls also figured prominently in the festivities. Again, youth was held up as an example for others to follow.
Organization and Cost of the Fiestas Mayas

At all times, the authorities tried to exert control over secular festivities and the secular aspects of religious celebrations. Due to the political and institutional instability in the first years of independence, the Cabildo naturally had the most influence in this respect. Though in 1811 and 1812 the Fiestas Mayas were organized by the entire cabildo, subsequently the cabildo would nominate one or more of its members to form an ad hoc committee.

TABLE 5-3
Fiestas Mayas Committees, 1813-1821

1813: Rafael Pereyra Lucena, Salvador Cornet, Juan Agustín Aguirre
1814: Felipe Trillo, Miguel Gutiérrez, Francisco Muñoz, Manuel José Galup, Juan Antonio Costa, Ulpiano Barreda
1815: Mariano Vidal, Diego Barros, Mariano Tagle
1816: Francisco Javier Rodríguez de Vida, Manuel Lezica, Blas Agüero
1817: José María Riera, José Julián Arriola, Miguel de Riglos
1818: Andrés Aldao, Miguel Mármol de Ibarrola, Matías Sáenz, Felipe Otalora, Mariano Icazate
1819: Joaquín Achaval, Braulio Costa, Miguel de Riglos
1820: Juan Norberto Dolz, Francisco Santa Coloma
1821: Manuel de Arrotea, Baltasar Jiménez

Of the known committee members, six were non-porteños. Three were from the Banda Oriental, present-day Uruguay (Francisco Muñoz, Manuel José Galup, and Manuel Arrotea), one, Andrés Aldao, was a Santafecino, another, Joaquín Achaval, was from Charcas. Finally, Diego Barros was from outside the old Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. Thus it seems that the overwhelming majority of festive committee members were natives of Buenos Aires. (Acuerdos del Cabildo, passim, and Vicente Cutolo, Diccionario biográfico)
Generally, these committees were given a budget, or budget restrictions and directions. Afterward, the committee handled the payment of the bills submitted by local artisans and merchants for goods and services delivered. Not all festive commissioners were happy with their nomination. In 1819, Manuel Bustamante had to leave town for some urgent business, regretting that he could not serve on the committee; his place was taken by Miguel de Riglos. Two years later, Juan Pablo Sáenz Valiente likewise had "more important business" to look after, and asked for a replacement.

### TABLE 5-4
Cost of civic celebrations, 1811-1828
(In Pesos, rounded figures)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fiestas Mayas</th>
<th>Fiestas Julias</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>11,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>8,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>9,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>8,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>11,800</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>12,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Acuerdos del Cabildo, passim; AGN X-35-11-4, X-35-11-8, X-35-11-8, X-36-1-12)
Significantly, during the early years, no commissioners declined to contribute to the organization and supervision of the Fiestas Mayas. After the cabildo was abolished in 1821, the Buenos Aires Police Department—under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior, took care of celebrations.

While it remained in existence, the cabildo jealously guarded its monopoly on the organization of celebrations. The public could be enthusiastic about military victories: in 1813 a number of citizens went out on their own to collect funds for a victory celebration. But the cabildo did not appreciate this private initiative. The Síndico Procurador requested his colleagues to stop the fundraising, fearing that some individuals might be tempted to use the funds thus acquired for their own benefit, rather than for the expressed purpose. While this sounded perfectly plausible, it is also possible that the cabildo wanted to have complete discretion about the character of the celebrations, which meant in turn that the cabildo carried full responsibility for raising the money for the Fiestas Mayas.
Notes to Chapter V

1 Royal cedula of 6 June 1780, in Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Cedulario de la Real Audiencia de Buenos Aires (La Plata, 1929-38).

2 R. de Lafuente Machain, Buenos Aires en el siglo XVII (Buenos Aires: Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1980), 154. Saint Martin (316/7-397 A.D.), the national patron of France, the French royal family of Capet, and of cattle (!), was a symbol of asceticism and abnegation. He founded some of the oldest monasteries in Europe. It has been suggested that his cult assimilated that of the pagan god Wodan. In many areas, his holiday was regarded as the beginning of winter, see Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, 11 vols., (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1957-67), s.v. "Martin," "Patron."


4 Torre Revello, "Fiestas."

5 These popular amusements at carnival time were seen by many as a sign of the backward and primitive nature of the Río de la Plata and its inhabitants. Repeated efforts at suppressing popular carnival activities were in vain, however. In 1778 Viceroy Ceballos prohibited these amusements. See, Paul Verdevoye, "'Corridas' et 'Carnaval' dans la presse argentine avant 1833," Caravelle, Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, 10 (1968), 5-16.

6 See, for instance, Acuerdos del Cabildo, November 29, 1803.

7 Its cost was usually modest: only about 45 pesos. See for instance, Acuerdos del Cabildo, December 29, 1810, and December 22, 1815.

9Cayetano Bruno, Historia de la iglesia en la Argentina, vol. 7 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Don Bosco, 1971), 91-3. The holiday of Our Lady of the Rosary was celebrated on October 7, commemorating the Spanish naval victory over the Ottoman fleet at Lepanto on that day in 1571. Since 1716, this holiday was obligatory in the entire Catholic church. See Lexikon fur Theologie und Kirche, s.v. "Maria."

10These regional military units selected for their celebrations a day with special significance: The Cuerpo de Gallegos organized a solemn ceremony on July 25, 1807, the day of Saint James, national patron of Galicia; the Catalans held theirs on August 9, in honor of Our Lady of Montserrat. See Comisión Nacional Ejecutiva del Sesquicentenario de la Revolución de Mayo, ed., Diario de un soldado (Buenos Aires: Ministerio del Interior, 1960), 184-97.


13Beruti, Memorias, 3725-7.


15Admittedly, in 1809 the money spent on Holy Trinity was only 155 pesos which contrasts with the 574 pesos and 6 reales spent on Corpus Christi and the more than 1,500 pesos for the city's patron saint. See, Acuerdos del Cabildo, June 20, 1809.


17Acuerdos del Cabildo, June 30, 1812.


19Gaceta de Buenos Aires, June 7, 1810.

20Beruti, Memorias, 3763.
21 Ibid.
22 Gaceta Extraordinaria de Buenos Aires, December 8, 1810.
23 Beruti, Memorias, 3789.
24 Acuerdos del Cabildo, March 21, 1811.
25 Acuerdos del Cabildo, April 5, 1811.
26 Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 12, 1812.
27 Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 24, 1812.
28 Gaceta de Buenos Aires, Suplemento a la Gaceta Ministerial May 29, 1812.
29 Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 29, 1812.
30 Gaceta de Buenos Aires, Suplemento a la Gaceta Ministerial, May 29, 1812; note that more than a century later, the peronists believed that they enjoyed special meteorological blessings as well, calling a beautiful, sunny day a "día peronista." In other places a similar belief has established itself. Royalists in the Netherlands refer to the sun peeking from behind the clouds on festivities involving the House of Orange, as the "sun of Orange."

32 AGN X-44-8-30.
34 Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 15; and June 1, 4, 11, and 15, 1813.
36 The Director Supremo, the head of state, in an order to all authorities involved in planning for the event, Acuerdos del Cabildo, April 29, 1814.
That is to say, according to the biting criticism of the Dean by Rómulo Carbia in his Historia crítica de la historiografía argentina (Buenos Aires: Coni, 1940), 52-3 and notes; Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 4, 13 and 17; June 3, 7, 14, 17, and 21, and July 5, 1814.


The cabildo festive committees were steady customers of some local artisans. Often, for instance, Pedro de Mendiburu would supply wax candles for illuminations; Maestro cohetero (Master fireworks maker) Pedro Nolasco Rodríguez would usually supply the firecrackers, rockets and other fireworks, while among the musicians and orchestra leaders Bernardo Pintos, Francisco Ramos, Francisco Colombo, and Antonio Ramírez were among those invited to play on the Cabildo balcony and in the Cathedral. Acuerdos del Cabildo, passim.
Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 21, 1819; May 2, 1821.

Acuerdos del Cabildo, March 10, 1813.
CHAPTER VI
FESTIVITIES (II)

Other Festivities

The major festival besides the Fiestas Mayas was the commemoration of the Declaration of Independence in 1816. The most lavish of all the Fiestas Julias took place in the year of the declaration. In symbolic imagery, expenses, and lavishness, the ceremonies on that occasion were among the most important festive events of the entire early national period.

On July 9, 1816, the Congress of Tucumán declared the Provinces of the Río de la Plata an independent country. The festivities at Buenos Aires had to be postponed due to heavy rains--but were rescheduled to take place on September 13 and 14, and showed all the usual elements of political celebrations in the city.¹

The main difference with other festivities was that the celebrations in honor of the Declaration of Independence were intended to be even more grandiose and magnificent. A large stage had been constructed on the Plaza de la Victoria, facing the cathedral, on which all civil, military, and ecclesiastical authorities were to take their places. The oath was pronounced by the Alférez Mayor (the new title for
the old office of Alférez Real), who now was holding the national flag, as he had held the royal standard before 1810. As the oath was being taken by the authorities, freshly minted coins of the newly independent nation were thrown among the crowd standing around the stage, with the words: "May concord return, may unity prevail, and may the fatherland and independence live." Then, white pigeons adorned with blue ribbons were let loose, which were said to symbolize innocence. The birds flew away amid the cheering crowd, gun salutes, ringing church bells, and exploding firecrackers. After this, the authorities paraded through the streets of the city, as flowers were thrown at them by young girls standing in doorways and on balconies.  

The afternoon of the 13th of September, the citizens of Buenos Aires were regaled with a grand spectacle. Beginning at 4 o'clock, two triumphal chariots (carros triunfales) were drawn through the streets of the city as part of parade in which the participants danced and sang patriotic songs. Twenty-two boys from the northern districts of the city, dressed in blue and white, surrounded a chariot drawn by four panthers (tigres). Upon the chariot sat "another very handsome boy" who represented Fame. A music band, likewise dressed in blue and white, preceded this section of the parade. The boy dressed as Fame declaimed a ringing poem praising the heroic military actions of
Argentine warriors. Printed copies of it were distributed among the appreciative audience lining the streets in dense throngs.

The second part of the parade was organized by the southern districts. Eighteen boys dressed as Peruvian Indians, with black trousers and carrying hoops in their hands, accompanied another chariot on which a boy representing America had taken place. He was dressed in white, with a red cape. On his chest he wore a large sun. His head was covered with feathers, while in his hand he held a bow. Next to him flew the national flag. ³

The celebrations of the Declaration of Independence in 1816 were the most lavish and most expensive ever to be held in Buenos Aires in the first decade of independence, with the exception of the 1812 Fiestas Mayas. However, a large part of the cost of the 1812 celebration was made up of cash benefits for the handicapped, for widows and for orphans, as well as for the manumission of slaves. Thus, in terms of pure festivities, the 1816 celebrations were probably the most lavish. Their total cost amounted to almost 8,000 pesos. ⁴

The following year, celebrations were much more modest, and public apologies for the sobriety were published. But it was also said that future generations would make up for the lackluster first anniversary celebration of the Declaration of Independence. ⁵ Thus, the Fiestas Julias were hit from the beginning with a budget crunch. Indeed, they
continued to be overshadowed by the much more popular, and more firmly established, Fiestas Mayas. Moreover, it was found advantageous to use the festive accoutrements of the Fiestas Mayas for the Fiestas Julias, only six weeks later. Thus, costs were being cut by allowing the arches and other adornments on the Plaza de la Victoria to stand. Not even the prospect of rains and gusty winds would deter the authorities from using such cost cutting devices. It seems that the Pueyrredón regime, especially, attempted to make the Fiestas Julias, so closely identified with its own coming to power and subsequent successes, into the true national holiday instead of the Fiestas Mayas. The fact that it did not succeed is telling evidence not only of the popularity of the earliest revolutionary festivity, but at the same time of the ideals and values of the revolution, however far they might still seem from being realized. On the other hand, it seems curious that the Pueyrredón regime, the first to give itself a successfully national profile, the one that sponsored the national auxiliary expedition into Chile and Peru, should have tried to deemphasize the one truly popular national festive occasion and replace it with the Fiestas Julias.
Victory Celebrations

Besides the Fiestas Mayas and Fiestas Julias, military victories over the royalists were celebrated with great popular enthusiasm in Buenos Aires. The battle at Suipacha in 1810 was the first major military victory of the revolutionary army over its royalist enemies. It was celebrated with great popular enthusiasm, as were the victories at Salta and Tucumán. In 1814, the fall of Montevideo provided an opportunity for at least three official festivities. With Montevideo in the hands of the revolution, the end of the struggle for independence seemed as near as ever, hence the extent of rejoicing. There were celebrations, for example, when eight flags taken from the royalists at Montevideo were officially brought to the capital: on the seventh of July the governor of Buenos Aires, accompanied by the commanders of the garrison, stood at the landing pier to receive the flags and take them to the Director, the head of state. From his residence in the fortress, the flags were then taken to the cabildo to be displayed. There were thousands of people present to witness the ceremonies, so many in fact that they took up all the space between the riverfront and the Plaza de la Victoria. That night, there was more merrymaking against the backdrop of an illuminated city.
In 1817, General San Martin's victory at Chacabuco was lavishly celebrated. News of the victory reached Buenos Aires in the height of summer, at 9:00 a.m. on Monday the 24th of February, and merrymaking continued from that moment till late at night. Pueyrredón wrote to San Martín that at midnight festive sounds still filled the air all over the city. On the 26th, a large crowd assembled to take part in the festivities. Gun salutes were fired, church bells were rung, and all spectators cheered. During three consecutive nights, on February 24, 25, and 26, plays were staged at the theater to generate funds to benefit the widows of soldiers killed during the actions in Chile. Military bands marching through the streets added a martial note to the general celebrations. It seemed that most citizens appreciated this particular element, as could be judged from the vivas they shouted as the bands marched by. A few days later, the lights of the city were lit again as the flags captured from the enemy were brought to the capital. From March 9 till 11, Buenos Aires was illuminated. Bullfights were staged, fireworks were lighted, as well as a magnificent castillo de fuego. While the festivities lasted, the portrait of the victorious general, suspended in the main arch of the cabildo, looked over the plaza.

Once central Chile had been completely liberated, the popular commander made a grand entree into Buenos Aires. On Sunday, March 17, 1818, he rode in triumph through the
streets of the city, with troops lining the route and military bands playing. Large numbers of people were out, shouting, "Long live General San Martín." Ladies standing on balconies threw flowers at the general as he passed. The streets were adorned with many-colored silk ribbons, and a special triumphal arch had been erected on the Plaza de la Victoria. On each side of this temporary structure, a girl was standing to throw flowers on San Martín and his companions. The commander was given a formal reception by the head of state, Director Juan Martín de Pueyrredón, the representatives of the National Congress, and all other authorities. San Martín was thanked officially for having saved the patria, and to symbolize the high honors bestowed on him, he occupied a chair next to the Director as he was formally introduced to the National Congress.¹¹ San Martín's further military successes were also celebrated in Buenos Aires, though with less enthusiasm, it seems, as the victories in Chile. In 1820, the landing in Peru was celebrated with illumination and the customary mass in the Cathedral, yet the event was not so spontaneous as previous celebrations.¹²

By far the most magnificent celebrations of a feat of arms took place when news reached Buenos Aires, on Sunday February 13, 1825, that the Spanish army had been decisively beaten at Ayacucho. As soon as the news got around, people
everywhere joined together in cafes and pulperias to listen to accounts and descriptions of the battle. From the fortress, guns were fired in salute. A Brazilian warship riding at anchor on the river even joined with an Argentine ship in firing its guns. That evening, candles and lamps were put up to provide festive illumination. Fireworks were let off. The Café de la Victoria was filled night after night with patrons drinking beer and wine and even toasting "religious toleration." Talk was about the past and the brilliant and happy future awaiting the inhabitants of the Río de la Plata. Several hundred enthusiasts assembled to march through the streets in military fashion, singing the national anthem and shouting vivas each time they came by the residence of a well-known patriot. Military bands were playing favorite tunes in the cabildo; the needle on the Plaza de la Victoria was decorated with ribbons. People everywhere were in fact genuinely overjoyed with the good news, although George Love accurately noted that such manifestations of joy were not always to be interpreted as evidence of patriotic feelings—they could represent a mere sentiment of relief as well. After these outpourings of spontaneous popular rejoicing, official festivities got under way. In honor of the victory the play Virginia, written by the Italian romantic Vittorio Alfieri, was staged in the municipal theater, decked out for the occasion in the national colors. The play was well received, and was said to
reinforce the audience's enthusiasm for freedom. In the evening of Thursday February 24, there was a victory parade. Already in the afternoon, large numbers of people had begun to assemble along the route and at the point of departure. Loud cheers greeted the float carrying the image of Simón Bolívar the Liberator, and fireworks were let off.¹³

**TABLE 6-1**
Most Important non-annual celebrations and solemnities in Buenos Aires, 1810-1828

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>year</th>
<th>battle or occasion</th>
<th>dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Suipacha</td>
<td>Nov. 24-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Tucumán: funeral ceremony flags received</td>
<td>Oct. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Salta</td>
<td>March 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>fall of Montevideo: thanksgiving flags received full celebration</td>
<td>June 24-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>Chacabuco</td>
<td>July 18-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Chile's Declaration of Independence Maypú</td>
<td>March 9-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Pilar Treaty</td>
<td>March 4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Belgrano's Funeral</td>
<td>April 17-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall of Lima</td>
<td>Feb. 24-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Ayacucho</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Victory and honor to Bolivar</td>
<td>Sept. 27-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ituzaingo</td>
<td>Feb. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March 4-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Acuerdos del Cabildo; Beruti, Memorias)

**Minor Celebrations**

Apart from the Fiestas Mayas, the Fiestas Julias, and the victory celebrations, all following an established pattern borrowed from the colonial Hispanic festive
tradition, other lesser celebrations were also given the form, if not the content, of the main events. In practice, these celebrations, often had a partisan character. Thus in 1814, on January 31, the first anniversary of the General Constituent Assembly was celebrated at the same time that Gervasio Antonio Posadas took office as head of state. A large crowd was gathered on the plaza to witness the ceremony. Cheers went up as Posadas went from the fortress to the Assembly Hall, and from there to the cathedral. There was an official banquet for 60 guests, among them "foreigners who were the most respectable on account of their public life." At night, there was illumination, bands played at the cabildo, and it was said that the large crowd was elated. They allegedly believed that Posadas' taking office was the only solution to the troubles besetting the country, and the end to uncertainty over the nation's fate.  

Although Posadas belonged to the Alvearista party, a small but influential, liberal political movement, he deliberately used all the trappings of the revolutionary festive tradition so as to demonstrate his new position above and beyond vulgar party strife. Less than a year later, after Posadas had stepped down, it was his nephew's turn. As on the previous occasion, troops lined the route as the new man, Carlos de Alvear, made his way from the fortress to the cathedral via the Assembly Hall. Only for Alvear's inauguration—in line with his decided streak of megalomania—the troops were cavalry
(Húsares de la Unión), whereas for his uncle they had been merely foot soldiers. It could, however, also have been possible that Alvear felt less secure of his position than Posadas, and that the use of cavalry as a guard of honor provided more protection in the case of trouble. At any rate, more was made of celebrations than the year before: gun salutes were fired, military bands filled the air with their music, and the festivities lasted for three nights.\textsuperscript{15}

The year 1820, so poor in events worthy of celebration for the porteños, did witness the unusual celebration of the Pilar Treaty. By this treaty, Buenos Aires had ceased to be the capital of Argentina. It had been forced to accept the wishes of the interior provinces for a federal union. Understandably, this represented a low point in the aspirations and achievements of porteños, at least measured against their own standards and ideas. The provincial government, nevertheless, decreed a three-day celebration of the treaty, beginning on February 24, 1820. There would be a Te Deum in the cathedral on Sunday, which eventually had to be postponed due to the governor's illness. Popular enthusiasm was at best lukewarm, as even the government newspaper merely noted that the peace treaty had been celebrated with the "sincere applause of patriots." Although there were gun salutes, and three nights of music and illumination, popular participation was not mentioned in the
official sources. Nor did Beruti, who otherwise noted the slightest remarkable fact in the life of the city, pay any attention to the Pilar celebrations.\textsuperscript{16}

How different was this celebration from the reception given to Juan Ramón Balcarce, porteño hero of the interprovincial wars. The commander made his entry into Buenos Aires on the 29th of February, and was received by a large crowd shouting "viva la patria."\textsuperscript{17} It is not certain what the crowd understood by "patria." Possibly, they were cheering the officer who had tried to preserve national unity under the leadership of Buenos Aires. On the other hand, their cheers may have been for the province of Buenos Aires itself, finally liberated from the burden of the interior provinces, ready to face its existence as an autonomous state. Either way, the porteño public did not necessarily appreciate the signing of the treaty. When the government chose the established format used for the Fiestas Mayas and other revolutionary celebrations in its celebration of the agreement, it may have wanted to emphasize the need to embrace the new settlement. After all, it could also have decreed a much simpler and more sober ceremony. Yet by their choice of the Fiestas Mayas format to celebrate an event that went against the ideals of the May revolution as many porteños understood them, the government in a sense betrayed the revolution. Few citizens apparently would swallow the Pilar treaty, and it was never celebrated again.
The revolution did not just celebrate its successes and victories. It also honored its war dead and paid tribute to its deceased leaders and heroes. These occasions were as vital as the more joyful ones, to demonstrate patriotism and political cohesion. In 1812 a number of soldiers killed in action in Upper Peru, Entre Ríos, the Banda Oriental, and in the naval engagement of Paraná, were given a state funeral in Buenos Aires. The ceremony was held on March 13, costing the cabildo a little more than 4,000 pesos. Doctor José Valentín Gómez said a funeral mass for which he declined to accept a fee. A similar event was not held again during the early independence years, perhaps because such ceremonies could sap public morale. Moreover, the burying of war dead in the capital was a drain on resources, and it must have posed considerable logistical and hygienic problems.

TABLE 6-2
Cost of some other festivities and solemnities, 1809-1821
(In pesos, rounded figures)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defensa, annual cost since 1809</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Función de la Pólvora, annual cost</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oath of Allegiance to Ferdinand VII 1808</td>
<td>7,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensa, Lottery on 3 July, 1808</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Funeral, War dead 1812</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salta Victory</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall of Montevideo, total cost 1814</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inauguration of Posadas 1814</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome of San Martín 1818</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgrano's funeral 1821</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Acuerdos del Cabildo)
Mere commemorations by way of church ceremonies were therefore preferable. Thus in 1816 a special mass was celebrated for the souls of all soldiers killed in defense of the country since the battle of Salta. On July 15, 1821, General Belgrano was given a state funeral costing almost 1,600 pesos. Father Cayetano Rodríguez pronounced the obituary. Belgrano was quite popular in Buenos Aires, not in the least because he was a native of the city. For some years each June, the month of his death, there were memorial services in churches in his honor.

Religious Celebrations, 1810-1828

Religious celebrations never went out of style in Buenos Aires or, for that matter, in Argentina. Throughout the early decades of independence, the same religious holidays were being observed as in colonial days. It was the relative importance of religious festivals and celebrations that declined. The political celebrations that replaced them as the most prominent festivals in society were an entirely new phenomenon. They were not, however, purely political. A central element of all important celebrations was always the solemn mass, often with a Te Deum in the cathedral, the most important temple in the country. This clearly demonstrated how benignly the Church and the religious establishment looked upon the new political developments in the area.
Church involvement in the scarce political celebrations before 1810 and 1806 was a matter of fact. Indeed, because of the closeness of worldly and religious authority in the Spanish colonial world, no one ever questioned the church's involvement in festive events. The church enjoyed a pervasive influence in all spheres of life, and in this respect, at least, there was no clear break between colonial and post-revolutionary circumstances.

Expenditures on religious festivities remained rather constant during the early national period. Spending on San Martín varied widely, more so than the spending on the other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Corpus Christi</th>
<th>San Martín</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>1,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>1,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>1,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>1,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>1,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1,010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Acuerdos del Cabildo)
major religious holiday, Corpus Christi. The cabildo spent the least money in 1816, and 1821. In 1816, too much money was needed for the ceremony in honor of the Declaration of Independence, and in 1821, political turmoil and uncertainty prevented the celebration of even religious holidays with any splendor.

Almost a decade after the May revolution, the holidays to be observed in Buenos Aires were firmly established. An almanac published in 1819 reveals that the defeats of the British invaders were still being celebrated besides the Fiestas Mayas, yet as can be expected, most numerous were the religious holidays. The almanac printed the names of certain saints in italics: most of these were the patron saints of cities and territories of the United Provinces, areas considered to form part of them, or with connections with the Río de la Plata. Although technically these were religious holidays, honoring a saint, they also had a political significance. Represented mainly are places in present-day Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Paraguay. The holidays listed in italics were: the Virgin of La Paz (24 January: La Paz), the Apostles Saint Philip and Saint James (1 May: Oruro, Salta, and Montevideo), Saint Ferdinand (30 May: Maldonado), Saint James (25 July: Potosí, Santiago del Estero, and Mendoza), Santa Clara, co-patron of Buenos Aires together with Saint Martin (12 August), Santa Rosa de Lima (30 August, and patron of the United Provinces and the
Americas), the Archangel Saint Michael (29 September: Chuquisaca and Tucumán). Other places represented by patron saints, but not printed in italics, included: Puno (purification of the Virgin, 2 February), Paraguay (Saint Blasius, 3 February), San Juan de la Frontera, Catamarca and Corrientes (Birth of Saint John the Baptist, 24 June), Cochabamba (Assumption of the Virgin, 15 August), Tarija (the abbot Saint Bernard, 20 August, and Saint John Evangelist, 30 September), Buenos Aires (Saint Martin, 11 November), and the Americas (Conception of the Virgin, 8 December). It is noteworthy that Santa Rosa was included, clearly pointing to a certain hemispheric symbolism, because she was the first saint native to South America, first canonized in the seventeenth century. The patron saints of Maldonado (Ferdinand) and Potosí (Saint James) held a particular significance for peninsulares. The former was also the patron of the King of Spain, the latter was and still is, the national patron of Spain. By a royal cedula of 1756, only the patrons of La Paz, Puno, Cochabamba, Paraguay, Tarija, Córdoba and Santa Fe were to be celebrated in all Spanish colonies. Saint James' day was not a special holiday in America in the latter part of the eighteenth century. (see table 1)
Religious festivals, even if they were celebrated in honor of historical personalities who had actually existed (such as Saint Martin, who lived in the fourth century, AD) were in effect suspended in time. There was no historical context to refer to. Even the celebration of political events could have an aspect of unreality. If there were festivities before 1810, celebrating the birth of a crown prince, for example, it was realized that it represented a real event. Yet it made very little, if any, practical difference in the life of the colony, who happened to be king at the moment. Like the post-1810 festivities, the celebrations of colonial holidays were intended to cement the loyalty of the subjects, to symbolize the unity of the lands under the Spanish crown, and to reaffirm colonial and national identity.

Festivals: Place and Meaning in Everyday Life

When the Río de la Plata was suddenly brought into the mainstream of European politics with the British invasions, its festivities began to change as well. Judging by the annual celebrations commemorating the invasions and their victorious aftermath, these events had a much greater impact upon society than, say, the reconquest of Colonia de Sacramento in 1775. That military success against the arch enemy Portugal did not leave any celebrational traces. Yet the British invasions and the Reconquista and Defensa yielded
their place on the calendar to the Fiestas Mayas. Today the Fiestas Mayas are still being celebrated whereas the Reconquista and Defensa are chiefly remembered by means of the streets in downtown Buenos Aires named after them. No doubt the ongoing popularity among both the citizens and the authorities of the 25th of May can be explained by the symbolism of the commemorated event. The victories over the British were purely military. The May revolution cleared the way to political freedom and independent development. The Fiestas Mayas proved such an attractive holiday that large sums were spent on them: only the official budgets are known, but much more was spent by private citizens. Many well-to-do porteños took it upon themselves to organize neighborhood festivities, dances, balls and parties in which all could participate. Often they would pay for refreshments for everyone.22

Sometimes there was pressure on the townspeople to contribute to the organization and cost of the festivals. In 1819, a Spaniard seeking naturalization, Francisco José de Mesa, included as evidence of his warm feelings toward the state a printed invitation, signed by the teniente de alcalde de barrio of his district. The form stated that the city government had authorized the district authorities to organize and prepare "the dances and public entertainments" with which the upcoming Fiestas Mayas and the publication of
the new constitution of 1819 were to be celebrated. It was left up to the discretion of the resident to donate funds for these events. Sra. de Mesa was given a similar invitation. Francisco Saguí, who was a former alcalde of the ward in which the Mesas lived, for his part stated that Mesa had always been known as a loyal individual. "In spite of his limited finances and his large family, he was always ready to pay the requested contribution to meet the country's needs, to celebrate its Fiestas Mayas, and the swearing of the constitution."23

Since official budgets for the May celebrations were already consistently much higher than those for any religious celebration before 1810, the total sums spent on all civic festivals were lavish indeed. Thus on the scale of spending festivities, the revolution was a radical break with the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6-4</th>
<th>Total and average cost of celebrations, 1811-1821</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>secular festivities</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811-1814</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815-1821</td>
<td>$33,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| religious holidays | total   | annual average |
| 1811-1814   | $5,300  | $1,300          |
| 1815-1821   | $6,400  | $900            |

(Source: Acuerdos del Cabildo)
In France and other Western European nations, the revolutions of the eighteenth century often adopted previously known festive traditions and practices. In Spain, the source of many cultural values and ideas prevalent in the Río de la Plata, May conjured up a whole cluster of symbolic meanings, all having to do with new beginnings and the renewal of nature itself. In France as well, May celebrations acquired a new meaning after 1789, when survivals of ancient fertility rites were incorporated into revolutionary festivals. Thus the Maypole was given added significance and in many places May Queens became symbols of revolutionary renewal. Possibly, the needle on the main square of Buenos Aires was the local version of a Maypole. In this way the connections between the revolution, renewal, rebirth, femininity, virginity, and freshness and youth were made visible. In fact, female beauty and youth came to represent the radical changes and the renewal brought about by the French Revolution.

It seems unlikely that the porteños and their revolutionary leaders had any intimate knowledge of French revolutionary festivals and of the extent to which relics of ancient rites of fertility were incorporated into them. Nevertheless, in Buenos Aires a number of analogous developments may be observed. It should be pointed out that, in Buenos Aires as in the rest of the Southern Hemisphere, May does not trigger the same associations as it does in
Europe and North America. South of the Equator, May means fall and has nothing to do with the beginning of a new cycle of growth in nature. May is the equivalent of November in the north. Therefore, it is all the more remarkable that in the early decades of independence, young girls suddenly came to the forefront during May celebrations. They were never present during pre-revolutionary festivities, yet after 1810, they get dowries and special prizes honoring outstanding moral virtues. In 1808, boys were the chief recipients of lottery prizes: scholarships to Córdoba. After 1810, the boys' role mainly consisted of singing the national anthem on various festive occasions. This particular role may also be a leftover from the days when no women were allowed to sing in churches, and boys were preferred when high-pitched voices were needed. In the revolutionary celebrations, then, boys represented continuities, while the girls symbolized all that was new and pristine.

The revolution brought about a profound change in the festive calendar of the Río de la Plata. Time was organized according to a different, more secular, pattern, while overall adherence to religious holidays was retained largely intact. Since the authorities and the public worked hand in glove to bring about this change, it is safe to say that the
changes were the work of both the government and its citizens. This is yet another indication of the popularity of the revolution.

Significance of Revolutionary Celebrations

The reasons for celebrating the anniversary of the May revolution were varied. The most obvious reason was, of course, to keep alive the memory of the revolution, to remember the glorious event, and to reflect upon its accomplishments. This would be especially true of the first two anniversaries, those of 1811 and 1812. But there were important political reasons as well, not the least of which was the affirmation of revolutionary values as exemplified by the showering of benefits upon the economically deprived. Furthermore, it was always important to give a clear, public demonstration of unity. After all, resistance against the new order of things was evident from the days of the May revolution itself. A demonstration of unity also entailed a show of the government's popularity, and in the process the revolution could distinguish friends from enemies. In the final instance, the Fiestas Mayas were an excellent way for the revolutionaries to show their power and, more importantly, their legitimacy. The sooner they came to be regarded as a regularly returning event, the better the citizens of Buenos Aires could be convinced of the
legitimacy of the "sacred cause." Moreover, by celebrating the revolution's anniversary, the porteños in a way made themselves responsible for its success. It was the clearest visible way most of them could express their allegiance to the new authorities. It was also a safe one, because one did not risk one's life, as one would on the battlefield.

It is perhaps in order to stress that the Fiestas Mayas were celebrations of a small-town community. Indeed, with the Fiestas Mayas, Buenos Aires not only celebrated the revolution, but also itself. Many smaller towns appear to need celebrations in which a sizeable portion of the population may take part. Besides, such celebrations serve also an integrative purpose. Two or more different, sometimes antagonistic, segments of the population may celebrate an event together, thus showing themselves and each other that they may live in harmony, and that any differences between them are not insurmountable. Such celebrations are reminiscent of carnival in some respects. They are local holidays, no one works, all take part in celebrating, and normal everyday order and organization are reversed. In a strictly geographical, or geopolitical sense, Buenos Aires at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a marginal place. But it was also a fast-growing, rich town, many of whose inhabitants had received, or were receiving, formal education. Moreover, Buenos Aires was economically and
socially diversified, and becoming more so every day. Finally, its population became ever more cosmopolitan. (See Chapter VII) Under these circumstances, to which revolutionary ferment, political innovation, and their concomitant uncertainties were added, a celebration like the Fiestas Mayas could prove useful. They became an integrative ritual of the capital of the independence movement, in which everybody was encouraged to take part. Indeed, many did, not only porteños, but immigrants from the Litoral, the Banda Oriental, Cuyo, Tucumán, Upper Peru, Peru, Chile, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, and Western Europe as well. Thus, apart from strict political reasons, there were sound social and cultural motives for celebrating the Fiestas Mayas.

Prior to the May celebrations, the need for integrative ritual had been fulfilled by the San Martín celebrations, from 1779 partly also by the función de la pólvora, and since 1806 and 1807 by the commemoration of the Reconquista and Defensa. There was, however, also a qualitative difference between the Fiestas Mayas and its predecessors. San Martín's day had been a purely local affair, only significant to Buenos Aires itself. It had its patron's day just like all other towns and villages in the Viceroyalty. The Reconquista and Defensa celebrations, while ostensibly of a significance for the entire Viceroyalty, in effect were largely porteño affairs. The May celebrations, on the other hand, were of "nationwide" importance. They were
a national holiday in the truest sense of the word, celebrated all over the former Viceroyalty, and even by armies in the field. The revolutionary government clearly saw that in order for the Fiestas Mayas to get established, the commemorations of the victories over the British had to be deemphasized. By sacrificing its own celebrations, and by substituting the Fiestas Mayas for them, Buenos Aires backed up its claim to being the national capital.

The revolution of 1810 was about freedom. If it was not literally so, perhaps, from the very beginning, it was at least in the hearts and minds of the people and government of Buenos Aires. This may be seen from the character of the Fiestas Mayas. Slaves were formally liberated on the occasion of the revolution's anniversary, although the practice was known from before the revolution. In 1812, the cabildo even requested the government to manumit a slave who was the daughter of "citizen Antonio Videla," who had given his life in defense of the fatherland. The idea was that the daughter of such a man did not deserve to live in slavery and should share in the liberty of the state for which her father had given his life. Considering there was still some money left from the manumission of slaves during the May celebrations, it was decided to spend the remainder in the same way. Occasionally, a private citizen could feel moved to follow suit. Juan Antonio Costa, while witnessing the freedom
lottery in 1813, was "moved by love of his country" to offer the freedom of one of his slaves, Joaquín, although he granted him freedom only on condition he serve in the army to fight the royalists. Costa's example was to prove popular among slave owners, if only because it meant they did not have to serve in the army themselves.

While in the case of the slaves the transition from a non-free status to freedom is illustrated most dramatically, the theme of liberty also distinguishes the benefits allotted to widows, orphans, and young girls. Their lack of money prevented them from realizing their potential, or from continuing their way of life, that is to say, to survive in decency. They were thus also liberated, if only from a situation of economic dependence. The pardoning of criminals, however, was only partly connected with the idea of liberty, for it was also understood that only a sovereign authority had the right to grant pardon. When Nicolás Herrera, as head of state, pardoned Gregorio Funes and Andrés Hidalgo in 1812, it was not just out of respect for the ideals of the revolution and its anniversary. Funes and Hidalgo had been accused of conspiring against the state. Their pardon at the behest of the cabildo was also a sign that the new government was indeed a sovereign body, with the power to grant pardon, just as the viceroys did in the name of the king. In another case, Corporal Juan Orellana, a Spanish deserter from the royalists at Montevideo to join the ranks of the
revolutionary army, had been sentenced to death by a military court at Tucumán. However, an appeal was made to commute his sentence in view of the anniversary of the 25th of May. Antonio Alvarez de Arenales as Auditor General de Guerra, agreed, commuting the sentence to 200 blows with the stick and degradation to the rank of common soldier.32

Many believed that the anniversary of the revolution was a magic moment. At least during the first decade of independence, it was said that the Fiestas Mayas used to bring a certain something ("no sé qué") into the blood.33 Furthermore, "it was for several years remarked that, during the fervid course of the revolution, that the 25th of May always brought good news."34 If for some reason the sun did not show its face during the anniversary, an explanation was quickly found. In 1823, so much rain fell on May 25 that festivities had to be postponed for two days, and it was said that heavenly provision had sent rains on that particular day, because the earth was so dry.35 Thus, a special divine blessing graced the anniversary of the revolution: anything that happened then was by definition good. In a sense, "el Día de América" had become a sacred day, not only for Buenos Aires but for the rest of the continent as well. It was the day on which the revolution in Upper Peru had started in
1809, and on which Simón Bolívar victoriously entered Mérida in 1813. Argentinian soldiers were thought to be assured of victory if they engaged in combat on that day.\textsuperscript{36}

Some contemporaries read more into public merriment and rejoicing than a mere manifestation of a general satisfaction with political "regeneration." One observer noted that spontaneous merrymaking was the most important indicator of a people's happy situation: "the character of poverty is always sad, melancholy and somber. That of abundance is happy, festive, and pleasant. These qualities are inseparably linked with freedom." How true this was could be seen in Buenos Aires during the May anniversary, when harmony reigned supreme: "excesses are unknown, vices do not appear, the ridiculous, the imbecile and the drunkard do not show up, there is order and security in everyone and in the collected body of citizens." The aspect of Buenos Aires and its people during the Fiestas Mayas was that of a superb and civilized society, such as could only have resulted from "a morality of many centuries." Because Buenos Aires was still a very young city, there was in its case another explanation, namely "the rapid transition from servitude to freedom, from ignorance to enlightenment, from being downtrodden to being uplifted."\textsuperscript{37}

Certain elements of carnival, including role reversal and the wearing of costumes, disguises and masks, were recurring features of the Fiestas Mayas. It was custom,
apparently, to wear phrygian caps during Fiestas Mayas and other patriotic celebrations.\textsuperscript{38} Masks are known to have been worn during the anniversaries of 1811 and 1822, among others. In the latter year while parading through the streets of the capital, numerous young persons wore various disguises, notably of felines such as lions, panthers, and leopards. As with carnival, it was remarked that during the Fiestas Mayas all classes were in the grip of a common enthusiasm, and that "for a moment the dykes of classicism" were thrown down.\textsuperscript{39} Thus, for the duration of the May celebrations at least, two of the ideals of the Atlantic revolution, equality and fraternity, were more than mere slogans.

Another element of the Fiestas Mayas was renewal, rebirth. After all, they celebrated the anniversary of the country's political rebirth. For the military, especially, this had a very tangible meaning. They were usually given new uniforms. But civilians also exerted themselves to look their best. So did the schoolboys who sang the national anthem standing around the needle at daybreak on the 25th of May.\textsuperscript{40}
Notes to Chapter VI

1 Emilio Breda, Proclamación y Jura de la Independencia en Buenos Aires y la provincia, (Buenos Aires: Casa Pardo, 1966), 64-6.

2 Bartolomé Muñoz, Día de Buenos Ayres en la proclamación de la independencia de las Provincias Unidas del Rio de la Plata (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Sol, 1816). Reprinted, with an introductory study by Emilio Breda, (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Theoria, 1966), 5-7. The throwing of silver coins among the people assembled on the main square to take an oath of allegiance, can be traced back at least to the old Burgundian lands: when the future King Philip II was recognized as heir to the Lord of the Netherlands, he also visited Louvain. In July 1549, heralds threw coins among the public on the town's market square, while the local elite watched amusedly. See Ludwig Pfandl, Philipp II. Gemälde eines Lebens und einer Zeit (Munich: Callwey, 1938), 199.

3 Muñoz, Día de Buenos Ayres, 7-9.

4 Acuerdos del Cabildo, December 10, 1816.


6 See for example, Acuerdos del Cabildo, June 11, 1819.

7 Gaceta de Buenos Aires/Ministerial July 13, 1814.

8 Gamalsson, Pueyrredón, 266.

9 Gaceta de Buenos Aires/Extraordinaria February 27, 1817; Beruti, Memorias, 3890.

10 Beruti, Memorias, 3892-3.

11 Gaceta de Buenos Aires May 20, 1818; Beruti, Memorias, 3903. This entrance into the capital was even more splendid than the one San Martín made the previous year, on March 30. Beruti, Memorias, 3895.

12 Gaceta de Buenos Aires/Extraordinaria December 21, 1820.

14 *Gaceta de Buenos Aires/Ministerial* February 2, 1814.

15 *Gaceta de Buenos Aires/del Gobierno* January 15, 1815.

16 *Gaceta de Buenos Aires* March 1, 1820.

17 *Gaceta de Buenos Aires* March 2, 1820.

18 Acuerdos del Cabildo, December 19, 1811, January 4, 17, February 21, March 16, and April 20, 1812.

19 Acuerdos del Cabildo, February 21, 1816.

20 Acuerdos del Cabildo, May 23, June 5, and August 31, 1821; *Un inglés, Cinco años*, 214. About 25% of the cost of the funeral in 1821 (414 pesos), was financed out of that year's Fiestas Mayas budget. Acuerdos, August 17, 1821.

21 *Almanak o Calendario, y Diario de Quartos de Luna, según el Meridiano de Buenos-Ayres Para el año de 1819, Decimo de Nuestra Libertad*, Buenos Aires: Imprenta de los Expositos, 1819. Found in AGN X-30-1-5, Sumarios Militares, expediente 641.


23 AGN IX-35-3-3, Tribunales.


26 Although Buenos Aires ranked among the biggest American cities, these were hardly more than small or medium-sized towns by modern standards. Mexico and Rio de Janeiro had more than 100,000 inhabitants, and Havana, Lima, Buenos Aires, Puebla and Bahia between 50,000 and 100,000. Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz, *The Population of Latin America, A History* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 128.

Thus, Gainesville, Florida, has its homecoming parade, in which both students and residents take part. It is the town's single most important festivity. This phenomenon is repeated annually in countless small college towns all over the country. Many find such celebrations to have an air of simplicity and straightforwardness, which is perhaps an indication of their integrative function. The bigger the city, the less likely one is to encounter such events, except as a neighborhood phenomenon. It may also be observed on the other side of the Atlantic. Smaller towns sometimes have their unique celebrations, such as the Third of October in Leiden, Netherlands. This annual celebration commemorates the deliverance of the city from a Spanish siege during the Eighty Years' War in 1574. The present form developed out of a students' parade held once every five years since 1835. See, for instance, H.Ph. Vogel, "Leyden and the Spaniards: An Unusual Relationship," paper read at the Second Spanish Dutch Historical Colloquium, Segovia, 1986.

In 1809, two slaves were manumitted on the occasion of a celebration, but it is not known why it was done, nor what its symbolic meaning was supposed to be. See Acuerdos del Cabildo June 20, 1809.

Gazeta de Buenos Aires June 30, 1813.

Pardon granted on May 26, 1812. AHPBA, section Audiencia, 5.5.76.18.

AGN X-30-1-5, Sumarios Militares, expediente 643.

Gaceta de Buenos Aires May 27, 1818.


El Centinela, 1 June, 1823; the paper spoke of "a benign and sweet rain, exactly the way the aridity of the land required it."

A good example of this belief in divine benevolence is the statement of General Antonio Alvarez de Arenales about the battle of La Florida in Upper Peru on May 25, 1814: "the Almighty deigned to give us, with his protection, the victory of the glorious action at Florida." Thus, the happy outcome of the battle was "purely the work of God." Arenales to José Rondeau, enclosed in a letter by Rondeau to the government, 21 October 1814. Reprinted in Archivo General de la Nación, Partes oficiales y documentos relativos a la Guerra de la Independencia Argentina, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Taller Tipográfico del Penitenciario Nacional, 1900-1901).


39 Robertsons, *Letters*, 128-9. By classicism, the authors understand class divisions and antagonism.

Whereas today a quick glance at someone's passport will tell whether he or she is a foreigner, there was no such convenient way of establishing one's legal status in colonial Spanish America. In Buenos Aires, there was not even a need for such a device, because the community was small and non-natives were often known as such. There were different national and ethnic groups in society, but it is difficult to determine their exact boundaries, and probably there were no precise lines. Unfortunately, data on self-identification are lacking. In an "objective" sense, there were Spaniards, or peninsulares, creoles, European foreigners, Indians, mestizos, and African-born and American-born blacks comprising free blacks, mulattoes, and slaves. In addition, there were large numbers of gauchos, a nomad-like rural population. This rough division is based on a mixture of ethnic or racial, economic, political and social criteria. Hence, the division itself is far from logical.

In colonial Spanish America generally, society had seen a basic division between European and "native" culture: the Europeanized cities versus the heavily Indian
countryside. If dilution between the two worlds occurred in practice, it was the ideal of the city to be as European as possible. While this division concerned the Viceroyalty as a whole, closer to the capital there were similar profound differences between the city and the gaucho-dominated countryside. Here, a mestizo culture, fed from both European and Indian cultural and ethnic sources, had sprung up and was growing steadily. Many in the countryside rejected European civilization, wanting to preserve a "native" way of life. In 1780, precisely in the Viceroyalties of Peru and the Río de la Plata, the two worlds clashed violently, as a result of which a series of measures was taken to suppress native Indian culture in the Andes. The Túpac Amaru revolt may have been the culmination of a longer process of Indian identity building upon the ruins of the conquista. To the extent that the urban and rural worlds were alien to each other, the revolution did not fundamentally alter this dichotomy.

If one chooses to center on the division between native and non-native, then the foreigners in colonial society were the peninsulars, other European foreigners, and African-born slaves. But even according to this scheme, things are far from clear. What were the natives native of? Were they natives of America, or in the case of Buenos Aires, were they natives of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, or of the city itself? If one distinguishes between natives and non-natives, it is also possible to center on the patria
chica, the "little fatherland." This would mean that only natives of Buenos Aires and its immediate surroundings were "natives." All others, including Indians from outside the city's jurisdiction, creoles from Córdoba, and American-born blacks from Montevideo, would be foreigners.

In Buenos Aires, where immigrants from the Mediterranean, Western Europe, Brazil, Africa, Upper Peru and Paraguay lived together with native porteños, there were bound to be certain identifying common characteristics of each of the main categories. Speech and accent, for instance, gave clues as to somebody's background. As foreigners today often retain a distinctive accent in their Spanish, there is no reason to think they did not do so in the past. Spanish and Portuguese immigrants could easily be identified as non-natives because of their distinctive accents. But it was rather difficult to distinguish between a Portuguese, and a Spaniard from Galicia. Since Portuguese is very similar to Galician, leading to a comparable accent in Castilian, Portuguese settlers could often pass for Gallegos. Therefore, a Portuguese could blend quite easily and inconspicuously into Spanish American society. It was easy for creoles and other Americans to mistake a Portuguese for a native of Galicia.²
Physical differences were more pronounced, probably, between the English and other Northern Europeans and Spaniards and creoles; Brazilians and porteños; and African and American blacks. Yet creole porteños may have looked different from Spaniards. In Buenos Aires, food was cheap and plentiful, and rich in vitamins and proteins. The city was self sufficient in wheat, beef, and vegetables, whereas Spain continued to suffer periodic famines in the eighteenth century. Peninsulars coming to the Río de la Plata as adults were thus more likely to have experienced malnutrition than creoles, or peninsulars who had arrived very early in life. Moreover, public health in Buenos Aires was more advanced than in Spain: by 1810, vaccination against smallpox was already widely practiced in the Río de la Plata. From descriptions of passport bearers, a typical image of the Spanish immigrant emerges as a person of short stature and with a pockmarked face.³

Numbers and Legal Status

In terms of colonial law, non-Hispanic Europeans were considered aliens. In spite of the efforts of the Spanish authorities to keep away all foreigners from their American possessions, foreigners had been a common sight during colonial days. Buenos Aires, a forgotten outpost of Empire, was no exception. Foreigners played a key role in its
economy. The Portuguese especially were important: some have suggested that it was the Portuguese, many of them Jews, who controlled trade in colonial Buenos Aires. From the earliest days, Portuguese had formed an important part of the population. A census from 1664 of the two hundred most important citizens, that is to say those with sufficient property to qualify as vecinos and to vote for the cabildo, revealed that more than 10% were Portuguese. Many who classified themselves as natives of Buenos Aires, moreover, had one or more Portuguese parents or grandparents. Other foreigners included one person each from Ireland, Antwerp, Genoa, and Vienna. There is no doubt that among the remainder of the city population there were also many Portuguese and some other foreigners as well. In a number of other colonial centers about which data are known, foreigners, especially Portuguese, were likewise present in large numbers. These places included Cartagena, Mexico City, Vera Cruz, Guadalajara, Potosí and Tucumán. Foreigners made up about 10% of these towns' populations. Apart from the ubiquitous Portuguese, there were Flemings, Italians and other Europeans. Most of them never received their naturalization papers, or even bothered to apply for them. The rich merchants were the ones to naturalize: more than 300 of them in the seventeenth century alone.
At the time of the May revolution of 1810, the foreigners in Buenos Aires included Portuguese and Brazilians, Italians, Frenchmen, Irishmen, a handful of Englishmen, and at least one Dutchman. Yet from the moment the revolution took place, and by law systematically after 1813, Spaniards were being considered foreigners as well. European Spaniards were the single most important non-native group in 1810, numbering about 3,000. Controversy about the size of the total population of Buenos Aires in the period has not subsided. Various estimates have long circulated, putting it somewhere between 40,000 and 60,000. Recently, however, modern demographic techniques and analysis have made it plausible that the population was even higher than the highest estimate so far. Lyman Johnson suggests a figure of 76,000, of which probably more than half was black or mulatto.

According to the available census data from the period itself, almost 80% of persons whose birthplace was given were Americans. Over two thirds, 67%, were "Argentinians." Seventeen percent, 2,290 persons, were known peninsulars, while 668 persons came from other European countries. The proportion of Spaniards steadily dwindled as the city population grew and communications with the metropolis became increasingly difficult and less frequent. Moreover, the political and social climate was unfriendly for many peninsulars, to say the least. In sheer numbers, though, the
decrease of the Spanish element was not as dramatic as one might suppose. In 1822, slightly over 2,000 peninsulars remained. The net loss of the total number of Spaniards in Buenos Aires measured over the first decade of independence would thus be about 15%. Several hundred were to seek Argentine citizenship, some left Buenos Aires and even the Río de la Plata, but many if not most continued to live in Buenos Aires.

During the revolution, the foreign communities of Buenos Aires began to develop and acquire a character of their own. The Spanish "community," to be sure, was not really a community but rather a passing category, created as a result of the revolution, and its members assimilated rather quickly into the mainstream of society. For obvious reasons, the Spanish element merged smoothly into the general population: Spaniards shared with the natives a language, a religion, and a culture. It may be said that the Spanish element finally aspired to be a part of society, after having set itself apart during colonial days because of the obvious benefits it derived from being peninsular. Those who could not or would not integrate into Argentine society simply left the area. Many Spaniards lost their government jobs for political motives, as a result of anti-Spanish measures taken by the Revolutionary governments. Once without a job, they might leave the area for lack of economic sustenance,
although there were also peninsulars who had to leave for being staunch opponents of the revolution and supporters of the King.

Andrés Agustín Nieto, for example, could not keep his job with the postal service because he was denied citizenship in 1813. Four years later, still without a job, he had also become a widower, and he returned to Spain. In 1813 Antonio de la Peña, a former Finance Ministry (Hacienda) official who had not been granted citizenship and who therefore could not keep his job either, asked permission to leave for Rio de Janeiro. In Brazil, he planned to look for a job because his family could no longer survive on his wife's meager inheritance.

In 1817 María Dolores Oromí de Moxó, a creole, asked permission to follow her husband back to Spain where he hoped to get proper medical treatment and to escape the poverty they were suffering in Buenos Aires. Permission was granted, but Moxó, a notorious adversary of the revolutionary cause, had to promise never to return to Argentina as long as Spain had not recognized the independence of America.

Some Spaniards were too poor even to think of leaving Buenos Aires. Antonio Pardo, summoned to pay a fine of 50 pesos if he did not contribute to a forced loan for Spaniards, told the authorities that he could not possibly pay. He was so poor in fact that in order to survive he had taken the humiliating job of taking care of chickens. The
authorities, after consultation with Pardo's alcalde de barrio, decided to let the matter go, relieving Pardo of his obligation to pay. 16

At the same time, the revolution brought new groups and categories of foreigners to the Río de la Plata. English merchants were among the more conspicuous. While in 1810 there were 124 British merchants in Buenos Aires, the British community developed impressively after the revolution. Around 1824, British residents were estimated at 3,500, while official figures put the number at 1,355. Subsequent growth of this community was not quite as dramatic, in percentage terms, yet since at the beginning of the 1830s there were perhaps more than 5,000 Britons living in Buenos Aires. 17

Ranging far behind the merchants, artisans, and sailors from Great Britain were small numbers of French and Italian and even German businessmen temporarily settling in Buenos Aires. Then there were, of course, the many foreigners who came to the area in search of adventure, primarily to participate in the struggle against the royalists. It is not yet known how many of these adventurous foreigners, both soldiers and businessmen, eventually decided to stay and settle, and how many actually lived in Buenos Aires all their lives and died there.
If the peninsulars are excepted, Buenos Aires was indeed a good place for foreigners, to judge from their steadily rising number in the city.

### TABLE 7-1
Foreigners in Buenos Aires, 1804-1822
(not counting peninsulars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>1,684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Equipos de Investigación Histórica, Buenos Aires, 99, 101. The data are drawn from official census data; the actual number of foreigners was probably significantly higher.)

Before long, however, Spaniards were welcome again. In 1827 Francisco Morales, a native of the Canary Islands, suggested to the government in Buenos Aires to foster the immigration of Canary Islanders, after having learned that foreigners arriving in the country could count on a "fatherly and friendly welcome" (paternal and caritatiba). The government agreed, desirous as it was to help increase the country's population and to stimulate economic growth in an early application of Alberdi's famous dictum: "goberrar es poblar" (to govern is to populate). Morales would receive 100 pesos for every settler over 15 years old and half that amount for those under 15. It is not known whether his plan ever bore
fruit, but it is significant that so soon after the end of the struggle for independence Spaniards were being looked with favor as immigrants.18

**Immigration Policy**

Buenos Aires had a reputation for hospitality to foreigners, which seems to have had its roots in colonial days and which apart from the temporary bad treatment of Spaniards survived the revolutionary period. As one visitor put it: "I was always forcibly struck with the truth of the remark made to me by a Portuguese, before leaving Rio de Janeiro, that I was going among people who preferred strangers to their own countrymen."19

The first Junta and its successors believed that economic growth and other benefits would result from the settlement of considerable numbers of immigrants from Europe, especially. While there was no deliberate immigration policy prior to the 1820s, from 1810 onwards, foreigners were explicitly welcomed and invited to come to Argentina in order to ply their trade and do business. Notably "the English, Portuguese and other foreigners who are not at war with us," could freely come to Argentina. Those who came to dedicate themselves to useful trades and agriculture would enjoy all the rights of citizens, and they would receive protection from the government.20 In 1812, foreign merchants were
relieved of the obligation to sell their goods through native consignment agents. Henceforth, they were allowed to sell their goods directly. Moreover, the Provisional Statute of 1815 implicitly extended civil rights to foreigners and natives alike. As a matter of fact, it stated that all inhabitants of the state would enjoy six fundamental rights, to wit: the right to life, honor, liberty, equality, possessions, and security.

Bernardino Rivadavia began the active encouragement of immigration. In 1824 he set up an immigration commission with a budget of 100,000 pesos. Its task was to attract settlers with technical and agricultural skills to help insure Argentina's economic development. At least two of the committee members, Antonio Dorna and Domingo Gallino, were naturalized Spaniards. Of the others, five were originally French or British. Two years later a new committee was formed, again including a number of foreign or naturalized citizens.

Argentina's early immigration projects were, however, rather failures. The immigration boards did not succeed in attracting the desired numbers and categories of newcomers. Instead of farm laborers and farmers, Buenos Aires continued to draw many businessmen, artisans and mechanics. For example, an attempt by Carlos Heine, a naturalized German
army officer, to attract Germans only yielded a meager harvest of 33 settlers, who besides felt cheated by their former compatriot.  

The Portuguese

The Portuguese were present in Buenos Aires in large numbers and as already noted, could pass easily for natives of Galicia; but whether it was always an advantage to be taken for a Galician is not certain: during the days of the revolution, Gallego became the standard insult one could hurl at any Spaniard. Generally, no distinction was made between European and American Portuguese until the time of the Argentine-Brazilian War of 1826-1828. It is only through deduction or thanks to an unintended piece of evidence that one can conclude from documents that a person was a Brazilian rather than a peninsular Portuguese. However, Brazilians must have been numerous in Buenos Aires in view of the close commercial ties with Brazil and with the Banda Oriental, which had always had strong Brazilian presence and influence. It did not matter that such relations had been officially outlawed: the traffic of goods and people tends to follow its own logic and laws.

When a Portuguese army entered the Banda Oriental in 1811 to fight on the side of the Spanish royalists against the revolutionary insurgents, the Buenos Aires Junta felt
threatened. Immediately, the cabildo was ordered to conduct a census of all Portuguese, which revealed that there were a little less than 400 Portuguese living in the city.\textsuperscript{26} This figure differs little from that of another census of Portuguese residents taken in 1817. The latter yielded data for only 22 out of the 36 city wards, but for these 22 barrios the number of Portuguese was around 300. One might therefore conclude that the number of Portuguese in Buenos Aires did not decrease substantially during the early independence years.\textsuperscript{27} It is curious to note that almost a third of the Portuguese registered in the 1817 survey were living in only one barrio, number 5, where 91 were counted. One could thus speak with some justification of a Portuguese neighborhood; the fact that so many Portuguese were living close to each other might mean that many of them did not fully assimilate into the porteño community. Further characterization of the Portuguese is made difficult because data are lacking on the length of their stay in Buenos Aires. Many Portuguese living in district 5 may have been temporary residents, with little incentive to integrate into the local community.

The exact place of origin of the Portuguese is only given in few cases. According to alcalde de barrio Salvador Gálvez, the two individuals in his ward were "Portuguese Americans" and so poor that they were balancing on the edge
of life and death. The alcalde of the 16th district included data on the racial category of the Portuguese counted in his ward, of whom two were black (*moreno*), and two were mulattoes (*pardo*). Of only four other Portuguese in the census was it said they were pardos, though probably there were many more Portuguese-speaking blacks and mulattoes in the city. Nor is it unreasonable to assume that the majority of the non-white Lusophone residents were really Brazilians, although there is a small possibility that some were from places like Angola, Mozambique or the Cape Verde Islands. Some Brazilians in any case felt very much at home in Buenos Aires, priding themselves on being "Americans." Antonio de Sosa y Silva, a 20-year old Brazilian *pulpero* from Paranaguá applied for naturalization in 1818, telling the judge that he was an *americano* and therefore had been exempted from compulsory naturalization and from taking loyalty oaths. Besides, he had always had a special attachment to his adoptive country. Yet of the six witnesses he presented, only one was a native of Buenos Aires, and he had a Portuguese-sounding last name. Three of the others were probably "Portuguese," one was from Montevideo, and one from Paraguay. One wonders how well Sosa y Silva was really integrated into the porteño community, if he was not able to come up with some authentic hometown types. Moreover, he was serving with the urban militia, which was a place where he presumably could have built friendships with native porteños. 28
Of course, for any individual to be known as Portuguese meant that his integration into society was not complete. Probably continued contact with other Portuguese, with what might be termed the Portuguese community, made for a certain degree of isolation. Nor had all Portuguese residents of Buenos Aires come with the intention to establish themselves in the country forever. Especially the Brazilians are known to have made trips back home with some regularity. It was relatively easy to visit relatives in, say, Rio Grande do Sul or Santa Catarina. All one had to do was get on a boat from Buenos Aires to Colonia del Sacramento across the river, and take a horse from there or continue up the Uruguay River. 29

Many Portuguese came to Buenos Aires to ply their trade, and the 1817 survey provides data on the professional breakdown of Portuguese residents. About one third were artisans, most of them shoemakers and cobblers. There were also cigar makers, barbers, candle makers and carpenters. About 15% were engaged in some sort of agriculture or horticulture, producing fruits and vegetables for the urban market. Another 15% earned a living by means of trade and commerce either as pulperos, as travelling salesmen selling goods to customers in the countryside, or as wholesale merchants. 30
Finally, more than half of all Portuguese residents were registered as single or unmarried; the other half were married. It is not certain whether men registered as either single or married had left wives at home in Portugal or Brazil, or how many of those with wives in Buenos Aires had married creole or peninsular women, or even natives of Buenos Aires. Naturally, many were prevented by their economic status as farmhands or pulpero store clerks from setting up a household of their own. Perhaps the high incidence of bachelors among the Portuguese also had to do with many of them being still quite young.31

The British

While Portuguese and Spanish residents, settlers and immigrants could, and perhaps were expected to, integrate into society rapidly, the British remained largely aloof and apart from it. Ever since the British military intrusions into the area, when for the first time large numbers were present, they had enjoyed a certain reputation for haughty aloofness. During one of the victory parades after the first victory over the invaders in 1806, a captured British officer refused to take off his hat, causing a young Argentine soldier to become so angry that he hit the officer in the face. According to an anonymous diary author, such conduct was typical of the British officers' arrogance, reflecting
their low opinion of the local population. Later, many British residents were anxious to correct any unfavorable impressions the local population might still entertain. Perhaps they felt that negative attitudes of the porteños might hurt their business. Thus, for example, in 1810 a group of 67 British merchants living in Buenos Aires, and with an apparent interest in the city's cultural development, donated money and books to the newly formed public library. 

Admittedly, such efforts did not always attest to a fundamental change in British attitudes toward the locals. Certainly the British did not exactly enhance their popularity among the porteños by their tendency to isolate themselves from society. As their community grew in size, the British developed their own residential areas, their own churches and their British Chamber of Commerce which did not admit any non-British members, thus causing severe criticism in Buenos Aires. Naturally they also had their own places of diversion. Many Englishmen preferred to live close together, so that at times entire streets could be known as ethnic English neighborhoods. Often, they had only a rudimentary knowledge of Spanish, as can be surmised from several sources, and obviously this is one reason why they even avoided attending the events in the municipal theater, otherwise a focal point of the city's cultural and social life. At the same time, there were two hotels specially
catering to the needs of the British community in Buenos Aires, the Faunch and the Keen. They were the scene of separate British celebrations and festivities on St. George's Day and St. Andrew's Day, when banquets were served to the British residents. The birthday of the King of England was celebrated with particular splendor at the Faunch, with another banquet for up to eighty persons. The members of the provincial government would grace the latter occasion with their presence upon special invitation.37 Whereas rich and influential British merchants in Buenos Aires frequented the two British hotels, most of their countrymen got together in their own cafés and bars. There was a pub known to be a favorite haunt of Englishmen not far from the fortress, the site of the present-day presidential palace, near the riverfront, but run by an Italian. It seems that other English-speaking foreigners, or foreigners who preferred to associate with Englishmen, used to frequent this bar as well—thus giving support to the porteño tendency to confuse all Northern European foreigners and Anglo Americans with the British.38

Despite their self-imposed isolation, the British were very powerful and influential in Buenos Aires. Of course, the fact that they were subjects of what was in those days by far the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth enhanced their prestige and social position in Argentina, so that other foreigners could not easily hide their envy at the
preeminent position of the British. John Murray Forbes, U.S. Consul in Buenos Aires, thought that, together with their colleagues in London, British capitalists were making rapid strides toward becoming the true lords of the country. The British were in control of the banks, they had extensive real estate, and they were continually buying more. Besides, they were owed the whole of Argentina's foreign debt. In Forbes' eyes, therefore, everything pointed to the eventuality of Buenos Aires becoming an English colony in all but name.39

The British held such a comfortable position that generally it was not even necessary for them to file for citizenship in order to continue their business or to safeguard their possessions, as was the case with the Spaniards and later the Portuguese. The Anglo-Argentine Treaty of 1825, besides ratifying a situation that had existed de facto from about 1810, provided effective protection of the British community in Buenos Aires. Apparently, however, the British sooner or later came under the spell of life in Argentina and found it difficult to cut their ties with it, even though as a group they never assimilated into Argentine life. There was no doubt that for most of them life in Argentina was more pleasant than the one they left behind in Britain. There were fewer restraints, more freedom, and life was easier. As a result, the mind of the British immigrant changed to the extent that he was no
longer considered a good member of civilized British society. At least this was the case according to one contemporary critic: 40

Men of the most opposite views and principles, from all quarters of the world, are blended together in one chaotic mass. The restraints of relationship and neighbourhood, the almost instinctive influence of habit and custom, and that salutary deference to public opinion which operates so extensively and so benignly in long established and regulated societies, are here wholly unknown. Broken and severed in the rude act of transplantation, these secret but powerful auxiliaries of virtue, order and patriotism, have ceased for ever. Released from these artificial restraints, the Emigrant, in too many cases, becomes a reckless adventurer; responsible only to those upon whom he is immediately dependent in his daily avocation, and utterly regardless to every consideration of character and reputation.

The British enjoyed life in Argentina, and despite any lingering arrogance they were welcome as long as they came with peaceful intentions. Many preferred to stay the rest of their lives. Not a few British soldiers who had been taken prisoner during the invasions of 1806 and 1807 had become so enchanted with the Río de la Plata and its inhabitants that they took creole wives, adopted the Roman Catholic faith, and settled in the country for ever.
In practice, foreigners had mostly found a warm welcome in the Río de la Plata even before the revolution, especially in Buenos Aires. But whereas many natives and residents could appreciate foreigners, the authorities had at various times resented this hospitality. They tended to fear certain classes of foreigners, first for religious, and later for political reasons. In colonial days, new Christians and "Lutherans" (most often Portuguese Jews and Northern Europeans, respectively) were feared because they might jeopardize Catholic loyalties in the New World. They could have a negative influence on the orthodoxy of the local population. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the French were feared even more. The viceregal authorities in Buenos Aires had been nervous about possible ramifications of the French Revolution: there were some rumors of French-inspired conspiracies and plots against the Spanish regime in Buenos Aires.41

However, as it turned out, the real threat from outside was not French but British. Without success, the latter tried to incorporate Buenos Aires and its surroundings into their empire in 1806 and 1807. Viceregal authorities and civilians alike came to a rude awakening, realizing that all of a sudden Buenos Aires had become part of an expanding world. Some, like merchants seeing possibilities for great
profits, enthusiastically embraced the opportunity of foreign ties and connections. Others had different reactions. They wished to push back foreign influence and interference as far as possible, and to subject foreign ties to the strictest of government controls. Among the leading critics of foreign connections were the clergy, or those who saw in the traditional religion the best safeguard for a distinct and separate identity. Foreigners and heretics were their enemies, and the clergy used any means to excite public sentiment against them. Allegedly, members of the clergy had spread the tale that the British soldiers invading Buenos Aires had long tails, just like the devil himself. Although the porteñas, the female residents of Buenos Aires, were horrified to watch the handsome, blond British soldiers be killed during the fighting in the streets, it is said that some of them really seemed to believe the story.42

Warnings against the spread of dangerous ideas imported from Western Europe had been issued even before the British made their surprise attacks. Francisco Bruno de Rivarola, a high-placed civil servant, was an eloquent advocate of religious and Hispanic traditionalism, believing the Spanish empire to be one nation, under God, indivisible, and with a unique Hispanic culture. Obviously feeling that adherence to Catholic orthodoxy was the cornerstone of Spanish nationality, Rivarola represented the traditional
Spanish view that one could not be a good Spaniard without being at the same time a good Catholic, and vice versa. The presence of large numbers of foreigners would be extremely harmful to the empire. No matter how economically advantageous for the nation, foreigners would certainly bring their heretic ideas and spread them. Hence, contact with foreigners would cause inevitably a gradual erosion of orthodoxy, and the Viceroyalty would start skidding ever faster toward the abyss of revolution. The loss of orthodox religion would create an environment in which independence could develop, or at the very least, Imperial unity would be seriously threatened.43

One man of the cloth who was an outspoken critic of foreigners and their ideas was Father Francisco de Paula Castañeda. It has even been suggested that he represented practically by himself the lunatic fringe of the Argentine clergy in the early independence period. "El Padre Castañeda" was rather a rabid xenophobe, and very active in the printed media, launching a number of ultra-nationalist and ultra-orthodox Catholic newspapers that enjoyed widespread popularity.44 Heretics and foreigners were among the favorite targets of the nationalist Franciscan friar. In one of his newspapers, he assailed several of his favorite enemies at the same time: the English and the Protestants. According to a letter of an anonymous English convert to Roman Catholicism (written by Castañeda himself, of course), Buenos Aires was
already in the grip of a nefarious degree of incredulity, and Roman Catholicism was in danger. Although the foreigner was "born ignorant in the capital city of London, the center of heresy," he had come to see the light of true religion during one of his frequent visits to Buenos Aires. His religious interest had also helped him to master the Spanish language, whereas few other British cared enough, or were able to learn Spanish well. Thus Castañeda sought to demonstrate the superiority of Hispanic Catholic culture over Anglo-Saxon heresy.45

Castañeda clearly sought to mobilize and influence public opinion against the presence of great numbers of British. No longer did he and others worry about the political ideas of foreigners, as on the eve of the revolution, but about their religious observances and practices (as had been the case even earlier). As a matter of fact, fear of the French Revolution had also had a religious component: the French Revolutionaries were godless regicides after all. Nor was Castañeda the only one to be irritated and angered at the British openly practicing their heresies in Buenos Aires. As an anonymous poet lamented in 1827, the British never went to mass, and if they went to church at all, it was to one of their own churches. This happened under
the pretext of freedom of religion, but what did the British know about religion anyway? Besides, under the monarchy such practices would never have been allowed: 46

Nobody is surprised anymore,/That any Englishman/May live here without hearing Mass,/Not even once,/And that he goes to another church/That is not ours/Freedom of religion!/They Shout...What nonsense!/About religion, what/Could they possibly know?/Honestly, it was not like that,/When the King still reigned.

The orthodox worried about the spread of heresy, Enlightenment and masonic thought brought into the area by the British. Giovanni Muzi, a papal envoy to the Río de la Plata in the 1820s, voiced similar complaints about the increasing popularity of private Bible-reading. British merchants, especially, were believed to introduce translations into Castilian of the New Testament, made by the Bible Society of England. 47

Indeed, Castañeda and other Roman Catholic Argentinians opposed the religious freedom accorded first the British and later other foreigners as well. In 1825, Great Britain and the Río de la Plata signed a "Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation," article 12 of which stipulated that British subjects were entitled to complete religious freedom in Argentina, as well as to build and maintain their own places of worship, and to have their own cemeteries. 48 Orthodox Catholics strongly objected to this clause, as well as to the Buenos Aires provincial law adopted in October of
that same year, according full freedom of worship to all residents, whether porteños, British, or others. In effect, Buenos Aires thus became the first place in Spanish America to announce complete religious freedom.

**Relations Between Natives and Foreigners**

**In Everyday Life**

**Creoles and Spaniards**

The climate of relations between the native populace and peninsular Spaniards sharply deteriorated after May 1810, with the insecurity of the political situation leading to tense relations between the two groups. An intense campaign of revolutionary propaganda undertaken by the Junta and its successors sought to justify and gain support for repressive measures against the Spaniards, while some real and alleged attempts to overthrow the revolutionary government, in which peninsulars played a major role, made things even worse. Undoubtedly, however, the popularity of anti-Spanish measures among the porteños was also based on the opportunity they afforded to take revenge for past injustices. In such a climate, many natives evidently felt safe enough to attack individual Spaniards, to insult them, and to try to take advantage of them. And yet, though many Spaniards lived in fear, the lives of most of them were never really in danger.
To the credit of the authorities, it must also be said that those who tried to abuse the situation for their own gain or interest, falsely accusing Spaniards of dubious crimes, were often met with official rejection of their outrageous allegations. In 1817, for instance, Eulalia Dorrego filed charges against José María Sequeiros, a Spaniard, for allegedly having seduced her and having spoiled her innocence. The judge on his part believed that the woman only filed her complaint "to pass the time" (para entretener el tiempo).\(^{50}\)

A curious case occurred in 1814 when two agents provocateurs, Waldo Luján and Miguel Romero—the latter himself of Spanish origin—in collusion with an army captain, Plácido Beróiz, tried to intimidate peninsular Spaniards in district number 30. Beróiz was afraid, so he declared, because of the many "Europeans" who lived in his barrio, and therefore decided to do some investigative work to find out more about the Spaniards' deeper thoughts. Romero especially did his best to provoke the Spaniards into making disrespectful remarks about the Revolution and the Church. Perhaps, Romero tried to goad his victims into expressing doubts about the status of the Roman Catholic faith under the revolution, peninsular opponents of the revolution could well conceal their true political feelings behind a serious concern for the purity and survival of Roman Catholicism. In his testimony, Romero stated that "since the European clergy
had been exiled," the Spaniards had told him that "they had not confessed, because the Americans (the American clergy) were devils who betrayed their confessions to the government." Romero's cover was that of a captured Spanish officer, and his intended victims had apparently no doubts about his peninsular background, although they did question his claim to being an officer in the Spanish army. Romero's talk, his lurid and lascivious behavior toward the Spaniards as well as the stories he told, made one of the accused Spaniards suggest that Romero was really a "Fraile apóstata," an apostate friar, and a former teacher in the monastery of Saint Francis in Buenos Aires. In any case, the trial that Romero and his associate initiated took an unexpected turn. The Spaniards they were accusing of plotting to kill all male citizens of the city over three years old, with a force of 2,500 peninsulars armed with knives and axes, were acquitted. Instead, Luján and Romero were sentenced to pay steep fines for their attempt to entrap the Spaniards.51

Luján and Romero were probably politically motivated when they tried to entrap Romero's compatriots. What better way for Romero to prove his allegiance to the Revolution? But other Spaniards unabashedly tried to take advantage of the political insecurity of their countrymen for personal enrichment. Francisco Javier Molina, a Catalan officer who had joined the Chilean revolution but who had been forced to
leave Chile when that revolution failed, tried to earn a living in Buenos Aires by blackmailing elderly Spaniards. His victims were easily intimidated when he told them that the government had ordered him to keep an eye on those individuals who spoke evil of the authorities of the Buenos Aires revolution. Molina would then offer to let his victims go free if they agreed to pay him off. Finally, the authorities caught up with him and forced him to desist.52

In cases such as these, the authorities did not allow themselves to be misled by exaggerated rumors and allegations, and it is to their credit that in a period of foreign threats and insecurity they upheld justice. On the other hand, the fact that the courts admitted cases like the one presented by Romero and Luján in all likelihood contributed to create an inhospitable and unpleasant political climate for Spaniards.53 Perhaps that was precisely the objective of accepting outrageous claims and accusations against peninsulars: to make them understand that they should not even think to undertake anything against the revolutionary order. If this was the case, then one may conclude that the revolutionary authorities succeeded in creating a very subtle atmosphere of intimidation and terror for Spaniards.

Trivial differences of opinion between creole and peninsular residents could thus escalate into bellicose animosity and even violence. Whether the authorities in
Buenos Aires were subtle or prudent, or both, the man in the street was neither. The slightest conflict between a creole and a Spaniard usually involved serious and vicious insults, and frequently the outcome was violent. In 1820, Antonio Tejedor, the prison warden, complained that some militiamen on duty in the prison were holding a loud party one night. When summoned to stop making such noise, one of the militiamen, Bernardo Orellana, told Tejedor to shut up, since he was no more than a Gallego, and that if he would not do so, he would have him shot. 54

A more serious episode occurred in 1815, when two lieutenants of the 8th Infantry Regiment fought a duel over a minor point of insulted honor. One, Jorge Velasco, was a Spaniard, the other, Fermín Indarte, a creole from Patagonia. As Velasco lay on the ground, wounded and with his sabre beaten out of his hand, Indarte told him: "You are a Spanish dog and I am a native. I'm sorry I didn't kill you." 55

Some of the quarrels between creoles and peninsulars were extremely pedestrian and even pathetic. During the early years of the revolution, Juliana López, a creole woman, filed a vague and lengthy complaint about her neighbor, Benito Fernández, a peninsular surgeon and physician. Allegedly, Fernández had raised his hand against a young creole girl who had been teasing and provoking the Fernández family at a time when Mrs. Fernández was pregnant and needed a lot of rest.
The complaint against Fernández is heavy with immaterial and insinuating remarks about the "real" character of peninsular Spaniards. Allegedly, he was one of those gallegos "who hate us, and somehow or other conspire against our existence; he is as brazen (audaz) as he is rude; cruel, and as bloodthirsty as he is docile." He was also according to Mrs. López, "horrible" and "filthy." Behind this avalanche of insults, the substance of the complaint virtually fell apart, as the court itself saw clearly. There was no sentence.56

Similar cases were all too frequent in Buenos Aires between 1810 and 1830. Many Spaniards lived in fear, knowing that only because a conflict with a creole might cost them dearly. The creoles tended to believe that all Spaniards were against the revolution, simply because they were Spanish.57

Variously referred to as gallegos, godos, and sarracenos, they were thought to be at best lukewarm and unreliable supporters of the revolution, the "sacred cause." More often than not, creoles suspected them of secret counterrevolutionary sympathies--of being a kind of fifth column living in their midst, ready at any moment to rally to the cause of the royalists. Thus José de Ugarteche, testifying in behalf of Juan Pita when the latter filed for naturalization, stated: "...the reason for my reservations (in his initial contacts with Pita) was that I knew he was a European Spaniard and that his ideas were perhaps the usual ideas of his countrymen living among us."58 Therefore, the
Spaniards always had to be careful what they said, with whom they associated, and with whom they were seen in public. In short, they needed to adapt their everyday behavior to the altered political circumstances.

Even among themselves, Spaniards changed their ways after 1810. Juan Furnet, another applicant for naturalization, told the judge that he studiously avoided all contact with other Spaniards, because he feared "being complicated in their imprudences," and that therefore he limited his "contacts exclusively to well-known patriots." Furnet, a Catalan merchant, was a careful man, but in the initial days of the revolution still unsure of its final outcome. Therefore he waited to apply for citizenship until after independence had been declared and the chances for a Spanish reconquest had virtually disappeared. In 1819, Furnet finally became an Argentine citizen after 30 years of residence in the Río de la Plata.59

Despite the repressive and restrictive measures taken by the government against the Spaniards, and citizens' doubts about the reliability of the latter, there does not seem to have been a general creole prejudice against the Spaniards. Spaniards had integrated too well into local society. Few indeed were the porteños who did not have a Spanish-born relative. If they did not, they probably had at least one close Spanish friend. Many Spaniards had married creole wives
and had become creolized, or *acriollados*, as they still say in Argentina. Indeed, the process of creolization had been a general pattern throughout the colonial period. Those European Spaniards who could not or would not adapt to the local situation, or merge into the creole population, returned to Spain, being succeeded by others who creolized where they had not. What the revolution did was to eliminate, for a time and to a great extent, new additions to the Spanish element, and cut off from the American societies their source of Hispanic renewal.

Not surprisingly, the revolution chiefly took its toll from the ranks of Spaniards who had not integrated well into society, because they clung to prerevolutionary privileges to which they felt entitled or for any other reason. Whenever there was a new wave of repression, it was this group of isolated, easily identifiable Spaniards that was in greatest danger. They were the ones to lose their jobs when it became a prerequisite to be a citizen in order to hold one. Sometimes, not even having a creole wife could shield a Spaniard from such harm: she then had to suffer along with her husband and family. It was certainly not true that supporters and opponents of the revolution could be identified on the basis of their place of birth. Too many Spaniards fought in the revolutionary armies, and too many creoles fought as royalist soldiers and officers. The lines of political division ran straight through social strata and
"nationalities." The porteño attitude towards the peninsulars was thus one of extreme ambiguity. No doubt many creoles hated one, some, or even all Spaniards, and vice versa. But neither the general populace nor the revolutionary governments developed any systematic ill-feeling against the Spaniards. On the contrary, it seems that as the revolution ran its course, or as it became consolidated during the 1820s and no longer needed to fear the Spanish, there grew a relationship which one might even call friendly and harmonious.

**Creoles and the British**

Like creole-Spanish relations, those between the creoles and the British were ambiguous. In the first place, the dominant position of the British in commerce caused many creoles to look at them with jealousy; second, the openness with which Britons were allowed to practice their Protestant religion upset many porteños by offending their Catholic sensibilities; and third, there were "cultural differences" that could on occasion sour individual relations between British and creoles. As far as the first point is concerned, the relationship was a classic case involving an economically advanced nation on the one hand, and a less developed one on the other. It was precisely around this point--disparity in
economic status—that porteño resentment of the British evolved. Creoles were often jealous of the British and their commercial success, backed by the protection of their mighty empire. They believed that the British monopolized Platine commerce, taking all the money out of the country. To be sure, it was clear that even if the deeds of the British were evil, they could not accomplish them without the help of local allies, and these collaborators were just as guilty in the eyes of porteño nationalists. As one contemporary critic put it:

Commerce! How wonderful! In Buenos Aires there are both native and foreign merchants. Their boundless ambition enables them to buy the entire country from foreigners, or sell it to them, if only they can make a profit on it within 24 hours!

No doubt most creoles welcomed British trade, but sometimes they had reservations about the British themselves. Father Castañeda voiced the concerns of many of his countrymen as he bitterly attacked British religious beliefs and practices. With their behavior and manners, the British offended porteño sensibilities on another level. Of course, the British from other European newcomers with whom creoles were familiar. Perhaps because their manners were so different from local customs, creoles found their guests uncivilized and rude. Concurring with many porteños and other foreign observers of the British way of life, Pedro Antonio Robledo, a creole businessmen, told a judge that the British
were in the habit of shouting too loudly.63 If merchants were rude, sailors were quite something else. The latter were always considered boorish and rude, but even so, creole sailors of the Argentine navy simply called their British colleagues "rude Englishman" (inglés bruto).64 Yet by the beginning of the nineteenth century, British manners are believed to have become more refined.65

For several reasons then, the British were frequently the target of creole wrath and frustration. Sometimes, tension could manifest itself in unpleasant incidents in which British residents of Buenos Aires were molested for no apparent reason. In 1818, William Hall, an English housepainter who also sold meat, was stopped on the street by a group of creole police officers who had just been drinking coffee in the Marcó café, a favorite Buenos Aires meeting place. Hall was summoned to show his identification papers, but, when he could not, his pockets were searched. Then, Hall sensed that something was wrong. In broken Spanish, he told the men that he thought they were thieves ("vos soldado ladrón"), and ran off. José Sosa, the police sergeant acting as the leader of the would-be molesters, was put in jail for abuse of his authority, but was later set free for lack of evidence. His motives, like those of his companions, remain unclear. While they were drinking coffee, had they been discussing the growing importance and overbearing behavior of the local British community? Did they want to indulge in some
acts of personal vengeance, venting their frustrations? Or were they merely interested in emptying the pockets of an easy victim, abusing their power and authority in a manner which is still not uncommon in some countries?\footnote{66}

At any rate, Sosa and his companions, if they disliked the British, were presumably not alone. In the same year, during carnival, there was another incident involving creoles and Britons. José María Moya, a (white) sergeant of the (black) Cazadores regiment, was sent out on the third night of carnival to prevent possible disorders in the streets. Although Moya was a "little heavy in the head," no doubt due to his participation in carnival events, he knew exactly where to go to prevent disorders. Heading straight for the "English" bars on the riverfront that were the favorite spots of English-speaking customers, Moya entered the first one and ordered his men to drag out some of the patrons. The men carried out the order, using their rifle butts to drive out the foreigners. Some of the arrested customers made a point of expressing their indignation at having been taken away by blacks, albeit under the command of a "tall white." It is not improbable that people from Great Britain, the United States, or Sweden, who were familiar with the position of blacks in the Caribbean and the United States, were especially offended when arrested by blacks. In any case, Moya could not count on
sympathy from the court: he received a sentence of four years' duty with the naval artillery, with the rank of a soldier, and was excluded from further promotions.67

Besides these two cases, there were others in which creole military personnel deliberately attacked or molested British residents. One example occurred in 1821, when José María Ibáñez, a lieutenant of the artillery company of the Legión Patricia, together with some friends, attacked three Britons and a creole woman who was with them. The woman, Cornelia Balbastro, was hit in the stomach with a sabre, but was not wounded. Ibáñez was retired without honor, with loss of the military fuero, and he was forbidden to wear his uniform. He was punished for having attacked a woman and trying to wound her, but not for the assault on the British. It was most unusual, however, for a woman to be attacked by an officer, or to be molested at all in Buenos Aires. Either Ibáñez thought that Balbastro was a man, or he was so incensed at the sight of a native girl going out at night with three foreigners who belonged to the nation that controlled so much of the country's business, that he could not hold back his anger and tried to wound her instead of the foreigners.68

While it is possible that in the case of Ibáñez creole sensibilities with regard to female honor played a part, sometimes they were perfectly evident. Vicenta Rodríguez, who lived in a large house in district number 11, was
increasingly upset and irritated by George Baker, an Englishman who had rented a section of her house. Every time Baker went up on the roof terrace (azotea) to enjoy the cool evening air, Mrs. Rodríguez felt spied upon. Most of her family then living with her were girls—daughters, nieces, in addition to her maid servants. She had the feeling Baker only climbed the roof to watch her and the girls. She said she felt deeply insulted by her tenant, not only by what she believed was his indecent behavior, but also because she felt Mr. Baker was a colonizer. It was only a matter of time, she told the court, before

the English treat us the way they treat the natives of India, at least my tenants or those who accompany them, have gone so far as saying that within three years they will be the lords of this land. That is to say, Baker's behavior is more like that of a Master than that of a mere foreigner, whom the openness of the Americans accords benefits that they already believe they are entitled to. But I am convinced that the Nation's magistrates will be able to contain the arrogance of those merchants....

Vicenta Rodríguez ostensibly pressed charges against Baker for having struck a 16-year old nephew of hers. But the underlying irritation and feelings rapidly came to the surface. The fact that a foreigner hit a native was for Mrs. Rodríguez merely the straw that broke the camel's back. The court agreed with her, sentencing Baker to pay an indemnity of 125 pesos and ordering him to pay the trial costs, almost 200 pesos.69
It is noteworthy that Mrs Rodríguez made a comparison between India and Argentina, both countries where the British behaved like colonial masters. Today, one of the favorite nationalist insults for Argentines who allegedly collaborate with foreigners in exploiting the country's riches is "cipayo," sepoy, the name of a local Indian ruler who worked together with the British colonial administration. It is also noteworthy that Mrs. Rodríguez had no complaints about, nor even mentioned, Baker's religious beliefs. It is more than likely that he was a Protestant, as were most of his compatriots. Apparently, the concern of men like Rivarola and Castañeda was not necessarily shared by those creoles who had conflicts with British residents. What struck them was rather the arrogance of the British, their intrusion into the domestic economy, and their behavior as if they were in control of the country. What bothered Mrs. Rodríguez also was Baker's attempt to secure support from the British consul--which was, however, of no avail in getting a lighter sentence.

It is difficult to assess the true character of creole-British relations. There was, of course, friction between the two groups, but that is only natural for different nationalities living together in one place. It is undeniable that many porteños greatly admired the British for their accomplishments in trade and industry, for the general
level of their material civilization, and for the apparent success of their political system in blending order and change. Moreover, it was clear to many that the British were allies in the struggle against Spanish colonialism. As a rule, the British kept themselves apart from porteño society, trying to lead as English a life as possible. On the other hand, they would sometimes have a part in the political celebrations of the local population, despite their reputation for aloofness. That they were permitted to take part in the Fiestas Mayas, for instance, is proof that the creoles on the whole welcomed their presence. Even more important is that some British participants won prizes and that the public approved of it. Many creoles could appreciate the prowess and ability demonstrated by British residents on these occasions, as when they managed to climb greased poles carrying away the prizes attached to the top. 70

As far as can be ascertained, creoles behaved differently toward the British than toward the Spaniards, with whom relations were, of course, colored by three centuries of colonialism and by the more recent struggle for independence. The British presence in Buenos Aires in large numbers was a completely new phenomenon. No European non-Hispanic group (if one may call the Portuguese Hispanics) had ever been present in the city in such large numbers. In such a situation ambiguity was to be expected. Admirations and appreciation on the one hand, but concern and irritation on
the other. The fact that special mention was made of British participation in the Fiestas Mayas is significant: the Lira Argentina wanted to preserve for posterity the successful and open participation of this most important group of foreign residents. Yet one ought not to forget that celebrations often involve a temporary suspension, and sometimes even a total reversal of everyday reality. If there was a creole-British antagonism, it went deeper than the differences between the creoles and the Spanish: the latter was primarily political. Once the political relationship between the Argentine Republic and Spain had been settled, there remained few impediments to harmonious Spanish-creole relations. Not so with creole-British relations. Tensions were bound to grow as the British hold on the Argentine economy increased.

Creoles and Portuguese/Brazilians

Relations between the Portuguese-speaking residents of the capital and creoles seem to have been quite friendly to say the least, and to have posed fewer problems than with the other two leading foreign communities. The Portuguese were numerous, constituting perhaps the second or third largest alien group in Buenos Aires, although they tended to keep a low profile. No creole ever seemed to have feared their competition, or felt their presence as oppressive, or as an
obstacle to his own advancement. Yet there would have been ample grounds for economic jealousy on the part of the creoles. Some Portuguese did remarkably well, amassing fortunes, marrying local girls, and assimilating completely into the local population. Perhaps there lay the secret of their harmonious relations with the creoles. But perhaps also relations were good because Argentine creoles felt themselves comfortably superior to them.\textsuperscript{71}

However, it was the Brazilians who primarily were regarded as the lower species, even more so than the Portuguese themselves. No doubt this had something to do with race, as many Brazilians had African or Indian blood, or both. The Brazilians were thought of as decadent and of generally low morals. This image appears to have been stuck on them mainly because Brazilian actors and dancers used to perform frequently in the theater of Buenos Aires. In 1756, when a new theater was inaugurated in the city, the cast of the opening show had been Brazilian. The group included "certain female dancers and singers (who) acquired notoriety because of the insinuating gestures with which they emphasized the naughty lyrics of their songs." Church officials in particular were most alarmed at these scandalous scenes, but the general public was likely to have enjoyed the show.\textsuperscript{72} In the first years of independence, Brazilian performers again caused a stir over morals. During an opera ballet in which the actors were "a trifle perhaps above
"mediocrity," they tried to make up for what they lacked in talent. The audience was shocked "at the *outré* dress of one of the male dancers, of Portuguese fabric, from the court of Rio de Janeiro." But the indignation of the porteño audience was "highly characteristic of the superior moral feeling of the people of this city."\(^73\)

Especially during the Brazilian-Argentine conflict over Uruguay that started in 1825, popular sentiment could run high against the Brazilians and the Portuguese in general. Like the Spaniards, the Portuguese-speaking porteños were the victims of international politics. In 1825, there were riots in front of the Brazilian consulate: windows were smashed by an angry crowd, shouting anti-Brazilian slogans.\(^74\) For some individual Portuguese and Brazilians, life in Buenos Aires was getting downright unpleasant. As with the Spaniards, they might well feel pressured to file for citizenship in order to safeguard their property and position. Like the Spaniards, the Lusophones were subjected to discriminatory measures. In 1826 the government of the United Provinces ordered all Brazilian subjects interned outside a circle of twenty leagues around Buenos Aires. This decision was taken in the interest of national security, so it was said. Immediately, protests were raised against the measure. Were the Brazilians really to be feared? Could they be expected to form a fifth column, doing damage to the
Argentinian war effort? These questions were asked in the newspaper *El Nacional*. It pointed out that there were not really many Brazilians in Buenos Aires. Moreover, those living in the city were hardly dangerous. Most Brazilians, the paper argued, had come for political reasons, having deserted the imperial Brazilian armies in the Banda Oriental. On the other hand, the European Portuguese needed to be treated with caution: "those are the true enemies, transplanted to the American continent, but with European sentiments; feelings of domination...and bloodthirsty. Those are also the natural allies of the throne of His Imperial Majesty...."  

As was formally done with the Spanish-speaking residents of Buenos Aires, the writers of *El Nacional* sought to separate speakers of Portuguese were separated into good and bad on the basis of their place of birth. Americans were good and trustworthy, and inherently in favor of the revolution and liberal principles, while Europeans were bad, dangerous, and sworn enemies of American freedom. The government apparently agreed with this emphasis, at least in part, for the newspaper noted with satisfaction that the restrictive measures against Brazilians had been withdrawn within a fortnight, on February 14.  

It did not, however, proceed to intern the Portuguese.
As the Argentine nation was being formed, the Argentines were thus defining themselves in terms of their relations with other peoples, in particular the Spaniards, the British, the Portuguese and the Brazilians. This was one way in which national identity could be shaped, since after all the Argentines, like everybody else, needed some points of reference. First of all, they needed to take their distance from the Spanish, thus coming to terms with the recent and not so recent past. They distrusted the Spaniards, but probably did not hate them, in spite of the efforts made by some individual propagandists and an occasional official. It should be emphasized that the Spaniards never were really strangers to the Río de la Plata and its people. The peninsulars arriving at Buenos Aires were outsiders and insiders at the same time. They had an intimate knowledge of the local culture, of Catholic holidays and customs, and they spoke the same language as the creoles, though with minor dialectical variations. Perhaps this very similarity of culture made many conflicts between creoles and Spaniards seem so trivial. Creoles became irritated at the British, but generally admired them as well. While the revolutionary authorities, and least of all Bernardino Rivadavia, never tried to incite any form of public sentiment against the British, clashes between individual creoles and British
British, clashes between individual creoles and British inevitably arose and seem to stem from cultural differences and creole economic jealousy. Indeed, it seems extraordinary that so soon after having fought bloody battles trying to conquer the country, the British were welcomed by the thousands. If the Spaniards could somehow be considered countrymen of the creoles, then perhaps it was true that porteños preferred foreigners, even their yesterday enemies.

Only toward the Brazilians did porteños feel morally and later also politically superior. These sentiments probably had their roots in the colonial past. Brazilians and Portuguese had never come as conquerors, nor had they been a socially and politically dominant group. Most came as "guest workers," filling a clear gap in the labor market, apparently. Thus it was easy for porteños to preserve and cultivate a sense of superiority to their neighbors.

Curiously, it seems that these sentiments continue to determine the way in which the Argentines look at, respectively, the Spaniards, the British, and the Brazilians today. For instance, Spaniards are well respected, and the Brazilians are looked upon with a certain disdain, culturally inferior to Argentinians, and not as refined, educated, and European-minded as the Argentines. Finally, the Falklands/Malvinas War has not caused the Argentines to hate the British. Fustration about the lost war has rather found
an outlet in increased anti-Americanism among certain nationalists. Anger and irritation, not anti-Britishness, color the national mood when it comes to the British.
In the eighteenth century, Indian "national" culture was becoming increasingly popular among the Indians. There was a movement away from the gradual adoption and borrowing of European cultural forms. More and more Indians who had previously preferred European clothes, went back to wearing their native dress, for instance. See Boleslao Lewin, "El mito incáico durante la dominación hispana," Todo es Historia, 126 (November 1977), 56-67.

In 1813, for instance, Felipe Marinez was accused of a conspiracy against the state; some witnesses thought he was Portuguese, others believed he was a Gallego. AGN IX-32-7-6.

See Pasaportes, AGN X-9-6-7, X-9-7-1, X-11-3-6, X-40-9-7, X-12-1-5, and X-10-9-7, passim.

See Eduardo Saguier, "The Social Impact of a Middleman Minority in a Divided Host Society: The Case of the Portuguese in Early Seventeenth-Century Buenos Aires," Hispanic American Historical Review 65:3 (1985), 467-91; according to McAlister, the terms of Jew and Portuguese were synonymous in Spanish America. See Lyle N. McAlister, Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492-1700 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 112.

About half of the population was native of Buenos Aires, about 25% was from Spain, while around 15% were other Americans. Two-thirds of the vecinos of Buenos Aires were therefore Americans. See "Padrón de vecinos de la ciudad de Buenos Aires (1664)," first published in the Registro Estadístico del Estado de Buenos Aires, vol. 1, 1859, republished as an appendix in R. de Lafuente Machain, Buenos Aires en el siglo XVII (Buenos Aires: Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1980), 203-31.


The first revolutionary census makes mention of one young 16-year-old Dutchman. AGN IX-10-7-7, Padrón de habitantes de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1810.


Ibid., 101.

AGN X-23-4-8 and X-9-6-7.

AGN X-23-4-8, Asamblea General Constituyente.

AGN X-9-6-7, Pasaportes.

The loan in question was that of 1816; AGN X-41-9-3, varios.


AGN X-23-5-9, Gobierno.


Circular, dated December 3, 1810, published in the *Gaceta de Buenos Aires*, December 6, 1810.

22 Section 1, Chapter 1, Article 1 of the Estatuto Provisional, reprinted in Mallié, *Impresos*, vol. 2, 432.

23 Apart from Dorna and Gallino, the committee had the following members: Juan Pedro Aguirre, Guillermo P. Robertson, Manuel Pintos, Pedro Capdevila, Lorenzo López, Daniel MacKinley, Juan Miller, Diego Brittain, and Gaspar Gallino. Most notably it also included Juan Manuel de Rosas, who extreme nationalists and liberals in Argentina agree in regarding as a staunch defender of nationalist values and a xenophobe. See Juan A. Alsina, *La inmigración europea en la República Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Lajouáne, 1898), 16-7.


26 Acuerdos del Cabildo, August 3, 1811; the exact number was 389, according to a letter from the Cabildo to the Junta, AGN IX-19-6-3, Archivo del Cabildo.

27 The precise number was 282. The barrios on which the census data have come to us are: 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12-14, 16-18, 20, 22-25, 27-31, and 33. See AGN X-22-2-3.

28 AGN X-7-1-6, Ciudadanía, 1818; the judge wanted proof that Sosa y Silva had actually lived in Buenos Aires for more than four years, the legal minimum for naturalization. Therefore, the applicant had to present a second set of three witnesses. These were José Lisboa, Pedro Carvallo, and Manuel Rodríguez. The first three were José de Samar, José Mateo Galeano and Francisco Antonio Cabrera.

29 See especially the documents on international travel in AGN X-10-9-7, X-11-4-1 and X-9-6-7, Pasaportes.

30 A pulpería could be anything from a small country store to a large urban establishment. In many cases pulperías also served as bars and cafes where people came to drink liquor, play cards, and chat. More than half of the 364 pulperos in 1810 were Galicians. See Equipos de Investigación Histórica, *Buenos Aires*, 119. Preference for this kind of business may have been another reason why Portuguese and Gallegos were often confused by the general public.
The episode took place on August 5, 1806, during the parade of the units of Biscayans, Asturians and Cantabrians; Diario de un soldado, 51.

Gaceta de Buenos Aires/Extraordinaria October 15, 1810.

Un inglés, Cinco años, 132-3.

AGN X-30-3-1, Sumarios Militares.


Un inglés, Cinco años, 16.

AGN X-30-1-4, Sumarios Militares; Un inglés, Cinco años, 62.

Forbes, Once años, 367-8.


Arsenio Isabelle, Viaje a Argentina, Uruguay y Brasil en 1830 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Americana, 1943), 127-9.

Francisco Bruno de Rivarola, Religión y fidelidad argentina, introduction by José María Mariluz Urquijo, (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones de Historia del Derecho, 1983), especially 97-108.


"Carta de un inglés protestante al R.P. Fr. Francisco Castañeda," Prospecto de un nuevo periódico titulado el P. Castañeda a la Provincia Argentina, October 29, 1822, in AGN VII-1-10-24, Celesia Collection.
See the poem "El Realista," in El Mensagero Argentino, 30 April 1827; The Spanish text is as follows: Hoy ya nadie extraña/Que cualquier inglés/Viva sin oir misa/ni una sola vez;/Y vaya a otro templo/Que el nuestro no es./¡Libertad de cultos!/Gitan....¡Ya se vè!/¿De cultos que pueden/Ellos entender?/A fé que así no era/En tiempo del rey.


Bushnell, Reform and Reaction, 26.

AGN IX-32-7-8, Criminales, 1816-1836.

AGN X-29-10-5, Sumarios Militares; Romero was indeed a member of the clergy, officiating as a priest in Buenos Aires, Catamarca, and Santiago del Estero. His application for naturalization in 1818 in Catamarca was rejected, but approved the following year in Santiago del Estero. See AGN X-7-1-6, and X-11-4-7.

AGN, División Poder Judicial, Fondo Tribunales Criminales, Letra M, anos 1764-1825, no. 1.

Sometimes, even the highest authorities in the land would personally involve themselves with outrageous claims by creoles. In 1816, Director of State Pueyrredon paid an unannounced visit to the Santa Catalina hospital to look into the charges made by creole patients about the lack of attendance by a Spanish male nurse. The charge was found to be exaggerated. See Gamalalsson, Pueyrredón, 249.

Actually, Indarte already spoke in the characteristic porteno idiom: "Vos sois un perro godo, y yo soy un Patricio..." During the duel, Indarte also questioned the Spaniard's bravery and ability to fight: "Ve usted so godo que no es capaz de vatirse conmigo." AGN X-29-11-7, Sumarios Militares.

AGN IX-32-7-6, Criminales.
This idea remained quite persistent, and was perpetuated by the founders of modern Argentine historiography. See Bartolomé Mitre, Historia de Belgrano, vol. 2, (Buenos Aires: Estrada, 1971), 79; according to Mitre, the Spaniards "odiaban con fanatismo el nuevo orden de cosas."

AGN IX-35-3-3, Tribunales.

See Bartolomé Mitre, Historia de Belgrano, vol. 2, (Buenos Aires: Estrada, 1971), 79; according to Mitre, the Spaniards "odiaban con fanatismo el nuevo orden de cosas."

Research pertaining to the situation in neighboring Chile has tended to reveal that the leaders of the Chilean revolution in most cases had peninsular fathers and creole mothers and wives. In a sense, then, the Chilean Revolution at least could be seen as a rebellion of sons against their fathers. See Mary Lowenthal Felstiner, "Familial Metaphors: The Language of an Independence Revolution," Comparative Studies in Society and History 25 (1983), 170-2.

Un inglés, Cinco años, 52.


AGN X-30-3-1, Sumarios Militares; A Dutch naval officer who visited London around 1810, was deeply shocked to see the British, both males and females, engage in bloody boxing matches, with bystanders enthusiastically betting on the outcome. See Q.M.R. Ver-Huell, Mijne eerste zeereis, (Rotterdam: M. Wijt, 1842), 305-8.

Un inglés, Cinco años, 62; By the way, Argentine ships carried many foreign sailors, including besides Englishmen, or British, North Americans, Irishmen, Swedes, Norwegians, Germans and others.


AGN X-30-3-1, Sumarios Militares.

AGN X-30-1-4, Sumarios Militares.

AGN X-29-11-7, Sumarios Militares.

AHPBA 5.5.70.9, Cámara de Apelación, 1825.
See the poem "Relación que hace el Gaucho Ramón Contreras a Jacinto Chano, de todo lo que vio en las Fiestas Mayas en Buenos Aires en el año 1822," La Lira Arentina, edition of Academia Argentina de Letras, (Buenos Aires, 1982), 581: "y vi subir a un ingles/en un palo jabonado/tan alto como un ombu,/y alla en la punta colgando/una chuspa con pesetas,/una muestra y otros varios/premios para el que llegase./El ingles era baqueano:/se le prendio al palo viejo,/y moviendo pies y manos/al galope llego arriba,/y al grito ya le echo mano/a la chuspa y se largo/ de un pataplus hasta abajo./De allí a otro rato volvio/y se trepo en otro palo/y tambien saco una muestra,/bien haga el bisteque diablo."

Un inglés, Cinco años, 76.

See Lafuente Machain, Buenos Aires en el siglo XVIII, 172.

Captain Andrews, Journey from Buenos Aires through the provinces of Cordova, Tucuman and Salta, to Potosi; thence by the deserts of Carania to Arica, and subsequently to Santiago de Chile and Coquimbo, in the Years 1825-26, 2 vols., (London: John Murray, 1827).

Un inglés, Cinco años, 219.

"Brasileros," El Nacional February 9, 1826.

El Nacional February 18, 1826.
CHAPTER VIII
NATURALIZATION

The Colonial and Spanish Background

The revolution of 1810 brought the Junta face to face with the need to divide friends from enemies. Its supporters believed that the revolution had ended a long period of colonial domination and that, finally, Argentine creoles could decide their own fate. Very clearly, the revolution was an affirmation of local autonomy. This local and regional character set the tone for the division between supporters and opponents of the revolution. Henceforth, a Spaniard was supposed to be an opponent unless he could positively prove that he was not. The easiest way for him to do this was by showing a document that stated that he had received Argentine citizenship.

From the very first moment of its existence, the revolutionary Junta introduced a new legal category, that of citizen of Argentina, or America. The first census taken by the new government mentions at least two Spaniards who had become Argentine citizens. There was nothing unusual in these measures. They affirmed the fact that the Spanish colonies in the New World were separate from Spain, that, like Catalonia, Aragon, or Navarre, the colonies were a distinct domain of
the Spanish King. (This would tend to support Ricardo Levene's thesis that "Las Indias no eran colonias.") A separate legal category and identity for Americans thus did not necessarily mean a declaration of independence, at least not initially. Since the Buenos Aires Junta made a point of proclaiming its allegiance to the lawful sovereign of Spain, which in its eyes was Ferdinand VII, the new "nationality" it created was not a revolutionary act. In theory a separate nationality for Americans would be perfectly compatible with the continuation of a dynastic relationship with Spain. The legal separation between subjects of the Crown of Castile and subjects of the Crown of Aragon, for example, had existed in the opening stages of the Spanish colonization of America. In those years, Aragonese subjects were forbidden to make their way to the New World. In a technical sense, they were just as foreign to the Castilian authorities as, say, Germans or Frenchmen. But on this point diehard Spanish colonialists and autonomist creoles diverged. The latter, who had in mind a sort of self-governing dominion status, regarded the creation of a separate nationality as a logical and necessary step; the former, who wished to continue unabated the tradition of direct colonial dependence, firmly rejected this idea.

A procedure for naturalization already existed during colonial times, so that foreigners could overcome their handicap. Most naturalizations then took place because the
applicant wanted to do business in the Indies. Hence, most new citizens were merchants. Their papers were issued by the Consejo de Indias, to which an applicant had to put in his request. It was next sent for investigation to the Casa de Contratación, the trade board, in Seville, the Consulado, or merchant guild, in Cádiz, or the Audiencia or the Governor as the case might be, in the Indies. The place of residence of the applicant determined which authorities handled his case, but the Council of the Indies always kept tight controls on the procedure. Finally, the application was processed by a court of law, where the applicant was represented by a procurador, the king by his fiscal. The procedure was lengthy, and usually took at least one year.¹

The requirements were made progressively more stringent. In 1561 a royal cedula had fixed them as ten years' residence in Spain (or its territories); a "casa poblada," or a complete household; and being married to a Spanish wife. Half a century later, in 1608, they were fixed at: twenty years' residence and being married at least ten years to a Spanish wife. For at least ten years, the applicant needed to have had property, which by a decree of 1618 had to amount to 4,000 ducats.² The point of these requirements was, of course, to make sure that the prospective new subject was sincere and that his desire to become a Spaniard did not reflect a mere passing interest. If
specific mention of the need to become a Roman Catholic was not made, it was because, in order to marry legally, one had to be a Catholic first. Thus, some foreigners would have to abandon both their nationality and their religious beliefs. Yet it is noteworthy that naturalization did not necessarily entail the abandonment of "cultural identity." Most Cádiz-based Flemish merchants who became Spaniards in the seventeenth century continued to form part of the Flemish "nation," or community. 3

Although many foreigners came to Buenos Aires in colonial times, few became Spanish citizens. Only eighteen foreigners are known to have naturalized, all but two in the second half of the eighteenth century. Most of them were merchants who needed a carta de ciudadanía for commercial purposes. Some, like Domingo Belgrano Pérez (or Peri, as it was in the original Italian spelling), the father of Manuel, eventually became so much a part of society that they were able to take a seat in the cabildo. Foreigners who were not merchants, like the physician Angel Castelli, the father of Juan José, became a part of porteño society without naturalizing. Yet for Italians like Belgrano and Castelli, adaptation to life in Buenos Aires was comparatively easy, not least because they were Roman Catholics already. This meant that they met the most important requirement for becoming a Spaniard. 4
The same was true of Frenchmen and Portuguese, as well as other Catholic nations, such as Irishmen, South Germans and Austrians, Flemings, Czechs and Poles. For non-Catholics, an extended period of residence without publicly converting to the Roman Catholic faith was difficult but not completely impossible. The Scotsman George (Jorge) Haliburton, the first to naturalize at Buenos Aires in the nineteenth century, in 1805, had to renounce publicly and formally his Presbyterian faith and adopt Roman Catholicism before he could initiate the naturalization procedure. John Tyndall, a British physician, had become a Roman Catholic first in order to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YOUNG, Roberto</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>British</td>
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<td>Portuguese</td>
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<td>1756</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>CARNILIA, Francisco</td>
<td>1756</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>1756</td>
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<td>SOUSA, Antonio de</td>
<td>1764</td>
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<td>PATRON, Lorenzo</td>
<td>1769</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>PATRON, Juan Bautista</td>
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<td>1770</td>
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<td>1771</td>
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<td>BALDOBINOS, Francisco</td>
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<td>1785</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>PUEYRREDON, Juan Martín de</td>
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<td>1791</td>
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<td>TERRADA, Juan Evangelista</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALIBURTON, Jorge</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>British</td>
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</table>

(Source: Acuerdos del Cabildo de Buenos Aires, passim)
marry a local girl. Like the Scottish pilot Haliburton, he had spent many years of his life in Buenos Aires before the two of them became Catholics in 1798. But unlike Haliburton, Tyndall had not become a citizen under the monarchy because of a dislike of despotism, or so he later claimed."

The Need for a Revolutionary Nationality

After the May revolution, nationality took on a new meaning, but in an environment of uncertainty as factions supporting or opposing the Junta emerged. Not surprisingly, many Spaniards became identified with the faction opposing political "regeneration." Although the division between friends and enemies was far from clear-cut, the new authorities were anxious to separate revolutionary wheat from counterrevolutionary chaff. Moreover, with the execution of Santiago Liniers, the former Viceroy and military hero of resistance to the British invasions, the Junta had stained its hands with blood. Thus the Junta had an additional incentive to establish clearly who were its friends and who were its enemies. The easiest way was the introduction of a purely political litmus test: naturalization. It was only natural that the new test of loyalty was political, because most applicants were to be Spaniards, who were automatically Roman Catholic. On the contrary, no longer was adherence to the Roman Catholic religion proof of political dependability.
From 1810 on, one could be a Catholic and an enemy of the government at the same time, which before would have been almost unthinkable.

It appears that from the very beginning of the revolution, the new order of things was apparent. Some non-native residents reacted quickly to the political change, by officially adopting the American nationality. One was a peninsular Spaniard, José Castro, the other was José Joaquín Almeida, a native of the Azores and allegedly a North American citizen. In 1810, the first census ordered by the new government, designed to give an idea of the number of residents of arms-bearing age, the wealth of the inhabitants, and the number of peninsular residents, qualified Castro and Almeida as "naturalized Europeans," (europeo con carta de ciudadanía). It is curious that no further information on these two first cases of naturalization has surfaced. (No data have been found, for example, in the Acuerdos, or the Archivo del Cabildo; because most early cases of naturalization were handled by the municipal government, the absence of naturalization records would seem to cast some doubts on their legitimacy. However, certainly not all naturalizations in the years 1810-1816 appear in the Cabildo documents. The possibility ought not to be ruled out that during the first confused and eventful weeks of the May revolution, peninsulares had themselves properly naturalized,
but that somehow supporting documentary evidence has been lost.) At any rate, it is worth noting that at least in the minds of Almeida and Castro the 25th of May represented a momentous change in the destinies of Buenos Aires and the Río de la Plata. This change was important enough for them to adopt a new nationality and to identify publicly with the new authorities. Their motives for doing so are another matter. There could be different incentives for changing nationality in early revolutionary Buenos Aires: to save a business, to protect life and liberty, or zealous adherence to the new political principles.

The revolutionary government was also keenly interested in naturalization for reasons of its own. The need to identify friends and enemies was one reason, but there were more important ones. Among other things, the government needed to assure itself of the continuing loyalty of those serving it in the capacity of clerks, bureaucrats, civil servants, and military officers. Most of the upper levels of colonial bureaucracy in the Río de la Plata were filled with peninsular Spaniards. The same held true of the military, where many superior officers were born in Spain as well. These men constituted the primary repository of administrative and defense knowledge in the Viceroyalty. At the same time, they represented the very continuity of the colonial regime. Hence, the loyalty and political reliability of bureaucrats and officers became a matter of vital concern.
for the new government. There were not enough experienced creoles to take over all functions, but the new authorities did hope to eliminate the most conspicuous peninsular royalists and potential counterrevolutionaries from the ranks of the civil servants and the military. The situation in the armed forces was slightly better for the revolutionaries than that in the bureaucracy, since there were numerous creoles with fighting experience thanks to their participation in the defense against the British invaders.

Most bureaucrats smoothly made the required transition in their loyalties from the viceregal audiencia to the revolutionary Junta. In 1810 the Junta had already issued a circular announcing a hiring stop for all non-natives. Signed by Mariano Moreno, it stipulated that from the date of issue no foreigners were to hold public functions, whether political, military, judicial, financial, municipal, ecclesiastical, etc. Exceptions were granted, among others, to all peninsulars holding such a job on the date of issue.7

The Constituent Assembly of 1813 went a step further in the direction of full creolization of the state bureaucracy. On the first day of its sessions the Assembly decreed that anyone holding a job in the public administration or the armed forces should possess American citizenship.8 Not
surprisingly, the decree of the Assembly of the Year XIII, as the Constituent Assembly was often popularly known, produced a wave of naturalization requests.

Legal Requirements for Naturalization

The Junta and the Assembly of the Year XIII laid the groundwork for a distinct Argentine nationality, and it was only natural that they should turn for inspiration and guidance to established Spanish legal traditions. The basis of the new measures was the principle of *jus soli*, the law of the soil, that is to say that those born in the Río de la Plata region automatically received citizenship of the new political creation. This principle is the opposite of that of *jus sanguinis*, the law of the blood, or descent, meaning that the nationality of the parents determines the nationality of the children. Originally, the Germanic peoples of Europe had lived by the law of the blood, a custom dating from the time of massive migrations of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.. The Latin legal tradition, as befitted an urban civilization, had traditionally put more emphasis on the law of the soil principle. The distinction between these two ancient legal principles had become somewhat blurred in Spanish America. Creoles, the offspring of Spanish parents born in the Indies, were considered Spaniards because their parents were Spanish, but also because they were born in the lands belonging to the
King of Spain. The revolutionary authorities departed from established norms, because legally all Spaniards, whether creole or peninsular, had been equal before the law. By proclaiming that Americans were privileged by birth over peninsular Spaniards, the Junta and its successors paved the way for political independence, well before it was officially proclaimed on July 9, 1816.

While the Asamblea of the Year XIII produced ad-hoc measures regarding naturalization, only the Provisional Statutes, the provisional constitutions of 1815 and 1816, provided coherent legislation. The constitutional projects stated that any literate foreigner over 25 years of age, with at least four years' residence in the Río de la Plata ("el País"), and at least 4,000 pesos worth of property or other assets, would enjoy citizenship. Foreigners who lacked the required fortune or time of residence could claim citizenship nonetheless, provided the office they held or the know-how they possessed were essential to the country. Peninsular Spaniards could not become citizens as long as Spain had not recognized Argentine independence. However, Spaniards committed to the "Freedom of the State," or having distinguished themselves in its interest, could obtain their naturalization papers. The 1819 Constitution did not specify the requirements for naturalization other than stating that only the Supreme Executive Power--the State Director, or
president--could hand out naturalization papers.\textsuperscript{10} Finally, the 1826 Constitution contained a full section on the subject of naturalization. Citizens were: all free men born in Argentina (according to the \textit{jus soli}), as well as children born abroad from Argentine-born parents (according to the \textit{jus sanguinis}). Citizenship was automatically extended to those who were fighting, or had been fighting, in the army and navy of the Republic, and to foreigners who had lived in the country since before 1816, and whose names appeared on the civil register. Other foreigners who had arrived since 1816 could obtain naturalization documents if they wished.\textsuperscript{11} The ephemeral 1826 Constitution thus imposed no temporal or financial limits on the eligibility for citizenship. Under its liberal provisions, anybody could become an Argentinian national. Nor was there even a formal literacy requirement as there had been in the 1815 and 1816 statutes.\textsuperscript{12} Under the provisions of the constitutional laws from 1815 to 1826, it was not too difficult to become an Argentine citizen, although it seems to have been the objective of the revolutionary authorities to obtain the naturalization of the rich, the succesful, the experts, and loyal Spanish-born military officers. Under the 1826 constitution, anyone could in theory become an Argentinian.

Provided one met all the requirements, it was relatively simple to become an Argentine citizen. One had to put in a written request on official paper (\textit{papel sellado})
directed to the highest authority in the land: the Junta, Directorate, or other executive power, the Assembly, the Congress, or after 1820, the Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires. From 1824 to 1828, the Buenos Aires Police Department supervised the naturalization of foreign residents. In most cases, the request was submitted to the law court which had to handle the case. If a request was given to the executive, it passed it on to a law court. After hearing testimony, a court of law made a recommendation. Then, the naturalization-granting authority made a decision, positive in most cases, after which the new citizen could be sworn in and receive his carta de ciudadanía somewhat later.

Argentine requirements for naturalization departed from Spanish tradition in another important detail. Whereas the Spanish authorities never overtly made political ideas a test of reliability, presumably on the ground that faithful observance of Roman Catholicism was sufficient guarantee of political loyalty, the Argentinian authorities wanted to make sure that new citizens were loyal in very sense. The Assembly of the Year XIII decreed that any applicant for citizenship should demonstrate convincingly his unavering loyalty to the "the sacred cause of American freedom" since the May revolution. Yet this was not enough. He should also prove his active participation in the fostering and the defense of the
revolution. Words alone were not sufficient, they needed to be matched by actions. An applicant's fortune was less important than it had been before 1810, and religion was not even mentioned. All naturalization requests should be directed to the Secretary of the Assembly, but it was within the competence of the local authorities to collect the relevant information from the applicant. This meant in practice that the cabildos and governors were to receive testimony and handle the naturalization request before sending it on to the Assembly.

Overwhelmed by the tremendous workload involved in reviewing naturalization requests, the Tucumán Congress, successor to the Assembly, decided in 1817 to delegate the granting of citizenship to the "Supreme Executive Power." Once again rules and regulations were established as guidelines for the naturalization procedure. In the first place, the applicant should have a good public conduct. Then, he should have lived in Argentina for at least four years, "unless conspicuous merit, distinguished services, or the national interest require dispensation from this requirement." This clause was apparently designed to accommodate the army and navy and to enable them to recruit officers from abroad and naturalize them on short notice. Once approved for naturalization, the applicant should swear an oath of allegiance to defend Argentine independence,
sacrificing life and property if necessary. As before, the local authorities were to help in gathering information and receiving testimony in each case of naturalization.¹⁴

Rigid and strict though the rules might be, it was always possible to circumvent them. Besides, there was room for varying interpretations of the law. For some, it was easier to become an Argentinian than for others, especially if they had important witnesses to testify in their behalf. Witnesses who were high in the revolution's hierarchy often did not have to appear in court at all: they could submit a written declaration, stating that the applicant was worthy of receiving Argentine citizenship. Nonetheless, not just anyone could become a citizen, and the major intention of Assembly and Congress was observed: political loyalty was the main yardstick by which an applicant was judged. Only loyal supporters of the revolution could become members of the "Great American Family."

These loyal supporters covered practically the entire social spectrum: they included rich merchants and businessmen with personal fortunes of over 50,000 pesos, peons working on urban quintas, café waiters, pulperia and store clerks, and high bureaucrats. For some applicants, having deserted from the Spanish army was considered sufficient proof of their good intentions and sound political motivation. More than one Spanish soldier who had deserted from the army at Montevideo
was made an Argentine citizen after less than the required four years' residence. Naturally, there was considerable propaganda value in such "conversions."

Number of Naturalizations, 1810-1828

From 1810 to 1828, there were three major waves of naturalizations in the Río de la Plata. The first, in 1813, consisted of peninsular bureaucrats and army officers complying with the decree of compulsory naturalization for non-natives on the government payroll. The second wave, in 1816 and 1817, again involved mostly peninsular Spaniards, many of whom were merchants. Finally, a third wave included mostly Portuguese and Brazilians opting for Argentine citizenship during the war with Brazil from 1826 to 1828. Before 1816, all naturalization documents had been issued in the name of Ferdinand VII, whom the Platine revolutionaries continued to regard officially as their sovereign. After the Declaration of Independence, these documents had to be exchanged for new ones issued by the Congress of Tucuman. In other words, citizenship had to be renewed, although certainly not all naturalized foreigners complied with this regulation. It could also be argued, then, that the naturalization papers issued between May 25, 1810 and July 9, 1816, were intermediate documents, reflecting the ambiguous political status of the former Viceroyalty.
In slightly less than two decades, in the portions of the Viceroyalty under revolutionary control, 517 peninsulars and others filed for Argentine citizenship. The vast majority, 441, were admitted as new citizens, while the remainder were rejected. Most applicants (348) were peninsulars, followed by Portuguese and Brazilians (34). Between them, other foreigners such as Englishmen, North Americans, Frenchmen, Irishmen, Germans, Italians and others, numbered almost 60.¹⁵

Not surprisingly, most naturalizations took place in the city and province of Buenos Aires. There, the proportion of non-Hispanics and peninsulars was relatively the greatest. Indeed, most "foreigners" in both the prerevolutionary and the postrevolutionary sense of the word lived in and around Buenos Aires. In the interior provinces, most naturalizations were of peninsulars, while only three non-Spaniards have been identified as seeking citizenship. Again, this is a reflection of the residence pattern of non-natives in the Río de la Plata.

Like most other western nations at the time, the Río de la Plata had instituted different classes of residents. In order to qualify for full civil rights, one had to be an adult, free male, and a native of America, or else a naturalized non-native. Consequently, children, women and slaves were residents but not citizens, with no rights to
vote, to appear in court as witnesses, or to make a will. After the May revolution, all natives—creoles, Indians, and free blacks whose fathers were free-born—automatically became Argentine citizens. Foreign-born adult males could become citizens through naturalization. It seems that there was little or no difference between the new Argentine citizenship and American nationality. Creoles from other regions in Spanish South America, especially, by and large enjoyed the same rights as Platine creoles. Chileans, Paraguayans, Peruvians, Quiteños, and others did not have to naturalize in order to enjoy the same privileges as their Argentine fellow-Americans. Even after the formal Declaration of Independence, men from as far away as Lima or Guayaquil were considered equal before the law. (Uninterruptedly to this day, citizens of other Spanish American countries, especially Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, need not present a passport or visa to enter Argentina. All they need is a valid identification card which they have to carry on their persons at all times also in their own countries.)

Citizens of the new state had the right to vote in elections, as well as the right to run for office. Except the obligation to pay taxes, there were few duties. The most important one was the duty to defend the fatherland. By a decree of the provisional executive in 1815, national military service was required of all free, male residents who had been living in the country for more than four years,
whether or not they had officially become Argentine citizens. If they were between 15 and 60 years of age, and if they were not already serving with either the infantry of the line or the navy, they had to report for military duty.16

The practice of Naturalization

By law, an applicant for naturalization needed to present at least three witnesses to testify as to his time of residence in the country, his loyalty to the political authorities, his standing as a citizen, and the extent of his personal fortune if he had one. For proceedings in the city and province of Buenos Aires from 1810 to 1828, a total of 268 witnesses appear in the legajos containing naturalization requests. The actual number was somewhat smaller, 257 to be precise, because eleven witnesses testified twice for different applicants. Most of these witnesses were from Buenos Aires--were born in the city and were citizens, or vecinos--and most could sign their names, indicating with some probability that a majority was literate. But apparently anybody could serve as a witness, provided he was legally of age, male, and a citizen of an American country. Many applicants asked their friends and neighbors to testify on their behalf. The naturalization files tend to suggest, moreover, that most testimonials were sincere and dependable,
TABLE 8-2
Regional origins of non-porteño witnesses for naturalization in Buenos Aires, 1810-1828

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banda Oriental</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salta</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Interior</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Peru</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Argentine Confederation</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rest of South America</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Naturalized Spaniards</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: AGN IX-35-3-3, X-11-4-7, X-7-1-6, X-9-6-2)

rather than being presented by bought witnesses. Indeed, most applicants were not among the richest residents of Buenos Aires, so that their limited funds would not readily have enabled them to buy witnesses and falsify testimony. Neither indeed should one forget that Buenos Aires, the largest urban center of the Viceroyalty with perhaps more than 60,000 inhabitants, was still, by modern standards, a small community in which almost everybody knew each other.

Of the 257 identified witnesses, 33 were from places outside Buenos Aires, from as far away as Guayaquil in Ecuador. Thus one may conclude that in this respect, too, all
South Americans enjoyed the same rights as their Platine brethren. Most applicants for naturalization did not present witnesses who were all from outside Buenos Aires. Those who did, were not granted citizenship, although this not mean that they were denied citizenship because they presented only non-porteño witnesses. The two who did were Lorenzo Castañón and Claudio Asenso, young Spaniards who in 1819 jointly filed for citizenship on the same day, with the same witnesses testifying in their behalf. They had been in Buenos Aires for only four to five months. Castañón had been a cavalry officer in the Spanish army in Spain, and his friend was a treasury employee. Both had left Spain because they were being persecuted for their outspoken liberal ideas. Two of their witnesses were from Montevideo, and no more than residents, not vecinos, of Buenos Aires. The other witness hailed from Santiago de Chile. Obviously neither applicant had stayed in the country long enough to have become well enchufado, connected with the local population. Their application was rejected on formal grounds, because they did not meet the residency requirement, they were not married, and they had no property. 17

Most applicants for naturalization received their papers within a reasonable period of time. Precise information concerning the dates of initiation of the naturalization procedure and the approval of the request are available for seventy cases. It would be dangerous, though,
to generalize about the other naturalizations on the basis of this information. After all, many factors were influential in determining the duration of the procedure of every applicant.

**TABLE 8-3**

Duration of naturalization procedure, Buenos Aires, 1810-1828.
(In cases where it is shown)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration (in months)</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one month</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Two months or less</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Six months or less</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one year</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Six months or more</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: AGN-IX-35-3-3, X-11-4-7, X-7-1-6, X-9-6-2, X-23-4-8, BN number 529, Acuerdos del Cabildo)

Inclusion of data on Anglo-Americans, who were naturalized almost instantaneously, would obviously skew the results. However, more than half of all applicants on whom data are available could call themselves Argentine citizens after two
months. Most Iberian candidates received their naturalization documents within six months of initiation of the procedure. A few applicants had to wait even longer. Clearly, the authorities did not grant naturalization documents in routine fashion: they wanted to make sure that new citizens were loyal in every sense and valuable members of the national community. Whenever doubts about this existed, procedures were held up, or citizenship was not granted at all.

The Categories of Naturalization

Spanish Bureaucrats, Officers, and Merchants

From February 1813 to the end of 1814, a total of 234 peninsulares applied for Argentinian citizenship. This figure refers to the whole of the territory under the control of the Assembly of the Year XIII: there were applicants not only in Buenos Aires, although that is where most lived, but also in Córdoba, Santa Fe, Tucumán, La Rioja, Salta, Santiago del Estero, Tarija, Catamarca, and Chuquisaca. One hundred forty-nine applicants were immediately made citizens, while 95 were denied their naturalization papers. Of the rejected applicants, nineteen, or 20%, were subsequently allowed to become citizens after all and so to retain any government jobs they were holding.18
Most of the hundred or so peninsulars who were denied the privilege of Argentinian citizenship did not bother to reapply. Ten applicants who applied in 1813 and were rejected, were allowed to become Argentinians later the same year. Some others managed to stay afloat economically for a longer period after the loss of their jobs, and reapplied successfully later. In 1813, Diego Camacho was working with the revenue (rentas) department as a "dependiente," or clerk, when he was refused naturalization, thus losing his job. Five years later, when he was admitted as a citizen, he had become a pulpero with a one-third participation in a pulperia valued at 2,000 pesos. Others had to wait even longer to become citizens. Damián de Castro and Salvio Gafarot had to wait eleven years till 1824, before they could become members of the "American Family." They and others like them were only able to survive because they were financially independent, because they had a supportive network of family and friends, or because they were allowed to continue working even without proper naturalization documents. However, only nine rejected applicants were able to survive thus without the required papers for a period of up to eleven years after their initial request.

It is not certain whether the motives for granting or denying citizenship were always sincere or even purely political. On more than one occasion, the issue was to reallocate ever scarcer resources to the detriment of
peninsulares and the benefit of creoles. Usually, the latter had been excluded from lucrative government jobs or sinecures during colonial days. Thus, the denial of citizenship could serve both the political and the economic interests of the supporters of the new regime: there were instances when Spaniards were fired from their jobs and denied citizenship just because creoles wanted their jobs. A Spaniard who suffered this fate might have been politically more reliable than a colleague who was allowed to retain his job, simply because no creole wanted it or could take it over.21 There were also instances when a job remained within the same family, passing from a peninsular father or father-in-law to his creole son or son-in-law. José de Goytia, a creole, wanted to have his father's job with the government. His father Francisco, a master smith, had been fired when not granted citizenship. His son was qualified on all accounts: he had the necessary experience (gained through working with his father as an assistant) and he was a native of Argentina.22

Andrés Segovia, a native American, put in a similar petition to receive his father-in-law's position. Explaining to the authorities that he had been in business, but that the war had obstructed commerce, so that his income had become insufficient to support his family of eight children, he applied for the job of archivero of the tribunal of accounts.
His father-in-law, Lorenzo Fuentes, used to take care of the family, but since he had been fired as archivero he was no longer able to continue helping his grandchildren. However, the Assembly of the Year XIII had second thoughts about this matter and resolved to grant Fuentes Argentinian citizenship after all. Thus, Segovia continued in business while his father-in-law resumed work as archivero.  

After the Declaration of Independence, many more peninsulars decided to become Argentine citizens, which led to a second wave of naturalizations from 1816 till 1819. In just three years, another 150 or so peninsulars thus became Argentinians. But despite this move to obtain citizenship and despite the legislation of 1813, making it compulsory to be a citizen in order to hold a government job or a commission in the army, peninsulars apparently continued to hold such positions without the required documents. In 1818, Manuel García de la Huerta, a legal expert, complained to the Tucumán Congress about the frequency of non-naturalized Spaniards occupying posts in the judiciary.

For all of the Río de la Plata, the regional Iberian backgrounds of 176 naturalized peninsulars are known, 132 of them in Buenos Aires. Most were indeed Galicians, thus giving substance to one of the standard American insults for peninsulars. Andalusians were the second-largest group, followed by Catalans and Basques and Navarrese, and Castilians.
TABLE 8-4
Regional origins of naturalized Spaniards, Buenos Aires and Interior, 1810-1828.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>region of origin</th>
<th>Buenos Aires</th>
<th>Interior</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galicia</td>
<td>35 (26.5%)</td>
<td>16 (36.4%)</td>
<td>51 (28.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andalusia</td>
<td>31 (23.5%)</td>
<td>5 (11.4%)</td>
<td>36 (20.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalonia</td>
<td>26 (19.7%)</td>
<td>6 (13.6%)</td>
<td>32 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Country</td>
<td>14 (10.6%)</td>
<td>8 (18.2%)</td>
<td>22 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castile and Leon</td>
<td>18 (13.6%)</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>20 (11.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santander, Asturias</td>
<td>5 (3.8%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>9 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other regions</td>
<td>3 (2.3%)</td>
<td>3 (6.8%)</td>
<td>6 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>132 (75%)</td>
<td>44 (25%)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: AGN IX-35-3-3, X-11-4-7, X-7-1-6, X-9-6-2, X-23-4-8, X-10-9-7, X-9-6-7, BN number 529, Acuerdos del Cabildo, Cutolo, Diccionario biográfico, Abad de Santillán, Enciclopedia)

These figures contain few surprises, fitting as they do into the general pattern of peninsular background of rioplatense Spaniards. As for the professions of naturalizing Spaniards, most were military officers or bureaucrats. In all, almost 150 naturalizing Spaniards were state employees of some kind. They were followed by about 50 merchants, including wholesale traders and more modest pulperos. Further, there were small numbers of clergy, physicians, artisans, and others. In the light of what is known about the national backgrounds of government and military personnel and the clergy before 1810 in the entire Viceroyalty, the purge effectuated by the revolutionary governments seems to have been quite effective.
Most peninsular military officers who served before 1810, apparently retained their commissions after the May revolution, and over half of the Spanish-born bureaucrats were not admitted as members of the Great American Family.
Since most naturalizations of peninsular civil servants took place immediately following the 1813 decree of the Constituent Assembly, during a six-month period starting in February, the bureaucracy can be said to have been purged in a short time. Of seventy civil servants applying for naturalization (that is, almost all peninsular bureaucrats obeyed the Assembly's orders), forty one, more than 50%, were rejected.  

Most peninsular merchants only opted for Argentinian citizenship after the Declaration of Independence. The few who already did so before 1816 had to become Argentines because they held commissions in the armed forces at the same time. Prior to 1816 at last, no merchant was motivated by political or sentimental attachment to the Rio de la Plata to become a citizen. Although merchants did not really have to become citizens before 1816, it may be said that few of them, if any at all, had political motives to acquire the Argentinian nationality. They did have other possible motives, as peninsular merchants were the chief targets of forced loans, a perpetual source of revenue for the authorities, even if it was drying up as a result of its frequent application. With naturalization, a peninsular could no longer be made subject to forced loans, which hence would entail a certain financial loss to the government. It is thus
not inconceivable that the revolutionary government discouraged the naturalization of merchants, at least before 1816.

Typically, a peninsular chose to become an Argentinian when his career, relationships, professional connections and attachments left him little choice. Most candidates for citizenship whose ages are known, filed for naturalization in their middle or later careers, between 25 and 45 years of age or older. Many applicants were at an age when they could hope to enjoy the fruits of their labor and careers, or when they needed to protect by naturalization what little was left of their life's savings and possessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at naturalization</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15-24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25-44</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(45-65+</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: same as table 8-4)
Colonial legislation in effect stipulated that applicants for citizenship needed to be long-established members of the community. Thus, little change resulted from the revolution, as men continued to naturalize especially when they had become "pillars of society," so to speak.

TABLE 8-8
Age at arrival in the Río de la Plata of naturalizing peninsulars in Buenos Aires, 1810-1828.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at arrival</th>
<th>number of persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0-14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15-34</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(35-59</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>totals</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: same as table 8-4)

Most applicants had characteristically spent a considerable part of their lives in the Río de la Plata. They thus had come as young immigrants, either with their parents, or in their early careers. It was not uncommon for applicants to have spent the greater part of their lives, or their adult
lives, in Argentina. Only among Buenos Aires applicants were there individuals who had spent no more, or even less, than the legally required minimum number of years in the area.

It should be pointed out that few of the numerous young Spaniards who had deserted the royalist armies in the Banda Oriental were so consistent as to try to become Argentine citizens to underscore their desertion. If they deserted for political reasons as was frequently claimed by revolutionary propaganda, why did they not become true sons of the revolution by shedding their peninsular nationality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>time of residence (in years)</th>
<th>number of persons:</th>
<th>totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0-9)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>(10-24)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<td>25-29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25-40+)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>totals</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: same as table 8-4)
Spanish Intellectuals, Technicians, and Liberal Refugees

By no means all peninsulars who became Argentinians did so out of expediency or crass materialism. A number of Spanish liberals emigrated to Argentina during the first two decades of independence, often at the express invitation of like-minded Argentine leaders. Thus resulted what might with some exaggeration be called a brain-drain of Spaniards. Antonio Arcos, for example, a military engineer and a member of the quasi-masonic Lautaro Lodge, came to Buenos Aires in 1814 to be naturalized only two years later. With the possible exception of the Pueyrredón regime, one might say that Argentina was for some time an attractive place for exiles and refugees who suffered persecution in Spain for their liberal beliefs. A reason that could be given for quick naturalization of peninsular liberal refugees was that they possessed skills necessary for national development; indeed, most liberals who came to Buenos Aires upon the invitation of Rivadavia were given important government jobs. When Rivadavia and Belgrano were in London in 1815, they met Felipe Senillosa, a liberal refugee from Spain and an engineer and mathematician. The two Argentinians persuaded Senillosa to come to Buenos Aires. Senillosa accepted the invitation and immediately crossed the Atlantic; still in 1815, he was made a citizen of the United Provinces. Pablo
Baladía was another friend of Rivadavia's. In November of 1825, this outspokenly liberal educator came to Buenos Aires, where he was named General Director of Schools. For Baladía, naturalization was as easy as it had been for Senillosa: in 1826, Baladía became an Argentinian. Dr. Rafael Casagemas needed hardly more time to become naturalized. He was a liberal as well, and a noted legal scholar. Rivadavia made him professor of international and civil law at the University of Buenos Aires, and citizen in 1826, a year after he had come to Buenos Aires. Ramón Escobar had been a stenographer with the Cádiz Cortes when he met Rivadavia in Gibraltar. In 1824, this well-known liberal came to Buenos Aires and started to work for the national and provincial legislatures. In 1825, Escobar became an Argentine national.26

Not all liberals who arrived in Buenos Aires in search of freedom and career opportunities were intellectuals, however. When the Bourbon restoration in Spain brought in its wake a crackdown on liberals of all kinds, a major target was the army. Hence, some liberal army officers came to the Río de la Plata as well. José María Jardon de San Vicente arrived in 1819, when the more conservative Pueyrredón was still in power. In 1821, when Rivadavian liberalism reigned supreme, Jardón was made an Argentine citizen.27 The noted liberal
journalist, José María Márquez, had also a career behind him as an officer in the Spanish army before crossing the Atlantic when liberalism was proscribed in Spain.28

Another group of Spanish immigrants consisted of what could be called technical personnel in the broadest sense: physicians, artisans, and experts of various kinds. They possessed skills and knowledge that were marketable locally and for which Argentina as a recently independent country in search of economic development had a great need. Naturalization was not always a prerequisite for a continued stay in the country, though. Numerous Spanish merchants and "technicians" never naturalized and nevertheless continued to prosper in Buenos Aires. Wealth and connections could shield peninsulars from the more unpleasant side effects of the revolution. Indeed, some merchants with peninsular connections, representatives of the old monopolistic trade system who saw their business ruined as a result of the interruption of trade with Spain, would reorient their business toward Britain, Chile, Brazil, or the Argentinian Interior. For many merchants, naturalization was not even necessary in order to carry on their commercial activities, since especially the lower and lower-middle class peninsulars bore the brunt of discrimination, persecution and other hardships during the revolution. Their richer compatriots could lead comparatively pleasant and protected lives.29
Without doubt, some naturalized peninsulars were of humble social status and modest economic means: Francisco Aparicio was a pulpero store clerk, José Borrayo a bakery employee, Rafael Gomila, a waiter, Pedro López a chacra peon, Juan Marín worked in a bakery. Aparicio, Borrayo and López were illiterates. Yet these "lower class" Spaniards represent only a very small minority of naturalizing peninsulars. Whatever the cost of the naturalization procedure, it was thus certainly not impossible for lower or modest income aliens to become Argentinian citizens. Perhaps these lower income Spaniards became citizens to escape discrimination or other misfortunes. Perhaps also, these few individuals adopted Argentine citizenship out of a genuine enthusiasm for the new political order, or were they driven by patriotic motives.

Portuguese Merchants and Artisans

The Lusitanians, the second-largest group after the Spaniards to seek Argentinian citizenship, were largely economically motivated. Many became citizens in order to insure continued residence in the Río de la Plata. Many were in commerce or had considerable fortunes. Others were artisans with high incomes: one was a silversmith, another a baker and a partner of a man related to one of the richest bakers in Buenos Aires. Another baker, Antonio Feliz de
Menezes, had been an officer in the Portuguese army and had subsequently married into the rich and influential Trapani family of the Banda Oriental. Very few naturalizing "Portuguese" were not well off. Moreover, only one out of the thirty-three seeking citizenship could positively be identified as an illiterate, but he was from Brazil, where education during colonial days had been notoriously rudimentary and deficient.

One other Brazilian, Manuel José de Mello, had come to the country as a prisoner of war, captured during one of the campaigns in the Banda Oriental. And all the Lusitanians professed to be good supporters of the revolution and liberal ideas, although there is a faint suspicion that most of all they wanted to protect their businesses and fortunes. Of course, by the time they filed for citizenship, the revolution had been well secured: there was no longer any danger of Argentina's falling into the hands of the royalists since their defeat at Ayacucho in 1824. On the other hand, an important aspect of the Argentinian-Brazilian war of 1826-1828 was the perceived struggle of democracy against autocracy and despotism. Consequently, the Portuguese and Brazilians wanting to become Argentinians took care to mention prominently how strongly they were in favor of liberal and democratic ideas, and how passionately they rejected any form of despotism. These assertions should not be dismissed too cynically. Some Portuguese had lived in the
Río de la Plata for a long time, between twenty and thirty years, and one even said that he had completely forgotten his native language. Indeed on the whole, the Lusitanians seem to have integrated quite well into Argentinian society. Many were, or had been, members of the urban militias, and a few even had helped to fight the British in 1806 and 1807. For such people, the decision to naturalize was not taken on the spur of the moment. It was merely the logical consequence of a lifetime spent in Buenos Aires.

British Merchants, North American Corsairs, and Others

The naturalization of English-speaking residents of Buenos Aires stands in sharp contrast to the circumstances under which both the Spaniards and the Lusitanians became Argentine citizens. The British who naturalized were either merchants or persons with technical skills in high demand. There was one hacendado, Juan Miller from Scotland, who introduced the shorthorn cattle race into the area. Enrique Jones was a noted mariner and hydrographer who explored the Patagonian coast for the Argentinian government. Other British-born Argentinian citizens who deserve mention include Diego Thomson, an educator who introduced the Lancasterian system of schools in the country, and Santiago Wilde, serving the local government with his financial expertise.
Some non-Hispanic immigrants quickly became connected with the local upper class through marriage. Charles Ridgely Horne, of Baltimore, Maryland, married General Lavalle's sister. Horne's father had moved to Buenos Aires in 1819 when Charles was only nine years old. Their quinta, or country house, was next to that of Guillermo Brown. Francisco Leloir, a French hacendado and later a diplomat for Argentina, also married well. His bride was the niece of General Pueyrredón, the head of state when Leloir arrived in Buenos Aires in 1817. Some foreigners even got married before they had a clear notion of what the new country was like. Such was apparently the case of the young Dutchman, Adriano Enrique Mijnssen, who married into one of the principal Montevideo families. He had long wanted to settle in the Rio de la Plata, but had been unable to do so due to circumstances beyond his control. For such men, naturalization presented no difficulties: Leloir, for instance, only had to wait two years before he could legally call himself an Argentinian. Neither did Mijnssen have to comply with the residency requirement, for he received his naturalization papers a few months after his arrival.33

Many British and North Americans adopted Argentine nationality out of mere expediency, rather than because of revolutionary sympathies, and practically none met all the formal legal requirements for naturalization. Most of them certainly had not lived the minimum of four years in the
country, but this requirement was waived for most Britons and North Americans. The first Britons who received Argentine citizenship were Diego (James) Winton, Diego (James) Paroissien, and Roberto (Robert) Billinghurst, all of whom were naturalized in 1811. According to Alberto Palomeque, it was Paroissien, an English physician who had played an active part in the independence movement from 1808 onwards, who really was the first foreigner to become a naturalized Argentinian. He was soon accompanied in this new status by the two other Britons, who had likewise taken creole wives and had also actively supported the local quest for independence. The Buenos Aires cabildo made Lord Strangford, the British ambassador at the Luso-Brazilian court at Rio de Janeiro, an honorary citizen in the same year, but Strangford declined the honor.

While those three Britons were actively involved in creole politics and had taken up permanent residence in Buenos Aires, the "Anglo-Saxons" and "Anglo-Irish" who received their naturalization papers in 1817 and 1818 were working ostensibly toward the same, but in truth for a somewhat different cause. Most often they were in the naval forces, and since there were virtually no more royalists to be feared in the Río de la Plata, their main task was privateering. Thus the foreigners who served in the Argentine navy were all pirates and corsairs. When they applied for
citizenship, it was for reasons other than a desire to stay in Buenos Aires and establish themselves as proper settlers and good citizens. They needed naturalization papers on strictly legal grounds, as a cover and justification for their professional activities. William Ford and John Chase, for example, both North Americans, had been in trouble back home for having undertaken, as U.S. citizens, actions against Spain, a country with which the United States was at peace. Before he sailed on another privateering raid as captain of the brig Patriota, Chase therefore needed proof of Argentine citizenship. Ford, Chase and at least ten other North Americans and one Irishman became Argentines for similar reasons.35

The naturalizations of these privateers were unlike all other cases in that their requests were usually honored immediately. Approval was granted on the very day the request was filed, or if not, then the next day. Such speed clearly suggests that the naturalizations were rather pro forma. This does not mean, however, that all Anglo-Saxons were insincere in their objectives or simply pragmatic. Some had indeed integrated into society and really wanted to form part of it, or felt sympathy for the Argentinian cause.36

Only in the case of Spanish-born residents was naturalization ever enforced with anything resembling consistency. The primary purpose of naturalization had been to make sure that civil servants, soldiers and other
officials continued to serve loyally the new authorities occupying the fortress at Buenos Aires. It was never applied to the resident foreign population at large.
Notes to Chapter VIII

1 Stols, "Spaanse Brabanders," 121.
2 Stols, "Spaanse Brabanders," 120.
3 Everaert, Vlaamse Firma's, 173-4.
4 See for instance, Nunn, Foreign Immigrants, 47-9.
5 Both Tyndall and Haliburton in AGN IX-35-3-3.
6 AGN IX-10-7-7.
7 Circular, 3 December 1810, published in Gaceta de Buenos Aires December 6, 1810.
10 Constitution of 1819, Section 3, Chapter 3, Article 84, in Ravignani, Asambleas, vol. 6, part 2, 717.
11 Constitution of 1826, Section 2, Articles 1-4, in Ravignani, Asambleas, vol. 6, part 2, 746.

12 However, the provisions for the suspension of citizenship were so stringent as to exclude the vast majority of the population from civil rights. Suspended were bankrupt persons, and any servant, employee, or worker (criado a sueldo; peon jornalero); common soldiers notorious vagrants, and persons convicted of crimes. If a person could not read and write, his rights were to suspended as well, but this provision was only scheduled to take effect in 1841; Section 2, Article 5, in Ravignani, Asambleas, vol. 6, part 2, 746.
13 Session of February 6, 1813, in Ravignani, Asambleas, vol. 1, 7-8; furthermore, the applicant was to renounce any foreign titles, privileges or pensions he might still hold.
15 See appendix; the actual number of naturalizations may have been somewhat higher. Sources include: AGN IX-35-3-3, Tribunales; X-11-4-7, X-7-1-6, and X-9-6-2, Cartas de Ciudadanía; X-23-4-8, Asamblea General Constituyente; X-10-9-7, and X-9-6-7, Pasaportes; IX-10-7-7, Padrón de habitantes de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1810; Biblioteca Nacional, Manuscritos, number 529, as well as the Acuerdos del Extinguido Cabildo de Buenos Aires; additional data have been found in Vicente Cutolo, Diccionario biográfico, 6 vols., (Buenos Aires: Elche, 1968-); and Diego Abad de Santillán, ed., Enciclopedia argentina, 9 vols., (Buenos Aires: Ediar, 1956-64).

16 Article one of the decree specifically mentioned all the categories liable for military service: creoles, foreigners with more than four years' residence, Spaniards who had naturalized, free American-born and African blacks and mulattoes, all without distinction of rank or social status. "El Director Provisional del Estado," May 30, 1815, in Mallié, Impresos, vol. 2, 517.

17 AGN IX-35-3-3, Tribunales, 1819.

18 AGN X-23-4-8.

19 AGN X-7-1-6.

20 AGN, Biblioteca Nacional, Manuscritos number 529.

21 For example, Juan Firmín Mármol, a native of Buenos Aires and presently clerk with the customs office, requested to be given the job of Gregorio Calzadillo, a peninsular who had been denied naturalization. The job Mármol wished to have was that of "oficial escriviente unico" of the customs office, with an annual salary of 600 pesos. However, it is not certain that Calzadillo was fired because Mármol wanted to take over his position. AGN X-23-4-8.

22 AGN X-23-4-8; it is not known, however, whether José was given the job.

23 AGN X-23-4-8.

25 AGN X-23-4-8; the viceregal administration, the old secretariat, became an almost exclusively creole body. Only four of the 21 employees were peninsulars before 1810, and after 1813, only two remained, Matías Bernal and Roque Hernández. See José María Mariluz Urquijo, Orígenes de la burocracia rioplatense (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Cabargón, 1974), 66; Yet according to the naturalization data in the AGN, at least seven peninsular bureaucrats of the viceregal office tried to become Argentinians.

26 All in AGN, BN number 529. The French naturalist, Aimé Bonpland, was also invited by Rivadavia to come to Buenos Aires. See for instance, Juan A. Domínguez, "Aimé Bonpland, su vida en la América del Sur y principalmente en la República Argentina (1817-1858)," Anales de la Sociedad Científica Argentina 108 (1929) 407-35; 497-523.

27 AGN IX-35-3-3.

28 Much of the biographical information concerning political exiles and Spanish liberal refugees comes from Cutolo, Diccionario biográfico, and from Diego Abad de Santillán, Enciclopedia argentina. However, these works of reference should be consulted with care. A number of biographies have been found to be faulty or even questionable. For instance, a number of individuals who requested, and were granted, citizenship, and who thus, according to the documentary evidence in the Archivo General de la Nación were peninsulars, are listed by Cutolo and Santillán as creoles. Among these "creoles" are: Pedro José Brid, Patricio Beldon, Francisco Montes y Larrea, Miguel Estanislao Soler, and José Superí. Cutolo lists Agustín Murriondo as a native of the Banda Oriental, born in 1795. However, his father Prudencio, a Basque native, only arrived in Buenos Aires directly from Spain, in 1804. Both the father and the son naturalized in 1813.


30 Aparicio, Gomila and López in AGN IX-35-3-3; Borrayo in AGN X-9-6-2; Marín in AGN X-7-1-6.

31 AGN IX-35-3-3.

32 Ibid.

33 Both in AGN IX-35-3-3.

35. These were Thomas W. Carter, the Irishman, commander of the brig Maypú; James Chaytor, on the Independencia del Sud; John D. Daniels on the Maypú; John Deites on the Buenos Aires; John Higinbotham on the Pueyrredón; Marcena Monson on the Túpac Amaru; Adam Pond on the schooner Ciripó; Thomas Taylor, a Bermudan, on various ships; James Treat on the schooner Tucumán, Jacob Weeden also on the Tucumán, and George Wilson on the same ship. AGN X-7-1-6, X-11-4-7 and X-9-6-2.

36. See Lewis Winkler Bealer, Los corsarios de Buenos Aires. Sus actividades en las guerras hispanoamericanas de la independencia 1815-1821 (Buenos Aires: Coni, 1937), Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Publicaciones del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, number 72, 46-7.
CHAPTER IX
CONCLUSION

Within a few decades, Spanish colonialism in the Río de la Plata was eroded, abolished and defeated. Upon its ruins, a new nation was trying to organize itself. It is no secret that the revolutionary regimes succeeding each other in Buenos Aires proceeded step by step, taking care not to make too many changes at once. The governments at Buenos Aires sought to consolidate and advance their cause by using force and persuasion alike. Thus, the revolution rested on two pillars: on the one hand military and political action, on the other, propaganda supplemented by revolutionary celebrations.

Very few revolutionary leaders or others in the Río de la Plata, had a very clear idea of what the nation they were constructing ought to be like. The one general objective on which many came to agree was the attainment of full political independence. Singleness of purpose, determination, and popular support were the revolution's strength. Especially in Buenos Aires, the new authorities rode on a crest of popular support unequalled in many other parts of the crumbling Viceroyalty. The revolutionary celebrations that were immediately instituted enjoyed a wide popularity. Each year on the 25th of May, and on the countless other occasions
when revolutionary military successes were celebrated spontaneously, the revolutionary governments at Buenos Aires received ample proof of widespread popular support for the common cause.

The major obstacle to the successful outcome of the revolution was interprovincial rivalry, or as nationalist revolutionaries would put it, domestic dissension. Divisions within society and within the viceroyalty exacerbated soon after the May Revolution. Divisions sharpened between Spaniards and Creoles, revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries, liberals and conservatives, soldiers and statesmen, porteños and provincials, merchants and agricultural producers and cattlemen, upper and lower class, Hispanics and non-Hispanic foreigners, blacks and whites.

The revolution in Buenos Aires was dominated by white, upper class liberal, creole statesmen from Buenos Aires itself. Thus the revolution that could, or ought to have been, national in scope, was soon restricted to Buenos Aires and some ephemeral allies in the interior. Moreover, as for its position in those outlying parts, the porteño revolutionaries often had to rely on armed forces, as evidenced by the frequent and fruitless military expeditions sent to Santa Fe, Corrientes, the Banda Oriental, and the Northwest.
Thus, whatever form an independent country rising from the ashes of the Platine Viceroyalty would take, it was sure to bear the heavy imprint of Buenos Aires. On the preceding pages, the two main elements of nationhood have been discussed, namely official, or "artificial" attempts at forging a nation, and "natural," popular-based sentiments regarding nationality. The former are evidenced by revolutionary propaganda, festivities, and compulsory naturalization of foreign residents, supplementing the military operations intended to hold the decaying Viceroyalty together. The "natural" elements of nationbuilding are to be found in whatever popular conceptions of nationality existed in early nineteenth-century Buenos Aires. Some porteños, especially, may have had a notion of belonging to a rudimentary "nation" even before the British invasions and the May Revolution pulled Buenos Aires into the limelight of history. For a Platine nationalism to succeed and take shape, Pan-Hispanic bonds of loyalty had to be dissolved first. This happened indeed, as it soon became clear to Spanish Americans that Spanish colonial policy was not to change so as to allow more room for Spanish American development.\(^1\) Layer after layer of loyalties was peeled away as revolution and war freed men from old bonds and old-fashioned and traditional political concepts. Thus, nationbuilding in Argentina had to start from scratch.
National sentiment identifying with the Viceroyalty had to compete with local patriotism. The regions composing the viceroyalty had only been together in political union for less than forty years by the time the May Revolution took place. Indeed, "viceregal nationalism" may have been weakened just prior to the revolution: the patria chica of Buenos Aires received powerful impulses from the victories over British invaders in 1806 and 1807. The foundations of Argentine nationality were laid at the beginning of the nineteenth century, if one is to disregard Bartolomé Mitre's eloquent assertion that its cradle was the Viceroyalty, even if one has to agree with him that Buenos Aires was its core. Enthusiastically, Buenos Aires tried to "export" its revolution to the neighboring and interior provinces, but nowhere did the revolution take root as strongly as it had in Buenos Aires itself.

The first cycle of nationbuilding in Argentina came to an end toward the close of the second decade of independence. The Rosas regime marked the abandonment of the early attempts to forge a nation under the leadership of Buenos Aires, whatever the net result of the Rosas period may have been eventually. At one point even Queen Victoria's birthday, on May 24, was celebrated, thus throwing a shadow over the subsequent Fiestas Mayas.
Consciously or unconsciously, porteño revolutionary nationalism followed the French example. Its objectives were "liberal," and included civil rights, equality and economic freedom. Under Bernardino Rivadavia, these goals seemed to have been attained, however briefly or imperfectly. Most notably, there appears to have been little racial or ethnic prejudice determining the early nationbuilding developments. In Germany and even in the United States, these elements had a decided influence on early nationalism. Nor was linguistic community with other Spanish Americans used as an appeal for the formation of a monolithic Spanish American nation-state. On the contrary, there was room, on the one hand, for Amerindians from the Interior and free blacks, and British, Spanish, German, French, Portuguese, Italian as well as Brazilian and North American immigrants on the other. Immigrants, especially, were welcomed. They could become citizens of the new state without many difficulties. But even without naturalization documents, their strong presence indicated that the attractions of life in Buenos Aires far outweighed any unpleasant aspects of residence in the city. Thus apparently the governments at Buenos Aires, and the porteño population in general, were willing to admit foreigners as members of their new nation. Attempts on the part of nostalgics like Castañeda to preserve an exclusively Catholic, Hispanic community were destined to fail. During its Golden Age from 1880-1930, Argentina has given proof of
the same willingness and ability to receive and absorb foreign immigrants, despite efforts on the part of conservative reactionaries to preserve a "creole" country. A major instrument of assimilating the waves of immigrants and their children were nationalist holidays.3

Thus it is not far-fetched to regard the cornerstones of nationbuilding in Argentina, namely the emotional assimilation of foreign residents by means of celebrations, and the legal assimilation through naturalization, as having been formed decisively during the first two decades of its existence as an independent country.
Notes to Chapter IX


APPENDIX A

NATURALIZATIONS OF SPANIARDS IN BUENOS AIRES FROM 1810 TO 1828

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>-</td>
<td>capt., EAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACEVEDO, Francisco</td>
<td>1813</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>aduana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACEVEDO, José María de</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Cádiz</td>
<td>aduana</td>
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<td>AGRELO, Inocencio Antonio</td>
<td>1813</td>
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<td>AGUERO, Juan de</td>
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<td>Asturias</td>
<td>lieutenant</td>
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<td>artillery sgt.</td>
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<td>ALCARAZ, Benigno</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>purveyor, EAP</td>
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(The basic data concerning naturalizations have been drawn from the Archivo General de la Nación, namely AGN IX-35-3-3, IX-10-7-7, X-11-4-7, X-7-1-6, X-9-6-2, X-23-4-8, X-8-10-3, X-10-9-7, X-9-6-7, Manuscritos Biblioteca Nacional number 529, as well as the Acuerdos del Extinguido Cabildo de Buenos Aires. Information has been completed as far as possible by using the biographical data in Vicente Osvaldo Cutolo, ed., Nuevo diccionario biográfico argentino, 6 vols., (Buenos Aires: Elche, 1968-), and Diego Abad de Santillán ed., Gran enciclopedia argentina, 9 vols., (Buenos Aires: Ediar, 1956-64)
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(*Abbreviations used: EAP=Peru Auxiliary Army; GAC=Granaderos a Caballo; BO=Banda Oriental; SPE=Supreme Executive Power; GS=General Staff.*)
### APPENDIX B

**NATURALIZATIONS OF Non-HISPANIC, Non-PORTUGUESE FOREIGNERS IN BUENOS AIRES, FROM 1810 TO 1828**

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## APPENDIX C

### NATURALIZATIONS OF PORTUGUESE AND BRAZILIANS IN BUENOS AIRES, 1810-1828

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Sala X: 2-10-9; 6-1-1; 7-1-6; 8-10-3; 9-6-2; 9-6-7; 9-7-1; 10-9-7; 11-3-6; 11-4-1; 11-4-7; 12-1-5; 22-2-3; 23-4-8; 23-5-9; 29-9-9; 29-11-4; 29-11-7; 30-1-1; 30-1-4; 30-1-5; 30-3-1; 35-11-4; 35-11-8; 36-1-12; 40-9-7; 41-9-3; 44-8-30.


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Henry Ph. Vogel was born in The Hague, Netherlands, in 1952. He spent part of his youth in Palembang, Indonesia. After secondary school, Mr. Vogel served with the Royal Netherlands Army in Germany before studying history at the University of Leiden. In 1978 he received a "kandidaats" degree in history and crossed the Atlantic to Gainesville in order to study Latin American history at the University of Florida. He was awarded the M.A. degree in 1981. In 1984 he spent a year of research in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Currently, Mr. Vogel is an assistant professor of Latin American history at Leiden University. Mr. Vogel is married, has a daughter, and lives near Leiden.
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

David Bushnell, Chairman
Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Lyle N. McAlister
Distinguished Service Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Charles F. Sidman
Professor of History
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Professor of Political Science
This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 1987

Dean, Graduate School